



JOSH THOMAS

Some go to Jim Porter's for singin'. Some go there for lovin'.

The Bar Hopper

Jim Porter's Good Time Emporium

2345 Lexington Road
in Irish Hill
452-9531

Let's face it, people are funny-acting creatures. So much so that an evening spent watching them can be all the entertainment you need — if, of course, you find the right natural habitat.

Thank goodness, then, for Jim Porter's Good Time Emporium. This Bar Hopper had been tipped off to the landmark's potential for eye-feasting on an interesting mix of the River City's finest, so on a recent Friday night, two friends and I ponied up the \$5 cover charge to get our first taste of the good times.

The first place we bellied up to a bar was the Ballroom, which was adorned with a stage, dance floor and enough tables to seat a hundred hunting cougars. (We noticed we were nearly the only patrons who appeared to be younger than 30.)

We were greeted quickly by the bartender, whose good-natured dig at my friend's Michigan hat was a friendly icebreaker. Jim Porter's isn't a place for brew snobs, so I figured I'd "do as the Romans do" and ordered a Budweiser (\$3). My Wolverine friend, following suit, snagged a Coors Light (\$3).

We were instantly struck by the room's décor. From the ceiling hung a grand chandelier and a host of hanging lamps with cloth shades, while the wall was plastered with the types of antique metal signs you see hanging over a checkerboard in Cracker Barrel — like wearing a top hat and tuxedo jacket with blue jean cutoffs and sneakers, but the Emporium pulls it off convincingly.

There was even a blackjack table, with a dealer slinging cards to a lone man. We didn't investigate, assuming what happened in that corner of the room stayed in that corner of the room.

Next, we headed to the Melody Bar, where the ambiance lies somewhere between the stained-glass hues of a cabaret, an old west saloon and a backwoods Deep South watering hole. Adding to the

charm was a hanging velvet seat, from which, a bartender informed me, a singer swings and belts out karaoke on select evenings.

Once seated, this Bar Hopper ordered a Sapphire and tonic (\$4.50), while my friend slurped down a Crown and ginger (\$4.50). Neither was very strong, and our server wasn't overly friendly — but that might have owed something to the deafening ZZ Top the band was pummeling us with.

We never made it past the Melody Bar, the intoxicating mix of the mulleted Moulin Rouge and faithful Foghat covers nailing us where we sat. And through it all, we never lacked for interesting people to watch — from the middle-aged man hitting on every woman that walked within arm's length to the woman who jumped on stage with the band to do a little go-going. The Good Time Emporium truly lived up to its name.

Jim Porter's is open 6 p.m. to 4 a.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

— Josh Thomas

Do you have a favorite hangout you'd like us to visit? Send suggestions to email@velocityweekly.com.