

## TARA JASPER, FOUNDER AND DISTILLER, SIPSONG SPIRITS, SONOMA CALIFORNIA



Tara Jasper

Flavors have been a passion of Tara Jasper for most of her life. She had been following her palate looking for her “calling”. Inspired by her husband’s passion for his work, she decided to follow her passion and enrolled in Culinary School after graduating from Cal Poly SLO. Interested in the connection between flavors, herbs, spices, and health, Tara explored nutrition, tea infusion, coffee extraction, and shrub making before she finally tried distilling for the first time. Tara made a blackberry Eau Du Vie. “It was stunning,” she shared, “I have loved it ever since. Each time I feel like I am creating something that will be here when I’m gone.”

Sipsong Spirits focuses on gin production. “I love to focus on gin-education,” Tara expressed. “I love to show people the range and diversity of gins. I just finished making a seasonal Spring gin that completely sold out the first day it was released.” Tara is working on more seasonal and “taste of place” gins. But in order to create new flavors, she spends time researching and “it might be years before I am fully inspired to release a batch.”

**There are few women in distilling. What types of challenges have you faced?**

For women and people of color, access to funding has historically been the primary barrier to starting a business. A spirit business can be especially capital intensive to start especially if you want to develop your own location. I wanted to be the head distiller for Sipsong; that is why I wanted to start this business. I did a lot of research before starting out and found a way to start distilling without having to build out my own facility. I share one with another distiller. I am very fortunate to have found this opportunity. It took me two years to go from wanting to distill professionally to having the license to do so.

**What do you see as the future for women in distilling?**

What is missing in many professions is the woman’s perspective. Our minds and our palates are different. Our perspective in the spirits industry on the head distiller



is just beginning to unfold. I know this is going to be a beautiful thing to behold. I love doing blind tastings. I tasted eight different absinthes the other day. I did this tasting with darkened tasting glasses so that I could not see the color of the liquid. Low and behold, without knowing it I chose the one made by a woman as my favorite. Then I did it again to be sure. It was Absinthia Absinthe. Delicious!



**SIPSONG  
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DISTILLING THE MOMENT