

Guido Tommasi Editore

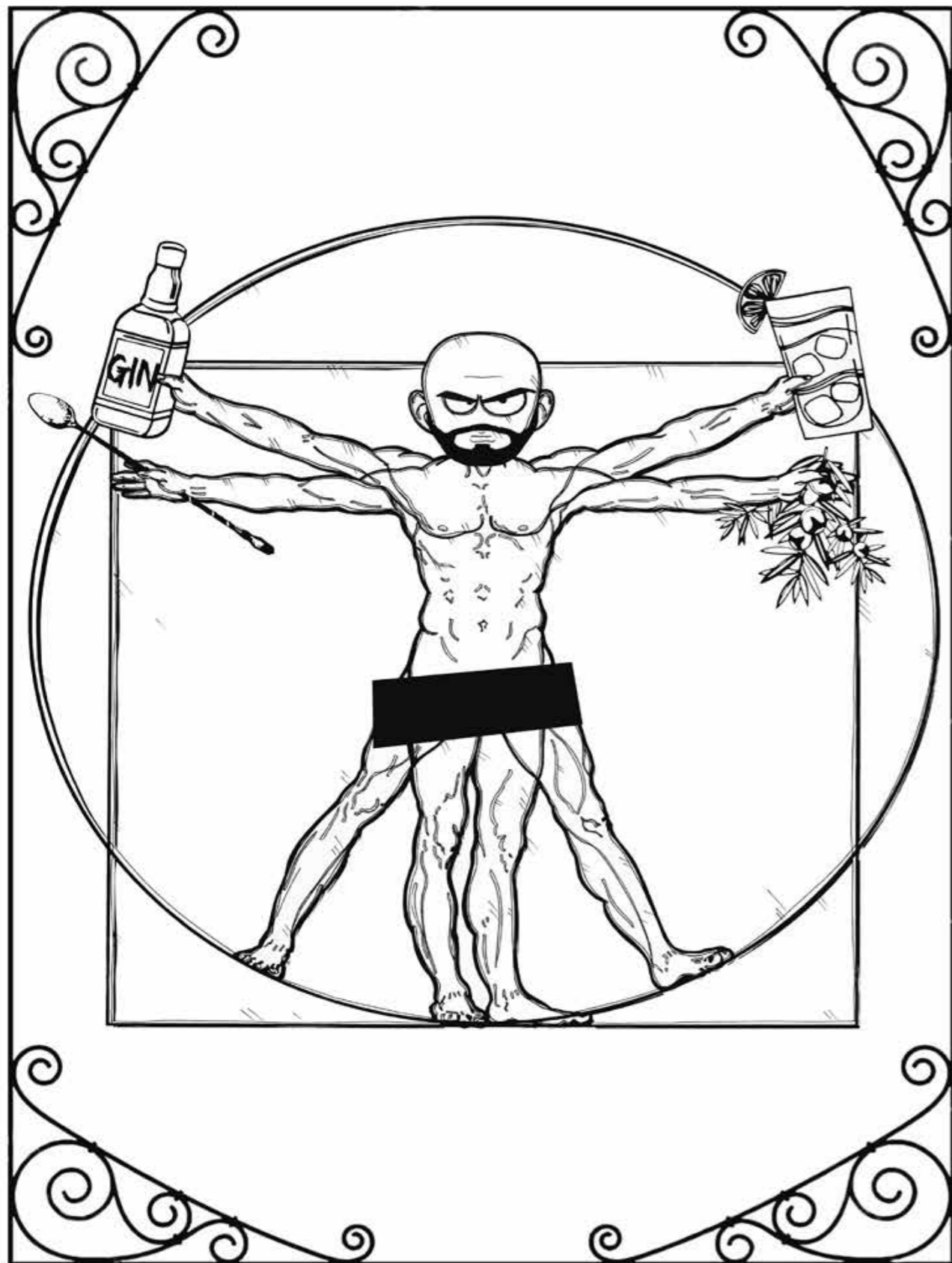
ANTHOLOGIN



SAMUELE AMBROSI

WRITTEN BY
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CONTENTS

PREFACE – 7

INTRODUCTION – 10

CHAPTER I – FROM SALERNO TO THE WORLD – 13

CHAPTER II – THE WORLD IS GIN – 35

CHAPTER III – NOT BY JUNIPER ALONE... – 69

CHAPTER IV – THE ART OF DISTILLATION – 97

CHAPTER V – GIN AND ITS RULES – 115

CHAPTER VI – THE GIN AND TONIC AND OTHER STORIES – 127

CHAPTER VII – 100 NOT-TO-MISS GINS – 169

INDEX – 283

BIBLIOGRAPHY – 287

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS – 288

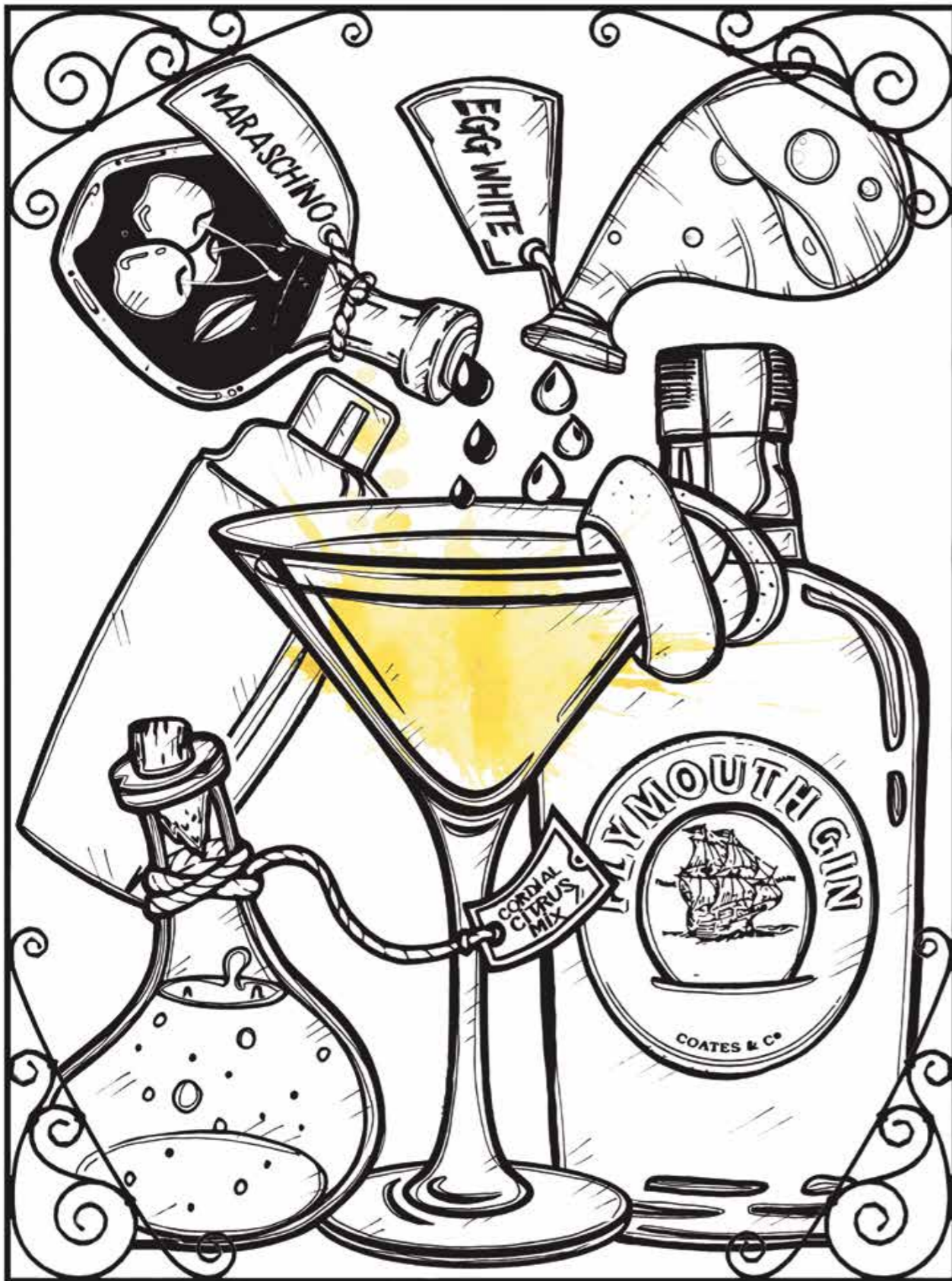


The virtues of juniper

Before getting to that glass of gin, however, we must start with the juniper berry itself. And note, too, that there's juniper and there's juniper. Some are thirty meters in height, going by the scientific name *Juniperus virginiana*, but more commonly known as Virginian juniper or eastern red cedar. This juniper isn't useful for much beyond being an excellent source of firewood. Then we have *Juniperus rigida*, fascinating but also not very useful, used mostly as an ornamental plant in the Far East. Next comes *Juniperus sabina*, also beautiful, but poisonous. Which brings us to the protagonist of these pages: *Juniperus communis*, whose scientific name would suggest a modest plant yet in truth is the only one of the