



Cheers to Michigan: A Celebration of Cocktail Culture and Craft Distillers
Tammy Coxen and Lester Graham
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Made in Michigan

While the origin stories of many classic cocktails are hazy (this is the history of people who've been drinking, after all) there are three that took that "Made in Michigan" spirit to a national stage.





Rediscovering a Detroit Treasure

The Last Word is Michigan's most famous classic cocktail, but until 2004 even the bar that birthed it had completely forgotten about it. The Last Word cocktail was created at the Detroit Athletic Club in 1916, before Prohibition made alcohol consumption illegal in the United States.

The Detroit Athletic Club is a holdover from more prosperous days. The club was established in 1913, and by the time its Albert Kahn–designed building opened in 1915, it had more than 2,000 members. Between them, those early members controlled 90 percent of automobile production at the time.



What does all this have to do with the cocktail? In 2004, at the beginning of the modern craft cocktail movement, a Seattle bartender, Murray Stenson, found the recipe in the 1951 book *Bottoms Up*, where The Last Word recipe was credited to the Detroit Athletic Club. That was the first the world had heard of the drink in many decades. In fact, when a spirits blogger contacted the Detroit Athletic Club in 2009 for more information about the drink, the bar itself couldn't find any mention of it in its records. However, the club

historian, Ken Voyles, eventually found the drink listed on a dinner menu and mention of it in a 1917 edition of the club's member magazine. Today the club is proud to claim ownership of this rediscovered classic.

One of the things Tammy loves about this drink is its bal-





The historic Detroit Athletic Club.

ance. An equal parts drink, the cocktail combines four disparate ingredients, but they come together really nicely, with bright, flavorful notes and herbal and earthy complexity lying underneath.

If you'd like to taste the drink where it was invented, you'll have to find a friend who is a member of the Detroit Athletic Club. When Lester visited the bar to document this piece of cocktail history, he wasn't allowed to take photos and was politely asked to leave. Fortunately, you can get The Last Word cocktail from other bars, as it is once again a favorite among bartenders and their guests.

THE LAST WORD

Detroit Athletic Club

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz Green Chartreuse

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz gin

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz Maraschino liqueur

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz lime juice

Combine ingredients in a cocktail shaker. Add ice and shake well. Strain into a coupe.

