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ISSUE 50



MiNiZ

THE NEWSLETTER OF PORT NICHOLSON MINIATURE BOTTLE CLUB



Australasia's only Miniature Bottle Club

Editorial / Cover Bottles / Etc.

This is the 50th edition of miNiZ and to mark the occasion we have brought you our first X rated cover. I mentioned two of the bottles on the cover, Dirty Girl and Orgasm, in the last miNiZ. These were ordered to be withdrawn from sale because they were too risqué. The club managed to secure a few before the remaining stocks were destroyed and they featured on the last Club Stock List which you were all sent a couple of months ago. The other two cover bottles, Citron Ice and Blizzard, are from Prenzel and are available from the club.



At the right are shown the final two Spirit of Marlborough 100ml flasks, Black Currant Brandy and Strawberry Brandy. This completes my set of 6 (thanks to Robin Mellish) and I have now shown you them all.

The Butterscotch Cream from Prenzel is a grotty bottle but a real find. Supposedly Prenzel sold the club a number of every bottle they had made in this series but this was not one of them. I found it in the wine shop at Marewa shopping centre in Napier. They always have a good selection of minis and are worth a look if you are ever in Napier.



On the subject of club stock, please, if you need anything off the list buy it. The club currently has a severe cash-flow problem as all our money is tied up in stock. Unfortunately we have to take the opportunities to buy bottles when they arise. I have personally helped fund the last two orders and Ian Butcher has offered to fund the purchase of some Findlaters Royal Prestige Scotch ceramic decanters. These are a stunning royal blue with gold writing. Very difficult to photograph as you can see. The decanter was made by Wade. They are being supplied empty at a cost of \$25 each or \$22 each cash with order postmarked within two weeks of your receiving this edition of miNiZ. Money and orders to PO Box 384, Wellington please.

We have our first ever paid advert in this and at least the next three miNiZ. The Hong Kong Miniature Liquor Bottle Collection has been around for a few years now and is run by member Mr. Chan Wai Man. Prices vary from very expensive to real bargains and I know that a number of members have been happy with minis obtained from them, myself included. Why not write and ask for a price list.

David Smith

The World in Miniatures

CYPRUS

Cyprus is an island located in the eastern most part of the Mediterranean Sea, directly south of Turkey, and east of Syria and Lebanon. You don't hear a lot about the country, but they have a lot of miniature bottles available. It was really difficult picking only a few bottles to show since there are so many, here are 5 of the many bottles I have from Cyprus.

The first miniature bottle is *KEO FIVE KINGS* Brandy. This tapered bottle has a real nice Black and Gold label with White print. I also have another one of these which has a White label. The combination of an attractive bottle and a nice label make this a real sharp looking bottle.

Next is a *KYKKOS MONASTERY Sweet Aperitif* Liqueur. An aperitif is a alcoholic beverage taken before a meal. This clear embossed glass mini holds an dark amber colored liqueur, has a Red and Gold label with Gold print, and has a picture of grapes.

The middle picture is a nice looking ceramic *ROSE* Liqueur. It stands about 5 inches tall, is White with a Brown donkey carrying some grapes and Red roses. The neck covering is dark Green with a Gold metal cap cover. This is a great looking mini. I also have another which is identical, except it contains *ROSE* Brandy.

Next is *PANTELIDES CYPRUS OUZO* extra. For those unfamiliar with Ouzo, it is a anise flavored Greek liqueur. Although Ouzo is basically a Greek drink, it is also very popular in Cyprus. This particular mini has a White label with Black & Gold print, and a Red & Gold Crest at the top of the label.

The last mini is *PANTELIDES CYPRUS BRANDY*. The label is Yellow with Black, Gold & Red designs.

Hope you enjoyed this article. I will have a different country next time.....Jim Crawford



KEN'S KORNER



This interesting miniature was provided to me by my local second-hand shop. It is an apple liquer with a scotch whisky base and is called **Mrs McGillvray's SCOTCH APPLE**.

In volume it is smaller than the average 50ml miniature: maybe 20-30ml. There is no strength mentioned on the bottle. It is produced in Scotland by **Drambuie**.

The miniature is a bit unique as the label is also a coiled strip of recipes and serving suggestions for Scotch Apple. These are printed down below and have been enlarged 1.5 times for ease of reading. They sound yummy although getting a few of the ingredients may be difficult. **Bon Appetit !**



**Mrs. McGillvray's
Scotch Apple**

Drink Over Ice!

CLYDE VALLEY STUFFED APPLES



4 Large Green Eating Apples
1/2 lb Diced Cooked Lamb
2 oz. Broken Walnuts
1/4 lb. Haggis
2 oz. Diced Leeks
2 oz. Butter
Pinch Sage/Lemon Juice
1 Glass Scotch Apple
Seasoning

1. Cut tops from apples and retain.
2. Scoop out inside of apples and cook with butter and sugar until pureed.
3. Melt butter in a large saucepan and fry off Sage, leeks, diced lamb and walnuts for few minutes.
4. De-glaze pan with Scotch Apple, then mix in haggis and lemon juice.
5. Place mixture in scooped out apples and replace tops. Place knob of butter on each apple and bake in moderate oven for 15 minutes. Serve on bed of hot apple puree, garnish with sprig parsley.

CHICKEN GRENADIER



4 Chicken Supremes
12 Button Onions
1/4 Melon
2 Nectarines
1/4 lb. Butter
1 Glass Scotch Apple
Oregano
Seasoning

1. Flatten out chicken supremes and shape. Dip in seasoned flour.
2. Melt butter in large saucepan and saute chicken along with a pinch of oregano. Do not colour.
3. When cooked remove chicken from pan and replace with button onions, sweet onions for few minutes then swirl pan with Scotch Apple, flambe and reduce.
4. Add fresh cream then reduce and add melon and nectarine (scooped with parisienne cut to same size as button onions).
5. Finish sauce with butter and seasoning. Pour over chicken fillets. Sprinkle with chopped chives/parsley and serve.



