

DISCARD

INDEPENDENT / TRANSPARENT / BALANCED



**PRINT IS
DEAD.
LONG LIVE
PRINT.**



ISSUE 01

03 / 2020

WTF IS THIS?

INDEPENDENT. TRANSPARENT. BALANCED.

Discard is an independent zine created by people working full time in hospitality. We think of ourselves as a collective.

Or a cult. You decide.

Every issue will have a 50/50 balance of male to female writers (or occasionally more women than men because why the fuck not?)

Discard covers topics that you won't normally find in the glossy industry mags; Gay Bars, Dive Bars, Wine Bars and the lesser talked about - Closing Bars.

This is us, putting our money where our mouths are and draining our bank accounts, all in the name of doing something different.

Drink the Kool-Aid, you'll like it.

Discard will be released every quarter. Unless you hate it and we never do it again in which case...

Welcome to the first and only issue of our zine.

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FAKE NEWS.



SPANISH SCHMUCKS

In an effort to embrace their adopted homeland, the owners of Two Schmucks have confirmed that they've downloaded Spanish Language 'Duo Lingo'. An official press release states 'hola, cerveza?'.

THREE SHEETS NEW MENU

Three Sheets have released their new cocktail menu featuring new, innovative and creative serves such as the 'whiskey soda', 'gin soda', 'vodka soda', 'tequila soda', 'rum soda' and the boundary pushing 'vodka soda with a dash of cranberry'.



STILL HAPPENING

The Schofield Brothers have announced that yes, they are still opening a bar. Bookies are reporting odds of 100/1 on a 2020 opening.

THE DEAN CALLAN SHOW

Dean Callan has announced new content for his eponymous YouTube channel including documentary shorts such as 'how to use a spoon' and 'filling a glass with liquid'. A 4 hour feature film detailing the construction of his cabin has been slated for 2021.

CRAIG FUCKING HARPER

Craig Harper has confirmed that he will be donating the contents of his swear jar to the Benevolent. Reports suggest he has raised over £100,000 in four days through repeated use of the words 'fuck', 'shit' and 'bastard'. Asked for his comments, Mr. Harper responded 'Awa' an bile yer heid yer bawbag'.



#DIVERSITY

A London bar celebrated its deep commitment to diversity this week, appointing a new head of the Jesus We Need To Sort This Shit Out We Got Caught Only Hiring White Dudes For A Century And That One Polish Barback Didn't Seem To Fix It department. When asked for comment a spokesperson said "we think all people are created equally, just ask Marek the dishwasher."

CROWDFUNDERTENDERS

Bartenders are increasingly turning to crowdfunding as a method of getting the essential investments they need to run their businesses into the ground. A source told Discard "it's much more difficult to be completely irresponsible if it's your own money, this is a brilliant solution and allows me to focus on what's important: me."

BARTENDERS LOVE GIN

Thames Distillers this week announced first quarter profits of £39 trillion, which the company puts down to every bartender with 5 shifts under their belt demanding their own 40 quid small batch esoteric gin. A spokesperson for the company was quoted as saying "lol gin is gross but we will take their money."

CHEERS, EBOLA!

In the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic AB InBev have announced plans to change the name of their top selling beer 'Corona' to 'Exciting Bottle Of Light Ale - Served As a Refreshing Sipper' or 'EBOLA-SARS' for short. The beverage powerhouse hopes that the new branding will help squash dwindling sales resulting from their association with the virus.

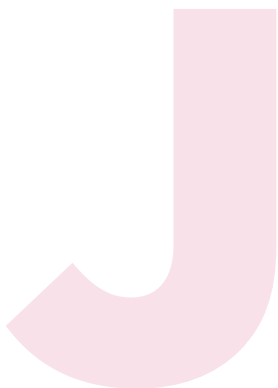


1

JAKE O'BRIEN MURPHY

LOOKING FOR
A LAUGH.





A TOP THREE CONTESTANT FOR EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE NORTHERNER, JAKE HONED HIS CRAFT AT CALLOOH CALLAY AND THREE SHEETS BEFORE OPENING HIS OWN BAR IN LIVERPOOL - PRESENT COMPANY. HE RECENTLY MADE THE DECISION TO MOVE BACK TO LONDON IN PURSUIT OF HIS FIRST LOVE - BARTENDING - AND CAN BE FOUND IN A WHITE JACKET AT THE SAVOY'S AMERICAN BAR. FOLLOW THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER AND YOU'LL BE SURE TO FIND HIM.

I'm not entirely sure when it happened, but the phrase "get the dog dressed" features so frequently in my day to day that it no longer even registers as out of the ordinary.

As a tax paying, grown adult with his own self-proclaimed, wholly unsubstantiated, "world famous" scrambled eggs recipe, I happily spend a pre-portioned amount of my life dressing a mardy Boston Terrier in a knitted Stegosaurus hoodie. It never fails to make me smile, plus proves helpful in differentiating between which end is which.

We all, in 2020, have the luxury of defining ourselves by the parameters in which we choose. While these progressive steps offer mobility for so many who are often marginalised, a way to challenge the assumptions of who they are and who they can be, it also presents us with a new set of unique problems. Who are you meant to be, when you don't know who you are? So we look to others to define our edges. To strangers in the park, I am the chubby lunatic with the stone faced dino-dog, a role which I'm happy enough to fulfil as long as possible. Truth is though, I am that person for a fraction of my life. This can be seen most widely when observing people's self-representation online.

With the advent of social media, you can present yourself as who you want to be and not necessarily who you are. Summarising yourself, your wishes and goals into a social media profile is like doodling an autobiography in the margins of the page; it can never truly represent the full breadth of who you are, warts and all; only how you wish yourself to be seen. It's like trying to fly a kite inside a broom cupboard. My job in hospitality and making people laugh has always been the currency with which I bank my own self-worth.

As a child, I would announce myself with ostentatious but tasteful drag performances in my grandparent's living room. As soon as I could legally drink, I performed standup comedy for the first and only time. My opening gambit was "I've always wanted to be a standup comedian, but I was afraid that people would laugh at me" and judging from the dead silence that punctuated the room I clearly had nothing to worry about. Laughter defines the person I am and acts as the engine with which I navigate the world.

I have always - in some capacity - worked in hospitality. My career anchors my sense of self-worth, and I have profited from this in friendship, experience and happiness. I know there are numerous faster, cleaner, smarter,

round-building-ier bartenders than me and that is fine; I have always made a concerted effort to learn, adapt and put the ingredients in the tin according to their financial value. I've accepted that I'll never be the fastest gun in the West. As long as I could make the people in front of me smile, it was a job well done and outwardly I was worthwhile. But rightly or wrongly, when nose-to-nose with uncertainty I default to humour as reflex. Just look at the paragraph previous; I'm writing this article because for a long while, I was treading water, up to my neck in the darkness of depression. But, as a knee-jerk reaction, I've tried to make you, a person I'll never meet, laugh; by calling myself fat and making you imagine my dog looking like a dick.

My girlfriend knew that I was depressed well before I could come to terms with it. I've asked her about it since. She wrinkled her nose and smiled in a way that spoke of past sadness. She recalled that she realised as soon as "you stopped trying to make people laugh." 'God, I must be insufferable to be around' I thought; but she was right.

You can make a Negroni when you're depressed, I found that out. Something about the systemic processes of building mixed drinks is immutable. There is a demonstrably

right way to operate, prescriptive movements repeated over the course of a night. Over the course of a week. No middle ground, no interpretation; just process. This couldn't be undone by the niggling sense of hopelessness that crept across my life outside of building the next round. I wore my denial and I worked in it. I would flash people the inevitable falsehood of a smile as I pushed their drinks towards them. At the time I felt ashamed by my inability to properly emote. At this point in my life real joy came as naturally to me as flight does to a pig. I was fulfilling the motions of my work to the highest standard and therefore, in my mind my self-worth was unsullied. I was still a good bartender and by the skew whiff internal logic of depression and denial, a fully working human person.

Depression is interesting in the same fatalistic way playing with a loose tooth is. It is the subjective experience of objective reality. It's universal and somehow fundamentally personal. As someone who relies on humour as others do on clean water, I didn't deal with it very well. I didn't pick myself up because I couldn't, or more truthfully, refused to see that I had fallen down in the first place.

That's the story you'll hear the most; some sorry soul who refuses

to acknowledge the reality of their situation. What you hear less, partly because of how difficult it is to articulate, is how it feels to be truly, deeply depressed. It's like hearing your voice being played back to you and saying, "that's not me is it?" I understood depression as unhappiness in stereo. Misery in a hat. That it had empirical grounding in something I previously experienced and understood. None of it comes close and by that same token, I cannot speak the language of other people's experience. You can't be a tourist in other people's souls.

