AWARDS SPECIAL

gin

ISSUE 10

MORE THAN 150 WINNERS REVEALED INSIDE

WORLD GIN AWARDS 2020

WINNERS INCLUDE

Ableforth's
Basilisk
Bergslagens
Copper Republic
Cruxland
Gospel Spirits
Hayman's
Hout Bay Harbour
Lubuski
Marylebone
Salcombe Gin
Seven Crofts
Sky Wave Gin
Twisted Nose

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EDITOR'S WORD
ANTHONY DENNY

THE UNITED NATIONS OF GIN

Amid political upheaval, gin stands strong

So here we are: new year, new decade, new geo-political landscape. Wherever you're reading this, it shouldn't have gone unnoticed that some things have changed in the last couple of months. Not least in the UK.

That said, a fair few things have remained the same: there's still a blond mop-top in charge in both Downing Street and the White House, a Swedish teenager is still making herself heard on a Friday for the sake of the planet and gin is still making waves throughout the bars of the world.

As this is our awards issue, we have a perfect excuse to celebrate all that is good in gin and to shout about those products, people and places that have wowed us, whether we're the ginerati or consumers.

There's a temptation to fret about the impact that some of the upheaval will have on the international love affair with the spirit, particularly with the recognition of Britain as its "home" (if not, arguably, its birthplace). There's even quite grown-up talk of "peak gin" having been reached, but I don't buy that.

The relentless speed of development of gin has meant that we are still being baby-showered with innumerable gin goodies.

Distillers large and small have experimented with botanicals, with production techniques, with the base spirit (hats off, as Alice suggests on page 18, to the not-so-straight-laced older sibling vodka). Indeed, these two extremes of the spectrum feed happily off each other: while the volume producers have the budgets to keep the consumers' appetite sated, the in-the-garage craft producers bring their gutsy "what if" approach to the game and add to our joy of discovery.

Perhaps us early adopters in the UK have started, subtly, to see what else we can tantalise our taste buds with and other cocktails and spirits are beginning to find their way onto our bar bills. But because gin so gloriously transcends borders, the word has got out.

> Whatever colour our passports are, we can all claim to be citizens of the world of gin

What we are now witnessing is the start of a strong global gin boom. You only have to look at the winners and shortlisters in the World Gin Awards in the back pages to realise that Britain has been joined by a United Nations of Gin. Australia is adding to its wine and whisky with some fantastic gins, South Africa is loving gin like it's never been loved before, the USA has woken up to the spirit and is distilling with alacrity and admirable derring-do, our friends in Sweden have been lavishing their supreme offerings on us for years, and now Brazil has arrived at the party bringing, let's face it, possibly the world's biggest choice of botanicals.

After glorifying the global nature of gin like that, it would be a tad disingenuous not to write about it in this issue. So we have sent Blair and Davin to the foothills of the Rockies in Canada to learn about the prolific output of the Last Best Distillery, our US contributor Aaron went to California to dig deeper into the pioneering past of the now Ryan Reynolds-fronted Aviation Gin, and we meet one of the surprising number of gin makers on Mallorca. Thijs has once again sent news from the genever producers in Europe and Virginia has searched New York for the finest gin joints. Kayleigh also reports on new and exciting gins emanating from Venezuela and Hong Kong. And closer to home, we learn that the world's biggest gin exporter, Bombay Sapphire, is immeasurably greener than its bottle suggests. David T. Smith, in the meantime, has gathered some friends together to look ahead at what the rest of the year will bring us in the realms of the junipered spirit.

So whatever colour our passports are, we can all claim to be citizens of the world of gin. Finally, of course we couldn't publish without sharing well over 20 gin tastings, which, with bottles from France, Germany, Iceland and Taiwan joining the panoply of nations already represented in this issue, demonstrate how multinational the spirit really is.

gin

Gin is published by Paragraph Publishing Ltd
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Annual subscription rates are UK £23.80
Europe £23.95 US/Can £26.88 ROW £27.28
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Subscribe by post to:
Gin, Intermedia, Unit 6 The Enterprise Centre,
Kelvin Lane, Manor Royal, Crawley, RH10 9PE
Subscription enquiries: *ginmag@subscriptionhelpline.co.uk*
Distributed by Seymour

Gin is published four times a year
(February, May, August & November)

Paragraph Publishing is a member of the Professional Publishers Association.

ISSN 2515-1177

Paragraph Publishing abides by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) rules and regulations as detailed in 'The Editor's Code of Practice'. To make a formal complaint about any editorial content, please contact *editorial@paragraphpublishing.com* or write to us at the address above. If you are not satisfied with our response, you may appeal to IPSO at www.ipso.co.uk

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SCOTLAND OFFICE
Forth House, 28 Rutland Square,
Edinburgh, EH1 2BW, UK

Printed in England by Page Bros, Norwich

Cover image: World Gin Awards 2020 winning bottles

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Gin Live returns for round two

One of the UK's biggest gin tasting events is returning to London.

Continuing on from its successful debut in 2019, producers from the four corners of the globe will be gathering to showcase their gins – you'll be able to sample some of the very best gins available and find out just how innovative makers of this wonderful spirit have been. This year the event will also feature a series of special masterclasses with gin experts, including Warner's and Edinburgh Gin. This international gin experience is not to be missed.

Gin Live will be taking place once again in its own dedicated marquee in the grounds of the historic Honourable Artillery Company (HAC) from 5pm on Friday 27 and from 12pm on Saturday 28 March. This historic 18th century building, set in its own six-acre garden yet just a short walk from Moorgate and Liverpool Street stations, provides a truly memorable backdrop in which to enjoy these exciting gins.

Tickets for Gin Live include unlimited pourings and a two-course meal. The gin masterclass tickets also bring additional benefits. Ticket holders will also have late access to Whisky Live, housed inside the HAC, just 10 steps from the Gin Live marquee, and they'll receive unlimited pourings of our whisky selection. This event is brought to you by our sister publication Whisky Magazine.

For more information visit *www.gin-live.com.*





Kent distillery records record visitor numbers

The maker of Dockyard Gin, Copper Rivet Distillery, has revealed bumper visitor numbers for 2019.

More than 10,000 people visited the distillery in Chatham, Kent last year, with at least 8,000 guests on pre-booked tours and 2,000 attending events or eating at its 70-seat delicatessen.

The distillery opened in 2016 in a former Victorian pumping station on the River Medway. A new waterside decking area was unveiled in 2019 and further updates are planned for 2020 as visitor numbers continue to rise.

Stephen Russell, co-founder of Copper Rivet Distillery, said: "Our distillery stands like a cathedral of the seas, with water on both sides. We were so lucky to find such a stunning building. It has loads of space, free visitor parking and, as half of the building is our own delicatessen and eatery, we are offering visitors a really memorable day out."



Copper Rivet's spirits portfolio includes Dockyard Gin, Vela Vodka and Son of a Gun English Spirit. Its products are on sale in Harrods and Selfridges in London and in on- and off-trade venues across Kent, including Waitrose branches, independent retailers, bars and restaurants.

Scottish distiller breaks into US market



Scottish gin brand Porter's has launched in its 11th export market as its products went on sale in America.

Working with New York City-based import and distribution partner, Domaine Select Wine and Spirits, the company will bring its Modern Classic and Tropical Old Tom gins to the on-trade and off-trade markets in the US.

The brand has already enjoyed international success since its launch in 2016, distributing to territories including China and France.

The founders of Porter's, Ben Iravani, Alex Lawrence and Josh Rennie, began making gin after turning the basement of their bar in Aberdeen into a micro-distillery. They use low-temperature distilling, which they say produces gin with a lighter, fresher flavour.

Ben said: "The USA is an important global market that we've been working towards for a very long time. We're looking forward to growing our business here with some of the world's leading cocktail bars and bartenders. We're really pleased to be working with Domaine Select and are hopeful that this is the start of a successful long-term partnership."

Hill Flynn, president at Domaine Select Wines and Spirits, added: "The Porter's Gin products are truly a pair of game-changing entries in the category."

>>

Silent Pool installs refill station for gin fans

Are you a fan of English gin Silent Pool? Are you also looking to reduce your environmental footprint? A new innovation by the producer could help.

Silent Pool has installed a refill station at its distillery in Albury, Surrey in response to requests from customers wanting to reuse their bottles.

The refill machine started life as a 50-litre still dragon, used during the development stage of Silent Pool. After several months of tinkering and testing, the team re-engineered the still to dispense gin in perfect 70cl servings.

The dragon is housed in the Silent Pool distillery shop; customers simply need to bring in their empty Silent Pool gin bottle and speak to a member of staff, who can put their bottle in position on the dragon for refilling.

Silent Pool is offering a financial incentive for customers to take this sustainable option – the cost of a refill is £33.30, a 10 per cent reduction on the price of a new bottle. The producer will also donate 50p per refill to the Silent Pool and Woodland Maintenance Fund.



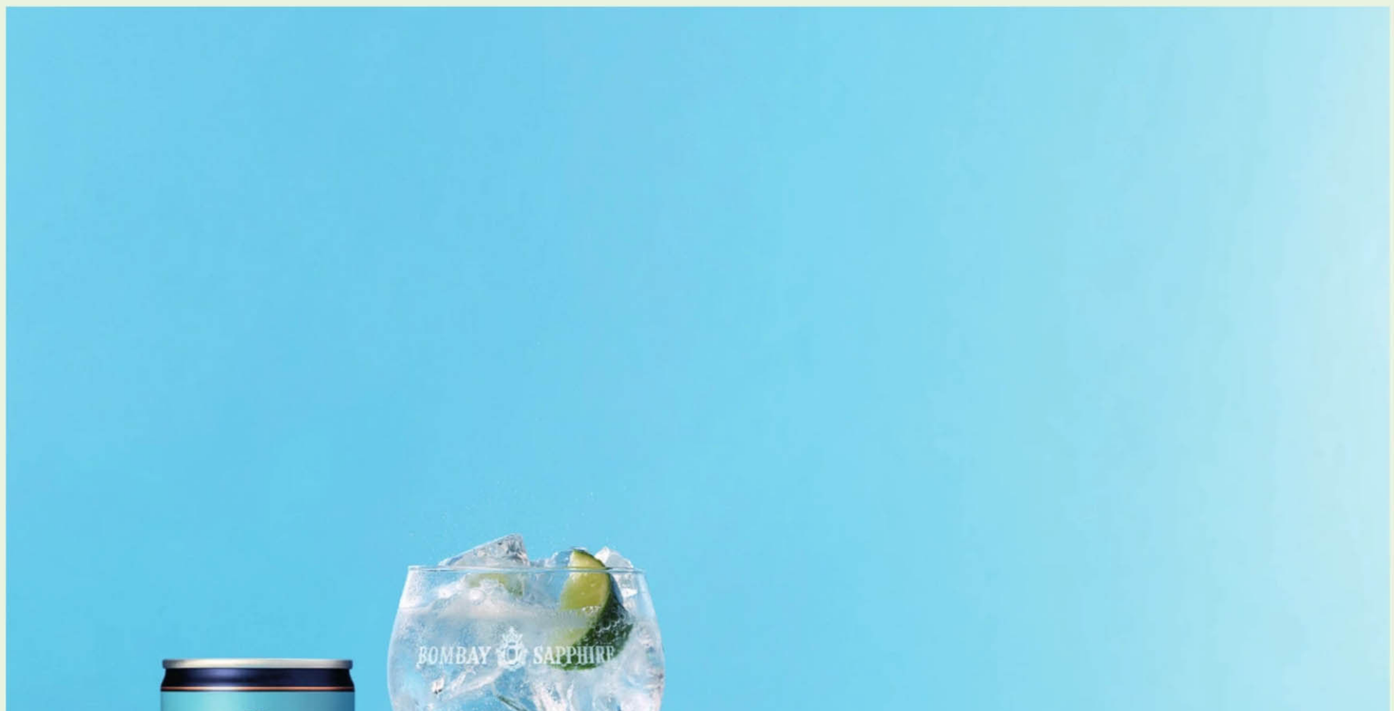
Bombay Sapphire joins ‘ready-to-drink’ market with new product

Bombay Sapphire is poised to take its first slice of the ready-to-drink (RTD) market with the launch of a new product.

Bombay Sapphire and Tonic comprises a serve of the premium vapour-infused gin and mixer. The beverage, which comes in at 6.5% ABV, is sold in 250ml cans which are 100-per-cent recyclable.

Its first stockist will be Ocado, where it is available for £2.80 per can, followed by other UK supermarkets and convenience stores in the summer.

Studies have revealed RTD was the fastest-growing category in the UK alcohol market in 2019, driven by demand from busy consumers for whom convenience is king.





New pink expression from Dutch distiller

The maker of Gin 1689 has announced a pink addition to its range – the first pink gin from a Dutch distiller.

The Queen Mary Edition is designed to reflect the creation of the world’s first pink gin, made in the 17th century after mixing the spirit with bruised strawberries and raspberries.

Alexander Janssens and Patrick van der Peet, founders of the Amsterdam Craft Gin Company, based Gin 1689 on a recipe from the time of King William III and Queen Mary II which was discovered in the British Library archives.

Like the original expression, the Queen Mary Edition is a classic gin with botanicals such as dried quince, lemon and orange peel, nutmeg, aniseed and clove. The addition of strawberries and raspberries gives the spirit a rosy hue and a fruity nose.

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CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
DAVID T. SMITH

GIN MEDIUM-RARE

Getting a taste for 'meaty' gins

The beginning of the year is home to Veganuary, an event that encourages people to try a vegan diet for a month. As part of this, an increasing number of food outlets have been creating vegan-friendly versions of popular dishes, whether that's a Gregg's sausage roll or Subway's "Meatless Meatball Marinara" sub.

Given this trend, it is perhaps surprising that a small but growing number of gins have decided to indulge their carnivorous side and release spirits made using animal products. Some of these inclusions are more obvious than others. White sugar, used to sweeten some gin and liqueurs, often uses bone char from cattle bones as a decolourising filter. Red colouring in drinks often comes from the dye carmine or cochineal (also known as e120), which is made from the crushed scales of insects. It is worth noting that Campari decided to use an alternative source of dye back in 2006, although oddly there is a suggestion that it may still be used for Campari in Sweden.

The first spirit made using meat as a botanical that I tried was a leaf-cutter ant distillate at a bar in Leicester Square. It tasted oily and slightly peppery, reminiscent of cubeb berries or grains of paradise. Since then half a dozen ant gins have been released, most notably Anty Gin from Cambridge Distillery, which is made using wood ants and costs around £200 a bottle. Adelaide Hills of Australia makes a Green Ant Gin that actually includes some ants in the bottle à la the mezcal worm. This led to some raised eyebrows when I served it at a blind tasting, especially as I prefaced it with the query, "Before I pour the next glass, is anyone vegetarian?"

Ants and crushed bugs are one thing, but what about gins that are even more meaty? In 2017, Portobello Road released its limited-edition Distiller's Cut No. 3 Pechuga Gin, taking inspiration from the mezcal practise of placing a piece of meat in the still during distillation.

> "Having tried many of these meaty gins, I was struck by how subtle the inclusion of meat is"

As for more "prime cuts" of meat, there was an almost mythical gin by Monkey 47 – Meat Gin – produced exclusively for subscribers of the German publication Beef! Magazine. Monkey 47 also made a gin that was washed in Kobe beef fat as part of a recent experimental series. Butcher's Gin from Belgium was produced in conjunction with luxury meat emporium De Laet and Van Haven and is based on the mix of herbs and spices (botanicals) used to make its acclaimed Secreto No. 7 dry-aged beef. A little of the beef is also thrown into the still for good measure.

There are also a number of gins made using shellfish. Lobstar, created by chef Kristof Marrannes, is a combination of gin and spirit in which a lobster has marinated, which helps bring out "sweet, briny aromas and flavours". Last year a collaboration between Gin Foundry and South Western Distillery, Treth Ha Mog, also featured lobster that had been cooked on a beach barbecue. Oyster is another popular crustacean; it has been used by Hardware Distilling in Washington State, Oakland Spirits in California and the Wright Brothers in the UK.

Having tried many of these meaty gins, I was struck by how subtle the inclusion of meat is. It is primarily about creating a richer, thicker texture rather than the gin's flavour and, with the high price tags often involved, some may ask, "Why bother?" In part this is because, in an ever-competitive gin market, this sort of innovation captures the world's attention and helps to promote a gin's overall brand. It did, however, leave me wondering about the potential for exploring meaty flavours in gin and with the help of a distiller friend I set about designing some of my own.

First up was smoked salmon. This was not a great success; even though it was paired with dill as a botanical, the result was rather unpleasant and glue-like in flavour. My second attempt used a bone-in sirloin steak. The resulting gin had distinctive aromas of meat and bone marrow and a particularly oily texture. Finally, we tried a venison gin. This was undisputedly the best of the three; the game flavours of the meat were well-captured in the gin and complemented the other botanicals.

2020

Visions in juniper

2020 looks to be another big year for gin, but what exactly does the future have in store? We spoke to experts from around the world to get their take. >>

2020



BERNADETTE PAMPLIN
Spirits judge and writer
@undertheginfluence

"2020 is shaping up to be an exciting year for gin. I believe there are trends from last year that will continue to grow in popularity, such as low/no ABV spirits. Sustainability is another recent buzzword that will continue to evolve as distillers make their processes more sustainable. This necessary rethink will hopefully lead to wonderfully creative ideas for methods and flavour profiles."



AARON KNOLL
Author and gin specialist
@theginisin

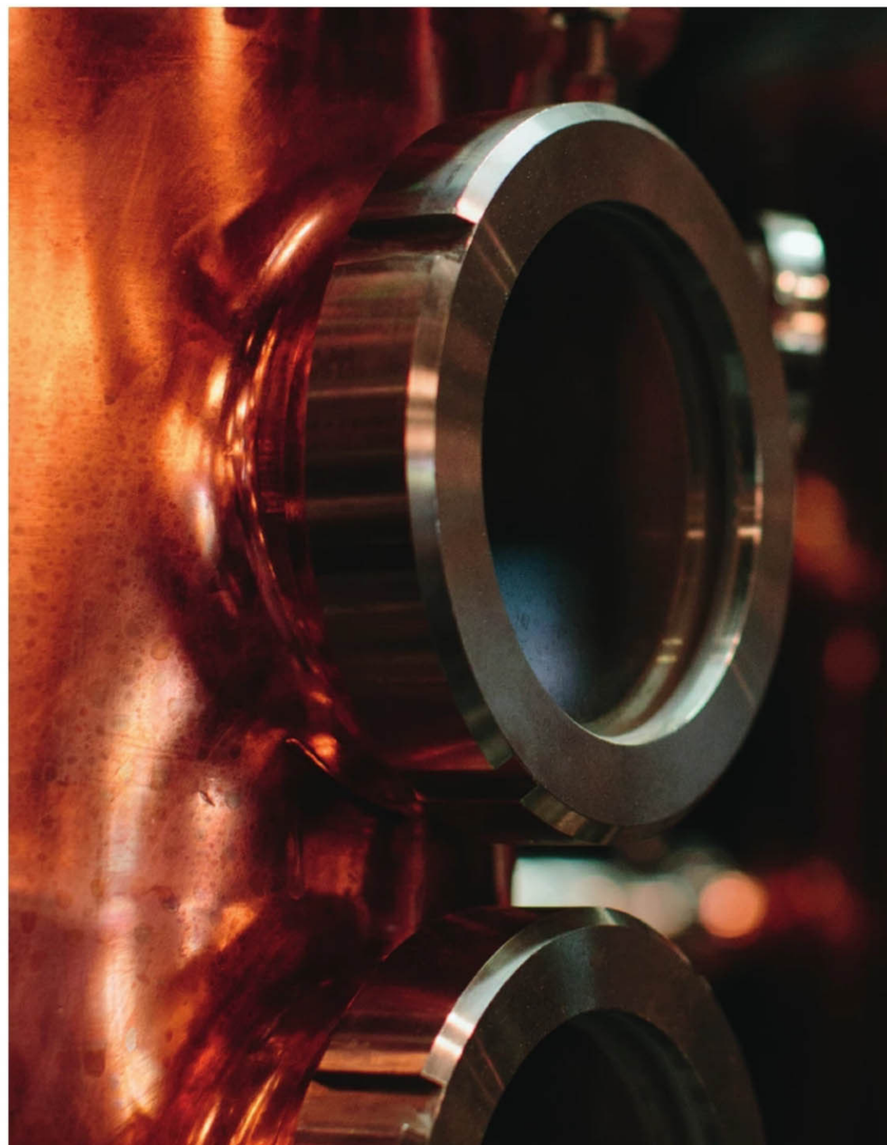
"This year will see a continued trend towards authenticity. With more Asian, African, South American and Southeast Asian distillers taking aim at the global market with their latest locally inspired gin releases, expect to see fewer European and American gin distillers taking 'inspiration' from other cultures and more distillers looking for new stories in their own communities."



SAM CARTER
Senior brand ambassador
Bombay Sapphire
@sapphiresamc

"You can already see it, but tonic is in decline, even though gin is still on the rise. People, as a gross generalisation, just don't care for bitter-style drinks. The consumer loves balance and is discovering new, interesting ways of mixing their favourite gins, be it with ginger ale, lemonade, fresh juices, sparkling wines, or even Kombucha!"









ALEX JAMES
Founder, London to Lima Gin
@lima_london

"Gin sales are going from strength to strength in South America and new brands continue to appear. Unlike five years ago, gin is now a staple at weddings and parties. Consumers' knowledge about how gin is made has definitely improved, but progress still needs to be made; some people still don't know what juniper is and some even think gin is made from ginger."



