

# NO.32

## CAN WE MIX IT?

The first memory that sprang to mind when I was asked to review No.32 Duke Street was an incident involving my boyfriend and an excitable hen party. Outside the popular eatery just off West Street, the latter took a shine to the former and attempted to smuggle him in by means of a merry and feather boa-clad Trojan horse. They were adamant that he should join their party at No.32 and since then, I have been meaning to ascertain what all the fuss was about.



We were led through the high-ceilinged, naturally lit restaurant area which opened out into a gallery above, and shown to one of the venue's three enticingly well-stocked bars. We were greeted by Kyle, No.32's charismatic brand manager, who took us on a precursory tour. We were shown the private booths that can be reserved for parties and the most sought-after table right beside the DJ booth. Kyle also explained that the restaurant floor doubles up as a dance floor on weekend evenings, when the venue transforms from elegant lunch spot into packed nightclub. Upstairs we explored the gallery, a dining area that leads out onto an open-air terrace lined with sofas. With the afternoon sun shining and a view of the lively street below, the terrace would be the perfect spot to soak up the Brighton atmosphere and enjoy a few drinks during the day or lounge under the heaters in the evening.



By now we had worked up a thirst for cocktails, so we settled into the easy chairs that flanked the bar to peruse the drinks menu. We took a good few minutes to decide on our first tipple thanks to the wonderfully extensive range of options. The cocktail menu was divided into seven categories including Classics, House,

By Maddie Maynard

Premium and Sparkling, with each section bursting with exciting new combinations as well as the old favourites.

My colleague decided on a Mai Tai (£9) and I plumped for the Lemon Tart (£8.50) with Kyle also joining us with his favourite Lychee and Rose Martini (£9.50). During the short wait for our cocktails (which could only be put down to the meticulous nature of the barman) Kyle introduced us to the owner, Ben, and explained that he was responsible for the entirety of the restaurant's interior design. This was impressive as the stylish, industrial-themed décor looked effortlessly classy.

Our drinks soon arrived and were accompanied by a description from barman Rico, who detailed the ingredients, method and special touches he had employed when making them. The Lemon Tart was sweetly acidic thanks to the addition of lemon juice, Absolut Citron vodka and Limoncello. This delicious tartness was balanced out by a silky and delicate coconut and egg-white foam, adding a tropical taste that was quite perfect. Featuring two types of rum and with a punch of almond from the Orgeat syrup, the Mai Tai was also sweet, refreshing and finished far too soon.



So it was on to the next round with a vibrant Pornstar Martini accompanied by a shot of Champagne for my colleague (£12), a sparkling Apple Crumble (£9.50) for Kyle and for me it had to be the house special, the No 32 (£9.50). This was a long, fruity drink packed with rich berry flavours provided by the Cherry brandy and freshly pressed fruit. The No 32 was topped with a sculpted ice shell which held a fresh blackberry and raspberry; a subtle but impressive touch which spoke of the barman's talent as well as pride in his work.

Sipping on our drinks and sharing stories about work and Pride, we were seduced by the chilled-out soundtrack (not to mention the gaze of Marlon Brando, who watched down from his photograph above the bar) until we forgot all about the pretext of our meeting. Tempted by the smells escaping from the kitchen, we took a look at the menu and agreed we would be back again soon to sample their lunchtime burger deal, extravagant lobster dishes or ingenious all-day brunch. No.32's slogan is 'Eat. Drink. Dance.' and that sounds like a challenge I'm willing to accept.

No 32, 32 Duke Street, Brighton, BN1 1AG  
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