

LONDON CALLING



Our first missive from London takes a look at four of the coolest bars from the city's leading hotels. Often a starting point for the traveller, bars located in posh accommodation hotels are sometimes a tad boring, however that is not a label that any of these 'charmers' would be saddled with. Read on.....

The Mandarin Bar at the Oriental Hyde Park in London is one of the city's hottest places to be seen according to Time Out magazine. The bar is decked out with leather armchairs, mohair, marble, glass, mirrors and wood, the walls lined with silk. The bar itself is a catwalk with no products on full view; they are concealed behind frosted, backlit walls. The bar's cocktail menu is as inviting as the venue's ambience. Here are just a few of the concoctions tantalising tastebuds:

Madame Butterfly - Fresh watermelon shaken with Grand Marnier and Passoa, topped with champagne
 Honeyberry Fizz - 42 Below honey vodka and Chambord shaken, strained and topped with champagne
 Fools Gold - Havana Club Anejo Especial shaken with apricot brandy, lime and pineapple juice, served long with a Galliano float
 Watermelon Martini - Absolut Blue shaken with crushed watermelon and a whisper of melon liqueur

Bonds Bar in Threadneedle Street London is the perfect place to meet for cocktails during and after work. A lively bar buzzing with the excitement of the city, Bonds claims London's best wine list, 65 signature cocktails and a Tapas menu sourced from Spain's finest producers. Signature cocktails from Bonds Bar include:

Bison kick G.Cassino - Zubrowka Bison Grass Vodka, fresh apple juice, kiwi syrup topped with Mumm Champagne
 Royal Aperitif L.Balbinot - Aperol, passion fruit syrup, Martini Bianco and fresh orange juice topped up with Mumm Champagne
 Senorita Alessandra - Stolichnaya Raspberry Vodka, Cointreau, lime juice, sugar cane syrup, apple juice and Raspberry Liqueur shaken into a sling glass.

The Berkley Blue Bar in Knightsbridge is designer heaven. David Collins, the creative genius behind the Vivienne Westwood boutiques, is in full flight here; the bar's made from white onyx with a black crocodile-print leather floor. A fifty seat bar, its most outstanding feature is the striking colour of the room, which Collins has termed 'Lutyens Blue'. The overall result; sumptuous and individual. Choose from over 50 different whiskies, a wide range of champagnes including Cristal, original and classic cocktails and a selected range of wine by the glass. A specially created Grape and Smoke menu is designed to pair cigars with carefully chosen wines to enhance the connoisseur's enjoyment. Again Tapas is the flavour of the day with sweet and savoury choices.

Tropical Tang - Aperol, orange spicy tea, half orange squeezed, ginger, passion fruit and papaya muddled and shaken
 Italian Job - Campari, 42 Below passion fruit vodka, orange pulp, passion fruit
 Cucumber & Guave Tini - Cachaza and Frangelico muddled cucumber and guava puree, gomme syrup and lime juice
 Affinity - Cuervo Gold, strawberries, basil leaves and vanilla sugar

Last, but certainly not least is **The Long Bar** at The Sanderson Hotel. At some 80-feet in length, Sanderson's dramatic, glowing onyx Long Bar is the focal point for this venue. Classic and innovative cocktails fill the seasonally changing menu and there are ample bar munchies. Guests can either sit around the bar atop the striking 'eye' stools, or relax in the sanctuary of the Courtyard. Cocktail concoctions currently include the Sanderson Martini - Wyborowa Lemon Vodka, Polstar Cucumber Vodka, Brown Sugar, Apple Juice and Fresh Grapes; Pear Blossom - Cariel Vanilla Vodka and Poire William shaken with Elderflower water, pears and ginger; and Frost Bite - Bison Grass Vodka and Crème de Cassis stirred with crushed blueberries, lemons and charged with champagne.