



We asked readers which places to eat and drink in Norwich they would recommend to Rendezvous visitors. Ex-Norwichian **Tom Rennell** reviews your responses

The results are in, the votes counted and the winners and losers of *Run Off and Restructuring's* Big Norwich Rendezvous survey 2009 can be announced. Despite many people struggling to remember the exact names of the bars and restaurants they frequent during this annual gathering (I can't think why), we would like to thank everyone who proffered their thoughts and opinions on the best watering holes and feeding troughs in the fair city that is Norwich.

As any Norwichian (yes that is the right word) will tell you there is a church for every week of the year and a pub for every day. Sadly this is no longer true and recent years have seen a number of Norwich's favourite boozers close down. The extent of the recession's effect on Norwich's pubs and bars should not be underestimated and Rendezvous attendees are encour-

aged to assist efforts to keep the trade alive by visiting some of the vast array of drinking establishments still open. We must all do our duty in these hard times.

Best Overall Pub award goes to Delaneys. Being positioned just next door to St Andrews Hall is not without its benefits and has ensured that this Irish pub is by far and away the favourite of the Rendezvous goer. Large and spacious with sports TV, it serves a damn good Guinness at honest prices. If you can't find someone this is not a bad place to start looking.

Best Beer goes to Norwich's oldest pub, the Adam and Eve. Established in 1249 its first patrons were the workers who built the famous cathedral it is just a short walk from. Ask and the bar staff will tell you of the various ghosts that are said to haunt the premises. With a nice selection of good ales and highly

cosy atmosphere Adam and Eve is well worth a trip for the beer lover. If memory serves it also houses a nice selection of whiskies. If memory serves.

Honorable mentions for beer go to the Fat Cat and the Belgian Monk. The former is the Good Pub Guide's 2008 pub of the year and the first pub in Britain to win the CAMRA national pub of the year twice. Bit of a trip from the centre but the taxi ride is worth it to see just how many ales are on offer. The latter is much closer to St Andrews Hall and offers a range of Belgian and continental lagers of varying strengths. Try a couple of bottles of 'Delirium' at your own peril. The standard Belgian fare of mussels and frites is on hand to soak up any excess alcohol.

Far and away the Best Wine Bar award goes to The Last Wine Bar, which also was voted the 'best place for a quiet meal'. Just over the river from



St Andrews Hall, this bar and restaurant is in a converted Victorian shoe factory. The upstairs drinking area is bright and airy and boasts a wine list some 18 pages long! The downstairs dining area has also received some glowing comments in the survey, both for the standard of food and the intimate atmosphere that is perfect for a private meal.

Best places for a loud drink with plenty of atmosphere include the already mentioned Delaney's as well as nearby Ribs of Beef or the Norwich Playhouse. Most popular choice however goes to tapas bar La Tasca. Located on Tombland it has a fantastic outside space which can be truly beautiful in the right weather – it was also last year's venue for the Rendezvous band. Think sangria, paella and plenty of dancing.

Rendezvous goers are suspiciously unsure about the best place to go for a quiet drink in the city. RSL's Steve Goate suggests 'just about anywhere away from the hall'. Best bet is to simply wander away from the crowd and you are sure to find somewhere that suits.

Unfortunately dining in Norwich has suffered as much as the pubs from the recession. Of the many restaurants voted the best place to impress, popular choice Adlards has sadly stopped trading. Nonetheless many favourites remain open, although some no longer open every day. Just remember, if you're bored with all the posh nosh and fancy dining, do as the Romans do and head for the mushy pea stall right in the centre of Norwich Market. Order with chips and plenty of vinegar.

Both the Best Overall and the Best to Impress awards go to Tatlers. Always a pleaser, this restaurant offers British cuisine with ingredients sourced directly from Norwich market. Conveniently situated on Tombland next door to Norwich Cathedral, Tatlers boasts some rather beautiful yet simple interior décor as well as a private room upstairs that can be rented out for that added touch. Compre's Kari Maki is particularly fond of the 'nice comfortable genuine environment' adding that it has been his favourite for 12 years. Be aware, does not open on Mondays except for private bookings.

The Best Lunchtime Destination award has to go to the Elm Hill Brasserie. Literally seconds away from St Andrews Hall, it promises classic French cuisine using fresh and local produce. Be warned, however, that it is snug to the point of tiny and booking is

well-advised. BMS's Andrea Viera told *Run Off and Restructuring* that she made her reservation for her favourite place a month in advance to ensure a table for the Rendezvous. Again, not open on a Monday

Best Place for Dinner goes to By Appointment. This quirky, family run restaurant is housed in a 16th century merchant's building and has been running for over 20 years. Spread out over four separate dining rooms, each available for reservation, it serves a variety of dishes but most votes were for the general laid back and cosy atmosphere rather than the food. It also boasts five extremely impressive, if oddly shaped, hotel rooms on the upper floors and reportedly one of the best breakfasts in town.

Honourable mention as Best All-Rounder goes to Brummel's Seafood Restaurant on Magdalen Street, over the canal from Tombland. According to Global Resource Managers' Robert Sirois it is the best place in all categories combining both business and pleasure. Worth a visit for the lobster alone.

There are a number of other extremely good and distinctive restaurants, bars and bistros scattering the streets of Norwich and any visitor is well-advised to be as adventurous as they can. During this year's event keep an eye out for anywhere new or interesting, then write to *Run Off and Restructuring* magazine and let us know about it! ●