



Gin, from the 13th century to today

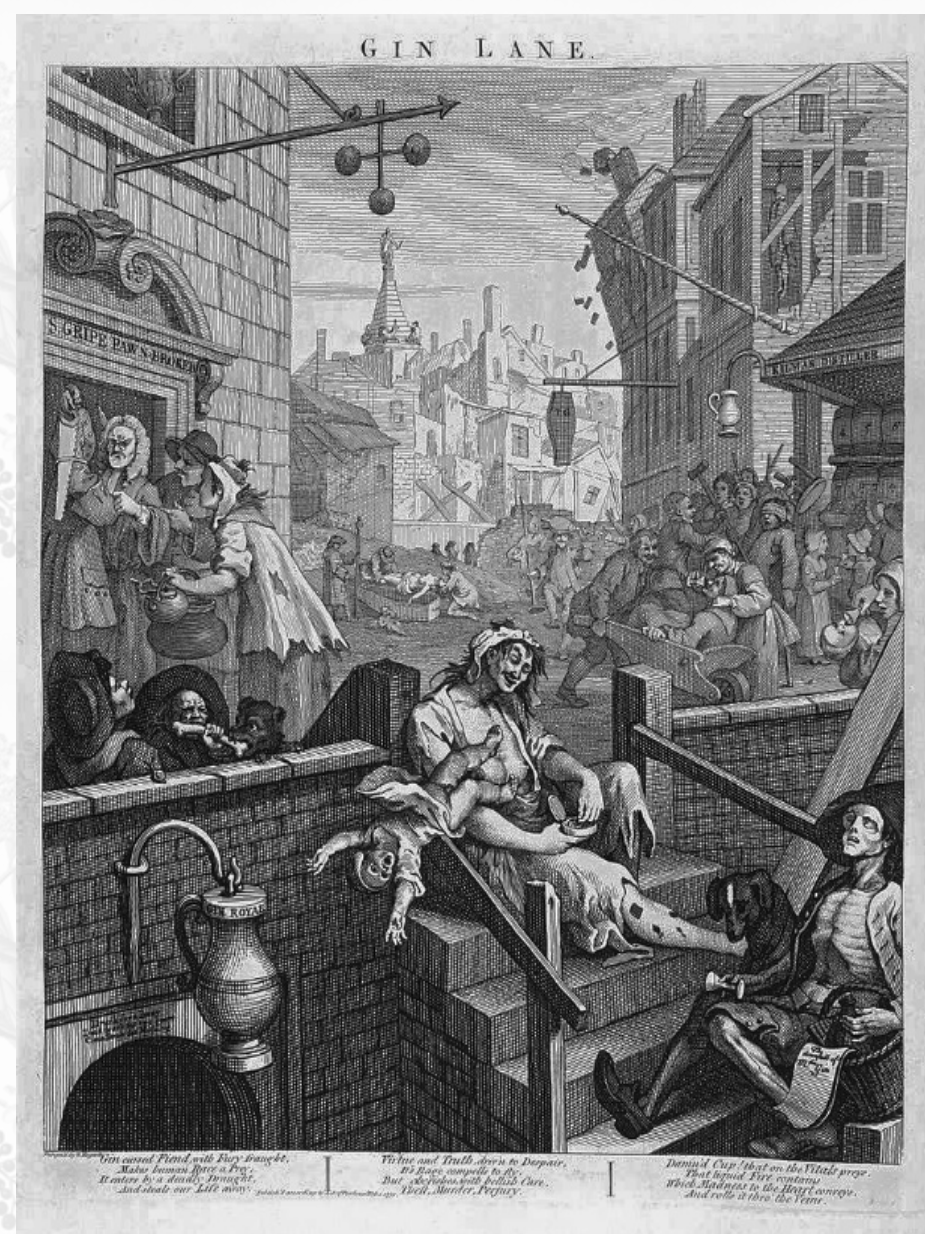
History of *Mother's Ruin*

The roots of modern gin were known as **jenever** or **genever** and were a distinctly different drink from later styles of gin. The earliest known written reference to genever appears in the **13th-century** encyclopedic work *Der Naturen Bloeme* (Bruges), with the earliest printed recipe for genever dating from **16th-century** work *Een Constelijck Distilleerboec* (Antwerp).

