



Marv's Classic Soda Shop, Black Diamond

Photographed by Roth and Ramberg

This week, it's not quite "Our Town." It's Black Diamond, a delightful 45-minute road trip, where you'll discover Canada's only working soda fountain, Marv's Classic Soda Shop. Every day, owner Marv Garriott laces up his wingtips, curls his moustache into the soda jerk's trademark twirl (the wax comes from Okotoks) and makes his way down Black Diamond's main street—and back in time. The building itself is a theatre transported from Little Chicago, a ghost town north of Longview. (The south side of Black Diamond's main street was destroyed by fire in 1949 and so Little Chicago's abandoned buildings were moved wholesale to Black Diamond.) Inside, you'll find a temperamental jukebox that plays 45s, a wooden counter and spinning stools from the '30s and soda fountain equipment from the teens. If that's not your era, turn a little to your left and

you'll see a dozen or so '50s-style pink and black vinyl booths with waitresses (one of whom is Marv's dishy girlfriend, Launa) in poodle skirts to match. "Those are the original colours of rock 'n' roll" according to Marv, and the man would know: he played east, west, north and south as a country guitarist from the late '50s through the '70s until he settled down to buy and run the now defunct North 40 Bar in Forest Lawn.

So why leave the big city and a thriving country and western bar to run a soda fountain in rural Alberta? "Most people have good memories of their childhood. They come in here and it makes them happy." His eyes mist as he tells the story of a New York woman who stepped through his doors shortly after 9/11. "Here, I feel safe," she said. For a tough old country singer, he's got a heart as soft as ice cream on a hot summer day. ☺