I've taken the liberty to type the background history of Scotch Apple from the recipe coil so that it is more readable. It makes interesting reading.

" A favourite source of conversation with Mrs Gena Mackinnon, wife of the founder of the Drambuie Liqueur Co.Limited, were the many virtues of home made wines and liquors. During the course of these discussions she often talked of a certain Mrs McGillivray who having an overabundant orchard at her Wester Ross home delighted in preserving in a variety of ways as much of nature's fruit as possible. One of the most delightful and always popular amongst her many friends was her "Scotch Apple" which she happily served on almost any occasion, as an aperitif or liqueur, and even in the winter months as a guard against colds and chills."

2 Ripe Apples
2 Ripe Pears
1 Tablespoon Sugar
Butter/Lemon Juice
2 Tablespoons
Scotch Apple
5 Egg Whites

4 Egg Yolks • ½ lb. Sugar
2 Tablespoons Sifted Flour
½ pt. Milk • Vanilla Essence

Beat egg yolks and sugar together, mix in flour, then add milk and vanilla essence. Cook over water stirring constantly until smooth and thick. Remove from heat and allow to cool

from the original recipe for Innes and Grieve Ltd.,
14 York Place, Edinburgh and bottled by
The Drambuie Liqueur Company Limited.

COCKNEY SOUFFLE



Peel core and slice the apples, cook in butter and sugar. Peel core and mash the pears together with the apples. Flavour to taste with sugar, lemon juice and Scotch Apple. Whisk egg whites to firm froth and fold into prepared custard. Place layer of this in buttered, sugared soufflé dish, then layer of fruit purée and finish with layer of soufflé mix. Bake in slow oven (350° F/180° C) for 40 minutes. Serve at once. Serves 4-6.

Ken Chin.

SECOND CHANCE - SECOND CHANCE

Some of you recently took part in a tender sale of miniatures run by Bob Houliston of Dunedin. The sale has now closed but unfortunately it was not as successful as Bob had hoped as he still has about half of the bottles left.

Only 13 club members bidded which is a third of the number that bidded in a club tender sale last year. Are you still interested? If so mark up your list with late bids, or ask Bob for a list of bottles he still has. Bob will consider any reasonable offer. First come, first served.

This is an official club tender sale with 10% of proceeds going to the club.

All correspondence to: Bob Houliston, 23 Shaw Street, Mosgiel, Dunedin

WHAT KIND OF "ANIMAL" ARE YOU?

We continue the series with years 5 & 6, the Year of the Dragon and The Year of the Snake

The Celestial Dragon



As the noble animal symbol that represents the Chinese emperors, Dragons are born leaders and masters of ceremonies. And because of this, every Chinese parent is hoping to have a Dragon child. Dragon people get things started and keep them moving. They are feisty and gifted with power and luck. Most people look up to the Dragon.

Dragons are born monarchs. As far as they can see, their power is indisputable. Dragons are idealists, perfectionists, they are born thinking they are perfect and they are inflexible. Dragons are also aggressive and determined, going after what they want is second nature to them. And due to their hunger for power, Dragons are not well suited to growing old. The prospect of losing power, the helpless feeling of youthful strength ebbing away is unbearable to them.

Irritable and stubborn, the Dragon is a real big mouth and his words often outrun his thoughts. Nevertheless, his opinions are worth listening to and his advice is always good. People do, in fact, listen to him and his influence is considerable. The Dragon is over-proud. He is enthusiastic to the point of impetuosity, and he loses his temper easily.



Dragons are dauntless, dynamic and delightful. When a Dragon enters a gathering, the room starts to simmer. The Dragon carries a self-assurance so impressive, and inflated ego so visible and a mouth so loud that it is useless to try to tell him anything.



Dragons are tyrannical. They hate orders except when they are giving them. Unlike the Tiger, who imposes his will seriously and firmly, the Ox, whose authority is implied in his very stern demeanor, or the Rat, who thrusts his dominion over others, the Dragon knows innately how to exert authority yet be gentle with his slaves. Dragons are terrible snobs. Although money is not always the object, they are slavishly impressed by wealth, prestige, rank and splendor.

The Dragon is gifted, intelligent, tenacious, willing and generous. He can do anything. No matter whether the Dragon chooses an artistic career, medical or political one, he is going to shine in it. He will be a success wherever he goes.

The Dragon is often loved. He is never disappointed in love. In fact, he is frequently the cause of some drama of despair. The women of this sign are surrounded by admirers and often demanded in marriage.



The Diplomatic Snake



Snakes have always been the seducers of human beings. If you know the story of "The White Snake", you will understand what I mean. In reality, Snake people are born charming and popular. Snakes are spotlight magnets, and they will not be ignored. Peer group attention and public recognition are the least of what he expects. Yet Snakes are never noisy or deliberately outspoken, and they have excellent manners.

Unlike the Snake who seduced Eve in to sin, the astrological Snake, is not a devil, not even a little demon. The Snake is a nice oversexed normal human being. Determined to follow through anything he undertakes to the bitter end, the Snake detests being left in the air. He makes his decisions quickly and firmly.

Most people are secretly or hopelessly in love with Snakes. Gather those frustrated folk you know and most likely, they are probably in love with a Snake. Irresistible as they seem, the Snake never wastes time in idle gossip. He thinks often and deeply. He is an intellectual, a philosopher, a cerebral person. Snake people rely heavily on first impressions, on their own feelings, on their sympathies, rather than on facts, on the advice and opinions on others. He seems to have a kind of sixth sense in this way.



Snakes are a bit tight when it comes to lending money, though his sympathy for others often leads him to offer help. The fatal flaw in his character is, in fact, a tendency to exaggerate - in helping friends as with everything else. If he does somebody a favor, he becomes possessive towards them in an odd way.

Another big flaw in a Snake's character is that, they are capable of biggie lies. White lies, true lies, whatever they call them, though they don't lie often, they do lie when they feel they can get away from it.

