



Bertha's Revenge Gin

Having scratched heads, studied tea-leaves and consulted with wives for almost a year, Justin Green and Antony Jackson formally established the Ballyvolane House Spirits Company in May 2015. Born out of a shared passion for food and drink, coupled with many years spent in the world of hotels, marketing, and wine, it just seemed like a good time to come together and become active players in the wonderful world of small-batch distilling. The result is a privately-owned, passionately-run little distillery based in an old cow shed in the farm yard at Ballyvolane House. There are three main protagonists in the story of the Ballyvolane House Spirits Company; Justin Green, Antony Jackson and a cow named Bertha. A former dairy farm, Ballyvolane literally translates from gaelic as 'the place of the leaping heifers' - a testament to the fertility and natural diversity of the land on which the estate lies. Ballyvolane House practices a field to fork philosophy when it comes to food. The Ballyvolane House Spirits Company is determined to echo this by championing a grass to glass approach for everything we bottle.

Bertha, a Kerry legend

Bertha, or 'Big Bertha' as she was known, was a legendary Droimeann cow from Sneem in Co. Kerry. She was reared locally, and was bought as a calf by a farmer called Jerome O'Leary. When she died on New Year's Eve 1993, just 3 months shy of her 49th birthday, she had become something of a local celebrity. Over the course of her long life she had given birth to 39 calves, and this achievement, together with her tremendous age, had earned her an entry in the Guinness Book of Records. This fame was harnessed productively by Mr. O'Leary; Bertha became a regular at local fairs, and led the annual St. Patrick's Day parade in Sneem where she was engaged in raising money for local cancer relief charities.

Bertha's wake

The reason that we know so much about Bertha is that a mutual friend of ours, writer and historian Turtle Bunbury stumbled upon her wake which was held in the Blackwater Tavern between Sneem and Kenmare on the the night of the 31st December 1993. We have always loved the story which he later had published in The Guardian newspaper. When we were thinking of a name for our gin we wanted to find something that was eye-catching, distinctive and that dove-tailed with the pedigree of what are working with and what we have set out to achieve. The dairy farming heritage of Ballyvolane, our use of whey alcohol in the gin, and our shared love of the gorgeous and gentle characters that can be found only in Ireland led us back to Bertha. To immortalise her memory, we have brought her back in spirit, literally!!

A celebration of the joys of life!

Bertha seeking revenge? It is not meant in a spiteful or harmful way; quite the contrary. Her life on earth, whilst celebrated at the end, was one of long service and selfless matronly duties. Her life in spirit is all about joy and pure Bertha time!!

Farewell Bertha

After 10 years of hard work, triumphs, disasters, giggles and tears we decided to wind down the company and we closed the distillery in 2025. We are hopeful that the Bertha's Revenge brand will continue under new and energetic stewardship, but it will no longer be produced on site at Ballyvolane House, nor will Antony or Justin be at the helm.

Justin has kept a stash of Bertha's Revenge Gin in the cellar at Ballyvolane House and is delighted to share it with our guests. The next page features a selection of carefully curated cocktails which bring out the best of Bertha's Revenge Gin.

A small piece of Ballyvolane history in your glass.





Bertha's Revenge Gin Cocktails

- Bertha & Tonic (B&T)** **11.00**
Shot of Bertha's Revenge Gin, Classic Indian Fever-Tree tonic, orange peel garnish. Served in a high-ball glass with ice.
- Dry Martini Cocktail** **15.00**
The real test of a good gin. 2 shots Bertha's Revenge Gin, half shot extra dry vermouth stirred with ice in a mixing glass. Garnish with a twist of lemon or green olives. Dirty Martini (with olive brine) available too. Served in a Nick and Nora cocktail glass.
- Rhubarb Martini** **15.00**
Spring and summer time. 1.5 shots Bertha's Revenge Gin, a shot of homemade rhubarb syrup (from our walled-garden), half shot fresh lime or lemon juice, shaken vigorously on ice for 20 seconds. Served in a Nick and Nora cocktail glass.
- Rhubarb Mule** **13.50**
Shot Bertha's Revenge Gin, shot of homemade rhubarb syrup, dash fresh lime juice, topped up with ginger-ale and ginger-beer, lime wedge garnish. Served in a high-ball with ice.
- Negroni** **16.00**
Shot Bertha's Revenge Gin, shot Campari, shot Valentia Island Vermouth, dash orange bitters, orange peel garnish. Served in a tumbler with ice.
- Gimlet** **15.00**
2 shots Bertha's Revenge Gin, a shot of fresh lime juice, 2/3 shot sugar syrup shaken vigorously on ice in a cocktail shaker. Served in a Nick and Nora cocktail glass.
- White Lady** **15.00**
1.5 shots Bertha's Revenge Gin, 2/3 shot Cointreau, 2/3 shot fresh lemon juice, 1 fresh egg white shaken vigorously with ice in a cocktail shaker. Served in a Nick and Nora cocktails glass.
- Hedgerow Martini** **15.00**
Autumn and winter time. 1 shot Bertha's Revenge Gin, 1.5 shots Bertha's Revenge Sloe Gin, dash fresh lime or lemon juice, dash elderflower cordial, fresh blackberry shaken vigorously with ice in a cocktail shaker. Garnish with a frozen blackberry. Served in a Nick and Nora cocktail glass.
- Other Cocktails**
We are always happy to mix other cocktails on request (provided we have the ingredients). Please ask a member of staff.