

**THE MOST
AUTHORITATIVE
BAR INDUSTRY
SURVEY
EVER**

THE WORLD'S

50

BEST BARS

2009

Drinks
INTERNATIONAL

THE WORLD'S 50 BEST BARS

LEADER



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Elite Squad

When compiling a list of 50 top global bars, you're always likely to incite a measure of controversy, but as Bertrand Russell once said: "The most savage controversies are those about matters as to which there is no good evidence either way." So, I'm more than happy to embrace it.

To be fair, Bertrand's quote is the only link I could make between the man and bars – he was a pacifist and mathematician among other things, and I don't even know if he enjoyed a drink. Nonetheless, he revelled in breaking boundaries, something anyone who runs a bar will be familiar with.

I suspect this controversy is already forming in the minds of readers. If you've had a peek at the list of 50 bars in this supplement (see page 29) you'll undoubtedly be casting aspersions as to the ones that feature – or perhaps demanding the inclusion of some that don't.

If for one would like to know why the hell Sully's wasn't in there. For those who've not heard of Sully's it's a tacky little bar in a Louisville shopping mall with few discerning features, modest decor and average drinks. Even so, on Halloween it can give you one of the best nights out of your life, and anyone who has been on a Kentucky bourbon trip around that time of year – particularly with the Woodford Reserve massive – will agree.

Sully's isn't there though, neither is Antigua's Papa Zouk's, or La Capilla of Tequila, Mexico; and Nanuchka – a Tel Aviv bar with a tiny capacity where I danced on tables – is a woeful omission to my mind.

But the truth is this list is not about a single

personal experience, it's about a global bar community identifying the venues that have consistently performed at the peak of the game. The venues that have stood out for decor, service, drinks and atmosphere and not just on one night, but on every night of the week, 365 days a year.

They have been identified by the people who operate in this field and know what it takes to make a bar work, and they have been visited on any given night in any given year.

With its Elite Bars survey, Drinks International has initiated some laborious research, receiving more than 300 responses from a global bar community. Such a wide-reaching survey is obviously a challenge to orchestrate, and it reflects a commitment. It is hoped that this effort alone is enough to convince readers that these bars are worthy inclusions.

You can read more about how the Elite Bars survey came together on page 6, and from page 9 onwards you can see how it all panned out.

In a bid to include a few that didn't make it we've also given predictions for those likely to make another poll in the future, and focused on some of the up and coming venues to keep an eye on. They feature at the end on page 32.

In all then, this supplement gives you plenty of food for thought, and for those who are new to this world, or who simply don't get out enough, you now have a fine guide to the best on the planet.

We suggest then that you stop googling Bertrand to find out how he got a mention in this leader, and instead take a look, then make your preparations to visit all of the Top 50 bars on this list. **50**



Read on to find some strongly held opinions, as well as the full results of the groundbreaking Elite Bars survey





November 2009
www.drinksint.com

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE BAR SURVEY EVER



THE VERY EXISTENCE OF A POLL OF THIS NATURE PROVOKES FIERCE DEBATE
TIMES OF ECONOMIC GLOOM. WHILE IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE EVERYONE
EXPOSING THE PROCESS BEHIND THE SURVEY, READERS WILL BE ABLE TO A



HOW WE DID IT

TE – AND THE BAR INDUSTRY CERTAINLY NEEDS TALKING POINTS IN THESE
, IT'S ONLY POLITE TO OFFER UP THE METHODS TO SUCH MADNESS, AND BY
APPRECIATE THE LEVEL OF EFFORT TAKEN TO MAKE THIS A VALID RANKING

For starters, we should clarify that this poll was started and finished earlier this year, so any bars that opened in the last six, possibly 12 months may not be included. There are many that deserve a mention but they will hopefully feature prominently next time around.

The starting premise for the Elite Bars survey was that those best placed to rate the best would be the industry's own experts. To achieve a representation of this group a sample frame was created that comprised bar experts, writers and owners and managers of a host of top bars, who were subsequently contacted.

The emphasis of the survey was on bar owners and managers selected from more than 120 data resources, from websites and guidebooks through to the Drinks International database. To qualify for inclusion, bars had to be mentioned as among the best in their region by at least two reputable data sources.

THE RESPONDENTS WERE DIVERSE AND AS A RESULT THE POLL IS TRULY GLOBAL. THERE WERE RESPONDENTS IN THAILAND, LITHUANIA, LEBANON, VENEZUELA, HUNGARY, INDIA... THE LIST GOES ON

After this process was complete 1,467 people were approached and of those 20 general experts were interviewed and 286 representatives from Elite Bars. For the picky out there, the research was conducted by Leslie Henry Marketing Research and the Hill Taylor Partnership Ltd, operating under the Market Research Society (UK) code of conduct.


All respondents were asked to name the five best bars in the world, not including their own – which is a crucial point. No more than three of the five could be in their own country. Once gathered, this information provided a dramatic regional split (see pie chart, page 31). To give a general idea of the variety, there were respondents in Thailand, Lithuania, Lebanon, Venezuela, Hungary, India... the list goes on.

Within the survey, weightings to bar selections were applied as follows: 1st choice, 1.5; 2nd choice, 1.4; 3rd choice, 1.3; 4th choice, 1.2; 5th choice: 1.1

In short then, this process was comprehensive and impartial, and to the knowledge of the team at Drinks International, no survey of this scale has been ever been published before.

The respondents were diverse and as a result the poll is truly global. The people on this list don't spend months of the year in London or Paris, they travel, but it's intermittent so as well as a few lesser known venues that popped up near them, the bulk of the list is made up of venues that have been respected for some time. The evidence of this is particularly applicable to the top 10.

I haven't visited all the bars on the list, which is why we've taken advice from others who have, and have voted for them. Some of the bar reviews are based on the opinions of those contributors.

So there you go, that's how it was done. All feedback is welcome and can be directed to the Drinks International team.
Tom Sandham 

THE WORLD'S 50 BEST BARS

OVERALL WINNER

MILK & HONEY

Poland Street, London UK
mlkhny.com



For seven years this venue has been at the forefront of discerning drinking, and it continues to excite

As my mother often says, it's not the winning but the taking part that counts. Yeah, but winning is nice right? I'd say the folks down at Milk & Honey London feel that way after being announced number one in this particular poll.

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that Milk is top dog in an international bar survey, it has been stirring and shaking drinks fans everywhere for many years. Opened by Jonathan Downey in 2002 it has maintained discerning drinking objectives from the outset and as a result has a chic clientele, customers who are usually informed on choice drinks.

That's not to say it's overly formal. It has a membership base, but non-members are welcome before 11pm and, with impeccable staff throughout, there's always assistance for those unsure.

The bar is split over four levels, a basement bar with private booths, a ground floor bar, the Red Room for members and a games room with DJ decks and plasma TVs.

#1

The drinks selection is eclectic but balanced, so the wine, champagne, port and sherries offer plenty of range. The beer is a hell of a lot better than your average spirits-led bar and includes the award-winning house brew Proof. And the spirits selection is fantastic, with top-notch house pours to compliment fine tipples such as the Lagavulin 12 Year Old Cask Strength or Sazerac 18 Year Old.

Even the food is useful, the saloon snacks and fancy food perfect for grazing if you come in early and decide to stick.

But you should come for the cocktails. Fizzles and Swizzles, punches, cups and cobblers, the Fresh and ups, the pick me ups, the shorts and sours. There's a marvellous range here, something for everyone, with influence on the list from all the bartenders who have stood behind the stick over the last seven years.

