

METRO

The 10 Best American Gins You Should Be Drinking

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It's not just Britain that's seen an explosion in craft gin over the last few years, America has also seen a huge rise in popularity for gin distillation.

America has long embraced the barrel ageing of gins which infuses extra layers of flavours and colour to the spirit but it also has a much less strict approach to the dominance of juniper in the botanicals.

These have been called 'New American' or 'New Western' style gins (a debate over whether they should still be called 'gin' rages on). They also use a wider variety of grains for the base spirits such as corn, rye and barley.

Many of the micro distillers don't yet import their wares across the pond to our shores but luckily more and more are switching on to the huge gin market that the UK provides.

So, here are 10 of the best ones that you need to get your hands on.

1. Dorothy Parker Gin, New York, £38



As the lady herself said: 'I like to have a martini, two at the very most. After three I'm under the table, after four I'm under the host.' Although this is called an American Gin, it's called this due to its provenance rather than it being in the 'New American' gin style.

This gin is juniper forward but then that gives way to warm, fruity, floral notes thanks to the cinnamon, hibiscus and elderberries. Created in a distillery that has always triumphed quality over quantity, this is definitely one that belongs in your gin cupboard. Available from The Gin Festival.

2. Smooth Ambler Greenbrier, West Virginia, £30



This gin comes highly recommended by the team behind The Gin Festival. The base spirit for Greenbrier is made from 68% corn, 16% wheat and 16% malted barley, all of which are grown organically. A smooth gin full of citrus and light black pepper spice with a well rounded feeling in the mouth.

They also produce a rather wonderful barrel aged gin that has matured in bourbon barrels and is well worth hunting down. Both gins are available from The Gin Festival.

3. Death's Door, Washington Island, £47



Just three botanicals make up this hauntingly good spirit (Picture: Death's Door Spirits)

This gin is a rare breed these days in that it only contains three botanicals: wild juniper berries harvested from the island and coriander and fennel seeds also sourced from within the state.

They use their own Death's Door Vodka as a base spirit, which is made from Washington Island wheat and malted barley from Wisconsin and has vanilla notes already.

The stripped back simplicity of it means you can taste all three botanicals: loaded juniper berries up front; spicy, citrusy notes from the coriander seeds in the mid-palate and a soft, cooling finish provided by the fennel seeds. Available from The Gin Festival.

4. Leopold's American Small Batch Gin, Denver, £37.95



Gold medal winning gin (Picture: Leopold Bros)

This gin won a gold medal at the International World Spirits Competition in 2013 and for good reason. They distill each botanical – juniper, coriander, pummelos, orris root, Valencia oranges, and more, separately to bring out only the purest flavors and aromas to be blended together for a softer and brighter spirit. Available from The Whisky Exchange.

5. Rogue Spruce Gin, Oregon, £44.99



The Marmite of gin, I love it (Picture: Rogue)

I first tried this gin about three years ago and it's been a firm favourite ever since. It's either a love it or hate it gin as the spruce really packs a big flavour punch.

With over 100lbs of fresh, hand-peeled cucumber in every batch, Spruce Gin is created using fresh Oregon spruce and 10 other natural botanicals and spices.

Rogue Spruce Gin received the Platinum medal and was named the 'World's Best Gin' at the World Beverage Competition in Geneva, Switzerland. You might also want to seek out their Voodoo Maple Bacon Vodka, well worth a try! Available from Beers of Europe.

6. FEW Breakfast Gin, Illinois, £45



Breakfast. Gin. Enough said. (Picture: FEW spirits)

This started as one of their crazy flavour experiments (they've made deep dish pizza whisky in the past) and turned out to be a roaring success. Earl grey tea was the botanical driving force behind this floral gin with bergamot at the forefront. It's a limited edition gin which is no longer sold by the distillers themselves but is still available here in the UK from The Gin Festival, huzzah!

7. Aviation, Oregon, £32.50



The perfect gin for an Aviation cocktail. (Picture: Aviation)

In order to qualify as gin legally, juniper is the most prominent botanical, Aviation however is one of the 'New Western' or 'New American' dry gins as it is lavender that takes pole position as the dominant botanical. Other botanicals include Indian sarsaparilla, sweet orange peel, cardamom, coriander seeds, anise and of course juniper which are distilled with a rye grain spirit. Available from The Gin Festival.

8. No. 209 Chardonnay barrel Reserve Gin, San Francisco, £57.95



Wine meets gin. (Picture: No. 209 Distillery)

A new addition to No.209's barrel-aged gins range which includes Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc gin. This gin is rested for three months in Rudd Chardonnay barrels, adding a white wine colour, along with buttery and fruity flavours.

Available from The Whisky Exchange.

9. Uncle Val's Restorative Gin, California, £51.25



We've all felt the need for a restorative gin at some point. (Picture: 3 Badge Mixology)

I love the idea of a restorative gin and this soothing spirit definitely gets my vote. They only use four botanicals – juniper, coriander, cucumber and rose petals which are steeped in the spirit to infuse flavour.

This gin is described as being crisp up front and silky going down with refreshing notes of citrus, coriander and juniper that pleasantly evolve to a finish of cucumber, along with a wisp of rose petals. Available from The Whisky Exchange.

10. BULLDOG, Cheshire, £22.39



English gin for an American market (Picture: BULLDOG)

Now don't go crazy over this rather controversial inclusion, I know that Cheshire is not in the States but if you love the New American Gin style (i.e not juniper forward) then this gin is for you.

Created by American entrepreneur Anshuman Vohra with the American market in mind, up until recently BULLDOG has only been available outside of the UK.

An exotic mix of lotus leaves, white poppy, dragon eye, almonds, french lavender and just a very light touch of juniper amongst its botanicals gives the exceptionally smooth BULLDOG its complex flavour. Available from Master of Malt.