

How the Piano Bar Came To Be

This piano, now a functional bar and art piece, was originally a 1923 Gulbransen player piano. Gulbransen was a major manufacturer of player pianos during the 1920s, and this piano sold for \$398. The price is actually woodburned on the back of the piano, as well as the serial number. On the left side of the piano is a large tile depicting the actual advertisement that ran in the Saturday Evening Post magazine in 1923.

I acquired the “orphan” piano for free, and when I found it, it was in no condition to ever be a functional piano again. This was perfect for me, since I wanted to give it a new life and identity. The player piano mechanism had already been removed, and I further removed the “action” and heavy cast-iron plate. Cabinets were installed, and the door slides up and away to reveal a hanging wine glass rack, wine bottle storage area, and a compartment for miscellaneous items.



I hand made all the fused glass tiles you see. I hand cut, layered and fused over 2,500 tiles in a glass kiln. Several of the larger and more elaborate tiles are of famous pianists, which I thought would elicit lively conversation for those sitting at the piano bar. I don't know exactly how many hours it took to complete this art piece, but it was significantly more than I anticipated. Placing each tile was based on color rhythms, size and shape of the pieces, and much of the work was done intuitively. Some of the areas are symmetrical with regular patterning, while others are conglomerations of different colors. The ceramic tile on the bottom of the piano was something I purchased several years ago, and is Van Gogh's well-known “Café By Night.” The tile itself covers what was a large opening where the piano's player pedals originally were. Somehow, I just liked it there.

Who's Who

Left Side: 1923 Saturday Evening Post Advertisement

Billy Joel with Elton John
The Beatles
Richard Nixon and Pearl Bailey
Chopin's Signature
Vintage Squeeze Box Boy
Mozart

Right Side: Liberace

Harry Truman
Stevie Wonder
Victor Borge
Easy Pieces for Difficult Brats Quotation
Zippy Cartoon of Billy Joel Lyrics
Ray Bradbury

Top: Einstein Playing Electric guitar
Ray Charles
Beethoven's Signature
Beethoven Portrait
Vintage Gramophone
Steam Punk Flying Boat

Bottom: Ceramic Tile of Van Gogh's “Café By Night”

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