

Asoka by David



So *Deckedout* asked me to hit this bar, have a few drinks, and write about the experience. I figured that I could at least get the first bit right. I've heard of the 'functioning alcoholic' concept and frankly, it's rather appealing.

The bar is called Asoka; apparently the Son of Dharma! "I will avenge my father's death! Kazaam!" Ok, maybe a bit much. I was curious about importing the legacy of Dharma into the new incarnation as I hung with the old man on one or two occasions. I must be getting on! Father Dharma was a touch poncey – in my opinion. You could bump into someone like Seth Rotherham (Editor of www.2Oceansvibe.com) who thinks that the difference between a Trilby and a Fedora is of social importance. Paris Hilton must have stayed in bed that day causing a vacuum of content for award winning bloggers. Harsh? Maybe. True? Absolutely.

Fortunately, I was pleasantly surprised. This could be attributable to my gracious acceptance of Mojito's, Gin and Beer. Or the top company I had in the form of the TBG – arguably the finest part of a local tabloid blog. Hehe. But no, Asoka is the carefully constructed brainchild of Paul Hettery, an aficionado of nightlife. You may recall the maestro from behind the bar at Barazza when Goldfish used to keep the weekend cracking on a Sunday night? Well, he has a slick operation with Asoka, which is keeping Kloof Street in the party mix.

The crowd is diverse. One wonders what its smoking hot ladies, gym nuts, Casanovas, jazz heads, Columbian look alike dealers, clowns and hipsters have in common. Probably nothing. Apart from the promise of casual sex. Or a mellow midweek toot in a classy gaff. So it's got to be in the food, tunes and the décor. I understand that they mix it up sonically with various DJ's, and a Jazz residency called Restless Natives on a Tuesday night. Sadly we didn't score. Without a DJ in the house it was Hotel Costes on rotation; which tastes a lot like a Holiday Inn buffet. But then one man's trash is another man's treasure.

The décor is stylish. Asoka has a dimmed down, inconspicuous atmosphere about it. You can slink away and perve out the corner of your eye, that is, if the TBG's behaviour is anything to go by. There is an impressive main bar, manned by off duty models that will smash a cocktail together for you in an

instant. There is also a wicked second bar that is smaller, adjacent to the open air courtyard. The aficionado has also extended the street facing side of the venue with an outside deck. It rocks. We wolfed down some starters, which were tip top. Nice.

Perhaps there was some Feng Shui trickery guiding my voluminous consumption, and my unwavering opinion that Asoka is way cooler than its dad. Yes, that's it. I looked at the heavens peering in through the roof, the placement of Buddha, the knowledge tree in the courtyard with all its secrets. Aha! Perhaps Asoka is a decent choice for the enlightened.