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Fun and comfort 101

(<http://www.southtownstar.com/entertainment/tgif/704448,122107PubGilhooleys.article>)

December 21, 2007

By Shenequa Golding Staff writer

In a nutshell: Gilhooley's allows you to take the needed breath after a stressful day at work. With good food and good friends, this bar would make a great regular hangout spot.

Decor: As you enter Gilhooley's Grande Saloon, you're engulfed by an atmosphere of fun and comfort. A miniature version of Lady Liberty and a long-bearded Santa welcome guests before they sit down. The bar offers a well kept balance between college life and a newlywed's safe haven from the spouse. Wood floors and stained glass accentuate the facility.

Food: Gilhooley's offerings range from fried calamari and codfish cakes to chicken-bacon and apple salad. Not that adventurous? You can build your own burger. The bar is famous for its corned beef and cabbage sandwiches, and it offers a variety of ways to spice up the famous dish. Also a plus, students who may get tired of eating in the cafeteria at nearby Saint Xavier University can use their meal plan on select dishes at the bar.

On tap: Norm from "Cheers" would be in heaven. Guinness, Harp, Leinenkugel's Berry Weiss, Blue Moon, Hacker-Pschoor, Smithwick's Irish Ale, Miller Lite, Miller Genuine Draft and Samuel Adams, but only seasonal.

Music: A jukebox welcomes guests as they enter, and XM radio also is offered. However, when the crowd gets thick, you might not hear anything.

Amenities: Baby showers, wedding showers and office Christmas parties are welcomed. The Heritage Room, equipped with a fireplace and big-screen television, will allow for the needed privacy. The bar also has a pool table and a dart board. The bar has a wireless network, eight flat-screen televisions, loaner laptop computers for students who provide identification, and satellite television. The nearest automated teller machine is next door at CVS Pharmacy.

Parking: The bar offers parking in front, but not much. Parking is shared with Saint Xavier's Driehaus Center. You may have to park along the street or a few blocks away.

Bathrooms: A bar owner once told me, you can have food on the floor and spilled beer on the counters; what you can't have is a disgusting bathroom. Both women's bathrooms were spotless. The first boasted a blue-and-white tile that gives a warm country feel, but the brick wall quickly counters that feeling and lets you know you're in Chicago. After making sure the coast was clear, I snuck into the men's bathrooms to find out that Mr. Clean himself had dropped by as well.

Tips from a regular: At Gilhooley's, it's the staff that helps make the environment festive. "Bartenders are really nice," said Janel Motley, a Saint Xavier faculty member.

Sports affiliations: Mostly a White Sox bar, but everyone's welcome.

Lighting up: Sorry folks. The bar has been non-smoking for about a year. If you need to partake in a cigarette, you're going to have to step outside.

History: The bar was donated to Saint Xavier University in 2004 by philanthropist Richard Driehaus, along with the paintings that decorate its walls.

Gilhooley's GRANDE SALOON

Address: 3901 W.103rd St., Chicago

Phone: (773) 298-4350

Web site: www.gilhooleysxu.com

Hours : 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Mondays to Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Sundays

Credit cards: All major cards accepted

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