

## DRINKS

# The New Vermouth

*Like wine, vermouth can no longer be defined as just "red or white." These bottles are upping the game, from dry to sweet. Also: a sampling of aquavit.*

BY KARA NEWMAN

It's been a couple of years since Wine Enthusiast published a comprehensive review of vermouth bottlings. And since then, the pool has become considerably deeper.

For starters, it's no longer just white/dry and red/sweet. The array of white vermouths now spans from "extra dry," which tends to be crisp and lean, with little or no discernible sweetness; to "dry," which tends to have a bit more flavor, often delicate touches of tropical fruit or white flowers and possibly traces of honey or vanilla; to "bianco" or "blanc." That last category has downright exploded in the last year, and to no wonder—it's delicious, featuring bolder, sweeter, more oxidized notes like golden raisin, baked pear and spice. It's long been popular on a global basis, but it's only recently found favor here in the U.S.

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Meanwhile, the red vermouth category is also growing at a fast clip, particularly among Italian-made reds. Look for the bitter-edged Vermouth di Torino, while boundaries are blurring between chinatos, vermouth amaros and more.

## Red/Sweet Vermouth

**Dopo Teatro Cocchi Vermouth Amaro** (Italy; Haus Alpenz, Edina, MN); \$20/500 ml, 95 points. This silky, garnet-hued sipper features a double dose of bitter quinine, but don't worry, it doesn't read as especially bitter. It features an enticing spiced-cherry scent and a flavor that suggests cherry compote, with a violet lilt on the finish and just the right amount of bitter edge. Sip or mix. **Best Buy.**