

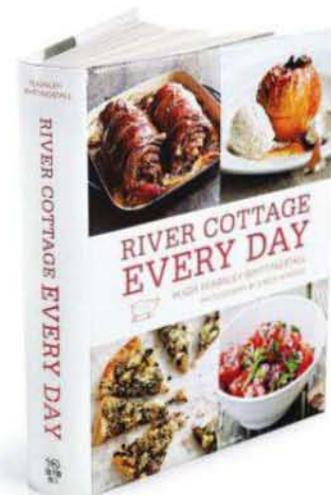
Clear Choice

I've never been a vodka drinker. Distilled multiple times and typically filtered, the colorless spirit is also fairly odorless and tasteless. So when SAVEUR.COM asked me to do a tasting of new American vodkas, I wasn't expecting a thrill. I should have known better; inspired by local food movements, craft distilling is exploding in the U.S. Along with American whiskeys and other spirits, distillers are creating all sorts of artisanal vodkas. At Manhattan's French Culinary Institute, where I run the beverage program, we sampled about 30 vodkas. I was struck by their diversity. There were vodkas made with grapes, blue corn, maple sap—local ingredients that spoke of where they'd been distilled. Then I was floored by the flavors: creamy, citrusy, spicy. I started mixing. I blended cider and celery bitters with a vodka from Oregon's Organic Nation; I added buttery **Vermont Gold Vodka** to a Kahlua and cream; and I used a clean, peppery vodka from Georgia's 13th Colony Distillers in this riff on one of James Bond's favorite drinks. 🍸 *Hibiscus Rose Vesper* Combine 3 oz. dry gin (such as Tanqueray), 1 oz. vodka (preferably Plantation), ½ oz. Lillet Blanc, and three dashes hibiscus rose bitters in a cocktail shaker, add ice, and cover. Shake until chilled, and then strain into a chilled martini glass. Makes one cocktail. —Alexis Kahn



For more drinks made with craft American vodka, one of the spirits in the hibiscus rose vesper (shown), visit our website, SAVEUR.COM, where you'll find over 15 years of [SAVEUR](http://SAVEUR.COM)-tested cocktail recipes.

TODD COLEMAN (3)



Book Review

Home Truths

An author of books for serious cooks pens a crowd-pleaser

THE PAST FEW years have delivered a library's worth of "quick-easy-thrifty" cookbooks. Global economic crisis will do that, and from Britain, where pulling your socks up in the face of austerity is a matter of patriotic pride, we have new books in this vein by Jamie Oliver (*Jamie's 30-Minute Meals*; Michael Joseph Ltd.), Nigella Lawson (*Nigella Kitchen: Recipes from the Heart of the Home*; Hyperion), and even the late Elizabeth David (*At Elizabeth David's Table: Her Very Best Everyday Recipes*; Ecco). A surprising one is *River Cottage Every Day*, an accessible collection of recipes from the farmer-cook Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, out this month in an American edition from Ten Speed Press.

Compare, for instance, Fearnley-Whittingstall's *River Cottage Meat Book* (Ten Speed Press, 2007), which opens with a photo essay depicting the slaughter, skinning, and sawing in half of a cow. The message: if you don't take the matter of where your food comes from seriously, this book isn't for you. *River Cottage Every Day*, by contrast, begins with a photo of the author scarfing honey-smeared bread and an introduction in which he confesses that as a child he refused to eat anything that