# BRIDGES, BEER AND BULLET HOLES

## Its coal-boom heyday is long past, but Wayne is proud of its rough-and-tumble history

By Barbara Balfour

**I**f you should find yourself hankering for a cold beverage while meandering through Alberta's badlands, take the Highway 10X turnoff from Highway 10 and head toward the tiny hamlet of Wayne.

Along this six-kilometre stretch, you will traverse no fewer than 11 one-lane metal bridges. Carrying traffic over the winding Rosebud River and the now-defunct railway tracks — once used to transport coal through local mining communities — these spans are in the Guinness Book of World Records as the most bridges to be found within the shortest distance.

But this bonanza of bridges isn't the only notable thing you'll find. Here in Wayne, 11 kilometres southeast of Drumheller, stands one of the last relics remaining from a once-booming mining community — the century-old Rosedeer Hotel and its original bar, the Last Chance Saloon. Rumour has it the saloon got its name because it is, in fact, the last chance for a drink for 65 kilometres, or a day's ride on horseback.

Its other name was "the Bucket of Blood," because of the numerous fights that occurred there, including a close call in the early 1970s that left three bullet holes in the wall. The story goes that three hooligans refused to pay for their drinks, so the barman calmly pulled out a .45-calibre handgun and fired three rounds over their heads. They then paid and left — swiftly.

During the area's mining heyday, there were 139 coal mines in the Drumheller valley, the first of which opened in 1911. The last load of coal shipped out in 1979. Six of the mines were in Wayne. "And wherever there was a coal mine, a community sprang up, so people could walk to

work," says Linda Digby, Executive Director of the Atlas Coal Mine National Historic Site.

The tiny town was once home to more than 3,000 people, and at least 30 different languages could be heard in the mines and on the streets of Wayne. It was also the first centre in the area to boom and bust.

While the majority of residents have long since moved away, Rosedeer Hotel/Last Chance Saloon owner Fred Dayman remembers growing up there while his parents were running the place. Along with his wife Alisa, Dayman has owned the establishment for 29 years. It has been in his family since 1948.

Dayman welcomes visitors seven days a week to stay in one of the hotel's seven rooms, or spend an afternoon enjoying a full menu that includes buffalo burgers and homemade apple pie.

"It's a real small-town, family atmosphere," he says. "It was a great place to grow up." ∎