

He took a girl into a bar...

By a Staff Reporter

Today I tried to buy a woman a beer—in a bar. What's more, I got one.

To get up-to-date information on the Australian phobia on serving drinks to women in bars, a woman friend accompanied me to the front bars of four well-known Adelaide hotels.

In the first bar, the few drinkers there froze, amazed.

Before I could ask for our drinks, the polite barman ushered us out with assurances that we would like it much better in the lounge.

I said we would like to drink in the bar, which was well furnished—and where drinks were cheaper. He told us, pleasantly, that women weren't served in the bar.

No surprise

The half-dozen drinkers in the bar of the second hotel didn't bat an eyelid when we walked in.

I asked for two butchers of beer.

"Why not go to the lounge—you can sit down there?" the flustered barman said.

"We'd rather drink here," said I.

"All right," he said, and drew off our drinks.

Our bar companions looked round idly, then went on with their own drinks.

"Go up the street"

At the next hotel I couldn't have caused more excitement if I'd walked in

with a leopard on a leash.

The drinkers edged closer when I ordered two beers.

The barman said he couldn't serve the woman, and directed us to the lounge.

"But the beer is dearer in the lounge," I said (this was one of Adelaide's toniest hotels).

"Never mind. Go up the street to the — hotel," said the barman helpfully. "Lounge prices are about the same as bar prices there."

Up at the — we tried the bar, but were shown smartly into the lounge.

The waiter in the lounge explained that women—mostly new Australians—occasionally wandered into the bar, but were shown into the lounge for a drink.

No laws

A woman witness before the NSW Liquor Royal Commission yesterday complained that women, made to drink in the lounge and not the bar, had to pay more for their drinks.

In SA, there is no law prohibiting women from drinking in bars.

But it's general hotel practice not to serve women there.

A butcher of beer, 7½d. in the public bar, costs anything from 9d. to 1/ in the lounge.

A schooner, 11d., costs anything from 1/1 to 1/4

anything from 1/1 to 1/4 in the lounge.

Hotelkeepers say the extra service provided in lounges justifies the extra charges, approved by the SA Prices Commissioner