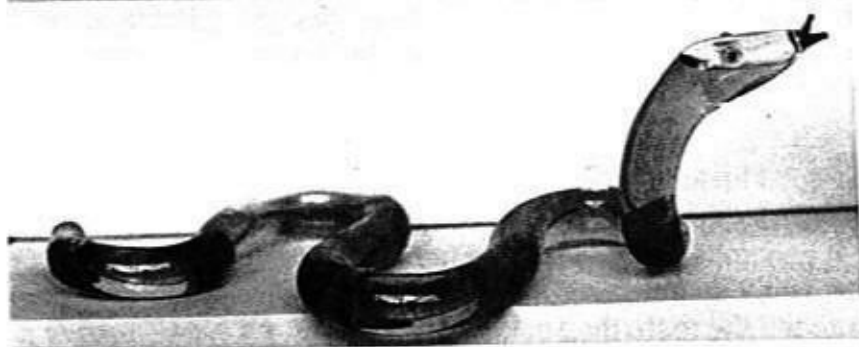
In money matters, the Snake has good luck: he doesn't have to worry - he'll always be able to lay his hand on money when he needs it. Generally, Snakes are careful but generous with friends and family. The Snake should stick to careers that won't involve him in any risk - even the risk of working too hard, for to tell the truth, the Snake is a bit lazy.

In love, the Snake male is romantic and charming. He has a sense of humor and the female is usually beautiful and successful. but if a Snake chooses a partner, he'll be jealous and possessive - even if he no longer loves her. Rejection is the worst blow his delicate ego can suffer. The Snake must be received, welcomed, accepted and approved by those with whom he comes in contact. They need a lot of security.



Now to the photos.

The first is a true Chinese fire breathing Dragon. It bears the Chiisai Bin label and was sold by them about 10 years back. It is a dark grey/brown and white with a gold trim and an orange



tongue. It contains 50ml of mint cordial. This is undoubtedly one of my favourite bottles and in my opinion the nicest that Chiisai Bin have produced.

The next photo shows The Year of the Dragon and The Year of The Snake from Sam Seng in Hong Kong. They are part of a set of 12 Chinese years which was the inspiration for this series of articles. All will eventually be shown. The set is available from the Hong Kong Miniature Bottle Club and is very good value.

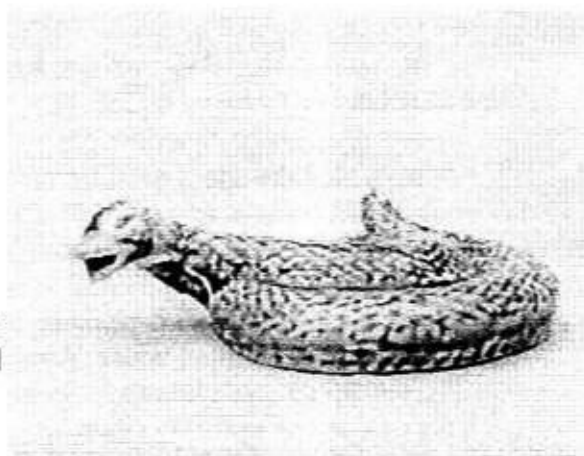
The next two 'Dragon' bottles are made by Sam Seng in Hong Kong and also came from the Hong Kong Miniature Bottle Club. Again they are good value. The Dragon Boat is pink with gold trim and the vase yellow with the embossed Dragon picked out in gold. I am told they contains rice wine but I am a bit rusty!!? with my Chinese. Both are available in other colours. I also have the vase in pink, white and green. The Dragon Boat is an obvious 'take-off' of the well known Larsen Ships.

The Loch Ness Monster is Scotland's Dragon (scraping the barrel aren't I?). If you don't recognise it you must not be a collector. The mini is by Beneagles and the pottery was made in 1989 by Beswick. There are a few minor variations of this bottle which are worth looking out for. What gets me is that if you see these in an antique shop they are usually priced anywhere from \$25 to \$70! The Beneagles Curling Stone, made by Wade, gets the same treatment.

The two blown glass snakes are a bit of a mystery. Neither have labels but they have similar seals. They were acquired at different times. The 'flat' snake contains a mid-brown liquid and the upright one probably Creme de Menthe. I apologise for showing the 'flat' snake two issues running but most of the last article was written in early 1996 and lost by a previous MiNiZ editor.

The last snake, shown below, is a German give away. The picture and attached article are from the MBC web site, <http://www.minibottles.com>

There are many different types of German giveaways. We have flasks both large and small, wonderful figurals with music box bases, clever characters doing "naughty" things and occasionally, something different. The snake bottle pictured here (yes, his head is the stopper) is seldom seen. In many respects, if you really think about it, the bottle is somewhat of a figural flask. He doesn't hold much so he probably wasn't too popular among the larger imbibers. BUT, he also comes in at least one other color (blue) so whoever produced him at least thought that much of him!



<http://www.kentuckyconnect.com/news/0107/fn22dist.html>

<http://www.kentuckyconnect.com/80/heraldleader/news/0107/fn22dist.htm>

Old Taylor Distillery coming alive with renovation plans

By Amos Jones
Herald-Leader Staff Writer

VERSAILLES -- In a remote Woodford County valley, adjacent to a spring, whiskey is in the air.

The Old Taylor Distillery property is being renovated into an arts and crafts mall, a spring water operation and a bourbon distillery.



The whiskey tanks at the distillery haven't been used for decades, but that may change soon.

Joseph
Rey Au

"When you think of an old distillery, you just don't quite think of a place like this," said Cecil Withrow, a partner in Stone Castle Properties Inc., which is remodeling the 1.5 million square feet of building space on McCracken Pike in Versailles.

The site got its name from the stone castle that sits at the front of the property. Built in 1887 of Tyrone limestone, the structure was used by National Distilleries for actual distillery operations from the early 1930s until 1972. Withrow worked for National Distilleries for 10 years.

In 1986, the company was bought by Jim Beam Distilleries, which stored and aged bourbon whiskey there until 1994, when the space was no longer needed. The property was put up for sale, and Withrow became interested.

