



Photo credit: Paula Markowitz Wittlin

What's Hot 'n Not

Porter House

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Por•ter (pôr•t´er) n. A beer made using dark, roasted barley. Dark malt flavors dominate.

For those of you jonesing for steak, **Porter House**—that newly-opened “Where the heck did that come from?” on Mamaroneck Avenue—isn’t that kind of, well, porterhouse if you will. Rather, White Plains welcomes its newest bar and beer garden. The establishment takes its name from a particular style of beer, defined on the cover of the bar’s impressive menu, where other types are also listed and deciphered including: ale, bitter, lager, lambic, stout and weisse.

I first spotted the cheerful cornflower-blue facade driving to work one morning. While dodging jaywalkers and vehicles attempting to parallel park, I gave a sigh, glanced over to my right and did a double-take. “Where the heck did that come from?” I wondered, laying my eyes on the newly unveiled establishment for the first time, nearly causing my own traffic pile-up.

I went in for a closer look Sunday evening, days after the Aug. 23 grand opening, with my companion Howard amidst pouring rain. We both immediately fell in love with the setting. The bar is a smart, spacious locale, complete with a fireplace and copper pots, Kentucky whiskey barrels stacked over the bar, industrial low-hanging lights set at a dim, golden glow, and a wooden and slate floor. There is ample seating in front and back along the walls, with two round tables cleverly

placed inside the arch windows. Even from the front of the bar, you can see large, sparkling windows leading out to the patio, soon to be transformed into a beer garden, complete with T.V. and sound system. Some of the prettiest details by our table were the stone walls and wrought-iron railings leading downstairs to the restrooms. As I strolled down, I had a giggle over a picture of a squirrel taking a swig of Guinness, and a framed doctor's prescription for alcohol. Prohibition-themed pictures hang throughout the bar on aged walls. Co-owner Brian Mahon said of the beer-themed photographs, "Every picture is a story."



Sparkling windows reveal Porter House's soon-to-be-opened beer garden.

One of artist John Gilroy's 1930s Guinness advertisements featuring flying toucans is placed lovingly next to the bar. Guinness, while a stout, is also based upon the porter style of beer that originated in London, and is highly influential in the name and decor of the bar. Along with a nice variety of Belgian and German beers, Porter House also carries beer from Pleasantville-based Captain Lawrence Brewing Company. "We want to support our local breweries," Mahon said. Thoughtfulness abounds on the menu; Ramapo Valley Gluten-Free beer was also added to accommodate those with Celiac Disease (amber honey is used instead of the more common barley or wheat), and for those of you who just want a Bud, have no fear; it's on there.

To start, Howard decided on an Erdinger (\$5), a German wheat beer, and we both snacked on some tasty bite-sized vegetable spring rolls with spicy sweet sauce (\$6.50). As we ate, we watched drenched pedestrians hurry past the bar, stop, backtrack, then cup their hands to the window to get a better look inside. I think the whole city was surprised at what was hiding underneath all that construction.



For those of you who still can't get over the fact that Porter House isn't a steak joint, order yourself their signature Porterhouse Burger (\$9.95) topped with smoked bacon, caramelized onions, sautéed mushrooms and chipotle. As my waitress took down my order, she enthused, "It's brilliant!" Howard built his own beef burger—they also have turkey and veggie—(\$8.50) with Creole sauce (.50), caramelized onions (.50), blue cheese (.95), and bacon (.95). Both were spectacular. The meat is freshly ground sirloin, chargrilled and juicy, and packed in a soft, sesame seed bun, served with seasoned curly fries. Mahon mentioned to me later in a phone conversation that there are plans to cut back on the wide variety of burgers and start introducing other items. "We started slowly to maintain quality control in the kitchen and make sure we were doing everything right," said Mahon. Now they will start to usher in soups of the day, more appetizers, salads and wraps, salmon, pasta, chicken, and even a New York strip. As are most of the bars in White Plains, Porter House is kid-friendly and will also have smaller burgers, chicken fingers and mac & cheese.

Howard's second beer, a Lindemans Framboise Raspberry Lambic from Belgium (\$8). The dessert beer is aged in oak for two years, is dark pink in color and served in a Lindemans flute glass.

Porter House exudes a confidence and friendliness that makes me think it's here for the long-haul. , the setting is possibly one of the nicest of the bars in White Plains, and it makes a nice addition to our Mamaroneck Avenue strip of pubs. And any bar that can appear out of the blue must have some impressive tricks up its sleeve.



Have an upcoming event or opening? What about a happy hour, promotion, class, performance, or special menu? E-mail skennedy@wptimes.com with details and your