

the o g's guide

Cocktail *Power*

Now that craft cocktails are the norm, drinking well has never been easier, nor the experimentation more exciting. We've spotlighted several cities that best represent what's happening in mixology right now, plus the newest trends to look for on menus far and wide. Kudos to today's bartenders, especially in our region—they're really shaking things up.

COURTESY OF BOILERMAKER HOUSE

Gunpowder
Treason, at
Boilermaker
House, in
Melbourne.

THE NIGHTS I CAN'T REMEMBER,
THE PEOPLE I WON'T FORGET.



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: Touché Hombre's open-air upstairs; at Bunker, a French Martini; Kiattikoon Auengcum mans the Bunker bar; stuffed piquillo peppers, new on the Il Fumo menu; Pailin Sajjanit pours a Sherry Flip at Il Fumo; roasted baby carrots at Bunker.



BANGKOK

DRINK, EAT, REPEAT

As mixing cocktails becomes as complicated as mastering a Julia Child recipe, it's little wonder that the foodie and quaffer cultures have collided to such delicious effect. Some of the city's best new bars are found sharing space with the hottest kitchens. Here, three great Bangkok restaurants to get lit. — Jeninne Lee-St. John

TOUCHE HOMBRE

You need to get the chicken. No, not the *pollo de habenero* tacos—although, get those, too. We mean the chicken-shaped pitchers of booze that make the best party-pleasers to souse the city this year. The new, hip-hop soundtracked Touché Hombre in Bangkok's bursting Thonglor 'hood is the first outpost outside Oz of the beloved Melbourne-born taqueria. But it also bills itself as a mezcateria, rocking 15 types of mezcals and so many tequilas that no other bar in Thailand comes close (for more on the agave trend, see page 62), and cheekily tossing a Bloody Maria Oyster shooter on the food menu.

Such liquid ambition shouldn't be surprising from the Sapparat Group, which basically introduced Bangkok to the craft cocktail (Hyde & Seek) and precision-coffee bar (Rocket) cultures. Here, mixmaster Sebastian de la Cruz has dreamed up 10 delicious, original agave-based specialties; try the Nacho Libre, with El Jimador Reposado, Yellow Chartreuse, vermouth, lemon and pineapple. Two must-eats: the tuna tostadas, and the octopus and chorizo tacos, wrapped in executive chef Patrick Marten's authentic-Mexican corn tortillas. As for the big chickens, they hold about 10 glasses of nectar, and options

range from the easy-drinking La Paloma to the intoxicating El Chupa Cabra (or, Goat Sucker), packed with 12-centiliters of tequila and mezcals. For its hefty Bt6,950 pricetag, you could probably buy a real goat, but we doubt it would get along as well with the chicken. fb.com/touchehombrebangkok. **BUNKER** Inventive, exploratory chef Arnie Marcella has run several Michelin-starred kitchens, but he was also a consultant at seminal New York speakeasy Death & Co, a pioneer of the neo-retro cocktail movement. His well-rounded CV makes him a living embodiment of this 'drink

well-dine well' trend. And when you pair that with the expertise of beverage director Andreas Pergher—a sweetheart of a sommelier who believes in value-for-money wines and more than holds his own with booze and craft beers—you've got a drinking dream team. Pergher continually tweaks the alcohol menus to match Marcella's ever-changing Contemporary American food offerings, of which the new, roasted baby carrots are heaven on a plate (also get the veal agnolotti with sweetbread, and the melty smoked wagyu beef rib). But in general, the cocktails in Bunker's dystopian-chic, concrete-walled,

TOP LEFT: CHANOK THAMMAKITT; PORNSAK NA NAKORN (4)

glass-lantern-lit, ground-level bar veer to well-done classics newly interpreted; we recommend the Tokyo Rose, starring sweet, fermentation-phase nigori sake. The range of bourbons, ryes and mezcals will impress, yet these guys are passionate about gin, and for that we suggest you head up to the third-floor balcony bar, which focuses on the botanical elixir, along with a bunch of taps custom-made for their global selection of craft beers. Pour it on. bunkerbkk.com.

