

The Unspoken Wisdom and Rituals of Closing Time: Bartenders On Their Final Drink

There is an undeniable mystique that surrounds bartenders and the late-night world they inhabit. As the neon lights flicker, the last call is announced, and patrons shuffle out into the darkness, it is often the bartender who remains, presiding over the hushed realm of the closing hours. In those moments, as the clock ticks closer to dawn, these guardians of the night reflect on their craft, their patrons, and their own mortality. This article dives into the unspoken wisdom and rituals of closing time, as shared by those who have honed the art of mixology.

The Final Drink: A Bartender's Unspoken Rite

Every bartender has a ritual, a personal way to mark the end of the night and the transition from serving to self-reflection. For some, it may be indulging in a rare and precious spirit, carefully poured and savored. For others, a simple beer or favorite cocktail serves as a comforting and familiar companion. The choice of this final drink holds significance, symbolizing the culmination of the night's work, the closing of a chapter, and a momentary respite before the sun begins to rise.

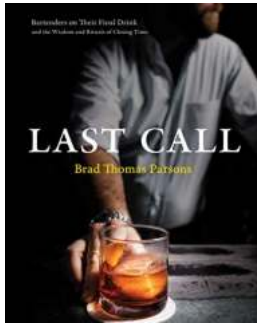
Tom, a seasoned bartender of 15 years, explains, "The last drink is like a goodbye to the night, the customers, and the energy of the space. It's my time to decompress and savor the flavors of the spirits that led us through the evening. It's a sacred moment of closure."

Last Call: Bartenders on Their Final Drink and the Wisdom and Rituals of Closing Time

by Brad Thomas Parsons (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
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Closing Time: A Haven for Profound Conversations

As the final notes of music fade away and the clinking of glasses comes to a halt, bartenders often find themselves engaged in deep conversations with the remaining patrons. The intimacy of the late-night hours, combined with the effects of alcohol, creates a unique space for contemplation and connection.

Emily, a bartender who has worked in a renowned speakeasy for over a decade, shares, "During closing time, people pour their hearts out. They reflect on their lives, their dreams, their regrets. It's a privilege to witness these conversations, to hear their stories, and offer a sympathetic ear if they need it. Closing time is the portal into people's hidden narratives."

The Rituals of Transition

As the last customer bids farewell and the doors are locked, bartenders engage in their own ritualistic practices to close down the bar. Glasses are meticulously polished, shelves are tidied, and the bar is disassembled with the care of an artist cleaning their brushes. This act of reprieve serves as a bridge between the bustling world of the night and the quiet solitude that follows.

Kate, a bartender in a high-end cocktail lounge, reveals, "Closing down the bar is like a dance. Each movement has its rhythm and purpose. It's a time to reflect on the night's successes and failures, to take pride in your craft, and prepare for the next night's performance. The cleaning and organization become meditative, a way to cleanse the ambience and reset."

The Wisdom Gained from Years Behind the Bar

Time spent behind the bar reveals an myriad of unexpected lessons and insights. As bartenders witness the triumphs and tribulations of their patrons, they become intimately acquainted with the human experience. From heartbreak and celebration to laughter and vulnerability, they witness it all.

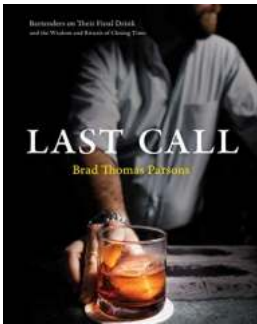
John, a bartender with over 20 years of experience, shares, "Through the highs and lows of my patrons, I have learned empathy, patience, and the power of listening. Bartending is more than crafting drinks; it's about nurturing human connection. Every night teaches me something new, and that wisdom spills into my everyday life."

The Closing Time Ritual: A Sacred Tradition

As the world sleeps, the bartenders continue their age-old tradition of closing time. This ritual of reflection, camaraderie, and cleansing serves as the backbone of a profession that embraces the unexpected. It is in these moments, bathed in the dim glow of the late-night hours, that bartenders find solace and a connection to something greater than themselves.

