

# The Great Drinking Experiment

The *I-S* staff put themselves on the line for a drinking mission like no other. Compiled by **Ramesh William**



**W**ine before beer, have no fear. Liquor before wine, you'll feel fine. Beer before liquor, never sicker. We've all heard these old saws about drinking, but we figured that it was time to put them to the test—in the interest of science and journalism, of course. We wanted to get to the bottom of things (especially glasses filled with booze) and find out if there really was a drinking strategy that could deliver maximum buzz with minimum blah the next morning.

So we scoured the *I-S* headquarters for some thirsty volunteers (wasn't hard), organized the venues—Gaelic Inns were kind enough to host us—and drew up a drinking roster. We then dispatched a platoon of drinkers on each day of this three-day (dream) project.

Drink assignments in hand, the first group sallied forth to the banks of the Singapore River and pitched camp at that veritable drinking institution—The Penny Black—and tanked big time on some very empty stomachs. This gave the other two groups that were to follow ample warning on the perils of operating on empty fuel tanks.

But being all-round empathetic folks, and in order to keep this experiment as scientifically sound as possible, groups 2 and 3 decided to suck it in and also not have dinner (gee, thanks group 1)—doing their bit for mankind, and reporting varying degrees of distress, amnesia, fuzziness and oral dehydration thereafter.

So which drinking myth was debunked? Were there any truths to these seemingly wise-ass sayings? Did having a pile of Graveyards before pints of Tiger lead to fitful dreams of being chased through the former by the latter? Or did beers before tequila shots result in disastrous consequences? Well, read on ...

## Group 1 (Drinks at Penny Black)

**Richard Lee**  
Art Director  
Beer followed by cocktails

Mr. Lee's counterparts realized things were looking up when the normally lugubrious Mac master started becoming a lot less complain-y. After a Tiger and a brace of Heinekens, Richard headed into uncharted waters with two margaritas before heading home.

What happened next? "I threw up in the cab," states Richard matter-of-factly. "Was the uncle angry?" we asked. "Nope, I threw up on my shirt; the cab was fine." The next morning, Richard reported a "dry, sandpaperish feel" in his mouth—and a stomach "as windy as Chicago." The only thing that kept Richard from drifting away at work the next day were eye bags of similar heft to a very famous namesake.

**Aspirin Factor:** 

**Zaki Jufri**  
Senior Writer  
Wine followed by beer

Being a curious journalist-cum-master alcohol imbiber (he's our nightlife writer), Zaki approached his mission with typical spring-in-his-step gusto. But after necking down three wines, he could only muster enough will for another two beers.

"Like Mohammed Ali, I was floating like a butterfly ... but I felt as though I was stung real hard in the head by a ginormous bee!" Zaki said, before adding, "and then, I got into a cab and Richard threw up all over himself, and I had to organize a plastic bag for him."

The next day he reported having a touch of wooziness. "Waking up was harder than usual but after a glass of water, the woozy feeling eventually stopped," he said. Funny, he seemed plenty woozy to us all day.

**Aspirin Factor:** 

**CC Goh**  
Marketing Executive  
Beer followed by wine

Tagging along with the guys, CC stuck strictly to her assignment, having a pint of Tiger, a pint of Killkenny and two white wines. And she represented the fairer sex admirably. "Maybe it was the empty stomach, maybe we drank a little too fast, but I was quite 'high' after my second beer; talking non-stop," she says.

On the mission's aftermath, CC says, "I KO-ed right after I got home. An hour later I woke up, feeling better, with my throat dry."

The next day, CC reported her head was "as clear as the sky" (which is kind of a confusing thing to say in these hazy times). And like her compadres, she too had the all familiar super dry mouth and bloated stomach.

