



THE ULSAN PEAR

VOL. I ISSUE II

an urban survival guide to the industrial capital of korea

MAY 2004



GOOD TIMES ON THE GO

BY MIKE WEBER
THE ULSAN PEAR

There's a special little thrill to doing anything in Korea that would be illegal in a lot of Western countries, even if it's something simple like public alcohol consumption.

That said, living abroad is all about trying new things, right? Well then, let's try something new. Let's put a different spin on a night out, think outside the box a little.

Let's get loaded in front of convenience store.

This one definitely has to go into the "Don't Knock It Till You've Tried It" category. Also, it should be stated up front that this is not for everybody.

Whether or not this is something you could enjoy speaks to what you look for in socialization.

Before you attempt this, you should ask yourself some important questions. If any of the following apply to you, then you should probably look elsewhere for good times:

1.) You're not really into drinking.

2.) You're too cool for this.

3.) You require that a drinking establishment has music, bathrooms, drink specials, a dance floor, a crowd of people you don't know so you feel like you're at someplace hip, a selection of mixed drinks, or an actual bar.

4.) You have no friends.

Still with us? Good.

Number four on the above list is important, because even if you're all about throwing it back at Wooleedle, it's not much fun unless you have some people to do it with.

And here's where we get to the heart of why this whole endeavor is a good idea:

Convenience store drinking boils the social drinking experience down to its barest, purest form. It's just you, a few drinks, a place to sit down, and some amigos to share the joy with. For a lot of us, that's pretty much all we need.

Good times aren't always spoon fed on demand, and having the ability to create them yourself with a few raw ingredients is a skill that will serve anyone well for a long time.

SEE GOOD TIMES PAGE 3

STRETCHING YOUR MAN (WON)

THE PEAR'S SUGGESTIONS FOR A CHEAP NIGHT OUT...

BY FIN MADDEN
THE ULSAN PEAR

It's the week before payday, and that new MP3 player you bought with your carefully budgeted money just isn't keeping you entertained for endless hours anymore.

You've only got a 'man-won' (a 10,000 note) for the evening's entertainment; so what are you going to do?

Well, you could spend 10 hours playing Starcraft at your local PC bang. You could head to one of the 'foreigners welcome' bars

and spend your man-won buying a nice Russian (or Philipino) girl a glass of juice.

You could rent the all three Extended Editions of Lord of the Rings, buy yourself a Hite pitcher from the local Happy-mart and stay in for the evening - but, really, that's not too much fun, is it?

Worse, you could spend all of it drinking yourself to oblivion in front of a convenience store like some sort of desperate alcoholic.

SEE CHEAP NIGHT PAGE 4



Settling in for a long night...

PHOTO: DAVE HARVEY

CHASING THE WAGON

ULSAN'S NIGHTLIFE THROUGH SOBER EYES...

BY JASON TEALE
THE ULSAN PEAR

There may be times in your life when you toy with the insane notion of spending a night in Ulsan without alcohol. You may even be so bold as to not drink at all, but either way the question still remains:

WHAT DO YOU DO?

Well being as how I quit drinking around 8 years ago, I thought I would take on the prospect of your guide through this psychotic idea of sobriety

and explain what to do when you suddenly find yourself caught "without alcohol!!"

First brace yourself, calm down and relax. It's okay... it happens to everyone. While the thought of being sober for more than an hour when you don't need to be, could scare off a lot of people, just be brave.

This is a country soaked in soju and beer, but there is still a lot of things you can do for a good time.

SEE SOBER NIGHTS PAGE 5

HELP THE PEAR!

WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED READING THIS RAG, PASS IT ON TO YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY, CO-WORKERS AND STUDENTS!



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Dear Readers,

First off, a great big thank you to everyone who showed up for our launch party last month. What a party! Ulsan hasn't been that hopping since the World Cup was in town. I know I wasn't the only one nursing a big hangover the next morning.

It's fitting then, that this issue tackles Ulsan's nightlife. Wondering where the party is on any given night is only half the story - making your own fun in this big, sprawling city is by far the bigger challenge. We hope to show you how.

As you can see in this issue, we've expanded the Pear to include four more pages of coverage. With the expanded sections we hope to continue to bring more interesting stories and as always, if you have any suggestions, comments or stories you'd like to see us cover, please drop us a line.

Cheers



Joel Burslem
info@ulsanpear.biz

...GOOD TIMES

Wanna give it a try? It's just as easy as it sounds. First, find a convenience store by walking half a block in any direction. That's the advantage to this kind of outing, the location is, well, convenient.

If you can't find one in your neighborhood, you should probably just stay home and look after your lobotomy scar.

Aside from proximity to your pad, there are a few other considerations:

Avoid places with seating near open sewer grates (found that one out the hard way), and sitting too close to a busy a street will be noisy and smoggy.

Bring some cash, but you won't need much. My two drinking buddies and I took turns buying rounds, with an average of ₩4,300 per round.

For the price of one Cafri at a pub, we bought three and stretched our money 200%. This alone already makes HappyMart boozing a good idea.

Five rounds of mid-range drinks for three guys, plus some snack food, totaled ₩23,400.

The only real issue to be considered is waste disposal. You're probably only a block away from your apartment, so it's not really a big problem.

Also, a little searching and you can find a convenience store located right next to a public bathroom. Of course, you can always just go (WE DO NOT ENDORSE PUBLIC URINATION) and nobody will really care, or even notice.

But seriously, try to be responsible. Some places are good places to pee, and others aren't. Use your own (impaired) judgment. And Lord knows Ulsan could do without additional pollution.

While Family Mart drinking offers is certainly a minimalist approach, it can offer some of the same familiar comforts of proper bars.

You have a plethora of bar snacks available, at great prices (well, better than a bar's). Better yet, the selection is more in line with the Western concept of bar munchies, i.e. peanuts, chips and the like.

You'll never find yourself paying 15,000 won for squid legs at a Buy The Way.

Also, there are limited entertainment options to keep a drunk waygook amused: many stores have arcade-style claw games out in front.

But all that aside, here's the key point: if you wanna hoist a few with some friends and get out of the apartment for a while, then throwin' back at the local 24-hour store is not a bad way to go.

It's a fun, and cost-effective, way to share some suds and laughs, whether you want to make an evening of it, or just pre-game for hitting the proper bars and whatnot.

Think of it as no-frills social drinking. Bring a little cash, a good friend or two, and a carefree attitude, and the rest takes care of itself.

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Who said these are rigged...

PHOTO: DAVE HARVEY



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FINDING FUN

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR STAY IN ULSAN

BY DAN BARHAM
THE ULSAN PEAR

The past two days I was up in Seoul enjoying some nightlife in the metropolis that is this nation's capital.

After slinging back my usual starter of Condition F and a few cocktails I began to mingle, albeit at high speed, with my fellow revelers. The conversations would inevitably follow that path that they always do...

