

The best spring bars

THREE BARS NEAR... Prospect Park



Franklin Park

This converted auto garage boasts the charm (and the square footage) of a basement rec room, complete with Skee-Ball, sports on a projector TV and vintage family photos on the walls. The sprawling front beer garden is perfect for knocking back a Franklin Lamnade (vodka, Campari, simple syrup, fresh lemons, setzer, \$9) and a halfway in back leads to the winemaking Dutch Boy Burger, where you can grab postpeak treats, including bourbon-spiked milk shakes (\$4) and stout floats (\$7) (made with Blue Marble Ice Cream, 818 St. John's Pl. between Classon and Franklin Aves., Crown Heights, Brooklyn (718-973-0196, franklinparkbrooklyn.com).

Washington Commons

This corner bar may not have Franklin Park's spaciousness, but it does have 16 craft brews on tap, knowledgeable bartenders who are happy to offer a recommendation or a sample of the stuff, and some of the most entertaining bathroom graffiti around (look at the ceiling and you'll be advised to "pay attention"). Grab a bright, happy Captain Lawrence Rye Ale (\$6) and head out back to the multicolored picnic tables where you can rub elbows with an eclectic mix of locals (and their dogs). 748 Washington Ave. at Park Pl. Prospect Heights, Brooklyn (718-230-3966).

Weather Up

Beyond the unmarked, white-tiled facade of this cocktail den you'll find a sultry space and artfully mixed renditions of classic drinks (and why not, with several Sasha Petraske-trained mixologists behind the bar). Sip on a Monk Buck (cognac, fresh lime, ginger syrup and yellow Chartreuse; \$11) or a Revolver (bourbon, coffee liqueur and orange bitters; \$14) while catching the last of the afternoon rays on the sizable back deck. 589 Vanderbilt Ave. between Beign and Dean Sts., Prospect Heights, Brooklyn (no phone). —Carolyn Stanley



Your winter-to-spring cocktail course

Transition into the season with these stellar cocktails. By Mari Uyehara



VICTOR'S SECRET AT POT

Before blood oranges fade from the market, the wintry fruit star in this gamet drink. The combination of dark citrus and spicy Rittenhouse Rye produces surprising chocolaty notes. A pair of amari—the full-bodied, artichoke-based Cynar, and the sherrylike Cardamaro, made from cardoons—add weight and bitterness to the juicy ambrosia. 113 St. Marks Pl. between First Ave. and Ave A (212-614-0386). \$15.

JOHN LEE HOOKER AT THE SUMMIT BAR

Co-owner/mixologist Greg Seider combines the elements of blues legend Hooker's famous ditty when mixing this drink: one bourbon (Buffalo Trace Kentucky Straight), one Scotch (Peat Monster) and one beer (Hop Stoopid). Dashes of cinnamon, agave nectar and sarsaparilla bitters lend spice, and a squeeze of lemon juice gives a bright boost. 133 Ave C between 8th and 9th Sts. (no phone). \$12.

THE PSYCHIC HEART AT HOTEL DELMANO

Bartender Sam Anderson's balanced quaff gets its funky override fruit flavors from a blend of mescal, pear eau-de-vie and Carpano Antica sweet vermouth. Agave nectar adds sweetness, lime juice provides acid, and a hearty shake with egg white adds a layer of thick foam to the nip. 82 Berry St. at North 9th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-387-1945). \$11.

SALT-N-PEPA AT VANDAAG

Don't be fooled by this dainty alabaster sipper: The beauty has kick. Star-anise-flavored aquavit, spiked with fiery red Fresno chili pepper, is melded with blanco tequila, lime juice and agave nectar. The aromatic rim of salt, fennel pollen and dried orange peel gives the zippy drink a celery-like fragrance and crystalline sparkle. 103 Second Ave. at 6th St. (212-253-0470). \$12.

APERITIVO COCKTAIL AT AI FIORI

Innovative mixologist Eben Freeman infuses Beefeater gin with potent Persian saffron for two days, and then mixes it with honeylike Dolin Blanc vermouth and absinthe. Flavorless Lactart milk acid, from chemist Darcy O'Neil's line of forgotten soda-shop elixirs, and Ligurian lemon soda add the fizz; a fennel frond adds color. 400 Fifth Ave. between 36th and 37th Sts. (212-613-8660). \$14.

