



THE 50 GREATEST BARS ON EARTH

Wherever you travel, you deserve to sip in style. The drinks guru Paul Wootton is your guide to the classiest joints in all the world

BRITAIN

69 COLEBROOKE ROW London
As far as cocktail creation goes, this bar blows the boundaries. It's run by Tony Conigliaro, the Willy Wonka of the drinks world, whose experiments in a laboratory above the bar have resulted in inventions of wonder, some of which defy the laws of physics.
Order: Vintage El Presidente, a cask-aged version of the classic rum cocktail (£12.50).
020 7540 528993, @colebrookeroad

ARTESIAN AT THE LANGHAM HOTEL London

This is a dazzling hotel bar with a jaw-dropping David Collins interior, a vast collection of rums and a cocktail list that has been described as the best in the world. Oh, and the drinks arrive with garnishes more ornate than anything you'll see at the Chelsea Flower Show.
Order: Artesian Punch, the bar's signature rum drink, with maraschino, calvados and pineapple, finished with a rum float (£14.50).
020 7636 1000, artesian-bar.co.uk

BRAMBLE BAR Edinburgh

Bramble comes with a serious cocktail pedigree, evident in drinks such as Affinity, a Glenmorangie whisky-based cocktail aged in cask for a minimum of six weeks and presented to customers in a small wax-sealed bottle.
Order: Mint 500 — gin, mint and basil, served in a special teacup (£7).
0131 226 6343, bramblebar.co.uk

CONNAUGHT BAR AT THE CONNAUGHT London

The Connaught is arguably the best hotel bar in the capital. Orate doesn't begin to describe the art-deco interior, another shimmering masterpiece by David Collins. Drinks are exceptionally crafted, the martini trolley oozes theatre and you can snack on tapas by the Michelin-starred Hélène Darroze.
Order: Connaught Martini, stirred at your table (£17.50).
020 7354 3410, the-connaught.co.uk

MILK & HONEY London

This larger, plusher incarnation of the original Milk & Honey, in Manhattan, was the capital's first neo-speakeasy, a homage to 1930s glamour. Its low-lit

rooms and a list of forgotten classics have done more to influence London cocktail culture than any other bar.
Order: Lazy Man Flip, a rich mix of port, calvados, cream, sugar and egg yolk (£8.50).
020 7065 6840, milkhony.com/london

WHORSHIP STREET WHISTLING SHOP London

Give the Victorian gin palace a 21st-century makeover and this is the result. Modern culinary equipment such as rotary evaporators helps create drinks that list "super heat-treated chocolate wine", "Hereford soil distillate" and "removed cream" among their ingredients.
Order: Radiation Aged Cocktail, a blend of rum, Campari, Dubonnet and absinthe, mellowed by being irradiated in a lab — seriously (£12).
020 7247 0015, whistlingshop.com

BEST OF THE REST

Portobello Star, London Jake Burger, one of the great drinks-makers of our time, presides over this entertaining self-styled "cocktail tavern", which now offers gin-blending sessions at the Ginstitute on the top floor.
020 7229 8016, portobellostarbar.co.uk

American Bar at the Savoy, London A paean to the golden age of cocktails, with lavish art-deco design, a jazz-playing pianist and exceptionally well-groomed bar staff.
Order: American Bar at the Savoy, London
020 7836 4343, fairmont.com/savoy

The Bon Vivant, Edinburgh This is a pretty, candlelit, bistro-like venue with a regularly changing menu of cocktails and 43 wines by the glass.
0131 225 3275, bonvivantedinburgh.co.uk

Raoul's Cocktail Bar, Oxford A consistently excellent place, with friendly staff and a long, appetising list of drinks.
01865 553752, raoulsbar.co.uk

EUROPE

BAR DANDOLO AT THE HOTEL DANIELI Venice

Forget Harry's Bar and sip instead in the soothing calm of the Hotel Danieli, a short walk away. Its 14th-century palazzo provides the ideal setting in which to sip authentic bellinis, made with superior Bissol prosecco.
Order: a bellini made with fresh peach coulis (£15; May to October).
00 39 041 522 6480, danielihotelvenice.com

