

TI ADELAIDE MARTIN
and LALLY BRENNAN

PROPRIETORS OF COMMANDER'S PALACE

In the Land of
Cocktails

RECIPES and ADVENTURES
FROM THE COCKTAIL CHICKS

In the Land of Cocktails

Ti Adelaide Martin and Lally Brennan

Illustrations by Tim Trapolin

 HarperCollins e-books

**For bartenders everywhere who care about
well-made cocktails.**

We also want to dedicate this book to our beloved city of New Orleans. New Orleanians have shown a courage and resilience even we did not know existed beneath your head-strong joie de vivre. We wouldn't trade being of and from New Orleans for any other location on earth. This one is for you.





Contents

[Foreword](#)

[Introduction](#)

[In the Land of Cocktails](#)

[Classic Cocktails](#)

[Bubbly and Fizzes](#)

[Winter Warmers](#)

[Summer Refreshers](#)

[Eye-Openers](#)

[The After Party](#)

[Coups de Milieu](#)

[The Cocktail Pantry](#)

[Source Guide](#)

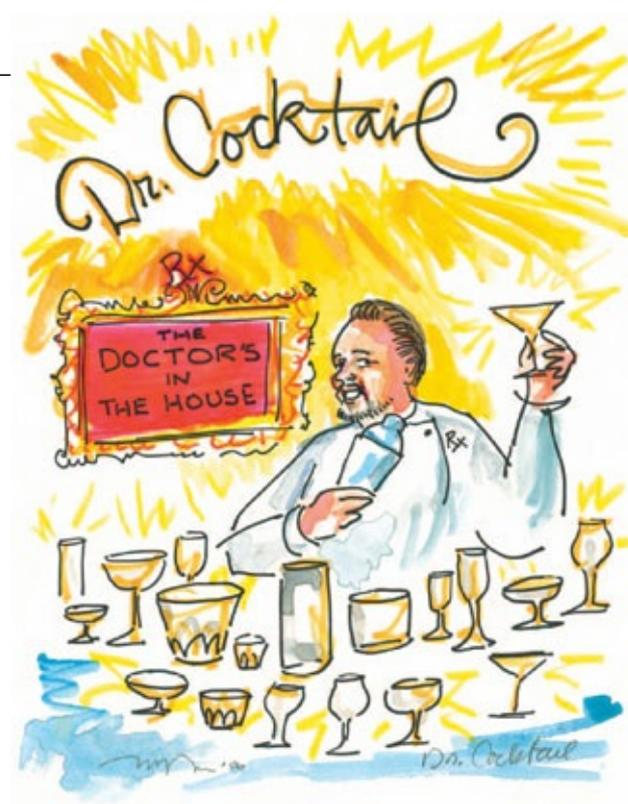
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[Credits](#)

[Copyright](#)

[About the Publisher](#)



Foreword

Your host chills your glass with ice as he reverently prepares your special drink. You watch as he carefully swirls the green-hued Herbsaint, coating the inside of the glass with faint color. He gravely measures the other requisite ingredients into an iced cocktail shaker, briskly agitating the mixture just long enough for white frost to form on the metal. Into your waiting glass he strains the potion. The pith is carved from the lemon peel to eliminate that extra nip of bitterness, and the peel is twisted with a flourish into your drink. As the first sip kisses your taste buds, you begin to fully grasp the history, the knowledge, the ritual, and the *heart* that go into making your Sazerac, the Godfather of all New Orleans cocktails.

Maybe in other towns they drink rum and Coke or vodka and Red Bull, but here in New Orleans we drink cocktails—elegant, well-made cocktails. You know that contrary to its reputation as represented by the drunken masses of tourists and revelers wandering Bourbon Street, New Orleans is truly the home of civilized drinking. Yet when away, you find yourself so often disappointed by the cocktails you get, you stick to wine by the glass until you gratefully return home...home to the land of cocktails.