So, the next time you find yourself in a bar at its closing hour, take a moment to observe the bartender. Witness their final drink, engage in a profound conversation, and acknowledge the quiet wisdom that pervades the air. Closing

time may mark the end of the night, but for bartenders, it is the beginning of something new.



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From the James Beard Award-winning author of *Bitters* and *Amaro* comes this poignant, funny, and often elegiac exploration of the question, *What is the last thing you'd want to drink before you die?*, with bartender profiles, portraits, and cocktail recipes.

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Everyone knows the parlor game question asked of every chef and food personality in countless interviews: *What is the last meal you'd want to eat before you die?* But what does it look like when you pose the question to bartenders? In *Last Call*, James Beard Award-winning author Brad Thomas Parsons gathers the intriguing responses from a diverse range of bartenders around the country,

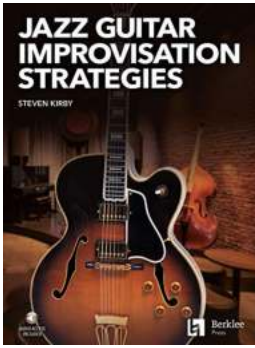
including Guido Martelli at the Palizzi Social Club in Philadelphia (he chooses an extra-dry Martini), Joseph Stinchcomb at Saint Leo in Oxford, Mississippi (he picks the Last Word, a pre-Prohibition-era cocktail that's now a cult favorite), and Natasha David at Nitecap in New York City (she would be sipping an extra-salty Margarita). The resulting interviews and essays reveal a personal portrait of some of the country's top bartenders and their favorite drinks, while over 40 cocktail recipes and stunning photography make this a keepsake for barflies and cocktail enthusiasts of all stripes.

Praise for Last Call

“[Parsons] captures the people and places through stunning photographs and prose. Like a perfectly balanced cocktail, it is equal parts cocktail recipes, travelogue and mixtape.”—The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

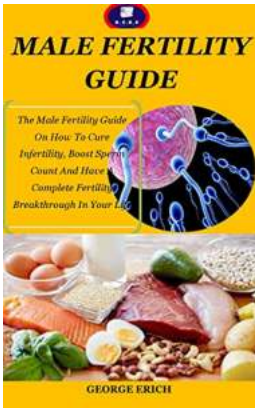
“Measure equal parts travelogue, tell-all, discography, and cocktail companion—in service of an obituary of all patrons—and you have Last Call; Brad Thomas Parsons’s best book yet. Through soulful photos and gritty interviews, he and photographer Ed Anderson capture the rawness, vulnerability, and ecstasy of the metamorphosis between the end of a guest’s night and the beginning of a bartender’s.”—Jim Meehan, author of Meehan’s Bartender Manual and The PDT Cocktail Book

“This book is a delight. Last Call shows us the sense of community evoked by bartenders across the country, whose wisdom and tenderness are captured here both in words and beautiful photographs. It made me—an erstwhile bartender and faithful customer—happy to remember that we all have nights when we unexpectedly hear the words ‘last call,’ and that noble and fascinating bartenders are out there waiting to share it with us.”—Alan Cumming



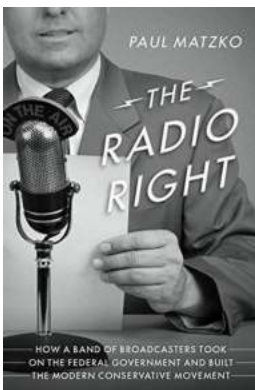
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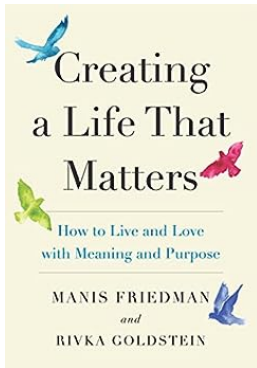
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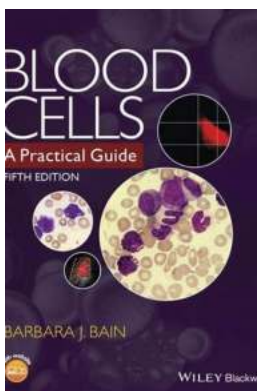
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