

# At the Grawood, you don't buy beer, you rent it

*The Gazette wanted to see if someone who likes the Grawood would still like it if they had to stay sober. To make the test fair, we also solicited the help of someone who dislikes the Grawood. That person had to drink and see if the effects of alcohol changed their opinion. The following testimonials are the results of this groundbreaking experiment.*

## YES / You can get what you want from the 'Wood.

BY JOHN CULLEN

Thursday night at the Grawood is usually a good time, at least for me. Sarah (the other half of the experiment) and I met at 8:30 p.m. outside the main doors. After a brief hassle with the bartender, we were let in. The first thing that always hits me when I walk into the bar is the intense heat the Grawood generates. It only takes a few minutes for me to be sweating. At 8:30 the place was already packed and there were minimal seats left. The house was getting crowded, so we decided to get our drinks. In the land of the six dollar pitcher, ordering a Pepsi was met with a puzzled look from the bartender. So with my non-alcoholic drink in hand, I set out to observe the finer (and lesser) points of the Grawood.

I was talking with a friend of mine when the DJ decided to get to work. The house system was cranked to an annoying, conversation-killing level as we were kicked-off the dance way for the dancers that were "about to come flocking" since DJ Shane was on the air. I am not a fan of the music played at the Grawood, however I realize that the majority of people are. This is fine, but why play the same song more than once a night? Last year, I remember hearing "Stuck in the middle with you" three times in the span of four hours. Now it

seems they are sucking the life out of that Coolio song.

No article on the Grawood would be complete without mentioning the beer. It is no secret the draft smells horrible. Someone told me the smell was caused by old pipes leading from the kegs. Now if this is true, why couldn't they have used some of their renovation money to fix this problem? It could only make those of us that frequent the Grawood happier.

I have mentioned almost every aspect of the Grawood that I do not like. Most people would not set foot in the bar if they went by the negative points alone. There are reasons however, I still go back. First, the beer is cheap. A six dollar pitcher is hard to pass up even if it does smell awful. It becomes less noticeable the more you drink. I would love to drink bottled beer all night, but that would be an added stress to the wallet. Second, I live very close to the Grawood. The walk downtown becomes tedious if done too often. It's convenient to be able to drop in and have a beer without a fifteen minute walk. And lastly, I get to see people I don't usually run into around campus. It's almost guaranteed you'll see someone you know. To me, the positive reasons greatly outweigh any negatives.

Despite my sympathetic view, I did not have a good time last Thursday. It had nothing to do with the fact I was sober, (well, maybe a little bit) it was having to analyze a place I've always taken for granted. Going to a bar and scrutinizing all that happens is no fun.

You can get what you want out of the Grawood. Whether it's drinking, dancing, or socializing, there's something for everyone. Personally, it takes a few drinks to forget the bad points and to be able to enjoy the good ones.

BY SARAH ROBINSON

Surprise, surprise — the Grawood isn't the hottest bar in town.

And you can hear it anywhere — "I went sober and it sucked." "It was so hot in there I could barely breathe," and, of course, "I stood in line for two hours!"

I've loved the Grawood three times since September and the first time I went I automatically disliked the place. I realize the Grawood has a strong following, and these people must enjoy it tremendously; however, that does not mean people like me should have to grin and bear it.

First, on a structural level, the 'wood has quite a few faults, most notably the ventilation system. It's either very small or non-existent, so by 9 p.m. the entire place reaches about 100 degrees.

I also witnessed a bouncer allow a person in the bar knowing they were underage. What's the point in empty threats? He looked at the I.D. and said "This looks nothing like you, but you already

paid so go ahead." The point being this bouncer must like to pick up on the job. It might work if he were actually doing her a favour.

And by the way, why aren't you allowed to take your drink past the front door? Is this some sort of nonsensical law? I walked across the threshold and was bombarded by a bouncer for having a drink in my hand. There are no large signs to inform me of this rule so all I could think was, "I'm in a bar, don't they want me to buy drinks?"

The Grawood could easily improve these problems if management installed fans, posted signs of any idiosyncratic policies, decided to implement the legal drinking age, and found a way to shorten the line-ups.

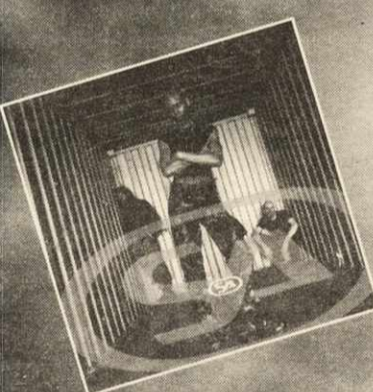
Being a person who loves to dance all night, I was also disappointed with the DJ — he must have played five songs, three times each. So, I requested some songs, played regularly in dance clubs all over Halifax — he hadn't heard of them.

While comparing Thursday at the Grawood to other bars, I must say I would rather be at Jerry's/The Palace. They have a live band, good dance music, and cheaper drinks. And the atmosphere. I think a bar should be judged by who goes there and how it's run. As an out-of-towner who lives off campus, I found the Grawood alienating, despite considering myself an outgoing person. It seemed obvious everyone there knew each other and about 90% of them lived in residence. I go to bars to meet people, and I'd prefer a bar where there's more of an incentive to do that.


I do feel obligated to mention though, that despite my negative attitude, I did enjoy myself last Thursday. I met some people I really liked and we danced together the entire night, which goes to prove it doesn't matter what bar you're in, it's who you're with. The thing is, the next time we get together, we decided it won't be at the Grawood.

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