



With more than 600 British gins (and counting) British distilling is raising spirits to a celestial level. **Charlotte Reather** imbibes a few of the best



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INSPIRED BY A 16TH CENTURY juniper-infused liquor called 'jenever' sold in Dutch pharmacies and believed to have medicinal properties, gin was brought back to the UK by British troops returning from the Dutch War of Independence.

Once again in the 21st century, gin is being lauded for its medicinal qualities as artisanal distillers, such as Silent Pool, turn base alcohol into hand sanitiser to help protect the vulnerable and our doctors and nurses on the frontline of Covid-19.

We thank them heartily and, while dutifully obeying the rules of lockdown, it seems only good and proper to raise a G&T to our key workers in the NHS, farming, food production and supermarkets for their sterling efforts during difficult times.

So with off-licenses still open for 'essential' business and a little time our hands, let's see if we can distinguish a gin of consequence from ribald firewater.

Dr J's London Dry Gin

Launched in 2011, Dr J's Gin is one of the few gins made with the distiller's (Dr John Walters) own base alcohol from local British sugar beet which is smooth enough to sip neat without wincing. Distilled with only four botanicals - juniper berries, coriander seeds, citrus zests, and macadamia nut - you can actually taste each note. Dr J's is the connoisseur's choice and mine. Serve with Refreshingly Light Fever Tree tonic, crushed ice, cracked black pepper and sliced lime.

£38

● englishspirit.uk

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CHARLIE'S CHOICE
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Limongino

Made by Dr John Walters (Dr J's Gin) at his distillery located in a 200-year-old Grade II-listed Black Barn at Great Yeldham Hall, Essex, Limongino is a nod to the Italian classic: limoncello. However, the gin reimagining is nothing short of delicious. Freshly zested lemons and juice are added to a small batch of distilled lemon gin, with a dose of English sugar. Two-and-a-half lemons go into every bottle - the result is a zesty, juicy, and truly lemon-y delight.

Serve cold from the fridge in a chilled glass, or add a measure to your favourite bubbly for some zing!

£22

● englishspirit.uk



OPIHR Oriental Spiced London Dry Gin

Produced by G&J Distillers in Warrington, who also make Greenalls Gin, this intense, exotic spiced gin incorporates hand-picked botanicals from the Ancient Spice Route, including coriander from Morocco, black pepper from India and cubeb berries from Indonesia. A complex and robust gin with key notes of cumin and cardamom, as well as citrus and camphor. A complex gin for an advanced palate.

Serve over ice with orange peel twist garnish and aromatic tonic water.

£23

● opihr.com



Tiger Premium No.1 Gin

Sold in the foodie restaurants and farm shops of Ludlow and Shrewsbury, Tiger Gin is the brainchild of Shropshire businessman JJ Lawrence who teamed up with local distillers using traditional copper pot methods, top quality grain alcohol and pure English water to create this tasty tipple. The result is a rich, oily juniper gin with piney, citrus and coriander notes, finishing with a hint of sweet liquorice. JJ's slogan is 'party like an animal', so be warned it might bring out the wildcat in you.

Serve with Indian tonic water, a large slice of fresh orange, over ice.

£36.50

● tigergin.com



That Boutique-y Gin Company: Spit-Roasted Pineapple Gin

That Boutique-y Gin Company teams up with distillers from across the world to release quirky limited edition, individually-numbered batches of gins that would otherwise never see the light of day. Their spit-roasted pineapple gin - popular in the 1920s but long since forgotten - returns with a 21st century twist. Whole pineapples are roasted on a spit with sugar until caramelisation occurs; the result is a juicy pineapple fritter gin which, transports you to the Caribbean. Serve with ginger beer and a lime wedge

£29.95

● thatboutiqueygin.com



Greenall's Wild Berry Pink Gin

The original hand-crafted British gin, Greenall's Warrington distillery is more than 250 years old, founded in 1761. The wild berry pink gin takes its inspiration from the English countryside, combining blackberries and raspberries with Greenall's Original London Dry Gin to form a sugar-free flavoured gin. Usually not one for the sweet flavoured gins, this has lots of oily juniper and citrus which complements the berry flavours.

Serve with premium tonic water and garnish with berries.

