

Taffer aids pandemic-stricken Vegas saloons in Season 8 of 'Bar Rescue'

tastytv
BY GEORGE DICKIE

Jon Taffer dials down his brand of tough love a few notches as he comes to the aid of pandemic-stricken Las Vegas establishments in Season 8 of Paramount Network's "Bar Rescue."

Airing Sundays, the new season finds the straight-talking Taffer in his adopted hometown helping local saloons come back from the brink of ruin after more than a year of little to no income. And unlike in previous seasons, where owners were largely to blame for their businesses failing, this crop of proprietors found themselves in dire straits through no fault of their own – just a COVID-19 pandemic that has devastated the hospitality industry, especially in Sin City.

"There is a real emotion this season and honestly, more of a thoughtfulness this season in the way I'm going about this," Taffer explains. "I'm not trying to demoralize people, I'm trying to build them up much more than having to take them down and then build them up again. On the other hand, the depth to which people are in trouble is greater than in a normal season."

Indeed, these are people who have not only lost their businesses but in some cases also their homes, thus forcing their families to move in with relatives. In one case, the owner's children were forced to sleep on the floor above the family restaurant. In another, a woman who was eight months pregnant was on the verge of being foreclosed on.

And while most problems could be traced to the pandemic, Taffer stresses that owners weren't blameless and that a little proactive management might have enabled them to circumvent their issues.

"When you look at the pandemic," he says, "there are operations that succeeded and survived. Maybe they put away a few more dollars for a rainy day. Maybe they operated at better margins. Maybe they were more nimble in the way they marketed. But some still stayed open. ... In some cases, had they operated their businesses differently or better, they would have survived the pandemic better. So there was still a bit of bar rescue in that I'm still challenging them on many of the things that they do and the ways they do them to try to improve their business. That hasn't changed."

In the end, Taffer still gets a charge out of seeing a bar that he helped come back from the dead. A hug and a few kind words are his reward and doing it in the city where he lives is even more gratification.

"We're a singular economy here," he says. "We're strictly based on tourism and everything else in the city just supports the lives of those in the tourism business and the hospitality business. So this city was impacted more significantly than any other ... so focusing my efforts on Las Vegas made a lot of sense."



Jon Taffer

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