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***Running a Bar***  
FOR  
**DUMMIES®**

**by Ray Foley and Heather Dismore**



Wiley Publishing, Inc.



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FOR

DUMMIES®



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## Running a Bar For Dummies®

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## About the Authors

**Ray Foley**, a former Marine with more than 30 years of bartending and restaurant experience, is the founder and publisher of *BARTENDER* magazine. *BARTENDER* is the only magazine in the world specifically geared toward bartenders and is one of the very few primarily designed for servers of alcohol. *BARTENDER* magazine is enjoying its 27th year, currently has a circulation of more than 150,000, and is steadily growing.

After serving in the United States Marine Corps and attending Seton Hall University, Ray entered the restaurant business as a bartender, which eventually led to his becoming assistant general manager of The Manor in West Orange, New Jersey, with more than 350 employees. At The Manor, he instituted a video-in-house training program — one of the first in the country. Ray is very proud to say that many of his students are now serving in such capacities as owners, managers, and vice presidents of national restaurants, general managers of major hotel chains, as well as bartenders and waiters at some of the nation's finest dining establishments. In 1983, Ray left The Manor to devote his full efforts to *BARTENDER* magazine.

Ray is the author of *The Ultimate Cocktail Book*; *The Ultimate Little Shooter Book*; *The Ultimate Little Martini Book*; *The Ultimate Little Blender Book*; *Advice from Anonymous*; *Spirits of Ireland*; *Jokes, Quotes and Bartoons*; and, of course, *Bartending For Dummies*, now in its third edition. He has also published numerous articles in many magazines, including *Playboy* and *Men's Health*, and has appeared on TV and radio shows, including *The David Susskind Show*, ABC-TV News, CBS News, NBC News, *Good Morning America*, *The Joe Franklin Show*, *Larry King Live*, Patricia McCann, WOR-TV, and *Live with Regis and Kathy Lee*. Ray also serves as a consultant to some of the USA's foremost distillers and importers. He is also responsible for naming and inventing new drinks for the liquor industry, including the Fuzzy Navel.

Ray is the founder of the Bartender Hall of Fame, which honors the best bartenders throughout the United States, not only for their abilities as mixologists but for involvement in their communities. Ray is also the founder of The Bartenders' Foundation Inc. This non-profit foundation raises scholarship money for bartenders and their families. Scholarships awarded to bartenders are used to either further their own education or go toward the education of their children.

Ray resides in New Jersey with his wife and partner of 25 years, Jackie, and their son, Ryan. He is also the father of three other wonderful and bright children: Raymond Pindar, William, and Amy.

Ray is foremost and always will be a Bartender.

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A veteran of both the restaurant and publishing industries, **Heather Dismore's** published works include such titles as *Running a Restaurant For Dummies*, *Jewelry Making & Beading For Dummies* (both published by Wiley), and most recently, *Start Your Restaurant Career*, published by Entrepreneur Press. She has contributed to many books on a variety of subjects, including *Diabetes Cookbook For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, *John Paul II For Dummies*, and *Einstein For Dummies*.

A graduate of DePauw University, she succumbed to the restaurant business while applying to law school. She orchestrated the openings of 15 new restaurants and developed the training, procedural, and purchasing systems that were used as the gold standard in numerous concepts throughout her tenure. She rapidly rose through the ranks at such regional and national chains as The Italian Fisherman, Don Pablo's Mexican Kitchen, and Romano's Macaroni Grill.

She's an active food writer and trend spotter in the food and beverage industry and a regular contributor to FoodChannel.com. She can be contacted at [heather@heatherdismore.com](mailto:heather@heatherdismore.com). She lives in Missouri with her husband and daughters, who are her first loves, inspiration, and never-ending source of new material.



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# *Dedication*

## **Ray's Dedication:**

This book is dedicated to all who serve the public with long hours, tired bodies, and great patience (and still know how to have fun): bartenders, bar employees, owners, and maybe to a couple of great customers!

And, of course, to Jaclyn Marie, whom I love the best, and Ryan Peter, who loves me the best. Both have made my cup overflow.

## **Heather's Dedication:**

I dedicate this book to my college friends with whom I first explored the magic of bars and discovered the mystery contained therein: Tracy, Jeanne, Biddle, Chrissie, Steph, Claire, Staci, Natasha, Lisa, Diz, Vince, Rock, Russ, and all my other DePauw pals.

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Thanks to my family who puts up with crazy schedules, my kitchen-table "office," late nights, and sometimes grumpy mornings. I adore you!

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# Introduction



**T**he bar business is exciting. Every night's a party. We're thrilled you're looking to get involved, and you've definitely come to the right place to get started. From the neighborhood bar to the local wine bar, opportunities in the industry have never been greater. This book is your guide to getting started in the right direction.

A lot of books have been written on being a bartender (heck, coauthor Ray wrote *Bartending For Dummies!*), but to run a bar, you have to be more than just a great bartender. To be the owner, you have to see beyond the glamour of standing behind the bar flipping bottles, pouring draft beers, and chatting up customers. You have to feel the anxiety, and the blood, sweat, and tears that accompany it. As you read this book, we think you will come to understand, if you don't already, that the bar business really is a *business*. You crunch numbers, make sales projections, watch labor costs, and so on, just like in every other business. And ultimately, your success is judged like any other business, on your profitability.

Whether you're a salty bartender or a cocktail waitress looking at your long-term goals, reading this book is a terrific step in launching your own business in the bar industry. Read on for tips on how this book is organized.

## *About This Book*

You don't have to pass an exam or earn a degree to prove you can run your bar. Instead, you have to work at it, gain experience, and have more than a little common sense. We wrote this book to help you to determine what skills you need to get into the business, and we help you figure out where you need to fill in the blanks. After you read the pages between these gorgeous yellow-and-black covers, you'll have a good idea whether this is the racket for you — and you'll have the knowledge to get started on the right foot.

You can find plenty of books that tell you how to open a bar, but you won't find many about how to *keep* it open. This book does both. Why? Because even after opening day arrives, you can never stop improving your service, evaluating your product, scoping out the competition, or researching opportunities in the marketplace. Change is the only constant in this business. To succeed, you must anticipate and act on new trends, new pressures, and whatever else the market throws your way. The spoils go to those who see opportunities before they happen.

## Conventions Used in This Book

To help you navigate through this book, we use the following conventions:

- ✔ *Italic* is used for emphasis and to highlight new words or terms that are defined.
- ✔ **Boldfaced** text is used to indicate keywords in bulleted lists or the action part of numbered steps.
- ✔ `Monofont` is used for Web addresses.
- ✔ Sidebars, which look like text enclosed in a shaded gray box, consist of information that's interesting to know but not necessarily critical to your understanding of the chapter or section topic.

## Foolish Assumptions

Bar owners have to make assumptions about the patrons sitting on the other side of the bar, and authors have to do the same thing — we have to make assumptions about our readers. With that in mind, we've come up with the following list of assumptions about why you've picked up this book:

- ✔ You're thinking about opening your own bar, and you want practical, how-to advice to accomplish your goals.
- ✔ You're a bartender or other bar employee who wants to take your experience to the next level and manage a bar.
- ✔ You've never worked in a bar but you've had success in other professional endeavors and have skills that you may be able to apply to this business.
- ✔ You buy every book that sports a yellow-and-black cover.
- ✔ You currently own or operate a bar, and you're seeking advice, tips, and suggestions to keep things running smoothly and successfully.



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