

Carrot Gin

It began some 150 years ago in Victorian times when gin was a popular drink, (sometimes too popular!) and people sought to have 'something with it' in order to lessen the effects of neat gin drinking, and yet at the same time to have an enjoyable and still alcoholic drink. This was before the days of imported oranges and lemons which feature so much with today's gin drinkers.

In a small village near Leeds in Yorkshire, a farming family, The Thomkinsons, who grew their own fruit and vegetables, decided to experiment with infusing some of them in the readily available locally made gin. After several failed attempts to find a palatable taste they eventually found that carrots provided just the right amount of added pleasure to their gin drinks, especially before their Yorkshire Puddings.

They initially squashed the carrots into a pulp before adding them to the neat gin. But then farmer Thomkinson hit upon the idea of making a distilled carrot gin. And so with friends from the local gin distillery, they experimented until in 1876 they produced the first distilled carrot gin. It became very popular in what was a fairly closed community.

And so it remained for nearly 150 years, but rumours of this wonderful vegetable-originated drink began to spread, and more and more people became aware of it and asked where it could be sought. The Thomkinson's family had built a small distillery and over the years obtained the necessary licensing for producing an alcoholic spirit of 37 1/2% percentage. Sales grew and eventually the Thomkinsons realised that they could no longer produce this drink as a family concern, and so the business was sold to a major brewery company in 2025 who decided to launch carrot gin in 2026 to coincide with the 150th anniversary of its being first produced.

At first the carrot gin would be placed on supermarket shelves intended for home and hotel consumption and then, when sales had been seen to advance, public houses would be encouraged to stock it.

The advertising campaign will begin in January 2026 and it was decided that emphasis should be placed on having the gin before eating lunch or dinner. There would be reference to the energy in carrots, its vitamins and the fact that carrots contained many healthy minerals.

Thus a TV advert would show firstly, man and wife/partner smiling at each other and holding a glass of carrot gin next to a roast joint of beef, with Yorkshire Pudding at one side and then a flash to another similar couple next to a veggie burger with salad. There would be a voice-over: "Before you dine have a taste of carrot gin with soda water or tonic, and remember that, as well as their rich taste, carrots do contain many vitamins, worthwhile minerals and energy - and it will enhance your appetite."

There would be the catchy jingle:

“Enjoy a carrot gin
Before you begin.”

In summer, there would also be a picture of a sizzling meat barbecue and accompanying salad, and the jingle would have an additional line:

“Whether out or in
Enjoy a carrot gin
Before you begin.”

Cheers!

Peter Smith