

Action After Hours



photo courtesy of Denny Grizzle, Pour House Trivia

Teams work together — and celebrate together — in pub quiz challenges. Here, fist-bumps are shared after a correct answer while playing the Pour House Trivia pub quiz during the World Series of Trivia at Hager Hall Conference Center, where competition is stiff, and so too can be the drinks.

by Nicole Jovel

Restaurants, bars and other late-night venues are offering more than happy hour specials to entice customers.

Eric “Squeekers” Malott steps up to the mic to belt out a favorite tune whenever the opportunity strikes. He’s not in a band; he’s a follower of karaoke. “I’ve enjoyed singing all my life and have fun while I’m doing it,” he says. And even though most of the karaoke opportunities he takes advantage of are at bars, he says he’s “not a bar kind of guy.”

Bars, restaurants and other dining and entertainment businesses are competing for customers like Eric by changing their game from specialty drinks and standards like pool or darts. They’re upping the ante with karaoke, quiz nights, and more, to set themselves apart. “While there are still customers that enjoy darts and a game of pool, I think others seek out entertainment that they can personally be a part of,” says Gina Oreamuno Lowry, co-owner of TSL Karaoke Entertainment. “If they’re participating



photo courtesy of Denny Grizzle, Pour House Trivia

Denny Grizzle (center), owner of Pour House Trivia poses with winners of a recent pub quiz. **Below**, are members of Potomac Playmakers who will be performing a murder mystery series held at Knob Hall Winery in Clear Spring.



photo courtesy of Potomac Playmakers

Though he never set out to make trivia his bread and butter, Denny says that the opportunity struck and he had to take it. Once he did, he knew he wanted to offer a quality service. "I'm not a guy with a box of Trivial Pursuit cards and a mic. We put a lot into this to create longevity," he says. With popular trivia themes like Game of Thrones night, he knows his success rides on the success of bars' willingness to get creative.

Knob Hall Winery in Clear Spring has thrown their hat into the ring to show people a good time, too. "Wineries offer a fun alternative for people looking for something to do," says Richard Seibert, managing partner. The establishment offers "Wine Down Fridays" — tastings during daylight hours, with music often featuring local talent. They attract customers from Baltimore, D.C. and the suburbs to their beautiful setting. They have special events just for ladies, too, called Women Who Wine, most recently during which the participants made their own sangria. "Next for us is to start a murder mystery series with Potomac Playmakers," says Richard. "We're pretty excited about it."

It's a potential win-win for the Potomac Playmakers, too, who are no strangers to drawing an audience. "People come to us generally for escapism," says Barry Harbaugh, president of Potomac Playmakers. "They're tired of TV or movies and want the experience of live theatre and to be able to watch the process of creating something from beginning to end." The group has been around since the 1920s, and just like the bars, they're trying new things, like the upcoming series with Knob Hall, to attract new customers. "We're trying a lot of different things right now," says Barry. "You have to evolve to survive." And while businesses are getting more creative, it's the customers who are reaping the benefits with more laughs, more fun, and more options. ♥

in the entertainment, it becomes more entertaining not only to themselves, but to those around them."

Gina and her husband started TSL Karaoke Entertainment in 2010 and can be found pumping out tunes all around the area — from Barefoot Bernie's Bar & Grill to The Greene Turtle to Thunder Road Bar & Grille. Gina says the list goes on and on because "karaoke is huge in the tri-state area. You can find a show almost every day of the week." She says the draw is that karaoke not only creates crowd interaction, but it also brings people together. "The ages of our crowds range from 21 to 90 years old. Seriously, every age seems to enjoy karaoke."

The best part is, you don't have to be a great singer, you just have to want to have fun. But if the idea of standing up in front of friends and strangers and pretending to hit that high note in a familiar tune isn't

your speed, trivia nights are another fun diversion that is gaining traction.

Denny Grizzle, owner of Pour House Trivia, was once a full-time musician. Having to give his vocal cords a rest under doctor's orders forced him to rethink how he would fill his time. He spoke to a friend in the restaurant business and decided to give trivia a shot. "I was tripling business on a Monday night and other bars started to show interest," he says. That was five years ago. Today Denny has a professional writer and research team on staff and works with roughly 30 bars. "I still play music, but I've found that there's a population of people who don't go out to get drunk but want to have a good time," he says. "People enjoy the competition and challenge of trivia — it exercises your brain. It's like family game night but at a bar and with prizes."



photo courtesy of TSL Karaoke Entertainment

When patrons get in on the karaoke action, it can make for an entertaining evening not just for the singer, but for everyone else around. And no, you don't have to be a great singer, you just have to be looking for a good time.

Upcoming Events

Things To Do With (Or Without) A Drink In Hand

By no means an exhaustive list, here are a few resources to help you engage your inner rock star, prepare for your time to shine on Jeopardy, or live the Clue life.

Knob Hall Winery

Murder Mystery: The Vintage Murder
(featuring the Potomac Playmakers)

Sept. 6–7 at 7:00 p.m.

14108 St. Paul Rd., Clear Spring

knobhallwinery.com

301.842.2777

Pour House Trivia

There are trivia opportunities almost daily in Hagerstown, Sharpsburg, Frederick, and beyond. Check the schedule at pourhousetrivia.com/schedule-and-standings to find one near you.

pourhousetrivia.com

301.605.9121

TSL Karaoke

Tuesdays from 8–11 p.m. at WoodPoint Seafood Grille in Hagerstown

Thursdays from 8–11 p.m. at Dewey's Pub in Hagerstown

Fridays from 9 p.m.–1 a.m. at ThunderRoad Bar & Grille in Hagerstown

For more information visit tslkaraoke-entertainment.com

Potomac Playmakers

For a booze-free experience, you can check out their performance of "Proof," a drama by David Auburn Sept. 26–28 and Oct. 3–5 at the Women's Club, 31 S. Prospect St., Hagerstown

For more information, visit potomacplaymakers.org or call 240.382.7269

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