

# Top Tens

## Shaken Not Stirred: London's Top Cocktail Bars

by Judith Schrut

**Y**ou say *tomato* and we say *tomato* - on that we can agree. So, why do we still argue as to which of us, Americans or Brits, invented the noble cocktail? It's a debate that's raged for decades, usually after we've had a few tipples or toddies. Competition is equally hot over which of our libatious nations is "Top Dog" in today's cocktail bar world. But none can deny that recent years have seen a cocktail

Renaissance in London. Whether your thirst is for classic or cool, elegant or ethnic, our Top Ten choice of London's cocktail bars is guaranteed to tickle your gimlet.

### 1. MASTERFUL MIXOLOGY: ZETTER TOWNHOUSE

Eccentric, charming, discreet and heavenly are phrases which trip easily off the tongue as you pass through the deceptively plain blue front door and enter the **Zetter Townhouse** cocktail lounge. ZTH, as it's affectionately known, is the weird sister to Clerkenwell's Zetter Hotel, one of London's hippest hotels in its coolest quarter. Think Downton Abbey, stir in Potter's Museum of Curiosities and garnish with a teaspoon of Hogwarts School, all set in this fascinating part of Dickensian London, once hedged with breweries and gin distilleries.

You may remember seeing the winning team in a recent episode of BBC's *The Apprentice* whooping it up with ZTH cocktails and wishing you were there. Although a relative newby on the scene, it's already swept up a whole bunch of accolades, including Good Hotel Guide's London Hotel of the Year, and has quickly become a favourite haunt for the capital's cleverest cocktail lovers. Once inside, get comfy in a battered armchair in front of the crackling fire, surrounded by odd portraits, unusual knick knacks, taxidermied cats and a stuffed kangaroo, and believe us, you won't want to leave. And then there are those cocktails!

Behind all the magic is the talented and respected Grandbardaddy of alcoholic alchemy, Tony Conigliaro, of *Drinks Factory* and *Colebrooke Row* fame. His cocktails, cordials and infusions are inspired by old recipes for tinctures, bitters and herbal remedies. Wizard Tony's new recipe book, *Drinks*, shows he

knows as much about alcohol in perfume as in beverages and puts this knowledge to unique use in his cocktail creations.

Our bartender William showed pure joy as he glowingly described each entry in ZTH's cocktail menu, all innovative tipples, handmade with carefully sourced ingredients and love. Signature drinks include the naval-themed *Master at Arms*, a combo of Myers rum, port evaporation and homemade pomegranate based grenadine. The result is a deep, dark and deliciously addictive tipple, served in a rope wrapped stem coupe glass for added nautical flavour. The *Koln* (as in Cologne) *Martini*, is a heady mixture of dry gin, Martini and homemade citrus aromatics and described to us as drinkable perfume, whilst *Somerset Sour* toasts a cross-Channel alliance of Somerset cider brandy and Breton cider. *The Flintlock*, made with Beefeater Gin, gunpowder tea tincture, dandelion, Fernet Branca and burdock bitters, includes a showstopping performance with a lit fuse.

Impressed as we were so far, our visit was lifted to an even higher level when our enchanting server, Aga, appeared with a fat spread of Bruno Loubet nibbles, including melt-in-the-mouth parmesan shortbread, pork crackling pigtails with apple sauce, rarebit baked spuds and ecstasy producing deep fried anchovy olives. Eat a bowl of those olives, down a couple of Masters at Arms and you'll go to bed happy. That's a promise.

*Zetter Townhouse, St John's Square, Clerkenwell House Cocktails £8.50*

[www.thezettertownhouse.com](http://www.thezettertownhouse.com)

### 2. JOY AT THE SAVOY: THE AMERICAN BAR

The splendiferous Savoy Hotel's **American Bar** holds a special place in the history of cocktails since it introduced American cocktails to a wide-eyed European public for the very first time. When the total ban on alcohol in the 1920s Prohibition Era America brought thirsty Americans over in their droves,



*A delicious taste of Victoriana, Zetter Townhouse Cocktail Lounge*



*Joy at the Savoy, the American Bar*

the Bar's popularity soared. Prohibition also brought across barman Harry Craddock, who famously came and stayed for 40 years, authoring the legendary *Savoy Cocktail Book*, still regarded as the bartenders' bible.

