



BEST BARS

DISCOVER WHAT THE AREA'S BARS HAVE TO OFFER.

BY TERESA K. TRAVERSE

ROBERT MENDANT



HIGHLINE RXR

For a place that supposedly doesn't have official bars, Northern Virginia is home to plenty of watering holes. No matter what your niche (wine bar, craft beer bar, date night spot), these spots all over town have you covered. Discover just what NoVA's vast and dynamic bar scene has to offer.



COCKTAIL BARS

HIGHLINE RXR

THE B SIDE

The B Side exudes cool. Diners can enjoy a music-themed spot (all the drinks are named after, what else, B-sides) that doesn't overdo it. The speakers pump out vinyl albums ranging from modern artists like Band of Horses and classics like Joy Division. Specialty cocktails like The 59th Street Bridge, featuring a combination of Maker's Mark, cabernet syrup, lemon and egg white for a smooth, crisp finish, are worth the money and rule this menu. / [8298 GLASS ALLEY, FAIRFAX; BSIDECUTS.COM](#)

HIGHLINE RXR

The Highline RxR features a long bar with an equally long drink list that caters to Crystal City's after-work set. And the expansive Highline is a place to relax. Customers will find pin-ball games like Ms. Pac-Man, graffiti-style decor behind the bar and big-screen TVs. Specialty cocktails are a true highlight.

The signature Highline cocktail is a dynamic blend of rye, fresh lemon, orange bitters and a housemade pomegranate syrup all served over ice. / [2010 CRYSTAL DRIVE, ARLINGTON; HIGHLINERXR.COM](#)

PX

Look for the blink-and-you'll-miss-it blue light on top of a white door frame around the corner from Eamonn's, ring the doorbell, and a server will escort you up to the ultra-exclusive PX. The lights are low, the space buzzes with lively chatter, and the innovative cocktails rock. Consider trying the inventive Wet Money, a mix of grapefruit juice, lemon syrup, white rum, blue curacao and salt water. Reservations are recommended as space is limited. / [728 KING ST., ALEXANDRIA; BARPX.COM](#)

COPPERWOOD TAVERN

Step back in time at this spot with a strong Western theme.

BARTENDERS
TELL US

WHAT MAKES A GOOD BAR?

KRISTIANA HADLEY

@ *Jammin Java*

"I like a more laid-back environment. I don't like it to be one of those crazy packed clubs where you have to scream your head off to get attention. It always makes a difference to me when the bartender will acknowledge you or something like that so you're not just a random face. If you can have a conversation with somebody, that's always nice."

MELISSA GERLACH

@ *W.K. Hearth*

"A good selection of different drinks, but also really an atmosphere of hospitality—that you're welcome when you walk in and that the servers are paying attention to the details of what they're doing."

KATIE NIGSCH

@ *Mad Fox Brewery*

"Selection and knowledge are huge. That goes for anything. That goes for cocktails. That goes for beer. And just knowledge, but also just being a nice person. You can joke around ... Nothing is worse than walking into a place where they have no idea where the beer's from and what it tastes like."



CLARITY

Expect wood everywhere—pieces salvaged from a real barn were used to create the wall behind the bar—and taxidermy, too. Little details count here. Each patron is given a complimentary small bucket of spiced popcorn to munch on. Classic cocktails with regional ingredients like the Commonwealth (not Moscow) Mule are the highlight here. Drinkers who like it very strong can even order moonshine. / **4021 CAMPBELL AVE., ARLINGTON; COPPERWOODTAVERN.COM**

CLARITY

This Vienna cocktail bar dishes out creative offerings in a sleek setting. Two bars provide two different views: bottles or the open kitchen. The bar is made with gleaming copper. Many cocktail ingredients, like the tonic, are made in-house, and guests can savor dynam-

ic creations like the savory and, yes, a little salty Montana—a blend of Ketel One vodka, Aperol, cocchi American, bay leaf syrup, preserved lemon and a blow-torched bay leaf. / **442 MAPLE AVE. E, VIENNA; CLARITYVIENNA.COM**