To ensure all drinks are perfect the glassware is kept chilled in freezers set to -40C and the commitment to ice is staggering, meanwhile bartenders are accurate in the build of cocktails to avoid over-dilution. Detail is the watchword here, nothing is left to chance and all the ingredients used are fresh with fruit juices squeezed on site, all of which means Milk & Honey offers some of the tastiest cocktails in town.

The industry might not regard this as an original choice – indeed Milk has been picking up awards for as long as I can remember. But, as stated up front, this poll takes in a global view and any visitors to London should still make this a must-visit venue.

As a winner, this bar is rewarded for commendable consistency over the years, and for that reason it's a deserving number one. **50**

MENU CHOICE

DRINK: London Calling
PRICE: £8.50

At £8.50 the London Calling (gin, sherry, lemon, sugar, bitters) is a fine choice and exceptionally appropriate. London is arguably the most important city in the world for cocktail culture right now and the Match Group has developed some of the outstanding talent in bartending over the years

TOP BARS

Beaten into second place by the whisker of a cat with alopecia, this is another bar with serious kudos.

Since it opened in 2000 it has been setting bar standards and its position as one of the best bars in the world means many of those who voted in this survey have benefited first hand.

As with its sister venue in London the vibe here is intimate (candle-lit in fact), meanwhile the gentle hum of music rarely intrudes on the low buzz of customer banter. As a result this remarkably small space exudes plenty of class.

The club has a set of rules you might find hard to adhere to, I've always scratched my bonce over the "Gentlemen you will not introduce yourselves to ladies" rule - this is what my gender tends to visit a bar for after all. But the "no name dropping or star f**king" is most definitely a worthy constraint and ensures that only the very best of drinks fans walk through the door.

Real drinks is what they'll find since owner Sasha Petraske manages the menu with devotion to classic styles and a splash of innovation. Even if customers aren't allowed to get fresh they can expect the very

best in ingredients, indeed everything that goes into the drinks served is sourced with unswerving care and heaps of affection.

Service is extraordinary and goes way beyond the universal American adherence to standards that put much of the world to shame, and each staff member is exceptionally knowledgeable. This is a huge help as the menu is nowhere to be seen and customers are invited to discuss their tastes and preferences to help bar staff make an appropriate tippie.

They are rarely disappointed of course, and M&H New York is the prefect haven for drinks lovers. It's not a bar to get you dancing on the furniture, but it remains a must for aficionados everywhere. [50](#)

THE 'NO NAME DROPPING OR STAR F**KING' IS A WORTHY CONSTRAINT FOR ONE OF THE BEST BARS IN THE WORLD AND ENSURES THAT ONLY REAL DRINKS FANS WALK THROUGH THE DOOR

2 MILK & HONEY NY



134 Eldridge Street
New York, USA
mlkhny.com

This bar has classic cocktails with a twist of innovation and a chilled-out vibe to die for

#2



#3

3 BUDDHA BAR PARIS

8 Bis, Rue Boissy d'Anglas,
Paris, France
buddha-bar.com

Sexy drinks, decor and people make this one of the favoured night spots in the French capital

Perhaps an unexpected choice for number three, although if you've been in Paris to get your funk on then chances are this place has popped up on the list.

And its high placement in the survey provides further evidence that this is a global poll – Buddha has stood the test of time and the international voters consistently put it in their top five.

The Paris site is the original vision from creator Raymond Visan who has subsequently driven the Buddha brand all over the world. As many will be aware, the key to its success is the Buddha's fortitude as a hang out for that moneyed pretty young crowd.

For Paris it's the staggering design that seems the notable factor in the bar's success. Stand on the mezzanine and extravagant wrought-iron balustrades will surround you, and as you peer over a dining area you can't fail to notice a gigantic Buddha who looks decidedly hungry.

Elsewhere the club drips with South East Asian

reference, Japanese art here, Khmer statues there, and the woods and fabrics emphasise the luxury and expense.

Beyond the design though punters have always been drawn by the atmosphere and in stark contrast to the bars that placed one and two on the list, Buddha is very much about keeping a night lively on the dance floor.

The evening starts with ambient tunes, a level of intimacy, fine drinks and food, with the opportunity to check out that eye-catching decor. But after the standard sit-down hours it usually fires up, with top DJs invited through the doors to please a sexy and cosmopolitan crowd.

Buddha apparently taught everyone how to live a happy and peaceful life, and while most of the crowd here on a Saturday night seems happy, it's far from peaceful. On a good night the place can really go off, which is undoubtedly why it has earned a top three place. **50**

AFTER THE STANDARD SIT DOWN HOURS IT USUALLY GOES OFF, INVITING TOP DJs THROUGH THE DOORS TO PLEASE A SMART AND SEXY CROWD



Hidden next to a hot dog restaurant, PDT is an extraordinary drinking experience worth seeking out

The letters stand for Please Don't Tell, but frankly, most of us can't keep our mouth shut when it comes to talking up this bar. But then silence would be far from golden. Recently picking up the World's Best Cocktail Bar at Tales of The Cocktail, PDT stalked the New York scene like a stealthy Great White two years ago, relying on nothing more than word of mouth to earn its fans.

4 PDT
 113 St Marks Place,
 New York, USA
 pdtnyc.com



#4



THE MENU IS A WORK OF ART AND MIXOLOGIST IN CHARGE JIM MEEHAN IS UNSWERVINGLY FAITHFUL TO THE SEASONS, ENSURING ALL INGREDIENTS ARE FRESH AND TASTY

The entrance alone sets tongues wagging. For the uninitiated you walk through a hidden wall in a phone booth and, more importantly, the booth is only accessible from the Crif Dogs hotdog restaurant. Pick up the phone once inside and confirm your reservation in the bar before a secret door will open to let you in.

Should you be eyeing up the food then you can order and eat the dogs at the bar, which is a magnificent bonus, and if it's on then I advise you to start with the Chang dog – bacon-wrapped, deep-fried Crif Dog in Momofuku kimchi.

But this is simply a novelty addition to the true joy, which is the drinks. The menu is a work of art and mixologist in charge Jim Meehan is unwaveringly faithful to the seasons, ensuring ingredients are always fresh and tasty regardless of when you visit. I was there in autumn for example (or Fall, for Jim) and there was a touch of cider on the list to perk up the cocktail offering.

Jim has enjoyed stints with Audrey Saunders at Pegu, a sturdy apprenticeship no doubt, but he has emerged a great mixologist in his own right and as a result the drinks here are beautiful.

The bar itself is cosy and intimate, complete with taxidermy adorning the exposed brick walls. And the place is always busy, evidence that the requirement of reserving a seat in advance is not dissuading the masses from an outstanding experience. ⁵⁰

#5

5 PEGU CLUB

77 W. Houston Street,
nr. W. Broadway, New York USA
peguclub.com



Boasting the talent of one of America's finest mixologists this is a bar for a drink education

AS A MECCA FOR THE GLOBAL BARTENDING COMMUNITY THERE IS ENOUGH OF AN OLD AND NEW BLEND TO KEEP PEOPLE ANIMATED

It might only be a few years old but when it comes to institutions in the bar world, one would hope there's little argument over Pegu being named.

This is largely due to Audrey Saunders who, while never one to invite the limelight, is revered among the cocktail greats for her drinks.