The American Bar was birthplace to many classics - *The White Lady*, *the Corpse Reviver*, *the Hanky Panky*, to name a few. *Wedding Bells* was invented to toast Queen Elizabeth's wedding to Prince Phillip; *Moonwalk* for Neil Armstrong's 1969 moon landing; and *Speedbird* for Concorde's first flight.

The Savoy was London's original luxury hotel, the first to have electric lifts, lights and 24-hour room service. This most elegant and atmospheric venue has been a favourite of the rich and famous since it opened in 1889. The long rollcall of celebrity American performers or guests includes Marilyn Monroe, Bob Dylan, Fred Astaire, Judy Garland and Humphrey Bogart. Gershwin premiered his *Rhapsody in Blue* here in 1925. Frank Sinatra liked to sneak into the Bar and play the piano. As you ascend the stairs to the American Bar, take time to gaze and gawp for yourself at its wonderwall of star photos and memorabilia.

Nowadays you'll find the charming and award-winning Erik Lorincz presiding over the American Bar, welcoming guests from all corners of the globe to cosy up with cocktails including his signature drink, the stylish *Green Park*. As it has for decades, classic jazz is played seven nights a week on the famed baby grand.

Erik joyfully described to us the honour of creating a special cocktail for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations last year. This led to Diamond Jubilee Punch, fittingly served up from the Lalique Fountain in the Savoy's forecourt, a forecourt famed as the only street in England where vehicles must drive on the right. The recipe called for 36 bottles of gin, 40 bottles of champagne, 90 litres each of Earl Grey Tea, lemon juice and iced sherbet. Summer 2014 may well see the fountain overflow again as the Savoy celebrates its 125th birthday.

Unsurprisingly, the cocktail menu is a wonder to behold. Modern ladies favour the lasciviously fruity *Pink Collins*, champagne cocktails or the sherry, port and rum combo making up the *Malecon*, while gentlemen prefer classic drinks like *Dry Martini* or an old fashioned *Maid in Cuba* is a spirited concoction of Bacardi rum, cucumber, mint and a hint of absinthe. If you're looking for a nightcap, American Bar has a strong selection of 'lullaby libations' like *Spiced Milk*, *Savoy Egg nog* and lovely Erik's absinthe-based chestwarmer, *Monet Moment*, created in honour of the French Impressionist who sketched nearby during his stay at the Savoy in 1902. If it's a liquid breakfast you're seeking, try waking the brain with a *Morning Glory*

*Fizz* or a *Bloody Caesar*.

*The American Bar, Savoy Hotel*

*Cocktails from £15, Mocktails £10.50*

[www.fairmont.com/savoy-london/dining/americanbar](http://www.fairmont.com/savoy-london/dining/americanbar)

### 3. COCKTAILS WITH COCO: SOFITEL - ST JAMES BAR

Union Jack meets the Tricolore in the luxurious surroundings of Hotel Sofitel-St James and its highly regarded **St James Bar**. With its pedigree address close to Buckingham Palace, walking distance from St. James Park and Pall Mall's renowned gentlemen's clubs, and a quiet refuge between the bustle of Trafalgar Square and bright lights of the West End, every inch of this destination oozes Franco-Britannique charm and splendour.

The St James Bar's cosy and seductive elegance takes inspiration from parfumer-designer Coco Chanel's 1920's Paris apartment. This apartment above the Chanel shop in Rue Cambon has been preserved exactly as Coco left it on her death in 1971, overflowing with gold trim, crystal chandeliers, oriental antiques, art deco furnishings and a uniquely mirrored staircase where Coco would apparently sit and watch her fashion shows happening downstairs in reflection, whilst completely hidden from view.

