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High in the Sky: Seasonal Cocktails at Manhattan's Best Rooftop Bars

by Winnie McCroy
EDGE Editor
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(Source:Bar 54 at Hyatt Times Square)

Summer is finally here, and it's time to get as high as the sky! So head to SixtyFive (the new cocktail lounge at Rockefeller Center), the Press Lounge at Kimpton's Ink48 Hotel, or Hyatt's new Bar 54 -- and enjoy some deliciously curated seasonal cocktails against the backdrop of the Manhattan skyline.

EDGE spoke with some of the city's best mixologists about their spring/summer cocktail menus, which feature the best locally sourced and artisanal spirits, fresh herbs and fruits, unexpected flowers, spices, and even mushrooms.

Trends this summer include drinks mixed with locally sourced Greenhook Gin, herb infusions and flavored simple syrups, and milk-based cocktails. And put away the sparkling cava; this summer, it's all about rosé.

So pony up and show yourself a good time with a great view. It will be one night of drinking you won't forget!



Bartender Brendan serving up cocktails at Bar 54. (Source:Winnie McCroy)

Bar 54 at the Hyatt Times Square

Noted mixologist Julie Reiner is the genius behind the success of the swanky new [Bar 54 at the Hyatt Hotel in Times Square](#). Nestled on the 54th floor, the bar has an amazing view from its terrace. And with the handsome bearded bartender Brendan slinging cocktails, the view bellying up to the bar isn't bad, either. He'll mix you up a thirst quencher like the Hawaiian Iced Tea, a mix of Stoli orange with a mango-scented Liliuokalani Tea, lemon juice, mint tea and simple syrup.

Or enjoy the Bridgetown Stomp, a mix of white Ed Dorado 12-year rum, Cinzano Sweet Vermouth, Campari, Cio Ciarro Amaro, Demerara syrup and Regan's orange bitter. They also carry an assortment of local brews, including Sixpoint Crisp and Seasonal, Brooklyn Local and Doc's Original Hard Cider.

This season, milky curry-based drinks are all the rage. Try Brendan's own creation, the Sailor's Delight, a mix of Curry Biz, Sailor Jerry Spiced Rum and Jamaican Rum -- all topped with crushed ice and a dash of bitters for a beautiful effect.

Bar 54 presents a fun, vibrant scene where you'll find a mature crowd and lounge music. Priority is offered for hotel guests, so check with the concierge for availability.

Special events include a Father's Day event that puts dad behind the bar to learn the tricks of the trade, before setting him up with a freshly rolled cigar. And for those who want their New Year's Eve to be truly unforgettable, the bar offers a special wedding package, with a reception in the salon, exclusive use of the bar, access to the Timeless Marilyn Monroe Spa, rooms for 50 guests, a complimentary suite for the bride

and groom and a recovery brunch. You can even add fireworks or a horse-drawn carriage. Now that's a one of a kind wedding!

Bar 54 at Hyatt Hotel

135 W. 45th Street
646-364-1234



Mixologist Isidro Gutierrez at the Press Lounge. (Source: Winnie McCroy)

Press Lounge at Ink48 Hotel

Say goodbye to David Letterman in style by visiting the rooftop bar where Paul Shaffer and his band convene during the show's opening credits: [The Press Lounge at Ink48 Hotel](#). This always-crowded bar on Manhattan's far west draws massive crowds upwards of 300 people all summer long, yet it still manages to stay sophisticated.

Set in a former printing house, take the elevator past floors whimsically named after fonts to the top, where local forager Meghan Boledovich works with bartender Isidro Gutierrez to develop seasonal cocktails using fresh ingredients gleaned from farmer's markets, Chinatown and the hotel's very own rooftop garden.

As befits the former printing press, the cocktails served here also have font-inspired names. Try the Courier, a mix of Templeton Rye, Drambuie, wildflower honey, raspberries and blueberries.

"As spring approaches, we are going to start doing cocktails with berries, spices, flowers like little roses and amazing

bitters," said Boledovich. When summer arrives, we'll switch out some of the spring fruits with watermelon and cantaloupe.

The Press Lounge has already found success with drinks like the Teletype, made with fennel-infused gin that Gutierrez crafts using Technical Reserve high-proof vodka from Industry City, plus Pavan liqueur, rhubarb-lavender syrup and club soda. Another favorite is the Dauphin, a blend of Teeling Whiskey, Aveze liqueur, agave nectar, lemon juice, strawberries and radish. Because radishes vary in peppiness, Gutierrez's attention to detail includes a taste of each one before adding it to the drink.

