



Spirit - Gin

Fifty Pound Gin

Country: England
Region: London
Producer: Timbermill Distillery
Thames Distillers Ltd - Clapham
Style: London Dry - Small Batch
Allergens: Not known
Bottle size: 70cl - abv: 43.5%



On the nose is juniper (pine) and citrus (lemon) with a slight spicy (coriander) perfume. On the palate this soft and subtle medium bodied spirit, gives a balanced taste of juniper, citrus and spice with earthy sweet notes, we also found some mint here too. The smooth oily dry and long warming finish has herbal and faint floral notes, with citrus (orange) belaying its complexity. A very nicely balanced Gin.

History

Thames Distillers is run by Charles Maxwell who is the 8th generation of the family (founders of the Finsbury Distillery) who have been producing Gin since 1700 – making them the oldest unbroken lineage in Gin distillation.

This Gin was launched in 2009 and late 2010 in the USA.

With Gin production in the UK exempt from any tax during the late 1600's and early 1700's, there was widespread consumption of this spirit. It reached a stage where Gin was the cheapest drink around where people in London could become inebriated for pennies, and often were - this period in time became referred to as the "Gin Craze". The British Government had to do something to combat this rising anti-social epidemic and so introduced the Gin Act of 1736. This law prohibited the production of Gin except under licence. The cost of this licence was the princely sum of fifty pounds, equivalent to \$130,000 US dollars today - no wonder only 2 distilleries ever paid this levy!

The Maxwell family concocted a Gin recipe at this time, it being ironically called "fifty pounds" after this tax. Although not used since, this recipe has been given a new leaf of life by Thames Distillery.

Some say gin originated in Italy, the British owe it all to Holland in the 17th century. At that time, gin was sold in Dutch shops as a medicine to treat ailments such as stomach complaints and gallstones, and flavoured with juniper, a berry said to have its own medicinal properties. In Dutch, juniper is known as jeneverbes, which gave the "medicine" its Dutch name, jenever. British troops fighting the Thirty Years war in the Low Countries were given warming tots of jenever to ward off the effects of the damp conditions. This process gave us the expression "Dutch courage", and saw British troops reduce the name from jenever to gin.

When William of Orange took the English throne in 1689, he encouraged the rise of British distillation, passing a series of statutes that restricted imports and made it far easier to produce alcoholic spirits. All too frequently, however, this resulted in spirits of very dubious quality. Gin consumption boomed across the nation, particularly among the poor. It became so popular, in fact, that gin sometimes formed part of a worker's wages.

By 1730, London alone had over 7000 spirit shops: some reports suggest that gin was distilled and sold in as many as one fifth of all London homes. This excessive and uncontrolled consumption – known as the Gin Craze – provoked a rapid degradation of society. Something had to be done to curb this "social evil".

That's why, under the reign of George II, the 1736 Gin Act was introduced. Its aim was to restrict production and the sale of gin by imposing an annual levy of £50. By the time the act was repealed in 1742, only two distilleries had agreed to pay this tax

Botanicals Used

11 botanicals are used, including: angelica root (Western Europe), coriander seed (Middle East), grains of paradise (East Africa), juniper berries (Croatia), lemon peel (Spain), liquorice, (Italy), orange peel (Spain) and savory (France). The other three botanicals are kept a closely guarded secret.

Juniper Berries: from Croatia Without juniper, it's not a gin. It's as simple as that. Ours comes from the hills of Croatia, to impart the classic gin profile and aroma, with traces of pine.

Coriander Seeds: from the Middle East, Perhaps surprisingly, it's coriander which gives Fifty Pounds Gin some of its citrus notes. Coriander also accentuates the gin's exotic flavours, spicy hints, and freshness.

Orange & Lemon Peel: from Spain, most of the citrus comes from lemon and bitter orange peel, which is sourced from Spain. These create a subtle balance between Fifty Pounds' citric aromas and flavours, and enhance the gin's superb dryness.

Angelica Root: from Western Europe. This brings a slightly earthy, spicy note to the gin but, more importantly, acts as a fixative, "glueing" together with the oils from the other botanicals.

Savory: from the South of France Savory has a delicate aroma, with traces of mint. It's what gives Fifty Pounds its extra freshness and hedgerow notes

Liquorice Powder: from Calabria in Southern Italy, adds delicate, woody and bitter notes and also acts a smoothing agent.

Grains Of Paradise: The Gulf of Guinea, Western Africa, is where Grains of Paradise are from The variety used is rare and hard to source, but it's worth it for the subtle, peppery flavour with hints of lavender it imparts.

Production

Fifty Pounds Gin is produced in the south-east of London, at a small, celebrated distillery with more than two centuries of tradition behind it, with a beautiful still manufactured by the legendary John Dore & Co Limited. The base spirit is distilled four times from grain. The botanicals are steeped in this base spirit for a minimum of two days, placed into the still, along with premium neutral grain spirit and water. They are left to macerate for a short time, and then the stills are turned on, heating them gently via hot water jackets, to avoid scalding the botanicals.

This entire process takes around five hours at which point the liquid is split into three sections, the head, heart and tails, only the heart is used

The final distillation is in small batches, using a 100-year old pot still made by John Dore & Co. It is filtered three times and then left to rest for a minimum of three weeks, which allows the botanicals' essential oils to blend perfectly with the grain spirit. The final step towards achieving this precious gin is to balance the distillate obtained with the same type of neutral alcohol, together with demineralised water, to achieve the perfect balance and alcohol content.

An unfamiliar design to us today the Gin is presented in a very dark green plastic covered clear bottle, which tapers upwards (larger at the top than the base), mimicking a design from the 1700's called a "Case Gin" bottle. Each batch produces around 1,000 bottles and these details are provided on the label: batch number and year.

Nose: On the nose, it's classic in character, with a predominant bouquet of juniper and coriander, balanced by its citrus and spice notes.

Taste: On the palate Fifty Pounds Gin is smooth but complex, opening with juniper, but followed by the citrus constituents, and a hint of spice and earthiness.

Finish: A long, fresh finish, that's clean, dry and with a touch of heat

THE IDEAL SERVE

It's ideal to be mixed with tonic or to star in a dry Martini garnish with a thin slice of orange or a twist of orange peel – but can also be enjoyed neat.

