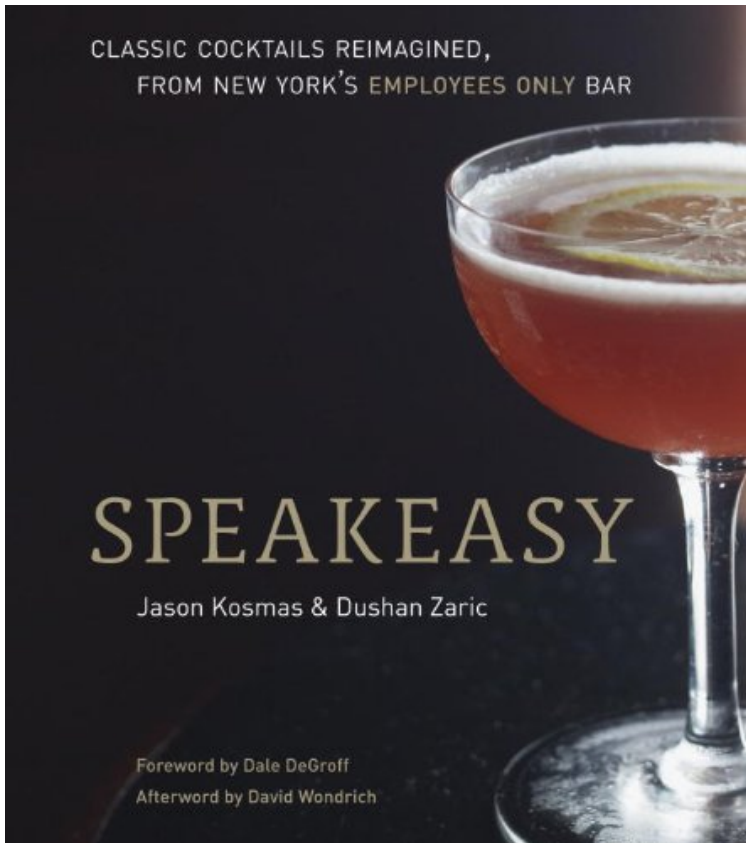


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# Speakeasy: The Employees Only Guide to Classic Cocktails Reimagined



*Par Jason Kosmas, Dushan Zaric*  
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**Speakeasy: The Employees Only Guide to Classic Cocktails Reimagined** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Speakeasy: The Employees Only Guide to Classic Cocktails Reimagined:

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurTime-honored cocktails like the New York Sour and the Sidecar were born during the era of Prohibition, the blessedly bygone social experiment that turned drinking into an underground adventure. In those days, hard beverage options were usually made with homemade hooch and flavorings of dubious origin and quality. Thankfully, a cocktail renaissance has emerged in many of todays bars, where inventive drinks showcase both the artistry and craft of bartending. At their moody and atmospheric West Village bar-restaurant Employees Only, master mixologists Jason Kosmas and Dushan Zaric can regale you with colorful tales of cocktail originsor just pour you a mean drink. In Speakeasy, Kosmas and Zaric take their inspiration from traditional favorites, then use the finest spirits, the freshest ingredients, and a good measure of reverence for their craft to elevate the mixed drink to artisanal status.More than 80 imaginative libations that riff on the classics are showcased in this one-of-a-kind collection. Recipes emphasize fresh fruits and herbs, homemade syrups and infusions, and a careful balancing of flavors, with a mind toward seasonality. A Ginger Smash is offered in four different versions: kumquat, pineapple, pear, or cranberry, depending on the time of year. The Millionaire becomes the Billionaire with the addition of homemade grenadine and 107-proof bourbon. And the South Side becomes the West Side by replacing the gin with sun-

kissed Meyer lemoninfused vodka. With the specter of Prohibition firmly in the past, Speakeasy shares recipes for the choicest potent potables, reimagining the finest drinks of yesterday for today's thirsty imbibers.

