

Happy Hour: Where Is Your Favorite?

Bonnie Eisenfeld

Happy hour is the new early bird special, appealing to all ages. Many local bars offer discounted drinks and small plates, a pleasant substitute for or prelude to dinner, usually available from 5 until 7 p.m. on weekdays, although some have extended hours. Whether you are alone or with friends, happy hour is a fun way to enjoy

yourself and possibly have an impromptu conversation with some congenial people. A friend and I have been researching local happy hours for a couple of years, and I will share with you what we learned.

What makes a perfect happy hour? First, the bar must offer a selection of good

wines, beers, and cocktails, as well as appetizers or small plates at discounted prices. A free batch of popcorn or a tiny *amuse bouche* does not qualify. Second, you want to have an attentive, courteous, efficient, and personable bartender who remembers your drink and food orders and maybe contributes a bit of amiable

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chit-chat. And third, the music should not be excessively loud, so you can have a lively conversation with friends or new acquaintances. Many other elements contribute to the overall ambiance, including attractive décor, clean and convenient facilities, and a diverse, convivial, and interesting mix of people. One of our favorite amenities is handbag hooks under the bar.

Even limiting ourselves to the CCRA neighborhood, I haven't the space to mention all the happy hours we have tried. Some came and went, some were inconsistent, and some were not so hot. So here are some highlights about the ones we liked best. At **Seafood Unlimited**, 270 S. 20th Street, the Isaiah Zagar mosaic-tile mural behind the bar is a never-ending delight to the eyes, the bar is lit in ocean colors, the atmosphere is cozy and sociable, and there is a large selection of discounted wines, cocktails, local beers, and appetizers. **Marathon**

on the Square, at 19th & Spruce, offers a rotating daily happy-hour special menu Monday through Saturday from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., and additionally on Wednesday through Saturday from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. **Friday Saturday Sunday's Tank Bar** on the second floor, at 21st and Latimer, offers specialty cocktails and bar snacks, and has the added visual attraction of a tropical fish tank.

Hotel bars are a bit trendy and less cozy. Our favorites are **The Palm**, Hyatt at the Bellevue, Broad and Walnut Streets; **10 Arts** at the Ritz-Carlton, Broad and Chestnut; and **La Croix** at The Rittenhouse, 210 Rittenhouse Square. Other noteworthy happy hours, which may or may not offer discounts, are **Urban Enoteca** at the Latham Hotel, 17th & Walnut (the venue of a recent CCRA Mix & Mingle event); **A. Kitchen**, and the recently opened oyster bar calling itself **A. Bar**, around the corner from each other at 18th & Walnut; and **Tria**, 18th & Sansom.



Judy and David Einhorn, owners of Seafood Unlimited, at the bar in front of the mosaic-tile mural by award-winning artist Isaiah Zagar.

Please write to me and tell me about your favorite happy hours: c/o centercity@centercityresidents.org with "Happy Hour" in the subject line.