



The world's best rooftop bars

From a glass platform with a bird's-eye view of Bangkok to a James Bond-style eyrie high up in the Austrian Alps, Isabel Lane recommends the places to down a tequila sunrise at sunset.

By Isabel Lane

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[In pictures: the world's best rooftop bars](#)

Sirocco, The Dome at State Tower Bangkok

At a dizzying height of 810ft, Sirocco sits right on top of the State Tower in downtown Bangkok. The dining area is beautiful but the circular, glowing Sky bar itself is the real draw – and it's not for those with a fear of heights. The only thing between you (sipping your suitably pricey cocktail) and street level, 63 floors below, is a clear glass barrier. From up here, the metropolis takes on a map-like aspect, with the Chao Phraya River weaving through and the expressway just a stream of tail lights.

1055 Silom Road, Bangrak, Bangkok, Thailand (00 662 624 9555, www.thedomebkk.com)

The Penthouse, ME Madrid Reina Victoria Madrid

This may be the only European outpost of the rapidly expanding empire of Rande Gerber, the American nightlife impresario, but it is just as flash and successful as his stateside venues. It even has a separate lift up to the candlelit rooftop terrace on the seventh floor. The later you go, the less likely you will be to find a lounging space on the smooth white seating – but in fact, standing, flirtini in hand, gives you the best views anyway. Below, the tapas bars lining Santa Ana square buzz into the early hours while across the rooftops the panorama of the old Huertas district and the wider city beyond spreads to the horizon.

Closed Mondays. Plaza de Santa Ana 14, Madrid, Spain (00 34 91 701 6000, www.me-by-melia.com)

Rooftop Bar at The Standard Los Angeles

This retro-cool two-tier bar in the heart of LA's financial district attracts a young fun-seeking crowd. Hotel guests receive a wristband to gain admission, while non-residents join the queue for entry, paying a \$20 fee to join the Saturday and Sunday night pool parties. Ride the red elevator up to the 13th floor to enjoy a spectacular vista of skyscrapers against the night sky. Entertainment is provided by DJs, live bands on Wednesdays and movies projected on to a neighbouring building. Hotelier André Balazs has played up to the mid-century architecture with low black seating, set off by a red AstroTurf floor, giant topiary dogs and communal scarlet waterbed pods.

550 South Flower Street, Los Angeles, California, USA (001 213 892 8080, www.standardhotels.com)

Sky Terrace and Private Park, Hudson Hotel New York

New York is awash with rooftop bars, but the Hudson in Midtown Manhattan still wins hands down. The choice is between the lively Private Park courtyard bar behind the

lobby, or the calmer, 100-capacity Sky Terrace on the 15th floor. For high-octane partying, join the throng at Private Park, which is open to all and lushly designed with signature Philippe Starck flourishes: giant watering cans, colossal vases and chaise longues. Escape the hubbub by heading to the tree-lined Sky Terrace (open to hotel guests or non-residents with a reservation), order a white mint lemonade and hit the loungers or swing out in a hammock to take in sweeping views down 9th Avenue and glimpses of the Hudson River.

Sky Terrace open May-October, Private Park April-November. 356 58th Street, New York, USA (001 212 554 6000, www.hudsonhotel.com)

Dome Terrace Sky Bar, Intercontinental Mumbai, Marine Drive Mumbai

Escape the dusty, hectic city and watch the sky fade to pink at sunset, high above the thrumming Marine Drive. A glass dome houses a stylish circular bar coolly decked out in monochrome, but balmy Indian nights are best spent by reserving one of the white couches overlooking the twinkling Arabian sea. Enjoy a gentle breeze over a Kir Royale. This is relaxed and romantic, with laid-back lounge music and live jazz thrown in on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

135 Marine Drive, Mumbai, India (00 91 22 3987 9999, www.mumbai.intercontinental.com)

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Istanbul

Calling all ornithologists... This restaurant, bar and club in the heart of Taksim is the ideal spot to witness flocks of migrating birds which navigate via the Bosphorus in springtime. Otherwise, it is good for gazing at Turkish glitz, set against an incredible panorama – from St Antoine’s church belfry in the foreground, across to Hagia Sofia and out to the Sea of Marmara. The bar is a sprawling industrial space with large communal tables, booths big enough for a party and glass walls opening to a wraparound terrace. Food is international-Turkish, including the “Society shish kebab remix”, best enjoyed with a 360 cocktail (cinnamon vodka, passion fruit, green apple, mint).

Istiklal Caddesi, Misir Apartment K8 No 311, Beyoglu, Istanbul, Turkey (0090 212 251 1042, www.360istanbul.com)

Top Mountain Star

Austria

This bar is pure Bond: a glazed state-of-the-art eyrie balanced 10,000ft up on a slender ridge of the Wurmkogel mountain in the Austrian Alps. The interior is stripped back to basics, with simple high timber stools and tables. Nothing detracts from the immense outdoors with snowy peaks as far as the eye can see, best viewed from the perimeter

balcony outside. Getting your head in the clouds is the perfect way to break the day's skiing – though, with a black and a blue run down, it may be wise to go easy on the hard stuff.

No bookings; open 9am-4pm, 14 November-3 May. Top Mountain Star, Hochgurgl, Austria (00 43 5256 6265, www.tophotelhochgurgl.com)

Plunge Bar & Lounge, Gansevoort South Hotel

Miami

At 26,000 square feet and with a glowing 110ft pool at its centre, this palm-fringed oasis is currently the hottest ticket in town – particularly for the Thursday night pool parties. Just above Miami's main hotel drag, the Gansevoort South is in the rapidly swankifying north end of South Beach. Eighteen storeys up and looking out on the Atlantic Ocean and the pastel sights of downtown Miami below, it is pretty spectacular by day and by night. Hang out around the decked bar area, or splash out on a private cabana (from \$1,000) complete with its own sound system and plasma screen. Order sushi and lychee mojitos by the pitcher and soak up the SoBe scene.

Gansevoort South Hotel, 2377 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, Florida, USA (001 305 604 1000, www.gansevoortsouth.com)

Rooftop Bar, Hotel Habita

Mexico

Habita Hotels has added another jewel to its tiara of superb Mexican hotels, with its latest opening in Monterrey. Rooftop pool terraces are Habita's USP and this minimalist masterpiece looks to be as successful as its siblings, crowning as it does

a remarkable tower by leading Mexican architect Agustín Landa Verdugo. Channelling modernist principles, he has provided protection from the sun and wind with a concrete canopy. Gather round the fire pit and down Vampiros tequila cocktails as the sun sets on the dramatic view of the city and the mountains beyond .

Hotel Habita Monterrey, Av Jose Vasconcelos, San Pedro, Garza García, Nuevo León, Mexico (00 52 81 8335 5900, www.hotelhabitamty.com)

Roof Top Shoreditch House

London

In warm weather, this as close as you will get to an Ibizan vibe in London, with a cool crowd, chilled music and white loungers surrounding the rooftop pool. The adjoining restaurant and bar area is semi-covered and has a large open-air barbecue at its centre. Decked out in monochrome by Tom Dixon and topped off with his distinctive Beat pendant lights, its seating ranges from deep black-and-white-striped couches to

modernist chairs. Glazing along two sides gives views of the low-rise East End and the glittering high-rise City, with the Gherkin playing a starring role. Smokers love this place the most, as they can light up without stopping the party. The Gay Bingo nights are the stuff of local legend.

Members only, but the roof is available for private hire Monday-Wednesday, October-March. Ebor Street, London E1 (020 7739 5040; for membership see www.sohoouse.com)



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