

TASTE-TEST

Hooked on Tonics



CANADA DRY



FEVER-TREE



HANSEN'S



Q TONIC



SCHWEPES



STIRRINGS

	CANADA DRY	FEVER-TREE	HANSEN'S	Q TONIC	SCHWEPES	STIRRINGS
FLAVOR	Fairly dry; artificial-tasting citrus bite; nice bitterness	Saturated and tangy with sweet citrus and grape; complex botanicals; bitter citrus peel	Classic sweet lime flavor; cotton candy; ginger; moderate bitterness builds later	Tenacious, aggressive bitterness with quinine and citrus peel; strong citrus; almost no sweetness	Moderately sweet, with pronounced citrus; fairly one-dimensional	Very dry but full-flavored, with floral, herbal and tannic notes; very bitter
MOUThFEEL	Medium-light; lively bubbles	Bright and lively; light, sparkling carbonation	Silkier than some	Light and spritzy; tiny bubbles	Very active carbonation	Tannic feeling lingers on tongue; mild carbonation
FINISH	Lingering bitterness that builds with continued sipping	Clean and refreshing, with mild bitterness	Stays sweet, with a light but lingering bitterness	Unrelentingly bitter, yet light	Dissipates quickly, leaving a very light bitterness	Bright, with a light bitterness
MIXABILITY	Becomes very bitter when mixed; enhances juniper notes	Great for dressing up an unexciting gin, but boldness could obscure subtleties of nuanced spirits	Better with gin than alone; enhances grapefruit notes; makes a passable but not robust cocktail	Mellows when mixed, opening up the gin's sweet and floral notes, but almost too bitter	Classic in a G & T but doesn't add much; sweetness obscures gin's botanicals	Mellows and opens when mixed; adds pleasant bitterness while allowing gin to shine; makes a well-balanced G & T
OVERALL	Classic, but exceedingly bitter and somewhat artificial-tasting ★★	Bold and juicy; delicious on its own or mixed with gin ★★★★	Can mellow an intense gin, but not ideal for showcasing a more delicate spirit ★★★	Works well as a mixer, making an intriguing but not completely balanced cocktail ★★★★½	Decent on its own; makes a classic but somewhat uninspired G & T ★★½	Superb as a mixer, though not as ideal for drinking on its own ★★★★

Evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5 stars



TONIC WATER ORIGINALLY DEVELOPED AS A WAY TO MAKE BITTER QUININE, A MALARIA MEDICINE, MORE PALATABLE. Drinkers developed a taste for the fizzer, which combines quinine (made from the bark of the cinchona tree) with carbonated water, a bit of sweetness and other flavors, often citrus. It was first mixed with gin to make the medicine go down, but people found that the medicine helps the gin go down, too: The bitterness

and citrus in tonic water complement the herbs and citrus in gin. We tasted our specimens both on their own and with gin. While some formulas boost up a well-built gin's natural endowments, others, with bolder flavors, are better for helping out a less-than-perfect spirit. And some are perfectly refreshing enjoyed solo on a balmy day.