

The Bar Manager's Guide to Fictional Bars

Fictional bars can provide one with a sense of the bar's place in culture. Drawing on the public's perception of bars, we can choose to import certain elements of these watering holes of film and myth in either a serious or playful way. Or we can simply give ourselves some trivia to talk about... I wouldn't dream of spoiling the fun by suggesting you use it either way.

As a bonus point, I propose NOT to mention the movie "Cocktail". Again.

Mos Eisley Cantina

From "Star Wars". You can't think of this scene without that bouncy tune going through your head, which is played by a band of alien musicians known in the script as "Figrin D'an and the Modal Nodes". This is also the place where Han Solo and Chewbacca are hired, after Han Solo shoots an innocent green alien named Greedo while clearly unprovoked beyond a minor extortion for money. Greedo's dialog is actually a recording of the Peruvian Indian language Quechua played in reverse. The cantina sequence has often been said to be the very incarnation of the spirit of Star Wars.

Rick's

Of course we couldn't leave out Humphrey Bogart's most famous movie. The whole movie Casablanca takes place in Rick's "gin joint". While it seems to be a relatively run-of-the-mill place, you can guess that if you have a box-thumper like Sam around, you could serve vinegar and the guests wouldn't care. By the way, the most famous line for which the movie was known "Play it again, Sam", was never actually spoken in the movie! That line is instead from the 12th Marx Brother's movie "A Night in Casablanca".

Archie Bunker's Place

One of the TV shows which itself was set in a bar. This show was spun off from the original "All in the Family" when Carroll O'Connor's character purchased the show's bar "Kelsey's Place". This series actually draws heavily from the inspiration of a 1950s radio and TV sitcom called "Duffy's Tavern" which also featured a blue collar tavern owner named Archie who commented on life and society with a group of colorful characters.

Cheers

Quite possibly the most famous fictional bar of all time, certainly of any TV series. "Cheers" derived much of its appeal from the old idea of "Archie Bunker's Place", since a cast of regulars at a bar is a perfect setup for an episodic sitcom formula. Cheers induced numerous spin-offs and made top stars out of each of the principles. It also earned the top ten spot in the Nielsen ratings for eight of its eleven seasons, and earned a total of 26 Emmy awards. Set in Boston Massachusetts, the set was designed after the "Bull & Finch Pub" still located there. The quirky downstairs entry to the bar eliminated the need to show any outside scenery, and the entire series took place mostly in the bar.

Moe's Tavern

You always have to follow the mention of "Cheers" with "Moe's Tavern" from "The Simpson's" cartoon series, since owner Moe Szyslak chose "Where nobody knows your name" as the bar's motto. The shadiness of Moe's operation is also suggested by the fact that the bar's liquor license expired in 1973, was valid only in Rhode Island and was signed by Moe himself. Like "Cheers", "Moe's Tavern" is based on a real bar called Fireside, which is located near Loyola Marymount University where writer and producer David Mirkin went to college.

Phil's

This bar was part of the set locations for the TV series "Murphy Brown", where the crew of Murphy's news magazine "FYI" would occasionally meet. Murphy Brown ran from 1988 to 1998 but the bar wasn't a prominent feature of the show.

The Queen Victoria

"The Queen Victoria", also known as "The Vic" or "The Queen Vic", is the fictional Victorian public house in the popular BBC soap opera, "EastEnders". Its address is given as 46 Albert Square, Walford, London E20. The real East End's post codes only go up to E18. This is one of the rare occasions in which a bar plays a role in part of a dramatic TV series. Many of the key plot points are set in the bar throughout the soap opera's episodes. For trivia, the bar's exterior has had three colors in the show's run. As originally seen in the series, the exterior was a dull brown. It was later painted green and cream in an effort to modernize it. Then in a plot point, one of the characters set fire to the pub for insurance money in 1992, after which it was rebuilt and painted red. Since the series, which started in 1985, is still running today, there's no saying what the ultimate fate of the bar may be.

The Regal Beagle

Finally, a TV bar that isn't named after a person! "The Regal Beagle" is of course the pub and restaurant owned by Larry, the apartment landlord of

the show "Three's Company". Perhaps because the show's producers realized too late that they had broken the television series bar-naming rule, bar scenes at the end of the series were moved to a place called "Jack's Bistro".

Ten Forward

This rather pragmatically named bar was the well on the Starship Enterprise in the "Star Trek: The Next Generation" series. Not much for atmosphere after you get used to the floor-to-ceiling windows showing intergalactic space whooshing by at warp speed, this bar does feature Whoopi Goldberg as the barkeep "Guinan" - her most comfortable role ever, it could be said. Elbow room being cramped on a space ship, the bar has also been seen in the series being used for diplomatic receptions, command transfer receptions, weddings, funerals, concerts, literary readings, spectator games, and various celebrations. Still, you have to love the idea of a space ship luxurious enough to have it's own bar. In one of those cultish acts of devotion that you only find in Star Trek fandom, an actual attempt has been made to create "synthelol", "Ten Forward"'s alcohol substitute, in real life. The company which was trying to do it, however, folded in 1998.

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