



the cotton factory huddersfield

I was surprised to find The Cotton Factory tucked away in a corner of Huddersfield's thriving Kingsgate quarter.

I'd imagined that this beautiful grade II listed building would occupy a semi-rural location on the edge of town. Daisychain Inns have spent over a year, and a reported £2.7m, converting this 10,000 sq ft warehouse into an upmarket collection of well conceived spaces with four separate bars. The team at Ocean is responsible for all aspects of the design and there are lots of quality touches throughout.

The front entrance leads directly into a large bar and restaurant area, providing a chameleon approach through daytime trade into night time revelry.

The original brick walls work well alongside the pewter topped bar, huge mirrors and impressive chandeliers.

To the rear of the ground floor area, I entered what struck me as a Mary Quant retro-inspired space which was enhanced by the attire of the largely female crowd.

Many of the finishes have been sourced from America and the designer furniture comes from Italy, Finland and Sweden.

Unfortunately, the drinks menu lacks the same kind of inspiration and only has a limited selection of basic wines and standard cocktails. All wines are under the £10 mark with 23 cocktails grouped

into Martinis (£5.95), long (£5.50) and short (£4.50) categories. Thankfully, the beer selection is lifted by the inclusion of draught Baltika (£2.25 pint or £3 a pint after 8pm Fri-Sat) but sadly only one bartender knew of its existence, which highlights the lack of local well-trained staff available for new projects.

The food menu is interesting, excellent value for money, but very simple, with handmade Burgers (£4.95), Rustic Feta Tart (£5.95) and the like. This is, however, a clever call; many of the ingredients are locally sourced from quality suppliers, a fact proudly displayed on the plasma screens dotted around the venue.

Upstairs, a large music bar, packed with state-of-the-art technology, shares the first floor with a members only lounge. The DJ rotas are impressive, with many high profile names from Manchester, Leeds and beyond. Live music also plays a part in what is largely a dance orientated set-up.

The members lounge is reminiscent of a gentlemen's club with its subdued lighting, dark woods and comfortable corners. This exclusive area features an improved drinks list that adds eight more wines to the basic bunch. An oakey El Morano Rioja Tinto 2002 is priced at £12.95 and The Cotton Collection, nine cocktails that include the Rodeo Martini (Wyborora Single Estate

vodka, fresh mint and sugar, shaken and served in a chilled absinthe-rinsed Martini glass) are priced at £6.95.

In many ways it's hard to tell where The Cotton Factory fits into the local scene.

There's no doubt it raises the standard currently on offer in Huddersfield to a new level but how many of its potential clientele, mainly students, really aspire to this kind of level? Do they have the money to spend at The Cotton Factory?

On the other hand, the prices are very competitive, with 25% discount cards available. However, it remains to be seen how long The Cotton Factory resists the economic pressure to cater for everyone.

Russ Otterwell

what CLASS thinks

drinks: ●●●, service: ●●●,

design: ●●●●, atmosphere: ●●●●,

value for money: ●●●●

the best bit: A well designed mix of retro and traditional styles

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Opening Hours: Sun 12.00-00.30,

Mon-Tues 11.00-00.30, Wed-Thurs

11.00-01.30, Fri-Sat 11.00-02.00

Price of G&T: £2.80 (25ml Gordon's)