IL FUMO

It's tempting to call the Il Fumo lounge a mancave, what with the low lights, wood paneling, wall of whiskey, and buttery leather armchairs. But it's a woman who rules this roost, and a superstar woman at that. The reigning Southeast Asia Bartender of the Year is Il Fumo's bar director Pailin "Milk" Sajjanit, a firecracker personality with a dapper sense of style and the keenest intuition. She's put together a tome of a menu highlighting

nouveau classics, such as the whole egg-whipped Sherry Flip that dates as far back as 1874, but you might as well just have a little chat with Sajjanit and let her decipher your desires.

To take home the crown from the Diageo World Class awards in Bali this summer, she had to create four cocktails in eight minutes, so you know she's good at thinking on her feet. While she heads back behind the bar, let yourself sink into the leather and soak in the surrounds. Look into the light—specifically the big, glass meat locker displaying crimson hunks of beef from Galicia, Tuscany, Queensland... New head chef Nelson Amorim has concocted a textured menu, including *piquillo* peppers stuffed with burrata, marscapone and Parmesan atop eggplant purée, that perfectly complements all those cuts. Savor your Sherry Flip then adjourn to dinner, after which a Bulleit rye-Licor 43-orange bitters Louis Old Fashioned—and that excellent armchair—awaits. ilfumo.co.



Chicken pitcher and fish tacos at Touché Hombres.

NEW FASHIONEDS

Timeless classics have never been so timely. Spurred by ubiquitous speakeasies, an obsession with gin and whiskey, and a collective *Midnight in Paris* mentality, old favorites now occupy prime menu real estate. While the latest incarnations carry hallmarks of the original recipes, some are reborn with experimental, even unorthodox, twists. —*Kissa Castañeda-McDermott*

NEGRONI

BITTERS, IN MANILA

Though the origins of this traditional aperitif are steeped in lore, the most widely accepted version is that Count Camillo Negroni, a swashbuckling ne'er-do-well who roamed the American Wild West as a rodeo cowboy, returned to his native Florence and asked for a stiffer version of his usual Campari-vermouth-soda drink, the Americano. Bartender Forso Scarselli obliged him by swapping soda with gin; today, on this side of the world, mixologist Lee Watson, who also helms ABV, makes a fruitful update at his newest bar, Bitters. His Negroni's Love Child replaces gin with the slightly sweet Asti, before finishing it off with a few dashes of sour cherry bitters. The count would be sated. 63-2/942-9750.

JULEP

AKADEMI, IN BALI

The old-school-elegant julep took over verandas in the 1800s American South first as a breakfast drink, then became popular with everyone from U.S. presidents to Hemingway-era literati. This sweet sipper is synonymous with bourbon, but some barmen are swapping in other regional spirits. No one is more passionate about Balinese liquors than Potato Head Family head mixologist Dre Masso, who helms the open-plan Akademi bar at the new Katamama hotel. Order his Jumping Julep, full of local ingredients like *blimbing buluh* juice, jack fruit purée, and orange-and-clove-

infused *arak* (Bali's favorite rice-based moonshine). akademi-bar.com.

OLD FASHIONED VEA RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE, IN HONG KONG

Suave, yet simple, classy but unpretentious, this

preferred cocktail of the modern gentleman can trace its roots back to at least 1806. Antonio Lai, the lauded pioneer of "multisensory mixology," adds another layer of manliness to his version, the Bone Marrow Old

Fashioned. Featuring umami-rich bone marrow-washed bourbon and dashes of Angostura aromatic bitters, it's a heady drink that's meant to be nursed. No need to order dinner; move right on to a digestif and coffee. vea.hk.

