

Crowbar (a.k.a. Club Manchu; a.k.a. The Chu)

2712 Jesse Street, Fairbanks

(907) 456-5957

License Issued: December 13, 1962, to LaVerne Smith Fivey **CLOSED May 2024**

Amenities: Pool table, darts, TVs, cornhole

Find them Online: Facebook

History and Notoriety: The Crowbar is still called the Club Manchu (as in Manchuria, China) by some people. Fivey and her partner Jerry Lynn decorated the bar to resemble a “quaint little cocktail lounge all in Chinese style.” The grand opening was July 18, 1962. Ads from the 1960s often mentioned that the bar was next door to Morry’s, a popular strip bar. The ads hinted that the Club Manchu patrons could “have a ball with them all.” By 1965, the bar was officially known as Jerry’s Club Manchu.

In 1975, two men entered the bar, fired a shot in the ceiling with a rifle, held the patrons at gunpoint, and demanded that all money be surrendered. They escaped with only \$340 and were later arrested.

Fivey and Lynn sold the bar in 1981, and the name returned to the Club Manchu. In 1985, Larry “Hack” and Margaret Hackenmiller bought the bar. Hack, who had previously worked at the Boatel as a bartender, became an elected member of the Fairbanks North Star Assembly and an outspoken opponent of tax increases on sales of alcohol. Hack passed away in 2022.

In 2017, a man viscously assaulted another man with a hatchet while inside the bar, striking him in the neck and face. The victim later died. The assailant fled but was arrested and charged with first-degree murder. In 2023, the 55-year-old man was sentenced to seventy-five years in prison.

In 2021, new owner Randall Kelsch changed the name to the Crowbar, although the bar still displays some of the Club Manchu signs.

Visiting the Crowbar: Like many bars in Alaska, the Crowbar took advantage of the pandemic to do a thorough cleaning and replace worn out furniture and fixtures. DJs on the weekend play hip hop, reggae, and Latin tunes along with the top forty.



Photo by Doug Vandegraft – 2004



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