

Time Out
New York

100% NY

FALL FASHION

New York City's style influencers hit the streets to find this fall's best buys



Just opened



Señor Frogs

For all its posh speakeasies and brainy *biertgartens*, New York still has its fair share of straight-up bro caves and debauchorous club-staurants. But never has the city housed such a flagrant shrine to spring-break depravity as this gargantuan, 420-seat installation of the Cancún-based party palace. As the chain's first foray beyond its usual resort locales, there won't be beaches at the two-level Times Square outpost, but there'll be cocktails poured by the yard (a Frogs' Punch with vodka, rum and peach liqueur; a tequila-and-melon Frogasm) and chicken wings plated atop cartoonish TNT boxes. Fellow booze-sopping eats are broken down into categories like sandwiches (blackened fish, Philly cheesesteak), Mexican specialties (chimichangas, enchiladas) and a "Splash Splash, Peep Peep & Moooo" selection of grilled meats. 11 Times Square (212-221-3833, senorfrogs.com)

Drinking

On our radar Azul

Havana on the Hudson. By Dan Q. Dao

★★★

525 Greenwich St (917-409-2576, hotelhugony.com). Average drink: \$16

The industrial, mirrored foyer of Hotel Hugo evokes a stuffy airport customs line, with suitcase-toting out-of-towners to complete the image. But an elevator whisking you up 20 floors is a minor fuss to reach your destination. Here, that picturesque landing-place is a 100-seat Cuban canteen set on the hotel's roof, trimmed with petroleum-blue walls, gritty spray-painted arts and Afro-Caribbean beats.

ORDER THIS: Tangy thirst-quenchers are filled to the brim with lush fruit juices, nectars and purees. The blush-hued La Chula

(\$16) drowns a kick of cachaça in syrupy guava extract and spritzes of lime, while a vodka-fortified Sandia Fresca (\$16) finishes on sweet notes of watermelon and cucumber. Mojito drinkers can sip on a bright-green Funky Castro (\$16), which riffs on the usual combo with an unexpected splash of peach liquor and imported *hierbabuena* that subs for mint. The traditional rum-soaked recipe also comes as a frozen passion fruit concoction swirled with Kelvin Natural Slush Co.'s organic citrus mix (\$15).

GOOD FOR: Taking a staycation high above the throngs of Soho shoppers and Holland Tunnel car honkers. Set your drinks down on one of the standing cocktail counters to 'gram the no-filters-

necessary backdrop or chat with friends at big-group communal tables lined with brightly colored salvaged chairs. On a more romantic getaway? Sink into plush, white-cushioned seats beneath strings of hanging festoon lights for secluded sipping.

THE CLINCHER: Guayabera-garbed servers transport platters of *bocaditos* and tacos, offering a taste of Cuban street fare, albeit with Manhattan price tags. The bar's *Cubano* (\$15) doubles up on hog, with pulled pork loin and maple ham on a toasted baguette, and tacos feature two house-pressed corn tortillas nestling succulent strips of skirt steak slathered with tomato and garlic *ajillo* (\$16). Cuba's streetside haunts may not tout reclaimed wood tables, \$9 guacamole and organic mojito slushies, but as the booze—and the sun—goes down, the distant glow of city lights bouncing off the Hudson could just about pass for witching hour on the Havana coastline.

BARTENDER TALES



Brandon Davey, owner-bartender, The Topaz 251 Bushwick Ave, Brooklyn (347-770-7217, topaz.nyc)

What is your signature cocktail? I would have to say the Dead Man's Mask. I like that it's balanced with both sweet and smoky flavors—I lean toward savory drinks that have almost a meaty element. I'm also a sucker for a nice looking drink. This one has a black salt rim—cartoonish, but not in a cheap way.

Have you noticed any trends recently?

I think the industry's heading back to something a bit more playful. Three years ago, it was all whiskey, whiskey, whiskey. But now offbeat liqueurs are a big thing—everyone's playing with amaro.

What is your favorite part of being a bartender?

There's two things: One is waking up late. The other is helping people relax. As a bartender, you get to be the ambassador of a good time, and I really get a lot of enjoyment out of that. I've been throwing parties since I was 15 years old—entertaining is one of my favorite things to do.

What are your customer pet peeves?

When someone flags me down, but they're not ready to order. They'll put their finger up while still scanning the menu and will ask me to "hold on." I don't mind that when we're not busy, but if we are, I don't have time. I call it holding the bartender hostage at the bar.

Got any crazy bar stories?

When I was bartending in Vegas, I made a drink for a couple on their first date. They immediately started making out, and six hours later, they went to get married at a drive-through chapel. They really hit it off.