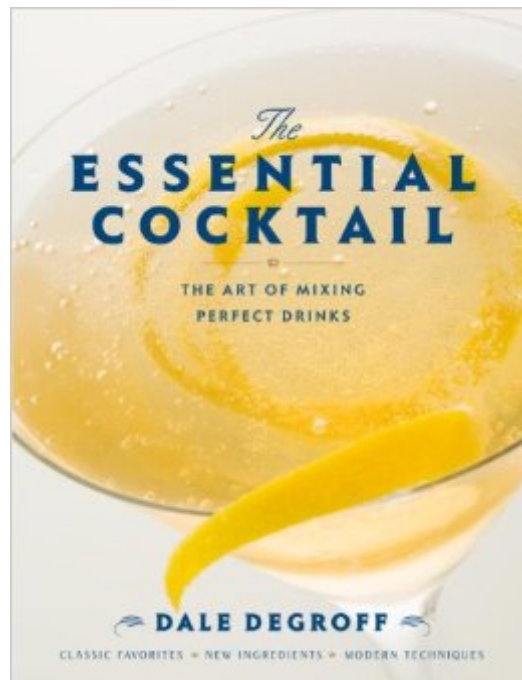


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# The Essential Cocktail: The Art Of Mixing Perfect Drinks



## Synopsis

Dale DeGroff is widely regarded as the world's foremost mixologist. Hailed by the New York Times as "single-handedly responsible for what's been called the cocktail renaissance," he earned this reputation during his twelve years at the fashionable Promenade Bar in New York City's Rainbow Room. It was there in 1987 that he not only reintroduced the cocktail menu to the country but also began mixing drinks from scratch, using impeccably fresh ingredients instead of the widespread mixes used at the time. Known especially for crafting unique cocktails, reviving classics, and coaxing superior flavor from his ingredients, DeGroff has selected his 100 essential drinks and 100 of their best variations—including many of his signature cocktails—for this premier mixology guide. The Essential Cocktail features only those drinks that stand out for their flavor, interesting formula, or distinctive technique. These are the very ones every amateur and professional bartender must know, the martinis, sours, highballs, tropicals, punches, sweets, and classics, both old and new, that form the core of a connoisseur's repertoire. Throughout the book are DeGroff's personal twists, such as a tangy Grapefruit Julep or a refreshing Yuzu Gimlet. To complement the tantalizing photographs of each essential cocktail, DeGroff also regales readers with the fascinating lore behind a drink's genesis and instructs us on using the right ingredients, techniques, glasses, and garnishes. As Julia Child's Mastering the Art of French Cooking was the classic compendium for home chefs and gourmands, so The Essential Cocktail will be the go-to book for serious mixologists and cocktail enthusiasts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a definite must-have book -- Mr. DeGross's reputation is such that you can trust pretty much every recipe he has in the book. If you are wondering whether to buy this book over pretty much any other similar cocktail book, I would advise you to buy it in a heartbeat. Would I rather have it over his earlier *Craft of the Cocktail*? For most people, no. That book covers the basics for the average home mixologist, whereas this sequel tends to discuss more advanced techniques, like certain foam toppings. Mr. DeGross continues to share great anecdotes about the cocktail hour in the *Essential Cocktail* and certainly isn't a dry writer. I also like how many of these recipes prescribe a particular brand of spirit to be used in each cocktail. This specificity is an improvement over the *Craft of the Cocktail*. If I do have to criticize the book, it is that I don't always feel that the pictures jive with the recipes. Specifically, many pictures have these peel garnishes hanging off of the glass. It was my understanding that this style is not really Mr. DeGross's, especially for those recipes calling for flamed peels. There is even a section in the book entitled "Garnishes" that advocates a style in direct contradiction to the pictures. However, I have not had the pleasure and privilege of Mr. DeGross's live performances. Perhaps I'm wrong, but based on some of the videos I've seen of his, these drinks don't look like they've been made in the style of Mr. DeGross. In *Craft*, many of the pictures features DeGross's hands as he makes the drink. So, unfortunately I get the sense that Mr. DeGross wrote a great book but then had Potter Publishers provide some generic pictures. A minor issue of trusting what I see that detracts from the sense that this book is all about Dale DeGross.

This was one of the first cocktail books I bought, and I still turn to it often. It's quite complete, and has beautiful photography. I also appreciated that DeGross has included a number of his own creations, which add some interest to the book. There's a good discussion of barware, tools, techniques, etc, and just the right amount of cocktail history. The reason it's a 4-star and not a 5-star is that ultimately it's really just another recipe book--though a very good one. Ultimately, I hope for reference books, whether they are cookbooks, cocktail books, or plumbing repair books, to tell me WHY I'm doing something and not just WHAT to do. If you're already very familiar with cocktails and are looking for some new ideas, you'll probably enjoy this book just fine. However, if you're looking for an in-depth overview of cocktails which will give you more of a sophisticated understanding of the subject, I would recommend *The Joy of Mixology: The Consummate Guide to the Bartender's Craft*. At the very least I would recommend you check out both books before buying.

Proofread! Please! While this book isn't as riddled with misprints as Mr. DeGross's first book, there

are still mistakes aplenty. No excuse. The book is beautiful and arguably better laid out than Craft of the Cocktail which is also essential. And, of course, Dale DeGroff is as close as you can get to a cocktail oracle. But, for Chrissake, proofread it! Next time, just drop me an email, and I'll do it for free. It would be an honor. Oh, and throw some o.j. into that Ward Eight.

Beautifully done in both material and layout, this is bound to be a must have classic tome on mixology. While it covers only about 500 recipes, it covers 500 worthwhile or essential (hence the title) cocktails, all well worthy of inclusion in a cocktail reference book - not just a compendium of every drink ever concocted (for better or worse). Almost every drink is given a short but interesting history/intro, then ingredients, directions, and photographs of the finished drink. Larger format (quarto or about 10 1/2" Tall and 8" wide) with a rarely seen (in drinks books past or present) decent binding so it stays open nicely with tasteful graphics, easy to read type fonts, and even a nicely retro cover (under the more modern dust jacket), it combines the practical and the high art both in its content and production. A lot of thought must have gone into not only the contents of the books but also the practical aspects of it. Built not only to please the eye and palette it works well on a counter, (or better yet behind one of those clear plastic book holders), laying flat, easy to read/consult, easy to wipe pages, and logically organized with a fine array of carefully chosen drinks. While not as exhaustive as Dale's other classic *The Craft of the Cocktail: Everything You Need to Know to Make 500 of the World's Best Drinks and Host Legendary Parties* it is a precis on how to do the included cocktails properly and artfully.

I decided it was time to start finding some more things I'd like to drink other than the 3 things I order at every bar. So I checked a bunch of books on bar tending out of the library. This is by far my favorite so I bought a copy to keep. First, it has a lot of the classic drinks that you'd get at a bar and also lots of others and all the drinks I've made so far are really great. Second, the photos are super - I pick half the drinks just by their looks alone. Third, the stories with each drink just add another layer of fun. I didn't expect to learn anything about the history of cocktails in America, but I have and it's been really fun.

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