

Stadium Inn

1703 East Evans Avenue

Phone: 303-733-4031 9AM

Hipster Scale Dive Bar Rating



When it opened during the dog days of summer following World War 2, the Stadium Inn—named after the long-defunct football team and its stadium at the University of Denver (DU)—was the first bar in Colorado to desegregate. So says Pete, my early-afternoon bartender. He also says every booth used to have a light next to it that alerted bookies lurking behind a small two-way mirror in the back (still there) of intended bets on horses and sports team. For 30 years, the Stadium—somewhat affectionately called the “Shadium” by the college kids that compose its core weekend clientele—has been in the capable hands of the Saliman family (for a few minutes there it was the Saliman Bar & Grill). Over the years, improvements have been few: new ceiling tiles appeared post-smoking ban, but the teeter-totter tables not safe for standing drinks have simply been moved to less desirable locations. Witness the “ATM table” in the corner by the kitchen. “No one sits there,” confirms Pete. Bathroom renovations are currently under negotiation; for now, the walls remain carved to idiosyncratic shreds, the piser a porcelain trough, the sink hidden behind a nondescript chunk of partition on hinges.

Pete (who’s actually the night manager; Carol, the daytime bartender for the past 18 years, is down the bar nursing a cocktail) is full of stories. My favorite involves the father of a former student who called the bar before parents’ weekend to make a reservation. For a week straight his son, following a disagreement with roommates, had been charging upwards of \$100 a night at the Stadium Inn to dad’s credit card under the guise that it was a motel. “Needless to say,” Pete says anyway, “dad was upset.”

Fun fact: The Stadium sells more Jim Beam per square foot than any other bar in the country. This stat means \$2 Beam all day, every day. It also means that the first 50 lishes to sample all seven varieties of Beam each October receive a “Degree of Bourbonology,” an honor confirmed the following January by a cap-and-gown ceremony and other shenanigans.

Unless you’re enrolled at DU or really want to party like you

are, steer clear on weekend nights, when the line to get in wraps around the corner and down the sidewalk. Daytime is a great time to shoot pool or, in the case of the guy who stops in wearing his enormous Mountain Hardwear pack full of dirty laundry, for a quick diversion from reality.

