

Every Important San Francisco Cocktail Bar, Mapped



The City Magazine of Times Cafe

Noble Spirit

Gone are the days of ordering vodka sodas and cosmos when out on the town; thanks to talented bartenders (mixologists, even), high-quality spirits, and innovative ingredients, there's no better time than the present to be a drinker in San Francisco. And if you're craving some of the very best libations in town, look no further than these cocktail bars (and a few restaurants with excellent bar programs) for boozy concoctions that are creative, thoughtful, and incredibly drinkable.

Don't see your favorite on the list? Let us know in the comments.

*Note: map points are listed **alphabetically**, not ranked.*

1 15 Romolo

A North Beach hideaway, 15 Romolo is located down an alley off Broadway's neon row of strip clubs. Excellently curated cocktails and an extensive sherry list make it a bright spot in a neighborhood filled with vodka sodas and thongs. Try a Double Down, with rye whiskey, cardamaro, manzanilla sherry, lemongrass bitters for a sherry-focused treat.



Eater Archives

15 Romolo Pl

San Francisco, CA 94133

(415) 398-1359

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3 ABV

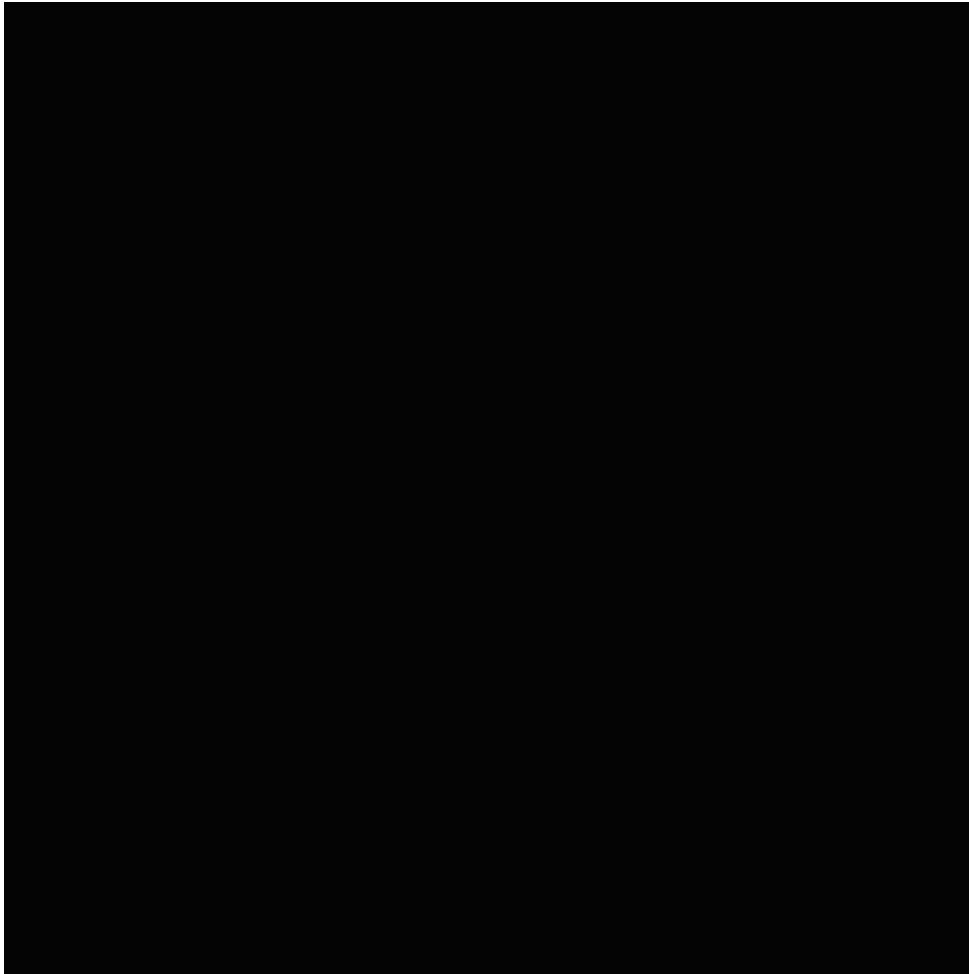
ABV owners Ryan Fitzgerald, Todd Smith, and Erik Reichborn-Kjennerd, are all longtime veterans of the SF bar scene, so it only makes sense that the cocktails at their Mission bar are some of the best you can currently get in the city. The 16 cocktail menu is divided by spirit, a move that makes so much sense it's a wonder more bars haven't adopted it. You can't go wrong with the Whiskey in Church and the pimento cheese burger. Because, yes, ABV also serves up delicious food from 2 p.m. to 1 a.m.



