

Meet the maker: Hope on Hopkins



By [Samantha Snedorf](#)

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Co-owners Lucy and Leigh Beard began their careers in London as lawyers. After enough time in the dreary London weather, they decided to take a year off in order to explore the world. As fate would have it, they ended up in Spain where they drank a Mediterranean gin which inspired them to begin their very own gin adventure.

I was lucky enough to meet with lovely Lucy (Beard) and look back on her gin journey. *Gin-ourney?*



Image Supplied

In the beginning

It all started as their Spanish holiday drew to an end. Lucy and Leigh decided to return home to Salt River where they set out to open a distillery.

With no previous experience, they reached out to various local distilleries and received the largest amount of help from Jorgensen's gin. Robert was kind, helpful and willing to part with vital information that helped Hope on Hopkins on their way.

And what a long way they have come.

Present day

Hope on Hopkins now has four enormous stills (the fourth being a recent acquisition), all named after their grandmothers: Mildred, Mouma, Maude and the latest – Mad Mary.

These stills are the true hard workers in the distillery as they don't only distil for their proud owners but also for a number of other gin companies including Bloedlemon, Musgrave, Southern Cross and Clemengold.

This is no small feat and could only be accomplished by maintaining a strict schedule. Each gin company sends their bottles into the distillery where the gins are then created, bottles labelled and eventually distributed from the same location which also serves as a tasting room and their personal home space. Talk about multi-functional.



The tasting room overlooks the distillery. (Image Supplied)

Distillation

What sets Hope on Hopkins apart from many other distilleries is that they create their very own spirits in-house. The majority of other distilleries bring in a neutral alcohol spirit which they then distil into gin but Hope on Hopkins, using local barley for the London dry and the Salt River gin and grape spirit for the Mediterranean gin, do it all themselves.

Beard is particularly nostalgic and explained that each gin is significant in its own way, having a personal representation from various points in their lives.



A tasting kit at Hope on Hopkins (Image Supplied)

Hope on Hopkins gin

The Hope on Hopkins London dry gin is inspired by their time in London - symbolic of the typical gin style. It is refreshing and contains lemon verbena and rosemary botanicals. On the palate it is smooth and juniper strong, seeking an ideal garnish of lemon zest and fresh rosemary.



Hope on Hopkins gin (Image Supplied)

Salt River gin

The Salt River gin marks their move back home to the Cape as well as the area that the distillery is located in. It is made using the one shot, London dry method which combines all the botanicals in one go with no additions afterwards. The taste, however, is less juniper dominated. This gin contains local fynbos, buchu which is known for its medicinal uses and *kapokbos* which is a form of sweet wild rosemary.

Buchu is such a strong flavour, they use only 35 grams to a 7.5-kilogram juniper berry ratio. It gives you an idea of how dominant the taste is. For this reason, Salt River gin is not served with a buchu garnish but rather with fresh thyme and frozen grapefruit. For any gin connoisseurs who are interested in sipping this spirit undiluted, you will get hints of the almost medicinal taste of buchu. With the addition of a good tonic, it becomes almost woody and floral with a dry mouthfeel.



Salt River Gin (Image Supplied)