"I just hated to see what was happening to it," he said. "It was just excess baggage to them."

So Withrow and business partner Robert Sims bought the property for \$400,000.

Withrow said the site is ideal for aging bourbon. "Those houses age whiskey really well (because of) good air circulation to help the bourbon breathe," he said, pointing to two warehouses.

Stone Castle Properties is planning an arts and crafts mall that will open Feb. 1 in the former bottling house. Also, spring water will be sold from the adjacent Bird's Eye Limestone Spring. And whiskey distilling will resume in the castle in the next two years.

The whiskey will be aged in white oak barrels for four years, and it will be bottled one barrel at a time and hand-labeled with proof numbers. Under no circumstances, Withrow said, will barrels of bourbon be mixed.

Stone Castle is trying to cash in on part of the super-premium bourbon market -- brands costing \$20 or more for a 750-milliliter bottle. Although sales of distilled spirits in general have declined about 20 percent in the last decade, sales of these higher-priced brands have increased, according to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States.

Stone Castle plans to produce 5,000 cases of whiskey a year.

"If we get to the point that we're doing 50,000 cases a year," Withrow said, "we'll be happy. Real happy."

Stone Castle is not the first company to renovate a dormant distillery in Woodford County. Louisville-based Brown-Forman Corp. is putting the finishing touches on its two-year, \$6.5 million renovation of the Labrot & Graham Distillery, which has been idle almost 35 years. It is scheduled for completion this summer.

**Reminder: There is a membership fee payable this year.
If you have had a subscription notice, have you paid it?
It is not cost effective for Ian to keep chasing you.**

COLLECTING
in
POPHAM COUNTRY.

Good Friday- Waimate 7am Dunedin 8.30am called into see ex publican from Port Chalmers with 3000 minis and the biggest Jim Beam decanter collection I have ever seen all for sale, I managed to buy 50 whiskys and 12 beers and a beautiful Speights and Dewars mirrors (no I am not having affairs with mirrors) called into a couple of other collections and arrived in POPHAM COUNTRY late. I was expecting to see County Sheriff Popham standing guard on state highway one, but alas he had fallen asleep in the sun.

The trading began in earnest after tea, I lost some whiskys, and a couple of beers and my best book, Ben gained a heap of Bourban some whisky, my prized book, but lost two of his prized whisky jugs that I had, had my eyes on for a few months.

Saturday Morning, Jack Frost paid a vist overnight, we headed south Milton, Balclutha, then onto Gore to the National Antique Bottle show, Ben bought a few minis and I keep my hands in my pockets. We then went west to Riversdale to one of the best 2nd hand shops I have ever been in, not as big as Tepapa but just as much stock and no controversy, well worth a vist but you will need a road map or a good guide, then headed to lake waihola for tea and a good sleep.

Sunday went to Dunedin another ex publican, London Lounge for lunch then site seeing.

Easter Monday more trading, then set off for home.

Sat 18 April early am, phone rings, Gary theres a guy on Dunedin radio who is selling 8 whisky jugs and a heap of other goodies for just \$80, dont ring me Ben, ring him and tell him we will take the lot, 1½ hours later I am backin Dunedin.

I said to Ben I may as well sell up and move down here permanently I wont tell you his reply, because it wasnt very nice.

Friday 8 May arrived Dunedin 9.30am paid a visit to all the second hand shops and then drove onto POPHAM COUNTRY expecting to find him a sleep, but no he is actually doing some farm work. A bit more trading but I still cant get my, our prized book back. Queens birthday weekend is comming up shortly we will have another try then.

So happy collecting all you members, love to hear of your trips up North and I promise I wont come up there and annoy you all, only kidden.

Gary Williams and the sheriff.





Ken's

Scotch



Ken's

Scotch



Being an avid Scotch whisky collector, I collect both single malt and blended whiskies due to the limited availability of both types of Scotch found in New Zealand. This is in contrast to the to the United Kingdom (the home of Scotch) where there is an enormous range of single malt whiskies to collect, and the collector here has the luxury of collecting just single malts and not worry about blends.

Oh what a dilemma to have such choice!

At present my blended scotch whiskies greatly outnumber my single malts. One of my most highly prized blended Scotch minis is my Johnnie Walker **BLUE LABEL**. This was sent to me by my good friend and fellow collector Dick Cotton of Waltham, USA.

Although its Red and Black Label are the world's best selling Scotch and best selling premium whisky respectively, Johnnie Walker's Blue Label is it's top-flight blend.

As depicted in the photo this mini handsomely packed in a blue presentation box accompanied by an authentic nosing glass which is "hand blown to the strict specifications of the Johnnie Walker master blender allowing its unique tulip shape to capture and concentrate the essence and bouquet of this historic blend."



Each miniature is individually numbered. The mini is 50ml and is 40% alcohol by volume. Each boxed set is accompanied by a luxurious brochure expounding the virtues of the whisky and a Red Seal Certificate containing the Nosing Notes.

The Cardhu malt whisky is the essential component of the Blue Label.

JOHNNIE WALKER

Category: Standard, Premium and De Luxe Blends

Licensee: John Walker & Sons, Kilmarnock and London

Owner: United Distillers

Expressions: Red Label; Black Label, Blue Label (duty free)
Swing; Swing Superior (Taiwan)
Premier (SE Asia & duty free)
Gold (Japan)
Honour (Asia Pacific)

The story began in a small grocer's shop in Kilmarnock, opened in 1820 by the eponymous Johnny Walker selling wines and spirits. By 1850 the shop was offering a house blend named **Walker's Kilmarnock Whisky**.

The business prospered, and with the opening of the London-Glasgow railway, which passed through Kilmarnock, Walker's blend began to be appreciated further afield. Then in 1852, the shop's entire stock was destroyed by a flood. The family faced ruin, but it happened that John had a very talented son, Alexander, who joined the firm (1856) and persuaded his father to expand into wholesale trading.