The bar is festooned with Coco's favoured birds, camellias, and bronze statues. Sit at the long bar or curl up on comfy brocaded sofas beneath the towering ceiling painting of the 'rooster-headed gentleman' and enjoy *un grand choix* of original, vintage and signature cocktails mixed by keen and knowledgeable staff. Alternatively, ask the Bar's *Champagne Angel* to help you navigate the extensive champagne and sparkling wine list. If you're feeling peckish, there's an all day menu of



*The delectable Jacques Rose with Alessio, Sofitel-St James Bar*

bites, main dishes and sharing plates with a distinct Franglais twist.

St James Bar's most popular drink is its signature 1921, dedicated to the birth year of Coco's most famous perfume, Chanel No 5. A sweet and respectful combination of jasmine, rose water, lime and cranberry juices, finished with a spritz of Bergamot mist from a classic perfume bottle, it can only be described as *magnifique*. By contrast, the *Barbaresque* is most definitely a man's drink, a stylish blend of rum, Curacao liqueur, lemon and a touch of nutmeg.

Other stand out cocktails include the *Vieux Carre*, combining rye whiskey, cognac, sweet vermouth, Benedictine and Peychaud bitters and created in the French Quarter of New Orleans in 1938; *Paris 75*, made with gin, Cointreau, lemon and sage sorbet topped with champagne and *Jacques Rose*, a delectable version of the classic *Jack Rose*, made famous by author and drinks aficionado, Ernest Hemingway. This one's made with Calvados, a traditional liqueur of fresh Normandy apples and pears, fine Moët & Chandon champagne and a scoop of handmade grenadine and lime sorbet. This highly enjoyable 2-in-1 cocktail journey begins with slow, sumptuous sips of Calvados-enriched champagne; when you can't bear waiting any longer, stir in the rich, dark, sorbet mound and sip again!

*Le Balcon-Sofitel St James Bar, Waterloo Place*

*Cocktails from £9, Mocktails £8.50*

[www.thebalconlondon.com/stjamesbar](http://www.thebalconlondon.com/stjamesbar)

### 4. THE SPICE IS RIGHT: THE CINNAMON CLUB

Just over 10 years ago, the **Cinnamon Club's** Founding Father and Executive Chef, Vivek Singh, set out on a passionate mission to convert an old Victorian library in a musty corner of Westminster into a top class restaurant which would transform and redefine Indian food in the UK.

Since then, the overwhelmingly successful Cinnamon Club has won umpteen awards, attracts a thoroughly international clientele of more than 100,000 visitors each year, including a generous sprinkling of celebrities, royals and politicians from nearby Houses of Parliament, and is regarded as one of the world's finest



*Turning up the heat with Cinnamon Club's fiery winter cocktails*



Indian restaurants. There's now a Cinnamon Soho, Cinnamon Kitchen and four Cinnamon Club cookbooks.

The Club's innovative spirit is alive and well in its subterranean cocktail bar, where you can savour a range of spice-infused cocktails and an Asian flavoured ambience. New Year 2014 is ushered in with a fiery winter cocktail menu created by head mixologist Gabor Onufer, a perfectly formed selection of 15 deliciously spiced drinks, thoughtfully conceived and thoroughly original. Unlike many other bars, the Club doesn't rely on overuse of sugar, salt or heavy flavourings in its cocktails; instead, tastes are encouraged to play with the palate and let underlying flavours through.

Take the extraordinary *La Fiesta*, for instance, a fragrant, fresh and fruity gathering of Grand Marnier, orange marmalade, lime juice, dandelion bitters and rosebud tea-infused Olmeca Reposado tequila. The indulgent *Golden Brown* is a richly delicious mix of cognac, apricot 'shrub' (apricot honey, Sauvignon Blanc and spiced rum), coffee liqueur, a dash of exotic Cynar and a flotilla of gold leaf. *Ten* celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Club in style, blending vodka, crème de figue, orange sherbet, lime and a top up of ginger beer. Champagne lovers will want to try *Southbank Royale* with its smooth, alluring scent of cucumber and mint and a surprising sharpness when tasted.