GREEN PIG BISTRO

A mostly local crowd fills the retro (imagine a classic Paris cafe) but modern Green Pig Bistro. Small touches make all the difference. Decor includes bowls of lemons and limes on the counter, an antique taphead and pages from James Beard and Julia Child cookbooks serving as wallpaper. Cocktails rotate seasonally and tend to feature fruit. A prime example is the Lavender in Blue, grapefruit-infused gin mixed with housemade lavender tonic. / **1025 N. FILLMORE ST., ARLINGTON; GREENPIGBISTRO.COM**



CABOOSE

LOST RHINO RETREAT

Lost Rhino's spacious offshoot of its original Ashburn location features an indoor/outdoor industrial looking bar where patrons can enjoy food and the Lost Rhino's own microbrews on tap. Lost Rhino supplies a range of beer options like its classic New River Pale Ale, dark lagers and a smattering of seasonal and limited releases, many made with ingredients from Virginia farms. Guests can pair suds

with fare like baked brie. Lively conversation rules this decidedly casual atmosphere. / **2285 BRAMBLETON PLAZA, ASHBURN;** LOSTRHINORETREAT.COM

GALAXY HUT

Funky inside with worn wooden floors and quirky embellishments like painted ceiling tiles and tables in the back where guests can playing arcade games like Pac-Man, Galaxy Hut is a lively, low-key bar. Bartenders pour craft beer ranging

from pale ales to “darker suds” from the seemingly endless taps located behind the six-seater bar. Groups chatter away at the tables as solo drinkers read books or scroll through their phones at the bar. / **2711 WILSON BLVD., ARLINGTON; GALAXYHUT.WORDPRESS.COM**

SPACEBAR

Spacebar has three things going for it: great atmosphere, good food and a rotating selection of craft beers. And that’s all this bar needs. The light blue walls are illuminated by soft lighting, and a TV behind the bar showing flicks like “The Dark Knight” reinforces the “nerd vibe.” Mostly young patrons enjoy a loud environment and a creative grilled cheese menu, including items like the pulled BBQ pork, crispy fried shallot and sharp cheddar on rye option. / **709 W. BROAD ST., FALLS CHURCH; SPCBR.WORDPRESS.COM**

MAD FOX BREWING COMPANY

Customers can enjoy Mad Fox’s very own craft beer on tap at this casual haunt. The space is light-filled and outfitted with a gleaming 63-foot wooden bar. Everything from pale ales to hop-heavy suds graces this menu. Food here is noteworthy. Mad Fox dishes out fresh pizza alongside common bar foods like fried pickles or a juicy burger. The crowd is mixed. Sports fans watch the latest matches on TV screens as Falls Church residents catch up. / **444 W. BROAD ST., FALLS CHURCH; MADFOXBEWING.COM**

HEAVY SEAS ALEHOUSE

Heavy Seas Alehouse has a surprisingly modern vibe that fits perfectly in Arlington. Soft lighting makes for a classy atmosphere, and nautical decor is subtle. Solo drinkers, couples and professionals all gather at the bar. Kids are welcome, and this spot even has a kids menu. As the name would suggest, look forward to beer and lots of it. Bartenders pour the Heavy Seas’ own stouts, hop-heavy IPAs and a light, refreshing Powder Monkey pale ale. / **1501 WILSON BLVD., ARLINGTON; HEAVYSEASALEHOUSE.COM**

HEAVY SEAS ALEHOUSE



WILL WITHEROW

@ Copperwood Tavern
 “What makes a great bar is really the bartender. It’s literally when you walk in to a place ... you wanna come somewhere, like “Cheers” said, man, where everyone knows your name. Your bartenders that are willing to read the guests and give ‘em a good time. Give ‘em what they want.”

KEITH BRASSFIELD

@ Caboose
 “The atmosphere is what I enjoy the most. Obviously you want a good bartender, good food [and] beer, but I tend to enjoy myself more when I’m able to talk to other people at the bar or talk to the bartender—just a friendly, open atmosphere, which invites strangers to talk. I like the social aspect of it.”



