



Google Street View

## Del Rois Bar

Mile 39.5 Old Palmer Highway, Palmer, AK 99762 (907) 745-3914

License Issued: March 6, 1958 to Roy & Olga Rainwater **CLOSED January 1, 2016**

Amenities: Pool table, darts, horse shoes, video games, juke box, occasional live music, liquor store.

Web Site: Facebook

History and Notoriety: The community known as Butte is located a few miles southeast of downtown Palmer adjacent to the Bodenbug Butte. Butte is spread out along the Old Glenn Highway between the bridges crossing the Matanuska River and the Knik River. Butte no longer has its own post office, but it still has the Del Rois Bar.

Roy Rainwater, originally from Oklahoma, and his wife Olga bought “Millie’s V Bar” from Millie Johnson. Del Rois owner Daniel Gama explained to me that Roy and Olga used the word “del” for man and “rois” for woman, although the word “rois” is the French word for “kings.” Roy and Olga sold the bar in 1966 and moved to Oregon.

Del Rois was owned by four different parties before being sold to Josephine Estes in 1975. “Mama Jo” as she was known had previously owned the Palmer Bar. Mama Jo perfected a recipe for barbecue sauce that worked particularly well with ribs. The Del Rois became known as the place to go for the best barbecue ribs in the state. It was during this time that Ken Whatley, a local Butte resident, swiped a 75-pound wrought-iron sculpture of a mosquito (with car headlights for eyes and snowshoes for wings) from a front yard, and wrestled it up to the roof of the Del Rois. Mama Jo sold the bar to James & Carole McGill and Rose Sowinski in 1989. Unfortunately, the recipe for the barbecue sauce wasn’t included in the transaction. Rose married Dan Gama in front of the bar in 1999 and they are the current owners.

Dan also told me that on one occasion, a customer was threatening the other patrons. The bartender on duty disarmed the man and subdued him with duct tape. This incident led to

the annual Duct Tape Party which is held every May 7<sup>th</sup>. Everyone is invited to dress entirely in duct tape which leads to creative and hilarious results.

Visiting the Del Rois: This bar is sometimes called the “Outlaw Bar” because of the occasionally rough clientele, but it is not an unsafe place to party. It has a big back yard with a terrific view of Pioneer Peak. The Del Rois celebrates all of the major holidays with buffet food and live bands.

**Photos by Doug Vandegraft - 2011**









IF ASSHOLES  
COULD FLY  
THIS PLACE WOULD  
BE AN AIRPORT

