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## There's Never Been a Better Time to Drink Gin on Long Island

By [Bridget Shirvell](#) | December 4, 2018 | Photos by Lindsay Morris

From gins made with Long Island potatoes and local wines to a-make-your-own gin botanical apothecary, there's never been a better time to fall in love again with gin.



*Stop and smell the juniper.*

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Look closely and you start to spy the juniper bushes at [Wölffer Estate](#). They're hidden in plain sight all over the winery's grounds. Come April, the bushes will come alive with juniper berries that will be handpicked before starring in [Wölffer Pink Gin](#).

Gin is old. Its origins date back to at least the 17th Century and some claim it's even older than that. But gin is also kind of having a moment. Sales of super-premium gin (priced around \$18-28) and ultra-premium gin (\$28+) have seen year-over-year gains. Wölffer, which first debuted its Pink Gin in 2016, has been known to have stores sell out of it, but they're far from the only Long Island place in on the gin game.

[Long Island Spirits](#) began experimenting with gin as soon as they first launched Liv Vodka in 2007.

"I am a gin fanatic and spent a lot of time seeking that incredibly tight balance of dry citrusy herbaceousness botanicals," LI Spirits founder Richard Stabile said.

The first run of [Deepwells Botanical Dry Gin](#) debuted in the winter of 2013 and quickly became popular for its mouthfeel and sharp zesty notes. Since then LI Spirits has released Pine Barrens Barrel Reserve Botanical Dry Gin, a Deepwells Gin that's aged in single malt casks for a subtle botanical taste with notes of tangerine. It's the LBD-and-pearls version of Deepwells Gin. They're also experimenting with a Sloe Gin made from local beach plums.

*Wölffer winemaker Roman Roth has long had a love of gin.*

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The gin boom is thanks in large part to New York State laws including the 2007 Farm Distillery Act and the 2014 Craft New York Act that have encouraged local liquor production by reducing regulations, allowing farms to become distilleries with tasting rooms and increasing investment in New York made spirits. The laws ushered in a distilling renaissance. There's been a 50 percent growth in the state's craft beverage industry since 2014.

Both Wölffer and LI Spirits showcase Long Island's delicious bounty in their gin production. LI Spirits is one of only a few gin distilleries in the country making its own neutral spirit, a Long Island

potato base. Into that Deepwells Gin base go 28 fruits and botanicals, 9 of which come from right on Long Island.

Much like LI Spirits founder Stabile, Wölffer Estate winemaker Roman Roth has long had a love of gin. He had been dreaming of making it since the early 1990s and now distills Wölffer's rosé wine in a copper pot column to form the gin base—a play on the Pink Gin of the 19th century a cocktail of Angostura Bitters and Plymouth Gin. Into that rosé wine base goes the juniper berries along with mint also grown on the estate, in addition to anise, fennel, coriander, cumin, cardamom seeds, ginger and lime.

Gin lovers are now even able to make their own gin in Greenport. There, [Matchbook Distilling Co.](#) has built a gin apothecary stocked with 75 botanicals for restaurants, bars, startups and individuals to experiment with using primarily New York-based neutral spirits of wheat, potato and more.

“Someone could come in spend a few hours experimenting, blending the different botanicals. We’ll take detailed measurements on the blends and whatever you like the most we’d produce or could blend it for you take with you,” said Leslie Merinoff of Matchbook Distilling.

Cheers to the very local gin cocktail of your dreams.

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