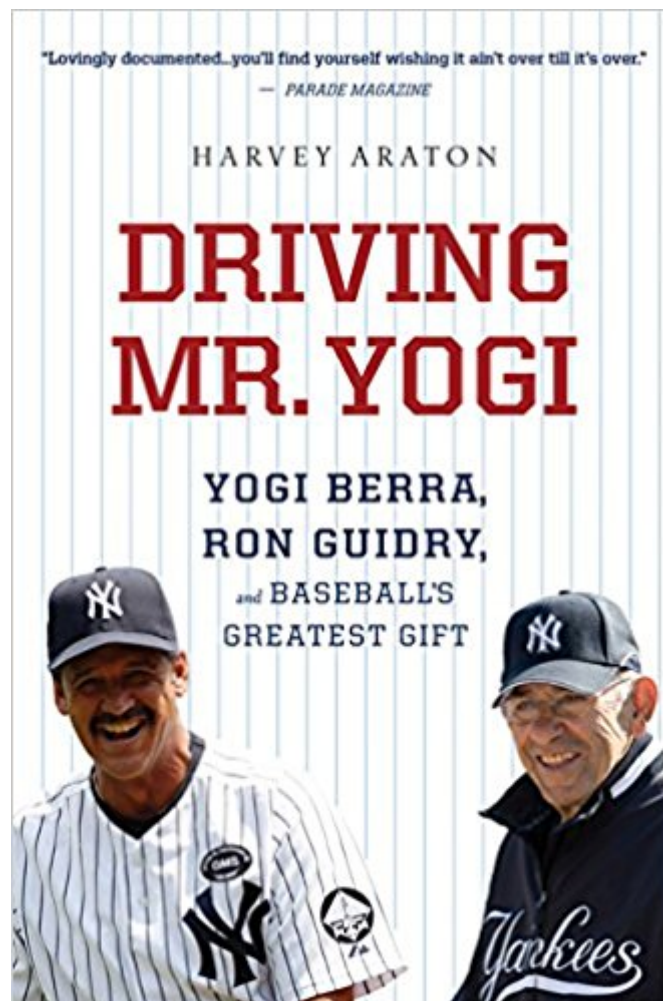




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Driving Mr. Yogi: Yogi Berra, Ron Guidry, And Baseball's Greatest Gift



Synopsis

“Funny, revealing, and surprising . . . anything that brings new Yogi Berra stories is a good book.” •MLB.com

Driving Mr. Yogi is the story of how a unique friendship between a pitcher and catcher is renewed every year. It began in 1999, when Yogi Berra was reunited with the Yankees after a long self-exile, the result of being unceremoniously fired by George Steinbrenner fourteen years before. A reconciliation between Berra and the Boss meant that Berra would attend spring training again. Guidry befriended “Mr. Yogi” instantly. After all, Berra had been a mentor in the clubhouse back when Guidry was pitching for the Yankees. Guidry knew the young players would benefit greatly from Mr. Yogi’s encyclopedic knowledge of the game, just as Guidry had during his playing days, so he encouraged Berra to share his insights. Soon, an offhand batting tip from Mr. Yogi turned Nick Swisher’s season around. Stories about handling a hitter like Ted Williams or catching Don Larsen’s perfect game captured their imaginations. And in Yogi, Guidry found not just an elder companion or source of amusement • he found a best friend. At turns tender and laugh-out-loud funny, and teeming with unforgettable baseball yarns that span more than fifty years, *Driving Mr. Yogi* is a universal story about the importance of wisdom being passed from one generation to the next, as well as a reminder that time is what we make of it and compassion never gets old. “A refreshing change from the normal diet of sports books out there . . . A warm, sentimental look at a baseball icon.” •Tampa Tribune

Customer Reviews

Harvey Araton on *Driving Mr. Yogi* There have been many books written about and by Yogi Berra. What makes this one different? The previous books about Berra, or those authored by him, have focused almost solely on his storied career, or on the quirkiness of his personality, his famous “Yogi-isms.” This book captures him as never before and in doing so characterizes him as far more multidimensional. In this flung-open window into Berra’s octogenarian life, and his incredibly heartwarming relationship with Ron Guidry, he occasionally is stubborn, cranky, vulnerable and ultimately endearing--in the manner of most aging folks we know. This is as real as Yogi Berra gets. How did the book come about? First, our beloved 14-year-old black Labrador died. Then our friends, the Kaplans, took us out for dinner. Dave Kaplan is the longtime director of the Yogi Berra Museum & Learning Center. I mentioned that I was going down to spring training the following week and wondered if and when Yogi would be there. Knowing that he had recently had some health issues, I asked if Yogi’s wife Carmen always stays with him in Tampa. Dave said, “Actually, Carmen usually only goes down for a few days. Believe it or not, Ron Guidry looks after Yogi. He’s been

doing it for years." Later that night, a light went on in my head. Might be a story there, I thought. It wound up on page one of the New York Times and the response to it was overwhelming. Fifteen hundred words hardly did it justice. Hence, we now have 70,000. How did you arrive at the title Driving Mr. Yogi? Just to be playful, Joni Bronander, who works for the Berras at their museum, made a cap for Guidry with the inscription "Driving Mr. Yogi," playing off the Driving Miss Daisy film. She also had one made for Yogi that says: "Driven by Gator." The title seemed like a natural fit from the beginning, although as I worked through the story I began to realize that "Driving Mr. Yogi" was something of a double entendre. It developed a far deeper meaning than I originally realized. How so? As much as this is about generational loyalty and commitment, about honoring everything that has come before, it is also an examination of a man who refuses to surrender to human frailty. And while Yogi Berra may be a household name of historic proportion, he is also really an Everyman, much like our grandfathers and grandmothers and parents, who clings to his identity however he can because it makes him feel not only happy, but vital and alive. Like Guidry, we all have such people in our lives--be it by blood relation or otherwise--who deserve our love and assistance in their struggle to not be pushed into a geriatric corner and left there. Why is Yogi Berra so beloved? I think there are obvious reasons--great team ballplayer, ten-time World Series champion, humble yet confident, not physically imposing, approachable, and a grown man nicknamed Yogi. At the same time, Berra has been a celebrity for many decades now, used to having people wait on him--or wanting something from him--and in that regard he can occasionally be demanding, though not in the sense that he wants material things given to him. But he does expect to be driven to the ballpark on a certain day, at a very specific time, and so on. As I came to understand it, those who cater to Berra see him as the most unpretentious famous person in the history of celebrity. They revel in being inside his circle because they plainly see that status has nothing to do with it. It's not about how important you are; it's about how real a friend you are. Photographs from Driving Mr. Yogi Click on thumbnails for larger images Yogi and Carmen Berra, the picture of fifties American suburban bliss. Ron and Bonnie Guidry, hometown sweethearts from Cajun country in Louisiana. Yogi shares a laugh with George Steinbrenner on the night the Boss begged his forgiveness at the Berra museum in New Jersey. Berra had a cap of his own, inscribed: "Driven by Gator." Joe Torre begged Berra to hand out 1996 championship rings and fussed over him when he finally returned to the Yankees in 2000. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Harkens back to an era when ball players were teammates because of the uniform they wore, not

the games they played. Driving Mr. Yogi is as sweet as the unlikely friendship between Berra and his designated chauffeur Ron "Gator" Guidry who, along with author Harvey Araton, handles this precious baseball cargo with requisite TLC." — Jane Leavy, bestselling author of The Last Boy and Sandy Koufax

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