

That's the

New World gins take on their Old World counterparts.

Spirit



In the era of the classic cocktail's return, Seattleites don't just eat locally, they drink locally. Small-batch brewers of gin, vodka, and whiskey are more popular than ever, and a number of them are distilling their products just down the road in Oregon. Seattle may not have its own small-batch distillery yet—but we do have some world-class mixologists and educated imbibers. To size up how New World gins like Aviation, the latest from Portland's House Spirits, compare to their Old World peers—and to have an excuse for a cocktail party—we invited some of the city's notable drink experts to guide us through our first *Seattle Metropolitan* Taste Test. Robert Hess, a founding member of the Museum of the

BY Laura Cassidy PHOTOGRAPHY BY Melissa O'Hearn

What the Barkeeps Keep

Thomas Dodson, manager at **Szmania's**, says he "couldn't serve just one gin," but his top three are Citadelle, Hendrick's, and Junipero.

Shea's Lounge manager Lotta Hashizume reports that she couldn't live without Bombay Sapphire because its "aromatics are incredible."

Michael Leifur, **King's Hardware** manager, picks Aviation as his favorite because it's "very clean and smooth."

Lola bartender Andy McClellan prefers Aviation because "it's not too flowery and fruity" and "it complements our fruit infusions."

Jerry Tide, **Union's** bartender, likes Boodles Gin best because it has a "classic London dry style that's not too flowery." —*Whitney Cork*



 **PANEL FAVORITE**

HENDRICK'S GIN

88 proof, \$34

William Grant & Sons Distillers
Ayrshire, Scotland
www.hendricksgin.com

Straight Sips The ladies in the room dabbed this one on their wrists, thanks to its "rosy" flavor. What color rose? "Pink."

Cocktail Spins Sampling this gin in a classic martini, we all wanted a second round. Very badly. Clarke called it "baroque," and its flowery, ladylike character held its own against the mixers. In the aviation, however, it almost disappeared.

Behind the Bottle Owing largely to the medicinal look of its bottle and the brand's snappy marketing, Hendrick's feels like a New World gin even though it's made in the Old World. It's been in production since 2000.



 **PANEL FAVORITE**

AVIATION GIN

84 proof, \$28

House Spirits Distillery
Portland, Oregon
www.housespirits.com

Straight Sips This gin presented a highly spicy nose; most tasters detected cinnamon and cardamom immediately, but the juniper and orange peel notes were very subtle. The strong scent of sarsaparilla inspired one staff member to dub it "the root beer of gin."

Cocktail Spins Highly interesting on its own, Aviation crashed in the martini, but shone in its namesake cocktail. Turns out it was engineered to do just that.

Behind the bottle Distillers Lee Medoff and Christian Krogstad, along with partner Ryan Magarian, transitioned from the world of beer and wine to the hard stuff; they also produce Medoyeff vodka.

