

Noorrrm!

Be honest. Who wouldn't want to hear their name shouted out as they walked through the door of their favorite watering hole? If your recent visits to a tavern feel about as authentic as a TGI Friday's commercial or you think paying upwards of six dollars for a 'premium' draft should entitle you to stock options in the bar, then maybe you should consider what Old Town has to offer.

For a number of years, Old Town has been anchored by not one, but two, *real* neighborhood bars. Deva's, (672 El Camino Real) and The Swinging Door (355 El Camino Real) were both recently mentioned in a "Best of OC 2005" (<http://www.ocweekly.com/ink/06/07/best-tustin.php>) column in the OC Weekly. Both bars have had brushes with fame. And both establishments are owned by successful businesswomen.

Deva's, run by Reva Renee Renz, occupies a location with a long libation pedigree. Formerly McGuires, Alex's Lounge and the Safari Room, this was, and still is, a favorite of the old Marine Base crowd.

Unabashedly Republican campaign posters and stickers are everywhere you look. Reva herself ran for governor in the Arnold election, forever securing her a place in California's archives and in the hearts of her patrons. Of course, Dems and even Libertarians are welcome, but I'm told they best be prepared to defend their position on the issues with the regulars. Luckily they can do that over darts or billiards (leagues!) or by partaking in the occasional Karaoke night. All in all, a great place to hang out.

Chronicled in a national mag some time back, I have yet to find any Republican posters at Kim Conroy's The Swinging Door. You will see a fair number of (loosened) ties during lunch hour – the short-order menu is classic grill - but the crowd gets decidedly more denim as the kitchen closes and the evening progresses.

The music is eclectic and suitably loud. The big screen is always on and the wireless Internet access (no that's not a misprint) is free. While I don't think anyone on the payroll has run for governor yet, the bartenders have achieved their own measure of fame with a very popular annual calendar. If so inclined, you can look up when your favorite month is pouring the suds at www.theswingingdoor.com.

Having frequented each place myself (research of course), it's obvious that both businesses enjoy a loyal clientele. And they are, for the time being anyway, about the only places open in Old Town past my kids' bedtime making Reva and Kim trailblazers around here. So if you're looking to raise a glass in a place where everyone truly does know your name, come down and pay a visit to one or both of these authentic pubs. Cheers!

As always, see you on Main Street.

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