

News story: Forest Gin branches out into new spirits and overseas markets

Husband and wife team Karl and Lindsay Bond have big plans for their new whisky brand – Forest Whisky – to help secure the firm’s future through exporting. They plan to increase their exports to constitute 90% of their total revenue in 5 years’ time.

Currently, the family-run distillery’s exports make up 17% of its sales, with its gin sold in 10 countries, including Japan, China, Australia and the US. UK stockists include Harvey Nichols and their gin is available by the glass in the Virgin Trains First Class lounge in London.

Interest in the new whisky brand follows repeat orders from distributors in Japan for the firm’s earl grey infused gin over the last year.

Forest Gin is the only gin to have ever been awarded 2 separate Double-Gold Medals at the San Francisco World Spirit Awards in 2016, a competition that assesses hundreds of spirits from all over the world.

Since starting operations 3 years ago, the business has leveraged worldwide demand for premium products with a clear British heritage to fuel its impressive growth. The team joined trade missions to China, Japan and the US, organised as part of the Food is GREAT campaign, a joint initiative by the [Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs](#) (Defra) and the Department for International Trade (DIT) to help British food and drink businesses sell their goods and services overseas.

Founders Karl and Lindsay Bond with their daughter. (c) Forest Gin

Karl Bond, co-founder of the Forest Distillery said:

We’ve been amazed at the reception to our gin from overseas buyers. We’re expecting our exports to grow substantially over the next few years, especially as we continue to find trusted contacts in new markets, with support from DIT.

We’re very excited about the launch of Forest Whisky. We’re only the 15th distiller in England to be granted a licence to mature whisky, and to receive pre-orders at this early stage shows how highly regarded British distillers are internationally.

We expect to face a few challenges as we grow our exports. The logistics of transporting our porcelain bottles is an obvious one. But support is on hand from DIT to help us connect with distribution partners that we can trust to take maximum care of our products. With the support that’s available, there’s nothing stopping others like us in the drinks business to find a footing in new markets.

Paul Stowers, Head of North West region at DIT, said:

While it's the Scottish that are typically best known for their whisky exports, ambitious drinks businesses like the Forest Distillery are beginning to fly the flag for English whisky overseas.

We're also currently seeing a surge in demand for British gin from abroad, as part of a so-called 'ginaissance', which is the result of excellent products like Forest Gin.

UK exports of gin have risen by 19% in the first half of 2018 and are predicted to reach £600 million by the end of the year. This is more than double the value exported in 2008. The US and Australia in particular are hot markets for British gin, and we'd urge any distiller to get in touch with one of our local [international trade advisers](#) to find out how they can begin or grow their trade overseas.

Forest Gin Distillery (c) Forest Gin

Online support, find a buyer, and export readiness tools are available at great.gov.uk, where thousands of live export opportunities are also promoted.