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[Home](#) > Sam Bar at the Alden Houston hotel is for adults

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By *Nikki Metzgar*

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If you were an adult, the kind that wears a tie — which, let's face it, you aren't — and works as a hard-nosed journalist or fatigued litigator in the heart of downtown Houston, then the Sam Bar in the Alden-Houston ^[1] hotel would be the perfect place to loosen up at the end of the day. As it stands, it's still a fine place for a post-work cocktail if you've got the inclination and imagination to pretend you're such an adult.

The Sam Bar is where old-school sophistication meets relaxed 20th-century Southern charm. As many people enjoy Shiners as they do martinis, though the furnishings are better suited toward the latter. A linear crystal chandelier points toward the bar where the welcoming bartender is often chatting with distinguished-looking regulars while making their usuals. Vintage cocktails include the French 75, garnished with a dainty lemon-peel spiral, and the Pegu Club, made with deliciously vegetal Hendricks Gin.

The light smell of men's cologne pleasantly pervades the space, cut only by the occasional waft of crispy Parmesan french fries, which, along with the rest of the bar menu, are half-price during the weekday happy hour. There are no draft beers, but a functional selection of bottled selections are also on discount from 4-7 p.m.

With the early evening sunlight slanting through the picture windows and a cushion of supple leather beneath you, it's not hard to envision yourself a Don, Joan or Peggy. Any one of those *Mad Men* characters would order a very dirty martini. Should the bar be out of, say, Tito's, don't hesitate to play a game of vodka roulette. Both activities — a little classy but a little bit playful — are welcome here.



Cocktail called Sam at The Sam Bar. Photo by Melissa Phillip

The Sam ^[1]
1117 Prairie

Bars/Clubs

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Links:

[1] <http://www.29-95.com/http>