CABOOSE

Located at the end of an industrial section of Vienna, expect an industrial looking (but warm) tasting room. Pallets hang from the ceiling and act as light fixtures. Caboose’s craft beer is on tap and ranges from light pale ales to hoppy IPAs. As this spot is mere steps from the W&OD trail, Spandex-clad cyclists order drinks alongside Vienna families and the occasional college-aged kid. Food is hearty—like burgers—but also healthy—like the kale salad. / **520 MILL ST. NE, VIENNA; CABOOSEBEWING.COM**

C.J. FINZ RAW BAR & GRILLE

C.J. Finz is a lively spot with a heavy beach bar vibe in the heart of Manassas. Look forward to a loud, fun atmosphere that’s perfect for a laid-back night out. Guests can order raw food like oysters or crab legs alongside cocktails and craft beer on draft. Patrons who head here on certain nights can hear live music from the open-air deck on the second floor with a bird’s-eye view of the Harris Pavilion. / **9413 WEST ST., MANASSAS; CJFINZ.COM**

WHAT IS NoVA’S SIGNATURE DRINK?

Keith Brassfield
@ Caboose

“Manhattan. Bourbon Manhattan. Older men tend to order that. Virginia in general is, I feel like, country people, and country people are going to be drinking whiskeys or bourbon or stuff like that.”

**BARTENDERS
TELL US**

HOTEL BARS



BARREL & BUSHEL

TODD THRASHER

@ PX and
Restaurant Eve

"Everyone forgets that you have to be able to make people feel comfortable. You have to make people feel welcome when they come into your bar. For me, I can go to a bar, and if I have the best cocktail, the best glass of wine, best food but the bartender is not into being behind the bar, I'm probably never going to go back. Being a bartender is a labor of love. You have to love being able to talk to people, love multitasking. People have gotten all confused with this whole mixology craze. People think you go to the bar to get a good cocktail.

That's not the bar business. That's the mixology business. If I order a Manhattan, I would like you to know how to make it. People forget how important it is to be nice. I have a saying ... 'I can train you how to mix a cocktail, if you're willing. I can train you how to walk and talk behind the bar and how to mix a drink, but I can't train you to be nice.' That was your parents' job ... Because of this whole mixology craze, people take it so seriously. It's just bartending. It's about making people forget where they are for the hour or two they're with you."

JACKSON 20

Twenty-somethings and older Old Town residents alike frequent Jackson 20 for its specialty cocktails and casual yet upscale atmosphere. It's perfect for date night or that midafternoon business meeting. Drink creations like Papa Hemingway, with Appleton Estate VX Rum, grapefruit, lime and luxardo maraschino, are prime examples of this bar's theme of classic cocktails with a twist. Consider pairing drinks with an order of Jackson 20's Southern-inspired appetizers like the crispy fried green tomatoes and barbecue pulled pork sandwich. / **480 KING ST., ALEXANDRIA; JACKSON20.COM**

BARREL & BUSHEL

Barrel & Bushel finally gave Tysons what it sorely lacked: a bar that's open late. Beer and bourbon are the mainstays of this menu. Patrons can sit indoors at the bar alongside the after-work crowd chatting on cellphones and watch bartenders work their magic or enjoy their goods alfresco—this spot has garage door windows that open up when the weather's nice. The air buzzes with conversation, but customers can still hear the person they came with. / **7901 TYSONS ONE PLACE, TYSONS; BARRELANDBUSHEL.COM**

AMERICA EATS TAVERN

Nestled deep in The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, America Eats Tavern's menu has historical roots, but the space feels very modern. Expect a mostly white interior and a sleek metal bar with 12 seats. But history is not forgotten here: Couch pillows are decked out with faces of Lincoln and Washington. The raw bar features oysters and crab legs that you can pair with classic cocktails like the Moscow Mule. The food menu features Southern dishes like hush puppies. / **1700 TYSONS BLVD., TYSONS; AMERICA EATSTAVERN.COM**

TAVERN 64

The after-work crowd and locals gather at this hotel bar in Reston Town Center that focuses on classic, historical American fare and drinks. The bar is a warm, light-filled space complete with lantern lights on the wood-paneled columns that surround the bar. The staff here is talkative and very knowledgeable. Consider asking for a classic cocktail like an Old Fashioned or Antebellum Mint Julep. The food is hearty, like duck served with fries and gravy. / **1800 PRESIDENTS ST., RESTON; HYATTHOTELS.HYATT.COM/CORPORATE/RESTAURANTS/TAVERN64/EN/TAVERN64.HTML**



