

## Hotel Bars Serve People-Watching Fun

By Alison McSherry

ROLL CALL STAFF

Whether you're sipping Champagne at the St. Regis or downing bourbon as you sway to blues at the Four Seasons, there's something fun about a hotel bar. Drinking a cocktail among tourists and business travelers gives an interesting glimpse into the lives of those who pass through our fair city, and you never know what accent you'll hear or what power deal you'll see brokered in a corner.

D.C. has a host of gorgeous, high-end hotels, each of which offers a bar often great for unwinding and people-watching.



### MUG SHOTS

Shots' favorites.

From Capitol Hill to Georgetown, here are a few of Mug

- It's hard to tell where the bar at the Liaison (415 New Jersey Ave. NW) on Capitol Hill ends and the hotel lobby begins. The

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first floor of the hotel is a large multiuse space that also includes Southern-cooking favorite Art & Soul. With master bartender Scott Worsham at the helm, this hotel offers tasty libations in a decidedly hip environment. The bar is peppered with funky furniture and has a lively vibe in the evenings. While the service tends to be on the slow side, the drinks are worth the wait. Cocktails are reasonably priced and top off at \$12. Try the Margarita, Perfected — a combination of tequila, fresh-squeezed lime juice, Fee Brothers orange bitters and lime zest — and you'll quickly realize how subpar every other margarita you've ever had was.

- Off the Record, the basement bar at the Hay-Adams Hotel (800 16th St. NW), is filled with dark wood and red banquettes. The bartenders are friendly, and the big game is usually on the large plasma TV. The clientele is often well-dressed and willing to shell out the minimum \$10 for a glass of wine. Go on a weekend and you may see a bride and groom come dancing through

the door in the late evening hours, or a well-dressed group of twentysomethings drinking in style before heading off to a gala at the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

- The Round Robin Bar at the Willard InterContinental (1401 Pennsylvania Ave. NW) has a wonderfully classic dark mahogany feel. In fact, it's easy to get swept up in the history of the hotel and the bar. After all, this is where Abraham Lincoln lived for a week before his inauguration and where Martin Luther King Jr. polished his "I Have a Dream Speech" days before delivering it. The bar is also where Henry Clay first introduced the mint julep to Washington, D.C. Cocktails are a bit steep at \$15 a pop, but beers start at \$6, making it possible to visit the Round Robin Bar without breaking the bank.

- On Thursday nights, the bar at Bourbon Steak, Michael Mina's hip restaurant nestled in the Four Seasons (2800 Pennsylvania Ave. NW) in Georgetown, transforms into a fun blues bar. Joe's Blues Band (aka the Joe Herrera Trio) plays to a packed house from 7 to 11 p.m. every week for a crowd that tends to be in their thirties and forties. Bourbon cocktails are plentiful, and the bar fare is tasty and much more affordable than eating in the restaurant. For example, a sirloin burger goes for \$16, while warm olives or a bowl of truffle popcorn costs less than \$10. The bar fills up quickly, so get there early to grab a seat.

- The Bar at the St. Regis (923 16th St. NW) stands in stark contrast to the hotel lobby. Where the lobby is ornate and antiques-filled, the bar is swanky and modern. This dimly lit spot is a wine drinkers' haven. In addition to a tasty cocktail list — try the white sangria — the bar offers a wine program designed by Ramon Narvaez. One of the perks of this bar is that in addition to the separate lists of wine by the glass, Narvaez is willing to open any bottle and pour it by the glass.

- If there's one thing the bar at the Park Hyatt has perfected, it's how to see and be seen while still having a little privacy. This



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bright, airy bar offers four “Capitol Hill” glass-enclosed booths that are named after the founders. The booths allow patrons to have a quiet chat while still being able to observe who comes and goes at the bar. Wines start at \$9, with cocktails such as the pear and elderflower martini costing \$13 each. In addition to libations, the bar offers a large selection of cheeses as well as Kobe beef burgers and the hotel’s famous apple pie.



File Photo

**The bar at the Liaison connects directly to the hotel’s popular new restaurant, Art & Soul.**

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File Photo

**Art & Soul on Capitol Hill links directly to the Liaison's hotel bar, with tasty drinks in a hip location.**