

Dallas Observer - Best of Dallas 1999
Best Pub

When the owners at the Dubliner decided to open a pub in a building on Henderson, a building rife with a history of failed businesses, they couldn't have predicted the across-the-board success the Old Monk would immediately become. As popular with the soccer-and-Guinness crowd as with intrepid yups and Dallas rockwannabes, the Monk pours its pints with plenty of charm and gusto, with a music selection to please most any critical pop fan and a menu more aligned with New American casual than U.K. grilled cheese. This is a neighborhood pub in the truest sense; any trip on any night of the week reveals a room of folks from the Lower Greenville-Lakewood area, and if you live in those parts, chances are you'll run into someone you know. Granted, the Monk is overrun with SMU types on weekend nights, keeping many of the Boddington's-swilling weeknight regulars at bay, but the woody, easy atmosphere stands up to even the hilliest silicone and blondest bleach.

Dallas Observer - Best of Dallas 2000
Best Pub Grub

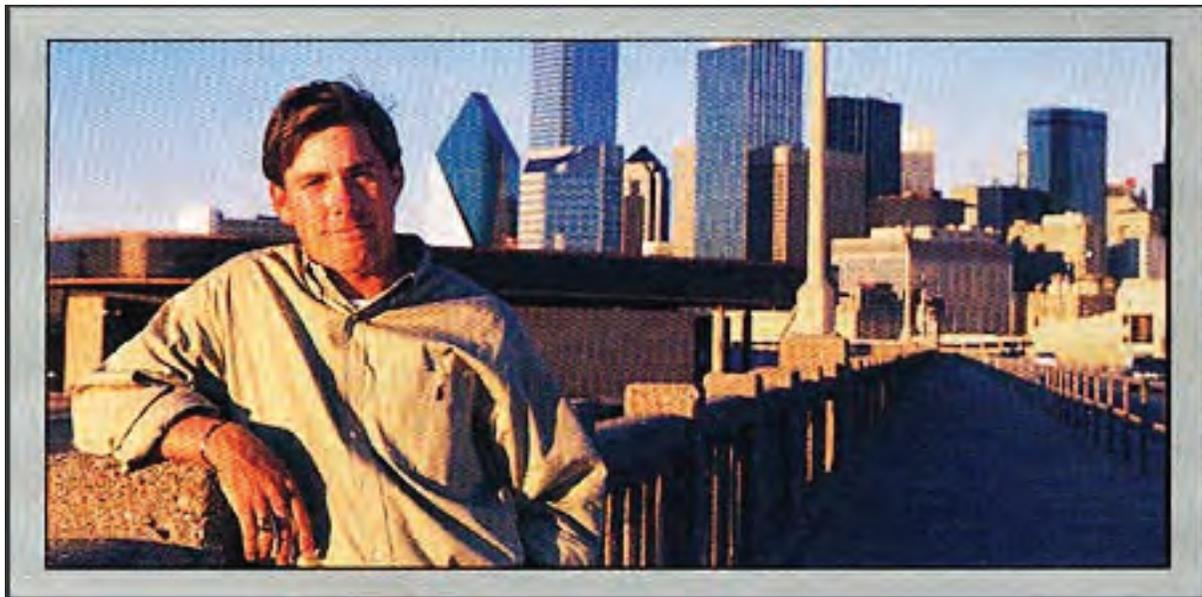
Most beer gulpers don't have a palate that ventures much beyond leftovers found between the couch cushions. But Trappist monks have always enjoyed good food to go along with their beer brewing – or so we've been told. That's why the Old Monk, a pub rife with Trappist monk imagery, has a range of good nibbles such as delicious mussels steamed in beer spiked with garlic and herbs, cheese boards, and fried calamari sleeved in a light, airy batter. What we want to know is, do monks pray before the same altar the rest of us do when the brew gets out of hand?

