

Silent Pool <<

Distilling a new flavour



SILENT POOL
DISTILLERS



Silent Pool has several tales to tell – of the drowning of a maiden surprised by King John, the place where Agatha Christie supposedly vanished, a sacred site of worship and the home of a certain but unidentifiable eeriness. Now it has a new story to reveal: that of a distillery.

Silent Pool Distillers is the brainchild of ex-media director Ian McCulloch, who having settled in the area and with a proclivity for whisky, decided to investigate the possibility of making his own. He began in the home of the spirit, visiting the Scottish distilleries, moving on to researching the possibility of setting up in the Surrey Hills. Silent Pool, with its spring-fed waters and surrounding hills where juniper, camomile, hawthorn and other botanicals grow, presented itself as the base for production.

Ian McCulloch said: "Our ambition is to create a new generation of hand-crafted spirits made with Silent Pool spring water that reflect the flavour palette of the Surrey Hills".

When I met Ian last year he was waiting for HMRC approval and, having since gained this endorsement, the company has begun to produce a range of liqueurs, gin, vodka and whisky. The site is something to behold, with a beautiful copper still, handmade in Germany and powered by steam, and a vintage wood-fired steam boiler which burns locally sourced sustainable hard woods. The carbon footprint is therefore low and the whole production helps keep the water fresher and the trees replenished. Ian is also keen to stress the enthusiasm of his team who are all specialists in their own right and are keen to make this entrepreneurial operation a success.

The approach to making the signature product – Silent Pool Gin – is also unique, with Master Distiller Cory Mason experimenting with the treatment of botanicals used to flavour the gin. Unlike most gins, where the botanicals are soaked overnight in a neutral spirit and then distilled in a pot still, he decided to break each

individual botanical down, identify the fraction of flavour required and build the process around obtaining it. In addition, Silent Pool Gin is distilled using a column, all of which makes for a very exact flavour capture.

Speaking of the company's first ever batch of gin, Mr Mason said: "Silent Pool Gin is a rich and clean juniper-driven spirit with floral layers of lavender and camomile. Fresh notes of citrus and kaffir lime are grounded with the subtle sweetness of local honey, creating a well-balanced gin that is both traditional and refreshingly individual".

Wherever possible, the distillery works with other local suppliers, producers and stockists. A mutually beneficial relationship exists between Silent Pool Distillers and Albury Organic Vineyard, whose yield went into producing an interesting grappa called 'Atila's Bite'. Other links exist with Taurus Wines, Kingfisher Farm Shop and several local pubs including the William Bray in Shere and the Drummond at Albury, who both stock the Albury Limited Release Gin. Already the feedback has been hugely positive, with plenty of repeat orders. As well as local and regional sales to local pubs, restaurants and stockists, there are plans for overseas distribution of Silent Pool Gin to Europe, the Far East, South Africa and the USA.

To reserve a bottle call 01483 229136 or pop in to the distillery at Silent Pool, Shere Road, Albury, Surrey, GU5 9BW, but do email ian@silentpooldistillers.com first. Exclusively to Round & About readers, Silent Pool Distillers are offering the chance to win one of two bottles of Albury Limited Release Gin (350ml). See the competition page for more details.