

Seattle's Favorite Watering Holes, Drink-Slingers, and Thirst Quenchers

Seattle Weekly readers tell us how they like to imbibe.

August 2, 2017
Seattle Weekly
By: SW Staff

Best Bartender

Jay Cates at Vidiot Read Kelton Sears' first-hand report from the West Seattle video game bar.

First Runner-Up: Jordan Strong
Second Runner-Up: Murray Stenson

Best Bottle Shop

Chuck's Hop Shop Not that they're the ultimate authority on this or anything, but according to OK Cupid users, Chuck's Hop Shop is one of the best date spots in Seattle. It stands to reason: Both the Greenwood and Central District locations of this beer-lover's heaven have friendly, wide-open patios and a constantly rotating tap list so dizzying that even the most refined palates have plenty to choose from—sour beers, crisp lagers, bitter IPAs, dark stouts, tart ciders. IPA flights and cider flights are just \$6 or \$7—a steal for the range you get—plus they'll fill growlers to go. Also, food trucks are onsite every day of the week, chips and peanuts and ice-cream cones are for sale, and every bottle of beer under the sun is available for purchase in the fridge along the back wall. Various locations.

First Runner-Up: The Beer Junction
Second Runner-Up: Full Throttle Bottles

Best Brewer

Fremont Brewing Company It's true that big beer companies like Anheuser-Busch are scared of smaller breweries. But it's more precise to say that they're scared of ones like Fremont Brewing, which not only can craft delicious beer but has the wherewithal to get it into as many bars and grocery stores as will have it, posing a real threat to the big boys' bottom line. In other words, support that nanobrewery down the block, but next time you're at Fred Meyer, support Fremont, too, and watch those Buds cry, cry, cry.

First Runner-Up: Stoup Brewing
Second Runner-Up: Georgetown Brewing Company



Best Cocktail Lounge

The Shanghai Room Twenty-four-hour diners and dimly lit cocktail bars have long been the touchstones of nightlife in this city. Recently those places have been disappearing—but not the Shanghai Room, which, along with the winner of Best 24-Hour Eats, the North Star Diner, takes as its mission the preservation of Seattle’s soul. Sink into a cushy booth in the dark lounge, sip a drink, and listen to the karaoke that happens every night. Low ceilings and worn carpet give this neighborhood watering hole character. As the owners say, when you fall down, their carpets will catch you.

8580 Greenwood Ave. N., 457-5794.

First Runner-Up: Vito’s Restaurant and Lounge
Second Runner-Up: Zig Zag Cafe

Best Coffee Shop

Victrola Coffee and Art Winning a coffee shop competition in Seattle is no small feat. Since opening in 2000, Victrola has been serving up coffee that’s much more than your average cup of joe. According to the proprietors, the goal of Victrola is to “highlight the natural beauty in the bean.” Coffee isn’t to be chugged on the go or downed to stay awake, but rather, deeply appreciated—like the locally produced art that adorns the walls. The shop even offers “Public Cuppings,” which are sort of like low-key wine tasting for morning people. Various locations.

First Runner-Up: The Station
Second Runner-Up: Caffe Vita

Best Distiller

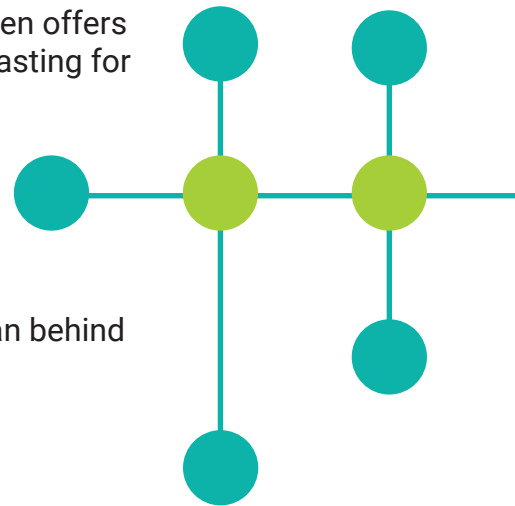
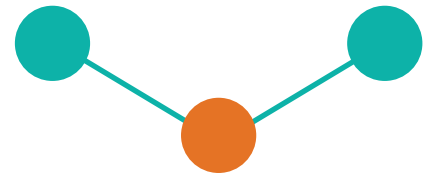
Fremont Mischief Read Jason Simms report on the man behind the machinery.

