

# Books

## Ladies and gentleman... Sam Cutler

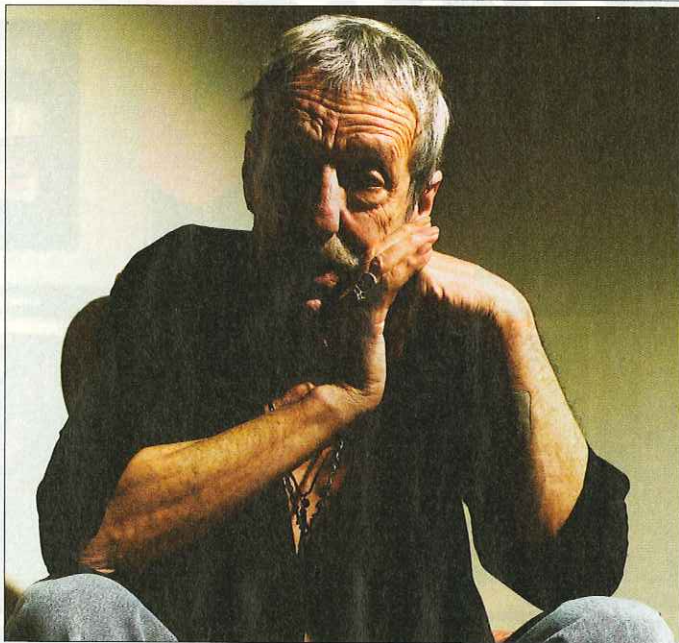
Best known as the Rolling Stones tour manager who hired the Hells Angels to provide security at the infamous Altamont concert in which a young black man was stabbed to death, **Sam Cutler** finally sets the record straight.

By Jason Walker

It's 39 years since Altamont redefined the shaky, violent end of the 1960s. Sam Cutler was in the thick of it and lived to tell the tale – and many more besides – in his new book, *You Can't Always Get What You Want*.

It's Cutler's voice that we hear introducing the Rolling Stones at the beginning of the Maysles brothers' brilliant rockumentary *Gimme Shelter*. Cutler's 12-month tour of duty in the service of the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world took him on a strange trip, through riot police, people of questionable morals, groupies, dealers, hangers-on, the FBI and the CIA, film makers and aggressive management – all on about three hours sleep a night. "I've read so many books about the 1960s and the Stones," says Cutler with discernible weariness. "So many of them were shit. So I just tried to write something that people would understand how it really was – a real, genuine, no bullshit feeling."

It's December 1969, and Cutler is in a world of shit. He has been working his knifeblade arse off for the Stones who want to organise a free concert



Say it again, Sam! Cutler tells his side of a dark story

for their fans to deflect criticism from the hip press about high ticket prices.

A vast Californian crowd has descended onto Altamont Speedway in the hills outside San Francisco. Also in attendance is an assortment of California chapters of the legendary bikers' club, the Hells Angels. At 6.30pm, the Stones are spirited away in a helicopter. There has been a brutal stabbing of a young black man, Meredith Hunter, and people – the cops, the Angels and the Stones – are looking to pass the blame for the way this well-intentioned free concert

went tits-up. The scapegoat is Cutler.

In just a few hours, the Rolling Stones are in the air, bound for Europe, and Cutler is on his way to California to try and sort the mess out. Along the way, he befriends Janis Joplin, Rick Danko, Jerry Garcia and becomes the tour manager for the Grateful Dead, which propels him further down the trails of weirdness.

"That era – the 60s – is now contemporary history; it's being studied at universities, you know. Everyone has their own perspective, so I wanted to add my voice to it, to build

the picture of my generation so that when it comes down to future generations, the picture has been tweaked a bit. A more realistic picture of the time, as it were.

Cutler is in a unique position to write of these events. Unlike the endless stringers for *Rolling Stone*, the photographers and documentary film crews or Truman Capote, Sam was really there, and he's eager to tell something more than the usual tales

**"I've read so many shit books about the Stones... I tried to write something genuine"**

of debauchery. "We can't have yet another book that says, 'Ooh, Keith got smashed on heroin', you know'. Big fucking deal."

*Sam Cutler will be launching his book on Tue 14 Oct at Brass Monkey, 15A Cronulla St, Cronulla 2030. (02 9544 3844 [www.brass-monkey.com.au](http://www.brass-monkey.com.au))*

[books@timeoutsydney.com.au](mailto:books@timeoutsydney.com.au)

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### MEET THE CHEFS

**FIRE BY CHRISTINE MANFIELD**  
WEDNESDAY, 8 OCTOBER / \$10

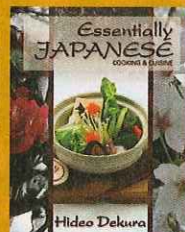
Ticket price includes canapés and complimentary drink on arrival. Join Christine Manfield at the Attic Bar in ArtHouse Hotel as she shares her insatiable appetite for travel, food and new experiences. Tickets are available at Kinokuniya.

**ESSENTIALLY JAPANESE BY HIDEO DEKURA**  
THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER / FREE

Hideo Dekura will take you on a tour throughout Japan and show you what makes Japanese cuisine one of the world's most beautiful and spiritual.

**CUISINE DU MOI BY GAVIN CANARDEAUX**  
THURSDAY, 23 OCTOBER / FREE

A hilarious send up of the current 'Uber chef' trend, this book's take on the 'philosophy of food' cookbook is sure make us stop taking food so seriously! Meet Ben Canaider and his alter ego Gavin Canardeaux.



All events start at 6:30pm.  
Please register your interest on 9262-7996.

**BOOKS**  
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