



IN 1750 ONE IN FOUR LONDON HOUSES HAD ITS OWN DISTILLING EQUIPMENT

in 2009. Their spirits have won numerous awards, making sensational martinis and finding their way on to the chi-chi cocktail menus at The Navy and The Dorchester. For Galworthy, 34, who has channelled a fairly upper-crust eccentricity into an infectious business manner, localism is about craft, 'making and generally doing things with your hands', an antidote to the mechanised and the digitised. 'What we're seeing as a trend is revivalism; it's not just localism. It's someone daring to do something locally, when the last time someone did it in a similar location, or on a similar scale, was a long time ago,' he says. He points out that in 1750, just before Hogarth drew his famous *Gin Lane*, alerting Londoners to the dangers of feeding moonshine to babies, one in four houses had its own distilling equipment. 'After that, the appropriate taxation models came in and only the wealthy could make gin, and we saw the rise of some of the brands we've heard of today. However, now those brands have moved production out of London, or gone bust, or been consolidated into big drinks companies, we saw a good opportunity to revive the old tradition.'

Galworthy formerly worked for Fulkers's brewers, while his business partner Hall has experience with Diageo, the alcohol giant which owns Smirnoff and Guinness, but they relish the freedom and quality control that small-scale production allows. They are also able to nurture close ties with their customers.

'We've been calling them locavores: a new kind of consumer who really likes consuming local things,' he says. 'When they ask questions about provenance and process and you're able to answer them more authentically, you end up with a really fun consumer base willing to follow you.' He stresses the importance of having a story to tell. 'The one message we drive continuously is the fact we're the first copper distillery in London for over 200 years. That's an anecdote that people want to hold on to.'

If the story is key, it is hard to imagine a more



Matt Hall (left) and Sam Galworthy in their Smirnoff gin and vodka distillery in Farringham

GOING LOCAL

touching one than that of Tracy Mackness, a breeder of saddleback pigs in Romford. She met her first pig when she was in the open prison East Sutton Park, nearing the end of a ten-year sentence for drug-smuggling. 'Well, I could smell it before anything else,' she says, recalling her first visit to the prison's farm. After her initial disgust, however, she fell in love - with a black and white sow. 'We came face to face. I looked at her, she looked at me. We were both somewhere we didn't want to be. And that was it, I was smitten.' Tracy spent the last years of her sentence studying for an NVQ in pig husbandry and selling prison-made sausages on occasional trips to farmers' markets. Upon her release in 2007, she set about creating her own farm on a friend's land in Essex. Today, she owns 500 pigs and produces 75 different kinds of sausage, plus 'New Age faggots - they're going down a storm'.

'I don't believe in intensive farming,' she says. 'I believe in giving my pigs as good a life as they can get. Saddlebacks have got such a nice temperament about them, and they're really good mothers... and they taste really good. 'No Fat or Crap in our Sausages!' proclaims her website.

It's this sense of human scale that unites local entrepreneurs. Ole-Martin Hansen has run his own smokery out of a back alley in Stoke Newington for a year, and talks proudly of building up a family business, not growing too fast. A 30-year-old Norwegian (with his red oilskin dungarees and hardy sweater he couldn't be anything but), he arrived in London six years ago to study sound art but, realising he needed something more solid, decided to revive the smoking business that his great-grandfather had set up 240 miles north of the Arctic Circle in 1923. 'Rather than importing the product, I decided to move the method instead,' he says.

In a small but cosy workshop, which exudes a beautiful smell of juniper and birchwood, he fillets, salts and smokes Scottish salmon, according to his grandfather's method, before packaging it in greaseproof paper and hand-delivering it. It's a world away from industrial smoked salmon, which, says Hansen, is