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december 2025 [hospitalitydesign.com](http://hospitalitydesign.com)

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## trendspotting alcohol-free bars

### BEYOND THE BUZZ

Led by Gen Z, the sober-curious movement takes off

With Gen Z increasingly shunning alcohol, and wellness becoming paramount across all demographics, the rise of fashionable, once-taboo sober bars was inevitable. These social hubs provide a welcoming third space for the growing sober-curious movement, especially among young people who are rethinking social norms around drinking. According to a Gallup poll, 62 percent of adults under the age of 35 said they drink alcohol, down 10 points from 20 years earlier. Additionally, in 2022, leading global drinks data and insight provider IWSR said the no- and low-alcohol category value surpassed \$11 billion and will increase by a third by 2028. A key component of this growing trend is mindfulness and health. In Brooklyn, New York's Greenpoint neighborhood, sober TV personality Carl Radke is bringing attention to the booming non-alcoholic market with Soft Bar. Among the items on the menu are drinks infused with electrolytes, vitamins, amino acids, and collagen. The space, designed by local studio Bolt, mixes pastel hues with exposed brick and effortlessly morphs from daytime work zone to evening social hub.



A moody vibe defines the 4,200-square-foot Maze in New York



The Maze recalls Italian cafes with inviting seating areas



Green tones add a dramatic ambiance to the Maze



Soft Bar from TV personality Carl Radke opened in Brooklyn, New York this year



Soft Bar boasts a muted green bar with ambient lighting

Sans Bar in Austin is also serving more than drinks. Founded by addiction counselor Chris Marshall as a pop-up in 2017, the downtown brick-and-mortar space opened in 2023 as a partnership with wellness company Swift Fit to create a wellness oasis in Texas. This year also saw the launch of Drinks with Benefits, New York's first zero-proof festival. Here, we highlight two more alcohol-free bars that are fostering a new type of community.

#### Redemption

"I quit drinking to save my life," says country music singer-songwriter Ashley McBryde. "But the sad and awful truth was I no longer had a place to hang out once I put the booze down. There were such limited alternatives in Nashville when it came to socializing. The need for a cool place that's safe for non-drinkers had to be met."

So, on the fifth floor of fellow musician Eric Church's hangout Chief's on Broadway, McBryde launched Redemption, the haven of her dreams. Designed in collaboration with AJ Capital Partners, the bar is an ode to McBryde's past. Elevator walls are enlivened by pages from memorable books, artwork draws from her lyrics, and greenery references Arkansas, where she grew up.

#### The Maze

The Maze, New York's first alcohol-free members-only club starring a restaurant developed in partnership with Tom Colicchio and Crafted Hospitality, is a particularly ambitious move. For Aria Jahanshahi, founder of local practice Opa Architecture, conceiving the Maze's bar required a different approach than other hospitality projects.

"A traditional bar model—structured around alcohol service and its social rituals—wasn't the right template. The design process became about understanding what a sober or sober-curious patron truly prioritizes: inclusion and a sense of belonging without the presence of alcohol," explains Jahanshahi.

Jahanshahi collaborated with interior designer Adrienne Laube of Brooklyn-based Laube Studio on the 4,200-square-foot space adorned with green and white mosaic flooring, antique mirrors, and a series of inviting portals. Throughout, Laube weaved in references to both Italian cafes and tennis, hallmarks of intellectual gatherings and exclusive clubs.

Underpinning the Maze's ethos is founder and CEO Justin Gurland's background in social work. "At its core, social work is about connection," he says. "It's about understanding people, building community, and creating environments that help others feel seen and supported." hd