

## premium gins

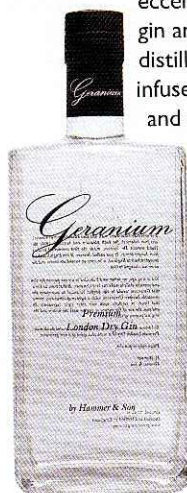
### Saffron & Sides

Distributor Emporia Brands runs an annual Saffron & Sides cocktail and food competition for its Saffron Gin, hand-crafted in France by microdistiller Gabriel Boudier of Dijon using botanicals including saffron. This year it was won by Tim Homewood, head bartender at restaurant Babylon at the Roof Gardens in Kensington, London, and Babylon's pastry chef Deepti Shevkar. The winning cocktail, Crocus Club, combined Saffron Gin with quince liqueur, a dash of lemon juice and home-made saffron syrup, accompanied by a saffron panna cotta.



elderflower, introduced in May by the family behind Wemyss Malts. Scotland has produced some of the best new gins on the market, including the super-premium small-batch Caorunn which was launched last year. The London Dry Gin's botanicals include Celtic ingredients of rowan berry, coul blush apple, heather, bog myrtle and dandelion, making it suit a gin and tonic served with a slice of red apple, says brand manager Iboylka Bakos. As well as tasting programmes for the trade, Bakos is running Highland Garden Parties this year to target bartenders in Scotland and London.

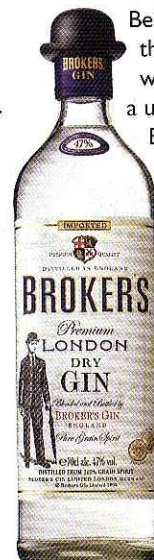
Hendrick's is another small-batch Scottish gin but, while William Grant & Sons highlights the use of Scottish water and craftsmanship, it achieves a more quirky British positioning through activities such as its touring Horseless Carriage of Curiosities, serving drinks from a converted 19th-century rail carriage full of eccentric machines. Its distinctive serve is a gin and tonic with cucumber. "Our unique distillation methods allow us to gently infuse unusual ingredients such as cucumber and rose petals to produce a refreshingly fragrant concoction with a flowery aromatic oiliness," explains master distiller Lesley Gracie.



Wales also has its own gin. The Welsh Whisky Company, which produces Penderyn whisky, introduced Brecon Special Reserve Gin in 2007. It has grown on-trade distribution in Wales, such as bars at Morgans and Towers hotels in Swansea, as well as gin specialists in London such as The Larder.

Broker's Gin, distributed by Lanchester Wine Cellars, is making an impact in the UK this year with a new trade push, highlighting award wins and its five-times distillation using a recipe dating back over 200 years. Last month, it launched into Scotland with a masterclass and cocktail competition for bartenders at The Raconteur in Edinburgh, led by co-founder and brand ambassador Andy Dawson.

But there is hardly room here to cover all the gins active in the UK. Ian Macleod Distillers is driving sales of its premium London Hill Gin after a redesign. "Gin has been on a steady increase for the past couple of years," notes its marketing director Iain Weir. Last year, G&J Greenall invested in new packaging for Greenall's Original London Dry Gin while Speciality Brands has plans for Jensen's



Bermondsey Gin and Old Tom gin later this year. Oxley Classic English Dry Gin was introduced in 2009 by Bacardi, using a unique cold-distillation process, Berry Bros & Rudd launched its acclaimed No 3 Gin earlier this year, and Bulldog Gin continues its push into the UK from its New York base. From California come both Gin No 209, distributed in the UK by Hi-Spirits, and DH Krahn, made with botanicals including ginger and grapefruit.

Sacred gin, distilled by hand in north London and using 12 botanicals including frankincense, is now listed in about 50 bars around London. Founder Ian Hart has gone further, producing 30 individual botanical distillates so that bars can make their own gin. They cover a wide range of fruits, spices, herbs and roots, from classic botanicals to wormwood, vanilla, fennel and cubeb.

David Bromige, co-founder of the 10-year-old Martin Miller's gin, says there was "craziness" in the number of new gins launched a year or two ago, but this seems to be dying down. He adds: "We are finding that new gins are bringing in younger consumers aged 24 to 30 to the premium gin sector in quite large quantities."

Premium gin has thrived during the recession with sales up 42 per cent, points out Nigel Tarn, senior brand manager for Whitley Neill Gin. "Gin consumers are generally less influenced by price so the recession has had little impact on the gin sector compared with others. Similarly, trends suggest that consumers are moving away from middle-market brands and trading up to premium gins." However, he warns: "For gin to be true to its heritage, it must have juniper as the predominant flavour. Some of the newer entries to the market just don't seem to be adhering to that principle."



Hayman Distillers is continuing to build on the success of the classic Hayman's London Dry Gin, introducing Hayman's Old Tom Gin, gin liqueur Hayman's 1820 and now Hayman's Sloe Gin. "Ten years ago, gin started to be seen as out of date, overtaken by vodka, but that has changed over the past five or six years and there's huge variety," says director James Hayman. "People are starting to realise that, if you make cocktails with different gins, it will make a difference."

botanicals, lemon and almonds.

The latest newcomer comes from Spain. Gin Mare was launched there in March and is due in the UK in September. Its botanicals include Arbequina olives, thyme, basil and rosemary, bringing a distinctive new flavour to the category. Duncan Hayter, international sales director for Global Premium Brands, says Gin Mare sales have surpassed targets. "There is a lot of interest in the Mediterranean in the UK," he adds.

Another innovative newcomer is Geranium Gin, which was launched last year by Hammer & Son of Denmark through Coe Vintners. The London Dry Gin is made with 10 botanicals with the crisp citrus aroma of geranium. Owner Henrik Hammer says there has been great interest from bartenders, backed by trade masterclasses by brand ambassador Jimmy Olsen at bars across the UK.

This year also saw the launch of Williams Elegant Crisp Gin by Chase Distillery, which produces vodkas made from both potatoes and apples. Its 10 botanicals include organic Bramley apples as well as hops and elderflower. Another interesting new gin is Bloom from G&J Greenall, developed by master distiller Joanne Moore using botanicals such as camomile, pomelo and honeysuckle.

Another new London Dry Gin, this time from Scotland, is the small-batch Darnley's View, with six botanicals including