

CONTAGIOUS



Lind & Lime Gin

Stealing the limelight

DBA Design Effectiveness Awards
Entry – November 2020

Port of Leith Distillery
For publication

Executive Summary

Like many gins, Lind & Lime Gin began life as a means to an end. Port of Leith Distillery had the long-term goal of making whisky and had embarked on the funding journey to build their distillery in the area rich with Edinburgh's naval history.

By November 2018, with a clear vision for a Scottish gin and a start-up-sized budget, Port of Leith Distillery were ready to take their gin to market – just as the category reached bursting point with new brands and major players. But it was important to release this gin at this point in time – it signalled their entry to the spirits sector and its success would be crucial in building brand credibility in advance of the whisky. No less important, the revenue was needed to provide valuable cash flow in the formative years while the founders raised the necessary investment for the planned distillery and began to make whisky.



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With projected Q1 sales achieved in only two weeks from launch, 3-year sales targets surpassed in just over 14 months and top-selling listings secured in both Harvey Nichols and John Lewis, Lind & Lime has more than delivered on business objectives.

As Port of Leith Distillery set out to capture the power of the gin boom, the role of the agency was to ensure the brand had the both the strength and standout to steal the limelight. Port of Leith Distillery had already experienced the positive business impact great design could deliver and were willing to put their faith in their agency's industry expertise. Committing all of their available funds into the design of a bespoke bottle form and a compelling brand would be a substantial investment for such a young company.

The return on that investment has blown all expectations out of the water. Lind & Lime became an immediate favourite of industry influencers and specialist retailers. The design of Lind & Lime packaging and the brand story it tells has captured imaginations across the world, picking up awards globally and in doing so gathering even more consumer attention, provoking trade interest, and forging conversations that have opened up new markets for the sales team.

From a standing start, this young distillery has shown the way in launching into a fully loaded market. Lind & Lime has risen strongly through the crowd of the gin boom and Port of Leith Distillery attributes the greater part of the success of their excellent gin to the power of design.

By taking a strategic view of investing in effective design, Port of Leith Distillery have placed themselves firmly in their desired premium spirits category, with a loyal following of advocates eagerly awaiting the first whisky release.

**3-yr sales
targets
achieved
14 months**

**Q1 sales
targets
achieved
2 weeks**

Outline of the project brief

Get Lind & Lime noticed in the craft Gin category by the trade, retailers, distributors, and consumers with a design that will make trade talk about us, retailers want to list us, distributors want to introduce us, and consumers want to be seen with us.

Raise awareness, establish credibility and generate income while we build a distillery and make whisky.

Do this by designing packaging with a story to tell about our values, skill and journey.

Market Scale

In 12 months to May 2019, over 76 million bottles of gin were sold in the UK. (WSTA to March 2019), with a value of £2.3 billion, including exports the total value of the category was just over £3bn.*

*The Scottish Gin Society, 15 Nov 2019 (HMRC export figure)

Competitor set

At the end of 2000 there were 2 Scottish distilleries producing their own gin.
By October 2018, there were 90.

(Not including those Scottish brands whose spirit is contract distilled.) Scottish Gin Society, 2019

At November 2020 there are around 197 Scottish gin brands and counting.

Key objectives & measures

Within 3 years:

- Achieve GP to contribute towards operating and staff costs while we build our distillery
- Gain a listing in the premium gin category in a major UK retailer
- Enter 5 key territories to establish distributor relationships
- Prove commercial credibility to support investor and funding conversations
- Establish a consumer base organically - with minimal marketing spend and effort to seed the market for our wider spirits offering when our new distillery comes online.

**Pre-1990 there were
31 UK gin brands.
By 2008, there were
73. In 2016: over 600.**

ISWR, 2016

**402 new gin brands
entered the UK market
between May 2016 and
Nov 2019, 367 of which
are premium brands.**

Scotland Food
& Drink, 2019

The brief's strengths and weaknesses

The brief was shared before the liquid was fully developed. This allowed scope to tightly align the brand story, name and taste profile for best possible consumer recall.

