

Dark Horse

2922 Baseline Road
Phone: 303-442-8162

Hipster Scale Dive Bar Rating



Anywhere outside of Colorado, the Dark Horse would make more sense as a novelty museum or a theme-park restaurant than a divey saloon. But it's precisely because corporate conglomerates would (and probably have) paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to replicate the 40 year-old Horse's antique-cluttered, wooden-surface-carved Wild-West authenticity—and that much of America would likely be willing to pay a cover to get in—that this cavernous, haunted maze of a place is so absolutely amazing. I seriously wouldn't be surprised if, god-forbid, the Dark Horse ever closes, some developer cuts it into pieces and puts it back together across the country for retirees and their grandchildren to ooh and aah at. But maybe I'm overstating.

First and foremost, the Dark Horse is a good-time roadhouse and honky tonk (sans live country) with three separate bars; a counter-service kitchen specializing in quirky burgers (peanut butter and bacon?) and other grub; an elevated back patio with views of the foothills; and a killer arcade area that features a Pez claw machine, video games and air hockey, among other entertainment. A mess of wooden staircases, winding corridors, nooks, crannies and other attic-like surprises (vintage Mickey Mouse and Friends stained glass? Huzzah!) lead away from the main floor, which may be decorated with more kitsch and crap from days gone by than any other bar ever. We're talking an entire covered carriage hanging from the ceiling, a slew of wagon wheels, full-size carousel horses and the Big Boy statue from the old Azar's. And that's less than one percent of the ornamentation.

A couple things you should know. First: Be sure to have a close look at the bathroom doors before drinking yourself into a 2 a.m. Tums binge or a 5 a.m. walk of shame. Though the door on the left says "Women" and displays a painted woman's leg, notice how the index finger on the painted hand above it points to the door on the right. Likewise, though the right door says "Men," the finger on that door points left. Hmm... Second: If the idea of taking a shot, riding

an adult-sized tricycle around in circles (the whole bar, actually) and then chugging a beer—and doing this as fast as you can with a relay partner—sounds like a terrific way to spend a Tuesday night, then Trike Night is your new favorite reason to be hungover on Wednesday.



BOULDER

DENVER'S BEST DIVE BARS