

MIXOLOGY



< The Bee's Knees

Consider the Juniper Berry

PHOTO BY HALLIE WESTERMANN

Springtime Cocktails Call for Aromatic, Flavorful Gin

The second Saturday of June is celebrated the world over as World Gin Day – but fans of this wide-ranging, aromatic spirit don't need to wait for a specific month to celebrate its wonderful complexity.

As much a part of pop culture as it is a well-stocked bar, gin has counted a number of notable adherents ranging from Winston Churchill (who liked his martinis so dry that it's said he'd merely chill the gin and then bow in the direction of France) to James Bond among its enthusiastic sippers. (Bond became known for his vodka martinis, but in Ian Fleming's first novel, he requests a dry martini with three measures of gin – shaken, not stirred, of course.)

"Gin is such a wide category," says Anna Bromley, marketing manager at Caledonia Spirits, in Hardwick, producers of Barr Hill Gin. "When you're looking at gin, just try a bunch of different gins. Get to know the difference between London Dry, Old Tom – all the different kinds. Don't count gin out because you had a London Dry and didn't like it."

Gin derives its predominant and most recognizable flavor from juniper berries,

coriander, citrus peel and cinnamon, among a wide variety of other botanicals, depending on style. It's an aromatic spirit with a wide ranging flavor profile that can travel from crisp and refreshing to a deep, aged flavor with malty notes not unlike whiskey. It has an herbal flavor that blends well with refreshing, spring-like cocktails, yet adds something completely unique to the taste. The variety of styles can play a significant role in the end result.

London Dry is drier than some of the older

types of the spirit, and features a balance of juniper and citrus.

Try it in a: Martini.

Old Tom style provides less juniper, and is slightly sweeter than London Dry, with more malt.

Try it in a: Tom Collins.

New World, also known as American Style, among other titles, takes advantage of a wider range of botanicals in the distilling process.

Try it in a: Gimlet.

Get to Know: Gin

- Gin is said to have originated in Holland during the Dutch War of Independence, though some will argue it was first produced in England as genever – a malted spirit.
- Gin can be sweet or dry.
- The gin and tonic was first concocted in India in the 19th century.
- The Philippines claims the world's highest per-capita consumption of gin.
- An old bartender's myth that says an even number of olives skewered on a cocktail pick in a martini is bad luck.

Genever features flavors of malt and more savory botanicals like fennel, which creates similarities to whiskey.

Try it in a: *Genever Old Fashioned*.

"When you're looking for a good gin, I'd just say to be open to it," Bromley says. "Don't be put off by thinking that all gins are a super-juniper, evergreen punch to the mouth. They're not all like that. It's a huge world that deserves more recognition and attention."

Caledonia Spirits' Tom Cat Gin is an example of how far afield the spirit can go from its pine-taste reputation. Caledonia Spirits ages its Barr Hill Gin in new American oak barrels, resulting in a bolder, more robust expression that Bromley describes as a New World style gin. The oak mingles with the botanicals and a touch of raw honey to create a remarkable spirit that sits perfectly in a wide range of cocktails – or even sipped neat.

"Our founder came from a whiskey distilling family from Scotland," Bromley says. "So he always had a love for whiskey. We ended up playing with aging and barrels and it felt like the next step."

The takeaway: Gin may be the most useful clear spirit in your bar, especially in the springtime – and with good reason. Barr Hill Gin, in particular, tastes like spring because it uses honey sourced from Vermont and New York. Its character, then, reflects the terroir of its northeast home.

"It's such a lively spirit," Bromley says. "Everything is blooming again, and the flavor of gin encapsulates that into the spirit. You're tasting fresh flowers and what the bees have foraged. It's very clean and crisp and refreshing."

Barr Hill Gin is produced in a custom-made botanical extraction still built right at the distillery by local welders. President and Head Distiller Ryan Christiansen is hesitant to divulge the special touches that go on inside the still – it is proprietary – but he will say that it was built the "good, old Vermont way – from scratch."