bunch truly deserving of the limelight. This juniper is the "little big mother" who has contributed so much to the history of mixed drinks and, to some extent, the history of humankind. Don't let its Latin name, likely attributable to Linnaeus, deceive you. While it does indicate juniper's early production time (from the Latin *juni*, or "June", and *perus*, "production"), it also refers to the plant's difficult harvesting, as evidenced by the Latin-Celtic etymology derived from the term's crisis *gen*, meaning "shrub" in Celtic, and *prus*, which is Latin for "severe" or "harsh". In any case, its healing properties were known to the Egyptians, as reported in the Ebers Papyrus, a medical papyrus from around 1550 B.C. that cites juniper as a remedy for jaundice.

The Greeks later used it as a cure for stomach cramps, while the Romans steeped it in wine as a general treatment for various ailments. In his *Naturalis Historia*, Pliny the Elder mentions it some twenty-two times, praising its diuretic, antioxidant, and, when steeped in wine for long periods, astringent properties.

In short, our plant juniper had already known the spotlight and been the focus of general human interest centuries before the Gin and Tonic—we really ought to be enjoying one right now as we read these lines, don't you agree?—came along. Yet, several theories exist regarding the origins of gin. For a long time, in fact, it was believed that the first person to create a juniper-based spirit was Dutch: a professor of medicine at the University of Leiden named Franz de la Bøe, more famously known as Doctor Sylvius, in the 17th century. More recent studies have disproved this idea, however, highlighting the Mediterranean rather than Northern European origins of juniper spirits. Around the year 1100, the Italian city of Salerno boasted the world's most famous and innovative medical school. It could also rely on a fundamental instrument to produce any distillate, namely the alembic invented by "Gerber", a Persian alchemist, astronomer, and physicist whose real name was Jabir ibn Hayyan and who lived between 721 and 815. In the Salerno school of medicine's archives, several references to so-called "burning spirits" have been unearthed (also called "aqua ardens" or "burning water" in English). If we factor into this



GIMLET

TYPE	ALCOHOL CONTENT	TECHNIQUE	GARNISH
SOUR	20.6% abv	Shake & Double Strain	Lemon peel (optional)

RECIPE (8 cl)

4 cl PLYMOUTH GIN
4 cl lime juice cordial
Egg white (optional)

PREPARATION

Home-made lime juice cordial

Squeeze the juice of 3 lemons and 3 limes into a measuring cup, setting the peels aside. Pour the fresh juice into a glass jar.

Sweeten to taste with granulated sugar (usually 1 and ½–2 teaspoons) and dissolve thoroughly in the juice.

