



Will Someone Please Pass the Chardonnay?



Dear Kind *H Texas* Readers:

I'm a red wine drinker. I tend to stray away from the hard stuff, because I morph into Faye Dunaway in *Barfly*. P.S. Do you remember the tagline from that phenomenal film?

"Some people never go crazy. What truly horrible lives they must lead."
Oh, it's perfection.

But I digress. Let's get back to the red wine. I've recently been invited to several Houston parties. And not just your average, run-of-the-mill shindigs. I'm not talking about a barbecue in the backyard, dog jumping in the pool, kids screaming for ice cream type of bash. Nope. These are the real deal. The big enchiladas of parties. The savoir faire's of fetes.

Imagine valets in red jackets parking your car, a golf cart sweeping you up to your host's front door, where you are greeted by a waif-like Heidi Klum bearing a tray of champagne flutes. And that's just the entrance.

Inside, the decorations include the likes of flower bouquets fit for a royal wedding, candles large enough to light Ecuador, and mini-quiches

served from domed English platters.

The guests are fashionable types. You know these people. Hey, you *may even* be one of these people. Flitting around in the latest high heel mini-boots. Waving to your gorgeous, mini-booted friends.

Meanwhile, I've shown up in a perfectly respectable outfit. And yet, I've missed the hot trend. The "this season must-have." The slouchy mini-boot.

Let's face it. I may as well be wearing parachute pants and Kaepa's. Ah, such are the trials and tribulations of the glamorous life.

I wind my way toward my only salvation – the bar. And there is the bartender, shaking fun little cocktails for everyone. Topping off champagne flutes. Smiling as if he owns the house -- which he absolutely does not, by the way.

"What can I get you?" he asks, because this guy recognizes a fish out of water. It's as if I'm wearing a nametag that reads: *Hi, I'm Jo. And I'm not wearing mini-boots.*

"I'm easy," I say. "I'll have a glass of *red* wine, please."

The bartender shakes his head, grimly. I can tell he's about to deliver the bad news, like the Captain of the Titanic.

"The host is only pouring Chardonnay this evening," he announces. I stare at him, but he remains poker-faced.

"No red wine?" I ask

He shrugs and looks at me with pitying eyes. I can tell he feels my pain, but he doesn't dare say a word. This bartender is one smart cookie. He knows where his bread is buttered, if you get my drift.

"How about a Gibson?" he offers. "I make a mean martini."

"Can't," I say.

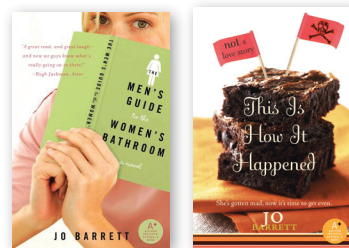
"How come?"

"I'm like Faye Dunaway."

He smiles. "*Barfly*, right?"

I immediately have a fleeting fantasy. The cute bartender and I are on a desert island drinking red wine out of huge goblets. We toast to the sun and the sand and to the fact that we are alone.

And no one is afraid we will stain anything. **H**



Jo Barrett is a guest columnist for H Texas magazine. Her two fiction novels, "The Men's Guide to the Women's Bathroom," and "This is How It Happened (not a love story)" are published by HarperCollins and available at bookstores nationwide. "The Men's Guide to the Women's Bathroom" was optioned by CBS and Paramount Pictures with Hollywood actor Hugh Jackman's production company attached.