Dallas Observer - Best of Dallas 2001
Best Fried Calamari

Few gastronomical adventures really excite us anymore. We love good food, but it seems as though we're too jaded – or just too fat – to believe that there is really any end-all, be-all dish. "Oh, the sea bass, yes, it was tremendous, but surely someone in town does it better, no?" Not so with this dish. No one in town does fried calamari better. No one on this earth does calamari better. It simply cannot be prepared in any more perfect a fashion than it is at Old Monk. The delicate ovals of splendiferous squid are feather-dusted in an impossibly light, perfect batter and then deep-fried. The quick-flash result is the most orgasmic experience of which any cephalopod has ever taken part. We figure, anyway.

Golf Digest - July 2001

Justin Leonard's hometown picks: Best bar: The Old Monk





The Old Monk serves such well-prepared and exquisitely interesting fare that it seems inappropriate to relegate it to the “bar food” category. But that’s what co-owner Feargal McKinney wanted when he and his partners opened the Old Monk four years ago.

“The thinking behind the menu was food that tasted good with imported beer,” he explains.

Taste good it does – visit after visit after visit.

Chef Kirk Mexia, who has been at Old Monk since shortly after it opened, runs the kitchen with a firm hand and an eye to consistency.

The Old Monk is comfortable, with homey exposed brick very much in the style of English or Irish pubs. It’s decorated with a fascinating selection of new and old beer signs and a back bar from an English chemist’s shop. A few items came from a Pennsylvania monastery, which, in part, was the reasoning behind the name. Mr. McKinney says that he, his wife and a third partner kept returning to a monastic theme.

Trappist monks are famous for their beer, and the Old Monk should be famous for food.

The menu has only 16 items, which range from traditional pub grub such as German sausages (\$7.50) and fish and chips (\$7.50) to the national dish of Belgium, moules frites (mussels and french fries, \$8.95). The mussels and fries are as good, or better, than versions I have eaten in France.

Thirty small mussels were steamed in Hoegaarden, a Belgian white ale, with garlic, shallots and herbs. Moules are traditionally prepared with white wine, but steaming them in a crisp white ale perfectly elevates the shellfish nectar without adding the acidic bite of cheap white wine. Old Monk’s version adds skinny frites and a spicy mayo to dress the fries.

Although moules frites are the best reason to visit the Old Monk, other dishes are done almost as well. Guinness beef stew (\$3.25 cup, \$5.95 bowl) had more beef than vegetables in a sauce that tasted more like a good bourguignon than a reduction of Guinness Stout. It had depth and complexity without overwhelming weight. And it was thin – like rich soup – not thick or gluey. Fish and chips and deep-fried calamari (\$5.50) both use the same light, fine, tempura-like beer batter. Both the fish and the chips were enhanced by traditional malt vinegar. The calamari were slightly greasy, but the fish and chips were well-fried. The calamari came with a kicky marinara sauce infused with oregano.

The most expensive dish on the menu is the cheese board (\$10.50 for three items plus garnishes), a favorite in European pubs but rare around here. Choose from seven cheeses and one salami. The cheeses generally reflect the national origins of Old Monk’s core beers. They include English cheddar cheeses and Stilton as well as farmer’s cheese, brie, Derby and Bruder Basil. The board comes with apple, tomato, tiny cornichons and garlic bread. All this and the generous cheese wedges made a large appetizer, suitable for two or more.

Sandwiches are made with Boars Head brand meats, and a few are more interesting than most bar fare. Smoked salmon (\$7.95) on toasted marble rye with capers, cucumber and red onion looked worth a try, as did the burgers (\$5.50) and a vegetarian Reuben made with portobello mushroom (\$5.95).

Mr. McKinney wants people to remember that Old Monk is a bar, not a restaurant.

The bar is stocked with fine draft beers from Ireland, England, Belgium and Germany. Beers such as Maredsous (\$5), a strong Belgian ale, and Paulaner Hefe, an unfiltered German brew, are popular.

If you are allergic to smoke or offended by it, be forewarned: Old Monk has no non-smoking area, and remember, people like to smoke in bars.

