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## Liquid engineering: how to create the ultimate cocktail soirée



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"Do not make the cocktails too strong and make a popular one like gin and orange, or a dry martini. As an alternative have sherry and tomato juice. If you can afford it most men prefer whisky and soda." We've come a long way, thank goodness, since Barbara Cartland proffered this advice to cocktail party hosts in her 1962 *Etiquette Handbook*.

Since the New York and London cocktail renaissance of the Nineties when mixologists seduced us with the cocktail all over again, we've graduated from Sea Breezes to Mojitos and Caipirinhas, with the odd Espresso Martini thrown in for good measure. In short, our tastes have evolved and are infinitely more sophisticated (after all, the Negroni, aka the drinker's drink, has gone mainstream) and so has our knowledge.

We're all semi-pros now, so hosting a cocktail soirée at home is a serious affair. From the leather-handled Japanese ice pick and the curve of the silver shaker, to the clink of the ice and the weight of the cut-glass crystal coupe – it should be a glamorous performance where every detail counts. Whether you're hiring staff, or playing bartender yourself, we've identified the best bar cabinets and trolleys, tools and tomes to ensure the perfect serve.

### THE BOOKS

Design buffs will be fascinated by Futurist Mixology, a limited-edition account of the eccentric and short-lived Italian cocktail scene that produced renowned futurist designs for the likes of Campari and Cocchi Vermouth. And for invaluable advice on everything from buying the best brands of spirits to how glass shape affects taste, as well as delicious recipes, Victoria Moore's How To Drink (Granta) is an entertaining guide to always serving the perfect drinks for every occasion.