Within six years, 100,000 gallons (over 450,000 litres) of Walker's Kilmarnock was being sold a year. The firm supplied 'merchant adventurers' (ships sailing out of Glasgow, which carried assorted cargoes all over the world, selling the goods and keeping a percentage of the profit) and made early inroads into the London market, where an office was opened in 1880. By 1890 there were also offices in Birmingham, Manchester and Australia.

The whisky won the top awards at exhibitions in Sydney (1880), Melbourne (1881), Adelaide (1887), Dunedin (1890), and Brisbane (1897). In 1893 the firm bought Cardhu Distillery.

Alexander's sons joined him, with youngest, Alec (later Sir Alexander) becoming chairman on his father's death in 1889. The other two, John and George Paterson Walker, travelled extensively to set up distribution agencies across the world.

It was only in 1909, once these foundations had been laid, that the firm introduced the Johnnie Walker Black and Red Label brands. George Paterson Walker saw the need to develop a lighter blend in line with changing tastes, particularly abroad. The idea of commemorating their grandfather was Alec Walker's, and a well-known commercial artist of the day, Tom Browne, was commissioned to produce a portrait.

The original intention had been to name the brands Very Special Old Highland and Extra Special Old Highland, and it was only when the portrait turned out so successfully that the names were changed. The famous slogan '**Born 1820 - still going strong**' was contributed by James Stevenson, a director, as was the square bottle and the slanted label packaging.

Ken Chin.

Secret World of the Gin Trade

BY JONATHAN MARGOLIS

Tradition, skill and passion – mix and serve for one of our favourite drinks

ON A scrub-covered hillside, well off the beaten track in the Italian countryside, a middle-aged Englishman in a sober suit strides purposefully uphill, accompanied by two local men. It is a grey autumn day. In the background lie medieval villages. Only birdsong breaks the silence.

The Englishman, Hugh Williams, pauses to examine the fruit of a thorny bush, one of thousands growing wild. He picks one of the pea-sized mauve berries, crushes it between his

For Williams, a 54-year-old south Londoner, gin is both his job and passion. On the way up to the hills he discusses the weather in a mixture of Italian and English. His interest is more than polite: the precise details of rainfall and temperature can have a bearing on the quality of the spirit that will eventually be distilled. The ideal is a hot, dry September that reduces the moisture in the berries and increases their oil content.

Since Roman times, the best of the juniper crop has grown on these slopes of the Apennine mountains, in Tuscany and neighbouring Umbria. It was used exclusively for medicinal purposes. After the Romans, only monks had the right to pick juniper.

One of Williams's companions, Federico Trumphy, is the monks' modern equivalent – the main juniper wholesaler for the area and a friend of Williams for 15 years. The other is a representative of the village families who for generations have picked the berries each October.

Some cheaper gins are flavoured with a chemical essence of juniper, but for Williams only the natural product will do. He carries no special equipment, for nothing beats feeling and smelling. Only rarely, when he is not sure if the berries are ready to be picked, does he have a small bag flown back to his laboratory for more detailed examination.

After giving the go-ahead for picking to begin, he will still select only ten per cent of the berries gathered – a total of 120 tonnes. After being matured for 18 months back in the vast plant at Laindon in south Essex, these berries provide the basic flavouring for a year's production.

Gordon's produces 50 million litres annually at Laindon. Eleven packing lines each handle up to 270 bottles a minute. The holding tanks of gin awaiting bottling contain 40 million single measures. Around the world, more than two bottles of Gordon's are drunk every second. Even so, only 12 people in the company know the 200-year-old recipe.

Gin is a complex distillation of alcohol with minuscule traces of natural flavourings. The top brands use about ten of these "botanicals," as they are known, from about 120 possibilities. Apart from juniper, which lends gin much of its distinctive spicy smell, ingredients include coriander, cinnamon, angelica root, orange peel and liquorice.

The very name gin derives from juniper. The drink became known as "genever," from the Dutch for juniper, after Professor Franciscus Sylvius of Leiden, Holland, recorded the recipe in the seventeenth century as a medicine. Genever was shortened to gin by British soldiers who discovered it on their forays into the Low Countries in the Thirty Years' War. They drank it before battle, nicknaming it "Dutch Courage."

By the middle of the seventeenth century, gin was distilled in London. Samuel Pepys's diary mentions the "strong water made of juniper."

When William III ascended the English throne in 1689, he increased the duty on French wine and brandy, giving a boost to the production of British gin. It began to enjoy such popularity that the Banqueting House at Hampton Court Palace became known as a "gin temple." In the 1690s, parliament allowed private citizens to set up their own stills.

For the best part of a century, Britain went on a gin spree that caused as much concern as drugs do today. In his painting "Gin Lane," Hogarth expressed his anxiety about the drunken oblivion into which the working class was descending.

The government made lame attempts to curb consumption. In 1729, an act taxed the drink and demanded that all retailers be licensed. Four years later, it was replaced by another requiring that spirits should not be sold except in a dwelling place. By the 1750s some one-fifth of London houses doubled as gin shops, and 42 million litres of gin were being distilled a year – 53 litres per adult male.

The "Tippling Act" of 1751 ruled that only licensed innkeepers paying at least £10 in rent could sell gin. As a result, consumption fell by four-fifths in a decade. Production ended up in the hands of a few family firms, such as that founded in 1769 by the young Scot Alexander Gordon.

Gin remained a social problem in the Victorian era. Garish pubs – "gin palaces" – were opened. Charles Dickens, himself a gin enthusiast, wrote: "Gin drinking is a great vice in England, but wretchedness and dirt are greater."



Master distiller Hugh Williams, opposite, samples the juniper crop while an onlooker seems to be praying he will approve; left: a villager harvests the berries

thumb and finger, feels the oily texture of the juice and holds it to his nose, his concentration total.

The Italians watch, hoping for a sign of approval. Their livelihood depends on his nod, as well as a multimillion-pound industry back in Britain – and the continued pleasure of drinkers all over the world.

