

Quick
Lit

“Arabic and its wealth of synonyms was helpful here—precision was encouraged. ... Houria hadn't even touched on so many other possible words: *maram*, craving; *huyam*, love like thirst; *hawam*, love that feels like falling; *shahwa*, a greedy lust.”
From *All Strangers Are Kin: Adventures in Arabic and the Arab World*, a new book from Zora O'Neill that takes a humanistic and humorous look at traveling through the Middle East. (OUT NOW)



Vermouth or Dare

Barcelona mixologists are offering risk-taking spins on a classic aperitif

CHEMISTRY Vermouth—a botanical-infused fortified wine that ranges from dry to syrupy sweet—has come a long way from being the preferred post-Mass aperitif for Catalonian seniors. While the mystery mix of herbs and sugar is still considered an acquired taste by many, Barcelona's most creative mixologists are reviving *vermut* (as it's called in Catalan) with inventive drinks far removed from your grandpa's Negroni.

At the Hotel Arts, Diego Baud pairs vermouth and amontillado sherry for the 45 Your Soul, which is served with a tiny clothesline hung with *jamón ibérico* (pictured). “The sweet yet dry notes of the aromatic cocktail dance beautifully with the savory, complex flavors of the *jamón*,” he says.

At Apotheke, on the Plaça Real, dry vermouth appears in the Miss Moneypenny, mixed with Brooklyn gin and a tincture made from the Buddha's hand citrus fruit. And at the Mandarin Oriental's Banker's Bar, Rafael Tapia intrigues palates with the tastes of smoke and poppies in his Cobre Fumé. “It might seem weird at first glance,” he says, “but customers who try it are often pleasantly surprised with the result.” For blends, he uses countertop barrels to age vermouth with herbs and flavorings for up to four months.

For some mixologists, the challenge isn't changing public perception but evolving it. Francesc Bretau of Slow Barcelona has been making vermouth-based drinks since before it was trendy. His Arabesque cocktail is made with vermouth, gin, crème de framboise, hibiscus tea, and juniper distillate.

“Vermouth has a long tradition in cocktails, the dry martini and Manhattan being good examples,” says Mike Cruickshank, who co-owns the new Balias Bar, a retro-stylish *vermuteria*. “By introducing other vermouth cocktails, we're able to give new insight into the possibilities of a common, popular drink here in Catalonia.” —JESSICA BENAVIDES CANEPA

45 Your Soul
Yields one drink

1½ oz.
Dos Déus
vermouth,
1½ oz. **Lustau**
amontillado
sherry,
1 dash
Angostura
bitters, 1
lemon wheel,
1 orange
wheel,
1 rosemary
sprig,
1 dehydrated
lemon wheel,
1 olive

Muddle lemon and orange wheels with vermouth, sherry, and bitters to release the fruits' oils and juices. Add ice and stir until chilled. Strain into a Nick & Nora glass and garnish with olive, rosemary sprig, and dehydrated lemon wheel.

Stage Magic

Five things you need to know about the theater productions *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, Parts I and II*, which open on London's West End this month

DRAMA

1

The plays take place 19 years after the last book, with Harry an employee of the Ministry of Magic and father of three.

2

When Swaziland-born Noma Dumezweni was cast as Hermione, J.K. Rowling dismissed the controversy with a Tweet: “Canon: brown eyes, frizzy hair and very clever. White skin was never specified. Rowling loves black Hermione.”

3

Playwright Jack Thorne and director John Tiffany also collaborated on another film-to-stage adaptation about supernatural kids, vampire drama *Let the Right One In*.

4

Rowling will release a companion book on her—and Harry's—birthday, July 31.

5

Resale tickets have been listed for more than \$3,000 on StubHub. Eat your heart out, *Hamilton*. —ND (JULY 30)

