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The 19.99% solution

With a ban on hard liquor above 20% now in force, it's time for Czech ingenuity to take over. Nowhere in the world, as far as we can tell, has such an arbitrary cap been put on the allowed alcohol content. A new product category at 19.99% is now ripe for the picking. There was already a tendency in the country for alcohol levels to decline as a way to save on the excise tax and to reduce the retail price, but 19.99% is much too low for a decent vodka or Czech rum (which are usually 40% and 37.5%, respectively). Instead, it's up to clever spirits makers to produce and promote a 19.99% slivovice or vodka that Czechs can fortify at home through freeze distillation. You stick the booze in the freezer in an appropriate vessel, bring it to the freezing point of water, and then add an ice cube or two to capture water crystals. What is left behind is then more potent than the original product. Marketed properly, it could perhaps be more popular than the current rage, flavored beer. Of course a catchy name would be needed. How about Kalouskovice?

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