

BARS from Page 6

"As long as we can get comedians we are going to have comedy night," McMeen said. He said Duffy's was filling the void created by the closing of Rocky Rococo's, but they will try to draw more national talent.

Last Sunday Jeff Stillson of L.A. filled Duffy's new addition. Future acts might include Ron "Oz" Osborne of Omaha and John Rood of Lincoln.

Duffy's opened a new addition March 4 that doubles the size and allows for a pool table to complement shuffleboard and a full menu kitchen.

The kitchen's specialties are giant nachos, a spicy beef stew made from an old Irish recipe handed down through the generations and 25-cent refills on soda — for the designated driver or anyone not wanting to take a swim.

Duffy's has the original Big Eight Deluxe with reworked flippers and an atmosphere to calm the soul and cool the throat. It is an everyday bar with an easy attitude and always a joke from Hank, the best bartender east of O'Rourke's.

— Mark Davis

Duggan's Pub, 410 S. 11th St.

Some bars spend vast sums of cash on hype. They promote drink specials or an accelerated "party" way of life. Duggan's Pub fits nowhere in that description. Duggan's Pub, 410 S. 11th St., is simply a place to go and relax.

Jack Gross, co-owner, said that they offer no drink specials and don't attempt to drag people in by their noses with cutsey promotional gimmicks.

"People come here to drink and enjoy life," he said.

Duggan's is one of those places that have been around for years. Something like 40. Jack and his partner have owned the pub for eight years.

The pub, is a well-lit, roomy place with shuffleboard, pool tables and video games. Drink prices are moderate, a buck twenty or so for a domestic long neck.

This is a college town. And as such, many bars either appeal to college students or to those who prefer to remain as far as possible away from the frenzied, overly vivacious seekers of higher education.

Duggan's Pub gets all kinds.

"We have one of the most diverse crowds in Lincoln," Jack said. "We get some lawyers, businessmen, plumbers, students and out-of-work people in here," he said.

If you're looking for a quick piece of action or loads of ultra-cheap drinks, head for another bar. If you want to sit, play pool or reflect upon the many mysteries of a long-neck Bud, a bar stool at Duggan's awaits.

— Kevin Cowan

O'Rourke's, 121 N. 14th St.

A friend of mine calls O'Rourke's, 121 N. 14th St., the "home of truth." He claims that if you sit long enough in the smoky light of the beer signs and drink enough pitchers, you can find the answer to anything.

A lot of the regulars — more than 100 of them — call it just plain "home." Some take most of their phone calls there.

Chicago Cubs fans. Rugby players. Regional Center workers. Geography students. Jour-

nalists. Cornhusker Hotel employees. Artists. Career students. (It's probably the only downtown bar with more college degrees than customers.)

They send postcards from all over that end up on the wall at the end of the bar. Eat free cold, salty popcorn. Provide nourishment for the three hungry smokeaters suspended from the low ceiling. Drop quarters in the juke box to hear songs like Lou Reed's "Take a Walk on the Wild Side" or Billie Holiday's "Ain't Nobody's Business If I Do," hand-picked from record stores, catalogs and private collections by bar owners Dave Moreland and Doug McLeese.

Moreland, 32, and McLeese, 33, bought the bar 6 1/2 years ago, and it hasn't changed much.

A rumor floats around that the four bartenders, three of whom have worked there for more than two years, have a pension plan.

That one's not true, Moreland says.

"You want to start one?" he asks. They stay for the same reason the regulars keep coming back — it feels comfortable, he said.

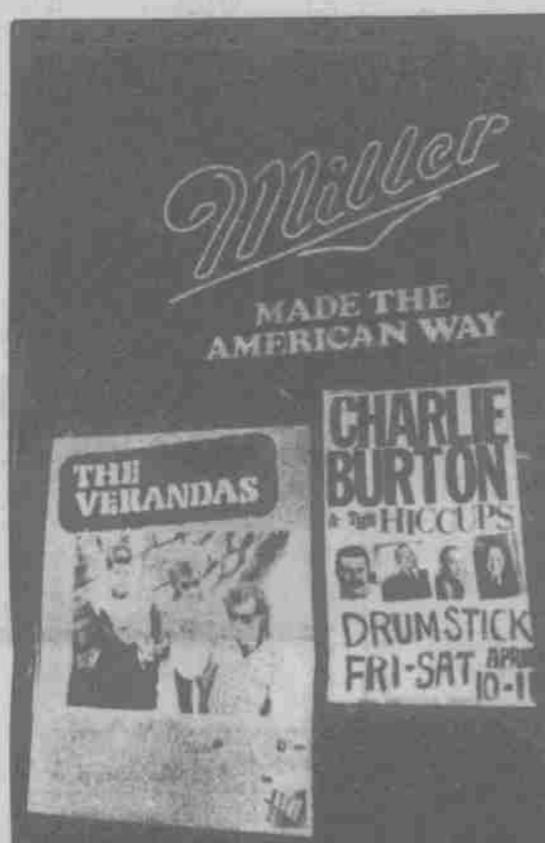
"It's a seedy little dark bar that's got a good juke box," said Mary Winner, a three-year bartending veteran and the only woman on the crew.

