## DISCARD

INDEPENDENT / TRANSPARENT / BALANCED



# THIRD TIME'S A CHARM.





**@DISCARDTHEZINE**DISCARDTHEZINE.COM

## WTF IS THIS?

#### INDEPENDENT. TRANSPARENT. BALANCED.

Third Time's a Charm! The Power of Three! The Magic Number! Third Time Lucky! And then there were Three! Three Martini Lunch! Three Vodka Sodas and a bottle of Champagne please, bartender! Yes, they're all for me. Welcome to Issue Three.

DISCARD is an independent, selffunded zine created by people working full time in hospitality.

In this issue, as always, we're talking to people we look up to about things we don't normally see in trade publications in a balanced and transparent way.

This issue has been a privilege to collate, and we are more thankful than ever to our contributors for sharing their stories. At times, articles within may be uncomfortable to read. We implore you to read them anyway.

At the time of printing (September) UK bars are on a 10pm curfew, despite just 3-5% of COVID cases being linked to hospitality. Please let your MP know how you feel about this at www.writetothem.com.

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

Ps. If you find a typo - we were on a tight deadline, don't be a dick.

THERE ARE 250 COPIES OF DISCARD. YOU HAVE: /250



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### FAKE NEWS.

#### **101 MOST INFLUENTIAL**

Drinks International have issued a recall of their most recent issue, blaming a printing error for a glaring ommision. The new 101 Most Influential List includes DISCARD at #3 - the highest new entry, ever. A D.I spokesperon added 'yeah we fucked up... our printers sent out the list before we were ready. Oh wait, that was CLASS, Ummm.'

#### **BEHIND THE SCENES**

The news is out. Channel 5 have commissioned a reality TV series about the London bar scene. Each episode focusses on a different aspect of the bar industry and working titles include 'Call The Guv At 3. Work At 10', 'Talking Shit About American Bars Whilst Being Jealous Of The Tips'. 'Saying "Backs" To People In The Supermarket' and "Pretending To Like That New Bar In Public Then Bitching About It To Your Mates at 3AM.' Unconfirmed sources are touting Jack McGarry as narrator, subtitles included.

#### STADTKIND ULM

In an entirely unprecedented move, German bar Stadtkind Ulm has announced plans to change their name to Zwei Schmucks. The owners commented 'It just came to us entirely randomly, it's never been done before, you know? We actually have never even logged on to Instagram in our lives, or followed 50 Best Bars, or Tales of The Cocktail, so our ideas are totally original. What do you mean there's a bar called Two Schmucks? Nah, we've never heard of them. Danke'

#### DRINK UP AND FUCK OFF

Following the success of Rishi's oddly named 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme Boris has announced his own endeavour 'Drink Up and Fuck Off.' Yep, you can get on the tube with 100 other people, teach a class of 30 snotty kids and even drink yourself stupid from 6am onwards but if you're in a bar after 10pm - Rona's gonna getcha.





#### **FAKE NEWS IS HARD**

DISCARD have confirmed that their Fake News feature is proving really fucking hard at the moment because it sucks to take the piss out of people when bars are closing and jobs are dissapearing at an alarming rate and governments around the world are proving woefully inept at giving a shit about our industry. Still, we persevere. Meta.

#### **INTRODUCING H20**

DISCARD learned earlier this month of big plans in the no and low alcohol sector. Rumours are afoot about a new 0% ABV, zero calorie beverage, created from cloud vapours, with the working title of Aitch Two Ohh. So far consumer testing has been promising, with Pernod Ricard and Diageo pledging six figure marketing funds to promote it.

#### **SOBER OCTOBER**

News just in - Sober October has officially been cancelled. After years of giving their livers 30 days off per annum, the Sober October organisers have confirmed they are absolutely, uncompromisingly, gagging to get pissed on the daily. A press release states 'due to the ongoing unmitigated shitshow that is 2020, we can't face not drinking for that long so we're planning to basically just get on it the entirety of October and maybe into November and December too.' Can't blame them TBH, sign us up.







## ALEX KRATENA

FUCK YOU PAY ME





THE BAR WORLD IS STILL REELING FROM ALEX'S FOUR YEAR WINNING STREAK AT WORLD'S 50 BEST BARS BACK IN 2015. NEVER ONE TO REST ON HIS LAURELS. ALEX CO-FOUNDED P(OUR) SYMPOSIUM IN 2016 AND OPENED TAYER + ELEMENTARY WITH HIS PARTNER MONICA BERG IN 2019. ALEX HAS BEEN NAMED 'BEST INTERNATIONAL BARTENDER' BY TOTC, 'BAR PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR' BY IMBIBE. 'INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR' BY CLASS MAGAZINE AND THE SECOND MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN THE BAR INDUSTRY BY DRINKS INTERNATIONAL. WHEN DOES HE SLEEP? JURY'S OUT.

eople always look for respect in their work. Although each profession has its own merits and demerits, every job should really be valued in the community.

I have dedicated my entire life to re-establishing bartending as the respectable and well-paid profession we're always told by cocktail historians it once was. This generation of bartenders, myself included, lives in the true golden age of cocktails; enjoys the attention of media, the thrill of international travel and lavish cocktail competitions, but we learned the hard way - when the global pandemic struck it became apparent that governments don't give a flying fuck about supporting bartenders, bars or cocktail culture.

With the entire community too preoccupied with IG live streams instead of lobbying and fighting for our rights, we are often all to blame for not raising our profession on the pedestal.

There is a large group of businesses and individuals benefiting financially from cocktail culture, without being directly connected or even engaged in the bar community. These outsiders like to pretend they are invested in the wellbeing and growth of bartenders, but too often there are hidden agendas. Or not so hidden agendas – namely profiting on other people's work.

Bar culture is created in bars, not

in corporate boardrooms and until we earn the respect of those sitting at board meetings making key decisions, we will continue to receive unfair treatment. The fact that many people still expect us to work for free, or in exchange for "fantastic PR opportunities and exposure" is just plain ridiculous – and more importantly - doesn't pay your rent.

On a weekly basis I get approached with incredible unpaid opportunities. On Monday it might be to promote someone else's brand for free, on Tuesday to create a recipe for free for a massive drinks corporation, on Wednesday to speak for free at an industry convention that is run by one of the biggest exhibition firms on the planet - this goes on and on every single month. I am happy to work for free when it benefits our community, a not-for profit organisation, friend starting their own business, or a charity, but don't let anyone ever ask you again to undertake free work and tell you there is no budget. When I work elsewhere it takes me away from my own work, my already time-poor private life, or a creative project I could be doing.

The biggest issue here is that every time I politely decline to do free work there is another fellow bartender friend jumping in because they feel they cannot miss this opportunity, and you know what? I see you guys. I know

who you are, and you are doing a massive disservice to all of us.

Last year a magazine owner and event organizer told me that for the same cost I quoted he could get five other bartenders. Please go and get them, but I am not coming. It is perfectly fine to say no and to this day the biggest luxury I hold dear is to be able to decline and say straight no. You guys should drop your FOMO too.

The last time I discussed this publicly I was told I am privileged and that it is different case for me because I am Alex Kratena. I completely disagree with this; I eniov this privilege and position because I always charged the right amount of money and most importantly I always do my very best to deliver the objective of a given project. And when people can't afford what I charge, I am happy to say no and simply don't do it. If you are unsure what you should charge for event, or a project the answer lies in a simple piece of advice: When in doubt what to charge, make sure it is enough that you will be happy with your cash even if the project goes south and you end up hating it and everyone involved in it. In other words you need to make sure you are still cool when things go bad, because you are getting the money.

Everything in business is negotiable, and people telling you how much budget they have shouldn't fool you. A few weeks ago I was approached about a super exciting opportunity that included creating a recipe, hosting a journalist and posting on Instagram. The proposed fee was strictly set out in the email, but it didn't match my cost structure so I simply sent an amended quote across that was more then twice the original proposed remuneration, after which I didn't hear back.

Well guess what? Yesterday I got the gig.

You should never work for free, and you should never allow an organisation you work for, and get paid from, to force you to manipulate young up and coming bartenders to do unpaid work. It is unethical, betrays your own community, undermines cocktail

culture and it devalues all the efforts of the generations of bartenders, who all dreamt that one day what they do will become a well-respected profession again. Don't let anyone fool you by telling you there's no budget because saying no is the most powerful and often the most difficult thing to do.

We must end this toxic relationship, because it is the very first step to start building a stronger community that one day will have the full respect of the public, and so when the next pandemic hits, governments and politicians won't be able throw us overboard and screw us like they did in 2020. Until then?

FUCK YOU, PAY ME!



BY ALEX.



## CHRIS CABRERA + ASH HAUSSERMANN

THE PLACE IN WHICH I FIT



RESIDENTS OF THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS, CHRIS (THEY/ THEM) AND PARTNER ASH (SHE/HER) COLLABORATED ON THIS PIECE TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF AMPLIFYING MARGINALISED VOICES. AS GREY GOOSE AMBASSADOR FOR NYC. CHRIS WORKS TIRELESSLY TO DRIVE CONVERSATION AROUND EQUALITY AND **DIVERSITY WITHIN THE BAR INDUSTRY AND IN 2019** CONDUCTED TOTC'S FIRST EVER LGBTQ+ SEMINAR. BARTENDER, WRITER AND ACTIVIST ASH HAS HONED HER SKILLS AT BLACKTAIL. DEAR IRVING AND CLOVER CLUB AND WHEN SHE'S NOT SLINGING DRINKS YOU'LL FIND HER SINGING KARAOKE AND PLANNING ADVENTURES.

y name is Chris Cabrera, my pronouns are they and them. If you don't understand what that means, that's okay.

The first step is understanding that I do not identify as male or female, so when people talk about me they use non-gendered pronouns like they and them. Imagine you've never met me, how would you know my gender? Cool, right?

I've always spoken up and had to fight for who I am. That's been my entire existence. Going from a bartender, to a brand ambassador, to now an activist has happened organically. The training for it was simply my series of life experiences. I was called to the forefront more recently with the rise of social justice issues and the discussion of concepts like diversity and inclusion. With the help of Bacardi's platform and resources, I've been able to educate and advocate globally for my community; specifically the LGBTQ+ and POC communities.

My community has relied on the bar since the early inception of our liberation, but we became as segregated in the bar world as we were in society at large. Gav spaces were illegal, mysterious, but most importantly: hidden. Parts of our community still stay hidden out of fear. To this day, trans people of colour are disproportionately harassed, assaulted, and murdered with little to no attention from anyone in the media or beyond. Pride parades are popular for one beautiful month of the year here in the US, but come July, we're all **still gay.** Now we, as a bar industry (and humanity as whole), are on the precipice of a new era, a fresh start. Society is calling for all of us to be better, safer, and more inclusive, and that must start in

our societal gathering places. The world is a more fluid place now and the importance of inclusive bar spaces cannot be understated. Bars and restaurants need to be safe, inclusive spaces for both clientele and staff, equally.

