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30 Years of XXX

CC Slaughters rings in anniversary all summer long

BY RYAN J. PRADO

It was 30 years ago this month that John Adams Sr. staked his claim amid Portland's burgeoning gay nightlife scene in the notorious Pink Triangle district of Stark Street. His business—a gay country/western bar dubbed CC Slaughters—was the first of its kind in the city. The place quickly assumed the role of popular meeting spot not only for line-dancing junkies, Wrangler-jean wearing gays and mustachioed macho men but also, as current entertainment and marketing director David Pettit explains, a must-visit for “non-country” customers to begin their evenings.

“I was one of the twinks, one of the club trendies,” says Pettit, who’s been at CC’s for a decade now. “But we’d all go to CC Slaughters to start our night off. We’d get our super strong drinks, then pop over across the street to hit the other bars. CC’s has really always been like that. The inclusion is a big, important thing for us.”

The official 30th Year Anniversary is May 21, but CC’s (219 NW Davis St.), having now long been established as one of Portland’s—if not the West Coast’s—premier LGBTQ clubs, has set aside the entire summer for celebrating. The “XXX Summer of Fun” builds on the club’s already stacked weekly calendar to feature big nights every weekend through August, culminating in this year’s Pride Block Party.

In anticipation of the 30-year festivities, Pettit reflects on the evolution of CC Slaughters while remaining somewhat mum on the specifics

of the summer’s celebratory additions. The club’s transformation from a Pink Triangle country/western bar to an Old Town hot spot stands out as the most telling element of the business’ longevity and success.

Adams Sr.’s vision of a booming gay nightlife scene in Portland was expanded in 1984 when he opened The Eagle, as well as a sister bar in Seattle, then also called CC Slaughters but which has since changed to CC Attles and is in a redesign phase. However, Adams Sr.’s

death in 1995 constituted the three bars being split among his sons. John Adams Jr. took control over CC Slaughters and The Eagle, but in 1998 he was informed that the owners of the Ben Stark Hotel building—which housed the club, now the Ace Hotel—would not renew CC’s contract as part of a revisioning of the area.

“It wasn’t really a choice,” explains Pettit. “It was back then the people that were buying on Stark didn’t want that clientele.”

Adams Jr. moved the club to Old Town, before the neighboring Pearl District blossomed, gentrifying the area to include new businesses and new customers.

“It was tough for many, many years,” says Pettit. “Slowly, the Pearl built up and started building up with us. We ended up in the long run having a good location.”

With the new locale came the decision to transition from the country bar aesthetic. Adams Jr. dropped the country nights to once a

“We’re not a specific drag bar; we’re not a specific lesbian bar. Anybody who comes through that door is welcome and will get the same service as anybody—as long as everybody remembers we’re a gay bar and that’s our roots, and will always be.”

—DAVID PETTIT,
ENTERTAINMENT & MARKETING
DIRECTOR, CC SLAUGHTERS

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Saturday, May 14th
at the Embers
110 NW Broadway
Doors open at 5:00pm
Ball at 6:00pm
\$10 admission



Other Upcoming Events

• Saturday, May 14th
AN UNDERWARE FASHION SHOW at CC Slaughters
213 NW Davis, Portland
7:00pm

• Sunday, May 15th
CLOSET BALL at the Darcelle XV Showplace
208 NW Third, Portland
5:00pm, \$5 door

2ND ANNUAL “CITY OF ROSES” PAGEANT
at the Darcelle XV Showplace
208 NW Third, Portland
6:00pm, \$5 door