

THE

WASHING PANEL

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The Year of the Artisan Brand

*Tatratea Is Steeped
In Versatility*



Giovanni Labile of Ocean Avenue
Brewery in Laguna Beach, CA.

PHOTO: ANNE WATSON

Aviation American Gin

In 2009, after launching Aviation Gin with House Spirits Distillery, award-winning mixologist Ryan Magarian wrote one of the most significant pieces about gin in decades. His “New Western Dry Gin Category Summary” heralded an entire new generation of gins now referred to as either “New Western” or “American.” Magarian saw this new category as “a greater opportunity for artistic ‘flavor’ freedom in this great spirit: creating gins with a shift away from the usually overabundant focus on juniper to the supporting botanicals, allowing them to, ‘just about,’ share center stage.”

Aviation American Gin is a quintessential entry in the category that Magarian so astutely helped codify—a softer, more approachable and mixable style of gin. While it does feature juniper, its

prominence has been dialed back in “botanical democracy” to make way for a host of other botanicals, including lavender, Indian sarsaparilla, cardamom, anise seed, coriander, and dried sweet orange peel (versus the more traditional bitter orange). By dialing back the juniper a few notches, Aviation reduces the initial juniper kick that sometimes turns off novice gin drinkers.

Aviation draws its name from a classic gin cocktail. “The Aviation was the first cocktail that expanded my palate with regards to gin-drinking,” says Magarian. “Back in 2002, gin was still the spirit you put into two things: Gin and Tonics and Gin Martinis—both completely unapproachable to the average American palate. When I first had the Aviation cocktail with Maraschino and lemon, I thought, Wow! I didn’t realize that gin could be such an approachable, exciting and applicable spirit to everybody. That Aviation cocktail was my big lightbulb to the future and potential of gin. I went back to my bar and started plugging gins into Mojitos, Margaritas, and Cosmopolitans. I realized that it’s not that people don’t like gin, it’s that they don’t like how it’s being prepared. There’s a gin cocktail out there for everyone.”

Aviation is one of the first spirits to come out of a collaboration between a bartender and a distillery. “This was something beyond a brand ambassador, it was a true collaboration in the creation of the gin,” explains Magarian. “They’d send bottles to me while I was on the road. I’d taste it and we’d have conversations about the levels of botanical flavor profiles. I’d let tastemakers around the country actually sample renditions of Aviation Gin before we even had a brand.” This collaborative model has since proven successful for other great products.



To develop and launch Aviation Gin, House Spirits Distillery drew significant investment and talent, including CEO Thomas Mooney, a former senior executive with Fiji Water; CFO Arturo Litwak, co-founder of Milagro tequila; board member Tom Wilen, formerly COO of Jim Beam Brands Worldwide and President of Allied Domecq North America; and investor Joe Montana, legendary NFL quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers.

“Aviation truly has what I believe to be the most definitively unique gin flavor profile in the industry,” remarks Magarian. “I don’t think anybody has a more definitively unique profile in all of gin.”

House Spirits

Portland Unicorn

The Portland Unicorn is a light and refreshing drink created by Sam Treadway at Back Bar in Somerville, MA. The drink plays with some of the flavors of a Moscow Mule. It has a similar spice and citrus note, but not as intense, and the gin helps to create a nice floral balance.

- ▶ 1½ oz. Aviation American Gin
- ▶ ¾ oz. Domaine de Canton Ginger Liqueur
- ▶ ½ oz. fresh lime juice
- ▶ ¼ oz. Clear Creek Douglas Fir Eau de Vie
- ▶ 1 barspoon simple syrup
- ▶ dash of Angostura Bitters
- ▶ Shake all ingredients with ice. Double strain into a chilled cocktail glass. No garnish.