Add one capful of maraschino (about 2 cl). Remove the pith from the peels and add. Store in the refrigerator overnight.

The next day, taste and adjust for sweetness, adding more sugar as needed. Preparing a cordial in this manner usually requires around 4-5 days.

METHOD

This wonderful drink must always be vigorously shaken, yet it can be served without ice in a cold cocktail glass (30 minutes in the fridge should suffice) or in a short tumbler with ice. Fill the shaker almost to the top with ice and stir with a bar spoon until the metal cools. Turn the shaker upside down over a strainer to eliminate any water. Now you are ready to add the ingredients.

First pour in the lime cordial, followed by the gin. Use a jigger for precise doses. Once all these ingredients have been poured in, add a few drops of egg white (optional). This detail will give the drink an extra soft feeling in the mouth.

Close the shaker firmly and shake in whatever style you choose for at least 10–12 seconds... vigorously! It's crucial that the shaken mixture be "explosive", so that the ingredients blend well, cool properly, and emulsify. Otherwise, you will end up with the opposite effect.



CHAPTER III

NOT BY JUNIPER ALONE... Botanicals

*“The smell of spices evokes places, and I really enjoy
the stories told about them”*

Moni Ovadia

Perhaps gin’s distinguishing characteristic, juniper, also embodies what is most charming and fascinating about this spirit. Yet alongside juniper, an extraordinary array of other botanicals—herbs, fruits, flowers and spices—have lent gin its remarkable distinction over the centuries, engendering not one but many gins, co-existing and simultaneously crafting gin’s alchemical beauty. Each and every distiller unfolds this creative potential before us, while alongside them the proficient barman works with a likewise creative mixological spirit, even if preparing a mere “simple” classic like the Gin and Tonic. Depending on the gin, and with a nod to the vital role of the selected tonic, any cocktail glass you hold in your hands will embody these nuanced, diverse emotions. And it is to the hundreds of botanicals, featured in countless recipes, that we owe this wondrous

diversity, one that breathes life into every gin and distinguishes one from the next: from the more common botanicals such as cassia, angelica or orris root, to those rarer, more unusual choices like hops, tea, exotic lotus flowers or Buddha’s Hand. Very often these botanicals tell the stories of their place of origin, expressing in the gin itself, enchantingly, the nature and qualities of their respective lands.

We therefore felt it important to explore the subject of botanicals with the following dedicated chapter. While recounting all of them would have been nearly impossible, here we are pleased to present a worthy selection of over forty plants, flowers, seeds and roots. Together they form a realistic picture of what truly lies behind the word “gin”, a word we are all familiar with but perhaps have known, until now, only superficially.



SAGE

Salvia Officinalis



Distribution: Central Europe and Mediterranean maquis.

Propagation: cutting.

Parts used: leaves.

Harvest: leaves, all year round.

Proprieties: used for a range of female reproductive ailments, such as premenstrual syndrome and menopausal side effects; helps with menstrual flow in cases of amenorrhea, and, given its antispasmodic properties, is used for intestinal tract diseases as a smooth muscle relaxant. Useful in

the treatment of intestinal irritability, digestive tract spasms, and menstrual pain. Moreover, its attributes include anti-inflammatory and diuretic properties, as well as being antiseptic and soothing.

Curiosity: the word "sage" ("salvia" in Italian) derives from the Latin *salus*, meaning "health", or from *salvus*, "safe" or "protected". Sage contains a complex ketone called thujone, which in high doses can be toxic.

Notes: herbaceous and fresh.

LAVENDER

Lavandula Angustifolia Miller



Distribution: Mediterranean region.

Propagation: pollination.

Parts used: flowers.

Harvest: starting with two-year-old plants; ideal harvest time is when the flowers just begin to bloom, between July and August.

Proprieties: lavender has been known for various properties since ancient times, including antiemetic, antiseptic, analgesic, anti-bacterial, vasodilative, antineuralgic, and as a treatment for muscle pain. It is also considered a mild sedative.

