

0X184 – Cowgate's new craft beer bar and grill



Already a big fan of Holyrood 9A and The Southern to name a few of their independent Scottish bars, I was excited to hear Fuller Thomson had opened a new venue in the Cowgate. 0X184 is Edinburgh's newest bar restaurant and late night venue; soon to be renowned for its wood-fired grill, craft beer and whisky.

I was surprised there were only a couple of people there when I arrived at 7 o'clock on a Thursday. The big cavernous room felt quite empty and I was worried it would lack atmosphere. I needn't have worried; it steadily filled up with a good mix of large and small groups. The vibe was very laid back and the volume stayed at a low hum, so while it got busy, it never got too loud to have a conversation. The service was polite and attentive. We were seated by the window which seemed like a great idea, but made me feel a bit like an animal at the zoo with lots of Cowgate's foot traffic peering in!

The 0X184 dining experience is well conceived. To befit the location, the focus is on a seasonally changing menu of locally sourced prime organic meat, including rare breed beef and pork, with suppliers including well-respected Lauder butcher Shaws Fine Meats.

The open kitchen allows diners to watch their team of chefs sear options including the 8oz shorthorn ribeye steaks on a wood-fired grill, which was custom made by Rosewell based blacksmiths G Fitzsimmons & Son.

It's a serious piece of kit that uses sizzling hot embers to cook the meat slowly, delivering a melting texture and caramelisation, thus deepening and enhancing the flavour. With

distinct US vibe (and Stateside portion sizes) you get serious dishes like Galloway brisket and the 0X184 signature burger, oozing with cheese. For pudding, try the special banoffee, which has been finished on their wood smoke in-house smoker.



The menu also offers a range of tempting lighter bites, including shrimp and lobster sliders and bacon corn muffins. Diners can choose to eat in the more casual downstairs bar area or up a level on the mezzanine.



We ate bacon and corn muffins and pork cheek nuggets from the bites menu, the mini muffins were fluffy and delicious. I felt the coating on the nuggets were a little too hard but the pork cheek filling was tasty and my dining companion had no complaints.

Next came lobster and pork belly burger along with the smoked chicken waffle sandwich from the mains menu. The sweetness of the dough worked well with the slightly spicy sauce and I got my crunch from the fried chicken inside.

No complaints about the lobster and pork belly burger, it was an interesting combination that really worked and the brioche bun really stepped it up a notch. Our mains were accompanied by cheese fries and charred corn. The corn was done to perfection and the home made cheese sauce on the mountain of fries had a nice spiced kick. We also tried the burnt end beans which I found too salty but can see them doing well with big flavour drinks.



The meal was concluded with the Smoked Banoffee, I was absolutely full to the brim but too intrigued not to order it.

I have no regrets. The bruleed banana slices on top were revolutionary. I only want to eat my bananas bruleed from now on! The homemade gingerbread is soaked in house made toffee to absorb lots of caramel goodness before being popped in a jam jar with smoked banana which is pureed. It's rich, it's decadent and it absolutely defeated me.

We had a fantastic time and look forward to returning with a group so we can try the rest of the menu and order demijohns of beer! Overall, I feel like there's still a few things still to tweak and the menu is ever evolving, so I look forward to many return trips and having new things to try all the time.

Draft beers come in 1/3, 2/3, pint and demijohns (8 pints). I took full advantage of the mini servings and tried three different beers from Tempest brewery. The companion had a Bristol Vice then a New Zealand sour wheat beer. Draft beers are rotating and are accompanied by a large selection of canned beers as well as a spirit list that spans two pages. They also offer a selection of whisky flights which I'd love to try and a range of bespoke cocktails. Five of which are named after New York boroughs – Let one of the bartenders muddle you a Brooklyn, with a blend of Tincup American Whiskey, Dolin dry vermouth, Briottet maraschino liqueur and Amer Picon biere.

Food is served from 11am until 2.30am. Start the day with a brunch dish; with burly choices including grilled hot links, vanilla eggy bread or a full breakfast that features the works. Pitch up at one of the large communal tables and grab an eight-pint demijohn of craft beer to share with your friends (or strangers, if you want to make a few more pals).

On Friday and Saturday nights guest DJs will be on hand to help fill the space, choosing tunes to entertain and accentuate the relaxed ambience. The only issue will be persuading everyone to leave at the end of the night.

OX184, 184-186 Cowgate, Edinburgh, EH1 1JJ

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