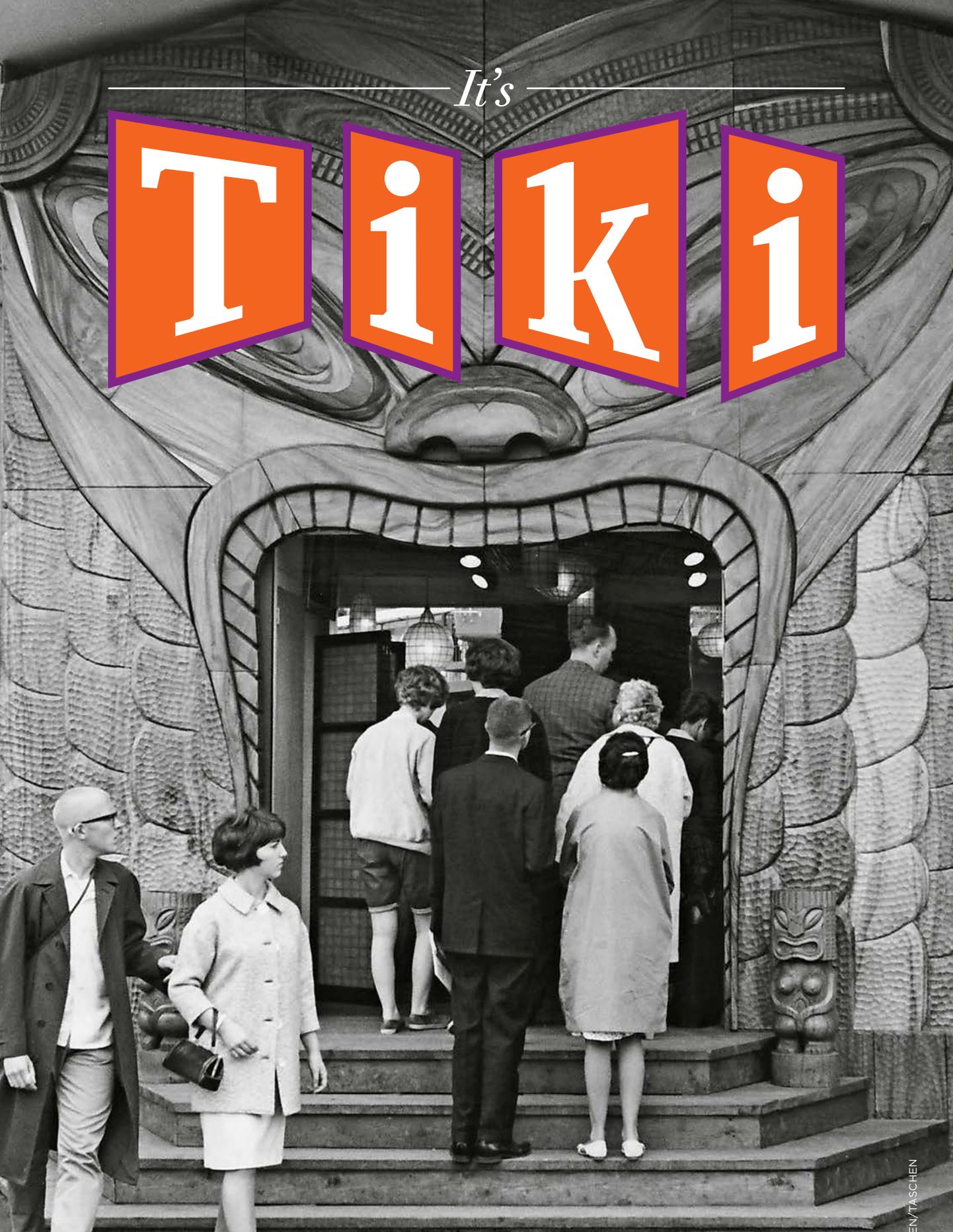


It's

Tiki



CURIOUS FAIRGOERS enter a tiki-themed doorway at the Seattle World's Fair in 1962.

SVEN KIRSTEN/TASCHEN

DREAMS OF paradise inspired these 1950s revelers to dress up in straw hats and leis while feeling the island beat.



Ti me

At bars and in their homes, midcentury Americans created their own tropical playgrounds. BY LEAH WYNALEK



THESE LADIES look as if they're at an island resort, but they're actually at a hotel in Pennsylvania.



