

## = Gypsy Restaurant and Velvet Lounge =

The Gypsy Restaurant and Velvet Lounge was a restaurant and nightclub established in 1947 and located along Northwest 21st Avenue in the Northwest District neighborhood of Portland , Oregon , in the United States . Popular with young adults , the restaurant was known for serving fishbowl alcoholic beverages , for its 1950s furnishings , and for hosting karaoke , trivia competitions and goldfish racing tournaments . The restaurant is said to have influenced local alcohol policies ; noise complaints and signs of drunken behavior by patrons made the business a target for curfews and closure . Concept Entertainment owned the restaurant from 1992 until 2014 , when it was closed unexpectedly .

## = Description =

Located at 625 Northwest 21st Avenue in the Nob Hill area of Portland 's Northwest District neighborhood , Gypsy was a " boisterous " , " disco @-@ balled " dive bar , recognizable by its bouncers , karaoke , and " wobbling smokers " . The Portland Mercury said the restaurant was a " kinda retro @-@ y bar ... popular with a young college @-@ y , drinkin ' , party crowd " . One Portland resident described the club as " the kind of place where you can go with your sophisticated friends and look at the Daddy @-@ O decor . Or you can go on a date and snuggle in a corner where the lighting is low . And if you want to meet new people you can stroll through there and see people whose faces you 've never seen before , which is a rare thing in Portland . "

The interior featured 1950s furnishings and " pinball @-@ panel " wall decorations . In 1963 , The Oregonian described the artwork on the interior walls , which included a large and colorful painting depicting a gypsy camp , and an " attractive " nude called Dian by Grace Harlow , a painter and former student of Louis Bunce . The venue also featured " mottled " iridescent red windows that were translucent , could seat 150 guests , and included a banquet area .

Gypsy was also known for serving fishbowl alcoholic beverages , and in its final years , for hosting goldfish racing tournaments . The restaurant served soup , sandwiches , and full entrees . Karaoke was available beginning at 9 pm on Tuesday through Saturday evenings .

## = History =

Gypsy Restaurant and Lounge was established in 1947 and was originally located at 612 Northwest 21st Avenue . In 1948 , The Oregonian published an advertisement for business , promoting an eight @-@ course dinner for \$ 1 @. @ 25 , between the hours of 4 pm and 3 am . The restaurant 's location was described as " next to 21st Avenue Theater " , between Northwest Hoyt and Irving Streets . In 1955 , the paper reported that \$ 1 @, @ 000 was stolen from an unlocked safe stored at the Gypsy Restaurant . In 1963 , the restaurant and lounge moved to its final location , at the intersection of Northwest 21st Avenue and Hoyt Street , across from Cinema 21 . On opening night , the " New Gypsy " restaurant reportedly played songs by Frank Fontaine .

According to a 1973 Oregonian obituary , Gypsy Restaurant was then owned and operated by Stacy Gurganus . An obituary published by The Oregonian in 1987 said that Gertrude " Tiny " Hursick of Lake Oswego co @-@ owned Gypsy and Gordon 's 7 @-@ Up Bar , also located in Northwest Portland . John Hursick continued to own and operate the restaurant until the early 1990s ; he died in 1999 .

Ownership of Gypsy transferred to Concept Entertainment in 1992 . The company has owned other Portland establishments such as Bar 71 , Barracuda Nightclub , Dixie Tavern , Grand Central Bowl , the Lotus Cardroom and Cafe , Quest , and the Thirsty Lion . According to Willamette Week , the restaurant had an " odd " influence on local alcohol policies . In 1994 , city commissioner Charlie Hales and mayor Vera Katz sought to close the Gypsy due to repeated reports of assaults , public intoxication , and noise complaints . However , the Oregon Liquor Control Commission ( OLCC ) refused . In 2013 , when Hales was the mayor of Portland , he unsuccessfully requested that the OLCC enforce a 10 pm curfew for bar patios within the Portland city limits .

In 2007 , Gypsy was one of several Portland sites depicted in " Virtual Portland " , a three @-@ dimensional computer @-@ generated simulation of the city , designed for Second Life . In May 2013 , a tree limb fell and damaged the restaurant .

After operating for more than twenty years , and despite having advertised future events at the club , the business closed abruptly on February 20 , 2014 . Its website and social media pages were shut down immediately , and a sign was posted at the club noting that Concept Entertainment had decided to sell . The space that Gypsy had occupied was immediately available for long @-@ term lease , with furniture included .

= = Events = =

Gypsy hosted a variety of musical acts and events throughout its history , including trivia competitions and rock band karaoke , featuring a live backing band . In 1985 , the Chris Conrad Quartet performed in the " Rhythm Room " . In 2000 , Gypsy hosted opening and closing night parties for Sensory Perceptions ' annual film festival , which spanned two weekends at neighboring Cinema 21 . Nearly twenty years after the death of Andy Warhol , the Gypsy held a birthday party in his honor in 2006 . One Oregonian contributor called Gypsy a " fitting setting " for the celebration , given its lava lamps and blue and orange fishbowl drinks , which he said were " like Pop art through a straw " . Gypsy partnered with Cinema 21 in 2009 when the theater hosted " Can 't Stop the Serenity " , a benefit for Equality Now that included two screenings of the film Serenity ( 2005 ) . Festivities included a costume contest , pub quiz , and Dr. Horrible 's Sing @-@ Along Blog karaoke . Pub Quiz USA hosted an " All ' Lost ' Trivia Night " at the Gypsy in 2010 for fans of the television program Lost . Gypsy often screened episodes of Mad Men , the American television series set in the 1960s , and pay @-@ per @-@ view Ultimate Fighting Championship matches .

In an attempt to offer " something different and exciting to do " , Gypsy began hosting goldfish racing tournaments in 2010 . A chef who worked at Gypsy proposed hosting the tournaments after seeing videos of fish racing online . Two other establishments owned by Concept Entertainment also hosted goldfish races . Gypsy 's cross @-@ shaped track was 9 feet ( 2 @.@ 7 m ) long and " tricked out with fancy runway lights " . The tournaments prompted criticism by a local veterinarian and a spokesperson for the Oregon Humane Society , who suggested they " may skirt the line of the humane society 's guiding principle , which is to not inflict pain and suffering on animals for enjoyment " . The spokesperson also said , " I do wish people could find different ways to entertain themselves . "

= = Reception = =

In 2009 , The NW Examiner included Gypsy in an article about happy hours in Northwest Portland . In her review , Desiree Andrews wrote that the fried artichoke hearts and pub chips were forgettable and recommended the black bean quesadilla . She said , " Overall , the atmosphere was a little too much like a Big Lebowski hallucination for me , and the food triggered clogged @-@ artery images , but the friendliness of the staff made up for a lot . "