



COURTESY OF ELIXIR

FOOD &amp; DRINK

## THE SAN FRANCISCO COCKTAIL BUCKET LIST: 41 DRINKS TO TRY BEFORE YOU DIE

By TREVOR FELCH    By TREVOR FELCH @TrevorFelch

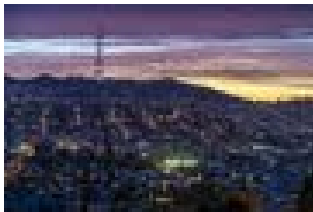
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@TrevorFelch



San Francisco was built on a delicious and strong foundation of cocktails (just ask the 1849 Gold Rush crew about Tadich). And now, more than ever, specialty cocktails have become one of the Bay Area's most lauded and sought after products (Pisco Punch and Cable Car anyone?). Because of this there are hundreds of bars serving up what they claim are the best mixed drinks in the city, an assertion that would make anyone want to grab, well, a drink and find out for themselves. To help ease that stress, we've assembled a bucket list of the 41 cocktails in SF you have to try.

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DEVIL'S ACRE

## CALL A TREUSE

SAVE 

The Devil's Acre [Address and Info](#)

NORTH BEACH

You feel great leaving The Devil's Acre because they treat cocktails as if they were medicine -- which is somewhat true. Doctors back in the day used to think cocktails were good for you and should be prescribed to treat illnesses. Also back in the day, monks at the Chartreuse monastery in France thought that green and yellow chartreuse were magical elixirs that could also treat you. God bless

them. Skip the Advil and sip the medicine that is green and yellow chartreuse, egg white, vanilla syrup, and dry vermouth (aka as the Devil's Acre).

## CABLE CAR

[SAVE](#)

**Harry Denton's Starlight Room** [Address and Info](#)

UNION SQUARE

We're spoiled with lots of rooftop terraces and top floor bars with views of skyscrapers. What do they all have in common? The drinks suck (hello Top of the Mark!). Harry Denton's -- atop the Sir Francis Drake Hotel -- is where you wish someone would throw you a birthday. The "Cable Car" is what you wish they'd buy you. It's a sweet concoction of Sailor Jerry rum, lemon, and cointreau with a cinnamon-sugar rum. And the view is the perfect thing to supplement it.



JOE STARKEY/THRILLIST

## BLOODY MARY

[SAVE](#)

**Zeitgeist** [Address and Info](#)

## DUBOCE TRIANGLE

San Francisco is a brunch town, a drinking town, a hangover town, a biker town... San Francisco is basically the Meredith Brooks of towns, and it all comes together in perfect harmony at every person's favorite beer garden that serves up one bloody fine Bloody Mary. Saturday night's parade of Fernet and vodka sodas are all but forgotten after an hour on a patio bench with one of their Bloodys (complete with olives, lemon, lime, and picked green beans).

## BARREL-AGED NEGRONI

[SAVE](#) 

**Alta CA** [Address and Info](#)

MID-MARKET

SF is crazy about Negronis. We're talking an addiction that may surpass the passion one feels about the Giants, or sourdough. If you've ever had a good Negroni, the next step is to have a great one created with time, love, care... and Gran Classico subbing in for Campari. The bar is also the go-to watering hole for the peeps at Twitter (it's across the street), so Alta had no choice but to create an amazing drink. No one wants a vitriolic hashtag trending because they messed up an otherwise standard cocktail.

## ABSINTHE PUNCH

[SAVE](#) 

**Terminus** [Address and Info](#)

FIDI

Absinthe deserves a better rep. The whole "it drove van Gogh to insanity" thing has been proven false time and time again, and we should all move on. Thankfully, Terminus cares deeply about absinthe and found a 19th century recipe from SF's Palace Hotel that knew the green fairy makes magic with sugar and lemon juice. After all, Terminus literally feels like a zinc bar in Paris, so do yourself a favor and get punched.

[LIHOLIHO YACHT CLUB](#)

## CASTAWAY

[SAVE](#)

**Liholiho Yacht Club** [Address and Info](#)

*TENDERNOB*

Salted falernum. Remember that. The cinnamon-allspice liqueur combined with Manzanilla sherry and green chartreuse gets Liholiho jumping every night. Then chef Ravi Kapur keeps the Aloha Spir rolling with some crazy delicious takes on not just Hawaiian food, but dishes from almost every continent.