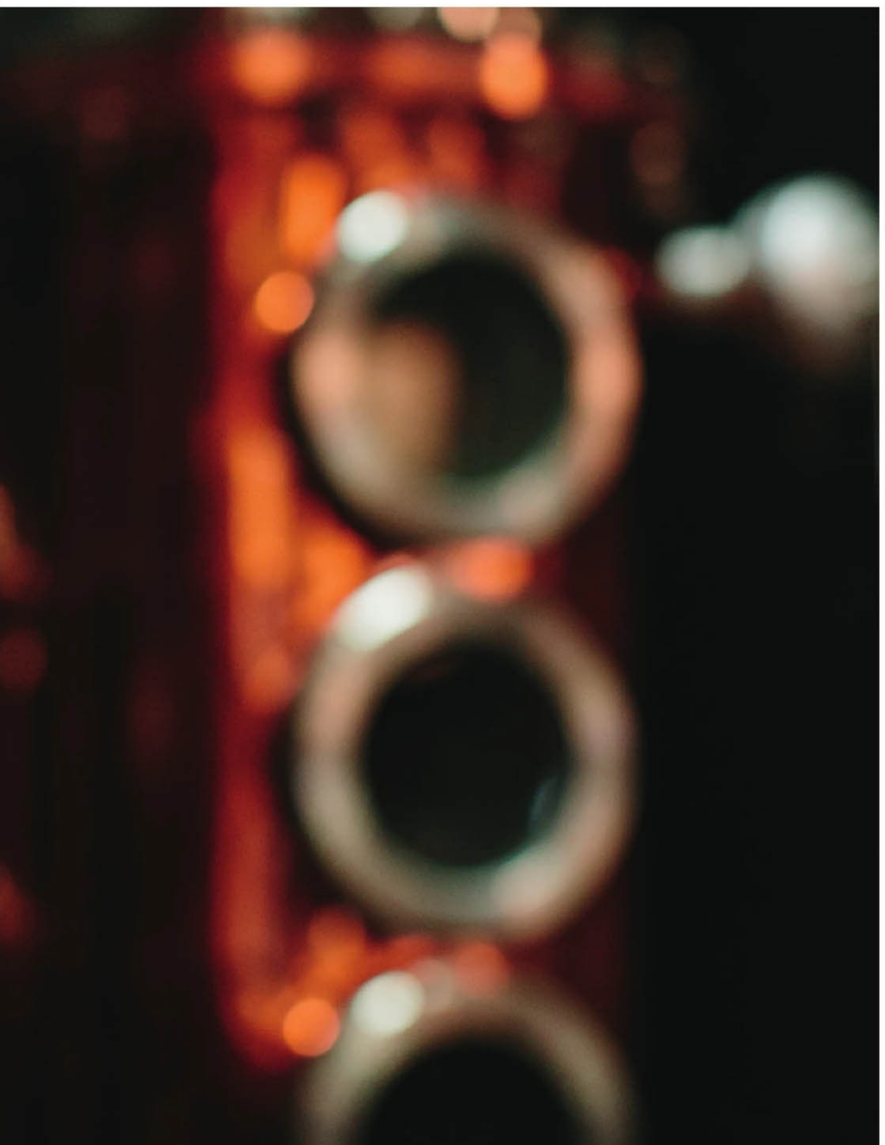
EDDIE BROOK
Co-founder, Cape Byron Distillery
@brookiesgin

"In Australia it is mainly very hot (spoiler alert!) and the trend of lower ABV, infused gins in refreshing spritz serves has grown significantly in the last 24 months. A good example of this is our Brookie's Byron Slow Gin or Four Pillars Bloody Shiraz. I have no doubt that this category of infused, fruit-forward (in particular native fruits) gins will be a big growth driver for Australian gin, both domestically and around the world."



SARAH MILLER
GinADingDing
@ginadingding

"Gin is anticipated to eclipse vodka as the UK's most popular spirit in the next few months, so 2020 is set to be another big year. It seems likely that we'll see more gin-inspired non-alcoholic 'spirits', although I'll be fascinated to see whether any distilleries follow in the footsteps of Hayman's Small Gin by adapting their flavour profile and serve, rather than the ABV, to create a low-alcohol drink."



>>



2020







VIRGINIA MILLER
Food and drink writer, The World's 50 Best Restaurants Academy chairman
@theperfectspot

"In the States you continue to see restaurant bars shine in specific categories, like Thai, Moroccan or Spanish-influenced cocktails in notable restaurants serving those cuisines. While some American cities have had such bars for years, other cities are just getting their first proper Spanish-style gin and tonic bar or menu. Creative gin cocktail ingredients continue to run the gamut, too."

CAROLINE CHILDERLEY
The Gin Queen
@theginqueenau

"Australia tends to lag behind everyone else, so what we see as a trend may have already peaked elsewhere. Gin RTDs (ready-to-drink) are taking hold – major brands, obviously, but some Aussie distillers are also getting involved: LoveCan (Poor Toms Gin and Strangelove Tonic) is a standout.

"Pink gins are coming through, too, but with a lovely Aussie twist, using native botanicals to create a drier style of pink gin. Lilly Pilly Gin from Manly, Sunset Gin from Adelaide Hills and Slow Gin from Brookies are great examples."

VANESSA PIROMALLO
Writer, ilGin.it
@VanessaMedea

"Most Italian gins used to be very aromatic and made by compounding, but now there is a move towards more classic and London dry gins. A trend for local botanicals persists: we have great juniper and citrus here, and producers are experimenting with other ingredients such as hops (expect a few hopped gins this year), hemp and sea water, as well as local juniper varietals.

"Overall the gin boom continues, although I don't see a move towards many flavoured gins, which – like the gin and tonic – are not as popular here as elsewhere."




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ALICE LASCELLES

BACK TO BASICS

What a vodka revival could mean for gin

What I'm about to say probably amounts to heresy in Gin Magazine, but I would like, for a moment, to talk about vodka. Because I think this spirit – which has been pretty unfashionable for almost a decade now – could be set for a comeback in the next couple of years, as consumers overwhelmed by the cacophony of colours, botanicals and flavour profiles in the gin aisle go in search of something quieter, cleaner and more 'focused'.

Vodka came unstuck last time around partly because it didn't talk about flavour. Brands wittered on about arctic water sources and mystical filtration techniques, but it was all style and no substance. For a while, the category kept us rapt with an increasingly monstrous array of vodka variants: bubblegum, pumpkin pie, popcorn, smoked salmon (for real). But you rarely saw a brand with the confidence to talk about the taste of the actual raw ingredients it was distilled from. And in the end, that undermined its credibility.

This is a shame because, contrary to received wisdom, vodkas can vary enormously depending on what they're made from. Potato produces a vodka that's creamier and more full-bodied, while rye produces a spirit that's more robust and spicy. Wheat vodkas are typically peppery and sweet, with notes of aniseed, while grape vodkas are often more citrusy and floral. These days we're all much more interested in the provenance of our food and drink – where it comes from, how it's made – which is why I think the time is ripe for vodka to really take things back to basics, and talk about those simple things that make them taste the way they do.

What has this got to do with gin, you may ask? More than you might think, because the character of the base spirit can have a big impact on the flavour and feel of a gin too. Yet up until now it's rarely been part of the discussion. This is partly because gin producers haven't historically had a hand in making the base spirit they use – the majority just buy in industrially-distilled 'neutral grain spirit', which is distilled to such a high strength that it's rendered almost flavourless. Thanks to the grain-to-glass movement, however, we're now seeing more and more gin producers making their spirits from scratch – growing and distilling the grain, the potatoes, the fruit that provide a canvas for their botanicals. And the results can be very distinctive.

> "the time is ripe for vodka... to talk about those simple things that make them taste the way they do"

Scotland's Arbikie Distillery makes all its gins using base spirit distilled from ingredients grown on the family farm in Arbroath. Kirsty's Gin is based on a distillate of three potato varieties – Maris Piper, King Edward and Cultra – which results in a gin that's creamy and smooth. Arbikie's AK's Gin, by contrast, is based on a distillate of Viscount wheat, which has a more fine-tuned, delicately spicy character. Both the potato and wheat recipes are also bottled in their own right as vodkas – and the differences between the two are striking.

"In the past people have just been focused on varieties that produce a big yield, but we're trying to put the focus more back on flavour – exploring heritage varieties, and planting on different plots," says Arbikie co-founder Iain Stirling. "Our grain-to-glass approach means we even have the scope in the future to produce vintage spirits with proper terroir, just like a wine."

As the English wine industry grows, grape-based gins are becoming more common. Chapel Down winery in Kent does two grape-based gins – one using the skins of the red grape pinot noir (characterised by red berry notes) and another using the white grape bacchus (a native varietal that tastes like elderflower-y sauvignon blanc). Once you taste gins like these it seems extraordinary that the base spirit is not more commonly discussed. That's rather why I hope vodka does make a comeback in a new, more nuanced guise – it could really teach the gin world a thing or two.

@alicelascelles
Alice Lascelles writes about drinks for the Financial Times and is Fortnum & Mason Drinks Writer 2019.

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BY BLAIR PHILLIPS AND DAVIN DE KERGOMMEAUX

Reaching for new heights

The Canadian gin producers pushing to establish provenance in their province

Calgary, Alberta is the gateway to the Rocky Mountains. More than that, it's the birthplace of the Caesar cocktail. That gustatory genesis happened in 1969 when Walter Chell, restaurant manager at the Calgary Inn, mixed clam-infused tomato juice, vodka, spices and Worcestershire sauce, then poured the concoction into a celery salt-rimmed glass, turning the Italian clam dish spaghetti alla vongole into a cocktail. It's a Canadian classic, though Canadians in the know are prone to ditch vodka for gin. And those really in the know skip the cocktail altogether for straight gin. Calgary distiller Bryce Parsons might have something to do with that. His home distillery bears at least part of the responsibility for Alberta's gin stampede.

At his Last Best Brewing & Distilling headquarters, gin fanatic Parsons did something never attempted, anywhere. He did not jump the distillery on a motorcycle. Nor did he try to beat the world record for most colossal Negroni (currently 504 litres). Nevertheless, he caught the attention of Guinness World Records. In 2018, Parsons distilled 52 different gins – a testament to gin's diversity and potentially a new world record.

Before his gin epiphany, Parsons earned a living as a cardiac nurse while moonlighting at a local cocktail bar. The owner encouraged him to bring in spirits and experiment with cocktails, and Parsons soon discovered how creative he could be with gin. Saving until he had a large enough nest egg, he moved to Edinburgh to study on Heriot-Watt University's brewing and distilling programme. Along with his mentor, distilling lab instructor Abhishek Banik, he explored Edinburgh's cocktail culture, debating the fine points of spirits endlessly. Meanwhile, back at school, Parsons was mapping gin flavours for his thesis. "I could see that gin was changing because you could be creative with it," he says. "Look where IPAs (India pale ales) were 15 years ago. They have changed and it's still evolving as a category. Now it's gin's turn."

In 2013, as Parsons was studying gin, David Farran and Larry Kerwin were about to pioneer Alberta microdistilling. Having successfully lobbied the Alberta government to redline a law requiring distilleries to produce a minimum of one million litres of spirit per year, they opened Eau Claire distillery. Meanwhile, Last Best owners Socrates Korogonas, Brett Ireland and Alex Derksen readied their own stills, and Parsons, home from Scotland, took up the helm.

Although the distillery focused on whisky, Parsons began developing various gin recipes. "Gin was becoming quite popular and I thought, the only way to stand out is if I do a bunch of them," he recalls. "That involved going back to my thesis. The way we run our gin programme, it's essentially a large research and development project. People kept asking for more, so I asked, what about one per week? It started as a showcase of how creative you can get in the gin category and served as an educational tool to train staff." >>

"Gin was becoming quite popular and I thought, the only way to stand out is if I do a bunch of them"



This page from top left: Last Best's Gin Craze #3; Head distiller Bryce Parsons; Last Best founders Alex Derksen, Brett Ireland and Socrates Korogonas; A 500-litre Artisan Still Design pot; Viewing the distillery from the brewpub









Alberta has a rich heritage growing grain. To contemporise the gin, Parsons deliberately leaves some grain character in the distilled base spirit. "I think an Alberta-style gin definitely has to have its own grain base. We have the blessing of growing grain really well, and it's high quality," enthuses Parsons. Working with Calgary's Canada Malting Company, he sources local grains for the gin's base spirit. He brews, ferments and distils a blended mash of malted barley, malted wheat and malted oats on-site.

Parsons dubbed his gin-a-week project Gin Craze and began following themes. For one, which explored links between brewing and distilling, he collaborated with Washington's Yakima Chief Hops to express the personality of its hops in some of the gins. Others, explicitly designed for Caesars, incorporated oyster shells from Rodney's Oyster House with a range of botanicals. Kensington Wine Market's Andrew Ferguson helped create a gin called L'eau de bain, a play on bathtub gin refined into what he calls "spa gin". Other collaborators included bartenders and chefs; one of Canada's top mixologists, Madeleine MacDonald, helped create an exotic floral gin she named Elizabeth's Vanity.

Day after day the show must go on, and three months in, Parsons began thinking about exploring Alberta's gin identity. "If we were going to use botanicals grown in Alberta, we had to get them into the ground as soon as spring started." Soon the gins included Alberta-grown tangerine sage, bee balm, summer savoury, borage, citrus Southwood, banana mint and plenty more.

Saving the best for last, Parsons pulled out all the stops to create Gin #52, which he proudly describes as a totally Alberta gin. Around 90 minutes from Calgary, the town of Sylvan Lake put Alberta cheese on the map with farm-made gouda from Sylvan Star Cheese. Sylvan Lake is also home to Shafar Botanicals, where Parsons' sister Shannon grows more than 100 of them, experimenting to see what grows well in Alberta. Shannon succeeded with Alberta coriander, hawthorn berry, angelica and orris, with floral chamomile, violet and marigold, and with anise hyssop, winter savoury, yarrow and moss. Citrus doesn't grow in Alberta, but the wild lemongrass which does adds citrus accents paired with coriander's pointed spicy citrus notes. Finally, elderberry and wild strawberries bring fruity tones to the gin.

A year after Parsons completed his 52-week project, it's become evident that Calgary, Alberta is also a gateway to gin flavour with more than world record status. Alberta's breadbasket grain character resonates clearly in many of Parson's 52 gins and in a new release he calls Afterglow. And he is not alone – the RAW Distillery in Canmore, Alberta has also embraced local grain for its gins. Alberta botanicals have proved their worth, too. Wildlife Distillery infuses 100 per cent wild-foraged botanicals into its Alberta Botanical Gin. In Edmonton, Strathcona Spirits Distillery distils its Badland Seaberry Gin with wild juniper from the banks of the Red Deer River's Badlands and native sea buckthorn, a sour and bitter berry that imparts a distinctive twang.

Alberta may not own the world record for tallest mountain, but here, at the base of the Rockies, Parsons and a province of passionate distillers are blazing a world-class trail for Alberta gin.

Last Best Brewing & Distilling features prominently in Davin and Blair's The Definitive Guide to Canadian Distilleries, to be published March 2020.

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BY BETHANY WHYMARK

SUSTAINABILITY ROCKS

You may associate it with the colour blue – but Bombay Sapphire has gone green

We all know that water is essential to gin making. Without it, there is no spirit. With this in mind, you would think Bombay Sapphire hit the jackpot when it snapped up Laverstoke Mill, its Hampshire home on the banks of the River Test.

However, the water which flows through its rural site doesn't go into its gin. Notwithstanding the effect it would have on the poor old river to take out thousands of litres of water a day, the company wanted to reduce its carbon footprint by transporting the neat spirit closer to its bottling plant in Scotland to be diluted, saving space and weight in its lorries. Instead, it utilises the river to operate a water turbine, which generates a significant amount of power for the site.

These measures are part of the over-arching eco-conscious strategy which makes Laverstoke Mill one of the most environmentally friendly distilleries in the world (according to the Buildings Research Establishment, which awarded it a coveted BREEAM award for industrial design in 2014).

As senior Bombay Sapphire brand ambassador Sam Carter explains, sustainability was woven into the mill's fabric during its renovation. Take the distillery's heat recovery system, for example. Water from the condensers is collected in thermal storage tanks, reheated to 72°C, passed through a heat exchanger and used to start heating the liquid for the next distillation.

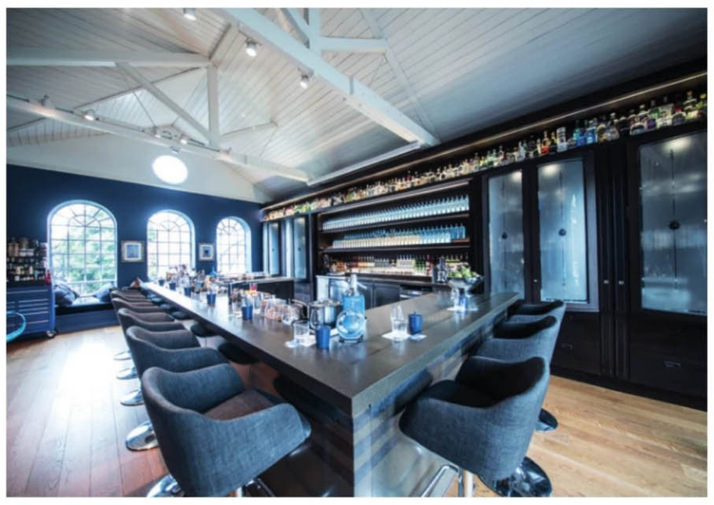
Sam says, "We have to heat 11,000 litres of liquid to 80°C multiple times a day. That is a lot of energy. There is a huge amount of investment that goes into these kinds of things, but then you reap the rewards in energy saving."

Then there's the packaging in which botanicals are sent to the mill – Bombay now uses 2-ply cardboard boxes rather than 3-ply to reduce consumption, and even the minimal plastic used to hold the boxes together in transit is a type which can be melted down and made into vehicle fuel. Or there's the fact that when it transports spirit to its bottling plant in Scotland, three distillations travel on one lorry to put fewer vehicles on the road.

And there's more. Much more. Sam explains, "We have a water turbine which produces enough power for 500 LED lights every day, >>











which is a big chunk of the site. We've put in solar panels and rain water harvesting for flushing the toilets, and we send zero waste to landfill.

"The waste alcohol – the heads and the tails from the distillation – is sold on to a company which makes industrial alcohol, so that is not wasted. Even our botanicals are reused. [Ex-Formula One driver] Jody Scheckter runs Laverstoke Park Farm and he takes our waste botanicals and turns them into compost, which he sells on or uses for his own organic farming."

Bombay Sapphire also sources its botanicals with sustainability in mind. At the heart of the operation is Geneva-based master of botanicals Ivano Tonutti, who has lent his skills to the likes of Grey Goose and Martini. He travels the world from Spain and Italy to west Africa to India to source ingredients from local farmers, who grow and harvest without mechanisation. He then tests the botanicals with small distillations to ensure consistency in the flavour profile – essential when you're making millions of litres of liquid each year using small-scale, mostly organic produce.

For the provenance geeks out there, each bottle has an individual code on it which can be plugged into Bombay Sapphire's systems to reveal the exact locations all its botanicals were grown, to within a 50ft radius. The botanicals are then weighed and packaged before being sent to Laverstoke Mill. To ensure freshness and prevent wastage, only around two weeks' worth of stock is kept on site at a time.

But hang on, I hear you say. Why is the world's most sustainable distillery not shouting this fact from the rafters, particularly as environmental issues have shot to the forefront of public consciousness in the past few years?

"I think on the outside consumers just think that Bombay is a huge industrial machine," Sam says. "It [being environmentally friendly] is just something we do and we don't really shout about it whereas smaller gin brands might talk about that.

"A brand cannot have too many USPs. We have the blue bottle, the gin that pretty much single-handedly rejuvenated the gin category in the 1980s. Back then you could count the world's gins on a couple of hands, but now there are 8,000 around the world."

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The company which "single-handedly rejuvenated gin" started life at a time when the spirit didn't really need marketing.

It was in 1761 that aspiring distiller Thomas Dakin devised the recipe for Bombay's London dry gin, after he set up his distillery in Warrington. He and wife Mary, who is credited with inventing the vapour infusion technique (more on this later), are immortalised at Laverstoke Mill as the namesakes of its two smaller stills in Dakin House.

The Dakins' Warrington Gin had a relatively quiet existence until, in the 1950s, New York lawyer Allan Subin brought the brand to America with the aim of targeting the country's growing cocktail culture. In 1959 Bombay Dry Gin was released and marketed as 'the' gin for martinis.

Then in 1986 Bombay Sapphire and its game-changing blue bottle hit the shelves. It was the brainchild of the company's new owner, American entrepreneur Michel Roux; the story goes that he was inspired to use coloured glass for the new release after being served mineral water in a blue bottle while on a flight. As with Subin, Roux was following a popular culture trend – that of the personality-driven marketing campaigns by vodka brands such as Absolut.

Bombay Sapphire was part of a parcel of products sold off by Diageo to Bacardi in 1997. Under the conglomerate's stewardship

it has grown into the biggest premium gin producer by volume in the world, turning out 60 million bottles a year and selling in 140 countries – and every drop is made in Hampshire.

Bacardi commenced the search for a new brand home for Bombay Sapphire in the early 2000s, which would bring an end to a long-standing contract with Greenalls in Warrington and fulfil a desire to bring production in-house.

Sam says the company considered around 30 buildings in its hunt for somewhere to accommodate a growing operation and a new tourist experience – including a home at Kew Gardens which, although useful for botanical sourcing, was a little over budget. "The brand home before was in Borough Market in London," he explains. "To be able to serve drinks to 100,000 people a year was great, but we were not made there so we didn't have genuineness. Bacardi wanted to have that and bring it together."

According to Sam, Laverstoke Mill was discovered by chance when one of the firm's directors found out from "a man down the pub" that the 18th century paper mill was about to come on the market. Opened in 1719, the mill made craft bank notes which were later shipped around the empire. The sale was completed in 2010 and, following a lengthy renovation, the mill opened for business in October 2014. It pays homage to both the company's and site's history in the naming of its main 12,000-litre stills – Victoria, after the 19th-century queen and empress, and Henry, after the paper mill's founder Henry Portal. They stand in India House, where paper for Indian rupees was formerly printed. Sam says, "We started to buy some of this paper back, but it was £600 for one rupee. You have to sell a lot of bottles of gin to pay for that, but it was nice to bring some of that history back to the mill."

>>



Opposite page, top to bottom: Sam Carter, Bombay Sapphire senior brand ambassador; Inside the Empire Bar; Touring the distillery; Gin tasting
This page: Putting the finishing touches on a cocktail



THE ART OF VAPOUR INFUSION

While Bombay Sapphire's current marketing is focused on the artistic and spontaneous potential of gin, its distilling process is precise to a molecular degree.

The company buys in its grain neutral spirit (GNS) from continental Europe at 96.3% ABV. Once you know the volumes involved you understand why it doesn't make its own – it takes delivery of two 30,000-litre tankers of the stuff every day.

The GNS is made with winter wheat, which Sam says gives a chemical advantage. "When you break it down to its molecular structure there are more arms for the flavours from the botanicals to attach on to."

Bombay Sapphire believes it is the only London dry gin producer to use 100 per cent vapour-infused distillation, which is no mean feat when your main still house churns out enough gin for 140,000 bottles every day. The eight botanicals for Bombay London Dry and 10 for Bombay Sapphire are suspended in perforated copper baskets, which the distillate vapour passes through before it gets to the condensing column.

"You read the phrase 'vapour-infused' on the bottle and it is intriguing," Sam says. "Because we have not got botanicals in the still you do not get the caramelisation. It provides the flavour of the botanicals in a fresher, lighter way rather than the heavier way of the boiling and caramelisation. It is not better or worse, it is just different.

"Because we use botanicals that are quite sweet – there's liquorice, cassia bark and cinnamon in there, and juniper has a natural sweetness – and because copper is a very good conductor of heat, the botanicals if they were boiled in the still could caramelise. That is fine for some gins, but we don't want it."

Perfecting this process was one of the reasons it took nine months before Laverstoke Mill was producing gin for market, from ensuring the relative amount of each botanical in each distillation was correct to finding the best order to layer them in the copper baskets.

Sam says, "We believe it is important. I have never had someone say to me that Bombay Sapphire tastes different now than it did five years ago and that is testament to the investment we put in to make sure that this was consistent."

Alongside master distiller Dr Anne Brock, there is a team of 17 distillers who work in shifts to keep the operation going 24 hours a day, 355 days a year. One distillation of Bombay Sapphire produces around 9,800 litres of high-strength gin from an initial 10,000 litres of GNS and 1,000 litres of water. Each batch is tested by seven people and has to pass the scrutiny of Dr Brock and spirit quality technician Lee Courtney, as well as a chromatography machine which measures for molecular traces of the botanicals.