**Aspirin Factor:** 

## Group 2 (Drinks at Muddy Murphy's)

**Chris Yong**  
Marketing Intern  
Beer, tequila—repeat

The scientific method didn't quite work for Chris. In fact, our friend veered completely off script after having his assigned three Tigers



### CONDUCT YOUR OWN EXPERIMENT

The folks at Gaelic Inns were kind enough to host us for our Great Drinking Experiment and they'd be happy to do the same for you. They're even ready to give you some great deals (they call them Happy Hours, but we know it's really a privilege given to hard-working beverage scientists like us!).

#### DURTY NELLY'S

#01-01/02/03 Marina Square, 6 Raffles Blvd., 6338-8023  
1-for-1 martinis 11:30am-8pm

#### BALLYMOON'S SPRITS BAR

#B1-06/08 Orchard Hotel Shopping Arcade, 442 Orchard Rd., 6735-0400  
1-for-1 house pour spirits 5-9pm

#### SCRUFFY MURPHY'S IRISH CAFÉ & PUB

B7 Marine Cove, 1000 East Coast Parkway, 6449-7717  
All day happy hour with pints of Guinness, Tiger and Heineken and Killkenny for \$11.50

#### THE PENNY BLACK VICTORIAN LONDON PUB

26/27 Boat Quay, 6538-2300  
\$12 pints of Guinness, Old Speckled Hen, Cider and Killkenny 11:30am-8pm.

#### MUDDY MURPHY'S IRISH PUB

#B1-01/01-06 Orchard Hotel Shopping Arcade, 442 Orchard Rd., 6735-0400  
\$12 pints of Guinness, Killkenny, Old Speckled Hen and Cider 11:30am-7:30pm.





and three tequilas. He went on to have two vodka martinis, an extra shot of tequila and beers throughout. The morning he described the condition of his head as such: "It felt like a low budget Mexican nuclear test lab."

His dry tongue also was out of whack. "My tongue wasn't functioning too well; I can't really get my Qs and my Gs right," he said.

Most bizarre of all, Chris also kept on smelling a part of his arm, as he had apparently missed a spot in the shower, describing it as a "smell that melts my heart." Aww, interns.

**Aspirin Factor:** 

### Andrew Hedges Editorial Intern Vodka RedBull—all night long

Andrew signed up for this in a heartbeat because, as he put it, "I have loads of experience from my Uni days." Also being half Polish, he admits to a certain affinity toward vodka. And so while he zipped along on six vodka Redbulls all night, the usually-bouncy Andrew had his edge taken off the next day.

"I was tired as hell," claims the young Jesus (ca. 16 BC) lookalike. "The copious amounts of RedBull kept me up until a ridiculous hour." The next day Andrew said: "The fact that I had to pause and think about my ability to think," and the fact that he had to manually peel his tongue from the roof of his mouth were good indicators of his condition. He also reported nasty gas which made us glad the interns have their own piece of office real estate.

**Aspirin Factor:**  (Says he much prefers an Alka Seltzer. Does he think we're running a pharmacy?)



### Ed Cubitt Reader Cosmos followed by martinis

So, we needed back-up and our intern (Andrew; see above) offered his layabout, on-vacation-from-the London School of Economics law student mate. Not only did he rise to the occasion, he too went above and beyond the call of duty, chalking five cosmopolitans, three martinis and four pints of beer—duly giving the old two-fingered salute to science.

Although he reported turning "blank" before bed, he woke up waxing lyrical: "Sporting a tongue that would send Oscar Wilde to the back end of a dole line."

He notes this the day after: "I wake up immediately to a soft, cinnamon light filtering through the curtain down onto my head. My brain is deep, dismal blue and the dull throb of a blunt knife across the back of my eyes promises that the worst is yet to come.

"I look at my watch. 6:30 am. Today is going to be a long day. Mouth tastes of frozen dust and building sites; pillow cold, moist and clammy on the back of my neck."

Writers and booze always go well together, don't they?

**Aspirin Factor:** 

### Ramesh William Senior Writer Cocktails followed by beers

In the interest of our beloved *I-S* readers, I put my "lagers, ales and stouts only" policy on hold and shunted down into the subterranean and iffy world of cocktail quaffing.