If you're in the mood for a total heatwave experience, *Don't Mess with Naga* is for you, a heady combination of Olmeca Plata tequila, caramel, lime juice, pear, green tea, cinnamon and Naga Bitter, made with the world's hottest chillies. On first approach, you'll welcome its fresh, citrusy-sweet scent, but this bouquet completely belies the spicy Margarita which soon greets the palate, followed by an explosive whoosh of chilli in the mouth. There are also some tasty non-alcoholic options like *Very Berry Lassi* and *Apple & Cucumber Fizz*.

Club cocktails are brilliantly matched with gorgeous nibbles and sharing plates like crisp whitebait with carom seed and chilli served with masala mayonnaise, garlic and herb naan or shrimps with a chilli and apricot glaze. Although the bar's a destination in its own right, it's only a short upstairs climb (or wobble, if you've messed with Naga) to the restaurant for the remarkable full-on Cinnamon Club experience, one we can't recommend highly enough.

Cinnamon Club also offers monthly Cocktail Masterclasses, giving guests a chance to learn and try the tricks of the trade while mixing signature cocktails under the watchful eye of its expert bartenders.

*The Cinnamon Club, Old Westminster Library*  
Cocktails £10-12, Mocktails £6  
[www.cinnamonclub.com](http://www.cinnamonclub.com)



*Pisco Passionate, Ceviche's marvellous Miguel*

## 5. A PASSION FOR PISCO: CEVICHE

Pisco, Peru's national drink and dating back to the 16th century, is a flavourful and potent brandy distilled from premium local grapes. It also has an important place in American cocktail history, introduced during the Gold Rush era via San Francisco, where it became an instant hit. *Pisco Punch* was an early classic cocktail.

Travel forward in time to 21st century Soho, London, where Anglo-Peruvian Martin Morales has been busy importing his passion for pisco and Peruvian cuisine. Starting with a Tweet ("does anyone care about Peruvian food?") and a humble pop-up, Martin opened **Ceviche** in 2012, Europe's first Peruvian pisco bar and restaurant. It's been a runaway success. A second enterprise, Andina, opened a few weeks ago in Shoreditch to similarly rave reviews.

Mixing London creativity and Lima flavour and flair, everything at Ceviche has been thought through carefully and designed with Martin's motto in mind: "*Aquí se cocina con cariño*" (Here we cook with love and care). The result is a joyous celebration of all things Peruvian, from the room colours, furnishings and music to the 'Hero Wall', posters, photos, artifacts and infused pisco display.

Ceviche's charming head barman Miguel shared with us his simple but winning cocktail philosophy: start with a deep respect for traditional recipes, then add some gentle tweaks, twists and inspirations. Stand out cocktails include top customer favourite, the *Pisco Sour*, made with Pisco Quebranta, lime juice, sugar syrup, egg white and Amargo bitters, while *Soho* is true Anglo-Peruvian fusion, combining the fresh Britishness of elderflower and cucumber with an Andes grown kick of Limo chilli-infused pisco. *Black Butterfly* honours the flavours of British springtime; a delicious, uplifting blend of blueberries, wild nettle cordial and lavender-infused pisco, it helped Miguel gain a place in the *Young British Foodies*

finals. Ceviche's adventurous and healthy mocktails are also highly recommended.

Cocktails are thoughtfully matched with incredible edibles from Ceviche's kitchen. Adapted from time-honoured Peruvian recipes or specially created by Martin and his devoted team of chefs, these include nibbles like *Cancha* (savoury Peruvian corn kernels) and *Chifles* (plantain crisps) as well as mouthwatering salads, ceviches, grilled anticuchos and hot recuerdos (the *Lomo Saltado* is a must). Be sure to save some room for extraordinary desserts like Peruvian chocolate-orange mousse, lucuma fruit cheesecake and lime tarte with chilli ice cream. Ceviche also likes to spread the joy with its popular food and cocktail Masterclasses.

