



WINE ENTHUSIAST

MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 15, 2010

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Q&A WITH DITA VON TEESE,

DANCER, LINGERIE DESIGNER AND COINTREAU AMBASSADOR

The international queen of burlesque discusses her passion for vintage threads, Mexican cuisine and glamorous cocktail culture.

Dita Von Teese, burlesque performer, designer and cocktail devotee, has taken on yet another role: brand ambassador for Cointreau, the orange liqueur. Known for performing worldwide in a giant Martini glass, she starred at the culinary and cocktail festival Tales of the Cocktail in New Orleans this year, and in collaboration with Cointreau, opened Parisian after-hours club Le Cointreau Privé, which features Cointreau-based drinks and Von Teese's costumes on display. Von Teese recently shared a cocktail and some banter with *Wine Enthusiast* in her luxurious suite at the Hotel Plaza Athénée in New York.

Wine Enthusiast: We're drinking a Cointreau Teese. It's delicious. Can you tell us about the inspiration?

Dita Von Teese: I talked to the master mixologist at Cointreau about perfumes I like, foods I like and fragrances and colors. I love the scent of violets. In Paris, you can actually buy little bunches of violets on the street. It's so exquisite. I wanted to do something with violet liqueur.

WE: Do you think there is a synergy between cocktail culture and burlesque?

DVT: Yes, I do. In both, you take your time to get where you're going. It's not about cracking open a beer and seeing how fast you can drink it; it's about slowly enjoying the process, the ritual of mixing a cocktail, tasting it, smelling it, everything about it. It's about elegance and knowing where to stop, and burlesque is like that too.

WE: You have been collecting vintage lingerie for 20 years. Do you also collect vintage barware?

DVT: I do. I pick up martini shakers. I love these figural '30s shakers—I have a polar bear, and I really want one of those roosters. I am constantly hunting on eBay for vintage barware. My boyfriend found the polar bear for me, so that has sentimental value. There's also a shaker I keep eyeballing on eBay that Lana Turner's daughter is selling. I want to buy it so bad. Part of the fun of buying vintage anything is the



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thrill of the hunt.

WE: Any plans to start collecting vintage wine?

DVT: I have a French boyfriend...I usually leave the wine choices to him. I stick to the cocktail mixing. But I performed at Francis Ford Coppola's birthday party and I really found that I liked his Rubicon, so that is the one that I always keep stocked. I like Silver Oak too.

WE: When you're off stage, what's in your glass?

DVT: It depends on the season. Right now I drink Perrier with Cointreau; it's like delicious orange-flavored soda. And I always like to have taco parties; I live in Paris part-time, and I have Mexican theme nights. My Parisian friends love it. I did a shoot where I played Margarita Sames, the woman who mixed the first Margarita, and that was fun.

WE: What is the perfect location for a glamorous cocktail experience?

DVT: Whenever I am in Paris, I love to go to the Hemingway Bar because they make the most spectacular cocktails in the world, and the bartenders there are really fantastic. They always make me something new. I walk in and they say, "I came up with something while you were gone." They are my favorite Parisian bartenders.

WE: Le Cointreau Privé is opening in Paris. What can we expect there?

DVT: We wanted an intimate private bar, but it was important to me that my fans can come and enjoy my favorite cocktails in a private atmosphere. The décor was chosen by me, with the help of designers. I just wanted an experience for my fans, exclusive but accessible—not a snooty private bar. It will be in Montmartre. I hope it's a big success. I've got my fingers crossed that it is the first of many.

WE: Of all the cities in which you have launched the "Cointreau-politan," which was your favorite?

DVT: Sydney! The party was incredible. They made this huge chandelier of hundreds of Cointreau bottles. I also got to do a few shows for my fans. That really meant a lot to me.

—MIKE DE SIMONE AND JEFF JENSEN