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Lost Lantern Whiskey

Most tasting rooms feature spirits from a single distillery, but at Lost Lantern, visitors get the opportunity to try whiskey from all across the United States. That's because Lost Lantern is an independent bottler, offering mostly single barrels from dozens of distilleries. And in the Vergennes, Vermont, tasting room, visitors get their pick from the company's vast library, including long-sold-out releases. "We want it to be a place where people can come and explore whiskey in depth, however much they know about it already," says co-founder Adam Polonski, who, with his wife and business partner, Nora Ganley-Roper, devises the intimate tastings. Their goal is to foster discovery, even if that means a guest ends up disliking one of the pours. "If you're just coming into whiskey, we don't necessarily expect you to like all of these," Polonski says, explaining that they hope people will learn enough about their preferences to guide their next pour. Plus, they aim for visitors to come away with an appreciation for the diversity of craft whiskey, which in Lost Lantern's portfolio ranges from bourbon and rye to uniquely smoked American single malt and more. "If you come here," Polonski says, "there are some fun treats for you." —SSB

Press Club

Before opening their first bar together, Devin Kennedy and Will Patton were friends and occasional rivals. "We came up in the industry together, and we were in the same

cocktail competition circuit," says Kennedy, who previously worked at Pouring Ribbons in New York City. Last fall, the two joined forces with Press Club, a vibrant addition to Washington, D.C.'s historic Dupont Circle. Despite their innovative recipes—early



menus feature drinks made with yogurt-washed Michter's bourbon—Kennedy and Patton aim to appeal to passersby and cocktail nerds alike.

"Hospitality comes first," says Patton, who is also beverage director for Hive Hospitality properties, like D.C.'s two-Michelin-starred Jônt. "We want to make some of the best cocktails in the world, but all of that is in service to the idea that, when you come in, we tune the entire experience so you have the best time." The menu is divided into two sections: Track List features à la carte drinks, while Play List is a seasonally driven tasting menu. All are inspired by vinyl records. "We take inspiration from certain albums and make cocktails that evoke the feelings you get if you listen to that music," says Kennedy. "We're really happy about what we're bringing to the city." —Emily Saladino

Lucky Cheetah

Opposite the storied cobblestone way of Portland, Maine's Wharf Street, a modest staircase leads to an unlikely subterranean world ensconced in cheetah carpeting, scarlet millwork, and Slim Aarons' high-society artwork. This is Lucky Cheetah, a fusion of Victorian-era Hong Kong dim sum houses and 1950s Monte Carlo grandeur, with a Champagne and dumpling

menu to match. "We wanted to create a space that felt opulent but also had a feeling of comfort," share owners Wills Dowd and Jared Dinsmore. The 10-seat bar, marked by a solid piece of pink Italian stone and black-and-white encaustic tile, flows into the open-format dining room where marble tables are set with coupes that await diners' selections from the curated Champagne list (Dom Pérignon, Laurent-Perrier La Cuvée, and Jacques Lorent among them). "Socially speaking, the celebratory nature of dim sum's communal table experience pairs perfectly with popping a bottle of Champagne to share," explain Dowd and Dinsmore, also noting the practical pairing of Champagne's high acidity to complement the savory, umami-rich cuisine. Besides bubbles, cocktails are crafted with Asian touches, including house-made shiso cordial, sesame-infused vodka, and lemongrass-infused tequila. "With neither of us being of Chinese origin, we didn't want to claim authenticity or a traditional dim sum experience—this establishment honors the experience, but is our version." —Jillian Dara

Bar Grale

Bourbon may be Louisville, Kentucky's calling card, but you won't know it at Holy Grale, the city's perpetually crowded de facto spot for beer. Now, owners Lori Beck and Tyler Trotter aim to do for Louisville's wine scene what they did for beer with the opening of Bar Grale Wine Bar and Bottle Shop. "Over the years, as we've traveled the world to immerse ourselves in beer culture, we started incorporating visits to notable wine regions,

which has been incredibly enriching," says Beck. Opened in May 2024, the spot offers a rotating selection of 16 wines by the glass (or a modest \$15 corkage fee on bottles from the shop), all of which beg to be consumed al fresco in the wine garden. Tuck away your pinkie; Bar Grale emulates the same vibe as its sibling establishment. "By removing the pretension often associated with wine, [we seek] to foster genuine connections and shared experiences," says Beck. —Shana Clarke

The Aladdin Sane

This intimate new cocktail bar tucked beneath the restored, century-old Book Tower in downtown Detroit takes its cues from Tokyo listening bars and the 1970s-era theatricality of rock star David Bowie. The Aladdin Sane, opened by hospitality group Method Co. last August, invites discerning imbibers to partake of the most extensive Japanese whisky list in the city, as well as rarities such as Glenfiddich 29-year Grand Yozakura (the only bottle in a Michigan bar). Japanese-inspired cocktails are crafted by Method Co. creative beverage director Jeremy Oertel and The Aladdin Sane's beverage director Patrick Jobst. Sip on the Sake & Strange Divine, a Martini-style sake-based drink with gin, rice whiskey, sushi rice, shiso, and garnished with caviar, or the cherrywood-smoked Negroni, Dreams & Reflections. "The journey is curated and personal," says Method Co. creative director Daniel Olsovsky. "[It's] a bespoke escape like no other." —CP

Bar manager Chris Allen at The Aladdin Sane in Detroit.

