

DRINK

Our New Favorite Neighborhood Bar



By Kathryn Maier
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It's Saturday night; you're gathering a bunch of friends together. But where to go? One friend's a beer nerd, while one's a craft-cocktail geek; another wants to sip rare bourbons and another would rather do shots and yet another just wants a can of Narragansett served without judgment.

Against all odds, there exists a bar that'll make everyone happy. It's the ultimate neighborhood bar, in the most lively of neighborhoods. Just off Houston, on the western fringes of Alphabet City, is a brand-new spot called **Drexler's**, from restaurateur Darin Rubell (who's also behind Boulton & Watt, two doors down). Now we can guess what you're thinking, and we're there with you: In our experience, most bars that set out to appeal to everyone generally end up pleasing no one. Drexler's, though, succeeds where those others have failed. We can't think of a friend we wouldn't bring there.

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It's a large two-level space with a vintage-rustic feel from **Emporium Design** (think exposed brick walls, a bar with a light-colored, flat-topped bar, wrought iron touches throughout). The ground floor has big tables up front to accommodate the whole crew; repurposed church pews hold smaller groups toward the back and downstairs. The lower level gets jump-started the weekends with DJs spinning mostly vinyl. The food menu—cheese and charcuterie—was created with large groups in mind. “The main idea was that you could come here in a group, feel comfortable, and have plenty of space,” says co-owner and manager Eric Kruvant. “We wanted you to be able to come in with six friends and have adequate space to hang out.”

The cocktail list is by Dustin Olson (formerly of Ward III, and who most recently created the drinks list for Bushwick’s Forrest Point). It includes classics like the Bees Knees and the Paloma alongside originals like the Summer Intern (Ron Zacapa 23 rum, Louis Royer VSOP, Dolin Blanc, Giffard Pamplemousse, Peychaud’s) and the shockingly delicious Fireball Sour (a twist on a pisco sour, with Elijah Craig 12-year bourbon, cinnamon syrup, lemon, egg white, angostura bitters, and a dash of tabasco), both much more sophisticated than their names would suggest. Olson’s known for his **milk punches** (he put some on the list at Forrest Point), and there’s one here, too—rum-based, fruity, and delicious. And while no self-respecting bar is without a tiki drink this summer, Drexler’s goes a step further with its large-format Employee of the Month, served in an enormous trophy glass.

Beer nerds will be happy with brews from Evil Twin and Braven—plus an exclusive seasonal collaboration with Kelso—but beer-and-shot types are welcomed, too. Dark-spirits sippers can choose from a wide array of hard-to-find bourbons, whiskeys, and scotches—think Blanton’s and Glenrothes.



Drexler’s

“We really set out to build that place that everyone feels comfortable coming to,” says Kruvant. “We just wanted to build a really beautiful space that people would like.”

We like it when a good idea succeeds.

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