TAVERN 64

WINE BARS



PARALLEL WINE BISTRO

The decor of Parallel Wine Bistro is downright dreamy. Think windows with creamy white panes, flowers, wine fridges so you can see what's inside and walls decked out with wood boxes of wine. Guests can order from more than 70 wines and 60 craft beers. Food here is typical wine bar fare like cheese and meat platters. Parallel is fancy, but not so much so that bros wearing flip-flops won't make an appearance. / **43135 BROADLANDS CENTER PLAZA, BROADLANDS; PARALLELWINEBISTRO.COM**

THE WINE HOUSE

The Wine House provides a classy, upscale atmosphere in a part of Fairfax that's dominated by college-student hangouts. The U-shaped bar in the light-filled dining room is complemented by romantic, low-lit lights. The restaurant doesn't play music, and on busy nights, the din of diners conversing is comforting and not overpowering. And this spot has earned its name: Drinkers can choose from more than 500 bottles of wine hailing from all over the world. / **3950 UNIVERSITY DRIVE, FAIRFAX; WINEHOUSEONLINE.COM**

THE WINE KITCHEN

Located on Leesburg's quaint King Street, The Wine Kitchen feels welcoming and warm. The bar is softly lit, with a brick pattern base and rich red walls framing it. Patrons can order wine by the taste, glass or bottle or try themed flights like the "Summer in Washington" or "The Plains of Spain" if they'd like to sample three different varietals. The food menu focuses on hearty, mostly regional cuisine like crispy squash blossoms or rare-for-the-area poultine. / **7 S. KING ST., LEESBURG; THEWINEKITCHEN.COM**

W.K. HEARTH

Housed in a former farmhouse, W.K. Hearth's bar feels warm and homey. A shelf high above the pretty marble bar features cookbooks that you'd find in just about any home. The staff is friendly and knowledgeable. Adding to the charm of this spot are the tiny brown cards that are served with the wine. Descriptions like "If big puffy white clouds drank wine, this is what they would drink" should make drinkers smile. / **130 PURCELLVILLE GATEWAY DRIVE, PURCELLVILLE; THEWINEKITCHEN.COM/HEARTH**

ERIN ROBERTSON

@ Clarity

"I love classic cocktails; I love experimental cocktails that use fresh ingredients and are pushing the envelope, in terms of being creative. Because I'm in the industry, when I go out, I do love to see that. But in terms of even a bar that just has beers and doesn't do a craft cocktail program, just a sense of community. Having friendly faces that might not remember your name but remember you, remember your drink. I tend to go to the same places. I have a few bars that I'm a regular at. I keep going there because of the community [and] because of the people. Atmosphere plays a big role, too. I'd rather go somewhere where I'm comfortable, it's clean, and I'm taken care of."

KORI HASSLER

@ Barrel & Bushel

"Great service and teamwork behind the bar. If we don't have a great team behind the bar, we can't provide the service we're supposed to. Our bar works really well together. We're all willing to help each other. We all really get along. It kind of feels like a family, even in the short time we've been here. That's kind of the backbone of what really makes a good bar. If you've got someone not paying attention, you're not going to have happy customers."

FAHED HAMID

@ America Eats Tavern

"Service with a smile. Friendly environment. Great people to talk to. Mostly if you go to a bar, you sit down, and you're by yourself; you kind of want to mingle with others from time to time. I appreciate that, if people around are nice and friendly."

EVO BISTRO

Located in a tiny strip mall in McLean, Evo Bistro's light blue walls and dark furniture make for an intimate, no-frills vibe that keeps the focus on what's important here: high quality wine sourced domestically and globally. Evo is known for its \$4, \$6 and \$9 happy hour specials. A mostly older and local Tysons crowd frequents this wine bar. Guests can look forward to tapas-style Mediterranean plates like butternut squash ravioli and melt-in-your-mouth lamb patty topped with goat cheese. / **1313 OLD CHAIN BRIDGE ROAD, MCLEAN; EVOBISTRO.COM**

GRAPE & BEAN

As its name suggests, Grape & Bean is dedicated to showcasing fine wines and coffee. The interior is dimly lit with a very cozy and romantic vibe. Anticipate a three-seater bar, high-top tables and an ideal date atmosphere. The wine menu is small but carefully curated. Diners can order small plates like cheese and charcuterie to go along with each glass. For dessert, consider the signature chocolate plate featuring three of the restaurant's best chocolates. / **118 S. ROYAL ST., ALEXANDRIA AND 2 E. WALNUT ST., ALEXANDRIA; GRAPEANDBEAN.COM**

BARTENDERS
TELL US

WHAT IS NoVA'S SIGNATURE DRINK?

