

Barfly

Toner's

139 Baggot Street, Dublin
Tel: 01 6763090

★★★★☆

It's sort of an ugly duckling, gorgeous swan thing, if you're asking us. On an average trip to Toner's, a well-regarded Baggot Street boozier, what strikes you first is how atmospherically dark the place is. Perhaps the interior really is fashioned of timeless oak — or maybe it's just that everything looks timeless with the lights dimmed.

With Ireland in the grip of an actual summer — featuring sun, temperatures in the 20s and other curiosities — a strange transformation takes place as, out back, Toner's is revealed to have a stunner of a beer garden.

Okay, 'garden' may be pushing it as we're not quite talking acres of green. But it's a great outdoor urban drinking area, with craggy buildings hemming you in and lashings of space — even a flat screen telly in the corner.

The establishment is named for one James Toner, holder of the license in the 1920s. Founded in 1818, it previously went by Rogers after the original proprietor. In between, it flitted through a variety of identities, serving as a grocers and bonded tea merchant.

Most impressively of all, it is rumoured to have been WB Yeats' hostelry of choice. The great man of Irish letters would sink a sherry, then vanish into the night.

If only the weather was nicer — he'd probably have kicked back all afternoon in the beer garden.

IN THE GLASS: Pint of stout €4.80, pint of lager €5

AT THE BAR: Office workers, sinking 'a few'

ON THE STEREO: Springsteen (who else?)

AND? There are two upstairs functions rooms, available for booking

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