Williams, master distiller of the world's best-selling gin, Gordon's, makes an annual journey to Tuscany to oversee the harvesting of the juniper berry, gin's main flavouring. Gin is one of the world's most popular spirits, with 450 million litres consumed every year, and the base of the legendary dry martini. Combined with tonic, ice and lemon, it is a symbol of sophisticated relaxation for millions.

Gin's middle-class image developed with the cocktail craze of the 1920s. It became almost synonymous with England. "London Dry Gin" – a style of gin rather than an indication of where it is made – is imitated and manufactured in dozens of countries.

Consumers tend to stay loyal to one brand, such as Beefeater (biggest

rival of Gordon's), Tanqueray, White Satin, Gilbey's or Bombay Sapphire. That makes the distiller's job of ensuring that every bottle is identical, no matter which year it is produced, a deadly serious business, on which profits and jobs depend.

"When I sample juniper, I might be attracted by a consignment which is especially high in oil and flavour," says Desmond Payne, Beefeater's master distiller. "But I might still reject it, because what we want above all is what we had last year, 20 years ago and 50 years ago."

The distillers guard their recipes jealously. Alexander Gordon's 1769 note of his unique formula is kept in a vault to which only Williams and the company's head of security have a key. Beefeater is distilled according to the handwritten 1820 recipe of James Burrough, and is kept under similar conditions of secrecy.

Williams has been offered vast sums by foreign rivals to reveal the

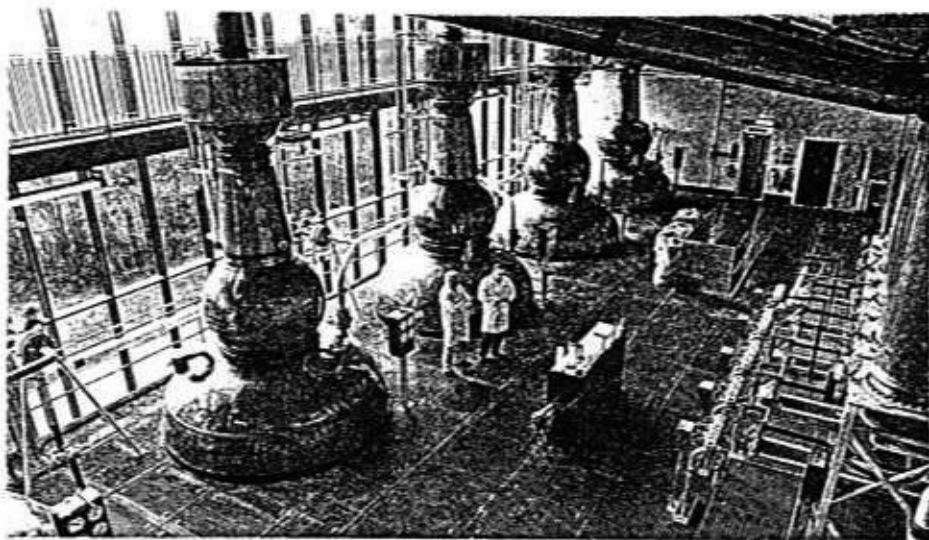
Gordon's secret, but has never even disclosed it to his wife of 26 years, Marjorie. "I don't believe torture could prise it out of me," he says. "Although even if a competitor had the recipe, it would get them nowhere without the 200 years of accumulated expertise needed to go with it."

All the same, when a Gordon's distiller accompanies a shipment of botan-

icals to one of their plants in Venezuela, Jamaica, Spain, South Africa or Mauritius, security measures worthy of MI5 are used to thwart spies.

Even trusted local distillers don't know the precise recipe. The amounts of ingredients with which the distillers travel bear no relation to the real formula. "If the plane crashed, it would be impossible to work out from sifting through the wreckage what goes into our gin," says Williams. "And we always put a few phantom ingredients in the crates, just to put anybody really determined off the scent."

Another secret nobody could ever steal from Williams is his special distiller's instrument: an extraordinarily sensitive nose. Much of the company's



Gordon's bottling plant in Essex has a still that has been in daily use since 1780

reputation and its ability to sell 1980 million measures of gin a year depends on it.

He can't use scented soaps, wear aftershave, or eat curry at any time other than Friday nights. He reels back from anyone with bad breath or body odour, and can barely enter the perfume department in shops. "Those places are overpowering to me," he says. "It's just like a wall of odour."

He also has to ban people wearing strong perfume or those who have recently washed with scented soap from entering the holy of holies – his nosing room at the distillery.

Williams is able to identify different brands of gin, sniff out adulterated samples, sense rogue pieces of angelica root and cinnamon, smell whether coriander comes from Mol-

dova, the Ukraine or Morocco, and identify the products of individual distilleries.

"In my job, your brain becomes the database of a bank of smells built up over a number of years of nosing," he explains.

At the Beefeater distillery in Kennington, south London, Desmond Payne, 49, is just as scrupulous about keeping the nosing room free of unwelcome odours. "It's not just the interference with your nosing ability," he says. "Alcohol itself picks up smells and flavours very easily."

Although Gordon's outsells Beefeater by seven to one in Britain, Beefeater is the most exported gin in the world, selling in 170 countries.

Distilled gin is made by heating a high-quality grain alcohol in the presence of natural botanicals. Two ways this is done are by racking and steeping. Racking involves putting the ingredients on trays in the neck of the still. The heated spirit then rises up through the trays, removing oils from the botanicals.

In the steeping process, reckoned by some to be superior, the spirit is placed at the base of the still with the botanicals for several hours. A gentle heat is applied to distil the gin, which takes another eight hours.

There are cheaper processes, used to produce some of the supermarket

own-brand gins and many of the non-British versions. The most common and cheapest is cold com-

pounding: taking an alcoholic spirit, usually from molasses, and flavouring it with artificial essences. The harsh emerging spirit tastes of gin, but is easily distinguishable from the distilled drink.

How to enjoy gin to the very best effect? Williams's ultimate dry martini is made by filling a cocktail shaker three-quarters full of ice. Add as much gin as required and a drop of vermouth. Stir 40 times, then pour into a chilled triangle glass. Garnish with a pitted olive or a twist of lemon.