Pegu is a collaboration between the owners of Flatiron and Zinc and is a serious place for serious drinkers, with influences coming from Dale DeGroff, with whom Audrey worked previously, and menu contributions from the illustrious Ted "Dr. Cocktail" Haigh and David Wondrich.

Even the name of the bar basks in cocktail heritage, the original Pegu Club was a 19th century hangout for Colonial Brits, 40 miles up Burma's Rangoon River, and the Pegu Club Cocktail is a drink cocktail legend Harry Craddock points to in the Savoy Cocktail Book.

All drinks are mixed with similar nostalgic

admiration and the Pegu Club, a simple blend of London dry gin, bitters, lime juice and orange curaçao, is a benchmark for the cocktails served here.

The classics are king and as if to prove the point the team consider themselves the "gatekeepers of classic cocktail culture".

That's not to say there's no innovation in the drinks, far from it, and as a Mecca for the global bartending community there is enough of an old and new blend to keep people animated.

Pegu's decor plays up to the colonial and South East Asian themes, with hand-carved wood a nod to the roots of the region that has inspired the bar. Meanwhile a selection of Asian dishes keeps the food and drink balance in check when you're hoping to spend more than an hour here.

Pegu is relaxing, comfortable and above all else a fine education in drinking. **50**

TOP BARS

6 BAYSWATER BRASSERIE

32 Bayswater Road,
Kings Cross, Sydney, Australia
bayswaterbrasserie.com.au



The Brasserie is an aperitif haven with a fine drinks list and capable staff to match

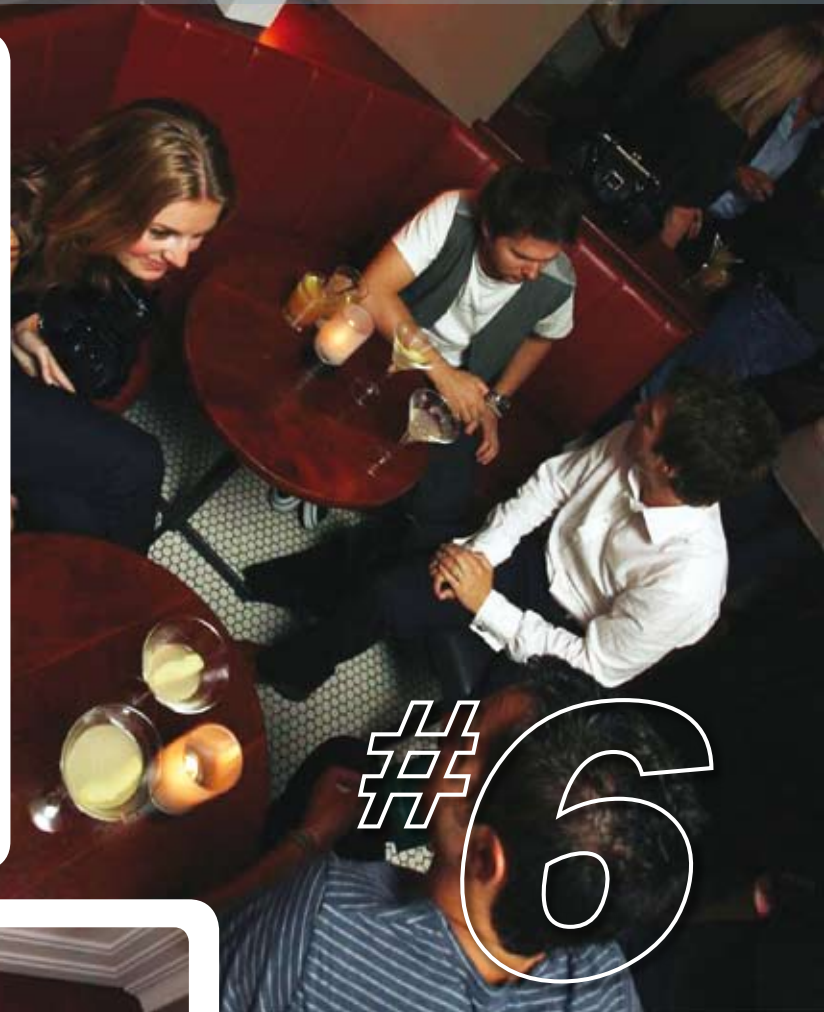
The Brasserie bar has become a Sydney institution, thanks largely to the number of awards it has picked up over the years.

Slightly obscured by the more notable restaurant, it's almost a hidden gem but has emerged as the perfect exponent of the aperitif.

The Brasserie restaurant was opened in 1982 with the aim of creating a European or New York approach to up-market but casual dining. This concept can be recognised in decor throughout, but striking wooden chairs, and the white cloth-and-papered tables complement modern hard surfaces and make it unmistakably Australian overall.

The bar itself lends much to the Art Deco era, and as if to hammer home the heritage the drinks offer plenty of historical reference with Martinis coming highly recommended. The Depression, Prohibition & Echoes section of the menu is a perfect example of this, and the Between the Sheets cocktail takes you right back to 1930s America: "This was as risqué as

THE BAR ITSELF LENDS MUCH TO THE ART DECO ERA, AND AS IF TO HAMMER HOME THE HERITAGE THE DRINKS OFFER PLENTY OF HISTORICAL REFERENCE, WITH MARTINIS COMING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED



it got in the 1930s. Rhum Agricole, VSOP Cognac, Cointreau and citrus in a sugar-rimmed glass," says the menu.

It's not all historic of course and an eclectic mix of old and new has emerged on the drinks list thanks to the application of talented former bar managers such as Naren Young.

There's a fine selection of spirits and a worthy cocktail list then, but more importantly the range is justified in the hands of the very capable bartenders which means that in terms of the competition in Sydney, this proves one of the more serious drinking hangouts. There are a few others to try of course, but the longevity at the Brasserie bar ensures attention to details is a primary concern, and that's a must in a top 10 bar.

Music is chilled and audible but not intrusive making this the perfect pre-dinner hang out or somewhere to relax and sip a decent drink. 50

#7

7 BRAMBLE

16a Queen Street,
Edinburgh, Scotland
bramblebar.co.uk



This beautiful bar complements the beautiful city of Edinburgh and continues to satisfy drink lovers

Bramble is undoubtedly one of the best bars in the world and since opening in 2006 has helped shine the drinking spotlight onto its home town, Edinburgh.

Set up by cocktailians Jason Scott and Mike Aikman it was no surprise to see the swift response from locals, and as word spread to those in the know it became a destination for drinks connoisseurs just as quickly.

That it has made it into the top 10 of a global poll

is further evidence of its flourishing reputation and as the only bar in Scotland on the list it is a worthy representative of a country steeped in discerning drinking history.

Tucked away down a set of stairs on Queen Street the basement space nods to the prohibition era. Low lighting and private seating areas provide the necessary intimacy, but only until it's busy and then a hip crowd delivers a bouncy atmosphere.

The customer vibe is compounded on Friday and

Saturdays from 9pm when DJs play and it's obvious music is important to the owners who emphasise that they "only play music with soul".

And soul is what Bramble has, with an unwavering commitment to decent drinks. Both Jason and Mike have created a fine looking menu and employed some capable staff over the years. As well as pulling shifts themselves they recently pushed bartender Ryan Chetiyawardana forward and he immediately became one to watch.

