

LUSH LIFE

PORTRAITS FROM THE BAR



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• a good man •

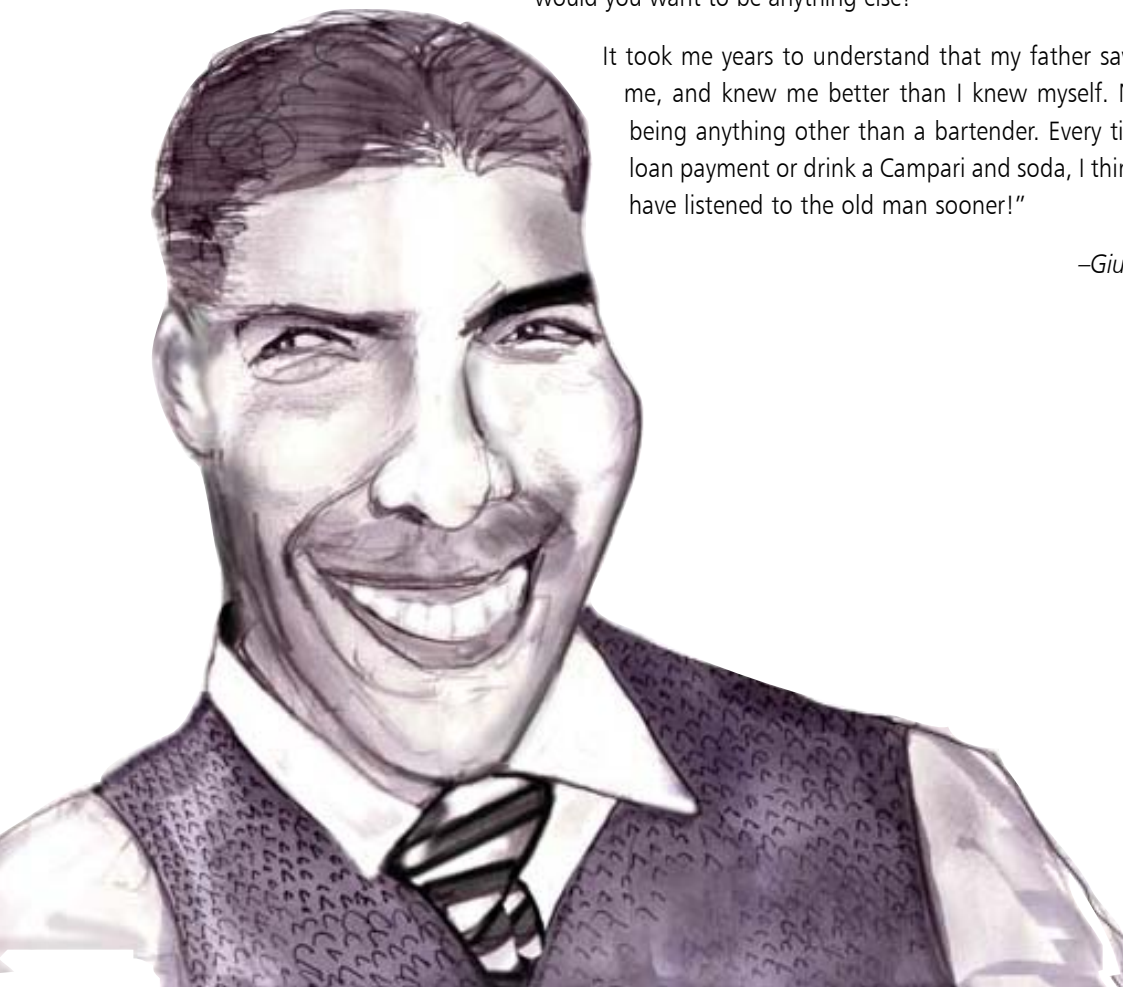
“My father wasn’t a good father. This does not mean he was a bad father. He was a good man. I just think he did not really like me until I could have a drink with him. He was more a friend than a father, unsentimental and moody, but with great charm and wit. The nature of his character, both obsessive and meticulous, always drew him more to his work than his home. He was a bartender. He was a bar owner. He was dignified. He was someone you respected, even if you didn’t know him. As a child, I hated him, but when I became a man, I loved him.

When I turned eighteen, I told my father I was going to college. We were in his bar and I was cleaning the back shelf. I really did not expect a response. My family is working class but, although I would be the first to attend college, I thought no-one would care. My father told me to stop what I was doing and sit down. Then he poured me a drink— a Campari and soda with no ice. I knew this was serious because, although I had made him many drinks, he had never done so for me. It was the first fatherly act I could remember.

Looking oddly disappointed and concerned, my father said, ‘Why are you going to college? Everything you need to know, I can teach you.’ I got angry because I had thought he would be proud. I blurted out, ‘Why would I want to be a bartender?’ As soon as I said it, I knew I had hurt him and regretted it. I felt ashamed for speaking without thinking. I was being treated like a man, but was acting like a child. But he smiled, kissed me, and said, ‘Why would you want to be anything else?’

