

A close-up photograph of a glass filled with a clear spirit, ice cubes, a slice of lemon, and a sprig of rosemary. The glass is set on a rustic wooden surface. In the background, another similar glass is partially visible, along with more lemons and rosemary. The overall aesthetic is natural and artisanal.

BITE  
SIZED  
GUIDES

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# KENT'S CRAFT DISTILLERIES

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HAND CRAFTED SPIRITS  
FROM THE GARDEN OF ENGLAND

[kentfoodtrails.co.uk](http://kentfoodtrails.co.uk)

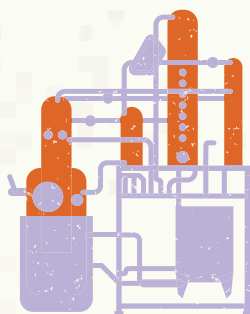


## Produced in Kent

We want to inspire you with the amazing food and drink of Kent. From products grown here for hundreds of years to 21st century innovations, food and drink has shaped the landscape of our wonderful county and we hope you enjoy exploring all it has to offer.

This series of publications will introduce you to a whole range of fabulous food and drink and [kentfoodtrails.co.uk](http://kentfoodtrails.co.uk) will guide you through what to do and where to eat and stay so you can make the most of the Garden of England. Enjoy!

Go to [producedinkent.co.uk](http://producedinkent.co.uk) to find out more about the tasty work we do inspiring everyone to buy locally.



If at first you don't succeed,  
try, try a gin.



# NO-ONE EXPECTS THE KENTISH DISTILLERS!

Garden of England, home to cherries (check), apples (definitely), hops (for sure), sparkling wine (don't mind if I do), cheese (if you insist) and gin (mmm... are you sure about that one?). Yes, yes we are! In fact right now, right here in Kent, we're riding high on the cusp of an exciting, passionate wave of craft distilling that's taking the world by storm.

However it's very much a contemporary industry, as despite some small scale "moonshining" and a snifter of 17th century Maidstone gin, distilling, surprisingly, was never a traditional industry for Kent. Odd when you look at the current success and more importantly the variety and abundance of our fresh produce, from cobnuts to samphire, soft fruits, grapes and more that are infusing and accompanying a whole range of quality Kentish gins, vodkas, whiskies, rums and brandy, as well as liqueurs.

Even better, our master distillers are making the most of 'local', working with Kent's farmers, utilising surplus grain and fruits and blending them with top secret recipes to produce an array of unique spirits with an authentic taste of Kent in every glass!

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**Alright, enough talk, time to get our alchemical groove on, there's distilling to be done!**





# THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT SPIRITS

## 1. The spirit of antiquity...

Distillation may have originated in Mesopotamia around 2,000 BC - to produce alcohol to dissolve botanical oils for medicines and perfumes, rather than for consumption.

## 2. Six is the magic number...

of distilled spirits: brandy, gin, rum, vodka, whisky and tequila, with pretty much every spirit deriving from one of these.

## 3. A taste of immortality...

Technically, whisky can last forever! Keep your bottle unopened and out of direct sunlight and it can (with willpower) be kept almost indefinitely!

## 4. Who says medicine tastes bad?

Genever (or gin) was first created in 16th century Holland as a medicine to improve circulation and other ailments. Given to soldiers to boost morale, it was known as "Dutch Courage."

## 5. Mosquitoes created G&T...

thanks to the anti-malarial properties of Indian Tonic Water, a popular (and necessary) tippie in 19th century British India. Some bright spark added gin to soothe the bitter taste, the rest is history!

## 6. Blessed are the 'Shiners'!

The English Malt Tax of 1725 cracked down on distilling, but enterprising Scottish distillers would make their whisky in homemade stills under cover of darkness, coining the term "Moonshine".

## 7. Turbo-charging your usual tippie...

Whisky is, in effect, beer minus the hops (grain, yeast, water) which is then distilled and aged. Brandy is, quite literally, distilled wine (made from grapes, apples or other fruits).

## 8. Don't try this at home...

Gunpowder doesn't dissolve in pure alcohol (at least the potassium nitrate doesn't), so the Royal Navy used to test the quality of both their gunpowder and rum by mixing them together!

