

Inns & Taverns

It is estimated that there almost 200 inns and taverns in the city of Specularum. Many of these are identified on the district maps in Chapter 2. However, even the city administrators are uncertain as some seem to pop up on a whim, while others disappear as the result of unexpected activities. This section attempts to describe a number of these establishments which may be of interest or use to adventurers.

(Normally “inn” is usually used to refer to premises which provide accommodation as well as food, drink and (sometimes) entertainment, and “tavern” lacks the accommodation aspect. However, the terms “inn” and “tavern” are often used somewhat interchangeably – so it is often best to ascertain what facilities are available before you commit to transacting your business.)

The Bawd and Minister

(Old Quarter O13)

Besides being a famous tavern, this building is also a 'house of ill repute'. Well, the ill part depends on your point of view. It is located in the part of the Old Quarter that borders Specularum's Merchant District. It takes its name from a scandal of many years ago when one of Duke Stefan's first ministers was revealed as a regular client of the harlots working

there. The local barkeep, *Ising Perpalp*, is the husband of the madam of the brothel, a woman named Estella.

The Besieged Dungeon

(Old Quarter O34)*

This tavern looks exactly like its name suggests; torches on sconces give a low, flickering light, long corridors and passages, and several drinking rooms set up like lairs of orcs, goblins, and hobgoblins complete with masked servers playing the role. Needless to say this place is extremely popular with adventurers and those who want a taste of the adventuring life.

The Black Heart Lily

(North End NE2)

This is one of the most notorious inns found in the city. It is named after the woman who broke the heart of an ancestor of the current tavernkeeper, *Luthier Sforza*. Luther welcomes adventurers and clients from every walk of life to eat, drink and sleep here, and is an invaluable source of gossip and rumour. He keeps his prices of fair, and the sleeping rooms can suit the needs of a wide variety of clientele.

The Blue Water Mead Hall

(Merchant District M3)

The Blue Water is a bright, clean building that caters to the many folk working in the Harbour as dock hands, rope makers, sailwrights, and boat builders. Although it caters to a rough working-class crowd, there are rumours that the tavern has connections to the Veiled Society, a major criminal network active in the city.

The Golden Book

(Bricktop B11)

The Golden Book is a small inn and restaurant, standing next to the Scriveners' Guildhall. The restaurant's walls are lined with dark woods and leathers, making it appear even smaller. It features a dozen small tables on ground floor, plus two smaller dining rooms at first floor, while the second floor has four single rooms, often rented by visiting scholars, and the last floor houses the innkeeper's family.

The Golden Book is an upscale establishment, where sombre waiters in dark uniforms serve mostly Thyatian and New Karamaikan cuisine with imported wines (the innkeeper, **Lucius Falernianus**, is a connoisseur reputed to have one of the best collections in Specularum) and some local light beers and ciders.

Lord Bartram Cordelius, the Minister of Trade, and doctor **Antonius Marcianus**, a prominent judge and a Consul of the Scriveners' Guild, can be often found here at lunchtime or in the evening.

The Gorgeous Giant

(South End SE31*)

This small inn and tavern is run by **Morrus Vasiyev** (N hm F6), a retired adventurer who named his inn after an encounter with a beautiful cloud giantess and her jealous husband. His inn is fairly new, but is doing well.

The Grey Gnoll Tavern

(Merchant District M36)

The Grey Gnoll Tavern is a relatively large establishment at the centre of the Merchant District in Specularum. Like many other establishments in this lively part of time, it is open practically 24 hours a day. It is a popular watering hole with citizens and visitors alike and the mouth-watering scent of boars and other large game roasting over the large firepits in the centre of the drinking hall carries into the street outside.

On any given night, as many as 150 people are inside, drinking, eating, gambling and talking. Even on a slow night there are usually 30-40 guests. Because of this, it is also a popular meeting place for secret meeting because there are so many faces always coming and going that it is easy to blend in with the crowd.

The Grey Gnoll is owned by some rich lord living on a mansion in the countryside, but is managed on a day-to-day basis by **Vonandir**, a portly red-haired man of 46. Vonandir employs a number of cooks and serving wenches as well as a few bouncers for the occasional troublemakers but they are rarely

needed as the city watch is just down the street.

The Karameikan Road Lodge

(The Hill H24)

A fairly recent addition, the Karameikan Road Lodge is actually one in a "chain" of inns under the ownership of a young entrepreneur by the name of **Nikolai Caledon**. The chain has developed a reputation for consistency at all of its 5 locations (also in Kelvin, Threshold, Penhaligon, & Vorloi). Accommodations are as expected: satisfactory if unremarkable. There is no food or beverage served. Vacancies are most common during winter months.

