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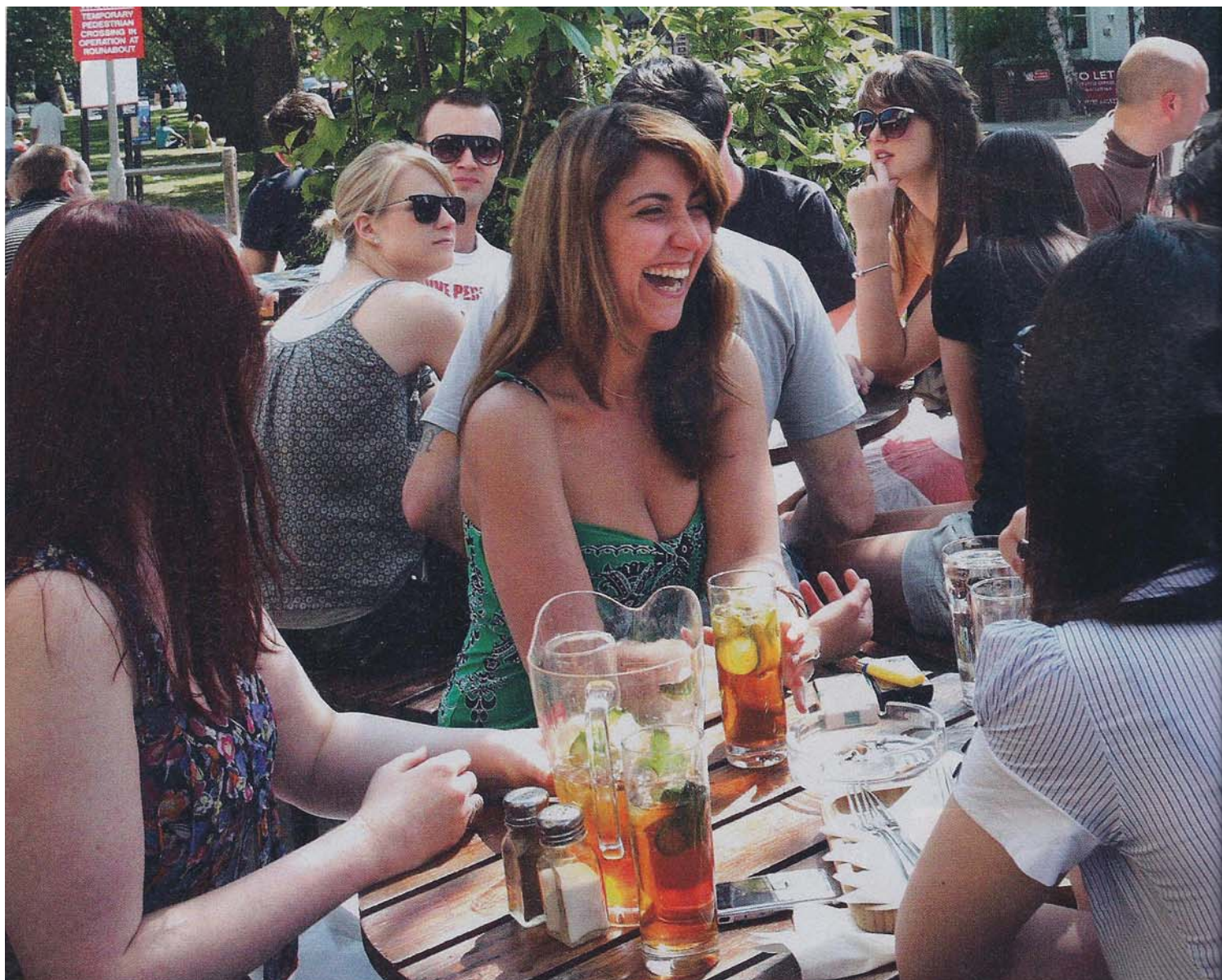
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**Top tips for getting tipsy:
a refreshing guide from
our brilliant critics**



The best bars and pubs in town

Here we list our favourites from London's ever-growing, ever-changing bar scene – from louche new cocktail lounges to the best old boozers. Let **Time Out's expert critics** take you on the ultimate bar crawl



GOOD FOR THE WORLD CUP



GOOD FOR OUTDOOR DRINKING

20 Blue Bar

The name isn't just a caprice: this David Collins-designed bar really is as blue as a Billie Holiday recording. The sky-blue armchairs, the deep-blue ornate plasterwork and the navy-blue leather-bound menus combine with discreet lighting to striking effect. It's a see-and-be-seen place, but staff treat all-comers like royalty, and the cocktails are a masterclass in sophistication. Not everyone can afford to scale the frightening heights of the bar list, worth perusing just to confirm that there is such a thing as a £4,200 bottle of Champagne or a £925

shot of whisky (Macallan 55-year-old). Leave those to celebrating Wags, and just enjoy the elegance and luxury of one of the finest hotel bars in the city. Be sure to wear your best threads, and leave the football colours at home. **When to go** When you've a glide in your stride, and you're feeling pretty fly. **What to have** Whisk(e)y – whether Scotch or American – is well represented.

Blue Bar, The Berkeley, Wilton Place, SW1X 7RL (7235 6000/www.theberkeley.co.uk). Hyde Park Corner or Knightsbridge tube. 4pm-1am Mon-Sat; 4-11pm Sun.