By the mid-17th century, numerous small Dutch and Flemish distillers had popularized the re-distillation of **malt spirit or malt wine with juniper, anise, caraway, coriander**, etc., which were sold in pharmacies and used to treat such medical problems as kidney ailments, lumbago, stomach ailments, gallstones, and gout.

Gin emerged in England in varying forms by the early **17th century**. Gin drinking in England rose significantly after the government allowed **unlicensed gin production**, and at the same time imposed a **heavy duty on all imported spirits** such as French brandy. This created a larger market for the poor-quality barley that was unfit for brewing beer. In 1695–1735 thousands of gin-shops sprang up throughout England, a period known as the **Gin Craze**.

Because of the low price of gin, when compared with other drinks available at the same time, **gin began to be consumed regularly by the poor**. Of the 15,000 drinking establishments in London, not including coffee shops and drinking chocolate shops, over **half were gin shops**. Beer maintained a healthy reputation as it was often safer to drink the brewed ale than unclean plain water. Gin, though, was **blamed for various social problems**, and it may have been a factor in the higher death rates which stabilized London's previously growing population.



Beer Street and Gin Lane are two prints issued in 1751 by English artist **William Hogarth** in support of what would become the Gin Act. Designed to be viewed alongside each other, they depict the evils of the consumption of gin as a contrast to the merits of drinking beer.

History of *Mother's Ruin*

The Gin Act 1736 imposed high taxes on retailers and led to **riots in the streets**. The prohibitive duty was gradually reduced and finally abolished in 1742. The Gin Act 1751 was more successful, however; it forced distillers **to sell only to licensed retailers** and brought gin shops under the jurisdiction of local magistrates.

In London in the early 18th century, much gin was distilled legally in residential houses (there were estimated to be **1,500 residential stills** in 1726) and was often flavoured with **turpentine** to generate resinous woody notes in addition to the juniper. The style of 18th century gin is referred to as **Old Tom gin**, which is a softer, sweeter style of gin, often containing sugar.

The invention and development of the **column still** (1826 and 1831) made the distillation of neutral spirits practical, thus enabling the creation of the "**London dry**" style that evolved later in the 19th century and is still the predominant type of gin being made today.

In India and other tropical regions, malaria was a persistent problem. In the 1700s, it was discovered that **quinine** could be used to prevent and treat the disease. The quinine was drunk in **tonic water**, however the bitter taste was unpleasant. British officers of the army of the British East India Company in India in the early 19th century took to adding a **mixture of water, sugar, lime and gin to the quinine** in order to make the drink more palatable, thus **gin and tonic** was born.

The modern gin revival

Since 2015, **gin sales are a billion-dollar industry**, with the figures from the Wine and Spirit Trade Association (WSTA) showing UK gin exports **increasing 32% in the past five years**.

Driving forces:

- Gin's versatility pairs well with the increasing **popularity of craft cocktails/mixology** and **shift in drinking culture**
- Locality and provenance of botanicals : **premium gins** at top of end of growth

“Customers are now so aware of what they are drinking so it is important to showcase the ingredients in a product well, particularly if they are unusual.”

Victoria Adams, brand marketing manager for Fever-Tree

- Explosion of **field-to-bottle movement** and **craft distilleries** (number of distilleries in the UK has more than doubled in the past five years)