3174 16th St
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 400-4748
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8 Bourbon & Branch

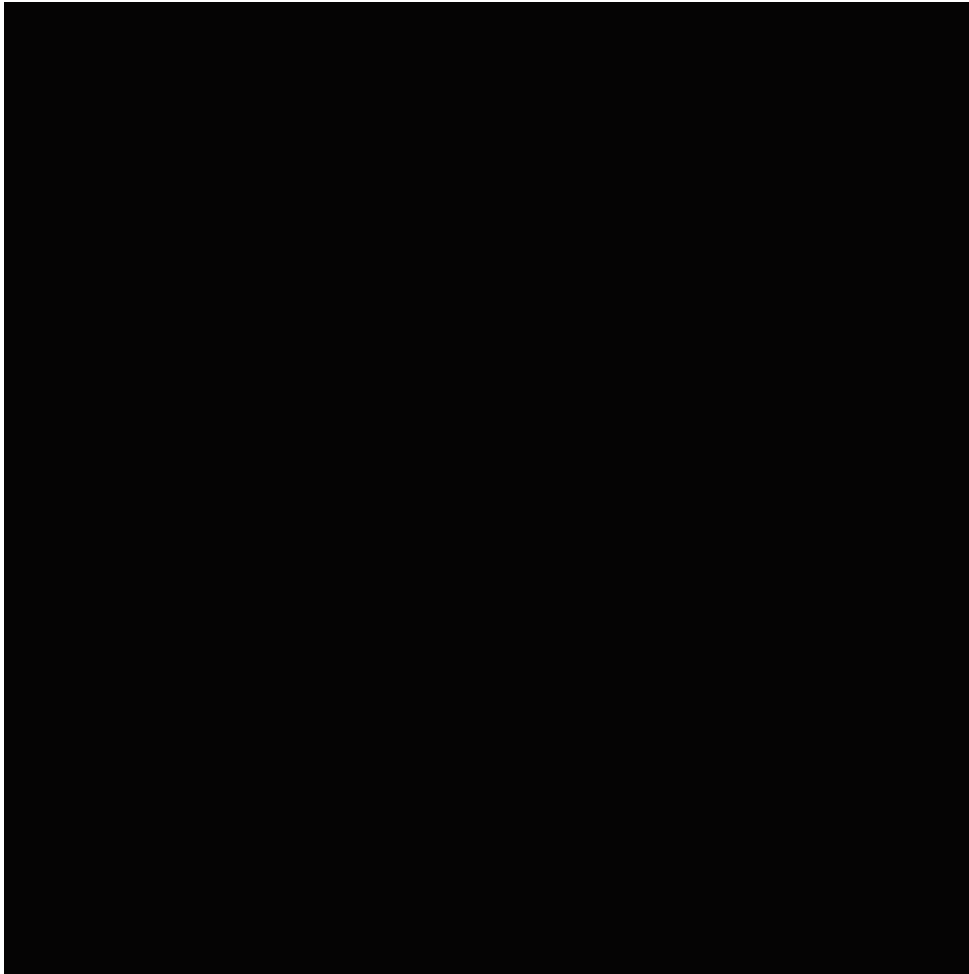
You can't just walk into Bourbon & Branch; no, you'll need to buzz an intercom and provide a password (which can be easily gotten by making a reservation). Once you're in, you'll be whisked to your seat, which may be in one of several rooms behind secret bookcases and walls that open up. The bartender's goal is to pour you a drink you've never had, so go with an open (and patient) mind. Just don't expect to Instagram it; photography and cell phones are strictly forbidden.



