



Backgrounder

Beehive Distilling began as an idea tossed around by three friends while lamenting Utah's notoriously strict distilling laws. Having worked together in advertising and photography for over 20 years, Matt Aller, Chris Barlow and Erik Ostling spent plenty of time together out of the office "appreciating" quality spirits and all shared an interest in the creative aspect of distilling gin, specifically.

As there was more discussion of pursuing the idea, they researched Utah's conservative licensing process and discovered that—because of recent legislation—it was actually possible to open a distillery in the state. For the next year, Chris lived and breathed distilling by attending seminars and workshops, touring distilleries and studying distillery workflow. In August 2013, when all the State and Federal license applications were processing, the paperwork was completed, Beehive Distilling launched as the state's first gin distillery since 1870.

Co-founder Bios

Matt Aller has been in the advertising world for nearly three decades, co-founding a successful branding agency along the way. A Utah native, he's an avid supporter of all things local—whether it be exploring Salt Lake City's farmer's market or hiking along the Wasatch Front.

Chris Barlow is a photographer-by-trade, but woodworking is what satisfies his creative needs. After spending time in the corporate world, he felt he owed it to himself and his family to do something more rewarding; being Beehive's Lead Distiller definitely fills the bill.

Erik Ostling originally moved to Utah from Alaska to ski and go to school (in that order) and at some point figured out he liked taking pictures. While not at the distillery or his downtown photography studio, he can be found skiing Little Cottonwood Canyon in the winter, and mountain biking with Beehive Distilling's two other partners in the summer.

JACK RABBIT GIN

Juniper berries

Lemon peel

Sage leaves

Coriander seeds

Orris root

Grains of paradise

Rose petals

Formulation and Identity

Jack Rabbit Gin is the result of a long series of test runs and tastings. After extensive recipe tweaks, the final formula captures the essence of Utah's fragrant desert landscape that is studded with juniper trees and sagebrush. The label was designed in-house, with the copper-embossed foil representing both the metal used in stills as well as Utah's copper mining history. The bottle's beehive seal is a nod to the State's emblem symbolizing industry.

Distillation and Output

Jack Rabbit is produced on a small (300-liter) hybrid column still in Salt Lake City. Beehive's lead distiller macerates crushed Albanian juniper, orris root, grains of paradise and coriander in grain neutral spirits for 24 hours before redistilling the spirit. During distillation, fresh sage, rose petals and lemon zest are added to the gin basket for vapor infusing; the resulting distillate is proofed to 45%. The finishing water comes from the Wasatch Mountains, and is further ROI-filtered for purity. Heads and tails cuts are made on each run, with only the mids—or hearts—being used for the final product. Three runs off of the still are combined for each batch, yielding roughly 65 cases. Prior to bottling, the combined runs are rested for one week in our holding tank, allowing the flavors to bind. After resting, the gin is filtered one last time before being hand-bottled, labeled and batch-numbered.

BARREL RESERVE GIN

Wood, Fire, Patience

Barrel-aged gin is a welcome addition to the spirits realm. Not only does it lend itself to craft cocktails, but can be sipped straight as well. Making Barrel Reserve takes some time, but has proven itself well worth the wait.

Barrel Aging

Barrel Reserve is distilled with an extra-strong blend of seven botanicals, and then aged in freshly dumped French Oak wine barrels, usually chardonnay. Since the wine barrels have only previously been lightly toasted, more char is required to pull the vanilla, honey and other rich flavors out of the wood. The charring process entails pulling the heads off the barrels and setting fire to the inside with a torch. After the barrels are reassembled and swelled with water to ensure no leaks, they are filled with gin and rest comfortably in the distillery for approximately nine months.

Flavor

After spending some quality time together, the piney notes of juniper combine with the smoky finish from the charred oak. Barrel Reserve takes the Jack Rabbit baseline and mellows it, adding in a big vanilla nose with hints of warm spices and wood.