

# Home / Cocktail Corners

## Behind the Bar

DELVE INTO THE WORLD OF MIXOLOGY BY CREATING YOUR OWN SPACE IN WHICH TO CRAFT COCKTAILS.

By ASHLEY RYAN

**S**ipping a craft beverage at an upscale bar, you may find yourself daydreaming about having your own cocktail corner—a place to entertain, unwind at the end of the day or experiment with signature drinks that contain just the right ingredients.

“For those who love hosting ... or have a passion for wine, whiskey, sake or just a great cocktail, the bar is the ultimate asset,” says Clark Collins of Collins Design & Development. “A well-crafted bar provides an opportunity to showcase your personal design style or drink passion and, at the same time, create a special gathering place for friends and family.”

When it comes to selecting the ideal spot, Collins recommends placing a home bar near the kitchen or close to a door that leads to the outside. Other prime spots could be in a game room or basement.

Natural materials are trending everywhere in the home, but especially in these types of spaces. Turn to stones like marble, quartzite or soapstone paired with walnut, oak or mahogany wood. Collins also advises using bold paint colors plus glass or mirrored elements that reflect light to generate warmth.

In fact, you may be surprised to learn that lighting plays a big role in designing a home bar. It can be used to create a desired atmosphere or to define the room's style. “Start with what you see, from decorative pendant lights over counters to ... small table lamps on the bar or tucked into shelving,” Collins says. “Both are a wonderful opportunity



Whether your home bar is a small space or a whole room, design it for relaxation, entertaining or both.

to set the mood and create focal points within the space.” Another option is to use LED light strips, which add versatility by allowing you to control the color and where they are placed, such as tucked away in a recess.

As a space that lends itself to entertaining, seating is key. Opt for furniture that is comfortable and welcoming, Collins suggests, such as bar stools or club chairs. Appliances are also important additions. If you're able, include a sink, a small beverage refrigerator, an ice maker and a kegerator.

After the basics are in place, remember to showcase everything in a way that is visually appealing, especially if you'll be hosting

in this space. “Outstanding bars are about showing off the goods,” Collins notes. “... The key is to balance tradition and trend.”

When you begin stocking your bar, don't skip over the tools. Collins says you should have a cutting board, knives, a cocktail shaker, shot glass, mixing glass, strainer, decanter, corkscrew, hand-held juicer and a good cocktail recipe book. You'll also want a variety of glasses: versatile rocks glasses, coupes, copper mugs, martini glasses, Champagne flutes, wine goblets, pilsner glasses and more.

As for ingredients, focus on your favorite spirits, but make sure you have liquors that will be ideal

for entertaining as well. Grab a bottle each of whiskey, bourbon, gin, tequila or mezcal, vodka, rum and wine (both red and white, if desired). In addition, gather bitters, vermouth, orange liqueur, Campari, mixers like ginger ale or tonic water, simple syrup, salt, lemons and limes, oranges, maraschino cherries, olives and more.

Make sure to have fun with the process. “One of the best advantages of having a home bar is that the design is completely up to you,” Collins adds. “... Take cues from your drinking and entertainment habits, your home's architecture and your design style. Whatever you do, make it awesome and memorable.”

FROM LEFT: GREY CRAWFORD, RYAN GARVIN

## LIBATION CREATION

SIP IN STYLE FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME WITH THESE BAR-CENTRIC PRODUCTS.

**1)** Incorporate “**REGARDING COCKTAILS**”—a book by legendary bartender Sasha Petraske—into your collection to assist with cocktail creation; the text features 85 different drink recipes, both classic and modern drinks, with ingredients, measurements and preparations, alongside advice on setting up your home bar, from \$30, at Nuance. (949-494-8833; nuance-home.com)

**2)** Elevate your cocktails with The Bitter Housewife's **BITTERS SAMPLER SET #2**, which features bright flavors like grapefruit, cardamom and lime-coriander that are designed to pair with lighter spirits such as tequila, gin, vodka and rum, \$19, at Spigot Liquor. (949-494-0040; spigotliquor.com)

**3)** Rather than a bar cart, opt for BDI's modern **TANAMI 7120 BAR** cabinet, which is the perfect piece for saving space while also keeping all of your liquor and tools organized thanks to side shelving, stemware racks, bottle slots and a hidden drawer, from \$3,599, with advance order at Modern Studio. (949-376-0103; modernfurnishings.com)

**4)** The elegant **KIRA TALL TUMBLER** from Fleck is the perfect vessel for serving libations, adding a sense of style with handblown glass, a raised linear pattern and a delicate wave-inspired rim, \$20, at Abode by Garage Collective. (949-715-0868; shopgaragecollectivelaguna.com)

**5)** This set of eight **SIGNATURE BAR TOOLS WITH STAND & COCKTAIL SHAKER** ensures you have everything you need to prepare high-quality drinks, including a cobbler (three-part) shaker, strainer, double-sided shot glass, bar spoon, muddler, bottle opener and ice tongs—plus a stand to hold it all, \$229.95, at Williams Sonoma, Newport Coast. (949-464-2168; williams-sonoma.com) ■

