

[Burgerlicious! Burgers, Shakes and Fries takes bite out of the competition](#)



Written by Ken Borsuk, Staff Reporter

Looking for the best burger in town?

According to a survey put together by the local real estate firm Anderson Associates, the answer isn't hard to find.

Respondents declared Burgers, Shakes and Fries at 302 Delavan Ave. to have the best-tasting hamburger in town, beating several other Greenwich restaurants for the honor.

The survey got responses from 226 people, including the staff of *Greenwich Post*, and Burgers, Shakes and Fries was the top of a list of 18, with a score of 4.33 out of 5, beating out

Sundown Saloon, Palomino, L'Escale, and Thataway Café in the top five. Respondents praised the hamburgers at Burgers, Shakes and Fries for being "perfectly cooked" and for how they were served on toast and not a bun. The toppings and side dishes were also praised, and one respondent even said, "This spot put us in a great mood," while another said it was a reminder of childhood.



Since Burgers, Shakes and Fries is relatively new in town, having just opened in August 2007, the victory can be considered something of a surprise, and no one was more surprised than the restaurant's owner, Kory Wollins, who told the *Post* he had no idea his place was even being considered.

"I was shocked and ecstatic when I found out," Mr. Wollins said in an interview last Friday. "I didn't even know that this was happening, and to think that people were coming in and evaluating us and that they liked what they got here is great to hear. I feel so good for my staff, because the fact that people came in at all times to evaluate us means that the staff's eye was always on the prize. We're just trying to create a great burger at a great price, and I think we hit it."

Carolyn Anderson, managing broker of the firm, said she greatly enjoys sponsoring and setting up the annual tastings in town. Previously the firm had ranked catering firms for their hors d'oeuvres, sweet shops for their chocolate truffles, ice cream parlors for their vanilla ice cream, and who made the best pizza in town. All these events had been held at the Andersons' home, but Ms. Anderson said this year she and her husband, Jerry, executive vice president for the firm, were concerned that having one big event where everyone blind-tasted a selection of hamburgers wouldn't work. She said they wanted the most accurate judgment, and the backyard environment didn't suit that.

So this year, the firm sent out assignments to people who are either clients or supporters of Anderson Associates. These amateur food critics were told which specific restaurants to visit and given evaluation sheets to fill out and mail back to the firm.

"We kept getting requests to find out who made the best hamburger in town, and this really was the best way to do it," Ms. Anderson told the *Post*. "It's the fairest way to evaluate, and people had a lot of fun doing this. People took it very seriously and that was great to see. We got back so many detailed reports and we were very interested in seeing what the results would be."

The Andersons naturally couldn't resist doing some testing of their own, and Ms. Anderson said she came to the same conclusion the testers did.

"I just couldn't resist," Ms. Anderson said with a laugh when she revealed she visited all the restaurants being evaluated. "I wanted to know just how I would feel about the results, and I think the people made a very good choice."

Mr. Wollins said there's no real secret to making a great hamburger and that he has no fancy technique for it, save for some seasoning, including salt, pepper and something else he prefers to keep a trade secret, and the fact that he serves burgers medium rare, which some other places won't do. He also makes sure the meat, which is fixed every single day, is treated well before it's cooked, not slapped and pounded down into a thin patty. To Mr. Wollins, that's a key distinction that makes his place's burgers stand out.

"It's not so much what I do, but what I don't do," Mr. Wollins said. "That's really the secret to it. You can do too much to something. It's what you don't do that makes it work."

In the little more than a year he's been open, Mr. Wollins said, he's happy to have the loyal customer base his restaurant attracts, including everyone from town employees to hedge fund managers accustomed to finding themselves on lists in Forbes Magazine. This is not the first rave thrown Burger, Shakes and Fries' way. It was recently ranked on *New York* magazine's Cheap Eats list as having great quality for a good price, despite the fact that the restaurant is not in New York City.

With that honor already under his belt, Mr. Wollins said he was happy and humbled to have this local recognition as well. Mr. Wollins describes himself as someone concerned with quality and said he is constantly asking people how things are and how they're enjoying their meals.

"It says a lot that we're considered to be the best," Mr. Wollins said. "It's a huge feather in our cap, and it really makes me wish we had a bigger space here. We have such great and loyal customers, and we're just trying to give them the best product and service."

The results from this test will be part of the next *Anderson Guide to Enjoying Greenwich*, which will have its eighth edition published next year. Suggestions are already being taken as to what will be taste-tested next year.

"We did this so people could have fun with it, and people definitely enjoy it," Ms. Anderson said. "It's great to see that."

kborsuk@greenwich-post.com

Add comment

Commenting is reserved for registered users.
Click on "Login/Registration" in the left menu to log in or create a new account.

JComments