



How's Your Drink?: Cocktails, Culture, and the Art of Drinking Well

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Based on the popular feature in the *Saturday Wall Street Journal*, *How's Your Drink* illuminates the culture of the cocktail. Cocktails are back after decades of decline, but the literature and lore of the classics has been missing. John F. Kennedy played nuclear brinksmanship with a gin and tonic in his hand. Teddy Roosevelt took the witness stand to testify that six mint juleps over the course of his presidency did not make him a drunk. Ernest Hemingway and Raymond Chandler both did their part to promote the gimlet. Fighting men mixed drinks with whatever liquor could be scavenged between barrages, raising glasses to celebrate victory and to ease the pain of defeat. Eric Felten tells all of these stories and many more, and also offers exhaustively researched cocktail recipes. *How's Your Drink* is an essential addition to the literature of spirits and a fantastic holiday gift for husbands and fathers.

How's Your Drink?: Cocktails, Culture, and the Art of Drinking Well Details

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From Reader Review How's Your Drink?: Cocktails, Culture, and the Art of Drinking Well for online ebook

Ben says

A wonderful little ode to the cocktail. Playfully written, with selected drink histories and recipes throughout. Felten writes about cocktails not as a detached chronicler but as an enthusiast for a well made drink and the joy of social libation.

Julie Davis says

#45 - 2010.

I always enjoyed reading Eric Felten's weekly cocktail column in the Wall Street Journal and was very sorry when it recently ended. Luckily, this book conveys the interesting combination of history and drink that Felten is so good at writing. With delicious and carefully selected recipes, naturally! I have tried the Raspberry Shrub and found it delicious.

David Macpherson says

This is so fun a book that I hate returning the borrowed copy I was lent. But I will Ted, I will. The history of cocktails is done so well and informatively, it makes me want to have a drink or three. Well written and funny, hell of a good time.

Jesse says

This short read by frequent WSJ Off-Duty contributor Eric Felten is a great blend of history, trivia, and cocktail primers for the well versed or just interested drinker. If you want to make a drink then any bartender's guide will do, but if you want to know why a drink is made the way it is and how it all came about, this book is better.

Christopher says

This book is a birthday present from my brother. And what a great book it is. It combines two of my favorite subjects, history and cocktails, using a style I love, a wry humor with a few jabs here and there.

To anyone who'll listen, I'll tell them I have created two drinks in my time. The first is a Fuzzy Redneck. I briefly bar tended in the mid '80's and the Fuzzy Navel was all the rage. A Fuzzy Navel is a screwdriver with peach schnapps. It's a horrible thing, akin to an Appletini in today's clime. I took this drink as a cue to create the joke drink Fuzzy Redneck. A Fuzzy Redneck is a deconstructed drink, it is, a shot of Jack Daniels, a shot

of peach schnapps, and a Bud back. Lest you're confused, the shots are not mixed but served in their own glass and lined up in order, Jack, schnapps, Bud.

The second drink I created is a real one and it celebrates the south instead of mocking it. Its called a Dixie Daiquiri. This drink is a fine drink. Its easy to make, you substitute a high quality bourbon for rum and instead of bananas or strawberries you use fresh peaches. Living in the south in the summer can be brutal but this drink is the tonic that soothes and comforts.

So there are my two drinks, but as I read "How's Your Drink?" I realized that created a third. Midway through the book the author discusses the Pink Lady. The drink uses applejack and in reading that it came back to me. When I was in residence hall at Virginia Commonwealth, I was 21 and could buy liquor, while my fellows were still only 18 or 19. I made a weekly pilgrimage to the ABC store to stock up. I would buy Wild Turkey 101, applejack, and ginger ale. Back at my room I entertained a few lovely women and poured them a highball. The recipe was one part bourbon, one part applejack topped with ginger ale. It was a great drink, that really pushed the party along. At the time I had no name for it other than highball. In retrospect, with my re-found memory of this drink I name it the Rhodes Hall after the residence hall in which it was served. I think if I were to make it today, I would use the best bourbon I could find. Wild Turkey is good but there are other bourbons that are much better. Its important to get real applejack. In the book the author cites Laird's made in New Jersey since the late 1700's. I've never tried Lairds. The name of the applejack I used escapes me but it was a Virginia-made product and was the real thing.