OLD CUBAN

ONE-NINETY BAR AND TERRAZA, IN SINGAPORE

Known as a cross between a French 75 and a mojito, the old Cuban retains some of the latter's flavor profile, but throws in bitters and champagne. When Audrey Saunders of New York's legendary Pegu Club created this tippie, she served it double-strained, garnished with a sugared vanilla bean. The One-Ninety F1, crafted by Proof & Company for the Four Seasons Singapore bar in time for racing season, adds coconut water and raspberries, meant to address the dehydration Formula One drivers feel after a race. fourseasons.com/singapore.

GIN FIZZ

JIN AT EBONY, IN GUANGZHOU

An effervescent cousin of a sour first whipped up in 1888 by Henry C. Ramos in New Orleans, this southern staple quickly spread and by the Roaring Twenties was fueling flapper parties across America. Despite its succinct ingredient list, the Ramos gin fizz is a labor of love, needing three to 10 minutes of vigorous shaking to bring it to frothy completion. For a modern version, head to the first-ever gin bar in southern China, which stocks 37 types of gin, including house-infused versions like Mandarin Oolong, Korean red ginseng, and goji berries and dates. Ask for the Honey Sage Gin Fizz, with a smoky bacon undertone in tune with the moreish palate of the Big Easy. mandarinoriental.com/guangzhou.



COURTESY OF VEA RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Get cozy at Elbow Room; Le Boutier's Ros Sereysothea, named for one of Cambodia's great crooners; a full-bodied red at Oeno Wine Bar.



PHNOM PENH

LOCAL LIBATIONS

Bars in Cambodia's capital have long stuck to safe import staples, attempting to win over patrons with heady splashes of liquor and sugary bases. The tide is turning though, as inventive mixologists give their beverages unusual local twists. These new spots incorporate homegrown ingredients, from fish sauce to Kampot's famed black pepper, to create fresh flavors. —Holly Robertson

ELBOW ROOM

The menu slides out of a 45rpm record sleeve to reveal Volume One of the city's most au courant cocktail list. Each drink is either an ode to hip-hop, which plays all night long, or an intriguing story of the capital's chaotic streets. Mixologists go on pre-dawn foraging expeditions for butterfly pea flowers, which lend a shocking blue hue to house-made syrup.

DRINK THIS: Yuz Ya Head: jasmine tea-infused rum, sesame orgeat syrup, lime, coconut and yuzu foam. fb.com/elbowrm.

ALCHEMY GASTROPUB

In the heart of the emergent Russian Market area is a welcome addition to the small but growing nightlife segment. Though there's plenty of craft beer, you'll also find appetizing cocktails, each with components found in traditional Cambodian cuisine—from red-hot chili peppers to homemade pineapple palm sugar juice.

DRINK THIS: One Hot Minute: Khmer chilies, Monkey Shoulder whiskey and honey from Mondulki province. fb.com/alchemygastro.

LE BOUTIER

With hopes of rekindling the spirit of Cambodia's musical 'Golden Age' in the 1960s, it's fitting that the cocktail list at this stylish three-story bar on hip Street 308 includes nods to icons of the era such as crooner Sinn Sisamouth, and exclusively spins Cambodian rock 'n' roll.

DRINK THIS: 1,000 Tears of a Tarantula: Samai dark rum, kaffir lime, curry syrup, coconut, benedictine, pineapple and fish sauce. leboutier.com.

OENO WINE BAR

Hotel bars often lack inventiveness, but Villa Oeno's is defying that stereotype with aplomb. Using oak barrels imported from the U.S., the venue produces aged mai tais, negronis and more, before applying a smoking gun to add rich aromas moments before the drinks are served up to customers.

DRINK THIS: Ginger Mojito: light rum, ginger, fresh mint leaves, lime, sugar syrup and hibiscus tea. projects.urbandesign.asia/villa-oeno.

NAANG AT MONSOON

A Cambodian cook would no doubt recognize much of the lineup in Naang's infused spirits collection, but would probably never have thought about combining them with alcohol, as this street-side watering hole does. The resulting drinks run the gambit from savory to spicy, but are almost always surprising.

