



Metromix Chicago Bars & Clubs

Get lit

6 spots to curl up with a book and a beer

By Amanda E. Snyder



A slow month like January is the perfect time to knock a few titles off your reading list—or, uh, start creating one. Pack a page turner and find a seat at one of these cozy, book-friendly bars. We've even got suggestions for reading (and drinking) material.

[Wilde Bar & Restaurant](#)

The library at this newish Lakeview spot is impressive: a fireplace, spiffy chairs and hardcover books that would make your high school English teacher proud ("Canterbury Tales," anyone?). Our only complaint: The Victorian setting sometimes competes with the 21st Century—head here during busy hours and you'll be browsing your book while Kanye blasts in the background.

Read: Keep it current with new fiction; try Irish author John Banville's "The Sea."

Drink: Get more authentic with a pint of Guinness (\$5.50).

[Old Town Ale House](#)

A fave of players from Second City, located just across North Avenue, this Old Town fixture's sparse library nook—look for it behind the "Family Guy" pinball machine—houses five shelves of titles by authors such as John Grisham and Tom Clancy. The benches and chairs surrounding it make for a relaxed, laid-back atmosphere.

Read: "I Am America (And So Can You!)" by Second City alum Stephen Colbert

Drink: Anything cheap and on tap—think PBR (\$3.25).

Pint

Pint is really a sports bar masquerading as an Irish bar, and its library, complete with a fireplace and cushy couches, is as good a place to watch a game as it is to read. The books, stacked way up high, are random ("Earth Science"? Really?). It's not quiet, but you can find couch space even on weekends—as long as you don't mind being stuck below the projection screen.

Read: Work the sporty vibe with a copy of "Say It's So: The Chicago White Sox's Magical Season" by Phil Rogers.

Drink: A shot of Jameson (\$7) to help you fit in with the sports fans

Bella Lounge

Bella's VIP lounge, a.k.a. Your Rich Uncle's library, boasts a roaring fireplace, leather couches and bottles of champagne on the shelves. They don't even pretend to have books here: You'll find only stacked copies of Image Chicago magazine on the shelves. Tip: Head here during the week when the "VIP" room is pretty much open to anyone.

Read: Leave the Faulkner at home. Try some chick lit, like "Be Sweet" by Diann Hunt, instead.

Drink: Go for style, not substance, with a Bella Tini (Ketel One and passionfruit juice, \$12).

Skylark

A little sketchy on the outside, this Pilsen hang is warm and friendly on the inside. The "library" is just a bench, two chairs, a table and a thin magazine rack at the front of the bar where you'll find copies of zine The2ndHand, community paper Fight Back! and other local rags.

Read: Keep it cool and unpretentious with a copy of locally published Stop Smiling magazine.

Drink: Robert the Bruce Scottish Ale from Three Floyds (\$4). It's just like the bar: a little harsh-looking at first glance, but surprisingly sweet once you get acquainted.

Map Room

The hip Map Room doesn't have a separate library area, but the shelves on the wall opposite the bar brim with old copies of National Geographic magazine, travel guidebooks and a few odd books such as Mitch Albom's "Fab Five." Take care to do your reading here in the afternoon or early evening, before the crowds spill in.

Read: Get inspired with "The Travel Book: A Journey Through Every Country in the World" by Roz Hopkins, Janet Austin and Laetitia Clapton.

Drink: Go for something worldly, such as Lindemans Framboise (\$5), a sweet treat from Belgium.

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