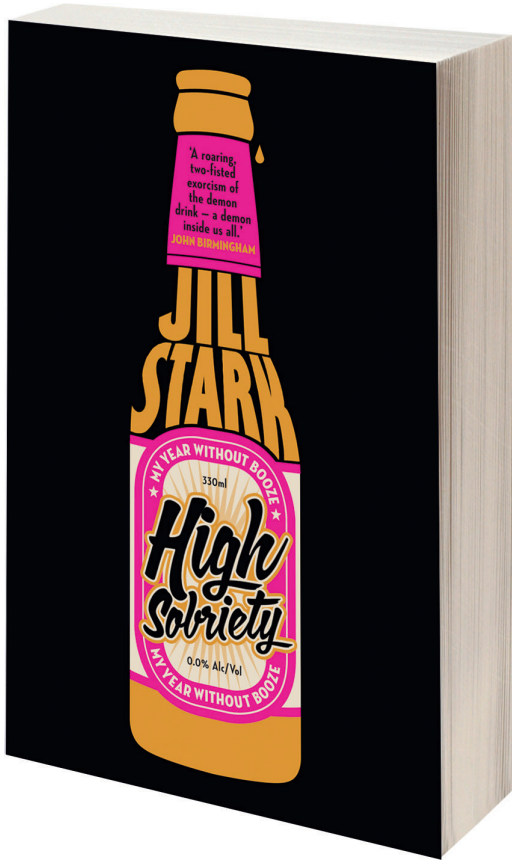


# High Sobriety

JILL STARK



## BOOK DETAILS

Format: paperback

ISBN: 9781922070227

RRP: \$29.95



## AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Jill Stark is a senior writer with *The Sunday Age*. She joined *The Age* in 2006, where she has predominantly covered health, specialising in alcohol and drug issues, mental health, and public-health policy. Jill began her journalism career in Scotland in the 1990s, before moving to Melbourne, where she currently lives, in 2001.

'I'm the binge-drinking health reporter. During the week, I write about Australia's booze-soaked culture. At the weekends, I write myself off.'

Booze had dominated Jill Stark's social life ever since she had her first sip of beer, at 13. She thought nothing could curb her love of big nights. And then came the hangover that changed everything. In the shadow of her 35th year, Jill made a decision: she would give up alcohol. But what would it mean to stop drinking in a world awash with booze?

*High Sobriety* charts Jill's tumultuous year on the wagon, exploring Australia's love affair with alcohol along the way. It's a funny, moving, and insightful exploration of why we drink, how we got here, and what happens when we turn off the tap.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why is alcohol considered such an integral part of the Australian identity? Does our reputation as big drinkers affect the way we're viewed around the world?
2. Does drinking strengthen friendships and help people to bond? Is it possible to be as wild and spontaneous sober as it is when you're tipsy or drunk?
3. Have you used alcohol to deal with stress or emotional problems, and does it work? Is a glass of wine to unwind after a tough day a harmless indulgence or an unhealthy pattern?
4. Why are non-drinkers often treated with suspicion? Have you ever criticised someone for being boring or a party pooper for refusing a drink? If so, why?
5. How would you define Australia's drinking culture? Is it any different to the way we drank 50 years ago, or is there a moral panic around binge drinking?

REVIEWS

‘A roaring, two-fisted exorcism of the demon drink, a demon inside us all.’

— JOHN BIRMINGHAM

‘A sobering, and distinctly inspiring, glimpse of what Australia might look like without a hangover ... Stark writes with honesty and unnerving clarity.’

— ANNABEL CRABB

‘A fun, fresh look at one woman’s battle to commiserate, celebrate, relax and party without the help of one of the last legal recreational drugs ... it’s a joy to go along for the ride’

— *Australian Women’s Weekly*

‘It’s hard not to recommend this book’

— *The Australian*

6. Have young people always been binge drinkers, or are they drinking more today because the alcohol industry is targeting them?
7. Is it better for parents to let their children drink under their supervision, or should parents ban alcohol until children turn 18? What was your parents’ attitude to drinking, and how do you think it has affected your alcohol consumption?
8. Is imposing a minimum price for alcohol – which would make some drinks more expensive – a necessary measure to protect the community’s most vulnerable, even if it means that responsible drinkers will pay more for booze?
9. Should alcohol companies be banned from sponsoring sport and from advertising during sports broadcasts? Do you believe that the close relationship between the alcohol industry and professional sport in Australia influences children’s attitudes towards drinking?
10. Is sober dating a more authentic experience, or can alcohol help to break the ice and aid the romantic process?
11. After reading *High Sobriety*, have your views on what constitutes ‘alcohol dependency’ changed?



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