# nyc chomp

## Church Street Tavern 6/10/15

I hadn't been to Church Street Tavern before this event, but I'd certainly heard of it. It's in Tribeca, and consequently, next to the La Colombe coffee shop I used to go to when I was a daydreamy intern at *SPIN* Magazine (2012 edition). Even then, I was too afraid to own my desire to be a writer, and interned in their Marketing department. But it was by denying myself the Editorial track that I realized how much I really wanted it, and I remember getting off the subway stop at Canal in the morning and hurrying to the old office on Broadway, repeating to myself over and over that I would be a music writer. One day, I *would*. That was a funny little memory to come upon as I walked into the event on Wednesday, even if it's peripheral to the food.

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I was meeting Andriana (Gluttony Eats), her friend Iliza and Todd, along with my friend Flora who reps the restaurant. The Church Street Tavern burger has quickly become one of those highly-blogged about dishes. The event on Wednesday dubbed it "New York's Most Important Burger" which is a stretch, but dabbles in the kind of hubris that appeals to me, so I didn't mind. I got there a little after the tasting had already started, but quickly snagged a slider from one of the waiters walking around with plates. It wasn't the full burger, but enough to give me a taste of how succulent and decadent the complete sandwich must be. (I do consider burgers sandwiches, though I'm sure that's up for debate, somewhere). The slider came with cheese and the bacon-onion relish that CST's somewhat-storied Chef Ryan Skeen concocted. I like how this dude has been at countless places and taken risks, because that's definitely the way I handle my own career. He's created a superb burger here: dry-aged beef, strip and rib-eye trimmings along with beef heart, meaning it's far more buttery and flavorful than a typical patty. The relish, Vermont white cheddar and a sturdy, fluffy bun finish it off. Now, as for the relish, my burger stand-by at Fort Defiance has come with a similar condiment as an option for over a year now (maybe more?), and I personally don't care much for it. It renders the whole sandwich greasier than it needs to be without the crunch that I want from bacon or an onion. However, it's certainly not *bad*, and to serve this burger without lettuce or tomato – as the slider was – means it needs some other flavor, which the relish adds. Overall, I was sad that the waiters were stingy with the rest of their portioning, and I only got one solitary slider. I wanted two. That means it was good. The burger runs $19 with fries, pretty standard Tribeca pricing, but still a little expensive once you factor in drinks etc. Maybe a good spot for when parents are in town.

The other dish I sampled at the event was their Wild Mushroom Spaetzle, which I liked just as much as the burger, if not more. Spaetzle is the coolest noodle because it has this airy magic about it. It seems like an easy noodle to make, but getting it the right texture is actually difficult. Whether or not they were, the noodles tasted freshly made and were right between soft and firm with the tiniest amount of spring. I'm a sucker for wild mushrooms and buttery, herbed pastas so this thing won me over right away. It comes in at $16 on the menu and didn't feel as heavy as the burger. And I was so intent on eating it that I forgot to get a picture, but here's what it looks like:

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The only other thing I had at the event was cocktails. The list was great! Typical Tribeca prices again, most of the drinks were closer to $20 than $10. I lean toward $10 drinks whenever possible, but these were certainly done in style. Also worth noting is that their daily happy hour from 5-7 PM features all these cocktails at $8! Go then. Anyway, I originally got a Rye & Ginger because I tend to drink whiskey whenever possible, and I thought the spicy and sweet ginger would help cut through the burger's fatty flavors. I was right. I tend to take advantage of open bars (I'm a writer, after all) so even though Dre, Todd and Iliza left, I stayed and chatted with Flora's other friend Jocelyn for two more drinks. This time, I ordered The Elvis, a bourbon-based drink with agave, lemon juice and muddled berries (blackberries, raspberries, blueberries). In the picture on that blog I linked to it's served up, but on Wednesday it was over the rocks and completely perfect for conversation on a humid weeknight.

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Overall, I had a great time at Church Street. It did seem like the place drastically emptied out after their event was over. Tribeca isn't a convenient place for me to get to usually, but when I'm around there I would definitely come back. Oh also shout out to the hostess. She was extraordinarily nice when I wandered in, and as a former hostess myself (RIP DuMont), I appreciate when they are actually nice to you when you first arrive. Most important burger in NYC? Probably not, but definitely one that deserves your attention.

Tags: churchstreettavern, burger, ryanskeen, spaetzle, beefheart

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