

GIRLS GET WILD

Ladies' night at the Cantina BY ALANA YANKUS

When it comes to late-night debauchery in Corvallis, there's only one place to go: La Cantina on Ladies' Night.

It all started years ago when current manager "Big Todd" was a DJ for OSU's radio station, KBVR. His show, "The Vault," was a throw-back to the glory days of the '80s, when Michael Jackson, Madonna, and Queen ruled the airwaves. The Vault was a hit, and though he eventually stopped DJing on KBVR, those DJ skills came in handy when he later started managing La Cantina.

Once upon a time, La Cantina was just a humble banquet room behind a downtown eatery known as Señor Sam's Mexican Grill. But the setup wasn't working out too well — it turned out people in Corvallis didn't need a banquet room. So the place was partitioned with a wall to shield the innocent eyes of the under-aged (per OLCC regulations) and converted into a bar.

Even in a college town, booze doesn't equal success. But

along came Todd with his '80s music, a new staff and one big night to get the ball rolling. His recipe transformed La Cantina from just a door in the alley behind the bus station to

the place for a good time on Saturday. The combination of music, two-for-one cocktails for the women, a place for college students to get drunk, sweat a lot, and rub up against

strangers all night worked.

Todd said the music is a key element because it's less about bump-and-grind and more about having a good time. And, as much as it might be denied by the light of day, in the dimly lit environs of La Cantina everyone knows the words to every song and any passers-by receive an earful of voices shouting along to ACDC's "You Shook Me All Night Long."

La Cantina recently went through more renovations. With looser OLCC regulations allowing a line of sight between the underage and the of-age, the walled-off area is now open space. The dance floor is bigger, the platforms are taller (watch your step on the stairs), and the DJ booth has been relocated. All of these changes opened up a huge amount of space. But no matter how big the place is, Cantina still packs in the drunken masses.

Bartenders mix up a mean cocktail (try the Stevie Special). The music can turn even the stiffest Joe into a dancing fool. And crowds of people flock there every weekend. ★

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