## 9. Should you run out of floor cleaner...

Vodka has been touted as a cure for anything from infertility to the plague. However it's actually a great disinfectant and antiseptic, good for toothaches, and even cleaning your house!

## 10. And if you needed another reason for a tippie...

A gin and tonic has 91 calories. A banana has 115 calories. We'll leave that one with you...

# SPIRIT OF THE AGE...

## A brief history of distilling

**Far from a lucky accident (a la brewing), distillation of spirits is a bonafide alchemical process developed over millennia. Originally a method to create alcohol for perfumes, it's disputed where distillers first turned their hands to drink - maybe China, perhaps Italy, possibly Arabia in the 9th century (the word 'alcohol' is derived from the Arabic 'al kohl').**

500 years later that knowledge spread amongst monks, physicians and alchemists of Europe, each with their own variations; distilled grain flavoured with juniper (gin), without the juniper (vodka), distilled and aged in casks (whisky) or simply distilling wine to brandy. Interestingly all were seen as medicinal and it was only later they evolved into social drinks.

Initially favoured with tax breaks (making gin cheaper than beer and wine), the spirit market exploded with the average 1700s Londoner drinking 14 gallons of gin a year! Kent got in on the act too with entrepreneurs like George Bishop producing 3000 gallons of Maidstone Geneva annually from his distillery. A prime location on the River Medway, Maidstone sported no less than four distilleries in the 18th century.

Parliament, noticing the alarming rise of gin, raised taxes and forbade anyone selling 'distilled spirituous liquor' without a licence. The vast underground illegal spirit industry which grew as a result was pretty much killed off in 1830, when taxes on beer were dropped.

That was it for many distilleries and the industry has only revived very recently, but what a revival! Inspired by the growth of craft distilling in the USA, Sipsmith in 2009 successfully lobbied HMRC for a small-scale distilling licence, starting a snowball of interest, enthusiasm and variation that has created a truly exciting time for distillers and their art.



## BOTANICALS?

Various natural plants and herbs introduced during distillation are known as botanicals. You'll always find juniper in gin but, this being the Garden of England, you'll also see true flavours of Kent such as hops, lavender, cobnuts and samphire.

# ALCHEMY 101

## Making spirits the Kentish way...

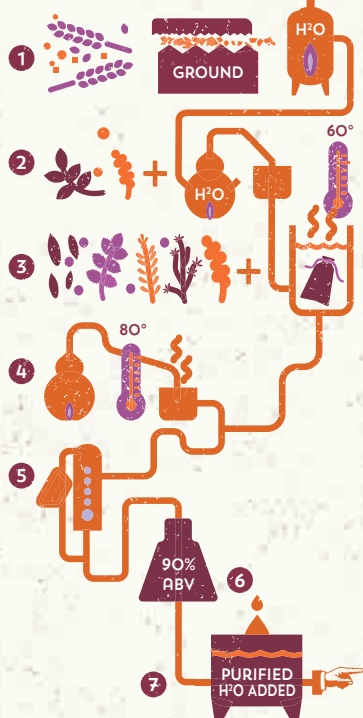
**OK, here's the lesson; spirits are made of grains or other plants that are fermented and then distilled, separating the water from the alcohol - and that's the basic formula!**

But here's the real lesson. The quality, flavour, intensity and pure magic of a spirit comes from what you put in (the quality and type of base grain), what you add (the quality and variety of botanicals) and the character you impart (how you age and store).

End result - EVERY distiller has their own formula meaning EVERY spirit is essentially unique!

The output of fermentation is only about 16% ABV - too low for spirits, to up it requires distillation. Because alcohol boils at a lower temperature than water, you can collect the evaporated alcohol, separating it from the water.

## THE GIN DISTILLING PROCESS



- 1 MAKING THE WASH (NOT ALL DISTILLERS MAKE THEIR OWN - MOST BUY IN A NEUTRAL GRAIN SPIRIT)
  - MALT AND GRAINS ARE GROUND IN THE MILL TO CREATE A GRIST
  - TO THE MASH TUN WHERE IT'S MIXED WITH LIQUOR (HOT WATER), RELEASING THE SUGARS
  - PUMPED TO THE FERMENTATION TANKS WHERE THE YEAST IS ADDED

