The Interval

San Francisco, California

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Housed in the Fort Mason headquarters of the Long Now Foundation—the private nonprofit behind such quirky-yet-visionary projects as the 10,000 Year Clock—this cafe-bar may sound mildly out of place in theory, but it's perfectly delightful in practice. (Thanks in large part to the involvement of noted bartender and booze historian Jennifer Colliau.) It's intended to be a new kind of a bar, one "built around conversation and not just shouting at people over loud music," says the foundation's executive director, Alexander Rose. "Our menu is really a timeline of alcohol and civilization," he adds. Look for the Midas Touch, from Dogfish Head Brewery, a spiced beer based on a 3,000-year-old recipe pulled from Midas's tomb and, from a northern Italian winery called Pelissero, an award-winning Barbera-Nebbiolo blend named in honor of the foundation. Don't miss the big wall of books facing the front door: They represent some of the 3,000 books the foundation's members feel you'd need to restart civilization. There's a limited snack menu—crackers with fava-bean hummus, say, and assorted pickles—but you can bring food in from the restaurant Greens, which is a few doors down, or from the food trucks that gather in the Fort Mason parking lot every Friday evening from spring into fall.

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