## CHAMPIONSHIP “POLICY”

[SAVE](#)

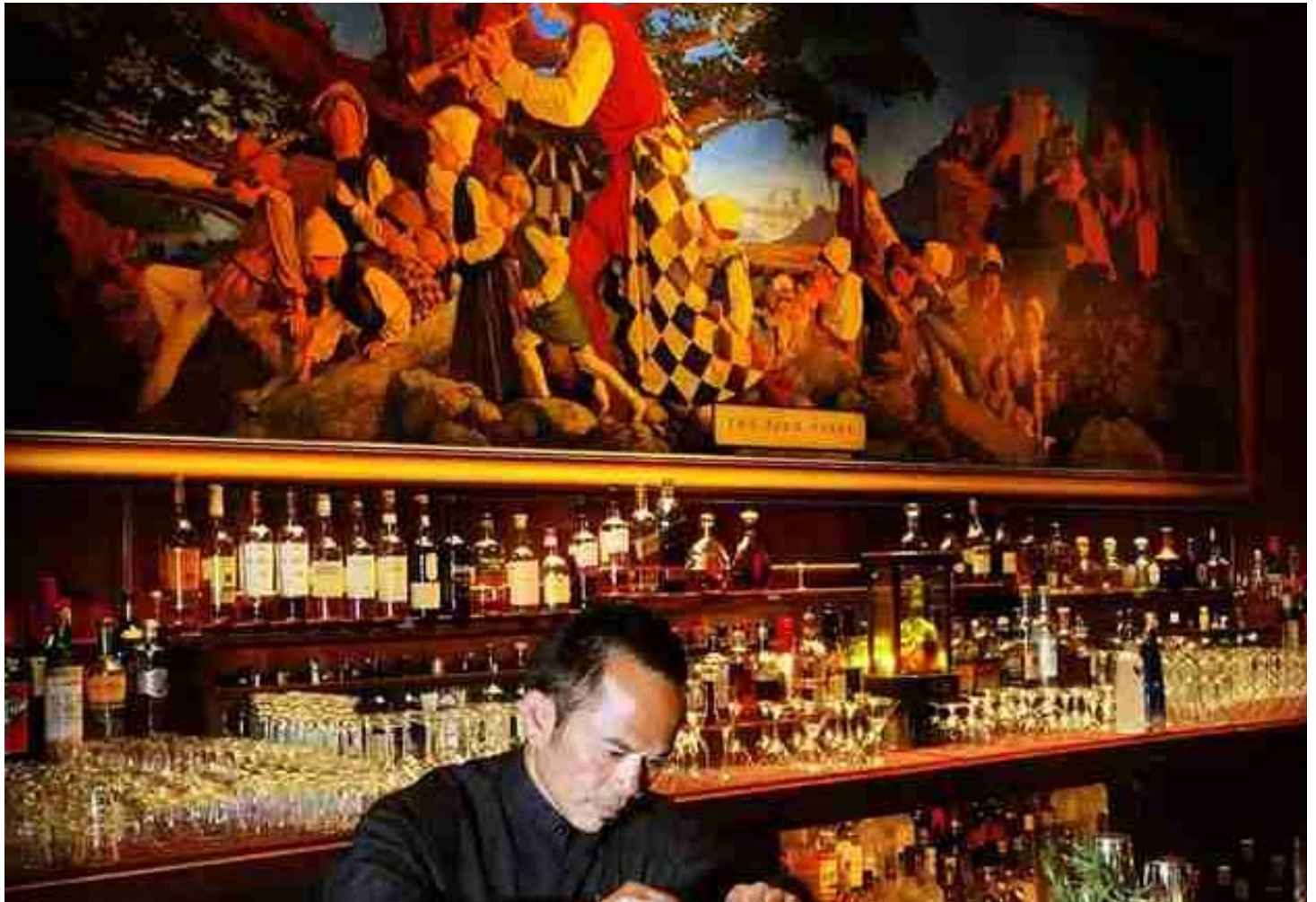
**Coqueta** [Address and Info](#)

*EMBARCADERO*

Do you get it? Carmen Policy! He was the president of the 49ers when they actually were not just good, but won championships. OK, so it’s basically a glorified Manhattan with a glass given a breath



of smoke produced from wine barrels at Policy's winery (and five golden raisins garnish representing the 49ers' five championships), but it's phenomenal.



