

The Mouth

By Nanci Tangeman

Eat to the beat

De Engelbewaarder

Kloveniersburgwal 59, 625 3772

Open daily noon - 01.00, 03.00 weekends

Lunch daily, dinner from 17:30

Cash, PIN

There are no hep cats in our house. The closest we have is an orange tabby, and even he cowered when I dusted off my clarinet after a couple of decades and blew into it, just to see what would come out. What came out was not pretty. In fact, my entire block slammed their windows shut.

But I took a hep cat vow this summer. It was at the North Sea Jazz Festival. Dr Lonnie Smith in his turban was groovin' (that's hep cat lingo) with the Lou Donaldson Quartet. I said to Partner-in-all-things-syncopated, 'We've got to do this jazz thing more often.'

So here we are on a Sunday afternoon, headed to where all the hep cats go on a Sunday afternoon, De Engelbewaarder on the Kloveniersburgwal, with its live jazz session from 14.00 to 19.00. We pick up two (former) euphonium players on the way. We're ready to jam—or at least listen to other hep cats jam.

Only one problem. All the hep cats are on holiday. No jammin' today, but that doesn't mean we can't stay for dinner. There's a wide array of cheap Palm beers on tap to help us work up an appetite. We order a round and study the menu on giant blackboards at the polished wooden bar.

Tables are set up on what seems to be the stage. As my cat



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(and neighbours) would attest, this will be my only chance to be on the platform at the De Engelbewaarder on a Sunday. We make a bee-line to the stage seating. The windows are large and there's a great view of the canal.

The lack of music disappoints us, but the food does not. I order the vegetarian curry (€12), a mix of fresh green beans, carrots, mushrooms and spring onions in a sweet red sauce. Two giant sesame rice balls ogle me from the bowl. They are soft inside and allow me to soak up every spoonful of the curry sauce.

Partner orders duck (€13). He is expecting a breast, but receives moist legs with a mix of roasted red and green peppers. The accompanying square of polenta is custard-like inside with a bit of a crust on top. Delicious! The euphonium duet orders sea bass (€13) and entrecôte (€15). The meat of the fish is tender, as is the entrecôte, which is covered in a light Bearnaise sauce. Surprisingly, it's not as rare as most *eetcafe* entrecôtes—comparable to a US-style 'medium'. The extra

bowl of *frites* (€2) is worth every cent.

Though it's known mostly for its jazz these days, De Engelbewaarder was once a literary cafe. But no need for black turtleneck sweaters and berets. The atmosphere is casual; the music, even when it's canned, is good.

But canned music isn't a problem any more because Sundays are jammin' again at De Engelbewaarder. I heard the other day that the musicians are back from holiday. Get there early for a good seat. And, of course, don't forget to bring a fellow hep cat or two with you.