For me, it was a sustained unfeeling; a dull ache of nothing in particular. The looming sense that someone had snipped at the wires that connected me to my emotion and to my ultimate humanity.

It isn't easy to be lost and feel so agonisingly empty in a room full of people enjoying themselves. Caught in a regress of shattered-self-worth, making drinks by regiment for no-one in particular; praying to disappear, that no-one would look at you. Emotion taps into the deepest faculty of what makes people human. It's right next to the part of the brain that intermittently wakes up to ask "Did you leave the oven on?" or without provocation sings "Shakira, Shakira!". To stand straight and face the enormity of

“it” takes qualities I didn’t, and may never, possess. I admire the people who can and have.

Other people helped me. Other people made me laugh. They helped me make some tough decisions. They were patient. Choices that flew in the face of the accumulated sense of importance I had placed on bartending. I left my business. I had to stop caring about shiny plates and unimaginative lists. I realised that defining myself by the brush-strokes of those who were already acting as pundits in my sadness could never bring consolation or happiness. The idea I once had, that depression is a binary experience that can switch on and off, is now a shortsighted memory. I’m still haunted by a tingling sense of dread that invades my mind if I think too hard. But, I was led by the hand into realising,

that “it”, whatever “it” means to you, isn’t easy.

My obligation towards bartending, the next round, the hours, the drinking, the calloused emotional immaturity wasn’t a talismanic example of pride. I wasn’t a member of a bartending higher order; I was paralysed by the fear of being pointless. That at the end of it all I’d still have nothing to show for my time.

If I could take anything away from this, it is that we all owe an obligation to ourselves. That none of it matters. It is just some drinks. It is just some jokes. You can have a choice in what defines you. That doesn’t mean you won’t struggle. It’s ok to get it wrong. It’s ok to feel lost. Listen to the people who care.

Now go and call your mum, or hug your partner or dress your dog up. You deserve to.



BY JAKE.



illustration by flora grosvenor-stevenson

2

ANNA SEBASTIAN

MAKING
DIVERSITY
PROFITABLE





AWARD WINNING ANNA SEBASTIAN LEADS THE TEAM AT THE - ALSO AWARD WINNING - ARTESIAN BAR. LIKE MOST OF US, ANNA FELL IN TO HOSPITALITY, WORKING IN LONDON'S NIGHTCLUBS BEFORE ACCEPTING A JOB AS A HOST AT THE AMERICAN BAR AND PROGRESSING TO BAR MANAGER AT THE BEAUFORT BAR BEFORE HER HOP, SKIP AND JUMP TO THE LANGHAM. ANNA IS KNOWN FOR HER HOSPITALITY AND WARMTH BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE - SHE RUNS A TIGHT SHIP.

One of my best friends, the one who made me get a terrible martini tattoo in Greece, once told me that context is probably the most important part of a story.

Without context it becomes harder for the reader to really understand why you are telling it. As people of the hospitality industry our lives are intertwined by stories and memories, whether with each other or with our guests. So when I was asked to write about the importance of gender equality and how it can positively impact a business I wanted to make sense of a topic that is often misunderstood or simply ignored, so here is my story.

In 2009 I was 22 years old and living my best life in London. After being medically discharged from the army I found my solace working and partying in London's illustrious club scene. I was having the best time. It was also the year that I realised that inequality really existed. It was the year I realised that being a woman meant you were subjected to unfair treatment that men would never have to endure. It was the year I realised that being a woman, you had to work harder, faster and louder if you wanted to be heard. It was the year that I was part of a court case that went to trial.

The room was full of men - the judge, barristers, policemen and so on. When it was my turn to be cross examined the barrister asked me, "What were you wearing that night?" Time seemed to fall still and my overly confident self replied, "Are you going to ask all the men in the court room that as well?" It was the beginning of nearly a decade of me trying to understand the sociological elements of inequality that evidently were a global issue. I thought to myself 'what change can I make?' People often want to change the world but sometimes the world can only be changed through small actions that eventually make a big difference.

Last year we started a small movement called Celebrate Her with the idea to support and promote more women in the hospitality industry. Initially I didn't know what direction it would go in, or if there was a need for it but it slowly transpired that it was a welcome movement not just for women but also for men. But everything must have a cause to it, a reason why. It certainly isn't a club for single women in their 30s to sit around in their White Company Pyjamas drinking chardonnay and listening to Taylor Swift (yes that also has its place), instead it is a way to make the industry better, more diverse, more inclusive, for women - yes, but

also for everyone else. It is to give a bigger and better understanding of how to run and be part of a business, to grow your bottom line, to improve public perception, to widen the talent pool and engage better with customers or consumers through diversity and equality.

The element of business is often forgotten amongst all the glamour of cocktail competitions, brand trips, bar shows and awards but none of these are possible if the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) of a business are not met. Achieving your KPIs in the forever saturated global market where uncertainty is prevalent and businesses are having to think in different ways is tough at the best of times. How you buy and sell, how you engage, how you PR and market are all elements that continue to be under scrutiny.

Diversity and Inclusion are key players in achieving these results.

Diversity refers to who's at work: who is recruited, hired, and promoted by a company. In other words, diversity is the representation of a range of traits and experiences in a company's workforce. These characteristics include gender, race, physical ability, religion, age, and socioeconomic status, among others - or, as defined by Gallup, "the full spectrum of human demographic differences."

Inclusion refers to how people feel at work. A company's workforce may be diverse, but if employees do not feel safe, welcomed, and valued, then that company isn't inclusive and will not perform to its highest potential. Point blank, inclusion is the degree to which employees feel "valued, respected, accepted and encouraged to fully participate in the organization."

Diverse work forces have been proven to outperform ones that aren't. Diversity can increase the profitability of company and decrease staff turnover. Companies in the top 25% for gender diversity on their executive team were 21% more likely to experience above-average profitability than companies in the bottom 25%.

To this day women make up around 40% of the global workforce. Only about 5% of those are in CEO and upper management positions and even then, annual salaries of men in similar positions are not equal. Studies have suggested that women earn only 80% of what their male counterparts do. A scary fact according to the UN is that there are only 6.6% of women CEOs in Fortune 500 companies – at this rate we will need 140 years to achieve gender parity if things do not change.

There are so many advantages to having an equal opportunity environment in the work place including:

Improved financial performance – when people feel included, equally supported and represented they perform better. Risk is reduced and better decisions are made in a more calculated way. The bottom line takes care of itself.

Staff turnover – better retention of staff means a happier and more effective environment, and makes teams feel like their opinions are valued by the company and their peers. If people (including women) have a sense that there is a chance to progress thanks to equal gender representation in senior roles then it can vastly increase productivity and positivity which can filter down into the office.

Widening talent pool – by doing this with a strong diversity pool you are opening your business to talent that you might previously have overlooked. Encouraging new exciting talent and strengths will give a more rounded opinion and better results.

Improved reputation – in this modern age where millennials rule, everything you need in life is a click away; reputation is key. A business with a strong record on diversity and inclusion is more likely to resonate with people, thus building better connections with future employees and also customers.

Better connections with customers – one of the biggest and most important things is being able to connect with the consumer. They need to trust the brands and the people they're doing business with, and the only way to build trust is to be open and honest about who you are and what you do. Brands that are willing to go beyond the baseline “we believe in gender equality” and really take a stand can attract an even more loyal customer base and following. These businesses implement policies that allow them to actively work towards advancing gender equality and not just ticking a box.

The theme for this year's International Women's Day on March 8th is Each for Equal - promoting equality in business. It is steps like these that are going to make a difference in achieving gender parity not only within our industry but also globally. What we can all do now is to have a

good look at our businesses and the ones that we are part of. Have a look at how you hire, what your policies are, what you have in place to actively encourage equality and diversity and then make changes. Be proactive in what you do. Have conversations. Ask for feedback. Every time I do a review or check in with a colleague my final question is always “Is there any feedback you have for me?” You may not always like the feedback you get but at least by asking an honest question you will get an honest answer. Question yourself, each other and make positive and better changes.

The idea of collective individualism is about all of us being responsible for how we behave and impact the society we live in. We have a responsibility to each other, ourselves and society to make the world we live in a better place. Together we can be better in achieving the parity we need to have.

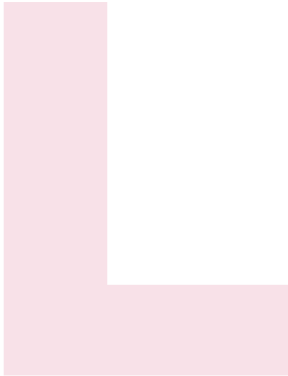


BY ANNA.

