

The Beijing Man Cave

Paddy O'Shea's

by Lulu Johnson



Paddy O'Shea's has won consecutive years of reader's choice awards as Beijing's Best Sports bar. HOPS ventures into the city's most testosterone-filled, sports voyeur equipped, beer-infused man cave to judge if Paddy's really is the best sports bar in Beijing.

The Beer:

The beer menu is impressive. From the 27 bottled beers and seven tap beers, the manly selection of drinks is already an indicator that Paddy's deserves its fame. Admittedly, four of the bottled beers are wine coolers, but this seems a veiled attempt to include the fairer gender. "You have to cater to everyone. You can't make much of a business catering to the 300 Irishmen in the city," says Long. The beer selection doesn't pander to any one genre. There are beers from around Europe, Asia and the Americas.

Guinness is the favorite at Paddy's, especially during the daily 3pm-8pm happy hour where it sells for 39rmb a pint. Happy hour also includes Carlsberg draught for 18rmb, TsingTao for 14rmb, Cocktails for around 21rmb. Drinks are 30% off, but even Long admits the math can get troublesome after a few pints.

The beer menu continues to grow. Mangers beer (a cider similar to Strongbow) is rumored to be entering the Chinese market, an inevitability Long has been awaiting with anticipation. He plans to stock the summer cider as soon as possible.

A new draft stout was added in April to the beer menu. Ever the quizmaster, Long proposed a twist on the Pepsi challenge, pouring a shot of Guinness and a shot of a new draft beer imported from Cork, Ireland, called Murphy's. "It's darker and settles quicker," Long explains, "and it's 5 kuai cheaper." Not even on the menu at the time of writing, Long explained that Murphy's is a popular drink in Western Ireland.

What do you get when you blend constant sports coverage with seven draft beers and 27 bottled beers? —only the best sports bar this side of Dublin.

HOPS AROUND TOWN: Beijing

The Sports:

Naturally, the World Cup is a huge event at Paddy O'Shea's, but the bar tries to cover a broad spectrum of sports coverage. "We had a big party for the Super Bowl" says Karl, and they also cover sports like F1, Gallic football, Hurling, Rugby and the English Premiership. Since sports are the focus, Paddy's stays open until the games end, and in the case of major events hosted where time zones don't agree with Beijing, the bar will open in the wee hours of the morning to cater to Beijing's most serious and dedicated sports fanatics.

Karl Long is a sports fan. His childlike glee was palpable while explaining why Manchester United was a superior team. If you want to watch sports, you should head to a bar where the owner and patrons can get in rowdy, heated and utterly pedantic conversations about their favorite teams and players. But as a businessman Long doesn't choose sides, as evidenced by the range of sports jerseys that decorate the bar's ceiling.

Paddy's also hosts non-sports related events like the Obamarama for the US Presidential inauguration, and full coverage of the Kate Middleton- Prince William marriage.



The Clientele:

"Some nights I look around at the clientele and it looks like a gay bar," laughs Long. "I suppose we are a man cave, especially on sports weekends. But we do get lady cavers in the after-work crowd." Long is considering a lady's night where women can be themselves. "No high heels, we want women to show up in their overalls."

Paddy's pub quiz is popular on Wednesday nights at 8pm, bringing in a range of intellectuals and genders that Long tries to cater to with a range of questions that are not gender-specific. While there are often sports questions, there are also queries about fashion, celebrities and politics. It may be a sports-filled man cave that smells like draft beer, but that doesn't mean women aren't welcome.

The Management:

How does one become known as the owner of the city's best man cave? "I used to be corporate. I had to wear a suit. I know it's hard to imagine. This opportunity came, I took it, and it's been interesting." Paddy's is the only Irish owned Irish bar in Beijing, a fact that Long is proud of as he exclaims that "ownership makes a huge difference."

Paddy's is a unique combination of sights, sounds and smells. Located on the first floor, an Indian restaurant sits on the second floor. Long explains in true manly fashion that a night out in Britain means, "curry, beer and a fistfight." At Paddy's you can get the curry

upstairs, the beer downstairs and if you are hell bent on fighting you can take that outside. As tough as he talks, Long admits there has never been a real brawl at the bar, a disappointing statistic for an otherwise authentic Irish experience.

The New:

Paddy's is growing. The success of the establishment inspired Long to attempt a smaller version of Paddy's in a more residential expat area. Paddy's Pit Stop is opening soon in the Pinnacle Plaza in Shunyi, offering similar drinks, pub grub and entertainment. "This is perfect. It gives men something to do while their wives are shopping," chuckles Long as he reveals a newly printed poster detailing the establishment's features.

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Test your Irish Beer IQ:

We asked bar owner Karl Long the following twelve questions to judge his beer knowledge. In defense, Long quipped, "I don't brew the stuff, I drink it!" He scored a massive 4 out of 12. Can you do better?

1. Where was beer invented?
2. When was prohibition in the USA?
3. Where is the oldest still-operating commercial brewery in the world?
4. What are the top five brewing countries?
5. What is the science of beer brewing called?
6. Why is beer preserved in brown bottles?
7. St. Patrick isn't Irish, where is he from?
8. Why is Hugh Beaver famous?
9. What does 'Erin go Bragh' mean?
10. There is roughly 1 bar for every _____ people in Ireland.
11. The word 'pub' is short for what?
12. Beer is the 3rd most popular drink worldwide after which two drinks?



Answers: 1) Mesopotamia; 2) 1920-1933; 3) Bavaria; 4) USA, China, Germany, Japan, Brazil; 5) Zymurgy; 6) Protect it from light; 7) Born in Scotland, father was Italian; 8) Proposed the Guinness Book of World Records; 9) Ireland Forever; 10) 350; 11) Public House; 12) water & tea.