While Bombay Sapphire is still the darling of the range, research and development is important to the team and there have been new releases since the move to Laverstoke Mill. Premium gin Star of Bombay, which uses a heady 14 botanicals, was unveiled in 2015 and last year saw the release of Bombay Sapphire English Estate, which was inspired by the English countryside and included new botanicals Pennyroyal mint, rosehip and toasted hazelnut. (Time is running out to sample this one – it will only be on sale until April, when production will start on a new limited-edition gin.)

Sam, who helped design these new spirits, says, "You don't just have to add different botanicals to your gin to make a different gin. You could change the flow rate or change the layering in the baskets and that would make a different gin. The slow distillation in Star [of Bombay] is what makes it different and more expensive."

LESSONS IN GIN

Laverstoke Mill is as much about gin education as gin production. In its two glasshouses – Mediterranean and tropical – grow examples of all the botanicals used in Bombay London Dry and Bombay Sapphire. Information boards give details of their natural habitat, flavours and other properties. (Fun fact: the glasshouses were designed by Thomas Heatherwick, who won a Bombay Sapphire design competition in 2001 and was a judge for the competition in subsequent years.)

Head across the courtyard to the Dry Room and you can see these botanicals in their harvested form, available to touch, sniff and even taste. In here guests will find cards on which they can mark their favourite botanicals, which they can take across the site to the Mill Bar where staff will mix a cocktail based on their choices.

There is also the Empire Bar, a stunning room with plush furniture, elegant windows and a staggering bottle display. Floor-to-ceiling cabinets flanking the bar hold not only glasses but an array of mixology equipment, including a mini-still and a dry-ice machine – for Sam, a harkening back to his former career as a bartender and molecular mixologist.

Laverstoke Mill welcomes around 100,000 visitors a year, with experiences to cater to a range of tastes. There are heritage days, horticultural days, cocktail-making classes, gin and cocktail tastings and 'ultimate' experiences which combine these elements. To combat the constraints of its rural location, the distillery runs a shuttle bus to collect people from stations at Overton and Micheldever (and before you worry about the carbon footprint of a bus, the firm planted a forest of trees to compensate). Being able to get under the skin of this globally recognised brand and marvel at the incredible site it calls home is an opportunity not to be missed.





These pages from left: Exploring botanicals in the Dry Room; The stills in Dakin House; Laverstoke Mill's glasshouses; Bombay Sapphire





BY VIRGINIA MILLER

TASTING THE BIG APPLE

We explore the cream of the crop in one of America's original 'cocktail cities'

The pioneering cocktail bars of the 1800s – and again in the renaissance of the last 20 to 30 years – were in New York City and San Francisco, while New Orleans created some of the most important recipes, completing the trinity of the world's original cocktail cities. NYC remains one of the most vibrant, if often overpriced, bar scenes in the world. Thankfully Brooklyn's renewal the past decade has brought more affordable, high-quality bars, while Manhattan neighbourhoods like the East Village have become drink meccas, lined with notable bars. Hospitality and friendliness don't exactly reign in NYC, but the bars that master drink and service are the ones worth returning to – and they're not always the most hyped. While some of our once-favourite NYC bars like Mace have gone downhill a bit since moving to their new location, these 10 bars (a few of them newer, many around for years) are among the best the city has to offer.

The Up & Up

116 MacDougal Street
New York, NY 10012
www.upandupnyc.com

These days, Greenwich Village bars run more towards the college party and pub crowd. But half-underground The Up & Up is the Village's ultimate cocktail destination in a space that once housed a Beat Generation venue. Green-toned, vintage William Morris wallpaper and rust-coloured booths provide cosy alcoves to slip into for a tipple. Owner Matt Piacentini and manager Chaim Dauermann craft intriguing drinks in every spirit category and delight in cocktails like Cunning Familiar, a mix of St. George Terroir Gin, Boulard Calvados, Kleos Mastiha, grapefruit, lemon, cider and celery bitters. Or check out their "Insanely Good" section, offering "superlative versions of under-appreciated drinks" such as a fancified Midori Sour, enhanced by Martin Miller's Westbourne Strength Gin, lime cordial, lemon and egg white.

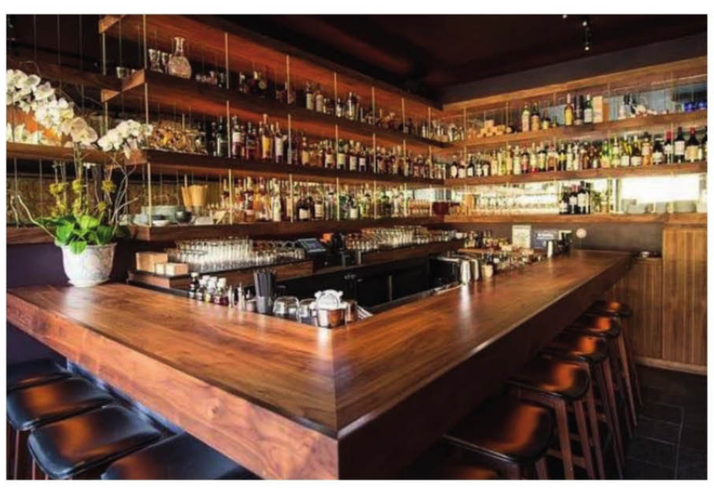


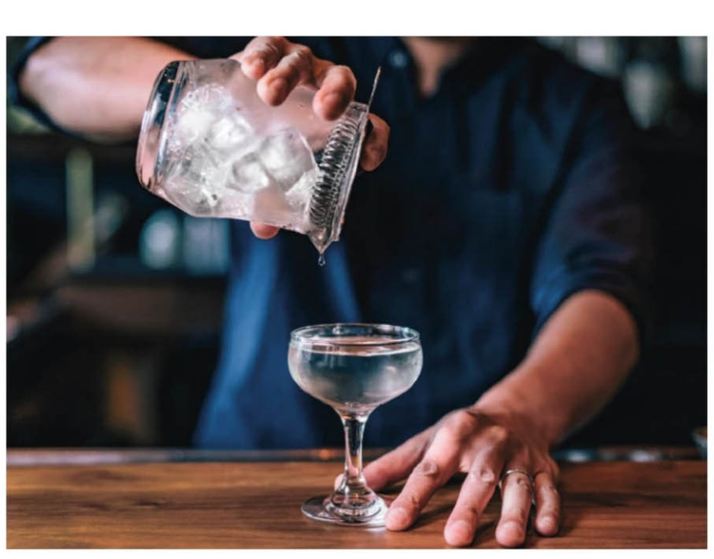


Katana Kitten

531 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014
www.katanakitten.com

Masahiro Urushido's Katana Kitten is one of NYC's great bars from a consummate barman whose bartending years in NYC and Tokyo inform his hospitality and precision. Katana is also about fun: lined with Japanese movie posters, communal seating in the basement and playful tunes, the laid-back vibe appeals to industry and non-industry alike with delicious bites like Masa's grandmother's fujimi crispy chicken. Drink offerings include a creative highball section with the likes of a shiso gin and tonic and a melon-lime soda with Absolut Lime, Midori, sudachi-lime, matcha and lime leaf. Gin gets the right treatment everywhere, from a martini stirred with gin, vodka, fino sherry, junmai-daiginjo sake and hinoki tree essence, to Old Duff genever in a Negroni-inspired combination of aged umeshu (Japanese plum liqueur) and bitters.



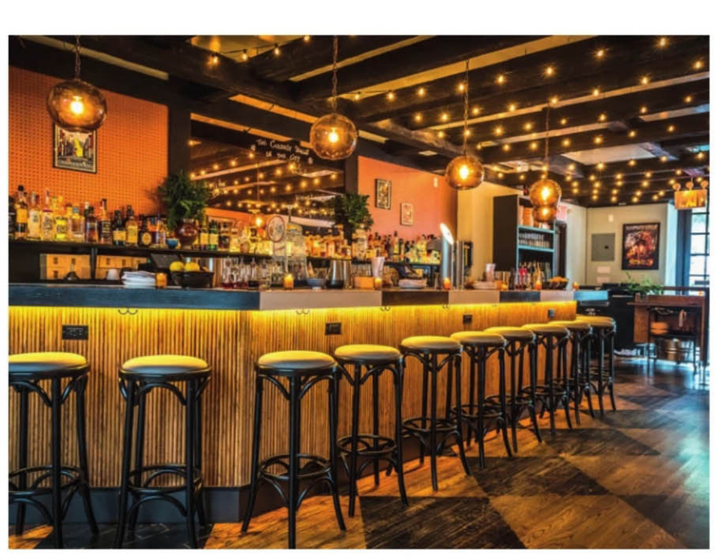


Bar Goto

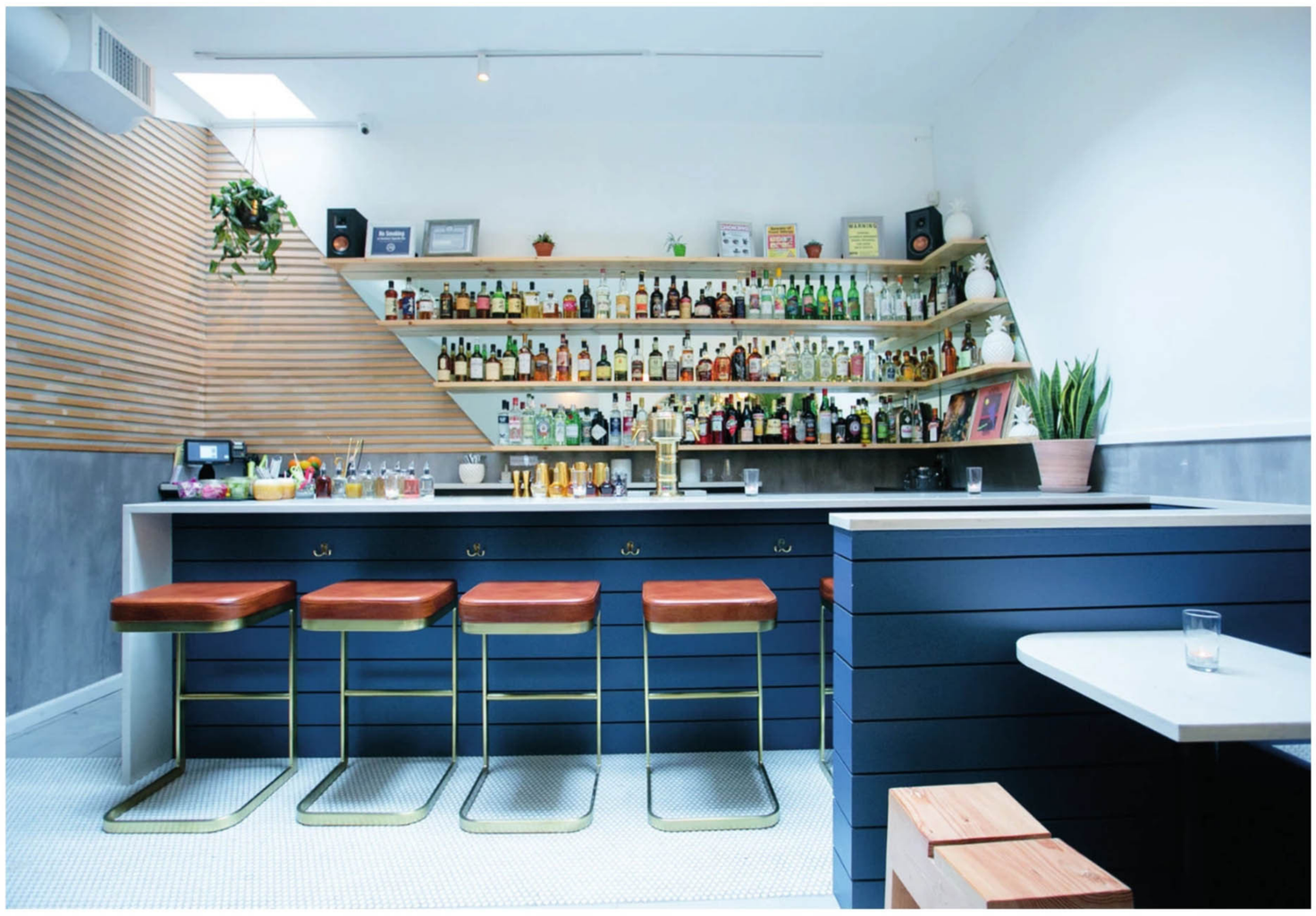
245 Eldridge Street
New York, NY 10002
www.bargoto.com

Kenta Goto has ensured that cosy Bar Goto has been one of NYC's best bars since it opened in 2015. This "escape to Japan" gem might play 1980s hair metal music while killer miso black sesame chicken wings and a menu of different okonomiyaki (savoury Japanese "pancakes") flow out of the kitchen, but cocktails seal the deal, whether it's a simple Shiso Sparkler of gin, shiso, lemon and prosecco, or a silky-soft cucumber melon soda fizzy with gin, lemon, cucumber, Midori and Calpico (a tangy milk soda from Japan). The house Sakura Martini is a signature gin martini, unfolding in layers with sake, Maraschino and cherry blossoms.





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The Hidden Pearl

621 Manhattan Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11222
www.hiddenpearlbk.com

One of NYC's best bar treasures, The Hidden Pearl is hidden in the back of Wanpaku Ramen in Brooklyn's busy Greenpoint 'hood. Skylights imbue gentle light over the white-walled space accented with touches of tan, navy blue and green plants. The intimate space benefits from skilled, friendly bartenders and snacks from the restaurant like uni shooters. Drinks are impeccably delicious, whether a JBS highball (gin, pear brandy, dry vermouth, ginger, shiso, lemon, seltzer) or Fireflies on the Water, an intriguing mix of gin, pommeau, orange bitters and genepy, given a vinegary-acidic kick from verjus.

Amor Y Amargo

443 E 6th Street
New York, NY 10009
www.amoryamargony.com

It's true that eight-seat, not-much-bigger-than-a-closet Amor y Amargo is an amari bar, but this long-time industry favourite has also been one of Manhattan's overall best bars since 2011. Now with a larger sister bar in Brooklyn (opened in late 2019), restaurateur Ravi DeRossi and barman Sother Teague have immortalised the bar in both boroughs. With a focus on bitters and amaro, a classic Negroni is perfected here – but so are many bitter gin cocktails, like the spirituous Sharpie Mustache (Meletti amaro, gin, Bonal, rye and bitters) or crisp, alpine-esque Freya Regal (gin, Italicus Bergamot liqueur, Carpano Bianco Vermouth, aquavit and black lemon bitters).





Bar Beau

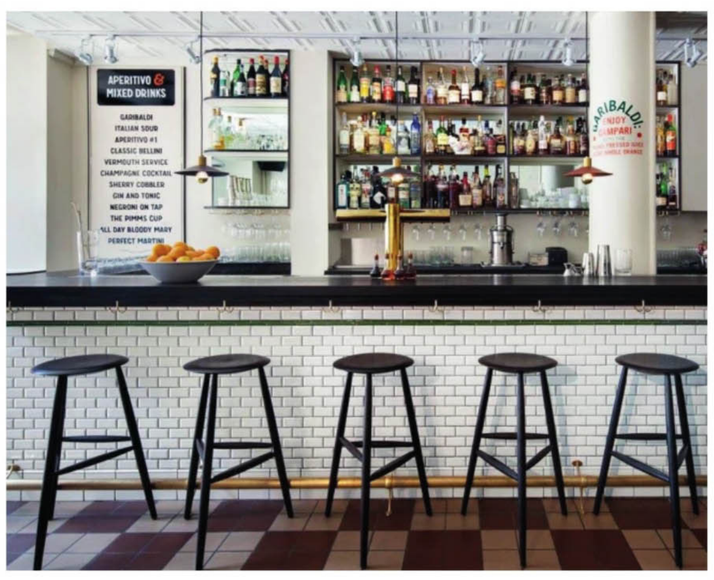
61 Withers Street, Brooklyn, NY 11211
www.beaubrooklyn.com

The kind of neighbourhood treasure every neighbourhood wishes it had, Bar Beau is top-notch coffee shop by day, then by night (or weekend brunch) it opens its hidden back room, spacious and spare, for dinner and cocktails. A long wrap-around bar invites those who just want to drop in for a bite and drinks, with inspired bar food like scallop corn fritters in a coconut lime dip. Relaxed bartenders shake up house creations like Tonka Truck – with its base of two gins accented by aquavit, lemon and turmeric, creamy-frothy with a touch of yoghurt and egg white – and the Green Flamingo, a gin-based drink with shochu, matcha, barley, rosemary and citrussy yuzu.

Dante

79-81 Macdougal Street
New York, NY 10012
www.dante-nyc.com

With a Dante West location on the way, the original Dante is housed in a historic Italian café in Greenwich Village that dates back to 1915, a go-to for celebrities from Al Pacino to Bob Dylan. Reborn in 2015, Australian restaurateur Linden Pride and fellow Aussie and bar vet Naren Young brought new life, quality cocktails and bites to the café and have won numerous awards since, including number one in the World's 50 Best Bars. While the menu is about straightforward classics and Italian aperitivi, gin and tonics and Negronis on tap appeal to the gin lover. Daily "Negroni Sessions" from 3pm to 6pm offer $10 drinks (a steal in pricey Manhattan) from a menu of more than 10 variations.





Pouring Ribbons

225 Avenue B, New York, NY 10009
www.pouringribbons.com

Opened in 2012 by NY bar greats Joaquín Simó, Will Cart and Jason Cott, Pouring Ribbons draws in drink geeks with its hidden upstairs location, vintage Chartreuse selection and helpful graph menu rating cocktails on a scale of "refreshing" to "spirituous", "comforting" to "adventurous". They also offer cocktail classes and have only got better over the years – strong on gin cocktails like the crushable Drag Race Thailand (curry and lime leaf-infused Bombay Sapphire East, Thai iced tea, lime and coconut) or the adventurous Body (Amass Gin, Kleos Mastiha, Lustau Palo Cortado sherry, M&R Ambrato Vermouth and Edinburgh Elderflower).

Raines Law Room

48 W 17th Street
New York, NY 10011
www.raineslawroom.com

The original Raines Law Room Chelsea opened in 2009 before the cocktail world had wearied of the speakeasy craze, and the romantic, relaxed space has long done it better than more pretentious spots. In 2014, a second Raines location opened in boutique Midtown hotel The William. Cocktail classes, cosy couches and wall buzzers pulled when you're ready to order your drink keep the experience unique. Curated by bar director Meaghan Dorman, rotating menus feature classics and seasonal house creations like Pushing Daisies (gin, pear liqueur, lemon, lavender bitters and Perrier) at the Chelsea bar or a Catalan Cooler (gin, grapefruit, yellow Chartreuse and tonic) at The William.





Manhattan Cricket Club

226 W 79th Street, New York, NY 10024
www.mccnewyork.com

Hidden upstairs in Aussie-themed restaurant Burke & Wills, Manhattan Cricket Club is an Upper West Side rarity for well-crafted cocktails. The narrow, book-lined space oozes Victoriana from wallpaper to chandeliers. Cosy up on a banquette under the pressed tin ceiling for elegant gin drinks, from a perfect 50/50 Martini to changing house creations. Expect creative drinks such as a refreshing Bend My Elbow (strawberry and hibiscus-infused No. 3 Gin, lime, grapefruit bitters and club soda) or the wintery-tropical Golden Pineangle (Zirbenz Stone Pine Liqueur, Four Pillars Navy Strength Gin, passion fruit, pineapple, lime, pandan syrup and rosemary bitters).

BY AARON KNOLL

UP, UP AND AWAY: THE LONG FLIGHT OF AVIATION GIN

The brand that took off before the celebrities boarded

Aviation Gin existed long before actress Monica Ruiz dutifully stared down her martini and drank to her new, implicit 'freedom' (as she did in a 2019 television advertisement). Aviation Gin existed even before actor Ryan Reynolds boasted in 2018 that he "tried every gin on the planet" (a claim that I seriously doubt). In fact, Aviation Gin existed well before most of the craft and small-batch gins available on the market today.

THE BEGINNINGS

The long journey from small craft brand to celebrity zeitgeist began in Corvallis, Oregon. Christian Krogstad and Lee Medoff founded House Spirits Distillery in 2004. "There are no plans for world domination," Medoff told the Corvallis Gazette-Times in January 2005. "We are interested in the Northwest, where people have a real acceptance of or interest in craft product." Medoff and Krogstad built their brand organically, especially in the early days. They took their product directly to bars, to restaurants, and to liquor stores in Oregon.

Krogstad said his desire to found a distillery was driven by creativity. "I didn't start a distillery just to copy anyone else," Krogstad said. "For me, the joy in starting a distillery and crafting spirits was to have the artistic freedom to innovate, to come up with new and exciting flavours."

Inspired by Medoff's Russian heritage, House Spirits first product was a 100-per-cent distilled-from-rye vodka. However, the local vodka market was crowded, even in 2005. House Spirits needed to diversify. Though whiskey was always part of the plans for the new distillery, practicality suggested the need for an unaged spirit that could be brought to market quickly. Medoff painted an evocative picture of the gin he wanted to make to the local papers. "Most gins on the market are English style... but House Spirits will make a Dutch-style product." To Medoff, Dutch-style meant a bold gin with lots of flavour and aroma.

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The still-nascent gin, tentatively called Aviation, was initially described as using local ingredients like liquorice fern and local grapes, owing to Oregon's long heritage as a major wine-producing region. The name was a reference to the Aviation cocktail, which in 2005 was an underground 'bartender handshake'. "The act of ordering one was a signifier that a person was part of the bar world's in-crowd," Robert Simonson told Punch Magazine. From the outset, Aviation Gin was designed to speak directly to bartenders and others in the know.

While designing the gin, Medoff and Krogstad added one more palate. Ryan Magarian, who was already well known for his cocktail work at Seattle's Liquid Kitchen, joined the team. The partnership of distiller and bartender – something not all that unusual today – was then described as being among the first of its kind.

"We were experimenting with lots of different botanicals – no legal herb or spice was off-limits," Krogstad said regarding these early trials. The product that Medoff first described to the Corvallis Gazette-Times in the summer of 2005 would undergo 30 rounds of collaborative trials. By the time it launched, Aviation Gin would look quite different.

THE LAUNCH

Aviation Gin launched in Oregon in 2006. It boasted a more provincial botanical bill: French Lavender, both bitter and sweet orange peel, cardamom, coriander and two somewhat unusual ones, sarsaparilla and anise seed.

Aviation Gin is one of very few gins to feature anise seeds instead of star anise. Often when we hear the word anise, we think of star anise, the fruit of an evergreen tree native to Southeast Asia. When it was first introduced to Europe in the late 16th century, it caught on as a popular flavouring for baked goods and liqueurs – primarily because Europeans already had a taste for











These pages from far left: Aviation Gin; Sarsparilla root; Anise seeds; Inside the distillery; Mixing a cocktail with Aviation

the flavour of anise. The true anise plant is a member of the same family as carrots and its seeds had been widely used across many European food cultures. Star anise has more anethole (anise) flavour in its fruits and is far cheaper to produce, hence its popularity in spirits.

Meanwhile, even today, sarsaparilla is rare in gin. Also known as smilax ornata, it is native to the Americas and was part of the medical traditions of many American First Peoples. Often this botanical reminds people of the soda of the same name, but the soda flavour generally comes from sassafras and birch, while having none of its namesake tropical vine in it.