3

LIAM THE DAVY PERCEPTION OF FAILURE





EVERYONE'S SMARTEST FRIEND AND FAMED KARAOKE ENTHUSIAST, LIAM DAVY HEADS UP THE BARS AT HAWKSMOOR - ALL TEN OF THEM - OVERSEEING DRINKS CREATION AND HIRING, WHILE ALSO RUNNING BAD SPORTS EVENTS ON THE SIDE. AN AMERICAN FOOTBALL ENTHUSIAST, LIAM IS KNOWN FOR HIS SKILLS AS A CHEF, BARTENDER, CREATIVE, EVENTS ORGANISER, PROMOTER, AND WRITER. SO - BASICALLY EVERYTHING.

Have you noticed that the bar and restaurant industry is a hot-bed of self-deprecation? You cannot move for people talking about how they “would be nothing without their team” or “I’m so shit at my job sometimes I wonder how on earth I got here?” or “in my actual life I’m such a mess, I save my best side for my work.”

While some of this might be sincere, I have a strong feeling that most of the time people are attempting not to be overtly arrogant about their successes without having to talk about things that they are legitimately bad at. We all do it. My own version of this is telling people how chronically disorganised I am while doing a job that requires a pretty high level of organisation to even function at its most basic level.

When I had to close my own bar I was forced to come to terms with the things I had been legitimately bad at and failed in. This was not the noble failure you read about in the trade press (swiftly followed by the story of a humbling re-scaling of the highest heights of the hospitality industry) this was the stark reality of the bailiffs at the door, making friends redundant, desperately scraping pennies together to buy some stock to sell from the cash and carry, drinking too much, developing a slightly too

familiar relationship with Valium. The reality is that if I'd known that it would have gotten to that point I almost certainly wouldn't have got involved in it, but at least in light of legitimate failure I understood what I was truly bad at and potentially learnt some useful lessons along the way.

Opening a bar and restaurant with my friends was genuinely one of the most satisfying and exhilarating things I've done in my life. After a fair few years of managing huge restaurants with all of the spreadsheets and training courses that entailed, the idea of literally cooking food for friends and regulars felt like one of the most viscerally thrilling things I could think of doing with my life.

Watching people get shitfaced and go wild in OUR bar, seeing chefs and journalists and whoever else say lovely things about our food, being the go-to place for out of town bartenders and bar owners, selling out Superbowl parties and thinking about second sites was all amazing and despite what was to come, doing all that with people you love is as rewarding a thing as you could possibly hope to do in our line of work.

But the stuff that actually makes a place successful, the dry, grinding realities of making a critical success a financial and operational one

were, it turned out, beyond my capabilities. Despite the fact that I'd seen up close the realities of what a successful restaurant operation looked like I obviously thought we were different. I liked the bit where we used the best ingredients (If you visited us in our early days you might have been lucky enough to have an iberico pork al pastor taco for £4) I wanted to pay our staff properly and treat them well. We didn't kick people off their tables after half an hour even if they'd finished eating and were drinking water. But on the other side I couldn't summon the energy after a hellish week to count the stock, file the invoices and put together a weekly report to see how much money we were actually making (or in reality, losing).

The harshest reality of being your own boss in the restaurant business is that when the gloss of the novelty has worn off after 3-6 months and you're exhausted, desperate to take your foot off the gas and have a holiday, that's precisely the time when you need to inject some new energy and take a fresh look at what is working and what isn't. All of the new ideas that might give the place fresh impetus (Deliveroo! Bar Food! Brunch!) felt like incredibly hard work without guaranteed reward and therefore were allowed to lapse – suggestions brought up on

a weekly basis only to be shot down with the same reasons (excuses) trotted out. The harsh reality begins to creep in that despite the fact you like to see yourself as open minded, dynamic and down to earth, you're actually lazy, stubborn and pretentious (sometimes).

The best way to describe the feeling when you know that you're going to have to close (excuse the cliché) is getting ready for a breakup that you know is going to happen but you really don't want it to. Part of that comes from the fact that you are genuinely sad that it doesn't work out. Another bit is the knowledge that it is going to fill you with embarrassment and shame and finally, and perhaps most importantly, is that the process is going to be a huge ball ache.

I'm actually relatively proud of the way it happened in the end. There were a few tears, some tense moments and a slightly bizarre night spent pressing 500 tortillas for an event by candlelight. I feel like maintaining dignity in that situation is a pretty tough thing to do. I wouldn't say that we left with our heads held high and there are elements of the mess

that will follow us around for years but, despite the fact the last few months were as grim as you can possibly imagine, after a year of being closed we all look back on the bones and are able to pick out some bits that we're really proud of and even some things that make us happy to remember.

As a result of that whirlwind 18 months I feel like I have a genuine and honest grasp of the things I'm bad at (sometimes I work too hard lol). I'm still petrified of failure and the shame and embarrassment that come with it but I feel a million times more comfortable talking about it knowing now what it looks and feels like. Given how much and often people do fail at things I feel like it's something we should be more comfortable talking about.

I'm aware that reading something like this it might sound like I'm suggesting that people just shouldn't bother. That definitely isn't the case, but if some of this sounds familiar, maybe it's best just being honest with yourself. Accepting a paycheck from somebody else for doing good work definitely does not make you a less interesting person.

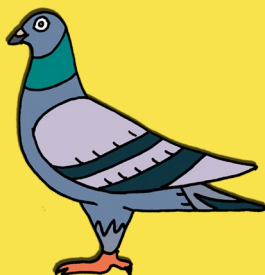


BY LIAM.

13

ROSEY MITCHELL

LONDON'S BEST
LAST
GAY BARS



R

FAMED FOR HER DRINKS CREATION PROWESS, ROSEY MITCHELL IS KNOWN AS 'THE BOSS' AT AWARD WINNING EAST LONDON BAR THREE SHEETS, WHERE SHE SMASHES OUT BANGING DRINK AFTER BANGING DRINK AFTER (YOU GUESSED IT) BANGING DRINK. ROSEY STARTED HER CAREER IN SOUTH LONDON DIVE BARS BEFORE STINTS AT MILK & HONEY AND 69 COLEBROOKE ROW. SHE HAS YET TO MAKE A DRINK THAT DOESN'T MAKE YOU GO 'MMMMM' UPON FIRST SIP.

The queer scene in London has changed dramatically since I first started drinking in gay bars. In the last decade we have made important steps towards equal rights here in the U.K, including the legalisation of Gay Marriage and other important and progressive changes to the way we consider members of minority groups and the LGBTQI community. We have watched this country become more aware, accepting and understanding than ever before.

And yet I find myself asking 'where have all the gay bars gone?' Has our society become so accepting of the LGBTQI community that we no longer even have a need for gay bars? Surely, in our modern society all bars should be "gay", or at least "gay friendly", right?... No. Personally, I think if you believe that, then you've missed the point about what gay bars mean within our community, and you're missing out.

Have we subconsciously killed the scene ourselves with dating apps? Where we would once go out on the "pull" or even just go and make queer friends in LGBTQI bars, do we now do this idly with a swipe - making "friends" with followers and feeling part of a bigger community from the comfort of our homes? Why would we bother to go out, when we can achieve all of this, and still be watching TV in our pyjamas?



photo by roxy lee @sausageandcustard

Possibly, however I don't think it's all down to our modern-day conveniences.

While researching gay bars, I came across a piece in the Guardian stating that between 2000 – 2016 151 London gay bars and queer clubs shut down. One hundred and fifty one! Between 2005 – 2015 an enormous 1400 London clubs (gay and otherwise) closed their doors. That includes The Joiners Arms, Madame JoJo's, The George & Dragon and Candy Bar - some of the greatest, often devoured by rapidly growing developments and stifling rent increases.

However, it hasn't always been like this. I used to love London for its big gay, sprawling, after-dark landscape and this is usually where I could be found.

If we take it back a decade the scene was thriving. Soho was still alive with queer bars on every street and corner. If dancing from Thursday through to Monday was your jam you could do it in Vauxhall. Head East and there were fashionable, promoted party nights popping up all over the shop, all called something incredibly witty that made you want to go on just their name alone. In 2009 Dalston Superstore was just about to open, shining a great big rainbow light on something we didn't realise we were missing until it opened.

This is around the time I started roaming the scene. Soho was where I spent a lot of my younger years. It felt to me, at the time, completely larger than life. This powerful non-stop party force sometimes actually became just that. Candy Bar in Soho was the first gay bar I ever stepped foot in. It even had it's own reality TV show and if you want a painful yet very entertaining look into lesbian life from the last decade - dig it out. Candy Bar looked like a very close rendition of how gay bars are portrayed in films by directors who have never stepped foot in a gay bar. Everything seemed polished and shiny and there were poles for dancing on. Despite its quirks, it had an air of plastic sophistication and charm that kept us coming back for more. It was my first step towards understanding what was truly going on in this world, and it led me to the next place to be; Ruby's.