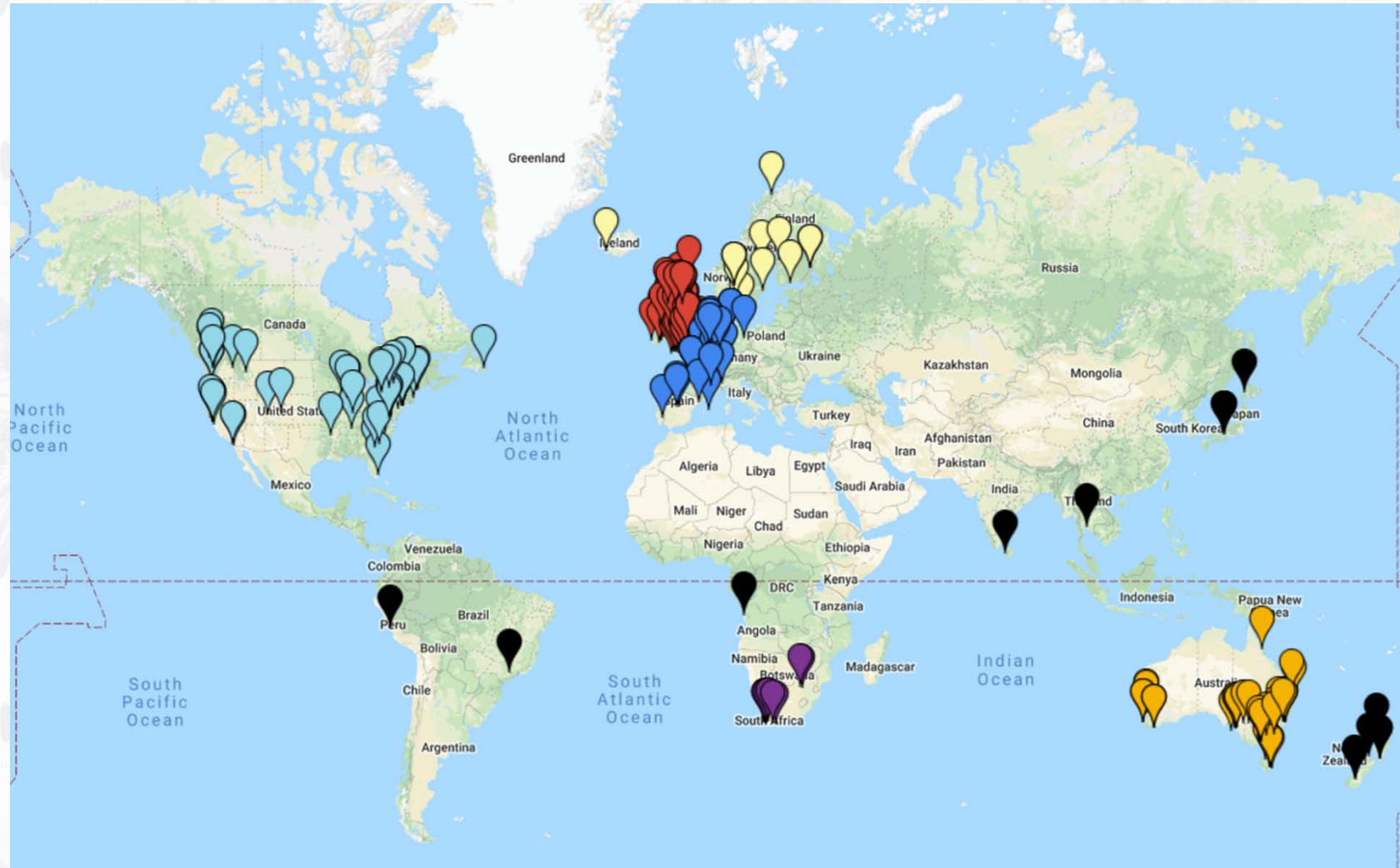
“You would never dream of buying a bottle of wine over £30 without knowing the vineyard, winemaker or terroir – why then, should it be any different for gin?”

James Chase, Chase Distilleries, UK

The modern gin revival

Although the British have laid claim to creating gin since the early 1700s, the next stage in its progression could be regarded as **'the rise of world gins.'**

The UK produces more than 500 gins, with around **6,000 worldwide.**



Some definitions

London gin

London gin is obtained exclusively from **ethanol of agricultural origin** with a **maximum methanol content of 5 grams per hectolitre** of 100 per cent ABV equivalent, whose flavour is introduced exclusively through **the re-distillation in traditional stills of ethanol** in the presence of all **the natural plant materials used**, the resultant distillate of which is at least **70 per cent ABV**. London gin **may not contain added sweetening** exceeding 0.1 grams of sugars per litre of the final product, **nor colourants, nor any added ingredients other than water**. The term London gin may be supplemented by the term dry.