As the name would suggest, gin is a firm fixture at Bramble and you should really order one if you end up here. After that try a Communist, with Martin Miller's Westbourne, and the Gin 'n' Jam, with Hendrick's and rose petal jam – both excellent and well worth a spin. ⁵⁰

LOW LIGHTING AND PRIVATE SEATING AREAS PROVIDE THE NECESSARY INTIMACY, BUT ONLY UNTIL IT'S BUSY AND THEN THE HIP CROWD DELIVER A BOUNCY ATMOSPHERE

About the only thing I remember from German lessons is: "Ich spiele gern Tischtennis." That, and: "Wie komme ich am besten zu Poste bitte." Apologies for spelling, grammar, etc.

Not that either of these phrases will get you far in this bar (or in Germany, I'm sure), since Der Raum is actually Australian and its name and the beers served are all that relate to Germany.

The beer list is very good though, with everything from pils to weizen earning a place, but what the bar really excels at, and possibly the reason it has placed in the top 10 is its cocktails.

There's a solid foundation in the heritage of cocktails but a playful mix of old and new to go

8 DER RAUM

438 Church Street, Richmond
Melbourne, Australia
derraum.com.au



A respect for heritage and innovation, but above all else fine flavours make this a must-see venue

#8



WHAT THE BAR REALLY EXCELS AT, AND POSSIBLY THE REASON IT HAS PLACED IN THE TOP 10, IS ITS COCKTAILS

with it, and innovation and history blend beautifully. The autumn 2009 menu included the Captain Blackbeer with Havana Club Añejo Reserva, Coffee Supreme Espresso, apricot liqueur, Der Raum Pimento Dram, Gosser Dunkel head – a drink fantastically rich in heritage and modernism.

Punches are served at the table and the spirits selection goes beyond a staggering 400 bottles so there's plenty to experiment with, meanwhile the staff's creation of the Melbourne Temperance Society, a group that meets regularly to discuss intelligent drinking, is a clear pledge to discerning drinking.

Der Raum is an intimate little bar and could easily be interpreted as another nod to an American speakeasy. Certainly it's dark, and a jazzy soundtrack whisks you back to the 50s at least. But this is as far as that comparison goes, since the early 20th century New York or Chicago bars didn't have bottles hanging above the bar on bungee ropes. Der Raum does, as well as plenty of interesting abstract art from executive barman and cocktail guru Matthew Bax.

This is a bar that has been pushing the boundaries since its opening in 2001, and as a result it is far from a surprise to see it in this top 10. **50**

TOP BARS

erson Welles is supposed to have drunk at Harry's Bar in Venice, which gives us two impressions of the place. One, it has history. And two it welcomes patrons with a love of life and liquor.

Thus, we like this as much as did many of the 300 people who responded to the Drinks International poll, and celebrate the fact that there is a bar of such heritage in the top 10.

Set up by Giuseppe Cipriani in 1931 it sits on the St Mark's bay waterfront and has an air of class that is far from intimidating.

The authenticity has somehow been retained over the years, almost stoically, and although it's a tourist hang-out it even smells old. It's one of the few bars in the world to have achieved this in the face of such fame and genuinely feels like a piece of history.

A tribute that will be supported by the government's more recent decision to name it a national landmark.

Most critics talk about the cost of the drinks, but if you accept your wallet is likely to get stung a bit then you can still enjoy the experience. This is reputedly where the Bellini was created after all, and in terms of cocktail history it's always useful to go to the home of a classic. Such is the status of the drink that it has impacted on the menu massively with a Sweet Annie, involving vodka, Bellini base and a slice of orange; or the Sweet Maggie, a blend of rum, Bellini base and fresh mint leaves.

And if history isn't enough to take you along then try the food, because that's pretty impressive as well – excellently prepared proper Italian grub. If your lady isn't impressed with a visit here after a trip on the canals, then she needs her head testing. [50](#)



9 HARRY'S BAR

S. Marco, 1323
Venezia, Italy
cipriani.com



Harry's is a piece of history where bartenders serve a classic cocktail in a breathtaking location

IT SITS SMACK ON THE ST MARK'S BAY WATERFRONT AND HAS AN AIR OF CLASS THAT IS FAR FROM INTIMIDATING

HARRY'S
BAR



#10

THE TURN-AROUND OF CUSTOMERS IS FAR FROM RAPID BUT ONCE YOU'RE IN THE CHANCES ARE YOU WON'T WANT TO LEAVE IN A HURRY

Death & Co sets out its speakeasy credentials by pointing an accusing finger at the absurd Volstead Act. For the uninitiated, this was a nasty little piece of legislation that led to Prohibition, with the twisted politicians of that era comparing drink and alcohol to 'death and company'. Coincidentally the owners fought their own liquor licence disputes when trying to open, but fortunately overcame the hurdles.

10 DEATH & CO

433 East 6th Street,
New York, USA
deathandcompany.com



A New York speakeasy with a fantastic rough edge and devotion to excellent drinks

Temperance eh? Who needs it? Well, certainly not the crowd at this bar who excel in making great drinks.

This New York hang-out has earned itself global prestige within the industry since its opening in 2007 and while the doors look rather ominous the word of mouth has quickly spread to New Yorkers who queue to get in.

The menu venerates the nostalgia of the Prohibition era, but the overriding theme is to twist these concepts into something new and as a result the bar offers variety and excellence. Bartenders even invite the customer to get involved in the mixology by adding a section of the menu that enables them to

build something using a preferred base spirit.

It's a low-lit environment with an equally low hum of music, and the dark wood and furniture is as far from day-glow life as you can get.

But the menu reminds all that drinking is fun and there's plenty to celebrate with the likes of the Nuts & Sherry Punch – toasted pecan-infused Buffalo Trace Bourbon, East India sherry, Allspice Dram, fresh

pineapple and lime juice, with a dash of Bittermens Mole Bitters.

Don't expect to guarantee your space at the bar though – this place doesn't take reservations and you'll be on the door for a while if you turn up during a busy period. The turn-around of customers is far from rapid but once you're in the chances are you won't want to leave in a hurry either. 50

TOP BARS

Melbourne's drinking scene is picking up more fans than a Dubai office space and the city has achieved two bars in the top 20 thanks to this addition from the suburbs.

Reviewers describe the Black Pearl as 'funky' and indeed 'groovy', so who are we to argue, particularly as it has successfully fitted in with its Fitzroy Boho

THE RECLAIMED STYLE FURNISHINGS CERTAINLY MAKE IT APPEAR NATIVE, EVEN DIVEY AT FIRST GLANCE, BUT LOW LIGHTING AND A CHILLED VIBE DURING THE WEEK ATTRACTS MONEYPED PROFESSIONALS

#11

11 BLACK PEARL



304 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, Melbourne, Australia

Far from pirate theme pub, this upmarket venue has the right touch of dive about it and great drinks

neighbours. The reclaimed style furnishings certainly make it appear native, even divey at first glance, but low lighting and a chilled vibe during the week attracts moneyed professionals.

More importantly, the staff are uber knowledgeable, making it a great hang out during the

quieter week nights when you're in town and want a decent drink.

Despite the name there are no pirates here, just to clarify in case you should be planning to turn up with a cutlass and parrot, or a speedboat from Somali coastal waters... 50

See the above intro and you can now make that three in the top 20, putting Melbourne marginally behind London and New York. And 1806 is no fluke either. Christened with a reference to the year the word 'cocktail' first made it into print, this is a serious purveyor of the mixed drink.

It's a refined venue and if you're in town you're likely to bump into fellow alcohol enthusiasts – in front of and behind the stick, with this being a true bartender hang-out.

