

SUPPER CLUB HISTORY

Situated at the corner of 15th and Wazee Streets—surrounded by brick and stone reminders of Denver's colorful past—The Wazee Supper Club has long been an inevitable destination for social gatherers.

Founding fathers Angelo and Jim Karagas ventured forth from their native Detroit and in 1969 opened their first Denver enterprise, My Brother's Bar. The next acquisition in 1974 was a 1910 structure—originally housing a plumbing supply house—that became the current Wazee.

Since then, the Wazee Supper Club, with its classic urban atmosphere, has earned favor with artists, politicians, architects, theater-goers, entertainers, businessmen, movers, shakers, and generally people of good character from around the globe. The Wazee also quickly became known as a source of the best pizza in the civilized world.

The atmosphere at the Wazee is nothing if not unique. A classic black and white tile floor is framed by depression-era wainscoting and overhung by gas lights dating from turn-of-the-century Milwaukee. The back bar—finished in bleached mahogany burl—is an outstanding example of 30s deco style. It was removed from the American Hotel shortly before its demolition.

As with many of the fixtures in the bar, the old telegraph clock hanging at its center has a story behind it. It dates back about 75 years and was originally in an establishment called Verne's in Detroit owned by the Karagas brothers. During a lease-breaking party, many of the patrons decided to avail themselves of the opportunity and pinch various items for the sheer sake of nostalgia. The culprit in this case ended up in Wyoming (employed at the University of Wyoming). He ran into the Karagas brothers and immediately arranged the return of the clock which had been gathering dust in his basement for an eternity.

The benches in the restaurant were obtained when the downtown chapter of the Denver Elks Club decided to relocate. They still have little brass numbers on them. The three stained glass windows above the bar were bought from a guy in a pickup parked nearby.

By far the most popular toy for people making their first trip to the bar is the converted 1937 garage door opener currently used in a dumbwaiter capacity to shuttle food and drinks.

As with a few good establishments, many of the Wazee's customers think of it as a home away from home and many people stopping through Denver on travels make a point of popping in.

Just a few blocks from the Wazee is Auraria, the site of the original town of Denver and not far off the Smoky Hill Trail, the dusty road that pioneers traveled to reach deep into the West.

Denver's original city hall stood a short distance away and reminders are everywhere of the rich past of this Historic District. In the old days, one of the more noteworthy features of this neighborhood was its Tenderloin District. Characters like Damon Runyan, H. Allen Smith, Bar Masterson, Gene Fowler and other famous writers used to prowl the bars and brothels then only a stone's throw away. More recent notables include Jack Kerouac, Jack Nicholson, Danny Glover and Raymond Burr.

**We have great space for
large or not-so-large parties!**

15th & Wazee in Lodo Denver Open Every Day

Mon.-Sat. 11am to 2am. Sun: noon to midnight

303.623.9518 wazeesupperclub.com

Happy Hour Mon.-Fri., 4:00 to 6:00 pm.

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