

BROADSHEET



Reinventing a Classic: The Gin and Tonic

By [Georgia Booth](#),
15th May 2014

Think a gin and tonic is a little boring or passé? It might just be because you're drinking it wrong.

Gin and tonic has long lost its reputation for being mother's favourite 5pm tippie. Jeremy Shipley, group bars manager at Solotel, is reinforcing this with the new, 14-strong gin-and-tonic menu at the Clock Hotel. Shipley was inspired by 'tonicas', bars in Spain dedicated to this classic combination. "[Tonics] serve 30 different types of gin, with 20 different garnishes and 15 types of tonic. We've scaled it down but we're still doing something fun," Shipley says.

Shipley is out to dispel the myth that drinking gin makes you depressed. Gin is not the culprit. But it could be the tonic water making your head pound. "Tonic water has more sugar than Coke," Shipley explains. "So after, say, three gin and tonics, you've got alcohol and sugar in

your system and you're having a good time. Then the alcohol wears off and the sugar kicks in. You'll have a headache and will be feeling pretty rubbish because the sugar content is so high."

To counter this, Shipley only uses Quina-Fina, a boutique tonic water from New Zealand which contains a third of the sugar other brands do. This tonic water also uses organic lemons and hand-harvested Cinchona Bark from Ecuador. The result is a very dry, much fresher version, without the sickly, sugary aftertaste. "If you're going to drink nice gin, you want nice tonic," Shipley says.

Another assumption is that gin and tonics are best served with London-style, dry gin and garnished with lime. "Garnishes are really changing," Shipley says. Hendrick's started it with cucumber about five years ago. Since then, people have been experimenting." When making gin, there is no limit to the combinations of botanicals that can be used to infuse it. They can be anything from dried herbs, fruits, spices and fresh herbs, from anywhere in the world. The garnish can enhance the individual botanicals in the gin.

Below are five of Shipley's favourite combinations on the list at the Clock Hotel.

4. Aviation, USA

Aviation was created by a bartender and it's a 100 per cent neutral rye-based spirit. You would never think of gin coming from America. It contains anise and orange peel so we decided to serve it with dry lavender and fresh orange to complement the flavours.