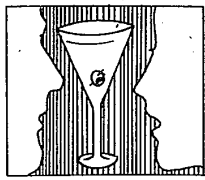


Bartenders watch out for problem drinkers

Truth or fiction?
A bartender is really a great guy (or gal), a combination of mentor, psychologist, listener and friend.
Or, a bartender doesn't give a damn; he's there to push booze and make money. So what if he's serving an alcoholic or some big spender who won't have enough of his paycheck left to feed his family.
Chip, one of the suburban bartenders interviewed, has owned his own bar for the past 12 years.
"Refuse to serve?" he repeated. "We do it all the time. I believe anyone who can't hold his drink has a drinking problem."
"We are alert to some alcoholics and some we can't label. You don't always know whether or not you're contributing to the delinquency of an adult."
He said that capacities differ and sometimes it is difficult to tell. "Getting a customer's car keys and calling a cab & part of preventive maintenance in a bar."
"My philosophy is don't push drinks. I have told all my waitresses that. I also tell them that when it comes to food and service, the customer is always right. When it comes to conduct and drink, the establishment is right."
HIS EXPERIENCE has been with neighborhood or family-type bars where they do not have to deal with many transients.
He said frequently, when a regular patron joins Alcoholics Anonymous or goes on the wagon, they miss the social scene of their favorite pub. They miss the sports talk and their friends.
"They'll come in and order a Coke or soda water and warn me that if anyone buys a round, make sure his is soda water. They'll come in with their wives and drink their soda water or Coke. They don't mind if their wives have a drink."
Chip added that when they say, "And even if I ask for a drink, just give me soda water," he is concerned about how a bar.



long they will stick to their resolution. The former owner of Chip's bar cashed pay checks, a practice that Chip stopped. More of the paychecks reach home "and besides, I don't like having all that money around."
He also got rid of the games which can spark arguments. Insurance rates for bars go up when there are games on the premises.
"I don't expect my waitresses to break up loud arguments or brawls. Some waitresses can handle a situation very quietly and easily, with a few words."
"If we have to call the police to eject a drunk, he does not come back. We do

not serve him, even if he comes back the next day and apologizes. He is potential trouble."
CHIP AND TOM agreed the Western bars are more difficult to run than a family type pub.
"There's something about the whole old West macho atmosphere of those places that encourages a different kind of behavior," said Tom.
Tom's frequent strolls through the pub are not just to say hello to friends. They are scouting excursions to check for potential trouble.
"I prefer the soft approach," said Tom. "I usually go back and tell the person that there's a phone call for him and he can take it in my office. Once we're in there, we sit and talk for a while before I see him on his way home. They usually calm down and thank me. There is never any trouble."
Neither Tom nor Chip have ever been approached by an AA representative for discussion or information on how the organization would like them to deal with alcoholics.
CAROL SAID, "We can't serve a drunk legally. But sometimes, it's hard

to tell. They'll walk in and be perfectly normal. I have taken a first drink away and replaced it with a cup of coffee many times."
She said Christmas is the worst time of the year for bartenders and waitresses. "They come in for lunch and a little Christmas party. They go back to the office and decide they're too drunk to work, so they come back here."
"Of course, an individual can be affected by alcohol different ways at different times. Sometimes they can drink a lot with no ill effects. The next time, one or two drinks and they're drunk. It has to do with their physical health."
Carol knows her customers. She shares their joys and their sorrows "and sometimes I cry a lot."
She persuades them to have an orange juice or a soda. She puts them on coffee, inquires about transportation and often gets a friend to drive them home.
"They come back the next day and thank me," she said. She encourages alcoholics to stick to non-alcoholic beverages and runs a tight ship.
"And we never push drinks," she added.

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