

# A veritable alcoholic megalopolis

## The Indy 500 of bars roars through the Hill and beyond

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**W**ell, now that the folks are gone, it's time to discuss how we really live down here in the fabled Southern part of heaven. And that means bars.

More so than other college towns, Chapel Hill is a veritable alcoholic megalopolis, boasting more bars per square mile than a Dionysian paradise. That explains the prevalence of Dookies and Staters walking the main drag on weekends. Whether you're 21, faking 21 or just spending time trying to get in, a veritable rogues' gallery of watering holes is waiting for you.

For the purposes of price comparison, I am introducing the Springer Bar Price Comparison Index (SBPCI). This index is figured based on the regular combined cost of 1) a Natural draft, 2) a Bud longneck and 3) a Corona. Mixed drinks are not included in the index, because not all of the included bars serve them. Each bar's SBPCI rating is listed in parentheses following the name.

Take a lap around the following bar loop, picking your favorite starting point. As in the Indy 500, speed counts, because you only have until 1 a.m. to finish. Starting time — 10

p.m. Barhoppers, start your engines...

First off, we have **Bub O'Malley's** (\$4.25), located on the top floor of the tri-tower at 157 E. Rosemary St. Notable features include a set-up that allows one to walk the entire periphery of the bar (important for scoping purposes), a CD jukebox, several wide-screen TV's, foosball, shuffleboard, pinball and darts. Friday and Saturday are always crowded, though weeknights tend to be slow.

Wait for basketball season and St. Patrick's Day, though, when breathing room is a rarity. Amstel and Labatt's are \$1.50 every night and a permanent fixture is the multicolored Bub cup, 22 oz. of draft beer for \$2, with \$1.50 refills. Snacks are available, so feel free to grab Bub's hot nuts (\$1) or some chips. Bub's is this writer's home away from home, and you're likely to find me there an ungodly number of nights per week.

Downstairs from Bub's, you'll find **Fred's Bar** (\$4.25), still known affectionately as Troll's to those who remember the previous space occupant. Bars in Chapel Hill move in constant cycles of "in" and "out" places to be. This semester, Fred's seems the consensus hot spot. On a good night, martial arts techniques or following a 7'10", 500-lb. football player are the only ways to approach the bar un-

scathed.

Thursday nights are Fred's nights, as \$2.50 Natural pitchers allow even the poorest barhoppers a chance to drink their troubles away. For an interesting diversion, count the number of times "Kashmir" plays on the CD jukebox in the course of a single night. Some of us have heard it three times in a single hour. Of course, there's always foosball and pinball to throw away a few quarters and wide-screen TV for sports nights. In addition to the usual stuff, Fred's features a band on Sunday nights.

Rounding the first turn, take a break in front of the grandstand area at **Henderson Street Bar** (\$5.00), specifically 105 Henderson St. The rectangular open area of the bar makes H. Street an ideal place to mix, mingle and, of course, drink. Complementing the status quo satellite TV and row of pinball machines, take a peek at one of the largest CD selections of any bar jukebox (over 2000 tunes). If "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" is one of your least favorite bar tunes, have no fear, since H. Street boasts electronic air cleaners to make breathing easier for all. There are no specials *per se*, but that doesn't stop the madding crowd from holding court regularly at this little slice of home.

Take a pit stop and a breather at

**The Parlor** (\$4.90), the upscale pool hall at 204 E. Franklin St. But don't expect a smoky little hole in the wall with a five-song jukebox. The Parlor is clean and spacious and permits no cut-offs (shirts or pants) or flip-flops. Though there are tons of tables, there still might be a bit of a wait to shoot the eight ball on weekends. Monday nights are Ladies' Nights, when women play pool free, and Tuesdays are league nights. For a special on collegiate bubbly, check out \$.75 draft night on Thursdays. More specials are forthcoming as The Parlor reorganizes its specials calendar, but a wide range of beers is always available.

Squealing around the corner and parting the Hector's fumes, take the small sheltered staircase down to **Linda's** (\$5.40), at 203 E. Franklin St. Rather small but nevertheless cozy, Linda's is the first bar in our list so far to offer mixed drinks, including an impressive selection of sippers and shooters. Seating at booths and at the bar is limited but helped by the recent removal of video games to add a new bench around the back wall.

The clientele is mostly composed of regulars who have pull when it comes to helping the bartender select a tape for the stereo — so don't expect any say in playing tunes 'til you've been there a few times. Linda's is a

restaurant too, so pick something up and keep that ol' BALW with parents, it's a classy place / with friends, it's decadence DTH/Grant Halverson in check. For the specials rundown, on Sunday nights, Whiskey Sours are \$1.75 and Rolling Rock, \$1.10; on Tuesdays, house highballs are \$1.75; and on Wednesdays, pitchers are \$3.25 and imports, \$1.75.

A short cruise down the block and you find the world-famous **Four Corners** (\$4.50), located at 175 E. Franklin St. The motif here is Carolina sports, earning the restaurant the name of Dean Smith's famous basketball strategy. On a game day (or night), people literally pile in and, let me tell you, it's hell getting to the bar if you're buried on the bottom. I know, not funny.