Sebastian Reaburn is behind the drinks here, a cocktail historian who takes his craft seriously and has previously earned the Tales of the Cocktail Best Cocktail List award for his efforts at 1806.

In a bid to extend this offering the team has recently opened the 'Orchestra Pit' bar located in the

A bar that ensures Melbourne has somewhere with true committment to drinks heritage

#12

12 1806



169 Exhibition Street
Melbourne, Australia
1806.com.au

basement, which celebrates Prohibition era tipples. So expect a menu that exhibits a fine blend of old and new, and with regular celebrations of specific drinks (Chartreuse recently got the once over). This really is a drinking haven. 50

CHRISTENED WITH A REFERENCE TO THE YEAR THE WORD 'COCKTAIL' FIRST MADE IT INTO PRINT, THIS IS A SERIOUS PURVEYOR OF THE MIXED DRINK



5 hot of Jäger anyone? Yes, yes, especially at Lab because this is a bar that kicks off. As well as serving fantastic drinks, this Soho joint is about having a good night out and there's always a party atmosphere here.

Set up by global cocktail notable Douglas Ankrah, creator of the Pornstar Martini, the drinks menu has always lent itself to fun and innovation, and while the talented team are well versed in cocktail heritage, they've always been keen to express themselves. 'The Unbeetable' is a great example: 'A winning

#13

WHILE THE TALENTED TEAM HERE ARE WELL VERSED IN COCKTAIL HERITAGE, THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN KEEN TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES

combination of Miller's Gin, fresh beetroot and thyme sweetened with a dash of passionfruit syrup. Served straight up in a cocktail glass.'

Small, stylish and retro it's a big hit on Soho's busy Old Compton Street and a particular favourite with the industry. Among the legends who have worked behind the stick is Gregor DeGruyther, a talented and well loved character who sadly passed away this year.

Lab carries a reputation for its great vibe and its great drinks, and it continues to be a top attraction to the bartending community. 50

13 LAB

12 Old Compton Street,
Soho, London, England
lab-townhouse.com



Fun times and fine drinks – Lab remains a customer favourite and a classic bartender haunt

If you've been to Sydney it would have been some feat to have missed out on the Ivy. This place is enormous, with three restaurants, four bars, a cocktail bar, and a live music venue.

It apparently took seven years to build and is slap bang in the middle of the city.

But it's the bar that we're interested in, another from the land of Oz – a country performing especially well in this poll.

Built on such an epic scale it's no surprise the Ivy

14 THE IVY BAR AND LOUNGE

320/330 George St, Sydney, Australia
merivale.com



Dominating Sydney thanks to its scale the Ivy exudes style in its design and its drinks menu

#14



OVERALL THE FANS EMBRACED THIS BAR'S CUTTING EDGE AND CONSIDER IT A GREAT SPOT FOR A DRINK

bar and lounge both get a mention in this vote and both stand out when it comes to design.

The bar is cutting edge modernity, the lounge has a more 1950s feel to it, and if you're here make it to the Den, which completes the design range with art deco style.

The drinks list is nicely balanced, with decent wine and beer, and cocktails are a mix of fun and classic. Overall then fans have embraced the bar's cutting edge and consider it a great spot for a drink. 50

#15=

15= HARRY'S NEW YORK BAR

5, Rue Daunou,
Paris, France
harrys-bar.fr



Harry's is a tribute to the history of discerning drinking and classic cocktails

The first on the list from La France and it's one that many will have heard of.

The history of Harry's is beautiful.

Apparently it was transported from New York by Tod Sloan in 1911 and recreated in Paris as the New York Bar before the legendary Scot Harry MacElhone was called in to take it to the next level.

Harry bought it in 1923 and added his name, quite rightly, and today it attracts cocktail fans from around the world, keen to bathe in the history of a

IT ATTRACTS
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BOGART IN ITS TIME

place that has served the likes of Hemingway and Bogart in its time

Among the drinks associated with Harry's are the French 75, the White Lady and the Sidecar, all of which can still be enjoyed today with a few new creations added to the list. Meanwhile the design and atmosphere continue to deliver the nostalgia of the bar's heyday. The staff are all well equipped to ensure the drinks are as tasty as they were back then and it is a must for bar tourists everywhere. 50

A genuine drinking experience with fantastic staff and a warm welcome every time

A BEAUTIFUL BAR
WITH FEATURES
BEHIND IT
DESIGNED BY THE
MAN HIMSELF
AND A MENU
THAT REFLECTS
SALVATORE'S
STYLE

#15=

15= SALVATORE @ 50

50 St James's, London
England
fiftylondon.com

What can we say about the maestro Salvatore Calabrese that hasn't already been said? A cocktail legend in his own lifetime, the drinks guru has travelled the world spreading love for the mixed drink and if you want to catch him, his own bar is the best bet.

Naturally his house follows his own perfectionist approach to drinking, a beautiful bar with features behind it designed by the man himself and a menu that reflects Salvatore's style.

The staff are equally adept and ask any member to free pour you a shot and it's a cast iron guarantee that they will do it every time, flawlessly.

The vibe is relaxed and somewhat formal at times, it's a members bar after all, but the staff know how to have fun as well and if you love your drinks then the conversations about the history will go on long into the night here. A beautiful bar with beautiful drinks, who could want more? 50



TOP BARS

17 MATTERHORN

106 Cuba Street, Wellington,
New Zealand
matterhorn.co.nz



Matterhorn started as an alpine retreat but now it's the cocktails that fans love in this New Zealand gem

IT'S HIGHLY REGARDED FOR CUISINE AND COCKTAIL, AND THE COMMITMENT TO FINE SPIRITS IS A KEY TO THE SUCCESS

Evidence that this is a truly global poll is right here in the shape of a New Zealand bar in the top 50 of the world.

Matterhorn has been open since the 60s and remains one of THE bars of choice in Wellington.

Set up by Swiss brothers, it was originally a German coffee house. The dark woods and images of mountains might have kept that alpine feel,

but today it's much more refined thanks to a renovation in 2002.

It's highly regarded for cuisine and cocktails today, and the commitment to fine spirits is a key to the success. Indeed it has one of New Zealand's most extensive lists, and along with more than 300 wines you'll struggle to find a better drinking experience in the country. [50](#)

#17

#18

More speakeasy love from New York and this one is, as the Americans might say, 'the bomb' when it comes to the devotion to drinks quality.

It's another Sasha Petraske creation so the devotion to quality should never be underestimated, but you will still be impressed.

Particularly remarkable is the level of knowledge from the staff who are sure to hit your palate

IF YOU MAKE IT IN HERE YOU'RE BETTER OFF AT THE BAR WHERE ALL THE ACTION IS. A GENUINE DRINKING EDUCATION AWAITS

perfectly if you give them enough information about your preferred spirit.

It's pokey and the stairs are a bit daunting, but it's warmer than Milk & Honey and it doesn't require a reservation so it's more welcoming to the passing customer all round, with a few booths for comfort seating. That said, if you make it in here you're better off at the bar where all the action is. A genuine drinking education awaits. [50](#)

18 LITTLE BRANCH

22 7th Ave South
New York, USA
littlebranch.net



A fantastic commitment to decent spirits and a team of staff that will cater to every drinking need



LONSDALE IS THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF A GREAT LONDON BAR, AND OF WHY MANY REGARD LONDON DRINKING AS THE BEST IN THE WORLD

#19

19 THE LONSDALE

48 Lonsdale Road
London, England
thelonsdale.co.uk



Lonsdale has something for most in its design and a staff and cocktail menu that are a tribute to London

This neighbourhood bar has picked up numerous awards for its fantastic drinks selection and is a bar that continues to attract discerning drinkers and industry experts in droves.

