

RICHARD GOSLAN
 TRAWLS SOME OF THE
 BEST WHISKY BARS IN
 THE WORLD TO BRING
 YOU THE DEFINITIVE
 LIST. WHICH IS YOUR
 FAVOURITE?



**JACK ROSE DINING SALOON, WASHINGTON DC,
 UNITED STATES**

The Jack Rose Dining Saloon somehow makes a bar that's a destination for travellers from around the world to the US capital of Washington DC feel like a local joint. As owner Bill Thomas says: "You'll find the most diverse array of whiskies being drunk by the most diverse group of people, whether it's whisky lovers travelling from around the globe or neighbours who make us their neighbourhood watering hole. It's the only bar in the country where kids want to bring their parents and parents want to bring their kids."

You're certainly going to be spoilt for choice: Jack Rose has more than 2,700 different expressions lining the walls. You can pull up a stool at its 83-foot long bar, or sit down in a leather booth with a backdrop of thousands of Scotch Whisky bottles. For guidance, there's a 70-page Whiskey Book, featuring thousands of individual bottle pours, plus curated tasting flights and more. Some rare bottlings include Springbank 1967 38-year-old, John Jameson & Sons 10-year-old from the 1960s and Karuizawa Noh 13-year-old. www.jackrosediningsaloon.com

HEAVEN *on* EARTH?

WHAT would be your criteria for the perfect Scotch Whisky bar? They come in all shapes and sizes, but the key ingredient, apart from a well-stocked gantry, must surely include a team who not only demonstrate a genuine passion for the drink in question, but offer a welcoming and encouraging environment when it comes to sharing that passion. With that in mind, we have picked out eight outstanding bars from around the world where the owners and bar staff have gone above and beyond in creating amazing spaces. Each one entices whisky lovers inside to explore endless offerings, seek out special bottlings and find companionship in the shared pleasure of having a blether over a cracking glass of Scotch Whisky. As we know, Scotch is a common language that transcends native tongues, bringing people together across continents and cultures. Each of these bars is sure to deliver a home-from-home experience, wherever you hail from and wherever you find yourself. Isn't

it amazing that this incredible spirit has the power to unite us across the globe? Step up for our pick of some of the best Scotch Whisky bars in the world right now.

**ARDBEG EMBASSY,
 STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN**

"Unfortunately, there can be a lot of pretentiousness in this industry, but as soon as you walk into Ardbeg Embassy you will feel relaxed and welcomed," says Ludwig Andersson, Beverage Manager at this whisky institution in Stockholm's 'Old Town' district. "There's no snobbery here – even if you are an experienced whisky connoisseur there is always something extravagant we can offer, but we never forget the 'others', people who come with their friends or partners who might feel intimidated. For us every single guest is equally as important, whether they enjoy a dram or not. I'm also proud of our wine selection, local beers on tap and our cocktail menu with several whisky signatures."

For dram lovers, Ardbeg



Embassy has around 500 whiskies on the shelves, with everything open and available to sample. "My top picks out of the rarities in our selection would be an Ardbeg 1964, a bottling from the Gordon & MacPhail Connoisseurs Choice

range or the entire Pappy van Winkle bourbon series," says Ludwig. "Just scrolling through our menu with a dram straight from our own cask is a beautiful experience for whisky lovers." www.ardbegembassy.se



**FIFE ARMS,
 BRAEMAR, SCOTLAND**

Since opening in 2021, Bertie's Whisky Bar at the Fife Arms in Braemar has been scooping up plaudits as a must-visit whisky drinker's destination in the Highlands of Scotland. Named after Queen Victoria's eldest son, King Edward VII – a noted 'bon viveur' in his time – Bertie's feels more like a labyrinth than a traditional bar.

