



HALE & HEARTY

A city centre working microbrewery which serves beef braised in its own ale? No wonder Emma Outten keeps going back

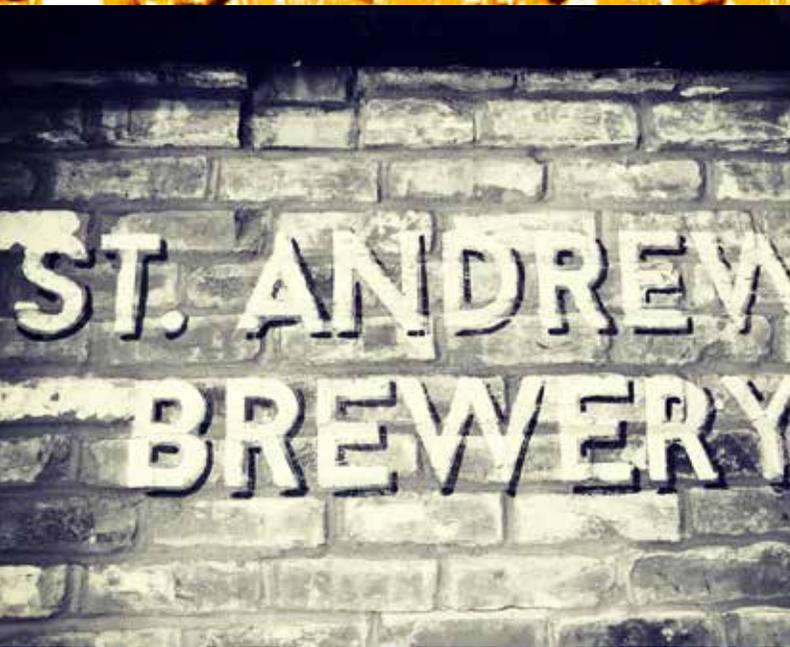
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WHEN SATURDAY COMES, there's something satisfying about finding a favourite place in the city to have lunch with friends.

For me, St Andrews Brew House is in a prime position. On the corner of St Andrew's Street in the city centre, it's a great meeting place (it always has been, in a way, as it used to be Delaney's Irish Bar). At the weekend it still has a sporty crowd, thanks to the big screen, but there's something else behind a glass screen to look at these days.

St Andrews Brewery is the only city centre based working microbrewery and has been going since 1974. In its new home, St Andrews Brew House, you can see exactly what's brewing behind the glass while you prop up the bar - and, if you wanted to really get close to the action, they do brewery tours.

The beer menu looks relaxed and fun: top of the list is Brew House PA - a blend of Mosaic and Amarillo hops with a citrus, dry finish; but further down the list you will also find Redwell Kofra Stout, for example, that collaboration with the local coffee shop. There's craft beer aplenty, and soft drinks include Norfolk Cordials.



ST. ANDREW
BREWERY



St Andrews Brew House

- EATING OUT -

Around the bar is the eating area proper, with tables that look out towards The Halls – home of the Norwich Beer Festival, of course. At the back there's a slightly raised eating area, with booths, for a more private dining experience. Envisage distressed wood and vintage signs and you've pretty much got the decor.

On our most recent visit, my friend and I had a booth to ourselves and staff were very accommodating about the fact that a couple more people would be joining us later, if only for dessert.

Us lunching ladies went for wine with our meal – Pinot Grigio Blush, Via Nova (£6.60 for 250ml), to be precise, and they're not wrong when they describe it as very easy to drink.

The first thing we noticed on the cleverly designed menu (you'd have to see it to see what I mean) is British tapas, such as Norfolk goat's cheese bruschetta. And I must mention the 'boards': having seen one of our esteemed contributors (naming no names) tuck in to the vegetarian St Andrews board before now, I wouldn't have minded going for this, had I been able to convince my friend to get on board with sharing one! Another time perhaps.

We both chose 'from the stove', as they say: I went for the beef pie (£11.50), containing Brew House Ale braised beef, veg and mash (or chips if you prefer). I have to say this was brim full of the most beautifully braised beef. The carrots were halved lengthways and rather rustic, sitting, as they were, on a bed of kale. And the mash was just marvellous!

My friend also went with the ale and hearty theme: Wensum Ale battered haddock (£10.50), with smashed minted peas, tartare sauce and chips. The peas did look rather smashing, there were a lot of them, and certainly nothing mushy about them!

On a previous occasion I've had the chuck steak burger, with a Brew House sauce (I do like the fact they do their own sauces), baby gem, tomato and chips, but if you prefer you could go for a lighter lunch and just have one of the sarnies, such as Wensum Ale battered fish fingers.

Onto puddings: I went for the rhubarb and white chocolate iced parfait (£6), with candied orange syrup. The rhubarb was suitably seasonal, and all in all the parfait had a refreshing aftertaste.

It would be fair to say my friend is a

chocoholic so it came as no surprise that she went for the steamed dark chocolate pudding (also £6). However, she wasn't too fussed by the sound of milk chocolate custard (her love of chocolate clearly didn't extend to custard), and as for popping candy? Well, that would have to remain unpopped. Once again, the staff were very obliging, and so her pudding came accompanied by a scoop of vanilla Norfolk dairy ice cream and toasted marshmallows. The steamed pudding itself was a sizeable portion. My friend's daughter then joined us and opted for the very same (never mind the fact, there's a kids' menu!), complete with the chocolate custard and in its own gravy boat, and she surprised us all by making light work of it. The vintage floral crockery, throughout our meal, was a nice touch, I thought.

There appears to be a lot going on at St Andrews Brew House. Go upstairs to use the facilities, as it were, and you'll notice there's a couple of funky function rooms: The Tank Room and The Locker Room.

Afterwards, we stood on the corner and said our goodbyes, and went our separate ways – another satisfying Saturday lunch had come and gone. 🍴