

Why this gin rocks!

It's one of the largest commercial whisky distilleries in the whole of England. It'll be another year before they can bottle and sell their whisky. But, in the meantime, why not buy and try their award-winning gin? And rum?

White Peak Distillery is the brainchild of Max and Claire Vaughan, whose enthusiasm, and knowledge of their business, should also be distilled and given to anyone who has ever thought of entering The Dragon's Den.

It takes three years - and a considerable amount of bottle - to take all of the raw ingredients and turn them into a saleable whisky. And that can only begin after first finding some premises, installing a distillery, hiring a crew, and creating a brand that will carry it all the way from the planning stage, to the customer.

So, why do it in the first place? "I love whisky," says Max.

The premises were a godsend. After spending a few years hatching plans in their spare time, the Vaughans returned to their home county of Derbyshire where they located a former Victorian wire-works with enough floor-space to install the distillery, a tasting room, small shop, and other visitor facilities. The industrial redbrick buildings and the steep woodlands [and river] adjoining the premises, meanwhile, were - prior to COVID-19 - also ideal for photographers and walkers.

Whisky production takes-up around 90% of the distillers' time at White Peak Distillery in Ambergate - and while the business-plan *and* the oak barrels are now starting to stack-up, it will be 2021 at the earliest before it can be bottled and sold to the public. Join their intriguingly-named Temperance Club in the meantime, and you'll be entitled to claim first-dibs on earlier, exclusive bottlings of their developing whisky spirit. Or, simply cut to the quick, and focus on their gin, which has already won a silver medal in the World Spirits Competition, in San Francisco.

Under normal (non-lockdown) conditions, tours of the distillery are available. For now, White Peak Distillery is still doing a roaring trade online. And, new for 2020, there's even some rum! Most of the rum produced so far has been laid down in oak casks to mature for a while, but a limited number of bottles of un-aged, white rum will soon be available to purchase via its website (whilst stocks last).

There is a small but growing new whisky category in England, which is showing great promise; and this is the third largest of the English producers.

For now, however, the Shining Cliff Gin is the star of the show. It's a small batch Derbyshire dry gin, inspired by the berries, hedgerows and flowers of Ambergate's Shining Cliff Woods, and the core *Floral* style is hand-crafted from thirteen botanicals including rose hip, bilberry and local mayflower.

Also on the label is an engraving of Betty and Luke Kenny's ancient yew tree: the very tree, Claire explains, which inspired the nursery rhyme "Rock-a-bye Baby".

That tree is actually located close to the distillery in Shining Cliff Woods. The 2,000 years old tree was set alight by vandals around 30 years ago, but the charred remains of this ancient yew still exist. The story goes that in the late 1700s, Betty Kenny lived in the woods with her husband Luke and eight children, working as charcoal burners for the Hurt family who owned the land at that time. According to local legend, the Kenny family not only used the tree as a shelter for their home, but also rocked their babies to sleep in one of the tree's enormous, hollowed-out branches. And it's widely believed

that it was her unconventional method of lulling her kids to sleep which inspired the nursery rhyme “Rock-a-bye Baby.”

Today, it’s a tale worth pondering while sipping on a gin from White Peak Distillery.

For further details of the Temperance Club, to sign-up to their mailing list for future news and for online sales, visit <https://bit.ly/2KI9ePq>.

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