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Topping the bar CHARTS

Cocktail masterclasses are in demand and sales of whisky tumblers are up 214%, reports *Claudia Baillie*

If pinot from a garage glass and a few cans of lager are what you're planning on serving this festive season, then you may need to up your entertaining ante. Christmas 2015 is all about the right barware, and — in case you haven't noticed — the world has gone doolally for a drinks trolley, too. Ever since Oliver Bonas launched its first design, a kitsch gold faux-bamboo affair, in June last year, we can't get enough of this seemingly frivolous piece of furniture. The original sold out within weeks, followed by a lengthy waiting list to deal with the subsequent demand. Since then, despite having a higher £350 price tag, the new Luxe trolley has flown out of the door, creating yet another queue of home mixologists, thirsty for the coveted piece (don't panic: it's back in stock now).

Oliver Bonas has even come up with a more compact bar table, so those with less space need not miss out. But why has a simple drinks trolley caused such a stir? "It's all about taking fun seriously, and people realise that entertaining can be something of an art," says Oliver Tress, MD and founder of the high-street store. "The trolleys create instant impact, and the new marble and gold designs balance luxury with accessibility. They're not too ostentatious, but feel special at the same time." The New York-based interior designer and king of irreverent luxury Jonathan Adler is also an advocate. "The bar cart is an essential tool that brands you the hostess with the mostest. Every home needs one," he says. "They say, 'I'm louche, I'm glamorous, I'm swanky, I'm rich!'"

And it's not only bar carts we're bonkers for. Both Marks & Spencer and John Lewis added stylish drinks cabinets to their AW15 furniture ranges, and the latter also reports that sales of specialist glasses and barware are on the up. "Cocktails are such an important part of bar culture, and people are becoming more discerning in their drinking choices," says Emily Moody at John Lewis. "Inspired by *Mad Men*, *The Great Gatsby* and the whole cocktail-hour experience, they now want to drink from an appropriate glass so are investing in glassware and accessories to re-create the sophistication at home. In the past year we've seen sales of whisky tumblers increase by 214% and whisky decanters rise by 84%." That's a whole lot of single malt.

And if you want your booze shaken, or indeed stirred, there are classes for wannabe mixologists. "Since we introduced the concept back in 2006, the demand for our cocktail masterclasses has grown every year," says Marion Carpentier at Harvey Nichols. "They are hugely popular, so much so, we host weekly sessions that regularly sell out. Customers want to know the history behind cocktails and to pick up techniques they can impress friends and family with at home." With all this in mind, it seems a warm gin and tonic really won't cut the cucumber. So what are you waiting for? Channel your inner Tom Cruise with our selection of specialist kit. Olives (and Alka-Seltzers) not included. ➔

PHOTOGRAPH: XAVIER YOUNG
STYLING: LUCY GOUGH



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1 Plum cocktail shaker, £95, TOM DIXON. 2 Decorative Grand cocktail shaker, £17.50, MARKS & SPENCER. 3 Lighthouse cocktail shaker, £195, AUTHENTIC MODELS; houseology.com. 4 Martini cocktail shaker (part of a set of two glasses and a tray), £385, by MIRANDA WATKINS for Wallpaper Handmade; dosouthshop.com. 5 Midas gold-plated cocktail shaker, £45, ROCKETT ST GEORGE. 6 Montgomery cocktail shaker, £195, RALPH LAUREN HOME. 7 Soneca faceted cocktail shaker, £25, VISKI; uberstar.com. Makrana wallpaper in emerald, £59 a roll; harlequin.uk.com

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