

mabuhay

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BANGKOK BECKONS

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Global

Not stirred, nor shaken

On-tap cocktail bars around the world are serving delectable drinks, minus the fuss

DRINKS

While Angus Zou once made impeccable Old Fashioneds at Alchemy, Taipei's most popular reservations-only speakeasy, he is happy with measuring, mixing and kegging in the second-floor workshop of his new bar. ❶ Draft Land serves all its cocktails – including the tropical pandan-accented Rum Cocktail and the soothing Earl Grey-infused Afternoon Tea Punch – from taps.

"I like being behind the scenes," says the veteran bartender. The 18-tap bar is the first in Taipei to serve only draft cocktails – drinks that are pre-mixed, poured into a keg, then hooked up to and dispensed from a tap, not unlike the process of brewing and serving craft beer.

"Bars around the world have been doing on-tap cocktails for a while but it's only gaining traction this year," Zou observes. He ascribes this rise to customers seeking more back-to-basics experiences as the drinking market becomes oversaturated with bespoke bars serving artisanal cocktails.

The idea came to Zou when popping open a beer bottle after work one evening. "I love craft beer and it's not just the flavor. There's this relaxed, no-frills feel about it," Zou says. "I thought, 'How awesome would it be if people can enjoy a cocktail like they would a beer?'"

Draft cocktails don't just remove the fuss and showmanship – there is also more consistency in flavor profiles. A bartender might make one drink slightly stronger or more bitter than another, but taps ensure that each drink is the same.

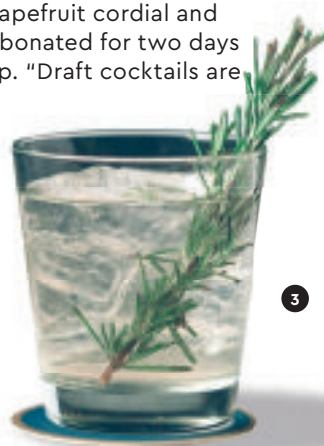
Parich "Joh" Sanguamkul of Bangkok's newest draft cocktail bar, ❷ Brain Freeze, explains that making draft cocktails isn't simply a matter of pouring ingredients into a bowl and calling it a day. "We take in mind the amount of dilution, the percentage of alcohol per serve and the best temperature for each drink to achieve the best texture," says Sanguamkul.



Located in the heart of Thong Lor, Brain Freeze is the antidote to the neighborhood's numerous high-end bars and restaurants. The 20-seater pink-neon-lit bar serves six on-tap cocktails and four slushy cocktails – slushies spiked with rum, tequila and vodka.

On the other side of the world, New York City bartender Jess Goldfarb had a similar vision. The recently opened ❸ Due West serves draft and bottled cocktails in a quintessentially West Village setting; it's roomy, with large velvet sofas and white-brick walls.

"Due West strives to be unpretentious," Goldfarb says. The cocktails have enticing names like the Green Witch, a mix of gin, absinthe, saffron, grapefruit cordial and lime juice, that's carbonated for two days before it's put on tap. "Draft cocktails are fun, efficient and, if done right, really good," Goldfarb says. fb.com/draftland; fb.com/brainfreezebkk; fb.com/duewestnyc – Dana Ter



POUR FAVOR

Two bars in PAL's network serving draft cocktails



Oxwell & Co
The three-level gastropub on Singapore's Ann Siang Road has been serving up draft cocktails since 2013. Oxwell & Co offers classic cocktails such as the piña colada on tap at a breezy first-floor terrace, while the third floor is a classic apothecary-style bar. oxwellandco.com

Duck & Waffle Local
A fast-casual eatery known for its quirky British and European fare, London's Duck & Waffle Local – the latest iteration of the popular Duck & Waffle restaurant – serves on-tap and bottled cocktails. Under the "Taps & Tails" menu section, order the Millennial Mojito, a funky carbonated mixture, or the bottled black olive Negroni. duckandwafflelocal.com