Lonsdale, found in the London's fashionable Notting Hill, has been firing out fantastic mixed drinks for seven years now and really made a mark in 2007 when it launched a menu celebrating the London cocktail, a blend of history and innovation.

Such is the quality in fact, that the bar acts as an example of why so many regard London as the cocktail capital of the world right now.

The likes of Dick Bradsell, Henry Besant and Charles Vexenat are amongst the cocktail luminaries consulted over the years, so few could argue with the

pedigree and the current team maintains standards.

The vibe is as cool as you might expect based on the neighbours, and the space age decor is thought provoking and original. Meanwhile the food is very palatable, making it a great stop if you decide you need more than one drink. 50

A fine example of all the hotel bar purports to be, relaxed, refined and a great staff to serve you

20 THE BAR



Dorchester Hotel, 53 Park Lane
London, England
thedorchester.com/the-bar

HARRY CRADDOCK IS AMONG THE LUMINARIES TO HAVE MIXED AT THE BAR SO THERE'S PLENTY OF RESPECT FOR CLASSIC COCKTAILS

This place will give you one of the warmest welcomes you're likely to receive in a bar, with manager Giuliano Morandin a true gent and perfect host.

Like all Italians he puts service top of the list when it comes to consumer satisfaction, but the attractions of the bar go way beyond the service – it is brimming with quality.

Harry Craddock is among the luminaries to have mixed at the bar so there's plenty of respect for classic cocktails, and there's nothing like seeing a Brooklyn on a menu. There's plenty of range though, with serious and fun drinks in abundance.

As a hotel bar it delivers on luxury and while many of the guests exhibit the behaviour of the wealthy, everyone is welcome. It was reopened in 2006 with new furnishings and decor, and there's plenty of seating room for hotel guests and those who simply fancy a decent drink.

Banquette seating lines the back of the venue and for those who sit at the bar there's plenty to discuss with a fine range of spirits and cocktails supervised by very capable bartenders. 50

#20



The rest of the field, completing the list of The World's 50 Best Bars 2009



21 LE LION, HAMBURG

Rathausstrasse 3
Hamburg, Germany
lelion.net

World famous drinks from a bar that opened in 2007 and was named 'Best New Cocktail Bar' at Tales of the Cocktail in 2008

22 TRAILER HAPPINESS

177 Portobello Road
London, England
trailerh.com

Tiki greatness in Notting Hill with quality drinks and an excellent bar team

23 SEAMSTRESS

113 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, Australia

Cantonese cuisine and classic and contemporary cocktails under the watch of the award-winning Jason Chan and super sommelier Anthony Herzog

24 MOJO LEEDS

18 Merrion Street, Leeds
England
mojobar.co.uk
Rock and Roll vibe with rock

and roll drinks, wicked night out and the perfect place to end up on top of a bar

25 BUDDHA BAR, DUBAI

Grosvenor House Hotel
Dubai
buddha-bar.com

More eastern extravagance from the Buddha crowd, this time dipping into the coffers of the Middle East

26 EMPLOYEES ONLY

510 Hudson Street
New York, USA
employeesonlynyc.com

A bar designed for and used by the industry, but loved by consumers. When it's jumping the bartenders are firing and it can be one of the best bars in the world

27 MATCH BAR

37-38 Margaret Street
London, England
matchbar.com

Another Jonathan Downey gem with all the quality benchmarks of the Match Group

28 ZETA BAR

4/488 George Street, Sydney
Australia
zetabar.com.au

Award-winning venue with stunning views to accompany a wide range of cocktails

29 BOWERY BAR

676 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, Australia
thebowery.com.au

A place for serious drinkers everywhere, named after a New York street famous for speakeasies. Expect live jazz and fine drinks

30 DRY MARTINI BAR

C/ Aribau 162 Barcelona, Spain
drymartinibcn.com

You'll find speakeasy styling here with a discerning crowd who like to sample fine drinks with no mucking about

31 CLOVER CLUB

210 Smith Street, Brooklyn
New York, USA
cloverclubny.com
Absolutely banging, this place

has emerged as one of the best bars in the world. Its Tales of the Cocktail 2009 'Best New Bar' award was much deserved and you can expect it to move up the rankings next time around

32 AQUA NEW DELHI

15 Parliament Street
New Delhi, India
theparkhotels.com

Outdoor drinking and dining complete with a pool, a more sheltered view of India

33 TIPLING CLUB

8D Dempsey Road, Singapore
tipplingclub.com

Deconstructed and molecular in the kitchen and at the bar. This one tests palate parameters

34 ROADHOUSE

Jubilee Hall, 35 Jubilee Market, The Piazza
Covent Garden, London
roadhouse.co.uk

A Mecca for flair tenders everywhere this London hotspot has disco drinks and nights to match

35 KU DE TA

Jalan Hotel The Oberoi
Seminyak
Kuta, Bali, Indonesia
kudeta.net

A fantastically chic spot where you can't fail to enjoy cocktails when served with a sunset

36 TOMMY'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT

5929 Geary Blvd
San Francisco
tommystequila.com

After Mexico the tequila pilgrimage must always lead here. Tommy's is an institution to the agave revolution and the Mexican food rocks. It's little wonder this is a favourite with bartenders everywhere

37 HUGO'S

1/33 Bayswater Road
Kings Cross, Sydney, Australia
hugos.com.au

Cocktail glamour in a plush award-winning nightclub. Expect a good looking crowd and if you're after eats then the pizza ain't bad either

THE WORLD'S 50 BEST BARS



TOP 50 BARS

- 1 Milk & Honey, London
- 2 Milk & Honey, New York
- 3 Buddha Bar Paris
- 4 PDT
- 5 Pegu Club
- 6 Bayswater Brasserie
- 7 Bramble
- 8 Der Raum
- 9 Harry's Bar, Venice
- 10 Death & Co
- 11 Black Pearl
- 12 1806
- 13 Lab
- 14 The Ivy Bar and Lounge
- 15 Harry's Bar, Paris
- 15 Salvatore @ 50
- 17 Matterhorn
- 18 Little Branch
- 19 The Lonsdale
- 20 The Dorchester Bar
- 21 Le Lion, Hamburg
- 22 Trailer Happiness
- 23 Seamstress
- 24 Mojo, Leeds
- 25 Buddha Bar, Dubai
- 26 Employees Only
- 27 Match Bar
- 28 Zeta Bar
- 29 Bowery Bar
- 30 Dry Martini Bar
- 31 Clover Club
- 32 Aqua New Delhi
- 33 Tipping Club
- 34 Roadhouse
- 35 Ku de Ta
- 36 Tommy's, San Francisco
- 37 Hugo's
- 38 Boudoir
- 39 Quo Vadis
- 40 Portobello Star
- 41 Melbourne Supper Club
- 42 Rose Bar
- 43 Planet Bar
- 44 The Toff
- 45 Asoka
- 46 Neo Bar
- 47 Sky Bar, Dubai
- 48 Double Happy
- 49 Tailor
- 50 The Merchant

#39

#41

#23

38 BOUDOIR

Dubai Marine Beach & Resort Spa, Dubai
myboudoir.com
 As the location suggests, money, money. Quite exclusive so not for all of us, but the name means you can ask a stranger if they'd like to join you in the boudoir...

