



SLOOP BETTY

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BLACKWATER DISTILLING RELEASES EASTERN SHORE'S FIRST VODKA SINCE PROHIBITION

Maryland's first distillery in nearly 40 years set to contribute to explosive growth of super-premium spirits market

Stevensville, Md. – March 28, 2011 – Blackwater Distilling™, Inc. today announced the launch of its flagship spirit, Sloop Betty vodka, a wheat- and sugar cane-based craft product. Part of an elite group of just 200 craft distilleries in the entire country, Blackwater Distilling is Maryland's first federally and state-licensed beverage alcohol distillery in more than three decades. The initial distribution area for its spirits covers Maryland, Delaware and the District of Columbia.

Sloop Betty, the fictional pinup character that graces every bottle, is a hot addition to the local distilled spirits scene. Crafted on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Sloop Betty's got the goods...in more ways than one.

"Betty is more than a pretty face," said Christopher Cook, CEO of Blackwater Distilling. **"In 2005, after coming across an archive of long-forgotten spirits, my brother, Jon, and I have made it our passion to hand craft spirits made from Maryland-sourced and other select ingredients."**

Though widespread distribution is set to launch April 1, Sloop Betty vodka has already been spotted on select restaurant and store shelves, such as Baltimore's Woodberry Kitchen and Kooper's Tavern. Initial supplies are limited; remember to ask for Sloop Betty by name at bars, restaurants and stores offering fine spirits. Though price will vary at individual retail outlets, Sloop Betty will be available for around \$32.

"Over the past five years, we've perfected the recipe for a smooth and balanced wheat- and sugar cane-based vodka," said Jon Cook, Blackwater Distilling's COO, who developed the company's production and quality assurance process. **"We use exceptional raw sources of wheat and sugar cane to craft Sloop Betty because that combination yields the cleanest, balanced spirit of the highest quality. Our proprietary process weeds out undesirable elements, such as burn from the wheat and excess sweetness from the cane."**

Superior taste is just one factor that distinguishes Sloop Betty. Maintaining the integrity of the land from which products are crafted is a cornerstone of Blackwater Distilling's values. Dubbed the "Everglades of the North," the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge that is the distilling company's namesake will receive a percentage of proceeds through the organization Friends of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge.

Vodka, the nation's most popular spirit, makes up more than 24 percent of sales volume in Maryland and Washington, D.C., or approximately 1.2 million 9-liter cases. About 300,000 of those cases are super-premium, and sales of such quality spirits grew an impressive 90% from 2003 to 2009, according to data from the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS). Statistics from the *Beverage Journal* show that vodka overall grew by nearly 5 percent last year, and premium vodkas, like Sloop Betty, grew 12 percent.



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Based on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Blackwater Distilling™, Inc. handcrafts super-premium spirits, such as its flagship product, Sloop Betty vodka. Made of the finest ingredients, Sloop Betty is best served over ice or in a glass neat. Any way she's poured, we encourage adults to savor Sloop Betty and enjoy our products responsibly. Learn more about the company at www.SloopBetty.com and follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@sloopbetty).