

Jog or drink . . .

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More years of training follow. When the budding social drinker can defend the planet Earth from hordes of alien spaceships while under the influence of three Johnnie Walkers and Seven-Up, he is deemed fit to meet the ultimate challenge in holding his liquor — the American cocktail party.

First of all, unlike the situation in the parked car, he must hold it while standing up. Second, unlike the bar, there is nowhere to set it down for respite. Third, unless he wishes to be thought a dolt, he must not only stand up, he must move about the room.

The hostess, naturally, has cleverly booby-trapped his passage with all manner of obstacles. These include gesticulating guests describing the size of the salmon they caught last month in Nova Scotia, camel-saddle stools,

house cats and what are laughingly called "cocktail tables," all being far too crowded with platters of soggy hors d'oeuvres to hold a single cocktail.

Show me a man who can negotiate such hazards for two hours while maintaining several lively conversations and yet spill nary a drop and I'll show you a man who can hold his liquor. So it's little wonder that when my wife, Glynda, asks me why we are going to this cocktail party or that, I simply stare her in the eye and say grimly, "Because it's there."

The reason I bring the matter up at this particular time is to assure our friend Bruce that I think none the less of him for spilling that Zinfandel on our yellow couch Friday night. He's obviously only a jogger.

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