DRINK THIS: Havana Heat: galangal- and cinnamon-infused Havana rum. fb.com/NaaangAtMonsoon.

POP-UP PARTIES

Creative party throwers are luring the masses to ever more extraordinary locations with the help of social media. In **New York City**, events by You Are So Lucky (youaresolucky.com) are part rager, part performance art: the group once bused 1,500 revelers to a deserted manor for a Felliniesque night of opera, dancing and champagne aplenty. We Are the Oracle (fb.com/wearetheoracle) throws themed soirées in **Paris**, like a Downton Abbey-inspired fête in the abandoned Rothschild mansion or a masquerade ball in the catacombs. And in spite of a Fight Club-worthy commitment to secrecy, **Hong Kong**-based Bunker (bunker.com.hk) draws crowds for all-night raves. Partygoers can enjoy laser shows and fire-swallowing acts in a rural ghost town or, fittingly, a crumbling World War II bunker. —Laura Itzkowitz

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF ELBOW ROOM; COURTESY OF LE BOUTIER; COURTESY OF OENO WINE BAR



EAT-WASHED COCKTAILS

Tequila's sultry big sister saunters into our hearts, giving the boot to that shot glass-sloshed, lime-and-salt-leavened, blue agave-based liquor. Mezcal distillers, who use *piñas* from 150 types of agave, smoke them in pits for days, infusing flavor from the wood used to heat the stones. This means the drink, like wine, can express a broad range of notes, from ash or walnut to citrus or chili. Recent years have seen bars such as Vasco (vascosingapore.com) in **Singapore** embracing the complex spirit in cocktails like the Mezcal '70, with Campari, sweet vermouth and chocolate bitters. A Toda Madre (atodamadre.com.ph), **Manila's** most extensive tequila bar, whips the smoky stuff into a margarita. **Hong Kong** is in the throes of a mezcal boom, with hotspots like Yardbird (yardbirdrestaurant.com) and Brickhouse (brickhouse.com.hk) churning out serious mezcal cocktails. One of the biggest selections in town is at Chino (chinohk.com), a Japanese-Mexican fusion joint with 23 varieties. Sip them neat or order a Mezcal Old Fashioned, with smooth Los Danzantes Añejo, agave and orange bitters. —*Diana Hubbell*



A lively crowd goes into The Woods. LEFT: Bitters & Sweets serves a moreish S'mores skillet. ABOVE: A Rosie Pink Sheet at Wolf Market.

HONG KONG

CRAFT CONCEPTS

In a city that already boasts some of the world's most sophisticated sipping options, bars are turning to new and increasingly innovative ways to stand out from the crowd. Here, four examples of bars at their idiosyncratic best. —*Helen Dalley*

BESPOKE BITTERS

BITTERS & SWEETS

Central's newest hot spot mixes house-made bitters with a menu that's big on dessert: witness their cayenne-laced-dark chocolate and homemade graham cracker S'mores. The cocktail list is split between signatures and reimagined classics, with popular examples of the former including The Sesame, in which spiced rum and black sesame deliver a boozy take on a traditional Chinese dessert. An imaginative play on an Old Fashioned, The Smokey Joe mixes house-infused coffee bourbon and chocolate bitters while cherry wood smoke adds a final flourish. fb.com/bittersandsweetshk.

MIXOLOGY DÉGUSTATION

THE WOODS

A jaunt to The Woods today is sure to reveal a big surprise: a culinary take on mixology that appeals to serious foodies. At its eight-seater bar area, the prix-fixe menu is turned on its head as cocktails take center stage and food is relegated to small bites on the side. Its classic menu includes a Beet Negroni, with Barbie-pink house-infused gin, and the Dirty Dill Martini, with a zesty wallop of pickle brine. Past seasonal shakers have incorporated local ingredients such as snow peas and pea sprouts, as was the case with the gin-based Poddington Pea. No matter what you order, it's a veritable harvest bounty. thewoods.hk.

