

## Martini Museum



**TROY FALK AND JIM FLACK, owners of Doc's Place, 140 N 8<sup>th</sup> St., in the Haymarket, decided to include artwork in their bar both because it seemed natural and it was a way to support their artist friends. Currently showing are drawings by Steve Shutz.**

## Culture, cocktails meld in pub

If it's possible to combine bar culture and high culture, Doc's Place has the market cornered.

Located in the historic Haymarket district, the relatively new Doc's Place, 140 N. 8<sup>th</sup> St., offers both swanky libations and stylish artwork created by local artists each month.

"We thought it would be nice to change the scenery on a regular basis — to keep it fresh," Doc's co-owner Jim Flack said.

The idea to hang artwork came before the completion of the bar, which was built primarily by Flack and his partner, Troy Falk.

"When we came into the space and started remodeling, we knew that was what we wanted to do," Flack said. "The art seems natural here."

Abounding with natural oak, exposed brick and a granite bar top, the art does indeed seem right at home.

In addition to the aesthetic merits of the works, Flack and Falk said they also wanted to support friends who were artists.

"We wanted to give them a place where they could display their art and wouldn't be charged a gallery fee or a

percentage of their sales," Falk said. "Even though at first the artists were friends and acquaintances, we're now booked through June with local artists who have sought us out."

Although they don't charge any fees, Flack and Falk ask artists to submit a portfolio to avoid displaying offensive work.

Since its opening in September, Doc's has featured three artists — Mark Frantz, Kamron Becwar and, currently, Steve Shutz.

"At first, we started showing artists every 60 days," Flack said. "But with the response we've had, we decided to give more artists a chance and show new work every 30 days."

Shutz, whose work will be up until the end of this month, said he was glad to be a part of Doc's monthly showing.

"It's nice that they give local artists a chance to get some work out there. I think more people should do that," Shutz said. "It's a win-win situation — it's good publicity for both parties."

Doc's has also had a good response from patrons about the art.

"Customers who don't usually look at art critique it and compare it to other

artists who have been shown," Flack said. "It's always fun at the beginning of the month to see people's reactions."

In addition to work that is hung, it's evident there is artistry in the location itself.

From mid-June until the opening in September, Falk and Flack worked to remodel the site and transform it into a classy yet comfortable martini bar.

"The idea was in the works for five years," Flack said. "We did as much of the work as we could and were our own contractors. We're quite attached to the space."

Immediately upon walking in the door, customers see an immaculate oak bar with glass shelving overhead. Next to the bar — where the majority of the art hangs — are leather chairs, tables and a couch to sit and enjoy the scenery.

One piece of art has a permanent place on Doc's wall.

To the left of the bar is a mural painted by Mark Frantz — one of the aforementioned featured artists.

If one were to imagine the mural as a window, the scene would resemble the actual buildings across the street from Doc's — where The Mill and

Vincenzo's are located — circa 1920.

The mural, which takes up almost an entire wall, took two months to paint. A few finishing touches have yet to be made.

"Eventually, it will look like it's been here as long as the bricks," Falk said.

Though Frantz's work is permanent, it still goes along with the philosophy of the monthly showings, as it serves not only as decoration but also as publicity for the artist.

"It's really a display of the quality of murals that he can do," Falk said.

Eventually, Flack and Falk said they plan to expand the scope of their vision. By this spring, the owners said they hope to establish outside seating and offer deli sandwiches for lunch.

But for right now, a comfortable atmosphere and regularly scheduled art will do just fine, they said.

And for those who are still a bit uncomfortable with mixing high culture and bar culture, Flack doesn't mind.

"We'd like to encourage people to stop in and check out the artwork without feeling pressured to stay."

Photo by Heather Glenboski

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