

Vodka And Charity - The Purrfect Christmas Party Tipple!

Monday 1 December, 2014

Snow Leopard Spotted

Unique vodka now available nationally – aims to raise a million dollars annually for snow leopards

Snow Leopard vodka was created by a passionate conservationist determined to save these critically endangered big cats.

Stephen Sparrow, an ex-drinks industry expert, heard about the snow leopard's plight during a trip to the Himalayas. Shocked at learning there were less than 5,000 left in the wild, he came back and founded the Snow Leopard Trust UK – and then created this super-premium vodka to help fund its projects. Stephen has set a global goal to raise a million dollars annually for snow leopard conservation by 2025. That's the figure the President of the Snow Leopard Trust has advised could provide the 'step change' to remove the animal from the endangered list. This goal has been helped by the vodka **recently gaining national distribution in Waitrose**.

With 15% of the vodka's profit going direct to the Snow Leopard Trust, funds are provided to community-based conservation projects. These range from replacing farmers' livestock that might be taken by snow leopards; through to helping educate herders' children and training for adults in spinning wool and handicrafts for extra income. Supporting these projects helps educate the local communities and fosters a positive attitude towards the snow leopard.

Snow Leopard vodka is crafted in small batches at the century old Polish distillery, 'Polmos Lubin', using natural spring water drawn from an ancient well in its grounds. Overseen by master distiller Joanna Dawidowicz, the unusual process involves six distillations to deliver a unique purity. **The vodka is also made from spelt grain** - the rare and expensive variety of wheat affectionately known as the 'grandfather of all grains'. First farmed by the Egyptians over 5,000 years ago, spelt has a distinctive and delicious nutty, slightly sweet, taste. Unlike other grains, it has a hard husk which protects it from pollutants and insects, meaning growers can *avoid using any pesticides or fertilisers*. This eco-friendly grain's scarcity – and the need to remove its husk - means spelt is typically five times more expensive than grains used in other vodkas.

The final stage of distillation involves Snow Leopard being filtered twice over charcoal. The entire artisanal approach results in a pure vodka with a **smooth, creamy clean finish and a distinctive nutty flavour**. Snow Leopard is now being recognised for its quality, winning a gold medal at this year's world renowned International Spirits Challenge. £36.00 RRP for a 70cl bottle and available at Waitrose, Harvey Nichols and Ocado.com, as well as all good independent drinks retailers. Snowleopardtrustuk.org / snowleopardvodka.co.uk

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