

Wonder Bars!

Tastings

With a massive selection of wines from around the world, this is a bar for the vino lover. Tastings stocks more than 160 wines, 40 of which are featured at any given time in one of its major drawcards – the Enomatic wine system – which allows you to sample some of the world's finest wines in small and affordable amounts at the press of a button. Finished in a slick rustic style appropriate for an urban wine specialist, and dominated by the blue glow emanating from its extensive wine cellar, this should be the first stop for anyone with a hankering for a rich shiraz, crisp chardonnay or refreshing rosé. 27 & 29 Wellington St, Central. 2523 6282; www.tastings.hk. No happy hour.

Executive Bar

Last time we visited, we got kicked out because we didn't have a reservation; lesson learned. Make a booking at this exclusive Japanese bar overlooking the Happy Valley racetrack to choose from more than 50 whiskies and bourbons. All can be served with symmetrical, baseball-sized cubes of ice. Minimum charge: \$150 per person. 27/F, Bartlock Centre, 3 Yiu Wa St, 2893 2080. No happy hour.



Oriental Sake Bar Yu-Zen

Entering this bar is like walking into old-world Japan. Cozy and charming, this small Zen den features a dark wood bar stretching in front of its frosted lattice wall, with Japanese waiters dressed in pristine white suits at your service. And the highlight: intimate, private sanctuaries with cushions sprawled on the floor, all enclosed by transparent curtains. As its name suggests, this bar features a quality range of sake, such as the floral and fruity Dassai, which is served in a beautifully ornate shot glass (\$68). So settle in on the floor, refresh yourself with the hot towels provided on arrival, enjoy the Japanese bossanova murmuring in the background, and content yourself with the knowledge that you've found one of the Hong Kong bar scene's real hidden gems. 21/F, Circle Plaza, 499 Hennessy Rd, Causeway Bay, 2893 6120; hk-yuzen.com. No happy hour.

Sahara

There are quite a few bars in town that do shisha, but it's hard to top Sahara for pure variety and value. With more than eight flavours on offer at \$100 a pop, Sahara provides a more affordable fruit-smoking option than rivals Marouche (\$165), Bar 109 (\$130), and Merhaba (\$120), and the waiting staff are always on hand, jangling hip-scarves, to keep your coals hot. Aside from the quality carcinogens, Sahara is a cosy joint with kitschy Middle Eastern décor, an authentic mezz menu, and comfortable purple couches pushed against the walls. Avoid the low stools, though – your back will soon start complaining for lack of support. 11 Elgin St, Central, 2291 6060. No happy hour.

The Specialists

The Globe

There are numerous reasons why The Globe is loved by its loyal regulars. Indeed, its old-style local atmosphere, classic jukebox, infamous Wall of Shame, and hearty home-made pies have a lot to do with it. But perhaps most of all, The Globe is a shrine to beer. With more than 100 on its menu, as well as a quality selection of ten on tap, this tiny, conveniently located pub is the only place in Hong Kong with the Belgian brew De Koninck on tap (\$32 for a half pint). It's not as Shakespearean as its name suggests, but in the end, the question is – to beer or not to beer? Answer in the affirmative, take up a spot at the bar, and strike up a friendly conversation with the regulars. 39 Hollywood Rd, 2543 1941; www.theglobe.com.hk. H/H 9am–8pm.