



FOOD & DRINK

The Coppertone cocktail (Plantation dark rum, virgin coconut oil, five-spice pineapple, Angostura bitters). Below: a stylish interior lies behind the entry



BEST INTIMATE BARS

# 28 HongKong Street

The groundbreaking lounge has made Singapore a player on the global cocktail scene



It would be easy to miss the unassuming brown-and-white sliding doors, situated on a fairly low-key stretch of Singapore’s Hongkong Street. Yet behind this plain façade you will find one of the most talked-about cocktail bars in Asia: 28 HongKong Street, a.k.a. 28HKS.

Now in its sixth year, 28HKS clinched top spot on the inaugural Asia’s 50 Best Bars list last year, and it did so in part by forgoing the razzmatazz commonly associated with the Lion City—the bar’s décor is wood-and-leather traditional, and the cocktail menu stresses quality over novelty.

“Our drinks don’t scream experimental,” says Czech bartender Zdenek Kastanek, who joined 28HKS as a “spirit evangelist” in

2013 and now maintains a residency there. “We aren’t in-your-face when it comes to flavors and techniques. Instead, we pride ourselves on using top-notch ingredients to create classics with a twist. It’s about creating a harmony of flavors.”

This approach has put 28HKS—and Singapore—on the global cocktail map. “We definitely helped shape Singapore’s cocktail scene by bringing the whole idea of fine drinking into the country,” Kastanek says. “Five years ago, you wouldn’t find

“WE BROUGHT THE IDEA OF FINE DRINKING INTO THE COUNTRY.”

Singapore bars making it to the finals of cocktail competitions, or winning industry awards. It’s now the other way around—there are no awards without Singapore being on the list.”

28HKS has also been a catalyst for change on a more local level. “When we started out, we were the only food and beverage establishment on Hongkong Street,” Kastanek says. “Around us were shops selling dried shrimp, nutmeg and cloves.” And now? “It’s buzzing and fun. We don’t see the other establishments here as competition at all. In fact, the street is an integral part of our identity.”

Indeed, the idea of community is key to the bar’s ethos. “28HKS is like a clubhouse for friends and family,” Kastanek says. “If you’ve been here before and come in again, you’ll almost feel like you’re home. We’re a one-off—we will only ever be located on Hongkong Street.” —DELLE CHAN  
[28hks.com](http://28hks.com)