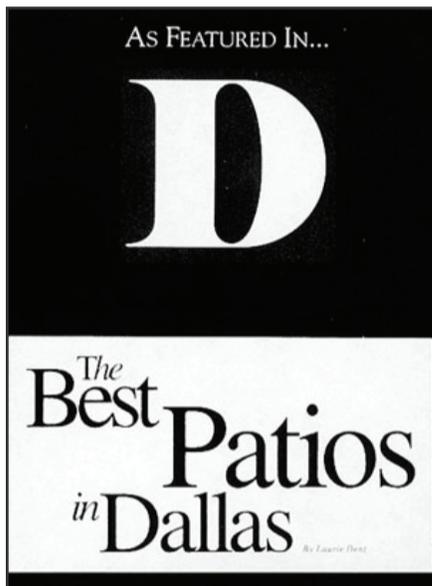
To be on the safe side, Mr. McKinney recommends that smoke phobics visit on a weekend afternoon, before the younger smoking and drinking crowd arrives.



There are several elements to a good bar. A good bar must have an outdoor sitting area to enjoy the six days of nice weather we have each year. (Check.) Inside, the bar must be dark, for ambience and illicit hookups. (Check.) The waitstaff must be friendly but not fake, knowledgeable but not pushy. (Check.) The beer selection must be ample. (Check.) The clientele must have a median age above 29 but have enough pieces of 21-year-old male and female eye candy to make the view pleasant. (Check.) It must have good food. (Oh, sweet heaven, is that ever a check. The calamari, the fish and chips, the mussels, the cheese board....) And it must have a pub-like worn-in feel. (Check.) That is the Old Monk. That's why it rules.

D Magazine - June 2003

The Best Patios in Dallas: Best Patio to Meet and Greet (by Laurie Dent)



Beer, friends, and steamed mussels – what else do you need? Old Monk is a comfortable Henderson Avenue rendezvous for catching up with buddies or for the simple pleasure of people watching. The covered patio is completely no fuss, save one wall mural of three rotund gentlemen engaging in a little beer recreation. Stay at the bar long enough and you might see the real thing.

What to wear: White monogrammed tank top, Abercrombie short denim skirt, armband tattoo, and a copy of *Catcher in the Rye*.

Tip: Old Monk has a large selection of Belgium beers and excellent bar food. Happy hours are weekdays from 4-7 p.m.

iExplore.com - June 2003

The Old Monk

The Old Monk is a Euro-styled pub that places an emphasis on all things Belgian. It has an impressive selection of Belgian brews on tap and in bottles, including Affligem, Chimay, Corsendock, De Koninck, Duvel, Hoegaarden, Lucifer, Mannekin Pis and Maredsous (which, in this writer's opinion, just might be the best beer on the planet). There's also a small but respectable selection of beers from Germany, Britain, Holland and the United States, and there's always a few seasonal and new offerings listed on the specials board.

Inside, you'll find lots of dark wood and exposed brick. It's sort of a whimsical mix of old beer signs (most of which represent brands you've never heard of) and old relics from a Pennsylvania monastery (hence the bar's name), including a large metal chandelier that hangs from the middle of the room. The back bar is from an English chemist's shop. While other Euro-themed American pubs fail because they look like they're trying too hard to look old world, The Old Monk succeeds in its whimsical simplicity. Patio seating on picnic-style tables offers a good view of the vibrant nightlife along Henderson Avenue.

Unlike most of the other establishments in this journal, The Old Monk serves food. For starters, it offers a few items such as calamari and Guinness beef stew. The rest of the menu is limited to maybe a dozen and a half plates and sandwiches, and features typical pub fare such as fish-and-chips and German sausages, along with a few interesting offerings such as an Irish smoked salmon sandwich served on toasted marble rye. The important thing to remember is that the food quality here far exceeds what one might expect from your run-of-the-mill pub. The signature item is mussels frites (mussels and french fries). The mussels are steamed in Hoegaarden, a Belgian white ale, with shallots, celery, garlic and herbs, accompanied by skinny fries and seasoned mayo.

