

Best of Burger Beat: Vol. III

Written by Mark Shaffer

Tuesday, 30 December 2014 13:51

The search for the Lowcountry's best handmade burgers continues...

Story & photos by Mark Shaffer



“Man who invented the hamburger was smart; man who invented the cheeseburger was a genius.”

- Matthew McConaughey, Oscar-winning actor & cheeseburger aficionado

FAT PATTIES

Hand crafted American burgers and craft beers

831 Parris Island Gateway

843.379.1300

www.fat-patties.com

(Second location coming soon to 203 Bluffton Rd. in Old Town Bluffton)

Nick Borregine could have called his wildly popular Shell Point eatery Plan “B” Burgers. That’s kind of how Fat Patties happened. After years on the Beaufort waterfront, the chef/restaurateur sold his hugely successful Panini’s Café to develop another concept. For reasons we won’t go into here, that project didn’t happen and – in a nutshell – Fat Patties was conceived. Borregine’s original plan for his Shell Point property was to eventually convert it into a no-frills, walk up burger stand. Once the downtown project fell through though, Nick knew he had to “ramp things up.”



He describes the end result as “industrial chic,” a hybridized collection of corrugated metal, polished concrete, wood and glass. Garage doors roll up to create an open-air feel when the weather’s nice. There’s plenty of outdoor seating with umbrellas, fire pits and a walkup ice cream window. Inside the full service bar features an impressive array of flat screens and craft beers on tap. “We wanted to make it fun,” he says. “It’s more than just a place to go out to eat, it’s more of a hangout.”

The place has “franchise” written all over it.

“That’s the plan,” says Nick. “It’s more than just a burger joint. We appeal to everyone. Everyone who drives by is a potential customer.” He smiles. “Everybody likes burgers.”

Even so, as the concept evolved, the broad appeal took Borregine by surprise. “My whole career I’ve kind of cooked for one type of person,” he says. “I had to rethink that.” The sheer variety of burger possibilities is a direct response to that “rethinking.” For starters there are five different types of burgers: a 100% grass fed beef, half beef & half bacon, turkey, wild caught shrimp and a black bean veggie burger.

The beef comes from the grass fed, hormone free steer herd at Southern Swiss Dairy of Waynesville, Georgia, the same source for the dairy used in the restaurant’s hand crafted ice cream.

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“The flavor profile of the meat is something you can’t get anywhere else,” Nick points out. “It’s very special.”

Ordering up a burger at Fat Patties presents something of a delicious conundrum. In addition to the selection of the 5 patties (each is a half pound) you can choose from 10 cheeses, 18 toppings (sausage gravy and fried egg included) and 14 different sauces. Build your own – the combinations are nearly infinite – or choose one of the dozen specialty burgers made with the patty of your choice. The burgers come stacked on a house baked bun and Fat Pattie’s insidiously addictive Sea Salt Rosemary Fries – fresh cut, naturally. In fact, just about everything right down to the tangy 7 Spice Ketchup is locally sourced and made from scratch on site.

The ice cream flavors vary with the seasons and the available ingredients just like the beers.

“We have 20 taps. 19 are craft beers and 14 or more are local and regional,” he says. The Bluffton location will be a fully functioning brewpub complete with beer garden and 30 taps, 10 of these will feature house brewed Salt Marsh Brewing crafts, Borregine’s new venture with veteran local brewer James Brown.

Hang on. We sense a pattern developing. Fat Patties, it seems, is not for the indecisive. If you’re easily flummoxed by a broad variety of choices – if having it your way is a daunting, vaguely alien concept – you may be a Fast Food Lemming. If the idea of leisurely consuming fresh, made-to-order burgers on homemade buns piled to the rafters with whatever you can possibly dream up frightens you, tweet us from Mickey D’s. That’s an extra seat for us.

This Burger Beat expedition turns out to be a guy thing. It just works out this way. But make no mistake: this is a serious crew. To a man we are harsh, even bitter cynics in a world where convenience trumps quality, especially when it comes to our burgers.

We all stick to the beef patty – although the sheer mad genius of the 1/2 & 1/2

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