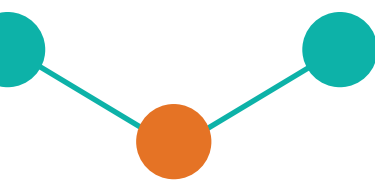
First Runner-Up: Sun Liquor Distillery
Second Runner-Up: Westland Distillery

Best Dive Bar

Waterwheel Lounge Any one of the Waterwheel’s best features could sustain a long-running dive: \$2 beers during happy hour (5–7 p.m. Mon.–Fri.). Live honky-tonk bands. Karaoke four nights a week with a huge catalog of songs. Brunch. Bingo. Trivia. A quaint mural. A spacious AstroTurf patio complete with ping-pong, cornhole, and ladderball—and the list goes on. The combination of all these has made this North Ballard favorite “Better than you’d expect!” since 1974. 7034 15th Ave. N.W.

First Runner-Up: Loretta’s Northwesterner
Second Runner-Up: Eastlake Zoo Tavern





Best LGBTQ Bar

Pony It's now been 10 years since Pony was born in a temporary Capitol Hill space, and the party rages on at its permanent home in a former 1930s gas station. A year-round patio equipped with a retractable roof and a gas firepit makes this divey homage to the Castro the perfect place to relax outside or sweat it up on the dance floor to DJs spinning everything from punk and New Wave to disco and indie rock. 1221 E. Madison St., 324-2854.

First Runner-Up: Wildrose
Second Runner-Up: Neighbours

Best Manhattan

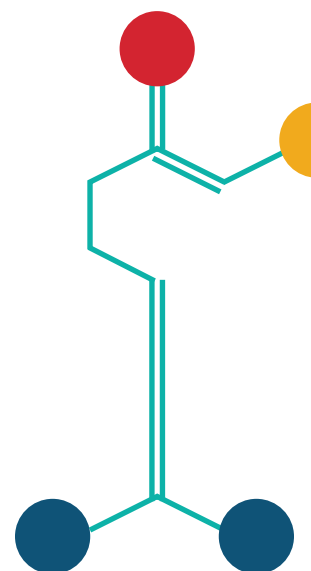
Zig Zag Café Rye or bourbon? Check on both. Perfect ratio of whiskey, vermouth, and bitters? Got it. Real cherry? None of that artificial nonsense here. Zig Zag doesn't take risks with its Manhattan, and it pays off with a solid take on the classic, served as it should be in a chilled glass. It helps that the red lighting, roses, and cozy patio make the perfectly classy-with-a-hint-of-sexy environment in which to enjoy it. Try one for just \$7 at happy hour on weekdays, 5–7 p.m. 1501 Western Ave. #202, 625-1146.

First Runner-Up: Metropolitan Grill
Second Runner-Up: Smith Tower Observatory Bar

Best Sports Bar & Best Happy Hour

The Westy Sports & Spirits With an extensive \$5 food menu, including a hand-pressed, all-natural Angus burger for \$5 as well as vegan and gluten-free options and hearty stuff like chicken and a waffle, it's no wonder the Westy pulled in our Best Happy Hour category. And there is plenty of reason to stick around to watch the game. Ample TVs are balanced well with the exposed-brick, homey atmosphere of this Roxhill neighborhood spot—just one of the many reasons the Westy also won our Best Sports Bar category. Meet you there for a \$5 happy-hour glass of wine and a Sounders game? 7908 35th Ave. S.W., 937-8977.

First Runner-Up for Sports Bar: Sam's Tavern
Second Runner-Up for Sports Bar: The Bridge
First Runner-Up for Happy Hour: Japonessa
Second Runner-Up for Happy Hour: The Matador



Best Winery

Chateau Ste. Michelle Love smashed grapes and Smash Mouth? Chateau Ste. Michelle has both. The storied winery turned 50 last month, and still churns out more riesling than any other winery in the world (spurring 75 other local wineries to try their hand with the grape as well). Plus, they book all your favorite oldies to perform for their summer concert series, where you can top off your glass with a little ZZ Top. 14111 N.E. 145th St., 425-488-1133.

First Runner-Up: Charles Smith Wines

Second Runner-Up: Sleight of Hand Cellars

Best Wine Bar

Purple Café and Wine Bar If you're looking for selection, it's going to be tough to beat the place with a 112-page menu. Honestly, reading the entire thing should count as credit toward a sommelier certification. With sections on everything from Washington wine history to oxidized wine, as well as explanations of rare varietals and techniques, learning opportunities abound. But don't be intimidated—among the dozens of glass pours, it's not hard to find options for less than \$10. 1225 Fourth Ave., 829-2280.

First Runner-Up: The Harvest Vine

Second Runner-Up: Bottlehouse

