



Restaurants & Bars

Happy hours

Least crowded happy hours

Just because these bars are empty doesn't mean they suck.

By Amy Zavatto

10 Downing Food & Wine

From 4 to 7pm, this restaurant (which has its own art curator for more than 20 painters and photographers) cuts the price on its cool cocktail list to \$8 (from the usual \$14). Sit at the gorgeous, thick, cake-like white marble bar, and watch mixologist Jan Levi Warren shake up original concoctions, such as the Desert Flower (his sweet-spicy mix of Fidencio mezcal, lavender syrup and honey liqueur) or the spring-is-coming Pickle (a pucker mix of fresh dill, Hendrick's gin, lime juice, pickle juice, cucumber and pinch of salt). *10 Downing St at Sixth Ave (212-255-0300, 10downingnyc.com)*

Cowgirl

While the gently curved wooden bar collects a thicker crowd as the night wears on, during the 4–6pm happy hour, the place is yours. Head for the quieter back room at this perennial favorite, famous for its rootin' tootin' dude-ranch decor, and lasso yourself a few \$3.50 drafts and half-price frozen margaritas (\$4.25 for your standard house version, and \$5 to \$5.50 for special flavors like prickly pear, blood orange or peach). *519 Hudson St at 10th St (212-633-1133, cowgirlnyc.com)*

Toby's Public House

This laid-back, chummy neighborhood joint is best known for its crispy-edged, wood-fired, brick-oven pizza (\$13–\$18), but show up between 4 and 6pm for a buck off your mug o' suds from one of ten tap brews, including Hofbräu seasonal and Pennichuck black lager, already an inexpensive \$4 to \$6 a pop. You can also down \$3 well drinks, as well as free nightly noshes (for as long as they last), like a plate of dried sausage, cheese and olives, or focaccia bread with dip. *686 Sixth Ave at 21st St, Sunset Park, Brooklyn (718-788-1186, tobyspublichouse.com)*

Trattoria Cinque

The best way to turn a cheap date into a cozy tête-à-tête is to meet your honey among the bottom-lit, glowing-red bottles of Aperol at Cinque's bar. As the fireplace crackles in the background and you sit beneath dangling Tom Dixon–designed hammered-brass lights, order the “Pie and Peroni” happy-hour special (\$20 for two Peronis or glasses of wine, plus one of Milanese chef Mirco Grassini's artisanal pies), and you'll look like a big cheese. *363 Greenwich St between Franklin and Harrison Sts (212-965-0555, trattoriacinquenyc.com)*

Winegasm

Despite the fratty-sounding name (that is, if fratboys drank cabernet franc), this sexy little winecentric spot is outfitted with printer's-box–like bottle shelving, exposed-brick walls and square, ample wooden tables—all the better to encourage the sharing of \$5 and \$6 small plates, like smoked-bacon–wrapped prunes and wild-mushroom truffle crostini. The short but sweet happy hour from 5 to 7:30pm Sunday through Friday offers two-for-one deals on all cocktails, including special mixes such as the fresh-pineapple-and-mint mojito and the spicy pumpkin martini. *31-86 37th St between Broadway and 31st Ave, Astoria, Queens (718-932-3331, winegasmeatery.com)*

Burp Castle

Gassy aristocrats aside, this Belgian-heavy bastion of beautiful brews, outfitted with medieval murals and cozy tables, keeps its happy hour civil thanks to a long-held policy of shushing loud talkers to more

monastically appropriate levels. Weekdays from 5 to 8pm gets you a buck off the ever-changing dozen tap beers, and Belgian fries are free from 6pm or so on Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays. *41 E 7th St between Second and Third Aves* (212-982-4576, burpcastlenc.wordpress.com)

Pier 76

Since it opened in late 2009 in St. George, this once-bedraggled Irish dive has become a cheery neighborhood staple, with five big flat-screen TVs for sports lovers and a pretty dark-wood wainscotted back-bar area of tables for those who want to spread out for the stellar thin-crust, Neapolitan-style pizza (the owners are the offspring of the original Joe & Pat's pizza peeps). But unlike its parent spot, Pier has a full bar that has become a convivial meeting place; you can always find a cushy bar stool for daily cocktail specials—pear martinis are two-for-one on Wednesdays, as are all mixed drinks on Thursdays and Fridays—as well as \$2 Bud and Bud Lights on tap and in bottle. *76 Bay St near Slosson Terr, St. George, Staten Island* (718-447-7437, pier76si.com)

Suspenders

While most Wall Street bars can get as jam-packed after work as a trading floor during a commodities fire sale, this spacious, firemen-owned watering hole near Trinity Church is the antidote to Financial District drinkin' blues. The reason: its big mahogany bar, its stained-glass windows with pictures of '20s-era ladies and gents, and its happy hour, which doles out \$4 tap beers and \$5 top-shelf mixed drinks weekdays from 4pm until close, as well as buy-one, get-one free until 8pm. *111 Broadway at Thames St* (212-732-5005, suspendersbar.com)

Sycamore Bar

The crowd here is a good, ol' Kensington mix of aging and youthful hipsters alike, as well as Russian and Latino immigrants, and local stroller-parking parents grabbing beers at the garden tables in the good weather. Happy-hour specials change daily but often include half-price well drinks from 5:30 to 8pm, international and craft beers for \$3 to \$7, and \$5 glasses of wine. Happy-hour bonus: Get a beer and a bouquet from the bar's sister flower shop for \$10. *1118 Courtelyou Rd between Stratford and Westminster Rds, Flatbush, Brooklyn* (347-240-5850, sycamorebrooklyn.com)

The Volstead

Hit up Midtown's sexy, candlelit Volstead early, and not only will you get to slide into a buttery-soft, dark brown leather booth, but you can also nab one of four specialty cocktails, like the Blackberry martini made with fresh muddled berries and served with a sugared rim. They're just \$6 each (normally \$13) from 4 to 8pm during the "Recess from the Recession" special. *125 E 54th St between Park and Lexington Aves* (212-583-0411, thevolstead.com)

WCOU Radio

This joint, which is more often referred to as Tile Bar, is what you might call a dignified dive with its plain wood bar, smattering of tables against the far wall, and excellent punk- and postpunk-heavy jukebox. Don't miss the mixed bag of great-deal drinks at happy hour from 5 to 8pm every day, including \$2.50 Rolling Rocks, Buds and mixed well drinks, as well as most call mixed drinks for \$3.50. But wait, there's more: a bonus happy hour from midnight to 4am on Sundays and Mondays, as well as bartenders who still believe in buybacks. *115 First Ave at 7th St* (212-254-4317)

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