Plymouth gin

Gin and the British Royal Navy go hand in swashbuckling hand, so it makes sense that a major British port would develop its own unique style of the spirit. These days, the brand Plymouth Gin is the only one to produce the style (in Plymouth, where it must be made by law). It's generally earthier, softer on the juniper and less dry than London Dry.

Navy strength, or gunpowder gin

The story goes that officers of the Royal Navy began to suspect their supplies of gin were being diluted by avaricious distillers or dodgy wholesale merchants. Often the gin was stored below deck adjacent to the gunpowder and some savvy officers began to realize a simple fact: if the gin spilt onto the gunpowder and the gunpowder smoked or failed to light at all, it was diluted gin. Only if the gunpowder still lit was the gin acceptable. The term "Navy Strength Gin" is a 1990s marketing creation to sell spirits which are 57.1% ABV

Production methods

Pot distilled gin represents the **earliest style of gin**, and is traditionally produced by **pot distilling a fermented grain mash** (malt wine) from barley or other grains, then **redistilling it with flavouring botanicals** to extract the aromatic compounds.

The fermentation of grain mash produces a **neutral alcohol** (similar to vodka) that is predominately tasteless except for the iconic ethyl alcohol taste. A **double gin** can be produced by redistilling the first gin again with more botanicals.

Due to the use of pot stills, **the alcohol content of the distillate is relatively low**; around 68 per cent ABV for a single distilled gin or 76 per cent ABV for a double gin.



Production methods

Column distilled gin evolved following the invention of the **Coffey still**, and is produced by first distilling high proof (e.g. 96 per cent ABV) **neutral spirits** from a fermented mash. The fermentable base for this spirit may be derived from grain, sugar beets, grapes, potatoes, sugar cane, plain sugar, or any other **material of agricultural origin**.

The highly concentrated spirit is then redistilled with juniper berries and other botanicals in a pot still. Most often, the botanicals are suspended in a "**gin basket**" positioned within the **head of the still**, which allows the **hot alcoholic vapours** to extract flavouring components from the botanical charge.

This method yields a gin **lighter in flavour** than the older pot still method



Production methods

Compound gin is made by simply **flavouring** neutral spirits with essences or other "natural flavourings" **without redistillation**, and is not as regarded as distilled gin. Secretly produced "**bathtub gin**" was available in the speakeasies of Prohibition-era America as a result of the relative simple production.



Botanicals



Juniper berries

The **main flavouring** in all gins, juniper is a member of the cypress family and the berries used in gin production usually comes from **Italy, Serbia, Macedonia and India**. These bluish berries are handpicked from October to February, and the main flavour comes from the **essential oils** within the **seeds** inside the berries.



Coriander seeds

The **second most important flavouring** in most gins, Coriander seeds come from **Morocco, Romania, Moldavia, Bulgaria and Russia**. The essential oil in coriander is **mellow, spicy, fragrant and aromatic** with a candied ginger, lemon and sage taste.



Angelica root

Angelica is a key ingredient as it **holds the volatile flavours of other botanicals** and marries them together giving **length and substance** to gin. Angelica has a musky, nutty, damp woody/rooty (forest floor), sweet flavour with a piney, dry edge. Most distillers think the smoothest and mellowest angelica comes from the **Saxony region of Germany** and prefer this to the more pungent angelica from Flanders in Belgium. The **root** is most commonly used, but **seeds and flowers** can be used as well.



Botanicals



Lemon peel

Lemon peel is used to flavour gin instead of the flesh because the skin contains a **high proportion** of the fruit's essential oils. Most distillers source their lemons from **Andalucia in Southern Spain** where fruit is still hand-peeled and hung out to dry in the sun. Lemon peel adds **fresh, citrusy, juicy**, lemony flavours.