HAVANA IN HONG KONG

DELIGATOR

With its distressed concrete walls, peeling paint, faux crocodile skin and funky art, this Wanchai newcomer channels Cuba's faded grandeur. The kitchen griddles up buttery, slow-roasted-pork-shoulder Cubanos. A live Cuban band plays on Saturday evenings, but the joint also hosts eclectic entertainment options from pop-up barbershops to *Zoolander*-themed disco boogie parties. Rum is, of course, a strong suit and appears in many guises. One of the best is appropriately retro: a strong, smooth daiquiri that'll transport you to sunnier shores. fb.com/deligatorhongkong.

BROKERAGE BAR

WOLF MARKET

In his heyday, the real Wolf of Wall Street, Jordan Belfort, would have relished buying rounds for his cronies at this stock market-themed bar, where punters watch an LED screen running across the ceiling with fluctuating drink prices to time their order to market crashes. While bankers may stick to champers, the cocktails at this new Lan Kwai Fong hangout are imaginative, including the Golden Cross (Bulleit bourbon, Courvoisier V.S.O.P, maple syrup and coffee beans). As a bonus, they open at noon, so decadent financial types can play DiCaprio with a three-Earl Grey-infused-martini lunch. wolfmarket.com.hk.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF BITTERS & SWEETS; COURTESY OF THE WOODS; COURTESY OF WOLF MARKET

Second Line
Julep from
Boilermaker
House.

HIT THE BOTTLE

In Melbourne, bartenders are taking one of mixology's latest trends to new heights: cocktails that have been bottled or aged—sometimes both. Though the quest for convenience sparked the craze, it turns out premade drinks have their own special character. "You can achieve an amalgamation of flavors not possible through shaking or stirring," says Daniel Mason, manager of Joe Taylor. Here, five standard-bearers of the batch-cocktail revolution—all within bar-crawl distance. —*Carrie Hutchinson*

JOE TAYLOR

At its launch party, the bar staff mixed and bottled Palomas, a tequila-grapefruit highball, ahead of time for easy serving. The cocktail was a hit, and since then they've tacked on new batch drinks like the Cuba Negra: a blend of vermouths replicates cota, then the blend is carbonated, bottled and served with fresh lime. fb.com/joetaylorbar.

HEARTBREAKER

Founder Michael Madrusan—the man behind the award-winning bar Everleigh—cemented his reputation as one of Melbourne's mixology elite when he launched the Everleigh Bottling Co. last year. At this divey, neon-lit pub, EBC's "Famous Four"—Manhattan, martini, negroni and Old Fashioned—make up the entire cocktail menu. heartbreakerbar.com.au.

BOILERMAKER HOUSE

This intimate bar offers a single aged cocktail, the aptly named From the Solera: Aberfeldy whisky, rum, house-blended vermouth and a chocolate malted orgeat. It's created in a tiered, three-barrel solera, a centuries-old aging system used by Spanish sherry makers. As the mixture is bottled from the lowest barrel, each level is topped off from the one above, making the final drink a complex blend of batches old and new. boilermakerhouse.com.au.

NOBLE EXPERIMENT

Countertop casks announce the serious aging intentions of this drinking den. Its extensive list includes a page of barrel- and bottle-aged specialties, all of which are left to steep for at least two months to let the flavors develop. Try the Spencer Takes Manhattan, a blend of bourbon, vermouth and blackberry liqueur aged in a black-raspberry-and-coffee-seasoned barrel. thenobleexperiment.com.au.

BAR LIBERTY

Co-owner Michael Baschetta prepares four different cocktails daily, decanting them into apothecary bottles for service. The list changes regularly, but the Briny Bay (vodka, olive brine, Murray River salt and bay-leaf oil) is a must-try when it's on the menu. It's a stylish, martini-inspired tippie to finish off an evening. barliberty.com.

