

Having a smashing good time

Traveling mini-putt event and bar comes to Denver

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Laughter, cheers and the loud, mechanical sounds of roboticized art reverberate off warehouse walls, intensified as the afternoon goes on and alcohol is consumed.

For six weeks, Smash Putt Miniature Golf Apocalypse! is invading Denver, offering a unique activity for adults by mixing miniature golf, experimental art and a full bar.

"It's the grand experiment; it's a theory we're trying to prove; it's ever-changing," Jeremy Franklin-Ross, co-creator and "instigator" of the project, attempted to project over the cacophony buzzing around the course.

This is the first time the event has been to Denver, with one appearance in Portland, Ore. and two in Seattle. Franklin-Ross said he wants it to become an annual event in Denver.

The course consists of various holes/pieces of art like the Deconstruction Zone, where players must hit their ball up a ramp and into a machine, which drills a hole in their ball. Another is the Driving Range, in which players use an air cannon to project their balls at targets of random pieces of metal, such as a saw blade, hanging in a metal cage — earplugs and hardhats with plastic face shields are provided.

One of Franklin-Ross' favorite holes is Infinity, which is an upward-slanting infinity symbol with a trick hole.

"It's usually a drunk couple [attempting this hole]," he said with a laugh. "The guy will go straight up and try to get it in. The girl will read the directions, then laugh when he can't [make the shot]."

Even if a player can get the ball in the hole, it pops right back out.

"It's impossible; it's infinity," Franklin-Ross said.

Franklin-Ross said the team adds a new hole each time they present the project. Denver's experimental hole is Catapult. This hole requires two people, though Franklin-Ross said it is quite amusing to watch one person try to do it on their own.

One player stands on one side of the obstacle, directing the catapult, while the other launches the ball toward windows (holes) in a picture of Rome's famous Colosseum.

"This is all pretty inventive," Andrew Carr said while he and Katie Parks waited in line to try Catapult. "A lot of work was put in, [and there



FROM LEFT: Linda McKenzie, Beth Spencer and Nicole Dougherty watch the golfball navigate the Foosball hole at Smash Putt Jan. 16. Smash Putt incorporates moving foosball players trying to block the putt.

were] cool ideas involved." They said it was their first time at Smash Putt and their favorite hole was the Driving Range.

Keith and Julie Mitchell, trying their luck at Tool Run, also attended for the first time.

"It's pretty nice," Keith Mitchell said, looking around, admiring the course. "And the bar is a nice touch!"

Smash Putt will run in Denver during the weekends until Feb. 6.

Franklin-Ross said attendance at the event has been unpredictable because of winter weather and he is surprised "Denver doesn't come out in the snow."

"I'd think Denverites would be

used to the snow," he said. "We've had good attendance otherwise ... It's just great to see people come out, have a few drinks and enjoy the experience."

SMASH PUTT

2762 Walnut St.
www.smashputt.com

\$10-15

Check website for tickets and times.



A grave of golf balls after being drill pressed in the final hole, Deconstruction Zone.



A hole is drilled into a golf ball after a player made the putt at the Deconstruction Zone hole.

Focusing on fine art, photography

Story and Photo by
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The FLASH Gallery in the Belmar Arts District hosted a birthday party and fundraiser for Working with Artists Jan. 15.

The WWA organization and FLASH celebrated 10 years together as Denver's premier fine art photography school and gallery. Through diverse classes in photography and frequently changing exhibits, FLASH and WWA seek to involve artists and the arts community in the latest contemporary fine art technologies, techniques and processes that are available now or emerging soon.

"Education is a big part of what we do. Gallery exhibitions for everyone, from 'very beginner' to 'very advanced' as well as public forums for photographers to come and network, meet with people and share creative ideas," Associate Director Valerie Photogoddess said.

Photogoddess got started in photography when she was 15 and received her degree in photography from the University of Northern Colorado in 1998. She started as a volunteer for WWA, and after eight years and has worked her way up to her current position.

In addition to the gallery, classes and special projects, WWA is starting



Jasmine Champion, assistant to the director at Working With Artists, arranges balloons Jan. 15 prior to the 10th birthday celebration of Working With Artists.

a new liaison with a company that does video marketing for television in order to broaden their audience and focus.

"We do four Internet TV shows. [We've been in] The Jeffco Business Guide, we do a tech and art show from all over the county by different artists. We do a green show for Jefferson County businesses that do green

information and we do kind of like a Larry King Live, but it's JBG Live," videographer Randy Little said.

Linda Sheridan, executive director of Working with Artists, moved to Colorado from San Diego five months ago. With a background in art history, nonprofits and politics, this was the perfect position for her. Sheridan said she loves artists and has had her

own art exhibited in galleries all over southern California.

"I've walked into a situation where the staff are people I couldn't have picked better, and that is a gift for someone in a situation like this," Sheridan said.