"What's your name?"

"Where are you from?"

"Do you have a.." (OK, so not that one)

"What part of Seoul do you live in?"

GASP

"You live in Ulsan?"

"That must be so boring!?"



PHOTO: DAVE HARVEY

Kombe! Cheers!

Much to their shock however my answer has always been "No."

I've been living here in Ulsan for two years now, and while my lungs might be cursing me, I have to

say I have had a blast, the entire time I have been here. Why? It's simple, because of my friends.

This city, at last count, has a minimum of five foreigner specific bars

Though even the other places can be fun too if you're not a jobist...

The number of places to go isn't the issue - this place has more than twice the number of bars as my old university town, it's who you go with that makes the night.

In Ulsan you can't wait for the excitement to find you, you have to make it yourself.

It's very easy to just sit and complain about how little there is to do in this town, but like any, you have to go and find the people who: climb hills and get up early on Sunday to *ahem* run, the hard drinkers that never leave the inside of a bar until its lights are out, the arty types that torture canvas and verse.

There's even those that are here to escape the harsh realities of life, and/or their criminal pasts.

In any case, chances are your not alone. Believe me, I have met the first three types in this city, and I'm pretty sure I've met some of the latter also. So you're not alone, you just have to find those that have the same interests.

Why am I telling you all these seemingly self-evident points, you may ask: because I have seen a lot of people sit on their butts and complain that there is nothing to do. Or they say that this is a "dead" city, when they do little to make it otherwise.

So next time you're about to whine about this how this is a dead town, get off your butt and go meet some new people, plan a party or event, and stop complaining.

The people I know in this town usually have a good time, perhaps it's because we want to.

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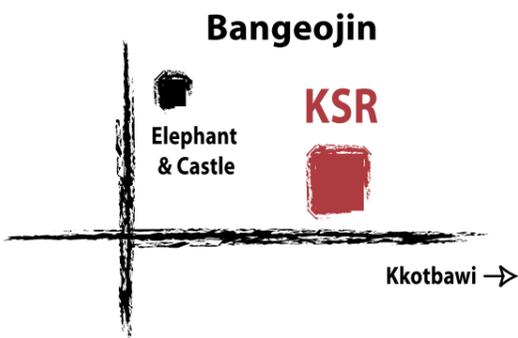
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...A CHEAP NIGHT OUT

So, without any further adieu, here are the Pear's suggestions for a cheap night out on the town:

Plan A:

'Man-won' just isn't going to get you far at any of the local pubs, where bottled beer runs, on average, at ₩3,000.

For an entertaining Friday night you could simply head to a Happymart and load your pockets full of bottles and clank your way from bar to bar. This is not a good way to endear yourself to any of the bar staff, but if you are really stuck, it might just work.

Learn the specials at your local bars. There are specials and free drinks to be had, but most are offered at the same time at all the bars. If you don't drink, but enjoying watching other people make asses of themselves, you could always head out and see what the other local hooligans are up to.

Plan B:

Soju tent. If you're really up for a night of debauchery, head down to your local soju tent and be prepared for an interesting evening.

You've seen the soju tents scattered around parking lots across the city, but you may never have really experienced them. In a country where patio bars are none existent, the soju tent provides for the rare opportunity to 'enjoy' the Ulsan night air.

You can play such games as 'Name that Smell' and 'Open Sewer Survivor' where competitors see who can stand over the open sewer the longest.

A bottle of soju runs you about ₩3,000. But my recommendation would be to mix it up. Ask for 'Oh Shit Saeju', actually called 'Oh Ship Saeju'. Now, this is simply a bottle of baek saeju (or one

hundred saeju) and a bottle of soju (zero saeju) mixed together in a pitcher or flask. Together, the drink is certainly a more palatable version of the original soju.



Oh Shit...here comes the burn... PHOTO: DAVE HARVEY

Plan C:

For alcoholics and non-alcoholics alike; Fireworks. Nothing makes a boring evening memorable than explosives within city limits.

Just think, the roof of your apartment is flat and provides excellent elevation for launching missiles into your neighbourhood.

Even the oldest, most osteoarthritic ajumma can scuttle for safety with surprising speed and dexterity when under a barrage of bottle rockets.

A decently sized package of fireworks costs only a few thousand won.

Add to this a few bottles of beer and you have yourself an entire night's entertainment.

Plan D:

Board Game Bang. Board game rooms have popped up across this great city;

they are the new PC-bang and where many of the younger Koreans hang out. Mugeodong, across from Ulsan University, offers the best selection of these 'bangs'.

Upon entering one of these rooms, you will be guided to a table and they will bring you a menu of games. Monopoly, Scrabble, Clue, the Game of Life, Risk and Jenga are all common names in these salons. The good news is that ALL these games are in English, Korea not having many homegrown games.

These great games have been bringing fragmented and hateful families across the Western World for generations for a few hours of spiteful close quarters, throat-slitting fun. Your family is thousands of miles away, so why not get some friends together and head out.

The regular hourly rate is ₩1,000 so a six-hour death match of Axis and Allies will even leave you enough change to head to a 24hr Galbi house for some discount pork products.

Plan E:

Pellet Gun Survivor. Imagine arming yourself with a replica Glock or Smith & Wesson and hunting your friends through the maze of alleyways behind your apartment.

Head to your local stationery store or to one of the SuperMarts and select your weapon of choice.

There is a veritable armoury of serviceable single shot handguns to be purchased for less than your man-won. For another thousand you can pick up a package of 1000 plastic BBs, all the ammo you'll need for a night of Rambo.

Round up your friends or just go cat hunting - a night in the alleys has never been more fun. Just remember, gentlemen, that this is not the type of activity that most women find endearing, so just lie to her and tell her you were at the 7 Club drinking juice all night.

Plan F:

Beercoasting. The newest sport to enter the Ulsan scene is Beercoasting. Simply strap on your rollerblades load up on Hite and gently roll from Happymart to Happymart around the city.



Charlton Heston would be proud... PHOTO: DAVE HARVEY

The safest route is usually through alleyways, which are empty during the evening hours.

Wear wrist guards, alcohol and alleys will lead to at least one spill during the evening.

You might get strange looks and a wave from a police officer, but drinking in the streets is legal (or at least it seems to be) so even the largest pack of police officers is nothing to fear.

Rollerblades are not necessary; you could simply call it a convenience store crawl and head out on foot. Don't be limited by equipment.

Plan G:

Throw your own party. Head to the supermarket and pick up two big plastic bottles of soju. Buy the biggest and cheapest you can get and a bottle of orange juice. Mix all three together, call some people.

...continued next page

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Plan H:
A sporting event and a bottle of wine. Ulsan's pride and glory is the Hyundai Tigers soccer team.

They play matches late Saturday afternoons most weekends. Tickets can be picked up in front of the stadium for ₩7-8,000.

These are but a few of the many things you could do with 10,000 won.