THE EDUCATION

The gin world that Aviation launched into was quite different from today. People outside the industry weren't talking about base spirits and botanicals. There was even some hostility towards innovation from the industry in the category. Jim Meehan, of New York City's PDT, bemoaned Bombay Sapphire's effect on people's drinking habits. He told Cheers Magazine, "It converted vodka drinkers to Bombay Sapphire drinkers, not gin drinkers."

Magarian noted the need for education. He told Drinks International in 2010, "The only way to gain traction in the gin market is to launch with a polished and comprehensive ability to educate the consumer about not only their product, but the category itself."

It was around this time that Magarian penned his essay New Western Style Gin Defined, one of the most important pieces of gin education ever written. In it he stated, "...distillers realised a greater opportunity for artistic 'flavour' freedom in this great spirit [...] these gins are most certainly defined not by the juniper itself, but by the careful inclusion and balance of the supporting flavours, creating,what I believe to be an entirely new "character" designation of dry gin deserving of individual recognition."

>>



This page: Citrus botanicals in Aviation Gin

"I wasn't thinking particularly about what to call the style," Krogstad said, noting that this was more Magarian's expertise, "but I was giving a lot of thought to creating something new and making my mark on the gin category."

Though much of the gin community has moved away from specious regional designations like "New Western" or "New American", the concept Magarian put forward – that juniper-forward gins that highlight other botanicals are worthy of a different term – has persisted to the present day. As Christian noted, it wasn't as if they set out to create a new category, but Aviation Gin's success has put it – and kept it – at the forefront of the debates around what is today classified as contemporary style gin.

THE PRESENT

Aviation Gin continued its rise to prominence as a critical darling. Wine Enthusiast heaped praise on it in 2012, awarding it 97 points, then a record for gin. The World Gin Awards and the Beverage Tasting Institute have also awarded it gold in their competitions. This caught the attention of the international spirits community and the brand was acquired by Davos Brands, a luxury spirits importer and marketing group out of New York. In 2016, Aviation Gin was the top-selling craft gin in the United States, moving more than 15,000 cases annually.

Perhaps the biggest moment for Aviation was in February 2018 when actor and Deadpool star Ryan Reynolds acquired a significant share of the brand. Stateside, his celebrity helped Aviation Gin achieve greater awareness and market share. In 2020, Aviation Gin told The Spirits Business that the brand was responsible for more than 30 per cent of gin's growth in the United States.

Undeterred by the long-predicted "peak gin" perhaps finally coming to fruition in the UK and Europe, Aviation Gin continues to prevail. The brand is aggressively courting the United Kingdom with a multimillion-pound investment in the market

Although the brand story now is tied to Reynolds' celebrity and it is available in more than 40 countries, it hasn't completely forgotten its craft origins. Aviation Gin is still made in small batches, it's still made at the House Spirits Distillery in Portland, Oregon, and it's still ruffling feathers and winning new fans.

THE Nightwatchman

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BY BETHANY WHYMARK

A la playa

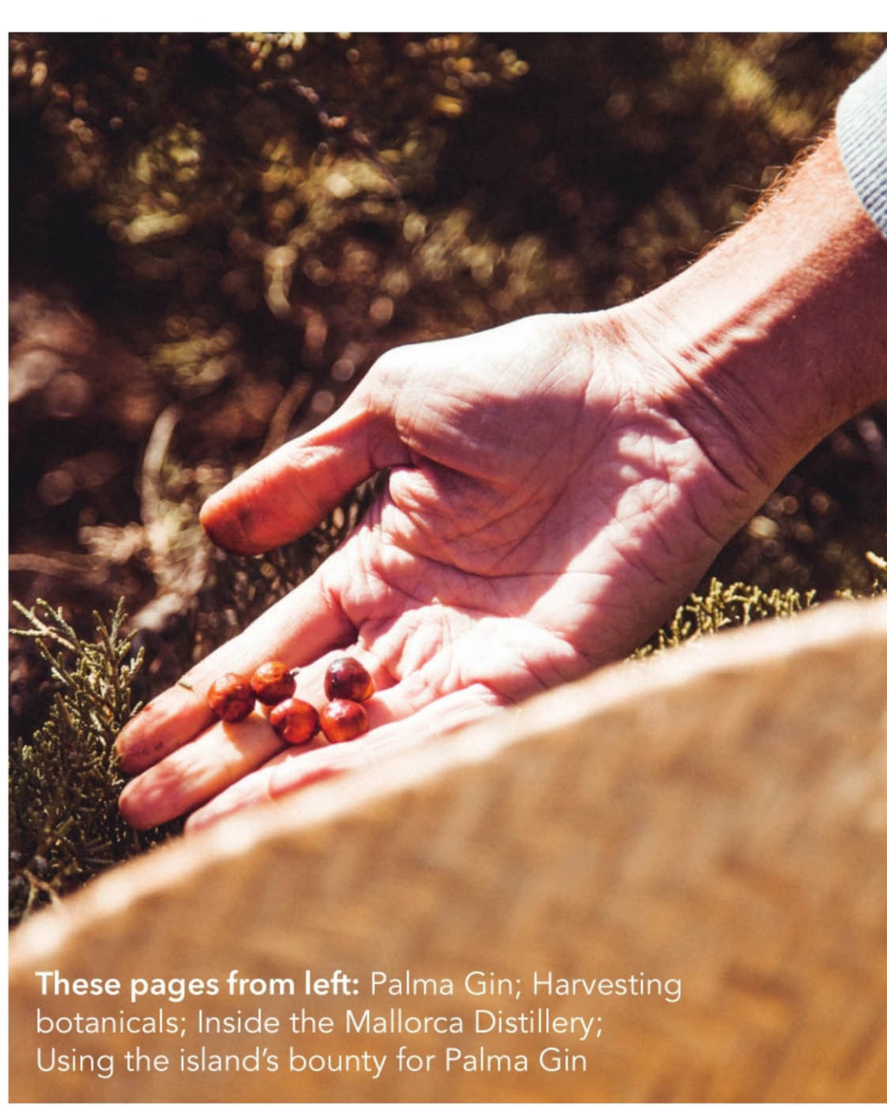
From Britain to the Balearics, we meet the couple shaking up Mallorca's craft gin scene

How many of us, in a quiet moment of frustration at the drudgery of everyday life, have thought of moving to an island and setting up a gin distillery? Husband-and-wife team Byron and Amber Holland, for a start.

After five years working as crew on luxury yachts and sailing around the world, the couple, originally from Newcastle in north-east England, returned to the UK to start a bar and restaurant in Edinburgh. However, just 18 months in – and despite the venue's rip-roaring success – they felt the pull of the sun, sands and blue seas of the Med.

"We made the tough decision to put the restaurant up for sale. Within three months we had found a keen buyer, sold up and were on a plane back to one of our favourite places, Mallorca," says Byron. >>





These pages from left: Palma Gin; Harvesting botanicals; Inside the Mallorca Distillery; Using the island's bounty for Palma Gin

"During our time in Edinburgh we were actively involved in the alcohol industry and saw first-hand the rise of the craft distilling revolution, seeing some fantastic gins emerge onto the market. We were often invited into the breweries because of our bar and a lot of them were starting to expand into distilling. This is where we really started to research gin – the flavours, botanicals and distillation process – which then became a passion of ours."

After 18 months of preparation, and the birth of their first child, the couple founded the Mallorca Distillery in April 2018 – the first craft distiller in the island's capital, Palma. Around this time, head distiller James Gibbons joined the team. A chemical engineering graduate, James worked with a global coffee company before joining the newly founded Copper Rivet Distillery in Kent, where he learned the fundamentals of brewing and distilling. Byron adds, "It was important from the start for us to find a distiller with passion and an understanding of craft distilleries, so he was a perfect fit."

Mallorca Distillery officially opened in July 2018 and its first product, Palma Gin, launched two months later. It uses a base wheat spirit, made by a local organic producer, which is macerated with juniper and orange, lemon and lime peel; more delicate botanicals including almond flowers, lavender, orange leaves and tomato branches are vapour-infused during distillation. The gin is chill filtered before bottling, leaving it as crystal clear as the waters lapping the Mallorcan beaches.

In its first year on the shelves Palma Gin has become a multi-award winner. It is not just the spirit which has been lauded, but also its attractive bottle design – the pattern was inspired by traditional Mallorcan tiles, known as suelo hidraulico, and is printed onto the glass with organic paints, which therefore makes the bottles eco-friendly and totally recyclable.

The couple are, quite rightly, chuffed with their success. Byron says, "A lot of love, time and tears have gone into the creation of this brand and even though we may be a little late to the distillery revolution, we want to put ourselves and Mallorca on the map as producers of high-quality premium spirits."

FROM BUSH TO BOTTLE

Working in harmony with the island they call home has been important to Byron and Amber from the start of Mallorca Distillery. Byron says, "We work with two organic farmers and an Agrotourismo estate on the island that provide us with eight of the botanicals we need to make Palma Gin, which really allows us to sustain ourselves from the island. The farmers are extremely passionate and always full of suggestions when it comes to the use of their produce. Despite the abundance of fresh oranges and lemons on the island, nobody seemed to be growing limes – another of our botanicals – so now our farmer is growing the only limes on the island just for our distillery. Our tomato farmer is a specialist in his field and has now started to plant coriander to harvest the seeds for our distillations in the future.



Hitting the barrel

Rather than taking the route of many gin distillers for a second expression and getting fruity, Mallorca Distillery decided to go barrel-aged.

"I have always loved working with barrels and barrel-aged spirits, and found barrel-aged gins a bit of a curiosity," head distiller, James Gibbons explains. "With so many wineries on the island, we were spoilt for choice when it came to barrels; they often go unsold and as a result are really good value for money."

James said the distillery uses veteran barrels – on their fifth or even sixth fill – and goes for a shorter aging period "to make the most of the wine, rather than the oak". It's aged with added vanilla, cinnamon and cloves, which help to tie Palma Gin's citrussy profile to the richer red fruit and spiced notes from the barrels.

But never fear, pink gin fans: Mallorca Distillery is exploring options, but in a way which fits with its local and sustainable values – so no strawberries, raspberries or rhubarb.

Last year the distillery also launched an organic vodka, blended with Mallorcan flor de sal (sea salt) for a smooth, slightly sweet spirit.



Those distilled botanicals get returned back to one of the farmers for use in animal feed."

The couple's self-sustaining approach suits island life well, but there are some items that are harder to source. "Sometimes the reality of being in the middle of the Mediterranean is apparent – we have to take care to ensure we have sufficient spare equipment on site, as it can be difficult to get replacements at short notice," says Byron. "But opening the distillery in Mallorca definitely has its advantages, not only with the beautiful Mediterranean climate but also with the quality of our work and personal life."

Since launching Byron and Amber have focused on their local audience, setting up sales and distribution channels on Mallorca, but international demand has been supercharged by their spirits' popularity and critical acclaim. Mallorca Distillery products are now available in Spain, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK (following a launch in partnership with department store chain Fenwick in December 2019).

BY THJIS KLAVERSTEIN

Genever distilling returns to Weesp

Genever makes a comeback in the city after a 135-year absence



Genever distilling is set to return to the city of Weesp in spring 2020 with the opening of a new craft distillery, Anker Weesp.

Surpassed long ago by Schiedam, Weesp once was the largest genever city in the Netherlands. In the 17th century, Amsterdam banished all distilleries from its city limits. Most of them moved to nearby Weesp. The fleet of the Dutch East India Company, based in the nation's capital, distributed Weesp genever all over the world. When the East India Company was dissolved in 1799, it contributed greatly to the demise of Weesp as a genever hub.

"In the Dutch golden age we had 30 to 40 distilleries," says Christian Pfeiffer, co-founder of Anker Weesp. "It's a part of our city's history that has always intrigued me." Pfeiffer and his wife Silvia are now reviving a small part of the genever tradition in Weesp. Together they run a windmill which processes a variety of grains. After stumbling upon an old Weesp genever recipe from the 1630s, the couple decided to bring genever back to their hometown. Anker Weesp is named after the last surviving distillery in Weesp, which closed its doors in 1885.



These pages from bottom left: Anker Weesp genever; The Dutch Anker Weesp distillery; Christian and Silvia Pfeiffer; Kalkwijck Distillers' genever

Anker Weesp will be a small producer, setting up shop in the historic Saint Laurentius Church in the city centre where it will be joined by beer brewery Wispe. Initially the couple expect to produce about 200 bottles a month. "To me it is important to revive the story of genever production in Weesp, maybe even more so than the genever itself," says Pfeiffer.

In recent years, Pfeiffer has produced the first batches of Anker Weesp genever at a friendly distillery located in a nearby city, respecting the ancient recipe from the 17th century. Made from barley, wheat and rye, Anker Weesp is an unaged 100-per-cent malt wine genever with a grain-forward flavour profile. Only a few botanicals are used: juniper berries, liquorice root and orange. "Those were fairly expensive botanicals for







their time, indicating genever indeed was a luxury product back in the day," Pfeiffer says.

Anker Weesp is made from local grains in limited batches. Because of the desire to be as environmentally friendly as possible, Anker Weesp is initially only being sold locally and almost exclusively distributed by bicycle or public transport.

KALKWIJCK TARGETS WHISKY DRINKERS WITH NEW GENEVERS

Kalkwijck Distillers, a single estate distillery in the east of the Netherlands, has released two genevers aimed at whisky drinkers. Its Rye Genever and Oude Genever, finished in an ex-Islay cask, are designed to bridge a gap between genever and whisky.

There are hardly any genever distilleries producing their spirit from grain to glass, but Kalkwijck truly qualifies as a single estate distillery. Situated in a farmhouse from 1904, the distillery is surrounded by almost 75 acres of farmland. Since it was founded 11 years ago, Kalkwijck has built a steady and loyal following.

"We exhibit at a lot of whisky festivals and wanted to offer something that would appeal to whisky drinkers," says Christian Broekhuizen, who runs Kalkwijck Distillers with his wife and master distiller Lisanne Benus. "The term Islay is something that rings a bell with them – it is the home of many well-known peated whiskies."

Kalkwijck Oude Genever Islay Cask Finish is a malt wine genever with minimal botanical influence from juniper berries, aniseed, citrus and liquorice root. More than half of the mash bill consists of malted barley, with rye and corn rounding out the recipe. After an initial maturation of one year in French oak Oloroso sherry casks, the genever was finished in a whisky cask that previously held single malt whisky from an undisclosed Islay distillery.

The Islay Cask Finish genever is smooth and grainy with a subtle peatiness that becomes more pronounced on the palate. "There needs to be a balance between botanicals, cask and our grain spirit," says Broekhuizen. "If the cask or the botanicals start to overpower the spirit, we feel it is no longer what genever is supposed to be. A healthy grain influence is very important to us."

The mash bill of Kalkwijck Rye Genever largely consists of rye, but also includes corn and malted barley. Botanicals such as juniper, liquorice root, coriander and aniseed give the genever more depth. It is aged in 300-litre new American oak casks, imparting a certain spiciness to the genever. "Rye is one of the most difficult crops to work with," says Broekhuizen. "If you do it right, the results are amazing. Rye gives our genever an interesting earthiness, but because we also try to distil a fairly clean spirit, there's an inherent fruitiness that pops up."

BY IAN WISNIEWSKI

ALL ABOUT JUNIPER

The art and science behind gin's biggest star

We keep discussing the same topics, whether life, love or politics, but the terminology at our disposal is always evolving as newcomers compete with the existing line-up: 'on trend' as opposed to 'fashionable,' or 'curated' rather than 'selected'. These terms are repeated in the mainstream, while other innovations are confined to select circles. The gin community, for example, refers to gins that deliver a distinct juniper character as 'juniper forward'.

However, juniper has a particular status as gin regulations stipulate that "the taste is predominantly that of juniper".

The most familiar source of juniper is Italy, particularly Tuscany and Umbria, though various European countries including Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo and Albania also provide a home for it. Being adaptable and resilient means that whether the terrain is woodland or rocky, it's of no consequence to juniper.

The annual schedule sees bushes flowering from January to April, with the colour of the flowers being significant. Yellow flowers indicate a male plant, while green are female. Their union is facilitated by wind, transporting vital male components to pollinate female flowers, which subsequently develop into berries. Initially green, the berries turn blue, purple and black as they mature over 18 months.

Berries are gathered from the wild by experienced collectors between September and January. Harvesting requires a selective approach as juniper bushes bear berries at different stages of maturity – some are ready, others will be ready for the following harvest. To detach the former, but not the latter, branches are agitated by gloved hands and a stick. >>

Production

Collectors deliver berries to a local processing house, where dust and loose needles are removed by blowing air on them, while triple-sifting sorts the berries into small, medium and large sizes.

Berries are subsequently dried to reduce the moisture level from around 24-32% to 16-18%. This is vital, enabling storage for two to three years without the risk of micro-bacterial growth. There are two drying methods: 'natural' air drying, which is traditional at Xoriguer, where juniper berries arranged in open boxes spend two years in ventilated warehouses; or utilising hot air, which dries the berries in a far shorter time.

Tommy Haughton, director of botanicals supplier Beacon Commodities, says, "Hot air at around 35-45°C is channeled at various angles to dry every part of the berries. The key is to gently remove moisture from the surface of the berries, not the centre. Drying lasts four to five hours, followed by a rest period of around four hours, when remaining moisture emanates from the centre of the berries to the surface, and then there's a further four to five hours of drying. It's vital not to 'cook' the berries or dry them too quickly, which makes them shrivel and risks damaging essential oils as well as tainting the flavour."

Dried berries are packed in hessian sacks, which offer the advantage of withdrawing and absorbing any remaining moisture from the berries while also maximising air circulation. This is how juniper berries arrive in the UK, with each hessian sack containing 25kg. UK suppliers such as Beacon Commodities deal directly with collectors and processing houses, as well as distillers who can specify the drying method and country of origin.

"We traditionally source juniper berries from Italy, predominantly Tuscany, which are naturally air-dried, and this is a vital part of our house style," says Joanne Moore, master distiller at G&J Distillers, owned by Quintessential Brands Group.

Specific origins inevitably raise the question of terroir, and how influential this may be. As juniperus communis is the variety used for distilling gin (some other varieties are toxic) this enables direct comparisons.

"Wherever juniper berries are sourced from they contain the same range of flavour compounds, though these can be at different intensities depending on the terroir. I place more focus on how the berries are processed after the harvest, particularly drying, rather than the terroir," says Tommy Haughton.

On arrival at a distillery juniper berries are shown straight to the lab, where the level of essential oils is checked. "Essential oils are made up of many different flavour compounds, though it's several key compounds that provide the typical juniper character, including camphor, citrus, floral, herbs, spice and sweetness," says Joanne Moore.

During distillation a vital factor is the volatility (i.e. boiling point) of different flavour compounds, which varies significantly. Lighter flavour compounds become volatile (i.e. turn into vapour form) at relatively lower temperatures as they are physically lighter. As the temperature in a pot still rises during distillation,



These pages from left: Picking juniper berries; Juniper berries packed into a still





progressively richer compounds which are physically heavier become volatile.

Once in vapour form flavour compounds are carried by alcohol vapours, which act as a taxi service as they ascend to the condenser.

Each botanical contains a range of flavour compounds, from lighter to richer, which become volatile at different temperatures and stages of the distillation run. The 'spirit cut' (see Gin Magazine issue one) enables the distiller to select the desired range of characteristics from the medley on offer.

Meeghan Murdoch, operations manager at Eight Lands Organic Speyside Spirits, says, "Heavy, oily, slightly rubbery pine or turpentine notes come over at the beginning of distillation, which are discarded as the heads. We start collecting the spirit cut when citrus notes appear – these are lemon, lime and orange, combined rather than appearing separately, together with lighter pine notes, which then lead on to rooty, orris notes. When the spirit shows more earthy, mushroom notes we stop collecting the spirit cut and move to tails, which are discarded."

While each botanical is renowned for contributing an individual note, that doesn't mean one botanical has an exclusive claim on any particular flavour.

Joanne Moore says, "There is some overlap between botanicals. Citrus notes, for example, are of course derived from lemon peel but can also be present in botanicals such as coriander and juniper. Each of these botanicals contributes citrus with slightly different nuances, and they combine to create a rounder and broader range of citrus character."

BY AARON KNOLL

Cool as a cucumber

From humble salad vegetable to popular botanical, Aaron Knoll explores the charms and challenges of cucumber

(A belated) Happy Lunar New Year! 2020 is the Year of the Rat on the Chinese zodiac. But to start off this year's botanical profiles, we're going to go back in time. If there was a gin zodiac, 1999 would have surely been the Year of the Cucumber. That was the year that both Martin Miller's Gin and Hendrick's Gin made their debuts. These mainstays on the international gin scene have paved the way for the explosion of contemporary gins with their playful use of vegetables.

Both gins add cucumber essence after distillation. This is a particularly smart move for two reasons. First, cucumber and juniper go together like gin and tonic – it's a (nearly) perfect pairing. Second, cucumber is a tricky ingredient to distil with. Cucumber, like many culinary vegetables, has many aroma active compounds that contribute to its flavour. Two of these compounds in particular are of primary importance: (E)-2-nonenal and (E,Z)-2,6-nonadienal.

On its own, (E,Z)-2,6-nonadienal smells like cucumber "with a hint of meat fat". (E)-2-nonenal sampled on its own has a "cardboard" flavour. When these two flavours combine, the result is sweet and fruity, redolent of fresh cucumber.

These two compounds have differing boiling points and differing solubilities in ethanol and water, which brings us to an important point about distillation. When ethanol vapour passes through plant matter at a specific temperature, the aroma and flavour-containing volatiles are evaporated and then re-condensed. Differing boiling points means not all volatiles in a botanical will evaporate at the same ratios as they are found in the fresh plant material.

If you've ever tasted single botanical distillates at a distillery before, you might have noticed that some distillates taste different from the ingredients they are made from. This volatility – often measured in vapour pressures and/or boiling points – is a limiting factor that distillers must work with when designing their gin's botanical bill. You may fall in love with the flavour of an ingredient, but translating it to a spirit isn't always as easy as peel and distil.

To capture the flavour of cucumber in its purest form, Martin Miller's and Hendrick's used an essence, which they added after distillation. This treats the cucumber in a way that best preserves its flavour. >>

"Cucumber and juniper go together like gin and tonic – it's a (nearly) perfect pairing"

Source: The Good Scents Company excerpting from Moscian, Gerard in Perfumer and Flavourist (1996) J. Inst. Brew. 116(1), 41–48, 2010 Ibid, "Some combinations did not only show synergistic effects, but also changes in the sensory perception of components in combination."

To understand more about why an essence would work so well, we need to take a closer look at essences. They come in many forms. Some essences are water-based and created by distilling botanicals in the presence of water. This has the advantage of a different steam temperature (water boils at 100°C while ethanol boils at 78.37°C), but also the end result will better capture water-soluble volatiles. Other essences might simply be high-proof ethanol that has had the ingredient macerated in it for an amount of time. In other words, when you see the word "essence", be aware that there are a lot of different approaches that could be captured under this umbrella.

