

THE BOB GATES EFFECT HILLARY'S OBAMA STRATEGY

Newsweek

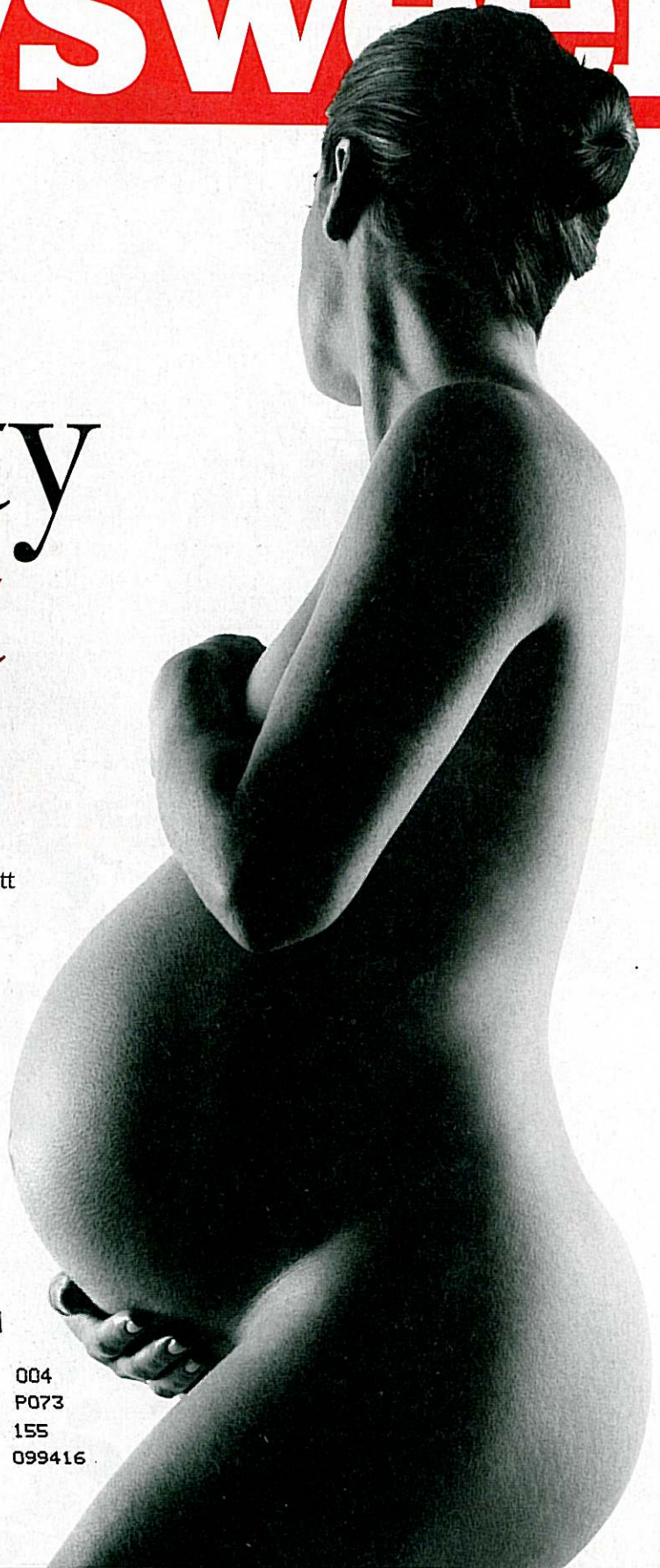
HEALTH FOR LIFE

Fertility & Diet

HOW WHAT YOU EAT
AFFECTS YOUR ODDS OF
GETTING PREGNANT

By Dr. Jorge E. Chavarro, Dr. Walter C. Willett
and Patrick J. Skerrett

With HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL



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PHOTOGRAPH BY HOWARD SCHATZ
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Shaken Well, With a Twist

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO I WAS IN A POSH AND VERY WELL-KNOWN steakhouse in Washington, D.C., with a powerful and very well-known columnist. It was Saturday at lunchtime, and the columnist, in an uncharacteristically festive mood, ordered a daiquiri. The waiter returned with my Bloody Mary, apologized profusely, and explained that the daiquiri was out of the question because the blender was on the blink. After we told him that the blender wasn't just unnecessary, it was inappropriate, he emerged a second time to say it remained impossible: "The kitchen is out of strawberries."

