

# Sustainability Case Study

## Boatyard Distillery

June 2023



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Boatyard Distillery is Fermanagh's first legal distillery since 1890, taking its name from the disused Boatyard it is built on. Local man, Joe McGirr, set up the Distillery in 2016 with an ambition to make a gin so perfect for Martinis that it would be poured in the world's finest bars and restaurants around the world.

## **Why did sustainability become such a big feature of your business?**

“Sustainability was always important to the business. That said, we didn't set out to create a sustainable business. We set out to become a great gin distillery. We took decisions that would not fall under the word 'sustainability', but they were practical decisions that make sense on many levels. A sustainable approach is a practical approach and it just made sense to us at every step of the journey.”

Joe McGirr,  
Boatyard Distillery



# What have the key sustainability initiatives been?

## Becoming a B Corp Boatyard

The business launched a Green Team called 'Better Boatyard' in 2022 with the task of improving the overall sustainability and governance of the business. Through the Better Boatyard Journey, the business brought in many changes across its processes. In 2023, Boatyard Distillery became the first distillery on the island of Ireland to gain the prestigious B Corp Certification. This is an international and coveted designation that a business is meeting high standards of verified performance, accountability, and transparency on factors from employee benefits and charitable giving to supply chain practices and input materials.

*"Our journey to B Corp status brought about a mindset shift in the business and inspired the team to constantly improve on their practices. Everyone has changed in the business. Their way of thinking has changed. The ideas are flowing now"* Joe McGirr, Boatyard Distillery

## A Circular Distillery

Boatyard Distillery has created a culture within the business of repurposing and reusing items to combat waste. Here are some of the practices in place:

- Bottles are made from recycled flint glass
- Bottle labels are made from recycled paper and produced by James Cropper a leading business in circular design for fibre recovery
- Shipping cartons are made from recycled pulp
- Pallet wrap is made of recycled pallet wrap
- Business cards are made of recycled Costa Coffee cups
- Promotional gift bags are made of recycled Kraft card
- Some gin fruit is sent to local cocktail bars for their drinks
- Other fruit from gin production goes to an Indian chutney producer and others made into a new Boatyard marmalade
- Botanicals created from gin production are used as a signature ingredient in the Boatyard Bean to bar chocolate
- Sloes from gin production are used to produce a Sloe boat conserve
- Remainder of solid waste goes to composting and liquid waste goes to anaerobic digesters which give electric back into the grid
- Old Tom barrels are repurposed to make furniture
- Spent grain from vodka production is sent to the family farm and used to feed animals.





## Waste Reduction Innovation – Refillable Gin

By taking away glass bottles from visitor operations at the distillery and offering an eco-refill pouch for locals to refill, while availing of a £10 discount, within three months the Boatyard saved:

- 211 glass bottles and packaging
- 2% of distillery-based packaging in total
- up to 380kg of Carbon

Glass bottles are 57% liquid and 43% packaging whereas the eco-refill pouches are 98% liquid. Eco-refill pouches can be sent back via FreePost to the distillery and refilled. In addition, all bottles are shipped with minimal recycled packaging through the use of HexiFlex

## Do you know?

Boatyard Distillery is part of the Embrace a Giant Spirit Distillery Trail.

Check it out: [NI Spirits Trail | Discover Northern Ireland](#)





# What are your sustainability ambitions for the future?

“Our goal is, to be the leading Irish gin distillery making sustainable spirits while giving our team their best possible adventure. We’re not perfect. We are very far from perfect, but at least we have our head out of the sand. Manufacturing is energy intensive, and it's not an environmentally friendly process. So we've got an uphill struggle that we want to meet head on. We are trying to get the metrics and want to cut our carbon footprint by 25% this year. We are on track and it will be independently measure. We're working with Invest NI to get scalability assessment, environmental impact assessment. We are working on our path to net zero.”

Joe McGirr, Boatyard Distillery