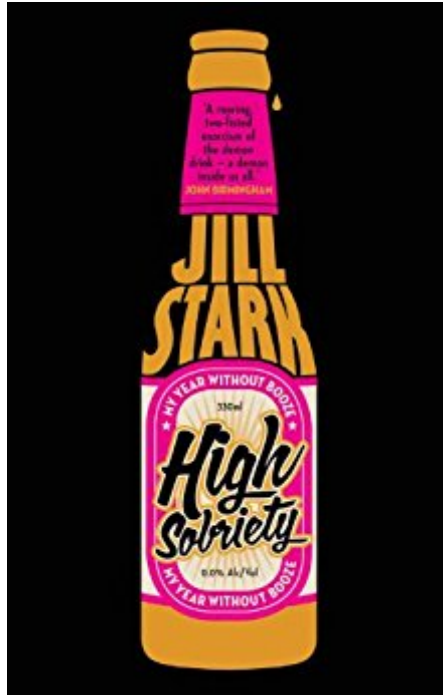


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High Sobriety: My Year Without Booze



Synopsis

Booze dominated Jill Stark's social life ever since she had her first sip of beer at 13, until, after a hangover at 35, she made the decision to give up alcohol – but what would it mean to stop drinking in a world awash with booze? This lively memoir charts Jill's tumultuous year on the wagon, as she copes with the stress of the newsroom sober, tackles the dating scene on soda water, learns to watch the footy minus beer, and deals with censure from friends and colleagues, who tell her that a year without booze is 'a year with not mates.' In re-examining her habits, Jill also explores Australia's love affair with alcohol, meeting alcopop-swigging teens who drink to fit in, beer-selling blokes in a sporting culture backed by booze, and marketing bigwigs blamed for turning binge drinking into a way of life. She also tracks the history of this national obsession: from the idea that Australia's new colonies were drowning in drink to the Anzac ethos that a beer builds mateship, and from the six o'clock swill that encouraged bingeing to the tangled weave of advertising, social pressure, and tradition that confronts drinkers today. This is a funny, moving, and insightful exploration of why we drink, how we got here, and what happens when we turn off the tap.

Book Information

File Size: 710 KB

Print Length: 314 pages

Publisher: Scribe Publications Pty Ltd. (July 1, 2013)

Publication Date: March 1, 2013

Language: English

ASIN: B00C0JD0BK

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #342,078 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #98

in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Australian #225 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Addiction & Recovery > Alcoholism #628 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Addiction & Recovery > Alcoholism

Customer Reviews

As a life-long abstainer who grew up WAY before binge-drinking became an accepted part of young

lives, I found this book both fascinating and horrifying. Stark was a product of Scotland where both the economy and national traditions center around the making and imbibing of whiskey. Her family offered no viable alternative, so she stuck her head in a bottle when she was 13 years old and didn't pull it out until she was 35. Sound shocking? Wait 'til you read the details. As a young woman she went on a back-packing trip Down Under and fell in love with Australia and the fun-loving Aussies. In terms of moderating her alcohol intake, it was jumping from the frying pan into the fire. Australians boast that they consume more beer per head annually than any other country and they don't stick to beer, either. After a stint working in bars (not a good place to go on the wagon) she got a job reporting for a newspaper. Journalists are traditionally two-fisted drinkers and she set out to show them that the "girlie" could match them shot for shot. Good for her standing with the boys; not so good for her liver. At 35, she began to realize that her life of every night boozing and hook-ups wasn't getting her what she wanted. But ALL of her social and professional life centered around drinking. Could she possibly stay sober and not become a hermit? So ingrained is alcohol in Aussie society that someone started a tradition called "FebFast." Lay off the booze for a whole month and donate the money you save to a charity. She took part in one and made it to the end of the month. She also became clear-headed enough to realize that one sober month surrounded by eleven sodden ones was not a good game plan.

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