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DIVERSIONS

SUPER-SIZED NIGHT OUT

Massive sports, Irish, game bars transforming York's entertainment scene

BY ROGER VARLEY
Staff Writer

It's not every bar that has its own map to show patrons where everything is. But WEGZ is not your average bar.

One of the newest attractions in Vaughan, WEGZ is a sports bar gone to the next level. It's so big, it isn't even called a sports bar. It's a stadium bar.

It is also the latest in what appears to be a trend, at least in Vaughan, to watering holes catering to the modern channel-surfing, short-attention-span sports junkie.

WEGZ (a stylized acronym for Woodbine Entertainment Group) opened last November without a lot of fanfare on Rutherford Road, just east of Jane Street.

General manager Steve Walker described the bar, capable of holding up to 800 people, as the next best thing to going to the game.

Which game? It doesn't matter, because with more than 90 TV screens around the premises, it's almost impossible for any sports event to go unnoticed.

A recent visitor saw hockey, soccer, basketball and horse, auto and motorcycle racing, surfing and even cricket in less than 20 minutes.

The TVs range from small screens, complete with X-box games, in booths lining one area of the bar, to a giant 16x22-foot screen in what is called The Forum area.

And the guys don't have to miss a play if nature calls: three TVs are in the men's washroom.

Running around the interior is an electronic ticker board with results of just about every sports event going on at the time.

For those who want to do more than just watch, the bar offers participation in several forms.

In one corner is an off-track betting area where patrons can watch live feeds of horse races at



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Rosemary Astri delivers an order at WEGZ Stadium Bar in Vaughan. The operation has more than 90 TVs to entertain up to 800 people. Nearby is a 65,000-square-foot Dave & Buster's adult arcade and Windy O'Neill's, an Irish pub with a capacity of 450 people.

tracks around North America and, sometimes, from Australia on 24 TVs in the off-track area.

'It's a place for adults to play and have a good time. We're the best of everything rolled into one.'

— WEGZ general manager Steve Walker

On the other side of the room are two virtual golf ranges where patrons can have a drink and play a round of golf at the same time.

Behind that is an electronic mini-version of a bowling alley,

with shortened lanes.

Pool tables, foosball games and sports-themed arcade games can be found in other areas.

The main bar is in the centre of the action with a couple of smaller bars to serve smaller areas.

Despite its size, the layout and décor of WEGZ lends a feeling of intimacy to some areas while retaining the excitement of a sports bar.

"We took the traditional sports bar and elevated it," said Mr. Walker, noting the menu includes such items as raspberry glazed salmon.

"It's a place for adults to play and have a good time. We're the best of everything rolled into one."

He said he has been pleasantly surprised with the number of women coming to WEGZ.

"It's way more than anticipated," he said, noting a 60-40 ratio of male and female customers.

Mr. Walker said he wants to see WEGZ become a tourist attraction as well as a place for locals.

That would put the bar into the same category as other recent additions to the Vaughan entertainment scene, including the nearby Vaughan Mills megamall, home of Lucky Strike bowling lanes.

Also opened last November, Lucky Strike is a bowling centre.

See NON-BOWLERS, page 10.



Cheryl Greenspan

Notes on a Napkin

Jaipur offers authentic Indian experience

Jaipur Fine Indian Cuisine

28-165 East Beaver Creek Rd., Richmond Hill
905-709-3773

Fine Dining, Indian

Entrée Selection: Excellent and take-out

Price range: Entrée average \$9 to \$10

Hours: Lunch - weekdays, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Weekends, noon-3 p.m. Dinner daily starting at 5 p.m.

Being a "foodie" myself, I find it very hard to understand it when someone dismisses a whole category of food with a single statement like, "I don't like vegetables".

As far as I can see, there is no relationship, texture, taste or otherwise, between, say, spinach and a carrot.

Yet, I find that people will often say they don't like Indian food - and some haven't even tried it, even though the tastes and textures in Indian food are as varied as any other food on the planet.

If you haven't tried the delicious food of India, I urge you to give it a chance.

One of the tastiest places to try this flavourful food is at Jaipur Fine Indian Cuisine.

If you are a bit squeamish about spice, you can order most dishes mild and there are plenty from which to choose that are delicately seasoned.

When you enter Jaipur, you are immediately transported to the colourful world of India. Owner Sunil Lakhani was successful in creating an atmosphere as authentic as his food.

See JAIPUR'S, page 10.

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