It took me years to understand that my father saw parts of himself in me, and knew me better than I knew myself. Now, I can’t imagine being anything other than a bartender. Every time I make a student loan payment or drink a Campari and soda, I think to myself— I should have listened to the old man sooner!”

—Giuseppe Gonzalez



INFANTE

By Giuseppe Gonzalez

2 oz. Don Julio Tequila
1 oz. Fresh Lime Juice
3/4 oz. Orgeat
3 drops of Orange Flower Water

Shake. Strain. Pour over fresh ice into rocks glass. Garnish with grated nutmeg.

• the draw •

“I relish the permanent dusk of a bar; neither day or night, but the constant, forgiving glow of twilight. It sets the mood, creates shadows and intrigue, but also softens the harshness of life. The pretty girl at the end of the bar grows prettier with the flicker of candlelight and the gentle whisper of ice swirling spirit in your glass. The subtle darkness dissolves the creases in the old man’s face as he smiles, erasing years. He may not notice, but somehow he smiles here more often.

And if it is not the light that is enchanting, surely it is the sound. The clinking of cubes in glasses, the rhythm of shaking ice in a tin, a trill of feminine laughter, the murmur of hushed conversation between lovers, the rap of impatient fingertips on the bar top. They create a symphony of bar sounds, a comforting din that combine with the deafening effects of spirituous liquids, and create a constant whoosh of pillowy noise, soft and enveloping.

It is all of these things that draw me in, the sounds, the glow, the conviviality, the cocktails. It is my joy in being a ringleader that keeps me here, stationed as a sentry behind the expanse of wood that plays host to the theater of social interaction. The magic of the place is a swirling chaotic balance, like an ecstatic, crazed dervish, spinning near the edge of a cliff. It is the beauty and danger of it all that draws you in, beckoning to be a part of it. So come and take your place at my bar, join the circus of fools that spin happily near the edge. We will try not to let you fall.”

—Jacqueline Patterson



FLEUR DU MONDE

By Jacky Patterson

1.5 oz. Don Julio Blanco
.75 oz. Domaine de Canton
Ginger Liqueur
.50 oz. Kabinett Riesling
(slightly off-dry, German white)

Stir ingredients on ice until properly chilled and diluted, strain into a small cocktail glass and garnish with a freshly cut grapefruit zest.

jacqueline patterson
• heaven’s dog •

• just to piss you off, mister regan •

“Norman Bukofzer, long-time bartender at New York’s Ritz Carlton, always refused to call me by my first name, and I hate being called mister so I pleaded with him to call me Gary. Initially Norman promised to do just that, but he never did it. Just kept calling me Mister Regan. Eventually, after I ranted at him about this issue on numerous occasions, Norman explained that since he had a reputation for remembering everyone’s name, if he used first names as well as last names, his workload would be doubled, so I reluctantly stopped bugging him to stop calling me mister.

A few months later I introduced my friend Roy Finamore to Norman, and Roy became a semi-regular at the bar. ‘And Norman calls me Roy,’ he boasted. I was furious. On my next visit to see Norman I asked if he’d seen my friend Roy Finamore.

“Oh yes– he’s in here two or three times a week these days.”

“And what do you call him, Norman?” I asked.

“I call him Roy, of course.”

“And why is that, Norman?”

Norman leaned over the bar, bringing his face within inches from mine. In a low voice, he said– ‘Just to piss you off, Mister Regan.’

At that moment I knew that Norman Bukofzer was the best bartender I’d ever laid eyes on. That went down over a dozen years ago. Norman is still the best bartender I ever met.”

–Gary Regan

Not long ago while exploring the highlands of Jalisco, Gary Regan, author of “The Joy of Mixology” and many other cocktail books, was swapping drink recipes with a young bartender from London, when the subject of orange bitters arose. She beamed and told him about a new brand of bitters she had just discovered. She could not recall the name; “You know– the label with the bearded old geezer”...

“Yes, m’dear,” said Gary, “That old geezer would be me.”

The beard is now gone, but Gary remains one of the most prolific writers and educators in the bartending profession. He has also created a Flip & Click bartending i-phone application, and the Worldwide Bartender Database.

DAMSEL IN ROUGE

By Gary Regan

1.25 oz. Dubonnet Rouge
.5 oz. Limoncello
.25 oz. Laphroaig Single Malt
Lemon twist for garnish

Shake and strain into a chilled wine goblet.
Add garnish.