What makes a perfect gin and tonic? For Desmond Payne, the starting point is a high-quality gin, which should be kept in the freezer – it will not solidify there. He recommends fresh ice. "If it has been in the freezer for weeks, chuck it out – it's only water. Then, take a good measure of gin and a quality tonic, and always use a tall, highball glass." He does not advocate any particular proportion of gin to tonic, but Williams plumps for three parts tonic to one of gin, "with a slice of lime rather than lemon."

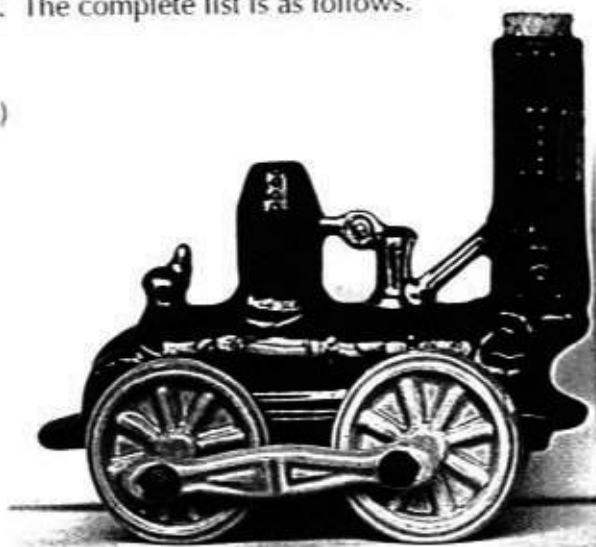
Williams's favourite gin mixer may surprise you. "I actually prefer a gin and water with ice. It's satisfying, cooling and shows off the flavour of a fine gin to its very best advantage."

Famous Firsts Ceramic Miniatures

The Famous Firsts company made ceramic bottles from the late 60's to the early 80's. They made not only minis but also full size bottles., 200ml bottles and a few 500ml bottles. Not many of them have been seen in New Zealand, although I have all of the ones shown in the photos, except for the two stamps. I also have the Corvette Stingray (not shown).

So far as I am aware there were 57 minis made. The complete list is as follows:

- 1968 Marmon Wasp #32 (car)
- 1969 DeWitt Clinton Railway Engine (Pictured)
- 1970 Corvette Stingray 1963 (car)
- 1971 Alpine Bells (4 different colours)
- 1971 Butterflies (4 different colours)
- 1972 Spirit of St. Louis (aeroplane)
- 1972 National Racer #8 (car)
- 1972 Winnie Mae (aeroplane)
- 1973 Phonograph (Pictured)
- 1973 French Telephone (Pictured)
- 1973 Indy Racer #11 (car)
- 1973 San Francisco Cable Car (Pictured)
- 1973 Sewing Machine (Pictured)
- 1976 Liberty Bell
- 1978 Yacht America
- 1978 Geisha Girls (3 different)*
- 1978 Clipper Ship Plate (Pictured from Montagues)*
- 1978 San Pan Plate (Pictured from Montague's)*
- 1978 Corvette Convertible 1953 (car)
- 1979 Medieval Warrior Series: Conquistador, Espana, Hun, Mongol, Norman, Spartan, Tartar, Trojan, Viking & Visgoth. (comic caricatures)
- 1979 Hurdy Gurdy with Monkey (Pictured)
- 1979 Honda Motorcycle (Pictured)
- 1979 Coffee Mill (Pictured)
- 1980 Two Postage Stamps (boxed set)
(Picture from MBC)
- 1981 Fireman
- 1981 Baby Pandas
- 1981 Mom-Baby Series: Bears, Elephants, Horses, Kangaroos, Raccoons & Walrus's. (comic caricatures)
- 1981 Animal Series: Buffalo, Bull, Goat, Lion, Panda, Squirrel & Tiger. (comic caricatures)





HEIGHT 3 1/2
WIDTH 2 1/4



FIRST U.S. POSTAGE STAMPS - 1847

Minis marked with an * have also appeared under the Blue Ridge label.

I can't say that these are my favourite bottles. The ones shown (except for the stamps and plates) are all rather too large for 50ml minis, although many of the others are of a more appropriate size.

David Smith



ODD SPOT

FROM NEW SCIENTIST MAGAZINE

Q New Scientist has recently printed a number of letters discussing the scum that forms on the tea of some drinkers and not on that of others. This is not the only drinker-dependent phenomenon I have noticed. Australian beer is always gassed, and something similar happens with the foam that forms the head. Many drinkers end up with the full head of froth in their glasses when the liquid is consumed while others seem to 'kill' it after only a few sips. This appears to be independent of the beer brand. Can anyone explain it?

A 1 I have been told by several bartenders that glasses should never be rinsed with dishwashing materials as these kill the foam. This happens with all brands, as far as I know.

A 2 Beer froth can be collapsed by an antifoam agent. These have two essential properties. First, they must be totally insoluble in the beer, and second, their surface tension must be lower than that of the beer. Animal or vegetable fats have these properties. So an Aussie pure in mouth and thought keeps the foam, but his mate with greasy chops causes collapse.

Odd spot

Wine with a bit of body

Wine drinkers sampling the latest vintage from vats of Western Cape province in South Africa should watch out for lizard parts in their tippie, warns the Mail and Guardian newspaper. It has been alleged that mechanical harvesters imported from Italy and France are picking chameleons as well as grapes from vines and that the reptiles are being mulched into wine. A traditional healer says wine contaminated with chameleons is poisonous to humans. — AFP

Welcome New Members

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Felipe Jose Peri Unamuno 942, 7600-Mar Del Plata, Argentina

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Vic Visalli 48 Cedar Ave., Maywood, NJ 07607, USA

Ross Walker P.O. Box 738, Christchurch

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Date, Time & Place of Meetings

15th August POT LUCK & SWAPMEET

20th September POT LUCK & SWAPMEET

3rd October MEETING

18th October MEETING

14th November POT LUCK & SWAPMEET

12th or 19th Dec. CHRISTMAS MEAL

SATURDAY 6.30pm at Colin Kilpatrick's, 6 St. Edmund Crescent, Tawa

SUNDAY 12 Noon at Lynch's, 51 Maxwell Avenue, Wanganui

SATURDAY 2.00pm at the Harvey's, 44 Basingstoke Road, Christchurch

SUNDAY 2.00pm at Brassett's, 13 Peckham Grove, Tawa

SATURDAY 6.30pm at Smith's, 86 Rawhiti Road, Pukerua Bay

SATURDAY 7.00pm Venue to be decided

What about some meetings up north? Any volunteers?

