You know those clear, two-plus-inch ice cubes laboriously cut down from giant sculpture blocks, usually shame at the bar with a variety of power tools? They're a pain in the glass. Now遇本coorking and other prep work like squeezing citrus juice, making syrups, and assembling batches and infusions, it's amazing that bartenders aren't exhausted by the time their bars open at 5 p.m. That's why two new companies are helping to extend all the prep.Being a Tiger Ice, a spin-off of Portland's PDX Ice, has set up shop in San Mateo to cut out those big, sexy cubes, spheres, spears, and other chunks of ice engraved with custom logos and deliver them to bars in the city and the South Bay at reasonable-enough rates. At the same time, the founders of Super Jugos, coincidentally also a Portland spin-off, figured out how to legally squeeze citrus juice and deliver it unpasteurized to bars, along with a choice of more than 50 syrups. Super Jugos has signed on bars including Bellota and Hard Water, whose bar managers both sing the praises of the syrups: "We find them very versatile," bar manager Yanni Kehagiaris is more interested in lime juice for the margaritas ($12). The Proper Hotel buys both juice and syrups for its lobby restaurant, Villon, and rooftop bar, Charmaine's. Kehagiaris says that using the service will not only allow his bartenders to spend less time prepping and juicing when they could be serving customers; it may also reduce repetitive motion injuries. Plus, he says, the delivered product actually tastes better than the rotary-juicer-squeezed lime juice they had been prepping onsite. These services should be inviolate to drinkers, but your favorite local bartenders may start out their shifts a lot happier.

In terms of quantity, the Mission district has never been underserved for drinking venues. Quality, on the other hand, has been a bit more elusive. But recent months have brought us a critical mass of haute cocktail bars and restaurants. Obispo promises to be a tiki-ophbic cocktail bar serving "rum classics from our favorite books," according to owner Thad Vogler. True Laurel from the Lazy Bear team, features a cocktail tasting bar (like a chef's table) with bar director Nicolas Torres strutting his stuff. The Beehive, in the former Range restaurant on Valencia, will be adding a second bar and mid-century-style cocktail lounge serving 1960s-influenced food and "playful" cocktails to wash down all the fondue. A couple blocks down, Bon Voyage, taking the former home of Slanted Door and Wo Hing General Store, is the second stand-alone cocktail bar from Trick Dog's Bon Vivants. Closer to Potrero, Tartine Manufactory announced that its new liquor license would be put to good use by its star cocktail consultant Julian Cox. Add these new venues to Trick Dog, Beretta LoLo, Wildhawk, the Hideout at Dalva, and ABV and the Mission has become the best drinking neighborhood in the city. But for quality this time around. 

Four of the ten on the district of The Laurel: From left, the Mission Critic, the Bar Bistro, the Farmers' Bar and the Prieto Tap.
YOUR COUSIN FROM PORTLAND
Graffiti, tattoos, and the Thermals on the Jukebox: Your northwesterner friend will feel right at home. —Kelsey Lamie

THE RUBY ROOM
True to the name, glowing ruby lights illuminate everything inside this cave of a bar, tucked away a block from Lake Merritt. The Easy Rider vibes are heavy—thanks to co-owner Trevor Latham, founder of the motorcycle and rock club The East Bay— but not in a scary way. You won’t have trouble finding a dance partner at honey-toned night or an opponent for a round of pool, but because of the indoor-smoking room you will have trouble doing either of those things and leaving without feeling like you’ve just chain-smoked an entire pack. 102 19TH ST. (AT MARISON ST.) OAKLAND $5

BEAUTY BAR
Though it’s one of seven locations, this hair-salon-themed chain is John Waters’ Female Trouble in bar form. With its extension done in a poster spray paint by local artist Dado, it is right into the mural-heavy Mission. The “beauty salon” offers a manicure-and-martini happy hour, where you can space out before hitting the nearby always packed dance floor in your best chi-chi heels. 3299 MISSION ST. (AT 19TH ST.) $5

THE DEN
Unless you’re waiting for a table at the attached Westburger ’n More or the adjacent Mission Chinese, it’s easy to overlook this tiny little bar reminiscent of your parents’ basement. Its limited seating and high customer turnover make the Den less a den and more a very festive elevator—the entire bar is just 100 square feet—decided out with plastic ferns, year-round Christmas lights, and a spinning disco ball that bedazzles everything in sight. If you’re looking to meet people and don’t mind standing while you sip, you’re in luck—the constant flow of new faces and close encounters make mingling with strangers both easy and impossible to avoid. 1240 MISSION ST. (NEAR 18TH ST.) $5

CHAMBER’S AT THE PROPER
The new jewel of Mid-Market is the Proper Hotel and its rooftop bar, Chamber’s. Posh 120 foot view above street level, the adventurous cocktails include the Proper Cup ($16), made with Pimm’s, gin, cucumber, blackberry, citrus, ginger ale, and black pepper. Even though the drinks are only too precious to name—the best mix the beeswax and the lot I’m Touch Your Mind—they’re as inventive as they come. Plus, ahead, though. Entry fees can stretch up to an hour at peak times. 1100 MARKET ST. (AT MACALLISTER ST.) $5

DIRTY HABIT AT ZELOS
Featuring dark wood designs, a hip-hop soundtrack, and inventive cocktails like the Espresso Machine (Wakakaka espresso, coffee, Highland Park Magnus, Suze-bitter, and agave; $15), Dirty Habit puts the hotel in hotel bar. It shares the floor of Hotel Zelos with a row of guest rooms. Make new friends over giant multi-person crystal bowls filled with punch like the Shiso Pretty ($16), made with Capuaro pisco aodo, shiso, lemon juice, tangerine, and shiso leaves, topped with prosecco. Recently overhead, one woman cheering another up: “A good Manhattan will get you ready for a hustling, bustling city.” 127 4TH ST. (AT MARKET ST.) $5

EDINBURGH CASTLE PUB
Not for the faint of heart, this Tendernoin dive’s dance parties, like Function, feature actual DJs spinning actual records, attracting fans of “rap music at high volumes on sticky speakers and lots of people sweating.” (Or so says the owner’s flyer.) The room’s mellow—but still very sweaty—Reid Heat Wave coincides with the neighborhood’s Lower Polk Art Walk every first Thursday. Added bonus: the sticky layers of spilled drinks that fall on the hot dance floor, providing extra traction. 960 QUINT ST. (NEAR POLK ST.) $5

LIBRARY BAR AT HOTEL REX
Smarten up at this bar and cabaret near Union Square that features live performances on the weekends by Sondra Cabaret. Dr. If you need a low-key wind-down, order a classic cocktail like the martini ($12) or a lemon drop ($12) and arm yourself of one of the many bowls filled with the shelves. If you’re still mourning the closure of Two Sisters Bar and Books it’s the next best thing. 562 BUSH ST. (AT MARKET ST.) $5

THE LIVING ROOM AT THE W
While the second-floor bar at the W is under renovation, talk disrup

YOUR NEW YORK INVESTMENT BANKER BROS
Drinking in swank hotels is back again, in San Francisco as in Gotham. Scott Lucas