Bromley – an admitted fan of gin, ("I couldn't work here if I wasn't," she says, laughing.) recommends The Bee's Knees for an ideal way to break into the world of one of Vermont's most unique exports.

"If someone doesn't have an extensive home bar, it's a simple go-to," Bromley says. "If you have honey in your pantry and some lemon juice, you've got a real crowd pleaser, guaranteed." 🍸

The Martini: One Drink, Many Options

As with gin, the martini has many different iterations, flavors and expressions. It can be made with vodka or gin, and in several different styles:

Dry: Uses little to no vermouth.

Bone dry: Emphasizes that you want no vermouth. Basically, it's chilled gin.

50-50: Equal parts gin and dry vermouth.

Perfect: Equal parts sweet and dry vermouth.

Gibson: A martini garnished with a cocktail onion.

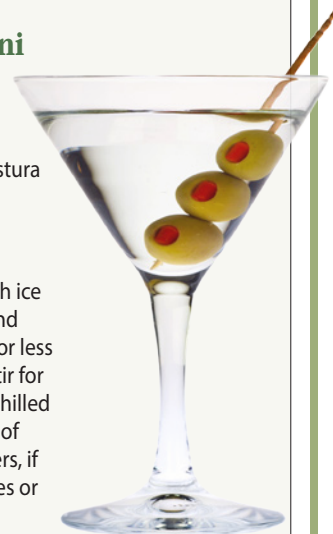
Dirty: Uses a bit of olive brine to add a savory and salty element.

Classic Gin Martini

courtesy thespruce.com

- 2½ ounces gin
- ½ ounce dry vermouth
- 1 dash orange or Angostura bitters (optional)
- 1-3 olives
- Lemon twist

In a mixing glass filled with ice cubes, combine the gin and vermouth, pouring more or less vermouth to your taste. Stir for 30 seconds. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Add a dash of orange or Angostura bitters, if desired. Garnish with olives or a lemon twist and serve.



For a taste of springtime, try these gin-based cocktails.

ON OUR COVER

Rosemary Grapefruit Gin Fizz *courtesy cakenknife.com*

- 2 ounces gin
- ½ ounce grapefruit juice
- ¼ ounce lime juice
- 1½ ounces simply syrup
- Club soda
- 2 rosemary sprigs
- 2 small grapefruit wedges

Crush a rosemary sprig and drop in a cocktail shaker. Add gin, grapefruit juice, lime juice and simple syrup. Shake and pour into a rocks glass filled with ice. Top with club soda and give one final stir to mix. Garnish with remaining rosemary sprig and grapefruit wedges.

So Fresh and So Green

courtesy bonappetit.com

- 1½ ounces gin
- 4 sage leaves
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 5 ⅛-inch thick cucumber slices
- 1 large egg white
- ½ ounce fresh lemon juice
- ½ ounce simple syrup
- ¼ ounce St. Germain elderflower liqueur
- Aromatic bitters

Muddle sage leaves, sugar and four cucumber slices in a cocktail shaker. Add egg white, gin, lemon juice, simple syrup, St. Germain and a dash of bitters. Cover and shake vigorously until egg white is very frothy (about one minute). Fill shaker with ice and shake vigorously until outside is frosty (about one minute). Strain into a coupe glass and garnish with remaining cucumber slice.



The Bee's Knees

courtesy caledoniaspirits.com

- 1½ ounces Barr Hill Gin
- ¾ ounces lemon juice
- ½ ounce honey simple syrup
- Lemon segment for garnish
- Lavender (optional added garnish)

In a cocktail shaker filled with ice, add the gin, lemon juice, honey, simple syrup and shake vigorously. Pour into a chilled cocktail glass and add garnish.

Vermont Gin and Juice

courtesy caledoniaspirits.com

- 1½ ounces Barr Hill Gin
- 3 ounces apple cider
- ¼ ounce ginger simple syrup
- Thyme and apple for garnish

Fill a cocktail shaker with ice, Barr Hill Gin, cider and simple syrup. Shake vigorously and pour into a highball glass filled with ice. Add garnish and serve.