*Ceviche, Soho*

Cocktails £7-8, Mocktails £4.50

[www.cevicheuk.com](http://www.cevicheuk.com)

## 6. SOUTHBANK SUAVE: SKYLON

Radical, shocking and futuristic when it first appeared on London's South Bank in 1951 postwar-austere Britain, the Skylon Tower became the symbol of the forward-looking Festival of Britain and a modern British world to come. Dramatic as it appeared by day, by night its piercing 250 foot beam of light transformed London's recently wartime blacked-out skyline. Sadly, the Skylon was demolished the following year due to political wrangling.

Not quite so radical but still an impressive and adventurous marvel is the **Skylon Restaurant and Bar**, opened in 2007 and occupying a spectacular window-on-the-waterworld perch inside the Royal Festival Hall. Minutes from its namesake's original Thameside site, Skylon has been gathering awards for taste, style and design from the start and is a favourite with many A-list celebrities.

Skylon Bar is all about creating perfect classic cocktails, reinvented with a twist to suit today's palate. Award-winning head barman Nebojsa Kutlesic and his expert team, (notably the fabulous Fabio), take their art very seriously.

Located on the river and so close to nature it's not surprising to find Skylon's cocktail menu looks to the weather and changes with the seasons. On a cold, wet, winter evening, Nebojsa's famed *Deer Hunter* provides a comforting belly-warmer of aged Scotch whisky, plum sake, Manzanilla Sherry and chocolate bitters, while *Timber* is an anti-freeze of rum,



*Choice cocktails and a riverside view, The Skylon*

Campari and quinquina. *The Philosopher* offers an aromatic delight of cardamom, lemon and thyme-infused Gin Mare stirred with Canton ginger liqueur and wild nettle cordial. In *Side Effect*, fine Normandy Calvados meets apple cider in a gingery, appley, minty mug of maelstrom over crushed ice.

Skylon is also renowned for some of London's best *Martinis* and *Manhattans*, and its astonishing range of *Bellinis*, that wondrous champagne-based favourite of Ernest Hemingway, including *Raspberry and Lychee*, *Lemon Ginger* and *Royal Coffee*. There's an unbeatable selection of dessert cocktails as well as some memorable mocktails, like Mojito-style *Virgin Southern Ginger* and the refreshing *Berry Blast*, both served long over crushed ice.

If that peckish feeling sets in, Skylon has some excellent small dishes and sharing platters from head chef Adam Gray's innovative kitchen, celebrating the best of British fish, cheese, charcuterie and baking. For more serious dining, it's a few steps from the bar to Skylon's Grill or Restaurant. Monday Masterclasses offer guests an extra 'wow', with free lessons from Skylon's spirited bar team- guests pay only the price of their cocktails.

*Skylon, Royal Festival Hall*  
Cocktails from £12, Mocktails £6  
[www.skylon-restaurant.co.uk/bar](http://www.skylon-restaurant.co.uk/bar)

## 7. ONE FOR THE ROAD: GNH BAR

Passing through Kings Cross-St Pancras station en route to that naughty weekend in Paris? Back from some nasty Euro-business in Brussels? Or just in need of uplifting refreshment to break the rush hour commute back to the 'burbs? If so, you'll find it's an easy step back in time to the Belle Epoque environs of the **GNH Bar**. With its dramatic chandeliers, polished pewter bar, beautiful cut-glass mirrors and black and white tiled floors, this recently re-designed bar in the recently refurbished Great Northern Hotel oozes style and sophistication, echoing classic railway bars of times past.

