

Esquire

Five O'Clock Bar – Cleveland, OH

By Joe Oestreich



You're Having: Pabst Blue Ribbon

The Five O'Clock is a rock and roll bar. Springsteen and Stones posters dot the walls, and on weekend nights, DJs spin meat-and-potatoes punk bands like the Supersuckers and Social Distortion. But get there early, say, ahem, five o'clock, before the skinny-jeaned punkettes and greasers with chain wallets show up. Squeaking into a round Naugahyde booth, you'll understand how this place has kept rolling since 1941, eleven years before Clevelander Alan Freed threw his Moondog Coronation Ball, laying claim to the very words *rock and roll*. The stools are vintage '50s soda fountain: cherry red and chrome and bolted to the floor. Nested behind the serpentine bar are the original wooden cooler-cabinets. Above the bar sits an old piano that nobody's played since "Lou," a celebrated regular, wiped out while "stage diving" from it. But don't worry, there's no stage diving at this early hour. Nothing much is going on at all. But to paraphrase Cool Hand Luke, sometimes nothing is a pretty cool bar.