



## Blue Tractor settles in as fine destination for local beer and pub food

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Ever since the [Blue Tractor BBQ & Brewery](#) opened in November 2008, it's become a popular downtown watering hole for the post-work professional crowd, as well as those just seeking a warm and welcoming gathering spot. Over the last three months, the restaurant began featuring rotations of three different groups of seasonal offerings of their beer, brewed on site in the restaurant's cellar. I stopped by on a recent Sunday night to give them, and some menu items, a try.



Outside of the Blue Tractor BBQ & Brewery.

Angela J. Cesere | [AnnArbor.com](#)

We opted for the sampler, which includes all the most recent seasonal offerings. My favorite, hands down, was the Bearded Pig pilsner, which had a light, sweet malty taste that went down smoothly. I found the Bumper Crop IPA to be bitter for my taste, though others will like it. Sudworth bock is ideal for those seeking a rich, dark lager. It had a full-bodied, dense texture and was quite good.

If you're up for a sweeter dessert type of beer, you can indulge in the Schokoladeweizen. This beer is made with 25 pounds of dark chocolate from nearby Schokolad for a batch of 150 gallons. Not surprisingly, it had a strong chocolate taste. Another sweet beer, the Java Stout, had more of a mocha flavoring and tasted remarkably similar to the Schokoladeweizen. In addition to the seasonal beers, Blue Tractor has five bottled beers and six on tap.

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### Blue Tractor BBQ & Brewery

205 E. Washington St.  
734-222-4095

[Blue Tractor BBQ & Brewery in AnnArbor.com restaurant guide](#)

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m.-2 a.m. (food served until 11 p.m.); Sunday, noon to midnight (kitchen closes at 10 p.m.)

Plastic: Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Discover.

Liquor: Yes.

Prices: Moderate.

Value: Very good.

Noise level: Can be loud.

Wheelchair access: Yes.

Smoking section: No.

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The appetizers we ordered to accompany the beer were first-rate. The pulled pork quesadilla was grilled nicely and melded an interesting combination of thick pieces of house-smoked pork shoulder, cheese, onions and chiles. It was such a hearty portion — and so good — we could have easily made it the main course. Green chiles also lent a nice kick to the wonderful grilled chile cheddar muffins, which were moist and fresh, served warm.

Main courses overall weren't as successful as the prelude to our meal. A pescetarian member of our dining party decided to opt for one of the few meat-free main

courses, bourbon salmon, only to find they were out of it. Instead, he ordered the 3-cheese mac & cheese, which had a watery sauce. The smoked beef brisket on the cowboy Reuben sandwich was entirely bland; the tomato ranch dressing added little.

In my experience, the strength of Blue Tractor is its barbecue offerings, and my smoked BBQ duck didn't disappoint. Served with enormous griddle cakes, an interesting accompaniment, it had a tangy, succulent sauce. I also liked the coating of the baby-back ribs, though the meat was a bit dry.

One of the highlights of our meal was dessert: the decadent, rich chocolate chip cookie ice cream bar, which was more of a sandwich: two giant, homemade, chocolate chip cookies surrounded creamy vanilla ice cream, along with whipped cream and hot fudge. Perfect for sharing, this is not to be missed.

It took a while for our server to greet us and take our orders, though she was friendly and enthusiastic. Overall, [Blue Tractor](#) continues to provide a congenial atmosphere for sampling some first-rate beer along with other hearty pub fare.

*Julie Halpert reviews restaurants for [AnnArbor.com](#).*