Why not just explore the city at night by foot.

Don't forget bowling or playing pool - The Anchor, Bebop and Acid all have free pool tables. For a pay table you can try and figure out the great mystery why Korean tables have no pockets.

The city is a jungle and it provides you with a plethora of entertainment on even the strictest budget. So get out there and enjoy the city.
finmadden@yahoo.com



and cracking into a mean game of Monopoly with a bunch of dudes is sometimes enough to drive even me back to drinking.

Furthermore, I don't have the mental capacity to understand the finer points of Starcraft, so for me most of the other 'bangs' are out of the question.

So, in doing the research for this article I failed horribly in finding the definitive cool place to sit and "not-get-hammered," for a night out in Ulsan. To tell you the truth, I spent most of my night sitting in a soju tent watching my drunk friends try and pee on a wiener dog.

I guess then it seems that for any kind of consistent nightlife, inevitably it must come back to bars. As much as they sometimes bore the crap out of me (especially when you have to spend 8 hours in the same bar) they do serve their purpose and occasionally can even be a lot of fun.
jasonale37@hotmail.com

...SOBER NIGHTS IN ULSAN

I have purposely left out anything to do with travel and scooters, because we shot that sucker dead in the last issue.

Coffee is my forte and luckily there is tons of highly-caffeinated beverages through out this city. Most bars and hofs carry it on their menu so this makes it easier to get out and hang with people. The hofs are great as you

can actually eat there as well.

If talk and coffee isn't for you, there is also many other interesting places to visit. Lotte Multi-Plaza is a good place to start. Having a restaurant and a kick-ass coffee shop, one can eat and stay awake all in the same area. It also has a huge multi-plex cinema that seems to be the main attraction.

Most times, there is a good assortment of English movies there with unobtrusive Korean subtitles. This gives you a great opportunity to hide in the dark and be a social reject for a night.

If you have exhausted the idea of going to a movie

or there is just crap playing, there are also many other places to go. In this city, there are PC rooms, PS2/X-box rooms, DVD rooms, singing rooms, and even board game rooms (see *Cheap Night Out - ed.*) I am sure that there is a "bang" somewhere to meet your needs.

I guess what I am really trying to say is that there are many alternatives to pickling your liver every weekend.

That being said, being sober in Ulsan can be difficult. Just the idea of spending a Saturday night stone-cold sober

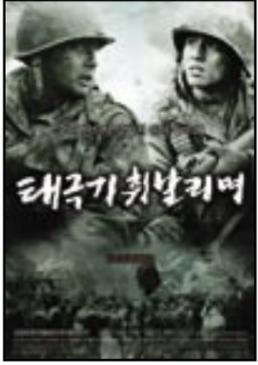
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KOREAN CINEMA CORNER

With Darryl Pestilence

Welcome to a special edition of Korean Cinema Corner. Considering that this month's Pear is focusing on ENTERTAINMENT, rather than offer up a review of one particular movie, I figured now would be the perfect opportunity to offer up a simple guide for the Hanguok-Yeonghwa curious.



Navigating one's way around a Korean video shop can be a bit overwhelming, especially if you're just looking to pick up a flick after work and you can't be bothered to try to instigate a long game of bungled Korean or you're going to have to pantomime like a mime on methamphetamine to get information from the chain smoking, Star Craft obsessed video clerk

or princess syndrome disaster running the shop's till, who could tell you a thing or two about where the Shinhwa CDs are located but knows jack shit when it comes to what a particular DVD offers. Darryl knows your pain.

So, utilizing the latest in top-secret Ulsan Pear technology, this installment of the KCC is here to help the Hanguok-inhibited in finding DVDs to rent, borrow or add to their collection. For old school adapters this might come off as being a bit redundant (explaining NTSC/PAL bit, etc.), but bear with me as you'll learn a thing or two that might help to open up your DVD collection to some gems (and drain your wallet of some clams).



Let's start with some basic facts about DVDs in South Korea:

1. ALL Korean DVDs are mastered in the NTSC broadcast standard.

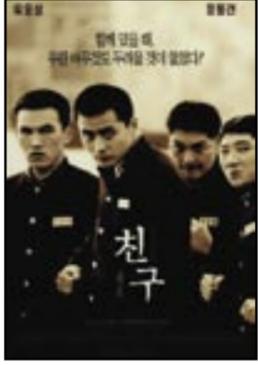
NTSC is the format Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Canada, and the U.S. and its territories adopted back in the day. For those of you from the U.K., New Zealand, Australia, all of Europe, China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Africa and the Middle East - PAL is your video standard. Unless you have a multi-standard DVD player that can convert NTSC to PAL, or have a player than can spit out a PAL or NTSC signal to a multi-standard TV, prospective collectors from any of the latter countries should proceed with caution.

2. 98% of ALL Korean-language films released on DVD have ENGLISH subtitles.



Some early releases did not and, much to the chagrin of movie enthusiasts, some companies STILL issue subtitleless releases, - Park Kwang-soo's 1986 masterpiece CHEOL SOO & MAN SOO being a casualty to such oversights. While some translations play fast and loose and others are riddled with typographical and grammatical errors, the majority of DVD subtitles are pretty good. Some releases (local blockbusters in particular) offer Japanese and Chinese subtitles as well, but English appears to be the norm.

3. MANY non-English language DVDs offer English subtitles.



This is a nice plus. Let's say you want to spend two hours with some entertainment from Europe, other parts of Asia or the Middle East: many Korean video distributors offer up English language subtitles on their releases. In the case of a film like the French thriller HAUTE TENSION (2003, released as "X-Tension" in the R. O. K.), Korean distributors released the film on disc with removable English subtitles a full half year before the film found an American distributor (it will finally receive a brief theatrical release this summer in the States).

There are some pluses to this, but also keep in mind Korean distributors face tougher censorship than the States, but relatively more lax censorship (when it comes to violence) issues than in England or Australia.

It's hard to gage a percentage on how many foreign-language films offer up English subtitles, but it's close to 50% and dependant on the Korean distributor and weather or not the film's producers have exclusivity rights regarding where it can allow English translations to be sold.

4. MOST Korean movies are REGION-FREE.

This is good news. Many DVD players offer up multi-system playback, but because of Hollywood greed, the issue of "Region Coding" has plagued the DVD format. For example, if a DVD is marked as being "Region 0," or "ALL," then it can be played on ANY player ANYWHERE, provided your system can handle NTSC/PAL conversion issues.



Now, the pain-in-the-ass of this is when a disc is designated as being playable in one region only.

The 6 region system breaks down as follows:

- Region 1 - The U. S. And Canada
- Region 2 - England, most of Europe, South Africa, and Japan
- Region 3 - South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Portugal and India
- Region 4 - Australia, New Zealand, Latin America
- Region 5 - The former Soviet Union and surrounding territories, Africa, all of the Indian sub-continent
- Region 6 - Mainland China

Now, NOT all Korean films are Region-free. There are a large number of exclusive Region 3 releases, and Region 1 & 3 combination releases out there. This is where owning a "hacked," region-free player comes in handy.

