

# OLDE TYME PUBS

## BEST SURLY BARTENDERS

### McSorley's Old Ale House

15 E. 7th St. (East Village)  
between Bowery and Second Ave.

No matter how long you've live in Fun City, you can't really claim residency until you've helped out a carful of Jersey kids demanding directions to "Mig-sahw-leez!" Like most Fodor's-approved destinations, this ancient taproom's modest appeal has been eclipsed by its resolutely un-hip reputation. Mugs of house-brand ale are served in pairs (like Twinkies)—one light, one dark (with your eyes closed, they taste identical). If you order anything off the spartan menu, make it the cheese and onion plate: The big slice of raw onion and hunks of sharp cheddar will arm-wrestle your senses to a draw, overpowering even the bouquet of more than a hundred years of spilt ale soaked into everything.

## BEST CHANCE OF SEEING A CELEBRITY

### Fanelli's

94 Prince St. (SoHo/NoHo/Little Italy)  
at Mercer St.

Since 1922—long before the area south of Houston became the city's biggest outdoor mall—Fanelli's has been serving up cheap drinks and pub grub. A bulwark against the ritzy local emporia, this one-time speakeasy maintains a low-key vibe with a weathered bar up front and wobbly tables (covered in red-and-white checkered tablecloths) in the back room. Lunches and late nights are bustling with burger lovers; the blasé wait staff would sooner spit in your drink than smile. But it's this dose of reality that gives the joint its charm. No wonder that local shopkeepers and staffers flock here in the evenings, seeking solace from the charlatans they've been catering to all day.

## BEST STAINED GLASS WINDOW

### Broome Street Bar

363 W. Broadway (SoHo/NoHo/Little Italy)  
between Broome and Broadway Sts.

An unassuming no-frills joint in the heart of SoHo (where you'd least expect it) that's been there since before SoHo was "SoHo", complete with dark wood and tabletops that show the years this place has seen. The charm is in the wear of the bartop and tables and the simple American food and beers on tap. It's a local hangout sans attitude in a neighborhood full of attitude, and stands out from the swanky establishments so common on West Broadway. Come for brunch or a satisfying burger and a beer.

## BEST NAME

### Ear Inn

326 Spring St. (SoHo/NoHo/Little Italy)  
between Greenwich and Washington Sts.

Arguably the oldest bar in Manhattan, the Ear Inn is neither fossil nor throwback. For its lunch crowd of Teamsters and paper-reading regulars, the Ear's Billie Holiday tapes, earnest no cell-phone reminders and dusty tchotchkes represent the way things are as much as the way things were. Nights and especially weekends, UPS uniforms are replaced by Gap and Dockers worn by twenty- and thirtysomethings particular enough to recognize a thinking drinking man's tavern when they see one. Food is cheap, hearty and swiftly served by waitresses who'll patiently put up with your requests for a pint of Thomas Cloake's Fidelio beer (an extinct ale still advertised on the walls of this, its former brewery).

## BEST STORY ABOUT AN AUTHOR DRINKING HIMSELF TO DEATH

### White Horse Tavern

567 Hudson St. (West Village)  
at 11th St.

Whether or not you have the Great American Novel in your head, you can still get blasted at this nostalgic high temple of the Alcoholic Artist. The scene today is characterized less by sailors, workers and bohemian writers (like Dylan Thomas, a regular back in the day, whose portrait hangs on just about every wall of the place) than by a mix of locals, NYU students and tourists, but the surroundings

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haven't changed much. After a dozen whiskies or so (legend has it that Dylan's record was eighteen), you might even indulge the fantasy that you can afford to write poetry, live here in the West Village and still have money left over to drink. (Oh, by the way, those eighteen drams killed Thomas the next morning.)

## **BEST BACK DOOR**

### **Chumley's**

86 Bedford St. (West Village)  
at Barrow St.

The walls of this onetime Village speakeasy are cluttered with dog-eared photos of famous writers and the jackets of their most influential tomes. Stop in and check out the distressed-wood décor before 6pm or after midnight, and it's not hard to imagine Hemingway and Fitzgerald bickering in a back corner over a few too many whiskeys; during prime drinking time, however, the crowd is more J. Crew than T. S. Eliot, making the place feel like a fraternity reunion. But you've got to check it out at least once. It's saturated with history, the drinks are cheap, the food's pretty decent and, in winter, there's a working fireplace.

## **BEST BURGERS**

### **Corner Bistro**

331 W. 4th St. (West Village)  
at Jane St.

Whether you want a booth in back or a spot at the long, carved mahogany bar, prepare to wait in line. The crowd isn't queuing up just for the \$2 mugs of McSorley's or for the scruffy old bartenders plying their trade with seen-it-all stoicism. What everyone's really here for is the Bistro Burger: an eight-ounce slab of juicy grilled beef piled several inches high with melted cheese, bacon and raw onions. Served on a paper plate that invariably turns into a greasy pulp, it's one of the heftiest, messiest and, at \$6, cheapest chunks of cow you'll have in this town. The chicken sandwich and grilled cheese are equally tasty, if not exactly healthy, alternatives. If you call yourself a New Yorker, consider it your civic duty to have a beer and a burger here at least once. If you're really a New Yorker, you'll know that the best time to do that is a weekday afternoon, when Corner Bistro's timeless tavern charm feels as warm as the sun streaming through the front windows.

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This list is focuses on my favorite places in the Village and Soho. Most of the content and reviews were taken from New York Magazine.