

DRINK

THE NEW GUARD: 10 MODERN MARTINI BARS

The best bars to try a new twist on the classic drink

BY [KARA NEWMAN](#) POSTED MAY 15, 2015

The martini is a straightforward cocktail, but that hasn't stopped bartenders from experimenting. In fact, many seem to regard the martini as a fertile blank canvas. Modern riffs on the classic drink include scaling the drink down into mini 'tinis and upsizing it into a bottled drink for a group. We've seen molecular martinis chilled with liquid nitrogen and flavor boundaries pushed with martinis that skew fashionably briny, pine-y, or bitter.

Consider, for example, the Silvertone cocktail at Dallas's [Midnight Rambler](#), which partner Chad Solomon describes as a "neo-classical" take on the original. Made with gin or vodka, dry vermouth, and orange bitters, and garnished with house-pickled onions, it follows the basic template for a Gibson. But he also adds saline solution and a full ounce of Texas "Crazy Water," a local mineral water, to the mix. It still looks, smells, and tastes like a martini, but it feels weightier on the tongue, and that minute dash of salt creates a seawater-like effect. Overall, it makes the drinker feel off-kilter, like having a martini while jet-lagged.

No matter how bartenders tweak and "improve" upon the classic martini, however, one aspect doesn't change: the ritual of making it. Though the cocktail has crossed over centuries, it's still poured, stirred, and presented with care—if not outright reverence. Whether your drink of choice skews toward classic versions or next-generation modern riffs, head to one of the following cocktail dens and other destinations to enjoy a martini right now:

MAISON PREMIERE, BROOKLYN, NY

Although it's best known for oysters and absinthe, this New Orleans-by-way-of-Williamsburg bar recently introduced tableside martini service for two with the Old King Cole martini. It's a nod to Martini di Arma di Taggia, a bartender who some credit with creating the martini at New York's Knickerbocker Hotel in 1912. Of note, the Old King Cole mural painted by Maxfield Parrish (which now hangs in the St. Regis Hotel), originally was commissioned for the Knickerbocker.

Instead of London Dry gin, this martini variation features Old Raj gin, made with saffron for a spicy flavor and light straw hue. A sidecar of various garnishes (buttery Castelvetro olives, elaborately "manicured" lemon peel, even seaweed) encourages guests to customize their drink. To make it, combine 3 oz. Old Raj gin, ¼ oz. Dolin dry vermouth, and 2-3 dashes orange bitters in an ice-filled mixing glass. Stir and strain into a martini glass. Serve with a sidecar of ice, Castelvetro olives skewered with a pin, a lemon twist, and seaweed.

Maison Premiere
298 Bedford Ave
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