Assuming you've understood the basics and are ready to explore what the world of Korean DVD offers, let's take a look at some scans taken from the back of two local DVDs, and what the technical information means.

WHAT'S ON THE BOX?

The Pear's Indispensible Korean Video Rental Guide

EXHIBIT A



Item 1: "Hwan Myeon Bee Yool," or "Screen / Movie Aspect Ratio."

This is important to know if you have a widescreen television and want to take full advantage of your system, or if you are a fan of cinema and prefer to know if a film is being presented in its original, theatrical aspect ratio.

With but a few exceptions, Korean distributors are pretty reliable when it comes to releasing local productions in their intended aspect ratios.

Item 2: "Eum Hyang," or "Sound Presentation."

This tells you if the film is in Mono, 2-channel Stereo, or 5.1 Surround.

Item 3: "Ja Mak," or "Subtitles."

These are crucial if you want to enjoy a non-English language film and require subtitles.

Items 4, 5 and 6:

"Yeong Oh" (English), "Il Oh" (Japanese), "Choong Oh" (Chinese)

EXHIBIT B

Item 1: "Subtitle."

While rare, sometimes the distributor uses Konglish ("SawBuTaEeTul") over the local vernacular ("Ja Mak").

Item 2: "Han Gook Oh," or, "Korean."

These subtitles are especially useful for those who want to learn Korean.

Item 3: "Yae Go Byeon," or, "Trailers."

If you like to know what extras a DVD offers, here's a simple start: the film's original theatrical trailer; in this case the disc offers up two of them. Rarely, if ever, are the Korean trailers subtitled.

Item 4: "MyooJeekBideeoh," or, "Music Video."

Rarely, if ever are the music videos subtitled.



Item 5: "MaeEeKeeng Peelrum," or, "Making Film."

Basic "making of," "behind-the-scenes" documentaries or EPK's (Electronic Press Kits) for the films. Rarely, if ever, are these subtitled in languages outside of Korean.

Item 6: "BaeOoo Mit Staeb Dongyeongsang Pubropeel," or "Talent Profiles."

I've rarely seen Korean films with any of these text-based extras in English.

...continued next page

EXHIBIT C



Item 1: NTSC

This lets you know what broadcast standard the DVD has been mastered in.

Item 2: Audio

This picture shows five squares that symbolize the speaker set-up owners of a digital receiver would have for 5.1 sound. Mono contains one little black square at the top of the large square. Basic, 2-channel stereo would have mini black boxes to the top right and left of the larger box.

Item 3: Region Coding

This is where you will find "0," "ALL," "1, 3" or "3" in the global box. This is good to know if you are purchasing discs to take home and want to know if they are compatible for playback with your system.

So there you have it: ALL you need to know when looking for Korean films to rent or purchase on DVD. Happy hunting!

pestilencepictures@yahoo.com



Item 4: "Sangyeong Sheegahn" or "Running Time."

This indicates the feature films' running time. This is good for local versions of foreign films, as some may be cut. Nothing's worse than spending your hard-earned dough on a censored version of a film you love.

Item 5: "Jaejak Nyeon Weol Il" or "Release Year, Month, Day."

This is of value if you are a collector. Some films have been re-issued with versions missing extras options, in alternate, "Director's Cuts," or in special editions with more goodies than the last version released. It's not too important for the casual renter, but this information might be useful for collectors.

WHERE THE F*CK IS EVERYONE?

WITH FILTHY O'NASTY

The best directions I can give to get to McKenzies is to stand at the Clock Rotary in Shinae ("Old Downtown") with your back to the Taewha river.

Turn left, take a 10-second walk to the next intersection, look up to the right across the road and you will see McKenzie's. A little alley way leads into it.

Of all the pubs I've knocked across in Ulsan, McKenzies is the one most like a pub back home in Ireland and I don't mean those Irish theme pubs that have sprung up all over Europe since the late 1980s.

There is a homely, even cosy atmosphere attaching itself to McKenzie's. Unlike some other establishments in this town you don't feel as if you are in a large foyer of a hotel, masquerading itself as a pub.

Additionally, I've never liked bright lights in bars and McKenzie's satisfies in this regard. Even a vampire would feel at home here.



The decor is varied and interesting. Old saws, swords, saddles, bugles, French horns and a dartboard deck the walls.

Old shot guns, pistols and numerous other fighting implements create the feeling that this is a hard-drinking joint.

Numerous wanted posters on the walls of infamous gunfighters from the Wild West. There is even a big bag of weed from Wyoming. No, just kidding.

As with most Western bars there's the collection of photos of the waygoofs of yesteryear, to remind us of the men (*and women - ed.*) we used to be.

The drinks menu is along the usual lines, W3,000 per bottle of Korean brew and a tad more for imported stuff. No draught beers.

Alex, the owner who speaks good English takes pride in his stock of spirits or shots, as there are very few that he cannot supply.

Saturday night is Happy Hour from 12 - 1a.m. with bottled beer, V+O, G+T, Tequila plus some other shots at W2,000 each. Bourbon and Coke is W3,000 during this hour.

A Quik Fuck or White Russian can be arranged at a negotiable price also. [Don't get too excited, both are drinks, the Quik Fuck being what we call a Baby Guinness back home.]

