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Drinker's Guide To London

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Forbes Travel Guide unveiled its inaugural London Star Awards. Check to see which hotels and spas made the cut here (<http://www.startle.com/landing/london2013?promotion=true>).

A trip to Great Britain's trendiest city could include a shopping spree at the world-renown Harrods department store, relishing in Her Majesty's Crown Jewels, or scoping out Buckingham Palace to sneak a peek at the royal family. But no visit to London (<http://www.startle.com/london-united-kingdom>) would be complete without a drink – or two – at some of the best hotel bars in the city. These hot spots offer everything from cocktails and champagne to whiskey and gin and tonic in hopes of satisfying the taste buds of regulars and new visitors. For those guests taking it light on the libations, we even found a must-try afternoon tea. Read on as we toast to the most elaborate of London's hotel bar scene.

Gin and Tonic

Londoners love their gin and tonics, and The Bar at The Dorchester (<http://www.startle.com/london-united-kingdom/hotels/the-dorchester>) has a menu created by renowned alchemist Giuliano Morandin that shows it. The "Paying Homage to the Gin and Tonic" includes bespoke gins such as the Dorchester Old Tom, which includes Old Tom Gin re-created especially for the Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star hotel's bar; Beefeater, the classic London gin that can be traced back to 1820; and Sipsmith Gin, which has been handcrafted in batches of less than 500 bottles in London's first copper still for nearly 200 years.

Whiskey

If whiskey is more your drink, head to the Blue Bar at Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star The Berkeley (http://www.startle.com/london-united-kingdom/hotels/the-berkeley#cmpid=forbes_DR). It's in the heart of Knightsbridge and known for its innovative cocktails. But we're most impressed with its huge selection of whiskey—more than 50, including blended and single malts; Irish, Canadian and American whiskies; and even 18-year-old Suntory "The Yamazaki" Japanese whisky.

Champagne

It's hard to beat the over-the-top, Art Deco glam at the Beaufort Bar at Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star The Savoy (http://www.startle.com/london-united-kingdom/hotels/the-savoy#cmpid=forbes_DR). The black-and-gold décor is totally fitting for its extensive champagne menu—by far one of London's best. Here you can sip everything from "the classics" (more traditional and well-known champagne houses) and "the unique" (aka boutique growers) to "the glorious" (famous grand crus) and "the giants" (popular bubbly in larger formats).


Cocktails

Mixologist Ago Perrone (http://www.startle.com/tastemaker/ago-perrone#cmpid=forbes_DR) heads up things at The Connaught Bar, which was named World's Best Cocktail Bar last year, and we couldn't agree more. The Art Deco style space is located in Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star The Connaught (<http://www.startle.com/london-united-kingdom/hotels/the-connaught>) and specializes in—you guessed it—some of London's best cocktails. The bar is known for its martinis, so order the Martini Trolley to see the preparation of this signature cocktail (here they're stirred, not shaken) in action.

Tea

Of course, we simply couldn't talk about London and not include high tea. While you can pretty much take your pick of hotels that offer tea service, you'd have a hard time topping The Goring (<http://www.startle.com/london-united-kingdom/hotels/the-goring>)'s Afternoon Tea. The Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star hotel has been serving its English Afternoon Tea since opening in 1910, and this year it was honored with the 2013 Top London Afternoon Tea Award, one of the highest honors from the UK Tea Council's Tea Guild. Aside from a selection of fine teas, you can expect finger sandwiches, freshly baked scones, spice cake with Brandy icing, chestnut rolls and more.

Photos Courtesy of The Dorchester Collection, Maybourne Hotel Group, Fairmont Hotels And Resorts, The Goring Hotel and David Collins

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