**From the Hardcover edition.**

**Extrait Introduction**

In late 2001, a small group of bartenders at the most popular bars in downtown Manhattan saw the writing on the wall: chefs in the vanguard were beginning to use ingredients that they touted on their menus as homemade, handcrafted, and organic, and the public was paying attention. The bartenders saw change coming to their craft, too. The days of the vodka Martini were numbered. So they launched a project to change the way people were drinking in their town. Little did they know that they would help destroy bottle service, bring back classic cocktail culture, and singlehandedly revive the mustache.

**Paving the Way for Classic Cocktails**

Our story begins in 1998, when we were young, eager bartenders behind the wildly fashionable bar Pravda, located in Manhattan's ber-hip SoHo neighborhood. Pravda, a Soviet Russian-themed subterranean vodka and Martini bar, was envisioned by restaurant mogul Keith McNally and opened in 1996 under the tutelage of Dale DeGroff, the most influential figure in the rebirth of the cocktail. Pravda was one of the first bars to take the leap into making drinks with fresh juices and Boston shakers. Ironically, the classic American bar style was the heart of the communist-themed lounge. Pravda's cocktail menu was heavy on vodka, with more than nine homemade infusions on the menu and more than a hundred frozen vodkas from all over the world. But the cocktails incorporated fresh and seasonal ingredients and were executed in the classic style of bartending, focusing on technique and balance of flavor. Any drink on the menu made with vodka served up could be called a Martini. This opened up enormous possibilities of what could go into a Martini. Pravda set a new level of quality and expertise that few other restaurants could live up to.

Your then-young, fearless authors worked at Pravda, and we quickly became friends. After closing, we would sit in big armchairs and share stories, drinks, ideas, and laughter, unwinding from another frenzied evening of bartending. Before long, we were the major contributors to the direction of Pravda's cocktail menu. The timing coincided with the emergence of a new American interest in good food. The nation was getting its first taste of the Food Network, and chefs were reaching celebrity status. People became obsessed with writings and publications about food, and the Internet made information accessible to all those who sought it. In the world of mixology, the Martini was the perfect medium to incorporate strange and exotic fruits and herbs not seen before in cocktails. The moniker Martini gave consumers a comfort level in ordering these wild new concoctions. The Martini became the gateway drug that eventually pulled people into the world of classic drink making—a vehicle for introducing then-uncommon ingredients such as pomegranates, blood oranges, and kumquats. We crafted our own syrups and revised the existing recipes with all-natural ingredients. The infusions once made with sweetened sulfured dried fruit now contained both fresh and dried organic produce. After working at Pravda for more than a year, Dale DeGroff held a follow-up training there. Dale is the godfather, the James Brown of drink making. Dale spoke of the history of the cocktail and instilled in us a pride to treat our jobs as a profession. He described it as a centuries-old craft handed down from generation to generation. He gave us an original copy of the *How to Mix Drinks or the Bon Vivant's Companion*—the first-ever cocktail book, published in 1862 by the father of our profession, the Professor, Jerry Thomas. We had an epiphany as to how many generations had delved into its secrets. It compelled us to research the foundations of cocktail making and resurrect long-lost ideas. As there was no demand for such books at the time, we easily created our own library, thanks to eBay and used bookstores. We lined up our books chronologically to make comparisons, draw conclusions, and witness the evolution of the cocktail. Dale continued to periodically instruct us over the next few years as we developed our own style.

**Crafting homemade ingredients like the masters of old became our focus. Moving beyond one-note cocktails, we raided the kitchen to develop intricate flavors. We began to realize that vodka as a spirit was preventing our cocktails from realizing their full potential. It simply does not contribute any flavor. We reached for gin, brandy, and rye whiskey and our drinks came bursting to life. However, these cocktails clearly had no place in a vodka Martini bar and now, neither did we.**

