SOCIAL ETIQUETTE—‘STRALIAN-NESS’
GENERATIONS AND THEIR MANNERS

With different generations come different attitudes — a bartender’s view of Gen Y and the Baby Boomers on a night out on the town.

‘Stralians’ are not that bad for a bunch of convicts and migrants. In fact, some may say ‘Stralians’ are some of the nicest people in this world. The ‘how ya goen?’, ‘She’ll be right’, ‘Your shout mate!’ attitude sets us apart from the likes of Americans and Europeans. One of the most interesting contemporary discussions is the difference in generations and the way things were ‘back then’. With different generations comes a difference in attitude; but one thing stays the same made evident by a strong part of Australian culture—a good night out on the ‘piss’.

While I’m at university, I like to earn spending money by working in the hospitality industry. I’ve worked in restaurants, bars, and nightclubs for over a year so you can imagine the vast array of characters I have met.

From just-turned-18 girls wearing bright pink sashes to the respectable scotch drinkers, the generation gap is brought home. As always, my generation – Generation Y – want to be served now, whereas the Baby Boomers patiently wait at the bar for their turn to be topped up. And when the grog starts to flow, you can really tell the difference between a fair dinkum ‘Stralian and a teenybopper.
The scene goes like this: a Baby Boomer comes up to the bar, stands and waits to be served. Generally, as soon as the bartender approaches this person to take their order, the Baby Boomer will immediately turn to the person next to them and ask: 'You right mate?' gesturing towards the incoming bartender. Given the nod: 'Can I please have...' follows. A transaction is made, the bartender is thanked (maybe tipped if lucky), and the customer goes on their way.

Now when a customer from the WHY Generation comes up to the bar, (not always, but generally) they firstly duck and weave looking for any tiny gap that might be a fast-track to the front of the line. Once there, it's two elbows up on the bar followed by something highly intelligent like 'Oi!' and a head-jerking motion meaning 'Hellooooo, I'm here, serve me!'. Even if there is a queue, it doesn't matter. Mr/Ms WHY needs to be served next or else their eyes roll and their lips do a strange flappy thing (kind of like a horse). Even if the bartender has told the person to wait their turn or that they will be served next, this little tantrum continues until there is a drink firmly in their hand. A transaction is made, the bartender is snubbed (maybe thanked if lucky) and the customer goes on their way.

Baby Boomers are just so easily satisfied. If a drink is $7 they pay $7 because that is the price. If someone from Generation Y is told a drink is $7, a standard WHY response is given followed by 'Can't ya do it cheapa?'. At the end of the day we hospitality workers are still getting paid but I often wonder what went wrong with my generation to make us so impatient. Before that bugs me too much I'll have to channel my inner Baby Boomer...