The investment in bespoke moulds to create a unique, ownable silhouette, would take up most of the client's brand design and marketing budget.

In 2018, the craft gin market was already in full bloom. Consumers were being bombarded with new bottle shapes and stories of complex botanicals, stand-out was destined to be difficult.

Volume brands had encroached on the craft territory with powerful marketing spend behind them.

The brief called for bespoke glass design, but the investment needed to achieve this would use up all of the client's budget. However, the powerful shelf standout, quality cues, environmental values and brand ownership that bespoke design could deliver would be a game changer.





Scope of work and design fees

REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA

Our task was to create the sort of brand appeal that would enable Lind & Lime to succeed in the premium gin space - with the twin aims of establishing the Port of Leith brand and attracting international investment.

Packaging design, product development and production management

Bottle design, including profile, glass composition, form, closures, labels and outer.

Deliverables: Brand positioning, naming, marque and story

Research and insight were to be crucial to the successful naming and storytelling of this gin.

With a limited budget, research, naming and storytelling was shared between client and agency, this led to initial ideas for profile and a clear, tight brief for both packaging and brand assets.

The willingness of Port of Leith Distillery to invest both time and money allowed the available budget to be focused on design and the crafting of brand and assets.

The design response

For some time, we had been building insight on how localisation was attracting consumers. As this brief developed, a new insight started to emerge, the rise of the urban distillery. A number of these brands were growing very fast and we were already working with both new and established brands to develop exciting inner-city projects around the world.

We could see that Port of Leith were on a similar path and decided to create a brand story that positioned this gin firmly in the urban landscape. With the name, story and bottle design we would root Lind & Lime in the history and heart of Edinburgh's Leith and in doing so capture both the waves of interest in local brands and urban brands. The naval links would further create international resonance.

This decision immediately created a standout among other Scottish craft gins most of which, at that time, were positioned around messages of countryside and botanicals. This initial launch positioning of a hyper-local gin would create another layer of depth for the Port of Leith Distillery brand.

We began with naming and the brand story. Digging into the naval history of Port of Leith, we uncovered the historical character of James Lind, an 18th Century Edinburgh native and Royal Navy surgeon who conducted the first clinical trials in the prevention of scurvy at sea using – amongst other things - lime juice.

The name Lind & Lime was born.

Focusing on this hero of the Scottish Enlightenment and his naval background

inspired the visual language we used to articulate the whole Lind & Lime brand. A map depicting 24 ships associated with Leith, was designed and printed onto large format tissue paper to be used to wrap each bottle.

Building on research into Leith's long association with the gin trade, we designed and refined a bottle whose sinuous silhouette echoed the shape of the industrial kilns once visible from sea on the approach to the Port of Leith.