Gary Regan



norman bukofzer
• the ritz •

• last of the mohicans •

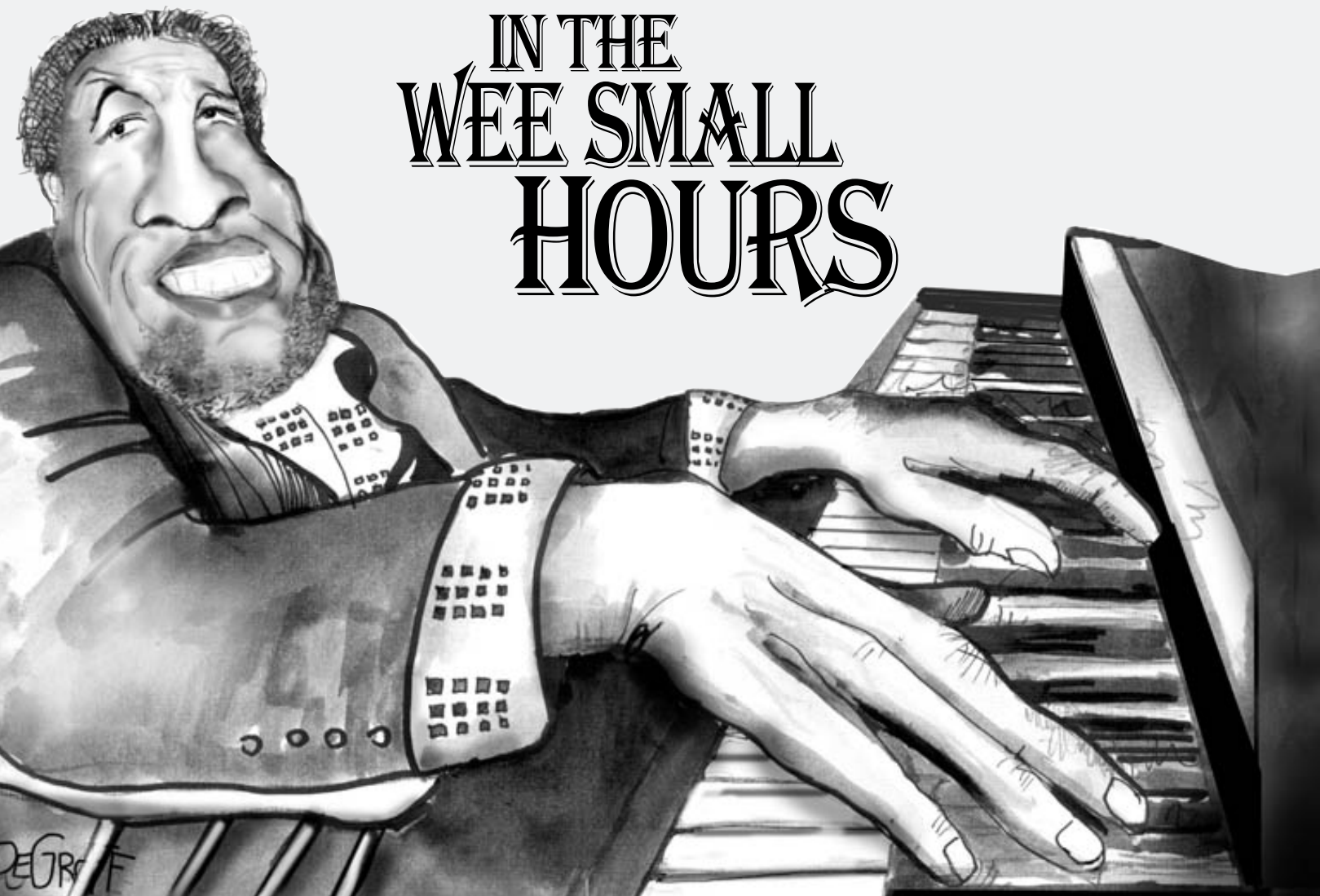
I was lucky enough to catch Arturo O'Farrill, Musical Director of Lincoln Center's Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, playing at 'Puppets', his neighborhood hang, one night. The whole family was there, and his two young sons even sat in on a couple of sets. Having been away from my favorite borough for many years, it's good to know Brooklyn still knows how to be Brooklyn.
-JD

“Many years ago in New York, there was a place that existed that was one of the last of the Mohicans. It was a bar at Columbia Street that was really more like a private bar; in fact if you passed it by, you would not hear a peep, and you would never know the place existed— all you could see was the brick facade and a door. But inside was the greatest juke box and the greatest bar that I've ever been to. Musicians from all over the city would come there, after their gigs were over, to have a drink or two, and it was a place where I'd run into people I hadn't seen for years. It was frequented by notorious members of society, as well as as lawyers and councilmen— people from all walks of life, and often, at 3:00 in the morning, musicians would swing by and we'd have some great jam sessions.

The owner of the establishment was a man named Carlos. If Carlos liked you, he'd get a twinkle in his eye and hand you a key. You could not get in by knocking. You had to have a key and know the guy working the door, although sometimes, you might knock in *clave* rhythm and be lucky enough to get in. And this place would get filled to the brim with people dressed in suits and ties, and dresses, lookin' all fancy to share a good time... however like all things in New York, the neighborhood became gentrified. They eventually lost the building, so the place ceased to exist. But for a minute there, it felt like the fifties, it felt like everyone was beautiful, and we had a great time— listening to great music, talkin' shit, and enjoying the company of other nocturnal folk.”

– Arturo O'Farrill

IN THE WEE SMALL HOURS



“I'm a Womanologist...
I love all kinds of women—
I love old women 'cause they
been women so long...
And I love young women, 'cause they
still have so long to be women,
I love fat women, 'cause there's
so much of 'em,
And I love rich women—
'cause romance without finance
is a nuisance!”

–Drink Small, Blues Doctor
www.drinksmallblues.com

arturo o'farrill & alex blake
• latin jazz orchestra •