HIGH SPIRITS

Call it reverse chic or call it confidence—the results are the same: We're much less status-conscious when it comes to wine and spirits. Knowledgeable, yes. Looking for quality, sure. But \$3 wine gets as much attention as \$40 cognac nowadays—maybe more, since the \$3 wine is a discovery. Our trustworthy expert explains it all for you



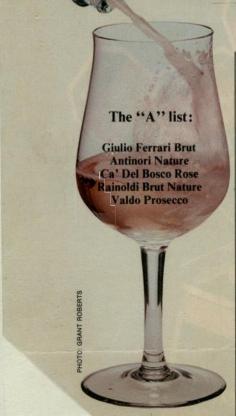
By Colman Andrews

METODO CHAMPENOIS SPARKLING WINES from Italy—spumantes, but not the sweet Asti variety urant in Ithaca, New te from Lebanon. You make terrific aperitifs. They're more refined than most Spansomething as benevoish and many American sparklers and less expensive than been made in so tragish and many American sparkiers and less experience of land ern New York, on u, I would suggest true champagne, but they're serious wines are Ca' del Bosco. The best are Ca' del Bosco. ce made, said wine and a champagnelike yeasty nose. The best are Ca' del Bosco and a champagnence yeasty mose. The oest are and Antinori, all staurant table in d symbol for the (try their ultradry Dosage Zéro), Berlucchi and Antinori, all staurant table in d symbol for the in the \$12 to \$18 range—or try the bargain-priced La Versa

of America's own fine bourbons, of course, but also the best sparkling wines of half a dozen countries, the best Dutch and English gins, the best rums of the Caribbean, the finest vodkas (from Japanese to Swedish, Smirnoff to Stolichnaya) and an array of first-class Scotch whiskies such as even Scotland rarely sees—as well as a veritable rainbow of sweet exotic cordials from every corner of the globe—among many other things. (If you want to expand the definition of the alcoholic beverage market just a little, we've even got whole cascades of domestic and imported mineral waters-those racy brand-name substitutes for, or enhancers of, the harder stuff.) My local supermarket, for heaven's sake, stocks South African sherry, chardonnay from Chile and Finnish cloudberry liqueur. In the variety, quality, and (sometimes) sheer maverick novelty of what's available to us, Americans are probably the luckiest imbibers in the world.

MAY 1984 \$1.95

HOT PROPERT



at around \$8 to \$10.

By Regina Nadelson Italy's new sparkle
One of the best-kept oenophile secrets is Italy's sparkling spumantes. They run the gamu from brut to refresh gamut from orut to refresh ingly fruity, can stand up to ingly food and range from a hearty food and range 22. Just hearty food and say 322. Just rock-bottom \$3 to \$22. now becoming available in now becoming available in the U.S., they're a bit hard to find but worth the effort. The best are listed at left. Earning honorable mentions are: Ca Del Bosco Franciacorta Pinot, Contratto Brut. Gran Cavit