

# Hide & Seek



Off-the-beaten-path takes on new meaning with these cocktail-bar bolt-holes. Now, you will have a new haunt in all your favourite cities.

BY DOUG WALLACE

**S**OMETIMES YOU JUST want to duck into a quiet place for a drink or two, shoot the breeze, chew the fat. The continuance of the Prohibition-era speakeasy-style watering hole is evidence of our need to step out of the limelight once in a while and into a dry martini.

Soma Soho



### LONDON: SOMA SOHO

“Soma” is a Sanskrit word meaning to distill and extract, which seems more than apt for this modern, subterranean speakeasy. Guests pull up a wooden stool along an etched stainless-steel bar or murmur away in the nooks and crannies. A semi-private lounge, all done in sumptuous chestnut brown, is a hot ticket for gaggles of 10 to 25. Look for the entrance next to Cricket Restaurant.

**DRINK UP:** The Cashew features mezcal with sweet vermouth, burnt cashew and Carpano Bitters, while the Rose is a spritzed gin with a rose and cherry-blossom flavour boost. *14 Denman Street*; ↗ [somasoho.com](http://somasoho.com)

### MONTREAL: STILLIFE

A small, apple shingle on Saint Paul West just outside Old Montreal is the only demarcation of Stillife, with the door off a side alley. The minimalism carries on inside the sleek, sexy space, which is lined with dark banquettes and tiny tables. Bartenders whip up house specialties and old-school classics Wednesday through Saturday nights. The list also includes an impressive selection of tequilas and whiskies. Go late. **DRINK UP:** The Rosie tastes like a tequila-forward Negroni, while the Castanea features cognac washed with pumpkin milk and chocolate bitters. *640 Saint Paul Street West*;

↗ [stillifemtl.com](http://stillifemtl.com)

### LOS ANGELES: ADULTS ONLY

Patrons enter this *Boogie Nights*-style watering hole through a doorway of what appears to be an old video store in the corner of a shopping-mall plaza. Once inside, Old Hollywood glamour rules, the décor championing the golden era of film.

Cinematic-slash-ecclesiastical touches include dramatic drapery, Gothic cathedral lamps, movie posters, church pews, stained-glass windows and projected movies. Brace for the beautiful people dressing to impress, who have probably already had a few. Follow the pink neon. **DRINK UP:** A bourbon with a beer chaser. Make it a double. *7065 ½ Sunset Boulevard*; ↗ [adultsonlybar.la](http://adultsonlybar.la)

### SINGAPORE: 28HKS

The award-winning 28 HongKong Street is hardly a secret, particularly when your name is your address. The exterior looks like it’s a hardware store that has closed for the night, perhaps even for good. Inside, it feels like you’ve ducked into a low-lit speakeasy – the Prohibition-era feel further underlined by the fact that alcohol in Singapore is so heavily taxed. **DRINK UP:** With the Black Forest Negroni, the Italian classic gets a German makeover. The Veg-O-Matic sports a mix of gins flavoured with yellow pepper, basil and lemon. *28 Hongkong Street*;

↗ [28hgs.com](http://28hgs.com)

### TORONTO: VATICAN GIFT SHOP

It’s blasphemous! What looks like a small shoebox selling votive candles and religious doo-dads opens up to a low-lit space sporting a long, wooden bar, a lounge and a Neapolitan pizza (straight from the wood-burning oven) restaurant, complete with cathedral lamps. There’s plenty of space for intimate live-music shows, 1980s dance parties and karaoke. **DRINK UP:** Choose a

local or European beer, or a fancy cocktail like the Ride the Cliché, which mixes ginger beer, amaro, tequila and lemon. *1047 Gerrard Street East*; @ [thevaticangiftshop](https://www.instagram.com/thevaticangiftshop)

### BUENOS AIRES: FRANK’S

What begins like the opening credits of TV show *Get Smart* quickly turns into what looks like a set piece from *Peaky Blinders*. The doorman requires a password (which you’ll find on Facebook), before giving you a code to dial into an American phone booth, the back of which then opens out onto a 1920s-style lounge. Two floors here are festooned with chandeliers and velvet. Book ahead via the bar’s Instagram account where you’ll find a link to the Woki reservations app to make your entry more seamless.

**DRINK UP:** Dandy bartenders specialize mostly in drinks fashionable in the 1920s. Bespoke cocktails can also be made from your particular tastes. *Arévalo 1445*; @ [franks\\_bar](https://www.instagram.com/franks_bar)

### NEW YORK CITY: PDT

Also accessed by calling from a phone booth – this time in the hot dog café Crif Dogs in New York’s East Village – this hideaway is very well-known for its speakeasy. Featured on Anthony Bourdain’s *The Layover* TV series, PDT (which stands for Please Don’t Tell) is a brick-walled basement den punched up with taxidermied animals. Sit at the bar so you can watch the show. And definitely make a reservation. **DRINK UP:** A hot dog, of course. The Alpine Fresca features rosemary-infused tequila and Génepy, a Alpine herbal liqueur. The Halva Suisse is a creamy Middle East-styled absinthe confection. *113 St. Marks Place*; ↗ [pdtnyc.com](http://pdtnyc.com)