

Spring Blooms with NEW WHITE BLOSSOM Vodka

NEW MICHIGAN PRODUCT ANNOUNCED

BY DIANNA STAMPFLER

Spring is a season of awakenings in Michigan – where April showers bring May flowers and May flowers are infused into dazzling artisan spirits like the new White Blossom from Valentine Vodka.

“I like to push the envelope and I always look for unique ingredients and flavors to work with, specifically those from Michigan,” says Rifino Valentine, micro-distiller and owner of Valentine Vodka in Ferndale.

“I actually discovered the elderflower flavor while traveling through Europe. There, it’s often used as an herbal remedy to boost the immune system – it’s one of those natural products that mass-produced vodka distilleries are too afraid to touch.”

Elderflower, with its floral nose and beautiful, unique flavor, was the perfect fit. Also called “sambucus nigra” elderflowers are in season from the end of May to the beginning of June, alongside many other spring blooms like dogwood, or cherry and apple blossoms.

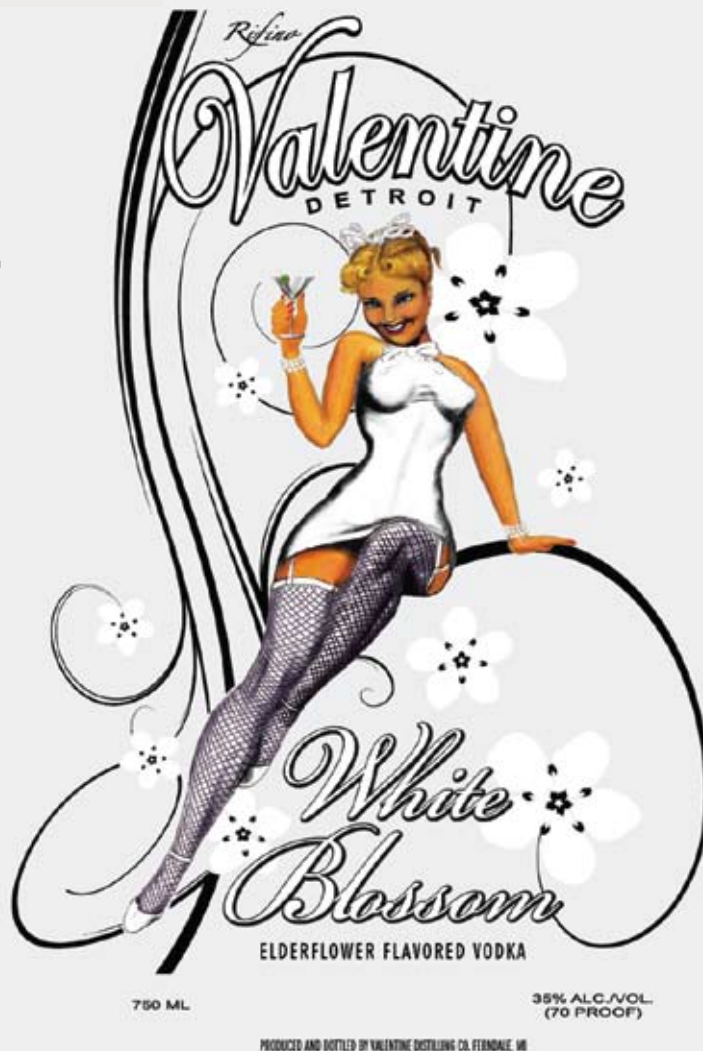
The leaves of the Elderberry plant are feather-like, with 5–9 leaflets and large clusters of small white or cream-colored flowers that bloom in the late spring. The flower heads, which are commonly used in infusions because of their fragrant aroma and distinct flavor, are best collected and used fresh, when the tiny buds have just opened and come to bloom.

“To craft this exquisitely unique flavor, I start with my own vodka,” Rifino says. Valentine Vodka is made of a proprietary blend of red Michigan wheat, two-row malted barley and corn, which all comes directly from Michigan famers and suppliers. “Then, I carefully blend natural elderflower blossoms, with a touch of grapefruit and 100 percent Michigan beet sugar, as a delicate sweetener.”

“White Blossom screams different and made-from-scratch, just like the rest of the Valentine brand,” says Jim Schramm, Manager & Maitre d’ of Tre Cugini in Grand Rapids.

The nose of White Blossom is simple and refreshing, like a bouquet of wildflowers picked on a warm spring Michigan afternoon. While the elderflower scent is predominant, there are hints of citrus rolled in sweet, velvety honey that finishes soft and clean. It’s perfectly delightful served on the rocks, or with a splash of natural juices or mixers for a variety of Michigan-themed infusions and signature cocktails.

White Blossom is currently available exclusively at Valentine Vodka’s Ferndale cocktail bar and will hit retail shelves in the spring of 2012. □



WHITE BLOSSOM RECIPES

Courtesy Nick Brancaleone

Pink Blossom

White Blossom Vodka
Splash of cranberry
Soda
Squeeze of lime

Blossom Grapefruit Press

White Blossom Vodka
Fresh squeezed grapefruit juice
Splash cranberry

The Lime Pinch

White Blossom Vodka
Squeeze of lime