- 2 THE BASE SPIRIT GOES INTO THE STILL WITH WATER AND HARD BOTANICALS (E.G. JUNIPER AND OTHER BERRIES, BARK, ROOTS, SEEDS) WHERE IT IS AGITATED (STIRRED) FOR A FEW HOURS AT 60°

- 3 A MUSLIN BAG OF DELICATE BOTANICALS (THE FLORALS - E.G. HOPS, LAVENDER, MARSH SAMPHIRE, ROSEHIPS, ELDERFLOWER) ARE ADDED TO THE BOTANICALS BASKET

- 4 THE STILL IS BOILED TO 80° - VAPOURS CARRY THE FLAVOURING OILS FROM THE HARD BOTANICALS THROUGH THE BOTANICALS BASKET WHERE IT INFUSES THE ADDITIONAL FLAVOURINGS

- 5 THE VAPOUR CONTINUES TO FLOW OUT OF THE TOP OF THE BOTANICALS BASKET AND INTO THE RECTIFICATION COLUMN

- 6 VAPOUR TRAVELS INTO THE CONDENSER WHERE IT IS COOLED WITH WATER, TURNING IT INTO LIQUID (AT 90% ABV!)

- 7 TO THE MIXING TANK WHERE PURIFIED WATER IS ADDED TO GET THE RIGHT ALCOHOL STRENGTH

- 8 BOTTLING AND LABELLING



**GIN**  
LABELLED AND  
READY FOR SALE



# NAME YOUR POISON!

## A spotter's guide to the fruits of distillation

**Know your London Dry from your triple distilled vodka? Stick with us and we'll have you up to master distiller level in no time with our easy guide to your favourite liquor!**

### Gin

*An English rendering of the Dutch word for juniper, "Jenever"*

Made from neutral grain alcohol infused with juniper and further flavours from a range of botanicals. Kent's skilled distillers balance anything from three or more botanicals for a unique flavour profile.

### Vodka

*From the Slavic word for water "voda" where "ka" is a diminutive - hence "little water"*

From the same base as gin, but often distilled multiple times and charcoal filtered to increase the purity and reduce the fusel oils in the alcohol. Kent vodkas include all-natural flavours like elderflower, rhubarb and berries, and can even be made from grape skins.

### Whisky

*From the Gaelic "uisgebeatha", or "water of life"*

Made from fermented grain mash (usually barley) and aged in wooden casks of charred white oak which gives colour and flavour. Strictly regulated, it requires a minimum ageing of three years. Here in Kent, Anno, the Canterbury Brewers and Copper Rivet are ageing their first casks.

### Rum

*Possibly from the Latin for sugar, "saccharum", or the Turkish name for Greeks, Rum*

Made from sugarcane by-products such as molasses and aged in oak barrels, again for colour and flavour. The majority of the world's rum comes from the Caribbean and Latin America. Kent rums are generally light, golden or spiced.

### Brandy

*From the Dutch "brandewijn" (burnt wine)*

Made from distilled wine, grape leftovers (pomace) or fruits such as apples. It can be clear (unaged) or aged in wooden barrels to deepen the colour. It takes about 9 gallons of wine to make 1 gallon of brandy. Kent brandies are made from grape pomace and quality surplus apples from local orchards.

## LICENCED TO THRILL

To produce spirits by distilling alcoholic liquids or by any other process, you need a distiller's licence. If you redistill spirits by using a still, it's a rectifier's licence you need. However if you alter the character or flavour of a spirit with anything other than water, but don't use a still to do so, you need a compounder's licence.

# SPIRITS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

## A who's who of Kent's Distillers

Say hello to the guys and girls at the forefront of our alchemical revolution. All these great distillers are producing top notch products with the very essence of Kent at their heart. The best news is that the innovations and experiments don't stop, so keep an eye out for new up and coming distillers and flavours!

### Anno Distillers

Two chemists, a love of whisky and a beautiful 300 litre copper still called Patience. The first micro-distiller in Kent in 200 years produces gin and vodka par excellence, with whisky in the pipeline.

#### *Look out for*

#### **Kent Dry Gin**

Award winning super-smooth gin incorporating truly Kentish botanicals - hops, samphire and local florals.

#### **602 Gin**

This over-proof 60% gin is big, bold and woody on the palate, with spices, citrus and Kentish hops.

