



with Hayman's of London co-owner James Hayman

A direct descendant of the creator of Beefeater, James Hayman comes from enviable gin stock. Times are 'rocky' for gin, he tells **Olly Wehring**, and there is consolidation ahead, but Hayman's is in a 'position of strength'

What's the history of Hayman's? We really date back to 1863; no one has the unbroken lineage that we have. My great-grandfather was James Burrough, who created a number of gin brands, including Beefeater. My father joined the business in 1969, before the business was sold to Whitbread in 1987. He was only 40 at the time of the sale and had a decision to make. He was fortunate enough to be able to buy part of the company back, and he kept his hand in gin. I'd go and help out in the school holidays, then I joined the business in 2004.

As a family business, we only have ourselves to answer to. We can make a quick choice, because we only have to ask ourselves. Where we've got to today is where we wanted to be from the outset.

We hope that we've played our role in the category — some of the craft names have made more of an impact, but we've been quietly getting on with making gin in London and being respected for our gins. We haven't gone down that flavoured profile, we've stayed true to what London gin is.

How we make our gin today is exactly the same as we made it in 1863. We just want to be a pillar of the category, and that's what we aim to do.

What's the size and scale of the company today? We export 85% of what we make. Outside the UK, our main markets are the US, Australia and New Zealand. We target emerging markets, which is where we've had success.

In terms of sales, we've grown year on year on year. Sales are a bit flat now, as you'd imagine, but we have some markets that are still in growth. It's not all doom and gloom, nor is it 2018, when every market was up.

We knew this was going to happen — I was being asked back in 2014 if the gin bubble had burst. Gin is having a rocky pe-



James Hayman: 'You don't need 1,000 gin brands on the market, but you do need choice in the category'

riod at the moment, but it's still a big category. For us, it's about riding out the storm.

We don't have really high prices; we're sold at a sensible price, because we've been doing this for a long time.

Hayman's seems to sit between the established international brands and the craft gin movement. You're right, we're not a corporate brand and we're not a private equity brand. It's been difficult at times to compete with private equity brands — people don't really understand how much investment there has been in the gin category.

I think that our brand has disadvantages in some markets, absolutely, but has advantages in others. It's about finding the right importers who really understand Hayman's.



Here in the UK, where we represent ourselves, the category is very private equity-driven. Now that the money's started to dry up, some brands are struggling to maintain their investment and are having to cut costs. We're still able to invest. So, even though gin might be in decline, it's an opportunity for us to grow our market share.

On the whole, history repeats itself. We will see consolidation and we hope that being in the middle gives us a position of strength.

How is Hayman's weathering the current trading environment? It is sticky. There are a lot of people in the gin category who've enjoyed good growth beyond what they anticipated. That's changed. We can't take this personally — this is a market issue and we just have to understand the situation and deal with it as best as possible.

But nothing lasts forever — we go through cycles.

Are you sure it's cyclical this time around? Gin is a lot bigger today than it was in 2010, when everybody was drinking gin because it was fashionable. Many of these consumers have probably moved on to RTDs or premix cocktails now. Gin brands like Hayman's have a responsibility to ensure the category doesn't become boring or complacent.

Will it fall back more? It could do if brands like ours don't keep the time and effort behind it. You don't need 1,000 gin brands on the market at the moment, but you do need choice in the category.

The versatility of gin will always keep it on the back bar. Over the next five to ten years, I think the gin category will be exciting, because it's going to change. When it changes, that's exciting as well, because it doesn't stand still. **GDI**

The full interview is available to subscribers. Join them at www.drinks-intel.com/subscribe

Gin ‘requires innovation to stay relevant’ in its European heartland

As growth slows, European gin producers are banking on innovation, flavour-led releases and RTDs to reignite consumer interest.

Henry Mathieu reports

Once the darling of Europe’s premium spirits scene, the gin category is now confronting a more complex and competitive landscape. While innovation and premiumisation continue to drive pockets of growth, producers face headwinds from shifting consumer habits, economic pressures and a boom-to-bust cycle in some markets.

“The gin category in Europe has experienced a slowdown after years of explosive growth,” says Beveland Distillers marketing director Jordi Sahis. “Factors such as market saturation, changing consumer preferences and the rise of new trends have contributed to this deceleration. The Covid-19 pandemic also had an impact, altering consumption habits and accelerating premiumisation across various spirits categories.”