The Priest and Jug

(Bricktop B12)

Just opposite The Golden Book lies this much rougher establishment. "Decorate" mostly by humorous (and often vulgar) graffiti, the Priest and Jug is the haven of the New Karameikan students. The walls are periodically tinted white by the owner, **Pyotr Caesarion**, but are immediately covered with new writings.

Caesarion, a drop-out student of Law who managed to put his hand on a good amount of gold in his first (and last, as he swears) attempt at adventuring and invested it in the establishment, serves simple but nutritious dishes of meat and vegetables, together with good beer. He is helped by a single serving girl,

Marina, and the cook, **Vika**, an aged Traladaran woman.

The generally friendly atmosphere sometimes (especially late at night, when everyone has had too many drinks) degenerates when students of "pure" Traladaran or Thyatian descent come in to stir trouble.

During the day, besides the students, Caesarion's maternal grandfather hangs out at the Priest and Jug with a small clique of retired Traladaran scribes. The aged gentlemen spend every afternoon playing cards and critiquing every item of news they can get.

The Rattlebone Inn

(Bricktop B16)

The Rattlebone sits on Rattlebone Lane in a poorer part of Specularum. It has a small selection of ales and meals and many honest and not so honest people frequent it on a regular basis. It has a small kitchen and caters to perhaps forty people at most each evening. Of some note is the waste pit that dumps straight down into a network of tunnels that are believed to be secretly dug by criminals of all persuasions beneath this part of the city.

The Rogues' Den

(Merchant District M20)

At the docks in Specularum lies a large old vessel called "The Wind Chaser". She used to be a proud ship that roamed the seas between Sind and the Isle of Dawn with the most vicious crew ever to sail the Sea of

Dread. Their captain was the Pirate Lord *Balthros Bloodeyes* and the mere mentioning of his name would scare children to crawl up to their mothers and cry!

For years The Wind Chaser eluded naval patrols of all nations around the Sea of Dread - not because she was fast, but because of her captain's devilish luck! It was whispered in taverns and the living quarters of junior naval officers that Captain Balthros was in league with a horrible monster - a creature as large as a sea dragon and capable of putting out banks of fog and mists to cloak old Bloodeyes and let him escape. Few were the captains that dared follow The Wind Chaser into such a mysterious mist.

Eventually, Bloodeyes got old and sick. Pirate tales claim that he grew paranoid and secretly buried all of his treasure on a small remote island. When he died, supposedly of poison in his food by the hand of his own ambitious lieutenant, the crew fell into bickering and arguing about how to get the treasure back. They turned on one another and many men were killed before a new captain was elected. He wasn't any good however, and a few months later The Wind Chaser was finally ambushed by several ships from the Ilerendi navy in a small cove. The crew was captured and hung in the nearest port and after a thorough search of the ship's hull, in the year AC 989 The Wind Chaser was auctioned off to a wealthy merchant in Specularum.

The merchant wanted to start trading with foreign lands without having to pay Minrothad merchants as go-betweens but he soon fell into economic difficulties and had to

abandon his ideas. The Wind Chaser fell into disrepair, her hull started to rot and leak and nobody wanted to buy her at the price the greedy merchant demanded.

Eventually, in AC 996, he did sell her - to a young elven lady named *Silvariel Stormstrider* from Minrothad Guilds. She put a crew of able-bodied men to restore the hull to water-tight conditions and pump the bills so she would stay afloat. Then Silvariel arranged for a long-term lease at the docks and a permission to run a food-and-drink-serving establishment and opened the Rogues' Den Inn aboard the proud, old ship.

The main room for dining, drinking and gambling is below deck where the crew and cargo used to be. At the front of the ship where sails, rope and supplies used to be stored there now is a food store for the kitchen right next to it. Silvariel and a few of her employees have their living quarters above deck in the old cabins that used to belong to Balthros Bloodeyes and his lieutenants.

The inn itself serves decent food and drink at reasonable prices but nothing exceptional. A lot of customers come here for the special atmosphere and because it is somewhat of a tourist attraction. Retired naval personnel come aboard to take in with their own eyes the ship that so often eluded them in the past. Children climb the lower parts of the rigging, pretending to be pirates or naval heroes and sailors from all over the world enjoy the slightly rolling feeling of a ship's deck beneath their feet - even while they are in port.

The Rusty Wand

(Old Quarter O15)

The Rusty Wand is a small tavern located about half way down the Street of Dreams. The Hin barkeep, **Bollo** is said to be an agent of the Duchess and a possibly useful contact.

The Scarlet Wizards

(Old Quarter O11)

Located in a six storey octagonal tower, the Scarlet Wizards is an informal social club. There are no internal stairways; just a hole in the centre of each level, thus members must use levitation to access upper levels. The top level is guarded by a wall (floor?) of flames. The Scarlet Wizards have another branch in Kelvin, where they lobby to have the ban on wizards casting spells repealed.