Todd says

Great! Everything you wanted to know about the Bronx and other cocktails, including what drinks literary characters mixed. Example: Babbit was a poor maker of cocktails.

Jack says

Such an amazing read! Thoroughly enjoyed both the historical aspects of the book and the recipes and pure craftsmanship of the cocktails presented. Got a ton of great anecdotes to throw around at get-together's now!

Matt says

It's like reading the origins of the super heroes but for cocktails. Also its funny, and not at all like a comic book.

This is a fun way to learn about many of the classic cocktails complete with great storytelling and simple but delicious recipes.

Looking forward to making some shrub this summer.

Sam Shipley says

A wonderful "expanded" compilation of Felten's award-winning columns from the Wall Street Journal. Anyone interested in the history of cocktails would love this book as it touches upon some of the most famous - and not so famous - potables. Aside from the history, Mr. Felten also weaves in stories of colorful characters and episodes that helped to make each drink a legend.

A fun read that I would recommend to give as a gift - but read first.

Sean says

An informative, though not overly exciting discussion on the history of certain cocktails. Felt some of his recipes were misguided, or lacking any creativity. I understand he is following an historic approach to the cocktail formulas, but wondered why he had to do so with such rigidity? That being my only complaint. I did enjoy the book thoroughly.

H. says

This book is a delight! Felten is a true wit and accomplished collector of all the best anecdotes, myths, and literary tidbits about drink. While many books in this genre are meant (as often stated in introductions and forwards) to be read erratically, flipped through, referenced from time to time and possibly never truly completed, *How's Your Drink?* is a smooth journey from cover to cover. Even some of the classic histories are relived here as new, with a master's brevity. There's something about Felten's tone that persuades the reader, even as he reminds that much of the best cocktail lore has a spurious flavor, to determine his accounts as probably the most authentic. Or, at least, the most worth retelling over the next round of drinks. It's as if *The Thin Man's* Nick Charles, after being quoted here teaching bartenders the proper rhythm in which to shake particular drinks, sits down in a seat next to the reader and becomes the ideal drinking companion.

Rob Fisch says

I had higher expectations for this one. At the very least I was hoping to walk away with a greater understanding of the history of certain cocktails and with the curiosity to try a few new ones. Nah, neither really happened. I ended up skipping quite a bit of this book because it didn't hold my interest. Now, if it included a taste-testing cocktail kit, that would have made it much better. :) In fact, if I applied myself more here, I could have made the cocktails myself and read about them while sipping that particular drink. But without a drink at hand, I didn't want to keep this book in hand. It's well-written, but just didn't do it for me.

Audra Jenkins says

This is a fun, funny, and fast read that made me want to overhaul (or at least add to) my liquor cabinet. Great historical and anecdotal tidbits along with classic cocktail recipes. Love the writing which sometimes goes over the top, but feels tongue-in-cheek enough to not be pretentious.

Wayne says

Eric Felten is writing more detailed and carefully researched cocktail history than anyone else today -- his Saturday columns in the Wall Street Journal are well worth following. I was really looking forward to this book, and it didn't disappoint. Well, it did a little -- it's a collection of the columns, spliced together somewhat thematically, and the seams often show. I would rather just have had a compendium of columns. But that's a small quibble for getting to reread some great tales of great cocktail and how they came to be.

Ellen says

I was excited to read this book, and while it wasn't bad, I agree with the review below, I was expecting more. While talking to a bartender at a local watering hole, he pointed me to a book called "Imbibe" which I promptly ordered from Amazon and started reading yesterday. That book is already exceeding my expectations. If you'd like a seriously academic study of drinking in America, I'd suggest the other book. If you'd like a breezy and entertaining guide to making famous cocktails, buy "How's Your Drink?"