I began with a Long Island Tea (LIT), which, no surprise was as evil as I remembered it to be (methinks that's why I started smoking at 15; it was a great way to eliminate LIT fumes). Next up I had the Graveyard—five spirits and Guinness combined, which surprisingly was not as potent as the LIT before, but every bit as gross. After that priming, three beers went down easily.

Then I got home and fell asleep on the floor while watching some fluffy travel show on Channel 16. I woke up in bed without any recollection as to how I got there.

The next morning, my mouth was so dry you could have filmed *Lawrence of Arabia* in it, and while at work my stomach was churning like a washing machine



going through several cycles of spin, tumble dry and rinse, and I was bloated all morning. For some reason, I seemed to be cursing a lot more at work than usual. Ahh well, fun night; but never again.

**Aspirin Factor:** 

### Group 3 (Drinks at Scruffy Murphy's)

#### Alan Grant Sub Editor Three Wines, Three Cosmos

Hailing from Scotland, Alan decided to put his highland drinking chops to the test with this assignment because he "believes drinking spirits at the end of a session lessens the effect of a hangover." While he reported feeling "merry" at the end of the night, did his theory pay off? The next morning, he reported feeling "not too bad, but definitely a bit vacant" and said that he had a "general and familiar sense of 'eugh' prevailing." That's not enough to deter him, though, and therefore he has no plans to abandon this particular drinking regimen. Although his wife wishes he would.

**Aspirin Factor:** 

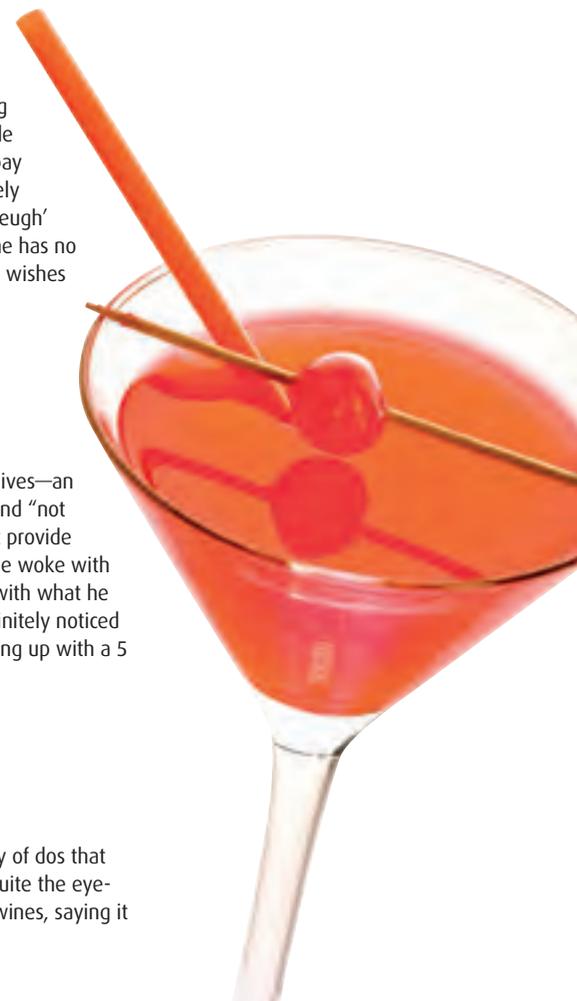
#### Michael Franco Managing Editor Martinis

At the end of a night that included six martinis (served with black olives—an interesting Murphy's twist), Michael felt "both shaken and stirred" and "not as drunk as expected." The "totally yummy" snacks at the bar didn't provide enough absorption though, to quench the "blaze in the belly" that he woke with at 2am. After some Actal and aspirin, he got back to sleep, waking with what he called "a spacey, sleepy haze that wasn't quite unpleasant." We definitely noticed the spacey part at the office as he apparently forgot to shave, showing up with a 5 o'clock shadow at 9am.