[PALACE HOTEL](#)

## THE CHARLIE CHAPLIN

SAVE 

**Pied Piper** [Address and Info](#)

*FIDI*

We're unsure what Charlie's cocktail preferences were, but his namesake beverage is one boozy knockout. It's absinthe, rye, Dubonnet Red, honey, Peychaud's bitters. And it's exactly what you should be drinking while sitting in front of the Pied Piper painting that is easily the most famous painting in any San Francisco bar.

## CLASSY LASSY

SAVE 

**Whitechapel** [Address and Info](#)

*TENDERLOIN*

The new gin-centric spot serves a very interesting combination of Dutch-Bangladeshi-Anglo food from Smuggler’s Cove, which is cool, but let’s talk about the cocktail. With a little gin, orange flower water, egg white, and a splash of tonic, you’ll get the Classy Lassy: a delicious and velvety cocktail that can only be found at Whitechapel.

## LA COPA VERDE

SAVE 

**Padrecito** [Address and Info](#)

COLE VALLEY

If you need proof that cilantro, chipotle, and mezcal aren’t the greatest trinity in the world, you’ve got it now. For your New Year’s Resolution, drink green. Just, ya know, cilantro juice instead of kale juice. With mezcal. Lots of mezcal.

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## COUNTRY LAWYER

[SAVE](#)

**Park Tavern** [Address and Info](#)

*NORTH BEACH*

A Manhattan by way of Italy, but it's not as strange as it sounds. Park Tavern is a classic new American brasserie in the heart of not-so-small Little Italy serving up this creative take with Zucca amaro, vermouth, and bourbon. Take a sip and behold a drink filled with terms you'll never use to describe your attorney -- honest, smooth, trustworthy.

## GIN & TONIC

[SAVE](#)

**Aatxe** [Address and Info](#)

*CASTRO*

Step 1) pick a gin. Step 2) pair it with a tonic. Step 3) profit?? Aatxe's 50-plus gins are divided into different sections of a color wheel and matched by profiles with the right tonic partner. There are a ton of combinations to choose from, so finding the right one will just take time... and a healthy liver.



Bonus: Aatxe chef Ryan Pollnow is helping to coat your stomach with his Basque-Californian cooking.



TRICK.DC

## CRAZIEST COCKTAIL ON THE MENU

SAVE 

**Trick Dog** [Address and Info](#)

MISSION

Trick Dog somehow manages to be both the most whimsical and the flat out best cocktail bar in the saturated SF circuit. They also swap out their menu theme every January and July. For the current “Declassified” menu, the craziest order might be the “Chupacabra” with turmeric, root beer, carrot, and yogurt whey among its seven ingredients. Go big or go home from Trick Dog, as it’s crowded enough already.

## HOUSE CAPPUCCINO

SAVE 

**Tosca Café** [Address and Info](#)

*NORTH BEACH*

This is no regular cappuccino. So sorry to break your milk-foam heart. The rejuvenated Tosca goes out with bourbon and Armagnac, joining a Dandelion chocolate and vanilla syrup base. They say it's not a dessert cocktail. We say anything is a dessert cocktail if you want it to be bad enough.



COURTESY OF THE INTERVAL

## DECANTED MOTHER-IN-LAW

SAVE **The Interval** [Address and Info](#)*MARINA*

Have you ever heard of a bar as a research institution before now? Interval is the bar involved with the Long Now Foundation, a non-profit devoted to fixing problems of today, tomorrow, and centuries from now. Generally, that ambition needs great cocktails. One such cocktail is the Decanted Mother-in-Law, a spirits-heavy drink made up of bourbon, curaçao, maraschino, and Ame bitters.

