

**Supplies:**

- barware: coupe, fizz and collins glass, jiggers, boston shaker, mixing glass, bar spoon, hawthorne and julep strainer,
- spirits (williams): old tom gin, genever, plymouth gin, Tanqueray, dolin dry, dolin rouge, orange bitters
- spirits (home): plymouth sloe, punt e mes, noilly prat, maraschino, champagne, absinthe, bokers
- citrus: lemons,
- sundries: ice chest, ice, two water pitchers, paring knife, cutting board, medicine dropper

## 1 Vermouth

Vermouth is a class of aromatized, fortified wines. *Aromatized* means that the wine has been infused with botanicals, typically via maceration. Fortified means that the wine has been augmented with some additional, higher-proof spirit like neutral grain alcohol or grape brandy [2]. The EU is strict about vermouth designations so officially vermouth must contain some type of wormwood and can “only be sweetened with caramelized sugar, sucrose, and (rectified, concentrated) grape must.” [1] The final product has between 15-25% alcohol by volume. Since vermouth is wine-based and since it has low ABV, one should refrigerate it immediately after opening it. Moreover, after 1-2 months, vermouth will almost surely oxidize, leaving you with something that resembles worcestershire sauce. Perhaps it will be time to drink a bloody mary.

Vermouth comes in many shapes and sizes, but the most common are Italian (often called red or sweet) and French (often called dry). Most vermouth, including sweet vermouth, starts with a neutral wine base, although there are a few exceptions (e.g., Carpano Antica Formula). In some ways, you can think of Vermouth as low-alcohol, wine-based bitters, sweetened with sugar or grape must. I make the allusion to bitters only because they largely share an ingredient list [2]:

Achillea	Angelica	Calamus	Cardamom	Cardo Santo	Cascarilla Bark
Chamomile	Chinchona Bark	Chinese Rhubarb	Cinnamon	Citrus peel	Clary Sage
Clove	Common Centaury	Coriander	Dictamnus	Egyptian Cornflower	Elderflower
Elecampane	Gentian	Germander	Ginger	Lavender	Licorice Root
Lungwort	Mace	Marjoram	Nutmeg	Orris Root	Quassia
Raspberry	Red Sandalwood	Rose	Saffron	St. Johns Wort	Star Anise
Teasel	Tonka Bean	Vanilla	Veronica	Violet	Wormwood/Mugwort

We’ll highlight a few salient ingredients here that we haven’t covered in previous meetings.

**Wormwood** Here we’re talking about Common Wormwood or Grande Wormwood which is a “powerful appetite stimulant and digestive” [1]. Note that wormwood and in particular, the chemical compound thujone, is the ingredient of objection in absinthe. Interestingly, European vermouths contain wormwood [2] (Vermouth comes from the German word Wermut) so it’s difficult to reconcile the US Government’s 1912 decision prohibiting Absinthe with its allowance of European vermouths. However, this is all somewhat moot, since as of 2007, the US Government defines *thujone-free* to mean *less than 10ppm*<sup>1</sup> and all vermouths (presumably) fall within this range. One reason the Government lifted its ban is due in part to Ted Breaux, creator of Lucid Absinthe, who conducted experiments showing that levels of thujone in pre-ban absinthe were under 10ppm [4]. It’s interesting to note that sage is around 50% thujone.

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.ttb.gov/industry\\_circulars/archives/2007/07-05.html](http://www.ttb.gov/industry_circulars/archives/2007/07-05.html)

**Hyssop** From Brown and Miller [1]

Used for cleaning sacred sites back in Dioscorides’ day, hyssop is a lovely evergreen bush that yields royal blue blossoms. The entire plant has culinary and medicinal value. But its strong, bitter, minty aroma and character are important to the production of Chartreuse, a few herbal liqueurs, and vermouths.

Dolin employs hyssop in their vermouth [5].

**Chamomile** A ground cover, this has hints of apple that “bely its bitterness.” Brown and Miller [1]. It is well known for giving digestive relief. Brown and Miller [1] report that over 50% of chamomile production in France is dedicated to the production of Noilly-Prat.

**History**

Coming Soon...

**Brands and Regions**

Figure 1 shows the regions of France and Italy associated with vermouth production. Almost all major producers of vermouth have products in both the sweet and dry categories, although originally dry was most associated with France and sweet was most associated with Italy. Below we will touch on some specific brands and styles of vermouth. Brands not mentioned in detail, but worth noting are Cinzano, Lillet, Dubbonet, and Byrrh.



Figure 1: European production of vermouth by region [2]. Most of the highlighted brands are available in the US market.

**Dolin** Dolin vermouth is new to the American market, but it has been produced since 1821 in Chambery which is in the Savoy region of France<sup>2</sup>. It is extremely popular with mixologists—my guess this is a combination of novelty and quality; the vermouths are light, refreshing, spicy, but not too bitter. At present, Dolin is the only vermouth carrying the official AOC for Vermouth de Chambery. AOC is a controlled designation of origin certification—think Champagne or Cognac. All the Dolin products are in the Chambery style. They begin with as neutral a wine as possible and then add the botanicals whole.

<sup>2</sup>www.dolin.fr

**Martini & Rossi** Based in Pessione since 1860, but originally in nearby Torino since 1849, Martini and Rossi was the first vermouth exported to the United States. It's rosso (red) vermouth is still often called for by name in Manhattans [3] and many mixologist claim it is the best vermouth in a Negroni.

**Carpano** Originally a Torino-based vermouth, Carpano is the original manufacturer of red vermouth. Carpano was acquired by Branca in 2001 and its production now takes place in Milan. Carpano produces three styles of vermouth: classic, vanilla, and bitter. The classic style is not available in the US. Carpano Antica is produced in the the vanilla style (called *vermouth alla vaniglia*). The product was released in the US sometime in the 1990s and is very popular with mixologists. Finally, Punt e Mes (point-and-a-half) is produced in the bitter style—extra bitters are added to sweet vermouth producing what some call a “bottled vermouth cocktail.” [2].

