

WHAT'S IN WITH GIN

15 JULY 2013



How well the gin category is doing depends on how you look at the numbers. Overall gin volume actually declined in 2011 by 1.7% (according to [DISCUS](#)) and the 2012 numbers are trending in the same direction. It would be easy to look at these numbers and write off gin as a struggling category with small annual gains or losses that never really goes anywhere. It's when you begin to really dig into the numbers that you see the real story of what's happening in gin: while the volume of gin sold may be decreasing, the total dollar volume is on the rise. When you break things out, the upper end of the gin category, the premium and ultra premium gins, are seeing double digit growth.

Beyond growth, the higher end of the gin category has begun to see a level of excitement and engagement that the category hasn't experienced for quite some time. "Gin has settled into the mainstream," explains **Jamie Gordon**, chief mixologist for Pernod Ricard. "It's finally entered into a safety zone for many drinkers, and gin cocktails have become ubiquitous at most of the top accounts." For many years, gin meant a neutral grain based, juniper forward, dry style spirit that was often mixed with tonic. The gin category has blossomed with gins using a wide variety of grains and diverse botanicals, and some being offered at high proof or barrel aged. "Without a doubt there is more great gin on the market today than any time in history," says Jon Santer, co-owner of the highly acclaimed [Prizefighter Bar](#) in Emeryville, CA.

With so many choices in the ever-expanding gin category, it can be difficult to understand the ins and outs of all the new choices, so we've broken it down with some of the more notable entries in each category:



American Gins

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. The piece "[New Western Dry Gin Category Summary](#)" heralded an entire new generation of gin now referred to as either as "New Western" or "American Gin". Ryan 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. Aviation American Gin is a softer, more approachable and mixable style of gin. While it does feature juniper, the prominence of the botanical 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 bitter orange often found in gin). By dialing back the juniper a few notches, Aviation American Gin reduces the initial juniper kick that often turns off new gin drinkers.