

📍 London

## In good spirits

Gin bars have been popping up across the world and the fad shows no sign of stopping – not least in London, where the latest openings devoted to the drink are only the most recent manifestation of a passion for the juniper spirit that dates back 500 years

The Big Smoke's centuries-long love affair with gin – which was ignited by William of Orange in the mid-1600s, blamed for a panoply of social ills a century later and cooled off after the Second World War – has recently been rekindled. Small-batch producers have been obsessing over vintage recipes, time-honored distilling techniques and traditional botanicals. Now, with the emergence of stately distilleries, neighborhood watering holes and entire hotels dedicated to the tippie, a new generation of Londoners is falling for locally made varieties of this juniper-soaked spirit. – **Arwen Joyce**

### Jensen's

Frustrated with the dearth of quality vintage-style gins being produced in the world, Christian Jensen took matters into his own hands and installed a John Dore still under a South London railroad track in 2014. The distillery produces only two varieties, one batch at a time: the smooth, approachable Bermondsey London Dry and an unsweetened, unaged Old Tom, which has a more complex, earthy flavour. The latter, named *Time Out's* Best Gin of 2016, was re-created from a 19th-century recipe. [bermondseygin.com](http://bermondseygin.com)

### Sipsmith

Fairfax Hall and Sam Galsworthy are at the vanguard of London's new gin craze, having brought gin production back to London in 2008 after a 188-year hiatus. Three barrel-shaped copper stills, which they have named Patience, Constance and Prudence, produce handcrafted spirits and liqueurs like London Dry (from the classic 10-botanical gin recipe), Sloe Gin (with notes of plum and almond from blackthorn berries) and London Cup (a fruit cup with Earl Grey tea and lemon). Tours of the sprawling facility combine humor, history and science with generous lashings of gin. [sipsmith.com](http://sipsmith.com)

### The Distillery

This boutique hotel, the stylish new home of Portobello Road Gin, opened late last year across four floors – The Ginstitute library and tasting room, The Resting Room gastropub, sleek tapas restaurant GinTonica and three cosy guestrooms – with a mission to advocate the art of gin appreciation.

Warm copper tones abound, found in the beautiful alembic (double-vessel) stills, the pipes that transport spirits from vintage barrels suspended above the bar and the boutique guestroom's minibar cocktail shakers. Take a gin appreciation class at the Ginstitute and create your own custom-made bottle of the spirit. [portbelloroadgin.com](http://portbelloroadgin.com)

### Little Bird Gin

Located in Bermondsey's lively Maltby Street Market – a must-visit foodie destination – and just a few doors down from Jensen's, this mini-distillery's London Dry Gin sings with hints of pink grapefruit, orange peel and ginger. As with their fellow microdistilleries, the distillation process here uses only natural botanicals for a pure, clean-tasting spirit. Grab some tasty market grub and bring it to Little Bird's vintage-style outdoor bar, where you can sip on a Maltby Mary, the gin version of a Bloody Mary. [littlebirdgin.com](http://littlebirdgin.com)

### City of London Distillery

Tucked inside a Bride Lane cocktail bar is the distillery that brought gin making back to the Square Mile in 2012. To complement a range that includes London Dry, Sloe and Old Tom, master distiller Tom Nichol created the award-winning Christopher Wren Gin, which features a delicate balance of piny juniper berries, nutty coriander seeds, warm licorice and fresh citrus. Book a distillery tour, or sit at a table in the cosy speakeasy, to sample the spirits produced on the bar's two eye-catching steam-jacketed copper pot stills. [cityoflondondistillery.com](http://cityoflondondistillery.com)