**Cocchi** Cocchi is still in Torino and in 2011 resurrected their red vermouth which is now available in the US [2]. Cocchi is probably better known for their quinquina (or perhaps, more aptly Americano) aperitif Cocchi Americano which is said to approximate the original Lillet, known as Kina Lillet, because of its bitter gentian / chinchona notes.

**Noilly Prat** Credited with creating the first dry vermouth in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, Noilly-Prat is still best known for their French vermouth:

This vermouth is made exclusively from white grape varieties grown in the Marseillan area, principally Picpoul de Pinet and Clairette. These light, fruity wines are matured in massive Canadian oak casks for 8 months inside the original storerooms. They are then transferred to smaller oak barrels which are taken outside and left for a year where they are exploded to the sun, wind, and low winter temperatures. [1]

In 2009, Noilly Prat started shipping a new vermouth formula to the United States, although it is reported to simply be the same vermouth they ship everywhere else.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 Gin

There are five styles of gin, all of which are fairly easy to find today today, but many of which were difficult to find a decade ago.

### Holland or Dutch

The original gin, known to many as genever, comes in several distinct styles including korenwijn, old, and young. Korenwijn is the original, based on a 70% barley mash and enhanced with juniper. We will mostly concern ourselves with the old style which has less barley and more corn, rye, and wheat in its mash, but is still treated with botanicals, including juniper. This version is also sweetened slightly. One can think of old genever as a whiskey gin which is not an unapt description of how it tastes. Bols Genever is an example of genever distilled in the old style.

### Old Tom Gin

Although genever was known to the English during the Thirty Years War (the troops called it “Dutch Courage”), it wasn't until the Dutch prince Williams of Orange became king of in 1688 that gin really took off in England.<sup>4</sup> At this point, distillation was still crude so the gin was somewhat harsh which is why it was infused with botanicals. As distillation became better, the sweetness left but the botanicals stayed.

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.drinkboy.com/Articles/Article.aspx?itemid=37>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.plymouthgin.com/original/heritage.php>

## London Dry Gin

Gin as we all know it today—essentially a natural, or near-neutral grain spirit infused with botanicals, the most forward of which is juniper.

## Plymouth Gin

Distilled in the style of london dry gin, Plymouth gin traditionally has smaller juniper notes and slightly larger citrus notes. That said, it is more an appellation than anything else and at present, Plymouth gin is the only gin carrying the designation.

## New American Gin

Most people describe new american gin, or western gin, or new gin as simply less juniper forward. Hendrick's gin is an example of new world gin—it emphasizes its cucumber presence—and de-emphasizes everything else.

## Improved Gin Cocktail

- 2 oz. gin
- 1 tsp gomme syrup
- 1/2 tsp maraschino
- 1/8 tsp absinthe
- 2 dashes Boker's bitters

Stir and strain into a well-chilled old fashioned glass. Garnish with a lemon twist. Wondrich [6] recommends Holland gin in this classic.

## Martinez

- 1.5 oz. old tom gin
- 1.5 oz. sweet vermouth
- 1/4 oz. maraschino
- 2 dashes Boker's bitters

Stir and strain into a well-chilled coupe. Garnish with a lemon or orange twist. This recipe comes from Meehan and Gall [3]. A 2:1 proportion is also common. Original Martinez recipes reverse this: 2 oz. of vermouth and 1 oz. of gin [6]. The Turf Club, a sibling of the Martinez, uses equal parts, but has no maraschino.

## French 75

- 1 oz. gin
- 1/2 oz. lemon juice
- 1/2 oz. simple syrup

Shake and strain into a chilled coupe, top with sparkling wine (2 oz) and garnish with a lemon twist. This drink is squarely in the fizz family.

## Pre-Prohibition Martini

- 2.5 oz. gin
- 1/2-3/4 oz. dry vermouth
- 2 dashes orange bitters

Stir and strain into a well-chilled coupe. Garnish with a lemon twist (or a few olives—odd numbers are often encouraged for aesthetics).

## Sloe Gin Fizz

- 2 oz. sloe gin (Plymouth)
- 1/2 oz. lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon superfine sugar

Shake and strain the sloe gin and lemon juice into a fizz glass, top with soda (3-4 oz.) and then mix in the superfine sugar. This should create a nice fizzy head. Subbing simple syrup for the superfine sugar is fine. Note that sloe gin is not gin, but rather, a gin-based liqueur that infuses sloe (blackthorn) berries in gin (or some other grain spirit). Sloe berries grow a deciduous shrub and resemble a small plum (I think they look a little like large blueberries).

## References

- [1] J. Brown and A. Miller. *The Mixellany Guide to Vermouth and Other Aperitifs*. Mixellany Limited, 2011.
- [2] M. Doudoroff. Vermouth 101. <http://vermouth101.com/index.html>, 2012.
- [3] J. Meehan and C. Gall. *The PDT Cocktail Book*. Sterling Epicure, 2011.
- [4] S. K. Ritter. Absinthe myths finally laid to rest. [http://pubs.acs.org/cen/email/html/cen\\_86\\_i18\\_8618sci2.html](http://pubs.acs.org/cen/email/html/cen_86_i18_8618sci2.html), 2008.
- [5] H. A. Website. Dolin vermouth facts. <http://www.alpenz.com/images/poftfolio/dolinvermouthfacts.htm>, 2012.
- [6] D. Wondrich. *Imbibe!* Perigren (A Division of Penguin), 2007.