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**Science fiction, fantasy, and horror, oh my!**





*Russ Colchamiro reads from his novel *Fractured Lives* during March's reading at Barrow's Intense Tasting Room. Photo by Charles Velasquez-Witosky.*

Every third Tuesday, something fantastic — literally speaking — happens at Barrow's Intense New York Tasting Room in Industry City. Notable names in science fiction, fantasy and horror gather for Brooklyn Books & Booze, an ongoing reading series hosted by author Randee Dawn.

Each month, four writers read excerpts from their work, followed by a Q&A led by Dawn or a guest host. The bar crafts a one-night-only themed cocktail inspired by one of the readings.

In March, the stories read were as eclectic as ever. Daphne Fama read from her debut horror novel *House of Monstrous Women*, about a deadly game set in the Philippines. Russ Colchamiro read from his novel *Fractured Lives*, about a private detective who investigates the interdimensional and paranormal.

The reading series began in 2021 at Ample Hills Creamery in Prospect Heights, where rooftop gatherings allowed for open air and social distancing. When the business temporarily closed in late 2022, the series needed a new home.

That's when Amy Goldschlager, a friend of Dawn's and occasional guest host, suggested Barrow's. Having tasted Barrow's Intense Liqueur at events around New York City, where she also met founder Josh Morton, she thought it might be a good fit.

She was right. In January 2023, the series relaunched as Brooklyn Books & Booze @ Barrow's Intense and has been going strong ever since.

## **A place that supports local artists and artisans**

Morton, founder of Barrow's, likes the bar to be a place welcoming to events, especially featuring local artists. This local-first focus is baked into the bar's license, a "Combined Craft License," which allows them only to sell the liquor they produce as well as liquor produced with 75% New York State ingredients. In their liquor library, they feature liquor from over 40 distilleries around New York State.

Barrow's began in Morton's kitchen in 2013. Inspired by a trip to Italy, he first tried making limoncello, unsuccessfully, but he continued experimenting with liqueur flavors, including blood orange, rosemary and horseradish.

"Horseradish was a disaster," Morton said with a laugh.

Eventually, he settled on refining a ginger liqueur that was a hit with his friends and family. A few years later, he opened a distillery inside Industry City without a tasting room. In 2018, the tasting room opened, although it was half the size it is today.

Now, they're bigger, produce and sell over 50,000 bottles of ginger liqueur yearly, and welcome a variety of events into the bar.

The tasting room is managed by Alex Haskell, a longtime friend of Morton's who owned a restaurant in the neighborhood, Iron Station, which closed a decade ago.

"We like community-based events. We hosted Spirited Away, an event for tarot reading and psychics," Haskell said. "It's not just the liquor that we like to keep local. Every dollar that goes through here stays in New York."

## **A fun, comfortable environment**

A regular staple of the bar and the readings is Chief, Haskell's dog, who likes to herd people inside the bar.

At one memorable reading, Chief met his match.

Legendary science fiction writer David Gerrold, known for writing the Star Trek episode "The Trouble with Tribbles," brought along a plush tribble, a head-sized fur ball. Chief, unsure what the tribble was, kept his eyes on it all evening, trying to herd it to no avail.

This event has gone down in BB&B history, a story told by many of those interviewed.

"It's a comfortable space. There's room. There are regulars that go every month, there's great drinks," shared Nicholas Kaufmann, a horror author and regular reader at the

series. "Although maybe one day I hope to have one of the themed drinks named after whatever I'm reading."

## Written by



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Charles is a reporter interested in all things Sunset Park. He regularly works in the film and television industries.

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