



Old world charm

One of Bengaluru's most popular breweries upgrades itself with the addition of a grill house. By Bindu Gopal Rao

LOCATED ON THE UPSCALE

Vittal Mallya Road in Bengaluru, The Biere Club is the first and only 'craft brewery' in India. Launched a year ago, this space is known for its freshly brewed original beers created in small batches using finest ingredients and traditional methods. Resembling a roomy and contemporary English pub, this space has an old world charm and has recently launched The Biere Club Chophouse, an old English style grill house to ensure customers don't need to head out to eat after drinks.

The Chophouse has been launched in association with Chef

Shaun Kenworthy who has paid special attention in ensuring that the food is authentic and true to the old English days. "The word chophouse is actually derived from old English, which means a restaurant that specialises in steaks, chops and other meats, a name that fits in perfectly with what has been created at The Biere Club Chophouse – good, simple, yet perfectly cooked steaks, chops, bangers and other grills that are a perfect match for The Biere Club's craft ales and beers," says Vishal G Nagpal, Director – Operations.

This 36-cover place is done up like an old time English restaurant.

Set in an intimate setting on the first level there is a coat hanger in place right at the entrance. Oak-clad walls, white linen-laid tables, dimmed lighting, a well-stocked bar and strains of jazz in the background make the setting perfect for a great meal. The tables are lined with white linen and just the right amount of glass and cutlery makes sure that you are comfortable. A few French pop art-like posters framed and stuck on the ceiling makes for an interesting décor element. The walls have a strip of red as well as wood cladding that lend a retro feel that is completed with the curious semi-vintage posters.

"There is a retro feel to everything here – from the décor to the food. We have positioned this as old school British dining that has probably been forgotten over the years. We have consciously incorporated old favourites on the menu like fish and chips. Also, we source all our ingredients locally including our meats whether it is beef, lamb chops or pork chops. To put it simply, a meal at the Chophouse is simple, non-fussy and yet elegant," explains Nagpal. The ambience of this retro restaurant changes from an open space in the morning to a cozy candlelight dining experience in the night.

While you are here, do check the blackboard or ask the staff about the soup of the day available in both vegetarian and non-vegetarian variants in half and full portions. The board also mentions one new signature dish that is not part of the menu, created by the chef and available over two or three days. When I

had visited, the specialty happened to be Bacon Braced Cabbage. The menu is interesting and is typical of a British steakhouse. The beverages served here are typically craft brews as well as a fairly compact wine list, an extensive liquor menu and a few classic cocktails like Negroni and Dirty Martini. The first thing that is served is a piece of cold hard bread with some soft butter that sets the table for more to come.

For starters, you can pick from the Bubbling Baked Camembert Aloft Roast Tomatoes And Rocket that whets your appetite perfectly or the Smoked Salmon Slices, Horseradish Cream, Capers And Melba Toast and team it with the specialty – The Chophouse Prawn Cocktail. This is a classic dish, made with small cooked shrimps mixed in cocktail sauce and served with soft half-boiled eggs placed on a bed of lettuce and a large prawn. You can also choose Slow Roast Shredded Duck, with pickle, herb salsa and feta or the Roasted Tomato And Bocconcini Mozzarella served on a thick chunky toast. Health-conscious non-vegetarians can sample the mixed leaves, flaked tuna, potato, tomato, capers and soft boiled egg and the vegetarians, the tomato and fresh mozzarella with basil pesto drizzle and toasted pine nuts, which is perfect for everyone.

An interesting section of the menu is called Stories From The Char Grill that offers steaks – 6 oz of beef tenderloin, cooked to your preference. A treat for non-vegetarians is the Pepper Steak, Wilted Spinach, Grilled Tomatoes, Mash And Pepper Sauce or the Blue Cheese Butter, Grilled Tomatoes, Rocket Salad And Fries. The Biere Club Steak Frites is a whopping big one pound T bone steak, cooked to preference, with grilled tomatoes, fries and béarnaise sauce. The Chophouse Mixed Grill made with steak, banger, pork chop, grilled mushrooms, tomato, fries and a fried egg, is another hot favourite.



Chicken liver pate with gherkins, pickled onions and melba toast



Knickerbocker glory



Chophouse prawn cocktail



Slow cooked leg of duck with rocket and tart black currant compote

For seafood lovers, the Rock Lobster, Lemon Butter Sauce, Grilled Tomatoes And Rocket or the Crispy Skin On Salmon Fillet, Roast Potatoes, Rocket, Citrus Fruits And Mint make good choices. The Chicken

Liver Pate, Pickled Onions, Gherkins And Melba Toast is a pre-cooked set cold dish that is cooked with apples and raisins; no extra flavours are added to keep the liver taste intact. It is finished with some brandy and

lots of butter and is an in-house specialty, and a favourite with many of the diners.

Vegetarians however, need not despair as the chef has made a conscious decision to incorporate sufficient choices. So whether it is the foil grilled parcels of Mediterranean vegetables and mozzarella or the Cheddar And Sun-Dried Tomato Stuffed Cottage Cheese Steak, Fries And Rocket or the Ratatouilli, with kidney beans, sour cream and crusty bread, there is much to choose from. From the oven (all their bakes come with hot, crusty garlic bread), dig into the creamy, cheesy, layered potato pie with sun-dried tomatoes, and the layered tomato and spinach pasta bake with bubbling mascarpone. Baked using flat pasta sheets, this has a garlic tomato sauce and tossed spinach and the multiple layers are covered with a strong cheese sauce, making it a grand indulgence. All the portion servings are quite large and give you good value for money.

Special mention must be made of their 'real British puddings and other happy endings' (that's how they call their desserts here). We tried the Sticky Date And Coffee, Toffee Pudding And Ice Cream which is a simple dish and interestingly uses a locally prepared jaggery sauce that makes the taste unique in itself. A lot of coffee powder and cream is used giving the sauce its chocolate coloured hue. The Knickerbocker Glory, a delight with kids, is a concoction of seasonal fresh fruits, marshmallows, jujubes, dry fruits and ice cream, and presented in an innovative manner in a transparent glass container. We also sampled the Best of British Banoffee Pie, made with a crust of crushed biscuits, banana cooked in a condensed milk sauce boiled for four hours and served with ice cream. The hot pie coupled with the cold ice cream makes this dessert simply melt in your mouth. A perfect way to end a perfect meal. ■