



## Aviation

American gin in a beautiful bottle reminiscent of the Great Gatsby era, Aviation Gin has caused quite a stir...

**Key Botanicals:** Lavender and Indian Sarsaparilla.

**ABV:** 42%

**Price:** Around £30

Where to buy Aviation Gin?

**Best Served:** In the eponymous cocktail, flying at 10,000 ft.

Of course many will be familiar with the well-known cocktail of the same name. A simple concoction of gin, maraschino liqueur, and freshly squeezed lemon juice allegedly invented by

barman Hugo Ensslin at New York's Hotel Wallick in 1916. It was this simple mixture that convinced Aviation co-founder Ryan Magarian to realise the potential of gin being more than just something for a G&T or a martini.

Aviation gin was a partnership formed between those that create spirits – distillers and those that mix them – bartenders. This was the joining of the distillers Lee Medoff and Christian Krogstad and mixologist Ryan Magarian. In June of 2006, after nearly 30 rounds of trials and adjustments, their vision became reality when the trio felt they had finally captured the essence of their obsessions – Aviation launched.

They lay claim to this partnership being the first between distiller and bartender in American History. Although this can't be confirmed and given the history of American bartending unlikely, by pairing with someone with an intimate understanding of the trade outside of the distilling arena, it has allowed them to gain outside insight on how the spirit might work in cocktails and create something suitable right from the offset.

While the gin takes its name from the Aviation Cocktail, the motivation behind its choice as the identity of the brand goes a bit deeper. The story goes that Ryan Magarian had found himself stuck in a rut when it came to mixing cocktails with gin, using it almost exclusively for martinis and gin and tonics. This however all changed when he was first introduced to the Aviation Cocktail. He recalls this moment to be critical in the development of not only his passion for making cocktails, but understanding the true potential of gin. When the time came to name the gin, Aviation was suggested as it represented an awakening to the true mixability of the spirit.

Interestingly, Aviation Gin actively promote their position as part of a new category of dry gins going under the designation; New Western Dry. Although this term (and designation) has not yet been widely accepted, it is by no means something to easily dismiss either. Arguably, beginning this debate about the terminology of New Western and what defines a "London Dry" was probably a much greater contribution to the category than Aviation as yet another gin on the shelf. With the loose terminology currently used to define the gin category and the increasing non-juniper dominant gins continuously being launched; what they are proposing may well hold the answer to a lot of controversy.

As a result, it is no surprise to see that Aviation Gin takes advantage of the rich, floral and savoury flavour notes of unconventional botanicals such as Lavender and Indian Sarsaparilla, giving it a medium to heavy flavour produced by the blending of the floral and spicy.

Made in Oregon, the production process is relatively traditional for a gin. Neutral grain spirit infused with botanicals and then distilled, in their case it's a 400 gallon stainless steel still where steam jackets heat the fluid up to nearly 173 °F, a hearts cut taken and then reduced to 42% ABV for bottling. Bottling happens meters away and once the caps are secured, bottles fly off to bars all across the world.

Aviation Gin set itself apart with its restrained juniper and citrus presence against the backdrop of creamy rye spirit more reminiscent of Dutch Genevers. It's been joined by a few similarly

softer gins in recent years. It's lack of juniper bite is as much a point of difference as it is a weakness however as more and more consumers are gravitating towards gin as a spirit because of it's juniper lead profile – and not having this by the bucket can leave many left wanting a different choice.

Aviation Gin and Ryan in particular have had a big impact on the conversation surrounding gin. How much juniper does a spirit need to have to be the predominant flavour? Should there be a New Western Dry subcategory in gin or should there be tighter controls that state that gins like Aviation are in fact not a gin at all. It's not one for us to judge but it's been an interesting conversation to follow and we respect them for pushing it so far, over such a short period of time.

Aviation Gin makes for a fun spirit to mix with and for those still dipping their toe in the gin world, it's an easy profile to enjoy. Gin lovers however, will probably feel like they've been a little short-changed.

**For more information about Aviation Gin, visit their website:**

[www.aviationgin.com](http://www.aviationgin.com)

**They are also on Twitter:**

@AviationGin