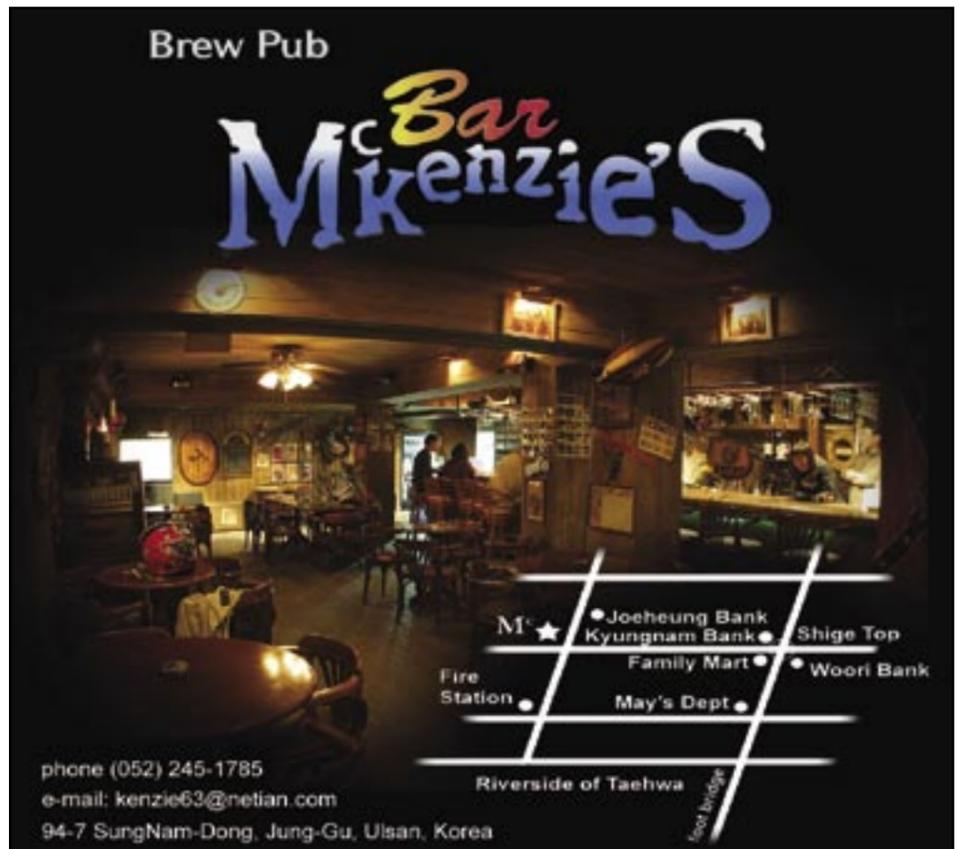
SEE W.T.F.I.E? PAGE 8

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...W.T.F.I.E.

McKenzie's has both SkySports and StarSports so such events as the Premiership, The Champions League, The Super 12 from Down Under, The Six Nations and The Heineken Cup can all be seen on the huge TV screen in the corner.

McKenzie's is usually open from 6p.m. onwards and really only closes when the last person leaves, usually at 4 - 4:30a.m. Alex is an extremely obliging fellow and there have even been exceptions to these times. My own personal latest/earliest leaving time was 9.30a.m.

Additionally, Alex's provision of cuisinal delights from his little back kitchen have almost become the norm as opposed to the exception.

He's the most decent sort of chap and McKenzie's often sponsors all sorts of Waygook events from

WonShot Wanderers soccer to Ultimate Frisbee.

Ulsan's Writer's Group meets there every second Wednesday as the acoustics of the place render themselves for better delivery than the "hotel foyer" type of places. On the occasional Wednesday when the place is too packed for the purposes of the Writers Group, Alex even provides a microphone.

Numerous table quizzes and concerts have also been conducted here by the likes of you and me. A more frequent supply of music comes from the PC behind the bar where many the wandering waygook have built up an eclectic collection of favourites.

To sum it up, all I can say is there's no harm in trying the place out, especially if you want a Quik Fuck. info@ulsanpear.biz

QUEST FOR THE PERFECT CUP

FINDING THE BEST CUP OF JOE IN ULSAN

BY JASON TEALE
THE ULSAN PEAR

While most of our reporters went out this month to seek the best bars, I took on the daunting task of finding the best coffee shops in Ulsan.

Here is what I found:

First on my list in a place in Samsan-dong called La Scalla. It's on the main strip parallel to Lotte Department Store heading towards the Taewha River.

It has the usual menu at the usual prices. A large café mocha will run you about W3,500 and it is excellent. The main reason why I thought that this place was the best was simply the atmosphere.

It is never too crowded and the interior design is nowhere near too "cutie" or trendy. It is dark and tasteful. Plus the music is never intrusive and they hardly ever play K-pop or Britney Spears, another thing I look for in a coffee shop.

Number two on the list is Dunkin' Donuts. Found in Mugeo-Dong and Shinae ('Old Downtown'), it is the last bastion of coffee flavored coffee, to quote Denis Leary.

It is your typical doughnut shop and has your typical coffee. A large original will cost ya about W2,300 and will be about the size of a small trashcan.

Great! This is the exact thing a Canadian ex-pat needs when he starts craving something close to a Tim Horton's "double-double."

Sometimes there is a bit of confusion over the coffee selection, but they usually sort it out. Just be direct, and use your best Konglish.

Next on the list is DaVinci's coffee found in Mugeo-Dong. It has a bright atmosphere and good prices. A smaller than normal mocha will run you about W2,000 but when you are down to you last few chon-wons, DaVinci's is sure to fit your budget.



PHOTO: DAVE HARVEY

Mm.. Caffeine.. Mm Mm.. Caffeine.. Mm Mm

Make a note that if the coffee doesn't wake your ass up the interior design will. The place resembles a brightly lit display kitchen from an upscale department store - very modern, very bright. It is however oddly comfortable.

Fourth spot goes to Java coffee in the Lotte Multi-plaza. It was given fourth because it is generally wickedly busy and that just isn't my style.

Great location, it seems to be a favorite stop over for people waiting for movies and whatever odd dancing is going on on the stage outside.

A café mocha will cost a little more than most places, about W4,000 for a tall, but when you just dropped W8,000 on a movie ticket and god knows how much more for popcorn and a drink, what's another W4,000?

The coffee machine chained to the bus stop across from the university has to take the fifth spot. It has an excellent selection at a great price.

For a mere W200 you can get a small half cup of something called "frima coffee" and it even tastes like coffee! And the service is spectacular!

With in seconds of making your selection your crap is ready and soon you'll be in flavor heaven... well something like that. It also offers a wide variety of sodas and many other tasty beverages to quench your thirst.

[Feeling lonely? want a little companionship with your coffee.... Read on. -ed.]

Coffee Girls. You've seen them riding around - taunting you with their little scooters and sacks full of coffee. You've thought about it, wondered what it would be like. You've considered it,

I did it. Coffee with the coffee girls!

Long before I started researching this article, I was given the opportunity to experience what these places are all about and shed some light on the rumors that seem to abound about these

coffee-bearing girls with the perfect posture on a scooter.

When I first went to a Ta Bang ('Coffee Girl Café') I was nervous, kinda like the first time you go to a strip club.

In my mind I was picturing dozens of lithe gyrating vixens pouring coffee and dancing naked for my amusement.

What I got was an over-the-hill ajumma that sat down, plopped some instant coffee into my cup, stirred it and took off.

