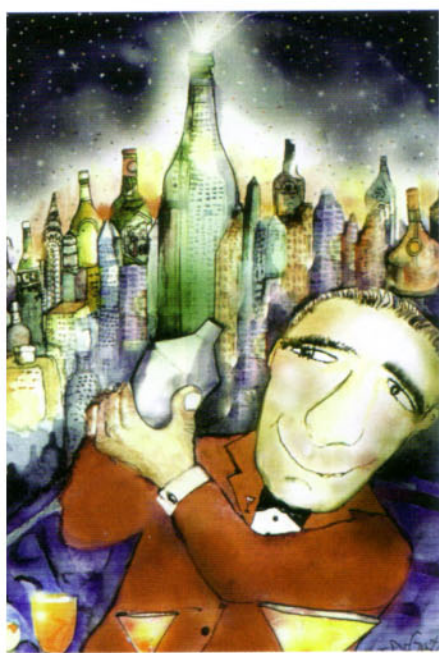


**Long drinks and tall tales** New York City—You have to love a book whose endorsements include: “There is no need to get in touch further.” —*Editor@NewYorker.com*.

Well, the *New Yorker* missed a golden opportunity, because Jill DeGroff has a far-stretching talent, both for drawing and getting her subjects—a happy commingling of today’s creative young mix-



Portraits from the Bar (from left): Julio Cabrera of Sra. Martinez (Miami); King Cocktail Dale DeGroff.

ologists and old timers—to spinning tales that elaborate their portraits. Her *Lush Life: Portraits from the Bar—Series 1: Cocktailians of the 21st Century* is bound to delight all cocktail lovers, bon vivants, barflies, dive bar habitués, imbibers, and downright luses.

Jill DeGroff is the wife of **Dale DeGroff**, aka King Cocktail, one of the world’s most famous mixologists, so if there is a bar worth its rim-dusting salt, she has been in it.

*Lush Life* is a captivating book full of DeGroff’s full-color drawings accompanied by an equally colorful profile of each of her subjects along with their favorite cocktail recipe. She describes the compelling, often very humorous tales in this book as stories from America’s real heartland—the corner bar. The more you read the more you want to head for a corner bar and, when you do, you may have a newfound appreciation for some of the denizens you encounter there.

I found myself fantasizing about what it would be like to go to a party in a bar where all the people in Jill DeGroff’s drawings have gathered, preferably in one of her favorite drinking holes. There would certainly be entertainment by Chris Gillespie, the notable piano player, from my favorite, the great quintessential New York City bar, **Bemelmans** in **The Carlyle** hotel, and Dan Levinson, a clarinet player who was arrested in France (and else-

where) by a cop who wouldn’t let him out until he played *Petite Fleur*. Also in attendance would be one of Jill DeGroff’s favorites, Ted “Dr. Cocktail” Haigh, now the curator of the Museum of the American Cocktail in New Orleans; John Myers of Portland, Maine, “a drinking town” according to Myers, “with a fishing problem”; Cathryn Davis Zommer, who sang a slow, sultry version of *Wild Thing* at **Sunny’s** in Red Hook, Brooklyn, claiming “I never met a microphone I didn’t like, if the booze was flowing”; and Dale DeGroff’s star protégé, **Audrey Saunders**, now the owner of the **Pegu Club**, the hipper-than-thou SoHo lounge named in homage to a British officers’ club in Burma.

And, of course, Jill DeGroff would be there drawing the characters for her next book. “I have to keep my hands moving,” she says. This enthralling first book—a thin volume, absolute treasure trove of nearly 90 drawings and almost as many unforgettable vignettes, tall bar tales and, no doubt, some downright damned lies will surely generate demand for another.

The book can be purchased from Amazon.com for \$24.95, but, if you order it from Jill DeGroff at [www.saloonartist.com](http://www.saloonartist.com), she will autograph it. Four percent of the proceeds of each book sold benefits the Museum of the American Cocktail; all the proceeds from books sold in the museum’s gift shop go to support the museum.

A *Lush Life* book signing will be held at the Astor Center in Manhattan on Mardi Gras, February 16. For info: [www.kingcocktail.com/ASTOR.btm](http://www.kingcocktail.com/ASTOR.btm).

—GERRY DAWES