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COCKTAILS ON DECK

Scenic Overlooks for Sipping Drinks

By VALERIE PETERSON

AS the end of summer approaches and the cost of travel continues to rise, there's nothing quite like having a drink outdoors with a view of the water to elicit that vacation feeling.

Over the course of a few weekends, several friends and I explored restaurants and bars, on both the river and the sound, in which the drinks, the views — and often our fellow patrons — provided the requisite mood-altering ambience. The crowds varied according to day and time, but in all cases we walked in without a reservation and were comfortably accommodated.

Whether your escapist taste runs to a cold beer at a lively beach shack or to sophisticated cocktails at a four-star resort, there's an alfresco option in Westchester to evoke the atmosphere of your favorite getaway — at considerably less expense.

The Cabana Bar at Striped Bass in Tarrytown is imbued with the presence of [Jimmy Buffett](#), that patron sinner of tropical languor. His voice twangs at a gentle volume over the loudspeakers, broadcast from his own Sirius radio station, and his Land Shark Lager has pride of promotional place at the cash-only bar, where a sign quotes him: "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere." One can also order a selection of seafood and sandwich options — including cheeseburgers — and, of course, drinks. So, when in Margaritaville. ... The well margarita was a bit sweet for my taste, but the staff happily provided extra fresh limes to tart it up. My companion enjoyed the premium version, and its Jose Cuervo came through to temper the sugar a bit. Generously sized, the drinks kept us wasting away for a while in the comfortable, cheerful blue- and gold-appointed surroundings as we watched boats bob in the Tarrytown Marina and sail past the tip of the tree-lined Pierson Park beyond.

In Rye, Seaside Johnnies is the prevailing beach brand. It's his shirts you'll see, instead of Jimmy Buffett's, at this lively, slick establishment, where the views of the Oakland Beach sand and [surf](#), the distant lights of Playland Amusement Park, and even the brightly colored, laminated menus, suggest a shore vacation. Between peak mealtime hours (generally 2 to 5 p.m. and after 9:30 p.m.), patrons are welcome to have drinks under the umbrellas in the outdoor dining area. While a list of "Johnnies New Cocktails" includes imaginative concoctions like the Nutty Swede Tini, with Absolut vodka and Frangelico, we stuck with slightly less eccentric specialties. The tart

Oakland Breeze, made with vodka, light rum, melon liqueur, lime juice, orange juice and grapefruit juice, was a refreshing standout. The South Beach (Captain Morgan and Malibu rums, pineapple and orange juice) evoked a tropical feeling. Among the classics, the margarita had a great tart-sweet balance and the cosmopolitan, too, had more flavor and backbone than most. If it's peak dining time, order at the small indoor bar and ask one of the helpful bartenders to serve your drinks in plastic cups. Take yourself and your friends to the tree-shaded area to the right of the main entrance, where you'll sit in the company of people waiting for a table. Wednesday and Friday nights you'll be treated to fireworks, but on a recent Saturday we were content to sip our drinks and watch an almost-full, preternaturally red moon rise over the lapping waves of Long Island Sound.

On a particularly hot and humid night, the expansive outdoor space at Harvest-on-Hudson felt more like a lush tropical jungle than Hastings, overgrown as it was with sunflowers, black-eyed-Susans, tomatoes, herbs and other plants that serve the restaurant. Separated from the Hudson by a deep swath of green grass, the individual tables are secluded by the foliage. The greenery also mutes the conversational volume from diners enjoying the exceptional cocktails and selections from the menu. For a deliciously refreshing watermelon martini, the melon is muddled à la minute with house-grown mint, melon syrup and lime simple syrup, shaken with vodka and served over ice in a tall glass. The Harvest Blossom, a peach nectar-infused creation made with Ketel One vodka, Peach Pucker schnapps and Champagne, deliciously cooled the hot night. If only there were mosquito netting.

