

# Bartalk

So many bars, so little time  
*The Old Ship, Hammersmith*



with Ben McFarland



**Where is it?** On the bend of the river between the bridges of Hammersmith and Putney, perfectly placed to watch the boat race. **What's it like?** Sailing a lot steadier than it used to. A recent refurbishment dispatched the swooshing Sky Sports screens and a clichéd Captain Birdseye maritime theme. This has been replaced with luxurious brown leather banquettes, riverscape portraits, rope chandeliers and, of course, a rowing boat on the ceiling. It's a bit gentrified gastropub, but just as good for those only there

for the grog. **The drinks?** The wine list doesn't give one's wallet much room to manoeuvre but it's varied and offers a dozen by the glass. **On tap?** Uninviting lagers and a trio of oft-seen cask ales, the pick of which was Deuchars IPA. Could do better on the beers. **The food?** A vastly improved menu takes in sharing platters, venison lasagne, scallop and mussel linguine. The beef brisket and ale pie was terrific. Breakfast is served from 8am every day. **The entertainment?** Wi-fi and river-gazing. **Best seat?** Outside on the deck overlooking the river. *Ben McFarland*  
*The Old Ship, 25 Upper Mall, W6 9TD (8748 2593). Stamford Brook or Ravenscourt Park tube. 8am-11pm Mon-Sat; 8am-10.30pm Sun.*

**ANY EXCUSE...**

for a drink March 26 is the 170th anniversary of the Henley Regatta. Sip by the river at Dove, W5.

## It's the drink talking *Bourbon*

Dis-hyare state a Kentucky shore is swell. Bluegrass yeehaw, dem pistol-fast hawses, banjo-twangin yahoes, finger-lickin' dip-fried fowl – and lil ol' me, a damn fine American whiskey.

Must be nigh on 220 years since gallaivantin' folks what come from Scotland and Ireland began distilling sump'n to go get them outta kilter in Bourbon County. Corn was big business in Kentucky and I wouldn't be me if I dint have 51 per cent corn. Some folk use wheat (Maker's Mark) and some folk use rye (Woodford Reserve) but all folk have to leave me alone in charred oak barrels for two

years. The flame-licked wood makes me mellow, dark and sweeter than a monkey in a priddy dress.

Some people be sayin' I ain't got much edgy-cation and some people be sayin' they'd ruther drink Scotch whisky – but that's nothin' but wonky-toothed, plane ignert crazy talk. Them ower yonder in Scotland done get too big for them britches, thinkin' them sum kinda tuff guy. Specially seein' how theys always a buyin' our liddle biddy used barrels from us, to give their own whisky some flavour.

I is gonna whupp you with vanilla,

spice, tobacco, leather and dark fruit flavours. Mix me in the glass and I make a mydee fine Manhattan, a Sazerac, Old-Fashioned and a Mint Julep. And looky hyear, boy, quit your whoopin' anna hollerin' about that gosh-dang Jack Daniel's. He ain't no bourbon, he a Tennessee whiskey and if you don't know that, well, boy, you don't know Jack.

### Where to drink me

**The Lexington**  
Recently opened American whiskey lounge with a vast selection of bourbons. *The Lexington, 96 Pentonville Rd, N1X 9JB (7837 5371).*

**The Rockwell Bar**  
A swish basilica of bourbon on Trafalgar Square. *Trafalgar Hotel, 2 Spring Gardens, SW1A 2TS (7870 2900).*  
**Salt Whisky Bar**  
Marylebone style bar with more than 200 whiskeys, whiskies and bourbons, and an impressive selection of classic bourbon cocktails. *82 Seymour St, W2 2JB (7402 1155).*



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## Nude Espresso



Good sarnies, even better coffee

★★★★  
**Coffee shop in Spitalfields**

Antipodean coffee enthusiasts wax lyrical about the coffee shops back home, and with good reason. Australians seem particularly adept at sniffing out the best beans, high roasts, espresso machines and baristas; the better coffee shops in Melbourne, Sydney and Auckland put most London cafés to shame. **Nude Espresso** – bad name, good coffee – has a Kiwi owner and is staffed by a bunch of Aussies. They're using Monmouth Coffee to make flat whites (£2.20 each) – the down-under name for a variant on the Italian caffè latte. A shot of espresso is expressed into the coffee cup; then by carefully drawing steamed milk from the jug, a smoother, creamier coffee is the result. Do this right, and you can draw pretty patterns in the foam on top too.

I'd rate the flat white here near-perfect, but there's more to going **Nude** than that. Italian breads such as focaccia are filled with simple but good fillings like salamis and salads. The breads and the morning goods (pains aux raisins and croissants) are bought in, but the cakes and even the chutneys are made on the premises.

In the Antipodes you'll find cakes called friands, which are similar to the French financier or madeleine. They're light sponge cakes with ground almond and fruit flavourings, and you'll find them here – in this case, with blueberries. Recommended.

Just as importantly, **Nude Espresso** has a good vibe. It's simply but tastefully decorated, with good-looking furniture and fresh flowers on the tables; mellow music sets the mood, and many of our fellow visitors were using the free wi-fi to surf on their iBooks. The café has a booze licence and sells decent wines, but currently closes at 6pm. *Guy Dimond*  
*Nude Espresso, 26 Hanbury St, E1 6QR (07804 223590/www.nudeespresso.com). Aldgate East tube or Liverpool St tube/rail. 7.30am-6pm Mon-Fri; 10am-6pm Sat, Sun. Lunch for two with service: around £16.*

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