Cotswolds Distillery CEO Jeremy Parsons echoes this sentiment: “The category has undoubtedly matured after a decade of remarkable growth. Several factors have contributed to the slowdown, including market saturation, shifting consumer preferences and economic pressures that have influenced discretionary spending.”

Nevertheless, gin continues to command a solid position on the continent. A Diageo spokesperson citing IWSR data claims that, despite slowdowns in key countries, broader European performance is encouraging: “If we look at Europe as a whole, gin is 14% bigger in volume and 20% higher in value compared with pre-Covid 2019.”

Sahis notes: “Gin remains a well-established category with a loyal consumer base, but it requires innovation to stay relevant.”

Innovation and extensions key

With competition from spirits like tequila and mezcal increasing, producers are turning to innovation to counter declining momentum. Sahis highlights a striking example: “At Beveland, we are committed to technological innovation with Aigin, our first gin co-created with artificial intelligence.” The Spanish distiller, he explains, used “algorithmic data



Spanish distiller Beveland’s innovative gin portfolio includes Gin Volcanic, Jodhpur Indian Gin, Maior Mallorcan Gin and its latest addition, Aigin, co-created with artificial intelligence

analysis” to create “a new botanical combination” from aromatics “never before” mixed, such as lavender, hibiscus and lychee.

Parsons believes innovation must go hand-in-hand with brand authenticity: “To maintain relevance, gin producers must continue to innovate while staying true to the spirit’s core appeal — versatility, botanical complexity and premium craftsmanship.”

He points to the Cotswolds Distillery’s diverse offerings, including its Wildflower No.1, No.2 and No.3 releases, Old Tom Gin based on recipes dating back to the 1700s, and 1616 Barrel Aged Gin.

Flavour development continues to play a central role. Nicola Dal Toso, CEO of Rossi d’Asiago, maker of Kranebet Botanical Gin, explains: “Many producers are focusing on flavour innovation, experimenting with botanicals, fruits and spices that provide a unique twist on classic gins inspired by Mediterranean ingredients.”

Meanwhile, flavoured gin is evolving beyond novelty. “Flavoured gins are still performing well,” Sahis notes, “but beyond simply adding new botanicals, the real success comes from focusing on ingredient quality, production techniques and solid storytelling.”

Similarly, gin-based RTDs are seeing

Top 3 takeaways

- Gin’s growth has slowed in Europe. After years of rapid expansion, saturation and shifting consumer behaviours are contributing to a natural decline.
- Innovation is crucial. Brands are turning to AI, new flavour profiles and RTDs to stay relevant, but success hinges on authenticity and quality.
- Premiumisation persists. While some craft producers struggle, demand for premium and differentiated gins remains strong, especially in less saturated markets like Eastern Europe.

steady growth as more companies release new products. In April, Fever-Tree collaborated with actor Margot Robbie’s Papa Salt Coastal Gin on an RTD cocktail blended with its Italian Blood Orange Soda, while rappers Dr Dre and Snoop Dogg launched their Gin&Juice canned cocktail in 2024 (the pair added a full-strength product, Still G.I.N., to their offering in March).

“Premium gin-based RTDs are growing steadily, driven by the rise of outdoor social ➤

KranebeTonic, the new Italian botanical Aperitif



Kranebet
The Botanical Gin

Produced in Italy by Rossi d'Asiago, distillers since 1868, Kranebet is an Italian botanical gin obtained by the distillation of juniper berries and other selected botanicals. Enjoy it neat or mix it in cocktails like the **KranebeTonic**, the new Italian botanical aperitif!

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» occasions,” says Gloria Hallaste, export marketing specialist at Estonia-based Liviko, which owns Crafter’s Gin. “Consumers now expect bar-quality taste in portable formats. This channel also serves as a brand entry point for new demographics.

“RTDs do not compensate for the overall decline in the gin category, but they represent the future of the segment. We are also preparing to launch our own Crafter’s RTD in the near future. We will begin with our home market in the Baltics and then expand internationally.”

Premiumisation and craft gins

As the category matures, premiumisation continues to gain traction. “Consumers are looking for greater value in what they purchase,” says Beveland’s Sahis. “There is a clear trend toward premiumisation, with consumers willing to pay more for differentiated, well-crafted products with a strong story.”

This trend is echoed across the board. “Consumers continue to show an appetite for premium, high-quality gins with a strong narrative,” Cotswolds’ Parsons notes. “At the same time, large, established brands maintain strong market share due to their accessibility and brand equity.”