Curiosity: the word derives from the Latin gerund of the verb "lavare" (lavandum = that which must be washed), an allusion to this plant's frequent use in antiquity, the medieval period especially, as a means to wash the body.

Notes: lavender is a widely used plant that bestows notable freshness and soft floral notes. It helps to extend the retro-nasal component and bind different spices together.



HERBAL G&T

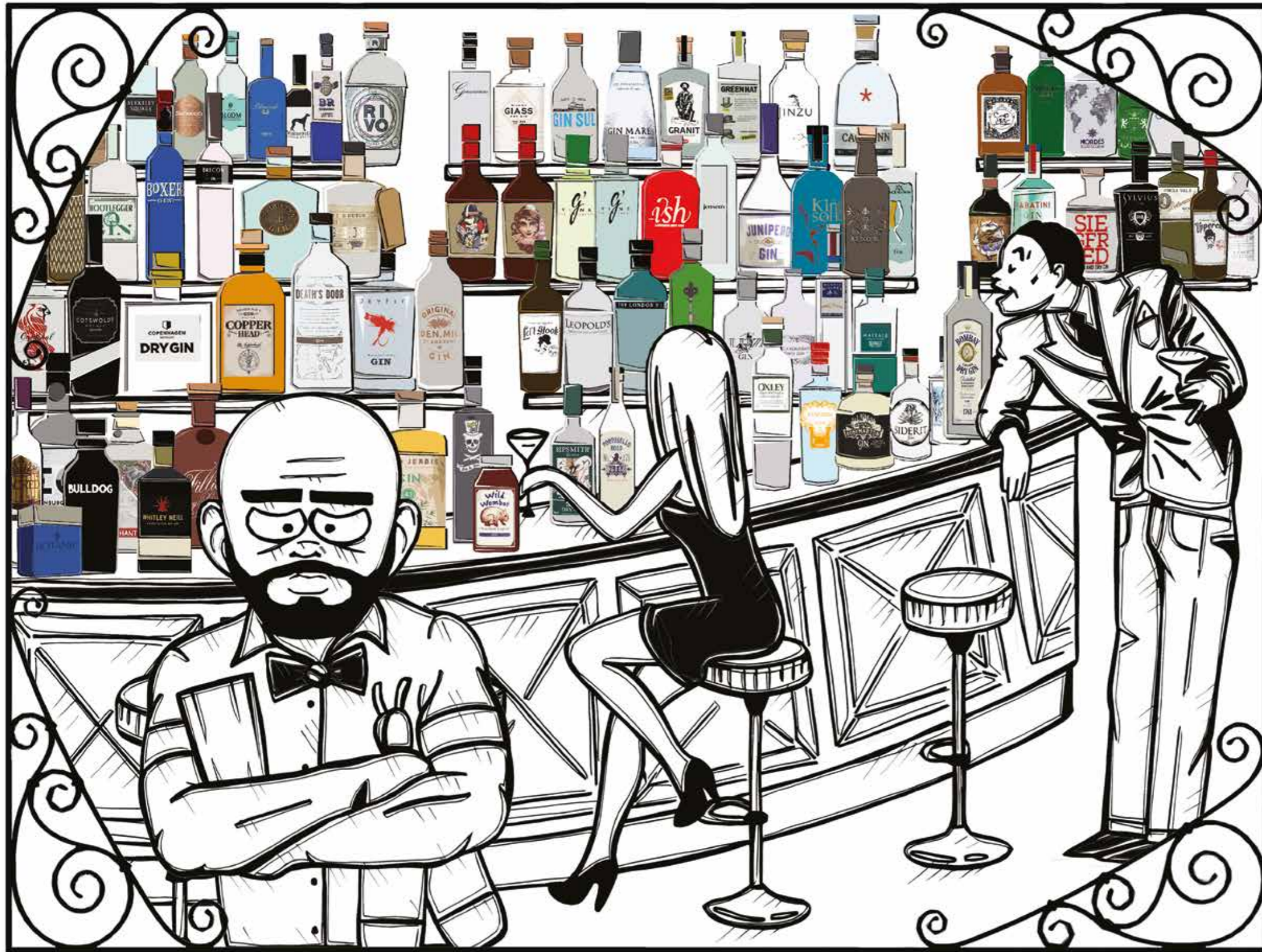
TYPE	ALCOHOL CONTENT	TECHNIQUE	GARNISH
G&T twist	10.8% abv	Built	Sprig of fresh thyme placed on top or hung from the edge of the glass