"It's a nice place to work. I don't think I could work at any other bar downtown."

You may not be able to find "the truth" at O'Rourke's, but you'll hear some interesting versions of it, from intellectual theories to funny stories.

Mary tells the "Great Lime Caper."

The night a gin-and-tonic drinking couple



Doug Carroll/Diversions
Drumstick

stole a Tupperware container full of limes, and Mary and co-bartender Tim Creek (a meteorologist on the side) went after them. Before the incident was over, a windshield was shattered, the two O'Rourkeans had narrowly avoided injury and the police arrived, only to find the guy (one of the lime thieves) who called them running down the street, gun in hand. The woman denied any knowledge of the man or of the limes.

The limes were never recovered.

It was a fruitless Friday night for margarita and gin-and-tonic drinkers.

— Lise Olsen

P.O. Pears, 322 S. 9th St.

P.O. Pears, with "quality cocktails" and

longneck and import beer specials draws a predominantly college crowd.

Pears features drink specials every night but Sunday and Tuesday. On those two nights \$1.99 burgers are sold as "Burger Madness."

Beer specials on Monday night include \$1.89 pitchers and 40-cent draws; Wednesday is Ladies Night, and offers 89-cent "quality cocktails" that feature "a little better" liquor, manager Ray Noffsinger said. For example mixed drinks will include Tanqueary gin or Cuervo tequila instead of lesser brands. Import and domestic beer are also on sale at 89 cents a bottle. On Thursday domestic beer is 89 cents a bottle. Friday specials include domestic and imported bottled beer and quality cocktails for 89 cents. Ten-cent tacos are included as part of happy hour, which runs from 4 to 9 p.m. and munchables on the menu, like nachos, are half price. On Saturdays tequila drinks and Corona beers are 89 cents.

Pears includes a dance floor, four bars, pool tables, pinball machines, a shuffleboard and an outdoor sand volleyball court. Music is top 40. Birthdays are publicized with an intercom announcement and a free drink.

Ladies Night is the busiest night at Pears, and a line usually forms outside.

Pears is a popular recommendation to college students from out of town who are looking for fun.

Pears' interior is unique. Its walls, ceilings and support posts are smothered with license plates, old beer signs, Nebraska football trivia, a sled and just about anything that will hang.

P.O. Pears' world-famous last call, which features a medley of old-time classics and other music, is worth experiencing at least once in a college career. Don't bring money for admission. There is never, ever a cover charge.

— Gene Gentrup

pitchers of beer, \$1.60. Thursday is margarita night. Eighty-five cents for the tequila delight.

Friday afternoons and evenings patrons can find Elk Creeks for \$1.10, pitchers of Elk Creeks for \$4.50 and pitchers of beer for \$1.75. Saturday afternoons offer the same specials as Monday, and Sundays all specials are available, and a free movie is shown at 8 p.m.

— Jeff Korbeklik



Richard Wright/Diversions

O'Rourkes**The Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St.**

I had this terrible dream. I had moved out of Lincoln, been gone a long time and returned to visit some friends. I went on down to the Zoo Bar. I opened the door and incredible amounts of light flowed from inside. I stepped in. The bar was well-lit by long rows of fluorescent bulbs. The bar had this ugly formica top, and behind it were stacks of those little cereal boxes and tourist souvenirs from Nebraska. There was even one of those blizzard balls with Bob Kerrey standing under water, waving. When you shook it, Kerrey's pants fell down around his ankles and snow flurried around him.

All the tables had Pizza Hut tablecloths, the bathrooms had those Wendy's Sears catalog collages for wallpaper, the stage had become a kitchen, and about seven waitresses with B-52s wearing canary-yellow uniforms and horn-rimmed glasses were waddling between the tables.

I sat at a table near the kitchen and hoped a blues band from Chicago would eventually appear in the waitress window. Instead this cook just kept looking out at me.

He looked familiar, but I just couldn't place him.

Then this one-eyed waitress came up to the waitress window and began to stack the dishes the cook had prepared up and down her arms. The cook let out this kind of primordial wail that started way deep back in his throat, projected up a minor scale and then turned into a pained rumble at the back of his throat again. This wail made the waitress drop all of the dishes, and pretty soon tears were just streaming out of her one eye.

The cook just cocked his head back and closed his eyes. He shook his head real slow.

It was Magic Slim.

Now once a week I make sure to go to the Zoo. To make sure the corners are still so dark that you can barely see the beer in front of your face. To make sure the ghosts of nights I slowly swayed back and forth to Slim, Jay McShann, Jonathan Richman, the LeRoi Brothers, the Morrells, Johnny Reno, Charlie Burton, the Crap Detectives, Buddy Guy and Junior Wells, the Mighty Flyers and the Table-rockers are still wisping around in there.

When Slim throws his head back and pours out one of those wails, I know he ain't makin' flapjacks.

— Charles Lieurance