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Cocktail Noir: From Gangsters And Gin Joints To Gumshoes And Gimlets



Synopsis

Catering to lovers of the well-written word and the well-mixed drink, *Cocktail Noir* is a lively look at the intertwining of alcohol and the underworld—represented by authors of crime both true and fictional and their glamorously disreputable characters, as well as by real life gangsters who built Prohibition-era empires on bootlegged booze. It celebrates the potent potables they imbibed and the watering holes they frequented, including some bars that continue to provide a second home for crime writers. Highlighting the favorite drinks of Noir scribes, the book includes recipes for cocktails such as the Gimlet described in Raymond Chandler's *The Long Goodbye*, the Mojito Mulatta T.J. English drank while writing *Havana Nocturne* and the Dirty Martini favored by mob chronicler Christian Cippolini. *Cocktail Noir* also lets us in on the drinking habits of notorious organized crime figures, revealing Al Capone's taste for Templeton Rye, Meyer Lansky's preference for Dewar's Scotch and Gambino family hit man Charles Carneglia's habit of guzzling Cutty Sark. With black and white illustrations throughout, *Cocktail Noir* is as stylish and irreverent as the drinks, often larger-than-life figures and culture it explores. Authors Quoted Extensively: Dennis Lehane Patrick Downey T.J. English Scott Burnstein Christian Cippolini Chriss Lyon Gavin Schmitt Authors Discussed: Mario Puzo Gay Talese Peter Maas Raymond Chandler Dashiell Hammet Authors Honorably Mentioned: F. Scott Fitzgerald Dorothy Parker Stephen King Truman Capote

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Customer Reviews

"You can take the writer out of the barroom, but you can't take the glass out of his hand. Or so says Deitch, a writer whose specialty is organized crime, in *Cocktail Noir*, a companionable pub crawl through the changing locales and evolving tastes of the nation's booze suppliers and their best customers, mainly criminals and the authors and movie directors who immortalize them. Like their fictional counterparts, real-life gangsters enjoy a good cocktail. But "noir characters order martinis, gimlets and brown liquor served straight," Deitch tells us, and the potent Twelve Mile Limit, a smuggled-rum-based concoction popular during Prohibition, is a far cry from the appletini. Although the party drags when the narrative veers into dull testimonials from contemporary crime writers about their favorite wine or the brand of vodka they keep in the freezer, the fictional detectives step up to rescue them. In "The Wrong Case," James Crumley's dedicated boozehound, Milo Milodragovitch, delivers a memorable oration that begins: "Son, never trust a man who doesn't drink." And Walter Mosley's Los Angeles private eye, Easy Rawlins, offers this poetic image in "Black Betty": "Whiskey is solace that holds you tighter than most lovers can. Nor are the photos of authors and descriptions of their favorite hangouts as captivating as the mug shots of actual mob bosses, the profiles of their long-gone haunts and the recipes for strong drinks concocted in their memory." New York Times Review of Books Greetings Crimeziners, it is time once again to uncork the office bottle and enjoy the enchanted thrall of the shimmering golden optics, as we throw back a five-fingered helping of Scott Deitch's boozetastic quaffing companion *Cocktail Noir*. Connoisseurs of crime will undoubtedly know Scott from his marvelously named column Libation Lounge, a regular feature in Cigar City Magazine and his books such as *The Silent Don* a study of Floridian crime capo Santo Trafficante Jr. It was with great pleasure therefore that Crimezine cocktail wrangler Consuela served up Mr. Deitch's delightful tome along with our customary glass of smooth sipping breakfast Cognac. This is an ambitious book and fast with it. We are treated to a mixological methodology of every noirish cocktail you can imagine. If Bogart drank it, it's in. If Chandler drank it, it is in. In fact, this book contains the recipe of every bad-assed beverage you can shake an AA meeting at, and more besides. Given that just about every noir fan you can mention is an inveterate boozehound, one wonders if this service is necessary. But Deitch ups the ante, by giving us a fascinating run down of gangster bars, big screen boozing and favorite crime author tipples. We get the usual suspects of course Hammett, Chandler, and Jimmy Cain. It is no secret these cats were hardcore boozers, as Chandler wrote in *The Lady in the Lake*: "I smelled of gin. Not just casually, as if I had taken four or five drinks of a winter morning to get out of bed on, but as if the Pacific Ocean was