Orange peel

Orange peel tends to come from **Spain, often Seville**. As with lemons, the peel rather than the flesh of oranges is used, and this is usually cut off in one continuous strip by hand. Different distillers choose different types of orange, **some preferring bitter and others sweet**. Orange peel adds **fresh, citrus, juicy** orange flavours to a gin.



Orris root

The bulb of the iris plant, orris root has a very perfumed character and, like angelica root, **can help fix aromas and flavours** within a gin. Mainly sourced from **Florence in Italy**, orris root is very bitter and tastes of parma violets, earth and cold stewed tea, and to my mind has an **earthy smell** reminiscent of clean stables or a hamster cage.

Botanicals



Cassia

A member of the cinnamon family, cassia is sometimes referred to as **Chinese cinnamon**. It is the bark of a tree which grows in **Vietnam, China and Madagascar**, removed from the trunk and rolled into quills.



Cinnamon

From **Sri Lanka**, cinnamon is commonly used to give a **spicy edge** to gin. Like cassia, it is tree bark rolled into quills.



Almond

Two types of almond - **sweet and bitter**, are used in gin - both are hard and must be ground before use. Almonds have a high essential oil content and give gin an **almond/marzipan, nutty, soapy and spicy** flavour. Almond also adds to the **overall mouth feel** of gin. Almond contains trace amounts of **arsenic**, which along with **nut protein** **does not come over during distillation so gin is not hazardous for people with nut allergies**.

Botanicals



Cardamom

These pods come from an aromatic plant which grows in the Malabar region of **south-western India** and contains numerous tiny black seeds. Of the two varieties, **green and black**, the green are most widely used as they are considered more delicate. Cardamom adds a **spicy, citrusy, almost eucalyptus** flavour to gin.



Cubeb berries

A member of the **pepper family**, these small, red-brown berries are grown in **Java, Indonesia**. They add a **spicy, peppery, lemony, pine/eucalyptus** flavour to the gin.



Grains of paradise

These dark brown berries are also related to the **pepper family** and add a **hot, spicy, peppery** flavour plus hints of **lavender, elderflower and menthol**.

Botanicals



Ginger

The aromatic rhizome of a plant from **South-east Asia**. Ginger's **distinctive scent and hot flavour** means it must be used **sparingly** in gin.



Liquorice

Liquorice comes from **Indo-China** and the hard fibrous root of the liquorice plant is **ground into a powder** for gin distilling. It gives gin an obvious **liquorice** flavour but also a **light, fresh, bittersweet, woody-earthy** taste. It adds base and length as well as **sweetening, softening and rounding-off** a gin.



Nutmeg

The nutmeg tree is native to **Indonesia** but widely cultivated in tropical Asia and America. Its light-brown, oval, rounded seeds are ground to add a **warming, aromatic, sweet spice** to gin.

More unusual botanicals

Aniseed

Ants (!)

Apple

Aprocot

Asparagus

Bamboo chips

Baobab

Bergamot

Black tea

Bog myrtle

Brown rice

Burdock

Cacao nibs

Caraway

Chamomille

Cherry blossom

Chili peppers

Cinchona bark (quinine)

Clove

Clover

Coconut

Cumin

Currant

Dandelion

Elderberry

Elderflower

Fennel seed

Frankincense

Galangal

Ginseng

Gooseberries

Grapefruit

Green tea

Hibiscus

Honey

Honeysuckle

Hops

Kaffir Lime leaves

Lavendar

Lemon verbena

Lemongrass

Lotus leaves

Macadamia nuts

Mint

Myrrh

Nettle

Olive

Passion fruit

Pear

Pine needles

Plum

Quince

Rhubarb

Rowan berries

Saffron

Sage

Samphire

Savory

Seaweed

Silver birch

Sultanas

Tarragon

Thai sweet basil

Thyme

Truffle

Violet root

White poppy

Wormwood

Yuzu

“Classic” gin recipe

At minimum, most gins will contain juniper, coriander, angelica or orris (binders), cassia or cinnamon (spice) and lemon or orange (citrus). Even the last 2 can be optional.

After that, there are no limits.