#### *Cocktail hour*

#### **Anno's Elderflower Appletini**

Anno's Elderflower & Vodka, apple juice and a dash of lime, shake with ice, strain and serve with an apple slice.



### Canterbury Brewers & Distillers

Celebrating Canterbury's heritage, their spirits are mashed, fermented, distilled, barrelled and bottled within the City walls, using ingredients from the local area.

#### *Look out for*

#### **Canterbury Gin**

Distilled using Kentish hops and apples to produce a juicy, citrusy London Dry style gin.

#### **Coming soon**

Small batch treble distilled Vodka from English barley and two white and dark spiced Rums.

#### *Cocktail hour*

#### **The Gimlet**

Shake Canterbury Gin, lime juice and syrup with ice. Strain over fresh ice and garnish with a slice of lime.

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### Chapel Down

Working in partnership with master distillers to combine their wine-making expertise with modern distillation techniques, Chapel Down are experimenting with their discarded grape skins to produce gin, vodka and brandy.

#### *Look out for*

#### **Chapel Down Bacchus Gin**

Made with distilled Bacchus grape skins, infused with elderflower and lavender.

#### **Lamberhurst Fine & Rare English**

#### **Grape Brandy**

Limited edition brandy made from Seyval Blanc grapes, matured in French oak barrels for 23 years.

#### *Cocktail hour*

#### **Chapel Down's Winemakers Martini**

Shake Chapel Down Vodka and Dry Vermouth with ice. Strain into a glass with a chilled olive and frozen grape.





## Copper Rivet

Based in the magnificent former Pump House No. 5 at Chatham Dockyard, Copper Rivet draws on Burden Brothers Isle of Sheppey grain, which they mill onsite before brewing and fermenting.

*Look out for*

### Dockyard Gin

A contemporary take on traditional naval gins, infused with botanicals including local elderflower.

### Son of a Gun

Hand crafted, small batch, medium bodied clear spirit produced from a blend of the “holy trinity of grains”.

*Cocktail hour*

### Copper Rivet's Moscow Mule

Shake Vela Vodka with ice and fresh lime, strain over crushed iced and top with ginger beer and a lime wedge.

## Maiden Distillery

Made on site in what was once the old Maidstone Brewery of George Bishop fame, this is a small scale production which enables them to distil very slowly and play and experiment with flavours.

*Look out for*

### Maidstone Gin

A little sweeter than a London Dry using botanicals like cardamom, meadowsweet and orange peel.

### Arwen's Flower

A floral pink gin with sweet botanicals of flower blossoms, rosehip, hibiscus and raspberries.

*Cocktail hour*

### Tom Collins

Shake Maidstone Gin, lemon juice and syrup with ice. Strain into a chilled Collins glass.

## Greensand Ridge Distillery

Sustainable to the core, using 100% renewable energy and distilling quality produce that supermarkets won't take to produce a range of gins, apple brandy and rum with wild Kentish botanicals.

*Look out for*

### Rye Cask Gin

A London Dry Gin distilled with a slightly altered recipe before ageing in Rye Whisky casks for 10 months.

### Premium Small Batch Apple Brandy

Created from surplus apples from local fruit growers, this 'Whisky of the Weald' is aged in Bourbon barrels.

*Cocktail hour*

### Kentish Apple and Raspberry Crumble, courtesy of the Burlington Hotel

Blend Greensand Raspberry Ghost, Chegworth Apple Juice, sugar and lime with crushed iced, strain and pour.

**LONDON DRY?**  
Not a geographical restriction (although a number of gins are made in London), rather a standard insisting the base spirit must be 96% ABV, and the final product a minimum 37.5%, with no artificial ingredients. If you are looking for a “geographical indication” try Plymouth gin (since 1793).

## SOMETHING SWEETER STILL?

Sloe Seduction is continuing a family tradition of sourcing wild sloes from Kent's hedgerows, steeping them in gin and finally combining with Belgium's finest for some truly decadent liqueur chocolates!

Fudge Kitchen partners their fudge with elixirs from Kent distillers to create deliciously complex combinations such as Strawberry Vanilla Vodka with Black Pepper, Juniper & Kaffir Lime Dry Gin and Special Reserve Cider.