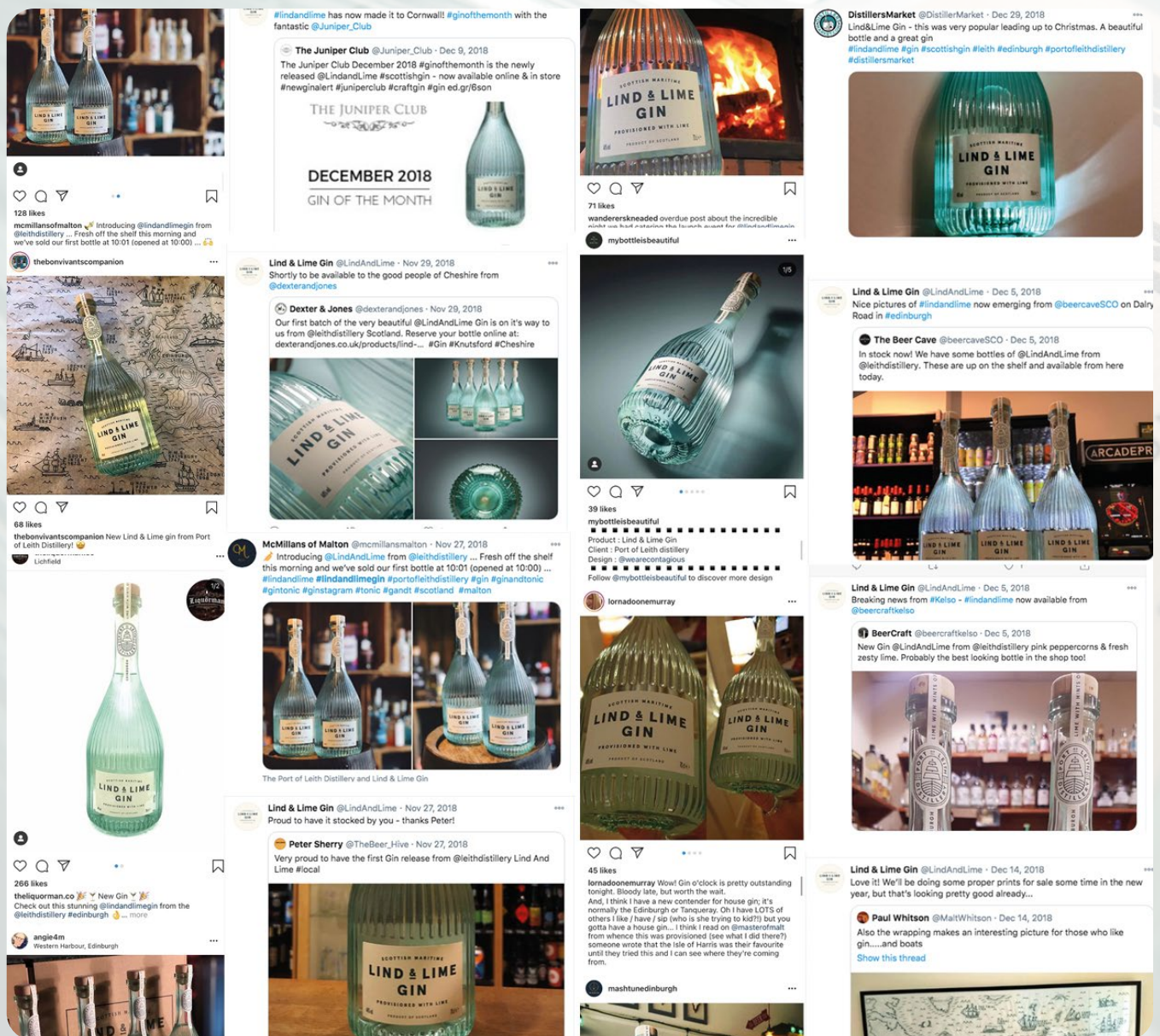
The nod to “Leith Glass Works” debossed on the base of the bottle itself, plants the new distillery into the history of the Port and discreetly confirms its local credentials.

The environmental values of Port of Leith Distillery were ever prominent in this brief. These helped steer design development away from the traditional methods used to colour glass. Instead, in search of the perfect green colour to reflect the crisp lime tones of the liquid, we worked with the bottle manufacturer to experiment using postconsumer glass waste. This recycled content through a more sustainable solution, eventually took us to the final unmistakable shimmering blue/green of Lind & Lime. The exact match we always wanted to achieve.

This solution together with the tissue paper outer, underpins the brand's exceptional eco values complementing the goal of 100% plastic-free and recyclable packaging. The entirety of this bespoke pack design tells a story in itself, one that resonates with target consumers - sustainability, location, style and taste.

Other influencing factors

Lind & Lime was supported by a small PR launch, but there was no budget or staff resource for further marketing support. Because the design so quickly caught the eye and favour of both trade and consumers, advocacy on social media was immediate and passionate from launch.



When the design industry also started to take notice, we quickly regrouped and strategically targeted international design awards that co-ordinated with client's sales plans.

By doing so, we have been able to deliver even more value for both client and agency. Picking up double gold in San Francisco for example, opened conversations with Previously difficult to engage US distributors for Lind & Lime.