501 Jones St
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 346-1735
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11 Holy Water

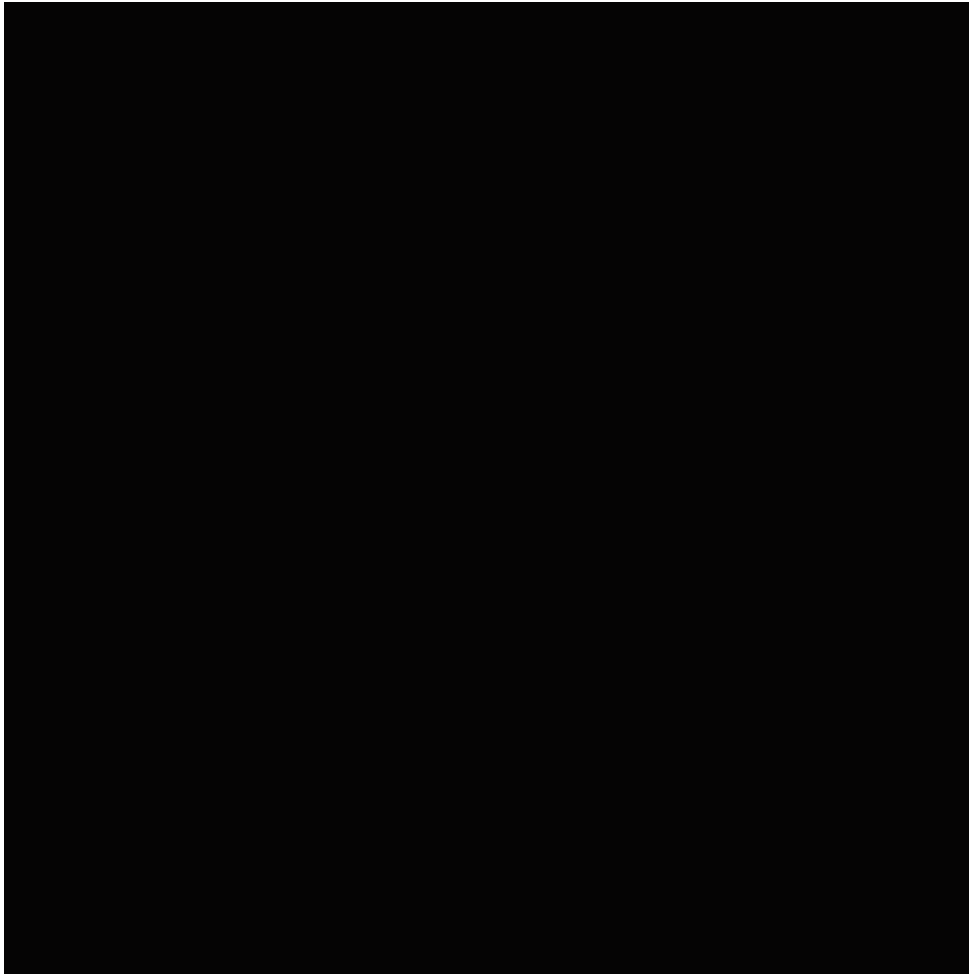
For the folks in Bernal, Holy Water was the answer to their prayers for a legit cocktail bar. But this neighborhood bar from the people behind Churchill is worth the Uber ride if you don't live nearby. The cocktail list changes frequently, but includes a mix of the bartenders' experiments as well as twists on the classics. Speaking of experiments, the late-night happy hour, "The 11th hour," starts at 11 p.m. every night and is a chance for patrons to taste new recipes. If you don't like it, you don't pay. Bartenders also open unique beers and make cocktails using whichever two ingredients you choose.