## MARTINI

[SAVE](#)

**Aub Zam Zam** [Address and Info](#)

UPPER HAIGHT

Aub Zam Zam is vital for 1) theatrical Persian décor that seems like an old Hollywood backdrop, 2) being THE rare non-psychedelic drug themed place in Haight-Ashbury, and 3) its house cocktail, which has probably been ordered by 99% of patrons for five decades. The martinis are a six ounce glass of ice cold gin (you want the 209 gin, a very good Bay Area-made spirit). Even when you ask for a less “dry” Martini (more vermouth), it still always seems stiffer than you’d expect. Even 007 would get tipsy off this one.



COURTESY OF NOPA

## THE EUCHARIST

[SAVE](#)

**Nopa** [Address and Info](#)

NOPA

In theory, it's a dessert cocktail, but treat "The Eucharist" any way you want. Scotch, sweet sherry, and dry Manzanilla sherry are a triumphant trio that will ease you into the spiced doughnut holes -- or [SF's \(best?\) burger](#). Thank you, Nopa. Thank you.

## HANKY PANKY

[SAVE](#)

**Bar Agricole** [Address and Info](#)

SOMA

I would be kicked out of town if I didn't include Fernet in this list. And I like SF, so here it is. Fernet, gin and vermouth soar together at SF's premier cocktail bar-restaurant hybrid, creating the Hanky Panky, or what you won't be doing after three of these delicious treats.

## MANHATTAN

[SAVE](#)

**The House of Shields** [Address and Info](#)

FIDI

If there's such a thing as a dive bar for people who work with hedge funds, House of Shields is it. But don't let that intimidate you. The drinks are meticulously made and regal in their boozy stature. The Manhattan (bourbon, and just right the blend of sweet and dry vermouth) here is the one all others aspire to be. And it tastes all the better at 3pm when you're an investment banker who lives on NYS time like many of the regulars.

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TREVOR FELCH/THRILLIST

## THE HAWAIIAN

SAVE

**Trou Normand** [Address and Info](#)

*FIDI*

Trou Normand is one of the first bars in the country to emphasize brandies (like cognac, calvados, Armagnac). “The Hawaiian” hits the tropics for pineapple gomme syrup, then the rural fields of Brittany for Calvados, and then its off to the monasteries for green chartreuse.

## OLD ‘FOIE’SHIONED

SAVE

**Pabu** [Address and Info](#)

*FIDI*

It’s \$27. But it’s also foie gras-infused Japanese whiskey, Aztec bitters, and garnished with even more foie gras. As if you needed more proof that the recession is over.





COURTESY OF NOVELA

## HEMINGWAY'S CODE HERO

[SAVE](#)

**Novela** [Address and Info](#)

*FIDI*

Did you know that punch is Hindi for “five?” It’s true. And the Code Hero gets it right with their pivotal five ingredients of spirit, spice, sugar, citrus, and water. As for Ernest, despite his love of mojitos and daiquiris, he could down a good number of the 120 gallons of punch on tap at Novela made each week -- especially his namesake, with a trio of whiskeys, maraschino liqueur, Pimm’s, Earl Grey, grapefruit, and lemon.

## MARGARITA (HOUSE OR CADILLAC)

[SAVE](#)

**Cadillac Bar & Grill** [Address and Info](#)

*MID-MARKET*

You can’t be a \$5 marg and a \$6 taco. And that’s exactly what you’ll get here. If you’re less a cheapskate, throw down a Hamilton for the (admittedly superior and terrific) “Cadillac Margarita”

that ups the tequila from Sauza Gold to Arrette Reposado and adds Grand Marnier.



COURTESY OF MAVEN

## HOMETOWN VIXEN

SAVE 

**Maven** [Address and Info](#)

LOWER HAIGHT

California loves three things above everything else: sunshine, avocados and pistachios. For the latter of the three, Maven's bar director Tim Hagney uses pistachio-infused Four Roses bourbon to craft the "Hometown Vixen." You don't even have to shell the nuts. You just have to drink it. And like so many of Maven's drinks, that's an easy task to accomplish.

## PIÑA VERDE

SAVE 

**ABV** [Address and Info](#)

MISSION

Génépy and tequila mix with pineapple gomme for what would be the offspring of a Margarita and a Pisco Punch. And as you know very well, Margaritas and Pisco Punches are indeed responsible for the progeny of myriad drinks in San Francisco.



