



Jamie Goode

Mum's the word – gin is an absolute tonic, says our expert

They used to call it “mother’s ruin” but these days gin is chic, sophisticated and highly fashionable. It’s made by infusing neutral spirit with aromatic plant products called “botanicals”, the most important one being juniper, which gives the drink its distinctive pine/lavender taste. A lot of exciting new brands have joined the old favourites in the past few years, and here’s my pick of the best.

1. Sipsmith London Dry Gin

From £22.99, *Oddbins, Waitrose*, 41.6% alcohol

When Sipsmith micro-distillery was opened in 2009 it was the first new

gin-making venture to launch in London since 1820. Here spirits are made in a copper still and the result is a thrillingly aromatic gin with lovely complex flavours. Very exciting stuff.

2. Oliver Cromwell 1599 Small Batch Gin

£8.99, *Aldi*, 40% alcohol

This inexpensive gin caused quite a stir when it won a gold medal and a trophy for best in class at the 2010 International Wine and Spirit Competition. It’s attractive and sweetly fruited, with bold juniper flavours and lots of character. A real bargain.

3. Berry Bros & Rudd No. 3 London Dry Gin

£33.65, *Berry Bros & Rudd* (0800 280 2440, www.bbr.com), 46% alcohol

A distinctive, full-flavoured gin, this packs a punch with strong flavours from juniper, cardamon seeds, coriander and grapefruit peel. It’s complex and spicy with real intensity. A superb tippie.

4. Adnams First Rate Finest Cut Gin

£24.99, *Adnams* (01502 727272, www.adnams.co.uk), 48% alcohol
From Adnams’ new Copper House Distillery in Southwold, this is made

using 13 botanicals and the result is intense, powerful and herby with bold juniper notes and zingy citrus flavours.

5. Whitley Neill London Dry Gin

From £18.58, *Waitrose*, 42% alcohol

This gin has appealing, herby aromatics and powerful flavours in the mouth from nine botanicals used in the distillation process, including South African baobab fruit and the Cape gooseberry. Despite the flavour intensity, it has a smooth and refined taste.

6. Bloom Premium London Dry Gin

£22, *Booths* (www.waitrosewine.com), 40% alcohol

Delicate and attractive, this gin has a floral, fruity nose and a smooth texture. Sophistication in a glass.

7. Sacred Gin

£35, *Fortnum & Mason*, 40% alcohol

Hand-distilled in Highgate, London, this deliciously lively spirit includes frankincense, hence the name. It is really powerful stuff with intense juniper and citrus flavours. **S**

