

THE ANTI ESTABLISHMENTS

When your local bartender not only knows your favorite drink, but also your middle name, it's time to change things up a bit. And that won't be a problem with a slew of new spots that all have their own special niche. From a clandestine club to a watering hole that gives away food (yes, free food), you're about to find a whole new way to drink.



A Midnight Mystery

It will take some serious sleuthing to uncover the mystery behind new West Loop avant-garde ultra lounge **Theatro**, which occupies the former Reserve spot. The centerpiece of Theatro's sexy scene is an elevated box holding a different live performance for each evening—but general manager Brian Conway and owners Aaron Belen, John Janviriya and Paul Jenkins are staying mum up until the second the night's act kicks off. Sip your Grey Goose and get set for anything from dancers, contortionists and vaudeville acts to tigers leaping through flames. But that's all speculation, of course. The idea behind Theatro is to really have no idea at all. 858 W. Lake St., 312.455.8345.

SECRET SOCIETY
Above: A performance painter is one of the acts that may or may not perform on any given night at Theatro.

“The crowd loves being part of the experience, and it helps to do a few backbend shimmies or a good old love tap on my fannie.”

—Angela Eve, burlesque performer at Debonair Social Club

Animal Instincts

Of all the bars that have opened in the last few months, we're going to go out on a limb and say that River North's new **Bull & Bear** just might be the busiest of the bunch. Great menu for lunch and dinner? Check. Innovative décor (stock tickers above the bar, exposed brick with spots of color)? Check. Attractive crowd? Check. Yep,

Bull & Bear has all the factors for success. But the coolest thing about B&B—what really sets it apart from all the other sports bars with pub grub around town—is something that no other spot in the city can offer: five booths with on-table taps that let drinkers pour their own beers. With one domestic and one imported tap per table, you can cocktail at your own pace while perfecting your bartending skills. You've got to love interactive drinking. 431 N. Wells St., bullbearbar.com.

