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AFTERHOURS

Airport bars cheer terminal drinkers

Your flight is delayed or you're in the middle of the layover from hell. For whatever reason you are stuck at the airport.

You are stranded. But at least there's someplace you can go and drown your sorrows.

The airport bar: Everybody may not know your name, but they surely can feel your pain.

"Let's just say having a beer makes the layover easier to handle," said 26-year-old Quinne Haugen, dealing with this very predicament last week at O'Hare International Airport.

Haugen and 26-year-old Dawn Lisika, both from Madison, Wis., were en route to San Jose, Calif., for a little fun in the sun when they got the news:

Their connecting flight wasn't there. It would be a while—nobody knew for sure exactly how long—before they would board their plane.

They headed to the nearest bar, O'Brien's Pub, located near the food court in Terminal 3. "We decided we might as well have a couple of cocktails before we head back out," Haugen said.

O'Brien's, which has occupied this space at O'Hare for five years, is one of the airport's more popular destinations for travelers eager to quench their thirst before a flight.

Just what qualifies an airport bar as a popular destination? After all, when you think of airport bars, you probably think of those cramped huts tucked in various corners of the airport.

The alcohol is overpriced (the average price for a beer at O'Hare is about \$6, at Midway it's about \$5.25). You never really get to know a bartender in an airport, what with the other passengers, credit cards in hand, flailing to get their attention.

And do you really need to

form a relationship with an airport bartender, since you're just passing through a town?

Yes, you do, said bartender Marge Genovese, who has been pouring beers and mixing cocktails since O'Brien's, affiliated with O'Brien's Chicago tavern in Old Town, opened at O'Hare.

"We have a lot of fun over here," said Genovese, who has the laugh to back up her words.

"I have a lot of regulars. I've got guys that come from the terminals across the way to see me. We laugh, we joke; we provide relief for them when they're stuck here."

Plus, Genovese said, frequent flyers know the importance of having a friendly face to ease the pain of traveling.

"We're here for the travelers, listening to their tales of woe," Genovese said. "Like it's my fault they're stuck here."

Across town at Midway International Airport, the ambiance is festive and lively at Reilly's Daughter, the Irish pub that sits just past the food court between the A and B concourses. This is where Boz O'Brien, who owned the original Reilly's Daughter at 111th and Pulaski, decided to reopen his pub in the summer of 2001. "You get a little panicky when you do something like this," O'Brien said. "I didn't know if people would come."

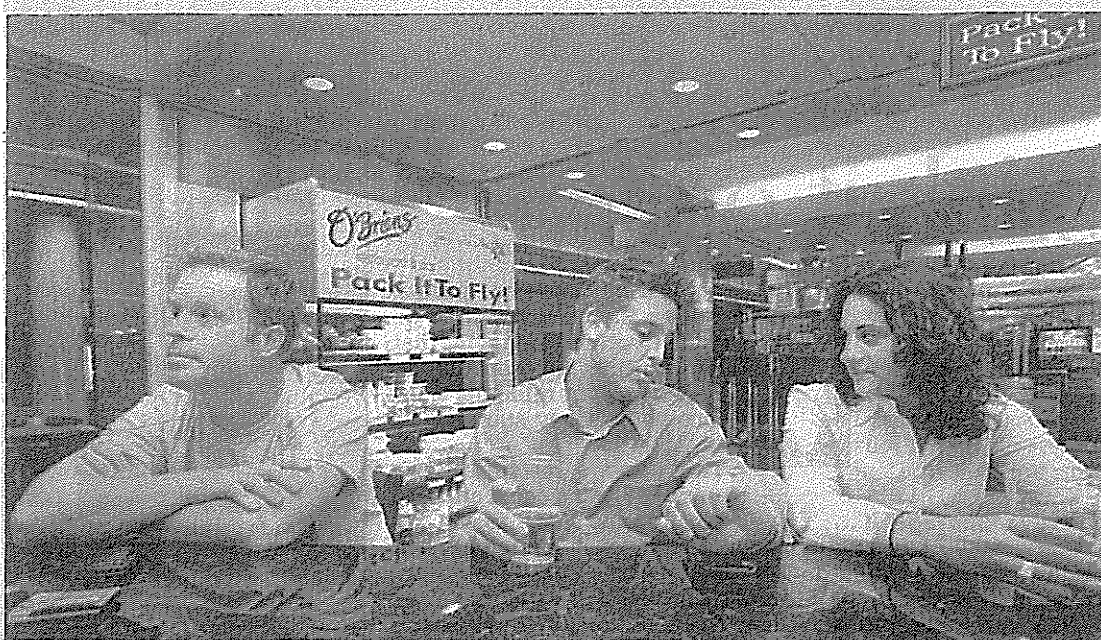
They did, and they have been coming since Day One, listening to Irish tunes while tossing back 20-ounce mugs of Guinness, Smithwick's and Harp—all at \$6.25. It's a miniature version of Boz O'Brien's original pub, including the dark wood bar, stained-glass windows and Irish artifacts, brought in by travelers passing through the airport.