Drinking with our guides, Ti Adelaide Martin and Lally Brennan, is always an experience. It's their Brennan blood and their New Orleans heritage. These gals were raised right with both manners and commanding individuality. Take Ti for instance. Tell a savvy local that you know Ti, and you'll get this response: "That Ti, she's such a shrinking violet" with a wide grin that says "Ti Martin: just try and keep up!" She follows right in the footsteps of her Aunt Adelaide, of whom you will read about in these pages. "Joie de vivre" describes Ti in her depressed moments.

Lally balances her cousin Ti with unfailing liveliness, wit, and warmth, the charms of the old South. One might be inclined to invoke Tennessee Williams when encountering Lally. They both pass my smart test, too: Smart means always getting the joke. And they do. It's easy when you meet them to feel immediately right at home, so gracious are they. Make no mistake, however; with a sixty-year heritage of running popular, sophisticated, and successful eating and drinking establishments, they are restaurant royalty.

Yet these Brennan cousins are every bit as likely to talk about (and to) you as they would talk to and about their celebrity friends, because they love people and they love fun. All the while, they are offering you sublime food and drink.

Cocktails have always been an intrinsic part of the culture of New Orleans. Drinks and food just go together, like laughter and happiness. I remember having brunch at Commander's Palace, feeling tad guilty at having a Brandy Milk Punch at eleven o'clock in the morning. In came a family. Junior ordered a Ramos Gin Fizz. Mom had Champagne. Dad got a Sazerac, and Grandma went straight for the double scotch on the rocks.

I ordered a second Milk Punch.

You are about to get family lore, stories, recipes, and advice from a unique perspective that can come only from Ti and Lally. Treasure it. It's a given that these two would author their own cocktail book; just a little shrinking violet of a cocktail book—if you know what I mean.

—Ted Haigh

Introduction

Make yourself a promise. And while you're at it, make us one, too. The next time you are about to order or make your usual cocktail, order or make a *new* one. You don't order the same dish every time you go out to eat, do you?

You read about food, you experiment in your kitchen, you go to the newest restaurants, you watch Food TV for crying out loud! So why do you keep ordering Cosmopolitans or a scotch and water? There is a world of flavor-packed, subtle, intriguing, silly, serious cocktails out there. You have so much less on the line when you gamble on a new drink—\$6 to \$11 (even less at home) versus an entrée or an entire meal in a new restaurant.

As in the food world, when it comes to forward-thinking dishes, independent restaurants and bars are leading the way. When you come to Commander's Palace, if you don't try an Absinthe Suisse at brunch or a Tequila Mockingbird 2 before or after dinner, you are missing out. When at good restaurants anywhere, look at their cocktail menu and ask for advice. We remember having our first Dark and Stormy in a New York restaurant—love at first sip.

As you try new cocktails, inquire and insist that the bartenders use fresh juices and top-shelf ingredients. Ask them to tell you how they are going to make your Old-Fashioned before they make it and watch them make it whenever possible. Let them know you know how to make a cocktail properly. Then praise them and frequent the establishments that take the art of cocktail making seriously, but still maintain their sense of humor about cocktails—and everything else.

We have studied cocktail making and cocktail drinkers from every angle, and understand why more people don't order or make cocktails. Most of the time, they're *awful*. There—we said it!

Too often the cocktails, made by your own hand or others, are too sweet, too bitter, too strong, just too *too*. Cocktail making is easy to learn but hard to master, because it is all about balance and quality ingredients; balance comes first, and it takes practice. What's more, you have to train your palate to enjoy different cocktails for different occasions or moods. Chances are you didn't like your first sip of wine or beer, did you? You experimented with different grapes and brands. Hopefully you still do.

So what we want to do in *In the Land of Cocktails* is to tell about the history of some great cocktails and stories of how we and other members of our family discovered them. We want to share our culture of cocktails with you. We want you to say, "Oh, let's try a Brake Tag tonight and Champagne Cocktails the next time we have guests."

We share local lore, legends, people, and family stories to put into words how we feel about cocktails, food, good company, and our New Orleans way of life.

As a matter of introduction, here are a few of those characters who enliven these pages: Lu, Doc and Dale.