The queer community is resilent, because we've always had to be. We've always taken care of our own. Bars, early on, were the only places we could meet with our friends, our lovers, our chosen family. Gay bars were where the terms "safe space" originated. So when the AIDS crisis was occurring in the eighties and nineties, the sick and abandoned would often come to the bar for care and resources. when the medical community and society at large turned their backs on the "gay plague". We were ostracised. The bar was and is the cornerstone of our community. During the pandemic, Grev Goose and I partnered with Another Round, Another Rally to create micro-grants specifically designed for the often overlooked parts of our community, the drag gueens, DJs, and other positions in the industry that we don't always think of. The pandemic disproportionately affected black and brown people, and the LGBTQ+ community. This was money to pay for food, electricity, and cell phones. Point being, we still look after each other today, because we have to.

The world we live in is changing. Social movements are changing the way the world sees itself. While there may still be mystery shrouded around parts of my community, the world is acknowledging our place in it. It's demanding that we value all members of society the same way we've valued white cisqender people. It's also happening in our industry. Our industry is diverse, and it always has been. The problem is that that diversity has never been valued the same way. Today's world is starting to acknowledge its privilege, recognise the status quo, to realise that just being good at your job isn't enough anymore. Knowing every in and out about your brand, how to make a great cocktail, having an exquisite palate, or displaying technique that is untouchable, it's just not enough. What do you stand for? What is your mission? How do you better society around you? How do you create a more diverse and inclusive space? These are the questions that we, and the world, are going to be asking of ourselves.

So now what? Firstly, live by this rule: Don't be performative, be actionary. Don't do something for the look of it, think permanent. Authenticity means more now than ever. Second, create transparency. Discuss your thoughts, ideas, and plans. We're in this together,

so include everyone in the conversation; but know that change starts at the top. Leaders, you must inspire and empower the people around you. The status quo is dead. The only way to move forward is to fully dismantle the system that has only served a small portion of society. Have you ever noticed a pattern in who is chosen for things like brand representation, influential positions, and award ceremonies? Is it always folx that tend to look very similar, or come from very similar backgrounds or places? This is the 1%. This is who the system works for. This is privilege. They did not ask for this privilege, it was given to them by a system that was setup long before they came to it. Together, we can break it and build something new.

Education; it is a massive part of modern day activism. You don't know what you don't know. So start here. What is diversity and what is inclusion? It's one thing to have a group of people sitting around a table that all look very different. This is diversity. But are all of them being heard and valued the same way? Do their viewpoints carry the same weight? This is inclusion. Today's leaders will need to ask themselves some hard questions like "What kind of a leader am I?" "How am I shaping the people that I work with or who work for me?" "How am I showing that I'm

inclusive?" "Are all the opportunities I create and encounter being offered to everyone?" and my personal favorite: "How am I encouraging people that may want to be in my position but have never been encouraged to do so?" It is ideas like this that need to be embraced on all levels of whatever kind of space you inhabit. Educate yourself and your staff or colleagues on what these ideas mean. One last auestion I think everyone should be asking of themselves is "Am I on the right side of history?" Explore and embrace social justice issues. It's the difference between being an ally, and being an advocate. An ally will side with you, an advocate will fight for you. You cannot create a safe and inclusive space without education, transparency, and trust.

Right now, it's not weird to walk into a place and be greeted with "hey guys", or "hello ladies". When you are, or are with, someone who is gender non-comforming, there's an immediate pang of awkwardness. While it may not even show on someone's face, being misgendered is a moment when you realise that someone has made an assumption about you that is wrong. Remember when we talked about being actionary? Here's a great place to start: embrace "hey folks", "hey gang", and "hey y'all". Step one for a more inclusive society is to remove all assumptions about who

you think someone is by how they look. The world is fluid, and this applies to both your staff and your clientele. Never assume the person in front of you is a "he" or "she". Never use a phrase like, "that drink is for the lady." Instead use a phrase like "the guest in the blue shirt." Use group language that doesn't carry gender. Cut out all "hey ladies," or "hey guys" from the vocabulary. And in fine dining restaurants, cut out pronouns all together. "Hello" and "welcome" are just as warm without having to gender your guests and risk a terribly awkward situation.

When and if you feel comfortable enough, please ask "by the way, what are your pronouns?" When people ask me for my pronouns, I am very grateful and I see that they're taking the steps. While it may not be very comfortable for them to initially start to do this, you have to understand that it's just as uncomfortable for someone like me to be referred to as "sir" or "ma'am". than it is for you to ask me for my pronouns. It really is a two way street. By respecting someone's pronouns, you are validating their identity. Even if this validation doesn't mean much to you, their identity is something they've likely struggled with their whole lives. I know mine is. When I came out 25 years ago, there were 4 letters: LGBT. So I (somewhat begrudingly)

indentified as a lesbian. It was only a few years ago that I realized I'm actually not a woman at all, at least, not completely. I'm non-binary. I tow the line between having both genders. Therefore, my pronouns are all inclusive: them and they. Using the pronouns they and them are different and usually pretty difficult for anyone who's never had to use them. There is patience from the non-binary and trans community when we see the person interacting with us trying. And this may seem like a small, maybe not even perceptible step, but trust me, for my community, it goes a very long way. I'll always remember how comfortable my partner and I were at a place when we didn't have to feel the jarring embarrassment of being misgendered. It will stay with me because I know how comfortable I was made to feel, and I'll share this with my community. When you respect someone's pronouns, you are validating their identity; and this must apply to both staff and guests. Anyone who is gender non-conforming has likely spent their entire lives figuring out who they are. Respect the struggle. And when you do happen to misgender someone (and we all will, myself included), it's important to recognise it, apologise, and then move on from it. Recognising that you did make a mistake and addressing it is accountability. You

will get better at it and eventually it will become muscle memory, it just takes practice.

Next step to a more inclusive society has to do with one of the most mundane things we do as humans: using the restroom. When was the last time you used a public restroom? Was it such a natural decision that it didn't even cross your mind that you might be in the wrong room? Imagine if you ALWAYS felt like (or were literally told that) you were in the wrong restroom? This is why gender neutral restrooms are so **important.** When you're non-binary or gender non-conforming, or trans, this becomes a massive source of anxiety, for (as I said) a remarkably mundane task. As a non-binary and masculine presenting person, I will quite literally stand between both doors and ask myself two things. First, which door will I be safest in? And the second, what degree of harassment am I willing to handle? I've been very fortunate that my life choices and career have been able to keep me primarily in two relatively queer friendly cities in the United States: San Francisco for eleven years, and now New York City for the last three. These are places that someone like me can feel comfortable in because of the prevalence of my community there. In those cities, I know that I'm rarely the only queer, non-binary,

or POC in the room. There's also a remarkably normalised culture around gender neutral restrooms. These are ways that bar owners, restaurants, and hotels show that they respect their clientele. It also speaks volumes to how much they respect their staff. It shows that they value creating a safe space for everyone who walks through those doors. It removes a culture of fear, harassment, and even danger for people like me.

I was presenting a seminar in **Denver for Sean Kenyon and his** staff at the beginning of the year on these ideas. Sean owns three amazing and award winning bars there, and after my presentation, realised that only one of them had gender neutral bathrooms. Later that night, we were touring one of the bars when he asked me to join him in the hallway. There, I watched him take down and destroy the Men's and Women's signs that were hanging outside the two doors. It was moving for both of us. And I know it meant a lot to his staff and his patrons, too. That was the moment his actions changed from being an ally, and to being an advocate. In a culture with gender neutral restrooms, the queer community should no longer have to be afraid that we'll be sneered at. or mocked, or physically assaulted because of how we look and how we identify; at least not while we're

also doing human's most mundane task. This is huge.

Did you realise there was a subtle

(okay, sometimes subtle) way to

let the queer community know that they are safe and welcome in your establishment? You don't have to be known as a "gay bar" (or brand) to be known as a place that is safe and inclusive. Something as small as a rainbow sticker, flag, or pin, is a huge sign to the community that you acknowledge and respect us. When walking down the street, my partner and I will always recognize the LGBTQ+ flag and note it as a place that shares our values and will be an ally if we need them. Which also means they have our loyalty. It's something that our community at large will notice as well and our loyalty runs deep. A safe space means a place for diversity; diversity in your clientele as well as your staff. The most obvious sign of an inclusive bar, is a diverse and inclusive staff. Bartenders, you have a thing for pins, don't you? Add a rainbow to it; any kind, any shape, whatever you want. The queer community will see your support. You are creating a safe space, where all folx will be welcomed and treated with respect, no matter how they identify. You are someone who encourages all kinds of people to your space, and validates them for who they are. This is how we

create space for the normalisation of

inclusion and diversity on both sides of our bar.

Bars are the center of our social universe, and society is changing. We must create new spaces meant for everyone. Today's bars must be safe and inclusive byways like having gender neutral restrooms, respecting pronouns, and encouraging a diverse staff and clientele. It's most important that everyone feels safe. It's an easy ask, we all want to do it. It's the human part of us. We want to protect others, because it's in our nature. We want our staff, colleagues, and quests to feel comfortable. We want them to know that we see them, validate them, and we respect them. We need to see and understand our industry's diversity. and value those contributions equally. Everyone needs to know that they have value in the place they work, and that their viewpoints and opinions are heard and respected. no matter how differently they look or identify. Encourage them to reach for things they've never thought to do before. They need to be given all the same opportunities and support that their straight, cisgender, white counterparts have been given time and time again.

This is how we reject the status quo. We must reject people who want things to stay the same way, to only serve a small fraction of society. The way the industry was run before is

dead, a thing of the past, and good riddance. Together, we can dismantle the system that was built long before our generation. Better yet, we can rebuild it into a system that gives equal opportunity to all, and welcome every part of society to the party. Bartenders are key leaders of society, whether we/they realise it or not. We are examples of culture, and we can normalise culture. We must normalise the culture of respecting and validating people's pronouns, and their identities. Above all, keep educating yourself, read books, listen to podcasts, watch documentaries to better understand the marginalized people in your space. This is called emotional labour. Don't ask someone else to do it for you. Change doesn't come easy. Start small. Everyone has the opportunity to change, and when you come from a marginalised

community you have to believe that. I come from two. I'm not only queer but I am also indigenous and POC, so the hope for us is that the world and society can and will get better. There's a whole new generation willing to do the work. And if you're still reading this, you're a part of it.

Activism takes an emotional toll on oneself. The fight for justice, inclusivity, diversity, and equity is a fight that consumes one's soul and can easily deter you if you don't keep yourself inspired. I surround myself with the advice from activists both with me now, and that have paved roads before me to keep driving me. One such activist is the late, great, James Balwin. Baldwin once said,

"The place in which I fit will not exist until I make it."



