

December  
2025

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## CENTRAL HUB

A custom bar area helps to set the tone and atmosphere when entertaining by allowing guests to congregate in one area and connect with each other. In this project designed by US design studio Alana Marie Interiors, the custom walnut bar also doubles as a privacy screen, helping to zone the space in a practical and elegant way. The slatted panels create beautiful storage nooks for glassware and bar accessories, demonstrating how form and function can be seamlessly integrated. **PROJECT BY** Alana Marie Interiors



# RAISE THE BAR

A HOME BAR IS A WONDERFUL THING - WHETHER YOU'RE ENTERTAINING GUESTS OR POURING YOURSELF A TIPPLE

FEATURE Roddy Clarke

The most memorable bars feel effortless yet refined,' says interior designer Laura Hammett. And while a home bar's success lies in a considered layering of intricate details, it's the ability to seamlessly bring people together that creates a lasting impression. Drawing inspiration from those of luxury hospitality venues and members' clubs, designers are helping us to reimagine such spaces in the context of our own homes, showcasing how subtle, intrinsic components can be combined to produce a memorable sensory experience.

It is this inspiration that will help in the planning stages of your own home bar. 'Begin by gathering images of bars that inspire you as it will help you to hone your ideas,' advises interior designer Tiffany Duggan. 'Think about how the bar might relate not just to the kitchen, living room and dining areas, especially if it is part of an open-plan space, but how it also fits with your overall plan for the house. How does it suit your space, or complement the joinery elsewhere in your home? Does it merge with the period of your property?'

While such spaces are a luxury and exude decadence that elevates how we entertain guests or can help us to become more experimental with our cocktail techniques, the fundamental configuration of a bar is centred on function. However, it is the seamless marrying of form and practicality that transforms it into an area reminiscent of those early inspirations. 'Good lighting and thoughtful materials are key to elevating the space,' explains Annie Harrison, founder of interior design studio Fare Inc. 'Whether it's a marble surface, brass accents or shelving

that shows off beautiful glassware, it's about balancing practicality and personality, creating a space that feels inviting and unique.'

Centred on time with friends and guests, bars must exude a conviviality and are an opportunity to showcase individual style and personality. Added to that, they can also provide the perfect solution to a tricky spatial configuration or layout. 'They bring a sense of occasion into everyday living,' Annie says. 'We encourage clients to think creatively about placement, such as a disused alcove, a corner of the dining room or even a wide hallway that can be reimaged into a stylish and functional bar area.' For Laura, the inclusion of a home bar is an opportunity to elevate the entire home. 'It should be a statement that is seamlessly connected to the rest of the interior,' she says, 'whether it's part of a living and entertainment area or a kitchen. It should draw people in, encourage conversation and add a sense of theatre to the room while still reflecting the same cohesion as the wider scheme.'

In paying attention to these intricate details and configurations, the outcome will exude a warm and welcoming ambience – a result that defines the success of any bar area, says Laura. 'I love working with tactile materials, subtle reflection and layered lighting to create a mood that feels both decadent and inviting,' she says. 'The key is to approach it with the same level of consideration as any other part of the home, steering away from anything overly styled or purely decorative.' And, in designing with the five senses in mind, it sets the tone for a space where treasured memories become interwoven into its interior for generations to come. ►