However, that is not the only way to capture the flavour of cucumber. Here's a small sample of distillers working with cucumber and how they are adding the flavour to their gin:



This page: Enjoying a gin with a refreshing slice of cucumber; Martin Miller's Gin; Whitley Neill; Hendrick's Gin



DURHAM DISTILLERY, NORTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES

Conniption American Dry Gin, Conniption Navy Strength Gin and its ready-to-drink gin and tonic all include cucumber. While most of the botanicals are vapour-distilled on Durham Distillery's 230-litre pot still, the cucumber is processed individually on a 20-litre rotovap at room temperature.

CAMBRIDGE DISTILLERY, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND, UNITED KINGDOM

Known for its low-temperature distillation capabilities, Cambridge Distillery has experimented with delicate botanicals before. Its Japanese Gin showcases several delicate ingredients, including sansho, shiso and cucumber. They are individually vacuum-distilled and blended together.

ROGUE SPIRITS DISTILLERY, OREGON, UNITED STATES

Rogue has been around since 2003 and its flagship Spruce Gin, while about the spruce, is equally about the cucumber. More than 1,300kg of fresh cucumbers are hand-harvested and hand-peeled each season, and it takes just under 50kg of cucumbers for a single batch of gin. All the botanicals (whole cucumbers included) are macerated and distilled together.

NOSFERATU DISTILLERY, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

It might be fair to say that the signature botanical of Nosferatu Distillery's Mandrake Gin is mandrake, not cucumber, but that's not to say care isn't taken. Delicate botanicals such as mint and cucumber are infused after distillation to avoid boiling them and preserve their delicate character.

WINSTON QUINN, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

Winston Quinn makes four gins, but it's its Slim Crop Gin that is a cucumber lover's dream. Paired with a sparse five other botanicals, including juniper and signature Australian botanical lemon myrtle, the distillation ratio of 11kg of cucumber per litre puts it in competition with Rogue Spirits Distillery for the highest quantity of cucumber per bottle of gin you can buy.

Other Gins with Cucumber: Gordon's Crisp Cucumber Gin, Long Table Distillery Cucumber Gin, Romeo's Gin, Far North Spirits 'Gustaf' Navy Strength Gin, Sator Square Distillery American Dry Gin, The English Drinks Company Cucumber Gin, Tiny Bear Distillery The Gypsy, Whitley Neill Aloe and Cucumber Gin, The No. 13 In Flames Signature Craft Gin

It's also worth pointing out that cucumber on its own is flavourful enough to drive a "botanical spirit" or flavoured vodka. There are many brands doing great work with cucumber despite not including juniper. Here is a small selection: Žufánek 'Salad Cucumber', Ketel One Botanical Cucumber and Mint, English Spirit Cucumber Spirit and Ceder's Distilled Crisp Non-Alcoholic Gin.






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BY KAYLEIGH RATTLE

NEW GINS ON THE BLOCK

From blackberry-filled bottles to heritage botanicals, we take a look at some of the exciting new gins which are set to cause a stir in 2020 and beyond

New year, new you, new favourite gin – that's how the saying goes, isn't it? If, like us, you're in the market to discover a new gin or two, uncovering the perfect tipple to tickle your taste buds couldn't be easier thanks to a whole host of recently launched flavoursome, innovative and experimental gins. Here we take a look at some of the latest launches shaking up the industry. >>

MANCHESTER GIN BLACKBERRY INFUSED GIN

The sixth and latest release from award-winning Manchester-based distillers Manchester Gin is bursting with British summer flavours. Infused with blackberry juice, alongside many of the key botanicals which make up Manchester Gin's signature blend such as locally-foraged dandelion and burdock root, this new jewel-toned gin is guaranteed to quench thirsts. "Our aim was to create a bold, unmistakably blackberry gin, so we're really proud of Blackberry Infused," explains Manchester Gin's master distiller and co-founder Seb Healey. "We've maintained a high ABV and a clear gin character that's both juniper forward and carefully balanced with the blackberries. Its rich and warm flavour is perfect for cocktails, or a G&T that's brimming with flavour." *www.manchestergin.co.uk*

WHITLEY NEILL GOOSEBERRY GIN

Ever wished you could bottle up the scents and aromas of the British countryside? Eighth-generation gin distiller Whitley Neill has achieved exactly that with the launch of its fresh and zingy Gooseberry Gin. A flavoursome affair, the gin offers top notes of cinnamon, pear and apple which give way to a subtle, sweet spice. Fans of the distillers' brightly coloured bottles will be pleased to hear this new flavour comes in a striking green bottle. *www.whitleyneill.com*

"Ever wished you could bottle up the scents and aromas of the British countryside?"









NO.3 GIN

While this award-winning classic London dry gin isn't exactly new to the market – it has won the International Spirits Challenge 'Best in Class' Gin Trophy an impressive four times – its bottle has recently undergone an elegant redesign. Now housed in a clear turquoise bottle, complete with a metal key, this juniper-led floral and spicy gin is one to keep on display, or for impressing guests. *www.no3gin.com*

CANAÏMA GIN

From the makers of Venezuela's Diplomatico Rum, Canaïma Gin is made with handpicked botanicals sustainably sourced from the Amazon rainforest by indigenous communities. Of the 19 botanicals which comprise this small batch gin, 10 come from the Amazon, including everything from merey (cashew) and acai berries to fruits native to the rainforest such as uva de palma and túpiro. These sit alongside more traditional botanicals including grapefruit, orange and passion fruit. As well as ensuring sustainable ingredient sourcing, the team behind this new gin is putting 10 per cent of the global profits back into conserving the Amazon. *www.canaimagin.com*

TWO MOONS GIN

If you're looking for a London dry gin with a difference, Two Moons from Hong Kong could be just the tipple for you. Produced in small batches – currently only 100 bottles at a time – it incorporates a blend of botanicals from around the world. What's more, a number of these are of Asian origin, such as Chinese apricot kernel. The distillery maintains a zero-waste policy, with any used botanicals from the distillation process turned into organic fertilisers and donated to local urban farms.
www.twomoonsdistillery.com

BOLNEY ESTATE GIN

Bolney Estate has made a name for itself in English wine, but now it looks set to follow this up with its very own gin. On top of offering delicate flavours resonant of the British countryside and allotments – think

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These pages from left: The Old Curiosity Distillery Wild Gin; Manchester Gin Blackberry Infused Gin; Whitley Neill Gooseberry Gin; No. 3 Gin

hawthorn leaves and fennel – this intriguing gin is also driven by a swathe of fragrant and spicy botanicals, including bay leaf, caraway seed and coriander seed. Not only that, it also comprises a base spirit made partly from unused press grapes. Certainly one to look out for! *www.bolneywineestate.com*

THE OLD CURIOSITY DISTILLERY WILD GIN

Scotland's The Old Curiosity Distillery benefits from an idyllic location: situated within the Secret Herb Garden, a botanical nursery just outside of Edinburgh, the distillery is able to take full advantage of all manner of botanicals which grow there. Wild Gin is distilled with nine wild botanicals: sweet cicely, bog myrtle, dwarf birch, angelica root, winter savory, wood avens, sweet woodruff, yarrow and nettle. Nature enthusiasts will love the fact that the gin's wooden packaging can be reused as a bird box, and the bottle's swing tag is infused with plantable British wildflower seeds. As well as tasting delicious, Wild Gin also has a charitable bent – 20 per cent of proceeds will go to RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) Scotland to aid their work in protecting threatened peatland. *www.theoldcuriosity.co.uk*

BASHALL SPIRITS GIN

For a taste of British history look no further than Lancashire-based Bashall Spirits, which has unveiled a number of exciting new gins for 2020. Based on a number of historic recipes that have been passed down the family over the years, as well as the land and traditions of Lancashire, flavours in its range include Orange and Quince, Damson and Elderberry and Parkin Cake. *www.bashallspirits.co.uk*

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BY EMMA STOKES

SAYING SOMETHIN' STUPID LIKE I LOVE YOU

Like the classic song, gin cocktails and The Savoy's American Bar are a duet that have proven a hit over countless decades

Inspired by the famous Frank and Nancy Sinatra song Somethin' Stupid, the 10th cocktail on the current American Bar menu is a cocktail duet. Called the I Love You, the serve mirrors the relationship between gin and one of the best bars in the world – historic, playful and fully designed to remove your inhibitions.

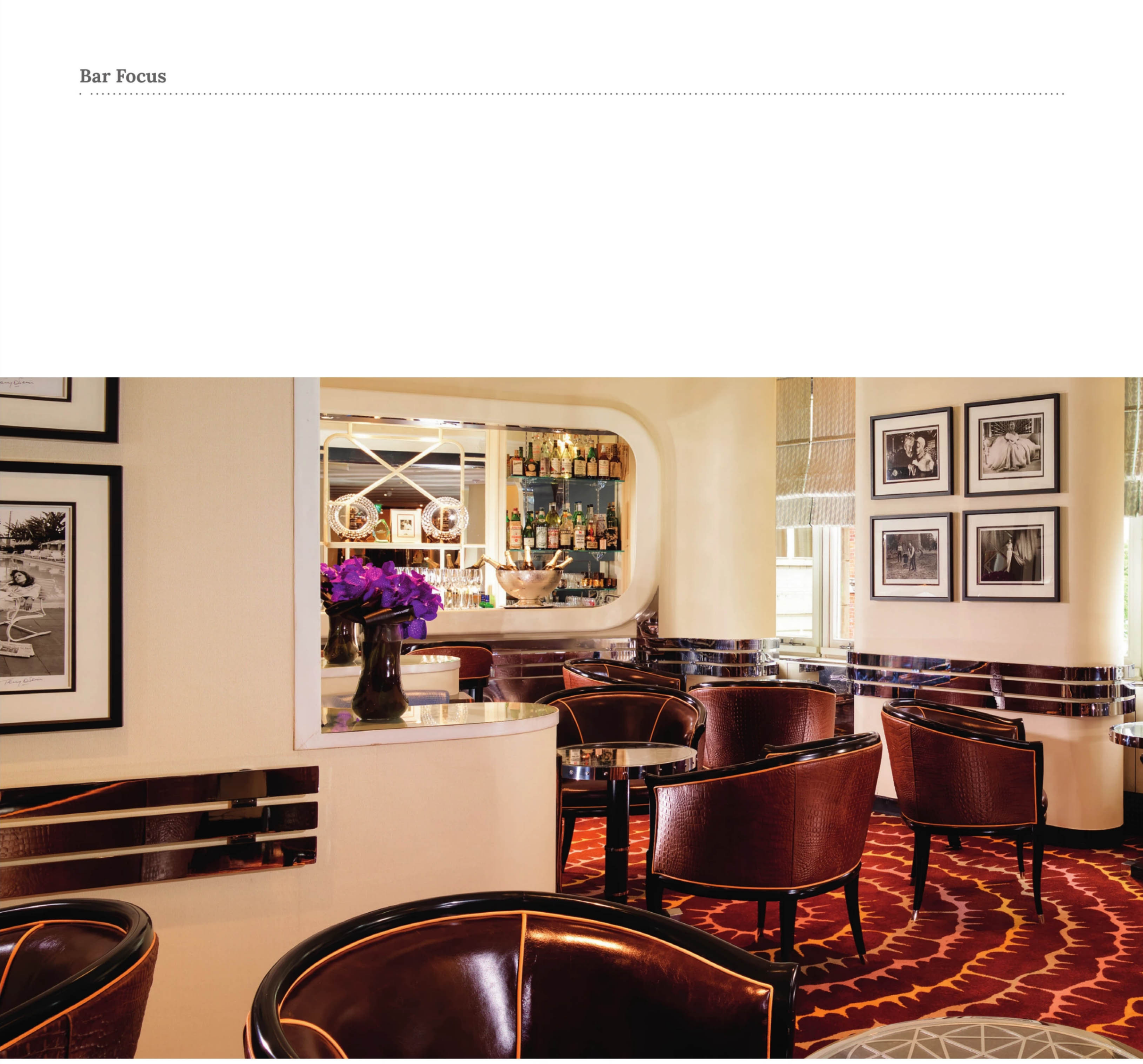
To step through the Art Deco-inspired American Bar at The Savoy, like Sinatra did so many times, is to step through a room of liquid history. Opened in 1893, it is said to be the longest-standing cocktail bar in the world. It is certainly one of the most awarded, most recently winning World's Best Bar in two prestigious competitions: Tales of the Cocktail, Spirited Awards in 2018 and World's 50 Best Bars in 2017.

Traditionally, 'American bar' was the name given to a bar serving American-style drinks (what we would now describe as cocktails) in the 1800s. Two centuries on, the American Bar remains old school; libations are delivered around the Art Deco room as resident pianists tinkle the ivories.
"It's as much a piano bar as a cocktail bar," muses director of bars Declan McGurk. In modern definition, however, the American Bar at The Savoy must be the most famous 'American bar' in the world.

A bar is only as good as its drinks, and the American Bar's menu is juniper forward. From the classic cocktails made famous in The Savoy Cocktail Book – more than 50 per cent of the recipes contain gin – to those created by current teams for each new menu, and even vintage cocktails made with spirits from decades past, gin fans will have plenty to discover upon visiting.

Once, menus at the American Bar were largely concerned with the classics that had made the hotel famous. However, in 2017, a >>





now-iconic partnership between McGurk and (at the time) head bartender Erik Lorincz directed a shift towards innovation. After all, when so many classic cocktails are well known the world over, it seemed a wasted opportunity to include them on the menu of one of the world's best-known bars. And so, inspired by stories from the bar, the duo created a new menu designed to engage their guests in a new way. It worked – not long after, the American Bar was named number one in the World's 50 Best Bars list.

The cocktail menu that you'll find in the bar today is the result of months of work by the team. "We first start by thinking about what our guests would appreciate, and from there we select the right theme," explains current head bartender Maxim Schulte. Titled The Savoy Songbook, it takes inspiration from the baby grand piano which sits in the centre of the room and the unique ambience created by the resident pianist Joe Nickoll.

The menu includes many styles of drinks, from gimlets to highballs and gin sours. There's the I Love You, a duet of two drinks featuring a cocktail of Bombay Sapphire, Old Duff Genever, verjus, egg white and citrus husk syrup. Or there's current best seller the Electric Lover, inspired by Prince and Purple Rain: a gin highball featuring Hendrick's Gin, quince liqueur, mint, lime, cinnamon syrup, prosecco and (perhaps surprisingly) edible glitter.

From past menus, Schulte remembers the popular gin-based First Impression, a combination of Bombay Sapphire, yuzu wine, St Germain elderflower liqueur infused with white pepper and a champagne cordial. Stirred like a gimlet, it was created by past bartender Dominic Whisson for their menu Every Moment Tells a Story, celebrating the photographer Terry O'Neill, whose work now decorates the bar.

Other than the menu, I'd argue that a trip



These pages, clockwise from main image: The American Bar at The Savoy; a selection of cocktails from the American Bar

to the American Bar is incomplete without a martini. Having tried gin martinis in bars across the world, the ones stirred up by the team here are among the best. Crisp, silky smooth and beautifully aromatic, the key for Schulte is simplicity – balance, with the right vermouth – and The Savoy is lucky enough to have its own. “We use our own Cocchi Dry Vermouth and our own bitters. The ratio of spirit and vermouth for us is important and with the second batch of our vermouth we had to adjust the recipe.”

Gin fans checking out the selection on the back bar will find a carefully chosen collection to suit the diverse tastes of customers. “I like to have most of the classic gins like Plymouth, Tanqueray and Bombay Sapphire,” says Schulte. “The other gins are then selected to be special and unique, for example Schrödinger’s Katzen Gin from Germany or Boatyard Gin from Ireland.”

For those looking for a totally unique gin experience, you can explore the bar’s vintage cocktails – but check the prices with the bartenders before you order! These cocktails are created with vintage spirits – it currently has vintage Gordon’s and Booths on offer – which can be mixed into a Hanky Panky, White Lady or Negroni. With the Booths no longer in production, it’s a chance to taste liquid history. Schulte, who has the task

>>







of sampling the vintage gins to determine which cocktails they should feature in, explains what to expect: "They are a bit more smooth after all these years, so I guess there has been some evaporation. But the gins were definitely produced differently than today; the flavour is exceptional, I think."

For many young bartenders, their first experience of the American Bar and The Savoy will be through the world-famous Savoy Cocktail Book, written by Harry Craddock in 1930 and considered to be one of the first books to catalogue cocktail recipes. With more than 700 recipes listed, from the well-known to the forgotten classics and the downright bonkers, they were just some of the supposed 2,000 recipes that Craddock chronicled on index cards during his time behind the bar.

One of his most famous creations, the White Lady, was adapted from a recipe by Harry MacElhone and remains a favourite to this day. It is said that Craddock buried a White Lady cocktail in a flask in one of the walls of the American Bar when he stepped down as head bartender, a hallmark of his for years to come. While other flasks he hid at The Dorchester were discovered decades later, the flask hidden at the American Bar has never been found, even during its refurbishment in 2010.

American Bar alumna Ada Coleman remains the most well-known female bartender of all time. Not only is she the only female to hold the head bartender role, but during her tenure from 1903 to 1926 women weren't often seen in the bar, let alone behind one. Her gin-based cocktail the Hanky Panky is still extremely popular, according to Schulte. "We have many guests that come to try our version, and sit at the bar just for that one drink."

With all this history around them, Schulte and his team still focus on old-school hospitality. "I find all my interactions with our guests special," he says. "In the end this is the reason that I love my job." This is why many, including myself, love the American Bar. There is something quite special about pulling up a bar stool and being made a gin cocktail by a team who understand the gravitas and the history around them, who are passionate about leaving their own legacies through the cocktails they create and the memories that they help their guests to forge. Memories that couldn't be spoiled, even by saying somethin' stupid like "I love you".







This page, clockwise from left: A martini; An ice-cold gin and tonic; The vast selection at the American Bar




KOLIBRI
TAILORED BY YOU
Strawberry & Basil
Deliciously blended lightly sparkling drink for you to tailor with Kolibri Drops
ALCOHOL FREE

BY **DAVID T. SMITH**

Maximise your mocktails

Choosing low and no alcohol gin alternatives for a cocktail doesn't mean you have to compromise on taste

Trends come and go in the drinks industry just like many others, but one trend that seems to be in the ascendency and has been for some time is the no and low alcohol sector. Individuals might choose a no or low alcohol option for a multitude of reasons: they might be teetotal, the designated driver, or might simply fancy a non-alcoholic drink between boozy alternatives. Whatever the reason, the days of your only choice being between a cola, orange juice or lemonade and lime look like they may be numbered.

Up until now, one of the main problems with non-alcoholic drinks served both at home or in bars and restaurants is that the attention to detail, glassware and garnish does not compare to the love given to alcoholic variations. One simple but effective tip for improving your serves at home is to serve a soft drink in a gin and tonic balloon glass with plenty of ice and a fun garnish. It not only looks better, but provides the drinker with a more enjoyable experience, especially if their companions are happily enjoying elaborate cocktails.

There are also lots of new products on the market that move beyond simple sparkling soft drinks, including some that get close to classic gin drinks, meaning that low/no alcohol no longer means no or low taste.

G&T ALTERNATIVES

Low Alcohol

HAYMAN'S SMALL GIN

Released in summer 2019, Hayman's Small Gin is a unique innovation in the no and low sector. The gin comes in a 200ml bottle and is 43% ABV, so it meets the required alcoholic strength for a gin, but through a special, slow distilling process, the boffins at Hayman's have turbocharged the flavour. As a result, you only need to use 5ml of the spirit to produce a typical gin and tonic. Each bottle also comes with its own metal thimble to use as a measure – it is recommended to use one thimbleful with 100ml of tonic, but as I usually use a 150ml can of tonic, I used a thimble and a half.

1.5 thimbles (7.5ml) Hayman's Small Gin
150ml tonic water

A typical gin and tonic of a 43% ABV gin would usually work out at just under 11% ABV; in comparison, the Hayman's Small Gin and tonic works out at about 2% ABV. The 200ml bottle will make 40 drinks based on 5ml for 100ml of tonic. For such a small amount of gin it is surprising how much flavour comes through, in particular flavours of juniper, angelica, and citrus. This is a well-balanced product and definitely one worth seeking out and trying.

>>



This page from left: Temperance by Portobello Road; Kolibri Elderflower and Lime; Borrago Non-Alcoholic Spirit

TEMPERANCE

From the creators of Portobello Road Gin, Temperance is bottled at 4.2% ABV and is described as "a lower alcohol spirit for gin lovers". It is made using the same nine botanicals as Portobello Road Gin, including cassia, nutmeg and orange. Directions on the bottle suggest using it as you would a gin.

50ml Temperance Lower Alcoholic Spirit
150ml tonic water

Temperance produces a particularly fresh and leafy drink with notable hints of juniper and citrus. It is refreshing, with a slight crunchiness and a sprinkle of spiced notes.

GORDON'S GIN & TONIC FLAVOURED DRINKS

The well-known gin brand makes two "ultra-low" products bottled at under 0.5% ABV: one with a hint of lime and another with a hint of grapefruit. They can be enjoyed straight from the bottle, but I think they are best appreciated in a big glass with plenty of ice and an attractive garnish.

The grapefruit version is slightly floral and I thought it worked well with grapefruit peel and – if I'm feeling decadent – a thin slice of vanilla pod, which helps to bring out some delicious chocolatey notes. The lime version is brighter and zestier; I like to garnish it with orange or lemon to add a little sweetness.

No Alcohol

SEEDLIP SPICE & GRAPEFRUIT TONIC

This drink is pre-mixed and sold in 250ml cans. It has a crisp flavour – woody and spiced with zesty grapefruit and a good level of fizz. When served over ice, the drink really opens up and the flavours become more complex with a lingering fruitiness.

NEGRONI ALTERNATIVES

This recipe is courtesy of Seedlip and also uses their sister brand, Aecorn, a range of non-alcoholic vermouth-like products.

25ml Seedlip Spice
25ml Aecorn Bitter
25ml Aecorn Aromatic

Seedlip Spice has woody and spiced flavours with a fair dose of clove, while the bright red Aecorn Bitter has a complex, earthy bitterness that is similar to Italian aperitifs like Campari. The Aecorn Aromatic is sweet and herbal with a lingering flavour of woody spice, similar to sweet or red vermouth. The combination of all three ingredients has the distinctive intense bitterness that is the trademark of a Negroni, along with a lingering finish. This drink is weighted towards woody, baking spice flavours, but this would change if you swapped out the Seedlip for another non-alcoholic spirit.

A pre-bottled version of Nogroni containing two servings is readily available from the Seedlip website.

MARTINI ALTERNATIVE

Low alcohol
50ml Temperance (ideally pre-chilled)
10ml Aecorn Dry

I am fond of an extremely cold Martini, so one concern I had about stirring this variation was that the Temperance would be over-diluted. I've taken to keeping it in the fridge to add to the drink's chill factor (in fact, this is recommended by the producers).

A low-alcohol variation on a Martini was always going to be a real test, because so much of a Martini's character comes from its alcoholic potency. While none of that is here, the other characteristics are – notably the dry crispness, light earthy bitterness from the wormwood and the over-smooth elegance of the cocktail. Even the desired silky texture is evident, thanks largely to the attention to detail from the team behind

Temperance, who have prioritised flavour, aroma and mouthfeel.

GIMLET ALTERNATIVE

50ml Temperance
1tsp sugar
Juice of half a lime

Combine ingredients in a cocktail shaker with ice and shake. Strain into a chilled Martini glass and garnish with a twist of lime peel.

