



THE HISTORY OF RUDY'S

Come on in, darlin'. Dive into New York's most famous dive bar, right through the original wood door, carved down the center with the name of the first owners, the Rudy family. Feels like you've stepped back in time, doesn't it? Maybe even as far as the Hell's Kitchen rumor that this joint was first a speakeasy in 1919, frequented by the likes of Al Capone (remember, the guy grew up in Brooklyn before he hit Chicago). Rudy's got one of New York's the first liquor licenses when prohibition ended in 1933.

bouncer to contend with. According to Jack, the former Merchant Marine who bought the bar in 1982, but had been drinking there since the 1940s, Helen Rudy kept two big German Shepherds to mind the door. If a customer fell asleep, or became unruly, she'd give a signal and the dogs would join the customer at the bar and growl. If that didn't work, the dogs would bark and bare their teeth. At that point, you bet the customer was behaving – or gone!



Al Capone



James Gandolfini



Paul McCartney



Drew Barrymore



Julia Roberts



Christina Hendrix

Don't mind the six-foot pig parked outside unless you're looking for a touristy photo opp. Rudy's porcine mascot, the so-called Baron has stood vigil at the door for about twenty years, and was only stolen twice before we bolted his big butt down.

Scoot past the bouncer, who'll ask for ID if you're a young'un. Under our low lights, one famous actress used to slip in as a regular until news of her 20th birthday hit the papers: "The saddest night I ever had in this bar was when I had to tell Drew Barrymore she couldn't come back 'til she was legal. I hated to do it because she was so nice," said Danny, the bartender-turned-general manager. But count yourself lucky you have only a

Side up to the original mahogany bar, custom-made for \$300 on the Bowery. You're hip-deep in good company now in our legendary microcosm of New York, as friendly, unpretentious, and wildly diverse as the best of the city itself. We've got folks with names like Bobby the Boxer, Justin the Butcher, Shorty, Cowboy and CP3, the legendary urban poet and bearer of birthday cards, squeezed together with yuppies, hot young actors, and Hell's Kitchen locals in what former manager, Ernie, called "an upper-low class" cocktail lounge. The drinks are cheap, and the hot dogs are—gasp!—free (even famed chef Anthony Bourdain has eaten a few). And in 1996, Rudy's was voted Best Jukebox in the city by Rolling Stone for its famed selection of jazz and blues. Although the jukebox has been mainstreamed

considerably to accommodate changing tastes, you can still get a wailing sax or Rat Pack harmonies if you choose.

The three mosaics commissioned by Ernie in the early 90s, including ones of Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, and a 12-foot sax. They serve as beautiful reminders of the bar's jazz legacy. As "Trainspotting" author Irvine Welsh, said of the neighborhood when The New Yorker interviewed him in one of Rudy's beat-to-hell red leather and duct-taped booths, "Hell's Kitchen, one ay the few good uns. It's still becoming yuppified n gentrified, bit eh's one ay the last bastions." When the movie about the Westies - "State of Grace" was being filmed, Ernie, who was the current bar manager, refused to close the bar to use as a set, out of loyalty to Rudy's customers.

Speaking of the 70's, where else might the guys from Steely Dan have been talking about, when they wrote in "Black Cow", "I saw you at Rudy's and you were very high..." Along with Steely Dan, Paul McCartney, Julia Roberts, James Gandolfini, Lauryn Hill, Tommy Ramone, Dexter Gordon, Sonia Braga, Ethan Hawke, Slash (of Guns 'n Roses), Colm Meaney, Christina Ricci, JFK Jr., Morley Safer, Timothy Hutton, Johnny

There was Clarence the Cabdriver, who went to sleep in a back booth about 15 years ago and never woke up. On a happier note, besides all the hooking up that obviously goes on here, some folks have even gotten married right in our backyard, which is currently under renovation. The backyard will re-open in the summer of 2010. Drinking Liberally, the progressive social club of "left-leaning individuals" who meet to drink and talk politics, was founded in Rudy's in 2003 and has now grown to over 300 chapters nationwide. You can join them every Thursday night, promoting democracy one pint at a time.

Longtime bartender Steve walked in one night to start his shift, and was startled to see writer Norman Mailer drinking in the front booth. "You know who that is?" he asked Vicky, the day bartender, excitedly. "Ah, that's just Normie," Vickie said. "He's okay, but I'll throw him out if he gives you any trouble." That's just the kind of bar it is, Rudy's. To quote Vicky one last time, "Less talkin' and more drinkin'!"



Irvine Welsh



Anthony Bourdain



Colm Meaney



Ethan Hawke



Slash



Johnny Knoxville

Knoxville, Halle Berry, Pauley Perrette, Jimmy Fallon all have drunk at Rudy's. Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner frequented the bar to keep a low profile, before they made their relationship public in the late '40s. Hell, even the Mets have spent many a night here winding down straight from the game—check out the '06 Division series shirt they hung on the far wall, signed by John Main, Oliver Perez, Ramon Castro et al.



Halle Berry



Pauley Perrette



Frank Sinatra

Rudy's most memorable characters include not only media celebrities, but also our hell-raising regulars: the Afro-Cuban beauty Carmen, who'd been a Broadway dancer, a dominatrix, and a postal employee. She dated Joe Louis, roomed with Eartha Kitt, and in her later years, beat people with her cane from her seat at the bar.