Green Russell mixes classy drinks, atmosphere

By Ian Gassman
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I shake my glass at the bartender, asking him for one more drop of rye, gin or scotch — anything. He shakes his head back at me as he darts his eyes around the crowded, dimly lit basement, knowing the Feds could break up this soiree at any moment.

Finally, I lay down my tattered bills and think about trudging through the snowy city to another well-hidden bar. After all, the night is still young and I'm still thirsty. As I get outside and begin to ascend the dark staircase, the cold wind hits me and I snap back to reality, realizing it's 2011, not 1921. I was just in the recently opened Green Russell cocktail joint, where drinks are legal and especially tasty.

Located near 14 Street and Larimer, the Green Russell lies among some of the trendiest restaurants in the city and it follows suit. Exclusivity is a factor, as the bar is only open Wednesday through Sunday.

Getting an early reservation is recommended, and there isn't a cheap draft beer in sight — only cocktails, wine or hard alcohol. These offerings mimic another type of business that was found during the early 20th century, a "speakeasy."

Since that the Denver-based culi-

nary giant Frank Bonanno is behind the Green Russell and its "storefront" called Wednesday's Pie, it's no wonder the bar has an intriguing concept. Like Bones, Luca d'Italia or any of Bonanno's other restaurants, the Green Russell serves gourmet food and drinks with a price tag. The atmosphere, though, is complimentary.

At first, it's easy to notice the mood-lighting or soft jazz. Upon closer inspection, patrons will see that each bartender wears a tailored vest and slacks as they crack large cubes of ice off one big block and pour jiggers of top shelf alcohols into crystal mixing glasses. Bartenders can even mix up a customized drink depending on one's taste in liquor.

A cocktail like the "Bitter End" features the local Leopold Bros. whiskey, paired with ginger liqueur, hints of lime and Fernet Branca. When drizzled down the thin handle of a mixing spoon, the bitter Fernet Branca red liqueur begins to float at the top of the glass and gives the cocktail a unique layering effect: dark on top, light on bottom. Each layer contrasts bittersweet flavors with a refreshingly minty and almost medicinal quality. Keep in mind that an imaginative cocktail like this costs \$12. Bottles of wine start at \$45, and the price for straight alcohol varies.

Denver-based distilleries have a lot of prominence, with Leopold Bros. dominating a lot of the cocktail

menu. The small-batch Leopold Bros. distillery makes gin, vodka and even absinthe, among others. Their "Three Pins" liqueur has an amazing flavor and an inspired distilling process — a number of alpine herbs and flowers are set with sprits and aged, then strained from the alcohol.

Drinks like these don't really require a thought-out food menu, but fortunately the Green Russell has an extensive one. With various spreads like the \$9 smoked, potted trout and tarragon pesto or the \$8 deviled egg dip, it's as simple as putting a hearty amount on a fresh piece of baguette and devouring. It's also easy to eat a whole batch of the blue cheese-flavored chips. At only \$6 a basket, this atypical and delicious bar food is within most price ranges.

Don't lurk in the shadows or worry about knowing some special password; the truth is the Green Russell isn't a secret. Any bar enthusiast can appreciate its cleverness and enjoy a cocktail or two.



Customized drink mixing sets the Green Russell apart from other cocktail lounges. Photo by Andrew Bisset • abisset1@mscd.edu

GREEN RUSSELL
Specialty cocktails
1422 Larimer St.
(303)-893-6505

Bad ad overload

Tilted
Head

By Megan Mitchell
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Growing accessibility in consumerism and in-home sales revolutions have made online and TV shopping the most used means for Americans to buy anything they want, whenever they want. Pop-up spam, personal targeting ads on Facebook, oceans of commercials and late-night infomercials constantly flood the mind with unlikely suggestions that are unwillingly embedded nonetheless.

The allure of comfort and nuances in convenience often draw a popular following of interested consumers. The infomercial for Pajama Jeans, for example, has more than 500,000 hits on YouTube, and Snuggles are one of the most-wanted products today.

Late-night product advertisement doesn't necessarily need to showcase things that are comfortable or useful in order to gain sales. Now, an outrageous or bafflingly annoying commercial is enough to gain a popular following, generate free ads through conversation and push unimaginable amounts of useless crap all over the kitchens and junk drawers of America.

Long-running spoofs eventually get run into the ground and taken too literally until the squawking "pitch-men" and impossibly enthusiastic actors have been turned into celebrities. It's all fun and games until suddenly everyone owns a Slap Chop and a Magic Bullet.

The tactics being used by advertisers to lure buyers are usually invasive, insulting and targeted at an audience of fourth graders. The real tragedy, however, is how successful all of these obnoxious stratagems are in the end.

Online
MET

Don't miss Denver artist, S.D. Prochyra, discuss his newest collection, "Requiem" showing at Illiterate Gallery until Jan. 28.