

On the town...

The Human Be-in

2-8 West Crosscauseway

★★★★★

SET BACK from the road and not in one of the typical locations for a bar bistro of this calibre, the Human Be-in stands out from the crowd with a cool and well defined style. With a minimal yet warming interior, tactfully lit and broken up to make it both cosy and social, the stage is set for the fantastic choice of food and drink on offer.

Unlike some of the many other similar establishments the restaurant and bar combination glides along together in perfect sync. The now expected range of choice spirits, wines and beer demanded by the cosmopolitan bar shark is backed up by a diverse, edgy and constantly evolving drinks menu. The cocktails, which come freshly made, both chilled and presented to perfection, also make reasonably priced drinking on a student purse. Although students clearly constitute a substantial part of the clientele, the little things are not forgotten, from the abundance of candles on tables to the choice fresh fruit used as garnish on drinks. If you're a perfectionist, you're at home.

The dinner menu has enormous depth with something for everyone at, again, exceptional value. Despite the fact that dishes are clearly intended to be contemporary, they are generously arranged with precise but homemade attention to detail and lack nothing in terms of flavour and substance. The variety of starters grabs particular attention, with such dishes as west coast mussels that are worth of any seafood restaurant and wild duck and port paté that would quite happily be on the menu at a country hotel.

The mains again boast variety and are served by the knowledgeable staff, who quietly slide in and out of the dusky lit pillars, to the highest standard. If you can, try and grab a booth to dine in as this is defiantly one of the most relaxed settings in



Photo: Sophie Arnett

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which to have a meal. Cut off from, yet looking into the bar you gain both the buzzy atmosphere and privacy. A good bottle of wine, from the short yet substantial wine list, later and you won't ever want to leave. Lunch and brunch menus are also similarly good are updated frequently.

When dinner is winding down the evening definitely isn't, with live jam sessions on Thursdays where the funk and nu-soul musicians add to the already laid back and funky atmosphere. At weekend nights live DJs play a diverse array of beats to kick start your night, if the cocktails don't get you going to begin with.

During the day the emphasis swings round to the light and airy seating by the large windows. Bask in the winter sun and drink coffee in a relaxed fashion - just what you need mid-morning. If you then get a chance, have a look at the art on the stairs before you go. Currently the works are from Bryan Clarke's politically provocative collection, worth a trip in itself and if you're feeling rich, all works are for sale.

Overall, the Human Be-in is a cool, sharply dressed bar with lots of well-polished appeal, perfect for winding down or simply getting your night going.

Greg Cole