



JEREMY FLETCHER

Moo Moo's BMS Moo

Take a Bite of San Joaquin's Burgers

Must-try local burgers

by JEREMY FLETCHER

There are precious few “safe” choices you can make at nearly any restaurant in America. We’ve all seen something on a menu and not just wondered how good it is, but exactly *what* it is. Undeniably we’ve all turned back to the “burgers” section, and knew that when push came to shove we could always go with the most American of dishes: a thick meaty patty wrapped in a bun. Surround it by whatever you want, and it’s still going to be a hamburger, plain and simple.

Let’s be honest, it’s hard to destroy a burger but also difficult to perfect it in a short period of time. Here are three local places that know their stuff and pride themselves on variety, speed, and flavor. »

Moo Moo's BMS Moo



Bob's at the Marina

SUMMARY: Tucked as far back into west Stockton as a place can get, this local favorite is little more than a counter, thirty chairs, and a handful of tables at the marina off Benjamin Holt. Don't let that fool you—what happens behind the counter is no less than an art studio for grilling.

THE BURGER: They don't make peaches this juicy. Seriously. A 1/3-pound of fresh beef on the softest bun of them all makes this monster hard to savor slowly. Bob's Giant Hamburger is topped with the usual suspects—mustard, lettuce, tomatoes and onion—but it's the beef that makes this the place for boaters, locals, and anyone who's ventured west of the 5.

OPTIONS: Almost as famous for their breakfasts, Bob's lunchtime also offers up sandwiches, some serious chili, and six other burger choices including the Sourdough Cheeseburger, Patty Melt, and the owner's own creation, called, wait for it... The Sloppy. A bed of lettuce, ranch salsa, and a burger topped with chili and cheese. Thank goodness the napkins are free.

GO FOR: Don't even mess around; the Bob's Giant Bacon Cheeseburger is all you can handle. \$6.25

GET THERE: 6639 Embarcadero, Stockton, (209) 957-3279, www.bobsatthamarina.com

Moo Moo's Burger Barn

SUMMARY: If cows, a barn, and the name 'burger' in the title don't suggest great hamburger, then we recommend you rethink what you're looking for. This three-location restaurant is half old-time diner, and half new-age barnyard.

THE BURGER: No matter what you order, they're all going to be 1/3-pound of good beef, made to order, and made quickly. Nothing is fancy, but it's all delicious, right down to the sautéed mushrooms and the meaty patty.

OPTIONS: More than 15 different kinds of burgers give you the option for just about anything. You want pineapple? The Hula Moo. How about bacon and green chilis? The Ole' Moo. Don't want meat at all? The No Moo. Yeah, no kidding. A vegetarian Gardenburger on a wheat bun caters to those more health-conscious folk.

GO FOR: The BMS Moo. A combination of bacon, Swiss cheese, sautéed mushrooms, moo sauce, lettuce, tomato, and onion on a Kaiser bun. It's messy; it's an assault on your taste buds; and it's really good. \$5.95

GET THERE: Downtown Lodi Cineplex, (209) 369-9450. Downtown Stockton City Centre Cinemas, (209) 469-9450. Park West Place, Stockton, (209) 957-9450. www.moo-moos.com

Manny's California Fresh

SUMMARY: Manny's took home *San Joaquin* magazine's Best of 2009 award for burgers, and for good reason. This wood-and-windowed eatery is about as centralized as a Stockton restaurant can be, and doesn't specialize singularly in burgers, sandwiches, or chicken alone. But it does specialize in fresh and delicious.

THE BURGER: Two patties, dripping with cheese and special sauce is exactly what a burger should be, and with the crispness of the lettuce and tomatoes, you can almost fool yourself into believing it's a healthy choice. But when you're looking for a great burger, health-consciousness tends to be the last thing on your mind. Sometimes you gotta go a little bad for a lot of good.

OPTIONS: The Avocado Burger with fresh avocado; the Old Timers Burger on sourdough; and the Carmel Burger with a selection of Swiss, avocado, tomatoes, and onions certainly caught my attention—but then again so did the fried chicken, and the fresh sandwiches, and the \$7.95 fresh deep-fried oysters...

GO FOR: The Manny's Burger and a beer. Let's be honest, there's nothing better than two half-pound patties smothered with cheese and a cold beer to wash it down. \$5.59

GET THERE: 1612 Pacific Ave., Stockton, (209) 463-6415, www.stocktonmiraclemile.com/mannys

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