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Organic Ocean Vodka – Almost too Good to be True

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In late April 2013, with much Hawaiian- style fanfare that welcomed 700 people with tours and parties over four days, the Ocean Vodka family Smith, parents Kyle and Kiana (Diana), son Shay, his brother Sye, and other ohana (family) opened their Ocean Vodka Distillery on the slopes of Haleakala in Kula, Maui on 80 acres.

By Michelle M. Winner



Ocean Vodka is purely distilled from deep Big Island sea water and organic sugar cane.

With the key manufacturing process in place now the Ocean Vodka Organic Farm & Distillery gives the Smiths control over all the processes that go into creating their organic, gluten- free, sugar-cane based spirit. Since the brand was conceived in 2005 as a “product that had a long shelf life, was organic, made from island ingredients, a family endeavor and something we could be proud of “ as Shay Smith says, Ocean Vodka has moved from concept, sourcing, testing, production, marketing, distribution and now distillation. Shay also mentions the challenge of finding a suitable property with a larger

parcel of land that had not been ravaged by plantation production mentality including chemicals and soil degrading practices over the years, land that could be able to be certified 100% USDA organic. “This farm is our own land. In addition to sugar cane, we can also grow different things here that we can build into different spirits products,” Smith notes of his idea to try corn spirits and produce a rum in the future. But for now the it is sugar cane growing(non-GMO of course) and being and harvested on their 80 acre farm and being distilled into beautiful blue bottles that are at least 60% recycled glass, right here in Kula.

The ocean water for the vodka is sourced from 3,000 feet below the Kona coast of the Big Island via the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawai`I Authority (NELHA) and is used in their state-of-the-art continuous column distillation process which is the equivalent of single pot distilled a hundred times over. Some say the minerality of this sea water rich with calcium, magnesium, potassium that creates a unique profile, others say it just tastes “ clean.”

One other feel good fact, as if this pure, smooth vodka is not enough; the Smith family of surfers and water-babies all love the ocean. They support many ocean foundations and causes through sponsorship and participating in fundraisers in the islands and beyond. At the next fundraiser near you, for The Ocean Institute, Oceana, The Ocean Foundation, Reef Check, The Surfrider Foundation or Save our Seas look for Ocean Vodka’s banner with their motto: “ One World, One Ocean, One Vodka.’

Ocean Vodka is available in many countries, in the air on Hawaiian Air and hotels where finer spirits are sold. Learn about Ocean Vodka Farm & Distillery tours at oceanvodka.com. (There is a schedule, a charge and reservations).

Go to the HC recipe section for a refreshing Ocean Vodka cocktail: Ocean Lemon Lavender Blossom.



Michelle M. Winner

Michelle was born with bags packed and a fork in her hand. As a culinary travel writer and confirmed foodophile she delights in the discovery of new flavor profiles, spices, salts and herbs. Based in one of the world's foodie meccas; Portland, Oregon, not far from Pinot Noir heaven, she shares food news and chef's recipes. Her photography has appeared in Saveur Magazine and her column Culinary Traveler is a feature in the Epoch Times in NYC, LAX, SFO, and D.C. markets. Her work has appeared in Forbes online, WSJ online, Business Insider and Condé Nast Digital Media. As President of The International Food Wine & Travel Writers Assoc. and a confirmed globetrotter; she still keeps her bags packed and fork in hand (well . . . except through airport security.)

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