Bar Chef Lu Brow hails from Shreveport. She has been with us for several years now at Café Adelaide and the Swizzle Stick Bar. ~~Since the day we met she has proven herself a true cocktailian.~~ Lu believes in the integrity of each cocktail, each time. They must look as good as they taste—and they must taste perfect. Lu lost everything in Hurricane Katrina but was back presiding with authority and an air of naughtiness over the Swizzle Stick Bar before the restaurant even reopened. Lu tested and retested every drink in the book with us; we are forever grateful and we expect our research to go on together forever—all the way to the Saloon in the Sky.

Doc is Ted Haigh, a.k.a. Dr. Cocktail, author of *Vintage Spirits and Forgotten Cocktails*, as well as founder of the Museum of the American Cocktail. We got to know Doc through the museum, but when he ended up living in New Orleans for four or five months as head graphic designer for a major movie company, we became fast friends. Doc's knowledge of the history of cocktails is unsurpassed. His larger-than-life personality is right up our alley, and we think of him as truly a part of our family.

Dale DeGroff is King Cocktail. He developed and honed his extraordinary cocktail techniques at New York's Rainbow Room. His years of knowledge and experience are summed up in his book, *Craft of the Cocktail*. As a food and beverage industry insider, Dale has a pulpit from which he has preached and challenged American bars and restaurants to take cocktails seriously, and to make them well with fresh juices and without shortcuts. Dale and his wife, Jill, are the perfect ambassadors of the cocktail world, along with being cofounders of the Museum of the American Cocktail, and our very dear friends.

Cocktails may well be New Orleans's most important contribution to the world. Would we ever have had jazz but for cocktails? Who knows? But who would want to live without either one? To understand how New Orleans became so important to the development of cocktails three things stand out. Sugar came to America through the port of New Orleans in massive quantities, and was later grown in Louisiana, before anywhere else in this country. Our port was the first to receive absinthe from Europe. Apothecary Antoine Peychaud was busy mixing healing potions, including his own bitters concoction, in the French Quarter. This triumvirate of facts collided in the perfect storm for cocktail history: the Sazerac, the original cocktail concocted of an alcohol, bitters, and sugar syrup.

New Orleans has always been a lively mix of cultures coping with heat, floods, and pestilence. The European and African cultures have histories of celebrating life's occasions with grand meals accompanied by wines and alcohols of various sorts. Cocktails became an integral part of life in the 1800s. The chapters of that history were visible in our upbringing. At home our parents had cocktails before and wine with dinner every night of the week, not just on weekends. We were grown-ups before we discovered that the rest of America didn't do that. And, as a result, we were taught to make drinks at a young age and taught also how to drink responsibly.

We were enamored with the exciting culture of cocktails. Who wouldn't be? The shakers, the mixers, the jiggers, the hand-chipped ice, the exotic flavors, the jewel-like liqueurs.... We thought it was all chic and smashing—and still do. We have our own collection of cocktail shakers, which we display at our restaurant Café Adelaide and the Swizzle Stick Bar.

Join our revolution and demand well-made cocktails at bars everywhere. We hope this visit to the Land of Cocktails has you mixing, shaking, and stirring a whole new world of flavor and style and fun. And, when in New Orleans, do order a cocktail—a well-made cocktail.





[In the Land of Cocktails](#)



We begin our trip to the land of cocktails with a selection of drinks that hail from New Orleans, starting with the Sazerac, the granddaddy of all cocktails. Some are revered, like Brandy Milk Punch, which is de rigueur for Mardi Gras as well as a welcome eye-opener at brunch, and Ramos Gin Fizz, a frothy concoction of gin, an egg white, and orange-flower water. Others are new classics we've created to celebrate friends, family, and our beloved city of New Orleans. The Adelaide Swizzle honors our broke-the-mold Aunt Adelaide. Sometimes it seems that we speak a different language down here from the rest of America, which we celebrate with the Neutral Ground and the Brake Tag. And to show that not even a hurricane will keep us from our cocktails, the Whoa, Nellie! was invented at our first Mardi Gras after Katrina.

 The Mardi Gras crown signifies a drink invented by our group that you won't find in other drink books.

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