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Georgeâ€™s Rants & Raves: Vodca Exclusiv by George Brozowski

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I was about to have a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde moment, but at that time, I didnâ€™t know it. I have to admit that when the three bottles of Vodca Exclusiv arrived it made me immediately turn to Google Earth to find out where in the heck Moldova was. Turns out itâ€™s a landlocked state in Eastern Europe, located between Romania to the west and Ukraine to the north, east and south. I know more about Romania since thatâ€™s where my favorite anti-hero, Count Dracula, hails from and it seems that most of my favorite B horror movies are also filmed there. But hey, if itâ€™s next to Romania, itâ€™s got to be a interesting place.

These Moldovans must know something about hooch since the average annual adult per capita consumption, in terms of pure alcohol, in 2003â€“2005, was 18.2 litres, the highest in the world. These are my kind of people. They must really know how to party on a Saturday night.

Of the three bottles, one was a good old fashioned Plain Jane and the other two were infused with orange and raspberry. Just like Spiderman, my Spidey sense came alive at the sight of those two infused bottles. I have rarely, possibly even only once in my life, tasted infused vodka that was spectacular; all the others were, to put it kindly, unpalatable. I crossed my fingers and forged ahead but it was difficult to ignore my Spidey senses tingling away.

The unflavored vodka has a slight wheat note in the nose, as well it should since it is made of winter wheat. It is a bit earthy and full bodied with barely a hint of ethanol and very inviting. Wow, itâ€™s quite clean on the palate with a slight bread back taste. It is creamy with a suggestion of minerals. It has a generally smooth finish with a bit of a spice note that is very short lived. This is a very good premium tasting vodka that is actually better than some super premiums out there. The final point that won me over was the incredible price of $9.99 per 750 ml, and $18.99 for a liter. You have got to be kidding me! Theyâ€™re practically giving the stuff away. At less than 1/3 the cost of Grey Goose and only the tiniest little difference in taste, if youâ€™re looking to save money without lowering your standards, then this is definitely the way to go.

On to the orange flavored Vodca Exclusiv. My spidey senses were in overdrive. The nose, at first, is a bit off-putting in that it seems too acidic, to bright and almost chemical in nature. A second longer whiff brings out a bit of something that could be called orange but more than likely a distant cousin or maybe a Mandarin Orange of some sort but certainly harvested well before it was mature. The hint of orange I perceived in the nose seems to lose its way on my tongue and is replaced by what I can only describe as pure citric acid. The flavor of orange is muted and pushed deeply into the cellar only to slowly struggle, stumbling back up the stairs, but it continues to be dominated by the acid. The finish is sharp and leaves me wondering if I had just tasted a bad batch of Tang. As a footnote, a good batch of Tang, in the latest newest formulation contains the artificial sweeteners Sucralose, acesulfame potassium, and Neotame not to mention citric acid, ho2cch2c(oh)(co2h)ch2co2h, calcium phosphate, potassium citrate, orange juice solids, (whatever in the hell those might be), ascorbic acid, alpha tocopherol acetate, niacinamide, and your good old everyday butylated hyrdoxyanisole. Iâ€™m not saying any of that crap is in this vodka, but if I were you, Iâ€™d stick with the unflavored Vodca Exclusiv.

On to the Raspberry, my spidey senses seem to have overloaded and blown a fuse and now are either not working or telling me not to worry as much. The nose has no acid and no ethanol up front and is fruity and creamy and actually reminds me ever so gently of raspberries â€“ go figure. I had the rare privilege of going to a strawberry and raspberry farm several years ago and hand picking a half dozen baskets that I took home and made raspberry jam. Okay so Iâ€™m lying, actually it wasnâ€™t me b

my girlfriend of the moment who knew how to perform this culinary miracle. However, I didnâ€™t just stand there and watch her work. I helped. I opened the bottle of wine.

On the palate there is again the suggestion of raspberries but it seems to be dominated by notes that are way too bright and acidic. Surprisingly it has a smooth finish almost reminiscent of the unflavored vodka but leaves the tongue tingling far too long. This one is much closer to good but still no cigar. Again stick with the unflavored Vodca Exclusiv. I think that if these Moldovan mad scientist/distillers, high up in the Carpathian Mountains, experimented a bit more they just might get it right. After all, they have an excellent base vodka to begin with.

Enjoy this all the varieties of Vodca Exclusiv with these cocktail recipes.

By George Brozowski

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