

# Bar Keeper

*A Shop Specializing in Unique Earware Gifts*

Written by Joshua Lurie

In 2005, Joe Keeper was a post-production producer who had become increasingly frustrated by television's collaborative process. He decided to take a break, and in April 2006 he opened Bar Keeper in Silver Lake's Sunset Junction, specializing in vintage barware and tradition.

Keeper handcrafted every aspect of Bar Keeper — building the shelves, laying the floor and designing the benzene ring logo, a nod to mixology's close connection to chemistry. Along those lines, he hangs a massive periodic table of the elements over his L-shaped bar.

Keeper works hard to create a unique space. He changes his front window displays every six weeks. The Halloween display featured tombstones listing cocktails that he says "should be put to death," including the green apple martini and Sex on the Beach. The Thanksgiving display was more staid, with fall leaves and pumpkins. In the opposite window is an "absinthe nightmare," featuring green light tubes streaming through mannequins' brains.

To complete the vibe, Keeper normally plays eclectic music. If requested, the Austin native will

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gladly play his theme song — a birthday gift from his wife that was written and performed by former Silver Lake iconoclast Stew.

In stocking his shop, Keeper mixes old with new. Shelves and retail islands host more than 2,000 items, including cocktail sets, decanters, ice buckets, glass absinthe fountains with



Bar Keeper, a vintage barware shop in Silver Lake's Sunset Junction

accompanying spoon, and cocktail shakers shaped like bullets, penguins and bowling pins.

Keeper sells the largest selection of bitters in the city — brands like Angostura, Peychaud's and Fee. He stocks cocktail-themed napkins and

greeting cards, and for anyone feeling especially ambitious, he even sells home bars. He's also been making secret flask holders out of used hardcover books with alcohol-related storylines, like "The Lost Weekend."

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COCKTAIL SHAKERS FIRST BECAME SYMBOLS OF GLAMOUR DURING THE PROHIBITION ERA.

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Keeper recently bought a collection of 70 vintage beer signs from hot rod builder Boyd Coddington. To anyone looking for the Hamm's beer sign with the flowing waterfall — Bar Keeper is the place to find it. He also carries fully functioning signs for Busch, O'Keefe Ale and Schlitz, to name just three.

For those more interested in purchases with local flavor, Keeper carries Daniel James Kopton's glossy photos of bartenders in their element, including the tenders from Echo Park's Short Stop, Highland Park's Footsies and downtown's Bar 107.

Whatever variety of cocktail wares a customer is looking for, Bar Keeper is guaranteed to have a unique version that will no doubt be the talk of the holiday party.

**3910 W. Sunset Blvd., Silver Lake**  
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