

Bar

The Bar Welcome Standard

Five steps for the first minute at the bar, the most timed moment in it. A guest will wait for a drink far more patiently than they will wait to be seen.

Who	When	You need
Bartenders and bar waiters, checked by the bar manager	Every guest who walks in, at the counter or at a table	Clean menus at the station, a clear view of the door, coasters
Measured by Acknowledged within 1 minute · Menu in hand within 2 minutes · Order taken within 3 minutes of seating		

1 Watch the door

One person per shift owns the door and stands facing the room, not the back bar. When they are making a drink, the nearest colleague takes the door over without being asked.

"Door's yours, Marco. I'm on the Martinis for table six."

Common mistake Everyone turns to the bottles during a rush. The guest waits at the entrance for a minute and decides the bar is full.

2 Acknowledge

Within one minute of the guest walking in, make eye contact and say a few words, even with a shaker in both hands. If you cannot leave the station, a nod and one sentence buy you two minutes.

"Good evening. I'll be with you in a moment, please take any seat you like."

Common mistake Waiting until your hands are free to look up. To the guest, silence and being ignored look exactly the same.

3 Seat and settle

Offer a choice of seat if there is one, pull out the stool or chair, and put a coaster and the menu down within two minutes. Coats and large bags go on a hook or a spare chair, never the floor.

"The counter, or somewhere quieter by the window, Mrs Laurent?"

Common mistake Pointing at a stool from behind the bar. The guest climbs onto it alone and spends a minute finding a place for the bag.

4 Take the order

Come back within three minutes of seating, before the guest has to look for you. Ask whether they know what they would like or want a suggestion, then repeat the order back with any change.

"A Negroni with mezcal instead of gin, stirred, one large cube. Coming up, Mr Okafor."

Common mistake Waiting for the guest to close the menu. Many never close it: they sit holding it, waiting to be asked.

5 Hand over

When the guest moves to a table or your shift ends, tell the colleague taking over the guest's name, what they ordered and anything they said. The guest never repeats themselves to a second person.

"Table nine is Ms Rossi, second Spritz, no olives, a friend joining at half past eight."

Common mistake Changing shift in silence. The new bartender asks "What can I get you?" of a guest who has been there an hour.

When the Bar Is Three Deep

Six moments when the welcome breaks first, and what keeps it intact. Most of them happen every Friday night.

The moment	What you do	What you say
Both hands on a shaker	Look up, nod, then speak	"One moment, I'll be right with you."
Guest at the door, no seat free	Walk over, give a time and a standing spot	"Ten minutes for a table. A drink at the rail meanwhile?"
A regular arrives in a rush	Use the name and their usual, then return	"Mr Al-Harbi, your lemon and mint while you wait?"
A group of six walks in	Greet the first person, count the group	"Good evening. All six of you? Give me one minute."
Guest on the phone at the counter	Coaster and menu down, no words yet	A smile, then wait for the call to end.
Both bartenders mid-drink	Whoever finishes first takes the guest	"Thank you for waiting. What can I get you?"

How to use this with your team

Read one row at each pre-shift briefing this week and ask who has lived it. On Friday the bar manager stands by the door for ten minutes at the peak and times every acknowledgement.

Part of the DolceVita Standards Library: free operating standards for every department of the hotel, at dolcevitahospitality.com/free-resources.