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Trendwatch: Barrel-Aged Gin



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While the rules for producing [bourbon](#), [Scotch](#) and [tequila](#) are quite strict, [gin](#) distillers have a lot of freedom to experiment.

From lemongrass and cucumber to Chinese tea, we've seen a huge variety of unusual botanicals used to flavor gin, but the latest trend takes a page from the brown-spirits playbook: barrel-aging. A bit of time in a wooden cask turns a bright and refreshing liquor into something altogether more complex, yet still perfect for a classic [Martini](#) or [Negroni](#).

Craft distillers began playing around with aging gins a few years ago, and now the technique has officially gone mainstream, with [Beefeater](#) getting into the game. Here are six barrel-aged gins to try, including a couple that

are coming on the market soon.

Beefeater Burrough's Reserve Gin (\$70)

Named for Beefeater Gin's founder James Burrough, this new expression is made in a copper pot still that Burrough himself operated back in the 1800s. It features the same botanicals as the famed Beefeater London Dry Gin, but it's aged in barrels that formerly held Jean de Lillet, a vintage version of French aperitif Lillet Blanc. Beefeater suggests you sip the resulting elixir neat. It came out in Europe last month and will hit American shores this fall.

Citadelle Reserve 2012 Vintage Gin (\$35)

By law, [cognac](#) can only be distilled between the fall grape harvest and March. In the off-season, Pierre Ferrand uses its copper pot stills to create Citadelle Gin, and every year it sets aside a special batch for aging. The recent vintage, which rolled out in June, is infused with 22 botanicals and spent six months in lightly charred French-oak barrels.

Corsair Barrel Aged Gin (\$38)

[Corsair Artisan Distillery](#) is one of the most creative brands we know of, making a wide range of whiskies, [rum](#) and even [absinthe](#). It also helped start this aged-gin trend with its smooth and citrusy bottling, which is rested in barrels that previously held spiced rum.

Dry Rye Reposado Gin (\$50)

The [Bay Area](#)'s St. George Spirits produces three different gins, including the malty and spicy Dry Rye. This liquor, whose base is Dry Rye, will be released in September and rests in American oak barrels as well as French-oak casks that formerly contained syrah and grenache wines. Sourcing the barrels was easy: They're from St. George's neighbor, Blacksmith Cellars, which just happens to be run by distiller Dave Smith's brother Matt.

Few Barrel Gin (\$45)

Operating in a tiny warehouse just outside [Chicago](#), [Few Spirits](#) creates tasty whiskies, as well as an American Gin made from a [white dog](#). This gin uses a more neutral base instead and is matured in new charred-oak barrels and used whiskey casks. It's available now in Illinois, Wisconsin and [Washington, D.C.](#), and will soon be in more states.

Smooth Ambler Stillhouse Collection Barrel Aged Gin (\$43)

To make this tasty spirit, West Virginia distillery Smooth Ambler ages its Greenbrier Gin for three months, half in new charred-oak barrels and half in casks that held its Old Scout Bourbon. This process adds hints of caramel and a whiskey-like finish without sacrificing any juniper or pepper notes. It's great with ginger ale in a [Gin Buck](#).