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AUGUST 2013 | 5280.com

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Revival

Floral and delicate, Colorado-made gin is putting a local spin on the classic spirit.

GIN, ONCE THE UPPITY DRINK of English high society, is making a comeback. Whether it will beat out whiskey as Colorado's darling, only time will tell. But Sean Kenyon, proprietor of Denver's Williams & Graham, says, "I've been bartending for 28 years, and I've never seen a spirit surge in popularity like gin has." From Loveland to Paonia, distillers are making serious gins that highlight locally sourced botanicals. Forget the piney-juniper bombs of the past; the new generation of gin is fresh, versatile, and crafted by hand. —REBECCA CARO

Distilled in tiny handcrafted batches at Jack Rabbit Hill Farm in the North Fork Valley, **CapRock** relies on organic apples sourced at nearby Ela Family Farms. The fruit, along with pristine mountain water and 12 fresh and dried botanicals (rather than extracts or oils) are blended and distilled using slow and low steam pressure. The result is a delicate, layered gin with hints of rose and lavender. Bonus: Look for CapRock to open a showroom and bar at the Source in RiNo. peakspirits.com

Kristian and Kimberly Naslund named **Dancing Pines Distillery** after the swaying trees outside of their Palmer Lake cabin. The couple, along with co-owner Christopher McNay, creates a number of spirits in their Loveland-based distillery, not the least of which is a dry, citrus-forward gin. The spirit, which snagged two gold medals at the 2012 Denver International Spirits Competition, is made from a blend of six botanicals, including fennel, licorice root, grains of paradise, and grapefruit. dancingpinesdistillery.com

Attention to detail has helped Denver-based **Leopold Bros.** earn national and international attention, including a Best American Gin nod from the *Wall Street Journal* in 2009. Each botanical—juniper, coriander, and cardamom—is distilled individually, ensuring that the purest flavor is extracted from each ingredient before they're combined. The ultimate payoff: A soft, bright, and palatable spirit with notes of zested pomelos and Valencia oranges. leopoldbros.com

Peach Street Distillers makes its gin using a variety of hand-picked Colorado juniper berries. Then the distillery adds seven botanicals—orris-root and angelica among them—to create a piney spirit with citrus undertones. The ingredients for each handcrafted batch are sourced locally when possible. Although sold throughout the state, this high-quality gin remains elusive. If you see a bottle, buy it. peachstreetdistillers.com

Boulder's **Roundhouse Spirits** uses 11 organic botanicals, ranging from chamomile to coriander, in its distillation process. Organic juniper adds to the gin's floral, citrusy complexity. The five-year-old microdistillery—which earned two gold medals at this year's Denver International Spirits Competition—makes its spirit the old-fashioned way: with a handmade Spanish copper pot still. roundhousespirits.com

