

Specifications:
Bi-weekly
500 words

Cocktail Chatter

The Madras

By Ed Sikov

June 7, 2010

Jack Fogg, the CNN reporter, strode into the house with the world-ownership attitude of everyone who went to Harvard. With him was his lithe Indian boyfriend, Samir. They rented a room one weekend a month. “Dude!” said the accent-free Samir, who liked to be called Sammy. Jack smiled his regal hello and bounded up the stairs to their room. I stared at his perky rump as he exited and immediately knew what cocktail I’d make.

“Sammy,” I began. “Don’t you think Jack’s attraction to Indian men and madras shorts is a sign of cultural imperialism?”

“Dude! His diapers were madras. You should see his father, who actually *looks* like Ralph Lauren.” (“Lifshitz!” Craig cried from the other end of the room.) But don’t give *me* your crap about ‘cultural imperialism.’ We kicked the Brits’ asses after a century of real-people-suffering imperialism. Besides, Jack takes it, not the other way around. He likes it when I . . .”

“What am I missing?” Jack cheerfully asked as he made his second entrance, this time wearing only – I swear – madras swim trunks. His fine Anglo-Saxon chest was hairy.

“Well if, baby, you’re the bottom. . . .” Craig sang out.

Jack shot Sammy a glare that unnerved me to the bone. Not Sammy,

who just grinned and said, “Only geeks wear swimsuits.” And with that he stripped off his clothes and exhibited the centerpiece of their relationship.

“Do we have cranberry juice?” I wondered as Jack and Sammy headed for the pool.

Craig was aghast. “Why on earth, after a spectacle worthy of Chi Chi LaRue, does your geriatric mind turn to cranberry juice? Kielbasa and Crisco, yes; but Ocean Squirt?”

“Sorry,” I replied. I did groove on Sammy’s body – Jack’s too – but I was getting sloshed on Absolut on the rocks without the rocks, my default drink when I was down. It had been a rotten week. The publishing industry was crueler than ever, my latest book proposal seemed dead in the water, I was wildly depressed, and Jack was so successful. . . .

“I’m going to make Madrases,” I slurred, “to celebrate the colonials’ revenge. So Jack likes India inside and out: how totally Harvard! But I hate Ocean Squirt. I like 100% juice, even if it’s mostly apple.”

“Thank you, *Consumer Reports*.” Craig’s eyes turned skyward. “Give him two perfect asses and two six-packs – 12! a case! – and he’s earnestly comparing juices. Well, the cupboard’s bare, too, so

I’ll go down to the harbor and get some. I’ll pick up more OJ as well.”

“No pulp!” I shouted as Craig lumbered out. I thought morosely about Jack Fogg’s lickable chest, Sammy’s breathtaking body and the futility of the human condition, especially mine.

“*Snap out of it, Eddie*”, Jiminy Cricket scolded. “*Go get the right glassware.*”

The Madras is a more complex Screwdriver: vodka, OJ, and cranberry juice. It’s great stirred together, but you can layer it like a Tequila Sunrise. Here’s how:

1 part Absolut

1.5 parts cranberry juice (ignore my pickiness; use what you like)

1 part orange juice (the no pulp kind if possible)

Fill a tall glass with ice, and add the vodka. Give it a stir. Pour in the cranberry juice and let it settle. Then attempt to float the OJ on the cranberry juice by pouring it gently onto the back of a spoon, which you have inserted into the glass at the top level of the OJ. If you fail the first time, drink the ruined cocktail and keep making and drinking them until you get it right. Then drink it.



Born in 1957 in Natrona Heights, PA, Ed Sikov is a 1974 graduate of Highlands High School, where he was a maladjusted loner. Escaping from his misery, Ed plunged into more of the same as a disaffected, alienated student at tiny Haverford College, where he majored in English and spent a lot of time by himself. He graduated in 1979, moved to New York, came out of the closet, got happy, and went to film school. He earned a Ph.D. in film studies in 1986 from Columbia University. He is the author of six books, has contributed essays to several gay-themed anthologies, and his work has appeared in such diverse publications as Premiere, Architectural Digest, Film Quarterly, the Village Voice, the Air Force Academy’s literary journal, and the Brazilian edition of Cosmopolitan.