309 Cortland Ave
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 555-5555
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12 Li Po Cocktail Lounge

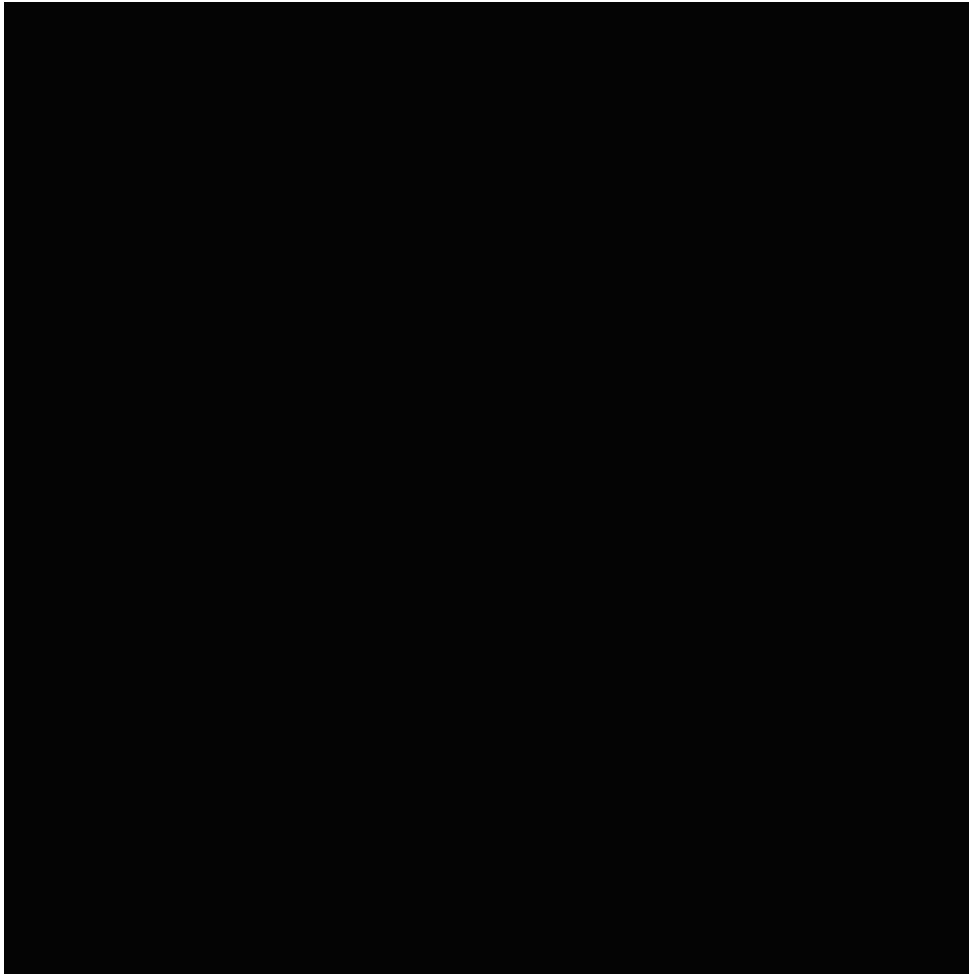
Li Po is one of, if not the, oldest bars in Chinatown (1937) and on any given night there will be a healthy mix of tourists and locals. You'll recognize the former because they'll be confused about where they are and the latter because they'll be very comfortable and probably playing dice. Order the Chinese Mai Tai (dark rum, light rum, 151 rum, "Chinese liquor," pineapple juice) because its a thing thanks to Anthony Bourdain, but stick to just one unless you have absolutely nothing to accomplish the next day.



916 Grant Ave
San Francisco, CA 94108
(415) 982-0072
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21 The Alembic

Due to Alembic's recent expansion (they added a dining room), you now have a much better chance of actually getting a seat at the bar next time you're in the mood for the Upper Haight's best cocktails. The menu is divided into "New School" and "The Canon" and you'll have to do a little reading to figure out just what you're getting thanks to the fact that the actual ingredients are mixed into a lengthy description, but that's just part of the charm of the experience. Still, it can be tempting to get lazy and order the same thing twice. That's not a mistake you'll want to make as all of the cocktails on the menu are worth a try.



