

South Africa's first craft gin club launches

The latest subscription box offering in SA delivers local, craft gin to one's door. [The Gin Box](#), founded by Jean Buckham, is a gin club that aims to introduce South Africans to the multitude of local craft gin brands, their unique stories and how best to enjoy them.



Members of The Gin Box will receive on a monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly or ad hoc basis (gifts, for example) a box showcasing a small batch of craft gin with unique tonics that accompany the gin and hand-picked gourmet food items that complement the taste journey of the month. No two months will be the same.

“Gin has long been enjoyed in South Africa and, for decades, we have been drinking many imported British gins, because up until recently, we had never really ‘South Africanized’ it. In addition, it had always been drunk with a simple tonic, but it could be adapted and made more original by adding hints of flavour, garnishes like pomegranates or rosemary, through to even changing the colour of the gin,” says Buckham.



Star player of the drinks cabinet

Global growth of gin has increased year on year, accelerating dramatically for the past three. New consumers and product innovation are the driving forces behind the sector's international success. According to *The Guardian*, British drinkers have

been quaffing gin in record amounts during 2016, buying 40 million bottles in a spending spree that outstripped sales growth in beer and sparkling wine.

SA, however, has the benefit of a massively diverse flora that provides botanical ingredients unlike anywhere else in the world, rooibos and fynbos among two of the most common examples. In fact, SA is the only country in the world with an entire plant kingdom inside its borders. This, together with a local appetite for entrepreneurship has seen many distilleries popping up, crafting often adventurous, small batch gins to satisfy any palate.



FMCG

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There are more than 75 local gin brands being produced by 50 local gin distillers dotted around the country. While many drinkers are apprehensive to try new brands, not knowing where to start, The Gin Box eases the confusion by acquainting members with a new brand each month.

“There’s no doubt that there’s more bravery and fun with gin drinking, because there’s more versatility with it. In the same way that whisky experienced its own period of popularity, which will always endure, and craft breweries exploded onto the scene, gin has rapidly emerged as the new star player of the drinks cabinet and bar scene,” adds Buckham.

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