On a recent visit, I ordered the fish-and-chips, which, quite frankly, were the best I've ever had. Atlantic cod fillets are dipped in a Bass Ale batter and served with thick steak fries and tartar sauce. The fish was fried to perfection, not greasy, and had a wonderful, spicy zip. Along with my glass of Maredsous, I was in Belgian beer heaven.

About the only drawback I can think of is that The Old Monk can get quite crowded. If avoiding large crowds ranks high on your list, try stopping by on a weekend afternoon. The Old Monk is a great place to relax, enjoy and ice-cold beer, and snack on some great food.

Texas Monthly - August 2003
Restaurant Guide: The Old Monk



Whether you choose the German plate (grilled bratwurst, knackwurst, sauerkraut, and potato salad), the Guinness beef stew, or a burger with steak fries, the term "bar food" doesn't do it justice. Just off Central, this pub and pleasant beer garden offers a wide selection of German, British, Dutch, and other beers. One of them, the Belgian Hoegaarden, is even used to steam mussels with celery and onions, a signature dish. Bar. Inexpensive to moderate.

D Magazine - September 2004
The Old Monk

Sure, this dimly lit bar has all the trappings of a European pub, including draft beer from Ireland, England, Belgium, and Germany. But the food is the standout here, with arguably the best fish and chips in town. People watching is prime.

D Magazine - June 2005
The Old Monk

Full disclosure: the Old Monk is on our way home from work and gets a considerable amount of our business. So much business that we consider the waitstaff our friends and the pub our second home. In our defense, the service is friendly, and the Henderson Avenue spot is clean but not pretentious, cozy but not confining. The frites are the best we've ever had, and the European draft beer is so plentiful that we're almost willing to stray from "the usual."

D Magazine - July 2005
The Old Monk

Those outside the 'hood may know Feargal McKinney's place as a watering hole, but those within walking distance pop in regularly for crispy fish and chips, divine steamed mussels, and frites to go with their imported beers.

Digital City - 2006
City's Best: The Old Monk

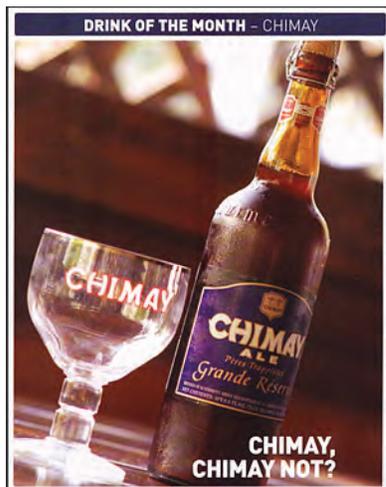
The Old Monk is a snug little bar with seating tucked in around the walls and a dark, old-fashioned atmosphere with lots of brick and wood. It will remind you of a quaint Irish pub -- even if you've never been to a quaint Irish pub. The walls are adorned with old and unusual beer signs and the decor includes knickknacks from a monastery in Pennsylvania -- hence the name. Old Monk has somewhat of a split personality. Although it is a bar, the owners pay close attention to the food. The selection and quality are way beyond what you would expect from a pub. In addition to the sausage and fish and chips, you'll find mussels, salmon and a variety of soups. The beer selection, as you might expect, is extensive and includes plenty of draft beers from Ireland, England, Germany and Belgium.

Dallas Observer - Best of Dallas 2006
Best Bar Food

A night out at the bar. You've been knockin' back a Stella or 10 with your gang, maybe playing a little game of "Who Would You Rather?" (Ugh, Barbara Walters.) You're starting to get a little hungry. But you're smart, and you didn't drive to the bar, which means no trip to Jack in the Box for some grease pocket tacos. Better hope you're at the Old Monk, 'cause the Knox-Henderson staple kills every other burger-and-fries-servin' drinking establishment in town when it comes to bar food. Two words: cheese plate. Floppy, frozen french fries don't stand a chance against the Five Counties cheddar, tasty deli meats and tiny little gherkins on the Old Monk plate. If you want heftier fare, the Guinness beef stew will tide you over till you wake up from that hangover tomorrow around noon. And the sandwiches? Oh yes, the sandwiches are big enough for two jonesin' drinkers to feel plenty satisfied. After you've felt the love of the Old Monk, you'll never look at 2 a.m. hamburger quite the same way. Or ever again.

