

THE GATEWAY

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Cover illustration by Lauren Alston

Room at the Top undergoes summer facelift

SIMON YACKULIC
News Staff

Returning students will notice big changes this school year when venturing to the seventh floor of SUB.

Students' Union Vice President (Operations & Finance) Zach Fentiman is confident that this summer's improvements to the SU-run Room at the Top have revitalized a prominent campus landmark.

"I think it has got more style now, [there is] more energy now," Fentiman explained, gesturing behind him to Room at the Top's newly-finished counters and acid-washed concrete floors. "It's ready for students. It's not old and depressed—a dive bar. It's a legitimate place for people to hangout with friends and drink or eat or whatever else while on campus."

Room at the Top re-opened in mid-August after undergoing substantial renovations during the summer. According to an outline presented to council, the refurbishing cost totalled \$68,000 with the largest chunk of the funding going to revamp the bar itself, which cost \$24,320.

What was previously "illegitimate" about Room at the Top may not be clear — Fentiman concedes that it was clearly a profitable venue in the past — but what has been clear so far is that the new design hasn't scared away clientele. And with the new lights, bar, floor, and seating comes an expanded food and beverage palette to serve the cravings of Edmonton students.

"Beer-wise, the beer [selection]



STEFFI ROSSKOPF

WHAT CAN I GET YA? A significant portion of the renovation costs went to upgrading Room at the Top's bar

has been expanded," Fentiman noted as the server delivered a pint of wheat ale. "So obviously we have Grasshopper on tap [...] and there's 16 taps on there now."

Of particular interest is the inclusion of Amber's, a local brewery operated by U of A alumni Jim Gibbon. Amber's has been given one tap with which they plan to rotate and showcase their many flavours of micro-brewed ale.

"What Amber's has proposed is that every month they're going to rotate what's on there. So right now it's Bub's Lunch Pail Ale, and [after September] it's going to be something different," Fentiman enthused.

Another beer to watch is the

larger currently going under the pseudonym of "Brand X," (actually Molson Black Label). Going for \$4 a pint or \$12 a jug, the establishment is to hold a re-naming contest this fall for "Brand X" to give its name a more local flavour.

Along with marketing "Brand X" and Amber's, Fentiman clarified that the re-configured Room at the Top will try to attract students with fair prices on all its beer. Prices will range, per pint, from \$4.75 for some domestic to \$6.50 for imports.

"We're trying to keep our beer prices as competitive as possible," Fentiman said.

Even with student unemployment during the summer at higher-than-

usual levels due to the recession, Room at the Top management still aims to capitalize on their prime campus location to maintain profitability during the upcoming school year. Fentiman outlined the management team's feeling that in order to remain on top, Room at the Top will need to encourage university students to stay on campus when they meet to socialize with their classmates.

"What we are hoping is, with the new feel and new configurations to the menu and improved customer service standards, all that stuff, is that even though there might be less of a pie, hopefully more of a share comes to us."

STREETERS

Compiled and photographed by
Sean Steels and Steffi Rosskopf

As you may be aware, the placement of Labour Day has caused classes to start early this year. What would you do with some extra days of summer?



Shane Labelle
Engineering I



Janine Eccleston
Engineering I



Brandon Kwong
Engineering I



Philip Girgs
Education I

I'd probably want to catch up on extra sleep before school starts.

I'd probably go out to my lake and chill there [Would you go water-skiing?] No, I stink pretty bad at water-skiing.

I never got a chance to go vacationing this summer, so I'd probably go out camping with the boys. Just do some real camping in the woods. [Real camping, man style?] No girls allowed.

I'd probably sleep for about 14 hours a day. Yeah, probably sleep mostly. Or maybe I'd take a road trip. I guess we're in Alberta, so I could just go to Red Deer.

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