

IT'S HIP TO BE SOBER: Beyond the Mocktail

Spas are not the only alcohol-free zones in the world. From booze-free bars to juice crawls and clean clubs, being on the wagon has never been so good.

Written by Judy Chapman



WITH WELLNESS NOW A MULTIBILLION-DOLLAR INDUSTRY more of us are looking for alternative ways to get our dose of fun and rejuvenation.

While red wine is getting a good wrap for its antioxidant properties, alcohol consumption is increasingly responsible for countless violent, criminal and health issues. It's little wonder then that people are seeking healthier highs. Which is why a good night out these days may include meeting up with friends for a group meditation class or a vegan meal rather than a bar. Where a night out with the boys could be a men's circle drinking Kava or a motivational workshop. Where your vacation is a yoga retreat and sipping on green juice is your preferred drink of choice. Here's a host of alternatives to explore for a fun night out.

DRY BAR MOVEMENT

It's all about the 'Hour of Happiness' at The **Alchemist Kitchen** New York, where, every Friday evening, folk socialize and sample elixirs and tonics hand-blended on-site from herbal botanicals.

It's also hip to be sober at **Redemption Bar** that has been so successful there are now two locations in London. What makes Redemption appealing is that it still offers a sexy bar style of ambience, but with exciting mixes such as 'Bombay Love' made with turmeric root, coconut kefir, carrot, lemon and ginger juice and alcohol-free Bavarian beer.



Says co-founder- Catherine Salway, "A lot of people that come to Redemption are looking to take a night off, but without having a night in - a sanctuary away from the perpetual temptation and peer pressure of booze. It's also a great place for people to work who might have had addiction problems in the past because it's a safe environment. I think there is a market for one in every major city." New Yorkers can check in on the **Listen Bar** that hosts 'all bar, no booze' pop-ups over the city. Founded by Lorelei Bandrowschi, whose mission is to 'rewrite nightlife', the vibe here is dive bar – dimly-lit, groovy music with sassy bar tenders. Listen Bar offers alcohol-free menus created by a team of world-class mixologists, herbalists and nutritionists delivered by a cast of musician bartenders.

Some dry bars go as far to support those with alcohol issues. **Sobar** in Nottingham London operates on a volunteer basis with all the profits going to fund their drug and alcohol recovery services. Similarly, **The Brink** is Liverpool's first dry bar serving up wellness drinks such as 'Bombay Sour' and 'Virgin Margaritas' – with all profits supporting people with addiction issues.

CLEAN CLUBS ARE ON THE RISE

"Healthy clubs are the new nightclubs," confirms co- Lauren Berlinger, co-founder of **Higher Dose**, a New York wellness company. "At Higher Dose, for example, we play Burning Man mix tapes, serve kava, and are all about getting folk high naturally."

Morning Gloryville started in London in 2013 and now hosts events worldwide



including Tokyo, New York, Paris, Melbourne and Sydney to name a few. These morning raves usually begin at 6.30 am and combine energizing music with superfood smoothies, organic coffee and free massages to set the tone for a healthy day.

The Get Down in New York, hosted by DJ Tasha Blank, just might be NYC's wildest dance party that promises to get you home at a decent hour so you can wake up Friday ready to conquer the world. Once or twice a month, over 300 beings congregate to shake off the stress of the day and dance like there's no tomorrow.

Similarly, **'5 Rhythms'** is a dynamic 'movement is medicine' practice founded by Gabrielle Roth. Now taught all over the world, this practice is all about being in our body that ignites creativity, connection and community – without any enhancers. It's about expressing and releasing any anxiety, emotions, aggressiveness and vulnerability – through movement.

Yoga Barn in Bali is famous for its yoga retreats and workshops and has hosted alcohol-free Ecstatic Friday and Sunday Dance for several years.

Says co-founder Charley Patton, "The great thing about dancing is the connection we create with each other - all without the unnecessary (and detrimental) aid of loud nightclubs, cigarette smoke or alcohol. Dance helps to remind us of who we truly are."