Boledovich favors local spirits like Greenhook Gin and The Widow Jane, a Red Hook distillery that sources water from upstate, and uses corn mash and local grains to make rye, bourbon and rum.

But they're not afraid of newcomers: another hit is the Allegro, a mix of pineapple-infused Atlantico rum from the Dominican Republic, Madagascar vanilla and ginger beer. Keeping things local, the Press Lounge also offers wine from Long Island and rosé from the Finger Lakes, along with local Greenpoint and Ommegang beers on tap.

People always say the West is the best; now's your chance to prove it.

Press Lounge at Ink48 Hotel

653 Eleventh Avenue at 48th Street
212-757-2224

SixtyFive Bar & Cocktail Lounge at Rockefeller Center

If you want to know what it feels like to be the king (or queen) of New York, all it takes is a trip to [SixtyFive Bar & Cocktail Lounge](#) at Rockefeller Center -- the crown jewel of Manhattan's rooftop bars. Laid out before you is the entire city, nicely packaged from Harlem to the Brooklyn Bridge, all for the price of a fancy cocktail.

Like her counterparts in the industry, Beverage Manager Molly Cohen enjoys sourcing local spirits, such as the Greenhook Old Tom gin she mixes with Pierre Ferrand Dry Curacao and Pedro Ximénez Sherry for the playfully named Vote for Pedro. Another hit is the playful Papa Doble (inspired by Hemingway), a mix of Banks 5 Island Rum, fresh lime, grapefruit and Luxardo maraschino.

"I do like to support smaller distillers and New York artisans, and bring all of these New York spirits into the menu," said Cohen, mentioning an Old-Time Gin distilled in Astoria.

Hot and sweet blend perfectly in a coupe in the Piquant Pear, a mix of jalapeño-infused Espolon Silver Tequila, pear, fresh lime and housemade cinnamon syrup. Fans of the Moscow Mule can try the Gotham Mule, a blend of Granny Smith apple-infused Tito's Vodka and Pickett Brothers Ginger Beer. Go for something



Manhattan's best mojito at SixtyFive. (Source:WinnieMcCroy)

stronger with the Bamboo Cocktail, Leonor Palo Cortado Sherry, Carpano Bianco Vermouth, and orange and angostura bitters.

The Rhythm & is an inspired mix of Dewatsuru Junmai sake, Pierre Ferrand Dry Curacao, and lavender bitters garnished with blueberries that goes down a bit too easy. And the Salty Lassi is a milk-based rum drink that blends ginger and kaffir lime with cumin and turmeric.

And no one does classics better than The Rock -- their Mojito, featuring El Dorado 15-year rum, mint syrup, fresh lime and Angostura bitters, can't be beat!

"There are certain things available in the beginning of the season that aren't there at the end," said Cohen. "So I like to have some staple drinks, and others with a shorter life span."

Cohen said that fresh fruit is always key, like resilient blueberries, and the blackberry and lemon in the Spiked Arnold Palmer. She makes the simple syrups and bitters herself. With the recent renovation (marking the first time guests can enjoy the soaring al fresco view in more than 80 years), Cohen has

been able to create a new menu from scratch for both the Rainbow Room and SixtyFive that is fresh and new, while still respecting "The Rock"'s legacy. The venue is only open from Monday through Friday and despite the hefty per drink price tag, don't expect to find expense-account suits at every table.

The wine list features eight wines by the glass, both red and white, and three rosés, plus several hundred wines by the bottle. Cohen sources some great New York wines, and keeps the list accessible, and not too esoteric and intimidating.

"People hunger for a good rosé, and they are out there," said Cohen. "That's why we have three different styles, to help educate people."

Enjoy complimentary tastings and special offers after work this spring. And on Memorial Day, take advantage of \$10 rosés all day long. It's a great opportunity to stop by and see all New York has to offer.

SixtyFive Bar & Cocktail Lounge
30 Rockefeller Center, 65th Floor
212-632-5065

Winnie McCroy is the Women on the EDGE Editor, HIV/Health Editor, and Assistant Entertainment Editor for EDGE Media Network, handling all women's news, HIV health stories and theater reviews throughout the U.S. She has contributed to other publications, including The Village Voice, Gay City News, Chelsea Now and The Advocate, and lives in Brooklyn, New York, where she writes about local restaurants in her food blog, <http://brooklyniscookin.blogspot.com/>

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 that doesn't mean we can't act as if it's 80 degrees and sunny. EDGE has scoured the country for a preview of our favorite sun-inspired cocktails.



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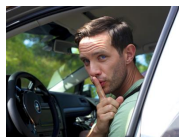
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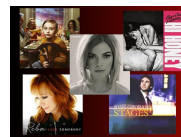
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