

Phoenix Area's New Burgers on the Block

Written by Written by Melissa Larsen/Photographed by Cassandra Tomei

First it was the steakhouse; then it was cupcakes. Now, the Valley is seeing a boom in chic burger joints. Here, AFM takes you on a tasting tour of four of the new hamburger hot spots.



Relish Burger Bistro

If you're in the mood for a burger with a view, The Phoenixian's new Relish Burger Bistro might be what you're craving. The restaurant overlooks the resort's beautiful golf greens—and dishes up top-notch burgers to enjoy while taking in the scenery. All of Relish's beef burgers are made of Kobe and nothing shows off the meat quite like The Classic, which is topped with the usual tomato, lettuce and onion plus two you-pick toppings (you can choose from a variety of cheeses and veggies). The challah bread bun, which is baked in-house each day, is airy, buttery and delicious. In addition, we're fans of the restaurant's relish trio: one sweet, one spicy and one prickly pear variety. For something with a little spice, The Southwestern is the way to go. The zesty offering is topped with roasted poblano pepper, guacamole and habañoero Jack cheese. Overall, the menu features six beef burgers, as well as several for nonmeat eaters, including a black bean variety. Each burger is sided with delish, crispy tater tots that have a Southwestern-inspired dusting of spices. As for sides and starters, consider the garlic fries and fried pickles. The garlic fries are crispy and feature just enough garlic goodness while the fried pickle spears are tasty but, due to the dense batter, it's hard to eat more than one or two. Dessert time calls for Relish's incredible milkshakes—including a few adult-only varieties—and build-your-own s'mores, where you get your very own tabletop grill in which to roast marshmallows on an open flame.

Zinburger

Whether you're hanging out at the chic indoor/outdoor bar or sinking into a booth (surrounded by fun murals of cow pastures), any spot at Sam Fox's eight-month-old Zinburger Wine & Burger Bar is a good one to enjoy A-plus patties. The menu at the Biltmore Fashion Park eatery features eight burger options (plus a few tempting salads), with our favorite being the melt-in-your-mouth Kobe burger. The mammoth, mmm-inducing burger is topped with cheddar, wild mushrooms and mayo. You might want to double-up on napkins—this is one juicy burger. On the side, the Double Truffle Fries are exquisite—and add a bit of sophistication to a burger-and-fries meal. Zinburger also serves sweet potato fries, hand-cut fries and zucchini fries with Parmesan cheese. (Don't expect any of these options to come with your burger; everything must be purchased à la carte.) Though no one wants the mouthwatering meal to end, it means that dessert time has rolled around. One of our favorite features at Zinburger is its milkshake menu, which lists a shake to satisfy just about any sweet tooth. Fruit lovers can stick their straw into the strawberry cheesecake or bananas foster shakes while chocoholics will adore the Kit Kat or cookies-and-cream varieties.

Lush Burger

It's hard not to feel hip at Scottsdale's Lush Burger, which opened in the spring. The lovely red and black design motif and awesome patio area make it a cool spot for people to stop by for a business lunch or dinner with friends. The burgers at this fast-casual spot (where you place the order at the counter and it is delivered to your table) include meat from Harris Ranch and Snake River Farms. While the meat is yummy, the patties fall apart a bit too easily, and the buns are too chewy for our taste. At Lush Burger, the real deliciousness lies in the sides and shakes. The Sweet 'n Salty mix of sweet potato and Lush fries or the truffle fries are must-orders. Plus, Lush Burger offers onion rings, which seems like a no-brainer but Lush is among the few new burger joints that offers them. When it comes time to wash down the burger and fries, Lush dishes up several divine milkshakes (which should be shared as they are quite large) that'll please both grown-up and kid taste buds. Mr. Lushbar is a favorite; it's a peanut butter shake with chocolate swirls, chopped nuts and chocolate flakes. The s'mores shake, which is topped with ooey goeey toasted marshmallow, is also bound to make you smile.

The Grind (pictured)

The most masculine of the new burger spots, Arcadia's The Grind dishes out mile-high burgers and cool, classic cocktails that date back to the 1950's. The atmosphere is dark, moody and intimate, a definite departure from the open, cheery ambience of the other burger restaurants. The goods at The Grind are coal-fired, adding a crisp crust to the exterior of the Steakhouse BLT burger, which is topped with bacon, tomato, lettuce, charred onion and The Grind's scrumptious steak sauce. (We love that the giant burger is served on what looks like an antique platter.) On the side, it doesn't get better than the sweet potato fritters. The crunchy fritters make for an interesting departure from French fries, though The Grind offers those too. (You can take a peek at the blackboard near the bar area for more daily specials). And though the Phoenix restaurant does offer milkshakes to finish off the burger-joint trifecta, we suggest sinking your teeth into the chocolate bread pudding or the warm doughnuts to cap off your meal. The chocolate bread pudding is warm and decadent, perfect for fall. Meanwhile, the incredible salted butterscotch that is served with the doughnuts will still have you reaching for a straw in order to sip up

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every last drop.

To Learn More:

The Grind www.the grindaz.com.

Lush Burger 480.686.8908, www.lushburgeraz.com.

Relish Burger Bistro 480.423.2530, www.thephoenician.com.

Zinburger 602.424.9500, www.foxrc.com.