of the Pleasure Party. Which is to say that if they find the idea of people mixing cocktails offensive, they can stop reading now.

I found a very useful text the other day, nestled in Smith's Alternative Bookshop here in Canberra. The title How to Make Over 200 Cocktails: An A-Z Guide wrenched me away from my recent diet of political theory books, for which I will be internally grateful. The book, written by Margaret Barca, and published by Penguin, retails for a mere $5.95, which is five cents less than I paid for a martini on my last fact-finding tour.

Now, cocktails are expensive to buy or make, and I can remember poor and innocent student days (days of simple beliefs and pursuits, such as communism, an eventual end to patriarchy and the achievement of the perfect hair colour) when spending $6 on a drink rather than buying an entire cask of tin cardboard would have shocked me. This was before I discovered Stolichnaya, the best thing to come out of what we used to call the Soviet Union. And those few extra-sound readers who have any doubts about buying relatively expensive drinks should regard it as a form of community aid abroad. After all, the Russians need our foreign exchange rather more than any objecting Australian tomato needs his or her brain cells (please excuse the oxymoron).

This cocktails book is written "in association" with Silver Shaker Cocktail Bar, which is described as a "programme that was established by liquor distributor Swift and Moore Pty Ltd...incorporating their range of premium alcohol brands". Stolichnaya is not the preferred vodka option. This is, on a taste and not distribution basis, quite wrong, and I would no more buy non-Russian vodka than I would read Tolstoy in the Readas Digest version. Nevertheless, this cocktails book covers the basics and has a good selection of the fatuous names often bestowed upon cocktails. Examples include a Bunny Mother, a Pussyfoot and a Zombie. Drinks with the words "pussy", "bunny" or "sheets" in the title are usually bought by male lawyers for secretaries at end of year drinks when their minds and mouths temporarily leave the car phone, and are not for the vanguard.

Martinis are the best mixed drink (vodka or gin with a few drops of vermouth; try rinsing the glass with vermouth and tipping it out.) You will soon be having profound discussions after one or two of these, and find the way forward in politics into the twenty-first century. Either that or you'll start believing you are Graham Greene, who occasionally mentioned his preference for Dutch gin in his writings. While in a literary vein, the Cocktail Guide lists a Hemingway-invented drink appropriately called Death in the Afternoon, which will appeal to Pernod lovers. "Pour 45 mls of Pernod into a chilled champagne flute, then slowly add champagne" is the simple instruction. I have never really liked Pernod, despite the fact that it appears in some nice old films. It reminds me too much of the Choochoo bars of childhood and blackened teeth.

Finally, something truly revolting which I recommend that you make for the abovementioned male lawyers, and dissolve their car phones in it. The name has a history. It refers to the protest of ideologically 'sound' young men to the renascent feminist movement of the late 1960s. Some of these charming boys used the words I give to the next brew as a supposed insult to ridicule meetings of women, without realising that they would be wiped away by the great wetsex of history. (And history has absorbed them.)

Pussypower

Blend 50 kiwifruit, lots of Kiwi vodka, buckets of cream, some Kahlua, some green jelly crystals, some green frogs from the local milk bar, some unmentionable excretions, news' eyes, turtles, a tin of pineapple, some Midori and decorate with whipped cream and washing powder. I guarantee that he'll be shaken and stirred.

Penelope Cottier.