BLACK ANGEL'S Prague

A rather gothic underground venue, with exposed brick archways, chandeliers, heavy leather booths and a beautiful baroque bar. There's a pianist and a huge range of wines, spirits and cocktails.
Order: Black Angel's Old Fashioned, a gin-based adaptation of the classic bourbon cocktail (£4.50).
00 420 224 213807, blackangelsbar.cz

OHLA BOUTIQUE BAR AT THE OHLA HOTEL Barcelona

A cool, minimalist bar serving plenty of startling cocktail creations, courtesy of the bartenders Massimo La Rocca and Guiseppa Santamaría. There's some startling furniture, too, including oversized red chairs and stools that look suspiciously like chess pieces.
Order: Irish Mermaid, whiskey-based and poured from a crystal teapot (£11).
00 34 933 415050, ohlahotel.com

BUCK AND BRECK Berlin

Buck and Breck is a single room, with a rectangular bar seating just a dozen guests. It's rather like being at a dinner party. The dark, understated decor focuses attention on the main event: the exquisite drinks being fashioned in front of you. Make sure you book ahead.
Order: a Buck and Breck, potently combining cognac, absinthe and champagne (£29).
buckandbreck.com

CAPRI LOUNGE Cologne

A subterranean drinking den with moody lighting and a treasure trove of premium spirits that glows invitingly behind the bar. Capri Lounge prides itself on the kind of professionalism that raises the simple act of serving a cigar into an art form.
Order: Truffle Sazerac, made with cognac, port and white truffle oil (£20).
00 49 221 820 3360, capri-lounge.com

DRY MARTINI Barcelona

With antique brands of gin and vermouth lovingly displayed, this vintage bar doubles as a martini academy. The service and decor hark back to an earlier age, and a quirky digital display shows the number of martinis they've sold to date — it's more than a million.
Order: after the obligatory dry martini, try a Ximz, a mix of vodka and Pedro Ximenez sherry (£9.75).
00 34 932 175072, www.drymartinibc.com

RUBY Copenhagen

The best bar in the Danish capital offers a welcome break from the attitude evident in many of today's establishments. Guests lounge on sofas in a friendly, laconic way, sipping excellent seasonal cocktails. There's good music and a rather special basement to explore.
Order: Meador Mix — Zubovka vodka, fresh serran, elderflower, dandelion anchoisette (£12).
00 45 3393 1203, ruby.dk

BEST OF THE REST

A for Athens Athens A fashionable rooftop bar with good drinks and even better views of the Acropolis.
00 30 210 324 414, aforathens.com

Bar Immertry, Berlin Ricardo Albrecht captives a crack team of bartenders at his lounge bar situated at discerning enkers.
00 49 157 8592 21, bar-immertry.de

Le Blizzard, Val d'Isère The perfect winter bolt hole — a roaring fire, dry martinis and Frank Sinatra impromptu if to know.
00 33 4 79 06 02 07, hotelblizzard.com

Boutiq Bar, Budapest The best cocktail bar in Hungary, with an extensive list of classic twists, vintage drinks and signature inventions.
Order: after the obligatory dry martini, try a Ximz, a mix of vodka and Pedro Ximenez sherry (£9.75).
00 36 30 229 1821, boutiqbar.hu

Hiding in Plain Sight, Amsterdam

Relatively new, with an amusing cocktail list and a brilliant take on the zombie — served in a 16oz skull and sporting fire.
00 31 20 757 1890, hpsamsterdam.com

Mikkeller Bar, Copenhagen

Minimalist Scandinavian design and wine of the greatest craft beers from around the globe.
Order: Meador Mix — Zubovka vodka, fresh serran, elderflower, dandelion anchoisette (£12).
00 45 3393 1203, mikkeller.dk

AMERICA

15 ROMOLO San Francisco

An unpretentious North Beach saloon bar offering laid-back charm, quality drinks and superior service. Its brunch, which includes alcoholic punch and a waffle soaked in a shot — usually rum — is mind-blowing.
Order: Wilson's Spiced Smash, a mix of spiced rum, caramelised pineapple syrup, lime and soda (£8).
00 1 415 388 1359, 15romolo.com

