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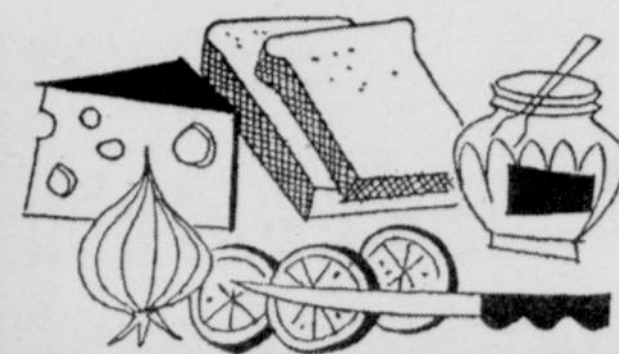
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BY MICHAEL E BARRETT

Burgers revisited

I do my best to steer *Just Out* readers to a variety of finer dining establishments and experiment with Portland's eclectic menus. I try to tempt you with gastro-babble like "pleasing the palate" or "amalgam of flavors" or "epicurean art form." But sometimes it's nice to just loosen your tie, roll up them shirt sleeves and chow! So this month I'm getting over myself and gorging on some yummy beef burgers with all the fixins.

The New Old Lompoc •
1616 N.W. 23rd Ave.

For burgers of the "that hit the spot" variety, The New Old Lompoc presents a tasty 1/3-pound Angus beef burger garnished with Tillamook cheddar or Emmentaler Swiss cheese. For extra flavor, pork it up with peppered bacon. Now that you're officially off your diet, forgo the side salad and dig into the house-cut shoestring fries. Lompoc brews include the typical list of ales, but, honestly, their Sockeye Cream Stout is the smoothest in town. Creamy, malty and sweet, it counts as an appetizer and a dessert. The New Old Lompoc is best enjoyed on its cozy patio, but a window seat in any 23rd Avenue restaurant is always good for a gander.

Laurelwood NW Public House •
2327 N.W. Kearney St.

Westiders rejoice! Laurelwood is in the 'hood. Known for great beer and even better root beer, the well-known Hollywood District establishment has opened a second home just off 23rd Avenue. The extensive menu features mouthwatering burgers with pesto mayo—the Black and Bleu is my favorite. Can you imagine a more perfect ingredient than bleu cheese crumbles to temper the zesty spice of blackening seasoning? Laurelwood's signature Brewery Fries make the perfect complement to anything from the grill. They come seasoned with malt vinegar, garlic, parmesan and parsley. Try the Tree Hugger Porter if root beer doesn't tickle your fancy.

Hotel Condon • 202 S. Main St., Condon

OK, so it may take three hours to get to this northern-ish central Oregon berg, but the burgers at Hotel Condon are worth it. The half-pounder Rattlesnake Burger is out of this world. (Come to think of it, Condon is a little otherworldly itself, but that's beside the point.) Smothered with chili pepper sauce, Monterey cheese and a couple of slabs of bacon, the Rattlesnake has zing and zest that I've never before encountered in a burger. Hotel Condon has a full bar, but don't order anything too fancy, unless a dollop of Cool Whip in your Spanish coffee doesn't faze you. For entertainment, grab a window seat and watch who goes in and out of the town tavern across the street. If you're too sophisticated for that, there's always Powell's Bookstore two doors down. (No kidding.)

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