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BURGERS



All-American Burger at Barleymash

Like the burger. But so what? Burgers were born in places just like here, sizzling somewhere between the blacksmith's armpit and a harlot's garter. This is it. You have arrived.

The Balboa Bar & Grill

1863 Fifth Avenue
BANKERS HILL

The splendor of Balboa's burgers is almost as well-established as the dangers of gazing directly at the eclipse. But, cautionary tales be damned, I can't stop staring into this celestial crescent of beef peeking out from beneath the partial eclipse of the bolillo bun. Any stranger on the street can tell you

why this place rocks, so I'll just add some gossip from the burger circuit and mention that Balboa expects to open a second location in downtown Chula Vista by the end of the year. The 4000-square-foot locale at 290 Third Avenue will offer a nearly identical menu sans cocktails, pending liquor license.

IAN ANDERSON
BURGERS FOR THOSE WITH EXQUISITE TASTE

I like my burgers like I like my beer — made with purpose using quality ingredients so it's obvious to everyone I possess exquisite taste. So don't be surprised that all of my picks are chef-driven burgers found at places offering terrific beer lists. Well, most of them. The same way swill beer sometimes finds its way into my fridge, I sometimes slip and eat a burger I know I shouldn't.

Craft & Commerce

675 W Beech Street
LITTLE ITALY
When Consortium Holdings hired chef Ted Smith to cook for its newly refurbished flagship, he was reminded the restaurant group sets a high

bar for its burgers. Smith responded by raising the bar higher. The \$13 C&C Burger tops grass-fed beef with tender onion confit and white cheddar blended with pepper jack (to balance sharp flavor with a superior melt). That's served on light Bread & Cie brioche and toasted with garlic butter. The final touch is a Russian dressing-inspired "secret sauce," revealed to include tomato, mayo, horseradish, chives, Worcestershire, and a touch of espetlette pepper. My new favorite.

Barleymash

600 Fifth Avenue
GASLAMP
Variety makes for difficult ordering decisions on this menu, but all start with a special grind sourced from century-old San Diego purveyor Central Meat & Provision, which culls the

unused tips of ribeye, filet mignon, and New York steaks. Chef Kevin Templeton seasons the patties with a light chili rub and serves them on his own baked-in-house brioche recipe, inspired by Hawaiian sweet bread. A range of from-scratch sauces top these award-winning burgers, from the ale aioli on the \$14.50 All American, to the truffle aioli paired with Maine lobster meat on the uber-decadent \$19.50 Surf 'n' Turf.

Mastiff Kitchen

3038 University Avenue
NORTH PARK
Jacob Bartlett and chef Eric Gallerstein launched Mastiff as a food truck making sausages from scratch. But upon joining forces with North Park Beer Co. last year, they gained their own kitchen inside the brewery — and the \$12 burg-