

Are You Afraid of the Dark Rum? and Other Cocktails for '90s Kids

Sam Slaughter

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Sam Slaughter's 90s-themed cocktail book *Are You Afraid of the Dark Rum?* is full of delicious drinks, nostalgia, and just the right amount of corny humor.

Puns and plays-on-words are abundant in this book. It induces strong 90s flashbacks with its myriad of pop culture facts and teems with groan-inducing laughs. It begins with a basic tutorial on glassware, bar tools, and techniques—as any cocktail book should—followed with a fantastic array of themed recipes, from Saved by the Jell-O to The Y2K and the I'll Never Let Yuzu Go, Jack. Only a page on metric equivalents seems to be unnecessary in this pert, well-thought out book.

Aptly named cocktails pay homage to television sitcom actors, cartoon characters, and boy bands, accompanied by trivia from the decade that proves a fun addition and a reminder of less pretentious periods of cocktail making. All are pictured in appropriate glassware, featuring vibrant colors and well-made garnishes. Amy Ellis's photography is a perfect fit for the theme.

Some recipes are as eye-rolling as the book's humor, but these are crowd pleasing and easy-to-execute drinks. A handful of ingredients and tools seem out of place in the mix, including a smoking gun and Ancho Reyes, both of which have minimal applications in home bar settings. But there is an excellent variety of ingredients, techniques, and spirits included, and the final result is approachable for a range of drinkers.

In the delightful appendix, even more ingredients are presented for an absolutely ideal 90s dance party. 90s-themed drinking games and one hit wonder playlists are the cherry on top of this corny and delicious cocktail book.

Ridiculous and overdone—exactly as intended—*Are You Afraid of the Dark Rum?* is literally refreshing in its approach to reliving the 90s, especially within the current mixology-obsessed culture.

KATIE ASHER (July/August 2019)

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