£15.50

● greenallsgin.com



Warner's Farmed and Foraged London Dry Gin

Farmers Tom and Tina Warner, in partnership with the Gin Foundry, created this London Dry Gin using botanicals farmed and foraged within a bee's flight (three-mile radius) of the distillery at Falls Farm, Northamptonshire. With a limited run of 1,200 bottles, each contains freshly-picked lemon thyme, lemon verbena, chamomile, dandelion root, toasted apple wood and bee pollen from their hives. Serve with Indian tonic water and garnish with apple mint.

£40 Free delivery and 2 x free Fever Tree mixers, when you spend more than £30.

Use the code 'FREEDELIVERY'
● warnersdistillery.com



Ableforth's Bathtub Gin

The term 'Bathtub gin' appeared during the Prohibition era when homemade spirit was being produced in 'amateur conditions' across the pond. Although not made in a bathtub, Ableforth's gin is made using compounding/infusing methods. "Firstly the copper pot-distilled gin is made with juniper, coriander and other fragrant botanicals, then we take a portion of this gin and infuse it with a further six fresh botanicals," say the makers. The 'mouthfeel' of Bathtub is rich with a zing of orange and cardamom.

Serve with Premium Indian tonic water, garnish with orange peel.

£31



BLOOM London Dry Gin

Distilled by Joanne Moore, one of the first female gin master distillers in the world, she was also responsible for the creation of Opihr Oriental Spiced Gin and Thomas Dakin Gin, as well as a number of other brands. BLOOM London Dry Gin is a fragrant and floral spirit in which she expertly combines chamomile, honeysuckle and pomelo (an ancestor of grapefruit) to create a refreshingly light but tasty gin.

Serve with premium tonic water and garnish with quartered strawberries

£25

● bloomgin.com



Mermaid Gin

Co-founder of the Isle of Wight Distillery, Xavier Baker, refers to Mermaid as a 'session gin' which means you can drink quite a few of this clean and smooth spirit without a headache. Inspired by the island setting, botanicals include IoW rock samphire (also known as Mermaid's kiss), Ventnor Boadicea hops, juniper, coriander seeds, fresh lemon zest, grains of paradise, angelica, liquorice, orris and handpicked elderflower. The blue Murano glass bottle is a thing of beauty, and so is the moreish gin within.

Serve with Fever Tree Indian tonic water, garnish with juniper berries and cucumber. Also try the Mermaid Pink Gin, infused with island strawberries.

£34.95

● isleofwightdistillery.com



Thomas Dakin Gin

In 1761, Thomas Dakin began distilling in Warrington at the age of 25 and was soon pioneering the development and refinement of English gin, which, given gin's sordid reputation at the time, was highly ambitious. The revived British brand now has a distillery and bar in the centre of Manchester expected to attract 70,000 visitors a year. Who said the gin renaissance was over? The gin is juniper-driven with notes of sweet orange, fresh citrus and an infusion of red cole - a savoury root botanical. Serve with Fever Tree Mediterranean tonic water, orange peel and thyme.

£29

● thomasdakin.com



Silent Pool

Situated on the Albury Estate in the heart of the Surrey Hills' Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is The Silent Pool, dating back to The Ice Age and renowned for its beauty. A group of old farm buildings on its banks were transformed into a distillery with a wood-fired steam boiler, which powers the copper still. A clean juniper-led spirit, the gin is produced using 24 botanicals, including lavender, chamomile and local honey, mixed with spring-water from the Silent Pool.

Serve with a generous handful of ice, a dash of Fever Tree tonic, and a twist of orange peel

£37 Free hand sanitizer with every bottle of spirits bought (excludes miniatures and vermouth). Purchase up to four hand sanitizers at £4 each.

● silentpooldistillers.com



British Polo Gin Botanical No 3:

Winner of three stars at the 2018 Great Taste Awards, this organic gin is made by British polo player, Richard Hine. All ingredients are 100% organic, certified by the Soil Association and the gin is made in small batches of just 300 bottles (important for quality control). It's quadruple distilled, meaning it's smooth enough to be sipped on the rocks. With notes of vanilla and citrus, it could be time to 'chukka' your commercial gin and sample the gin of kings!

Serve with Fever Tree Indian tonic water, garnish with strawberry and basil. Also try British Polo Gin Strawberry and Rose this summer.

£39.99

● britishpologin.co.uk