For more literal, if pocket-sized, tropical surroundings, the Tiki Bar at F.I.S.H. in Port Chester, tucked at the back of the restaurant, provides a sliver of Polynesia. The spirit of you-know-who hovers, again, in the Land Shark Lager sign — shaped like a surfboard with a bite taken out of it — that hangs overhead. Bamboo mats, pots of beach grasses and other greenery shield the space from the row of cars that stands between the bar and the Byram River. Over the grass, however, one can see the masts of sailboats cruising by on their way to or from Long Island Sound. Among the cocktails, the mojito was the standout, and from a full menu we sampled a good crab cake, served with a slightly wilted carrot-and-celery-root slaw, and a fresh, flavorful pizza topped with plump, firm shrimp and spicy sausage and given a jalapeño kick. Because of its diminutive size, the bar is less well-appointed than the one upstairs, and there may be some time lag with the back and forth for things like finding special drink ingredients or making change. But then again, you're supposed to be on "island time."

On Fridays, a different kind of island ambience — the Club Med kind — fills the outdoor Tiki Bar at the [Washington Irving](#) Boat Club in Tarrytown, with its lively standing-room-only crowd. (On weeknights it offers more sedate enjoyment of its panoramic view of the Hudson River, in spitting distance of the Tappan Zee Bridge.) Asked if there were any specialties of the house, the

bartender, in a Hawaiian shirt, offered to mix up “something fun”: a concoction of coconut rum, spiced rum, orange juice and cranberry juice; and a more urbane (despite the plastic cup) cocktail of Stoli Raspberi, cranberry juice and Sprite. Both were tasty and fit the scene. Several classics — vodka tonic, vodka and grapefruit juice, and gin and tonic — were given thumbs up for their quality and alcohol-to-mixer ratio. The bar here is cash-only; food can be ordered from the grill shack next to it, run by the Sunset Cove restaurant.

At Whiskey Rio in Yonkers, those who want a bite to eat have the option of ordering food to go from the Pierview, its sister establishment, next door. The no-frills Rio might not be Tanglewood, but its mish-mash of plastic, wicker and cushioned deck furniture affords prime riverside seating from which to enjoy the live jazz and blues performances sponsored by the Downtown/Waterfront Business Improvement District of Yonkers on Friday nights. Waitress service starts outside at 7 p.m., and the seating area filled quickly after that, as groups of four or more congregated at this very social spot. Happy hour drink specials are frequently offered, but when asked what their most popular cocktail was, the bartender and several patrons answered in unison: “Beer!”

Beer and live [music](#) (usually classic rock and cover tunes) are late-night Saturday staples at Dudley’s Parkview Restaurant. This New Rochelle institution feels like the venerated “townie bar” you stumble into while on vacation — minus the intimidation. Its famous (or, for some of us, infamous) back porch provides a lovely view of the New Rochelle Municipal Marina. On summer Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, the clean and bright blue and white space is host to laid-back diners and drinkers during the day and revelers at night. On a sweltering afternoon, friendly staff members served up a sweet, coconut-heavy frozen piña colada (it could have used more “piña”), a flavorful Bay Breeze and a decent margarita. When we asked for water, we were served a pitcher of it, with lemons.

At the recently opened roof bar of the Red Hat in Irvington, attentive servers continuously brought refills of water and ice on a particularly warm night — made more sultry and mellow by the piped-in blues in the background. Everything about the place suggested [spa](#)-like serenity. The neat, fresh green cushions on the deck furniture; the orderly planters full of purple and white petunias; the unimpeded view of the Hudson River; the clean, regular lines of the brick building next door — even the sleek, imposing L&B smokestack — added to the soothing, tranquil elegance of the surroundings. As of yet, no food is served on the roof, but house-made honey-and-salt cashews were a gracious gratis accompaniment to the drinks, including the special cosmopolitan, made slightly more punchlike with a touch of freshly squeezed orange juice, and the Red Hat margarita, distinguished by a float of cranberry-lime GuS (Grown-up Soda).