Envy | Dallas Life - November 2006
Pubs: The Old Monk

Lindemans Framboise and Chimay on tap... mais non, est ce possible? This neighborhood pub makes it possible by pouring hard to find imports from Belgium, Germany, England and Ireland. If you swill something made by someone who has devoted his life to the almighty and making beer, chances are it tastes damn good. Dress Code: Casual



Okay, I have to level with you guys and goils. All of these sweet cocktails with fruit garnishes and salt rimmed edges have been giving me a bit of a toothache. I mean, can a girl just get a beer? Well, yes. Apparently she can.

The mecca of beers, The Old Monk, offers over 100 different ales, stouts, draughts, bottles and ciders. This pub is a chill, dim lit favorite filled with good people and good music (think Arctic Monkeys, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Yeah Yeah Yeahs and the Mad Scientists).

Mick and Bryan were my tutors for the night, informing me on all of the different selections. Sheesh, what's a girl to choose? After a couple of different tastings, I chose the Blue Chimay Grand Reserve. Bryan, who seems to have a Ph.D. in beer, told me that monks brew Chimays and drink them while they are fasting just to keep their bodies going. The monks also donate the proceeds to orphanages. What?! Another reason to rationalize my drinking habits?! Well, I am all about helping kids, so I decided to order a couple...or five.

The Blue Chimay contains 9% alcohol, so it is pretty strong but with a nice, smooth finish. My fellow drinker, a.k.a. the poor fellow ENVY employee I dragged out of the office to accompany me, would agree. After a couple glasses, Amy was stretching, kicking her legs extremely fast-just to see if she could do it-and asking some guy if she could have his old school Nike jacket. He was so impressed he zipped the jacket off and handed it to her without hesitation. That or he was just plain scared.

So it turns out that Chimay isn't just fun to say, tasty to drink and strong-it's also capable of inspiring people to do a few leg kicks and take off articles of clothing. Yesss, count me in.

If you don't know, now ya know...

Head over to The Old Monk, or their sibling bar, The Idle Rich Pub, and ask for a cold Chimay Grand Reserve. Do it. Do it.

Dallas Observer - Best of Dallas 2007
Best Bar Food

There are plenty of bars where you can grab a decent bite in Dallas -- Lee Harvey's, the Meridian Room and the Lakewood Landing all come to mind -- but The Old Monk is the only one we frequent even when we're not drinking. From the sizable burgers to the awesome fish and chips, everything on the menu is tasty, and it's all better with a side of the best skinny fries in town. And don't forget your vegetarian friends, who'll surely love the renowned (in our world at least) vegetarian Reuben. You'll find us on the large patio, a must in our book since most of Dallas' bar scene still hasn't come around to the idea that food tastes a lot better when it's not accompanied by the smell of cigarettes.

Dallas Observer - Best of Dallas 2007
Best Beer Joint

At The Old Monk you can select from 14 beers on draft and nearly 50 bottled beers, including Belgian varieties so strong they could intoxicate Nate Newton. Of course, it's not just the selection of fine brew that makes The Old Monk a Dallas institution; it's the cozy feel of the place, highlighted by dark wood floors, elegant antiques and round, polished tables that look like they came from your grandparents' house, which in our case render us a little nostalgic. While the place is always full, the bartenders have a knack for handling your drink requests quickly and perfectly, giving patrons the best of both worlds: a fun, lively atmosphere and top-shelf service.

D Magazine - February 2007
Restaurants: The Old Monk

Those outside the 'hood may know Feargal McKinney's place as a watering hole, but those within walking distance pop in regularly for crispy fish and chips, divine steamed mussels, and frites to go with their imported beers. Full bar.