Rossi d’Asiago’s Dal Toso agrees: “The gin market has become highly fragmented with the rise of craft gins. Many of these brands are gaining attention for their unique profiles: differentiation, authenticity, a fascinating story and high-quality ingredients are key.”

However, not all craft producers are thriving. “A number of craft distilleries are struggling, as investment is running dry,” says James Hayman, co-owner of Hayman’s of London. “It is inevitable that we will see a reduction in producers over the next few years.”

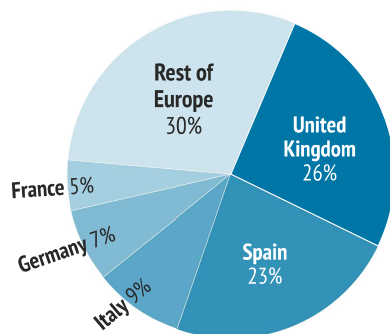
Market divergence across Europe

While some markets are levelling off, others still offer potential. “Countries like Germany and France continue to show strong interest in premium gin,” Sahis notes. “More mature markets, like the UK, may require a more strategic approach. Spain remains a key market, but with a more demanding and exploratory consumer base.”

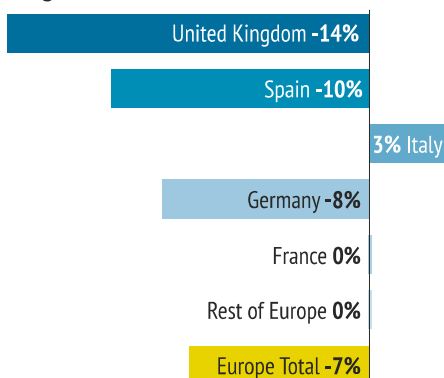
IWSR data shows that the UK and Spain dominated the market share in Europe in 2023, accounting for around 25% each. However, the UK saw gin value sales fall 14% year on year, while Spain dropped 10%.

Italy, the third most important market

Top 5 European Markets for Gin Market Share (Vol) 2023



Chg Vol 2022–23



Source: IWSR. Note: May be small differences due to rounding

on the continent, actually grew 3% in value. Dal Toso points to Italy’s distinct advantage: “Italy, with its rich history of botanicals, is an interesting player in the premium market.”

Parsons sees potential even further afield: “Markets such as Spain and the UK are showing signs of saturation. Meanwhile, countries in Eastern Europe and Scandinavia present interesting growth opportunities. Germany, Italy and the US also show potential for premium and craft segments.”

No/low opportunities

The rise of no/low gin variants has reshaped the narrative around moderation, but challenges remain. “The no/low-alcohol segment remains an important and evolving category,” says Parsons. “Consumers are seeking not just imitations of alcoholic spirits, but genuinely enjoyable, complex alternatives that stand on their own.”

Sahis adds: “While non-alcoholic gin had its moment of rapid growth, the challenge now is maintaining the perception of quality and value. The key is developing liquids with their own identity.”

As with non-alc beer and wine, a question hanging over zero-ABV spirits is whether they taste like ‘the real thing’. Brands like Seedlip, which was acquired by Diageo in 2019, were early contenders to break the mould of imitation.

Dal Toso sees room for growth: “The no/low-alcohol gin segment is still in its early stages, but it surely has potential. The challenge will be creating products that offer genuinely enjoyable alternatives.”

Not everyone is convinced by the pace of progress. “No/low from a ‘spirits’ perspective is still a niche category,” says Hayman. “It is growing, but from a tiny base.”

Seedlip owner Diageo — which last year strengthened its no/low spirits portfolio with the acquisition of Ritual Zero Proof and has also released alcohol-free extensions of its Tanqueray and Gordon’s gin brands — remains optimistic. “Non-alcoholic gin remains in strong growth. Consumers do not see it as an imitation; [they see it] rather as a great drink in and of its own,” says a spokesperson.

What does the future hold?

The future of gin in Europe rests on how well producers can adapt. “The biggest opportunities lie in segmentation and product diversification,” Sahis argues. “Innovative gin profiles, limited editions, collaborations with bartenders and the integration of new technologies, such as AI.”

Parsons concurs: “Opportunities lie in reinforcing gin’s versatility across different drinking occasions. The continued demand for premium spirits also presents potential for ultra-premium and aged expressions.”

