

Distillery No. 209 – Kosher for Passover

After celebrating many Passovers without a good cocktail, founder of San Francisco's **Distillery No. 209**, **Leslie Rudd**, decided to innovate a solution to his libation conundrum. In 2010, he asked ***Ginerator & Master Distiller Arne Hillesland*** and ***Winemaker Jonathan Hajdu from Covenant Wines*** to craft a Kosher-for-Passover version of No. 209 Gin. Initially, Hillesland thought the recipe for the flagship No. 209 Gin could be used while simply changing the base spirit to a Passover-certified spirit. After consulting the Orthodox Union, it quickly became clear that it was a much more complicated endeavor.

Thus began our quest to create a new recipe that strictly adhered to kosher dietary law. A Passover-certified sugarcane base spirit was selected as a substitute for the grain-based spirit used in the flagship No. 209 Gin. Among the key botanicals in the flagship gin, cardamom presented the largest challenge. The exotic spice is not Kosher-for-Passover, leading Hillesland to conduct many test distillations (the Kosher Trials as we lovingly call the experiments) to select a suitable botanical to replace the cardamom in the recipe. After much diligence, California bay leaf was selected from ***Rudd Farms on Mt. Veeder in Napa Valley*** as a substitute.

Master Distiller Arne Hillesland has crafted all of Distillery No. 209's spirits from the beginning and the creation of the Kosher-for-Passover gin and vodka pushed his creativity in keeping the same quality standards of our other spirits, while working within the restrictions of Passover dietary law. "It's been fascinating to delve into a tradition that is over two-thousand years old and bring it into the 21st century, while keeping the tenets of the faith with utmost importance. It's an honor to be the only distillery in the world creating a Kosher-for-Passover gin," said Arne Hillesland.

The Orthodox Union oversees the entire distillation process of ***No. 209 Kosher-for-Passover Gin***, starting with hand-sorting coriander and other botanicals to ensure forbidden grains do not enter the product, all the way through distillation and bottling. In addition to bay leaf, Hillesland uses bergamot orange peel, lemon peel, juniper berries, coriander and cassia bark to craft this unique gin. Several years later, ***No. 209 Kosher-for-Passover Vodka*** was created as the companion product due to popular demand.