

Meet the Maker: Shanna-Rae Wilby

 By [Samantha Snedorf](#)

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Gin blogger Samantha Snedorf from SamSamButDifferent recently launched a new feature called Meet the Maker. We'll be keeping up with her to explore South Africa's top names and bottles in the gin industry. Her first maker is the prominent Johannesburg-based distiller, Shanna-Rae Wilby, who is the chief alchemist and co-owner of Time Anchor Distillery in Maboneng.

The first craft distillery in Joburg, their gins are extraordinary and worth sampling if you haven't already had the opportunity. Ranging through a London dry, Livingstone gin, Sloe gin, Gincello (which is delicious by the way) and finally - their Mirari range which includes a pink damask rose, a blue orient colour changing gin and more recently an amber African botanicals gin. Their line does also extend beyond gin so be sure to check it out.



Image: @shawn.greyling

Mirari gins

All of Time Anchor's gins are small batched which means that absolute love and care goes into the creation of each individual bottle.

The Mirari range is a showstopper, based on myths of the Oasis of Mirari - an arcane utopia overflowing with fruits, botanicals and water, hidden within the desert dunes. This haven is said to be protected by sacred peacocks, the possessors of a thousand wise eyes gathered upon their tail feathers. They feature prominently on the boxes and bottles themselves.

The pink Mirari is floral on the nose followed by citrus; best served with a slice of grapefruit and edible flowers. I am obsessed with the way it shimmers in the light.

The blue Mirari is spiced with grains of paradise, ginger and cardamom flavours on the palate. Best served with a wedge of green apple, a sprig of mint and of course topped off with tonic to change it from blue to pink.





Finally, there is the amber African Botanicals Mirari - the newest addition to the range which I have not yet had to chance to sample.

I was lucky enough to chat to Shanna-Rae and got to ask her some interesting questions about her gin journey and this is what I found out.

Please tell me a little bit about yourself?

I have been distilling since 2012, Time Anchor is my passion, I am very fortunate that I get to travel often as it's also a big passion of mine.

How did Time Anchor Distillery (TAD) come into being (a brief history)?

My gran worked in a Pharmacy and when I was very young she took me into her rose garden where we picked roses and infused them into medical grade ethanol, thereby making a "perfume". I was always surrounded by creativity and the urge to create, and what started as a Varsity "party drink experiment" turned into a long time love of experimenting and creating new and exciting drink options. Creations such as Skittle, Mars Bar and even a marshmallow vodka were firm party favourites.

A few years after my varsity days, my partner purchased me a gleaming five-litre copper pot still and my fascination for creating truly crafted spirits grew. After much research and a serious amount of self-teaching and experimentation, in 2013, Warrick and I embarked on the path to set up Time Anchor Distillery nestled in the trendy Maboneng area in Johannesburg.

Against all the odds, and after much hurdle jumping, Time Anchor Distillery officially opened in September 2015. Using skills and techniques, many from distillers of an old era, Time Anchor Distillery's craftsmanship is founded in tradition, with a modern twist. It takes approximately six weeks to handcraft a bottle of craft Gin, which attests to an unwavering dedication to creating an authentic craft spirit. Made by hand each bottle bears my fingerprint after I hand label and sign each one.



The master distiller herself

Where do you stock your gins, including the newest Mirari range?

Norman Goodfellows, Yuppie Chef, The Gin Box and directly from the distillery.

What is in store for TAD this year? Any new gins on the menu?

We are concentrating on growing our footprint with the Mirari range and I have been working on a new Gin for the last eight months, and are working to launch it in October 2018. I can't say much more at the moment.

Are you still hosting gin tastings in 2018?

Our 'old' format tastings are now only going to happen once a month. You will still get to meet the maker (me) and the gins

will be paired with different garnishes and different chocolates, however, people need to look for the events on our Facebook events tab to see when and what exactly is happening each month. As of the last weekend of March, we will be open on the last weekend of every month from 12 - 5pm. We will be serving a gin platter where you will get to try three of our gins and take yourself through the self-guided gin tasting. Thereafter you will be able to stay on, have some G&Ts and relax.

Which is your favourite TAD gin and why?

This is a tough one! It's like asking someone to choose their favourite child. I love our entire Mirari range. I feel that they all fit into different occasions, but if I am forced to choose, our Mirari Pink Gin is my favourite. It is floral, but it balances so that the true gin taste still comes through."

Which is your favourite non-TAD gin?

Our personal gin collection sits at over 80 gins. It's very difficult to earmark just one. From a 'commercial bog brand' perspective, Tanqueray 10 is a firm favourite.

How do you enjoy your gin at home?

I am a fanatic for perfect ratios, one part gin, two parts tonic and garnish experiment makes it fun. I also enjoy trying different tonics with the same gin and seeing how the flavour changes."

What sport do you think would be hilarious to add a bunch of alcohol too?

Yoga!

What is the worst alcoholic beverage you have either had or created for yourself?

As I am self-taught, I have had a steep learning curve with this, so my first few batches of alcohol were not the best – lol.

And there you have it. An amusing set of answers from an interesting lady. For more info on tastings and where you buy their gins or just for general info on their distillation process, visit their website.

All images supplied.

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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- Meet the Maker: Andrew Rall of Distillery 031 - 23 Nov 2018
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