Like some of the other bars, Four C's offers bands on Sunday nights. The staff will serve up (Lendl style) your favorite beer or mixed drink. The Wednesday night special is \$2.50 pitchers, and be sure to take advantage of \$1.50 imports on Sunday. Why not buy me one too — Dos Equis is my favorite.

Right next door at 174 E. Franklin St., above Ye Olde Waffle Shop, you can dance away that slight buzz at **Club Zen** (\$4.50). The dance floor is rather small, but, with no inhibitions, you'll be up there in short order. The music tends to be alternative, so wear your cleanest Cradle clothes. For those of us who know all too well how poverty sucks, mark Tuesday night (dime draft) and Thursday night (quarter draft) on your social calendar. While a DJ rules the airwaves most nights, be sure to check out the top local bands on Sunday nights. A WXYC presentation, to see the Sunday locals will only run 'ya two bucks.

Don't take off your dancing shoes yet, because the next stop is **Players** (\$4.25), located up the stairs at 159 1/2 E. Franklin St. With the biggest dance floor in Chapel Hill, this is one club you won't want to miss. Tuesday night is Greek night, with \$1 draft and \$3 Long Island Iced Teas, and Thursday night is Ladies night, with domestic longnecks on special for \$1.25. Players offers a variety of different music, including Top 40 rock (Greek night), progressive and straight dance music.

Now make a pit stop at the NCNB machine, because, of course, you're out of money by now. Then duck inside the plaza to **Papagayo** (\$4.75). If you start the bar loop early, start here, since Monday-Friday, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., they offer food specials and free chips and salsa. In keeping with the Mexican motif, the big favorite here is the Papa G's margarita, which runs \$3.40. Though music or the television is usually going, this is one of the quieter drinking spots around. The couches around the bar are quite comfortable — and portable. When with a group of people, that facilitates those secondary things, like ... uh ... talking.

Along the straightaway at 101 E. Franklin St., cruise into **Spanky's** (\$5.00). Despite the upscale restaurant atmosphere, Spanky's offers a good selection of beers and assorted spirits. The reasonably quiet atmosphere offers the throbbing temples a bit of a break. The specials breakdown includes \$1 domestic non-premium draft (if you can say that three times fast by this point, color yourself an IROC champeen) on Mondays and \$1.75 house highballs on Wednesdays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, Spanky's and the gang discount \$.50 on draft, \$.75 on pints and \$2.00 on pitchers. Those rates apply to Bud and Natural on Tuesday and to Heineken and Bass on Thursday.

When not serving up suds, the

Rest the oil-stained hands either inside or out on the patio. This year's Ham's highlight falls on Fridays, when pitchers of "The Beast" (a.k.a. Milwaukee's Best) are a mere \$1.50. If the beast is more than you can handle, join the Chapel Hill drinking brigade for \$.99 highballs on Monday, \$2.50 shooters on Tuesday and \$.50 Lite draft on Wednesday. Since the headache's gone by now, check out bands on Thursday nights while knocking down \$1.50 blue cups and flaming Dr. Peppers. Though it's been called the "K-Mart of bars," this flashing blue light will have you in and burning rubber for the next stop.

As we all know, good and bad consumption habits cancel out, ex-



Inside Ham's, sometimes called the "K-Mart of bars," they serve pitchers of Milwaukee's Best for \$1.50 on Fridays



DTH/Grant Halverson

**Players: drafts and domestic longnecks (you supply the dancing shoes)**

Spanky's crew offers the expected sippers and a grand array of new and different shooters. The newest little blast at Spanky's is a humdinger called the "Buddy Shot." Whoever's riding shotgun can race you as you suck down (through two straws) a concoction of amaretto, vodka, cranberry juice and OJ. The same classy place where you took your parents turns decadent for late-night partygoers.

After crossing Columbia St., the next heavyweight along the way is **He's Not Here** (\$4.50), located on the Village Green at 112 1/2 W. Franklin St. At everyone's favorite open-air bar, the Tuesday night specials of \$1.50 blue cups (33 oz. of draft beer) and \$2.50 pitchers are legendary. In warmer times, to miss a Tuesday night at He's Not is to drive a nail into one's social coffin. Of course, there are two levels inside for cold evenings, with the usual array of pinball, darts and TV. Check out bands on Friday and Saturday nights for a minimal cover charge when the weather is of reasonable temperature.

Picking up speed, cruise through 310 W. Franklin St. at **Ham's** (\$4.85). Rest the oil-stained hands either inside or out on the patio. This year's Ham's highlight falls on Fridays, when pitchers of "The Beast" (a.k.a. Milwaukee's Best) are a mere \$1.50. If the beast is more than you can handle, join the Chapel Hill drinking brigade for \$.99 highballs on Monday, \$2.50 shooters on Tuesday and \$.50 Lite draft on Wednesday. Since the headache's gone by now, check out bands on Thursday nights while knocking down \$1.50 blue cups and flaming Dr. Peppers. Though it's been called the "K-Mart of bars," this flashing blue light will have you in and burning rubber for the next stop.

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