

Historic tavern still has potential



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City Tavern on Northumberland Road, Newcastle

LET me tell you about David King, a chap who knows a thing or two about bars...

He's the gentleman behind the likes of Barluga and Perdu in Newcastle city centre.

Ever popular spots those two, as anyone who knows about the region's hostelries will tell you.

Having sold Fluid Group last year, David, ever the entrepreneur, has moved on to new territory with the creation of Bar Hound whose first venture was the £250,000 refurbishment of the historic City Tavern pub on Northumberland Road.

Mrs Eats has been getting awfully excited about this since hearing the news that this place



was being transformed back in January.

So, time to visit.

She Who Must Be Fed jumped at the chance (not literally, of course - these days, getting out of bed's enough to see her break out in a sweat) and we both jumped into the trusty Eatsmobile to have a gander.

First impressions were excellent.

The building, which began life as stables and livery in 1872 and

has since been used for a wide range of purposes ever since, maintains its well-known Tudor facade.

Couple that with the sharp but sensitive new City Tavern branding, it really looks top notch.

The interior was equally pleasing - crisp but sumptuous, the dark wood and mellow lighting screaming something that sounded distinctly like: "Any time you're passing, Eddy, do pop in and pass a dreamy hour or so, nursing a pint while Mrs E takes care of shopping and the like."

And who were we to argue?

Anyway, looks aren't everything (I should know) so let's get down to business.

Menu-wise, all hunky dory - not only a great selection of Sunday lunch mains (£8.95 each), but a good few additional classics, like the steak & ale pie and pork & leek sausages. Plenty of local sourcing going on too.

First things first though - the starters.

In my case, that was the potted chicken liver pate (£4.95), which was lovely, but a little shy quantity-wise when it came to coating the accompanying toasted sourdough bread.

Mrs E's steamed mussels in white wine and cream sauce (£4.95), meanwhile, were plentiful and delicious.

Quantity problems, however, resurfaced on the mains - roast Northumbrian topside of beef for me and pork loin with crackling and stuffing for her - which, with all the extras, were just mountains.

Even Mrs Eats felt intimidated and we agreed the meal could be sharpened up by cutting down on mashed accompaniments and the like, while perfecting more satisfying parts.

Still, the flavours were there and the quality was high, so it's just matter of refining things.

Drinks-wise, City Tavern is spot-on already. I enjoyed a pint of fruity City Tavern ale (£2.95) and a few glasses of tasty and reasonably priced Malbec (£14.95 a bottle), which Mrs E also indulged in, hoping - praying even - that the alcohol could fuel a rekindling of hunger that would see her through to dessert. No such luck. We were beaten. But we'll be back...

Scran score

CITY TAVERN
10 Northumberland Road,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8JF
Tel: 0191 232 1308

DRINKS
Pint of lager £3.25, pint of bitter £2.95, G&T £4.10, glass of wine £3.55, fresh orange £2.35

- Car park.....✗
- Kids allowed.....✓
- Real ale.....✓
- Wine by the bottle.....✓
- Credit cards.....✓
- Vegetarian food.....✓
- Disabled toilets.....✓

Food served: noon until 9pm

Rating: 16/20

Character.....★★★★★

Quality.....★★★

Service.....★★★★★

Value.....★★★★★