

## The coolest place in town; 'Ice bar' opens tonight at downtown Stillwater's Freight House

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With temperatures heating up, the Freight House is bringing cooler air to downtown Stillwater with a state-of-the-art "ice bar."

Kept at a temperature of 23 degrees, the ice bar will give Freight House guests the opportunity to escape the muggy Minnesota heat into the makeshift "igloo." A grand opening will begin at 6 p.m. tonight.

About six months ago, the Freight House began collaborating with Minus5, a company that provides freezing attractions, Freight House manager John Daly said.

"Opportunity presented itself for us to work with Minus5, and this concept has proven itself all over the world. And why not? Stillwater and The Freight House is a great destination," he said.

Stillwater will be home to the company's seventh ice bar; other locations include Las Vegas, Sydney, Australia, Auckland and Queenstown in New Zealand, and Viseu, Portugal.

While Minus5 has built ice bars and lounges around the world, the Freight House's design will be the first of its kind.

"It's a prototype, and it will be the first time it's been attempted, from my understanding," Daly said.

It will be a smaller version of the Minus5 archetype, only holding up to 25 people. Because of its smaller size, Minus5 President Craig Ling refers to it as the "Minus5 Igloo."

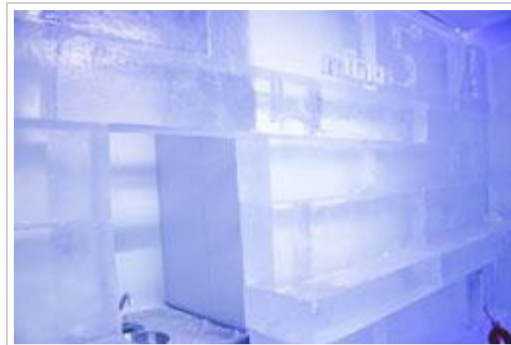
"It is a new brand we've been developing, which I personally wanted to set up somewhere that had a lot of humidity and somewhere people know the cold as well as the hot weather," Ling said. "I know Minneapolis is very cold in the winter, the coldest I've ever, ever come across."

Ling, originally from New Zealand but now based out of Las Vegas, was visiting Minneapolis when he stumbled upon Stillwater.

"I looked around Minneapolis and came down here and I was like, 'Wow, this is where I want to be.' It's a beautiful building, a great pub, and it just fits what we are," Ling said.

When eyeing possible locations around the globe, Ling said he searches for tourist attractions that draw people into a local community. Once Ling found his venue and had the new design in mind, it came down to building it.

"It's very fast to put up, which is a big thing. Las Vegas took us six months to get that thing built,



Gazette photo by Hannah Gruber The Freight House in downtown Stillwater will open an "ice bar" tonight at 6 p.m. that will offer martinis and an escape from the summer heat.

this is taking us five days," Ling said.

During those five days, workers donned their winter coats while chiseling the inside of the Igloo, which holds about 20 tons of ice, including the walls, the bar and the glasses. (Yes, even the glasses are made of ice.)

The bar also provides an assortment of drinks, including a range of five Minus5 cocktails that are the same at all locations.

But according to Ling, it's not just a freezer.

"We have music and cool lighting. Minus5 is an experience. It's an attraction and it's all about fun," Ling said. "It's far from a freezer. It's a very special engineered room, and it has to be. It's designed for people to be in a comfortable environment."

The bar, situated on the deck overlooking the river, will be open for the summer. It's uncertain if it will close after the summer or return next year.

"People go absolutely crazy in here, and I know you guys are used to snow and ice but to watch people's faces when they see this concept and are partying with the lights going they just go mad," Ling said.

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Hannah Gruber is a Stillwater resident and an intern in the Gazette newsroom.

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