

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

Distilleries 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 'ginnaissance', 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.

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[News story: National Drought Group – Chairman's Statement – August](#)

The National Drought Group (NDG), chaired by the Environment Agency's Chief Executive, brings together government departments, water companies, environmental groups and others to coordinate action to maintain water supplies and manage the other risks associated with drought. The NDG convened on Wednesday 29 August to assess the present situation and coordinate plans for the weeks ahead.

The present situation and the prospects

Rainfall across England over three months from May to July was 54% of the long-term average (LTA). Farmers, the environment and water companies faced considerable pressures caused by the rapid deterioration in water resources.

At the end of July, a band of wet weather brought some respite as it moved across parts of the country. United Utilities called off a proposed hosepipe ban in early August but continued with applications for 4 drought permits, should they be needed later in the year. These have been approved by the

Environment Agency.

August has been unsettled with dry periods interrupted by wet weather. This has helped the situation.

The Met Office's 3 month outlook for September to November forecasts that above average temperatures and slightly lower than average rainfall are likely.

As we move into autumn the Environment Agency, the water companies and the other members of the NDG will continue to work closely together to reduce the risk of water restrictions and balance the needs of the public, businesses and the environment.

Action we are taking

Water Companies

Water companies have taken and will continue to take a range of actions to maintain water supplies for customers, including:

- Operational interventions such as installing new pumping stations, reconfiguring networks to reduce reliance on specific water treatment works, and accelerating work to bring sites back into operation.
- Tackling leakage by providing extra funding and resource to fix leaks, alongside use of technology such as satellite imaging and drones to find leaks.
- Implementing contingency drought plans as appropriate.
- Promoting water efficiency messages to customers through increased media activity, roadshows and community engagement.

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency has:

- Responded to a 330% increase in dry-weather related incidents compared with this time last year.
- [Introduced flexible abstraction for farmers](#) in emergency cases in order to safeguard food production and animal welfare, where it is satisfied there will be no adverse effects on the environment.
- Allowed farmers to trade water allowances – as set out in their abstraction licence – on a short-term basis, without the need to change

their licences.

- Granted United Utilities 4 drought permits at locations in Cumbria, to enable them to be deployed quickly should they be needed.
- Used our powers to protect the environment by applying for a drought order. This is the first time we have used these powers due to the extraordinary dry weather this summer.

Other partners

Defra, the National Farmers' Union, Canal & River Trust, the Angling Trust and other NDG members are working actively to manage down the risks and support the needs of water users and the environment.

Advice to the public

Although we have received some rainfall during August, the overall outlook for the next 3 months remains drier than average. We encourage everyone to follow the advice of their water company and use water wisely. This will help protect the environment and the economy, and reduce the risk of further water restrictions.

Next NDG meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 20 September where we will focus on preparing for next summer as the drought may continue through the winter.

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