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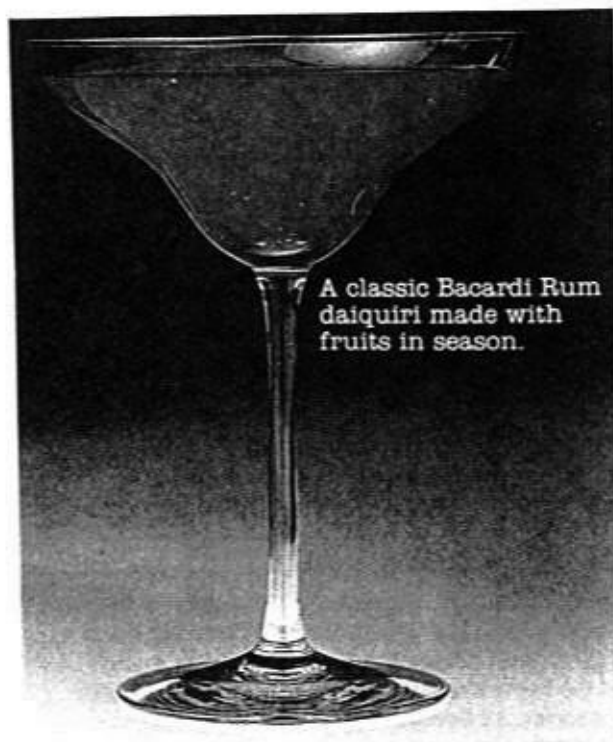
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Cocktail of the Month

Daiquiri

It is quite obvious that rum was out to lunch somewhere when reputations were being handed around. Polite society seems to develop an attack of the yohohos at the merest suggestion that rum might, after all, be fit for purposes other than the marination of dead admirals.

Beloved of convicts, pirates, the Royal Navy and every bar-bound yachting you ever met, rum boasts a decidedly raffish image. But hang in there, Horatio. Help is at hand.

Heed the hymn of George Gordon Byron, sixth lord of the line and a man noted for his grasp of affairs. Quoth George:

There's nought, no doubt, so much the spirit calms

As rum — and true religion.

No one knows for sure how rum came into being. The first recorded reference to the subject occurs in *Brief Description Of The Island Of Barbados* — a tome which waxed lyrical about a local spirit then known as rumbullion. It makes sense. Columbus had introduced sugar cane to the West Indies on his little-reported second voyage and the Caribbean was already bidding fair to become the world's sugar bowl.

Rum is made from molasses — a sweet, black, sticky and otherwise pretty useless byproduct of the sugar refining process. The West Indies were literally awash with the stuff by the time some bright spark discovered that with a little perseverance one could make something to drink out of it.

The manufacturing process is relatively simple. Dilute the molasses with water, toss in a bit of yeast, allow to ferment, warm up the resultant foul-smelling porridge and condense out that early fraction of the vapour which contains most of the alcohol. The procedure yields close to neat (95 per cent plus) ethyl alcohol.

At about that point, the distiller has to make up his mind whether he is serious about moving in on the rum business or would prefer to ship his product out as vodka or gin — both the latter spirits being little more than dilute ethyl alcohol.

Assuming he is prepared to wait a couple of years for a drink, our stillman tips the buckets into an oak cask and sits around in the shade waiting for nature to take its course. When the rum finally emerges, blinking in the sunlight, the previously almost clear spirit will have taken on a tawny colour as a result of prolonged contact with the inside of the barrel — contact which will, with a bit of luck, also knock some of the rough edges off the raw spirit.

A complex process of tasting, blending, filtration and colour matching follows. This is designed to ensure that in taste, smell and appearance this week's output has the same style and characteristics as last week's.

With rums, what you see is very much what you get. In common with other spirits — brandy, whisky (or "whiskey" if you want to refer to the non-Scotch product), gin, etc — rum does not improve with bottle age. Once sealed, it simply goes into a form of suspended animation and, depending upon the permeability of the cork or other form of closure, will actually deteriorate over time.

Daiquiri came into being by courtesy of one Jennings Cox, an American mining engineer who towards the end of last century was working the Cuban copper mines in the hills above Santiago. Given the choice between tapping rocks or a keg of Bacardi, he opted for the latter, got into the habit of adding the juice of locally grown limes, and thereupon invented a drink which will celebrate its centenary in 1996.

Daiquiri takes its name from a village close to the copper deposits which occupied Mr Cox's spare time up there in the Sierra Maestra mountains — the same mountains which later played host to Fidel Castro.

To make Daiquiri, add one measure of freshly squeezed lime juice and four measures of light Bacardi to a shaker or blender a quarter filled with crushed ice. Shake vigorously (or blend for 10-20 seconds) and serve in a large cocktail glass.

This formula produces the original, and distinctly astringent, Daiquiri. Caster sugar or a little syrup may be added to temper the tartness, while the introduction of some egg white will produce a creamy foam.

In the forlorn hope of improving on perfection, generations of cocktail jockeys have monkeyed around with Mr Cox's original recipe. The advent of the blender added new impetus to their efforts — called sons of Daiquiri, most of which have tended to substitute lemon juice, canned or fresh fruit for the prescribed lime juice. Strawberries, pineapple, peaches, bananas, mangoes... even kiwifruit — each has made its leap for the golden ring.