

Ransom Spirits

Started in 1997 by Tad Seestedt, Ransom Spirits has become synonymous with Northwest artisan distilling. Tad crafts three gins styles: Old Tom, genever-style, and an American-accented Dry. Using a hand-hammered, direct-fire French alembic still, and only natural ingredients plus human taste to determine quality, Ransom also produces multiple whiskey styles, vodka, and grappa.

Head Distiller: TAD SEESTEDT



THE PEOPLE, DISTILLERS AND FLAVORS THAT ARE SHAPING NW GIN

WRITTEN BY *Cole Danehower*

It has been proposed that America’s essential contributions to world culture boil down to jazz and the martini. If the latter is true (and who am I to argue against it?) then gin—the beating heart of a true martini (emphatically not vodka)—has become a true American spirit. One look at the current Northwest gin scene would seem to cement the case.

Though the medieval origins of gin are cloaked by the centuries, today’s Northwest distillers are honoring gin’s past while pushing the gin genre forward with innovative rifts on classic formulations. They are even helping define an entirely new category of gin: New Western Dry Gin.

“Gin is always built around juniper as its forward flavor,” explains Ryan Magarian, bartender extraordinaire and long-time spirits and cocktail consultant who coined the term New Western Dry to describe this emerging gin style. “But around 2005, some folks in

the Northwest became captivated by the idea of taking creative license in the gin category. Some of us wanted to explore how much balance we could achieve between the many botanicals that are typically used in gin, and the core juniper flavor that defines what gin is.”

A seminal result of this work was the creation of Aviation Gin, a collaboration between bartender Magarian and distiller Christian Krogstad at Portland’s House Spirits Distillery. While not the first gin to push the boundaries of traditional recipes (Tanqueray and Hendricks were some of the earlier examples), Aviation Gin was the first American made, artisan-crafted gin of this style to achieve national market acceptance.

As Magarian points out, their timing was impeccable. Aviation was introduced just as the craft cocktail renaissance was gaining momentum, and this new gin’s more balanced

flavor profile—Magarian calls it a “democracy of botanicals” rather than a “dictatorship of juniper”—made it popular among cocktail crafters. Named after a classic pre-Prohibition-era gin cocktail, Aviation’s flavors have a juniper nod to the classic style, but also evoke the Northwest with a sense of earthiness and mountain air, with a light citrus touch. Its success helped inspire a raft of other Northwest distillers to forge their own gin paths.

Sometimes the path to the future lies in the past, as Tad Seestedt, owner and distiller at Ransom Spirits in Sheridan, Oregon, discovered. Attracted by the myriad aromatic possibilities in gin, Tad began looking at London Dry recipes about the same time Aviation hit the streets. This is globally today’s most popular gin style, emphasizing forward juniper flavors and a dry and crisp character—accenting botanicals playing strictly a supporting role.

[NORTHWEST GIN FAVORITES]

our top PICKS



TRY

1-Ransom Old Tom / \$34.00

Highly aromatic, spicy, and a soft touch of barely perceived sweetness. Unusual, and unusually good.

2-Aviation Gin / \$29.00

A modern classic, fresh and spicy, but elegant and earthy at the same time. Great in cocktails.

3-Bainbridge / \$39.00
Heritage Doug Fir Gin

Like a breath of mountain air in a glass, with great herbal overtones.

4-Gables Gin / \$29.00

Viscous, round, malty, but full of herbs and character with citrus touches.

5-Aria Portland
Dry Gin / \$23.00

Classy and polished expression of New London Dry style, with a NW twist.

6-Merrylegs / \$29.00
Genever

Malty, herby, junipery, a fine and different sipping gin.



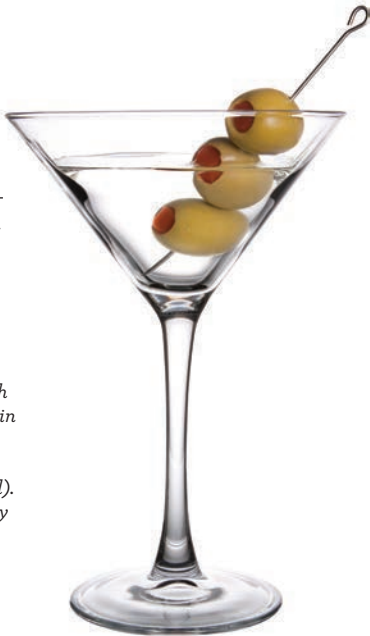
the classic!

