

— PLATE AND CUP

Southern hospitality in the East End

For a venue being spearheaded by a winemaker and no less than three aeronautical engineers, NOLA Craft Beer and Whiskey Bar is surprisingly grounded.

Words: Farrin Foster
Pictures: Josie Withers

The old Stables building on Vardon Avenue – just past Mothervine – has been empty for a long time.

A brief stint in 2009 as the Fringe Club highlighted its potential, and cemented it in the minds of many artists and arts industry types as a place where good times were to be had. A rumour says that some years before that it was a jazz club. But beyond that, the small historic building has been sitting unused for decades.

Despite being so long without life, the Stables held huge attraction for winemaker Oliver (Ollie) Brown and aeronautical engineers / beer and whiskey enthusiasts Matt Orman, Alex Marschall and Josh Talbot – all of whom had long held hopes of opening a bar.

"We were searching for a venue for ages and fell in love with the old Stables," says Ollie. "It wasn't advertised, it wasn't for lease, so we kind of pursued it – Googled names, called people out of the blue and went for it."

Landlord the Maras Group hadn't been looking for a tenant, so the guys found themselves on the sell – attempting to convince father-son property team Steve and Theo why their bar was going to work and why it would only work in this venue.

The conceptual basis of the bar is given away in its name. NOLA is, of course, shorthand for New Orleans, Louisiana – a city whose culture and atmosphere Ollie aspires to replicate.

"It's like a lifetime party," he says. "You walk down the street and there's this all encompassing atmosphere. You come across kids with crushed cans on their feet tap dancing and people come up beside them and start playing some jazz

1 - it just has this great feeling and I wanted to bring that all together and put it into a venue."



Accordingly then, both food and music will be central to the bar, just as they are to New Orleans. Plans for music are still being finalised, but the guys hope to be hosting small one or two-piece jazz and blues inspired musicians several nights per week.

The food will be more of an all day affair, with the bar opening for lunch each of the six days it operates and serving right through until dinner. A chef is yet to be confirmed, but whoever comes up will need to be interested in working with a clear vision already being articulated by the group.

"There's something about trying to tame it back to being easy, simple, home-



1 Whiskey and craft beer will be at the heart of NOLA's offering

2 NOLA collaborators Oliver Brown, Alex Marschall, Josh Talbot and Matt Orman

"WE WERE SEARCHING FOR A VENUE FOR AGES AND FELL IN LOVE WITH THE OLD STABLES."

— Oliver Brown

ey like jambalaya and gumbo in a bowl with some crusty bread on the side – it's not expensive and it's not fancy," says Matt.

"We don't have stuff like that here at the moment. It's different to sliders and fried chicken – it removes that current concept of Southern American food and takes it back to being what that property is, which is Creole and Cajun."

The drink offering though – while still taking some cues from Southern American Traditions – will be more focussed on showcasing small makers from across the beer and whiskey scenes.

"For the main whiskey collection, we'll have about 70 to start," says Matt.

"We'll have quite an extensive Australian collection and then back that up with your American bourbons, Tennessee whiskeys, your malt caramels, your moonshines and stuff like that – still all limited batch stuff from nice independent producers though."

To make more room for micro outfits on the beer side of the bar, each of the 16 beer taps at NOLA will be available to craft breweries on a rotating basis, with Alex and Josh particularly interested in bringing in some labels that have never before been available in Adelaide.

"We want to develop a community amid the brewers and the drinkers – have a bit of a craft beer family here in Adelaide," says Alex.

To do this, NOLA is running a Pizable campaign called Tipping for Taps. Normally, a portion of a bar's beer taps are "bought out" by a large company and dedicated to pouring only that company's beer for a prescribed time. The money raised in the campaign will allow NOLA to sidestep such a contract and instead offer all of their pouring space to the little guys.

With the young owners' clear vision and attention to detail, the bar looks set to be a fine slice of the real NOLA fun when it opens in late September. As for whether there will be any crushed can dancing – that we'll have to wait and see.

REMARKS

NOLA is another venue for which the design is being spearheaded by Matiya Marovich of Sans-arc Studio, who is quickly gaining a reputation for diverse and excellent spaces after working on venues like Gondola Gondola and Pink Moon Saloon.