**BY CHRIS + ASH.** 



## TABARA N'DIAYE

I'M GOING TO
QUIT MY
JOB





TABARA IS THE FOUNDER OF LA BASKETRY. A LIFESTYLE BRAND OFFERING HANDWOVEN HOMEWARE AND ACCESSORIES MADE IN COLLABORATION WITH **FEMALE ARTISANS IN** SENEGAL. THE FRENCH **ENTREPRENEUR TURNED** HER BACK ON A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN THE HOSPITALITY **EVENTS INDUSTRY IN 2017 TO** LAUNCH A BUSINESS THAT WOULD RECONNECT HER TO HER SENEGALESE ROOTS. LA BASKETRY'S RANGE HAS BEEN STOCKED AT THE WORLD-RENOWNED VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM AND SHE HAS MOST RECENTLY RELEASED HER FIRST BOOK 'BASKETS'. WHICH HAS SINCE BEEN PUBLISHED IN SIX LANGUAGES.

had always considered myself a risk-taker, just take moving to London at 21 from Paris where I was born and raised. I originally planned to stay in the city for just six months and then, you've guessed it, I never left.

Following my move to 'The Big Smoke', I climbed up the career ladder in the events industry. I loved and still do love events; there's something so magical about working on a project for six months and seeing it come alive in front of your eyes - much like the launch of a new menu or working on a new opening, that buzz is very addictive and my role at Cocktails in the City was exactly just that.

When I started with Cocktails in the City, I knew no one in the industry (well, other than my partner and some of his friends) and quickly had to build a network of contacts in cities across the country from Edinburgh to Bristol and Manchester. This was nervewracking but I fully embraced the new challenge - after all, I have always felt at home in bars, especially as my dad owned his own in Paris when I was a little girl. OK, it might also have something to do with my penchant for a Negroni and a boogie into the late evening.

Changing jobs is one thing but changing career is a big step, especially when I'd worked hard to climb up the ladder as young woman in a country where English was my second language. But four years ago, I felt ready to take the next step as I craved a new challenge. Having just wrapped up a sell-out event in Leeds, my sister, my mum and I embarked on a two week holiday to Senegal, where I still have a large group of family residing. Although I had spent many summers there, that one trip felt different. There was something different in the air. Our paths led us to a small village a couple of hours away from the city where we met a group of women weaving baskets all together. We were greeted with an instant sense of community, connection and joy. That image stuck with me for weeks, months even, and as I stayed in touch with these women, I soon came to realise there was a real market for people who wanted to buy what these craftswomen were making, creating, sculpting with their hands. This was a skill that had been passed down from generation to generation to women in rural villages. A seed was planted and the idea for La Basketry was born. There were daily chats with family and friends about savings, with many asking, 'are you sure you making the right decision?'. But behind all of this, I had an innate feeling, a gut feeling, if you like, that this was the path I was meant to go down.

Ok, so forgive me for sounding all 'Eat Pray Love' right now, but I truly believe we're led to meeting people - as I was those craftswomen on that trip - and if your instinct is telling you to go for something, you should follow that signal and ACT on it.

Taking smaller steps before making the big leap.

As much as it is freeing and exhilarating to quit your job, for me it was a gradual transition. I quietly worked on my business for eight months while still working full time. It was challenging to say the least as there were quite a lot of logistics involved - I could write a whole feature on import, export, customs and freight - but things paid off when one of my products was featured in a national newspaper and sales started to pick up 2 months after launching the online shop.

People often ask me, "when did you know it was time to go?" I knew the time had come when I started to miss opportunities to properly scale and grow the business because of my commitments to my full time job. Side note; you'll also be surprised at how many skills you have developed in your past careers that are transferrable to your new business.

Stay open to opportunities and embrace change.

When you start your business, you'll have a clear idea of how you envision things - congratulations if you find the time to put a

business plan together! I was strongly encouraged to write one myself, but in reality this plan was out of date within 6 months because the market and my vision had changed so much. Don't get me wrong, it's good to be the visionary and understand your sector, but the world is constantly evolving and to stay ahead of the competition, keeping pace with new technologies, meeting customers' needs or simply doing what feels good and aligned to you (hello gut instinct again), you will need to stay open to changes and opportunities that take you away from what you had initially planned.

Half a year into launching La Basketry, I was approached by a publisher to write a book that was released in 2019 and has now been published in 6 languages across the world, including Spanish German, French and Italian. Never in my wildest dreams - and in my business plan - would have I imagined this opportunity arising. This was a project that took me away from the work I'd been doing with the weavers in Senegal and took a toll on the business in its second year. However, it's clear to see now the time spent away from the day-to-day business ended up having a much bigger impact in the long run as it attracted a new audience and opened me up to a number of different revenue streams.

You will fall, but you'll also pick yourself back up.

Which brings me to resilience - probably one of the skills you'll require the most as a small business owner - you'll need a lot of it (plus \*insert your favourite spirit\*). Your ability to overcome challenges and bounce back from setbacks is what will set you apart and learning to dust yourself up after you fall means you'll rise back bigger and better, with a lesson or two under your belt for next time. If you learn from defeat, you haven't really lost.



BY TABARA.



## MARY ALLISON WRIGHT

MY WEIRD

& WONDERFUL

JOURNEY HROUGH WINE





MARY'S BIO, AS WRITTEN BY IAIN GRIFFITHS:

THE YEAR IS 1985: DUE TO LEGAL REASONS. ROLLING STONE IS BLOCKED FROM RUNNING AN ARTICLE FROM AN UNCONFIRMED SOURCE ABOUT A LOVECHILD OF **DOLLY PARTON & TOM PETTY** THAT IS DESTINED TO BECOME A PHISH-I OVING WILD CHILD WITH A TASTE FOR BOMB ASS WINE MADE THE RIGHT WAY. WHOSE HAIRSTYLE WILL FOREVER BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE BABIES FIRST WORDS, "GA-GA", DESPITE THE FACT THAT WE ALL KNOW THIS CHATTANOOGA CHILD DID IT FIRST.

he visceral. Transcendental.
Untethered and unmoored
by such earthly restrictions
as gravity and atmosphere. An
experience so earth-shattering
that it seems to unroot us, pulling
us up away from ourselves,
sending us to float freely through
time and space, as we watch
reality play out far below; forever
changed in regards to what was
previously understood to be real.

These are the experiences we chase; with music, with art, with travel, and with wine.

They can sound absurd to the uninitiated. delusional even, to those who haven't been so moved by the liquid in a bottle. To some it's just grape juice and these are just hyperbolicnotions, and that's totally fine. But for those of us that have felt it, we will be chasing that dragon for the rest of our lives.

My own vinous beginnings open up on a humble scene with a certain primary colored "critter wine" and psilocybin. The night before Thanksqiving circa 2003. it was what I'd call 'one for the books'. Unfortunately, those two things weren't the best stomach companions and a tumultuous hangover threatened to end my future with wine. Riding high on youth and low on expectations, it would be at this point in the story that I would be sent around in a flying phone booth to get my life together and save the future. As

luck would have it, my time with wine didn't end there, but it was with a similar lack of pretense and pretension that I reentered the World of Wine. Skipping ahead a few years in that time machine brings us out of the halcyon days and squarely to 2010 when things in my life had leveled out a bit, insofar as I had parlayed my good timin' ways into a career in music promotion and all that entails.

In Atlanta, GA for a show and not one to pass up some proper cocktails for fortification. I was at my favorite watering hole at the time. Holeman + Finch. where I found myself "getting my mind right". The crew there (all legends) gave the tip that there was a really special tasting taking place at their bottle shop down the street. Not only is that a massive understatement, but that tasting ended up changing the trajectory of my entire career. Trying my best to look like I knew what I was doing (and very likely failing) while a French man around my age poured through his lineup, I (in my mind) elegantly gazed, swirled, and then, sticking my nose in for a sniff before the first taste, tumbled right down the rabbit hole. As my mind struggled to wrap itself around what was happening, I became entranced with essentially what I didn't know, and felt this feverish desire to learn everything I could make its way up from the depths of my soul.

That bottle was Marcel Lapierre's 2009 Morgon and that moment is forever etched into my mind as I felt the intrinsic pull into this magical world of rocks and vines, science and alchemy, the seen and unseen: spellbound by tales of gamay, granitic soils, and the "Gang of Four". **These moments** can spark an insatiable hunger for understanding. Why? How? Where? Who? Since When? A deep desire for knowledge beyond that sip that will course a trajectory into the Wonderful World of Wine, down, down, down the rabbit hole and possibly never to return. It's about chasing these moments. these experiences, rather than chasing bottles.

One such moment came while I watched as a golden amber-hued liquid flowed out of a bottle and I became mesmerized by the powerful aromatics taking over the room. Prodded to do so by my friend. I stuck my nose in the glass and was sucker punched by salty toasted almonds, golden raisins. dried chamomile, mever lemon zest and ginger spice. My eyes popped out of my head (sort of like Christopher Llovd as Judge Doom in Who Framed Roger Rabbit?) and my friend laughed and asked semirhetorically what I thought about it. I tripped over my questions and comments as they tumbled out of mv mouth.

The wine in question was 2004 Jacques Puffeney Vin Jaune and

it proved to me how little I knew, and sent me on a quest of humility to try to understand as much as I possibly could about this faraway land called the Jura, the fabled "Pope of Arbois".Comté cheese, and the traditions and merits of wines aged sous voile vs ouillé. Forever bound to the wonders of Savagnin and the traditions of the Jura, the grape responsible for that moment. I can relate to its existence on the fringe. Far from being a testable variety and with a tradition of lending itself to the Jura's voileaged wines, it's written off by many as too obscure or its wines too cool (like calling a science book "too cool"). But you know what? It is fucking cool and unique and what the hell is wrong with that? If the point of all of it is to expand our minds and barrel down the path of unending knowledge, why set boundaries? Acknowledging the historical importance and cultural significance of a wine while simultaneously writing it off as not important enough to study is creating a Schrödinger's cat-esque paradox that serves no one. There should be no gatekeeper to the path of pleasure and enlightenment.

While the enjoyment of such pleasures is no doubt a privilege, it is by no means one that anyone should hold a key to or set parameters on. Barriers to entry for enjoyment should be burnt to the ground and any sort of wine "community" should be just that - a shared space for this interest

we share. Not a private club with a dress code. Worship at the fashion altar of Mick Jagger? Fuck yeah. Is Missy Eliot your style guide? Get your freak on. Let's weave our inherently unique attributes together with this common thread and build a space that actually serves all of us. That's a club I want membership in. The sum of the moment is what causes the shift, in contradiction to what others might have you think.

Serious Wine People might try to have you believe that you must chase certain bottles. Tally up all of these trophy bottles by their cost, divided by their rarity, multiplied to the power of dick-swinging factor, and there vou have vour worth as a wine professional. These bottles are hoarded, whispered about, hidden under tasting tables surrounded ten deep by arms jabbing their way in for a sacred splash, poured behind closed doors in PDR's. allocated in amounts of ones and twos, photographed like porn stars and shared like dick pics. But does suckling a quarter ounce out of a bottle like a hamster really

But does suckling a quarter ounce out of a bottle like a hamster really make an impression? Or create an experience worth chasing? Not in my experience.