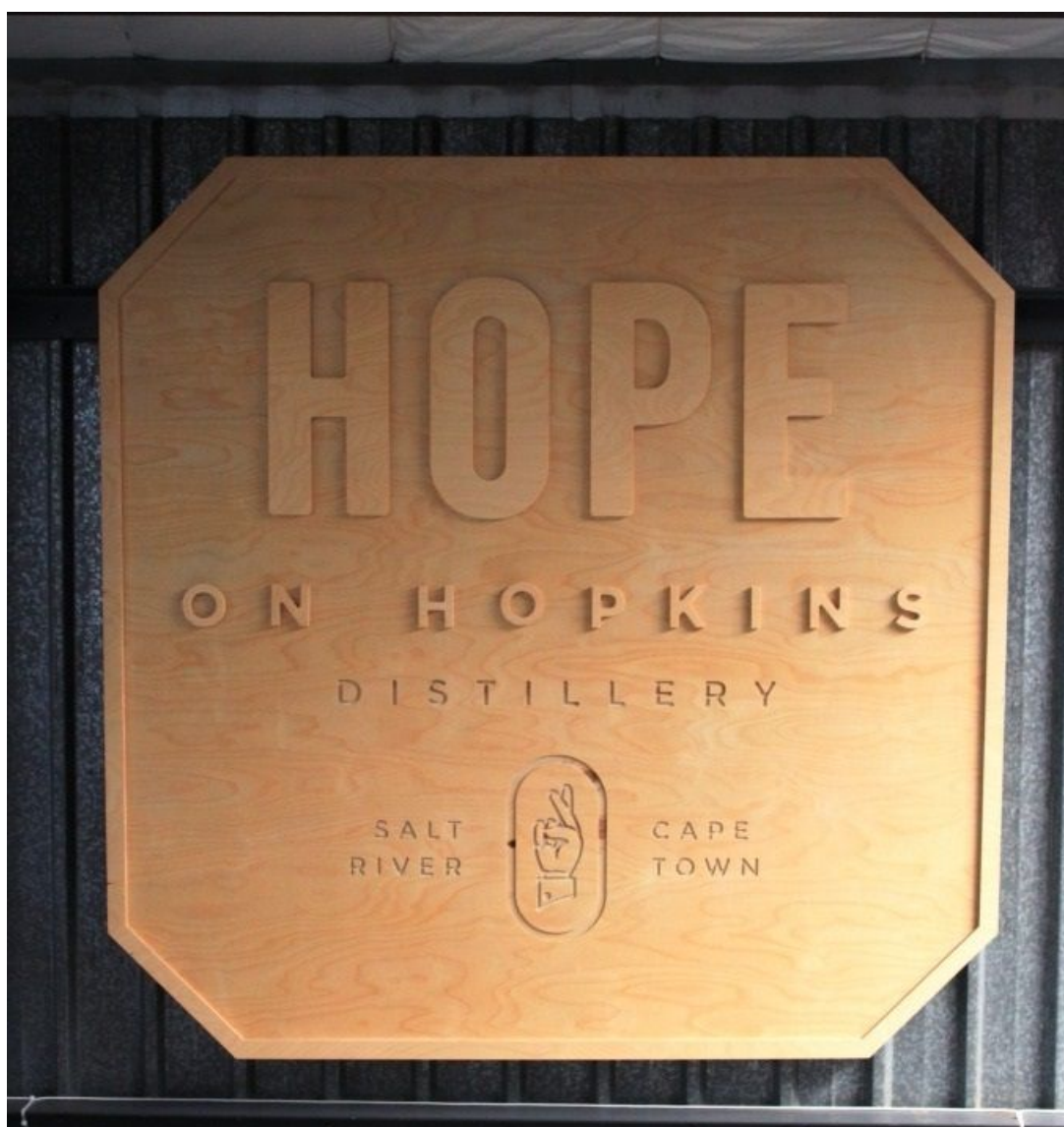
Mediterranean gin

Finally, the Mediterranean gin, inspired by their time in Spain, is unlike anything I have ever tasted. The botanicals in this gin are almost savoury and include cardamom, bay leaf, manzanilla olive and rosemary. The taste is unique for everyone and I got the cardamom flavour immediately.

This is the most significant gin in their line because it is the one that Beard wanted to create the second she set her heart on distillation. It is stunning and would work well in a martini. It's not sweet and if you serve it with an olive, you will experience an even deeper botanical flavour. In the words of the tasting host Dominique, "it is a holiday in a glass."

It is also Beard's personal favourite gin because it is the one she set out to make from the get-go and is essentially her baby. She also prefers Fitch and Leedes as her tonic of choice because it is not a dominant flavour, which allows the gin to shine through.

I did also taste their small batch pink gin which was more whimsical and sweet. I definitely liked it. I also loved the idea behind it. Beard had something that she wanted to experiment with so they made small batches because they were unsure if it would sell. It is full of berries and very sweet and light on the palate and does extremely well.



A great success

Hope on Hopkins has been around for four years and I think that it is safe to say that Lucy and Leigh have accomplished what they set out to do. Their symbol of the crossed fingers representative of their hoping like hell this works did exactly that.

Not only do they have an established selection of gins but have also added to their repertoire their own small batch vodka as well as an agave spirit called *esperanza* (which is basically tequila but cannot be called such as it isn't made in Mexico). Their upbeat attitudes and down to earth personalities combined with a huge passion for gin has made this venture a raging success.

ABOUT SAMANTHA SNEDORF

Snedorf is a qualified journalist and full-time blogger. She is obsessed with gin and is trying to bring light to the enormous number of gins and talented crafters that we have in South Africa. She films weekly videos where she samples different gins and focuses on their different botanicals. In the near future, she would love to host gin tastings and sell the handcrafted botanical bags she creates. She adores travel and wants to explore the world whilst drinking gin and taking beautiful photos.

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