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The Best Rock Bars in New York

 by [Chadwick Moore](#)

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Punks, metal-heads and true rockers, in today's New York, are such a delight. After you've just had an all-out-brawl with your Little Carrie Bradshaw roommate, you'll spy one, on the train or in line at Rite-Aid or walking a mangy half-breed through Tompkins Square, and you'll think: Thank God you're still around. For this round-up we were out for loud and cheap, and we found it.

Wreck Room

940 Flushing Avenue, Brooklyn

Late at night the streets of the East Williamsburg Industrial Park (the official name of this section of Brooklyn) have an eerie, post-apocalyptic feel. Never mind that organic grocer across the way, and stop into the Wreck Room where, on a recent visit, the crowd consisted of 1) the most severe mohawk witnessed since 1979, 2) a leopard print jacket/cherry red lipstick/vampire fang combo and 3) a Hasidic man in full regalia seated alone and nursing his drink until close. Ladies and gents, does it get any more rock 'n' roll than that?

[Click here for more info on Wreck Room Brooklyn](#)



Duff's

North 3rd Street and Kent Avenue, Brooklyn

There's a hearse parked outside. There's an outside deck open year round with a public grill. And, according to the bar's official statement of purpose, there're "no yuppies around for miles." Given the prime Williamsburg address, we might have suggested saying "for yards," but you get the drift. Duff's is the new incarnation of the former world-renowned Bellevue Bar in Hell's Kitchen and is New York City's favorite little deathmetal home away from home. Don't get yourself knocked out by ordering a cocktail with more than two ingredients and leave that new pashmina at home, for Christ's sake.

[Click here for more info on Duff's Brooklyn](#)

Manitoba's

99 Avenue B, Manhattan



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Owner Dick Manitoba is the former front man of the punk band The Dictators. His East Village rocker hangout, Manitobas, has been a staple since the 90s and live bands perform Mondays where there's never a cover. The Official hangout of the Gotham Girls Roller Derby (Monday night is also Ladies' Night), Manitobas brings you an early happy hour beginning at 2 p.m. and cheap booze all night long with a stellar rock-stocked jukebox and live DJs most nights.

[Click here for more info on Manitoba's New York](#)



Double Down Saloon

14 Avenue A, Manhattan

We do love the Double Down Saloon despite the feeling that, well, it hasn't yet earned its rock 'n' roll stripes so much as it just found some lying around and hung them up on the wall. The hot, tough broads behind the bar serve up house beers and bacon martinis and a crowd of punk rockers thought long ago vanquished from the East Village have crawled from the inertia to call this place home. And so have scores of eager NYU students, cause for--as you can imagine on a drunken Saturday night--hilarity to ensue when these two worlds collide.

[Click here for more info on Double Down Saloon New York](#)

The Annex

152 Orchard Street, Manhattan

Where the corridors are as black and tapered as the denim, The Annex has a roster of bands and live DJs most evenings and offers a great space (dark, windowless, circular booths and pressed-tin ceiling). Drinks are a bit pricey for a proper rock 'n' roll bar. And the crowd is young, indie, attractive and (one can assume) well-educated. But then again, this isn't Sid and Nancy's New York we're talking about, now is it?

[Click here for more info on The Annex New York](#).

Trash Bar

265 Grand Street, Brooklyn

The former home of LUXX, Trash Bar describes itself as having "all the fun conveniences of a watering hole in Des Moines, Iowa." The drinks are super cheap, the food is super cheap (hot dogs, tater tots, etc.) and the staged venue in the back is booked nearly every night of the week with bands. Admission charges to the back venue are usually under \$10 and often include a free drink or two.

[Click here for more info on Trash Bar Brooklyn](#).

Cake Shop

152 Ludlow Street, Manhattan

Cakeshop is housed on the ground level of one of those awful and painfully bland Lower East Side luxury condo developments but you'd never know it looking inside. The ground level of Cakeshop is a bakery/coffee shop complete with wi-fi and scoffing art students while the basement is dark, dank and no-frills. Here bands and live DJs rock out most nights of the week and when you're popping up to street level for a cigarette--ears ringing and drenched in sweat--try not to drip on the MacBooks as you pass.

[Click here for more info on Cake Shop New York](#).

Southpaw

125 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn

This 5,000 square foot venue in Park Slope opened in 2002 and has gained renown as one of the best concert venues in New York City. You can pretty much always count on a cover charge here (usually under \$10) as Southpaw isn't the sort of place one just pops into for a drink. The sound system is great and the hyper-cool downstairs bar has a plasma TV



projecting what's going on upstairs as well as its own DJ booth. The downstairs ("DownSouth) is open most nights and also available for private bookings.

[Click here for more info on Southpaw Brooklyn.](#)



Lit Lounge

93 2nd Avenue, Manhattan

We like our bands live and maybe just a bit scary and our venues dark, divey, and cheap. Though Lit Lounge is far from anything we might consider to be Bad Ass, it does offer the above criteria. Downstairs looks like a construction site (or maybe a staged construction site, like for a scene in a high school play), full of nooks and crannies and surprises around each corner. Upstairs is a bar with an adjacent art gallery. Band showcases Monday through Saturday downstairs, live DJs seven nights a week upstairs.

[Click here for more info on Lit Lounge New York](#)

Hi Fi

169 Avenue A, Manhattan

Hi Fi's one-of-a-kind Jukebox, the EL DJ, is rumored to have the largest music selection of any jukebox in the world, over 31,000 songs, and the selection is heavy on rock music. The bar's owner, Mike Stuto, is also the EL DJ's co-creator and any track found there was taken from his personal collection. Album covers line the walls and two-for-one happy hour (4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on weeknights) draw a steady and seasoned crowd of East Village music lovers.

[Click here for more info on Hi Fi New York](#)

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