Melissa Gerlach

@ W.K. Hearth

"One of the most popular is a sauvignon blanc. It's an easy to enjoy wine. The flavors aren't exaggerated or imposing. It has a nice bouquet, and it's easy to drink. It has a nice balance of crispness, and it doesn't [have a] heavy oaky [taste] that a chardonnay sometimes does. For our restaurant—the 30 to 50 age group, the working professionals, the upper-middle class group—I guess maybe it has to do with your location. We don't get a lot of really young, just-turned-21s."

Katie Nigsch

@ Mad Fox Brewery

"Beer, because you have so many influences. Virginia in general, but [especially in] Northern Virginia, there's just so many different bars popping up and so many people doing different things. Beer's definitely taken over. Whether you're a man or woman, no matter what you like—light, dark, sweet or whatever—there is a beer for you. Have you ever had a lambic before? We're starting to grab people with saisons and all these different styles. There's no way you can not find a beer that is good for you."

BARS WITH LIVE MUSIC

JAMMIN JAVA

Vienna's coziest and coolest live music venue's bar starts in the lobby when guests walk in and wraps around toward the stage. A black curtain is closed during showtime and separates the lobby from the performing area. Order beer, cocktails or coffee here. The mood is determined by the act on stage, mostly. Customers just looking to drink and chat should probably call ahead to ensure the performer is of the louder variety as talking is not permitted during quieter shows. / **227 MAPLE AVE. E, VIENNA; JAMMINJAVA.COM**

IOTA CLUB AND CAFÉ

Iota is divided up into three sections: one outside of view from the stage, another directly in front and another off to the side. This makes for three individual spaces where guests can see the performers but also makes it feel a bit choppy. A younger crowd chats while musicians perform. Iota is an ideal spot for customers who want conversation and live music. Beer is the main offering on the drinks menu. / **2832 WILSON BLVD., ARLINGTON; IOTACLUBANDCAFE.COM**

BASIN ST. LOUNGE

Take in live music, whiskey and a setting that feels straight off the pages of "Great Gatsby" at this art deco-inspired lounge. Anticipate a low-lit atmosphere complete with a dark wood bar and carved wooden shelves holding the booze. True to form, a long list of whiskeys ranges from classics like Glenlivet to modern creations like High West's Campfire. Patrons can kick back with cigars as they do their best Don Draper impressions. / **219 KING ST., ALEXANDRIA; 219RESTAURANT.COM/BASIN_ST_LOUNGE.PHP**

JV'S

JV's is Falls Church's best-kept secret and has been in business since 1947. The menu features beer and comfort food that's all served at a U-shaped bar designed to provide customers with great views of the stage at the front. Walls are plastered with plenty of kitschy musical memorabilia like shots of The Beatles. Locals and even families drop by this low-key, unpretentious spot whose (appropriate) motto is "ageless charm without the yuppie bastardization." / **6666 ARLINGTON BLVD., FALLS CHURCH; JVSRESTAURANT.COM**

EPICURE CAFÉ

Epicure Café is what a great first date spot should be: loud and dark. When the weather's bad, guests can sit at the bar sipping wine or beer and watch through the partitioned space that separates the bar from the performance area as musicians or comedians showcase their talents. When the weather's good, listeners can head upstairs for charming—the space is strung with white lights—rooftop shows. / **11104 LEE HIGHWAY, FAIRFAX; EPICURECAFE.ORG**

WHAT IS NoVA'S SIGNATURE DRINK?

