

Offbeat on Third Avenue

Bread pudding and vintage porn at The Smith

NADIA CROES
nadia.croes@metro.us

The Smith
55 Third Ave., 212-420-9800
Grade: ●●●●

REVIEW. Bustling Third Avenue across from AMC Theatre and Webster Hall doesn't exactly scream glorious restaurant location. Neither does the ghost of a Pizzeria Uno. But Jeffrey Lefcourt and Glenn Harris, the team behind The Smith, didn't seem to mind.

The white subway-tiled walls of this East Village restaurant, dressed in black-and-white photographs of Victorian nudes, create quite a bit of noise, but it's not stifling. The waitstaff is more than friendly, if not downright

fun, and always ready with an enthusiastic drink or food recommendation.

The cocktail menu is the first thing to check out. The drinks are divided into long pours, muddlers and fancy categories. Try the refresh-

ing long pour Moscow Mule (\$8), with vodka, ginger beer and lime, or the muddler Cucumber Loco (\$9), with silver tequila, cointreau, cucumber, lime and a pinch of sea salt, before ordering a carafe of wine. Just be sure to chase it down with some of the restaurant's in-house water. That's right — the restaurant produces its own flat and sparkling water.

As for the bras-



The space at The Smith bustles with noise and activity.

serie-style grub, the options are largely comforting and rich, hearty and varied. Among the appetizers, the crab hush puppies with old bay aioli (\$9) were flavorful but not too heavy. And the hot chips with blue cheese fondue (\$6) were deliciously messy toward the end, while the mac & cheese

(\$10) had that ideal balance of cheese melt and pan crisp.

For entrees, the braised short ribs with red wine sauce, roasted shallots and tiny potatoes (\$21) was satisfying all around, and the skate with caper brown butter (\$17), though a lighter alternative, was

rich and succulent.

As for dessert, the bread pudding (\$5) is the only way to go, with brioche, drunken raisins, bourbon sauce and caramel ice cream. Though asking for a double order of the bread pudding itself is recommended, as the entire dessert is more of a sundae.

After your meal, you may want to head downstairs to the basement level to pop into the classic photo booth for a session with friends or perhaps peek through the peephole in the wall between said booth and the restrooms for a quick look at a cleverly hidden reel of vintage porn. It's just part of the fun at The Smith.

