



Stop & sip the

ROSES

Summer 2019 is seeing a surge of fragrant gins, with distillers emphasising their floral components and scented bouquets, reports
SUZY NIGHTINGALE

When you are sipping a gin and tonic, you are imbibing a bespoke blend of fragrant botanicals that sets the spirit apart from all other alcoholic beverages. Distillers work to truly distinguish their gin creations via the botanical ingredients they choose to infuse them with – juniper berries being the most traditionally prominent note, but frequently with additional fragrant ingredients brought to the fore, which can be emphasised in the names and descriptions.

But there's a new trend in distilling that perfume-lovers everywhere are raising their glasses to. Blossom-powered gins are blooming this summer and we've selected our favourites, for the following pages.

One distiller taking their perfume inspiration to an even higher level, meanwhile, is Comte de Grasse (above right), which is located in the heartland of perfumery. Indeed, this new distillery sits in what was an abandoned perfumery, formerly the home of fragrance house Roure, creators of raw materials for perfumers since 1820.



Today, Comte de Grasse are using the latest technology – ultrasonic maceration, vacuum distillation and CO2 supercritical extraction – to create 44°N: a floral-infused gin that owes even more to perfumery production than traditional gin techniques. CEO & Founder, Bhagath Reddy, maintains that 'Utilising practices from

the perfume industry for producing our gin has resulted in a flavour like nothing else we've tasted.' Comte de Grasse 44°N unfurls on the senses just as a scent should; bright citrus top notes, salty sapphire and sharp, woody juniper revealing a floral heart blooming with Grasse's *Rosa centifolia*, jasmine, honeyed mimosa, and a base of spicy, peppered patchouli grounded with elegant, powdery orris (iris root). 'It all comes together to create a bold fusion of flavours that play with your senses,' they promise.

With such a complicated production process, bottles are limited to 1,500 this year – so we suggest fragrant gin lovers don't sit on their scented laurels. Comte de Grasse 44°N is priced €75 at shop.comtedegrasse.com and we splashed out on a bottle – purely in the name of research, you understand – and are enjoying it very much indeed. So this summer, don't just stop to smell the roses – but pause to drink them, too. And the violets, orange blossom, mimosa, and the geraniums, in this new garden of fragrant libations. ▶



**BLACKFRIARS
ORANGE & BLOSSOM GIN**
Made in France at the Gabriel Boudier distillery, eight botanicals include orange, orange blossom and thyme flavourings. (We love garnishing this with thyme, too.)
£16 for 70cl
sainsburys.com



**HENDRICKS
MIDSUMMER SOLSTICE**
'Deeply floral and definitively Hendricks', a secretive selection of floral essences has been added to the damask rose and cucumber of the original.
£35 for 70cl
masterofmalt.com



**SILENT POOL
ENGLISH ROSE GIN**
Traditional gin botanicals infused with the fragrant aroma of the finest English roses, for a perfectly perfumed summer tippie (especially good with elderflower tonic or in a Tom Collins).
£52 for 50cl
silentpooldistillers.com



**DUNNET BAY
ROCK ROSE GIN**
Locally harvested Caithness *Rhodiola rosea*, rowan berries, sea buckthorn and blueberries are infused with juniper from Italy and Bulgaria. Delicately scented, deliciously smooth.
£34 for 70cl
dunnetbaydistillers.com



**WHITLEY NEILL
PARMA VIOLET GIN**
Aromatic violet flowers infuse a subtle floral note to the smooth English gin base, for a vibrant, elegantly Italian taste sensation.

£23.95 for 70cl
31dover.com



**MARYLEBONE
ORANGE &
GERANIUM GIN**

Inspired by Marylebone's fashionable, fragrant pleasure gardens, which first opened at the height of the gin craze 300 years ago, enjoy rosy geranium blossoms within a sweet orange, coriander and juniper blend.

£28 for 50cl
sainsburys.com



**BLOOM
LONDON DRY GIN**
Created by Joanne Moore - one of the world's first female Master Distillers - combining floral notes of chamomile and honeysuckle alongside pomelo, for a naturally sweet gin.

£20 for 70cl
waitrose.com



**CITY OF LONDON
DISTILLERY RHUBARB
& ROSE GIN**
The first distillery to produce gin in the City of London for nearly 200 years, it takes months of macerating to create the intensely floral/sharp/fruity nature of this small-batch, scented gin.

£35 for 70cl
cityoflondondistillery.com



The cocktail candle

Finally, we couldn't resist decorating our cocktail cabinet with this splendid Fornasetti Cocktail Candle. Based on a 1950s design by Piero Fornasetti, the signature Otto fragrance evokes wild Mediterranean herbs, sun-warmed orris and smoky birch. Perhaps keep your cocktail umbrellas in the jar, afterwards?

£140 for 300g selfridges.com

TIP *Mix a fragrant gin with a more subtle tonic water to fully enjoy the fragrant experience. Or a fragrant tonic with a boring gin (if such a thing exists!)*

8 FLOWER-POWERED TONICS

It isn't only gins getting in on the olfactory action: mixers are also upping their scent game, with a whole border of blooms to adorn your chosen beverage. Artisan Drinks Violet Blossom Tonic ripples the freshness of elderflower with the floralcy of apple-blossom and violet for an elegantly meadow-like taste. In Lamb & Watt Hibiscus Tonic, the natural candied aspect of hibiscus flower is shot through with a refreshing tartness, while Thomas Henry Cherry Blossom Tonic celebrates the Japanese Hanami season with abundant, aromatic blossom to fill your glass. For rose fanatics, meanwhile, Fentiman's Rose Lemonade is sumptuously scented with pure Bulgarian rose oil and zesty lemons. As these can be more overtly fragrant and pungent on the palate, we suggest trying with a more neutral-tasting gin, mixing with a non-alcoholic drink or even enjoying alone, with plenty of ice.

BELOW FROM LEFT: Artisan Drinks Violet Blossom Tonic £26.95 for 24 x 200ml at masterofmalt.com; Thomas Henry Cherry Blossom Tonic £1.20 for 20cl at thewhiskyexchange.com; Lamb & Watt Hibiscus Tonic £0.98 for 200ml at lambandwatt.com; Fentiman's Rose Lemonade £1.25 for 100ml at waitrose.com

Scented Sips

At The Perfume Society, we happen to have our own resident mixologist, Carson Parkin-Fairley (who also works on our social media and events, not just our cocktails). She has designed two recipes exclusively for The Perfume Society - one non-alcoholic and one with gin - to whet your appetites. Enjoy!

Violet & Elderflower Fizz

10ml elderflower cordial
20ml cloudy apple juice
10ml lime juice

- Shake and pour over ice
Top with Artisan Drinks Violet Blossom Tonic
- Serve in a tall glass (highball)
- Garnish with a violet flower – or borage, when violets are out of season

Ruby's Blooming Breakfast

50ml Marylebone Orange & Geranium Gin
35ml fresh orange juice
15ml pink grapefruit syrup (e.g. Monin)

- Shake over ice and strain
- Serve in a Martini glass
- Garnish with a geranium flower & orange zest

