

Grill power: Brooklyn chef offers all-American favourites with a Dutch twist

TEXT: SALLY TIPPER | PHOTOS: WYERS BAR & RESTAURANT

Simple food, done well. That is the not-so-secret recipe behind the success of Wyers Bar & Restaurant, a stylish, relaxed spot in central Amsterdam.

Chef Sam ‘SammyD’ DeMarco comes from Brooklyn. After a career that has taken him around the world, he has settled in the Dutch capital, where he combines his roots with fresh products local to his new home. On the menu is American comfort food with a Dutch twist, like a smoked goose pastrami Reuben sandwich, roadside burger or a kimchi Texas-style hot dog.

His food is fun and approachable, like his lollipop chicken wings. “They’re part of my history,” he says, “and I got a lot of attention from other chefs when I started making them at my restaurant First in NYC.”

How does one stand out in Amsterdam, a city where both the fine dining scene and the

casual café culture are so strong? “We aim to bridge the gap between those styles with a wide beer selection, cocktails and affordable upscale comfort food in a lively environment. A meal at Wyers is what you make of it. You can come in for a beer and ‘bitterballen’ or a steak from the woodfire grill and a bottle of wine.”

After working at and owning restaurants in the United States and internationally, he is

now thrilled to be part of the community that he serves. “My goal has always been to be a ‘cook for the people’,” he says. “My family and I have settled in Amsterdam and I’m proud to be a part of the culinary scene here.”

For more information, please visit:
www.restaurantwyers.com



At Wyers Bar & Restaurant, Chef ‘SammyD’ aims to bridge the gap between casual café culture and fine dining.

Bravi Ragazzi: the refreshing restaurant at the Damrak

TEXT: JULIËN L’ORTYÉ | PHOTOS: BRAVI RAGAZZI

Although the Damrak will not be the first street or place to come to your mind while thinking of Amsterdam, it remains the busiest street in the Netherlands – mostly thanks to all the tourists.

The street offers some cool shops, a few well known fast food restaurants and some places to grab an ice cream. But when you are looking for a proper place to have lunch or dinner, you might be disappointed. That is until you get to Bravi Ragazzi, an Italian restaurant that opened around a year and a half ago, and continuously distinguishes itself from the other restaurants in its fully packed area.

According to Johnny Jesterhoudt, Bravi Ragazzi’s manager, it is partially about putting thought and energy into your people, but – and perhaps even more importantly – making your guests feel at home. Jesterhoudt: “We only work with the best suppliers, which results directly in a better quality of our products. Of course, it may happen that you will pay slightly more at

our place, but it is just not possible to offer the quality we want to serve for a lower price.”

He has extensive knowledge of wines and spirits as well, which is why he sees the importance of a nicely arranged wine menu; each guest gets his or her own recommendation, if they desire it. With over 80 seats inside, Bravi Ragazzi is one of the largest restaurants on the Damrak; it even offers the possibility to book the upper floor for business events or bachelor(ette) parties. When you include the wonderful heated terrace, the restaurant accommodates up to 150 guests. An unexpected pearl in crowded Amsterdam, to say the least.

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