19 Rake

When asked how often his team changes the draught options here, the barman replied that it depended on consumption: perhaps daily, perhaps every couple of days. The Veltins and Maisels Weiße taps stay in place, but to say that this blue-fronted spot has Aecht Schlenkerla Rauchbier (a rare smoked variety from Bamberg), Jenlain, Meteor Pils and Grisette Fruits des Bois on tap may or may not be true by the time you read this. The only guarantee, as advertised on a yellow sign above the bar, is that there'll be 'No crap on tap'. The tap brews, offered

MICHELLE GIBBANI



The White Horse

in third-of-a-pint measures for easy sampling, are merely the tip of a beery iceberg: as befits an operation run by the folk behind the Utobeer stall in Borough Market. There are also bottles galore from all corners of the world, an enticing selection sold at elevated prices. The room is tiny with few decorative distractions; the small decked courtyard (seven tables) doesn't really get the sun, as it's under a huge canopy for the adjacent market.

When to go After a food forage in Borough Market.

What to have Any of the excellent beers, for example Kaiserdom pilsener from Bavaria, which is always on.

Rake, 14 Winchester Walk, SE1 9AG (7407 0557). London Bridge tube/rail. Noon-11pm Mon-Fri; 10am-11pm Sat.

18 Charles Lamb

 This Islington corner pub only opened in 2007, but it feels like it's been here a good deal longer, such is the degree to which it's become part of the fabric of its neighbourhood. The regulars are a highbrow, high-spirited bunch; some are here simply for the drinks, which usually include three or more ales, Breton cider and Sierra Nevada in bottles, while others tackle the fine food, aspirational gastropub cooking that generally impresses. All this is served by friendly staff in a pair of small, handsome rooms with wooden floors, the cream walls sparingly decorated with menu blackboards, letterpress prints and other tasteful ephemera. You'd like it in your part of town, and like it even more if you want to avoid the World Cup. There are six tables outdoors at this junction of two quiet streets.

When to go If you find Upper Street's pubs too plebeian.

What to have A guest ale such as Urban Dusk from the Redemption Brewery in Edmonton. *Charles Lamb, 16 Elia St, N1 8DE (7837 5040 / www.thecharleslambpub.com). Angel tube. 4-11pm Mon, Tue; noon-11pm Wed-Sat; noon-10.30pm Sun.*

17 Kensington Wine Rooms

Thor Gudmundsson and Richard Okroj's stylish, delightful wine bar offers about 100 well-chosen bottles, together with five Enomatic wine machines serving 40 varieties of the glass (they're proud of the latter, too, as their chosen URL makes abundantly clear). Superior hams hang over the sleek metal bar; burgundy colours and dark wood add warmth to the seating area. Through the arches is a spacious dining room with open brickwork where you can choose from a short menu of mostly Mediterranean dishes, though there's also the likes of tempura-style fish with skin-on, hand-cut chips and, only at weekends, brunch food such as eggs Benedict. There's a compatible wine recommendation for each dish on the menu. Check online for details of the regular wine classes. There are often a few tables on the terrace if the weather permits. Football fans beware—the owners say the closest they'll get to World Cup mania this year is via South African wines on the menu.

When to go When you just want a glass of something really good.

What to have Whatever takes your fancy from the Enomatic wine preservation system.

Kensington Wine Rooms, 127-129 Kensington Church St, W8 7LP (7727 8142 / www.greatwinesbytheglass.com). Notting Hill Gate tube. Noon-midnight daily.

16 Old Brewery

  Rather than make cask-conditioned English ales for an already crowded market, Alastair Hook and his team at Meantime specialise in more unusual artisan beers, which they've rolled out in increasing numbers across London over the past few years. In 2010, Meantime opened this ambitious operation, a microbrewery, pub and café-diner in part of the newly refurbished Old Royal Naval College. The modern bar area is small but has a huge outdoor area of 30 tables seating 200. Meantime's own beers, chiefly brewed using bottom-fermented, low-temperature continental methods, take pride of place; among them are Helles, a pale lager, and the smoky, complex London Porter. But the menu extends



69 Colebrooke Row

beyond Greenwich to cover around 50 beers on draught or in bottles, arranged by style on the menu from 'hoppy ales' to 'Belgian Lambic and crisp beers'. The food, too, is excellent, taking in such hearty dishes as pork terrine served with strips of pig's ear. Some World Cup matches will be on the bar's TV screen—but the sound will only be turned up when England are playing.

When to go For an outdoor pint in a lovely bit of Greenwich.

What to have London Porter! *Old Brewery, Pepys Building, The Old Royal Naval College, SE10 9LW (3327 1280 / www.oldbrewerygreenwich.com). Cutty Sark DLR. 11am-11pm Mon-Sat; 11am-10.30pm Sun.*

15 Portobello Star

 The Notting Hillbillies propping up the bar at this handsome local are in for a shock, as Portobello Star is having TV screens brought in for the World Cup—showing England games with volume, but other games silently. If you can snap your attention away from the goggle box, you might be able to appreciate that this bar is where you find some of the best examples of mixology to be found around these parts. The USPs are the confident ▶



Connaught Bar