GIN MARTINI

1/2 oz Dry vermouth
3 oz Gin
Cocktail glass
Olive for garnish

MIX IT

Fill a metal shaker with cracked ice, then pour in the dry vermouth. Stir briefly and strain out (this may be discarded). Add the gin. Stir briskly for about 10 seconds. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass, and garnish with an olive.



But why, friend and cocktail historian David Wondrich wondered, tread such a well-worn path when there were older gin styles in need of resurrection? Old Tom gin, Wondrich proposed to Tad, was a gin ripe for a revival. Old Tom is a stylistic bridge between the original proto-gin called genever (or Holland gin) and today’s fresher-tasting dry gins (London or New Western gins). It has a more malty flavor and heavier body than modern dry gin, but less of the sweet and densely malty character of the original Dutch genever. Throughout the 1800s, Old Tom was the gin of choice until it died a quiet death in the 1950s.

Tad took up the challenge and with Wondrich embarked on creating an historically accurate revival of this staple spirit of the golden age of American cocktails. “It was a big learning curve trying to faithfully recreate Old Tom,” says Tad, “but it also deepened my understanding of gin and helped me create our other two gin styles as well.”

Based on malted barley, juniper, citrus peels, coriander seed, cardamom, and other botanicals, and then aged in French oak wine barrels for three to six months, Ransom’s Old Tom is an entirely different—and delicious—sort of gin. “It has the intense aromatics of a more modern dry gin, but also a more malty, richer, almost—but not quite—sweet character,” says Tad.

Again, the timing was good. Released in 2008, Ransom’s Old Tom was the first modern American-made gin of this style, appearing a scant year after England’s last producer of Old Tom re-introduced their Hayman’s Old Tom Gin. Ransom caught the wave and, like Aviation, became one of the darlings of the national cocktail craze.

Northwest gin success doesn’t always have to mean pioneering something new or resuscitating something forgotten—it can also mean polishing a classic until it shines.

“Historically, gin has always evolved,” says Ryan Csanky, co-owner of Aria Gin in Portland, “and I really love that Northwest distillers are pushing the gin envelope.” Initially Ryan and his partner Eric Martin thought they’d go in that direction too. But with years of experience behind the bar at Portland’s iconic Wildwood restaurant, Ryan began itching to produce a more classic, mixable gin.

McMenamins

James Whelan is Head Distiller at McMenamins Edgefield Distillery in Troutdale, Oregon. Amid their cozy and crafty ambiance (always worth a visit), McMenamins makes two gins, sometimes using century-old pot stills. Gables is a wheat-based, genever-inspired gin that uniquely uses Oregon Grape root, while Penny’s gin is an American Dry gin. Both delicious!

Head Distiller: JAMES WHELAN



House Spirits Distillery

Since 2004 House Spirits has been a leader in the craft distilling movement. Co-founder Christian Krogstad worked with bartender Ryan Magarian to create one of the first “New Western Dry” gin styles. Their Aviation American Gin immediately took off and is still soaring in the market. House Spirits also crafts two unique aquavits, vodka, Oregon straight malt whiskey, and a coffee liqueur.

Head Distiller: ANDREW TICE



“A lot of the new-style gins, as great as they are, don’t always work as well in classic cocktails as I would like,” he says. As they tasted around the market, what Ryan and Eric did not see was anyone regionally making a true London Dry style of gin. So they did it themselves. They wanted a gin that appealed to the traditional gin palate—juniper forward, crisp, dry, citrus edges—but also a gin that had its own identity.

“We wanted to create a gin with a classic sensibility but without trying to imitate someone else.” Using a selection of ten traditional gin botanicals, Ryan and Erik took four years, and hundreds of individual distillation trials, to come up with the Aria formula. Once they did, they were ready to launch and on October 11, 2012 they sold their first bottle—even before the inaugural bottling run was complete.

Aria is currently made in small pot still batches at Bull Run Distilling in Portland (though later this year Aria will open their own distillery and tasting room) using only raw natural ingredients; none are added after distillation and no essential oils are used. “For me, it’s all about balance,” says Ryan. “It makes for a gin that is approachable for people who like and want a traditional style, yet it has turned out to be equally approachable for people who say they don’t like gin.”