EXOTIC COCKTAILS in tiki mugs made going to a bar feel like vacation.

Paradise Found

Step back in time at these beloved tiki temples:

Mai-Kai (Fort Lauderdale, FL)

This Polynesian paradise opened in 1956, and it's been charming tourists with its flame-twirling dancers, South Pacific cuisine

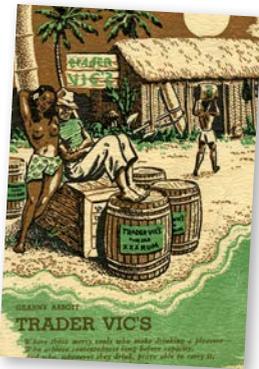
and plentiful tiki drinks ever since. As the home of Hukilau, an annual festival for tiki enthusiasts, Mai-Kai maintains its reputation as one of the grandest tiki palaces around.

Tiki-Ti (Los Angeles, CA)

As one of Don the Beachcomber's seasoned bartenders, Ray Buhen mastered fruity rum cocktails like the Missionary's Downfall and the Zombie. In 1961 he opened up his own little oasis, Tiki-Ti, on Sunset Boulevard. Today Ray's son and grandson carry the Tiki torch, still serving his secret recipes at the Hollywood hangout.

Three Dots and a Dash (Chicago, IL)

Though this tropical escape opened just one year ago, its classic rum concoctions and wooden tikis (many from Chicago's old Trader Vic's) make it feel much like a midcentury watering hole. Drinks are served in kitschy mugs shaped like conch shells, treasure chests and more, which thirsty guests can buy as souvenirs.



Head to CRITIKI.com to find a tiki bar or restaurant near you.

In the 1950s and '60s, escaping to paradise was easy—all you had to do was step into a tiki bar. With their fruity cocktails and themed decor, these oases were a retreat from the daily grind. Beyond the bamboo bar, island fever infected pop culture through movies like *South Pacific* and Polynesian-style restaurant chains such as Trader Vic's.

"It was during America's *dolce vita*, when everyone had worked hard to have their own homes with cars and television and needed an escape valve for all the stresses of their everyday life," says Sven Kirsten, author of *Tiki Pop*, a book that explores the tiki phenomenon. A night at a tiki bar "was like going to a tropical island for just an evening."

Though the tiki craze peaked in the early '60s, the passion for Pacific culture began decades earlier. Ernest Raymond Beaumont Gantt—later known as Donn Beach—gave Americans a taste of paradise in 1934, when he opened his tropical bar, Don the Beachcomber. After World War II, servicemen shared their experiences at home, sparking more interest in the Pacific. The island infatuation re-emerged with a new look in the

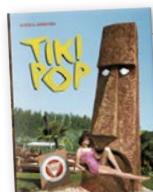
1950s, thanks in part to Hawaii's statehood. "After the war, the quaint Hawaiian paradise thing had become a little tired, and there was an appreciation of primitive art as decor," Kirsten says. "The tiki carving and tiki idol became a symbol used by all these Polynesian restaurants."

By hanging tropical matting and tiki carvings, Americans turned their rec rooms into island sanctuaries where they could sip mai tais with friends. But the fad ended by the mid-'60s.

"The new generation had a different style and concept of how to entertain themselves," says Kirsten. "Anything their parents had done was unhip and outdated. Tiki was part of that."

These days, the craft cocktail movement is inspiring young entrepreneurs to unearth classic recipes and mix up their own exotic drinks.

"People are always looking for new games," Kirsten says, "and tiki is just a fun-all-around game to play."



LEARN MORE about America's tiki obsession in Sven Kirsten's book *Tiki Pop*, available at TASCHEN.com.

TIKI BAR: ALADDIN COLOR INC./GETTY IMAGES; BOOK: SVEN KIRSTEN/TASCHEN



TIKI BAR: FOUND IMAGE PRESS/CORBIS; MUGS: RETROPLANET.COM; ANNETTE FUNICELLO, HARRY BELAFONTE, MENU: GETTY IMAGES

Island Beat

Unwind with these tropical tunes of yesteryear:

- "Honolulu Lulu" by Jan and Dean
- "Pearly Shells" by Burl Ives
- "Pineapple Princess" by Annette Funicello (right)
- "Coconut" by Harry Nilsson
- "Day-O (The Banana Boat Song)" by Harry Belafonte (left)



Want to collect your own tiki treasures? Visit RETROPLANET.com to order mugs, coasters and more.