Ruby's was a night at Ku on a Tuesday and was the place to be seen in Soho. The basement bar of the venue would become so full the party spilled onto Lisle Street with many people (including myself) not even bothering to head downstairs as it was far easier to do the rounds, flirt, talk and breath up on street level. If you did head downstairs, you could basically touch the ceiling and that's the only personal space you'd get until 3am when you were eventually able to leave. Ruby's was class and really does hold some of my best memories.

Then came Dalston Superstore. Superstore with its continuous beats, playing songs until the early hours that you've never heard before, and already knew at the same time. **The air was so thick with the night's antics, it trickled down the walls as you danced. It is the definition of cool but still somehow on the edge, pulling everyone into it to get lost. You are guaranteed to bump into an ex.**

I will always remember my first time there. It was NYE and they had a night on called Gutterslut. It was slammed. Everyone was dressed up and towering over me, and I'm pretty certain someone looking incredibly like Leigh Bowery was floating effortlessly above me attached to balloons. (The latter might have happened, or that could have just been my state of mind at the time... Either way I was still sold on the place). Dalston Superstore soon became host to my favourite club night of all time - Twat Boutique. They really knew how to throw a party, pulling in DJs like Robyn, La Roux and Peaches to name just a few.

Superstore has this amazing ability to be something completely brand new and exciting every time you

enter, yet also still makes you feel so at home. That magic is something that still exists there, and it remains one of the most welcoming queer spaces in London a decade on.

There are still some amazing gay bars open here in London. A select few institutions (G-A-Y, Fire, Royal Vauxhall Tavern) and other new spots with fresh nights, help shine a light of hope. There is still time to get out there and experience the magic of our city, instead of from behind a screen. Many people, especially the younger generation, could be missing out on how amazing it feels to have a space that is exclusive and special. Queer bars are always the most fun, and everyone wants to be a part of this party that can only exist in these spaces. You can't recreate the feeling you get when you're in this; it is different, it is special.

But if you've never been, you won't know what you're missing, right? Supporting these surviving venues that work hard to support our community may be the difference between seeing the gay scene thrive once more, or seeing the closure statistics continue to rise.



BY ROSEY.

5

**EDMUND
WEIL**

**WIND YOUR
FUCKING
NECK IN**



A FORMER TEACHER, EDMUND HAD LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN HOSPITALITY PRIOR TO OPENING NIGHTJAR - NAMED 3RD BEST BAR IN THE WORLD BY 50 BEST IN 2012. ALONGSIDE PARTNER ROSIE STIMPSON, EDMUND OPENED ORIOLE IN 2015 AND SWIFT IN 2018 - WHILE WE ALL SAT AROUND SCRATCHING OUR HEADS WONDERING 'HOW DO THEY DO IT?!' EDMUND IS A LIFELONG ARSENAL FAN AND IS VERY GOOD VALUE AT A PARTY. INVITE HIM AND SEE.

As I approach ten years as a bar owner, I've found myself in a in a reflective, bittersweet mood.

I've had the privilege of working alongside some truly exceptional bartenders. I've also crossed paths with my fair share of arseholes. Often enough, these two qualities coincide. I love this industry fiercely, and I wouldn't swap hospitality for any other career - yet there are times when I find myself fighting off a surge of frustration and ennui at the whole shooting match.

Sometimes this feeling steals in at the very moments I should be enjoying myself the most: an

awards ceremony marred by dark mutterings about brand vetoes and flawed judging processes, or a well-attended industry get-together tainted with ripples of unpleasant rumour. Sometimes it's the grind of industry social media that makes up the majority of my feeds these days. The posing, the preening, the obsequious flattery, and worst of all the humblebrags. Seriously. I think if another of my friends or acquaintances declares themselves 'humbled' to have won an award I am going to go full Larry David on them in the comments. Sitting between Mahatma Ghandi and Nelson Mandela at a dinner party? Definitely humbling. Stepping in and sliding through a fresh dog turd on your way into an important job interview? Also humbling. Picking up a gong for most sustainable garnish programme? Not humbling you idiot.

I think most of what really gets my goat comes from one place: the tendency for people to take themselves too seriously. Whether it's the brand ambassador smouldering out from their brand-adorned profile picture as if from a glossy perfume advert, or the competition bartender who's just been flown halfway around the world for a showcase competition final explaining their ingenious sustainability scheme to filter grey water using activated charcoal,

it fills me with the overwhelming impression that our industry is eating itself. It's important to remember that – outside of a small circle of bartenders, brand people and perhaps a very few dedicated cocktail connoisseurs – even the leading lights of our industry are almost entirely unknown to the general public. Even a stint on TV making Bloody Marys for guests on Sunday Brunch is hardly going to turn you into a household name.

I think some people in the industry believe that what happened to restaurants in the nineties and noughties (celebrity chefs, TV shows and multi-million publishing deals) might yet happen to bars in the twenties. I'm afraid I don't buy it. The fundamental difference between cooking and bartending is that everyone has to eat. Hundreds of thousands of people probably consult a recipe book two to three times a day, something even the loudest of home cocktail enthusiasts would struggle to do with their favourite boozy tome. Don't get me wrong, it's a good idea to build a following in the bar industry, and good books about bars and bartending will always have a keen audience, myself included. Just don't expect a big audience outside of your Facebook friends list. In the immortal words of Nidal Ramini, "wind your fucking neck in".

Hell, in War on Terroir, the industry even has its own satirist. WoT elicits mixed reactions and many complain it goes too far and gets too personal at times; and whilst I certainly hope I never get important (and/or conceited) enough to find myself skewered directly, I think those who feel uneasy are missing the point. The best political cartoonists and sketchwriters in the media pull no punches, and spare no-one, be they genius or fool. Anyone who aspires to take themselves seriously should prepare to be satirised.

There is of course a flipside to all this frippery. For every bright-eyed, bushy tailed aspirational startender who boasts their second place in a regional Disaronno comp in 2007 on their 4-page CV, there's a laconic, self-deprecating seen-it-all-before drinks slinger who prides themselves on "average drinks and shit chat". So laid back they're horizontal, they're probably flexing a moderate to serious drug habit, they'll do almost anything to avoid taking themselves seriously.

Although these are the people I generally like to hang out with, there are times that Laconic Slinger fills me with more despair than Competition Guy. **The fact is, if there was ever a time to take ourselves seriously as an industry, this it. As I write, the entire hospitality**

workforce is being tarred with the 'unskilled worker' brush by a Home Office bent on enacting a populist political agenda of immigration control. I'm not going to get all political on you, but our industry is in the process of becoming collateral damage.

It's not just the immigration implications (grave though they may be) of this attack on hospitality that worry me. I feel we might be in the beginning of a fight for a soul of the industry; by devaluing the very nature of a job in hospitality, they discourage even those they are prepared to allow into the profession from joining it. Of course it's undeniable that there are plenty of unskilled workers in hospitality; nine days after my 18th birthday I walked into the pub at the end of my road to ask for a job. That same afternoon I was pulling pints and polishing glasses. Badly. Needless to say, I had no inkling in that moment that ten years later hospitality would be my life.

The problem is that for too many – in the public and in government,

18-year-old me is the image that comes into their heads when they hear the word 'bartender'.

Humility and self-deprecation are all very well, but I'd be willing to bet that the vast majority of you reading this would classify yourselves – in one way or another – as highly skilled. Be you Competition Guy or Laconic Slinger – or anywhere on the vast spectrum between these two stereotypes – you're likely to boast an array of character traits, techniques and accumulated knowledge that set you at least on a par with many better remunerated and more traditionally prestigious professionals. They're unlikely to make you a fortune, nor will they make you famous outside of the circle jerk. But boy are they are important. So let's take ourselves seriously; let's seek collective recognition for what we do day in, day out to make the UK the one of the best countries in the world to eat, drink and be merry. They won't know what they've got til it's gone.



BY EDMUND.

6

DISCARD INTERVIEW: MONICA BERG AND ALEX KRATENA



CO-FOUNDERS OF P(OUR) SYMPOSIUM, MUYU LIQUEURS AND BACK OF HOUSE, MONICA BERG AND ALEX KRATENA OPENED TAYĒR + ELEMENTARY IN 2019. THEY'VE BOTH BEEN NAMED TOTC'S 'BEST INTERNATIONAL BARTENDER', SCORED THE CLASS MAG AWARD FOR 'INNOVATORS OF THE YEAR 2020' AND WE DON'T HAVE THE SPACE TO LIST EVERYTHING ELSE THEY'VE WON BUT TRUST US WHEN WE SAY - IT'S BASICALLY EVERYTHING.