If doing **homemade bathtub gin**, for 750ml base spirit:

juniper berries – 20-25g

coriander seed – 8-10g

angelica root – 2-3g

liquorice root – 1-2g

orris root – 1-2g

orange peel – 1-2g

lemon peel – 1-2g

1. Pour the botanicals (minus any particularly punchy ones) into a clean sterile bottle (sterilise with boiling water).
2. Top with your chosen base spirit (usually vodka).
3. Leave for 24hrs to infuse in a cool, dry place. Have a taste, it should be starting to taste all junipery and ginny – hurrah!
4. Add any remaining botanicals to the mix, or if there's a particular flavour you want more of, add a bit more of that botanical! Leave to steep for a further 12-24 hrs agitating the mixture at least once.
5. Taste, and once you are happy (**longer does not mean better, beware of over infusing**) use a sieve to filter out the botanicals, If there is still sediment you can use a coffee filter, muslin or cheese cloth to filter again.
6. Leave to sit for a couple of days. Re-filter out any sediment that settles.
7. Run through the brita filter/freeze if you want to, with further filtration as necessary.
8. Bottle your gin.

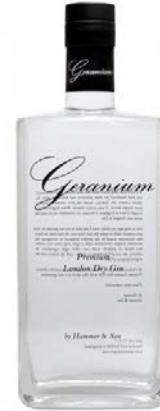
Floral gin



Rose,
cucumber,
chamomile
and
elderflower



Rhodiola
Rosea, rowan
berries, sea
buckthorn
and verbena



Geranium



Edelweiss,
woodruff,
elderflower,
lemon
balm, and
lavender

Herbaceous gin



Heather,
bog myrtle,
dandelion,
apple



Apple mint, heather, red clover,
and meadowsweet, chamomile,
creeping thistle, downy birth,
elder, gorse, hawthorn, heather,
lady's bedstraw spearmint, sweet
cicely, bog myrtle, tansy.
watermint, white clover, wild
thyme and wood sage



Arbequina olive,
rosemary, thyme
and basil



Arctic Blend,
Cloudberry,
Crowberry,
Labrador Tea
and Wild Rose
Hips.

Spicy gin



Cassia, cubeb, and grains of paradise



Cubeb, black pepper and cumin



Bachu, baobab, lions tail, devil's claw, African wormwood, apple, ginger, mountain pine and pimento



Cassia and nutmeg



Fennel and saffron

Citrusy gin



Rangpur
limes



Amalfi Coast
lemon and
Sicilian
lemon



Seville
oranges



Bitter orange,
cranberries,
hibiscus kaffir
lime, lemon,
lemongrass
and pomelo

Gin cocktails



Martini

1/2 oz Dry vermouth
3 oz Gin

Pour all ingredients into mixing glass with ice cubes. Stir well. Strain in chilled martini glass. Squeeze oil from lemon peel onto the drink, or garnish with olive.



Negroni

1 oz Gin
1 oz Campari
1 oz Sweet Vermouth

Stir into old fashion glass over ice, garnish with orange peel and serve.



Gimlet

2 oz gin
1 oz lime cordial
1 oz soda water

Stir into cocktail glass over ice, garnish with lime wedge and serve.



G&T

1 oz dry gin
3 oz tonic water

Stir into copa glass over ice, garnish appropriately and serve.



Tom Collins

2 oz dry gin
2 oz lemon juice
1 tsp sugar syrup
soda water

Stir into collins or highball glass over ice, garnish with lemon slice and serve.

