

Sloe Gin World Championships

Artisan sloe gin makers from across the world will gather at the George Inn village pub in England to vie for the coveted 'Sloe Ginster World Champion' title

TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT, ENGLAND, November 18, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Artisan sloe gin makers from across the world will gather at the [George Inn](#) village pub on the Kent/Sussex border near Tunbridge Wells, to vie for the coveted 'Sloe Ginster World Champion' title for 2016 on Wednesday 14th December.



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Pub Landlord Greg Elliott

The late summer has provided ideal growing conditions for sloes or drupes, producing a bumper crop of the bitter fruit of the blackthorn bush. Forages are now eagerly awaiting the first frost, after which, by tradition, the berries are harvested.

This Christmas marks the 8th year of the annual event that began when pub locals began arguing over the perfect sloe gin recipe. Dating back to around 1750, The George Inn, a traditional country pub with cosy log fires, is said to make an ideal setting to judge the most traditional of Christmas liqueurs.

Sloes, a smaller relative of the plum, are used to make the red liqueur normally with an alcohol content between 15 and 30% abv. Traditionally it is made by infusing gin with the bitter-tasting drupes, using sugar to extract the sloe juices.

"Hand crafted sloe gins are generally superior to commercially produced branded sloe gin liqueurs which are made by flavouring cheaper neutral grain spirits, producing an inferior flavour akin to a fruit cordial taste," said pub landlord Greg Elliot.

Sloe gin is made from ripe sloes that, by tradition, are picked after the first frost of winter. Each drupe should be hand-picked with a thorn taken from the blackthorn bush on which it grew. Some sloe gin connoisseurs say that the drupes may only be pricked silver pin or fork.

Modern protagonists pick the sloes earlier and freeze them, avoiding the pricking stage, claiming that this not only splits the drupes, but by analogy to ice wine, the freezing changes the flavour of the drupes.

Last year's entrants travelled far and wide to contest the competition. The Champion Artisan Sloe Ginster 2015 title was awarded to Edinburgh-based Demijohn. Nearer to home, Kevin Ladley of Dartford was named the Homemade Sloe Ginster Champion.

This year' sloe gin makers can also send their entries in by post to Frant's George Inn by 8h December. Individual entries cost £5, commercial entries are £30. Commercial entrants are invited to submit a second bottle to be sold for charity.

All proceeds of the event are donated to the MS which supports people with Multiple Sclerosis -

<http://www.mssociety.org.uk>.

Further information on entering the Sloe Gin World Championships via
http://moondown.co.uk/sloe_gin_championships.html

Editors' Notes: Two miles south of Tunbridge Wells, Frant is bordered by Eridge Park and is on the High Weald Walk making it a popular stop for walkers. The heart of the local community, the busy George Inn has its own golf society, "the Gofers" and is a meeting point for several local clubs and societies. Winter is enlivened by the Monday night quiz, special food nights, and darts competitions.

Dating to around 1750, the traditional country pub, with two bars and restaurant, traditional English food with continental influences, hand drawn beers, oak beams, a large enclosed garden and dogs lying by log fires in winter – The George Inn makes an ideal setting to judge the most traditional of Christmas liqueurs.

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Photos and recipes available.

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