SAVORY CHARACTERS

Eshewing saccharine cosmos and daiquiris, today's most innovative bartenders are crossing over to the saline side. Grandma's favorite panacea gets a less-wholesome makeover with Chicken Soup for the Alcoholic's Soul, an umami-loaded creation from the mixologists at Hopscotch (hopscotch.sg) in **Singapore**. Pour the bone broth spiked with bonito-infused vodka warm from a tea kettle to cure what ails you. Over in **Bangkok**, the Tee Yai at WTF Bar & Gallery (wtfbangkok.com) packs a punch courtesy of three types of hot sauce. Of course, the original and still one of the best of the genre remains the Bloody Mary, the Platonic ideal of which can be found at Bar Mimitsuka (bar-mimi.com), a tiny, invitation-only watering hole in **Tokyo**. You'll find no outlandish garnishes here, just a single spartan cube of ice and spicy, liquid perfection. —*D.H.*

COURTESY OF BOILERMAKER HOUSE



The main bar at 878.

BUENOS AIRES

SPEAK LOW

Over the past decade, speakeasy-style bars have become a hallmark of thriving nightlife—a signal that a city's after-hours scene is worth the plane fare. And right now Buenos Aires is the epicenter of cool, low-profile hangouts serving bygone-era hooch. —*Sorrel Moseley-Williams*

J.W. BRADLEY LTD.

Clamber aboard a replica railcar to enter this new Orient Express-themed watering hole, complete with European-inspired cocktails and wood sleepers repurposed as the bar. Start with the King's Cross, a gin and Earl Grey mix that's sure to become a classic. bradleyltdbar.com.

HARRISON SPEAKEASY

Newcomers and nonmembers must first dine at sushi joint Nicky NY, then ask to "see the cellar" to be whisked back to this Jazz Age social club, where bartenders sling drinks like the Branca Smash: Fernet Branca with fresh pineapple, lime juice and mint. nicky-harrison.com.

FLORERÍA ATLÁNTICO

A fake refrigerator in a flower shop is the portal to this award-winning basement drinking den. Don't miss the Tereré Tonic, made with Príncipe de los Apóstoles, a mellow Argentinean gin distilled with regional botanicals like yerba maté. floreriaatlantico.com.ar.

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The hidden-bar-within-a-bar configuration—a set of unmarked steel doors in the back lead to a second space—amplifies 878's cloak-and-dagger vibe. Both rooms serve a mean Cynar Julep, a house favorite that's at once bitter and slightly sweet. 878bar.com.ar.

FAT-WASHED COCKTAILS

Everything's better with bacon, so it was only a matter of time before bartenders figured out how to slip a little greasy goodness into your glass. Though it appears everywhere in that quintessential brunch accompaniment, the Bacon Bloody Mary, some bars are getting more creative with concoctions such as the Bacon Blah Blah, a bourbon base with bacon oil, egg white and lime at Wing N' Thing, a funky, Old Town eatery in **Bangkok**, or the Iberian lard-washed (and bacon-garnished) Stone & Knives at Isono (isono.com.hk) in **Hong Kong**. Fat-washing, the process of emulsifying fat molecules in liquid that makes these full-flavored, mouth-coating libations possible can be used in even more daring ways. In a clever nod to the Thai palate, Ah Sam Cold Drink Stall (fb.com/AhSamColdDrinkStall), a hidden speakeasy in **Singapore**, shakes up a mean Moo Daeng Cocktail, made with whiskey and blowtorched *char siu*. —*D.H.*