The GNH's cocktail list celebrates the 'bon' of the voyage, with signature drinks like *1854*, an evocative blend of smoked pineapple syrup, crushed cardamom, Woodford Reserve and Noilly Prat intended to transport you back to the original smoke and coal-filled station of



All the 'bon' of the voyage, GNH Bar

the Victorian age; *the Lady Violet*, a tall and elegant drink made with elderflower vodka, champagne and Chambord raspberry liqueur commemorating the world's first Ladies Only smoking room, revolutionary when opened at St Pancras a century ago, and *Last Call*, an easy-to-drink union of El Jimador tequila, brandy, fresh pear, a lick of pink grapefruit and basil crushed ice, perfect for when there's just enough time for one more. There's also an attractive range of classics like *Cosmopolitan*, *Manhattan*, *Espresso Martini* and *Caipirinha*.

Couple your drinks with cocktail-friendly sweet and savoury bites to suit all appetites and schedules. There's succulent garlic prawns, smoky sourdough and a choice selection of oysters, smoked salmon and other delicacies to please seafood lovers and golden Oscieta caviar for the high rollers.

If you can but manage a quick pitstop pleasure, we recommend *the Oriental Express*. This chilli and lychee Martini-style drink introduces itself with a wave of refreshing lychee, followed by a swift, sharp poke in the palate from the chilli. Next stop, hangover!

Almost impossible to believe that only a thin velvet curtain divides you from one of the busiest train stations on the planet. Travellers with a little more leisure time may wish to make the short commute upstairs for more substantial temptations and watch the world go by at sister restaurant *Plum & Spilt Milk*.

*Great Northern Hotel, King's Cross-St Pancras Station. Cocktails from £9, Mocktails from £5*  
[www.GNHLondon.com](http://www.GNHLondon.com)

## 8. BAMBOO COOL: INAMO ST JAMES

**Inamo St James** is an innovative Oriental fusion cocktail bar and restaurant in the heart of London, minutes from West End theatres, shops and sightseeing hotspots. Its relaxed ambience, seasonal offers, central location and unique futuristic feel combine to make Inamo a popular and enjoyable choice. On entering, you'll be convinced you've entered a bamboo forest and yes, that really is a Japanese garden growing up the back wall.

Inamo boasts the world's first interactive food ordering system, using the latest in overhead projection technology. This means you place your order from an interactive table menu, design your own virtual tablecloth, play games while you wait and use the 'Chef Cam' to watch chefs prepare your food. With all that cool table technology, a delicious daily-changing menu of sushi, satay, noodle dishes and house favourites like Japanese Gyoza dumplings or steamed dim sum with vegetables, meat or seafood and lashings of mango-chilli relish, plus an equally fabulous range of exotic cocktails and fresh and fruity mocktails to match, it's not surprising that



Bamboo Cool, Inamo St James

Inamo attracts guests of all ages and tastes.

Liquid pleasures can be ordered at the table or in the bar. The cocktail menu changes seasonally and makes the most of Inamo's Pan-Asian possibilities, including liberal use of Japanese Sake (rice wine), exotic spices and tropical fruits. It recently celebrated its 5th anniversary with some especially stylish cocktails created by head bartender Sokol Jakaj, such as *Japanese Whisper*, *Tropical Storm* and *Sake Blossom*.

Champagne lovers will head straight for *Prucia Fizz*, an uplifting combo of plum liqueur and prosecco, or *Sol Levante* - Rising Sun to you and me, a seductive blend of champagne, kiwi liqueur, pomegranate, and lemongrass. Martini fans will delight in a choice which includes *Lychee Martini*, *Sake Martini* and *White Chocolate Martini*. For something bolder, try the *Inamo*, which comes with a 'hot and spicy' warning. A unique blend of Mandarin orange, chilli syrup vodka and onion, this is not a drink for the fainthearted.

*Inamo St James, Lower Regent Street*  
Cocktails from £7.50, Mocktails £5  
[www.inamo-stjames.com](http://www.inamo-stjames.com)

## 9. RHAPSODY IN BLUE: THE BLUE BAR

With its stylish fusion of the modern and the traditional, the Berkeley Hotel's **Blue Bar** is a shining example of all that's best in British design. Located in one of Knightsbridge's favourite celebrity hangouts, it was lovingly created by David Collins, design genius behind many of London's best bars and restaurants and who sadly died last year. The Blue Bar's most outstanding design feature is its striking blue colour scheme, known as Lutyens Blue.