SEE CUP OF JOE NEXT PAGE

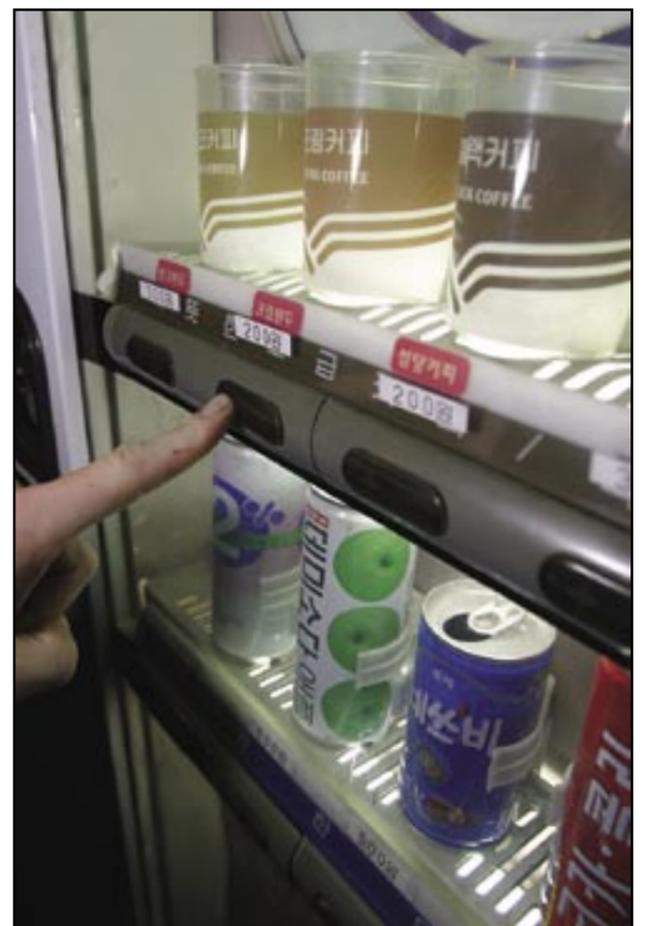


PHOTO: DAVE HARVEY

Anybody got some change?

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Filthy gives McKenzies: 4.5 Shamrocks out of 5

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THE ULSAN PEAR

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GETTING OUT OF ULSAN

YOUR HEAD'S HURTING AND YOU JUST NEED TO GET OUT OF TOWN...

BY JOHN VYVERBERG

We've all been there. It's Sunday morning after a night on the town, the TV infomercials for vibrating heat beads are getting annoying, and there's ₩3,000 burning a hole in your pocket.

What better to do than hop a bus and head down to Busan with a couple of friends?

A good Saturday afternoon starts with a bus ride to Busan and a trip to Bexco. Bexco is the convention center just inside the Busan city limits, offering all sorts of entertainment.

Bexco offers a chance to get out of Korea and get into the rest of the world. With exhibits from around the globe, Bexco offers hours of entertainment.

Most recently Bexco hosted the Terracotta Warriors Exhibit from China. It was once-in-a-lifetime chance to see the work of a wacko 3rd Century Chinese Emperor who made thousands of clay warriors in order to protect him in the after-life. The statues are reknown for their workmanship and lifelike qualities.



PHOTO: BENNETT HO

Kneeling Qin Warrior

Bexco also recently exhibited a human body exhibit which displayed human bodies preserved behind glass.

Ever seen a sliced up human body on display? I tell you what; it brings a whole new meaning to the words "organ donor" on your driver's license.

Bexco offers an array of exhibits, from musicals to art, ice-skating to a play-land for children. Whether going to see an Australian production of the musical "Cats" or going to see the latest in cars at the Busan Auto

Show, Bexco is an excellent way to spend an afternoon.

To find listings for current exhibits check out their site on the Internet at www.bexco.co.kr or do a search for 'Bexco, Korea' and find a listing of upcoming events for 2004.

If you're bored, get some friends rounded up and get out of Ulsan for the day. Bexco will get you in touch with exhibits from around the world and keep you from spending ₩29,000 on the latest in heat bead technology. chikkinugit@yahoo.com

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Map showing location near Jung-Gu Fire Station, Pedestrian Street, Cheon-do Theater, Taehwa Bridge, Riverside Parking, and Assano.

...CUP OF JOE

Not what I pictured.

The second time I went, I got a gold-toothed, rotund, chocco-pie faced girl who kept asking in Korean if I wanted a date and giggling insanely.

I was out of there in a puff of Wile-E-Coyote smoke. Again: not what I pictured.

So, after doing my due diligence into these odd but popular Korean coffee shops, I had an epiphany. What I think is the key to these places is not sex but rather company.

Think of these girls as providing a service.

You're bored and want a cup of Joe, for the mere price of another cup a young lady will sit down and chat with you for a bit.

But, being a foreigner and not really having a good grasp of the Korean language and not finding a gold tooth smack in the middle of a giggling mass of Korean woman particularly attractive, I don't think ta bongas are for me.

I'll take getting a cup of whatever-chino at an inflated price and drinking it while listening to bad pop music any day.

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PEAR EXCLUSIVE: THE NAKED TRUTH

OUR INTREPID REPORTERS GO UNDERCOVER (IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING) IN AN ADVENTURE INTO

THE MYSTERY (AND HIDDEN PLEASURES) OF KOREAN BATHHOUSES

FROM A MAN'S PERSPECTIVE...

BY JOHN BUCKLEY

Q: How can I really do something on a night out on the town that I would truly not normally do in the Western World?

A: Get naked and start Jjim-Jil banging.



PHOTO: DAVE HARVEY

Wanna take a dip?

A rather unusual answer since most Koreans have a peculiar attitude to bared flesh, they don't like to see any. For example: a friend of mine once wore a low-cut dress that bared her shoulders to her teaching jobs. The shocked 12/13 year old boys turned their faces away and refused to look at her while she taught. Her director even reprimanded her for it.

On the hottest days of the summer it's a common sight to see thousands of fully clad Koreans lounging on the beaches like Haeundae or Ilsan. Not a spec of flesh in sight. *Jjim-Jil bangs* (Steam Rooms) or *Mokyok-tangs* (Public Bathhouses) are the big exception. There you see everything.

But on my first visit to one, it wasn't the nakedness that

shocked me, as I have had quite an amount of exposure to bathhouses in other countries.

In Germany, bathhouses are communal unlike in Korea where they are segregated.

30 kilometres outside of Hamburg, on the Lunar Heide river you've got the SalzTherme, Europe's biggest water world where it is verboten to wear any clothing. There, in addition to an array of Finnish and Turkish saunas, Dampfenplatz, Jacuzzis, Schwimmbads etc. there is a bar. Just like the one in Cheers actually. You can sit back, relax and let it all dangle, sip a nice cold HefeWeizen beer while eating a juicy bratwurst

Anyway, I shouldn't have been shocked by what I saw in Korean bathhouses, but I was. Sons scrubbing fathers and fathers in turn scrubbing their own fathers on every, and I mean every part of the anatomy.

Public bathing in Korea is more of a social family outing than a private act.

Bathhouses have a long tradition not unique to Korea but in most Asian countries. Unfortunately, they're rather an alien concept to North America and the British Isles.

After an excruciating game of soccer or football (*or hockey! -ed.*) such their soothing therapeutic qualities are indeed a pleasure.

Personally, I have been to numerous bathhouses. Most dong have two or three. However, the most impressive by far is Dong Nae Hot Springs, in Busan (Near the Onchongdong subway station, I think). It's a must-see. A huge bathing complex complete with pools, caves, and even birds.