Much of my life is guided by the wacky wisdom of Tom Robbins, narrating my misadventures and informing my nonsensical plans. One in particular, seems to articulate my entire existence in

the World of Wine: "Our lives are not as limited as we think they are; the world is a wonderfully weird place; consensual reality is significantly flawed; no institution can be trusted, but love does work; all things are possible; and we all could be happy and fulfilled if we only had the guts to be truly free and the wisdom to shrink our egos and quit taking ourselves so damn seriously."

Knowledge is power, and learning is cool, and if you're into learning and cool stuff and the universe and pushing boundaries and making quantum leaps and having your socks blown off then you're my kind of Wine Person. Here's to being wild and wonderful, not always easy to understand, maybe not for everyone, but most certainly unique and thrilling.



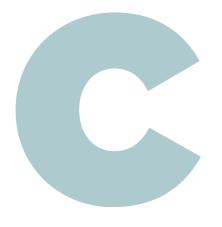
BY MARY.



## CRAIG FUCKING HARPER

STORYTELLLING + TELLERS





PROUDLY AND UNDENIABLY SCOTTISH, CRAIG HARPER PULLED HIS FIRST PINT IN HIS PARENTS' INVERNESS PUB. DESPITE RUNNING AWAY TO JOIN THE MARINES. HOSPITALITY CONTINUED TO CALL HIS NAME AND HE RETURNED HOME TO WORK IN SOME OF SCOTLAND'S BEST BARS AS WELL AS WITH BRANDS INCLUDING BACARDI AND MARTIN MILLERS. A WSET SCHOLAR, CRAIG IS CURRENTLY THE CAPTAIN OF BARS AND PUBS FOR FEVER TREE AND LIVES IN A HOBBIT HOUSE IN CORNWALL WITH HIS MERMAID WIFE AND THREE KIDS, FUCKING AYE.

am a storyteller. I often get asked what my favourite bar is - it was (and kinda still is) Milk & Honey in New York. That's just an answer though, it's the story behind the answer which is usually the thing worth knowing.

"We are all storytellers. We all live in a network of stories. There isn't a stronger connection between people than storytelling."

- Jimmy Neil Smith

Now, while the short answer is accurate, it's nowhere near as interesting (hopefully) as the story, and if you make or talk about drinks, write menus, train staff or sell booze, you would do it all better I think if you consider the story at least as important as just the facts alone, that's if you really want people to listen and learn from you.

Back in 2002 when M&H was opening in London, the press around it was incredibly exciting. A secret bar selling just classics and only stocking things you'd have found in a real speakeasy in 1920's New York. A collaboration between the iconic Match group and an enigmatic Sasha Petraske, who whenever he felt his NY bar was getting too popular, changed the phone number you needed to book a coveted table and shared it with only the chosen few quests he liked. which prevented it ever becoming too busy with those he didn't. It sounds bloody brilliant doesn't it?

As soon as I was able, I made the trip to the new London outpost, and it was even better than I hoped. Drinks, lighting and most importantly the heart and soul made it one of best bars in world. A few years later I made a trip to New York for work (telling stories about gin) and I insisted to my hosts that my first drink had to be in the original M&H, that's how important the idea of this bar was to me.

Well blow me down if it wasn't everything I'd loved about the London bar, but even more so and all jammed into a single room. I ordered a Manhattan to begin my night (I still do) and Sammy Ross, resplendent with mohawk made me the best damn Manhattan I've ever had (Pappy 13 in case you're wondering, this was so long ago that bars could actually afford it) and I fell forever in love with both the bar and New York City. A Happy ending!

But it gets even better. I came out again to tell some more stories a year or so later, and while sipping a Manhattan (again) in Little Branch with Sam, a friend of ours from Belfast who worked (and now owns) M&H popped into the bar, saw us and came over to say hello;

"Sasha is at the bar, do you want to meet him?" "No way" was my reply. Never meet your heroes, it mostly ruins everything. Mickey however insisted, and despite Sasha being as ever the reserved and elegant gentleman, and I as always behaving like a drunken sailor on shore leave, and us seeming to disagree on nearly everything about how a bar works, we became friends and he kindly showed me around his city whenever I visited, and I even got to take him round my beloved Edinburgh in return once. An even happier ending!

It didn't end happily ever after though I'm afraid.

Milk & Honey New York shut, but the bar rose again from the ashes as Attaboy - helmed by former bartenders and now owners Mickey McIlroy and Sammy Ross, and that room remains my favourite bar on earth. Lose some, win some.

A potentially more permanent loss, our M&H in London closes its doors this September. Whether you've been there or not you have likely been influenced by the incredibly high standard of drinks and service that radiated from those three rooms, which helped change cocktail culture for the better across the UK. As I write this, I am planning on making my last pilgrimage next week, I bet you can you guess what I will be drinking with Pierre to say goodbye.

Most tragically though, we lost Sasha five years ago. His influence lives on though far and wide, he changed cocktail culture around the world, and the world is better for having had him in it. I will raise a daiquiri to you next week too pal. "We are, as a species, addicted to story. Even when the body goes to sleep, the mind stays up all night, telling itself stories."

- Johnathon Gottschall

We love stories, from the bedtime tales we were told as wee tots, to nights of Netflix sagas over lockdown, we never tire of hearing them. If you can manage to weave a story into what you do, it will become more memorable to those you are doing it for. If you are good, they will even tell that story again on your behalf, and possibly again and again if it's a real belter, just as I have done for years about Sasha's beautiful bar Milk & Honey.

"Storytelling is the greatest technology that humans have ever created."

- Jon Westenberg

In our world of booze and bars, it's easy to see the importance of the story a brand tells us about itself, which then morphs more importantly into the story we tell ourselves about why we like Mezcal more than Mixto. The story fuels our choices, and our choices then in turn shape the future of bar, brand and industry. A great story can change the world.

Big brands may have weaponised storytelling for mass markets, but they are often dogshit at delivering them to savvy bar folk like yourself, which is great for two reasons. Firstly this means there will always be a plucky, small, windswept and interesting brands bursting through and challenging the status quo in the bars who care the most, and secondly a lot of these brands big and small will need bartenders to deliver the stories in an effective way on their behalf, and so old fuckers like me don't have to leave the industry completely when we can't bend down to reach glasses on low shelves anymore.

I don't mean this cynically at all; I fucking love this trade, and the stories and storytellers are a big part of why. I don't want you to lie about shite drinks, I want you to find the best pubs and bars and tasting liquids you can and learn how to make folk as excited about them as you are. That's what a good story really is, it's an experience you had and an emotion you felt, that you are skilled enough to communicate in such a way that someone else who wasn't even there, can then feel excited too. It's bloody hard to do well though, and just telling people "honestly, it's delicious" is fucking useless as all the lying cunts are saying just that.

So how do you become a good storyteller?

If you're extremely lucky, you may have been born brilliant at it, and if you ever spend time in a pub with Jake Burger or Dave Broom you'll have this rubbed in your face in a most enjoyable way. Most of us though will need to work at it and be prepared to fail before we get better. Don't despair though, as like making a great cocktail, there are rules and recipes we can follow and learn from, which will in time enable us to become ever more creative and truer to the voice in our head.

Pixar, who know a thing or two about telling stories say there are six pillars to making a great one.

- 1. Great stories are universal. You need to tell it in a way the listener can relate to.
- 2. They have a structure and purpose. You need to have a clear reason and hoped for outcome.
- 3. You need a hero. There needs to be someone to root for, preferably an underdog.
- 4. It must reach people's emotions. Be it happiness, anger or surprise, if it isn't emotional, it's not a great story.
- 5. They need a surprise along the way. We need the unexpected to make us think or do something new sometimes.
- 6. A great story is usually simple and focused.

God may be in the detail, but if there is too much of it, most folk will get lost or switch off.

"Long before I wrote stories, I listened for stories. Listening for them is something more acute than listening to them"

- Eudora Weltv

I personally have learnt most from listening and learning from my betters. I remember many moons ago the marvellous Mark Ridgewell pulled together a WSET2 course on spirits, and each category was taught by a world class expert and storyteller. Dave Broom on whisky, **Desmond Payne for gin, Tom Estes** discussing tequila, Tony Hart on rum and Nicolas Faith for cognac. Without coming across as a total wanker, I could have rocked up to just the exam and scraped a pass I reckon, and I did learn lots of new facts but the real reason I attended was to hear the stories behind them (and indeed steal some to use myself), and they didn't disappoint. They helped shaped not only how I understood spirits, they more importantly gave me a much better understanding of how to share that knowledge in an engaging and enjoyable way.

"Long before I wrote stories, I listened for stories. Listening for them is something more acute than listening to them"

- Eudora Welty

When taking to fellow trade, don't make it just a nuclear arms race of who knows more facts, and it also doesn't need to be overly dramatic, Sasha was quietly spoken and reserved in his delivery, yet his story will live on because it was such a great one. Find your inspirations, listen and learn, work on your stories and I promise you

will become better at your chosen craft, and maybe get paid more too. Equally, your favourite pub will be full of storytellers, and I bet even when it's empty and you are first to prop up bar, the room itself tells a tale too. There are lessons all around us, we just need to notice them.

"Inside each of us is a natural-born storyteller, waiting to be released."

- Robin Moore

Now to start you on your journey, the best book I read in lockdown was The Founders Tale, which is also probably the most important book on whisky you don't know about. Pip Hills helped not only bring single malts out from obscurity, he spins a cracking yarn.

I hope you enjoy it.

The End.



BY CRAIG.



## DEANO MONCRIEFFE

### EQUAL MEASURES: DIVERSITY IN THE BAR INDUSTRY



The following article contains language which some may find triggering. We (DISCARD and Deano) discussed whether to include this word, or whether to obscure it. Ultimately, as the author and the person against whom this word was used, Deano has chosen to include it in full.

We fully support and stand by this decision.

Find out more about Deano's work at @equalmeasureuk



FORMER DON JULIO AMBASSADOR DEANO OPENED DALSTON BAR HACHA WITH HIS PARTNER EMMA EARLIER THIS YEAR, THEIR FAMED MIRROR MARGARITA HAS EARNED THEM ACCLAIM THE WORLD OVER AND HAS BEEN NAMED BY CLASS AS THE 2020 COCKTAIL OF THE YEAR. BY TIME OUT AS LONDON'S BEST NEW COCKTAIL. AND THE 7TH BEST COCKTAIL IN THE WORLD ACCORDING TO TIME OUT (GLOBAL). DEANO'S HOSPITALITY CAREER BEGAN IN PARIS AND HAS TAKEN HIM ALL OVER THE GLOBE INCLUDING AFRICA. THE MIDDLE EAST AND MUCH OF EUROPE. THANKFULLY FOR THOSE OF US IN EAST LONDON. HE CHOSE TO SET UP SHOP HERE.

eptember 22nd 2020
"Fucking nigger, I'm going to get you fucking nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger..." louder and louder, with more venom each time the word was said over and over again until eventually my good friend Lauren Mote stopped the zoom session.