In harmony with its cool design, the Blue Bar's cocktails are all about classics with innovation, using the finest ingredients, imaginative twists and a passion for perfection. Get in touch with your natural self with cocktails from its *Season Atelier* range, such as *Firelog*, *Winter Garden*, *Falling Leaf* and *Down the Rabbit Hole*, making the most of earthy ingredients like eucalyptus, mint, lime leaf, plum, liquorice and rosemary. For special occasions there's a superb choice of creative champagne cocktails like tongue-tingly *Lemon Meringue* or refreshing *Rose's Delight*. You can also choose from over 50 different whiskies, a wide range of champagnes and selected





*Kind of Blue: Stefano at the Blue Bar, Berkeley Hotel*

wines by the glass. The full range of drinks are complemented by some great savoury and sweet tapas-style dishes.

Nothing is too much trouble for the Blue Bar's devoted band of bartenders, whether it's the creation of bespoke drinks to suit a mood or occasion, or a guest's personal request for a classic favourite. The iconic Blue Bar leather shaker and other exclusively designed bar and glassware are also available for purchase, so you can recreate that stylish Blue Bar experience for the folks back home.

*The Blue Bar, Berkeley Hotel, Knightsbridge*

*Cocktails from £16*

[www.the-berkeley.co.uk](http://www.the-berkeley.co.uk)

## 10. RELAXED REFINEMENT: THE ROSEWOOD BAR

Last, but by no means least, treat yourself to an evening of cocktails at the ultra-luxurious

**Rosewood Bar.** Rosewood Hotel Group has spared no expense in transforming an historic Edwardian building in Holborn, originally global headquarters of Pearl Assurance, into London's newest super hotel. The magnificent frontage and grand carriageway leading to the hotel's intimate courtyard entrance would have you believe you were arriving at a country manor house rather than an urban hostelry on the cusp between the City and the West End.

Rosewood's guiding ethos is a sense of place, so, this being London, the bar celebrates the best of British with locally brewed beer, Kentish bubbles from Nyetimber Vineyard, Scottish whiskies and a complementary range of Anglo-Indian curries and snacks. Its cocktail list has been carefully curated and wittily named, using the finest ingredients sourced directly from producers wherever possible. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting the *Lord Chancellor*, Rosewood Bar's take on the classic champagne cocktail, gainfully employing Calvados, crème de peche and a plethora of Nyetimber bubbles over an absinthe-soaked sugar cube, while vodka and Victorian lemonade-based *Seine River Fizz* was a sparkling blend of ginger, lime and basil dashed with elderflower foam. American connections are dutifully honoured with offerings like San Francisco-born *Tommy's*



*Relaxed refinement, the Rosewood Hotel Bar*

*Margarita and Pisco Punch*, gin and vermouth-based *Martinez* and George Washington's favourite, rum-rich *Fish House Punch*.

The bar's warm and vibrant décor is the work of renowned designer Martin Brudnizki. Ultra-comfy seating, antique books, Edwardian collectabilia and liberal use of wood, leather and low lighting, give it the cosy feel of a traditional English gentlemen's club—minus pipe and slippers. The roaring fire at one end and long, comfortable bar at the other completes the look, while live jazz on tap every night of the week adds that extra 'wow' factor.

*The Rosewood Hotel and Bar, Holborn*

*Cocktails from £10.50, Mocktails £7.00*

[www.rosewoodhotels.com/london](http://www.rosewoodhotels.com/london)

*This is the latest in our featured series of Top Tens for Americans in Britain. A special thanks to our devoted tribe of tasters and aperitif accomplices: Ivor, Amanda, Josh, Toby, Ariel, Jeremy and Damian. Hard work guys, but worth it! If you've got a hot Top Ten tip to share with our readers, contact Judith at [judith0777@gmail.com](mailto:judith0777@gmail.com)*

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Taken at Four Season Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa

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