

Are I Funny?: Start Up Laughing

Looking for great comedy in Rhode Island? Want to try your hand at standup? Check out the Comedy Open Mic Tuesdays at Askew in Providence.

This open mic is specifically designed to support and nurture budding local comics, who begin to gather, chat, laugh together, either inside at the bar or on the sidewalk outside.

You'll see many of the same faces from week to week. These hard-working comics are tremendously talented and successful performers. "Newbies" also feel welcome, as the more seasoned comedians give feedback and great advice, and encourage all to participate and enjoy the process of honing the craft.

Owner Windsong Hadley says she started the comedy night at Firehouse 13 about three years ago with a "splattered with blood" sign on the door. The open mic moved to Alchemy, before settling in at Askew, a homey club atmosphere with couches, a pool table, a main stage and friendly staff.

The true heart of this club is that it is indeed a practice space. Windsong says she wants to see the comics develop the marketing skills and presentation skills necessary for succeeding in the business and that she "aims to promote the development of the craft and encourage the comics to realize it isn't just a hobby to be funny."

Everyone feels at home at Askew, welcomed and accepted, and gets the unique opportunity to work on jokes before taking on a bigger crowd, whether it be in Boston or New York City or wherever the pursuit takes them. Windsong also helps comics learn what she describes as "the ethics of comedy".

"If Chris Rock wants to throw the mic on the floor, that's fine," she laughs, "but we discourage performance deviance like that." While she doesn't actually censor anyone, she or one of her hosts introduces every open mic reminding the crowd of a welcoming LGBTQ acceptance policy. She uses what she calls a "No 2 G" rule — ie: if a word used in a joke has "two n's", it is inappropriate and not acceptable.

In addition to the weekly open mic, Askew offers showcases and themed shows for the most experienced in the area. Recently, in partnership with Last in Line Comedy, she featured an LGBTQ Rainbow Show that was positive, celebratory and widely attended. Look for Askew's next showcase on October 23, featuring John Valby, also known as Dr. Dirty, a comic musician known for his obscene song parodies. How lucky are we in Little Rhody to have this gem, a living room for building careers and getting some good laughs simultaneously!

Comedy Open Mic at Askew, Tue 7pm (Doors open at 6, sign up sheet is out at 6:30), 150 Chestnut St, Providence, RI