In fact, one of Spa Finder's Top 10 trends for 2016 was the rise of 'Well-Fests – a shift from wasted to wellness.' From one-day yoga events to music festivals and Burning Man, it's all about connecting where health takes center stage.

WHY DO WE DRINK?

Aside from the civilized way Europeans traditionally drink a glass of wine or two with meals, one of the reasons that people drink alcohol is that it can loosen up our inhibitions,

give us confidence to connect with others, and can even boost our energy levels.

Dry January in the UK and Dry July in Australia are increasingly popular. Here in the USA, there's a 'Sober October' coming up. These dry months were originally launched as public health campaigns urge people to abstain from alcohol for a month – and have been a worldwide success.

"There are signs of change," confirms Salway. "UK politicians have been scratching their heads trying to figure out what to do about problem drinking with measures like minimum pricing, but I think the most powerful changes come from culture. 18-24

years olds are beginning to drink less. Bad pubs are going out of business."

Here in the USA, up to 100,000 people die each year from alcohol-related causes making it the third leading preventable cause of death. The first is tobacco and the second is poor diet and physical inactivity. In 2014, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities accounted for 9,967 deaths (31 percent of overall driving fatalities).*

DRINK ALTERNATIVES

Alcohol-free spirits are another emerging trend and little wonder that **Seedlip**, the world's first distilled non-alcoholic spirit, is a big seller at retailers including Selfridges and Harvey Nichols.

"As the world shifts its focus towards a more conscious attitude to food & drink, Seedlip is an option for what to drink when you're not drinking," says founder Ben Branson.

In the US, especially in premium restaurants and gourmet markets in New York, Connecticut, and New England. The sophisticated all-natural, non-alcoholic, sparkling beverage is **TÖST**, based in Vermont, with impressive names like Alfred Portale of Gotham Bar and Grill behind it. TÖST is a sparkling beverage that provides the celebratory air of Champagne without the alcohol. Refreshingly dry and not too sweet, it's exceptional on its own and pairs exceedingly well with food. TÖST is elegant, sophisticated, delightfully fizzy, and a drink that can be enjoyed anytime, anywhere, by anyone.

You know that change is afoot when mainstream hotel brands start introducing smoothie stations and on-site juice bars. Boost your immune system with seasonal juices, tonics, and elixirs at selected **Ace Hotels** around the world. In Seoul, the **JW Marriott Dongdaemun Square** offers a



Nutrition Bar for juices, smoothies, and teas prepared by a "vegetable sommelier", while the **Swissôtel** group recently introduced a menu of Vitality Drinks, including power shots and healthy breakfast smoothies filled with fiber and protein.

We are living in the age of wellness. The Global Wellness Institute (GWI) recently reported that global wellness tourism revenues grew an impressive 12.8% from 2015-2017, from a \$3.7 trillion to a \$4.2 trillion market. To put that in economic context, from 2015-2017, the wellness economy grew 6.4% annually, nearly twice as fast as global economic growth (3.6%). Wellness expenditures (\$4.2 trillion) are now more than half as large as total global health expenditures (\$7.3 trillion).

As the wellness movement continues to push us to reconsider our lifestyle choices, the trend of cocktails infused with alkalizing vegetables are also on the rise. Just some of these include Root Vegetable Cocktails and Korean Kimchi Cocktails made with fermented vegetable juice – all of which helps us feel more rejuvenated in the morning. A hangover has never felt so good! □

*National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>



About the author: Judy Chapman is the author of four books on spas and the former Editor-in-Chief of Spa Asia magazine. Over the past twenty years, Judy has created award winning spas, wellness retreats, and products for luxury brands in Australia, Bali, Germany, India, Maldives, Middle East, Myanmar, Singapore and New York. With a relentless pursuit of unique and original experiences, her curiosity has led Judy to explore the Himalayas, spending time with Tibetan doctors to onsen bathing in Japan and Ayurvedic retreats in India. She has created over 200 skincare, tea, and candle collections for luxury brands around the world. Judy is also the Editor of 'The Chapman Guides, a curation of wellness retreats and destinations. www.thechamanguides.com