**Change In the City**

The real push for us to open our own bar came after September 11, 2001. Before that date, New York was an exciting city with an air of perpetual adolescence, and we were reaping the benefits of all this lifestyle had to offer. After the initial shock of the terrorist attacks, the downtown New York restaurant and nightlife scene seemed to change. People contend that America lost its innocence that day, but it also lost its naughtiness. Nightlife in the city became sporadic, sober, and dull. Destinations that used to be open until 4 a.m. were closing their doors early; only a handful of restaurants stayed open past midnight. New York's restaurant employees were the ones most affected by this. Our income became inconsistent, and there were few options to go out to after a hard night's work. While mega-clubs and bottle

service dominated the late-night scene, restaurant employees would gather in small dark pubs, sharing stories. There was a sense of camaraderie among us misfits (who, by the way, now run and own some of the best restaurants and bars in the country). We wanted to capture this feeling and bottle it. Our ambitions were simple: to open up a first-class cocktail bar that would be entirely owner operated. Over the course of a week, we would completely staff that bar ourselves, creating a direct link between the customer and the establishment. We wanted to transport people back to a time when drinking cocktails was part of a lifestyle, and to romanticize it. A secluded destination was ideal for this concept, to keep out the distractions of daily life and reserve the restaurant for people in the know. Many locations we scouted were too big for our original concept, so we envisioned a faux business exposed to the street with two swinging doors passively marked Employees Only, which would lead into our hidden cocktail den. Employees Only came to represent the fact that we, the owners, were also working there (see our photos on page 8). It also beckoned our intended audience of peers in the business. Finally, it created a barrier between the real world and the restaurant industry.

**Drawing Inspiration from the Speakeasy** We found the perfect metaphor to romanticize our concept in the speakeasies of the 1920s Prohibition era. It was a time when cocktails were truly forbidden fruit and finding them was a risky, clandestine adventure. To be historically correct, however, we should point out that few speakeasies looked like Francis Ford Coppola's Cotton Club. Most were little more than dingy basements with a wood plank on top of two barrels and a couple of chairs. This may sound disenchanting, but speakeasies were also the first places where it was socially acceptable for women to drink with men. Flappers emerged, and, together with fellow male imbibers, took their chances in defying the new law. Don't think for a moment that, in their defiance, people were raising perfectly crafted cocktails. Most speakeasies served whatever alcohol they could get their hands on. Most drinks that were served were horrible and some, containing poisonous methyl alcohol, were even lethal. Many of the mixed drinks created during Prohibition fell into one of two categories: those designed to mask the flavor of bad hooch and those created outside of the country. Either way, Prohibition accelerated the evolution of the cocktail and exported it around the world. Before Prohibition, cocktails were a purely American phenomenon. They represented the melting pot of the inhabitants of this young country. The idea of bastardizing a spirit was appalling to most in Europe, where the cocktail did not progress past simple aperitifs. When the reality of Prohibition set in, many well-to-do Americans vacationed in other countries where booze flowed like water. Realizing this, expert bartenders discovered new places to display their craft. Some emigrated to Caribbean islands such as Cuba, a mere ninety miles from U.S. shores; others fled to Europe and Great Britain, where drinking was part of the daily lifestyle. Cities like London, Paris, and Milan became the stomping grounds of the thirsty American elite. Out of these migrations, new cocktails were born. Influenced by their surroundings, bartenders in the Caribbean crafted tropical cocktails with new flavors never seen before in mixology. In Europe, many expanded on the aperitif, and old-world flavors crept into cocktail making. New spirits and bitters native to these countries increased the complexity of the cocktails created there. Back in the United States, the small number of speakeasies had to play down the poor quality of bathtub gin, white lightning, and the merchandise of rum runners. Some had to become very creative. Though Prohibition ended up a failed experiment and many of the cocktails consumed in the speakeasies are best forgotten, drinking was changed forever. Mixology was recognized as a culinary art form around the globe, and cocktails as the first original American contribution to the world of gastronomy. By the time Prohibition was repealed on December 5, 1933, cocktails had attained worldwide acceptance and influence. The notion of what could be a cocktail had expanded exponentially. Seventy years later, we decided to take this idea and romanticize it, to give it our own incarnation. We realized that most restaurateurs were bringing Paris and Shanghai to New York, yet no one was trying to preserve what New York was infamous for. Employees Only would be a New York speakeasy.