RECIPE (20 cl)
5 cl RIVO GIN
15 cl Scortese Pure Tonic
1 bsp thyme syrup
A few drops of celery bitters

METHOD
Chill a large tumbler glass very well, or store it in the fridge/freezer prior. If you chill the glass with ice, make sure you empty all of it out before adding the other ingredients. First pour in the bitters and the syrup, followed by the gin. Mix well. Pour in the tonic water. Lastly, carefully add a large chunk of slow ice. Garnish and serve with the small bottle of tonic alongside.

PREPARATION
Thyme syrup
Place ½ cup of fresh thyme and 2 full cups of cold water in a small saucepan. Turn on the heat and bring to the boil, then immediately remove from the heat. Let cool, filter well with a fine mesh strainer, then add white sugar to obtain a syrup at 62 degrees brix.

NOTES
Serving this G&T with a straw is strongly discouraged.



- *Tanqueray Lovage*: 47.3% abv. Born with the help of Joanne McKerchar, historical researcher who oversees the Diageo archives, and the well-known bartender Jason Crowley. Launched in 2018, its recipe (from 1839) calls for juniper, angelica, coriander, celery seeds and roots, nettle, cinchona bark, Java pepper, chamomile and winter savory. It is named for its primary botanical component, lovage.

COCKTAILS:

Martini Cocktail, Negroni, John Collins, Clover Club, British Spring Punch, London Mule, Bijou, Mayfair Cocktail, Pegu Club, Gin Fix, White Lady, Paradise, Gimlet.

GARNISH GIN&TONIC:

Grapefruit peel, lime peel, fresh chamomile flowers.

RECOMMENDED TONICS:

Goldberg, Franklin Indian T, AQ Monaco, Scortese Pure Tonic, Fever Tree Indian, Thomas Henry, Indi

WEB www.tanqueray.com



Samuele Ambrosi

Cocktail Bar Developer, owner of the Cloakroom Cocktail Lab in Treviso, and national consultant for AIBES (Association of Italian Barmen and Supporters). In 2004 he won the Angelo Zola national championship, and the following year he took first place at the global competition in Singapore, receiving the Eagle Award and also winning the South Asian Competition. In 2008 he won the Calvados International Cup in Normandy. Today Ambrosi is also a trainer for AIBES and the Campari Academy, in addition to consulting for various businesses in the field. Ask him anything about gin, and he will know the answer.



Maurizio Maestrelli

A professional journalist and writer, Maestrelli has been recounting the world of alcoholic drinks for more than twenty years, with a strong preference for beers and spirits. His articles have been published in many Italian magazines and prominent newspapers. Author of several books on beer, he also collaborates on The Pocket Beer Book by Stephen Beaumont and Tim Webb. This is his second book dedicated to the world of cocktails and distillates.



Serena Conti

Conti graduated with a degree in Design and Arts at the University of Venice, specializing in Fashion Design. Her first collection received immediate international recognition and was exhibited at the Ichinomya Fashion Design Center in Japan. She subsequently managed the research trends area at Pitti Filati in Florence. She has designed collections for several prominent names in the fashion world, including Karl Lagerfeld and John Galiano for Maison Dior and C'N'C Costume National, then starting a specialization in her truest, greatest passion: denim. Simultaneously, Conti has begun collaborations focused on illustration and graphics, and for many years she's worked as a freelancer for publishing houses, in addition to designing theatrical sets, posters and advertisements among the most varied sectors. In 2017 she won the coveted Denim Gallery Award in New York for best designer.



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