Gin tourism and activities



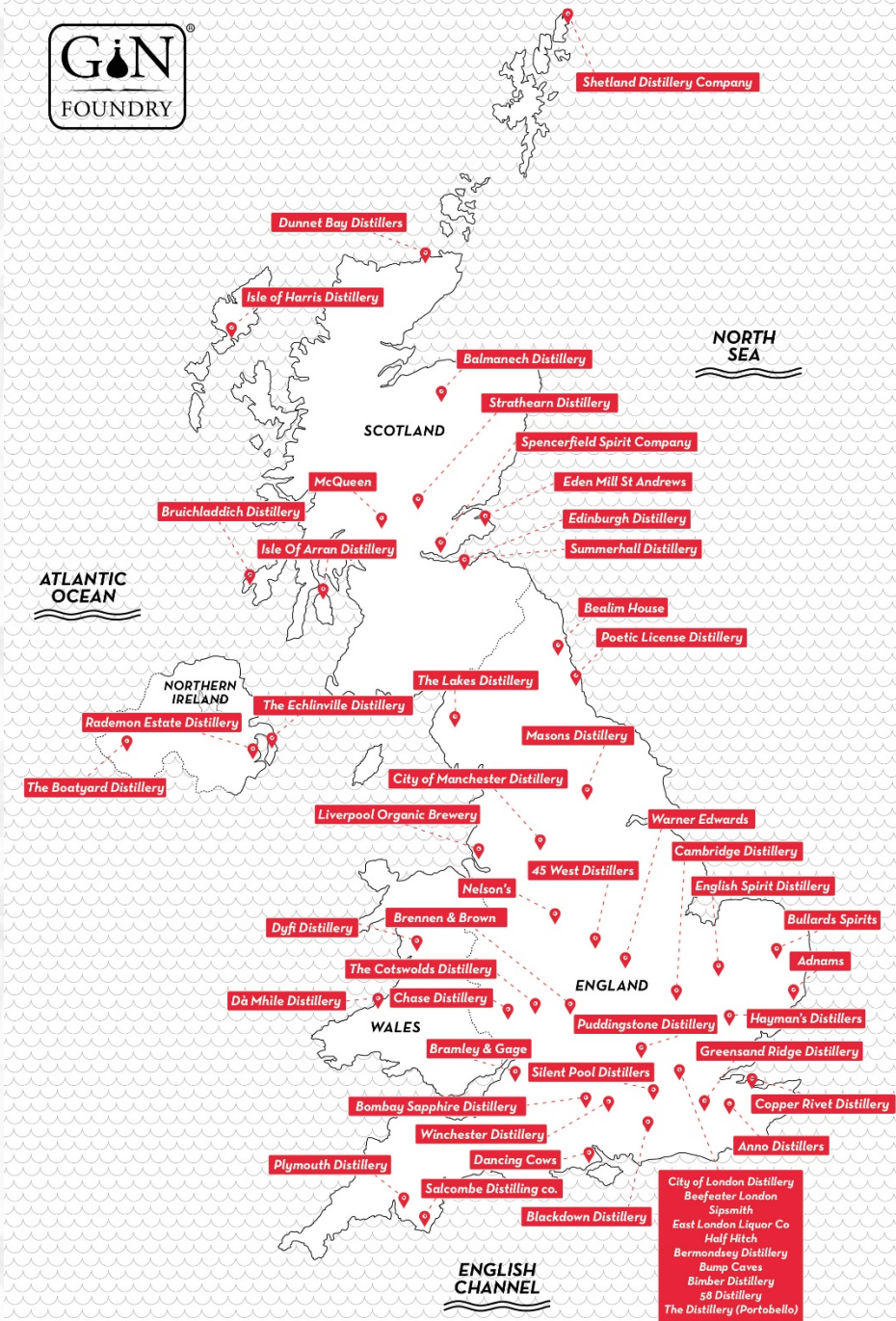
Portobello Road, London



Burleighs, Leicester



Cirka, Montreal



Tasting – Tanqueray No. Ten

Tanqueray No. TEN Gin is named for the still on which it is made. It launched in 2000, way ahead of this modern iteration of the Gin craze. The gin is made with fresh, whole citrus fruits, which brings great depth and character.

Indisputably a step up in class, the gin seems smoother than Tanqueray's classic offering. It has a full-bodied grapefruit and citrus hit to it and when released was highly sort after by bartenders who were keen to work with a gin that had a little something extra about it. It was go-to Martini fodder in a world of standardized spirits, and even though many thousands of gins have come along since, it's still one that cocktails makers and those in the know keep close to hand.

Taste wise, the big brash citrus has plenty of juniper alongside it, along with a lovely floral note. The finish is smooth, laden with citrus oils, and the high strength makes it stand up to the loudest of mixers.



