

Review: Four Green Fields



By Dan and Melissa Wolfe

With St. Patrick's Day quickly approaching, my husband and I embarked on a hunt for the best Irish food in Tampa. What we found was Four Green Fields, tucked into the heart of the downtown/South Tampa area.

Located on the corner of West Platt Street and Parker Avenue, Four Green Fields is an unassuming cottage pub with traditional thatched roofing that helps it stand out from the neighboring skyscrapers and palm trees.

Boasting over 10 premium beers on tap and a bar menu that includes everything from classic Irish fare, such as shepherd's pie and Guinness stew, to bacon burgers and onion rings, Four Green Fields offers a delicious and authentic Irish pub experience.

I knew I was in for a treat the moment I walked through its bright green door, and seemingly, into Ireland.

The walls are adorned with Guinness

advertisements from the 1920's, historical maps and flags of Ireland, photos of famous Irishmen, and other odds and ends that lent themselves to the overall ambience of the pub.

The regular sports bar fare of non-stop ESPN is nowhere to be found, in fact the pub is completely free of TV's. Instead, this quaint thatched cottage encourages a universally accepted Irish trait – the gift of gab.

It is this gift we first noticed in our host, the pub's manager Randy Burns. He did a quick once-over of the dining area, saying a few words here and there to every table, making sure everyone felt

welcome. He finally came to us and took a seat. This was the first of many things he did that made 4GF seem less like an establishment operating for profit, and more like a cozy neighborhood pub.

The first thing we noticed was the color of our food: the shrimp and cape cod fish were battered to a perfect gold; the smoked salmon on toast was delightfully offset by a sprinkling of green capers



and red onions; and the vibrancy of the lettuce, lemons, and sauces made this plate a feast for the eyes as well as the palette.

The made-from-scratch sauces were not to be overlooked; the cocktail sauce was about par for the course, but the tartar sauce was the stuff of legend. It took all our restraint not to dip our fingers in it once the fish was gone.

Next came the potato-leek soup. I've had this before, so I knew exactly what I was getting myself into. Heaping chunks of potato, a few slices of carrot, some grilled onions and leeks were all brought together in a broth that made me wish it were cold outside just so I could order another bowl or two.

Finally the house special, the Guinness stew. It's made from scratch, just like everything else, with beef that looks sized for kebabs and generous portions of everything else: potatoes, onions, carrots, and scallions. Like a good stew should be, you can tell that it was made about a day or so earlier and set in the fridge to let the flavors marry.

When the dish arrived, it was warm and inviting – like the pub itself. The stew also came with Irish soda bread, which Randy informed us he makes by hand a few times a week. It was a fantastic complement to both the stew and the soup, and we made short work of all three.

Randy then brought out one of the house favorites – the burger. Piled high with crispy bacon, a thick slice of cheddar, ripe tomato, red onion, and fresh lettuce, it's no joke.

"A burger's a burger – everyone makes 'em, but ours are really something special," Randy told us.

He's right. Our burgers were medium rare, and the bottom bun was soaked with juice – just the way I like it.

A few minutes and a handful of napkins later, I was stuffed. We had been through a great cross-section of their menu and tasted some of the finest food they had to offer.

Our ice-cold beers acted as fantastic counterpoints to every dish, and being surrounded by authentic Irish décor and music only enhanced our experience.

If you find yourself in South Tampa or downtown, and you feel like a visit to the old country, look no further: Four Green Fields is just a pint and a handshake away from the real thing.

