

# Local's Guide

CAROLINAS



## Check In for a Cocktail

Drinks at these hotel bars are served with unforgettable views, food, and music

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### North Carolina

CHARLOTTE

#### Merchant & Trade

##### Kimpton Tryon Park Hotel

On the 19th floor of the Kimpton Tryon Park Hotel, firepits blaze even in the summer, giving a glowing welcome to Merchant & Trade, a pub with an experimental side. While they gladly prepare longtime favorites, they also stretch boundaries—a whiskey sour might arrive with a frothy topping of aquafaba, a vegan egg white alternative. Another beverage may be infused with Tasmanian pepper berry for a honey-like flavor. Bubbly lovers can browse around 30 choices of Champagnes and other sparkling wines. You'll often find a DJ spinning everything from electronic music to softer cover songs. The dinner menu features upscale twists on classic bar bites. (The Bougie Tots come loaded with truffle crème fraîche and caviar.)

DURHAM

#### The Roof at the Durham

##### The Durham Hotel

When's a bar more than a bar? The Roof at the Durham serves up fun libations for special events such as Views from The Durham (stargazing with Morehead Planetarium and Science Center experts) and Swift Night Out (Audubon birding enthusiasts point out swifts swooping and diving into neighboring chimneys—binoculars provided). Enjoy jazz from Grammy-nominated trumpeter Al Strong on many summer nights. Look down on the bronze *Major the Bull* sculpture from your sixth-floor perch while sipping The Durham, a signature combination of cognac, dark rum, tawny port, an herbal liqueur, and bitters. Or go lighter with the Don't Call Me Shirley, a blend of vodka, lemon, cherry-ginger cordial, and sparkling rosé. Local beers and wines from family producers also enhance the menu. Don't miss the North Carolina Oysters or the Bourbon Caramel Popcorn.

### South Carolina

GREENVILLE

#### Juniper

##### AC Hotel Greenville

Juniper, accessed by a special elevator at the new downtown AC Hotel Greenville, is a gin-forward space that shares the spotlight with other spirits too. A wafting floral scent pervades the place, and drinks vary from traditional to whimsical. The large-format ones are all hits; a past option for five or more guests was the Let's Flamingle, a huge ceramic flamingo filled with vodka, gin, a botanical liqueur, dry curaçao, and lemon. Particularly popular is the Rich Girl (with gin, raspberry liqueur, vanilla bean syrup, lavender, lemon, and cava). A gin flight from Kentucky's Castle & Key distillery offers three selections. An added bonus: Both the firepit and Secret Cocktail Garden areas provide stunning vistas of the Blue Ridge Mountains.



## Florida

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OCALA

### **Yellow Pony Pub & Garden**

#### **The Equestrian Hotel**

Located on the World Equestrian Center campus is Yellow Pony Pub & Garden. Sit on designer-crafted Western and English saddles at (or near) the horseshoe-shaped bar. The Mustang Margarita features watermelon, and you can order it by the pitcher. The Rosemary Lavender Smash has flavored vodka, lime, and lavender syrup and is presented in a delicate crystal glass. The Yellow Pony Julep introduces strawberry and lemon to the classic recipe. This social space for equine chatting takes a global approach to food. A French pastry chef provides the pub's desserts and huge German pretzels; the Reuben highlights house-smoked pastrami. And with an expert sommelier overseeing it all, this place is even better than the winner's circle.

## Georgia

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ATLANTA

**By George**

### **The Candler Hotel Atlant**

As you enjoy the Southern tail at The Candler Hotel George restaurant and bar, travel back in time to the 20th century, when the named George designed for The Coca-Cola Company. Asa Candler (it's rumored the recipe once resided in a vault). The Candler has grandeur and huge marble floors still greet you in the lobby. But back to the South: the cocktail combines bourbon, citrus, and bitters. Another drink, Velvet, shines thanks to Falernum and Chartreuse. The beverages are as elegant as the hotel itself; they come in crystal glasses often adorned