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High Spirits: The Legacy Bars Of San Francisco



Synopsis

The best places to imbibe in San FranciscoCommunity, heritage, architectureâ "oh yes, and stiff pours: these are the hallmarks of San Franciscoâ ™s Legacy Bars. High Spirits leads readers on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood pub crawl in search of the cityâ ™s most remarkable nightspots. Atmospheric photographs accompany descriptions of each barâ ™s colorful history, unique architectural features, idiosyncratic owners, and quirky clientele. As we dip into one barroom after another, we see that these establishments function as unofficial cultural centers, offering kinship and continuity amid an ever-changing city; indeed, all of the bars shown are at least forty years old and sites of significant historic or cultural value as deemed by San Francisco Heritage. Whether we are following in the footsteps of Beat writers in North Beachâ ™s Vesuvio CafÃ©, tossing peanut shells on the floor of The Homestead in the Mission, or selecting jukebox songs (three for a quarter) at the Silver Crest Donut Shop in Bayview, High Spirits welcomes us as regulars at every spot, showing off the conviviality that makes San Francisco one of the great saloon towns.

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Customer Reviews

A treat for the eyes, hands, and mind. This compact and lyrical book is a delight - not only does

Dineen's prose leap off the page in a you-are-there-bellied-up-to-the-bar fashion, but the high quality of the production feels good in your hand. As a connoisseur of cocktail establishments (would "enthusiast" be better? celebrant? I dunno...), I have been to all but two of these historic bars. Dineen captures their history and challenges, and reminds San Franciscans why their history is special and relevant. I imagine that some savvy operator is already creating a tour for tourists based solely on this book...

Wow, what a beautiful book and a really fun read. I've lived in San Francisco for over 15 years and haven't been to most of these bars (I know, right?) but the ones I have been to are very accurately portrayed. I really like the neighborhood feel, and the quality of the book is excellent, so I'm gifting it to a few "drinking" friends.

I spotted this book at my local bookstore and was compelled to pick it up by its cover (I ALWAYS judge a book by its cover ;)). I was familiar with Dineen's byline in the SF Chronicle for his housing issue stories and wasn't expecting this book from him. What a doozy it is. If you ever wonder why people pay the outrageous rents and cost of living to be in SF, this book is one of the reasons why. SF is home to one of the best drinking cultures and some of the best dive bars around. Dineen creates a fantastic love letter to the kinds of places where everyone knows your name. Anyone who appreciates a good drink and a good place to drink it in will appreciate this book, no matter where they live. The book's also a great guide to SF bars for residents and visitors alike. A must own for anyone who can toss one back.

To say that San Francisco Chronicle reporter JK Dineen "gets" cities and bars and community and the oft-wondrous connection between them is to insist that Dark & Stormies have Gosling's in 'em; it's that obvious. I'm a long-time San Franciscan (almost 25 years). My husband and children were born here. San Francisco is a city in the painful throes of change. "High Spirits" is the cure for that pain, following the threads of history that connect then to now in a way that soothes, gently moving us forward into the next era as residents, as visitors, as drinkers, as observers, and as lovers of this great town. Every story in this book is a jewel -- the kind you wear close to your heart, a touchstone that provides strength in uncertain times. Thank you, JK, for reminding us what we love about our town.

San Francisco is fighting hard to preserve what makes San Francisco unique and great. This book

captures the energy and personality of the historic bars and people that frequent them. This is a fun read and a great coffee table book!

I've walked in -and been carried out of- a good number of the fine drinking joints featured in Dineen's excellent 'High Spirits.' A comprehensive and conversational narrative delves into the bar's histories and importantly brings to life the patrons, the drinkers, and the dreamers that inhabit them. Extensive research went into the crafting of the book and the humour and pathos shows. One of the more important modern history's of San Francisco's most storied taverns. Bottoms up!

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