

News story: Batch Brew bottles export success

Last month, Burnley-based Bath Brew, shipped its first order of 4,000 bottles to fulfil an exclusive US distribution deal with a Georgia-based spirits distributor, and in September shipped 450 bottles to SAQ, the state-owned alcohol retailer of Quebec.

These new export deals, combined with an increasing overseas demand for craft gin, mean the company is now expecting to see its export sales grow from 12.5% of annual turnover to more than 20% in the next 12 months.

To help it break into the US and Canadian markets, the company has been working with government International Trade Advisers (ITAs), who have supported the business in navigating overseas legislation and cultural differences.

Batch Brew's North American successes are the most recent in a series of export wins for the business. Last month the company also began shipping to a new retail partner in Italy, as well as shipping its first pallet of a bespoke gin made using Chinese botanicals to a new partner in China.

Batch Brew's exporting success is being showcased as part of the [Food is GREAT campaign](#), a cross-departmental initiative led by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department for International Trade (DIT) to showcase UK food and drink overseas and help more firms export.

Founded in 2011, Batch Brew started life as a brewery, before its founder and director Phil Whitwell recognised the opportunity available in the craft gin market.

The company produced its first gin in 2014 after trying out 252 recipes to find the right flavour. The business now sells a core range of 3 gins, along with a variety of monthly gin 'innovations'. As well as gins, the business produces its own vodkas and rums, and has a whisky currently maturing.

Earlier this year, Batch Brew's Industrial Strength Gin was crowned 'Best Gin' at the International Spirits Awards in San Francisco, and its Signature Gin was voted the UK's favourite craft gin by the Craft Gin Club.

Batch Brew gin being distilled into bottles.

Claire Plowes, Operations Manager, Batch Brew, said:

When we first started out, exporting wasn't part of our business strategy. However, with the recent craft gin boom, we jumped at the chance to have gin drinkers around the world try our product.

These new North American deals are a big step forward for the business, but there's been a few things we've had to tackle to make them happen.

For example, in the US and Canada not only is the standard spirit bottle size larger than in the UK at 75cl, the standard for packaging is also different, with the US market shipping in boxes of 12, compared to our boxes of 6. To get around this we've not only had to adjust our bottle size, but also commission custom boxes.

Similarly, we've had to adjust our labelling to meet specific US and Canadian requirements. In Canada, everything must be labelled in both French and English, while in the US we've had to adjust the prominence of the word 'gin' on our label to meet its product description requirements.

Support from International Trade Advisers has not only enabled us to overcome some of the legal barriers we've encountered in new markets, but has also helped us seek out new opportunities overseas. Thanks to their support, we're now in discussions with a potential new partner in Germany, who we met at a Northern Powerhouse meet-the-buyer event in Harrogate last year.

Paul Stowers, Head of Region, North West, DIT, said:

Gin exports from across the UK are booming, and the US is our biggest market – worth £189 million in the year to June 2018. Distillers from across the North West are well-positioned to benefit from this demand.

To help more local firms take advantage of the export opportunities available, we have a team of International Trade Advisers – like those that work with Batch Brew – on hand to offer 1-to-1 guidance on everything from addressing labelling regulations, to sourcing trusted logistics providers.

We know that exporting can help boost firms' profitability and increase their resilience. I'm encouraging anyone interested to get in touch with our team and see how they can start or grow their export activity. If a local distillery like Batch Brew can do it, there's no reason many others can't too.

Batch Brew gin.

Firms looking for support should visit [great.gov.uk](https://www.great.gov.uk), which has information on live export opportunities and includes general information on exporting and events.