

12

# Unforgettable Gins

THE SHEER VARIETY OF BOTANICALS AVAILABLE TO DISTILLERS FOR CRAFTING THIS ELEGANT SPIRIT MAKES EACH ONE DISTINCT AND COMPLEX IN ITS OWN RIGHT.

BY ROBERT PLOTKIN

PHOTOS BY JON VAN GORDER

**T**he resurgent popularity of gin is surely a sign that society's tastes are evolving. Legions of parched Americans, disenchanted with vodka's austerity and carnival-like parade of flavors, are finding sanctuary in gin's affordable elegance and unrivaled complexity. Crafted according to a secret blend of aromatics, every brand is endowed with an engaging personality as individually distinctive as DNA, which explains why no two premium gins taste the same.

The most telling distinction between brands is the irresistible nature of their bouquets. An exceptional gin makes its presence immediately known with an outpouring of fresh, celery-crisp aromas elicited from botanicals such as juniper berries, citrus peels, herbs, roots and spice. The effect is mesmerizing and lingers on the mind like an unforgettable perfume.

The Chanel No. 5 of the category is **Plymouth** English Gin. Made for two centuries at Black Friars

The Winkle and Salt and Pepper Cocktail



The Mekong Martini can be garnished with a lemon twist or a jalapeño slice.

Distillery, the ultrasophisticated spirit is distilled in a copper alembic using pure grain spirits, soft Dartmoor water and an infusion of seven highly aromatic botanicals. A quick sniff explains Plymouth's enduring popularity. The gin has an exuberant citrus, spice and juniper bouquet, and a light, seamlessly smooth body. Its vibrant, skillfully balanced palate fills the mouth with the flavors of strawberry, coriander, orange and lemon zest, which gradually tapers into a graceful, distinguished finish.

One of the pillars of the British Empire, **Beefeater** London Dry Gin, is made in the same manner and according to the family-held recipe first devised in 1820. The renowned brand is exquisitely dry with a lavish floral, juniper and spicy bouquet, and a layered, long-lasting palate of citrus, lavender and pepper. Bottled at a lip-tingling 94-proof, Beefeater and the dry martini have been an item since Prohibition.

AN  
EXCEPTIONAL  
GIN MAKES ITS  
PRESENCE  
IMMEDIATELY  
KNOWN  
WITH AN  
OUTPOURING  
OF FRESH,  
CELERY-CRISP  
AROMAS.

Bestselling **Tanqueray** Special Dry English Gin is distilled in Finsbury, England, which at one time was world famous for its spa and rejuvenating waters. The gin has a creamy, medium-weight body and a captivating bouquet redolent with the piney aroma of juniper and delicate lemon and orange notes. Its palate is deeply saturated with tart, slightly bitter citrus flavors that have made Tanqueray the preferred choice to mix with the bittersweet flavor of quinine and lime.

The successful franchise now also includes Tanqueray No. Ten, an exceptionally fresh and unforgettable gin. Instead of relying on dried botanicals for its flavor, the spirit is distilled using tree-ripened grapefruits, oranges and limes; ripe juniper berries from Tuscany; and herbs such as coriander and chamomile. Tanqueray No. Ten has an immense citrus and spice bouquet and a broad array of succulent fruit flavors.

Self-described as the "world's most peculiar gin," **Hendrick's** is imported from Scotland and crafted from a blend of small batch spirits produced in two types of stills, each of which produce distinctively different styles of spirits. Particularly unusual is the gin's botanical mix that includes juniper, coriander, citrus, rose petals and cucumber. Hendrick's is refreshing and delightfully eccentric.

Few spirits have gone to greater lengths to achieve their world-class status than artisan **Martin Miller's** Reformed London Dry Gin. Every drop of this small batch marvel is shipped 3,000 miles from Langley, England to the remote, glacier-fed Selyri Springs in Ireland. Its pure, soft waters are used to lower Miller's alcohol content, which for the classy and altogether breathtaking Westbourne Strength is 90.4 proof.

When it comes to making a good first impression, drop-dead gorgeous **Magellan** London Dry Gin wins hands down. The superpremium brand from France is triple-distilled in small batches employing 11 botanicals, including cloves and deep-blue Iris petals. Imbued with a lilting bouquet, shimmering light blue tint and crisp, spicy palate, Magellan Gin is a feast for the senses.

#### Handcrafted classics

Scour the Earth if you must, you'll find no other dry gin like **Cadenhead's Old Raj**, or one as pricey (around \$65). This extraordinary 110-proof spirit is