39 QUO VADIS

26 Dean Street
 London, England
quovadissoho.co.uk
 A members club that picked up awards after only six months. Boasts some of the best mixologists in the world and is a must visit if you're in town and industry connected

40 PORTOBELLO STAR

171 Portobello Road
 London, England
 Another newbie that will rise and rise, fronted by the internationally renowned Jake Burger who made a success of Jake's in Leeds. Drinks are a mix of true education and pure fun

41 MELBOURNE SUPPER CLUB

1st/161 Spring Street
 Melbourne, Australia
visitvictoria.com
 Relaxed decor but very serious commitment to drinks, this is a perfect blend of old and new worlds and yet another great from Melbourne

42 ROSE BAR

2 Lexington Avenue
 New York, USA
gramercyparkhotel.com
 Sophisticated hotel bar in a sophisticated hotel with stunning artwork (Warhol originals no less) and decor to admire while you sip a decent Martini

43 PLANET BAR

Mount Nelson Hotel
 76 Orange Street,
 Cape Town, South Africa
mountnelson.co.za
 A colonial feel to this hotel bar that offers a decent selection of cocktails all made with due care and attention

44 THE TOFF

2/252 Swanston Street
 Melbourne, Australia
thetoffintown.com
 This place has a private member feel but is laid back enough to offer a pub vibe along with it

45 ASOKA

68 Kloof Street, Gardens
 Cape Town, South Africa
asokabar.co.za
 The new kid on the Cape Town block this will ruffle more feathers over the coming year. Great drinks, fresh fruit for all of them and the Watermelon Martini is one of the best in the world

46 NEO BAR

The Address Hotel
 Downtown Burj,
 Dubai
theaddress.com
 Sits 63 floors above Dubai so needless to say you can expect breathtaking views. If it's raining, which it won't be, then there are also stunning interiors to enjoy

47 SKY BAR DUBAI

Sky View Bar
 Beach Road, Dubai
 Another venue that makes it for the views with a useful drinks list and reservations required

48 DOUBLE HAPPY

182 Cashel Street
 Christchurch, New Zealand
 Previously voted New Zealand's best cocktail bar with the award-winning Glenn 'Dickie' Cullimore ensuring quality

49 TAILOR

525 Broome Street
 New York, USA
tailornyc.com
 Molecular guru Eben Freeman oversees a drinks molecular menu that will blow your mind

50 THE MERCHANT

The Merchant Hotel
 35-39 Waring Street
 Belfast, Northern Ireland
 This bar took three awards from Tales this year and is a world beater with incredible mixologists **50**

A world of opinion

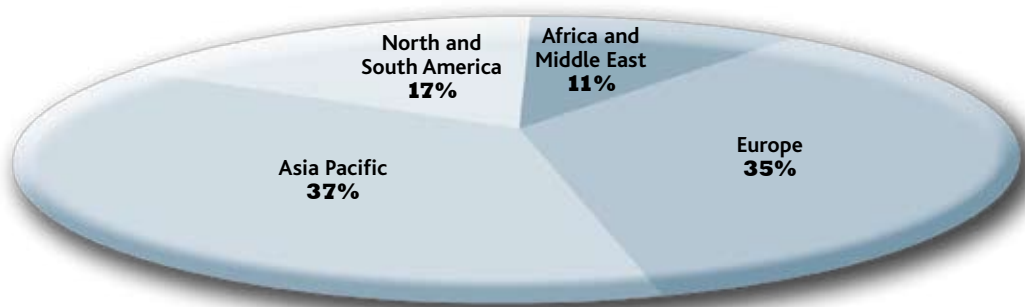
Reflecting the truly global nature of The World's 50 Best Bars, responses to the survey came in from 50 countries. Nobody will be surprised that London and New York are vying for the position of bar capital of the world, but it is striking to see that the highest number of responses came from bar experts and mixologists in the Asia Pacific region (see chart).

It's an age-old joke that you can't go into a bar in London without hearing an Aussie accent behind the stick, but perhaps the 37% figure reflects a higher propensity of natives of that part of the world – particularly Australia and New Zealand – to travel widely and gather experience behind the speed rails of the world.

While Milk & Honey London narrowly edged out its New York namesake for the top spot in the 2009 survey, there were 13 different nations (treating England, Scotland and Northern Ireland individually) represented among the top 50.

This year New York can consider itself the style bar capital of the world, with nine in the list and four in the top 10. However with 11 entries each, Australia and England share the honours for the highest number in the top 50 overall. [50](#)

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF ELITE BARS SURVEY RESPONDENTS



REGIONAL FAVOURITES

The top 10 bar choices from each of the four regions

Africa & Middle East

Eight of the top 10 bars selected by respondents in Africa and the Middle East were from within their region. Top selection was the Buddha Bar in Dubai.

Asia Pacific

By contrast, respondents within the Asia Pacific region were much more likely to pick bars from outside their region, with the top three picks being in London, New York and Paris. Bayswater Brasserie was the top local choice.

Europe

In keeping with that old trans-Atlantic love affair, European respondents looked West for the best bars, with the top two choices both in New York.

North America

A lack of consensus meant that no single bar stood out – hence a surprising winner, the classic Harry's bar in Venice. However seven of the remaining nine bars were from New York, with South America represented by only one bar, the Alvear Hotel Bar in Buenos Aires.

AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST

- 1 Buddha Bar, Dubai
- 2 Planet Bar, Cape Town
- 3 Asoka, Cape Town
- 4 Neo Bar, Address Hotel, Dubai
- 5 Sky Bar, Dubai
- 6 Milk & Honey, New York
- 7 Der Raum, Melbourne
- 8 Boudoir, Dubai
- 9 White Bar, Beirut
- 10 ZUMA, Dubai

ASIA PACIFIC

- 1 Milk & Honey, London
- 2 Milk & Honey, New York
- 3 Buddha Bar, Paris
- 4 Bayswater Brasserie, Sydney
- 5 Ivy, Sydney
- 6 Black Pearl, Melbourne
- 7 Matterhorn, Wellington
- 8 Pegu Club, New York
- 9 PDT (Please Don't Tell), New York
- 10 1806, Melbourne

EUROPE

- 1 PDT, New York
- 2 Milk & Honey, New York
- 3 Milk & Honey, London
- 4 Lab, London
- 5 Bramble, Edinburgh Scotland
- 6 Buddha Bar, Paris
- 7 Pegu Club, New York City
- 8 The Dorchester, London
- 9 Dry Martini Bar, Barcelona
- 10 Zeta Bar, Sydney

NORTH AMERICA

- 1 Harry's Bar, Venice
- 2 Little Branch, New York
- 3 Rose Bar, New York
- 4 Buddha Bar, Paris
- 5 Death & Co, New York
- 6 Clover Club, New York
- 7 McSorley's, New York
- 8 Milk & Honey, New York
- 9 Employees Only, New York
- 10 Alvear Hotel Bar, Buenos Aires

FLAG COUNT NUMBER OF ENTRIES IN THE TOP 50

- Australia 11
- England 11
- US 10
- Dubai 4
- France 2
- New Zealand 2
- South Africa 2
- 1 EACH: Bali, Germany, India, Italy, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore, Spain

UP AND COMING

Ones to watch



While it's true the choice of a bar is based on personal preference, there are some that simply can't be ignored. For one reason or another the bars listed here have been omitted, and we thought adding them would emphasise how the quality in this sector extends way beyond 50



69 COLEBROOK ROW ↑ 69 Colebrook Row, Islington, London, England

This bar was recently set up by Tony Conigliaro, which should give those of you with an ear to the ground an idea of its relevance. And for those who aren't so clued up, Tony is one of the best bartenders in the world and the winner of the Tales of the Cocktail International Bartender of the Year 2009. So he knows his stuff.

