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## Give a hoorah because Ri Ra has reopened

March 12th, 2010 by Web Editor in [Night Review](#)  
By Sarah Coombes

While the wait for Ri Ra's reopening has made their closing feel like a lifetime ago, it was only nine months prior that the pub closed its doors to renovate after the fire. But now, just in time for St. Paddy's Day, Ri Ra has finally reopened. So in order to get in a quick pre-Paddy's celebration, as well as check out the latest restorations, my fiancé and I headed over for the grand re-opening party last night.

It turns out Ri Ra is just as popular as ever. When we arrived, there was already a line out the door. But luckily, the sounds of the Irish jig inside had made it out onto the streets, so the wait was like a pre-party of its own. Once inside, I learned the music was Bobby Houck (of the Blue Dogs), and they had their own stage at the back of the pub. It was a rocky grotto, built kind of like the secret pool at the playboy mansion, just with a different kind of entertainment.



Complimentary drinks covered all of the Irish favorites, from Guinness to Harp, Killikenny to Smithwick and a fine selection of wine for the non-beer drinkers. Unfortunately, we were too late for the good eats, but rumor has it there were sampler trays of the pub's menu going around. I did notice a platter of mini brownies float by me at one point, but I wasn't quick enough to grab one.

The crowd varied from the after-work crew to singles and plenty of couples. One thing was for sure: The place was packed. But instead of feeling forced into a corner, there was plenty of room to move around. The upstairs was one of the newly renovated spaces, and the room was open and inviting. One of the Ri Ra employees informed me that not only had the area been brightened with new chandeliers, but the ceiling had been raised, and a new bar added. My fiancé and I had plenty of space to relax and lose ourselves in the corner, while also getting a feel for the busy bar, too. Even though my fiancé and I stood for most of the night, it is apparent that Ri Ra has lost none of its comfortable ambiance.

And while some places like to start over, the owners of Ri Ra want guests to remember where the establishment has been. That's why the bar has kept some of its damaged décor. From smoke worn posters to disfigured bottles, Ri Ra kept many of the items that had been ruined by the fire, and it really added a taste of something different. Of course, the biggest restoration was of Saint Patrick himself. Split in half by the fire, he has now regained his rightful place behind the bar, pardoning all those who eat, drink, and end up shitfaced.

Overall, the pub was warm and inviting. People were laughing and drinking as if Ri Ra had never closed in the first place. And having been born and raised in England (not Ireland I know), it was like walking into a pub from across the pond. Of course, the rainy weather didn't help the delusions there.

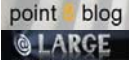
But I think the Ri Ra experience captures what a good night at the pub can inspire in people. Even when everything goes up in flames, you can always rebuild, and throw a damn good party when the rebuilding is over.

Here are some photos of the interior of Ri Ra, courtesy of Claran Sheehan.

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