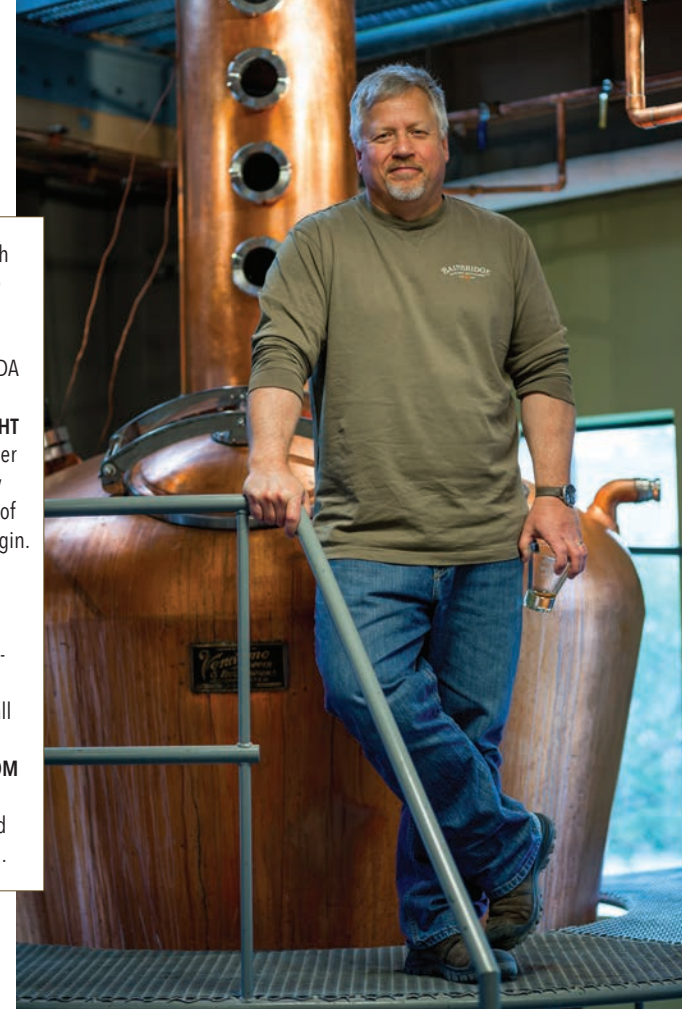
Today’s Northwest gin scene is growing ever more complex. If you think you have a handle today on who is producing what style of gin, just wait a month or two and the landscape will have changed.

Oregon got a jump on the Northwest craft distilling scene in the mid 2000s when distillers like House Spirits and Ransom began gaining national attention. But Washington quickly followed. Dry Fly Distillery in Spokane launched in 2007 and co-owner Kent Fleischmann was instrumental in getting the state legislature to open up the state’s regulations, allowing for a rapid expansion of Washington spirits producers. By some accounts, Seattle now has more distilleries than any other city in the country.

But is there a definable Northwest gin style? Ransom’s Tad Seestedt doesn’t think so. “Our industry is still so young at this point that I don’t think we’ve had enough time to develop a purely regional style. If there were, it would come from using predominantly botanicals that are grown in the Northwest—and here there are perhaps great opportunities.” Ransom does use marionberries in their Dry Gin, and Tad has experimented with hazelnuts. Still, of Ransom’s three gins, it would be hard to call any of them truly “Northwest” in style.

When Ryan Magarian and Christian Krogstad were working to create Aviation, they succeeded in crafting a spirit that reflects the flavors of the Northwest—yet there was nothing specifically Northwest about their ingredients. “It’s really cool that the Northwest has been a leader in craft spirits,” says Magarian. “Some people try to add something to give their product a Northwest profile, sometimes in an effort to establish their own identity. We’re lucky enough to live in this petri dish called the Northwest where a freewheeling culture allows craftspeople to try new things—for better or worse.”

RIGHT Distiller Keith Barnes, Bainbridge Organic Distillers, Washington’s first maker of 100% USDA Certified Organic spirits. **BELOW RIGHT** Ryan Csanky, distiller of Aria Portland Dry Gin, an expression of classic London Dry gin. **BELOW LEFT** Indio Spirits Distillery’s Cricket Club Gin is billed as a Portland-style, locavore gin, handcrafted in small batches using local ingredients. **BOTTOM** Distiller’s Reserve: Aviation Gin is aged in a bourbon barrel.



Oregon Gin

BEND DISTILLERY
Bend, Oregon

Crater Lake Estate Gin / \$52
All the ingredients are grown at the distillery—perhaps unique in the world of gin. Hints of sweet herbs with citrus and a broad minty overlay.

