



Founded in 2008 by Ian Hart and Hilary Whitney, Sacred Spirits is an independent distillery based in Highgate, north London. A pioneer of the recent gin renaissance, Sacred was the first spirits brand to use vacuum distillation, a technique that uses 90% less energy than a traditional pot still. This process is key to creating the fresh, smooth spirits for which Sacred is renowned and reflects its commitment to sustainable and ethical work practices - Sacred is proud to be B Corp Certified and Soil Association approved.

For many years the distillery was located in Ian and Hilary's home in Highgate, north London. Ian had always appreciated a good gin and tonic and often thought about distilling his own London Dry Gin - as a Londoner, he also liked the idea of producing a traditional London product actually in London. In September 2008 he decided to realise this ambition and turned traditional gin production on its head by using vacuum distillation rather than a conventional pot still. Vacuum distillation occurs at a much lower temperature (25-35°C) than pot distillation (85-95°C) so not only is it much more environmentally friendly, but the distillates are lush and fresher - think of the marmalade flavour of cooked oranges versus fresh cut oranges.

Ian enthusiastically set about experimenting with many different gin formulas, distilling dozens of both well-known and obscure botanicals and every Sunday evening he would take his latest gin recipe into his local pub, The Wrestlers, for people to try.

In early 2009 he was persuaded by this ad hoc panel of gin tasters that his 23rd recipe, which has a fresh, creamy and aromatic quality, was the unique gin Ian had been looking for. It contains 12 botanicals including juniper, cardamom, nutmeg, and *Boswellia sacra* (aka Hougary Frankincense) - hence the name, Sacred. The landlord, Martin Harley, promised Ian that if he bottled this version he would put it behind his bar and, true to his word, you can still find Sacred at the Wrestlers today.

It was only a matter of weeks before Sacred was also listed at Dukes Hotel, Fortnum and Mason and Gerry's Wines and Spirits and continued to gather momentum, scooping several awards along the way including a Double Gold Medal at the prestigious San Francisco Spirits Competition.

The Sacred stills are unique as they are designed by Ian to his exact specification. The setup, complete with bespoke handblown glassware, gives him complete control over a small volume/high quality production process, enabling him to adapt the delicate apparatus to suit every distillation.

The handling of ingredients is equally important. Each one of Ian's organically-sourced library of botanicals is macerated in English wheat spirit for 4-6 weeks to achieve the maximum extraction of flavour and aroma possible. These rich extracts are then distilled separately, allowing Ian to experiment with multiple combinations of distillates.

Encouraged by the success of Sacred Gin, Ian created Sacred Organic Gin plus eight additional gins, four of which are an expression of a key botanical - Juniper, Coriander, Cardamom, Pink Grapefruit - plus Sacred Old Tom Gin, which won the award for the World's Best Old Tom Gin, Sacred Christmas Pudding Gin and a bespoke gin for Tate galleries.

However, it's not just its production methods that make Sacred so special. Ian has a knack of dusting off old categories and making them relevant again – because of course, strange as it may seem today, this included gin back in 2008! Having accumulated a library of over 100 botanicals distilled purely out of interest, such as buddleia, oak bark and lemon verbena, inevitably Ian was inspired to experiment with new recipes which has led to the creation of many new, award-winning products.

For example, Sacred was the first distillery to create an English vermouth. Using English wine from Three Choirs in Gloucestershire and organic wormwood grown especially for Sacred in Somerset, Sacred English Amber Vermouth and Sacred English Dry Vermouth were both made in collaboration with Alessandro Palazzi from Dukes Hotel and named the World's Best Vermouth and the World's Best Extra-Dry Vermouth at the World Drinks Awards respectively.

However, Sacred's first vermouth was a beautiful rosso style vermouth, Sacred English Spiced Vermouth, made with macerated plum and cherry stones from Gloucestershire and cubeb from Indonesia – and of course, organic wormwood. Shortly after this was launched in 2010, it occurred to Ian that all that was needed was a red bitter and it would be possible to create an entirely Sacred Negroni.

The result was Sacred Rosehip Cup. This all-natural gently bitter aperitif is made with English rosehips and rhubarb, sweet Spanish orange, organic Peruvian ginger and has no artificial colouring or flavouring – the beautiful red colour comes from grape skins. Not only does it make a great Negroni - and Sacred now also produces a Bottle Aged Negroni – it also makes a very sophisticated spritz.

The Sacred range also includes Sacred Organic Vodka, Sacred English Whisky Liqueur and Sacred Peated English Whisky, plus various Distillery Edition pre-bottled cocktails, such as the Hemingway Daiquiri and the Rosita.

In October 2019, Sacred moved out of the house where its story began over 16 years ago and in 2020 moved into a beautiful new distillery on Highgate High Street where customers can enjoy events such as gin blending sessions and cocktail masterclasses. There is also a bottle shop where the entire range is available to taste and buy. In September 2021, they opened a second shop in Spitalfields.

To learn more visit [sacredgin.com](https://sacredgin.com)

*“When you hold a bottle of Sacred in your hands, you can feel the love and ambition that went into it.”*  
Matt Teacher, The Spirit of Gin

*“Sacred is a knockout of a gin, with all the hallmarks of a classic London Dry, but with its own unique vibe. One of the smoothest, most supple gins I've ever tried...my taste buds all but jump for joy when I take a sip.”* Tony Sachs, Huffington Post

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