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The Best Bars and Cafés in Phoenix Right Now

Where to sip wild ale, horchata latte, and the Valley's most electric drinks

BY CHRIS MALLOY

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An interior view of Carry On, a 1970s jet-set fantasy in downtown Phoenix Photograph By Kevin Brost

In a place as hot as Phoenix, you just need good drinks. The city's top brewers, mixologists, and baristas have been quietly turning heads for a decade, the best channeling the unique energy and creative spirits of the desert. Recently, a new crop of maestros has emerged.

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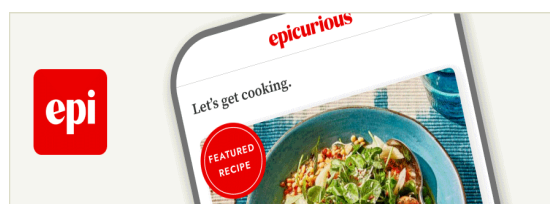
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Brewheads know that the Valley of the Sun’s beer scene has been a powerhouse for a decade. Two of the biggest stalwarts—Arizona Wilderness Brewing Company and Wren House Brewing Company—have opened new outposts expanding their visions.

Meanwhile, the coffee scene is becoming more fun. Consider the island vibes and shakerato riffs of Wonderift Coffee in Ahwatukee, while on Grand Avenue, Malegría Cafe blends Salvadorian horchata lattes, reflecting how local coffee culture is embracing Latin influences.

Cocktails have been the beverage ecosystem’s keystone for the past decade, and a new crop of maestros is pushing into new directions. With thoughtful emerging bars like the produce-forward, high-tech Legends Never Die and the Indian-inflected cocktails of Indibar, the Valley’s cocktail scene continues to expand into a bold, multi-sensory frontier.



Whatever your preference, here are eight top new places to drink in Metro Phoenix.

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Photograph By Ivory Rose

Malegria Cafe

1031 Grand Avenue, Phoenix

[instagram.com/malegria.cafe/](https://www.instagram.com/malegria.cafe/)

On Grand Avenue, a dusty thoroughfare of art galleries and gritty, excellent eateries, uncompromising storefronts burst with life: artisan piñatas, retro neon signs. Newcomer Malegria Cafe fits right in, with a mural depicting the national birds of Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala, broadcasting its roots and style. The birds represent owner Melina Ruano Serrano's heritage as well as the coffee cultures she braids together.

Don't Miss: Serrano makes café de olla, fragrant with cloves, cinnamon, and star anise, while her Salvadorian lattes, particularly the horchata version, are real gems. She blends

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Photograph By Lauren Topor

Wonderift Coffee

12020 S Warner Elliot Loop, #115, Phoenix

[instagram.com/wonderiftcoffee](https://www.instagram.com/wonderiftcoffee)

Lauren Topor and Kyle Reichert enjoyed their Hawaii honeymoon so much they launched a coffee shop aiming to recreate its spirit of mellowness and adventure. Set near the foot of South Mountain and its 100 miles of trails, Wonderift adopts an earthy ethos, recycling grounds and providing a no-velvet-couch, no-frills hangout to hikers.

“We’re really adventurous and willing to try new things,” Topor says. “We want to

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[instagram.com/azwildernessmm](https://www.instagram.com/azwildernessmm)

The Arizona beer scene's mad scientists have moved brewing operations to Miracle Mile, Phoenix's long-ago hub undergoing a rebirth. Jonathan Buford and Patrick Ware are best known for quirky, fantastical brews made with hyperlocal ingredients (often foraged) and Sinagua Malt, a low-water malt grown in Arizona's Verde Valley. Think: Beer-wine hybrids, sours steeped with spruce tips, wild ales made with yeast culled from across the state. This new Wilderness mothership, anchored by a U-shaped bar in a 10,000-square-foot building that once housed an illicit gambling den, aims for a pub-like ambience. Taps dispense arcane suds, like a seasonal-favorite watermelon gose. Just as often, you can find really solid takes on classic styles from all over the world (recently: Italian-style pilsner, saison, West Coast IPA, and a highly crushable British-style pub ale). The kitchen turns out whimsical bar food, like Mexican pizza, and wall art depicts the buttes and cacti of the Seussian desert.

Don't Miss: The wild and funky world of sours, which Wilderness explores deeply. Though offerings shift, look for a summer-classic watermelon gose, prickly pear sour, and even a dill sour ale infused with brine and pickles.