THE AVIARY Chicago

The most exciting bar opening of 2011 — brainchild of Grant Achatz, who trained as a chef at El Bulli and runs the three-Michelin-starred Alinea — the Aviary offers a startlingly original take on the cocktail, with drinks that are deconstructed, interactive and even inside out.
Order: the Blueberry — rye, vermouth and verjus infused with fruit and mint (£15).
00 1 312 226 0868, theaviary.com

DEATH & COMPANY New York

Classy cocktails in a dark, sexy room on the Lower East Side. There's no standing allowed, so sit in a candlelit booth or pull up a stool by the bar and watch the talented team shake you a Rita Hayworth, a Grass Kilt or a Last Train to Oaxaca.
Order: Valley of Kings Punch, combining pisco, fresh pineapple, lime and grapefruit juice, and champagne (serves 4-6; £26).
00 1 212 388 0882, deathandcompany.com

LA DESCARGA Los Angeles

Narnia-style, you walk through a warzone to access this bar. But there's no White Witch waiting on the other side — just a smokin' slice of old Havana, with classic rum cocktails, live Latin music and burlesque dancers on the bar.
Order: a Bad Spaniard, made with rum and sweetened condensed milk (£7.50).
00 1 415 388 1359, 15romolo.com

HORSE BRASS PUB Portland

The Horse Brass purports to be a "traditional English-style pub" in Oregon. That might be true, but only if you think of TGI Friday's as an English-style pub. Still, don't let that put you off. With a warm welcome and 99 local, regional and international beers on tap, it's a pint drinker's paradise.
Order: any of the local guest beers (from £2.70).
00 1 503 232 2202, horsebrass.com

PDT New York

Accessed through an old telephone box inside a hot-dog store, PDT has become the most talked-about bar in the world — ironic, given that its name stands for Please Don't Tell. It may no longer be a secret, but Jim Meehan's inspiring speakeasy lounge remains world-class.
Order: a Bacon-Infused Old Fashioned, which is bacon-infused bourbon with maple syrup (£9.50).
00 1 212 694 0386, pdt.nyc.com

SMUGGLER'S COVE San Francisco

With its rigging, timber, glass anchor and skulls, the pirate's lair setting is wonderfully kitsch: not so much a bar as the remnants of a shipwreck. But behind the pirate paraphernalia and 2ft straws is an establishment that's serious about its rum cocktails.
Order: the Scorpion Bowl, a potent mix of booze, fruit and fire (serves 4; £22).
00 1 415 388 1900, smugglerscove.com

THE VARNISH Los Angeles

This bar is part-owned by Isiah Petraske, the gentleman who gave us Milk & Honey, in Manhattan, so it's no surprise to find a discover, cocktail, jazz affair, with impeccable cocktail credentials. It's rumored to be the Mad Men actress Christina Hendricks's favourite watering hole.
Order: the Bartender's Choice — a bespoke drink, just for you (£2.50).
00 1 213 622 9999, 213nightlife.com

BEST OF THE REST

Daddy O, New York Where New York's finest bartenders go to drink on their night off. Enough said.
00 1 212 434 8694, daddysnyc.com

Drink, Boston Bespoke drinks for customers are the name of the game at this celebrated, convivial venue.
00 1 617 691 1806, drinkboston.com

Employees Only, New York Barflies will love the superb art-deco styling, the sturdy cocktail list and the brilliant late-night dining menu, offering food until 3.30am.
00 1 212 262 3021, employeesonlynyc.com

Tommy's Mexican Restaurant, San Francisco The last word in tequila. The agave syrup-inspired Tommy's Margarita, which you'll see on cocktail lists all over the world, was invented by the owner, Julio Hernandez.
00 1 415 387 4747, tommyatequila.com

From left: the Aviary resort, in Babi; the Artesian bar's award-winning Oye Mi Cante cocktail; and the Artesian at the Langham Hotel, London