Tasting - Jinzu

Jinzu Gin is a Scottish made, Japan inspired gin with an English woman at its heart. Designed by bartender Dee Davies for Diageo's Show Your Spirit competition in 2013 (which it went on to win), the gin is a fantastic example of East meets West, with traditional gin botanicals (juniper, coriander, angelica) joining cherry blossom, yuzu and sake to form a distinctive gin with a luxurious, creamy mouth feel and a subtle, compelling sweetness to its flavour profile.

Fleshy citrus jumps to the fore on the nose, with the sake bringing an underlying sweetness. The cherry blossom carries a distinct floral note, but there's a subtle juniper underpinning it all.

Tasted neat, Jinzu Gin is mild, easy to sip and to hold on the tongue. It's altogether quite unfamiliar as a spirit, though notably still a ginny with a long finish and a strong enough juniper backbone that carries all the way through to the aftertaste. The yuzu brings a fresh, mandarin-like citrus and the sake provides a creamy mouthfeel and a taste which bites right at the end. The cherry blossom, too, holds strong in the mouth – it's not sweet and not herbal, rather it sits somewhere in-between.



Tasting – Hendricks

William Grant and Sons decided to release a premium gin in 1999 inspired by eating cucumber sandwiches and British gardens.

Hendrick's macerate 12 botanicals (juniper, coriander, angelica root, orris root, orange peel, lemon peel, cubeb berries, grains of paradise, caraway seeds, elderflower, yarrow and chamomile). There is a further addition of cucumber and Bulgarian rose petal essence before the spirit is cut with water and finally bottled. If you don't like gin or don't know where to start, this is the place to do so as Hendrick's is not a big juniper gin.

That said, the juniper may be lighter but it's certainly there, creating the base for a clean, floral and refreshing gin. The cucumber adds a fresh quality to the ensemble helped along by the rose which can definitely be picked up on the aroma. Cubeb berries, elderflower, chamomile and yarrow give the floral edge some depth while also complimenting the more commonly used botanicals, who work to provide a solid backbone to the overall gin.



Tasting – Gin Mare

Gin Mare was testing the boundaries of Gin long before everyone else hopped on the bandwagon. With cardamom, coriander, rosemary, thyme, arbequina olivea, sweet oranges from Seville, bitter oranges from Valencia, lemon and basil included in the botanical line up it's savoury and unusual, balanced and complex. It's also a Spanish Gin made in Spain, something that should, in due time, help it to establish itself firmly in one of the world's biggest Gin markets.

The citrus fruit is macerated for an entire year in neutral spirit of around 50% ABV. While the citrus are macerated together for an extensive period of time, most of the other botanicals are macerated separately for around 36h and then individually distilled then blended with more neutral spirit and water to create Gin Mare.

Gin Mare does indeed taste “Mediterranean”. It smells herbaceous, with resinous juniper and thyme dominating. Olives are also apparent. To taste, more juniper with a burst of basil, rosemary and thyme emerge as well as coriander. The combination feels savoury and different to other gins on the shelf, marking Gin Mare as both authentic and original.



Tasting – Opihr

Opihr Gin is named after the legendary port from which King Solomon was said to receive a cargo of gold, silver, sandalwood, pearls, ivory, apes and peacocks every three years. The gin itself was designed with the equally exotic ancient spice route in mind – that which sailed from Indonesia to the United Kingdom via India, Turkey, Italy, Morocco and Spain.

While none of the botanicals are particularly unusual, their combined presence pulls the drink down a very distinctive path. Cubeb, black pepper, cardamom, ginger, cumin, coriander seed, bitter oranges, grapefruit, juniper and angelica are in the mix.

On the nose, Opihr Gin has a heady spice mix with cardamom very much raising its hand above the rest of the class. There's also a cheeky, zesty citrus making itself known. While there is certainly a spiced explosion to taste, there is also a discernible sweetness from the orange in Opihr Gin. Cubeb dominates the finish with its deliciously exotic and characterful notes of cracked pepper and light violet.



Enjoy!