It has several saunas, indoor and outdoor, a small swimming pool, herbal baths, jasmine baths, yellow mud baths, showers galore, waterfalls, massage tables, restrooms and much more.

And at Dong Nae, whole sports teams hang out there, lounging around, roughhousing, exercising, whatever. On any given weekend hundreds of men can be seen there.

Dong Nae is also the cleanest bath house you will see in Korea. It's also apparently Asia's largest. However, bear in mind it was Koreans that told me that.

It's open from early morning to late evening. Very busy on weekends with Koreans, Japanese and a few Western clients. 8,000 won for the day.

Most local bathhouses bathhouses however, have at least two hot tubs, one roasting, the other temperate and two cold pools, one cool and the other freezing.

Almost all also come with a resident barber and shoe shine guy.

SEE SALT SCRUBS NEXT PAGE

AND A WOMAN'S...

BY EILEEN KEAST

Getting naked in a sauna full of curious Korean women was not my first idea of how to ease myself into Korean culture.

I'm the kind of person who gets easily embarrassed as a bystander at a topless beach, never mind as the one baring it all in front of a bunch of perfect strangers who have a natural curiosity about what my pale waygook body looks like.

That being said, going to the local bathhouse was one of the best things I could have done, as a waygook fresh off the boat, to get a glimpse of the Korean way of life.

While I've discovered that the bath house is a great way to clean up and unwind, it also gives great insight into every stage of Korean women's social relationships with each other.

During my visits I saw mothers carefully washing their infant daughters, young women sitting around the hot pool gossiping, middle-aged women scrubbing each other's backs, and old women being helped in and out of pools by their grown daughters.

In a culture where women are often publicly treated as second-class citizens, seeing how they treat each other in private is refreshingly positive.

After just half an hour in the sauna, even the most body-conscious and nudity-shy person starts to relax, and think that there might be something to the whole idea. (I found that the onset of acceptance is accelerated by being either really cold or really hungover beforehand.)

I had been warned that I would be stared at, but I found that after ten minutes the other women in the sauna stopped staring every time I got out of one pool to move to the next.

Since my first visit to the bath house, I have spoken to several western women who say that they have had very positive receptions from Korean women, from offers to scrub their backs to invitations to join drinking circles in the hot room.

Be careful, though, especially if you're visiting the sauna before work: the drinks in those thermoses the ajummas bring have a significant soju content.

It took me a while, but I finally worked up the courage to approach the women at the massage tables.

soap-down, and oil massage. For 20,000, I figured it was a bargain. I gamely hopped onto the massage table, reasoning that if the Korean women before me had enjoyed the energetic scrubdown, I would too.

[Writing this now, I'm already anticipating the giggles of those who have been in Korea long enough and have experienced a professional ajumma scrubdown.]

I still hear my ajumma, who, on hearing me yelp out my first "OW!!!". began to chuckle agreeably.



PHOTO: DAVE HARVEY

Ready for my scrub down...

If you're like me and new to Korea you may not know that you can either have a do-it-yourself sauna, where you bring all your own bathing necessities and wash yourself (which is a good budget option), or you can splash out a bit to have the professionals do it for you.

In the spirit of research I opted for the complete treatment: full body scrubdown and exfoliation, face mask,

She continued unabated to enthusiastically exfoliate the inside of my thigh with what felt like a brand new Brillo pad.

Be forewarned: "full body" scrubdown means FULL body scrubdown. There is no region too sacred or tender to be spared the attentions of the ajumma's loofah.

SEE SCRUBDOWN NEXT PAGE

...SALT SCRUBS & HOT TUBS

My favourite bathhouse is one in Mugeo-dong, because of its water jets which you can lie on for a body massage.

It has also a saltroom which can be additionally enjoyable if you coax an unsuspecting "friend" with sand grazes or cuts on their knees in to it. Let the salt do the rest and the profanities will abound.

About ₩4,000 is the going rate for most bathhouses and some are open 24hours. However, many bathhouses close early on Thursday nights as this is cleaning night.

Jjim-jil bangs have been good to me during my stay in Korea. Very often while venturing in strange cities they have even doubled as cheap accomodation.

In most you get logs or guilotine blocks upon which you can rest your head. If you are not too fussed about a perfect night's sleep a few hours on a warm slated floor with a log as a pillow is a fine substitute. And let me tell you, 10 minutes on a cold marble one really wakes you up to meet the day.

Additionally, I've found the steamrooms (wet heat) great after a session of beers. Going from 50 C heat to -10 is damn sobering.

Be warned if you are in any way hairy or have tattoos your body will become magnetic to Korean eyes. Not just kids, but often grown men will blatantly come up pointing at the waygook. But take it all in stride, get naked and start Jjim-jil banging. buckleyj7@hotmail.com



"Houston, ready for lift off..." PHOTO: DAVE HARVEY

...SCRUBDOWN

If you're not comfortable with a stranger scrubbing away at you in certain places, be very firm about your boundaries. (This also applies to boozy nights out that end up at Asshole.)

The pain level went up another notch when she moved onto the massage.

It wasn't a massage such as I've encountered them before so much as a vigorous thumping and stretching.

I could literally feel the phlegm being knocked out of my lungs. And that was before the ajumma crawled up onto the table on top of me to work my spine. I've had chiropractors who make me crack less.

That being said, I came out of my first sauna experience feeling completely

relaxed, and with possibly the smoothest skin I've had since I was a baby.

And forty five minutes of exfoliation, scrubbing and massage for only 20,000 won is a great bargain, considering what I've paid at home for similar (though not so thorough) treatments. Altogether, it was a great experience. Bathhouses have officially become a regular part of my Korean lifestyle. emkeast@sfu.ca



DID YOU KNOW?

Gajisan Sulfur Spring Spa is located near Seoknam temple. Its low-alkali carbonated water contains sodium, calcium, and magnesium which helps circulation and helps prevent arteriosclerosis and heart disease.

