

THE AMSTEL HOTEL BAR



1 Professor Tulpin, Amsterdam, 1018 GK, The Netherlands



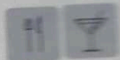
Tel: +31 (0)20 689 7070, www.amsterdamintercontinental.com
Hours: Mon-Sun 11am-1am

Type: Hotel bar
Alfresco: Riverside terrace
Entry: Via hotel lobby
Highlights: Terrace & cocktails
Atmosphere: Starchy yet relaxed
Cientele: International hotel crowd
Dress code: Not too casual
Price guide: €€€
Bar snacks: Full menu

This classy, intimate, old-school bar is hidden in the depths of an equally classy old hotel. A long terrace gives onto the Amstel River and drinkers spill from the terrace on to the boats moored to it.

Inside the wooden paneled room, the nautical theme continues. A brass ship's clock, barometer and display case of nautical knots hang behind the granite topped bar. Blue leather bucket chairs line the tartan carpet and polished wooden tables are set for dinner (the extensive food menu and silver service befit such a hotel). Settle at the bar or out on the terrace and enjoy some very well made cocktails.

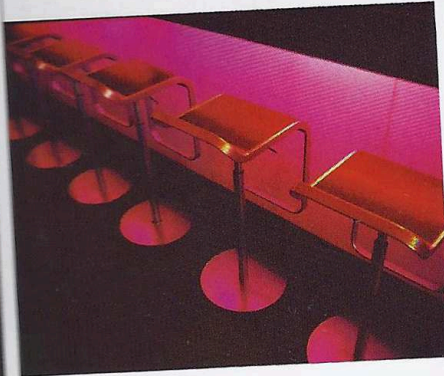
I hear a refurbishment is scheduled. Let's hope it includes a lighting change and an evolution in the music policy - because the location and drinks need no further amends.



ARC BAR



44 Reguliersdwarsstraat, Amsterdam, 1017 BM, The Netherlands



Tel: +31 (0)20 689 7070, www.bararc.com
Hours: Sun-Thu 4pm-1am, Fri-Sat 4pm-3am (happy hour 5-7pm)

Type: Gay restaurant bar
Alfresco: Street side terrace
Entry: Open door
Highlights: People watching
Atmosphere: Relaxed
Cientele: Gay blokes plus few straight
Dress code: Flamboyant designer casual
Price guide: €€€
Bar snacks: Full menu

This more than slightly gay restaurant and bar fronts Amsterdam's equally gay Reguliersdwarsstraat, its decked terrace producing an effect akin to the verandah of a camp beach hut.

The interior is clubby lounge with low slung seats and tables, and a decidedly eighties club look is heightened by design features including blue neon-lit stair rails. While the interior could be described as clean and modern, the same cannot be said of the garden this place backs onto: the large windows overlook a stagnant pond.

Unless you want to strut with the boys at the main bar, I'd head to the back left corner where a smaller cocktail bar lies. Here are served some surprisingly good cocktails, particularly when Ara Carvallo is manning the shaker.

BUBBLES & WINES



37 Nes, Amsterdam, 1012 KC, The Netherlands



Tel: +31 (0)20 422 3318, www.bubblesandwines.com
Hours: Mon-Sat 3:30pm-midnight

Type: Wine bar
Alfresco: No
Entry: Open door
Highlights: Wines by the glass, food
Atmosphere: Easy going
Cientele: Local office escapees & tourists
Dress code: Casual but not scruffy
Price guide: €€€
Bar snacks: Tapas-style bites

We stumbled upon this little place close to Dam Square by accident. I say stumbled, although we were riding past on pushbikes as normal when bar crawling in Amsterdam. Behind its narrow frontage lies a long, slender room outfitted in eighties retro brown and black, complete with velvet and bronzed mirrors.

As the name would suggest, the bar specialises in champagne and wine - fifty by the glass and 180 by the bottle. High-tech nitrogen wine savers (Enomatic System) ensure opened bottles stay fresh and tasting flights are enthusiastically served with the punch line "have a good flight" following notes on each of the wines poured.

Bubbles & Wines is owned by a young couple: Robert pours the wines while his wife prepares tapas-style gourmet bites in the kitchen. I particularly recommend the Bee Stings (truffle cheese, parmigiano and black pepper) but whatever you eat be sure to follow Robert's wine matching suggestion.