Will Witherow

@ Copperwood Tavern

"Honestly right now, I think Northern Virginia, like the rest of the country, is obsessed and infatuated with the mule. And the mule ... is something that I see a lot of people drink. And craft beer. It's going to sound kind of crazy. There's a lot of craft breweries popping up and we have a lot of people asking, "Have you visited this brewery?" And if you'll notice, all 20 of our drafts are from local breweries. Everyone is ordering them. I see younger adults are ordering this stuff. Older adults are like, "Oh my god, I haven't ordered this in years."

BARTENDERS
TELL US

ADAM ZAUG

@ Evo Bistro

"Quality drinks served on time in a relatively quick fashion. I think the thing about a good bartender is they have to be able to read the guest. Some people want to talk. Some people want to be left alone. Some people need assistance on a first date a little bit. There's all sorts of different dynamics of people who come into a bar. You just kind of have to play it by ear."

COREY HAWKINS

@ The B Side

"Ambience and the style of the music. I want something calm. I want to be able to go somewhere and talk to the people I came with. You want the bartender to be fairly outgoing, not annoying. I can be a little too attentive myself. You want welcoming. You want the bartender to go over some things, someone who's willing to talk their time and discuss the things that they offer."



PHOTOGRAPHY

WHAT AND WHERE THEY DRINK

KRISTIANA HADLEY

@ Jammin Java

“I typically like to just hang out at [Jammin Java] in my off hours.

I like to drink whiskey sours.”

WILL WITHEROW

@ Copperwood Tavern

“Tazza Kitchen. Their bartenders are very good as well, and I like to let them just run wild. I get cocktails, beers. It’s literally by the mood. Drinking is literally by the mood.”

TODD THRASHER

@ PX and Restaurant Eve

“I go to Hank’s in Old Town.

I will always go in and have one cocktail.

Usually I’ll get something rum-based, nine times out of 10. If it’s not rum, it’s going to be gin.”

Albert Mille

@ CJ Finz

“I go around Reston Town Center (Jackson’s, American Tap Room) and support the local bars in the area. I like to try different craft beers [and] wines so I can see what’s good and bring what’s good to our area.”

MELISSA GERLACH

@ W.K. Hearth

“My husband and I like to go to The Wine Kitchen in Leesburg a lot. I’m definitely a wine drinker; I prefer just good wine, white or red. [What I order] kind of depends on the weather and my mood, if it’s hot or cold. I really enjoy all kinds of wine.”

KEITH BRASSFIELD

@ Caboose

“I like J. Gilbert’s in McLean. I get mimosas at brunch.”

ERIN ROBERTSON

@ Clarity

“My drink, I call it the ‘Erin Special.’ I drink Tito’s, soda, with a splash of tonic. I like about three quarter-ounces of lime juice; it ends up being three to four limes, depending on how juicy they are. I tend to go to Bungalow Lakehouse, O’Faolain’s, Velocity Five.”

ANDREW SHAPIRO

@ Green Pig Bistro

"When I'm in the area, I drink at Lyon Hall. I tend to drink Jagermeister and ginger ale."

COREY HAWKIN

@ The B Side

"Barmini. I drink a lot of gin-based cocktails."

FAHED HAMID

@ America Eats Tavern

"T.G.I. Friday's. Normally, I drink Yuengling."

KORI HASSLER

@ Barrel & Bushel

"A-Town Bar & Grill in Arlington. Vodka waters."

JASON SWARINGEN

@ Gypsy Soul

"B Side. Brine. I usually get whiskey or gin and tonic."

KATIE NIGSCH

@ Mad Fox Brewery

"I've bartended for a long, long time, and right now my preference is a lot of beer just because of the [summer] season. I'm really digging saisons, wheat beers, sangrias, margaritas or just really good, crisp ales. Normally, I do love bourbon, bourbon and gingers or any kind of cocktails that are summery. Around here, the usual plan is I always come to Mad Fox because I love our food and our beer, but then you'll definitely see me at Spacebar. They do all grilled cheeses, like 19 different ways. And they do tater tots where you can get any topping—great late-night bar food. Dogwood does really good appetizers, and they have amazing beer on draft. Both Spacebar and Dogwood have amazing beer on draft. I live in Arlington on Columbia Pike, and I used to work for P. Brien's Irish pub, so we would go there a lot. They're a big supporter of craft beer, and they have great summer cocktails. Their food, for being pub food, is actually pretty good. Right next door [to them] is the Lost Dog. I love to support them and Stray Cat. Stray Cat does sandwiches, and they have amazing beer. Lost Dog, same company, they do gourmet pizzas. Westover Market is really great because they have the beer garden and the inside pub."