Crater Lake Gin / \$20
Made from wild-harvested juniper, infused after distillation, this gin offers a greenish yellow tint and forward herbal juniper aromas and flavors.

BULL RUN DISTILLERY
Portland, Oregon

Aria Portland Dry Gin / \$23
Balanced set of complex botanicals creates a rich and elegant gin with smooth, yet varied flavors ideal for sipping or mixing.

DOGWOOD DISTILLING
Forest Grove, Oregon

Union Gin / \$23
Small-batch column stills give this London Dry-style gin its smoothness. Spicy and rich, great for cocktails.

HOUSE SPIRITS
Portland, Oregon

Aviation Gin / \$29
A complex gin with a fresh character that offers spicy top notes overlaying a subtle forest-floor-after-a-rain-shower grounding.

INDIO SPIRITS DISTILLERY
Portland, Oregon

Cricket Club Gin / \$22
Locally sourced ingredients add to the Portland flair, with tastes of lemongrass, blood orange peel, and—naturally—juniper.

MCMENAMINS
Troutdale and Hillsboro, Oregon

Gables Gin / \$29
Ever-so-slightly-amber-tinged gin uses juniper, coriander, orris root, and—unusually—Oregon grape root, sage, chocolate mint, rose, and yarrow. Delicious on its own.

Penny’s Gin / \$29
Light body and plenty of citrus and floral notes wrapping around the core of juniper. Would make a mighty martini.

NEW DEAL DISTILLERY
Portland, Oregon

New Deal Gin No. 1 / \$28
Full-bodied, juniper-dominant gin patterned after the genever style. Complex aromas and flavors of juniper, pine, dried herbs and toasted.

New Deal 33 Portland Dry Gin / \$24
Distinctive gin has only juniper and a bit of citrus, yet with such simplicity comes a remarkably fresh and nuanced flavor.

New Deal Old Tom Gin / \$34
A spicy rendition of this classic style, with notes of vanilla and spruce mixing with juniper and citrus.

OREGON SPIRIT DISTILLERS
Bend, Oregon

Merrylegs Genever / \$29
Viscous texture and a hearty, malty, almost herbaceous character give this genever force.

RANSOM SPIRITS
Sheridan, Oregon

Old Tom Gin / \$34
Highly aromatic, spicy, and a soft touch of barely perceived sweetness, this new classic employs juniper, orange peel, lemon peel, coriander seed, cardamom pods, and angelica root.

Ransom Dry Gin / \$25
Made in the genever style, this malted barley and rye-based gin uses an infusion of botanicals with an Oregon accent of marionberries and hops.

Smalls Gin / \$25
Closer to a modern dry gin, this juniper-forward spirit is made with traditional botanicals supplemented by a touch of Oregon raspberries.

ROGUE
Newport and Portland, Oregon

Spruce Gin / \$35
Oregon spruce, hand-peeled cucumber, tangerine, ginger, juniper berries and “free range coastal water”. Complex and fresh.

Pink Spruce Gin / \$35
Spruce Gin aged in Oregon pinot noir barrels adds gentle vanillin tones and a floral quality. It is different!



Washington Gin

3 HOWLS DISTILLERY
Seattle, Washington

Good Old Fashioned Gin / \$24
Juniper is well balanced with a sense of nearly sweet citrus notes.

Navy Strength Gin / \$33
Navy Strength indicates higher-alcohol making for a potentially potable junipery gin.

BAINBRIDGE ORGANIC DISTILLERS
Bainbridge Island, Washington

Bainbridge Heritage Organic Doug Fir Gin / \$39
Rich, lush and full on the palate with well-balanced herbal, citrus, juniper, and pine notes.

CAPTIVE SPIRITS DISTILLING
Seattle, Washington

Big Gin / \$27
Juniper and pepper notes are bold, both aromatically and on the palate, with a traditional mix of backing botanicals including Tasmanian peppercorn.

Bourbon-Barreled Big Gin / \$36
Big Gin matured for six months in once-used bourbon barrels add cinnamon and vanilla to the herbal tones.

DRY FLY DISTILLERY
Spokane, Washington

Washington Dry Gin / \$35
Floral and spicy, with lavender and apples up front on the nose and tongue, juniper in the background, and a gentle hop-and-malt dance.

HERITAGE DISTILLING
Gig Harbor, Washington

Elk Rider Crisp Gin / \$29
Traditional juniper-forward flavors include peppercorn and citrus peel in the background. Unusual.