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Photograph By Kevin Brost

Wren House Paradise Valley

12650 N Tatum Blvd Suite 106, Phoenix

[instagram.com/caskgram](https://www.instagram.com/caskgram)

In Paradise Valley Mall, elite brewer Wren House Brewing's next chapter brings a twist: a 50-seat hideout highlighting two dozen distinct brews on tap at any given time and four rotating cask beers. Thanks to cask beer manager Mason Swierenga, Wren's pours are known for soft carbonation, live yeast, plush mouthfeel, and a slow pour that builds its own head—under the cask's spell, hops and malts show different faces. (Cask ale is naturally conditioned and served by hand pump, not forced by CO₂.) This cozy drinkery melds British Pub and American Southwest design influences, sporting rich woods, handsome tiling, and booths with a little privacy. In a state where cask beers have faded, Wren House revives a cool fringe beer tradition.

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Indibar

6208 N Scottsdale Road, Paradise Valley

[instagram.com/indibarscottsdale](https://www.instagram.com/indibarscottsdale)

Seven years in the making, this modern Indian restaurant in Scottsdale offers a flashy cocktail list aiming to “recreate memories and make magic.” Jonathan Rodrigues runs a technique-heavy cocktail program: ghee-washed whisky mustard-infused tequila, foam finishes. Each cocktail is purposefully crafted, bridging flavors as with a slow-sipper featuring a split whiskey base sees bitter orange, curry leaf, and a bath of hickory smoke paired with the kitchen’s tender rogan josh shank, snappy papadum, and other hits.

Don’t Miss: The “Mango’ Lore” unites mezcal, citrus, and tropical fruit, playing on the margarita with a golden spoonful of finger lime caviar for garnish. “Our cocktails are stories that connect us to our roots,” says executive chef and co-owner Nigel Lobo.

Carry On

2 N Central Ave Suite 101, Phoenix

[instagram.com/carryonairlines](https://www.instagram.com/carryonairlines)

Carry On is a 1970s jet-set fantasy in downtown Phoenix. The space goes all out with midcentury carpets, amply spaced leather and bouclé seating, and rich wood paneling to recreate the glamorous flight experience of decades—even each reservation-required, 90-minute seating is a “flight.” The simulation is so immersive that windows, shaped like

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Don't Miss: A Martini card lets you pick spirit, style, and garnish, all mixed tableside by uniformed “airline” staff.

Legends Never Die

509 E Roosevelt St, Phoenix

[instagram.com/legends.never.die.phx](https://www.instagram.com/legends.never.die.phx)

In the hum of Roosevelt Row, Brenon Stuart and Sam Olguin just debuted a modern cocktail haunt that subverts spirit-first classic mixology rules for seasonal fruits and vegetables. Put another way, “we start with the produce first and pick the spirit last,” Stuart says. The spring menu features 12 cocktails built to highlight flavor pairings like pineapple and mace, fennel and pear, and blueberry and oats. A high-tech approach utilizes centrifuge clarification and sous-vide infusions, often repurposing ingredients like beet scraps or wilted herbs from their sister restaurant, Pretty Penny. The bar is small, minimal, and rooted in a brutalist design philosophy. It’s a dark, neutral sanctuary designed to be anti-Instagram, watched over by statues of Greek gods (the “legends”).

Don't Miss: The “green apple and snap pea.” This crisp cocktail combines blanco tequila infused with fennel and snap peas via sous vide, mint-infused vodka, and centrifuged skin-on green apple juice. A custom “tree-fruit” acid blend adds a hit of brightness, making each sip like biting into a cold apple.

Instagram content

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7033 E Main St Suite 102, Scottsdale

[instagram.com/jamiesbottleshop](https://www.instagram.com/jamiesbottleshop)

This buzzy wine playground in Old Town Scottsdale comes from Jack Borenstein and Jamie Hormel, the latter known for helming Wrigley Mansion (Phoenix) and its 16,000 bottles. Jamie's blends retail with a casual bistro atmosphere. Bottles line the walls and flights feature pours from less expected places (think Salento, Le Marche, and Etna within Italy, plus a sparkler from Lombardia) and the 800-plus labels are priced from \$15 to \$15,000. The Champagne Room houses special tastings with cheese pairings, and a climate-controlled Reserve Room stocks rare finds you can uncork on site. Fridays bring themed classes, courses high on intel and low on snobbery.

Don't Miss: An artful charcuterie board is heaped with so many cured meats, cheeses, nuts, olives, and pickled peppers that it can almost serve as a meal for two. Bottle and board combos are \$10 off during happy hour.

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