The cocktails at the Dylan Lounge at X2O Xaviars in Yonkers were also well made, and highly original. Two-Gin Punch featured Rangpur and Plymouth gins, yuzu wine (from a Japanese citrus

fruit) and Aranciata, the Italian orange soda. A stiff, dry Perfect Suburban was made with Hudson Valley-distilled Tuthilltown Spirits' rye and contained both sweet and dry vermouth. Upon inspection, however, the unfurnished cement apron that juts out over the Hudson River from the restaurant wasn't a promising outdoor cocktail destination. To get to it, my companion and I carried our drinks, a tad awkwardly, through the sweeping dining room, to the iron-railed slip of a space under the giant white "Yonkers" sign. In the company of diners dressed for a special occasion and in need of a bit of fresh air or a cigarette break, we hurried to finish our beverages and move on. But suddenly, our motley gaggle of patrons was galvanized when a young man among us dropped onto bended knee to propose to his girlfriend. We held our collective breaths until she answered in the affirmative, and when the couple ran off to inform their respective families, the rest of us proceeded to chat among ourselves. For another hour or so, cocktails in hand, we strangers discovered mutual acquaintances and mutual interests. And as the sun slowly sank in the dusky sky, dappling the darkening water with paint-by-number pinks and blues, gosh if I didn't feel like I was on a [cruise](#).

Spots to Hit to Hit the Spot

HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON Harvest-on-Hudson, 1 River Street. (914) 478-2800; www.harvest2000.com/hoh. Mixed drinks, \$9 to \$14; beer, \$5 to \$6; wine, \$9 to \$12 a glass. Valet parking.

IRVINGTON

The Red Hat on the

Roof, 1 Bridge Street. (914) 591-5888; www.redhatbistro.com. Mixed drinks, \$10 to \$13; beer, \$5 to \$7; wine, \$10 to \$13 a glass. Plentiful parking in adjacent lot.

NEW ROCHELLE Dudley's Parkview Restaurant, 94 Hudson Park Road. (914) 235-4445. Mixed drinks, \$5.50 to \$10; beer, \$4 to \$6.50; wine, \$6 a glass. Live [music](#) on Saturdays starting at 10:30 p.m. (\$5 cover). Parking: \$2 at adjacent Hudson Park lot.

PORT CHESTER Tiki Bar at F.I.S.H. (Fox Island Seafood House), 102 Fox Island Road. (914) 939-4227; www.fishfoxisland.com. Mixed drinks, \$8 to \$12; beer, \$4 to \$5 (weekly specials, six bottles for \$8); wine, \$6 to \$10 a glass. Valet parking.

RYE Seaside Johnnies, 94 Dearborn Avenue. (914) 921-6104; www.seasidejohnnies.com. Mixed drinks, \$7.50 to \$11.95; beer, \$4.50 to \$6; wine, \$8 to \$12 a glass. Beach parking: \$2. Playland fireworks begin at 9:15 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays through Aug. 29.

TARRYTOWN The Cabana Bar at Striped Bass, 236 West Main Street. (914) 366-4455;

www.strippedbassny.com. Mixed drinks, \$6.50 to \$7.50; beer, \$4 to \$5;

wine, \$6 a glass. Parking available at

the Tarrytown train station after

5 p.m. and on weekends.

Tiki Bar and BBQ, [Washington Irving](http://WashingtonIrving.com) Boat Club, 238 Green Street. (914) 366-7889;

www.sunsetcove.net. Mixed drinks, \$4.50 to \$5.50; beer, \$1.50 (draft) to \$3.50; wine, \$5 a glass; frequent weekend drink specials. Valet parking; municipal parking nearby for overflow.

YONKERS Whiskey Rio, 1 Van Der Donck Street. (914) 376-9502. Mixed drinks, \$6 to \$10; beer, \$5 to \$6; wine, \$8 a glass. Frequent Happy Hour drink specials, 3 to 6 p.m. Jazz performances Fridays, 6:30 to 8 p.m., through Sept. 5; the lineup of musicians is at

www.yonkersdowntown.com. Metered street parking; valet parking available for \$8.

Dylan Lounge at X20 Xaviars on the Hudson, 71 Water Grant Street. (914) 965-1111;

www.xaviars.com/yonkers. Mixed drinks, \$8 to \$13; beer, \$5 to \$7; wine, \$8 to \$19 a glass.

Metered street parking; valet parking available for \$3 with restaurant validation.

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