



## A LESBIAN BAR STOP HOLDING OUR BREATH?

First off, if you are the proud owner or customer of a lesbian bar in Portland, and it's so ironic that I don't know it exists, I'm sorry. One of the first things I did before writing this, was do a fairly extensive search for anything that may be openly, secretly, or unknown to the owner or clientele, a lesbian bar. If you ask around town whether anyone knows where one is, you get some really funny answers... but I'll get into that in a moment.

Many of us remember the "E-Room", or later named "Weird Bar", that closed its doors for the final time last year. It was a notorious place of local gay history, with maybe too much room for the customers, and not enough space for the drama. Many of us either loved it, or loved to hate it, but I think we can agree that its closing left a hole in the community, both figuratively and literally, as it was sadly torn down.

At the time, I genuinely thought a new space would open quickly to fill the obvious gap in the queer bar scene, but it never really happened. When I ask friends and polite strangers why nobody jumped on the wagon, I got an array of very entertaining answers.

Why isn't there a new lesbian bar in Portland?

"There is! It's called Crush. It's in SE, and they have a few awesome dance nights." Okay, yes, I've been to Crush for "Crave", and it is really fun, but the bar really only feels that way during that specific night. Otherwise, you kind of can't tell what it is.

"Have you been to the Florida Room? That's a lesbian bar."

Strangely, if the Florida Room was a person, I think it would be a surly lesbian. I love it there. It's all-inclusive, and in its atmosphere of excess, a catalyst for good times. We need more places where the straight, queer, and especially the trans communities can all come together in drunken harmony.

"Eww, I don't like the word LESBIAN. I'm just queer. Please, just call me queer!"

Alright, you big lesbo... I'm just kidding. Actually, I've identified as "queer" for a long time now, and it's nice to have a word with more gender wiggle room, but it doesn't answer the question. What we're really talking about is a place that serves cocktails, provides recreation, and comes from a unique feminist perspective. Let's not have double standards. Some of us are perfectly fine embracing the stereotype of a gay male bar, 'CC Slaughters' is a good example of this, but get really negative when you talk about girl bars. I just want a jukebox with Bikini Kill in it, is that so bad?

"I don't like lesbian bars, I want an all-inclusive space."

Great, let's start an all-inclusive feminist bar. None of these things are mutually exclusive. You can have your cake, and eat it with the hot person of your choice.

Basically, this seems to be confusing for everyone. Most people seem to want cheap drinks with no labels attached. I'd like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that when you're drinking, you're making a political decision with each dollar that you spend. We still are subjugated to bashing, and a lack of equality. It is possible to drink cheap beer in a place that empowers you. I think in Portland, from a feminist perspective, we've forgotten what it feels like.



Photo Horace Long

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