There's a different bottle for every day of the year arranged across its shelves like a precious liquid library, where guests are encouraged to browse what's available for themselves. The organisation is also based on flavour rather than a distillery's name, age or region, encouraging guests to explore their whiskies without prejudice, but also with the help of Bertie's sommeliers to play the role of expert whisky 'librarians'. Bertie's specialises in rare single cask releases, including bottlings from lost distilleries such as Caperdonich, Imperial and Pittyvaich and also offers a complementing tasting menu. The Fife Arms has also commissioned

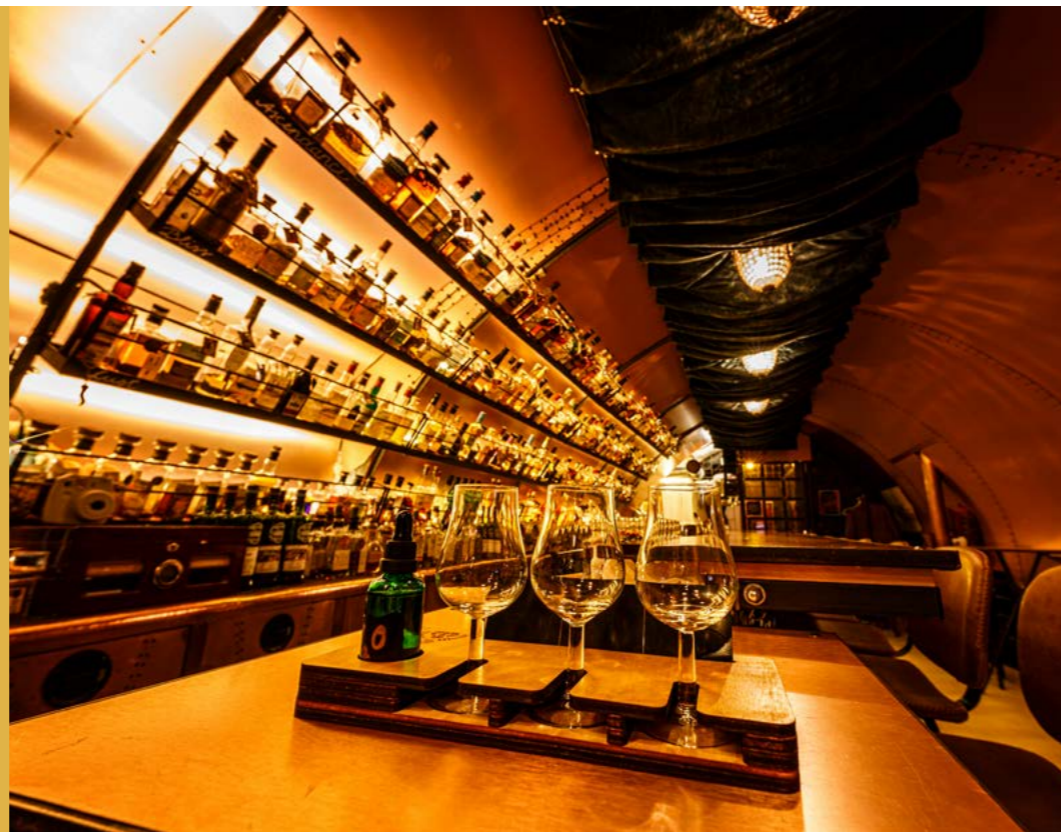
MALT VAULT, UTRECHT AND THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS

The Malt Vault was founded by Said Bijary in The Netherlands specifically to create a unique whisky experience for new generations and to stray away from the more traditional whisky bar image of old men in leather armchairs, dark rooms and cigars.

“We wanted to create a young and LGBTQ+ friendly space, which I have the honour to lead as a 25-year-old woman,” says manager Giusi Conduro. “Our experience revolves around taste; we divide the whiskies into three flavour categories: light, rich, and smoky. This division allows seasoned drinkers as well as those who are new to the ‘golden drop’ to go beyond brands and names, and focus on the tasting experience.”

Giusi and her teams constantly change their selection of whiskies, and encourage customers to experience a tasting with one of their custom-designed flights, without any surprises when it comes to price. Their ‘Lust’, ‘Bliss’ or ‘Ascendance’ price points are fixed so that guests can focus on their whiskies without worrying about an unexpected bill. The Malt Vault’s focus is on exclusive independent bottlings, with a collection of around 400 whiskies which changes every week.

www.themaltvault.nl



WHISKYPLAZA, HAMBURG, GERMANY

Whiskyplaza started out modestly back in 2007, with 30 whiskies – and now find themselves with a collection of well over 1,000, including rare and old bottlings from Brora, Port Ellen, Lagavulin and Talisker, a Linkwood from 1939, around 40 different Rare Malts, some Rosebank and Glenury Royal. “The wall shimmers full of bottles, each containing a different liquid sunshine of whisky, including collectors’ items that are no longer available for purchase elsewhere,” says Whiskyplaza’s owner Björn Lahmann. “And we are always happy to open them!”