Discard: Monica & Alex! Can you tell us a bit about the concept behind Tayēr + Elementary?

M&A: Tayēr + Elementary is a bar with two distinctive spaces, which are separated through design and concept. Elementary, which is the street facing bar, focuses on beer, wine, drinks, bottomless coffee and snack in a laid back setting. As the name indicates, we've removed anything that's unnecessary, so we can give our guests good quality drinks at affordable prices. Tayēr in the back is a bit more adventurous and experimental. Here our drinks list change almost every day, depending on what produce

and ingredients we get, and we explore creativity through flavour. Connecting the two is our kitchen, with its additional 4 seat kitchen counter, which can be booked for a tasting menu with drinks pairing. All in all, we do a lot of things - but if I had to sum it up in one sentence, what we do at T+E is to have fun :)

D: How long did you have the concept for Tayēr + Elementary in your minds?

M&A: We've been working on the bar since we left our previous jobs, so around 5 years-ish. Obviously it has changed quite a bit, but the core principles remain the same. I think there's often this illusion that if you work hard, your dreams will come true really fast - but in my experience, that's just not true. The process of creating the bar, building it and finally opening it has been, at times, brutal - and yes there were many times where we had major doubts and questioned if we were doing the right thing! So many times we've been told that our concept or our station design, or our business structure is stupid and won't work - but we've always believed in our vision, and are very aware that to get to where we want, we needed to and will need to make sacrifices. We've had a lot of great advice along the way - and we've been very lucky to have so many amazing people to help us!

D: Did you find that the concept evolved as you were finalising the venue? Were there any last minute changes or did you stick to the plan?

M&A: Absolutely - and we are still evolving! We make - some small, other bigger - changes every week. As with everything, there will always be a difference between what you envisage and how others will react to something. If you are not willing to be flexible and make adjustments along the way and learn from your mistakes - I don't think you'll be as successful as you could have potentially been. It's important not to let ego and stubbornness come in the way of success, and after all - the most important thing is that our guests are enjoying the place!

D: You've spoken previously about the importance of building a team - how do you choose your team members? What are you looking for when you recruit?

M&A: Our team, which is almost the same today as when we opened (we added one new member) is probably the strongest team I have worked with to date. We don't really believe in the classic hierarchy - in fact, in my experience, it's actually the best way to guarantee nothing gets done and everyone else gets blamed - so we decided to nix the management, meaning we all are filling the same role; bartender. This obviously puts a lot of pressure to

build a functioning team, so one of the most important qualities for us is that you're a team player. We look for people who put the team first, are hard working, are inquisitive and most importantly, who are nice people with the empathy and understanding it takes to want to make a difference in our guest's lives. We try not to micromanage the team, but rather teach them our "WHYs" so that they can find their own ways to our common goal. Our opening team is a mix of 'old and new' - where some have worked with us before, and some have not. They are all strong personalities, and I love watching how they are becoming closer and closer each week. For us it's definitely a strength that we have so many different backgrounds and cultures represented on the team, and we work very hard to be as inclusive and open minded as possible.

D: How do you both work as a team? Are you very similar in your approaches, or do you bring different things to the table?

M&A: We work very well as a team - but obviously it has been an adventure getting to where we are now! It is important to communicate and be honest about your expectations, and to be open to your partner's ideas and opinions, despite them being different from your own. Our industry is sometimes really tough,

and it's important to grow a thick skin, and be able to brush things off without feeling hurt - and one of the biggest strengths we have is that we always have each other's back, and we always prioritise the other before anyone else. We are definitely becoming very aligned, but we are also different in many ways - something we have learned to use to our advantage. I don't really think we could imagine going back to not working together after having done so for so long!

D: What inspires you, and where do you look for inspiration?

M&A: Everything and anything! We find inspiration everywhere; from the flowers in our neighbours garden, to our favo perfume (currently F) to the latest Off-White exhibition or my recent trip to Tokyo. I think we often and mostly look outside of food and drinks to find ideas and inspiration and enjoy spending time with people from very different but still creative disciplines.

D: Is Tayēr + Elementary an expandable brand? Would you open it elsewhere, or would you change the concept depending on the location?

M&A: Yes, yes and yes - but..... I think the best bars, galleries, hotels - places in general - are a product of the time, place and people it represents, so if we were to expand

on the brand we definitely would allow it to evolve in whatever way it wanted to.

D: You are both very very busy, hardworking people - how do you find balance, do you ever switch off? What do you do with your time off?

M&A: I think its important to say that balance - in life and in cocktails - is something different to everyone. Alex and I really enjoy both our time being in the bar and working service, but also talking about different scenarios, improvements, ideas etc when we are hanging out.

We really enjoy going to bars, and restaurants to experience what others are doing - so on our Sundays when the bar is closed, we try to go for a nice lunch or a glass of wine etc and just hang out as a couple, rather than as business partners, if that makes sense - but if Im honest, we often end up talking work because we just really enjoy it. Im aware our life might not look very balanced from the outside, however it is quite right for us - and in the areas we need to improve, we are slowly making changes to allow for that to happen. At the moment, most of our time off is spent sleeping, which to be honest - is one of my favo things to do anyway.

D: How to you quantify success?

M&A: The freedom to say "No".

D: Can you explain the different drinks styles between Tayēr and Elementary? Do you think you have a signature style in either space?

M&A: With Elementary we try to keep it fun and simple - taking drinks that you might have heard about and playing around with them. Our goal is to make drinks more approachable to everyone, and also introduce more unknown ingredients to a larger variety of audience. Our Palo Santo Gimlet is an example of a modern take on a classic drink, which introduces an exotic ingredient which many have not yet tried, but still keeping the end result very easy to drink. In Tayēr on the other hand, it's much more experimental and adventurous. Here we try to explore ingredients to their fullest potential - and really work with

unusual ingredients, techniques and combinations. Our goal, in both spaces, is always to make something delicious - but applying a different level of complexity, creativity and identity to each. Envisage and how others will react to something. If you are not willing to be flexible and make adjustments along the way and learn from your mistakes - I don't think you'll be as successful as you could have potentially been. It's important not to let ego and stubbornness come in the way of success, and after all - the most important thing is that our guests are enjoying the place!

D: What makes you happy?

M&A: Seeing other people happy.

D: What changes would you like to see in the bar industry?

M&A: More focus on the basics.



BY MONICA + ALEX.

7

MELISSA MARKERT

MAKING
SUSTAINABILITY
WORK FOR
YOU





MELISSA HEADED UP THE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM AT DEAD RABBIT AND BLACKTAIL IN NYC BEFORE ACCEPTING A POSITION AT LIQUID PRODUCTIONS - THE EVENTS, EDUCATION, AND CONSULTING COMPANY SPEARHEADED BY INDUSTRY VETERAN ANDY SEYMOUR, WHERE SHE'S CURRENTLY CURATING A PROGRAM FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENT INITIATIVES. MELISSA HAS HEADLINED AT TOTC ON THE TOPIC OF SUSTAINABILITY - A CAUSE CLOSE TO HER HEART ALONGSIDE PUPS, SLUSH, AND HOME-MADE PICKLES.

There are many admirable reasons to take a sustainable approach to cocktails and reducing waste in bars. However, we often overlook an important reason that impacts bars immediately and directly - the financial incentives.

The fact of the matter is, we are destroying the planet. While this seems like a great incentive for all of us to do better in our bars, it can sometimes be hard to convince a skeptical owner, or even yourself, that implementing sustainable measures can be viable from a financial perspective as opposed to simply being an idealistic pursuit.

When quantifying profitability, businesses generally concern themselves with “the bottom line”, or the last line on a company’s income statement. The bottom line quantifies a company’s net income after all expenses have been deducted from revenues. Basically, it tells you how much money you made after accounting for what you’ve spent. This bottom line number is what companies typically look at when determining their future behaviors. However, there are other considerations we can and should be taking into account. If we look at traditional profits and losses alone we cannot account for the full cost of doing business. Instead, we

can utilise The Triple Bottom Line, an accounting framework that takes into account people and the planet alongside profitability, to see the larger picture.

The Triple Bottom Line

People: Considers how socially responsible an organization has been throughout its operations, accounting for things like fair wages and safe working conditions.

Planet: Considers a business's environmental impacts.

Profit: Measures dollars in vs. dollars out in a given period of time.

The traditional bottom line does not take into account when a company uses a ton of chemical fertilizer and damages the soil for future uses. It does not consider how cheap disposable straws and to-go containers are putting a strain on municipal waste management. These things directly affect a business and its profitability in the long term. It is advantageous to think of people, planet and profit in tandem, because making improvements in one area will almost always have a positive impact on the others.