This is probably one of the best low/no cocktails (as opposed to just combining with a mixer) that I have had: bright and complex with a delightful balance of sweet and sour, delicate hints of juniper and spice and a floral character that adds depth to the drink.

FRUIT CUP ALTERNATIVES

Pimm's and other fruit cups are popular in the summer months and, while a fully mixed fruit cup may only be 8-10% ABV, the following version is completely alcohol-free. It uses Borrago Non-Alcoholic Spirit, which is made from borage flowers – the original go-to garnish for fruit cups. The bright purple flowers are star-shaped and the leaves have a cucumber-like flavour.





Serves three
100ml Borrago #47 Paloma Blend
50ml Aecorn Aromatic
450ml sparkling lemonade

Fill a jug with ice and add a cucumber slice, mint, lemon and lime – add the first two ingredients and stir before topping up with lemonade. Serve in ice-filled glasses.

FRENCH '75

15ml Caleno Non-Alcoholic Spirit
1 sugar cube
2-3 dashes of rose flower water (optional)
75ml of low or non-alcoholic sparkling wine (such as Rawson's Retreat from Australia)

Add the Caleno to a champagne flute along with the sugar cube and rose water. Top up with the sparkling wine and garnish with a lemon twist.

I used Caleno in this cocktail as it has a rich, fruity and jammy character that contrasts neatly with the dryness of the wine. The drink is complex and refreshing with a delicate balance of floral and fruity flavours.

OTHER BOTANICAL DRINKS

Kolibri is a range of British sparkling waters that are free from artificial flavours, colours or sweeteners and are blended with flavours often found in gin drinks, such as strawberry and basil, elderflower and lime, and chilli and cardamom. The recommended serve is in a large gin and tonic glass, filled with ice and suitably garnished. While the liquid itself is unsweetened, each bottle comes with a small container of agave syrup that you can use to sweeten your drink to taste.

Taster biographies



Phoebe Calver
After studying English and Journalism at university, Phoebe has turned her hand to writing for the drinks industry. She splits her time between the UK and US as editor of *American Whiskey Magazine and Gin Magazine's sub-editor.*



David T. Smith
David T. Smith is an independent spirits writer and consultant who specialises in gin. He is a chair judge for a number of spirits competitions and has written widely on the subject, incuding *The Craft of Gin*, *Forgotten Spirits and Long Lost Liqueurs* and *Gin Tonica*. He was winner of the 2016 Gin Communicator of the Year award.

THE PROCESS

- All samples are blind tasted, with ABV and style the only information disclosed.
- Samples are tasted individually over a two-week period.
- Tasters are provided tasting and scoring guidelines for consistency.
- The top scorer is awarded Editor's Choice.
- Scores of 17+ receive a Recommended award.

Comte de Grasse
44°N
COMTE DE GRASSE DISTILLERY

EDITOR'S gin CHOICE

ABV: 44%
Country: FRANCE
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: This is immediately there with the aromatic spice, but it's not overpowering, slightly chai-like.
Palate: Those spices wrap you up in a warm hug. Chai latte in both spice and creaminess. Then the spice calms a little to reveal that earthy juniper, floral aromatics, like Turkish delight but not as intense, and rounded out with a citrus edge.
Finish: Delicately spiced and creamy to the end of time.
Comments: This is one punchy gin. Maybe I'm in a good mood, maybe it's heaven in a glass – who knows!

9.4

David

Nose: Indulgent and perfumed with distinctive aromas of rose and violet chocolate creams, backed up by a sprinkle of baking spice.
Palate: A restrained sweetness to start, mixed with warm, spicy cassia, nutmeg and oily juniper wood. Followed by rose and violet flavours mixed with raspberry, liquorice and coriander.
Finish: A gentle glow of alcohol is accompanied by flavours of dark chocolate and oily, zesty citrus peel.
Comments: Elegant and graceful with a delightful complexity.

9.5

Ableforth's
Bathtub Gin
ATOM SUPPLIES

ABV: 43%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Grainy, very grainy, like a Sunday filled with baking. There's a little baking spice coming through which is cut short by a hint of orange.
Palate: That orange zest doesn't make too much of itself, but does linger throughout. The palate is heavily juniper-forward, bringing out the earthy and root botanical notes of the gin.
Finish: Smooth and peppery, paying homage to those earthy notes right until the bitter end.
Comments: I think this would make a pretty lethal Negroni.

7.7

David

Nose: Pale straw in colour, this has buttery aromas of chocolate, orange and cinnamon cookies.
Palate: Oily in texture with the sweet earthiness of liquorice and angelica root. A gentle warmth in the middle of the palate that leads to notes of juniper and spice.
Finish: Citrus-forward with a floral zestiness that lingers on and on, joined by a light, peppery spice.
Comments: A pleasant gin, albeit a tad aggressive. It would pair well with ginger ale and a slice of lemon and orange.

7.6

Anno
Kent Dry Gin
ANNO DISTILLERS

ABV: 43%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Incredibly floral, like a market flower stall in the morning, and there's a definite citrus note lingering around the edges. I'm intrigued by what's next.
Palate: Those floral notes are right there, particularly perfumed and reminiscent of Parma Violets, before a little bit of heat enters in the form of cracked pepper.
Finish: This has a kick to it that I wasn't expecting to last.
Comments: A really enjoyable sip with strong, lingering flavours the perfectly pair with each other.

8.3

David

Nose: Vibrant and enticing aromas: plump, fruity notes accompanied by the elegant fragrance of fresh flower petals.
Palate: To start, flavours of raspberry and blackberry; not too sweet with a little leafiness. The jammy flavours continue on the palate along with vanilla and citrus pine.
Finish: Notes of zesty, freshly cracked coriander seeds add a spiciness to a long, lingering finish.
Comments: A complex gin with lots of layers. Fruity, but still dry, it would make a fine gin and tonic.

8.5

DISCOVER OVER 1,000 GINS AT **MASTER OF MALT**

Bottle price guide: **£11-20** (US$15-26) **£21-40** (US$27-53) **£41-60** (US$54-79) **£61-90** (US$80-119) **£91 plus** (US$120 plus)

Beefeater
London Garden
PERNOD RICARD

RECOMMENDED gin RECOMMENDED

ABV: 40%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Classic
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Fresh and classic upon our first introduction, but look a little deeper and it has a leafy and herbaceous way with it.
Palate: Again, the first sip is delightfully delicate, then it begins to follow through with a slip of lemon to complement the remaining herbal hit.
Finish: Some light floral lavender making an appearance. It's quite heavenly actually.
Comments: This kept me guessing throughout. It strikes me as the perfect addition to a cheeky little Martini.

8.9

David

Nose: A crisp nose with lime and a dash of minerality. A tiny hint of crème brûlée, too.
Palate: A superb, luxurious texture: the gin really fills the mouth and coats the tongue. Soft flavours of juniper and citrus linger on the palate.
Finish: Dry, with a delicate floral sweetness, woody pepper and a gentle, comforting alcohol warmth.
Comments: A lovely example of a classic gin. This has a restrained - almost understated - character that would make a handsome dry Martini.

8.8

Canaïma
Small Batch Gin
SPECIALITY BRANDS

RECOMMENDED gin RECOMMENDED

ABV: 47%
Country: VENEZUELA
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: One sniff of this is like walking into a wholefood store, straight up to the row of crystallised fruits.
Palate: Don't leave the store just yet; take a right turn into the spices. This is great; the fruits are still there, as is a little bit of pure citrus, combined with some light earthy notes.
Finish: Florality coming through from those delicate spices, lingering nicely.
Comments: Thanks to the variety of flavours in this gin, I wouldn't want to play around with it all that much. Add a little splash of tonic and sip away.

8.5

David

Nose: An exotic and unusual nose with bright citrus, creamy chocolate and a hint of saffron: a true symphony of aromas.
Palate: Succulent and juicy to start, with mandarin and citrus floral notes that develop into a fresh, green leafiness and, finally, some spice.
Finish: Perfumed notes are combined with the aromatic power of saffron that continues long into the finish.
Comments: A complex and powerful gin that would make a refreshingly different gin and tonic and has good Gimlet potential.

8.6

Deerness Distillery
Sea Glass Gin
DEERNESS DISTILLERY

RECOMMENDED gin RECOMMENDED

ABV: 43%
Country: SCOTLAND
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Quite traditional, which is actually very welcome. There's some lightly wooded juniper notes with the promise of fruit appearing soon.
Palate: Ah yes, it appears we have some fruit loaf, dry and delicate. The juniper is still running along nicely, but integrated with that now is that dried chewy fruit and a little bit of prickly heat.
Finish: The dryness continues on to the finish, but it remains pleasant with that earthy juniper.
Comments: This was simply lovely. Enjoy at your leisure.

8.8

David

Nose: A clean nose: gentle with quiet aromas of juniper, citrus and a touch of freshly baked bread.
Palate: A good, dry start with chocolatey, malty flavours and a clean, grainy quality. The character moves onto more leafy notes and a slight salinity reminiscent of cucumber and samphire.
Finish: A dry, slightly oily finish with piney juniper and a final flourish of rose petals.
Comments: An especially classic gin that is well-balanced and flavoursome. A solid all-rounder.

9.0



DISCOVER OVER 1,000 GINS AT **MASTER OF MALT**

Edinburgh Gin
Jasmine & Lemon
IAN MACLEOD DISTILLERS

RECOMMENDED gin RECOMMENDED

ABV: 40%
Country: SCOTLAND
Style: Flavoured
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Intriguing. This is quite heavily perfumed. The floral notes are nicely tamed by a thin layer of crisp lemon.
Palate: That perfumed jasmine is quite all-encompassing at first sip, but the combination of citrus in there has stopped it becoming too much. This reminds me of a less zingy lemon posset covered in decorative petals, which leave a lingering floral hint.
Finish: Rounded out by the remaining jasmine.
Comments: Really well done and a very pleasing gin to drink.

8.5

David

Nose: Dusky floral notes on the nose; delicate, but revealing themselves more and more as the gin opens up in the glass with hints of crisp citrus, too.
Palate: Warm citrus to start; juicy and jammy with a hint of creaminess. The middle of the palate is more typical with juniper and soft spice. A floral flourish leads back to lemon citrus flavours.
Finish: A clean finish with notes of mandarin before dry, floral notes of the jasmine.
Comments: Delicate, but with good flavour intensity. Would work well in a White Lady.

8.8

Edinburgh Gin
Watermelon & Lime
IAN MACLEOD DISTILLERS

RECOMMENDED gin RECOMMENDED

ABV: 40%
Country: SCOTLAND
Style: Flavoured
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Fresh – that punchy lime is making the sides of my tongue water, really nicely balanced with delicate juicy watermelon.
Palate: I'm craving Turkish delight. Like biting into a slice of watermelon before that zesty lime cuts right through and stops everything becoming too sweet.
Finish: I like that there is some light spice cutting through these strong fruity flavours. It's a bit special.
Comments: I'd like to knock this up into a bit of a punch, ready for those summer picnics I'm already craving!

9.2

David

Nose: Floral and fruity with aromas of Turkish delight, a zing of lime and succulent watermelon sorbet, before a hint of vanilla cake batter.
Palate: Soft sweetness is nicely balanced by the other elements of the gin: creamy spice such as nutmeg and cinnamon, followed by the freshness of cut watermelon.
Finish: A bright, zesty finish with lemon, lime and a hint of grapefruit. A lingering spiciness of cardamom and ginger.
Comments: A lovely example of a flavoured gin. A fine choice for a Gin & Tonic.

9.0

Fordington Gin
Gurt Lush
FORDINGTON GIN

ABV: 50%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Incredibly bold from the off, with a herbal edge to it, with a caraway note.
Palate: It's fennel which, I think, is offsetting the heat that could have been present due to the ABV. Mixed in with herbal notes, there appears to be some dark berry compote to add sweetness.
Finish: Something that I hadn't got before here is liquorice.
Comments: I really enjoyed this gin. It has a lot of punchy flavours, but considering the ABV it's extremely smooth and sippable. I'd happily enjoy this served long.

8.3

David

Nose: A relatively subtle nose with hints of orris, a little green, leafy mint and sage.
Palate: The texture is noteworthy given the high ABV: it's particularly smooth with only a little tingle of heat on the lips. Herbal notes are accompanied by juicy blackcurrant and sweet anise. This has a pleasant mix of leafy herbal and plump, fruity characteristics.
Finish: A little flash of black pepper heat with a touch of treacle and spiced festive cookies.
Comments: An intense gin whose character really opens up with the addition of water.

8.1

Foxhole Gin
Foxhole Gin
FOXHOLE SPIRITS

ABV: 40%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Baked cinnamon biscuits, fresh out of the oven, cut through by a hint of lemon zest.
Palate: There's a nuttiness that has replaced the initial festive spice. Again, the citrus note is keeping things from getting too cloying in there and sweetens the whole palate up.
Finish: A relatively delicate finish, with some fresh florality to it.
Comments: I would say this is a very delicately balanced gin that is likely to be a bartender's dream.

8.0

David

Nose: Biscuity notes of digestives and lemon shortbread are joined by lovely warm citrus.
Palate: A delicate, sweet earthiness to start, leading onto a light, creamy palate of vanilla oak and cedar, before a gradually building resinous character.
Finish: Juniper and angelica on the finish with a gentle, warming glow.
Comments: A beautifully smooth gin that would work well when mixed with cream and crème de cacao in an Alexander cocktail.

8.0

DISCOVER OVER 1,000 GINS AT **MASTER OF MALT**

Glacier Gin
Small Batch Gin
GLACIER GIN

ABV: 44%
Country: ICELAND
Style: Classic
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Afternoon tea at the Ritz – think traditional fruity cakes decorated with petals and fresh, homemade berry jam.
Palate: The florality dusting the nose is more prominent, taking the sweet edge off the strawberry jam that is still tickling the sides of my tongue.
Finish: The fruit lingers, wrapping things up in a neatly packaged berry gift box.
Comments: I'm already excited to be sipping this at a festival this summer. I'm thinking lots of fresh berries and a splash of lemonade… is that sacrilege?

8.4

David

Nose: Aromas of rose jelly, strawberry and raspberry make this almost reminiscent of a jam sponge.
Palate: Light, leafy herbal notes combine with juicy, slightly tart berry notes and a hint of gorse. A balanced and well-rounded spirit with minimal burn. Plump and succulent.
Finish: A little lift of lemon on the finish is accompanied by a lingering sweetness.
Comments: This has a great intensity of flavour and would work well in a refreshing Gin Collins.

8.2

Hooghoudt
RAW Genever
FAMILIE DISTILLEERDERIJ HOOGHOUDT B.V.

RECOMMENDED gin RECOMMENDED

ABV: 43%
Country: HOLLAND
Style: Genever
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Imagine you've just walked into a grain store on a warm summer's day, dry and grainy with juniper and freshly baked bread.
Palate: The grainy flavours follow through, but now we get an introduction to fruit. Light citrus zest and rich red berries pair perfectly with the strong rye notes.
Finish: This packs a bit more of a punch in the heat department than you'd think. Just the right amount.
Comments: A wholesome gin – who knew that was a thing?! Try it in a smoky gin Old Fashioned.

8.7

David

Nose: Soft, malty notes join aromas of teacakes, buttered toast and jam sandwiches.
Palate: Exceptionally smooth with a plump fruitiness to start: strawberry, raspberry, plum and cherry. Notes of sourdough bread follow with a slight yeastiness before spicier notes of coriander and cracked black pepper.
Finish: A gradually building, warming glow. Lingering notes of dark chocolate biscuits and coffee.
Comments: A warming, but pleasant spirit with a robust flavour profile.

8.5

Kavalan Distillery
Kavalan Gin
KING CAR GROUP

ABV: 40%
Country: TAIWAN
Style: Classic
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: A little bit like opening up a bar of Fruit & Nut (the big size obviously). Nutty and almost earthy notes at first before a light reminder of juniper.
Palate: We're back again with the nuts, but it is far smoother than the nose was hinting. Creamy chocolate, with a little honey, or perhaps freshly cooked vanilla cupcakes.
Finish: Ah, some dark fruit trying to break through all of that earthy flavour. It's not around for long.
Comments: A breakfast gin – not that I'm suggesting you have it over your cornflakes!

7.7

David

Nose: Dry and fruity with freshly cut pear and apple along with aromas of butter and dark chocolate.
Palate: The texture is smooth to start, followed by a building warmth. Creamy, melted chocolate is joined by oily fennel and anise before notes of rye bread.
Finish: A relatively short finish with a hint of floral blackberry eau de vie and gentle warmth.
Comments: A perfumed gin with plenty of fruity flavours and a good warmth. It'd work well mixed with fruit juice for a still summer cooler.

7.6

"Soft, malty notes join aromas of teacakes, buttered toast and jam sandwiches"

DISCOVER OVER 1,000 GINS AT **MASTER OF MALT**

Linden Leaf
8
LINDEN LEAF BOTANICALS

ABV: 43%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: A sweet tropical island paradise, with fragrant orange bursting out.
Palate: There's a light peppery sweetness that is tickling the back of my throat as soon as it hits, joining from the juniper, then we're back with orange, fiery lemon and lime.
Finish: This really isn't going anywhere and neither is the heat.
Comments: This really is a dream; it's sweet, spicy and a little bit of a sass-pot of a gin. You can be as playful with this as you want, but I'll be in the corner enjoying it over a big ice cube.

9.0

David

Nose: A perfumed garden of citrus blossom and leaves. Vibrant aromas burst forth from the glass; exciting and attractive.
Palate: Exotic lemongrass and ginger to start, followed by a fruit salad of citrus, orange and lime. The lemon becomes more focused towards the end, bringing in coriander, melon and a hint of sherbet.
Finish: A long, distinguished finish with citrus and peppery coriander.
Comments: A simply delightful gin with great versatility and a vivacious character.

9.2

Linden Leaf
88
LINDEN LEAF BOTANICALS

ABV: 43%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Some really bright citrus notes come through on the nose immediately, like grated lemon zest mixed into Victoria sponge cake batter.
Palate: I enjoyed sitting with this for a while with refreshing citrus coating the tongue. More floral than the vanilla essence.
Finish: Closing out our time here with lingering lemon zest and a surprising appearance from baking spices to warm things up.
Comments: This should certainly be enjoyed long; there's lots going on and the addition of tonic only adds to that.

8.3

David

Nose: Orange sorbet and lemon syllabub: vibrant, bright and inviting. A little creamy coconut butter wraps up the nose nicely.
Palate: Fruity and succulent. A full palate of citrus notes and the modest sweetness of melon. Additional complexity appears in the form of menthol, pepper and a clean leafiness.
Finish: More menthol on the finish with sweet pepper and grapefruit. Lingering and oily.
Comments: A lively spirit that's packed full of flavour. Easy to enjoy on the rocks or paired with tonic.

8.1

Lunun Gin
First Batch
LUNUN GIN

ABV: 41%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Classic
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Floral and bursting with citrus notes, I can already feel this setting off my hayfever symptoms.
Palate: That citrus note is great, approaching the lime side of life which works beautifully with those floral notes and a gentle current of juniper that keeps running throughout.
Finish: Although creamy and smooth, there's warming spice there which is rounded out by a rose bush.
Comments: This was a joy and the perfect springtime gin. I'd be intrigued to give this a little try in an Aviation cocktail.

8.7

David

Nose: A blooming bouquet of fruity floral notes and the lemon and ginger aromas of lemongrass.
Palate: A delightful, creamy texture with rich vanilla notes followed by a bright burst of lemongrass. This is accompanied by other classic gin flavours such as juniper, coriander and orange. A superbly soft mouthfeel.
Finish: The floral characteristics come through: rose and honeysuckle with a dash of lemon verbena.
Comments: A contemporary, citrus-forward gin with a playful liveliness.

8.9

Poetic Licence
Old Tom Gin
POETIC LICENCE DISTILLERY

ABV: 41.6%
Country: SCOTLAND
Style: Old Tom
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: A fresh fruity trifle, with rose petals lovingly sprinkled on top. I'm intrigued by where this is going.
Palate: I'm not sensing anything wanting to take the lead here; there's nectarine covered in jelly, not quite as sweet as the nose. It's creamy but with a little spice hit.
Finish: Greek yoghurt and honey, but with that kick of spice gently lingering on.
Comments: I find this interesting – it's not quite what I was expecting from an Old Tom, but I'd be interested to see it in a traditional Tom Collins.

7.5

David

Nose: Delicate orchard aromas of peach, pear and nectarine are accompanied by hints of orange conserve.
Palate: Light with initial flavours of vanilla, woodiness and orange citrus followed by resinous cedar, some marmalade sweetness and a hint of peach cobbler.
Finish: Dark wood and a drizzle of honey before a more toasted, peppery finish and some heat.
Comments: A bold Old Tom gin with minimal sweetness and a balanced wood character. A solid partner for ginger ale.

7.8

DISCOVER OVER 1,000 GINS AT **MASTER OF MALT**

Bottle price guide: **£11-20** (US$15-26) **£21-40** (US$27-53) **£41-60** (US$54-79) **£61-90** (US$80-119) **£91 plus** (US$120 plus)

Silent Pool
Intricately Realised Gin
SILENT POOL DISTILLERS

RECOMMENDED gin RECOMMENDED

ABV: 43%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Classic
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: There's quite a lot going on here. The juniper sings out as a soloist among the choir, surrounded by the florality of lavender and a little dry spice.
Palate: This really is very smooth. The floral has become a little fruitier, we're moving on to light berries, herbaceous juniper and some zest which offsets that spice.
Finish: Smooth, with creamy vanilla that's decided to say hello.
Comments: Takes you on a journey. It's been beautifully crafted to create something to intrigue and surprise you at every turn.

8.9

David

Nose: Notably clean and classic with strong juniper and green pine forest notes and a flash of grapefruit peel.
Palate: An excellent, super-smooth texture. A wide array of juniper characteristics from oily berries to woody cedar and even some floral pine blossom. A little sweetness unfolds over time along with rose, white chocolate and clotted cream.
Finish: Dry with lingering notes of lemon and grapefruit.
Comments: A superb gin, well balanced and cleanly made with both character and versatility.

9.3

Stobbe 1776
Blackcurrant London Dry
PURE SPIRITS

RECOMMENDED gin RECOMMENDED

ABV: 43%
Country: GERMANY
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Vibrant from the off, with leafy notes reminiscent of grass right after the rain.
Palate: The light juniper notes that were hinted at on the nose emerge cleanly here, again with a fresh woodland hit to the palate that livens up the senses with a little peppery spice.
Finish: It hangs around a lot longer that I would have expected, with lingering lightly wooded spice.
Comments: A nicely curated gin, with a real kick to it that creeps up on you. I personally would enjoy this in a nice and refreshing gin and tonic.

8.5

David

Nose: Bright, resinous, green juniper notes give this gin an oily character with a hint of woodiness.
Palate: The complex juniper notes continue onto the palate with a waxy, almost sticky, piney flavour like freshly cracker juniper. A gentle, floral sweetness develops with violet and raspberry.
Finish: Light, creamy spice and a sweetness reminiscent of crème brûlée followed by lingering notes of toasted cedar that coat the tongue.
Comments: If you like your gin packed full of juniper, this is for you.

