



## The Smoking Gun - San Diego, CA



The Smoking Gun is one of the newest bars in downtown San Diego, complete with a retro vibe and comfort food headed by powerhouse chef Kevin Templeton. We were invited to check out the new southern menu and dropped by to see what new direction this would take the location. I still remember items like alcoholic slushies from Wet Willie's and asian fusion from Blush East+West Kitchen, the predecessors.



**Brandt Farms Beef Brisket (\$12) - bbq au jus**

Brisket is a meat that Dennis is experimenting with at home so we were curious how the chef prepared theirs. This tender meat had a very thin smoke ring but surprisingly the juices imbued that sought out smokiness. Dennis remarked that in this wet form, you can't get that brisket crust that he desires. Even though we were warned of this, the ratio of fat to meat was a little too high for our liking, at least 15-20% fat. Still, the meaty parts we did have were succulent and flavorful.



### **Baked Mac N Cheese (\$6)**

When done right, mac and cheese can make your heart flutter. Underneath this dish was a rich distribution of cheeses though the top cheddar layer was not Dennis's ideal topping. This thicker consistency and ooey gooey cheese strands around al dente pasta were right up my alley though. My next brilliant idea was to pair this with the meaty parts of the brisket! I heard they recently won awards for their mac and cheese. Good job chef!



**Cornmeal Fried Heirloom Tomatoes (\$7)** - garlic aioli, housemade ranch  
These fried tomatoes were so beautiful with their crisp cornmeal crust! Beneath that layer, the thick sliced tomatoes inside tasted just like pickles so Dennis was a huge fan. Pickle-haters like me might want to pass though! A tiny bit more sea salt would have accented this dish well. On the side were a ranchy dressing with dill and a creamier mayo-ish aioli dip.



**Pulled Lemon Chicken** - green chili mustard, cheddar; **BBQ Pulled Pork Sliders** - bbq-mustard, red chili slaw

The sliders typically come in pairs of the same flavor but we requested singles for taste testing. Our absolute favorite item of the visit was this chicken slider. It gave a rotisserie chicken juiciness that dripped from the sandwich! The sauce had a hint of mustard without too much bite and paired perfectly. The buns were hardy but still soft enough to allow your teeth to sink in wonderfully. The meaty pork in the other slider looked like brisket to be honest. Topped with a BBQ inspired sauce, it held its own but was not as good as the chicken.



**Lemon Peppered Chicken Drumettes (\$12) - house made ranch, cali wing sauce**

This oven finished chicken came out surrounded by juices within an aluminum foil wrap. This slow cooked texture reminded me of the chicken in my mom's homemade curry. The meaty little drumsticks had a simple salt and pepper seasoning but paled a bit compared to the flavorful slider. One sauce was the same as the fried green tomatoes but other one had a spicy kick like salsa verde.



Relive your childhood (or at least for us) with this picture viewer! Several of the cocktails were pictured in the slide show.



**I'm Turning Japanese** (\$13) - Toki japanese whisky, blood orange amaro, toasted pecan bitters

**Goodbye Island** (\$13) - cruzan rum, passionfruit, lime, pineapple, serrano chile

Dennis ordered a whiskey drink that was too "whiskey" strong for this girl. The second was more to my style with a delicious sweetness especially because I requested it without the chile. No spicy for me!



Inside the restaurant was a center bar with multiple television screens for watching sports. It was busy but not rowdy on that Football Sunday.



For additional entertainment, you could challenge someone to ping pong or shuffleboards. The background pic is motivating us to pull out our own ping pong table for some fast paced action!



Our check came out in a Madonna cd which fit with the retro theme of the restaurant. Our waitress Katie took good care of us though service was a little spotty once in a while sitting on the patio. They have daily promotions worth checking out if you are in the area. I think this place has lots of promise, especially with Chef Kevin Templeton on board the team. We'll drop by again when the restaurant is more established in a few months.

*Disclaimer: We were invited to dine here and our food and drink were complimentary. We were not otherwise compensated and all opinions stated are our own*

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