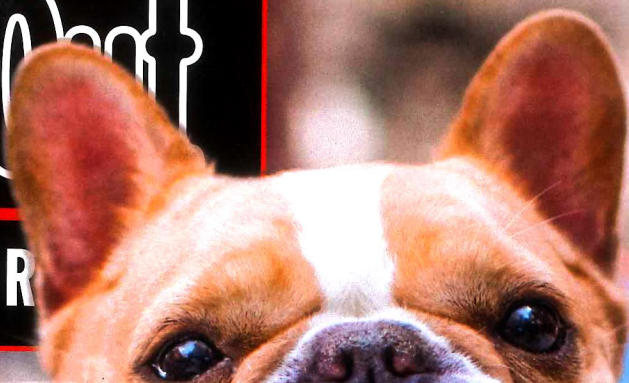


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NEW YORK



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Drink

Spritzing the summer away

The bubbly aperitif has risen to the tipped top of cocktails this summer.

By Alyson Penn



Aperol spritz pitcher at Dante

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ITALIAN SUMMERS ARE nothing short of charming: sun-kissed piazzas, narrow cobblestoned streets and café tables awash in honey-orange beverages in the early evening hours. And in the past year, these pre-dinnertime drinks—or aperitifs—have invaded our American shores, turning harried New Yorkers into those who slow down and sip. In other words, the spritz (Aperol and all) has gained full-on superstar status in Gotham. Sure, the sparkling drink is not flooding social media handles as aggressively as slushy *frisé* goblets or unicorn lattes, but the effervescent drink has quietly turned up on a surprising number of bar menus this season.

And it's not hard to see why

it's suddenly so pervasive. Mixed with any number of low-ABV alcohols or liqueurs and topped with a sparkling liquid (think soda water, prosecco or champagne), the airy, flavorful cocktail helps imbibers beat the heat without knocking them out. The most common is the Aperol spritz, a refreshing combo of Aperol, soda water and prosecco, but NYC mixologists are getting more creative. Ingredients popping up now include salted grapefruit cordial, white balsamic and chamomile.

And it certainly seems like the spritz has staying power—at least until NYC's tree leaves turn brown. Just a quick inventory of the spots featuring upmarket versions of the drink include Union Square's Library of Distilled Spirits (Red Queen,

\$15), Gramercy's Covina (Spritz Covina, \$16), Greenpoint's Sauvage (Elixir Spritz, \$12) and the Flatiron District's Italienne (Fizz de Violette, \$13), to name a few. Even the Meatball Shop joins in on the fun with Aperol

spritz pitchers (\$55).

According to Naren Young, partner and head bartender at Dante, a Greenwich Village café-restaurant spearheading the rise of the spritz since 2015, it's high time the drink gets more recognition. Young, who oversees a summertime menu of eight innovative spritzes, attributes the drink's attractiveness to the "leisurely, sophisticated and elegant" style of drinking throughout Europe. Casey Lane chef and co-owner of Casa Apicci, the Italian restaurant hosting a Summer Spritz menu, agrees. "The rise of travel culture has helped popularize it in America."

And while it's too soon to tell if the bubbly drink is a passing fad or a welcome mainstay, there's no doubt that this summer, we could all use a little sparkle.

Fizz de Violette at Italienne