pure gin and I had nosedived off the boat deck. The gin was in my hair and eyebrows, on my chin and under my chin. It was on my shirt. I smelled like dead toads. Dead toads indeed on a Bouchercon morning perhaps? By way of contrast, author Dennis Lehane of *Gone Baby Gone* fame confesses, rather anticlimactically, that he enjoys an occasional bottle of Becks beer. One wonders what achievements Chandler et al could have made if they had forgone their dedication to the sacred sauce in favor of literary achievement. Fear not though *Crimeziners, Cocktail Noir* is entirely devoid of killjoy questioning. Instead we get a breathlessly fast paced super-session of boozy indulgence. Czar of noir Eddie Muller is quoted as saying “Nobody made getting loaded look more glamorous.” He is talking about Dashiell Hammett’s sleuths Nick and Nora Charles, who swill back cocktails like they are practicing for a three-day weekend with Ernest Hemingway and Scott Fitzgerald but he could equally be talking about this crimetastic little book. Like any good boozy session, this book is over too fast. For those unfamiliar with the noir scene *Cocktail Noir* will provide many revelations and deliciously sizzling starting point for further investigations; while more experienced boozehounds will no doubt value this tome as a compendium of crimeish cocktails that will jumpstart the very blandest of mornings. As a postscript it should be mentioned, that the term Noir was coined by French film critic Nino Frank, while talking about the work of legendary author Cornell Woolrich. Many of Woolrich’s books, and the multiple films that were based on them, had black in the title most notably *Black Angel* (1946), *The Bride Wore Black*, and *The Leopard Man* (1943) based on the book *Black Alibi*. In keeping with the Noir tradition, Woolrich died of alcoholism in 1968. - *Crimezine* Deitche sheds new light on history’s most memorable gangsters, noir characters, and the writers who created them at the nexus of their favorite cocktails in his latest book. Cocktail recipes punctuate the narrative along with 100 distinctive photographs of the famous and infamous people and places that have consumed and served up these libations. Everything from Mickey Spillane’s humble Miller Lite, a choice mirrored by his famous noir character Mike Hammer, to Richard Cass’s noir bartender Elder Darrow’s complex, multi-layered *pousse-café* cocktail, with a recipe for real-life gangster Meyer Lansky’s own Meyer Lansky Sour in between is covered in this homage to the cocktail and the people and characters who influenced its evolution. - *Alcademics*

Scott M. Deitche is the author of 5 books and on organized crime, including *Cigar City Mafia: A Complete History of the Tampa Underworld*, and *The Silent Don: The World of Santo Trafficante Jr.* He has also written dozens of articles for local and national magazines and newspapers, including the regular column *Scott Deitche’s Libation Lounge* for *Cigar City Magazine*, a column

devoted to spirits and unusual cocktails. Scott has been featured on The Discovery Channel, The History Channel, A&E, C-SPAN, and both national and local news and radio shows. Scott is one of the few writers who has donated items to the Mafia Museum in Las Vegas, and is a regularly-featured guest speaker there. A high-tech, visual effects-filled true crime travel television series entitled Mobtown America, based on Scott's popular walking tours of Mafia sites, has just started being shopped by Big Machine Productions. Scott lives in St. Petersburg, FL. with his family. Scott's favorite cocktail is the Negroni.

Perfect

Great cocktail recipes and tales of old mob hangouts from major cities across the United States. Loaded with cool photos from prohibition, this book will compliment any bar or crime library.

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