8.9

Whittaker's Gin
Clearly Sloe
WHITTAKER'S GIN

RECOMMENDED gin RECOMMENDED

ABV: 42%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Sloe
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: This is quite literally a fresh-out-of-the-oven cherry bakewell in a glass. I can already tell I'm going to like this a lot.
Palate: I like that this sloe gin isn't pretending to be something it's not. The juniper and sloe berries are at the forefront, sticking with the bakewell sweetness.
Finish: Slightly out of nowhere I'm getting a little hit of anise to round things out.
Comments: Someone pass me a bottle and a straw.

9.3

David

Nose: Plump, decadent fruity aromas of plum, cherry and almond.
Palate: This liquid is completely clear - unusual for a sloe gin - but once you taste it, it's obvious what it is. An excellent balance between the flavours of juniper, sloe berries and sweetness, although it is drier than many of its contemporaries.
Finish: A zing of citrus, particularly lemon, combined with notes of hibiscus and rose.
Comments: An exciting and delicious product, combining the intensity and fruitiness of a sloe gin with the mixability of a classic dry.

9.1

"An excellent balance between the flavours of juniper, sloe berries and sweetness"

DISCOVER OVER 1,000 GINS AT **MASTER OF MALT**

Whittaker's Gin
Navy Strength
WHITTAKER'S GIN

ABV: 57%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Navy Strength
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Imagine putting your head firmly in your kitchen garden's herb pot. Some really punchy thyme.
Palate: The thyme is still with us, but right behind it is a sweet hint of citrus zest and that well-oiled juniper that we know and love.
Finish: Traditional and botanical-heavy, but it packs a punch with the pine notes still hanging around on the finish.
Comments: There's plenty of character here. I'd be tempted to test it out in a Negroni and see how it stands.

7.7

David

Nose: The tart sweetness of candied fruit peel is followed by a green, leafy stalkiness.
Palate: An intense and oily flavour profile that is simply packed full of character: the sweetness of parma violet sweets is combined with lavender and pine needles.
Finish: Botanical flavours coat the tongue before a long finish with notes of menthol, cedar and black pepper.
Comments: A powerful gin that would stand up well to heavy mixing.

7.9

Whittaker's Gin
Pink Particular
WHITTAKER'S GIN

ABV: 42%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Flavoured
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Starts gently with a subtle undertone of red fruit compote.
Palate: There's a spice, like the prickly sense you feel after crushing peppercorn. The spice doesn't tamper with the prominent juniper. The fruit becomes more floral and herbaceous.
Finish: Wraps you up in a thyme blanket.
Comments: Overall this was not what I was expecting, not necessarily in a bad way. The fruit doesn't stick around long enough for my taste but it does show a little more character with the addition of tonic.

7.6

David

Nose: A modest nose with light berry notes and a touch of grassy leafiness.
Palate: A subtle note of dried strawberries quickly makes way for more traditional gin flavours such as lemon, bitter orange, orris and - of course - juniper.
Finish: Dry on the finish with a little of the bitterness of grapefruit, along with coriander and spice.
Comments: For a flavoured gin, this is particularly dry; that said, mixing this with tonic does allow more of the berry character to shine through.

7.4

Whittaker's Gin
The Original
WHITTAKER'S GIN

ABV: 42%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Classic
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Like taking a huge breath of fresh air while you're on a woodland walk in the English countryside.
Palate: The palate follows the nose, with a slightly zesty burst of pine. There's definitely a lot more citrus here, lemon and a sweet berry note that gently moves you away from the initial greenery of this gin.
Finish: Following suit yet again with a refreshing finish.
Comments: This is a delight – nothing too out there, but certainly very sippable.

8.1

David

Nose: Green, sappy pine with a hint of buttery, toasted coconut. A touch of freshly baked bread.
Palate: A very green, slightly vegetal gin with a fresh, almost crunchy, stalkiness to it. Notes of celery become clear, along with the citrus zip of coriander, before an oily sweetness with notes of anise and fennel unfolds.
Finish: Clean on the finish with a little citrus and residual floral, leafy notes of coriander.
Comments: A gin with a distinct flavour profile. This has a lot of potential for use in a Negroni.

8.2

Whittaker's Gin
Winter Solstice
WHITTAKER'S GIN

RECOMMENDED gin RECOMMENDED

ABV: 42%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Flavoured
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Am I smelling eggnog? Surely not, but I like it. I'm definitely getting a dusting of nutmeg, layered over rich dark berries – here's hoping that sticks around.
Palate: The winter spice continues, but with the added enjoyment of its creamy mouthfeel. The sweetness returns, on the lighter side of stewed dark fruit. A little angelica?
Finish: Sweeter here and doesn't linger on the palate for long.
Comments: This has me feeling festive. I wouldn't want to do a thing to it in my glass.

8.6

David

Nose: Initial aromas of coriander leaf and a complex array of green and floral citrus alongside an almost pastis-like sweetness.
Palate: Excellent texture: oily with anise and fennel upfront before a broader range of spice such as ginger and nutmeg. More coriander follows, with orange and grapefruit.
Finish: Lemon verbena and more sweet anise, along with sage and spearmint.
Comments: A complex spirit with plenty to explore. It'd be a nice option for a Tuxedo cocktail, but I'm equally happy to sip it neat.

8.4

DISCOVER OVER 1,000 GINS AT **MASTER OF MALT**

Wildcat
Wildcat Gin
WHYTE & MACKAY

ABV: 41.5%
Country: SCOTLAND
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Really punchy with juniper from the off, followed by a sweet and tangy herbaceous kick.
Palate: The greenery has become a little more floral – think dandelion, joined by some serious zest, juicy lemon peels to be specific. Slightly spicier juniper than the nose initially provided.
Finish: Dry and spicy.
Comments: A good attempt at the style. Playing up the zest in this could make it a little more fun.

7.3

David

Nose: Green and resinous with a good dose of juniper and woody angelica with an earthy sweetness.
Palate: Initial flavours of pine are joined by a leafy oiliness and the gentle bitterness of zesty citrus. Earthy root notes wrap up the palate, which is altogether rather forest-like.
Finish: This has a reasonable amount of residual heat and an exceptionally dry finish, before a final flourish of fresh, leafy flavours.
Comments: A clean gin that would work well in a dry Martini with a twist of lemon.

7.1

Wyre
Forest Gin
HINTON'S OF BEWDLEY

RECOMMENDED gin RECOMMENDED

ABV: 42%
Country: ENGLAND
Style: Contemporary
Price per bottle:
Availability: Worldwide



Phoebe

Nose: Oh my, I like this already. Think dark forest gateau-style rich fruitiness.
Palate: This is punchy and rich from the off. The dark fruits are holding their own, with strong raspberry and blackberry tang to complement the juniper. There's something a little contradictory here… fennel maybe? I wasn't expecting it but I'm not mad about it either.
Finish: Far gentler than I was expecting, fruity and lingering.
Comments:This is a bit of a party in a bottle. I'd like to make it last a while in a gin and tonic.

9.0

David

Nose: Rich and juicy with an array of hedgerow fruit: blackcurrant, blackberry and raspberry.
Palate: Blackberry jam with lemon and a touch of raspberry ripple ice cream. A splash of juniper is followed by rich, creamy vanilla and notes of crystallised violets.
Finish: Delicate and perfumed on the finish with notes of hibiscus and rose and a minimal alcohol warmth.
Comments: A fun and fruity gin that would be delightful in a Bramble or mixed with lemon tonic for a crisp, refreshing long drink.

8.8



DISCOVER OVER 1,000 GINS AT **MASTER OF MALT**

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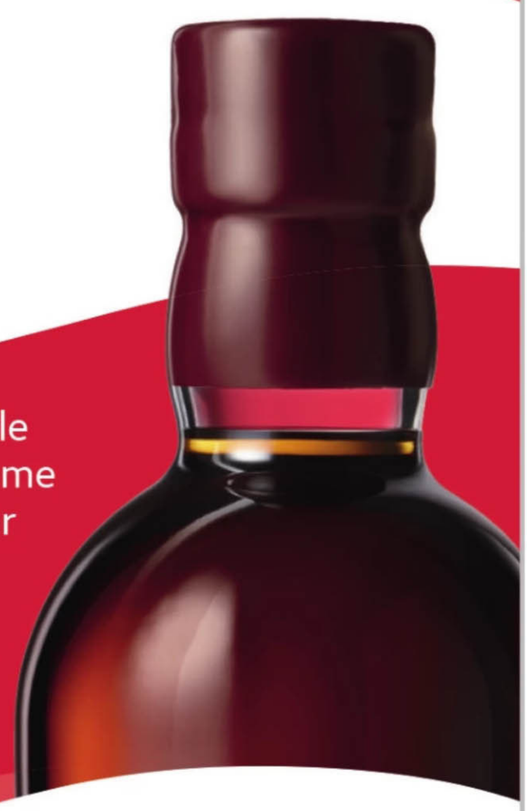
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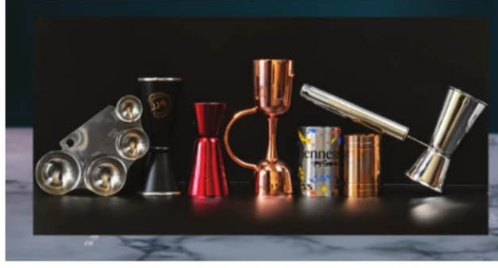
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BY JOE BATES

P&O Cruises to debut world's first floating gin distillery

After capturing the airport market, distillers are chasing opportunity on the high seas

One of the most prominent signs that gin was finally taking off in travel retail was the much-publicised opening of the first airport gin microdistillery in 2016, The Nicholas Culpeper at London Gatwick's North Terminal. Now it is the turn of the cruise ship world, which is set to boast its own floating distillery when P&O Cruises' new 5,200-passenger Iona, the largest in the company's history, embarks on its maiden voyage in May this year.

The Devon-based Salcombe Distillery is set to install a working distillery on the ship, which will produce an exclusive gin to be served in the vessel's onboard bars, restaurants and duty-free stores. More specific details about the gin and the technical challenges of operating a floating distillery have yet to be released, but it has been revealed that Salcombe's mainland distillery will be producing the same gin for all of P&O's fleet, effectively making it the company's in-house gin.



"Our two brands have an amazingly rich and shared history," says Salcombe Distilling Company co-founder, Angus Lugsdin. "At the same time that P&O expanded into leisure cruising in the mid-19th century, the famous Salcombe Fruit schooners were entering their heyday, importing cargoes of precious fruits and spices from the Mediterranean to England's ports and the ships probably passed each other on their voyages.

"Both brands are kindred spirits, born of the sea with a history of breaking new ground and exploring new horizons. To be responsible for creating a unique gin and distilling it onboard the first distillery at sea is a very romantic notion and brings us closer to the intrepid adventurers who travelled the world's oceans seeking out the finest fruits, spices and herbs."

P&O Cruises is not the only cruise ship company getting serious about gin. Fred Olsen Cruises is adding a gin-making masterclass to the onboard entertainment programme of its flagship Balmoral this year. With guidance from expert gin makers Nigel and Debbie Wright, guests can make up to six gins per session using Fred Olsen's own copper distilling equipment. Guests can choose from more than 50 different botanicals and get to keep a 70cl bottle of their own handcrafted gin to take home with them. Classes are limited to between six and eight guests and the two-hour experience is priced at £25 per person.

Staying on the nautical theme, I wanted to draw readers' attention to Mary Rose Gin, a cracking juniper-led gin made by Southampton-based craft distiller HMS Spirits Company. The gin is named after Henry VIII's ill-fated Tudor warship which sank in 1545 and was salvaged in 1982. Presented in a suitably maritime-style 50cl bottle, Mary Rose Gin offers gentle notes of grapefruit and rosemary and has been listed by two cross-Channel ferry lines, DFDS and Condor Ferries.

Back in the airport world, World Duty Free at London Heathrow airport has recently stocked Wildcat Gin, a 41.5% ABV gin made with 10 botanicals: juniper berries, coriander, angelica root, lemon peel, orange peel, grapefruit peel, liquorice root, orris root, cubebs and cat's claw root. Made by Whyte & Mackay, the owner of The Dalmore and Jura whiskies, this gin delivers predominantly juniper and light citrus aromas on the nose, a crisp, refreshing palate and a quick, dry finish.

The gin's intriguing name is tied up



with an old 18th century yarn about an entrepreneurial rogue called Captain Dudley Bradstreet who, after arriving in London, set up a scheme to sell gin in secret. He hung the sign of a black cat over his window, and let it be known that by knocking three times, a generous measure of gin would be dispensed once money was placed inside the cat's mouth. Before long, cat signs began to appear all over the city and a new gin craze was born.

At the launch of Wildcat Gin at Heathrow late last year, World Duty Free set up a fun in-store Wildcat Temptation Hotel promotion area in Terminal 5. Visitors to the Temptation Hotel were greeted by a flamboyant concierge and invited to sample the gin in two mixed concoctions – the Wildcat Bramble or the Wildcat & Tonic. Wildcat Gin is now available at World Duty Free at all of its UK airport stores priced at £31.99 per bottle.





These pages from far left: HMS Spirits Company's Mary Rose Gin; Salcombe Distillery founders Howard Davies and Angus Lugsdin; A Fred Olsen Cruises gin-making masterclass; Wildcat Gin at Heathrow's Terminal 5

Ask the Expert

Our gin expert, David T. Smith, is on hand to answer all your juniper related questions. Tweet us *@ginmagazineuk* or email *editor@paragraph.co.uk* for a chance to feature

I'm a big gin fan. I'm a big cheese fan. Can you recommend any good combinations?

ANNIE, LEADBURN

Pairing gin and food can be tricky and I must admit to still being a little skeptical about the benefits, but this was a good excuse to both try a few things out and make the most of the leftover Christmas cheese board!

Although neat gin is generally not anyone's first drink of choice, it can make for a good alternative when others are sipping on a post-dinner whisky or brandy. The right gin served on the rocks can be quite delicious and pairs very nicely with a vintage cheddar. Love it or hate it, Stilton is a classic that no cheese course would really be complete without. It's perhaps suitable that it works well with a cocktail that also splits opinion: the Negroni. The combination is rather wonderful; the tangy, slightly acidic character of the cheese complements the cocktail's bittersweet intensity.

For soft cheeses such as camembert and brie, there are a couple of options. Firstly, the gin and tonic: the crisp, refreshing drink is a good counterbalance to the rich creaminess of these cheeses. An alternative would be to pair it with sloe gin, which has a great combination of fruit and sweetness. Other fruity gins would also work well, such as Four Pillars' Bloody Shiraz or Brookie's Byron Slow Gin (a staple accompaniment to our cheese platter at New Year's).

Why isn't gin really drunk neat? Have you got any suggestions on how to enjoy gin this way?

HANN, FALMOUTH

This is a funny one, but you're absolutely right: anyone that has visited a distillery will know the amount of care the best distillers put into the flavour and balance of their gin, so it seems a shame to not at least try it in its unadulterated form. Some of the easiest to enjoy neat are fruit or sloe gins. Being a tad sweeter, they are easier to sip, especially with a cube of ice. Warner's Rhubarb Gin or Hayman's Spiced Sloe Gin might be a good starting point – both combine a bright fruit flavour with a strong gin backbone.

Moving on to the London dry gins, I think an accessible gin – and possibly the first that I enjoyed neat – is Plymouth. It has a little sweetness and it's relatively easy to pick out the botanicals: there's citrus and the sweet spice of cardamom, as well as zesty coriander and piney juniper. It also has a particularly smooth texture.

If you choose to serve your gin over ice, you can add a little dilution by simply swirling the ice cubes around a bit to encourage them to melt. This results in a drink reminiscent of the once-popular "gin and water" – a serve that was, in some discerning circles more than a century ago, seen as the only way to drink gin by those "in the know".

What is the oldest gin brand still available to buy?

LIZZY, ROYSTON

I had to dust off my history books for this! While I had an idea, I suspected the answer might be more complicated than it initially appeared. Booth's is certainly a contender. First produced in 1740 by Felix Booth in Clerkenwell, London, this gin was available in the UK until the 1980s and is still available in the USA. It is a poorer reflection of what it once was – being sold in plastic, half-gallon bottles for less than $20 – but the gin, especially considering the price, is pretty good.

Another contender is Greenall's: it has its origins with Thomas Dakin in Warrington in 1761, where the distillery is still based. The gin was originally sold as Dakin's Warrington Gin, but the name changed to Greenall's following Edward Greenall's purchase of the distillery in 1870.

The oldest gin brand sold worldwide that is still being sold using its original name and recipe is Gordon's, which was founded by Alexander Gordon in 1769. An honourable mention should also be given to Nicholson's, whose family trace their history in spirits back to 1736. Although their gin has not been made consistently since then, it is now, happily, available once again.

gin MAGAZINE AWARDS

The winners revealed...

Meet the world best in a world class industry

We are delighted to welcome you to the 2020 Gin Magazine Awards, which include the World Gin Awards, the Icons of Gin and the Gin Magazine Hall of Fame.

In this, the third year of these awards, we have been inundated by entries from all corners of the globe, and it shows that there is no let-up in either numbers of producers, high quality and pure enthusiasm for this exciting spirit.

First up are the Icons of Gin. These awards celebrate the people and places that best exemplify the innovation, energy and dynamism of the gin industry. These are always fascinating awards because we discover, once again, how interconnected and mutually supportive this sector really is.

The process involves peer-to-peer nominations; the shortlist (calculated by the team at Gin Magazine) is put out to an industry vote, which produces the winners.

The results are a demonstration of quite how breathtaking the combination is of this camaraderie, innovation and resulting consumer demand for the end products.

So it is with a palpable sense of pride that we present to you the winners from this year's awards. All the names on the next few pages richly deserve the accolade, because they have been recognised for their excellence by their peers and competitors. One of the most pleasing things to observe is the new names and faces in these ranks. It is proof that the world of gin is still in rude health. Long may that last.

Later on, you will meet our new inductees to the Gin Magazine Hall of Fame, the roll of individuals who have made a profound and prolonged contribution to the world of gin. More about this can be read on page 90.

From page 91, you can pore over the greatest pours of 2020. In each category, we present the World's Best and the country winners. A more exalted list of gins is hard to find.

To view the shortlist for each category, go to www.gin-mag.com/awards



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AUDEMUS SPIRITS
CRÉATEUR DE SPIRITUEUX

Visitor Attraction of the Year

PHILADELPHIA DISTILLING

Bluecoat Gin pays homage to Philadelphia's former status as a "workshop of the world" and to the so-called Bluecoats who took up arms against British rule in America ahead of the Revolutionary War. Philadelphia Distilling has put its own "revolutionary" processes on display for visitors on its distillery tours, which also offer the chance to taste the Bluecoat family of gins.

Highly Commended
City of Manchester Distillery Gin Experience

Craft Producer of the Year

AUDEMUS SPIRITS

From its flagship product Pink Pepper Gins, French producer Audemus has expanded its range in weird and wonderful directions to great acclaim. Along with many enticing limited-edition gins, its portfolio also includes the cognac-based Covert Liqueur, contemporary aperitif Sepia Amer, and Umami Spirit made with Italian capers and parmesan cheese. Production takes place in distiller Miko's living room in Cognac, demonstrating the brand's dedication to the small-batch approach.

Highly Commended
YVY Destilaria

SPONSORED BY WestRock

ADNAMS SOUTHWOLD

Brand Innovator of the Year

ADNAMS

After making a name for itself in beer, East of England brewer Adnams turned its hand to distilling and has since built up a portfolio of brands which push the boundaries. Look to its Rising Sun Gin, made with Japanese matcha tea, its triple-malted vodka and whisky, or its Spirit of Broadside, distilled from the popular Suffolk ale. It has also made a splash in the ready-to-drink gin market.

Highly Commended
Hayman's Gin



SPONSORED BY HRASTNIK 1860

Distiller of the Year

ADELAIDE HILLS DISTILLERY

Former winemaker Sacha La Forgia pledged to put Australian produce at the heart of his spirits when he founded Adelaide Hills Distillery in 2014. His flagship product, 78° Gin, used a variety of locally sourced ingredients and earned him a reputation for producing top-notch small-batch gin. The distillery's current product range, which includes vermouths and the sell-out Native Grain Whisky, showcases its evolution as a spirit producer.

Highly Commended
Aviation American Gin



Sustainable Distillery of the Year

CAPE BYRON DISTILLERY

Pam and Martin Brook built sustainability into their distillery from the ground up. After buying the site in 1988 they planted 35,000 subtropical rainforest trees, which now provide botanicals for their Brookie's Byron Dry Gin as well as a haven for wildlife. The distillery is also a supporter of Big Scrub Landcare, which maintains what is left of the Big Scrub rainforest area in which it sits.

Highly Commended
Adnams

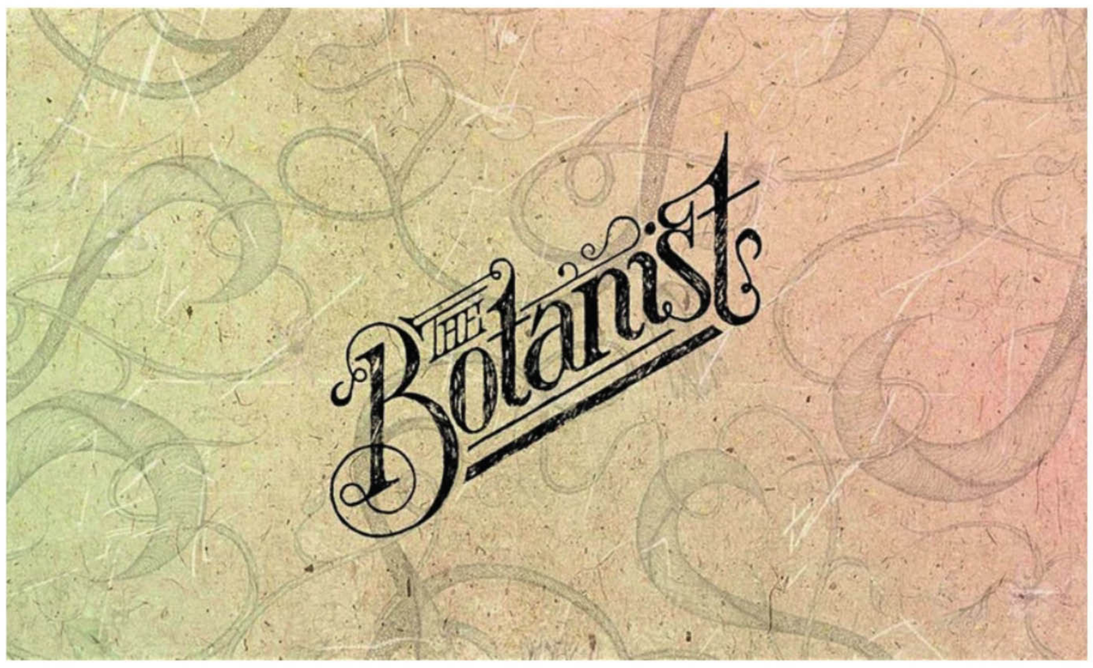
ally
CREATIVE PR & MARKETING

Communications Agency of the Year

ALLY, CREATIVE PR & MARKETING

Based in Athens, Greece, Ally provides PR and marketing solutions for clients through business consulting and mentoring, creative content, social media strategy, corporate social responsibility and "green" marketing. Its broad roster of clients includes spirits companies and other food and drink brands.