HDC Soft Gin / \$19
Made in the genever style, this malted barley and rye-based gin uses an infusion of botanicals with an Oregon accent of marionberries and hops.

OOLA DISTILLERY
Seattle, Washington

Oola Gin / \$32
Lavender grown in Snohomish is nicely detectable on the tongue, giving this gin a layered and subtle quality.

Waitsburg Barrel Finished Gin / \$43
Oola Gin with two to four months in bourbon barrels (American oak) to give it a light honeyed hue and baking spices accent.

PACIFIC DISTILLERY
Woodinville, Washington

Voyager Distilled Dry Gin / \$24
Fresh and elegant London Dry gin that delivers classic juniper-forward flavors in a clean, crisp, and full-flavored style.

SEATTLE DISTILLING
Vashon, Washington

Seattle Gin / \$31
An all-Northwest sourced gin with Oregon juniper, Vashon Island lavender, elderberry, and hazelnuts.

SOUND SPIRITS
Seattle, Washington

Ebb + Flow Gin / \$30
Forward citrusy notes impart a crisp edge to the botanical tastes.

Sound Spirits Old Tom Gin / \$34
Lightly bronzed thanks to time in barrel, this Old Tom version offers a supple sense of malt and vanilla, ringed with spice and juniper.

SUN LIQUOR DISTILLING
Seattle, Washington

Hedge Trimmer Gin \$29
Velvet-textured gin employs double distillation in Scottish copper pot stills and uses sarsaparilla, the rind of Washington-grown watermelons.

Gun Club Gin \$31
Birch leaves and organic cranberries are different botanicals. A bold gin that shows its strength in texture, power, and flavor.

Photo Credit: Cocktail recipes and photos courtesy of Aviation Gin



#1 THE PEGU CLUB COCKTAIL

2 oz Gin
3/4 oz Grand Marnier
3/4 oz Freshly pressed lime juice
1 dash Angostura Bitters

In a pint glass add spirits and mixers. Fill with ice and shake vigorously. Fine strain into a cocktail glass. Garnish with a lime wedge.



mix it up!

#2 NEGRONI

2 oz Gin
3/4 oz Campari
3/4 oz Sweet vermouth

In a pint glass, add spirits and mixers. Fill with ice and stir. Strain into a cocktail glass. Garnish with an orange peel.

#3 GIN BEAUTY

2 oz Gin
12 Leaves mint
1/2 oz Pomegranate juice
3/4 oz Freshly pressed lemon juice
1/2 oz Simple syrup

In a pint glass, muddle the mint. Add spirits and mixers. Fill with ice and shake vigorously. Fine strain into an ice-filled collins glass. Garnish with a lemon peel and large mint sprig.

#4 GIN and VIT

3/4 oz Aviation American Gin
3/4 oz Krogstad Aquavit
1 1/2 oz Carpano Antica Vermouth
2 dashes Orange bitters

In a double old fashioned glass, add one big ice cube (or serve on the rocks), spirits and mixers. Stir. Garnish with an orange peel.

#5 BEES KNEES

2 oz Gin
1 oz Freshly pressed lemon juice
1 oz Clover honey syrup*

In a pint glass, add spirits and mixers. Fill with ice and shake vigorously. Fine strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a lemon disc or twist. *To make honey syrup; combine equal parts honey to heated water and stir until honey is dissolved, let cool.

OREGON SPIRIT DISTILLERS

MADE IN BEND, OR

Oregon Spirit Vodka, Merrylegs Gin, One-Eyed Jon, C.W. Irwin Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Wild Card Absinthe, Otterbein Oregon Wheat Whiskey

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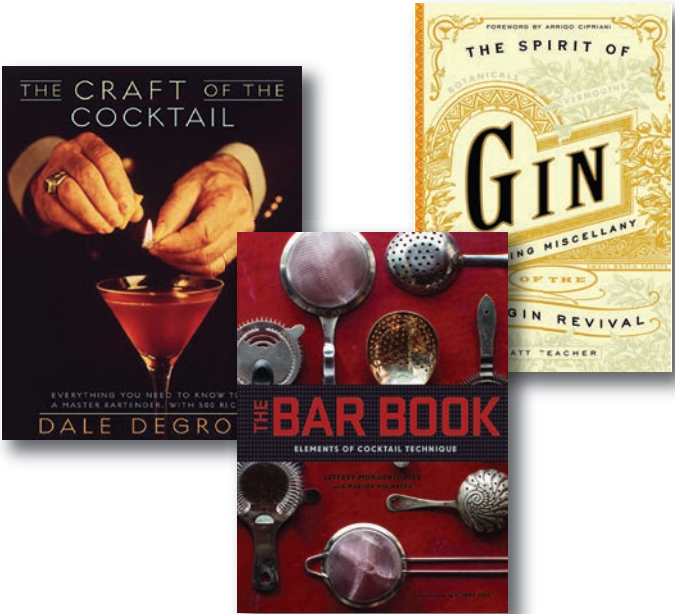
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bookshelf | **THE ESSENTIALS**