**Aspirin Factor:** 

#### Julius Toh Country Manager Three Cosmos and Three Wines

We know Julius can drink. As our boss, the man has organized plenty of dos that have gone down in *I-S* folklore. This self-confessed beer nut made quite the eye-raising and effete choice of drinks with his three cosmos and three wines, saying it "sounded like a good combo."



And it worked well for the man, as he described his pre-pillow feeling as “nice, warm and tasty” and was also happy to note that his head was still screwed onto his neck.

How did your mouth feel the next day captain? “A tad leathery,” he replied. While he reported having a fuzz-free day and a well-behaved stomach the morning after, we think he might just be understating his physical and mental well being. Why? Simply because the frequency of his rounds about the office dropped markedly the day after, leaving the rest of us to tear the place apart ... we only jest, of course (if anyone knows how to repair industrial aircon units, call us).

**Aspirin Factor:** —  (err, dude ... minus 1 aspirins?)



### Dominic Hennessy Senior Account Manager Three to five pints of Guinness

Dominic’s deep well of patriotism gushed to the fore upon hearing Arthur’s family name and he grabbed this assignment with the same gusto he uses to grab his draft. “I knew I would do justice to the Guinness,” Dominic harrumphed the day after consuming seven (we say more) pints.

The one immediate side effect before going to bed, according to this dude from our beloved sales department, was that he didn’t “remember going to bed or buying and eating 20 chicken McNuggets from McDonalds.”

The next morning’s weather report read: “Dodgy with spots of bloatedness. Possibility of illness on the horizon.”

Also as he attempted to do some work, he noticed his hands going crazy. “It was even hard to write!” he exclaimed. Umm, we think that’s called the shakes. Nothing

a morning after pint can’t fix though!

**Aspirin Factor:**  please (how polite)

### Elaine Meyers General Manager, Splash Cosmos all night long

Now Elaine was our ex-boss as *I-S*’s erstwhile managing editor. We all know that journos have tin-based livers and that Elaine would saunter through this—no worries. “The all Cosmo assignment picked me; I’m a *Sex in the City* girl,” said Elaine before consuming five cosmos before her two pints of cider nightcap.

“I felt a bit woolly, heavy and blurry before bed so I popped in a couple of ibuprofen,” she said. Next morning, the only thing she suffered from was hunger pangs. Lucky girl! See, told you (albeit ex) journos would be a-okay!

**Aspirin Factor:** 

### Eric Pesik Reader One bourbon, one scotch, one beer

Eric picked this because this was the only selection left available that wasn’t as girly as the cast of *Little Britain*.

So Eric, tell us, what did you have? “I had one bourbon on the rocks (Heaven Hill), one scotch on the rocks (Black & White), one draft beer pint (Tiger), in that order, repeated twice, and finished off with an extra Tiger at the end of the night,” he duly answers.

He went to describe the condition of his head in the morning as, “startled, tired, and mildly introspective, having awakened directly from a frenetic dream running through a traffic tunnel with a clique of my old schoolmates.”

He spoke disdainfully of a slow hum vibrating from behind his eyeballs, with the biggest insult being, “the 1980s US advertising jingle stuck in my head: ‘Hamburger helper/helped her hamburger/ make a great meal’.”

And although he was lucky enough not to suffer from a volatile stomach, he was, in his own words, “looking forward to bland breakfast cereal to help maintain stability,” proving that a hangover meal is a dish best eaten cold.

**Aspirin Factor:** None—only wanted water (show off!)

So our conclusion? While it seemed that wine before beer was the least painful drinking combo, the entire office felt that much more research is needed so that we can be as accurate as possible. So while we go out and gather more data, we hope you’ll do the same. Let us know what bubbles up in your research by joining the “Great Drinking Experiment” discussion on Facebook (search for *I-S Magazine*)—if you can find it through those bleary eyes! ■

