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HAPPY HOUR

Happy Hour of the Week

A fish feeding frenzy at Rose & Thistle

By [Joseph Manuel](#) • 4/2/2010 at 9:00am



As my buddy and I meandered toward Rose & Thistle on Northeast Broadway, visions of fried fish swam dreamily through my head for the hundredth time that day. See, in order to prepare for my Happy Hour report I'd done my best impression of a religious martyr and fasted (for five entire hours!). Needless to say, by this time I was ravenous as a damn werewolf. Upon our arrival I made note of the exterior: dark green and done up like ye olde public house from merry ol' England, with carved sign hanging in front. I was tempted to run home and snag my tri-corner hat in order to better mingle with the natives, but my mounting gastric distress wouldn't hear of it. Good thing, 'cause technically The Rose & Thistle is a Scottish pub. Sadly, my kilt was still at the cleaners.

I've always wanted to enter a tavern like Arnold in *Terminator 2*—come in with nothing and leave with a motorcycle and shotgun. Alas, my inner Schwarzenegger stayed put, as my tentative entrance got zero style points. As if to reinforce customer civility I eyeballed rows of medieval weapons plastered on the wall, that seemed to announce “no funny business” to any potential rough-housers. My lupine appetite then delivered a resounding dope-slap to my gut, bringing me back to reality and reminding me that I was here on a fishing expedition. We were greeted and seated by an amiable server with a string of potable prompts, and, after inquiring about the happy hour specials, she informed us that only drinks, not food, were discounted. Still, a 20-ounce “royal pint” for \$3.50 (well drinks a paltry \$2.75) is nothing to scoff at.

Among the ten offerings on tap was Fearless Scottish Ale, a brewskie from Estacada that I was unfamiliar with. In an attempt to pass myself off as a fellow Pict, I ordered up. Best decision I made all day. After my introductory sip, I was inspired to bust out the phone and text three friends, my grandmother, and Charlie, the family pitbull (Molly, our Yorkie, prefers Italian table wines), with lavish praise for the bold bite of Fearless. Bitter aroma aside, its sturdy and buttery profile could make even a totalitarian teatotaler take notice. Tasty though it was, my hunger continued to howl for fish.

After staving off starvation by gnawing on the napkin holder, I finally spied our enchanting hostess approaching with steaming platters so I did my best to mop up the drool pool in front of me. A word about the waitress: she was welcoming, informative, and attentive (but not annoying, like that flair-rockin' fool from Office Space), generously dropping knowledge on us about what makes R&T regulars return like swallows to Capistrano—and that would be the Scotch eggs, sausage rolls, and trivia night. Oh yeah, and the fish. The glorious fish.

My twin slabs of fried goodness (\$10.50) were gi-normous, as if removed from some legendary sea beast rather than your ordinary, run-of-the-mill cod. The kraken perhaps? If so, it was some cracking-good kraken. Tender and bursting with the same sea-salty allure that has lured mariners to watery graves for centuries. It comes with tartar sauce, but I didn't bother. The fries crisply done and held their own, but didn't keep me from focusing on the fish.



Tasty cod snarfed, my final drop of Fearless a sweet memory, and the free verse on the men's room wall dutifully critiqued and edited, my friend and I were ready to exit and in doing so I almost forgot to pay for my Hemingway-worthy fish. I attributed my amnesia to the R&T's cordial ambience. It's a neighborhood pub but the clientele won't look at you funny if they've never seen you before. Especially if you're stuffing your face with the fish.

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