



Belgin St Cruyts Abbey Dry Gin

Country: Belgium

Region: Lion d'Orweg - Aalst

Producer: Hand Crafted Belgian Gin

Bottle size: 50cl - abv: 43%



The history of Gin starts in the Low Countries (Belgium) in the 15th century

To find where 'gin' comes from we need first to find the origins of genever/jenever, the prototype combination of grain spirit and juniper berries and other botanicals. According to the National Jenever Museum of Belgium it was first produced in Flanders in the 13th century. At this time, this area was part of the Low Countries that also included what is now Holland, bits of Northern France and Luxembourg.

Originally used as a medicinal tonic or a herbal medicine, it wasn't long before genever was being drunk for pleasure. Again the transition lacks precise dates and written records but one source of information is the numerous records of taxation levied on distilleries throughout the Low Countries from the late 15th century onwards.

The first recorded mention of genever as a distilled beverage flavored with juniper and botanicals was in 1552, in a book called 'Een Constelijck Distileerboec' by Antwerp-based Philippus Hermanni. That's not to say there are no other recipes yet to be found and diligent historians will keep looking no doubt. But, knowledge tended to be handed down orally then, as not everyone was literate.

The English first met genever during the Eighty Years War (1568-1648) when the armies of France, England and Spain fought over religion, politics and territory in the Low Countries. Here, English mercenaries were introduced to the local grog, given to steady their nerves before battle.

The origin of gin can be traced back to Belgium, Brugge with the first published recipe of a spirit made with juniper berries (the main ingredient in gin). Belgin's artisanal Belgian gins are the result of 500 years of Belgian distilling history since giving birth to gin, Belgian's rich spice trade going back to medieval times and the craftsmanship from Belgium's famous beer and culinary history. Belgin continues the story of gin with unique new flavours such as Fresh Hop and brings a new level of gin quality back to the country that started it all.

To be legally classified as a gin, the primary flavour influence in the finished spirit has to be juniper, and Belgin source their hand-picked juniper berries from Macedonia, regarded by many experts as the finest available.

The company philosophy is to only use natural ingredients, and to extract their flavours by treating every component individually. No artificial colours, synthetic concentrates or sweeteners are used in the process - it's all in the skill of the distiller

Certain botanicals are distilled separately and others in groups. In addition, fresh herbs or fruits are macerated for extra fresh flavours. The European definition does not allow these innovative techniques in a London Dry Gin

Is this better than a London Dry.?

In a world where it feels as though every possible botanical has been added to juniper in a bid to make a new 'wonder-gin', it's probably worth spending a moment thinking about who invented it, and what it was like?

*The earliest records of juniper flavoured drinks go all the way back to the 13th century, and a Belgian reference book called *Der Naturen Bloeme*. At this time it is difficult to definitively say whether this proves that gin (or genever as it was originally known) was invented in Belgium, but it seems likely that they were among the very first distillers.*

As with many alcoholic liquors, the earliest producers were almost certainly monks and members of religious orders, as their status and the power of the church and monasteries would keep them protected from local marauders. Additionally, the monks would often travel to far off lands as missionaries, and would return with exotic seeds and herbs to add to their own monastic gardens, giving rise to ever more complex creations.

St. Cruyt is a tribute from the master distiller to those who made the first gins, and we like to think that you can taste every single one of the 50 botanicals that make this a truly sensational gin..

NOSE; Perfume, citrus, lavender lots happening

PALATE Soft, creamy pronounced lavender, juniper, citrus, lemon, A lot is happening

FINISH: Clean, fresh and very very long

THE IDEAL SERVE

Can you taste every one of the 50 botanicals?

Pour into a glass 50cl a couple of ice cubes, let your brain wander through an array of flavours that will leave you wondering if you'll ever find a gin that is more complete...