'Did that really just happen?' I asked myself, because it felt so surreal, disgusting, vile and full of hate. Surely I had misheard the words, maybe it wasn't as bad as I thought it was, perhaps he only said nigger once but because it's such a horrible word it echoed in my mind? No. It did happen and it was as bad as I thought it was, and the reality has kicked in that I had just been ambushed. I was targeted and racially abused on a zoom webinar session for Tales of The Cocktail while lots of people from all other the world watched me be dehumanised by a racist in the most cowardly way. I felt sick, drained, vulnerable, emotionally empty and then I shed a tear or two before pulling myself together again. Welcome to the world of a black man in the hospitality industry in 2020.

Let's go back a few months to understand why although this situation was disgusting and shocking it isn't actually all that surprising to me that an opportunist racist individual would hijack a zoom webinar. It is sad but true that in our great

### industry these people exist. I hear comments and snide remarks all the time.

30th June 2020: Imbibe live and the first time I had the opportunity to openly share my plans on social media regarding an independent platform I was in the process of setting up called Equal Measures.

The main motivation and driving force behind setting up Equal Measures was to help eradicate racism that exists in our industry through creating a new on-line education platform, workshops, seminars, focus groups and a recruitment drive directly focused on BAME communities which I've planned for spring 2021. If I'm honest the positive response I received after the session was somewhat overwhelming and blew me away, I felt an even greater motivation, desire and passion to make a positive contribution to our industry for people who care about equality in society on any level. There were some people who questioned why I was doing it, was it because of the Black Lives Matter movement etc... the answer is no - it's something that's been on my mind for years because there is frequent racism in our industry that people either don't see or turn an blind eye to. They probably didn't believe me. I hope they do now.

There is much work to be done to change the way people of colour are perceived, underrepresented and treated in hospitality, and I need your help to do it. I am asking you to join me by doing a few simple things that can make a big impact. The first step is recognition which brings me nicely to Black History Month.

#### Black History Month Equal Measures Campaign

Black History Month was first launched in London in 1987, the main aim was for the local community to challenge racism and educate themselves and others about certain historical events involving black people that had not been not taught in schools. Since then it has evolved into not only a nationally recognised event, but also resonates far further than the local community it was set up to educate.

Of course much has changed in 33 vears since October 1987 - when 'pump up the volume' (anyone remember that?) was number One in the UK charts and Margaret Thatcher had been re-elected earlier in the year at the general election held in June, making her the longest continuously serving Prime Minister in the UK. The development of Black History Month in the last three decades has been in part down to a much greater positive impact of black culture into wider UK society, but also fractious parts of working and middle class communities uniting and coming together over common social injustices that affected many people. In short, during the late 80's yuppies, chunky mobile phones, money, city bankers and the upper classes were omnipresent but their time was coming to an end and it was the beginning of a change that would last for a generation. 90's Britain became known as an age of excitement, possibility and chaos, a rise in multiculturalism and alternative media challenged convention and really did lay the foundation for the next two decades.

OK, the history lesson is now over but I think it's really important to understand how those events led to us being where we are today. It's hard to imagine that there has ever been a point in the last three decades where Black History Month has held more relevance, importance or the potential for positive impact and change as it does this year. The reasons are very clear and there is an exhaustive list of social injustices that I can mention which have genuinely outraged anyone who has any moral value and cares for social equality.

### How do we work together to enforce positive change?

I've been fortunate enough to travel around the world visiting and working in some of the best bars in the world. Wherever I've been I've always noticed that if I've really studied the motivations, themes and inspirations behind the majority of cocktail menus there is usually a dramatic underrepresentation of cocktails inspired by people of colour. I've always found this a great shame if you consider the incredible and obvious contributions black culture has made to modern day society.

So, I have a simple request to all my friends who are bartenders. restaurateurs, bar owners, brand ambassadors and in fact anyone who cares about equality. As part of Black History Month 2020 I'd like for you to create a special cocktail that's been inspired by a person of colour who has had a positive impact on society. It doesn't have to be a celebrity, someone who has passed away or a historical figure... it can be a key worker, a friend, an associate, a colleague or absolutely anyone you decide. The cocktail just needs to be posted on social media with the #EqualMeasuresUK. That's all there is to it. I will then repost it on the @EqualMeasuresUK Instagram page and together we can drive awareness around the positive impact people of colour have had that often goes under the radar.

Are you with me?



BY DEANO.



# ALI DEDIANKO CLOSING CEREMONY





**ORIGINALLY FROM** BALTIMORE. BY WAY OF NEW YORK. WHERE SHE SPENT HER FORMATIVE YEARS BARTENDING, ALI HAS BEEN IN LONDON FOR NEARLY A DECADE, FORMER GLOBAL BRAND AMBASSADOR FOR BELVEDERE VODKA TURNED (FAILED)\* RESTAURATEUR. ALLNOW HEADS UP THE UK ADVOCACY TEAM AT BROWN-FORMAN AND IS ALSO MOTHER TO TWIN TODDLERS. AN EXHAUSTING JOB FOR SURE. SOMEONE GET THIS WOMAN A MEDAL! \*THIS IS ALI'S OWN WORD - WE BEG TO DIFFFR.

o one opens a restaurant expecting to close it. And yet, conventional wisdom tells us that the majority of them fail within their first few years. But is it a failure if that restaurant enjoyed both critical and commercial success? If it was loved by locals and kept a wonderful team of people happily employed? I closed my restaurant eighteen months ago and despite these very tangible successes, it still feels like my biggest failure.

I opened Ceremony with my husband, Joe, in September 2017. A neighbourhood vegetarian restaurant, but not a worthy one, that served great drinks with relaxed service: it was our dream realised. We put in some hard graft to get the place open; the site needed a ton of work and everything we could do, we did ourselves, with a little help from our friends of course. Blood, leave the power tools to the professionals; sweat, digging out the garden in the peak of summer; and tears, anyone who's ever owned a restaurant has shed a few.

On our opening night we celebrated a fortieth birthday with a full house of industry friends and family. The lights were too bright, the portions were too big, and the place still smelled of fresh paint, the final coat having been applied only hours earlier. Everything about that first service was ham-fisted, a curious way to describe a veggie restaurant

for sure, but accurate nonetheless. Maligned metaphors aside, the doors were open, and the feeling was great.

We never set out to please the critics; vegetarian restaurants in NW5 without a named chef at the helm rarely attract the reviews. We actively chose not to do any PR, partially due to limited budget and partially due to the fact that we weren't ready - surely critics are like vampires, they can't come in if you don't invite them. But fortunately for Ceremony they did come in, partially because what we were doing was decent and partially because a very famous national restaurant critic happened to be our neighbour - we didn't invite him, but he couldn't pop to the shop without passing our front door. Six weeks after opening we celebrated a review so glowing and so glorious that we could hardly believe it was our little restaurant receiving all this praise.

The next morning our phone rang non-stop with customers desperate for a table when the online booking system told them we were full. Our 38-seat restaurant went from bright, pungent, and clunky to vibey, in-demand, and slick seemingly overnight. People travelled the length of the country to try our crispy duck egg and warm polenta, certainly a delicious dish, but worth the trip from Darlington? I'm not so sure. Another national critic came in; we were more prepared this time

but had more to lose. The reviews remained positive and we were nominated for Best Breakthrough at the GQ Food & Drink Awards alongside some truly outstanding restaurants. We didn't win, but we definitely didn't deserve to; losing to two-Michelin starred Moor Hall was about as good as it gets.

We rode that crest for months; tables were always full, guests were mostly happy, and our team was making money. We were offered a cookbook that never did get written because the day-to-day of running the business was all-encompassing and never stopped.

Six months after opening I found out I was pregnant, and surprise, it was twins! Maternity leave isn't part of the package when you own vour own restaurant, so I made a naïve plan to carry on working right up until the babies arrived. My pregnancy was filled with anxiety; partially because of the higher risks associated with carrying two, and partially because I could feel Ceremony losing momentum. We were no longer the hot new restaurant on the block, reservations were still steady, but the phone was no longer ringing off the hook. We ran promotions, improved our digital presence and got lean with costs. We were efficient and the turnover was decent, but in the restaurant business margins are tight, a few quiet weeks and it can get tricky.

That first summer things got harder

- record high temperatures plus the World Cup meant that people wanted beer gardens with big screens, not sweaty restaurants lacking air con and the requisite TV. We opened windows, turned on fans and completely revamped our menu to suit the sizzling summer. But adaptation is exhausting and the Yelp reviews rolled in, armchair critics desperate for an audience to hear their cries of, 'very pricey, very salty, very noisy!'

Modern convention tells women that we can have it all, the business, the babies, the body, and the energy to enjoy all of those things as well. But as I stood there, eight months pregnant, scrubbing dishes - our pot wash had called in sick and we had no one else - I felt desperate and resentful of the responsibility that comes with owning a restaurant. The babies arrived a few weeks later and I remember sitting on my hospital bed doing payroll 24-hours after the birth, the panic I felt that my team might be paid a day late.

As I stepped away from the business to focus on my new family, the realities of motherhood set in; spoiler alert for the non-parents out there, it's really tough. Ceremony carried on and the team did the best they could with the limited information I had left them before my departure. From inception I was involved in every aspect of the restaurant, from the build to the brand, the menu to the

marketing, jobs I did mostly for free because it was my business and I needed to protect our cashflow. It felt impossible for me to hand over the reins, to ask someone to instinctively understand the decisions I wanted making, and even more impossible for me to allow them to make those decisions for themselves. Beyond that, how could I expect someone to take on a mountain of burden: deal with difficult customers, pander to chefs, manage the Instagram, plunge toilets, and work seven days a week for the compensation we could realistically offer? The business plan only worked when I was there to do the dirty work, for free.

Six months after the twins were born we closed Ceremony. My priorities had shifted and I lacked the energy, the passion, and the drive that it takes to run a successful restaurant. It feels strange to be writing this piece in the current climate, knowing the obstacles and hardships operators are facing, knowing the struggle and determination it will take them iust to stav afloat. The restaurant business is character-building at its best, soul-destroying at its worst; it is punishing and gruelling and to those of you who are making it work, you're made of tougher stuff than I am and you deserve your every success.

