

## **Fire damages restaurant -- but rare beer steins are rescued**

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Author: Susan Weich ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Firefighters and employees of the **Old Mill Stream restaurant** worked side by side late Thursday night to pull a collection of rare beer steins out of a two-alarm blaze that gutted the first floor, officials said.

The restaurant at 912 South Main Street in Historic St. Charles had about 250 of the steins, with an estimated value of \$75,000, displayed on a shelf that wrapped around the eating area. Firefighters and employees formed a human chain to remove the steins and other Anheuser-Busch memorabilia.

"They were boxing them up as we were pulling them out while we were still fighting the fire; it was pretty incredible if you think about it," said Capt. Dan Casey of the St. Charles Fire Department.

Workers were preparing to close up for the night about 11:45 p.m. when customers noticed smoke coming from the kitchen area near the rear of the building, Casey said. Employees went to investigate the smoke and found the rear of the area engulfed in flames.

About 35 customers were in the bar in the basement of the building when the fire began, officials said. No one was injured. The fire started when some items left on the stove ignited, Casey said.

Patrick Capstick, manager of the restaurant and tavern, said the upstairs portion of the building, recently converted to a restaurant from a T-shirt shop, was gutted. The basement area suffered heavy smoke and water damage. No estimate of the damage was available.