Let's first consider people. Happy employees help businesses thrive. Sustainability is defined as, "the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level." If your employees are being run into the ground, are underpaid or generally feel

underappreciated, you are not going to be able to maintain a standard of service and quality, or keep up a business whose employees are producing sales greater than the cost of constantly replacing them. Employee turnover is expensive. According to The Center for Hospitality Research at Cornell University, it costs thousands of dollars per employee, with "the damage to productivity caused by the inexperience of new employees [being] the greatest contributor to the overall costs of turnover."

Take the long view. Investing in your staff now will save you money down the line. Invest in education, provide experiential opportunities, leave room for creativity and listening and concern yourself with your staff's health and wellness. As you gain a reputation for being a great place to work, you will attract and retain staff that are excited to work with you. Happy employees are more inspired and productive, translating to positive effects to your bottom line.

Now let's consider the planet. The negative effects of our wasteful behaviors on the environment are substantial business risks, and the impact our bars have on the environment should be on the forefront of all of our minds. The best thing we can do, by and large,

is to not make waste in the first place. Reduce, is the first part of the reduce, reuse, recycle system, but is often time not the first thing we look at. Bars are leaving money on the table when they do not have a close eye on their waste streams.

Start with a waste audit. Identify what your bar is wasting, how much of it you are wasting, and what that translates to in dollars. If you do not know what you are wasting, you cannot know what to change. To help bars get started, former head bartender at BlackTail NYC, William Pasternak, created www.barwaste.com, a digital spreadsheet and calculator that is free to download and use as a tool for conducting an audit. “We wanted to find out what we threw away and what it was costing us, so we effectively costed everything like we cost a spirit. For things like juices, we applied that cost per ounce of juice to the amount of juice that we wasted, daily, weekly, etc. After collecting a few months of data we realised if we extrapolated those numbers out, we were potentially throwing away tens of thousands of dollars a year if we didn’t make a change.”

Consider the entire lifecycle of an object. Take into consideration all the inputs and outputs, all of the resources used and pollutants emitted to get that

thing to your bar, from resource extraction through manufacturing, refrigeration, to distribution, storage, packaging — through an item’s use and then to its disposal. All of those inputs and outputs go to waste when you over order produce, or dump juice down the drain, or fly through bev naps over the course of a night, and there are costs inherent in every single step of a lifecycle. Figure out how to reuse materials instead of throwing them away and keep track of how many bags of trash you produce.

Do not mistake recycling as a replacement for reducing! After all, recycling is the last option in the reduce, reuse, recycle system. Recycling is a business. Materials are collected, sorted, squished into giant bales then resold to a buyer who cleans and processes them back down into their raw materials, and then sells those raw materials. Collected recyclables need to be in reasonably good shape to do anything with. If they are not, they either cannot be processed or the cost to recycle them would outweigh their market value. Many things people think are recyclable are not. Wet, balled up bev naps mingling with little bits of broken glass in a bin, for example, are going to end up in the trash. Paper needs to be clean to process it and glass has the highest market value in large pieces. Moreover, many cities no longer

recycle because it has stopped being economically viable. Educate yourself on how to use your local waste management systems properly, cost effectively and avoid fines. In order to reap the environmental and economic benefits of recycling, we have to do it properly, and we need to create less of it.

Invest in durable and reusable products. This is a critical step in reducing your waste stream. When considering the lifetime cost of an item, take that upfront cost and divide it by how many times you are going to use it. The cost of these products decrease with every use, so while a metal straw or reusable coaster may have an unfriendly price tag in the short term, you stand to save in the long run by not having to replace them. Show your bar owners and investors what you can save them today with your waste audit, as a revenue stream to fund these upfront costs and cost out what they can stand to save in the future if they make the initial investment today.

Your brand's reputation benefits when you take action to reduce your environmental impact.

Consumers feel good when they buy products and services from companies that care about their communities and the world at large. Consumers are more likely to be loyal to your brand if your values align with their personal ones, according to a 2015 Nielson poll of 30,000 consumers across 60 countries. 66% of these global consumers and a full 73% of millennials (Nielsen defines Millennials as those born from 1977 to 1995) said they were willing to pay more for sustainable goods.

Alcohol is agriculture; and as people who serve the fruits of the earth everyday, bartenders need to consider their responsibility in preserving resources. But this consideration does not have to be at the expense of your bottom line. Your commitment to sustainable practices will keep the momentum of the movement heading forward, and help to convince more consumer markets that they should be supporting sustainability with their dollars. When you consider people and the planet, as an asset to profitability, you can run a better business.



BY MELISSA.

8

GARETH EVANS

THE WORLD'S
BEST
DRINK





PROFESSIONAL VODKA HAWKER, CREATOR OF THE MINI-PEG AND OCCASIONAL WRITER, GARETH EVANS PREVIOUSLY WORKED AS THE BARS MANAGER FOR ALL 19 OF JASON ATHERTON'S BARS. HE FAMOUSLY CREATED THE 'DILL OR NO DILL', 'ROBIN HOOD, QUINCE OF THIEVES' AND 'GREENGAGE MUTANT GINGER MYRTLE' EARNING HIMSELF A REPUTATION FOR THE QUICKEST TONGUE IN THE WEST. GARETH IS DOGGY DADDY TO JUNO - A TITLE THAT HE HATES, SO MAKE SURE TO REMIND HIM OF IT OFTEN.

I've been working in the bar industry 20 years, and in that time the martinis got dirty and the chat got clean, or something clever like that. Yes, I realise it's really annoying when people write in that way, but it's important in setting the scene - you pique interests with an attention grabbing headline, then begin the article proper with an intro that is nothing to do with that headline, before just aimlessly mashing the keyboard with your sausage fingers for a thousand or so words until you finally meander round to the single sentence point your article was trying to make all along. Fuck off, Giles Coren does it all the time, and he's a proper writer. Sort of. I guess he's also an insufferably pompous bellend, but whatever, it's happening. Are you sitting comfortably children? Then I'll begin.

So...what was I saying? Oh yeah. Twenty years. A score, two decades, my best years given to this industry. Twenty years, man and boy. A lot has changed in that time, oh boy let me tell you. I remember when all this were fields as far as the eye can see. By that of course I mean it was all ever so slightly different, but the core of it remains pretty much exactly the same in every single

way. **However, over that time lot of trends came and went; branded barblades, black shirts with red ties, Cusqueña, wicker Zacapa bottles, Funkin purees, password entry speakeasies where bartenders wear hats, regional Tuaca competitions, that cool thing where you stick the sippy straw to the side of a Z-stem martini glass with soda; all have disappeared like a Spirited Awards runner up's tears in the New Orleans rain. But over that time there's been one constant that has been there in good times and bad - the Jack Daniel's and Coke.**

Now don't get me wrong, there are definitely finer, more refined, even tastier things to drink. The copper coloured elephant in the room is obviously screaming out that I work for a vodka brand, and those of you unfortunate enough to have had me sitting at your bar for any length of time will attest to the fact that between boorish rants about whatever topic I've convinced myself I'm an expert on that week, I basically drink only vodka martinis, but even I know there's a wider world out there than the narrow constraints of the top cocktail bars. With this, as with so many things - context is king.

My bitingly cold dry vodka martini with a twist is the perfect order

for making candlelit googly eyes at my wife or drunkenly putting the world to rights with a friend in a dark moody cocktail bar at 1am, but it isn't much of a tropical poolside flex. Some swear by a Pina Colada or Hurricane in hot weather, but you're not day drinking that in London Fields, unless you're some sort of unsavable tiki monster with a battery powered blender under their XXXL Wray & Nephew shirt. A G&T can be a thing of simple elegant beauty when served tall with plentiful ice, effervescent tonic and freshly cut citrus, but a shitty, unloved, tragically warm airline version is fit only for ditching directly in the sea, and while there are certainly those out there that yearn for a frosty Miller High Life and tepid half pint Jameson chaser, it's a wholly different animal if you remove it from its spiritual home of the Alibi at 4am in July. You see, a great drink isn't just great on its own, or because of the quality or temperature of the liquid, it needs a stage. It has a natural place, a home, a set of criteria that need to be met to ensure that it is as great as we all know it can be, but without those? Well, it's as out of place as a TGI's Ultimate Oreo Mudslide at the Ritz.

