SO YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO

Buster Mantis







In a nutshell

A bar, restaurant and live music venue with the south London jazz scene in the palm of its hand.

Where is it?

Deptford, positioned rather inconspicuously down an alleyway and under two railway arches. Follow the fairy lights and saxy sounds.

What's the vibe?

This is an independently run hub for informed jazz lads and lasses, and those curious about south London's musical exports. Twinkly lights and a contemporary pine and white-tile interior set off the venue, decor-wise. The bar and restaurant is the perfect place to while away the evening on a date or with pals, and next door the arts and music space is minimally decorated with space to dance. It's most famous, though, for its diverse music policy - look forward to hearing jazz, hip hop plus roots and culture.

What makes it a great venue?

It's a cultural incubator that has been home to influential jazz collective Steam Down, the BBZ club night celebrating queer and non-binary women of colour, and a slew of incredible artists and photographers. It's also one of the best places to take in the incredible sounds of young jazz musicians on the ascent.

What's the booze situation?

The clue's in the name... When Jamaica claimed independence from the British in 1962, Alexander Bustamante was the first president. Thus all the drinks and food hark to Jamaica: enjoy a rum-focused cocktail list and plenty of Red Stripe.

What's coming up there soon?

Every Wednesday the tunnel is set ablaze with the free jazz improv night, Champion Sounds, where incredible young jazz musicians and fans come together for a four-hour jamathon. These nights actively break the fourth wall, encouraging audience participation; if you're moving and grooving you're part of the performance. Get down there early to secure a good dancing spot.

Tell me one random thing about Buster Mantis?

It's a favourite of local Reggie Yates, who rates the fish fritters and Friday night fun times. ■ Hayley Joyes

→ Buster Mantis, 3-4 Resolution Way. Deptford rail.

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