**The Cocktails** The vision behind the bar at Employees Only was to take a culinary approach to classic mixology. All cocktails would be either reenvisioned or modified classics or inspired by classic themes or ingredients. By blending drinks with homemade and contemporary ingredients, we sought to change the way people perceived the old standards and to make cocktail drinking as fun and accessible as it once had been. In a reprint of *How to Mix Drinks* or the *Bon Vivants Companion*, we found our bar jackets in a portrait of a bartender wearing a clean white coat similar to a chef's coat. The white coat would let people know that we were serious about our craft and that great effort went into creating our little masterpieces. (Just for the record, in no way were we pretending to be chefs. We are not chefs; we are bartenders. We have the utmost respect for someone who slaves away in a kitchen creating edible art under heat and pressure.) And because the bartender in question wore the same handlebar mustache as our partner,

Igor, the picture was complete. The mustache thing was a coincidence. When we opened, people wrote rave reviews about the mustachioed bartenders of Employees Only. What was really scary was when the mustaches began popping up on the other side of the bar. In late December 2004, Employees Only opened to a select group of friends and industry colleagues. The turnout and the immediate, overwhelming response were shocking. Within a few months, our little secret was out. People from all walks of life and countries passed through the vestibule to taste our libations. Every night at 6:00 p.m., we opened to a bar full of women. We would joke that we would buy a drink for the first man to get a seat at the bar, which would usually happen around 8:00 p.m. Six months later, we held a seminar in London; more than two hundred people attended to find out more about our little gem. Employees Only had become a world-class neighborhood restaurant. And over the years, EO has become a New York City institution. On any given night of the week, after midnight we have an additional surge of customers: cooks, bartenders, and industry leaders from around the city. We serve more than 130,000 cocktails each year, making EO one of the highest-grossing cocktail bars per square foot. Since our opening, many speakeasy cocktail bars have opened up worldwide, bringing that ambience of intimacy and seclusion to other neighborhoods and cities. Popular American culture has become obsessed with period pieces from the last century, and marketing agencies have begun to use vintage packaging and messages to grab consumers' attention. Restaurants everywhere must now educate their bartenders on proper technique, and bar-restaurant hybrids are found in many major U.S. cities. The greatest compliments that we receive are not from the press but from the young women who dance on the bar one night, then bring their families in for dinner the next to show how mature they are. They say God protects fools and drunks, and God knows we've got both at Employees Only.

*Revue de presse* One of New York's most serious cocktail bars shares its recipes, both classic and creative. Mustaches not included. *The New York Times Book*, Web Extra: 25 More Cookbooks, 12/3/10 An elegant book from bartenders behind Employees Only. . . . We have seen compendiums of classic recipes before, but this one ups the game with thoughtful directions and NY flair. *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, Appetite: Delicious giving, 12/3/10 Cocktail aficionados everywhere will find a lively guide, easily worthy of the increasingly heavy mixology shelf. *StarChefs.com*, Top 10 Cookbooks 2010, November 2010 A survey of the city's 2010 culinary scene wouldn't be complete without cocktails; luckily, Jason Kosmas and Dushan Zaric have published this book of quaffs served in their popular West Village bote, Employees Only. *New York magazine*, Best NYC Cookbooks of 2010, 11/24/10 The swells behind Employees Only penned this cocktail compendium, which breaks down classic and newfangled mixed drinks, alongside tips on properly stirring, muddling and more. *Time Out New York*, The Seasons Best Cookbooks, 11/12/10 "Dushan Zaric and Jason Kosmas, the handsome mixologists behind NYC's famed Employees Only bar/resto, keep it classy in their new book of cocktails, *Speakeasy*. Their recipes for a perfect dry martini, mai tai, and/or Pimms Cup make it a party must-have." *DailyCandy*, The Best New Fall Cookbooks, 11/12/10 "A tightly packed, pretty little number." *LA Weekly's Squid Ink* blog, 10/19/10 [Employees Only] co-owners Dushan Zaric and Jason Kosmas reveal their tasty recipes and mixology secrets in the innovative cocktail cookbook *Speakeasy*. *Liquor.com*, 10/11/10 Kosmas and Zaric (You Didn't Hear It from Us), owners of Employees Only, a not-so-hidden take on a Manhattan speakeasy, offer instruction on recreating classic drinks and stirring up some modern variations. Fresh ingredients are their mainstay, but since the focus is on old-school cocktails, fewer intense flavor combinations arise than what might be found in a more contemporary collection of artisanal concoctions. Not that there's anything wrong with that. It's curious, for instance, to learn that the Manhattan, circa 1882, contained more vermouth than it did rye, while its modern version calls for a bourbon to vermouth ratio of 2 to 1. Among the 90 offerings, there are some that one would proudly order across a crowded bar, such as the New York Sour with its shakeup of 101-proof rye, lemon juice, and dry red wine. Others would best be acquired on the down low, like the Monkey Gland, a cocktail of absinthe, gin, orange juice, and Grenadine. There is also the Amelia, a sequel to the Cosmopolitan, starring blackberry puree and elderflower liqueur. For the more literary minded, there is the Hemingway daiquiri, a supposed favorite of Papa's, wherein grapefruit juice finds harmony with rum and maraschino liqueur. (Oct.) *Publishers Weekly*, 9/20/10 Just after the new millennium, Jason and Dushan decided that the time was right for a different sort of speakeasy, and so they opened Employees Only. This speakeasy, unlike the ones run by gangsters where a good drink was rare and bad ones cost a fortune, celebrated premium products and classic bar service and you could walk right into the joint . . . no password necessary. Employees Only captured the hearts of New Yorkers and the joint has been full since the doors opened. The timing was impeccable. New York was ready for a late night place with solid food and great drinks. Ten years later and again the timing is

