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5 Fabulously Themed Bars in OC

Words and design by Talan Garcia
Photography by Jakki Padilla and Talan Garcia

#5 Ruin Bar

2030 Bristol St
Costa Mesa



Tucked away in the corner of the LAB anti-mall is Ruin Bar—a “post-apocalyptic” watering hole. The place is filled with black and white TVs, mismatched furniture, and a full piano built right into the bar (yes, you can actually play it). Turquoise lighting, multi-color animal busts and walls dedicated to cat art make you question reality. It’s intriguing, but a major letdown about this concept bar is that there’s much of a concept. It’s a hipster haven, not an immersive world as promised.

#4 Strongwater

270 S. Clementine Blvd. Anaheim

Strongwater was the most immersive experience, completely transporting you aboard the wreckage of the Clementine, a fictional sunken galleon. The curved overhead and each wall is painted to appear like planks inside of a ship, with overgrown moss and greenery filling the corners of the old vessel. The bathroom even adds to the experience having a circular window and about 20 locks to keep intruders out. Sweet polynesian sounds were played quietly enough for chatting.



#3 Belly of the Beast

14401 Newport Ave Tustin

Enter Stowaway, a popular tiki bar inside one of Tustin's many strip malls. After showing our Yelp reservation to the host, we were led through the Polynesian haven to a faux exit in a corner of the bar. Pushing that door revealed the mouth of Monstro, the whale that swallowed up Pinnochio and his father. Gaped open, it showcased the petite rustic speakeasy.



Surrounded by wooden pinocchios, faux seaweed and the pink, textured walls of the whale's mouth, the place was a magical room reminiscent of some forgotten fantasy. The place feels intimate moody and straight out of a storybook.

#2 The Cauldron

8028 Beach Blvd ste B
Buena Park



Walking into The Cauldron is like stumbling into a witch's secret lair...if that witch had impeccable taste. The room reflects an occult charm, dimly lit by flickering candles and packed with cracked skulls, paintings of succubus, and antique books crammed into every inch. Look closer, and see that the devil is in the details: cauldrons over fireplaces, vases full of eyeball-filled roses, and projections of a black cat that treads along the bar.

#1 Cowboys & Poodles



2948 Randolph Ave unit B, Costa Mesa

As the sun sets, cool cats head down the street to Cowboys and Poodles, where patrons have to get their IDs checked through a Judas Window, the sliding window seen in mafia movies. Enter into a rainbow-lit hallway, surrounded by mirrors and pop-art dog paintings on each wall. The scent of burning sage hits your nose as a huge disco ball reflects light around the room. It's an ode to those singing cowboys, with wood paneling and a western feel created with hand-picked retro art, bull skulls, and even a Catholic confessional, titled "Come Clean".



1530 West 17th Street
Santa Ana, Calif. 92706
Newsroom: (714) 564-5617
staff@eldonnews.org

**WORDS
AND ZINE DESIGN**

TALAN GARCIA
talangarcia@eldonnews.org

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