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Q Tonic and Citadelle Gin

By James Romanow, Bridges May 30, 2012



Photograph by: James Romanow

High end ‘artisanal’ and ‘boutique’ gins are all the rage these days among the cognoscenti. I recently drank my way through a Canadian entry to this market. It took a couple of months and I am here to tell you the life of a booze critic is not all sunshine and roses. Sometimes it resembles one of the nastier Grimm fairy tales.

The weather being warm, we opened a new bottle last weekend, Citadelle gin from France. I positively purred at the contrast with the musty horrors of West Coast ‘artisanal’ product.

French gin (and for the record Tanqueray is another, their bottle modelled after the Parisian fire hydrant) is usually a bit subtler than

the London Dry. I’ve never been able to work out if this is peculiar to the French, as 90 per cent of the French gin lovers are vulgar North Americans such as me.

If you really want to welcome summer, use a boutique tonic. Best I’ve found is Q. It’s an organic American product using agave syrup as the sweetener and organic Peruvian quinine. Organic credentials aside, this is great stuff. It has a stunning finish and is less sweet — the best tonic I’ve found so far. It also comes in small bottles ideal for making two G&T.

Last summer, Dad’s foods in Saskatoon carried it, but you can buy it on line or when down south.

Another alternative is the organic concentrates like Tom's Tonic (available online). It tastes great but maintains the look of iodine. Let's face it — part of the appeal of a G&T is crystal clear fluid with a slice of lime floating in it.

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Citadelle Gin, France. \$32.15 *****

Q Tonic, USA. *****