THE RISE OF RUM

Long considered merely a stiff complement to cola—or worse, the preferred drink of spring breakers—rum has finally moved up from the bottom shelf. For a taste of the tiki renaissance that's helped rum revamp its image, head to Pouring Ribbons (pouringribbons.com), in New York City, for Mondays with Miller. Tiki expert Brian Miller mixes retooled island standbys; his version of the Painkiller is made with pineapple juice, cinnamon syrup and coffee-infused rum. If you're craving a less tropical take on the spirit, pay a visit to Bertin's Melody Nelson (2 Novalisstrasse; 49-177/744-6751) for a Black Mojito—a tippie of dark rum, blackberries and mint that's not on the menu, but is legendary nonetheless. In Sydney, the rum bar Lobo Plantation (thelobo.com.au) serves the high-end stuff neat. A seven-course flight lets you sip your way through distilling regions around the world. For the definitive sample, try the High Roller's Private Jet flight, featuring rare and limited-release rums for a cool US\$294. —*Erika Owen*

ATLANTA

PROOF POSITIVE

Cocktails made with low-alcohol booze have become increasingly popular, and Atlanta's at the forefront of the trend. So-called "suppressor" drinks—the antithesis of ultra-potent "revivers"—swap hard liquor for fortified or sparkling wines, layering them with liqueurs, juices, sodas, and fruit for a complex beverage that won't have you stumbling home.

And according to Atlanta cocktail pioneer Greg Best, that's exactly the point. He's now co-owner of Ticonderoga Club (ticonderogaclub.com), a Colonial-inspired tavern, but kicked off the trend when he was behind the bar at the upscale pub Holeman & Finch (holemanfinch.com), mixing dry vermouth, Cocchi Americano, sherry, and grapefruit bitters to create an anti-cocktail he called Suppressor No. 1. "Atlanta is a driving town, so having several boozy drinks in a night doesn't work here," he says.

Barkeeps around the city have followed Best's lead, adding a low-proof cocktail or two to their own menus. At Ration & Dram (rationanddram.com), bartender Andy Minchow's Suppressor #7—Pommeau de Normandie, Cynar and sparkling

wine—is a perennial favorite, as is Cooks & Soldiers' (cooksandsoldiers.com) La Lorea, a zippy concoction of Casoni 1814, Cocchi Rosa, lemon, honey and cava. Some choose suppressors because they're less intimidating than, say, a high-octane martini. But they're also true drinkers' drinks, showing what a bartender can do when he doesn't have the harder stuff to fall back on. That's what excites Eduardo Guzman, beverage manager for the Atlanta hot spots JCT Kitchen & Bar, the Optimist, and Beetle Cat (fordfry.com), which all serve low-proof cocktails. "Removing the liquor base creates a whole new world of possibilities," Guzman says.

At Ticonderoga Club, those include the Poor Fella—port, sherry, Coca-Cola, sorghum and lime—as well as the Hootchy Cider Punch, with French cider, Amer Ticon (a house-made riff on Amer Picon) and bitters. As low-ABV options pop up alongside traditional cocktails, Atlantans often order them without realizing it. "People choose these drinks because they have cool ingredients, not necessarily because they're low-alcohol," says Ticonderoga Club co-owner Paul Calvert. —Allison Entreklin



Cocktails at JCT Kitchen & Bar. BELOW: The bar at Beetle Cat.



THE RICE STUFF

A sake revival is under way as bars and breweries the world over experiment with new approaches. In San Francisco, the Michelin-starred Nico (nicosf.com) uses sake in place of liquor in cocktails, infusing it with ingredients like juniper or molasses to re-create the taste of higher-proof spirits. London's 7 Tales (sosharulondon.com), a Tokyo-inspired

cocktail bar, forgoes cheap hot sake in favor of chilled rice wine mixed into drinks such as the Nikkei Martinez, with pisco, edible flowers and black salt. You'll find a similarly new-school ethos at Sake One (sakeone.com), a brewery in Forest Grove, Oregon, west of Portland. There, varieties such as G Joy Genshu are sipped cold to highlight the nuanced flavor profiles. —E.O.



FROM TOP: MARY CAROLINE RUSSELL; ANDREW THOMAS LEE; ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN SPROULS