The bar has a fantastic location, in the second oldest house in Hamburg dating back to 1697 and with a direct view of the famous Elbphilharmonie concert hall on one side and with a balcony facing one of Hamburg’s canals. The first floor also has a ‘Scottish style’ tasting room with flights and specials on offer, the perfect spot to sit and peruse Whiskyplaza’s ‘Bible’ with 200 pages of information about each distillery and details about every bottling.

www.whiskyplaza.de

➤ its own single cask bottlings, most recently a 14-year old ex-sherry cask from Dailuaine named A Winter’s Dram. www.thefearms.com/eat-drink/berties-bar

PEAT & SHERRY, ISTANBUL, TURKEY

When Peat & Sherry opened its doors in Istanbul it was Turkey’s first true whisky bar, and the culmination of a whisky journey by Gürkan Gümüş and his friends



Peat & Sherry

to bring their passion for Scotch Whisky to the Turkish drinker. “We realised that Turkey needs a whisky library!” says Gürkan. “So we set up on one of the most popular streets of Istanbul, with a capacity of 40 people in a similar ‘Speakeasy’ dating back to the Prohibition period in America in the 1930s.”

Peat & Sherry organise regular whisky tastings as well as whisky and jazz events, and have opened a scent workshop where whisky lovers can experience the 15 most basic aromas found in Scotch Whiskies. “Our aim is for whisky lovers to taste the whiskies they can’t bear to open at home, to meet new whiskies and to improve their whisky archives and memories by experiencing them,” says Gürkan. “The best formula is to give our guests information about the whiskies they are curious about, to guide them about whisky culture and to have detailed conversations about each glass they drink.”

www.peatandsherry.co

WHISKY & ALEMENT, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

A true haven for whisky lovers in

Australia, Whisky & Alement in Melbourne was set up by Brooke Hayman and her partner Julian White in 2010 and continues to go from strength to strength. W&A now has around 600 bottles, predominately Scotch Whisky, focusing on independent bottlers with unique finishes and vintage bottlings that peak the team’s curiosity for comparison, age and the stories around them. The collection is constantly rotating and evolving, and the bar is at the heart of Melbourne’s whisky scene, with weekly events hosting international guests, producers, distillers and product launches and weekend whisky classes.

The collection features the largest Scotch Malt Whisky Society collection in Australia, as well as their ‘Never-Ending Cask’ sitting on the bar – first filled on St Andrews Day in 2013, predominantly with Islay whisky, and constantly changing and evolving.

“You’re guaranteed a warm welcome,” says Brooke. “Start your evening with the perfect thirst-quenching beer that will complement the whisky to follow and sate your thirst after a chat with



Whisky & Alement

your barman to help navigate our library of whisky – a bit like Indiana Jones exploring the Lost Ark!” www.whiskyandale.com.au

WHISKYBROTHER, JOHANNESBURGH, SOUTH AFRICA

Guests at WhiskyBrother, Johannesburg’s first and only dedicated whisky bar, are welcomed by a huge back bar filled with nothing but whisky and framed by church-like wooden arches. “The site can either induce awe,



WhiskyBrother

or possibly intimidate, but a welcoming voice from one of our friendly team members greeting you will let you know you’re in the right place,” says founder and Keeper of the Quaich, Marc Pendlebury. He set up the bar in in 2017 to provide South African and visiting whisky lovers with a whisky bar that could sit comfortably among some of the best in the world. With around 1,400 bottlings and new arrivals every week, there is plenty to choose from, although Scotch Whisky is the absolute focus. “Our goal is to offer

both core range and independent, single cask releases from every Scottish distillery, along with old and rare, discontinued and hard to find whiskies, including closed distilleries, distillery exclusives and hand-fills, WhiskyBrother exclusives and even some cask samples,” says Marc. “We like to think we bring a part of the international whisky world to South Africa.” www.whiskybrother.com/pages/whiskybrother-bar-morningside-johannesburg