# THE SWEETER SIDE OF LIFE

## Think spirits aren't to your taste?

**Think again! Kent has you covered with a top notch selection of liqueurs! These are our great spirits enhanced with flavours, fruits, oils and extracts. Originally a technique for creating herbal remedies they are frankly much better in cocktails or chilled on the rocks! They are also the perfect accompaniment to a Kentish cheeseboard.**

So here's the lowdown on the best from the Garden of England...

### Coxy's Liqueurs & Gins

Passionate about Kentish flavours, they take Faversham's finest fruits and steep in gin, vodka and brandy before adding Kentish honey or spices.

#### *Look out for:*

#### **Coxy's Elderflower & Honey**

Winner of three Great Taste Award stars - made with fresh Kentish elderflowers and honey.

#### **Coxy's Plum & Cardamom**

Spicy and fruity, a great alternative to rum. Just add lime juice and lemonade.

#### *Cocktail hour*

#### **Coxy's Kent Mojito**

Mix Coxy's Ginger & Honey liqueur, mint and sugar. Stir, then add ice, lime juice & elderflower tonic.

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### Dallaways Cherry Liqueurs

Fresh Sandhurst Cherries are picked at their very ripest to capture all of that natural sweetness and flavour in their liqueurs.

#### *Look out for:*

#### **Dallaways Cherry Brandy**

A smooth flavoured cherry brandy with a deliciously subtle cherry aftertaste

#### **Dallaways Cherry Vodka**

With a delicious warming kick, this makes a great after dinner drink.



### Cocktail hour

#### **Kent Sling**

Combine a Kentish gin with Dalloways Cherry Brandy, triple sec, Benedictine, pineapple juice, fresh lime juice and grenadine. Shake with ice and strain into a Collins glass.

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### **Nip from the Hip**

Locally sourced fruit (rhubarb from Maidstone and damsons from Sutton Valence), no additives or preservatives, simply infused in London Dry gin, vodka, rum or brandy.

#### *Look out for*

#### **Kent's Very Berry Vodka Liqueur**

Strawberries, raspberries and blackberries infused in triple distilled vodka to provide a massive fruity impact.

#### **Blackcurrant Liqueur**

Packed full of powerful fruit, serve with a Chartham Vineyard Blanc de Blanc for a Kentish Kir Royale.

### Cocktail hour

#### **Canterbury Pudding, courtesy of the Burlington Hotel**

Blend Nip from the Hip Cherry Brandy, egg white, sugar syrup, lemon juice and bitters. A take on an old pudding originally designed to fuel agricultural workers!

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### **Wild Spirits of Kent**

Creating blends of fruits, berries and leaves foraged from hedgerows along the Pilgrims Way, topped up with fruits sourced from local farms before being turned into liqueurs and flavoured spirits.

#### *Look out for*

#### **Quince Vodka**

Great served with a Kentish Sparkling wine, on the rocks, or drizzled over a Kentish ice cream.

#### **Damson Gin**

A dark, soothing gin made with the finest wild Damsons picked along the Pilgrims Way.

### Cocktail hour

#### **Wild Spirit's Bramble Blush**

Mix their Blackberry Vodka with Sicilian Lemonade, tonic water and garnish with a blackberry and slice of lemon.

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As this exciting market continues to grow, new brands and products are continually being developed. Keep an eye out for Bardsley Farm's Apricot Liqueur, made with apricots grown on the farm, and Sloe Seduction's new chocolate cream liqueur.

## GRANTS MORELLO BRANDY

Kent has been producing a cherry brandy liqueur since 1774! Part of the Shepherd Neame family since 1988, Grant's is still made to the same traditional recipe and was named Best Liqueur at the 1994 International Wine & Spirit Competition.

## LIFE IS LIKE A BOWL OF CHERRIES

Find out more about these succulent temptations and other Kentish fruity treasures in our Cherries & Berries guide at [kentfoodtrails.co.uk](http://kentfoodtrails.co.uk)





# AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!

## An ancient beverage making the most of Kent's botanicals

**Mead, AKA ambrosia - the nectar of the gods, is made by mixing honey with water and then fermenting with yeast to produce a drink from 5% to 25% ABV. A traditionally ancient drink, mead fell out of favour in the 1800s (beer's fault) but is making a comeback right here in the Garden of England.**

What's really exciting is the blends of local herbs, florals and fruits Kent's mazers (mead makers) are using to pep up the flavour mix, creating another great taste of Kent.