DEVIN OCHS

@ Tuskie's

"I go next door to Fire Works Pizza in Leesburg. I drink beer. Lately I've been drinking saisons."



BARS WITH GAME ENTERTAINMENT

ALL AMERICAN STEAKHOUSE & SPORTS THEATER

Expansive, loud and family-friendly, the All American Steakhouse seeks to provide large parties and sports watchers with a casual and fun atmosphere. Customers at the Woodbridge and Ashburn locations searching for additional fun can play the Golden Tee golf game or practice hunting animals at the Big Buck Safari game by the bar. Diners can partake in happy hour specials like half-priced domestic drafts and mixed drinks. Food options include juicy steaks and standard pub fare like spinach and artichoke dip. / **4179 MERCHANT PLAZA, WOODBRIDGE; 43150 BROADLANDS CENTER PLAZA, ASHBURN; THEALLAMERICANSTEAKHOUSE.COM**

CARPOOL

Carpool is all about fun. After a bouncer IDs customers, they can play a myriad of games including pool or oversized Jenga. A massive vintage Esso sign makes for some colorful decor. Guests can chill on the patio or sit at the bar and enjoy beer on tap. Patrons are as likely to spot sweaty teams of adult kickball leagues relaxing after a game as they are after-work professionals shooting pool in suits and skirts to unwind. / **208 ELDEN ST., HERNDON; CARPOOLWEB.COM**

KING PINZ

King Pinz provides customers with a bowling alley, skee ball and other classic games and a bar at the front of the establishment. Parents can watch as their kids play or just rest while

they wait to bowl again. Those who prefer a more adult, quieter (albeit smoky) atmosphere can head next door to the High Roller Lounge. Patrons can talk politics at the bar as they sip on their choice of martinis or cocktails and enjoy cigars in plush lounge chairs. / **1602 VILLAGE MARKET BLVD. SE, LEESBURG; KINGPINZBOWL.COM**

BUNGALOW LAKEHOUSE

Customers can enjoy a lively atmosphere where they can watch the game on one of this spot's many oversized TVs. Guests who prefer not to stare at a screen the entire time can play pool or shoot darts. In between turns, patrons can slide up to the bar and order off a menu that's dominated by national and local beer. Hello, Port City's Optimal Wit. Hungry guests can consider ordering the haunt's noteworthy chicken wings. / **4616 LAKE CENTER PLAZA, STERLING; BUNGALOWLAKEHOUSE.COM**

LUCKY'S SPORTS THEATRE

Located in a strip mall, Lucky's patrons can walk through the double doors to the left of the lobby to find themselves in a happening dual game and bar area. Lucky's is laid-back and fun. Patrons can find classic games like skee ball alongside modern offerings like first-person shooter games. The U-shaped bar is the centerpiece of the space. Bartenders wearing black T-shirts sling a variety of beverages on this menu that's dominated by specialty cocktails. / **7027 MANCHESTER BLVD., ALEXANDRIA; LUCKYSSPORTSTHEATRE.COM**

ANDREW SHAPIRO

@ Green Pig Bistro

"I want to feel welcomed, more than anything else. I'm not saying I want you to talk my ear off—I actually don't want you to talk my ear off. I'm a very low-maintenance customer. I only drink one thing. If I'm drinking, I like to be left alone. Make me feel like I want to be here ... Every great bar has to have a niche. So whatever your niche is—you're a sports bar, or your niche is that you're a speakeasy style bar, or a country and western bar—have a niche. Do your thing, and don't feel like you have to do everything. I think the problem I have with a lot of places is every place has a cocktail menu, but they seem a lot of times contrived. You have a place that has 12 cocktails on the menu. Do you really need that many? I think people need to understand their clientele. And most important they need to have a vision for what they're doing and keep that vision. Be who you are. If you're a shitty little dive bar, people really appreciate that. Stick to your concept.

