

Burgers with a Twist

NORTHWEST BURGERS OFFERS LOCAL MEAT AND VEGAN OPTIONS BY MOHAMMED ALKHADHER

Born and raised in Eugene, NorthWest Burgers owner and chef Garrett Kirsch says he knows what Eugeneans want: “They want local, house-made products. I wanted to take something as simple as a burger and see how it goes.”

NorthWest Burgers, tucked away in the upstairs of 5th Street Public Market, puts a homemade twist on typically mass-produced “All-American” food.

“I feel like that’s what separates us from other places,” Kirsch says. “I think a lot of people just use pre-made patties — frozen patties that aren’t cooked well. I wanted to do a burger joint unlike what anyone else is doing in town.”

Kirsch and his wife, Felicia, met in culinary school and opened their restaurant almost a year and a half ago in the Fifth Street food court. “We put a lot of love into it,” he says. “We’re here every single morning.”

The menu at NorthWest Burgers displays a dedication to creative burger options, as well as vegetarian and vegan fare. The vegan burger boasts fresh mushrooms, yellow onion and spinach with tempura, and the beer-battered asparagus casts veggies in a whole new light.

Still, NorthWest Burgers is a burger joint, and meat weighs heavily on the menu in a pleasing variety of choices: BBQ chicken, salmon and “bork,” a blend of beef and pork mixed with bacon and blue cheese, all round out the more typical burger selections.

The meat is never frozen, Kirsch says. They buy it fresh and grind it the same day, and the Kirsches makes all of their dressings themselves. “We make every sauce, from ketchup to mustard,” Kirsch says. “If we’re not able to

make it ourselves, we outsource to local companies.”

The tangy freshness of the ketchup is novel, replete with seeds and tomato peel, and the homemade ranch outclasses anything you could find in a plastic bottle.

The Kirsches rely on local businesses, including bakery

Reality Kitchen, for their buns. And while the fries may be one of the only things on the menu grown out of state (Idaho, of course), the spuds that come with the burgers are both crunchy and delicious.

The space, nestled in the food court of 5th Street Public Market, has all the options of a contemporary mall food court but subverts the norm with fresh, local food. It’s one way to marry the old with the new, while remaining true to sustainable ideals. ■

NorthWest Burgers is open 11 am to 7 pm Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 7 pm Saturday and 8:30 am to 5 pm Sunday at 296 E. 5th Ave. #300 in 5th Street Public Market. Learn more at nwburgers.com.



PHOTO BY MOHAMMED ALKHADHER

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