

Speakeasies

By Amanda Baltazar

One hundred years after Prohibition and just three years after a global pandemic threatened to undo the bar industry, speakeasies are going strong.

They're also diversifying. While there are still many dark, mysterious, broody locales, there are other speakeasies with lighter, brighter designs that offer a more modern feel.

"There is still a thrill knowing very few people know about the speakeasy, and it makes guests feel special," says Arlene Spiegel, a restaurant consultant in New York City.

"There is also the bonding aspect with the person or group that included you. Knowing the knock-knock secret password to enter is satisfying."

Spiegel notes that many of today's speakeasies are entered via retail storefronts or restaurants.

"The stark difference in lighting, decor, music and vibe is a 180-degree contrast that transports the guest to an immersive experience."

To maintain their mystique, however, speakeasies need to stay within the boundaries of tradition, Spiegel points out. They need a "surprising location, limited occupancy, immersive, sensual and tactile environment, and of course the secret, coded password." +

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