

**Correction:** In this story about New Brunswick nightlife, the Brazilian drink caipirinha was incorrectly identified as a Cuban cocktail.

## New Brunswick: The hip, the esoteric and the expensive

Not keggers and frat houses, but cigars and martinis.

Not students and finals, but lawyers and promotion parties.

Not rock 'n' roll, but salsa and meringue.

The newest incarnation of New Brunswick's downtown is a long way from the college campus - a mix of the hip, the esoteric and, definitely, the expensive.

Nightspots like Nova Terra, Clydz, Delta's, Makeda's, the North Star Cafe and Gaebel's cater to a crowd of customers not yet burdened with children and a huge mortgage, but established enough to spend as much as \$10 on a martini.

The spots describe themselves as "casual elegant" or "casual yet upscale" - fancy, but not your parents' type of fancy. These are the places in New Jersey - not New York City - where you can wear your Earl jeans and be appreciated for the understated elegance of a black Prada top.

The round wooden Palm Bar at the Nova Terra restaurant is the focal point of nightlife in this bustling New Brunswick spot.

"The bar is very attractive," said Elaine Drody, as she sipped her caipirina - a Cuban drink even more trendy than the mojito. "It's circular and you can see more people."

The modern and sleek bar serves as an altar to the manifestations of chic supply and demand.

"These are not people on a budget," patron Denise Bishop said of the crowd at Terra Nova. "I like to come here because there are no college students."

Men and women in their late 20s and 30s talk, drink and smoke at the well-known martini bar, Clydz. A mostly suited crowd on a work night, the crowd moves into the cigar-smoking and scotch-drinking connoisseurs of good food and wine as the week moves into the weekend.

If the retro interest in martinis hold your fancy, Clydz is the fanciest place in New Brunswick to order a "Berry White" - berry vodka, chambord, Godiva white chocolate liqueur and a touch of cream - or a "Ritz Special Pick Me Up" - champagne, cognac, cointreau and OJ. Not your father's martini.

New Brunswick officials said the upswing in the downtown area has been happening for the past two decades.

"The DINKs or whatever you want to call them, have been going to the Frog and the Peach for years," said Glenn Patterson, director of planning, community and economic development for New Brunswick. DINKs is a term that describes "Double Income No Kids" customers of the more expensive area businesses.

But with the new development in the city, the last five or six years have brought in an extra oomph into the historic area. "We've had an increase in residential housing downtown," Patterson said. "And the people have a little more disposable income and they can support the businesses downtown."

Patterson said more residential units - like the Highlands at Plaza Square luxury rentals and the Skyline Tower - will only add to the influx of cash into the restaurants, bars and shops.

"The crowd in the downtown may be young, but it's usually post-college," Patterson said, adding the latest retro cocktails - like martinis, Manhattans, cosmopolitans or mojitos - also are on par with the first-class restaurants in New Brunswick.

"You can go to Clydz and they have 50 types of martinis," Patterson said. "But you can also get lion ravioli or black bear chili. I've had kangaroo. I've had ostrich."