

London Evening Standard

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Food & Drink **London Life**

REAL QUALITY WITH A DASH OF REAL ALE

THE OLD BREWERY ★★★★★

Naval College, Greenwich, SE10. 020 3327 1280; oldbrewerygreenwich.com. Approx £100 for two, with wine.

FIONA HUGHES

THERE'S A LOT TO TALK about in Greenwich these days. We locals have a World Heritage Site to watch over, after all. Then there's the future of our beautiful covered market to keep an eye on, along with the restoration of the Cutty Sark. Plus, in 2012, the Olympic riders are coming to the park.

Now, to add to this list there is, oh joy, a new restaurant and it's really good. So good that it's worth the trip to SE10 if you're not one of us. The Old Brewery is Greenwich-based microbrewery Meantime's latest venture, a café by day, restaurant and bar by night, situated in the very corner of Christopher Wren's great Naval College where the sailors once brewed their own.

The renovated building stands a few feet from the Thames, through big glass doors into a brick-and-blond wood bar where most of the home-made London porter and raspberry beer is drunk. So far so good. But there's no point dallying here when the high-ceilinged room next door is where the restaurant lives.

Think twice before sitting at one of the larger sharing tables – ours was a middle-of-the-room black spot, with the breeze from the river rushing up and under whenever the main door was opened. The red velvet banquet arrangements with white table cloths look much cosier.

On a Wednesday night at 10ish, the

place was almost full and nicely bubbling without boiling over. Our waiter brought a dozen Irish Carlingford rock oysters without fussing. The Meantime London Stout sauce seemed an unnecessary novelty but the springy little salty creatures were just right. The whole lemon sole with Cornish cockles, cucumber, caviar and lemon butter sauce came next, one of those tastebud tinglers you start dreaming of as soon as it's done. My dinner date's hake, steamed with vegetable broth, Shetland mussels and samphire, was even better, more surprising somehow – the fish so light, the mussels melting and a delicate almost oriental flavour flashing through.

The young chef, Daniel Doherty,

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buys from Billingsgate every morning but it's not all fish – there are interesting offers of Herdwick mutton marinated in Meantime Hospital Porter or Roast Kilvarock pork belly with braised cheek in pale ale. I never can resist cheese to finish – served here with beer chutney. But the prize for best use of the boozy stuff goes to the gloriously succulent, sweetly bitter beer jelly with summer fruits and vanilla cream.

Besides all the ales used in the cooking, there are more than 50 brewed concoctions on the drinks list. It may be perverse that we stuck to wine but there's every chance that we'll have another opportunity.



DANNY ELWES

necessities: ale takes centre stage on The Old Brewery menu and drinks lists