To be fair to voters, this bar opened shortly after the poll was closed, but expect more people to give it props in the coming months. If you're in London then it's a north-of-town venue, cocktail led, Italian café feel and intimate – 40 covers more or less.

It's cool but not pretentious and has a genuine lounge feel, that is to say if you end up here on any given night you can expect to converse with many of the other patrons. It's all about mixing, with the drinks and the people.



THE CONNAUGHT BAR ↑ The Connaught Hotel, Carlos Place, Mayfair, London, England

Another relatively new addition to the global drinking map, although this one has been open as long as at least two of its London neighbours that made the 50.

For that reason it goes down as an oversight, since it's a splendid hotel bar. Refurbished and re-opened in the autumn of 2008 the team behind the project enticed a magnificent bar staff to the venue and as a result the drinks are mixed and served with the distinction the customer demands. Meanwhile the refurb must've cost a few quid because it's dripping with class. It's a truly luxurious drinking experience and one well worth trying.

THE ALEMBIC → 1725 Haight Street, San Francisco, USA

San Francisco doesn't always receive the recognition it deserves in the world of drinks, emphasised by its lack of presence on this list, but the Alembic is a bar that is representative of a sea change.

Famous for its counter culture the Californian city is home to a number of excellent dive and beer bars, but in recent years a cocktail culture has sprung up. The Alembic has embraced this and delivers it with a fine commitment to it's beer and food as well.

Resting on Haight Street the bar's cocktail menu is innovative and excellent, and the staff are entirely capable of mixing each drink with aplomb. Meanwhile beer comes from local brewers, including those from the Magnolia brewpub, another fine establishment that Alembic owner Dave McLean is behind.



← LA CAPILLA Tequila Town, Mexico

The status of this bar is legendary amongst tequila fans, specifically the lucky drinks enthusiasts who have visited Mexico. Based in the heart of tequila country, it is ramshackle and run by the octogenarian Don Javier who has been serving in this particular spot for 60 years. It's hugely popular with the local tequila owners and farmers and if you make it try Don Javier's creation the Batanga, best enjoyed with some of the authentic Mexican grub served straight from the barbeque outside.

It's authentic and for this reason alone it needs to be on the list.



RUBY ↓ Nybrogade 10, Copenhagen, Denmark

Perhaps the majority of survey respondents haven't been to Copenhagen – this is surely the only reason for this bar to be missing.

Quite simply it is one of the best in the world and blends a serious commitment to great drinking with a fantastic vibe and crowd. Set in the same building as the Georgian Embassy it's converted from a beautiful existing building and is set across three floors.

The staff are excellent and well trained and the whole experience is a marvellous one, making this a serious oversight in this year's list.



TOKYO ↑ Yes, that means the whole city

Basically, to leave bars from Japan out is a massive faux pas and no other country with such strength in drinking culture can have as much cause for complaint.

There are a number of venues in Tokyo that would not have looked out of place, so one can only assume that those asked simply haven't made their way over there yet. The current standards of bartending in the country are competing with the leading cocktail cultures in New York and London and with domestic distilling currently earning plaudits at the leading drinks competitions, there's plenty of local product to mix with.



Match Bar in Margaret Street, London

Match Bar's Jonathan Downey runs this year's number one venue, Milk & Honey. Lucy Britner found him full of bar wisdom, and happy to air an opinion or two

JONATHAN DOWNEY

FOUNDER MATCH BAR GROUP

WHAT MAKES A GOOD BAR?

The two most important things are the people who go there and the people who work there. We've been mass-producing great bartenders for over a decade.

I always aim to create institutions for food and drink – I want to attract nice customers, not necessarily cool. We've got 3,200 members and we define our crowd by what we don't do – play chart music, serve slippery nipple type drinks, serve energy drinks or jugs of cocktails.

MILK & HONEY SEEMS TO BE HAVING A PRETTY LONG HEYDAY. WHY?

The clever answer is that we've changed everything and we've changed nothing. We've changed so many things but you wouldn't notice. Lots of the back-of-house has changed, we've moved things to make life easier for the staff and ensure they continue to deliver an exceptional level of service.

Someone said to me that Match EC1 looked dated. I said: "You mean it looks like a 90s East London cocktail bar?" That's exactly what I want – for people to feel it's been there for a while. The key is building things in the right way to start with.

DO YOU TURN DOWN OPPORTUNITIES TO MAINTAIN THIS BUSINESS ETHOS?

Yes. W Hotel in Leicester Square wanted us to do a bar. But I went to the one in LA and I thought, if this is what you're looking for, I can't help you.

WHO DO YOU ADMIRE IN THE TRADE?

Sasha Petraske (his business partner) genuinely lives and breathes it everyday. He's incredibly influential. When we brought Milk & Honey to London there

was nowhere like it. There have been lots of attempts – and ones that have spent more money. But they are all shinier versions.

He used to come over here and give me a hard time but I've got children and 400 employees. He used to think I was quite harsh but now he's involved in four or five sites in New York, he understands that burden of responsibility.

WHICH COUNTRY TAKES BARTENDING MOST SERIOUSLY?

In the States there's a focus on 'gourmet bartending' – which is a wanky term. It's more about crafting a drink. Molecular mixology is another stupid term. To me, bartending is about looking after the customer – knowing cab numbers, late bars, places to eat. I'm not bothered about your atomizer.

WHERE ARE YOUR FAVOURITE BARS, NOT INCLUDING YOUR OWN?

There are no real standouts. Mojo in Manchester – good music, good cold beer, friendly staff, shots of tequila; Blue Marlin in Ibiza, it's right on the beach. In New York, I like Employees Only; Dick Bradsell's new bar in London is great because he's there; Seamstress in Melbourne.

ARE THERE ANY BARS IN THE WORLD THAT YOU THINK ARE OVERRATED?

So many! Bars have a heyday. Some are great for a

couple of years but people move on – you know that quote "there are no great bars only great bartenders"... I've tried to make sure our bars are great anyway.

This may be an incorrect statement but I can't think of a decent hotel bar in the world – they are just boring.

IF YOU COULD OPEN ANOTHER BAR ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD, WHERE WOULD YOU GO FOR?

New York. I'd like to open a Match or a Soshu there. There aren't bars that mix great drinks and great music and I've never understood that. There are temples to the cocktail and then beer and shot places that just seem to play Bruce Springsteen.

We're also dealing with a great landlord on a site in Manchester, England, at the moment and we're looking to open an East Room type concept – a modern take on the wine bar. Hopefully that'll be early in the New Year.

YOU SEEM TO BE FOCUSING A LOT ON THIS WINE BAR CONCEPT. WHY?

Ever since I moved to London in 1990, I've wanted to reinvent the wine bar. I started work at a big international law firm and on my first Friday night out, a partner took me to a Davy's wine bar. It was absolutely shit.

I've never just wanted to do cocktail bars. For me, a bar menu should mean you can order food all day, good beer, great wine, cocktails and music. [50](#)



The basement lounge at Soshu, part of the Match Group