

## Nothing Puritanical About Square One Botanical: Pleasure In A Clear Glass Bottle



After enjoying it regularly during the spell of great sunny weather we've been having (at least over here in the Dogpatch), I'm ready to come out and say it--the just-released Square One Botanical is bold, original, wonderfully delicious, and absolutely deserving of your attention.

Why? I'll get to that. But just let me tell you what it is. Square One, of course, is the vodka brand started a few years ago founded by Marin resident and former spirits-industry executive Allison Evanow. I'm not particularly a vodka fan, but even I praised Square One when it came out for being a spirit of character and not just a flavorless, odorless additive. Last year came Square One Cucumber, which is a lovely spirit and useful in all manner of cocktails. But the Botanical is truly something else.

In Evanow's [own words](#): "Simply put, it's not a flavored vodka in the sense that most of us are used to seeing a flavored vodka, like our Square One Cucumber. I mean, what does "Botanical" taste like? At 90 proof and with 8 organic

botanicals - ranging from fruits to spices to herbs - it doesn't mix like a flavored vodka, nor is it a gin (no juniper) or an aquavit (no caraway) . . . it's basically a new twist on what we think will be a new wave of spirits to come - Botanical Spirits with all kinds of different botanicals used that don't fit "neatly" into pre-existing categories like gin."

The gin reference is apt. For years, gin companies have been trying to appeal to gin-haters who were too squeamish about the peculiar flavor of juniper (gin's signature flavor). Hence, the less-than-successful [Baffert's](#) and newer products like [Right Gin](#), both of which de-emphasized the juniper as an alternative to the crisp, bitter London Dry style. What neither was willing to do was embracing the freedom of simply severing the tie to gin. That's what Evanow has done with Square One Botanical. Of course, the risk is that without the "brand" of gin behind you, you have to do a lot of explaining. Hence the length of this post.

But trust me, it's worth it. After a week or so of drinking Botanical and Tonics at home alongside and instead of the good old G&T, I'm hooked. The bitter slash of juniper you find in classic gins (which I like) has been replaced by floral bite of rose, lavender, rosemary and chamomile, all underpinned by the lovely basenote of pear, which holds it all together. The Botanical pairs gorgeously with good tonics like Fever Tree, Q, and Stirrings. Use just a dash of lime, not too much. The flavors are unusual at first, but as your tongue settles in you'll find that it's hard not to pour glass after glass. What's irrisitible is the complexity, the novelty and the bouquet of flavors that all express the joy of being alive.

Botanical also works well in cocktails, though I haven't spent too much time in that department. Evanow has some good mixing advice in the above-linked post. Botanical is just rolling out, so you might want to consult the [Where to Buy](#) page on its website before rushing out. Either way, give it a try, and you're sure to enjoy the rest of your summer.