Highly Commended
Brazen PR





Gin Bar Group of the Year

THE BOTANIST

With locations around the UK from Birmingham to Newcastle, The Botanist bars bring together creative cocktails, hearty food menus and regular live music. The group encourages visitors to its bars to explore a secret garden of food and drink, where its "botanists" have foraged high and low to curate a host of food and drink delights. For the more horticulturally minded visitor, cocktail masterclasses are available.

Highly Commended
London Cocktail Club

Gin Bar of the Year

BARBER SHOP, SYDNEY

Proving that you can do two things well simultaneously, this venue combines barber shop and cocktail bar and remains a crowd-pleaser. Opened in 2013, the bar – hidden behind the York Street barber's – boasts a selection of more than 700 gins and a cocktail range including signature sips and gin "flights". Even the food menu is punctuated with gin-laced creations.

Highly Commended
Bitter and Twisted Cocktail Parlour, Phoenix AZ



Gin Hotel Bar of the Year

THE AMERICAN BAR, THE SAVOY

The carefully curated selection of gins at The Savoy's American Bar ensures a top-quality sip, whether in one of its signature cocktails or in a classic serve with tonic. Head bartender, Maxim Schulte, is the force behind its latest cocktail collection, The Savoy Songbook, which reimagines classic hits in the form of lip-smacking libations.

Highly Commended
Little Rituals, Residence Inn by Marriott, Phoenix AZ

31DOVER.COM
YOUR DRINKS, DELIVERED.

Online Retailer of the Year

31DOVER – WWW.31DOVER.COM

Created by the founders of Vanquish Wines, drinks distributor to London's top on-trade venues, 31Dover is the UK's fastest-growing online drinks retailer. With industry expertise and strength behind it, the retailer's virtual shelves are carefully curated and every bottle is tried and tested to receive the 31Dover seal of approval.

Highly Commended
Master of Malt – www.masterofmalt.com

BinnY's BEVERAGE DEPOT

Multiple Outlets Retailer of the Year

BINNY'S

Founded in Chicago in 1948, Binny's Beverage Depot is the Midwest's largest wine, spirits and beer superstore. The family firm has 42 locations in Illinois serving up more than 30,000 products in-store and online. As well as beverage sales, Binny's publishes cocktails recipes, runs product "hotlines" and organises events such as Bourbon Women Night.

Highly Commended
Drinkmonger

Billingtons

Single Outlet Retailer of the Year

BILLINGTON'S OF LENZIE

This delicatessen and eatery in Lenzie, Scotland serves up a range of homemade, artisan and locally sourced produce including beer, wines and spirits. Its selection of more than 100 gins is a celebration of Scottish distillers, with products such as Eden Mill gins from St Andrews, Glasgow Gin and Rock Rose, as well as two house gins.

Highly Commended
Batch 13 DC

Supermarket of the Year

LIDL GB

As it rides a wave of increasing popularity in the UK, the budget retailer is ensuring that its product ranges keep up with the expectations of its growing pool of shoppers. Its range of own-branded spirits, including whisky, gin and vodka, has stayed effectively up-to-date with spirits trends and as such has proved a hit with consumers and industry.

Highly Commended
Waitrose

Travel Retailer of the Year

DFS CHANGI

This airport retailer offers a selection of some of the world's most premium wines and spirits across a range of locations. Choose from Johnny Walker Red Label Scotch, Hennessy XO Grand Champagne, Camus L'Elegant, Chivas Regal, Martell Cordon Bleu and Absolut Vodka among a host of other well-known names.

Highly Commended
World Duty Free

Own Brand Supermarket of the Year

LIDL GB

Lidl's range of own-branded gins spans the current direction of the gin trend that we see growing in the UK, showing a supermarket with its finger on the pulse. While many would be struck by the low prices offered both in-store and online, the gins available also deliver great quality.



Bartender of the Year

DALE KYD, THE GIN ROOM, ST LOUIS

Engineer-turned-bartender Dale Kyd developed his passion for hospitality as a college student, but his first trip to The Gin Room was a game-changer. Since being offered a job at the St Louis venue by legendary owner Natasha Bahrami, he hasn't looked back and has dedicated himself to furthering both the bar and his bartending skillset.

Highly Commended
Giorgio Bargiani, Connaught Bar, London



Bar Manager of the Year

CHRISTOPHE ROSSI, L'ESCAMOTEUR, KYOTO

Travelling to Japan from France via India, Christophe spent 10 years pursuing his passion as a magician before discovering mixology. He was trained by two of the sector's top professionals before opening L'Escamoteur (roughly translated as The Illusionist). Based on a fin-de-siècle "magician's house", Christophe's venue specialises in gin and whisky-based cocktails and has developed an international fan base.

Highly Commended
Paul Minea, The Leafy Elephant, Wokingham



Visitor Attraction Manager of the Year

ALISON DINNIE, COTSWOLDS DISTILLERY

Alison has looked after the distillery shop and tours programme at Cotswolds Distillery since 2017 and oversaw the distillery's rise to number one in TripAdvisor's ranking of visitor attractions in the Cotswolds in 2018, beating more established attractions such as Gloucester Cathedral and the Royal Gardens at the Highgrove Estate.

Highly Commended
Julie Fitzgerald, Adnams



Gin Ambassador of the Year

AIDAN CONROY, SLING SHOT DISTILLED IRISH GIN

Sling Shot Distilled Irish Gin was launched in 2018, the first product to come out of Lough Ree Distillery's micro-distillery in Lanesborough, Co Longford, Ireland. Brand ambassador Aidan Conroy has thrown himself behind the spirit (the first and currently only spirit to be distilled with peat as a botanical), promoting it at events including Gin Week 2019 and Bar Convent Berlin.

Highly Commended
Keli Rivers, Sipsmith



Gin Buyer of the Year

JACK BRESLIN, SCOTTISH GANTRY

A Stirling-based shop with a sterling selection which gives pride of place to Scottish products, from bigger players such as Edinburgh Gin to craft distillers foraging in the Highlands. With a mission to make spirits and wines more accessible, Jack has grown the shop from strength to strength since it opened in 2017 and now provides tasting clubs and other events alongside the retail operation.

Highly Commended
John Vine, Waitrose



Communicator of the Year

CAROLINE CHILDERLEY (THE GIN QUEEN)

Launched in 2013, The Gin Queen is now Australia's biggest gin-related blog and has expanded to encompass cocktail recipes and interviews with industry movers and shakers. Founder Caroline is the owner of Gin Queen on Tour, an Australian ambassador for World Gin Day, partner and organiser for Junipalooza Melbourne, and was the first Australian member of the Gin Guild.

Highly Commended
The Bearded Gin Guy, South Africa



Designer of the Year

ADAM HILL

Adam Hill's collaboration with Cape Town craft producer Unit 43 Distilling Company on their flagship gin The Prospector shows that almost as much thought has gone into the packaging as into the spirit housed within. Not for the first time has inspiration been drawn from Adam's illustration-led design, with the ornate paper wrapping giving way to a sleek black bottle, providing two striking angles to the brand.

Highly Commended
Thiago Modesto, Estudio de Design



Distillery Manager of the Year

ANDREW AUWERDA, PHILADELPHIA DISTILLING

Former cosmetics company owner Andrew was instrumental in setting up Philadelphia Distillery in 2005 – the first new producer in Pennsylvania since Prohibition and one of only a few dozen craft distillers in the US at the time. He has since helped his "truly Philadelphian distillery" to prosperity, from supporting the launch of its flagship Bluecoat Gin to overseeing its move to a new $4.5 million distillery in 2017.

Highly Commended
Dr Garrison Ellam, Arizona Craft Beverage



Master Distiller of the Year

DAVE WITHERS, ARCHIE ROSE DISTILLING CO.

Born into a family of winemakers, Dave carved a new path in distilling and has developed a particular interest in the science of spirits production. He has been instrumental in driving product innovation at Archie Rose, such as the Summer Gin Project releases, a collaborative series with tattoo artist Horisumi and two gins produced with Sydney Opera House.

Highly Commended
Alex Davies, The Kyoto Distillery

Guardians of the sector

We welcome two new inductees

In a world that demands fast-paced innovation, it's crucial to remember that without the solid bedrock of craftsmanship and a due respect for founding principles, everything risks lacking integrity and, ultimately, being merely ephemeral. Induction to the Gin Magazine Hall of Fame is a reflection of an individual's extraordinary contribution to the gin industry. It is the highest honour we bestow and as such, is bestowed sparingly and with a great deal of consideration.

This year we welcome two great protectors of both the product and the brands for which they work. By extension, therefore, they represent all that is best in the industry.



Inductee No. 4

Desmond Payne

Master distiller, Beefeater

Like Beefeater, where he has been master distiller for 15 years, Desmond Payne, who was made an MBE in 2018, is a giant of the British gin industry and a shining example of how tradition and innovation can work in harmony. Having started his career in the wine cellars at Harrods, he was introduced to spirits after joining Seager Events in 1967 – an encounter which kickstarted a career in gin that has so far spanned five decades.

After spending 25 years in charge of production at Plymouth Gin, Desmond joined Beefeater in 1995 and was named master distiller in 2005. He has helped the veteran producer to stay nimble amid gin's seismic shift into one of the world's most popular and diverse spirits, steering it to numerous international awards and overseeing the creation of expressions such as Beefeater 24 and Burrough's Reserve.

As Desmond marked his 50th anniversary as a distiller in 2017, his peers paid tribute to a gentle man brimming with passion for his craft, who tested the boundaries while maintaining the highest standards.



Inductee No. 5

Myriam Hendrickx

Master distiller, Rutte Distillery

Myriam Hendrickx has led production as master distiller at eighth-generation Rutte Distillery in the Netherlands since 2003. The spirits industry caught her eye while she was working as a food engineer; thirsty for knowledge, she spoke to master distillers everywhere to learn all she could.

Her prodigious spirits knowledge impressed the team at Rutte, which offered her a job as PR, marketing and technology manager before putting her in charge of production two years later – her first official role as a distiller. When the distillery was taken over by De Kuyper in 2011, she carved a place for the brand's craftsmanship and history in its new international framework.

Myriam has used her long-standing passion for genever – Rutte's core product – to raise its global profile, as well as keeping the brand at the forefront of gin innovation. Its Old Simon Genever and Rutte Celery Gin placed as the only genever and gin in the Best New Spirit or Cocktail Ingredient category at the Annual Spirited Awards 2016, Tales of the Cocktail.

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WORLD'S BEST LONDON DRY

Best South African

Cruxland 43%

Tremendously clean and well balanced. Elegant pine with beautiful fragrance. Not overpowering. A great example of a London dry gin.

SHORTLISTED

Australia
Manly Spirits
Australian Dry Gin 43%

Belgium
Filliers Dry Gin 28
Classic 46%

Brazil
Amázzoni Gin
Rio Negro 51%

Canada
Steinhart
Classic Gin 47.5%

Croatia
Dubrovnik Republic
Dalmatian Dry Gin 47%

England
River Test Distillery
London Dry 43%

Estonia
Junimperium
Blended Dry Gin 45%

France
Saint Amans
Gin 40%

Germany
NORGIN
London Dry Gin 43%

Gibraltar
Campion
Gibraltar Gin 48%

Iceland
Himbrimi
Winterbird 40%

Ireland
Dublin City Gin
Premium Irish Dry Gin 42%

Italy
Borsci
Sir Miller Dry Gin 40%

Japan
The Kyoto Distillery
KI NO BI 'SEI' 54.5%

Netherlands
No. 3 Gin
London Dry Gin 46%

Norway
Bareksten
Botanical Gin 46%

Portugal
Neighbours
31 Caviar Premium Gin 42%

Scotland
Crafty Distillery
Hills & Harbour Gin 40%

Spain
Astobiza
Dry Gin 40%

Sweden
Hernö
Hernö Gin 40.5%

Switzerland
Edelwhite Gin 42%

Wales
Dyfi
Original Gin 45%



WORLD'S BEST CONTEMPORARY

Best English

Sky Wave Gin

Contemporary London Dry 42%

Well rounded and smooth. Lots of salinity on the finish; seaside, seafood and samphire. Nice subtlety and good juniper presence.

SHORTLISTED

Argentina
Destilería Moretti
Buenos Aires 45%

Australia
Four Pillars
Spiced Negroni Gin 43.8%

Belgium
Cin'Kin
Cherry 43%

Brazil
YVY Territórios
Cerrado 44%

Canada
Compass Distillers
Gin Royal 44%

Channel Islands
Wheadon's Gin
Rock Samphire and Pink Grapefruit 46%

Estonia
TOHI
Nordic Dry Gin
Cloudberry Mist 43%

France
C'est Nous
Gin 40%

Germany
LiquorMacher
Gin 45%

Greece
Melissanidi Distillery
Mataroa Mediterranean Dry Gin 41.5%

Iceland
Martin Miller's
Westbourne Dry Gin 45.2%

Ireland
Sixling Gin 41.7%

Italy
Emporia Gin
Mediterranean Gin 45%

Japan
The Kyoto Distillery
KI NO TEA 45.1%

Luxembourg
Opyos Beverages
Luxembourg Dry Gin 44%

Mexico
SEIS14
Gintol 45%

Netherlands
One Eyed Spirits
The Hedgehog Gin 43%

Portugal
Folium Gin 40%

Scotland
Pickering's Gin
Pickering's Original 1947 Gin 42%

Slovenia
Broken Bones
London Dry Gin 45%

Spain
Otso
Black Pacific 40%

Sweden
Hernö Gin
Old Tom Gin 43%

United States
Gothic Gin
Per Divinitatem Lumen 45%

Vietnam
Sông Cái
Vietnam Dry Gin 45%

Wales
Welsh Sisters
Morwyn Dry Gin 40%

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WORLD'S BEST CLASSIC
Best Swedish

Bergslagens
Distilled Organic Gin 45.7%

Strong aroma and mouthfeel; when cut with H20, delicate freshly cut grass, pine, citrus and floral tones become apparent. An exceptional classic gin.

SHORTLISTED

Australia
Big Tree Distillery
Elegant Dry Gin 42%

Brazil
BEG
New World Navy Gin 54%

Canada
Compass Distillers
Gin Wild 45%

England
Peaky Blinder
Spiced Dry Gin 40%

France
Baron Denis
Premium French Gin 40.4%

Germany
Murre Gin
Fünnefunfuffzich 55%

Ireland
Thin Gin 40%

Italy
St. Urban
Gin Urban 44%

Portugal
Gotik
Igreja da Graça Edition 40%

Scotland
Tobermory Gin 43.3%

South Africa
Fluorescence Gin
Dry 43%

Switzerland
Falco Gin 43%



WORLD'S BEST NAVY
Best South African

Hout Bay Harbour 57%

A pleasant sweetness and good balance of flavours. Well structured with floral intensity. Exceptionally tasty. A beautifully crafted navy gin.

SHORTLISTED

Australia
Never Never Distilling Co.
Juniper Freak Gin 58%

England
Hidden Curiosities
Aranami Strength Gin 59%

Germany
Elephant Gin
Elephant Strength Gin 57%

Netherlands
Gospel Spirits
Duyfken Navy Strength Gin 57%

Norway
Bareksten
Navy Strength Gin 58%

Scotland
Pickering's Gin
Pickering's Navy Strength Gin 57.1%

Slovenia
Broken Bones
Navy Strength Gin 57%

Sweden
Hernö
Navy Strength Gin 57%

United States
Conniption
Navy Strength Gin 57%

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WORLD'S BEST OLD TOM

Best Swiss

Basilisk

Old Tom Gin 40%

Funky, fruity, sweetness, grape, then subtle juniper. A touch sweet but it works. The fruitiness is really enjoyable.

SHORTLISTED

Australia
Four Pillars
Experimental Old Tom 41.8%

Canada
Dixon's
Wicked Licorice Gin 40%

England
York Gin
Old Tom 42.5%

Japan
The Kyoto Distillery
KI NO TOU 47.4%

Norway
Bareksten
Old Tom Gin 44%

Sweden
Hernö
Old Tom Gin 43%



WORLD'S BEST MATURED

Best Polish

Lubuski

Aged Gin 42%

Very woody nose. More kick on the tongue with spices like orris root and liquorice which last far into the finish. Amber in colour. Subtle juniper, caramel and spice. A little feisty on the palate; potently peppery.

SHORTLISTED

Argentina
Destilería Moretti
Caporale 40.8%

Australia
Manly Spirits
Barrel Aged Gin 45%

Canada
Stillhead Distillery
Barrel Aged Gin 43%

England
Cuckoo Gin
Sunshine Cask Aged Gin 40%

Germany
Knut Hansen Dry Gin
Avontuur Edition 44%

Iceland
Martin Miller's
9 Moons Solera Reserve 40%

India
Jaisalmer Indian Craft Gin 43%

Scotland
Firkin Gin
American Oak Aged 46%

Spain
Gin Eva
Artisan Old Tom 43%

Sweden
Hernö
Juniper Cask Gin 47%

United States
Corsair
Barrel Aged Gin 46%



WORLD'S BEST COMPOUND

Best English

Ableforth's

Bathtub Gin 43.3%

A punchy hit of nutmeg appears before the warming cinnamon note heats up your senses. This doesn't overwhelm the delicate undertone of piney juniper that is present throughout, making it a perfectly balanced sip.

SHORTLISTED

Scotland
Byron's Gin
Melancholy Thistle 43%

United States
Prairie Organic Spirits
Prairie Organic Gin 40%



WORLD'S BEST GENEVER

Best Dutch

Gospel Spirits

Barrel Aged Piet Honingh Genever 40%

Rich, fruity malt loaf on the nose, huge palate and heavy raisin-y finish. This spirit has a lot going on. Really heavy flavours, quite testing on the palate. It would be great for cooking and bringing flavour to other things.

SHORTLISTED

Canada
Compass Distillers
Fort George Genever 43%



WORLD'S BEST SLOE

Best English

Hayman's

Spiced Sloe 26.4%

Negroni-rich bittersweet on the nose, dried fruit tang through the palate with a delicious finish. Nose is promising, with hints of coffee and cereal bar. Engaging palate with almondy stone fruit notes. This is a rich spirit, a lovely generous thing. So much flavour and a bit of punch.

SHORTLISTED

Australia
McHenry
Sloe Gin 23%

Germany
Elephant Gin
Elephant Sloe Gin 35%

Luxembourg
Opyos Beverages
Luxembourg Sloe Gin 26%



WORLD'S BEST FLAVOURED

Best English

Marylebone

Orange & Geranium Gin 46.2%

Nose is a little sweet, with strong floral notes, a hint of citrus and juniper berries. The palate is like a meadow in spring, filled with flowers, rose petals and some balsamic lemongrass or geranium. Very long finish with a hint of juniper berries. Fresh and smooth, despite the high ABV.

SHORTLISTED

Australia
The West Winds
Wild Plum Gin 39%

Belgium
Wilderen
Double You Gin 43.7%

Brazil
Vitoria Regia Organic Rose Gin 38%

Canada
Stillhead Distillery
Wild Blackberry Gin 37.5%

Croatia
Imagine Spirits
Pink Robin Aronia Gin 42%

Norway
Elsker
Dry Pink Gin 40%

Scotland
Edinburgh Gin
Rhubarb & Ginger 40%

South Africa
Cape Town Gin
Rooibos Red Gin 43%

Spain
Fresha Strawberry Gin 38%

Wales
Penderyn
Brecon Rhubarb & Cranberry Gin 37.5%



WORLD'S BEST SIGNATURE BOTANICAL

Best South African

Copper Republic

African Dry Gin 43%

A super-elegant fragrance that lingers. With its subtle citrus, it would be perfect in a well-made stirred Martini cocktail. A great, well-integrated gin.

SHORTLISTED

Belgium
Bel'uva
Muscaris 40%

England
Salcombe Gin
Voyager Series 'Island Queen' 46%

Germany
LiquorMacher
Hopfen Gin 42%

Spain
Gin Eva
Bergamot Gin 45%

Switzerland
Niels Rodin
Gin Fleur Bleus 40%

Vietnam
Sông Cái
Floral Gin 45%



World's Best

World's Best
GIN DESIGN

Best
BOTTLE DESIGN

SPONSORED BY

Twisted Nose
Watercress Dry Gin

This twisted bottle has huge standout. It's distinctive design and colour perfectly represents the gin inside, which is described as having a "watercress twist" and "fresh herbaceous nose". The structure of this crystal-clear, green vignette glass bottle has been carefully considered with the production and operational challenges in mind. The base stipple is embossed 'Made in Hampshire'.

Design – Sponsored by Rankin Bros. & Sons



BEST
New Launch

Seven Crofts
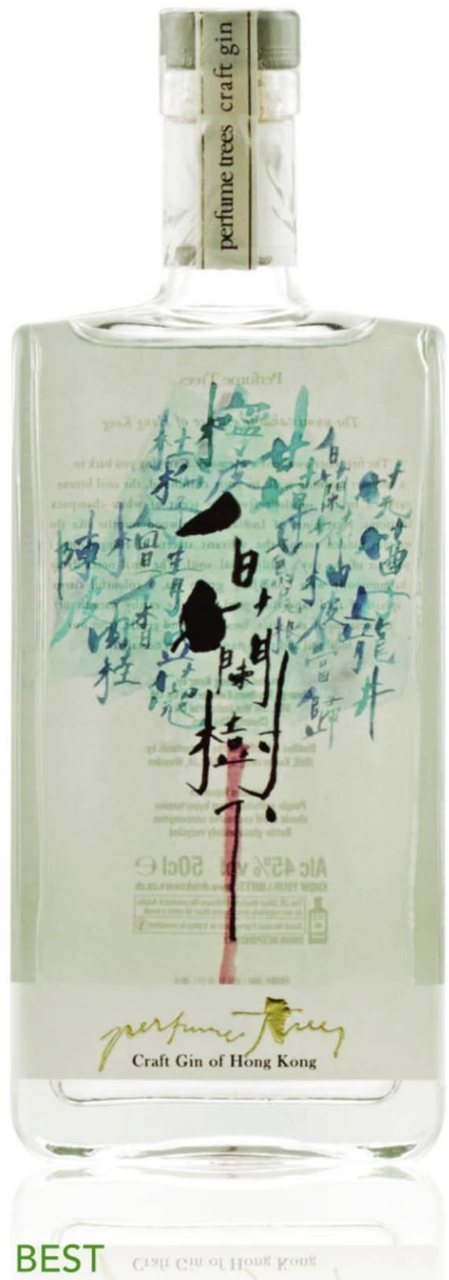
This understated, sophisticated bottle design is beautifully crafted with a lovely vignette of colour. The bottle structure, closure and label work well together and it feels great in the hand.



BEST
Presentation

Salcombe Gin
Voyager Series ‘Island Queen’

There is a consistency in the overall branding of the bottle and outer carton with a distinctive nautical flag theme. This is a well made carton constructed using quality materials, pleasing colours and clever detailing.



BEST
Label

Perfume Trees Gin
Craft Gin of Hong Kong

A very distinctive and elegantly illustrated label design that gives a sense of place and provenance. A quality tactile paperstock has been used to create this complex, all-in-one, front and back label.







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