## STONE AGE

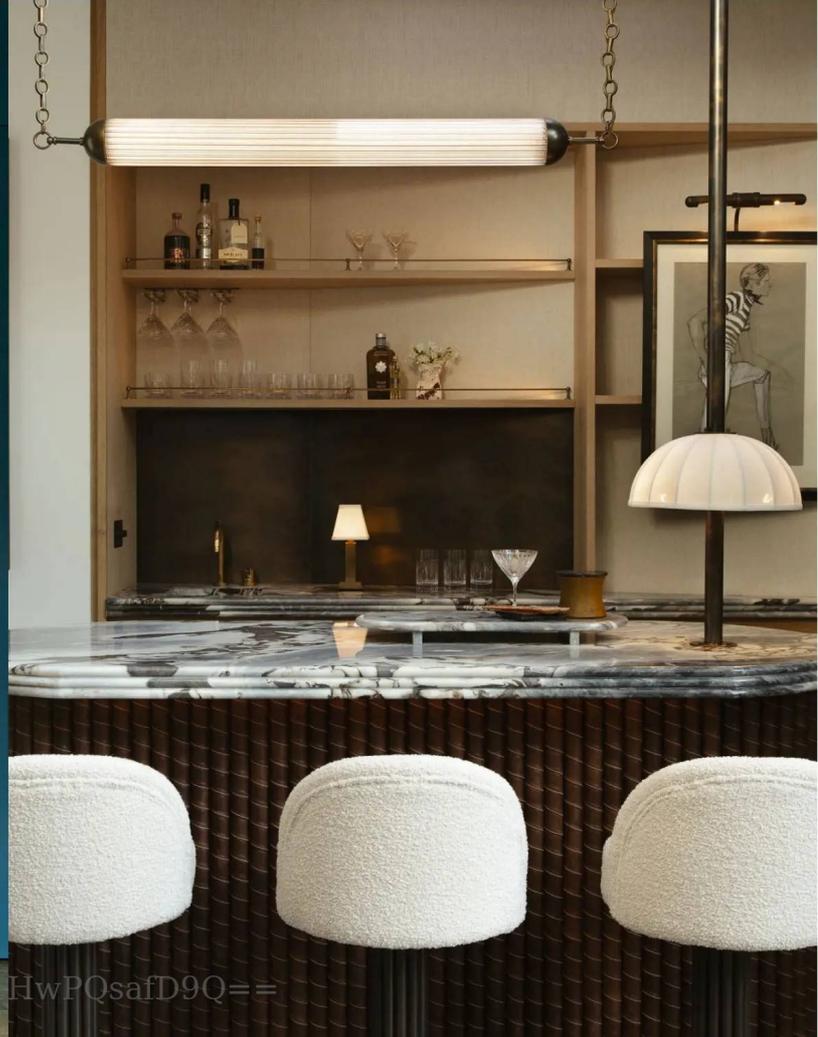
In compact areas or when a bar cabinet is part of a larger cabinet configuration, opting for materials with wow factor can create emphasis and impact. 'The large joinery unit is complemented by a beautifully veined marble cocktail bar, which transforms the functional feature into something rather fabulous, attention-grabbing and innately sociable,' says Ed O'Donnell, co-founder and creative director of interior design studio Angel O'Donnell, of this project. **PROJECT BY** Angel O'Donnell

## HIDDEN TREASURE

Behind book-matched burr walnut bifold doors lies a bar in this games room by kitchen designer Roundhouse. With a bronze-tinted glass backdrop beautifully complementing the Farrow & Ball Hague Blue painted cabinetry, it elevates the space. 'We were aiming for a mix of luxury and intimacy,' says Ben Hawkswell, senior designer at Roundhouse. 'We wanted it to feel just as inviting for guests as it does for the host and, in giving it plenty of length, it encourages a laid-back, sociable flow.' **PROJECT BY** Roundhouse

## TURN A CORNER

In this Islington home, residential and hospitality interior design studio Fare Inc. turned an unused corner into a bar. Through refined materiality and sophisticated detailing, the space has been brought to life with finishes such as hand-stitched leather, a marble countertop and a textural linen wallcovering. The mix of juxtaposing, luxurious materials results in a superior aesthetic reminiscent of a boutique hotel or members' club. **PROJECT BY** Fare Inc.



**MIRROR IMAGE**

When space for an integrated home bar might be limited, opt for a bespoke free-standing design to create an elevated feel without taking up too much room. In this sitting room designed by Studio Duggan, a mirrored bar cabinet, handcrafted by Rupert Bevan, adds a glamorous touch, ideal for sophisticated moments of indulgence after a long day at work. The mirrored surface allows light to be reflected into the room, enhancing the illusion and making it feel bigger than it is. A perfect blend of form and function.

**PROJECT BY** Studio Duggan

PHOTOGRAPHS (TURN A CORNER) CLAIRE MENARY; (STONE AGE) TARAN WILKHU; (HIDDEN TREASURE) MARY WADSWORTH; (MIRROR IMAGE) DEAN HEARNE