Chloe List

1725 Haight St

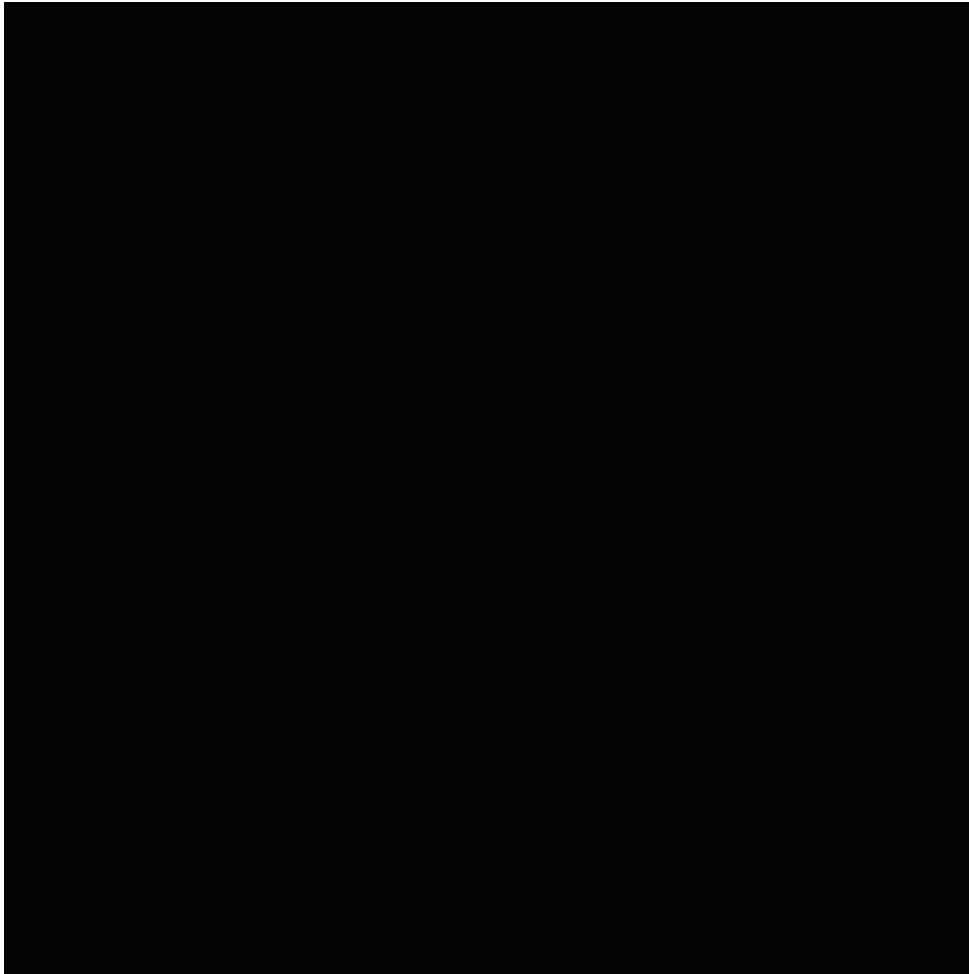
San Francisco, CA 94117

(415) 666-0822

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28 Tosca Cafe

Tosca has always been a favorite of SF A-listers and locals and that remains true despite a recent face lift from New York restaurateurs April Bloomfield and Ken Friedman. Now that Claire Sprouse and Chard Arnholt of the Tin Roof Drinking Community have taken over the cocktail menu, things are really lookin up. New twists on classic are the focus, matching the restaurant's revival. Don't worry though, the coffee-less House "Cappuccino" 1919 is still on the menu, featuring Marie Duffau Bas Armagnac, Buffalo Trace Bourbon, Dandelion Chocolate Ganache, and organic milk. Translation: hot chocolate with brandy.



242 Columbus Ave
San Francisco, CA 94133
(415) 986-9651