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Singapore launches a six-day cocktail festival to widen the culture beyond bars

The inaugural Singapore Cocktail Crossover pairs global bars with art, music and design in a bid to reach new audiences

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Singapore’s bar industry has launched a new citywide event aimed at expanding cocktail culture beyond the usual guest shifts and trade-focused festivals, as the inaugural Singapore Cocktail Crossover begins this week with a six-day program across

the city.

The event, known as SGCX, opened on Tuesday and will run through June 14. Organizers say it is designed to connect cocktails with other creative fields, including food, music, fashion, art, scent and design, while also drawing a broader public into a scene that has helped make Singapore one of Asia’s leading cocktail destinations.

The festival is led by four figures from the local hospitality industry: Vijay Mudaliar, co-founder of Native and Analogue Initiative; Peter Chua of Night Hawk; Henry Stonham, formerly head of projects at Bar Convent Singapore; and Caryn Cheah, who has worked in large-scale event production and logistics. Their stated goal is to move Singapore’s cocktail scene beyond traditional formats and create a wider cultural platform for bars and spirits.

“By bringing together diverse cultures, philosophies and creative practices from top bars, SGCX positions Singapore as a meeting point for cocktail enthusiasts across the Asia-Pacific region,” Mudaliar said in comments released by the organizers. He said the project is meant to energize the community and rethink how people experience refined cocktails.

The launch comes after more than a decade in which Singapore built an international reputation for high-end bars, award-winning bartenders and a strong hospitality network. Since hosting one of the region’s early cocktail festivals in 2017, the city-state has played a central role in shaping cocktail culture across Asia. Organizers say that growth now calls for a different model, one that reflects changes in how consumers discover bars and engage with hospitality.

Stonham said the local scene is ready to move past older festival structures. “The cocktail scene in Singapore is prepared to go beyond traditional formats,” he said. “The goal is to integrate spirits and cocktail culture into the social fabric of a new generation of consumers.”

The program is divided into three parts. Over four nights, 14 events are being held across several bar districts, including Bugis, Tanjong Pagar, Amoy Street and Robertson Quay. Each event pairs an international bar with a local venue and collaborators from

outside the drinks world for one-night-only experiences.

Among the visiting bars are Sip & Guzzle from New York, Smoke & Bitters from Sri Lanka, Zest from Seoul and Paradiso from Barcelona. Organizers say these collaborations are intended to create experiences that go beyond bartending showcases by linking cocktails with other forms of expression.

One example is taking place at Stay Gold Flamingo on Amoy Street, where Soka from Bengaluru is working with Rahasya, a Singapore perfumery. The concept translates aroma into flavor through cocktails built around scent. Other events combine drinks with live painting, food pairings or music-led programming.

After the citywide events, the festival will conclude with a two-day weekend gathering at the newly opened METT Singapore in Fort Canning. That portion of the program will feature 30 cocktail stalls and pop-ups along with more than 50 brands spanning spirits, beer, Korean traditional liquors and nonalcoholic drinks. Live music and lifestyle activations are also planned.

The event has attracted support from major beverage companies including The Orientalist Spirits, William Grant & Sons, Rémy Cointreau International, Suntory Global Spirits, Brown-Forman, Campari Group, Singha and Perrier. Their involvement signals both commercial interest in Singapore’s premium drinks market and confidence in the city’s ability to host regional hospitality events with international reach.

Organizers have framed SGCX as both a celebration of local talent and an attempt to make cocktail culture more accessible. The festival’s motto, “For the community. By the community,” reflects that approach. Mudaliar has said the idea is not simply to showcase famous bars or personalities but to create meaningful intersections between hospitality and other creative disciplines.

That emphasis also shapes the inaugural SGCX Bar Awards, which will debut during the festival. The awards are organized by Colin Chia of Nutmeg & Clove and are based on input from a panel of 65 Singapore-based voters drawn from industry professionals, media and regular consumers. Rather than ranking venues in strict order, the awards are intended to recognize bars, bartenders, teams and menu design in a way that

celebrates contribution across the sector.

The decision to avoid rigid rankings reflects a broader message behind the event. Organizers argue that hospitality should be treated less as a competition and more as a shared cultural practice. In their view, bars can serve not only as places to drink but also as spaces where ideas from different disciplines meet.

That argument comes at a time when many Asian cities now host their own cocktail weeks or bar festivals. From Taiwan to Penang, regional scenes have matured quickly in recent years. But organizers say consumer behavior has changed just as fast. Social media, peer recommendations and community-driven experiences now play a larger role in how people choose where to go and what they value once they arrive.

Mudaliar has said that what Singapore needs now is not necessarily more bars but more platforms that bring together people, ideas and creative disciplines. In that sense, SGCX is being presented as an answer to what comes next for a market that already has global recognition but is looking for new ways to grow.

Singapore’s position as an international crossroads gives weight to that ambition. The city’s food and beverage sector has long benefited from its mix of cultures, languages and cuisines, as well as its role as a regional travel hub. Organizers say those conditions make it well suited for an event built around exchange and collaboration.

Whether SGCX becomes a recurring fixture will depend on turnout and industry support over the coming days. For now, its debut marks an effort by some of Singapore’s best-known bar figures to redefine what a cocktail festival can be: less centered on trade spectacle and more focused on how drinks fit into contemporary urban culture.