Reilly's Daughter has become a gathering spot for Sox fans and Notre Dame football fans follow-

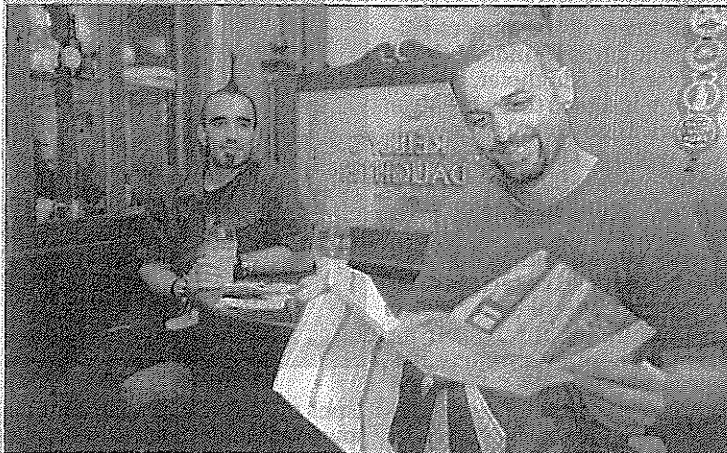


**NIGHTLIFE
ADVISER**

Terry Armour



Patrick Roach (from left), Greg Lees and Dina Alimecco ease the pain of their delayed flight to Harrisburg, Pa., at O'Brien's Pub at O'Hare International Airport. Photos for the Tribune by Jasmin Shah



Newly acquainted Pablo Romero (left) and Dan Smith share a table and drink some beer while awaiting their flights at Reilly's Daughter, the Irish pub inside Midway Airport.

ing their respective teams, as well as traveling South Side business people.

"Half the people who walk through the door, I already know from the old place," O'Brien said. "I have developed a ton of regulars, which I never expected to have."

Reilly's regulars span the globe, including Louisville businessman Tom McCarty, 50, who was downing a Guinness while waiting to hop a plane back to Louisville.

"If I have more than an hour to kill at Midway, I come here," McCarty said. "I didn't even go to the ticket gate this time. There's an atmosphere here; you're treated like you're at the corner bar. You don't have that at other airport bars."

The place also comes as a pleasant surprise to travelers

simply looking for a place to have a cocktail. On this particular evening, a pair of long-haired, tattooed gentlemen strolled in, sat right under a picture of the first Mayor Daley and ordered a couple of Stella Artois. They were members of the rock band the Bangkok Five, whose flight to Portland, Ore., where they had a gig, was delayed.

"So I'm walking through the airport and out of the corner of my eye I see 'Reilly's Daughter,'" said band member Greg Coates. "I said, 'Hey, man, that's for us.'"

His bandmate Brian Donovan Murphy gave Reilly's his own stamp of approval. "Being Irish, I'm always skeptical of those pseudo-Irish places," he said. "This is a genuine Irish pub. Not bad for being in an airport."

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Reilly's Daughter Irish Pub

Midway Airport (773-838-1496)

The buzz: Boz O'Brien, owner of the original Reilly's Daughter at 111th and Pulaski, opened this smaller version in 2001. It's got the ambiance of the bigger one, with the Irish-themed artwork and photographs that fill the walls. You'll also find your favorite Irish beers, including 20-ouncer Guinness, Smithwick's and Harp—all for \$6.25.

Honorable mention: Miller's Pub (773-948-6318), located in the B concourse, is affiliated with the Downtown bar. It's small, but the service is fast, and the beer is reasonably priced (\$4.25 to \$5.67).

O'Brien's Pub

O'Hare Airport (773-462-0700)

The buzz: Sometimes a friendly face and a joke are all you need to make your delay tolerable. That's where bartender Marge Genovese comes in, running this cozy pub like a neighborhood bar. She engages travelers—many of them regulars—in lively banter as they sip their cocktails (beers range from \$5.59 to \$6.17, with tax).

Honorable mention: Wolfgang Puck's Airport Cafe (773-686-6154) has locations in Terminals 1 and 3. They have a friendly vibe, with the bartenders going out of their way to remember first names.