Envy | Dallas Life - December 2007
[YUM] Old Monk

This neighborhood pub makes it possible to enjoy hard-to-find imports from Belgium, Germany, England and Ireland. If you swill something made by someone who has devoted his life to the almighty and making beer, chances are it tastes goods. Dress Code: Casual

D Magazine - March 2008
Nightlife: The Old Monk

This Henderson Avenue spot is clean but not pretentious, cozy but not confining. The service is friendly, the frites are the best we've ever had, and the European draft beer is so plentiful that we're almost willing to stray from "the usual."

D Magazine - October 2010
Beer! Your Guide to the Finest Taprooms in Dallas: The Old Monk



Talk about convivial! What's not to love about The Old Monk's häus vibe and affinity for Belgian ales? Ten years since his last crawl through the area, national Brewers Association director Paul Gatz still remembers The Old Monk as being all about Belgian ales before Belgian ales were cool.

Show up on a weekend afternoon, when you can grab the attention of Carsen "Jake" Jacobsen, manager and on-site enthusiast, who, alongside owner Feargal McKinney, shepherds guests through an appreciation of limited-run, cask-conditioned firkins (minikegs). For as long as it's available, go straight for the cask-conditioned Avery IPA, a hand-pumped, unfiltered, unpasteurized, hoppy delight that is untainted by extra CO₂ and reminds me of the very best of those semipro basement homebrews of old. Pair it with a Chimay-beer-cheese cheeseburger, and watch the stars align. As an alternate, go for a Maredsous Belgian blonde that is so silky, delicious, and drinkable that it will be gone before you know you've begun.

Extra points go to the Monk for its insouciant staff and cozy corners, the combination of which makes it a perfect first-date wooing ground, a dark and friendly place where, with a modicum of advance work, you can come off as casual yet clued in. Jake's suggestion: show your date you can parse a beer menu by ordering a champagne-style bottle of the little-known La Chouffe Belgian bottled beer (best shared entre deux), pairing it with a Chevrion, Saint André, and Red Leicester cheese board. The combined influence of your ordering skill and the Monk's natural amity will cause your date not only to swoon in gastronomic bliss but also wonder what other insider knowledge lurks behind your mild-mannered facade.



This is a pub that even the most provincial Trappist monk would find cozy. The Old Monk offers drafts beers from England, Ireland, Germany and Belgium, and around 70 bottled beers. Once you've stopped ogling the beer menu, don't miss the bar's noteworthy decor. Probably thanks to its close proximity to a bunch of antique stores, it's festooned with lights from a Pennsylvania monastery, a back-bar from an English chemist's shop and roughly hundred-year-old altar door. With an added bonus of foodie awards for the best pub in town, The Old Monk is the go-to place for adventurous beer drinkers.

Serves Food, Excellent Beer Selection, Super Service

Dallas Observer - Best of Dallas 2012
Best Bar Food: The Old Monk

So many bars relegate food to burgers, wings and nachos, forgetting all the finer menu items that go well with a cold beer. Mussels served with a Belgian ale might be one of life's greatest culinary pleasures, and fish and chips with a pub draft can border on divine. The Old Monk does both of these well, and rounds out the menu with a good Reuben and a chicken sandwich featuring pistachio-breaded chicken tenders. Hell, there is even a decent burger if you want to be a traditionalist. If you're the kind of person who comes to a bar to drink beer, though, the Old Monk has you covered, with a shifting selection of craft brews from around the world. Work your way through the beers while sampling one of the greatest (and under appreciated) beer pairings: a well curated cheese board.