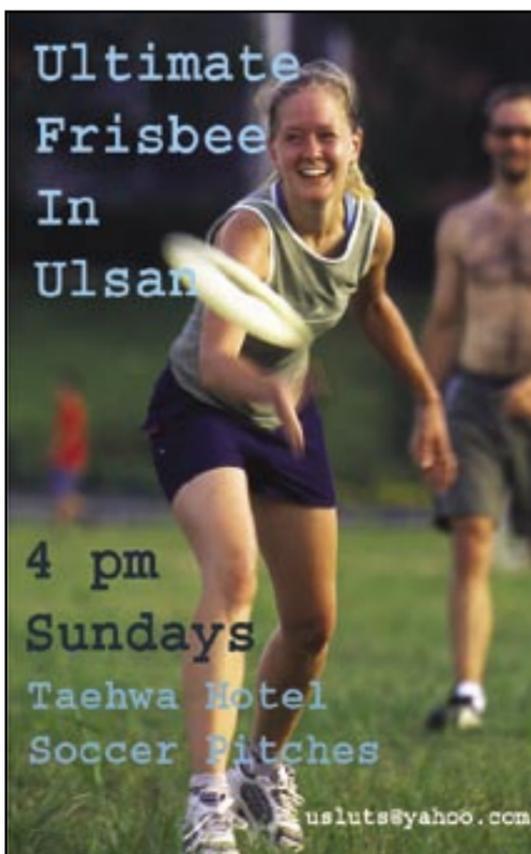
Source: Ulsan Metropolitan City

EVENT CALENDAR

ULSAN HASH HOUSE HARRIERS



the drinking club with a running problem runs on Sunday every second week more info: leojmelsrub@yahoo.com



Ultimate Frisbee In Ulsan

4 pm Sundays Taehwa Hotel Soccer Pitches

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ULSAN'S BEST KEPT SECRET

A Visit to the Adam Bar

BY ANONYMOUS

"You take your own chances and pay your own dues"

Only a handful of Waygooks may find entertainment at Adam (how original!), Ulsan's first and to date only gay bar and one of its best kept secrets.

Even though it's been on the go since 1998 it was only by pure chance that I knocked across it myself one hot summer's night during the World Cup two years ago.

There are no laws proscribing homosexuality in Korea. Official thinking is that since it doesn't exist it doesn't have to be banned.

So, this might explain the almost non-existence of Adam Bar. However, it is a friendly relaxed joint, more akin to somebody's living room than an actual bar.

The Adam bar seats about thirty people comfortably, but there is loads of room for other positions if sitting doesn't tickle your fancy.

It's only got Hite and OB beer at ₩3,000 a bottle. No shots, draught beers or fancy stuff. The only fancy stuff can be done on the karaoke machine as Adam kind of doubles as a Norae-bang.

It has six TV screens on which you can gape at yourself blasting out your stuff. At least your vanity will be satisfied.

It also has two spherical multi-coloured lights flashing annoyingly like some throw back from a late 1980s disco.

Westerners are a sheer novelty in the place, even though I've never met any others there myself. The Koreans will make you feel that you are the King Of Siam.

Diary, as the owner calls himself, will take a great interest in you, sometimes a tad too much. He's in his early forties, speaks poor English but enough to get the message across.

He's got a few fresh bar boys working there. I used to get quite an amount

of free booze there at one stage but that seems to have dried up ever since I inadvertently, borrowed one of those same bar boys for an hour or two one busy World Cup night.

Anyway, if you do desire to go there remember these guys are Korean first, gay second. It's not the Castro, Fire Island or even gay Paris. It's relatively tame actually. No darkrooms, gloryholes, private cubicles or other conveniences often found in Western Gay bars.

Culturally, Koreans are expected to marry by the late 20's so it is not unusual to see a gay Korean marry after leading a very gay active life. It is also not unusual to meet a Korean over 30 who is married with a family and leading a dual life with a secret gay lover.

Neither do gay Koreans, much like hetero Koreans go in much for public displays of affection. Out of sight... well....I'll leave that to your wild imagination.

Additionally, it was only after assuring the owner

that Westerners were open minded sorts, without any homophobic hang-ups, that he was convinced to allow Adam be publicised in the Ulsan Pear.

Please remember that if you do happen to end up there.

To get there, walking from McKenzies side go straight through Shigaetop.

A 20 second walk will take you to a bank with Prudential Financial written on the door. Turn left here. You should see a large lit-up sign with black characters dancing on it.

Walk as far as this sign, then take a very slight left. After a 20 or 30 yard walk you should see a sign, IMF on the left. That's Adam bar.

It's a little tricky to find as nowhere does it mention the word Adam. Like I've already said it doesn't exist therefore it cannot be advertised.

If you can't find it, e-mail me. shoulderghost@yahoo.co.uk

CONFESSIONS OF A NORAE-BANG JUNKIE

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK...

BY JOEL BURSLEM
THE ULSAN PEAR

I like to sing.

I like to sing loud. I sing unapologetically, confidently and exceedingly badly.

But give me synthesized guitar chords and a 4:4 heavily re-verbed drum beat and I will rock your pants off.

Karaoke (which simply translates as 'empty orchestra' in Japanese) was born in Kobe, Japan sometime in the late 1980s.

By the early 1990s, the singing fad had spread to Korea and on to the rest of the world, earning it a dubious place in the annals of musical entertainment history as a way for the truly intoxicated to make complete asses of themselves.

Norae-bangs (or 'Singing Rooms'), as Karaoke rooms are called here, can be found right across this city. They proliferate like weeds in every neighborhood along with their distant but unrelated cousins, the PC-bang.

Probably the biggest differences between Karaoke, as it is found in the Western world, and a Korean Norae-bang is that, back home, karaoke is usually found only in bars and on special theme-nights (frequently in Country & Western bars, for some reason).

There, it often meant stepping up to a beer-stained microphone in a smoke-filled room in front of a large crowd of very bored strangers. Most don't appreciate your blistering rendition of 'You Shook Me All Night Long' and you have to put up with their off-key, labored versions of "Rhinstone Cowboy" or "The Rose".

Korean Norae-bangs, bless them, are your own intimate musical kingdom. There you can rule your one-room domain like the Emperor of Rock. And nobody else can see you.

Needless to say, most of my Norae-bang adventures are usually precipitated by profuse amounts of alcohol. Fueled on by a Dionysian cocktail of soju and beer,

most of my nights out in Ulsan end up at one of these establishments. Admittedly, it's usually at my own urging.

For the uninitiated, the Norae-bang is really quite simple. Find the song you want to sing, punch in the numbers on the oversized gamepad controller device and you're off.

Follow the lyrics as best you can, enjoy the beautiful landscape scenery projected on the television monitors and do your best Angus Young imitations to amuse and irritate your friends.

Some of the machines actually score your performance. I'm not sure how they judge it, but it seems if you scream loud enough you nearly always generate a near-perfect score.

Tired of hearing the same old songs over and over again each time you visit the Norae-bang?

Try a game I call 'Karaoke Roulette' - punch in random numbers and see what comes up.

If you really want to go pro, throw in some K-pop or some Turrot ("taxi driver music") classics and you've got a worthy challenge indeed.

A night at the Norae-bang runs you about ₩25,000 an hour, but this also depends how much beer and soju you consume as well.

Norae-bangs let you live out all of your adolescent rockstar fantasies, however fleetingly, in the privacy of your own chamber and in front of your own friends.

So no matter what kind of singer you are; closet crooner, air-guitar god or pop princess - grab the microphone, step into the flashing lights, feel the synth-beats pounding in your veins and remember AC/DC's immortal words:

*Hail hail to the good times
'Cause rock has got the right of way
We ain't no legend, ain't no cause
We're just livin' for today*

You might just find that you end up having a good time too. joel@burslem.ca



PHOTO: DAVE HARVEY

We salute you...



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