

Guide

GO

News: newstips@ajc.com or 404-525-4444



Dining review by Jon Watson

A playground for grown-ups

Ormsby's, on the Westside, likes to have fun on and off the menu. It can be hard to find, but worth the search.

Ormsby's
1170 Howell Mill Road, West
Midtown ★★☆☆☆

With no signs, save for the iron "O" adorning the nearly hidden door on the ground floor of the Westside's White Provision complex, Ormsby's can be easy to miss. But as you step through the cave-like entrance, it opens up into a cozy, wood-paneled, two-story playground for grown-ups.

The brainchild of Warren Bruno, of Atkins Park, and partner Michael Goot, Ormsby's merges a remarkable craft beer selection, a dizzying array of bar games, and updated tavern fare into one



The Abe Froman is a Chicago-style dog slathered with mustard and loaded with onions, relish, tomatoes and peppers. The beer-battered onion rings make a hefty, and tasty, side. Photos by Becky Stein Special

[editorial]



[The Reynolds Group Inc.] [www.thereynoldsgroupinc.com]

of 2010's most popular watering holes.

The menu succeeds in its takes on classic pub grub, especially all things deep-fried. Hand-cut fries or oversized beer-battered onion rings (\$5) quickly disappear into any of the 12 dipping sauces, including the lemon aioli and pot roast gravy. Though the batter on the corn dogs (\$5) is more akin to what you'd expect on fish and chips, when dipped into the sriracha mayonnaise, the crunchy Angus beef dogs-on-a-stick are not to be missed.

The sandwich selection offers more standouts. The Bruno burger (\$10), a half-pound grass-fed patty cooked to order, may be too salty for some but leaves most smiling. Savory egg yolk oozes from toasted sourdough bread as you bite into Uncle Fred's ultimate BLT (\$8).

But not all of them are winners. Uncle Lenny's shaved roast beef sandwich (\$10), reminiscent of lunchroom mystery meat, falls flat and the Madison (\$7), a grilled three-cheese sandwich, suffers due to underwhelming bacon and anemic tomatoes.

Other highlights include the sausages and brats – especially the chicken and apple sausage (\$9) – topped with caramelized onion and Taleggio fondue, or Ormsby's take on the gyro, the spicy lamb merguez (\$9) served on a warm pita with tzatziki, cucumber, and tangy pink pickled onion. All of the sausages are house-made, except for the hot dogs ordered from Usinger's in Milwaukee. After ordering the Abe Froman (\$6), a Chicago-style dog piled high with mustard, onions, relish, tomatoes, peppers and



Uncle Fred's ultimate BLT, served on toasted sourdough bread, oozes with flavor thanks to two eggs sunny side up.

celery salt, I chuckled as our server explained that the restaurant sourced their franks from "the sausage king of Chicago." I think he was new.

And what would a tavern be without the drinks?

Be warned, devotees of mass-produced American lagers: you won't find any Budweisers or Millers poured here. The craft beer list, though not the most extensive in town, is impressive. For those unschooled, the wait staff is always happy to give recommendations according to your tastes. Take the chance to branch out.

If you prefer the hard stuff, both bars keep a wide selection of spirits in stock. Bourbon enthusiasts can only smile at seeing bottles of Blanton's and Jefferson Re-

serve instead of Evan Williams and Jim Beam.

Then there are the wonderful games. Shuffleboard, skee-ball, and bocce, oh my!

Whatever your game, be it darts, backgammon, or pool, Ormsby's has you covered. But arrive early, especially on weekends. The chalkboard waiting list for the dual indoor bocce ball courts fills up quickly.

Though satisfying, ultimately the food is not the siren's call filling the seats here every night; it is but a piece of a larger puzzle.

When combined with the comfortable atmosphere, variety of games, a few drinks, and friends to enjoy them with, Ormsby's becomes a destination worth visiting if you are in the area.

Ormsby's

Overall Rating: ★★☆☆☆

Food: Updated pub grub

Service: Friendly and informative, though the crowd can get thick on the weekends and service can slow down

Best Dishes: Uncle Fred's BLT and any of the sausages

Vegetarian Selection: Only a handful of appetizers and one sandwich

Price Range: \$-\$\$

Credit Cards: Visa, Mastercard, American Express

Hours: 11 a.m.-3 a.m. Mondays-Fridays, noon-3 a.m. Saturdays, noon-midnight Sundays

Children: Not allowed downstairs after 6 p.m. and not allowed at all after 8 p.m. Not a family destination after dark.

Parking: Free parking deck

Reservations: No

Wheelchair Access: Yes

Smoking: No

Noise Level: Moderate to high

Patio: No

Takeout: Yes

Address: 1170 Howell Mill Road, Midtown, 404-968-2033

Website:

www.ormsbysatlanta.com

[editorial]



[The Reynolds Group Inc.] [www.thereynoldsgroupinc.com]