Make sure to check out:

### **Marourde**

Using an all-natural process to produce both a gently sparkling craft mead and a spiced mead flavoured with Kentish Goldings hops, the recipe for which is based on historical evidence from the Battle of Waterloo.

### **Biddenden Vineyards**

Producing a sweet Pymment style mead from fermented locally grown fruits and honey - a great accompaniment to a strong Kentish cheese.



### **DID YOU KNOW...**

A place of making mead is referred to as meadery.

'Wassail' is cheers for a mead drinker.

Watch out - mead hangovers are supposedly legendary!





## RESPONSIBLE DRINKING... AND (NOT) DRIVING

Do partake responsibly and plan your trip accordingly. Have a designated driver or why not take the train? We recommend overnighting locally too. Go to [kentfoodtrails.co.uk](http://kentfoodtrails.co.uk) for local accommodation.

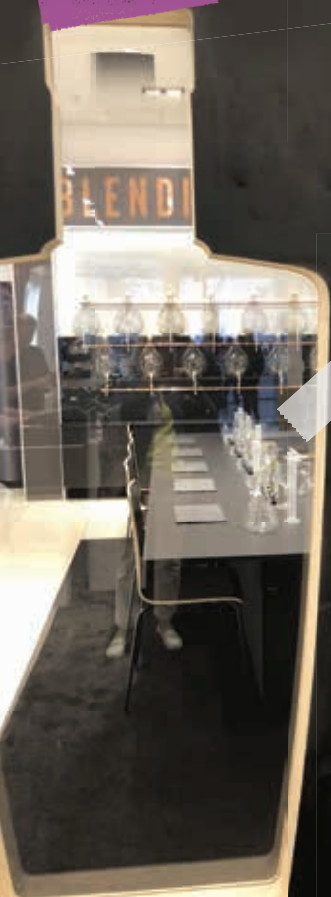
# GETTING IN THE SPIRIT OF THINGS...

## Where to sample, drink and buy

**Heard enough? Feeling the need for a stiff drink? Good news, it's never been easier to grab a snifter, shot or dram of Kent's finest. Pick up a bottle at well-known retailers and specialist stockists around the county, or simply order yourself a treat at our restaurants, pubs and bars. You can also visit many distillers by appointment or buy direct.**

Level up your inner master distiller on a number of distillery tours and tastings. You'll get to sample the products, learn the art and explore the different botanical infusions. For the top-tier experience you can also operate your own individual copper pot still, selecting the botanicals and distilling your own bottle of gin (which you get to take home with you)!

We agree it's not much fun visiting if you can't sample the products, so unless you have a designated driver, why not discover the alternatives. Here are a couple of ideas to keep you on the straight and narrow.







## Put your best foot forward

Follow The Greensand Way for fabulous views of the countryside and to be within stumping distance of the Greensand Distillery and Marourde, as well as a number of brewers and vineyards. See [explorekent.org](http://explorekent.org) for details of this and many other local walks.

## By rail

Canterbury Brewers and Distillers, Maiden Distillers in Maidstone and Anno Distillers in Marden are just a short stroll of their local train stations. Be sure to check in advance those you can only visit by appointment.

## Events and festivals

Many of our craft spirit makers attend events throughout the year - farmers markets, seasonal markets, special events held at our major visitor attractions and festivals - a good opportunity to sample and buy their products.

For information on these as well as places to stay, eat and for things to do, go to [kentfoodtrails.co.uk](http://kentfoodtrails.co.uk).



## Produced in Kent

This is one of a series of food trails promoting Kent's local produce and distinctive landscapes. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the content of this leaflet is accurate and up-to-date at the time of printing, no liability can be accepted for any errors, omissions or misrepresentation of fact contained herein.

Our thanks to Anno Distillers Ltd, Canterbury Brewers & Distillers, Greensand Ridge Distillery, Marourde, Maiden Distillery, Mighty Fine Things, Sloe Seduction.

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Anno Distillers, Chapel Down, Greensand Ridge Distillery, Marourde, Nip from the Hip, Produced in Kent, Wild Spirits.

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The European Agricultural Fund  
for Rural Development:  
Europe investing in rural areas.



A LITTLE MAGIC  
CAN TAKE YOU  
A LONG WAY

Roald Dahl



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