

JOURNEY TO THE MOON

Juniper Moon's centuries-old artisanal distillation method and carefully selected, "secret" botanicals make a unique gin, perfect for adventurers



THE BEST LIFE IS A JOURNEY undertaken in a spirit of adventure. Distiller Richard Stanton wholeheartedly embraces this philosophy, and it underpins his proudest creation, Juniper Moon, a handcrafted London dry gin. Juniper Moon's unique blend of botanicals and its artisanal ethos create an unforgettable experience for discerning drinkers, but behind the gorgeous label a rigorous distillation process must be observed.

"It's easy to make a distinctive gin, by infusing the spirit with flavourings after distillation is complete," says Richard. "But a London dry gin cannot be flavoured after distillation. The flavours must be imparted during the distillation process."

Richard uses a traditional handmade copper pot still to make Juniper Moon at his craft distillery in South Africa's Western Cape. Every stage of production is handcrafted by Richard himself. It is a truly artisanal product, made in batches of less than 300 bottles.

"Juniper Moon embodies an intriguing balance of flavours that allow the drinker to pick out individual notes," says Richard. "Our botanicals are laid on racks above the alcohol as it distils, to impart a delicate combination of flavours."

The botanicals behind Juniper Moon are an intricate blend of the familiar, the exotic and the mysterious. At the forefront, naturally, are juniper berries, which must be present in any gin. Earthy notes come from orris and angelica roots. Coriander and grains of paradise (a rare pepper) add a touch of spice. Citrus notes flow from dried lemongrass and orange peel hand-zested by the distiller himself.

Alongside these seven traditional botanicals, Richard has added two secret ingredients. He is prepared to reveal that one is an exotic dried flower but will not disclose any details about the second ingredient. "Central to the Juniper Moon

experience is a sense of adventure," says Richard. "Our back label invites gin lovers to 'join us on a magical journey to the Juniper Moon', and I want everyone who takes that journey to share my sense of wonderment."

The genesis of Juniper Moon dates to 2013, when Richard created his first distillation following a two-year period of research, reflection and experimenting as a distiller. This first batch coincided with Halloween, so Richard named it "Scary Gin". It was a glorious melange of more than 20 botanicals but "lacked refinement". However, the experience kick-started a serious study of botanicals and a fascinating odyssey into distillation. "It took me four years, but I was thrilled when I finalised the recipe," recalls Richard. "It's at the heart of what makes Juniper Moon such a special London dry gin."

The handcrafted ethos of Juniper Moon extends to the label, which uses an artist-grade, mould-made paper rich in cotton. It is sourced from a German mill that has been making paper since the 16th century. The label, with its finely drawn allusions to travel and star-gazing, is printed using letterpress, an artisanal printing method that is as traditional as the pot still distillation process.

So, now we know all about one of the world's most distinctive London dry gins, how should we enjoy it? "The classic ratio for a G&T is 1:3 gin to premium quality Indian tonic water," explains Richard. "Personally, I occasionally prefer a stiffer 1:2. And do try Juniper Moon neat if you're feeling adventurous. Pour a splash of unchilled Juniper Moon into a glass, let it settle and enjoy a magical tasting experience that will stay with you throughout life's journey."

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