



### Tir Na nOg

BY BRIAN ADORNETTO, *Food Editor*



I arrived a few minutes before our guests, so the sociable hostess led me to Tir Na nOg's large, well-stocked, rectangular bar where I sat under an elaborate wooden canopy. There, bartender Blair explained the seasonal draft selections and made me feel like an old friend and bar regular.

Looking around at the exposed brick and stone walls, there are maps of Ireland, flags, purposeful graffiti, Irish ads, old beer and whiskey barrels, Irish street signs, and plenty of televisions. On one side of the bar, there is a stone stage for the live bands that perform at Tir Na nOg every Thursday through Sunday. In front, there is a foosball table and a video game, and on the other side, table and booths for dining. There's also a private dining room that looks like a separate restaurant, complete with its own doors, stucco walls and thatched straw roof.

Once everyone arrived, we were seated by Tir Na nOg's General Manager, Annie Nice. She not only runs the place but also searches high and low for the great bands that perform at the pub. Annie, a native of Ireland, embodies the spirit of hospitality that permeates Tir Na nOg.



Thanks to her and her staff, the pub has a welcoming, "everybody knows me here" kind of vibe.

We started our lunch by sampling the Guinness Wings (\$7.95), Roasted Beet Salad (\$7.95) and "Ye Olde Celtic Nachos" (\$7.95). The large wings, marinated in the famous stout, came with a choice of sauces and could have been a meal on its own. The entrée-sized salad consisted of beets, pears, goat cheese, and toasted pita points. It was filling, texturally-appealing and came with a choice of dressings. The "nachos," clearly meant for sharing, were actually house-made kettle chips topped with pepper jack cheese sauce, chili and jalapenos and served with sides of sour cream and pico de gallo.

The kitchen then sent out a wide array of Tir

Na nOg's famous burgers and sliders. The beef is ground in-house daily and cooked to your liking. So if you like your beef burgers cooked medium rare, this is the place to go. Additionally, all of the beef versions weigh in at a healthy half pound.

We sampled the Blount St. Burger (\$8.25), Whiskey Burger (\$8.25), Chicken Burger (\$8.25), Lamb Sliders (\$8.55), and Shiitake Sliders (\$7.95). The Blount St., cooked to perfection, was layered with pimento cheese and fried onions. The Whiskey, spread with an Irish whiskey aioli and topped with chili and a fried egg, had a bit of a kick and was unlike any burger I've ever had. The zesty Chicken Burger with house-ground chicken, pepper jack cheese, crispy collard greens, and a spicy citrus aioli provided a texturally appealing option for those cutting back on red meat.



The three Lamb Sliders, a favorite of our lunch guest, Deep South's Dave Rose, were topped with sautéed onions and served with a side of Curry Sauce. The sauce was creamy, full of flavor and wonderfully complimented the ground lamb patty. The trio of Shiitake Sliders was Tir Na nOg's answer to the grilled portabella sandwich. This version, featuring a toasted bun, was topped with large sautéed shiitake mushroom caps that were infused with lemon and basil and crowned with caramelized onion. This was an extremely tasty vegetarian treat.

Mix in a beer list featuring locally-brewed draft beer, some Irish standards, an impressive offering of bottled microbrews, and a few domestic favorites, and you have Tir Na nOg, a great pub for lunch, after work, live music, or weekend fun.

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