

BARS NEAR HOLIDAY HOT SPOTS

1 Lincoln Center and Time Warner Center

Go here: Whether you're capping off a cultured night of ballet or seeking a moment away from the shopping melee, Center Bar (Time Warner Center, 10 Columbus Circle at Broadway; 212-823-9482, centerbar.nyc.com) offers a convenient place to unwind and toast the season. Bonus: The fourth-floor bar overlooks Columbus Circle and Central Park, making it an impressive spot to take out-of-towners.

Drink this: The full-bodied Starmont 2009 merlot (\$15)

**3 Holiday windows on Fifth Avenue**

Go here: If you start your window-gawking tour at Barneys and plan to end at Macy's, Bar Downstairs at Andaz 5th Avenue (485 Fifth Ave at 41st St; 212-699-5602, newyork.5thavenue.andaz.hyatt.com) serves as a good midpoint for resting your feet (and having a tipple). As you sip your drink, debate whether "Skinny Minnie"—the slim depiction of Minnie Mouse originally slated to appear in Barneys' window displays—is really that big a deal.

Drink this: The winter-spiced Celler Door (\$15)

**3 Brooklyn Flea at Skylight One Hanson**

Go here: Once you've picked out two gifts for your family and friends at the hip market's holiday bazaar, reward yourself with a few steins at Die Koelner Bierhalle (84 St. Marks Pl between Fourth and Fifth Aves, Park Slope, Brooklyn; 347-227-7238, thekbb.com). The cavernous beer hall serves around 70 German brews (roughly 40 bottled, 30 on tap), giving you and your crew plenty of ways to get blotto enough to serenade the bar with your favorite seasonal tune.

Drink this: The malty Innsstadt Extra Schwarze lager (half liter \$9, liter \$17)—Sarah Bruning

**2 Rockefeller Center**

Go here: You'll need a quiet, dimly lit refuge from the tree-gawking masses—or the glittering Rockette bodysuits, as the case may be. Head to Lantern's Keep (The Iroquois New York, 49 W 44th St between Fifth and Sixth Aves; 212-453-4233, thelanternskeep.com), where you can snag a fireside seat and throw back a stiff cocktail or two. (It may make navigating the crowds on the way to the subway just a smidge easier.)

Drink this: The Scotch-forward Wildest Redhead (\$15)

**4 Soho shopping**

Go here: Reward yourself for an afternoon spent on the stretched-out open-air mall that is Soho by grabbing a pint at 508 GastroBrewery (508 Greenwich St between Canal and Spring Sts; 212-219-2444, 508nyc.com). The drinkery stands out for its carefully crafted suds, all made in-house by home-brewing enthusiast turned pro Chris Cuzme.

Drink this: The subtly minty Nug Bug Christmas stout (\$7)

