



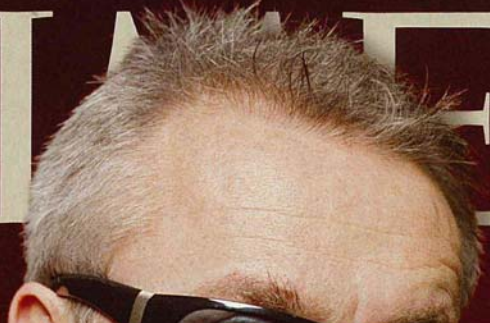
Out of Nowhere:  
America Meets  
Sarah Palin

Can Europe Do  
Anything to  
Rein in Russia?



A Computer  
Game That Lets  
You Play God

# TIME



## Artist As Rock Star



**GRAPEVINE**

### That's the Spirit. The best vodkas are full of flavor, so sip them straight

VODKA IS THE WORLD'S MOST popular spirit, but its rich potential for natural taste is also the least appreciated. In the West, distillers filter the hooch heavily to create a neutral liquor that adds an undetectable kick to your Moscow mule or bloody Mary. But in vodka's homelands, Poland and Russia, distillers follow a different philosophy. Their brews retain the character of the original ingredients, which can include anything organic and fermentable, from potatoes to grain to beets. And although these artisan vodkas are best drunk neat and chilled, some connoisseurs suggest sampling the spirit in a wine glass at room temperature. This allows the vodka to aerate and, when it hits your tongue, reveal its true flavor. If you feel a burning or tingling in your mouth, then you're drinking the cheap stuff. A good vodka will create a warming sensation that gradually spreads through your body. So put away the soda water and tomato juice—these vodkas deserve the glass to themselves.

—BY THEUNIS BATES



**CHOPIN**

Call it alcohol alchemy. This talented firm of Polish distillers has perfected the art of transmuting the humble potato into a super-smooth and creamy drink. It's an excellent body warmer, ideal for downing after a day on the ski slopes. (\$60; [www.chopinvodka.com](http://www.chopinvodka.com))



**POTOCKI WODKA**

First produced by the aristocratic Potocki family in 1816, this is a liquor with a legacy. Made from Polish rye, it's distilled only twice and is unfiltered, letting it keep its nutty aroma and robust, chocolatey taste. (\$60; [www.potockivodka.com](http://www.potockivodka.com))



**JEWEL OF RUSSIA ULTRA**

Don't be fooled by the imposing packaging—this Russian wheat vodka is surprisingly delicate. Any impurities are removed during a five-stage process in which the spirit is filtered through charcoaled peach and apricot pits. (\$120; [www.jewelofrussia.com](http://www.jewelofrussia.com))



**BELVEDERE**

The hip-hop star's vodka of choice: both Jay-Z and Missy Elliott like to big up this silky Polish brew. Made from a single type of grain—Dankowskie gold rye—and water from the distillery's own wells, this slightly sweet spirit makes a perfect vodka martini. (\$50; [www.belvedere-vodka.com](http://www.belvedere-vodka.com))



**AMUSE-BOUCHE**

### Green Cuisine



ILLUSTRATION BY REBECCA BRADLEY

IN OUR QUEST FOR A GREENER PLANET, THE smallest details can make a big difference. It's not just how the food we eat is grown that matters, but how it's packaged, how it gets to our plates, even what we do with the leftovers. Just ask chef Arthur Potts Dawson. In 2006, he and business partner Jamie Grainger-Smith launched Acorn House and declared it London's first truly eco-friendly restaurant. Two years on, the award-winning team has pushed the city's eco-friendly standards to the next level with Water House Restaurant on the Regent's Canal.

"We're sort of a green petri dish," says Potts Dawson of his latest venture. "We're learning every

step of the way." They use the ambient temperature of the canal water, via a high-tech pump, to heat and cool the Water House. Roof-mounted solar panels provide the hot water, a wormery reduces food waste, and the restaurant filters its own "premium" bottled water on site. The menu, of course, is seasonal, all-organic and sourced as locally as possible; dishes include ravioli of sustainable salt cod with truffle oil, and roast rabbit with saffron couscous and honey.

But are fine diners really ready to swap their foie gras for eco-ethics? "Everything comes with a price," says Potts Dawson, who wants to lead by example. "Consumption is at a level now where restaurants need to stand up and be counted." Sure, ethical dining might leave a dent in your wallet, but it could ease the burden on your conscience. [www.waterhouserestaurant.co.uk](http://www.waterhouserestaurant.co.uk) —BY YASMIN HUDA