

# The return of The Cellar From callow youth to taste expert

Fredericton favorites All Of Green and Slowcoaster supplied an appropriately rocking welcome-back fanfare for everybody's favorite campus pub last weekend.

by Mike Nason

Remember the last time you were really bored, flipping through channels on your TV, and you suddenly hit a rerun of Cheers?

You probably didn't stick around long enough to see Sam Malone's latest attempt to make his major-league comeback or hear everyone cheer "Norm!" but you probably sat through the seminal theme-song wishing that you too could find a place to go where everybody knows your name, a place that feels like home, where the beer flows like water.

Well, this past Friday I returned to our very own Cellar Pub and was instantly taken over by those very same feelings. Sure, no one yelled my name except a drunk friend, and even then it was only an approximation of my name, but walking through those doors with my very first stamped hand of the year filled me with an indescribable warmth. Or maybe that was the rum talking. Either way, it was wonderful.

Yes, kids, The Cellar is open again, and for fans of live music, good chow, great company, and, of course, alcohol, that's something to celebrate.

Last year, The Cellar was easily the best venue in town for live music, bringing in crowd favorites like the Jimmy Swift Band, Grand Theft Bus, Burt Neilson Band, Melonworks, All Of Green, and many, many more.

It appears that they're on the same track this year, bringing more quality music to Fredericton and our campus than we can shake a stick at.

This brings me back to Friday:

All Of Green, Slowcoaster, and my first show of the "Cellar Season." It was definitely great to be back in the pub I'd called home throughout the '04-'05 academic year. The full house was in cheerful spirits as many of them met with friends they hadn't seen since last year. It almost felt like a reunion of sorts.

The show was opened by All Of Green, but not in some sissy "swing the door open" sort of way. It was more like they opened the show by blowing the lock off with a shotgun and kicking the door clear off its hinges super-badass style.

I spent quite a lot of time during the winter term trying to convince people to see All Of Green for themselves, and over the summer they've only gotten better. They're becoming staples on the Fredericton scene as their loyal fans chant the lyrics over the band's awesome riffs and melodies.

When I asked guitarist and four-time pro bowler Steve Dunn about their growing popularity in the Maritimes he said, "We were thinking about quitting rock n' roll to start up an apple butter farm - you know, the kinds with the breakable glass jars - but all this support has been pretty rad, so we'll probably stick around."

And stick around they shall, as they'll be playing at The Capital on September 22 with The Most Serene Republic, where bassist/superfreak Nick Cobham will no doubt announce his plans to run for Mayor of Fredericton.

All Of Green were followed by one of the greatest bands in eastern Canada, Slowcoaster. They're

a band with steadily increasing popularity country-wide because of their slick jams and smooth sound.

They're also a band that I always end up seeing when I'm exhausted, for some reason, and they still manage to wake me up and get me on my feet. The packed Cellar crowd reacted in much the same way as they battled the sweltering heat to rock out.

It's hard to believe that a band from Cape Breton can manage such funky and infectious grooves. Their latest album *Where Are They Going* is proof. If you can grab yourself a copy, you'll have a hard time getting it out of your player. It was obvious that many of those at The Cellar were among the crowd familiar with the tunes because sing- and dance-alongs erupted on a massive scale.

Slowcoaster master their crowds. It's like watching a snake charmer as these four fantastic musicians pump out some truly fantastic music that is amazingly creative, yet very accessible. Sadly, my exhaustion eventually took over and I went home for some sweet, sweet sleep.

All reports from after the show indicate that the rock continued throughout the evening, leaving crowds tremendously satisfied and damp.

Friday's show was only a glimpse of things to come. September alone features shows from Vorca Trio, The Masses, Sidecar Radio, Tala, The Novaks, Blue Quarter, and Mr. Something Something. Not to mention that Cellar staff will be serving you in the SUB Cafeteria while you rock out to Sloan, The Stills, Jimmy Swift, and Buck 65.

If you thought last year was great, it looks like this year could be even better. Welcome back Cellar, oh, how we've missed you!

Check out [www.cellarpub.com](http://www.cellarpub.com) for more information on the awesome acts that will grace the campus stage in the coming months, or keep reading *The Brunswickan!*

## THE WHISKY ENTHUSIAST

by Michael Burt

All real stories should start "Once upon a time," but in this case, my earliest memories are of lean, uniformed gentlemen who arrived from time to time at our house in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to be welcomed by one or both of my parents. They came, usually, in pairs or threes from their ships, which had docked in Colombo for repairs or to take on provisions during the early 1940s. After the invitation to "come in, come in" came my father's inevitable question: "Now! What would you like to drink?"

The usual - and not unreasonable - response was "What have you got?"

Even during the war years, my father kept a variety of libations including gin, whisky, sherry, and beer, mostly the generous gifts of His Majesty's men in uniform. The standard drink in the tropics was, of course, gin and tonic served with plenty of ice and a generous wedge of lemon that actually yielded juice, not the miserably thin, decorative slice so frequently served in sophisticated lounges these days. The tonic, or quinine soda, was the recognized anti-malarial product, and required the addition of gin and lemon to "help the medicine go down."

However, occasionally there came the question, "Have you got any whisky?" which I came to recognize as a light brown liquid kept in a beautiful, square crystal decanter. It was many years later that I learned that there was more than one 'gin' and more than one 'whisky.'

With a move to Scotland after the end of the Second World War came a growing realization that there were sweet and dry sheries, as well as some in between, and

that both gin and whisky came in bottles with different labels prior to being poured into the crystal decanters from which they were served to honoured guests. It was only at the more advanced age of 16 that I was allowed to further my education, libation-wise, with a parental invitation to have a small, pre-prandial sherry on special occasions.

A summer job as a wine-waiter some three years later and a keen interest in zymurgy led to a steep (almost vertical) learning 'curve' which was not confined to Bordeaux and Burgundy wines but also involved various spirits. As the mysteries of VS (Very Special) and VSOP (Very Special Old Pale) unraveled, so did the differences between blends and single malts become clearer.

Unfortunately for my student's pocketbook, I learned to enjoy superior blends like Haig's Pinch and The Antiquary, which is not to say that lesser blends were not imbibed and appreciated.

During the latter part of the following summer, employed as a 'grouse beater' for the Queen Mum, my education relating to single malts started in earnest under the tutelage of my brother,

four years my senior, and his theology friends.

At the end of that summer, I took the "Whisky Trail" by driving from Crathie, on Deeside, to Tomintoul (the A393) and then to Speyside (B9008/B9009) by way of legendary distillery towns as Knockandu, Tomnavoulin, Glenlivet, and visiting other famous distilleries such as Cragganmore, Glenfarclas, Dufftown, Glenfiddich, and on to Strathisla. This tour has been repeated several times, combined with efforts (not always successful!) to catch wily trout, sea trout, and salmon. Each subsequent visit, however, has become more and more enjoyable.

But it was during my first leave of absence from UNB, which I spent in St. Andrews (both the home of golf and of the oldest university, per se, in the United Kingdom), that I became seriously interested in the subtleties of different single malts. With the help of a local grocer, Mr. William Birrell, I was able to purchase (and taste!) some 10% of the over 400 different single malt whiskies.

This is the first of a series of articles, written in honor of Fredericton's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Whisky Festival, to be held October 14, 2005.



UNB professor Michael Burt discovered a distinct taste for whisky at the tender age of 16, and has been fine-tuning it ever since.

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