

Esquire

THE BEST BARS IN AMERICA, 2018

Twenty-one exemplary places to start a tab.

What makes a bar a best bar in Esquire's ever-growing hall of fame? It's the feeling: There is no other place you'd rather be right now. How that emotion arises is a mystery, however. For the past twelve months, our lead barflies, Jeff Gordinier and Kevin Sintumuang, with an assist from many friends, set out to solve it. Mysteries aside, these are the places that made them want to go back.



Charleston, South Carolina

The Living Room at the Dewberry

Any hotel can fill itself with midcentury-modern furniture and call itself cool, but there's something more deeply transportive about the JFK-era vibe of this lobby bar. For one, as the austere exterior will tell you, this was originally a federal building from the 1960s—the bones speak truth. As do the barmen in crisp white jackets behind the tiny five-seat brass bar. The drinks, which come in substantial glassware, are precise and beautifully brooding—the Dark as Night, a cognac-based cocktail with walnut liqueur, is as moody as they come. The name of the place is apt: You'll want to settle in for a while. **Pro tip:** Don't skip the old-fashioned, either. *334 Meeting Street —K. S.*