

AT THE BAR

New tonic is great, but hard on budget

Our in-house tasters rarely give a unanimous thumbs-up to any product, but they did to Q Tonic — and that's even before adding gin or vodka. The new mixer is made with Peruvian quinine (many tonics use synthetic) and sweetened with organic agave instead of the nutritionally challenged high-fructose corn syrup. All this gives Q Tonic a cleaner, lighter and fresher taste than familiar brands such as Schweppes and Canada Dry. Just as welcome, it's low-calorie, with 24 per 5-ounce serving (versus 110 for Schweppes). Of course, there has to be a downside — in this case, price. Spec's stores across the Houston area sell it for about \$9.90 per four-pack, or roughly \$2.50 per 6.3-ounce bottle. It may be worth that for an occasional splurge. Still, one wishes this delicious newcomer were more within reach — especially as other new, premium tonics also hit the shelves.

— LINDSAY HEINSEN