Gin enthusiast

The Craft of the Cocktail: Everything You Need to Know to Be a Master Bartender, with 500 Recipes
by Dale DeGroff (Clarkson/Potter)

Cocktails are bigger than ever, and this is the first real cookbook for them, covering the entire breadth of this rich subject. The Craft of the Cocktail provides much more than merely the same old recipes: it delves into history, personalities, and anecdotes; it shows you how to set up a bar, master important techniques, and use tools correctly; and it delivers unique concoctions, many featuring Dale DeGroff's signature use of fresh juices, as well as all the classics.

Debonair, a great raconteur, and an unparalleled authority, Dale DeGroff is the epitome of Perfect Bartender, universally acknowledged as the world's premier mixologist. From Entertainment Weekly and USA Today to the Culinary Institute of America and the nation's best restaurants, whenever anybody wants information or training on the bar, they turn to Dale for recipes, for history, for anecdotes, for fun and for cocktail-party conversation as well as for cocktails.

"The Bar Book; Elements of Cocktail Technique"
by Jeffrey Morgenthaler (Chronicle Books)

Written by renowned bartender and cocktail blogger Jeffrey Morgenthaler, from Clyde Common, The Bar Book is the only technique-driven cocktail handbook out there. This indispensable guide breaks down bartending into essential techniques, and then applies them to building the best drinks. More than 60 recipes illustrate the concepts explored in the text, ranging from juicing, garnishing, carbonating, stirring, and shaking to choosing the correct ice for proper chilling and dilution of a drink. With how-to photography to provide inspiration and guidance, this book breaks new ground for the home cocktail enthusiast.

"The Spirit of Gin; A Stirring Miscellany of the New Gin Revival"
by Matt Teacher (Cider Mill Press)

The ultimate guide to today's exciting gin revival with a nod to the spirit's rich history, featuring a comprehensive review of gin distilleries, ingredients and accoutrements, distilling methods, cocktail recipes, international bar guide, and creative contributions from industry leaders.



SAINT 75

1 oz Gin
½ oz St. Germain
½ oz Lemon juice
½ oz Simple syrup
3 oz Sparkling wine

MIX IT

Combine first 4 ingredients and shake. Double strain into a champagne flute. Top off with sparkling wine. Garnish with an expressed lemon peel.

BON VOYAGE

2 oz Gin
½ oz 10 yr Tawny port
¼ oz Dolin dry vermouth
1 barspoon Combier creme de peche

MIX IT

Combine all ingredients into a mixing glass. Add ice and stir. Strain into a chilled mixing glass. Garnish with an expressed lemon peel.

NOTABLE BARS

the new face of gin

Where do those in the know go for a great gin drink? These bars are known for using Northwest gin in new and inventive ways – whether it's a fresh take on a classic dry martini or a creative concoction like the Gin Vit, with American Aviation Gin and Krogstad Aquavit.

◀ Shaken or stirred? Brandon Lockman, Lead Bartender at Portland's Red Star Tavern, serves up a refreshing Saint

drink here

PORTLAND

TEARDROP COCKTAIL LOUNGE
teardroplounge.com

OVEN & SHAKER
ovenandshaker.com

CLYDE COMMON
clydecommon.com

THE ROOKERY AT RAVEN AND ROSE
ravenandrosepdx.com

IMPERIAL
imperialpdx.com

TASTY N ALDER
tastynalder.com

MULTNOMAH WHISKEY LIBRARY
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KASK
grunerpdx.com/kask

ST. JACK
stjackpdx.com

RED STAR TAVERN
redstartavern.com

SEATTLE

BATHTUB GIN & CO.
bathtubginseattle.com

TAVERN LAW
mccrackentough.com/tavernlaw

SUN LIQUOR LOUNGE
sunliquor.com

ROB ROY
robroyseattle.com

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