“Lind & Lime has won design awards in Asia, Europe, the UK and North America. This enthusiasm for the design has started new conversations and opened up more new audiences keen to try our gin. The attention and awards attracted by the bottle and brand design shines a light on the product that we could never have imagined, helping to gain us entry to 11 new markets, including the hard to crack, US. We still spend very little on marketing - relying instead on the organic growth which we achieve very much because of word of mouth about our bottle.

Now, we have already garnered a loyal army of brand advocates, who've helped us to raise the all-important funding to build our new distillery and brand home.”

Ian Stirling, Founder,
Port of Leith Distillery



**Dieline Spirits
Packaging 2020
BEST IN SHOW**



**Pentawards Spirits
Packaging 2020
PLATINUM**



**Marking Awards
China Best Design of
Business Value
2020 WINNER**



**Denver Spirits
Packaging 2020
GOLD**



**Roses Packaging
Design
2019 GOLD**



**San Francisco
Spirits Packaging 2020
DOUBLE GOLD**

KEY OBJECTIVES

WITHIN 3 YEARS. (BY NOV 2021)

Achieve GP to contribute towards operating and staff costs while we build our distillery

Gain a listing in the premium gin category in a major UK retailer

Enter 5 key territories to establish distributor relationships

Prove commercial credibility to support investor and funding conversations

Establish a consumer base organically - with minimal marketing spend and effort to seed the market for our wider spirits offering when our new distillery comes online

RESULT

In May 2020, after only 18 months and **17 months ahead of expectations**, the Gross Profit from Lind & Lime grew to cover all of the company overheads and staff costs so that it is now making a monthly contribution to the construction of our whisky distillery.

In October 2020, **a year ahead of expectations**, Lind & Lime is **the top selling gin at John Lewis** and sits in the **Harvey Nichols** 7 top selling gins. John Lewis featured Lind & Lime on the front page of their best gift guide for 2020. Lind & Lime has held its position on **the coveted top page of Gin in Master of Malt** since launch. For context, at last count: John Lewis carries 42 50/70cl gins Harvey Nichols more than 130 gins Master of Malts lists a breath-taking 1,400 gins.

Lind & Lime was in **8 markets by the end of year 1** trading. **Now in 11** with new export markets, including the USA, growing quickly and coming online soon.

Lind & Lime launched in November 2018 with 2,000 bottles, enough projected stock to take the company through to Christmas. **This sold out within a fortnight. Year one saw sales that exceeded production capacity. In year two with a tripled capacity sales reached 83% of that volume.**

Enthusiasm for the design has opened up new conversations, garnered a loyal army of brand advocates **opening new audiences and helped us to raise the all important funding to build our new distillery** and brand home of that volume.

Conclusion

With an organic marketing strategy, built on the upfront investment of product design rooted in brand storytelling, Lind & Lime is keeping the new Port of Leith Distillery front of mind with consumers even as it is being constructed.

Strategically building a reputation for Port of Leith Distillery as an innovative and trusted brand is laying valuable groundwork for the eventual launch of the first whisky.

18 months ahead of expectations – half the anticipated time – the Gross Profit from Lind & Lime grew to cover all of the company overheads and staff costs so that it is now also making a monthly contribution to the construction of the whisky distillery.

All objectives set in the brief were met then exceeded well within the clients 3-year timeframe.

This success has put both Lind & Lime gin and Port of Leith Distillery firmly on the international spirits map and helped attract valuable investment – exactly what we set out to achieve.

- From a standing start Lind & Lime hit **volume sales of 100% of production capacity** of 2,000 bottles a month.
- By the end of year 2 they were able to **triple capacity** to 6,000 bottles a month.
- In year 1 sales reached 25,000 bottles (with pre-launch stocks taking care of the oversell volume).
- Sales soared to 60,000 bottles in Year 2.
- **That's a sales increase of 140% in year 2**, to reach 83% of production capacity.

Market Comparison

From the point of zero, Lind & Lime achieved sales of 25,000 bottles in year 1 (2018/19) growing that by **140%** to 60,000 bottles in year 2 (2019/20). That's 10 x the 2019 UK gin volume sales growth of 14%*

*14% Beverage Daily