

HEAD CASES

The **BEER GLASS** gets in shape

With beer bars bubbling up all over town, it's becoming less likely that your favorite brew will arrive in a traditional pint glass or even a frosty mug. There's now an array of suds-specific vessels that some say, if paired with the right beer, can enhance the flavor and overall drinking experience. (Sound familiar, oenophiles?)



TULIP

Size: 10-13 oz. **Ideal for:** Belgian ales like Delirium Tremens. **Why:** The out-turned rim coaxes a foamy head and floral notes from full-bodied beers that need to breathe. **Where:** Verdugo, 3408 Verdugo Rd., Glendale Park.



GOBLET

Size: 12 oz. **Ideal for:** Trappist ales like Chimay. **Why:** Its wide mouth brings creamy ales to the desired temperature. **Where:** Würstküche, 800 E. 3rd St., downtown.



LAMBIC

Size: 8 oz. **Ideal for:** Fruity, sour beers like Cantillon Classic Gueuze. **Why:** The real "champagne of beers" deserves a flute. Etchings in the base create extra bubbles. **Where:** BottleRock, 1050 S. Flower St., downtown.



BULB

Size: 14 oz. **Ideal for:** Strong ales like Allagash Curieux. **Why:** It's bigger than a pint and allows swishing room for big American ales. **Where:** The Golden State, 426 N. Fairfax Ave., L.A.



LAUREL TAVERN

11938 VENTURA BOULEVARD, STUDIO CITY
818-506-0777 OR LAURELTAVERN.NET

LAUREL TAVERN HAS GIVEN us something unexpected: the Ventura Boulevard sidewalk scene, complete with stilettoes, cigarettes, and a bouncer asking you to please—please—stand away from the entrance. Inside, Valley denizens throng the bar to order regional brews (15 California beers are on tap) and way-above-average pub grub (try the salmon plate or the roasted marrowbones) before plopping down at the high butcher-block bar, a rare instance of communal seating that works.

LOCALS COUNT: 53 percent. **SIGNATURE DRINK:** Pasadena-brewed Craftzman beers. **BONUS POINTS:** Add house fries to any beer order, and you'll still come in under \$12, including tip.

WURSTKÜCHE

800 EAST 3RD STREET, DOWNTOWN
213-687-4444 OR WURSTKUCHERESTAURANT.COM

WE KNOW—WE'VE WORKED this sausage-and-beer hall into just about every issue since it opened. But this is the quintessential new-school neighborhood bar. The long picnic tables offer a slice of downtown life, circa 2009. Fashion District employees with funny haircuts chat over obscure Doppelbocks. A birthday party looks as if it includes the entire lower ranks of Deloitte & Touche. A middle-aged couple chuckles at their rabbit and

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BOTTLED WISDOM

LOU AMDUR, of Lou, in Hollywood, suggests five ways to make the most of a wine bar



LEAVE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

"A lot of people come to me and say, 'I'm a pinot grigio drinker.' If you want to drink what you're comfortable with, go drink at home. Use the wine bar as an opportunity to expand your awareness and to exploit the knowledge of the folks there—like me."



DON'T COMMIT

"If you're shy about trying something new, go to a wine bar that offers smaller, two-ounce tastes. It's not the most economical way to get your drink on, but at least if you love it, you can get a glass or the bottle. If not, it's no big deal."



START SMALL

"Wine service is like a three-course meal: You want to start with an appetizer. Even when someone says they want a full-bodied red right away, I give them a white or a lighter-bodied red to start—something to reset your palate and your brain."



LEARN THE LINGO

"With steak we know what rare, medium, and well done means, and that helps the chef. Wine terms do the same for sommeliers. If you say you want something with refreshing acidity, no oak, and slightly sparkling, I'll know you should try this muscadet."



DRINK WATER

"There's a difference between being happy and being bombed. Drinking water isn't going to make you any less drunk, but you may have one less glass of wine. It seems like a stupid business decision, but you want customers to come back alive."

classes on the side. Friends wanted to know what she knew, which led to get-togethers at her home. When the group outgrew her digs, City Sip LA was born. The friends-of-friends vibe remains here, where locals gather around a cherry red bar made of reclaimed bottles to sample California cuvée syrah, a late-harvest gewürztraminer, and more than 40 wines by the glass or bottle. Reggie Southerland (*The Next Food Network Star*) works miracles on the panini grill. **APPELLATION:** Wine-soaked housewarming party. **TOP POUR:** Half-price Sundays at 9 p.m. **PALATE CLEANSER:** Daddio panino with truffle cheese, salami, and pesto.

as in, it's mellow. Modern, airy, and with plenty of space at the bar, the place is enveloped in blond wood. Slide up for suggestions from the knowledgeable folks turning the corkscrews. As for the wines, there's something from Amador, Temecula, and every region in between. **APPELLATION:** Downtown chic with more wood than a Spearmint Rhino. **TOP POUR:** Morgan 12 Clones pinot; it's like drinking a baseball glove, but good. **PALATE CLEANSER:** On Test Kitchen Tuesdays you are the guinea pig: Try experimental appetizers for \$2.

BOOZE CLUES

Enomatic what-the-what? Robots are taking over—the wine world at least. The Enomatic wine dispenser is part fridge, part computer, part spirit. Customers insert a card and select a wine. The machine then dispenses a calibrated portion into a glass. Sexy? No. But these devices "control oxidation and keep the wines at their optimal temperatures," says Peter Birmingham, wine director at Santa Monica's PourIt. OK, R2-D2, you can stay.

CORKBAR

403 WEST 12TH STREET, DOWNTOWN
213-746-0050 OR CORKBAR.COM

WE LIKE A WINE BAR WITH focus. Corkbar pours almost exclusively California wines. The taps dispense only California beers, and the spirit is altogether Californian—

SALUTÉ

2435 MAIN STREET, SANTA MONICA
310-450-3434 OR SALUTEWINEBAR.COM

AT LAST, A WINE BAR FOR liquor drinkers. Don't get us wrong; we love wine, but Saluté's fully stocked bar allows our companion to quaff a Casa Lapostolle Clos Apalta carmenère blend while we nurse a martini (because sometimes it's that kind of night). A line of Enomatic wine dispensers is banked on one side of the dimly lit space, which bears no vestiges of its Röckenwagner days. Choose a shot or a full pour from any of the 40 bottles on tap. Those feeling too comfortable to leave their low-slung leather banquettes or their exquisite little pizzas can order by the glass or by the bottle from the don't-move-we'll-bring-it-to-you wine list. Half-price happy hours are 5:30 to 7:30, Monday through Thursday. **APPELLATION:** Sex appeal and mechanized pours? Does not compute. **TOP POUR:** Creamy, spicy Layer Cake Zinfandel. **PALATE CLEANSER:** Wood-roasted beef fillet.