

The time is now for Brooklyn Gin

By Jas Ryat on April, 20 2018 | Spirits & Tobacco





New York craft spirit Brooklyn Gin is set to crack the global travel retail market, says its Co-Founder Joe Santos

Craft spirit Brooklyn Gin hails from New York and is ready to offer a fresh spin on an old favorite

The company recently partnered with Miami-based WEBB Banks, the spirits and wine distributor, to expand its presence in the Americas.

Americas Duty Free sat down with Joe Santos, Craft Distiller and Co-Founder, to discuss why it's the right time for Brooklyn Gin to enter the global travel retail channel.

"Right now we are present in New York JFK International Airport. We are in International Shoppes as they are really focused on craft and getting craft products into their shops. We started to look at agents to expand into travel retail and were introduced to WEBB Banks," he explains.

Craft movement in travel retail

The craft movement has opened the door for craft spirits in global travel retail and retailers are becoming more aware of the increased demand from consumers. The question is, how quickly can operators adapt to the changing trends to fully capitalize on craft spirits?

"Retailers are a little resistant, which makes sense in the business aspects as most of the channels are dominated by the big guys and the little guys like us find it hard to get the time and attention we need. So it takes a special type of visionary to understand that this is the next wave," shares Santos.

Brooklyn Gin is about being fresh and approachable, he says. Five of the 11 ingredients are fresh citrus peel, which incorporates more oils, resulting in a vibrant citrus flavor. Most gins tend to lean heavy on the piney notes, which tends to turn off first-time gin drinkers, he believes.

"Just from smelling our gin, people are surprised that it can smell and taste the way ours does. It is good for people who aren't used to this category and people who drink it are usually surprised with the different spin on a classic spirit," Santos enthuses.

This craft spirit was created for people who are into buying local and prefer something handmade. Its customers are encouraged to connect to the story behind the brand and appreciate its authenticity. Customers are more aware brand legitimacy and validity now, making it a great time to be part of the craft movement, Santos adds.

When the brand launched eight years ago, there was 150 craft distillers in America. Now, the number has jumped to 1,300, proving that consumers are asking for new products. Santos sees this as a major opportunity as opposed to a challenge, and reckons that it attracts more people to niche brands.

Santos' main focus for 2018 is to get deeper into travel retail. The brand has recently been picked up by some cruise lines, and the Caribbean market has also shown high levels of interest. The partnership with WEBB Banks looks to expand its reach in the Americas.

Brooklyn Gin will be opening a distillery in Brooklyn in early 2019, which will help materialize ideas and innovation. Santos believes his company's time is now.

"Customers are asking for it. To me, the time has now passed where you walk into a bar and only have a choice of the big guys," he concludes.