Dallas Observer - Best of Dallas 2012
Best Place to Watch the Game: The Old Monk

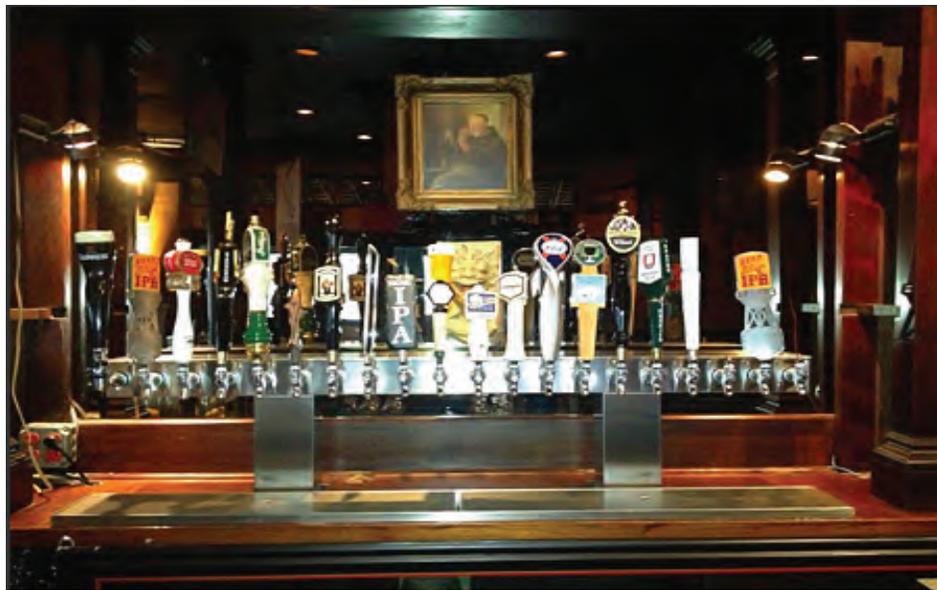


This distinction isn't given based on the television-to-patron ratio. If that were the case, The Old Monk would surely lose out in this super scientific selection process. No, this is based on a handful of criteria that enrich the sports-watching experience: Patio, food, booze and, yeah, televisions. The Old Monk has one of the best patios on Henderson, which is a generally accepted fact and of the utmost importance during basketball season. You can choose from an admirable selection of microbrewed draft and bottled beers and order some pretty tasty mussels while watching the game.



Un pub irlandais traditionnel en plein coeur de Dallas, qui sert une excellente cuisine de brasserie et propose plus de cent crus de bières artisanales américaines ou européennes, ainsi qu'un grand choix de cidres et de whiskys. On appréciera l'ambiance discrète et décontractée, une alternative bienvenue au luxe tapageur qui caractérise bon nombre des restaurants de Dallas. (photo credit Allison V Smith)

Advocate Magazine (Lakewood) - June 2013
Restaurant Talk: The Old Monk (by Whitney Thompson)



I remember every detail of my first dining experience at The Old Monk. It was 7 years ago, I was new to Texas, and fearful that Dallas might be the plastic, un-inspired city that I was warned about. My friends said to me before I moved, "No no, go to Austin, you will be so much happier there."

But as I sat on the patio with the trellis filtering in some early September sun, and some song from the magical "Funeral" album by Arcade Fire playing in the background, I thought that maybe if a place like The Old Monk sticks around in Dallas, then perhaps I'd be able to stick around too.

What makes this place so great? It's laid-back. The food has been consistently good for years. The service is friendly and un-intrusive. Since 1998 The Old Monk has been nailing what every new-fangled upscale pub is trying to do now-serving great beer and pub food that isn't greasy and nasty. There is nothing pretentious about it, and no experimental food that's overly priced. And the Irish entrées are hearty and delicious, which always helps.

There was a time a couple months ago when I was getting a little sick of The Monk. They had the same 6 or 7 beers on tap, and only two rotator taps, and more pubs were catching on to having local beers on tap that I wanted to try. But last month, the pub installed a new draught tower and walk-in beer cooler which has breathed some new life into The Old Monk.

I can almost hear the monks of ages past rejoicing. I popped in to the restaurant last week and my Stella was crisp and clean. They spruced up the menu too by adding some fancy cocktails, (The Purple Jesus is tasty, if for some strange reason you don't want beer.) However the new food menu has all of the same good eats, including the best cheese board in the world...

As I drove home after the meal I saw the "For Lease" signs peppering the windows of vacant restaurants that weren't able to find their niche on Henderson, serving as additional testimony to The Old Monk being able to successfully hold it down in a neighborhood constantly in flux.