These rules are hard to figure out, and are different for each drink,

but are vitally important to pick up on, in fact understanding what drink fits where and when is the only thing of note I think I have learned as my age advances, my back aches ever more, and my stories becomes more outdated and boomer-esque. Personally, I don't think I have learned a new classic that sticks in my head for maybe a decade, and certainly my actual practical bar skills have gone from average to just downright laughable. I have my repertoire, my skillset and it has served me pretty well. But learning to make drinks that suit the situation, rather than making the situation suit the drink? That's a learned skill. There's more knowledge, and certainly more nous, involved in busting out the savvy B and Sprite at a barbecue than there is trying to make everyone drink your second-rate mezcal Last Words instead. That half dead bag of Tesco ice isn't making any decent cocktails and you know it, you're not serving drinks, you're serving ego, and let me tell you - it doesn't taste very good.

The JD and Coke on the other hand transcends all of these boundaries, and effortlessly sidesteps the potential occasion-based faux pas like Jay Rayner swerving a Tom Collins. It's the consummate all-rounder,

the ultimate journeyman utility player, the archetypal character actor; it's everything to everyone and doesn't try to be anything more or less. There is no drinking situation where a JD and Coke isn't appropriate. It's as at home in the Savoy out of cut crystal with hand carved ice, as it is served British Summer temperature, barely even mixed, out of a disposable cup in a muddy field at Glastonbury. It is the one drink that goes with everything - It's a slim fitting, black single-breasted suit, it's blue jeans with converse and a white T shirt, it's red lipstick, it's the ultimate alcoholic LBD, and it's all the better for it.

No ice? No problem. I have had this drink practically mulled in temperature at beach bars, and it holds up like a first press Led Zeppelin album. Ratios? JD don't care 'bout that. You can mix it so strong that it's pretty much translucent, where it's heading into coke flavoured whiskey territory, but its still tasty. It is the boozy social butterfly, comfortable everywhere, in all bars, in all restaurants, clubs, house parties, you name it. It's fitting that musically it's biggest exponents were just as varied in style - Ol' Blue Eyes himself, and the only modern man to wear a top hat and not be gassed about fox hunting - Slash.

My 20 years of drinks making pales into comparison when talking about either side of this iconic partnership, with nearly 300 years of murky brown co-dependence, and they show no signs of slowing anytime soon. Long after the Rotovaps and Spinzalls and Flavour Blasters have gone the way of the aforementioned straw/soda/Z stem, Jack will still be partnering up with his old sidekick to leave that weird foamy scum on glasses the world over, from the duttiest of student halls to the fanciest Hollywood mansions,

old and young, rich and poor, and everything and everyone in between.

So this is the point real writers would sign off with a pithy conclusion bringing the story full circle and rounding it off with a smart call back to the intro, leaving you thinking “wow this guy really does know what he’s talking about, how informative and yet hilarious” but that’s not me, and this isn’t that kinda movie I’m afraid. The one sentence point I talked about earlier? JD and Coke - name a more iconic duo.

END

BY GARETH.

9

REBEKKAH DOOLEY

MY MENTOR
TOMAS
ESTES



REBEKKAH BEGAN HER CAREER AT THE ILLUSTRIOUS MILK & HONEY - HANGING COATS - AND HAS SINCE WORKED AT CALLOOH CALLAY, THE LONDON EDITION, DEAD RABBIT, BLACKTAIL AND THE UMBRELLA PROJECT ON ALL THINGS MARKETING, PR, AND EVENT MANAGEMENT. IN 2014 SHE STARTED THE LONDON SESSIONS WITH GARETH EVANS AND HAS GONE ON TO LAUNCH AN INDEPENDENT ZINE WITH HER PROFESSIONAL PARTNER IN CRIME, DESPITE HIM CALLING HER 'FACEBOOK DORIS' FOR FIVE YEARS.

The first thing Tomas taught me was to ask questions. As a cripplingly shy youngster I was loath to raise my hand, interject, or say anything much at all in front of an audience larger than three.

When I first met Tom I was too shy to hold staff briefings, and so I would brief my Bar Manager, who would in turn brief the staff. I was quiet and awkward and full of misplaced anger that manifested as a seething silence. And so Tom taught me to speak more. I bought a book, 'Tequila - A Complete Guide', and I swallowed it whole. I would report back to Tom with my new found knowledge, about Pulque and Mayahuel and Agave Pups, and my enthusiasm was met like for like. I would bring him a fact, new to me,

and he would give me ten more. I felt encyclopedic when in reality I was just scratching the surface but it felt good, really good. In trainings I started taking notes, writing down topics to research and eventually; I started asking questions.

We would meet at Cafe Pacifico and eat fajitas and churros at the quietest table which was by no means quiet but he requested it none the less. I exclusively drank beer and Tequila for five years of my life. Pacifico Clara was my favorite, it still is, and I liked knowing that the cerveza had let the restaurant use their logo free of charge. **I would pick Tom's brain and he would ask me questions that I hadn't been asked before like "what do you want to do with your life?"**

In that time I learnt that Tom was a really cool kid. He drove a Triumph with no shoes or shirt and would frequently travel from his native California over the border to Mexico where he was of legal drinking age. He knew a chain smoking monkey called Devil and he was both a wrestler and a teacher before he turned his hand to Tequila. While Cafe Pacifico was still a building site Hunter S Thompson used it to stage an interview with the New York Times, requesting that he be paid in mezcal and cocaine. Queen, the Jackson Five and Tina Turner all ate there, and Debbie Harry waited three hours for a table. Tom jammed with Dennis Wilson and John McVie and

has the cassette tapes to prove it. He was, and still is, the epitome of cool.

Over the course of 40 years Tom has opened 18 restaurants in 6 countries. He launched Ocho with Carlos Camarena in 2008, speaks four languages and is the Mexican Ambassador of Tequila to Europe. His debut book, *The Tequila Ambassador*, sold out its first release and now retails for ten times its face value. His achievements are dazzling.

When Gareth and I launched *The London Sessions* Tom would arrive early to secure a front row seat, smiling encouragingly as I spoke with increasing confidence to a room of 60 people. When we presented together for the first time I saw my typed notes next to his written ones and felt immensely proud.

Tom gave me and my brother a book, a 1968 edition of *Nine Stories*. He said we reminded him of JD Salinger characters. When I moved to New York I brought it with me, a piece of home that gave me peace of mind tucked in the pocket of my plane seat alongside my passport. In Oregon we ate cherries macerated in Ocho Reposado and a whole artichoke - my first, a big step for a picky eater. **In Mexico we visited Don Javier with mangos and papayas and we drank Batangas - another**

first, stirred with a kitchen knife, as it should be. Everything as it should be. My mouth hurt from smiling, my belly ached from laughing and my eyes prickled with tears - so happy I cried. In New Orleans, every year for five years on more or less the same date we ate dinner in the damp dank heat and talked.

If Tom has ever asked you a question you'll understand what I mean when I say that he asks the questions to which he knows you need an answer. It's a special kind of person who so patiently serves to enlighten others above themselves. That's Tom.

When Tom and I are in the same country we catch up over dinner. He always makes sure there is a vegetarian menu available and requests a quiet table because, he says, he wants to be able to hear me. When we say goodbye he invariably tells me that he is proud of me and I thank him, trying unsuccessfully to hide the crack in my voice.

Most recently Tom asked me what I wanted as a child, and my eyes grew shiny as I looked at the table and deflected the question with something non-committal because I wasn't ready to tell him the answer. "To make someone proud."



BY REBEKKAH.

10

DECLAN McGURK

IN FAVOUR OF
THE HUMBLE
PUB





DECLAN OVERSEES ALL THINGS BEVERAGE AT NEEDS-NO-INTRODUCTION: THE SAVOY. WHEN HE'S NOT DRESSED TO THE NINES CHARMING EVERYONE IN SIGHT, YOU'LL FIND HIM DRESSED DOWN AT A LOCAL PUB - CHARMING EVERYONE IN SIGHT. DECLAN KNOWS EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT FIVE STAR SERVICE BUT HAS AN AFFINITY FOR PINTS, MOST NOTABLY THE BLACK STUFF - A RESULT OF HIS IRISH HERITAGE.

Picture this... I am in Phoenix Arizona with Leeds Legend - The Prince of Portobello - Jake Burger - in a bar named Bikini Lounge. Believe it or not, it is in-fact a dive bar and not a strip club, as some of you may have thought.

Jake comes out of the toilets with a smile on his face. As far as he's concerned, the bar lacked some of the facilities and functions needed to define it as a dive bar. As far as I'm concerned, the status of the bar was never in question; The moment Georgi Radev (then Mahiki, now Laki Kane) tried to order a cocktail and received ridicule and a Miller High Life, I knew I was happy to be diving down and dirty into Bikini Lounge. Quickly the conversation turned to questioning why there aren't a plethora of dive bars in London. Crobar ticks many boxes, but according to the Jake Burger dive-bar-tick-box criteria it isn't a true dive. So why does London struggle to celebrate the dressed down relaxed night time economy style of dive bars? The answer according to Jake is simple - "we have the pub."

