



## Vodka – White Queen

**The past decade has seen vodka assume the mantle as queen of white spirits. Its dominance of the world's white spirit market does not appear to be slowing down; rather it is increasing.**

Poland and Russia both claim to have invented vodka and as its history is many centuries old, it is unlikely that we will ever know the truth. However, there is documented evidence that vodka has been available in Poland since the 14th century.

Distillers in Russia believe, on the other hand, that the only true vodkas are those that are produced in old Russia and that all other vodkas are merely pretenders to the throne.

Vodka was initially used as a medicine which cured a range of ills from earaches to colds and flu. Every wealthy family had its own little vodka distillery in its house and made its own special variety. Common additives include herb, spices, fruit and honey.

There are currently more than 1000 brands of vodka in Poland and these are produced by 20 distilleries throughout the country.

Scandinavia has joined the ranks of vodka producers recently and *Absolut*, *Finlandia* and *Danzka* have grown in popularity over the past decade. *Absolut*, produced in Sweden has become one of the fastest growing brands in the world, but the world's most popular vodka is *Smirnoff*.

One reason for vodka's popularity

appears to be its ability to complement a range of flavours both added and infused. Its pure taste and clean finish lend themselves to an infinite number of fruity combinations, as well as the traditional herbal and spicy combinations.

Teamed with fruit, modern vodkas are taking over from the pre-mixed bourbon and cola blends as the new ready to drink favourites.

The flavouring of vodka has been happening for decades and many producers have their own range of commercially produced drinks, but there are many seeking their own flavours.

Infusion is about adding flavouring to vodka naturally, with all kinds of ingredients such as fruit, lollies, chocolate, chillies; in fact any flavour that you might enjoy.

Some of these infusions take some time to prepare while others are really quite simple. To make an infusion, begin by removing about one third of the bottle's contents, add the ingredients and top up with the vodka. Once you have prepared the vodka with your favourite flavour, leave it to stand for about 10 days to allow the full flavour of the ingredients you have added to mix with the vodka. The most enjoyable way to serve the infused vodka is to chill it and serve in 30ml shot glasses.

Try these:

Take a bottle of your favourite vodka and remove one third of the

contents:

### **VODKA PASSION**

Peel one firm ripe mango, cut the flesh into strips thin enough to put in the bottle. Add the pulp of one ripe passionfruit. Top up with vodka and stand for 10 days.

### **VODKA TOBLERONE**

Break one 300 gm Toblerone bar into portions and melt into a frying pan over a low heat. Add 120mls cream and stir. Allow to cool for a couple of minutes and pour into the bottle. Top up with vodka and allow to stand for two weeks.

### **VODKA CINNAMON PEAR**

Peel one sweet pear and remove seed and core. Cut into strips and place in the bottle. Add two cinnamon sticks, top up with vodka and allow to stand for 10 days.

## New Appointments

*The Australian Law Reform Commission* advise that **Mr Mark Weinberg, QC** has been appointed a part-time member of the Commission.

Mr Weinberg is a leading Melbourne barrister and is appointed until December 1998.

During his career he has served as the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, held the post as Dean of the Faculty of Law at Melbourne University and has written extensively on evidence and fraud. He will work on a review of Australian laws relating to the proceeds of crime.

**Mr Dale Boucher** has been appointed *Chief Executive Officer designate* of the *Australian Government Solicitor*.

He has had a distinguished career with the Australian Public Service and has held the post of Australian Government Solicitor, a Deputy secretary level position within the Attorney-General's Department.

Mr Boucher's term is for three years