

Indigo District brimming with originality

A cozy cafe by day and a swanky, all-inclusive bar by night, the Indigo District caters to a 'full lifestyle'

BY RYAN MURPHEY
PULSE REPORTER

I take my place at the bar with a Gap-clad frat boy to the right and a Pabst-drinking fashionista in women's jeans to my left — when describing Indigo District, I can't make up a better anecdote than this.

An important feature in any nightspot is personality, and Indigo District has a lot of it, at least on the inside. Located in the building that once housed Field's Brewery, Indigo District resides inconspicuously on the corner of 13th Avenue and Oak Street. There is no sign, no outside decor, and if you were just driving by, you might think it was vacant. However, as soon as you walk through the massive front doors, it is a different story altogether. To your immediate left is the monstrous and extremely cheesy waterfall known colloquially by frequent patrons as "Awesome Mountain." Across the walkway from this monolith of kitsch is a palm tree that reaches to the ceiling.

The decor is centered around eastern art, tapestries and statues, all of it broken up by the kind of furniture you dream of finding at St. Vincent DePaul. The oblong bar itself has a classic feel to it, with lots of wood and brass, and at the rear of the establishment are two pool tables.

The staff does not have uniforms, but are instead allowed to express their personal style at work. One bartender can often be seen slinging drinks wearing a homemade T-shirt that reads, "I make you drunk." The two most striking elements of Indigo District, however, are also the most subtle: the tasteful lighting and

incredible use of space. All the elements come together to create something a bit too unique to simply call eclectic. It's more like a perfectly orchestrated identity crisis, and it really works.

Offering a range of features that includes a full bar, wireless Internet, an organic coffee bar and a restaurant that serves a full menu of quality food on weekends, Indigo District defies categorization. It's more like the old L&L Market than a bar.

"I wanted to create a place that accommodates a full lifestyle, not just a place to party," 24-year-old owner Justin Gibbs said. "A place to study during the day and to have fun at night."

During the day, Indigo District assumes the persona of a quiet cafe where a student can read, have a cup of coffee or order a reasonably priced lunch of considerable quality. During the night, it becomes a lively night club, highly prone to impromptu dance parties. Unlike many other bars in town, Indigo District avoids weekly events in favor of a more sporadic events calendar.

"We were originally thinking about weekly and nightly events," assistant manager Geoff Bradbury said. "But the way it works now keeps things from getting redundant."

One night you may find yourself sitting around at the bar with friends, listening to Indigo District's signature playlist of indie rock, dance music and electronica; the next you could find yourself at "A Night On Awesome Mountain," the prom-themed

party held at the end of spring term this year. In the past year, Indigo District has played host to performances by The Lashes, the Rock 'n' Roll Soldiers, United State of Electronica, Federico Aubele and many more. It was also hosted charity events like "Rock for S.A.S.S. (Sexual Assault Support Services)" and "Fun Boys for Toys," a bachelor auction benefiting Toys for Tots. On September 25, it celebrated its one year anniversary with a dance party that filled nearly every square foot of the bar with writhing bodies and pounding bass.

"I think it's a great bar. It's the only reason I go out," business major Greg Bresnitz said. Bresnitz helped organize the "Fun Boys for Toys" auction last year.

Indigo District is perhaps best known for its musical selection. While most bars in town pump out the college jams such as Dave Matthews, The Grateful Dead and Jack Johnson, Indigo District adds a little flair

to the night with indie rock such as Modest Mouse, Eagles of Death Metal and Franz Ferdinand; kitschy electronica such as Ladytron or the Faint; and punk rock such as Misfits and The Briefs.

Indigo District also offers a full bar, with what I believe to be the best Manhattan in town. From single-malt scotch to the quintessential Pabst Blue Ribbon, Indigo District is the only bar in Eugene where I have never heard the words, "Sorry, we can't make that." The bartenders are fast and good at what they do. An unconfirmed rumor states that Indigo District makes one of the best bloody marys in town.



DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Heather Sang is a bartender at Indigo District, at East 13th Avenue and Oak Street.

The restaurant serves quality lunch and dinner at reasonable prices, and the menu is as eccentric as the rest of the establishment. The selection includes everything from typical bar fair such as french fries, chicken strips and jalapeño poppers, to coconut curry chicken and

grilled salmon in a caper olive garlic sauce. The best part is that the restaurant serves the full menu until 2 a.m. on weekends; Gibbs would eventually like to extend that to weekdays as well.

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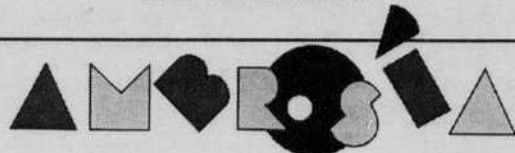


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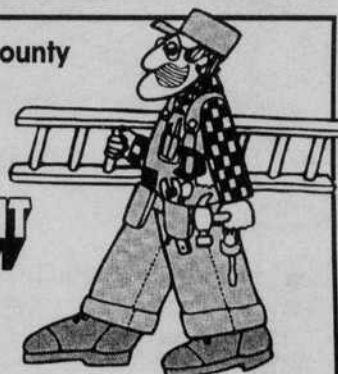
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