

Doing Up Dannys: Local tavern gets a new look

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ALTON – Patrons and purveyors of Downtown Alton may have noticed some new activity at one of the area's most well-established establishments – Danny's Lounge.

Current owners, Gina Stewart and Keith Hall, opened the traditional tavern up to Riverbender.com Monday morning to show some of the work they have done to the place since taking over in July 2016. Stewart was formerly a bartender at the establishment since 2000 and took the opportunity to take ownership from Don Wallace after his ex-wife Tina Wallace, who owned it previously, died in September 2015. After taking the reigns, Stewart and Hall decided the bar was due for some serious upgrades, which it had not had in nearly two decades.

“We started from the inside and worked our way out,” Hall said. “We started improving and got the bar and the tabletops re-coated with the same coating and got new rails. We also re-coated the bathroom sinks and replaced the flooring on at least two-thirds of the floor.”



Flooring behind the bar was formerly plywood in various stages of disrepair – something Stewart said affected health inspection numbers, because it could not be properly cleaned. Since replacing that flooring with easier-to-clean materials, Danny's Lounge has since received a solid 98 from inspections. Both Hall and Stewart said keeping the bar clean is important – both for sanitary purposes and for its image.

It is no secret Danny's Lounge has had something of a rough reputation in former years – some viewing it as strictly a biker bar or associating it with sketchy characters – but, that image has given way to the same melting pot people would see in Downtown Alton any other night.

“We have young people, old people, couples coming out, and young women coming in here by themselves,” Stewart said. “We're really a bar for everyone.”

“There are 12-13 bars within walking distance of here, and not too many of them have that tavern feel, most of them go more for the restaurant thing and have great food,” Hall said. “We have great drink specials, snack foods and frozen pizza, and friendly bartenders who are great at conversation.”



The frozen pizzas served at Danny's Lounge are sourced from Missouri-based Andoro and Sons. Stewart said they rival even the so-called best brands when it comes to customers' opinions.

In fact, a lot of the conversation at Danny's Lounge skewed locally. During their renovations both inside and out, Hall and Stewart have utilized local businesses. The priming and painting of the entire structure are being done by Wells Painting and Pressure Washing. The guttering, fascia boards and downspouts being done in the back of the building are being done by Morse Home Improvement, and new custom blue awnings are currently being crafted in Hartford by Traube Awnings.

Even their merchandise, which comes in a variety of colors with tropical themes, is done by the local firm, Logo It.

When speaking outside of the Riverbend community, Hall showed off the bar's new dartboard, which has a feature allowing people to play against anyone in the world. He said he could challenge someone from Belgium or Switzerland from their corner of Alton, Illinois.

Renovations for the bar should be completed within the next month or so, Hall said. Outside of the structural work and interior design, new coolers and televisions have also been added.

“It seemed like everything broke right after we took over,” Stewart said, laughing.

Danny's Lounge is located at 118 W Fourth Street in Alton. Drink specials are every day, and Stewart and Hall said they are famous for their apple pie and cherry pie shots, which are made in-house and cost a buck each.