

Meet the maker: Mark Taverner of Silver Creek Distillery



By [Samantha Snedorf](#)

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When you ponder upon the beautiful creation that is gin, your mind does not immediately travel to the deep American South and its prohibition days. Yet somehow, there was one person who fell in love with the idea of the languid southern drawl and making shine by the light of the moon, and his name is Mark Taverner. Four years ago, Taverner took a minor detour from the food industry and began his distillery endeavour, as one would expect the Southern influence to have dictated, with moonshine of course!



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The distillery

Silver Creek Distillery has been around since 2014. Taverner started his journey with Shanna-Rae of Time Anchor Distillery as one of his mentors, as well as Lucy Beard from Hope on Hopkins. Even with these local influences, his alcohol has a unique twist to it. "I did more of my research in the United States," says Taverner, which is what initially inspired the moonshine and prohibition gin brands. "I did all the courses that are available here and then went to moonshine university – it exists by the way – in Louisville Kentucky!"

The moonshine brand

Having won five international awards it comes in six flavours which have each also obtained various 2017 Michelangelo awards. The chocolate won silver, apple pie, bonfire hot cinnamon and salted caramel landed gold and finally charred shine and clear shine won double gold which is highly commendable and speaks volumes about the quality of the pure alcohol when there are no flavours added to it.

Prohibition gin

With these worthy accolades behind his name, there could be no doubt that Taverner would dominate with the gin run. The Prohibition craft gin was created on the day the prohibition was appealed and they are bottled in the same style glass as the moonshine which helps bring through the theme of prohibition all through the ranges.

When asked to describe the prohibition gin he stated: "It is a new world gin. A happy, fruity gin that is not overly spiced but extremely easy to drink and can be dressed with any botanical. It is not old world or too serious about itself."

"You've got to be slightly different. I wanted to keep my slightly off-kilter character which is why it stays in this bottle so the prohibition story is still there."



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Their pink gin

Mark has also recently created a Prohibition pink gin. Infused with hibiscus and rosewater, Taverner explains: “I have gone the berry route with blueberry and raspberry which gives it a very interesting nose. I think it’s outstanding.”

Once again, Fitch and Leedes come in as a heavyweight recommended tonic. Not that any of us are surprised. But what is surprising though is that Taverner’s personal favourite gin is, in fact, the pink one. Who would have guessed the strong man driving his branded hummer around would have an affinity for blush drinks?

Taverner vehemently disagreed with my suggestion at pairing the pink tonic with the pink gin (I was considering the rose flavour but he was wary of the cucumber) and recommended it instead for the Prohibition craft gin. The pink gin is a delicate one and you wouldn’t want to alter those flavours so instead stick to Barker and Quinn or a lovely Indian tonic, both of which will bring the colour through.

Their stills

To top off this fearsome collection of liquor, it also turns out the Silver Creek distil their own alcohol for the gins rather than bringing them in. The grain spirit is distilled until it is neutral and then these wonderful gins are made.

The distillery itself is situated in Randfontein and it has three stills of varying sizes.



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“I’ve got an experimental still where I fine tune everything. Then there is a stripping still which is the hard-working one and then we go to the finishing still where we do the final distillation,” proclaims Taverner proudly.

Taverner described this entire venture as “an incredible journey of discovery.”

Read the [original Meet the Maker](#) on SamSamButDifferent.

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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