Premium classic gin holds enduring appeal and a role in evolving consumption occasions and social settings, according to Natasha Curtin, global brand VP for Bombay Sapphire. “Classic gin is timeless,” she says. “Consumers are still opting for gin, and they are opting for higher-quality brands when they do drink. They are also seeking drinks that are well-suited to informal, daytime occasions — especially in the mid-tempo, aperitivo drinking occasion.”

Still, caution remains. “Innovation does not always lead to category growth,” Hayman warns. “It can cause confusion, fatigue and saturation. Maybe gin just needs a period of calm and normality after both Covid and the gin peak.” **GDI**



India's great spirits revolution

From single malts to craft gins, India's booming market is a rare bright spot amid the gloom affecting much of the global spirits business, writes **Joe Bates**

India's spirits business is in the midst of a remarkable transformation. This lucrative, yet complex, market is being shaped by premiumisation, craft experimentation and shifting consumer preferences.

Blessed by a growing economy and youthful demographics at a time of global economic upheaval, international and domestic players are racing to realise India's undoubted potential.

The factors driving India's trade-up trend are not hard to spot. Against a backdrop of global uncertainty, the country's economy is humming. According to the International Monetary Fund, India will enjoy an impressive GDP growth rate of 6.5% this year. India's swelling middle class — expected to grow by 283m by 2031 — is also fuelling market growth with its increasing disposable income.

"We have witnessed an increase in the purchasing power of the middle-income groups, driven by factors like economic growth and increasing disposable income," observes Abhishek Khaitan, managing director of Radico Khaitan, one of the country's largest manufacturers of India Made Foreign Liquor and also the owner of premium brands like Rampur Indian Single Malt Whisky and Jaisalmer Indian Craft Gin.

"Now, this increased purchasing power is translating into greater demand for premium products and Radico Khaitan is well-positioned to cater to this shift."

Radico Khaitan's domestic competitors are also alive to the opportunity presented by this market shift. In February this year, for instance, Allied Blenders & Distillers Ltd (ABD), India's third-largest spirits producer, completed its acquisition of Goa-based Fullarton Distilleries Private Ltd, a family-owned firm whose super-premium craft spirits portfolio includes the likes of Woodburns Contemporary Indian Whisky, Pumori Small Batch Gin and Segredo Aldeia Rum.

Meanwhile, Diageo India last December launched its new India Rare Spirits exclusive cask programme, which gives high-net-worth consumers the chance to purchase bespoke cask whiskies from the company's



Abhishek Khaitan: 'Increased purchasing power is translating into greater demand for premium products'

Goa-based Ponda distillery. Purchasers consult with production experts from the distillery to choose a unique expression from a library of 30–40 aged malts, each matured for a minimum of 5–10 years in a wide variety of cask types.

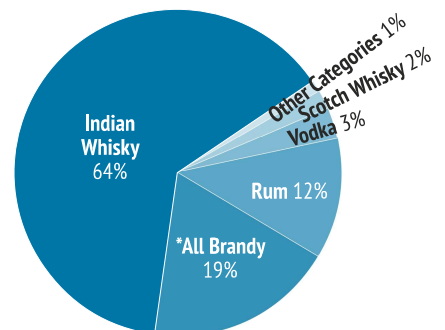
Breaking taboos: Women, youth and new experiences

Social behaviour around alcohol is shifting. Evolving societal norms are leading to more women drinking alcohol, for instance. Traditional brown spirits such as molasses-based whisky, rum and brandy still rule the rankings, especially among older generations, but younger urban LDA consumers are increasingly seeking out locally made craft vodkas, gins and agave-based spirits. They value unique flavours, origin stories and craftsmanship.

"Historically, alcohol has faced a certain level of stigmatisation in India, but that stigma is slowly fading," says Mohit Singh, the founder of British-Indian Desi Daru Vodka, which plans to break into the Indian market this year by initially focusing on duty free in Delhi. "As attitudes toward drinking evolve, especially among younger generations, the market is embracing premiumisation and new drinking experiences."

Radico Khaitan's Magic Moments Vodka has proven a hit among younger consumers with its wide availability and broad

Top 5 Spirits Categories in India Market Share (Vol) 2023



Chg Vol 2022–23



*Excludes cognac/armagnac. Source: IWSR
Note: May be small differences due to rounding

range of flavours, while high-end tequilas such as Diageo's Don Julio and Bacardí's Patrón have proved popular in the upscale >>