impeccable; the book *Speakeasy* will hit the shelves at the most exciting time in the history of the American cocktail. *Speakeasy* gives the reader an inside look at the creative process brought to bear in crafting the retooled classic cocktails. The reader can share in the creative process more fully by producing their own homemade syrups, cordials, and infusions.

Dale DeGroff, from the foreword  
In the wee hours of December 27, 1930, five men sauntered into the West 45th Street speakeasy run by one Thomas Wassel and engaged him in earnest conversation, punctuating their speech with eight shots from the pistols they had hidden under their coats. He did not survive the conversation. Fortunately, I've never seen anything like that happen at Employees Only. Indeed, it would have made me very sad if I had, as Jason and Dushan, its proprietors and the authors of the very fine book you're holding, are not only good friends of mine but also figures of no small importance in the modern Cocktail revolution. Employees Only was one of the very first bars dedicated to reviving the classic American art of the bar, and it remains one of the most successful. More than that, though, Dushan and Jason are bartenders to the last stir, and the world doesn't have nearly enough of those. When I was first starting to loiter in grogeries, I did most of my drinking in old mans bars. They were cheap, and I was poor. But there was also something about the dignity of the gents behind the bar that made their joints far more congenial to me than the usual college bars, with their smutty drinks and bartenders who didn't know any more about life than I did. The old guys knew how to talk to every customer, and knew what to do in every odd situation that might arise. Those are lessons that Jason and Dushan, working bartenders since before such creatures as bar chefs, celebrity mixologists, and brand ambassadors began to stalk the earth, managed to absorb. Even better, they've brought that old, bartenderly way to a new generation.

David Wondrich, from the afterword  
The bar has been raised  
Jason Kosmas and Dushan Zaric have written a powerfully passionate book. Their methodology is spot-on, their philosophy is nurturing, and their recipes are innovative without possessing the slightest hint of pretension. You don't need to be a bartender to love this book; you just need to want to know how to fix great drinks.

Gary Regan, ArdentSpirits.com  
In addition to authoring a world-class book filled with delicious drink recipes, Jason and Dushan have shared their unique perspective on the mixed drinks evolution from Martini to Cocktail at the beginning of the twenty-first century. *Speakeasy* is a must for culinary historians and cocktailians alike.

Jim Meehan, managing partner at PDT, New York  
With *Speakeasy*, Jason and Dushan have demystified the cocktail experience and brought it into your home. They celebrate not only the history and romance of tipples, along with the art of those who fashion them, but also the beauty of the joints that serve them. It is a great time in America on both sides of the bar!

Tony Abou-Ganim, author of *The Modern Mixologist*