

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

PLATINUM 70 YEAR

## The essence of Monaco



Monaco's first and only distillery now produces two liqueurs and a gin, plus a limited-edition vodka.

[L'Orangerie](#) was founded just five years ago, yet it's the first legal distillery in Monaco.

It's the brainchild of Irish businessman (and Monaco resident) Philip Culazzo, 41, who had reflected that the one thing the principality lacked was a distinctive dish or tippie. "It's a mix of Italian and French," he tells us, "so I thought it would be great to make something that really comes from here. Not just put Monaco on the label to sell it, but actually try and make something that was good."

His solution lay with the 600 bitter orange trees growing along local streets. "They produce anywhere between 10 and 15,000 kilos of fruit every year. The trees are incredibly well looked after, there are no pesticides [yet], and between 85 per cent and 90 per cent of that fruit was going to waste every year."



L'Orangerie is the brainchild of Monaco resident Philip Culazzo, right. "The whole idea was to create products that express what's around us."

Given permission to harvest some oranges for experimentation 10 years ago, Culazzo eventually came up with the drink he calls L'Orangerie. "It's 30 per cent alcohol, a digestive a little bit like Cointreau or Grand Marnier, but with one-quarter the amount of sugar."

A combined distillery and shopfront, named after the drink, opened in 2017, with the tiny operation doing almost all its labour by hand. The second drink was Carruba, from Monaco's carob trees. Then came Gin aux Agrumes, a gin using bitter oranges plus various citrus products from a little further afield (though all within 20 kilometres of L'Orangerie). "The whole idea," says Culazzo, "was to create products that express what's around us."



A (locally made) gin with tonic is just the thing on a balmy day.

In the summer, 1000 bottles of Vodka de L'espoir ("vodka of hope") were produced, with Philip paying three teenage Ukrainian refugees to label and package them in their national colours. The suggested price was a donation of €60 to €100, with all proceeds going to humanitarian relief.

L'Orangerie's products will arrive at a small number of Dan Murphy's stores in Australia in the run-up to Christmas.