KING BEE AT FORT DEFIANCE

Proprietor St. John Frid calls this brisk tea-and-lemon tippie a "boozy Arnold Palmer." He steers in Pursuit of Tea Darjeeling viscous, honey-distilled Comb vodka. The result: tannic tincture is mixed with lemon juice, herb Bénédictine and Angostura bitters, and topped with a splash of prosecco. 365 Van Brunt St. at Dikeman St., Red Hook, Brooklyn (347-46672). \$9.

CASA VERDE AT LOCANDA VERDE

Herbs, vegetables and flowers all get a fair shake in this refresher. Crisp cucumber puree plays on a base of pungent Banks 5 Island rum, aromatic elderflower liqueur and absinthe. Tarragon syrup enhances the drink's grassy notes, while bursts of lime and white balsamic vinegar balance it out with tartness. 377 Greenwich St. between Franklin and North Moore Sts. (212-925-3797). \$14.

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FRENCH AFFAIR AT THE RAINES LAW ROOM

Head barkeep Meaghan Dorman mixes a stunning French two-tone: Rich, velvety cognac and herbaceous Yellow Chartreuse are paired with muddled strawberries and lemon juice in this charmer. Poured over cracked ice and crowned with a crimson berry, the easy-sipping concoction is ideal for balmy spring toasting. 48 W 17th St. between Fifth and Sixth Aves. (raineslawroom.com). \$13.

Places to drink all day

ABILENE

Like the appearance of spring's first robin, the sight of tables and lawn chairs outside this Carroll Gardens fave is a sure sign that lazy, laid-back afternoons are once again on the way. Order a basket of pulled pork (\$8) and cheese fries (\$6) or nachos (\$7) while kicking everyone's ass at Connect Four, refilling often with pints of Brooklyn Lager (\$5). When temperatures drop in the evening, move your gang inside and park on one of the well-loved, mismatched couches, and continue to party into the wee hours. 442 Court St. at 3rd Pl. (718-522-6900). Daily 11am-4am.

BLIND TIGER ALE HOUSE

The menu at Blind Tiger—an eclectic hideaway on a trendy stretch of Bleeker Street—is what makes it a blue-ribbon standard for all-day drinking. Choose from 30-plus varieties of American-craft, Belgian and cask ale on tap. People-watch through the tall

windows while nursing a Nebraska IPA (\$6.50). Snag a table early—and order bowl of beanless bour chili (\$9)—for a calm, casual afternoon before the evening revelers descend. 281 Bleeker St. at Jones St. (212-462-4682, blindtigeralehouse.com). Daily 11:30am-4am.

SUPERFINE

Afternoon sun streams through enormous warehouse windows, shines on the brick walls and sends shafts of light across this modern bohemian hangout, seducing you into spending hours in one of the repurposed movie-theater seats by the bar. Sip an artisanal cocktail like the El Craneo (house-infused pepper vodka with muddled mint, \$8) and shoot some pool on the orange-felt table. The next thing you know, you'll be perusing the dinner menu. 126 Front St. at Pearl St. (718-243-9005). Tue-Thu 11:30am-2am, Fri 11:30am-4am, Sat 2pm-4am, Sun 11am-2am.

MISSION DOLORES

Wait, an industrial stretch of Fourth Avenue isn't your ideal location for a gorgeous, alcohol-soaked afternoon? It doesn't matter after a few pints at this airy, converted

auto shop, you won't want to leave. During happy hour, all beers are \$1 off and pitchers of Yuengling or Genesee are \$10 (Mon-Thu 4-7pm, Fri 2-7pm)—or spring for a craft beer on tap (most usually \$5-\$8). Keep yourself occupied by playing *Indiana Jones* pinball, listening to Jay Reardon on the jukebox and eating tacos from Oaxaca across the street. 249 Fourth Ave. between Carroll and President Sts., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-399-0099, missiوندoloresbar.com). Mon-Thu 4pm-1am, Fri-Sun 2pm-4am.

THE RANDOLPH AT BROOME

Ease your way into a hazy-afternoon bender this easygoing cocktail hub, which pours cup Intelligentsia and Oxo coffee (\$4, pour-over press-pot \$7) beginning in the early-morning hours. Come 11am, you can move on to the strong stuff. Give the Old College Try (\$14), a

the daily happy hour (until 8pm), when every cocktail is half off. 349 Broome St. between Bowery and Elizabeth St. (212-274-0667).

Chrysis St. (212-253-7077, korylesnyc.com). Mon-Thu, Sun noon-2am, Fri-Sat noon-4am. —Casey Barber and Tim Lowery

MORE ONLINE! Visit newyork.timeout.com/springbars for an expanded list of places to knock a few back—all day.