BUENA VISTA

## IRISH COFFEE

SAVE 

**The Buena Vista** [Address and Info](#)

FISHERMAN'S WHARF

The Buena Vista's signature mix of Irish whiskey, coffee, sugar, and cream in those oh so appropriate vintage glasses is not just deserving of being on the cocktail bucket list, it's already on the actual San Francisco bucket list. Honestly, the real shocker is that despite being such a tourist magnet, it's actually incredibly good.

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COURTESY OF ALCHEMIST

# LA FIN

**Alchemist** [Address and Info](#)

SOMA



La Fin leads the drink menu here, and after a round of them, you'll be well-acquainted with Strega; a saffron liqueur that works wonders with the smoke of mezcal. It's a glamorous concoction in a glamorous bar, deftly tying together smoke, spice, and a hint of sweetness. Best of all, the drink cost far less than what, like, five threads of saffron cost.

## SMUGGLER'S RUM BARREL

SAVE 

**Smuggler's Cove** [Address and Info](#)

HAYES VALLEY

In the always crowded, always uncomfortable, always painfully slow to get a drink tropical lair of Smuggler's Cove, the waterfalls and humidity combine to make decisions from the extensive menu covering the history of rum intensely challenging. Here's a tip: get the "Smuggler's Rum Barrel" with something like 15 different rums and 20 different juices in it. It's the tiki drink to end all tiki drinks, and if you shell out \$10 more, you can get an actual barrel (that they'll replace with a new one you can take home later).



TREVOR FELCH/THRILLIST



## TOMMY'S MARGARITA

[SAVE](#) 

### Tommy's [Address and Info](#)

OUTER RICHMOND

If there's one iconic drink to have in San Francisco, it's a margarita at Tommy's. Tourists really don't go there because it's so damn far away. There is no cocktail menu -- only a tequila menu. But be sure to ask for the house margarita. With salt. They'll take care of the lime juice and the house agave mix. The downside? Every other margarita will be a letdown the rest of your life.

## MARTINEZ

[SAVE](#) 

### Stookey's Club Moderne [Address and Info](#)

NOB HILL

Forget the passé speakeasy, pre-Prohibition-style wave of new bars. Welcome to the post-Prohibition art deco bar generation, thanks to Stookey's. Imagine South Beach and the Hoover Dam as a small corner bar. That's Stookey's. You'll want to spring for a Martinez, supposedly the precursor to the Martini that was actually invented (per rumor) in the namesake East Bay refinery town. What's the difference? Maraschino liqueur is added, hence it's a little sweeter and less stiff.



TREVOR FELCH/THRILLIST

## MARTINI

SAVE 

### Tadich Grill [Address and Info](#)

*FIDI*

Opened in the midst of the 49er's arrival (that would be the 1849 Gold Rush), Tadich is basically a living museum. A museum that serves a proper, perfect, and viciously powerful martini. It's first stirred before two olives are dropped in, and don't you dare get it with vodka. Also, don't be the person who asks for a dirty martini (trust me, a friend did that with me and was given a whole jar of olive brine to dilute the precious drink).

[HARD WATER](#)

## MINT JULEP

[SAVE](#)

**Hard Water** [Address and Info](#)

*EMBARCADERO*

San Francisco's Bay-side whiskey specialist is all about just sipping the spirit straight, but we care more about our spirits in cocktail form. The mint julep is probably the hardest drink to make great and the easiest to slam. The bartenders here know the precise ratio of crushed ice, bourbon, simple syrup, and most vitally the muddled mint and the mint garnish. It's so refreshing and far superior to what they're drinking in May at Churchill Downs.

## PEDRO SUCKERPUNCH

[SAVE](#)

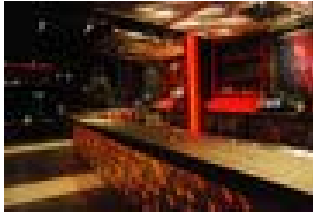
**15 Romolo** [Address and Info](#)

*NORTH BEACH*

This drink really does come out of nowhere and hit you when you least expect it. It's made with Pedro Ximenez, the syrupy oddball of the sherry family, and incorporated perfectly here by a top-

tier cocktail bar that really loves sherry in its cocktails. With the PX, there's bonded bourbon, lemon Amaro Nonino, and espresso liqueur. It makes for one hell of a night cap.