The pubs of both Britain and Ireland have a sense of identity that is unrivalled. The symbiotic relationship we have with beer is culturally something - dare I say it, that people are nurtured into.

Drinking ale itself is a ritual dating back to the Bronze Age, and the evolved version of this drink is as critical to a pub's history as the buildings themselves.

In 1393 legislation was introduced dictating that ale houses must display a sign to make them easily identifiable to those in need of refreshment. This was a defining moment in pub culture and a wonderful selection of names were used. Fast forward to today and there are roughly 4000 pubs currently in operation in London, including twenty Wetherspoons within the boundaries of Zone one alone.

There is a uniqueness to pubs that make them very hard to replicate. Wandering through London you will notice that most pubs are purpose built with design features to die for such as stained glass lead lined windows and master carpentry that is no longer practiced. Admittedly a visit to a pub can also be a sad affair, with poor service and lacklustre standards, but for every poorly run establishment there is a jewel waiting to be found.

In the UK the existence of pubs not only challenges the growth of dive bars - I would go as far to say they challenge the development of the cocktail bar scene too. Drinking cocktails is not something that the British public naturally do, and often

they are intimidated by the thought of high-end bars with alien drinks. In the UK we go for a pint after work and across the Atlantic they grab a quick Whisky Sour prior to the journey home. With this in mind for new bar openings, my suggestion now is to embrace this part of culture, and install draught beer. Counter to the perception that this might attract the wrong crowd, I would argue that the right selection of beer is a way of comforting new guests and easing them into your bar concept rather than alienating them. Hotel bars have their own very independent identity, but for High Street bar operators, pub clientele may be the best pickings for future patrons.

As you might be able to tell, I have developed quite the passion for pubs and like to celebrate their existence. Whilst working at the Savoy an important skill to develop is the ability to suggest the right pub for a traveller to visit, as it is a frequent recommendation to have to make. Sometimes I proactively make pub suggestions, because for someone visiting from afar a trip to a public house is more important than getting a photo by a London Underground sign. Luckily, we have some examples of very fine pubs close to The Savoy:

Coach & Horses, 42 Wellington Street, WC2E 7BD.

This Victorian style pub has an Irish influence from its landlord giving it a noticeably warm service. The pint of Guinness is as good as you can find, and the décor is elegantly stripped back with no gimmicks. This place is simply as good as you can get.

The Nell Gwynne Tavern, 2 Bull Inn Ct, WC2R 0NP.

This hidden pub was actually introduced to me by Erik Lorincz, our former head bartender and now owner operator of Kwānt. He was thrilled to be teaching me something on the topic, and the setting alone warrants a visit.

The Harp, 47 Chandos place, WC2N 4HS.

An ale specialist where a fine selection of hand pulled specimens are on offer. Whilst this type of beer has been over shadowed by lager, it is an important part of the history of public houses, and it is wonderful to see a place do so well with it. This place is never quiet.

The Marquis, 51-52 Chandos Place, WC2N 4HS.

The music offering of this venue

wins my admiration. There is a record player behind the bar and the team are frequently engaging guests over what to play next. I certainly don't conform to the idea that pubs should be without music, and feel moves like this, whilst challenging bar culture, help keep a pub a modern attraction. I hope to see more pubs playing great tunes in the future.

The Toucan, 19 Carlisle Street, W1D 3BY.

Although not in the Covent Garden area, I can't not talk about the Toucan when talking about pubs. Colin Taylor has been running this Soho institution for just under 30 years. Pop downstairs and see a heavily Irish influenced venue with stunning Whiskey's and a fine pint of the black stuff. On a sunny day standing outside and watching the weird and wondrous world of Soho is spectacular. You are far more likely to find me here on a day off than in a rival hotel bar!

I look forward to bumping into you in a pub! Sláinte.



BY DECLAN.

11

ISIS HERNÁNDEZ

24 HOURS IN
TEQUILA
TOWN



ISIS HERNÁNDEZ IS THE GENERAL MANAGER AT THE ONLY INDEPENDENT TASTING ROOM IN TEQUILA - LA CATA. SHE HAS MANAGED RESTAURANTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO, WHERE SHE SPENT THE LAST SEVEN YEARS AS CAPTAIN AT CASA LUNA. ISIS GREW UP IN AMECA, ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE VALLEY OF TEQUILA, HAS LIVED MOST OF HER LIFE IN CALIFORNIA AND TLAQUEPAQUE, AND IS A DIE-HARD GUADALAJARA CHIVAS FAN.

As you probably know - Tequila (the spirit) got its name from a town located in the heart of Jalisco, Mexico, in the surroundings of an extinct volcano, in a region called “The Valley”. That town is Tequila.

The City of Tequila (established 1530) is a vast and multifaceted destination where (of course) our spirit is the main attraction. Tequila is a small town with lots to do. Activities include visiting different distilleries, agave fields, museums, bars, gastronomic tours, guided tequila flights and horseback riding. This is my handy and simple schedule of recommendations on how to spend 24 hours in Tequila.

If I was coming to visit, the first thing I would do, at around 8am, is to get a coffee and breakfast. I recommend Café El Palomar for a classic Mexican breakfast or the coffee shop located inside El Centro Cultural Juan Beckman Gallardo for a really good menu of coffee and breads. A couple of blocks from there you'll find a more local option - Patio Mayahuel.

After breakfast - time to visit a distillery. I suggest La Rojeña (Cuervo), El Llano (Tequila Arette) or if booked ahead of time - La Fortaleza (Tequila Los Abuelos/ Fortaleza). Tours normally take 2 or 3 hours and after a good time of education and probably hot weather I very much enjoy a glass of Pachecada - a local specialty made of tejuino (fermented corn) and beer. They sell them in a little stand across from the famous TEQUILA letters in the corner of Palacio Municipal (a good spot to take a photo).

With a Pachecada in hand, take a moment to enjoy the street show of Los Voladores de Papantla before making the short walk to MUNAT Museo Nacional de Tequila and Museo Los Abuelos - an old house made in to a museum of Don Francisco Javier Sauza, and step in to Palacio de Gobierno to admire the beautiful mural of Mayahuel.

From here, just two little blocks of 200 steps you'll find La Cata - the only independent tasting room in Tequila, carrying the largest selection of Tequila in the region with very knowledgeable and bilingual staff who can guide you through a tasting flight or make you the best cocktails with fresh and local seasonal ingredients. Here you have to try Las Tostadas de Doña Silvia and special tequilas only found at La Cata. Next - it's time for an obligatory stop at La Capilla for a Batanga.

Options for dinner are tacos at El Callejón del Hambre (which translates to Hunger Alley), a taxi to Braceritos Caborca or Restaurant Mango at Hotel Casa Salles, or hand made tortilla tacos at the Tacos Cheques taco stand by Glorieta Mayahuel (Mayahuel Roundabout), where you'll find a churro stand too.

For night life in Tequila it could be Bar La Catrina for Tequila and cerveza, a club called Limuria for late night drinks or Los Portales at any time - I love the Cantaritos there.

If you're staying overnight, book Hotel Plaza Jardín, Hotel Rubio,

Hotel Villa Tequila, Casa Salles or Solar de las Ánimas. If you wish to go to Guadalajara the last bus stops at 8pm.

Throughout the year there are many festivals:

Feria Internacional de Cine en Tequila (International Film Fair, February)

Feriel del Mango y la Ciruela (Mango and Plum Fair, May)

Feria del Hongo (Mushroom Fair, July)

Aniversario de la Fundación de la Ciudad e Tequila (Anniversary of the Foundation of Tequila, April)

Fogones y metates (an appreciation of Tequila cooking, December)

Feria del tequila (Tequila Fair, November - December)

Akamba (music, April).

And Tequila has much more to offer too. Spend a few hours at Los Azules Cascades or take a full day at Amatitán, touring the agave fields on horseback. Maybe book a hot air balloon flight or a visit to the opal mines in Magdalena.

But my idea of 24 hours doesn't sound bad at all. I tried it and I loved it. Tequila is tu casa.

See you soon.



BY ISIS.

ask *Abi*

COMING SOON: WELCOME TO A.A.

Abi is our resident agony aunt. Got a problem? She's your gal! Keep it light, we're not licensed therapists and if you need actual help - good on you for taking the first step - talk to someone at The Samaritans (no joke, they're great.)

Please note that we will publish questions so don't ask us anything you wouldn't be happy to see in print. Enquiries can be submitted via **discardthezine.com/askabi**

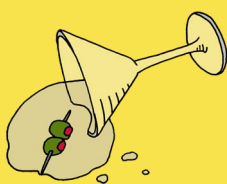
Part one, coming soon to issue two.

Thanks Hen!





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