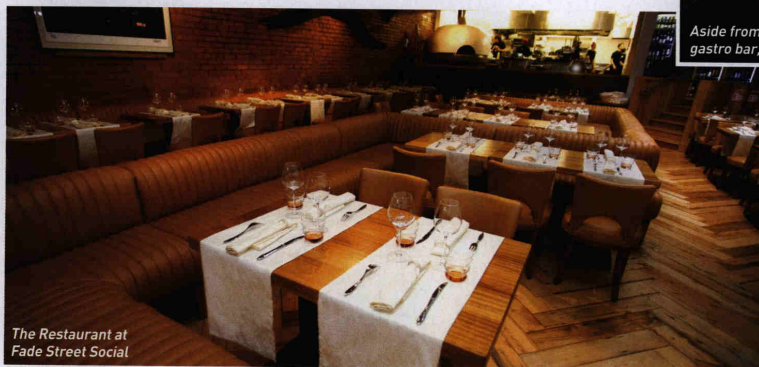
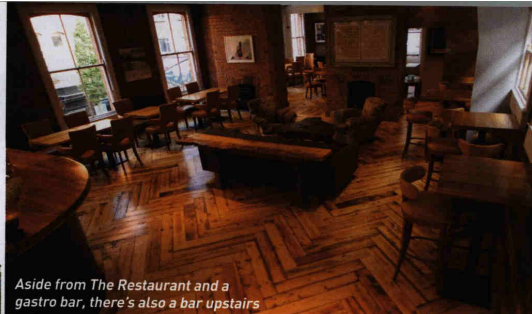


REVIEWS

# Eating out...



The Restaurant at Fade Street Social



Aside from The Restaurant and a gastro bar, there's also a bar upstairs

## Fade Street Social

4-5 Fade Street, Dublin 2.  
Tel: +353 (0)1 604 0066;  
[www.fadstreetsocial.com](http://www.fadstreetsocial.com)

Fade Street Social opened with a bang towards the end of last year. **Dylan McGrath's** reputation combined with his skilful display of culinary prowess on Ireland's MasterChef drew in the crowds. Rumours of long waits ensued. But now, several months on, both the gastro bar and the main restaurant have had a chance to get well into their stride.

Still, the place was drawing a serious crowd the Thursday evening we visited. We bypassed the more casual tapas section and headed for The Restaurant. Hopeless romantics take note, this is not the place to take your beloved for a quiet meal for two, or your hard-of-hearing granny for that matter, but then that's not the vibe they're going for. It's loud, very loud, and the lights are bright. The room itself is something else though, with exposed piping running along the ceiling, one red brick wall and, best of all, fantastic views of both the kitchens.

We were seated smack-bang in the middle of the bustling room, which was a little unnerving. We grappled with the large menu on the small table, as well as the seriously long drinks list. There was plenty of reading to do. We needn't have worried though; it turned out we had nothing but time, having been sat in what appeared to be the Bermuda triangle of the restaurant. Servers busily scurried around us, cleaning and resetting tables, clearing dishes, seemingly oblivious to our presence, with no one willing to claim us as their own. Finally, eye contact. We latched on and didn't

let go until our full order was placed. It took two attempts to get some water and the third time proved a charm in my request for a napkin, which had been missing from my table setting.

Still, down to business. From a very interesting cocktail list, I gave the 'Carrot Head' (€11.65) a go. Served in a cocktail flute, this frothy and light number made with homemade carrot purée and orange infused rum was refreshingly delicious. Out of an equally long list of beers, my companion tried the Fade Street Ale. This turned out to be the Scottish Caledonia Smooth, a similar but lighter version of Galway Hooker.

Starters ranged from white pudding and cabbage soup to smoked salmon layered on filo, baked with seaweed, crème fraîche and trout caviar. My companion bravely chose the beef tongue and Carpaccio of scallops (€9.50), but there were no regrets. Presented on a slice of flatbread straight from the woodfired oven

behind us, the delicate slices of scallops marinated in chervil and lemon zest were in contrast to the dark, brooding flavours of the crispy beef tongue. It was an inventive starter. Thankfully, we didn't have to fight for it as I was otherwise engaged with the rich, unctuous flavours of my pot of duck liver mousse (€10.50),

complete with baby white beans and bits of smoky bacon topped off with two long slivers of pink duck meat on crispy bread. Divine.

Choosing mains was a more complicated affair. There was the woodfired section of flatbreads, a range of braised stews and charred and smoked meats to choose from, before getting into the vegetarian and side options, not to mention the blackboard specials that were constantly being crossed off as the night progressed. Having heard good things about the

flatbreads, we gave the pumpkin, pork and chestnut variety a go (€17). Essentially an Irish take on pizza, the huge oval base presented on an even bigger wooden board would give any Italian pizzeria a run for its money. The charred thin and crispy base was perfection. The pulled pork on top was a touch on the dry side, but the Irish mozzarella, sweet onion purée and flavourful mushrooms more than made up for it.

Meanwhile, I was overdosing on smoky bacon, having ordered the braised rabbit legs with white wine, smoked bacon, tarragon and onion (€14.50) while, misguidedly, also ordering a side of the new potatoes glazed in sticky chicken stock, crushed egg, chervil and, you guessed it, more smoky bacon (€4.95). A slight oversight on my part given my choice of starter. Still, the rabbit stew boasted clean, simple flavours – the strong, aniseedy tarragon adding freshness to the earthy meat. The potato side was like an Irish take on carbonara, with the pasta replaced by spuds.

Despite our expanding waistlines, dessert beckoned. Being an old-fashioned kinda gal, Dylan's modern take on the classics was right up my street. Banoffi, sherry trifle, bread and butter pudding, black forest, pavlova and apple pie – you can't get more old school than that. I barely recognised the humble trifle all gussied up in a fancy cocktail glass, without a hundred and thousand in sight. It was a good rendition, but a bit more custardy goodness wouldn't have gone astray and it was steep at €10.50. Order envy ensued as my companion broke into his elegantly layered glass of banoffi (€7.50). Banana purée, banana sorbet, caramel jelly, caramel foam, caramelised condensed milk, vanilla crème fraîche and digestive crisps – seriously, what's not to like? We finished on a high.

**Dylan McGrath's** name will always bring with it high expectations and the food in Fade Street Social certainly lived up to them on this occasion; the service didn't and the room is never going to be everybody's cup of tea.

Orla Murphy

Open: (The Restaurant) lunch Mon – Fri 12.30pm – 2.30pm; dinner Mon – Sun 5pm – 10.30pm

**We loved the flatbreads**

**We spent €117 on two drinks, two starters, two mains, two desserts, one side and a bottle of wine**

Have you any restaurant recommendations? Tweet us @FoodAndWineMag #SPellegrinoReviews



ACQUA PANNA

THE FINE DINING WATERS

S. PELLEGRINO