This is what it has come to: the average Joe thinks a daiquiri, one of the simplest and most storied cocktails in the world (think Papa, think JFK, think Havana's La Floridita), is an overly sweet frozen concoction made in a blender with strawberries. I keep hearing that classic cocktails are on the rebound, and I am ever hopeful, but I would bet my house that the great majority of today's bartenders could offer up an appetini or a cosmopolitan long before they could shake, not stir, a Ramos gin fizz. Fortunately, there is hope. Two days after my D.C. lunch, I was back home in New Orleans at Commander's Palace restaurant, which had undergone extensive post-Katrina renovations. The new dining room was lovely, but even better was the cocktail menu—item number seven was a lime daiquiri. I mailed the menu to the columnist straightaway and suggested he visit the city on his next vacation.

There are other places you can go—the bartender at Duke's Hotel in London, for example, makes the best martini I've ever tasted. But New Orleans is where the very word "cocktail" is said to have been coined when, in the early 1800s, pharmacist Antoine Peychaud mixed brandy with his celebrated bitters ("good for what ails one irrespective of malady"). He served his restorative in French egg cups called *coquetiers*, the word was soon mispronounced/slurred, and the modern cocktail was born. The wonderful women who run Commander's, cousins Ti Adelaide Martin and Lally Brennan, consider it

to be their city's most important contribution: "Would we have ever had jazz but for cocktails?"

New Orleans is also the home of the Museum of the American Cocktail, and birthplace of such immortals as the Sazerac, the gin fizz and the Brandy Crusta. It is fitting, then, that Martin and Brennan have named their new book "In the Land of Cocktails." The good news is that you can be there, too—they provide recipes for the classics and concoctions of their own, accompanied by stories and whimsical illustrations. I'm giving it to everyone I know for Christmas in hopes that when I visit I might be served a Scotch Old Fashioned with a correctly muddled orange. The book is especially useful during this holiday season, when you are either caught up in the festivity of it all or in need of your own restorative.

Either way, I recommend one of the world's great drinks, the sidecar, which features the warming combination of brandy and Cointreau. The most frequent story of its origins has the barman at Harry's Bar in Paris making it toward the end of World War I for a chilled officer who had ridden in from the front in the sidecar of a motorcycle. Like the daiquiri, it is a monument to simplicity and balance, but is rather more suited to the current weather—and to the season's stress. When Rosalind Russell, playing Auntie Mame, is told of the imminent arrival of her nephew's trustee, she instructs her houseman to bring her a "light breakfast, black coffee and a sidecar." No wonder the book calls it a "big, beautiful drink for the connoisseur."

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N Get Julia Reed's recipe for the perfect sidecar at xtra.Newsweek.com



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CRAZY FOR YOU: *Jonah Hill as one half of a nerdy duo*

Checklist

Our top picks for the week

Rent "Superbad," last summer's hit movie starring Jonah Hill and Michael Cera as two dweeby high-school buddies making one last desperate attempt to hook up with a girl before they graduate. This teen-comedy classic is just too much fun.

Surf exlibris.typepad.com and click on "Russian Reading Challenge 2008" in the right-hand column. Whether you've been on page 60 of "War and Peace" since 1989, or you've worked your way through Dostoevsky and Tolstoy and are ready to move onto Gogol, this blog will help you make it happen.

Hear "Live Earth: The Concerts for a Climate in Crisis," a 15-song CD package of performances from artists at the global Live Earth concerts in July. The package also includes two DVDs, one with short films, including a documentary about the making of Live Earth (\$19.99; amazon.com).

Read "Gallop!" by Rufus Butler Seder (\$12.95). Through a process called Scanimation, this amusing picture book makes horses gallop, dogs run and eagles soar as you and your children turn the pages.

Go to Austin for the annual Trail of Lights festival, a display of 43 holiday scenes composed of almost 300,000 lights. The festival kicks off Dec. 9 with a parade and the grand opening of the mile-long trail. (Through Dec. 23; for more info see ci.austin.tx.us/tol.)