

5 Divine Dive Bars



Five iconic dive bars you have to check out!

In comedian Eugene Mirman's bizarre and hilarious novel "The Will to Whatevs: A Guide to Modern Life" he offers a very apt description of what a dive bar is. Allow me to start this article by borrowing his definition: *"Dive bars are the classic American bar full of all kinds of people... art students, elderly divas, atheists, others, writers, rockers, trannies, regular folk"* and many other grace these establishments.



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When I read Mirman's definition, I found it funny but also

true; dive bars are indiscriminate, laid back, and often a great place to meet diverse and interesting characters if you are open minded. I have listed five dive bars in this article that I have fond memories of. There are certainly many others in Greater NB, and I'd love to hear about them in the comments section below!

1. Knuckleheads

85 MacAuthur Drive, New Bedford, MA

Ever since I moved to NB at the age of 21, Knuckleheads has repeatedly been mentioned to me as one of the most eclectic, dive bar-esque hangouts in the city. While the quality of food and drink set Knuckleheads a bit higher than the typical dive bar standard, the prices are very reasonable and overall, Knuckleheads embodies that local vibe that "divers" cherish.

One of the things that makes a good dive a good dive is the combination of affordable drinks and affordable, fun entertainment. It's a big check in both columns when it comes to Knuckleheads, which features live music (no cover charge!) Tuesday-Saturday as well as beer pong tournaments.

2. The Oriental Pearl

576 State Road, Westport, MA

The Oriental Pearl, or The "OP" as we regulars like to call it, looks exactly the same way it probably has since it was first built. As a result, I always get a feeling that I stepped back in time to the '80s when I'm there which is a simultaneously strange and interesting feeling. What I really like about The OP though, is that it isn't pretentious. On a karaoke night you will find everyone from 21-year-old locals to 80-year-old married couples picking up the mic.

The drinks are affordable, and since it's a Chinese food restaurant you can grab something tasty to split while you

hang out. There's a pool table if you get there early in the evening, but that is often moved aside on nights when there's karaoke or bands playing because YES, there will be dancing. With a disco ball and other fancy lighting, the dance floor is a judgment free zone. I've been there on nights when elderly couples were schooling us on how to waltz, and I've been there nights when twenty-something year olds were jumping around to metal renditions of Britney Spears songs. You never know what you'll find at the Oriental Pearl, and that makes it one of my favorite divine dive bars.

3. The Garden

133 Union Street, New Bedford, MA

The Garden doesn't need a whole lot of mentioning, because it's well known to anyone who spends time in downtown New Bedford. The Garden is a simple equation for dive bar goodness; cheap pitchers of beer, a jukebox and pool tables. It's a magnet for locals and has a lot of regulars, so you're always likely to see someone you know there. At the same time, its crowd is diverse, ranging from frat boys to retirees, so it's an easy place to strike up a conversation with complete strangers (if you're into that kind of thing).

4. Bayside Lounge

125 Sconticut Neck Road, Fairhaven, MA

The Bayside Lounge is the sort of bar where anyone and everyone feels welcome. It has a kitchen that serves delicious specials at certain hours, and the prices are always reasonable for food and drink alike. The Bayside Lounge has a fisherman's bar sort of vibe, and there's always plenty to do there, whether it's ordering a pitcher of beer and playing pool with friends, going to trivia night, or checking out some of their live entertainment. I've seen a couple really fun bands (and one time, a great rendition of "Free Bird") that got people up and dancing like fools.

5. Paul's Sports Corner

19 Howland Road, Fairhaven, MA

I will always remember being at Paul's Sports Corner one day and meeting one of the owners, simply because of how funny and down-to-Earth she was. She took pride in the fact that Paul's is a family owned establishment and that it's a sort of "What you see is what you get." neighborhood bar. You can tell that it has been supported by the same local regulars for years, and as a result people are very at home there, which makes it feel like a place that's easy to relax and unwind at. Paul's features pool and a jukebox, as well as a decent number of TV screens for sports fans. Of course the drinks are very affordable as well!

Do you have a local dive bar that you love? Tell us about it!