

Union Public House in Tucson

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Tucson's dining scene gains flavor and momentum with the opening of Union, the latest culinary star to appear on the Old Pueblo's expanding restaurant map.



There is nothing quite like sitting outdoors on a gorgeous winter's day – mind you, we're in Tucson where late January often finds us flirting with 70 degrees, but that doesn't discount the inviting location of Union Public House in St. Phillip's Plaza. The leaves are rustling, the birds are singing and the wafting aroma of freshly made pretzel bread envelopes our senses. O.K., there may be no birds, but there are sides of warm cheddar dipping sauce and whole grain mustard, an accompaniment on par with peanut butter and chocolate. Welcome to lunch at Tucson's newest gastro-pub.

Originating in London and taking root in New York in early 2000, the gastro-pub raises the "bar" when it comes to pub food. Think crispy pork belly crostini or mussels with chorizo. Lunch offers fresh takes on familiar fare, like the chicken sandwich (citrus-marinated mozzarella and lavender aioli up its game) and possibly the best nicoise salad ever chopped, thanks to perfectly seared ahi tuna and house-marinated olives topped with lemon-caper vinaigrette. Flatbreads sport toppers like duck confit with blue cheese and roasted apples or Celtic cheddar with house-made sausage and crispy shallots. Dinner features many of the same stars, but innovative chefs Jake H. Tate and Patrick Malarchik get creative with fish 'n chips and Southern-fried favorite, chicken and waffles.



For the burger lover, the Union Burger is one of the packed bar's biggest draws. The house-ground beef is topped with savory bacon jam (yep, bacon jam) and a rich English cheddar. Served with sides like "tots" (house-made russets with sea salt) and "bbb" (bacon, beets and Brussels sprouts with honey), the entrees are inventively charming without being overdone or pretentious.

Draft beers run the range from Union Brew to Italy's Birra Moretti. But cocktail lovers don't despair: Union has embraced the signature cocktail and fashioned several to call their own. The Cu Ball melds Effen Cucumber vodka, St. Germaine liqueur and 7UP. The Paloma mixes Herradura tequila, serrano syrup and fresh grapefruit juice. And what would said cocktail be without an afterhours in which to sip it? Union isn't quite sure, because they have that too. A DJ spins after 10 p.m. on weekends, creating a relaxed, after-hours vibe.

As if all this weren't enough, the house-made ice cream provides the perfect sweet ending. Get the trio, and don't plan to share. Flavors change daily; however, the spicy chocolate, lemon-basil mascarpone and salted caramel, all served in waffle cones, are sure to become staples.

The restaurant tag line, "Honest Food and Clever Libations in a Stylish Atmosphere," nails it. Union just may be the best new restaurant to arrive in Tucson in quite some time.

Union Public House, 4340 N. Campbell Ave, Tucson, AZ, 85718, 520.329.8575

Lunch, Social Hour, Dinner, Late Night.

www.uniontucson.com.