

The Astoria: An Iconic Old Town Haunt

First-hand eye witness accounts and documented evidence prove that craft beers and cocktails aren't the only spirits being served up in this historic and haunted structure!

The campy Astoria is host to many events including Foxy Friday's which features music and dance, Drag Queen Bingo and Open Mike nights. The unique Cuban Cuisine is a favorite in Fort Collins as well as the late night Sushi provided by Mountain Sushi.

The Astoria's owner, Lindsey Anderson, has completed a lot of research regarding the history of the building herself and enjoys telling guests this unique building's story as well as her experiences while owning it.

A brief history:

This location first appears as Malaby's Grocery in the 1870's. Emma Malaby ran the grocery store until 1906 when the location was bought by an outsider named B F Clark. Clark started the Commercial Bank and Trust and moved the store by horse and wagon to 313 Meldrum Street in order to make room for his bank. Malaby's Grocery store still sits at the site on Meldrum Street just as it did in 1906.

The bank closed in 1915 and other businesses have occupied it continually ever since. Its central Old Town location made it a superlative business site and it has been home to an early real estate office, the Chamber of Commerce, Triangle Review, a Hungarian restaurant called Novak's, Saigon 17, The Vault and most recently the Astoria Bar.



Photo courtesy FCMOD

According to Anderson, some of the guests who frequent the historic Astoria and mingle among the crowd aren't always in earthly form. Anderson has documented evidence in the form of audio EVP's and visual images to prove it. A photograph taken by Scott Fuller, a friend of Anderson's, reveals what appears to be a dark shadowy spirit in the form of a man lounging on a couch in the main dining room. This couch and table area is where guests to her restaurant and bar sit nightly to enjoy a beer and her famous Cuban cuisine.



Photo courtesy Scott Fuller and Lindsey Anderson

Other evidence of the paranormal occurring at the Astoria includes a photograph, taken by local writer Maria Winnie, of a mysteriously levitating bottle of beer near the bar. Winnie insists that the image was not photo shopped and others were there to witness the event. Is it a Bud Light? Local artist Jeff Herndon was inspired to create a drawing of the ghost enjoying a beer in front of The Vault Gallery, where the illustration hangs today.

Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP) has also been captured at the Astoria. The ethereal melody of ghostly whistling has been caught in the basement, which can be validated by employees who have heard it with their own ears.

Links to the EVP's are courtesy the Denver Paranormal Society who conducted an investigation of the site.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KtYghweGkM>

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Photo courtesy Maria Winnie and Lindsey Anderson

The owner of the disembodied whistling and possibly the shadowy diner on the couch is speculated to be that of a man who worked at the location over a hundred years ago. From 1905 to 1909 the head cashier at the Commercial Bank and Trust was a man named Clark Smith. When Clark was replaced by another cashier named Murdoch Nelson, Smith moved to Denver. In February of 1910 Smith passed away under mysterious circumstances. Some rumor it suicide. Coincidentally, Anderson adds that February is traditionally her most paranormally active month. Anyone for a haunted Valentine's Day date at the Astoria?

Anderson's employees have their own first hand encounters with this spirit, which would make even the most devout skeptic shudder. While walking to the basement for supplies, one employee witnessed a man walking around a corner towards a long hallway, located in the back establishment where the apparition disappeared into thin air. No other employees or patrons were in the basement at the time. This ghostly figure was dressed in a nice suit with a high collar. A cook at the Astoria, Del, related for guests recently that he had his own literal brush with the afterlife while working in the kitchen. Del says that he was busily preparing food when he saw and felt a presence brush past him. Without looking up he thought it was another employee. However, when he finally did investigate there was no one else around.

And for the ladies, beware that this shady character also frequents the ladies bathroom which is located just off the bar area. Many women have experienced phenomenon while in the bathroom including the wall mirror gyrating back and forth and the door being briefly held shut.

Anderson has obtained a large photograph of the interior of the structure when it was the Commercial Bank and Trust. The photo is beautifully framed and sits on a wall adjacent to the bar. In the photo are the images of two men behind teller cages and one customer. Eerily, one of the cashiers is dressed just as witnesses of the apparition have described him. Could Cashier Clark Smith still be actively keeping watch on the bank he once knew?



Anderson emphasizes that the spirit she shares this space with is not malicious or out to harm anyone. Anderson and the ghostly specter have come to a mutual respect regarding each other's presence in the Astoria. She says he is actually very kind, just spooky. In a way, the Astoria ghost is the perfect ghost, active enough to satisfy our fascination with the afterlife, but not threatening enough to cause harm.

Visit the famous Astoria to learn more about the haunted history, to take in an event or fantastic meal and meet owner Lindsey Anderson. A New York native, Anderson has been in the Fort Collins area since 2003 when she came to here to play music with her band The Kowalski's, for which she was the lead songwriter and rhythm guitarist. In September of 2011 she purchased the Astoria and added rock posters from shows she has played and from her bar in New York which she called Coney Island High. Anderson's fun personality shines through in the Astoria and she likes to call the decor "glam with a wink".

Below is contact info for the Astoria:

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