

What's New?

The York!

"The area lacked a proper hangout," explains Ryan Ballinger, co-owner of The York, a tasty, cutting edge gastropub on the eastern outskirts of Hollywood, California, in a rebounding neighborhood called Highland Park. Named for the boulevard on which it is situated, The York is coincidentally more New York than L.A. in its look and feel.

At 5pm on a Saturday, the horseshoe bar is already crowded, customers gripping tequila cocktails (the house specialty is La Paloma, made with grapefruit juice, soda, lime juice and reposado tequila), dining on Hoisin-marinated baby back ribs or sipping, either from the selection of wines by the glass or from

the well-thought-out array of beers on tap.

Everything is ordered through the bar from hand-written menus on oversized blackboards, and here it's about good food and good drink, thus the term gastropub, a moniker that began in London a decade ago when pub service began taking upscale steps.

The partners, Ballinger and Gabriel Byer, tested the area to see if it indeed merited a hip joint. "We would go out on Tuesday nights and see which neighborhoods were attracting decent business. There were very few bars in this locality, but the ones operating were packed. We figured we could lure some of the clientele our way."

They were right. The stark utilitarian space—the edifice was built in 1934—is a workhorse, completely remodeled since its stint as The Wild Hare. The new owners updated The York with a brick-meets-steel-beams look with a 22-foot-high barrel-vaulted truss ceiling. Casement windows sport street-forward seating.

The York opens in phases seven nights a week, unfolding at 5 p.m. for family dining or early quaffing, continuing 7 till 9 for serious foodies and the cocktail/wine crowd and then developing into full party stage after that. Every night. We love the sign behind the bar, a testament to positive energy: "Be nice or leave." We predict people will be nice and will keep coming back. ■■



Brandon Bartlett of Future Brands supports the spirits program at The York with owners Gabriel Byer (left) and Ryan Ballinger (far right).

Sangria in the Courtyard

Whether because of his culinary training or his travels in Spain, Albert Silvera has formulated a haven for tapas and sangria lovers in West Hollywood's Courtyard restaurant. As the name suggests, the bistro is mostly outdoors—a quiet, shaded oasis in the midst of busy Santa Monica Boulevard.

Courtyard restaurant's owner puts the "song" in Sangria with Flavored versions such as blueberry-mint and peach.