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## BIX'S NEGRONI

[SAVE](#) 

**Bix** [Address and Info](#)

FIDI

Negronis should all taste the same right? They're so easy. 1:1:1 ratio, gin, Campari, sweet vermouth Boom. But life is never this simple. Bix has a doctorate in all classic cocktails and nails its negroni every single time. Add the beyond suave jazz and supper club aura to the mix for an ultimate 1:1:1:1:1 power quintet.

## OLD BAYSHORE COCKTAIL

[SAVE](#) 

**Bloodhound** [Address and Info](#)

SOMA

Banana liqueur and Ancho Reyes chili liqueur are probably the two most favored trendy ingredients (at the moment) for SF bartenders. And nobody combines them better than the friendly folks at Bloodhound. It's all so San Francisco 2016: a spruced-up dive bar in the tech goldmine neighborhood that does a spicy banana cocktail. What else were you expecting?



[COMSTOCK SALON](#)

## PISCO PUNCH

[SAVE](#)

**Comstock Saloon** [Address and Info](#)

*NORTH BEACH*

We'll get to the point here. Comstock knows how to combine the simple trio of pisco, lemon juice, and pineapple gomme into a drink Bay Area natives (and tourists alike) know and love dearly.



COURTESY OF ELIX

## PISCO SOUR

SAVE 

**Elixir** [Address and Info](#)

### MISSION

If not the first saloon in the whole city, Elixir certainly was one of the first in the mid-19th century. Today the saloon strikes that beautiful balance of new creative cocktails and hitting the classics right on target. My first ever Pisco Sour was here and no combination of egg white, citrus, simple syrup, Barsol pisco from Peru, and the decorative bitters on top has matched it outside of Chile.



COURTESY OF LOCANDA

# THE PRINCE

SAVE

**Locanda** [Address and Info](#)

## MISSION

Not a negroni, not a boulevardier, and not very different from either. With bourbon, bonal, and Campari, The Prince tastes like it's meant for royalty, but since you can afford one... it's assuredly not.

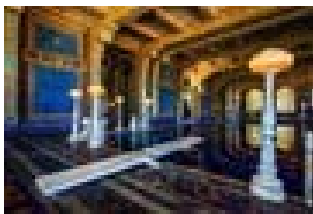
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TONGA ROOM

## SCORPION BOWL

SAVE 

**Tonga Room** [Address and Info](#)

NOB HILL

How great it is that the most buttoned-up hotel in the city (the Fairmont, where Obama has stayed) is also the home of a tremendous Scorpion Bowl? The Mai Tai is the heart and soul of Tonga Room, but you don't come here for a quick pre-dinner drink. Tonga Room is an event. Events require communal flaming bowls with a laundry list of juices and rums... add the ukulele music and the frequent "thunderstorms" and your night's just beginning.

## SLOE BOAT TO CHINA

[SAVE](#)

**The Alembic** [Address and Info](#)

UPPER HAIGHT

Let's give some love to The Alembic. This beautiful fruity and herbaceous number brings together London dry gin, bianco vermouth, and orange bitters with the sloe gin toeing that very thin line of crisp and easy-drinking. Here's a nifty fact: sloe gin is red and made of little English berries called "sloe."



[DOSA!](#)

## STEPH CURRY

[SAVE](#)

**Dosa Valencia** [Address and Info](#)

MISSION

MJ had Gatorade as his trademark drink. The reigning MVP Steph Curry gets bourbon, curried nectar, and tempranillo wine as his. Just remember when people say that Steph Curry might be the greatest shooter in the world, they're talking about the player, and not this potent drink.



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Trevor Felch is [Zagat](#)'s San Francisco editor and he basically only drinks cranberry juice and vodka. Don't ever serve him a cocktail with crushed ice unless it's a Mint Julep. Don't do it. Follow him [@TrevorFelch](#).

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**4. Alta CA**

1420 Market St, San Francisco

**5. Cafe Terminus**

16 California St, San Francisco

**6. Liholiho Yacht Club**

871 Sutter St, San Francisco

**7. Coqueta**

