

BROKE? THEN HEAD FOR DALLAS

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I happened to stumble onto one of the cheapest places to drink in Austin -- Dallas Nightclub.

After departing Beverly's biker bar one Wednesday evening (said evening was chronicled in the last column), computer guys David and Rick, poet Briante and I headed up to Dallas Nightclub (in a weird, extreme kind of pub crawl, from south to north, biker to cowboy). Dallas, the "new country" two-stepping heaven on Burnet Road, was in the throes of its "69" ladies night. Which means that most drinks were 69 cents; a few were \$1.69. But I'm pretty sure that the neon-colored shots in test tubes that young women offered us were only 69 cents, for all who dared. (Not us.)

And that's just the Wednesday night deal. Thursdays, for example, are buck nights, when beer and most drinks will only set you back a dollar; Friday nights, those same beers cost 75 cents. Cheap stuff. It cost me a dollar to get in both Wednesday and Thursday night, but I was quite happy to pay it, given that I think I spent five whole dollars once I got inside. (And that includes buying a round.) And did I mention that Dallas has free happy hour food on Fridays? Like fajitas and stuff? Did I say free? The joint is a graduate student's dream.

Not that there seemed to be a plethora of theory-spouting academic-types hanging out at Dallas. Most everyone looked relaxed. And Dallas had one of the widest patron age ranges I've seen in a bar (Broken Spoke excepted); people on the dance floor ranged from 21 to 60. (I assumed the 21-year-olds were the ones buying the neon headaches in a test tube.)

By 10 p.m., the place was bursting. Dancers slid across the enormous wooden dancing stage (maybe 20 bull lengths long by seven bull girths wide). And some of those boot-scooters moved like professionals: flips, twists, slide wiggles, even a woman walking in a wide circle at the beginning of each song, her arms extended like a ballroom competitor, her smile as wide as Miss America's. I sometimes forgot to pay attention to the conversation at our table, so busy was I staring at the hip-swinging, Texas-sliding action. Perhaps the very best people watching, however, came when the DJ decided to interrupt the country flow with a little Salt-N-Pepa and even -- I kid you not -- Vanilla Ice. The dance floor, contrary to our expectations, didn't empty; rather, folks simply changed their groove ever so slightly and adjusted their partner moves to a funkier beat. I have rarely seen anything so glorious or so entertaining.

Should a patron be foolish enough to want entertainment other than the dancing, she could wander over to the pool tables to the right of the main entrance (the dance floor is to the left). Dallas is a big place, with several bars and troughs full of beer as well as shot sellers and wandering waitresses (ours wore pigtails and sucked a lollipop -- and it was ladies night). The pool tables reside in the "quieter" area of the bar, set away from the

enormous television and lounge area, the DJ booth, the bullring of a dance floor. Plus, on Thursday nights, Dallas sponsors some kind of game and contest night, so you can play and drink all at once. (This is after the Thursday night live music ends.) If only I liked current country music more (Hank Sr. and Patsy put Garth and Shania to shame), I might make Dallas a regular stop on my nights out. As it is, I'll only stop in when I'm flat broke.
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Dallas Nightclub.

7113 Burnet Road, 452-2801. Hours: 5 p.m.-2 a.m. Tuesday-Sunday