



Styling Your Bar

Entertain your guests with well-stocked flair

By Candice Adler

When building your bar, it's important to think about what beverages you like to drink, who will you be entertaining, and how can you make it a natural extension of your home. Whether it is a casual summer bar by the pool or a more elaborate serving area near the dining area, there are certain essentials to consider when planning your bar.

Many people tend to entertain during the summer season. If you enjoy entertaining on a frequent basis, the bar is a key ingredient to making the most of your party space. If your bar is well stocked, as well as stylish, it will add a cool vibe to your guest's experience.

If you want the bar to be a focal point of your space, an actual wet bar may be your ideal solution. This will resemble a mini kitchen, with running water, a sink and refrigerator, and extensive storage for all different supplies. Cocktail glasses and utensils come in a variety of sizes and shapes, and become the accents that make your bar unique. A custom bar can easily be built along a wall off the kitchen or dining area.

Coordinate the bar with the theme or colors of the rest of the home. Keep with the wood tones and paints so the flow is uninterrupted. Even the cocktail napkins, decanters, and serving trays should be cohesive and natural with existing elements in the space.

It's not always necessary to build a custom

bar space if your budget or space does not allow for it. You can still have an attractive space intended to serve cocktails if you are creative with the design plan. Perhaps use an existing sideboard to store all the glasses, liquor, and mixers. A unique bar cart is always an option and, due to its mobility, is easily accessible; that way the fun travels from kitchen to den to living room as a small-scale party progresses. When not in use, a bar cart can easily be stored in a corner and be an accent in the room. If you're tight on space and need something even more temporary, try to find some interesting serving trays. You can put some pretty glasses on one and the liquors on the other. Add some interesting detail with flowers or garnish for color, and *voila* ... a makeshift bar that functions and looks pretty.

If wine is your passion, provide suitable conditions to display your collection. It is a priority to store and decant your collection properly while still showcasing them openly if possible. Wine you drink often may be placed in a decorative wine rack while still keeping it away from heat and direct sunlight, which could spoil the wine.

For more serious bottles, a wine fridge may be a nice solution. Most are reasonably priced and easily available. If you would like the wine to play a larger role in your plan, a wine cellar could be designed to look like a cabinet or buffet

to fit your individual needs. It's nice if you can combine wine and spirits in a designated area. If organized well, your drink zone can function perfectly without sacrificing aesthetics.

Most people have specific needs and would enjoy adding a little bit of their own personality to their bar. People always love to reminisce about good times and the things collected over the years. If you collect old bottles or corks, incorporate them in the design. A collection of shot glasses from different places you visited I'm sure could be a fun topic of conversation.

Bar Basics

- Make sure your bar is stocked with the ingredients you need to make your favorite cocktails.
- Find trendy new mixers to have as an alternative to your classics.
- You will always need the basics to ensure the greatest crowd pleasing.
- Cranberry juice, orange juice, and seltzer should always be on hand when entertaining, and include chilled sparkling water and soft drinks as well. ■

I hope you enjoy my tips to make your home the one you love. If you have any design questions, please feel free to reach out. Visit my website at www.candiceadlerdesign.com for inspirational photos and ideas.

Pictured left, bar is open. Right, bar is closed.

Photos by Eric Weeks