Execute your concept. Don't worry about being what you're not and trying to compete with all these other bars. Be what your concept is and execute it. And if you execute your concept, there will be people who like that and they will come."

DEVIN OCHS

@ Tuskie's

"Good service for starters. Certainly atmosphere. Good product. I like all the places I can get good beer. I like a bartender who knows when to talk to you and who knows when you want to be left alone. Sometimes after a long day at work, I just want to have my beer and be left to my thoughts."

BARS FOR DATES



TRUMMER'S ON MAIN

Clifton's preeminent fine dining establishment's first floor is home to a swank and beautiful onyx bar where patrons can enjoy the fine fare of the restaurant (without the noise of being upstairs) and sip on craft cocktails like the Pain and Pleasure—tequila, vermouth, hibiscus, jalapeno ice and cilantro. Small plates like the chicken fried oysters impress. The low lights and quaint house setting make for a quiet, intimate experience. Servers here have seen many a proposal. / [7134 MAIN ST., CLIFTON; TRUMMERSONMAIN.COM](#)

RESTAURANT EVE

Restaurant Eve's bar exudes warmth, literally. From the

fireplaces to the light colored orange walls surrounding the bar, the entire setting feels cozy, which makes it perfect for date night. A bartender wearing a classy black vest will pour couples creative cocktails, crafted by top mixologist Todd Thrasher, like the Smoke and Spice, a combination of mezcal, hibiscus citrus tea and lemon juice. Couches surrounding the bar make it easy to cuddle. / [110 S. PITT ST., ALEXANDRIA; RESTAURANTEVE.COM](#)

TUSKIE'S

Tuskie's historic charm isn't stuffy. Bartenders wear vests. Behind the bar is an eye-catching floral centerpiece. Pulleys hang from the ceiling. The bar is all dark wood. The conversa-



SCREWTOP

tion hums along but doesn't require patrons to shout to hear each other. Guests can sip wine and beer. The beer menu is mostly craft beers such as Dogfish Head, Allagash White and DC Brau. Wines are mostly international, but a Virginia one makes an appearance, too. / [203 HARRISON ST. SE, LEESBURG; TUSKIES.COM](#)

MAGNOLIAS AT THE MILL

Housed in a building that was once a working mill, Magnolias looks like a barn scene straight out of a wedding album. Think wood accents everywhere in a spacious and charming country setting. Given its location in Loudoun County near plenty of wineries, it makes sense that the wine menu features a local flight and a selection of Virginia reds alongside domes-

PHOTO BY KEN WYNER PHOTOGRAPHY

BARTENDERS
TELL US

WHAT IS NOVA'S SIGNATURE DRINK?

Andrew Shapiro
@ **Green Pig Bistro**

"Old Fashioned because it fits where the Northern Virginia dining scene is. [It is the area's signature drink] probably because bourbon is extremely popular right now. Bourbon is very, very popular, and I think it's because it's just a sweet bourbon. [An Old Fashioned] sweetens up an already sweet liquor. It's easy to drink. It's easy to drink a sugary drink like that. It's got a certain sophistication to it since it's a classical-era cocktail. Only young people order it. Low 20s to mid to high 30s. It's definitely a guy thing."

Corey Hawkins
@ **The B Side**

"Moscow mules are really refreshing. Something light, refreshing, with a little bit of citrus bite to it. People come here for our cocktails."



RESTAURANT EVE

tic and international picks. Beer and cocktails complete the drink menu. / [198 N. 2ND ST., PURCELLVILLE; MAGNOLIASMILL.COM](#)

SCREWTOP

Half retail shop and half wine bar, Screwtop is a true Arlington haunt. Decor features a dark brown bar complemented by warm, soft yellow walls. The crowd includes parents, middle-aged professionals and Arlington's younger crowd. Tasting notes specify just how the wine might taste. Order a stuffed sandwich or cheese plate and pair it with a glass of wine from this menu that shifts seasonally. Although attentive and knowledgeable, the staff here isn't all that chatty. / [1025 N. FILLMORE ST., ARLINGTON; SCREWTOPWINEBAR.COM](#)