



Updated: Sun., Apr. 18, 2010, 10:58 AM

Praising the roof

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Last Updated: 10:58 AM, April 18, 2010

Posted: 11:49 PM, April 17, 2010

Spring hasn't really sprung until you can drink on a roof somewhere. And if this year is any indication, you'll have your pick of views, scenes and fancy cocktails. Check out these six, and beware of the ledge.

1) Top of the Strand at the Strand Hotel

33 W. 37th St., between Fifth and Sixth avenues; 212-448-1024

The bar's proximity to Penn Station makes this relatively small rooftop ideal for commuters looking to grab a quick cocktail in a laid-back, quiet setting before heading back to the 'burbs. There's no food, but cocktails are broken up into four sections: classic, vanguard, modern and exotic.

View from the top: The Empire State Building is just three blocks away, and practically smacks you in the face when you look directly south.

Sip on: the mojito (\$14), a mix of Barbancourt Silver rum, fresh lime juice, mint, sugar and soda.

2) Upstairs at the Kimberly Hotel

145 E. 50th St., between Third and Lexington avenues; 212-702-1600

When this 3,000-square-foot lounge launches next month, it'll be open until 2 a.m. But don't expect to find scantily-clad sexpots dancing on tables: "We're geared more toward a business clientele," says general manager Mujo Perezic, noting the hotel's proximity to nearby banks. The space has both an enclosed penthouse as well as an outdoor patio and will feature a variety of small plates, including truffled mac and cheese (\$12) or spiced duck "cigars" with pomegranate dipping sauce (\$13).

View from the top: 360 degree views include the Chrysler Building facing downtown and the Lipstick Building facing uptown

Sip on: the "Upstairs" (\$15), a mix of vodka, house-made ginger puree, crushed mint and lemon juice.

3) Press at the Ink 48 Hotel

653 11th Ave., at 48th Street; 212-757-2224

The brand-new Ink 48 Hotel brings a dose of swank to Hell's Kitchen with its 16th floor Press lounge, which opened Friday. To keep the bridge and tunnel crowd at bay, owner Adam Block plans to avoid using club promoters or DJs, promising a mostly Manhattanite crowd at the 10,000-plus square-foot space. "We're not looking to jam-pack the roof," he says. "We want a calm, relaxed setting."

View from the top: 360-degree panorama views, with the Hudson River up close and personal. "The high rises that are taller than us don't really start until 42nd and 56th Streets," says Block, of the unobstructed vista.

Sip on: the "Early Edition," with cognac, benedictine, cointreau and lemon juice (\$16).

4) Hudson Terrace

621 W. 46th St., between 11th and 12th avenues; 212-315-9400

Although the third-floor views aren't quite as scenic as those of its Hell's Kitchen neighbor Press, Hudson Terrace is an ideal alternative for those seeking a more high-energy, party scene. The lounge opened about a year ago, but demand was so high that they've recently revamped the space by updating the menu — try the sesame tuna tartare with guacamole and crispy wontons or the mac and cheese spring rolls (\$10-\$19) — and investing in a fully retractable roof with a clear top.

"Even when closed, you're still dancing under the stars," says owner Sean McGarr.

View from the top: Check out the stunning Hudson River views looking west instead of facing south, where you'll be just about eye-to-eye with the billboards.

Sip on: the "Hudson Terrace Lemonade" with Vision vodka, limoncello, basil, muddled lemon and sugar (\$14).

5) Rare View at the Fashion 26 Hotel

152 W. 26th St., between Sixth and Seventh avenues, 212-807-7273

While this Chelsea hotel started taking reservations on Tuesday, it officially opens its 22nd floor, industrial-inspired rooftop

bar next month where a healthy mix of business tourists and locals are expected to mingle amidst the open air setting.

View from the top: unobstructed views of the Empire State Building to the north, as well as central panoramic views of the rest of the skyline, given its smack-in-the-middle-of-the-island location

Sip on: the “Rare Fashion,” made with gin, fresh green apple, cucumber and limejuice (\$14).

6) Aretsky's Patroon

160 E. 46th St., between Third and Lexington avenues, 212-883-7373

Although the old Patroon space has been through several incarnations over the past decade, owner Ken Aretsky is revamping the second floor rooftop space, slated to open June 1, so that half of it will be covered and heated (to keep you warm on those colder days), and the other half will be open-air. During the day, patrons can choose from any of the lunch items on the menu, and after 4 p.m. the space switches to its bar menu, which features their popular Angus prime beef sliders with cheddar cheese (\$19).

View from the top: Since it's only on the second floor, there's not much of a view other than nearby buildings such as the Third Avenue outpost of Condé Nast.

Sip on: the “Cactus Berry,” made with Maker's Mark, Citronage, pineapple juice and cranberry juice (\$12).

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