A ceremony, defined as an event of ritual significance, is a feature of all known human societies. Essential to survival and deeply symbolic, virtually every culture has rituals surrounding food, from the mundane to the exotic. We eat when we're happy, we eat when we're sad, we eat to celebrate and we eat to survive, this emotionally significant practice can be both routine and theatrical, but it is inherently ceremonious. And whether we love a particular restaurant for the food or the

service, the atmosphere or the design, we return because of how it makes us feel; it's a departure from the ordinary, respite from the everyday. For a time, Ceremony was that respite, until it wasn't. Failure has taught me a great many things, resilience, humility, and chief among them, that I would rather be a guest in your restaurant than a host in my own.



**BY ALI.** 



# NICK STRANGEWAY

FAMILY AND HOME





NICK STRANGEWAY HAS WORKED AT THE TOP END OF THE BAR INDUSTRY FOR OVFR 30 YFARS, BFARDED FATHER OF TWINS. CO-FOUNDER OF HEPPLE SPIRITS. CO-HOST OF KITCHEN ON THE EDGE, FORAGER, PART-TIME CURMUDGEON AND MISANTHROPF - HF HAS HELPED SHAPE THE MODERN LONDON BAR SCENE, EVEN THOUGH HE SPENDS A LOT OF TIME PRETENDING HE HASN'T. NICK HAS 'WON A FEW THINGS. CREATED A FEW THINGS, RUN A FEW THINGS AND OPENED A FEW THINGS', AND NOW SPENDS HIS TIME RESIDING IN DENMARK, FERMENTING THINGS, AND DOING A GOOD IMPRESSION OF CAPTAIN HADDOCK.

et me state this right from the start, emphatically and unequivocally: I love bars. I feel at home in bars, whether it be a pub, a dive bar, an elegant restaurant bar, an avant-garde cocktail bar or a glamorous hotel bar.

What's more, I love the people who work in these places - not all of them obviously, but the majority of them. I understand their work, appreciate their highs and lows and empathise with their hardships. I celebrate their skills, talent and creativity, after all they are all part of what I consider my extended family. To comprehend why I feel like this it is important to go back to the beginning of my long and varied career in this business.

In the late summer of 1987, aged 19. I arrived in London from the provinces to study History of Art at the Courtauld Institute. To help fund my academic endeavours I got a job as a part-time dishwasher in a private members club called Fred's' that was about to open. I had read about the impending opening of Fred's in the style bible The Face and had deemed it an appropriate place for someone as cool as me to work...it didn't take me long to figure out just how uncool I was. I was an awkward teenager, in a dirty apron, washing the greasy plates of an incredibly fashionable and trendy clientele. I missed my family and I missed

home.

At the end of the long shifts I would sit down with the rest of the team and eniov a beer or two. initially I was the outsider and the lowest of the low. The bartenders held swav In Fred's, and they were a motley crew of misfits who all knew each other from previous jobs and were led by the gentleman punk himself Dick Bradsell. Slowly over the course of a few months I was accepted into their band and I realised I had found a new family and a **new home.** Over time I rose from dishwasher to barback and finally to bartender at Fred's, although I very rarely worked on the main bar but was exiled to the basement or upstairs bars. The main ground floor bar was staffed by the same core team that had opened the venue and most would remain working there until Fred's closed after a few years. The pay was great, the customers were pretty cool, and the perks were amazing. Of the team only Dick actually wanted to be a bartender, the rest of us all held what we considered loftier, though largely unfulfilled ambitions. However, when we were at work, we all did our allotted iobs to the best of our abilities and because of the hours we worked Fred's was our home.

When Fred's finally closed we all had to find new homes and the family was split up, but over the years that followed we often found ourselves working together in new bars and we'd temporarily set up home there, with new family members. Time after time I found myself working for Dick in one new venue or another; The Atlantic Bar, Detroit Bar and the Flamingo Club, honing my bartending skills but each time convincing myself it was only temporary and that one day I would get a "proper" job.

I distinctly remember one evening at the Flamingo Club when things changed. Dick and I had been chatting about the cocktail recipes in "The Fine Art of Mixing Drinks" by David Embury. At the time Dick considered this book to be the gospel on cocktail making but one drink in particular - the Bacardi Cocktail - did not seem to make any sense to us. The recipe in the book did not seemed to work the way it was written and so the two us spent several hours after the shift trying to perfect the recipe by adjusting the proportions, using different base rums, etc etc. but without success. Finally, Dick had the inspired idea of adding a little bit of crushed ice to the shaker along with the usual cubed ice we had been using, and suddenly the potential in the drink was revealed. Dick reasoned quite rightly (but without any proof) that the ice available to bartenders would have been different when Embury had written the recipe. In this moment I realised that there was so much

more to being bartender than I'd previously thought, and that if I acted more professionally, I could combine it with the skills of research and creativity that I so loved.

Many years have passed since that evening in the Flamingo with Dick, and I have been incredibly lucky to have worked in some wonderful bars with an amazing bunch of people. Most of those bars I considered to be my home and my colleagues in them were my family for the time we were together. Sadly, over the years I have seen too many members of this family pass away when they were far too young and still had so much to contribute. I try to rationalise this by thinking that this happens in all families at one time or another. Looking on the bright side though, I have seen this business become bigger and better than ever - it has evolved in ways I never imagined possible, and is now quite rightly

a legitimate career choice for so many people globally.

Most mornings, after I have dropped my kids off to school, I first check up on the BBC news and then I check up on my extended family via Instagram. By extended family I mean the global bar and restaurant community, whom I consider to be my extended family. It saddens me deeply to see the livelihoods of these brothers. sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins and distant cousins threatened in the way they are now. I have seen how resilient and creative my family have been in setting up new and diverse opportunities in their businesses and places of work. I am incredibly proud of them for continuing to survive, but I dearly hope that governments around the globe will see just how important the bar trade is and offer meaningful support. Please do not allow our homes to be torn down brick by brick.



BY NICK.



# DISCARD W/ MEIMI, CHARLOTTE + CLAIRE

THE FUTURE OF ADVOCACY





**OUR VERY OWN** PROFESSIONAL VODKA HAWKER, CREATOR OF THE MINI-PEG AND DOGGY DADDY - GARETH EVANS, SPOKE WITH THREE OF ADVOCACY'S STRONGEST - WELL -ADVOCATES, MEET HAVANA **CLUB'S INTERNATIONAL BRAND AMBASSADOR** MEIMI SANCHEZ, DIRECTOR OF BRAND ADVOCACY AT WILLIAM GRANT & SONS USA - CHARLOTTE VOISEY AND HEAD OF NEW BRANDS AT ÆCORN SPIRITS CLAIRE WARNER, THE BEST THAT ADVOCACY HAS TO OFFER.

t's no secret that the bar world has changed drastically over the last few months. The hours after the Spirited Awards winners are announced were usually followed as sure as night follows day by the sight of the world's brand ambassadors propping up the bar at the Alibi, shaking hands and kissing babies, looking to get a selfie with the winners so they can tell social media how amazing and inspirational they are.

But this year things are different, and the new virtual world we now inhabit means the brand advocates have to almost completely overhaul how they get their brands' message across to the bar world as budgets dwindle, distillery trips are cancelled, and even their ability to meet people in person has been removed.

But is that what brand advocacy was all about? Shots and selfies? The chosen few, wearing bright on-brand suits on business class flights, Facebook check ins to the Concorde Room or Ambassador's Lounge, clanging Big Name Bartender name drops, and casually picking up everyone's tab in bars around the world - and were these ever even effective tools in giving back to the bar community, in communicating the brand message to customers? DISCARD spoke to

three advocacy specialists who have shaped some of the world's biggest and most successful advocacy programs in recent years, to discuss what has worked in the past, and what the future might look like.

First things first though, what does the catch all term "advocacy" even mean? Obviously, our facetious caricature of the perma-smiling frequent flying global BA is a little bit of a joke, but what does the process actually entail for the brands of the world? Charlotte Voisey is Director of Brand Advocacy at William & Grants USA. and states that her definition of advocacy is "...making people fall in love with a brand where that brand love transpires into action." This call to action is echoed by Claire Warner, now Head of New Brands at Æcorn spirits and previously Director of Education for Moet Hennessy: "Today, I think it comes down to communicating with impact. And that can take many forms; educational, inspirational, meaningful or entertaining. In order to create a change, to move someone from where they are to where you want them to be - as in desirous of what you are advocating - requires that you make them feel something. Transcend the technical and speak to their heart. Impactful communication, active listening and responding to your audience

needs has that power which goes beyond brand storytelling and taps into something more emotional, and therefore much more compelling."

Meimi Sanchez, Global BA of Havana Club says advocacy to her is "the personal touch between the brand and the final consumer" and touches on the theme of bringing like-minded people together: "it is all about creating a community. Within that community you build long lasting supportive and positive relationships that meet evervone's needs". Voisev stresses that an equally important piece of the puzzle is ensuring the message is reaching the right people: "Advocacy becomes truly meaningful when those you infect with brand love are influential. have professional or social circles of others that look to them, trust them for guidance on what's cool." Sanchez has similar sentiments. stating that consumer spending is shaped by the influence of those making the drinks, and that this link between bartender and consumer is vital: "The trade gives us insight and access to the consumer. I'm a big believer that in order to grow as a brand you need the trade behind you otherwise it's a waaaayyy slower journey. You walk into a bar as a consumer and ask the bartender for a recommendation. based on that experience your shopping behaviour and at home

consumption may be guided."

So advocacy in the traditional sense could be said to be the practice showcasing the favourable aspects of a brand to the right people, to create meaningful emotional ties to that brand - but is it merely the actions resulting from these connections that seem to be the deciding factor on whether the advocacy has actually been successful? By what metrics can a company judge whether a program has worked? "Oof. There's the million-dollar question" says Warner, "bottom line is, are people paying attention to - and crucially paying for - your brand? Is it connecting? Does the message resonate? Are your audience engaged, awake, asking questions? Are they physically and metaphorically 'leaning in'? Ultimately, is the brand growing in volume and value in line with saliency?" Voisey maintains that focussing on reaching the correct people in the industry with the requisite influence is as important as appealing to the consumer directly (ie, bypassing the bartender altogether) can mean a longer wait for results: "Advocacy can be consumer direct, it just takes a lot more time and invariably you need to rely on third parties to provide platforms to reach the consumers. By focusing advocacy efforts on the influential, they in turn influence the

broader consumer so it becomes a more efficient and impactful way to spread brand love. Bartender recommendation is the most direct example of this in our world." The importance of patience is echoed by Warner: "Advocacy is a longterm game. The best examples of bartender advocacy from brands in our industry reveal many years of work against slow, steady growth before obvious success is seen. It is not easy to measure but you will certainly miss the effects of advocacy if it has not been an area of investment historically for your brand."

Sanchez points again to the community aspect, pushing the idea that creating long lasting loyalty is the key to increased case sales down the line: "successful advocacy means loyalty to the brand therefore more menu listings, incremental volume, social media presence and recommendations. I love taking bartenders to Havana, it can be a make or break experience! I have friends in the trade now that I took to Havana twelve years ago who still pour Havana Club and are loval to the brand because of the bond we made during that trip".

