

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

September 2014

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For summer fun in the city, order your drinks alfresco at one of New York's coolest rooftop bars.

From September 2014

By Nathan Storey

On a sultry summer evening, grown-ups in suits are attacking pink popsicles with the vigor of sugar-obsessed kids. That's what a rooftop bar can do to you—specifically, Loopy Doopy at New York's Conrad Hotel, where strawberry-lemongrass ice pops are infused with vodka and dunked in a goblet of Prosecco.

In New York, high-rises, honking traffic, and jammed subways make fresh air a luxury and rooftops a sanctuary. The best of these

sun-drenched, sky-high bars provide a welcome reprieve, mixing a lively atmosphere with well-crafted drinks and expansive views of what *Seinfeld's* Kramer dubbed the Nexus of the Universe.

And there's an NYC rooftop for every taste: classic or new? Elegant or edgy? Manhattan or Brooklyn? Downtown's cool-kid Jane Hotel attracted buzz in summer 2014 by opening its rooftop overlooking the Hudson River to the public for the first time. SoHo's new Bar Hugo promises to be the Fashion Week party du jour come September, thanks to chic décor and restaurateur Sean Largetta's A-list pedigree (his restaurant Lion is a celebrity magnet).



Scott G Morris - SGM Photography



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But you won't find a higher vantage point than Bar 54, atop the Hyatt Times Square, officially the tallest cocktail lounge in town—for now. Yes, that's the gleaming spire of One World Trade Center down there.

Dreamy Manhattan cityscapes and a more laid-back vibe lure locals to the outer boroughs. Why not join them in Brooklyn, where the Wythe Hotel remains as popular as ever for its farm-to-table dishes and Technicolor sunsets. In up-and-coming Greenpoint, Northern Territory has added some Down Under flair to the neighborhood with Australian beers and freshly baked meat pies. Across the canal in Queens, under-the-radar Penthouse 808 at the Ravel Hotel has a spectacular vista of the East River and a lineup of potent tropical drinks.

But really it comes down to an ironclad universal truth: drinking above ground is just more fun.

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Refinery Rooftop

German booze alchemist Alex Ott develops the madcap cocktail menu atop the [Refinery Hotel](#), drawing on a biochemistry degree and an affinity for obscure aromas. His vibrant ingredients (curry powder, seedless raspberry jam) are in sync with the savory menu of pork belly sliders and catfish po'boys by Jeffrey Forrest, winner of the Food Network's reality show *Chopped*. Views of the Empire State Building make the porch swing laden terrace a hit, while the retractable glass roof and cozy fireplace keep the after-work crowd coming long after summer fades.



Rick Lew