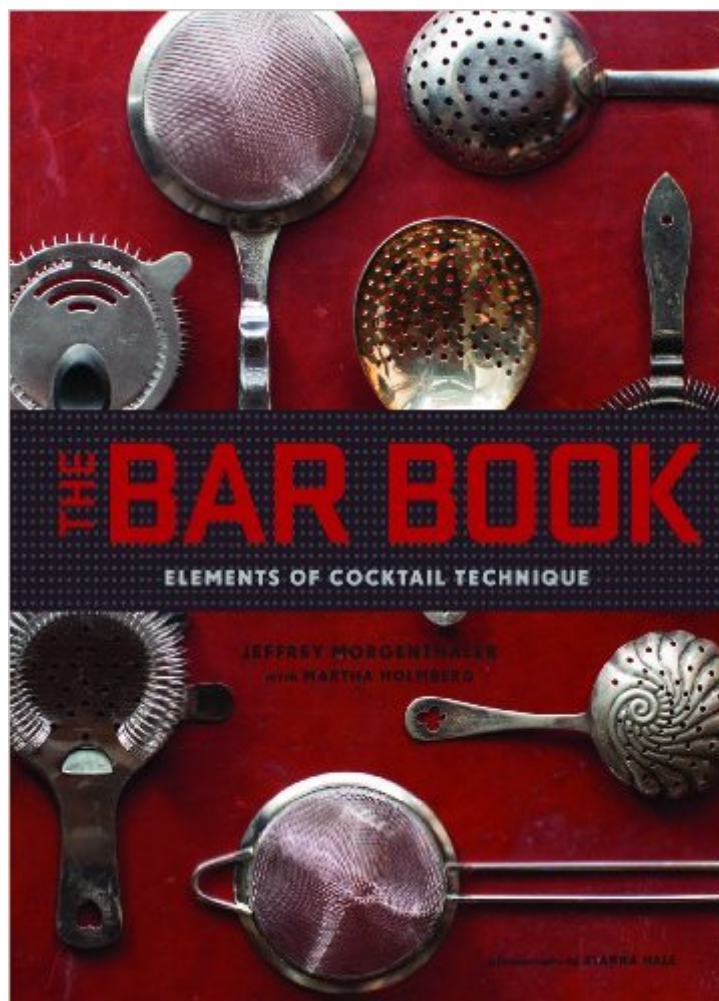


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The Bar Book: Elements Of Cocktail Technique



Synopsis

Written by renowned bartender and cocktail blogger Jeffrey Morgenthaler, *The Bar Book* is the only technique-driven cocktail handbook out there. This indispensable guide breaks down bartending into essential techniques, and then applies them to building the best drinks. More than 60 recipes illustrate the concepts explored in the text, ranging from juicing, garnishing, carbonating, stirring, and shaking to choosing the correct ice for proper chilling and dilution of a drink. With how-to photography to provide inspiration and guidance, this book breaks new ground for the home cocktail enthusiast.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There's "Setting the Table" by Danny Meyer, to learn about being truly hospitable. There's "The Fine Art of Mixing Drinks" by David Embury, to learn about the theory and practise of mixology. And now there is "Bar Book" by Jeffrey Morgenthaler*. I've trained about 60,000 bartenders in 60-odd (sometimes very odd) countries in the last 15 years. I've founded Europe's largest bar school as well as an award-winning craft cocktail bar, and if I could go back in time I would give Jeffrey's book to each and every student I've ever had. As it is, I will give it to every student I have from now on. Jeffrey's research, insight and experience have resulted in a book that will shave years off the time needed to master drink making, leaving more time for professionals to concentrate on creativity and hospitality, and for interested Cocktaillians** to concentrate on seducing your neighbours' wives (and husbands) at the excellent cocktail parties you will henceforth be able to effortlessly throw. This is where you click "buy now". Now!*

Disclosure: Jeffrey is a friend and contemporary of mine, but

such a cheap, thoughtless bastard that not only did he not think to offer me a financial inducement in return for a positive review, I even had to buy my own copy of this annoyingly excellent book.**
Cocktailian = cocktail equivalent of a foodie.

I recently set up a home bar and have been looking for guides that would show the ins and outs of preparing quality cocktails. There seem to be a lot of books out there with recipes, but none of them really get down to the fundamentals of technique. I have even looked into professional bar-tending classes, but they seem to be inconvenient and I suspect they focus as much on customer issues and how to crank out the drinks. I typically only have one drink a night: I want it to be a good one! This book truly delivers. It is beautiful with magnificent photos, it's the right size to sit on a bar shelf and, most importantly, it really gets down to the details of technique. A good example is the chapter on shaking... About a week ago (before buying this book) I cracked the glass part of my Boston Shaker when trying to release it. It made me realize that I really had no idea how to deal with shaking a cocktail in general. Then along comes Morgenthaler's chapter on shaking. He starts by listing (in detail) the different shakers and how they can be used. He describes (in detail) the brands and qualities of the various shakers and what characteristics you should look for in each type (heavy gauge vs. light gauge steel for example). He then continues with how to grip the Boston Shaker (in detail - are you seeing a pattern yet?) and even how to practice shaking (he has his trainees use rice in the shaker). In short, this is EXACTLY the sort of information I had been looking for. The book is all about the technique that creates a truly wonderful cocktail. Yes, it includes some great recipes (more can be found on the author's blog) and, yes, it has great pictures and the explanations are well written. But most of all it gets down to the details that you could probably only get if you had a pro working alongside you. I suspect that there is a lot of great information in this book for even for professional bartenders, but it remains very accessible. I can guarantee that the pages of my copy will soon be stained with various bitters, spirits and juices.

When Jeffrey Morgenthaler states that the difference between art and craft is the difference between creating something unique and recreating the same thing, flawlessly, over and over again, you begin to understand his approach to bartending. It's "aiming for the unattainable goal of pure perfection... [T]o those of us who enjoy that sort of thing, it's a Zen practice." The three elements of cocktails are recipes, ingredients, and technique. This book is entirely about technique: making your drinks look better and taste better, and developing your flair for showmanship behind the bar. Not the Tom Cruise bottle-flipping, poetry-spouting kind of showmanship, but the proper ways of stirring,

shaking, zesting, and juicing; of making, storing, and handling ice; making syrups and infusions, arranging garnishes. As you can imagine, this is a pretty daunting course of study, and I haven't even mentioned the section on measurements: speed pouring, free pouring, batching drinks for multiple guests, and -- gasp -- blind pouring exact measures. Morgenthaler is such a lively, engaging writer that he makes this technical manual interesting even to casual cocktail enthusiasts; if you're planning on mixing drinks for a living, this book just became part of the syllabus.

If you like to mix a nice drink for yourself or guests, but haven't spent a lot of time in really good bars closely studying the world's best bartenders, you will want this book. I have never seen anything even close regarding such "nuts-and-bolts" details of building a fine cocktail and am enjoying it immensely. My compliments to the author for an absolutely brilliant compendium, beautifully illustrated and engagingly written. The range and depth of the information presented (including background, theory, techniques, options, recommendations) is just right for the home mixologist looking either to get started or to take his/her game to the next level. I imagine a professional bartender looking to broaden the scope of his/her practice would find it very useful as well. Very, very useful!

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