So, should those setting up new advocacy programs just be targeting the 1% of bartending? Are the bartending "influencers" - those with the high day rates, shelves of Spirited Awards and similar frequent flier status as the aforementioned global BAs - the only people brands should be focussing on? Voisey doesn't believe so and thinks involving those with genuine love for the industry is key to creating long lasting brand loyalty: "the strongest advocacy programs involve and include the most passionate people that work in bars and restaurants and they are the most likely to respond to the education, entertainment, the most likely to be inspired by advocacy and show loyalty in the future." Warner mentions that the bartenders themselves are not the only ones working in the bar environment that have the influence: "any effective marketing campaign needs to pull on the levers which work with a particular audience. After all, you're trying to encourage someone to see, remember, seek out and purchase your brand in an ocean of other increasingly noisy (and nosy) brands. An effective advocacy programme is still designed to ultimately reach the consumer via the bartender, manager or floor staff who, it could be argued, has a greater ability to influence the consumers than a billboard." Sanchez acknowledges the importance of reaching out to the industry top brass, as they tend to be the decision makers in their

particular bar(s), but also warns of overlooking others in the trade: "you can't ignore the people in front of consumers day to day that are pushing your brand. You need to have a program for both. As a brand you learn very different insights from talking to the bar owner and talking to the bartender – you'd be stupid to ignore that "just" the bartender may well be the future bar entrepreneur winning all the industry awards!"

Success in advocacy seems to be a lot more than simply affecting case sales, even if obviously that is the eventual goal. Meaningful connections seem to be the key to influencing how people will respond to a given program and winning with the trade involves a lot more than simply buying a few dinners or taking people on a bar crawl. Warner pushes the importance of an almost altruistic investment in trade education, to strengthen the bond between brand and end consumer "Typically, advocacy is still relevant because when it's good, it can be highly effective. Our industry is made up of the wellinformed and the want-to-be-wellinformed and we've placed a lot of value in education. We demand brands tell us everything, to be transparent, authentic and to align with our values. We want to peer into the souls of brands we love

to see if they're really worthy of our affection and attention. All the while we're able to connect and create affinity with an advocacy programme, it will remain relevant."

So, where does this leave us now? As the world looks to recover from the ongoing pandemic, what changes are we likely to see in the world of brand advocacy? "The post COVID world looks to be shaking up who the influencers are a little" says Voisey, "those who are important to pass along the brand love and recommendation. Bartenders remain the most important in my opinion but with a temporary increase in people entertaining at home more, or buying direct from the off-trade and through e-commerce, there may be additional or new people in the mix who influence what people choose to buy and enjoy." Sanchez speaks to a more personal touch going forward "I think the relationships you now have with the trade as a brand feel a little more real, less pure business." Warner says that embracing digital methodology is key but that this is nothing new: "I think before COVID things were already changing. We have more information at our fingertips than ever before, so perhaps we're not looking to brands to provide the 101s like they used to. Digital education platforms, gamification

of training and immersive experiences have replaced much of the bread and butter of advocacy. Post COVID, perhaps we'll see more of a reliance on digital platforms to do much of the heavy lifting. The question will be how to bring a brand to life if events and in person activations are limited or even banned? One thing is for sure, advocacy will not look the same post COVID."

Although there is - understandably - a fair amount of doom and gloom in the industry currently, there are still those out there using their decreased resources to good effect. "I am always impressed when brands have actively listened to what bartenders need and want and made that the foundation of their advocacy" states Voisey, "whether that is the combination of wellness and positivity of Bacardi's Rum Shaker program or the community spirited Campari Cares initiatives." Warner adds: "Anytime I see an ambassador living their values which also happen to genuinely connect with their brand values is a good example of a programme that will likely connect meaningfully. Someone genuine, inspiring and who gives a shit about helping me be better. Never the other way around. [A good] example would be Fabiano at Reyka - a great example of someone is educating, inspiring and having fun

while being totally himself.

It does seem the landscape of advocacy may have irrevocably changed in 2020, and maybe the traditional brand behaviours we had perhaps come to take for granted will never return. Business performance is intrinsically linked to how much budget is allocated to advocacy programs and worldwide lockdowns have seen all the brands suffer financially, but is there still a place for the expense account and brand trip even if travel and interactions return to normal in the future? "It is a difficult area to create metrics for, but for me

education and advocacy needs to drive commercial success" says Warner, "It's strangely unpopular and we don't like talking about it, but without commercial success, where does the funding for your next trip to a distillery/winery/ vineyard (delete where appropriate) actually come from?"

However, she states that communicating well with the industry, however it may look post COVID, will always be key to brand success: "Great advocacy can move us in ways that an above the line advertising campaign cannot. Unless of course you're Nike."

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# BY GARETH, MEIMI, CHARLOTTE + CLAIRE



# ALEX IRVING

SO... WHAT
EXACTLY IS
PR?





WITH 15 YEARS OF PR **EXPERIENCE UNDER HER** BELT. ALEX IS THE GO-TO FOR ALL THINGS BAR AND BOOZE PUBLICITY RELATED. IN 2017 SHE FOUNDED COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY LX WITH HER SMALLER 'BETTER HALF' ALEX CHATWIN. KNOWN FOR HER JAZZ HANDS, ALEX HAS WORKED WITH THE LIKES OF DIAGEO RESERVE. LAURENT-PERRIER, W50BB AND SOME OF THE WORLD'S BEST BARTENDERS. SHE NOW **RESIDES IN STREATHAM WITH** HER GRUMPY CAT PHIL AND IS WORKING ON HER FUTURE CAREER AS AN AMBASSADOR FOR KYLIE ROSÉ. \*INSERT JAZZ HANDS\*

iterally anyone I've ever spoken to: "What do you do?"

Me: "PR"

Anyone: "Ah so what does that involve?"

Me: "So you know when you read about a bar to visit in a magazine? Or see a bartender's recipe on TV, or see a drinks brand you should buy in the paper? Well I do that for my clients"

Anyone: "Oh cool! So do you write the articles?"

Me: "Well no..."

Anyone: "So what do you do exactly"

Me: "Uhh..."

I've had this conversation countless times. With friends, family, uber drivers and sometimes even clients. More often than not, people tend to think PR just involves going to fun events, drinking champagne, making jazz hands and generally being very excited about everything. I'd be lying if I said I never did that (I am Queen Jazz Hands after all and have never said no to a glass or three of champagne). But scratch the surface and you'll see we do quite a bit more than that. We're the secret squirrels that are quietly making things look ever so effortless for our clients whilst gently coercing you into choosing a specific brand or bar over another. Sounds a bit

creepy and manipulative when I put it like that so let's try someone with a bit more kudos:

According to the PRCA (Public Relations & Communications Association), "Public relations is all about the way organisations communicate with the public, promote themselves and build a positive public image".

Basically it's reputation management. Making brands, people or venues stand out and remain in the target audience's mindset for the right reasons. Who's the audience? Well it can be anyone... fellow industry peers, Linda shopping in Waitrose, or the uber cool hipster buying bread in Broadway Market. It could even be your internal staff members or investors and stakeholders. If you want people to believe in your brand, buy it more frequently or visit your bar then they need to know you exist. They need to read about you in the right magazines or see you online.

Why does it matter? To be honest I ask myself that many a time - particularly when I'm trying to smash out a document at 1am because I've spent the day answering emails. Really, in the grand scheme of things (highlighted ever so well over the last eight months) we most certainly aren't "essential workers". But a strong communications plan can, and does, make an enormous

difference to businesses when used in conjunction with other elements. At the end of the day no matter how great your product or bar is, nobody is going to know about it if you don't shout about it.

Now that's not saying that you require a spangly PR or social media agency; with your very own team of enthusiastic media types that - more often than not - look ever so similar to each other and tap away on their MacBooks (mine is pink obvs) over their matcha lattes at Soho House. Particularly in the current climate when budgets are beyond tight and futures uncertain, lots can be done inhouse or by appointing someone on your team to manage marketing and communications. Strong brand positioning, regular posting with correct "hashtag-ing" and engagement on social media can all make a huge difference to your visibility. If you are doing it yourself, don't be shy about outreaching to some key titles or journalists directly - they're not that scary (I promise) and above all have strong imagery! Media need it and it'll make vour social media accounts look better too.

But what if you do have a spangly media team? What do they actually dooo?? Because when they're not on their MacBooks with their health drinks aren't they just propping up your bar with a privileged journalist having a free drink? Or sending yet ANOTHER journalist in for

ANOTHER drink? I mean yeah... we probably are, but I promise we would prefer to be at home in our PJs on the sofa drinking squash and actually eating a healthy dinner for once. Making small talk with someone you barely know whilst trying to subtly weave in the ins and outs of our clients' menu / production process / or glittering career whilst staving focused even though we're on our second martini and eating nuts for dinner isn't top of the fun list. Even if we are drinking your delicious drinks and eating your lovely bar snacks. And that doesn't even cover us having to ask the journalist out for drinks in the first place. As one of my team members so eloquently put it recently "This is worse than dating. I'm asking people out and trying not to take it personally when they ignore my invitation".

So why do we do it? For you... our clients, whom we love and (again, if not a little bit creepily) probably talk about on a daily basis more than your parents or partner do. Getting our clients into the press is more complex than it may seem. Journalists are busy getting harassed from A LOT of other PRs. inhouse PRs. and brand or bar owners so we have to work hard to get our voice heard over everyone else. We need to give them that reason why OUR client is oh so much better than everything else out there. To do this, we generally start by developing the wider strategy and campaign which is informed by the overall brand positioning. We then will employ a variety of tactics that will likely involve us showing them your bar, gifting your product, hosting an event or coming up with weird and wonderful feature angles. Or the ultimate one... the press trip - which tbh could warrant its own article entitled "herding kittens".

If you think about every single bar in your major city - or every single vodka / gin / whisky / teguila / rum brand - and then think that between 50 - 75% of them probably have some form of PR. Now imagine you're Alice Lascelles (drinks writer extraordinaire in the UK) hearing from just 50% of the sheer volume of gin brands on a daily basis - imagine how exhausting that is for her! But also, imagine being the PR... trying to make sure YOUR gin client stands out over all the other gins out there so when she is writing that elusive gin feature for the year, she picks your brand over all of the others. Likewise, when Laura Richards (the fabulous Drinks and Online Editor for Time Out London) is compiling a list of the best margaritas in the capital... think about HOW many great margaritas there are out there. Why is she going to pick your drink? Most likely because she heard about it from you or your PR and tried it on one of her visits.

PRs and journalists have a particular symbiotic relationship. We need and use each other

for information and coverage. PRs provide journalists with information that they can potentially use for their columns or features and we (trying to strike that delicate balance of getting our point across whilst not being annoying or like a needy partner) then follow up to see if it's of interest. Surely they must be super excited about this new menu or limited-edition release as much as our client is right? Wrong. Likelihood is, they couldn't give a shit, but they'll write about it anyway if the pitch is strong or it works for their readers. And you have strong imagery - ALWAYS strong imagery.

When a journalist does need something however, as they often work to super tight deadlines, they generally don't give us long to get everything over to them. If we take too long, they will simply go with someone that got their information over faster. So when we're asking for a recipe using blueberries with a 30min turnaround time, PLEASE DON'T HATE US. We're doing this so you can be in the Guardian over another bartender or brand. Trust us, it is also just as annoying for us. We don't want to drop whatever it was we were doing to start madly harassing you via email / WhatsApp / FB messenger / phone for a sodding blueberry cocktail either. But we also want to get you that coverage and we're sure as hell going to try and beat everyone else to get it\*.

(As you can see, we basically spend our lives feeling like a needy girlfriend in some form or another - sigh).

\*To avoid this scenario, it's best to work with your PR to create a bank of imagery and recipes that they can fire out immediately for whatever random request they get. I'm sure we'll still find a reason to chase you for something, but it will definitely help alleviate things.

So what happens when it all goes wrong? When you either fuck up royally or something catastrophic happens that is outside of your control but could affect your brand? Well. vour PRs will be there. Quietly cleaning up the mess as best they can; crafting a positioning statement and doing as much damage limitation as possible to minimise and control the flow of communication. We can also be used - as seen recently - to help drive the news agenda and influence public awareness by submitting quotes, case studies or news angles when something as idiotic as a 10pm curfew is introduced.

A friend who had worked in the agency that handled British Airway's PR once said, "the BA comms team are incredibly good at spinning a negative story into a positive one". After she said that, and I thought back about some of the BA stories that had been published I realised she was right. When that BA flight from Beijing

landed without its engines running in 2008, nobody was heard in the news saying "WTAF, A BA PLANE'S ENGINES STOPPED WORKING MIDFLIGHT OVER CENTRAL LONDON!" Everyone was just full of praise for how amazingly talented and skilled the BA pilots are. Now that's (worryingly) good PR.

Anyway we digress, back to drinks... so the big question - how does this influence awards and IF you have a PR team or do your own PR push, will you win an award or feature in 'that' list. Whilst the Emperor's New Clothes had a point, and yes, if we tell people something is fabulous even if it isn't they may believe us to an extent, we also can't perform miracles and magic up an award or place in a list. Bars have to actually be good to achieve that and no amount of PR is going to do that for you. But going back to the point

of "if you have an amazing bar and nobody knows about it..." of course some promotion - in whatever guise that may be - will assist in people being aware of your product and output.

So there we have it. PR in a not so short nutshell. It's not exactly rocket science and if we didn't have our talented clients to talk about we most certainly wouldn't be here... but when done correctly it can be a pretty important tool within your business model. So next time you see a group tapping on their MacBooks sipping on oat flat whites or propping up your bar with someone they've just met, or they're chasing you over text don't hate us! We're just doing our job - doing our best to shape the news agenda and making sure our clients are seen as the best possible versions they can be.





# DISCARD INTERVIEW POM MODESTE



THINGS ARE CHANGING AT BARCELONA'S MULTI AWARD WINNING TWO SCHMUCKS. POM AND HER PARTNER IN CRIME, JULIETTE 'LARRY' LARROUY, HAVE TAKEN OVER THE REINS AT RAVAL'S MOST **FAMOUS ADDRESS AND ARE** CURRENTLY DEVELOPING TWO SCHMUCKS 2.0 AKA DEUX SCHMUCKS, A CLASSICALLY TRAINED PASTRY CHEF, POM STARTED BARTENDING IN 2016 IN PARIS, AFTER A COUPLE OF YEARS SPENT RIDING THE CITY OF LIGHTS. INCLUDING A STINT AT THE EXPERIMENTAL COCKTAIL CLUB. SHE RELOCATED TO BARCELONA IN 2018 AND HAS BEEN FLYING HIGH EVER SINCE.

# DISCARD: Hi! How did you originally come accross Two Schmucks?

POM: My first time at Two Schmucks was in november 2017, as a tourist, following the recommendation of Sullivan Doh. After harassing them for a while on social media and with a bit of luck, Moe asked me if I wanted the job while I was sitting in the bar having a drink. Nothing beats the right place/right time combo, innit? I met Juliette in Paris, at Glass (RIP), around four years ago. The rest is Herstory.

D: How is the bar industry in Barcelona different to your experiences in Paris?

Paris is a very unique place, with a beautiful heart, strong community and lots of innovation. Anyone who's worked in the industry in Paris knows what I'm talking about and it's very hard to compare. Barcelona is a beautiful city with a very strong bunch of Italians who really know what they're doing and bring a specific sparkle to the community. People here tend to have a prominent barrio life, going out in a close circle around their houses. We are in a bit of a rough neighborhood outside of the heat point and outside of the expected kind of Barcelona bar. But happy to be on the fringe cos it makes us a bit of a destination. Schmuck or Die.

# D: Now that you're in charge, what changes are you making to Two Schmucks - the drinks, music, decor, service?

POM: Beside french accents all over the place, flat jokes and unexpected dance moves, we are coming from different backgrounds, culture and references than the OS (Original Schmucks) and our way of working reflects that. The idea is more to bring more layers than to operate a change. Two Schmucks is Two Schmucks, we moved to Barcelona for this, and are really excited to carry on the project and make it grow.

### D: How do you and Juliette work as a team?

**POM:** We are very similar and very different. We understand each other very easily, and have a super straight forward communication which definitely helps. But she's the

solar and I'm the dark one.

## D: What makes Two Schmucks special?

POM: Knowing both sides of the counter I'd say our way of mixing dive bar vibes and conscience of what we want to achieve. Nothing is left aside. Therefore it's constantly changing, evolving, to be the closer to the current feelings. Hospitality in Two Schmucks is also very noticeable and important. The way we work is also important. We are a very small team, five at the moment. but all involved in the project and getting responsibilities. Also this gnarl we have to get shit done. Times are hard and ideas have to spin faster now. Rules in Spain right now are kinda similar to rest to rest of europe, table service, smaller capacities. curfew. We adapted our offer. We have the chance to count on a wild crowd of regulars that are not always there when we call but they're always on time.

D: Desert Island Drink?

POM: Idk... What's good here?

D: What song do you want played at your funeral?

**POM:** Jaan Pehechaan Ho - Mohammed Rafi Let's dance!!

D: Is there anywhere or anyone in particular that you look up to, or draw inspiration from?

POM: I'm following closely what's going on in Cyprus right now. It's super exciting, lots of dope bartenders opening places - High & Wet, That's Y Bar, cafes and dav-time places as well. The new generation there is so smart and ambitious. Also being a big fan of neighborhood bars I must say I'm really happy to see the general quality of bars improving. Better brands, knowledgeable staff very conscious of the power of hospitality. I will always enjoy a coffee half spilled in the saucer, but a dope drink or glass of wine at every corner is a luxury I'm glad to live with.

D: What are your plans for the future? Other than world domination...

POM: At the moment my focus is on the development of the new menu - a process I've always enjoyed. Finding ways to make my weird ideas be relevant on a menu, mostly. And of course all these new responsibilities: experimenting with new things, learning a lot, sweating sometimes but getting my hands dirty, and being worthy of the entire teams trust.

D: What's your favorite city to drink in?

**POM:** No matter the place if the company's good.



BY POM.



EACH ISSUE (STARTING NOW) WE'RE WORKING WITH AN EXPERT TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS - ABOUT ROUND BUILDING, FERMENTATION, DISTILLATION, CARBONATION, BAR OWNERSHIP, CAREER ADVICE, DATING, FAVORITE JOKES - WHATEVER. FOR ISSUE THREE, OUR INAUGURAL A.Y.A, WE'VE SECURED REVERED TOTC AMERICAN BARTENDER OF THE YEAR 2018 YAEL VENGROFF. HERE, SHE ANSWERS THE QUESTIONS YOU SUBMITTED ONLINE.

YAEL AKA 'YARL' AKA 'ASAP STORMBORN' AKA 'NINF INCH YAFLS' HONED HER CRAFT IN NYC WORKING WITH DEATH & CO'S ALEX DAY AND PEGU CLUB'S AUDREY SAUNDERS BEFORE HEADING TO LA WHERE SHE WORKS AS THE BARS DIRECTOR FOR HOLLYWOOD'S GENGHIS COHEN AND THE SPARE ROOM, YAFI IS KNOWN **GLOBALLY AS A WOMAN** NOT BE MESSED WITH, BUT SOMEONE YOU DEFINITELY WANNA PARTY WITH. WHEN SHE'S NOT MAKING GUESTS BEAM WITH KILLER SPARKLING DRINKS AND HER SIGNATURE MILLION DOLLAR SMILE SHE'S PERFECTING HER TRAP LYRA SKILLS AS AN AERIALIST. YAEL'S PRETTY MUCH THE

HARDEST WORKING PERSON WE KNOW - WHEN DOES SHE SLEEP? IT'S A MYSTERY.

**Q. Do you like cats?** - Eugene Lee.

**YAEL:** Literally just discovered that I do. They crack me up!

Q. What is the best part about the LA bar scene?? Cause you know I miss it so much! - Ryan Wainwright.

**YAEL:** The best part about the LA bar scene is NOT the LA bar scene. I suggest the Tiki Ti.

Q. What are important pre rush mental and physical routines do you find are must do's for you

### (shots, stretch, cigarette, etc)?

- Jooey Deschanel

YAEL: Some form of movement, dance or exercise is always necessary, followed by a cigarette on my way to work. I like to walk or take a scooter to be in the fresh air since I will be stuck inside for the next 8 or so hours. I don't typically start drinking until much later in the evening, usually 10pm will be the first one for me.

Q. Pizza or Sushi or bucket-ofried chicken? - Eugene Lee

YAEL: SHOOSHI.

**Q. Full Recipe for the Disapproving Larry?** - Moe
Aljaff

**YAEL:** You'll have to wait for Episode 2 of the Naked Mixologist to find out.

## Q. What's your favorite 90s movie?

- Eugene Lee

YAEL: Mrs. Doubtfire.

### Q. Which Ninja Turtle are you?

- Eugene Lee

YAEL: Darkwing Duck

# Q. What do you want to be remembered for? - Eugene Lee

YAEL: I want to be remembered for transformation. Whether that be a person, a program, an idea, a culture, or all of the above. I believe that my power comes in transforming myself but more importantly in transforming others. Not sure how this will manifest, but this would be my dream. But if that's too big an ask, I just want people to remember that I loved surrealist prank phone calls, bloody mary's, and dangling like a chandelier.

Q. Hi Yael, I got carried away on a virtual Notting Hill Carnival call and am now finding glitter everywhere how do I get rid of it? - Tony

**YAEL:** Your Roomba will do wonders! I also love to mix in a little fake blood to distract from all the glitter every once in a while.





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