



Menu Clips

Tracking Menu Activity
Throughout the
Foodservice Industry

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MENU-MINDED: Insider Commentary



Global Influences Heat Up Burger Innovation

Aaron Jourden, Associate Editor

Hamburgers have always been a distinctly American food, a classic structure of grilled beef patty on a bun with familiar toppings and sauces. Burgers have been popular for decades all across the country, but recent years have seen a marked uptick in the quality, variety and availability of burgers at chain restaurants. Technomic's newly released *2009 Burger Consumer Trend Report* provides an in-depth look at the latest trends and influences driving the burger category. One of our most interesting findings was a distinct shift at many restaurants to innovative burgers with globally inspired ingredients.

Although restaurants have been offering burgers with ethnic ingredients for some time, consumer demand for more edgy and exciting flavors has inspired operators to roll out new burgers with exotic flair. Menus across the industry are increasingly listing burgers with Asian, Cajun, Hawaiian, Mediterranean, Mexican and Southwestern flavor profiles. Because of the abundance of toppings, proteins, sauces and breads associated with these particular cuisines, burgers can be easily adapted to incorporate global flavors.

Here are some examples of what operators are creating:

Asian/Hawaiian

- **Silver Diner** menus **Aloha Veggie Sliders** featuring black-bean patties, mango-pineapple salsa, lowfat peppercorn ranch dressing and balsamic glaze on toasted wheat-and-oat buns
- **Carl's Jr.** offers a **Teriyaki Six Dollar Burger** with a charbroiled 100% Black Angus beef patty with teriyaki glaze, a charbroiled Dole pineapple slice, two slices of Swiss cheese, lettuce, tomato, red onion and mayonnaise on a toasted sesame-seed bun

Mediterranean

- **Champps Americana** features a **Fresca Burger** with a USDA Choice Angus beef patty, provolone cheese, roasted red peppers, spinach leaves and crumbled feta cheese on a toasted ciabatta roll
- **Kuma's Corner** lists a **Motorhead** burger with a 10-ounce beef patty, goat cheese, kalamata olives, oregano, tzatziki, onion and tomato on a pretzel roll
- **Quick Chek** prepares a **Roasted Tomato & Garlic Burger** with a ¼-pound Angus beef patty, roasted red peppers, mozzarella cheese and roasted-tomato and garlic spread on a kaiser roll

Mexican

- **Rubio's Fresh Mexican Grill** offers an **All-American Taco** with a chargrilled, seasoned beef patty, melted American cheese, salsa fresca, garlic-chipotle mayonnaise and lettuce inside a soft flour tortilla with jalapeño peppers on the side
- **Black-eyed Pea** created a **Caliente Burger** featuring a ½-pound Angus beef patty or an all-white-meat turkey patty, roasted jalapeños, pepper Jack cheese and pico de gallo on a whole-wheat bun
- **Burguesa Burger** menus **La Monumental** with two beef patties, two slices of cheese, a slice of ham, crunchy tostada, refried beans, lettuce, tomato and onion on a sesame-seed bun capped with a jalapeño
- **Olga's Kitchen** lists the **South of the Border Burger** with beef or grilled chicken, pepper Jack cheese, avocado, tomato, lettuce and chipotle mayonnaise wrapped inside signature Olga bread

Though burgers are widely menued across the restaurant industry, burgers featuring ethnic flavors currently make up only a small fraction of the category. That leaves plenty of opportunities to invent creative burgers using ethnic ingredients and preparation methods. International burgers, with their exciting flavors and less-familiar ingredients, allow restaurant-goers to experience the classic American burger in new ways, just as ethnic flavors have influenced innovations and trends in many other menu categories in recent years.

Menu of the Month *Kuma's Corner*

Chicago

Burgers with Attitude



Kuma's Corner is a neighborhood eatery with a reputation for luxe burgers, hard-to-find beers and a rocking atmosphere.

A premium burger with gourmet toppings on pretzel bread is probably not the first thing that comes to mind when one is listening to Black Sabbath, but at Kuma's Corner in Chicago, heavy-duty burgers and heavy metal music go hand in hand. Kuma's Corner, a four-year-old concept founded by Matt Cain, is a full-service gastropub specializing in three things: burgers, beer and loud rock music. The restaurant has built a reputation for its casual atmosphere and solid list of burgers on signature pretzel bread. Though the music is aggressive and the waitstaff may be heavily tattooed, Kuma's Corner attracts guests of all sorts, including families with children.

Kuma's Corner is open daily for lunch and dinner, offering a menu of nearly 20 different burgers along with a small selection of starters, salads and sandwiches. All burgers are served on a signature pretzel roll and come with a choice of a 10-ounce, coarsely ground beef patty, boneless chicken breast, garden burger or chicken tenders. Most selections are named after a heavy metal group. The restaurant also offers a rotating burger special about every month, usually inspired by a current news event. For example, a recently offered Swine Flu burger featured fried tortilla strips, chorizo hash, roasted green chiles, pico de gallo, fresh cilantro and cream sauce.

Craft beers provide a counterpunch to the restaurant's lengthy list of burgers. Kuma's Corner offers an array of hard-to-find draft and bottled beers, with an emphasis on local and seasonal brews. The beer list runs the gamut from blue-collar favorite Pabst Blue Ribbon to mid-range selections from Great Lakes Brewing Co. and Left Hand Brewing Co. to indulgent brews like the \$12 Big Bear Black Stout from Bear Republic. Pricing ranges from \$3–\$20. Non-alcoholic beverages include root beer and cream soda.

Menu selections include:

Burgers (served with fries or housemade chips; substitute house or Caesar salad for \$2)

- *Famous Kuma Burger*—bacon, Cheddar cheese and a fried egg (\$10)
- *Black Sabbath*—blackening spice, chili, pepper Jack cheese and red onion (\$10)
- *YOB*—smoked Gouda, bacon, roasted red peppers and roasted-garlic mayonnaise (\$10)
- *Iron Maiden*—avocado, cherry peppers, pepper Jack cheese and chipotle mayonnaise (\$10)
- *Slayer*—fries topped with a ½-pound burger, chili, cherry peppers, andouille sausage, onions, Jack cheese and “anger” (\$12)
- *Neurosis*—Cheddar and Swiss cheeses, sautéed mushrooms, caramelized onions and horseradish mayonnaise (\$10)
- *Metallica*—Buffalo sauce, bacon and blue cheese dressing (\$10)
- *Melvins*—fresh basil, prosciutto, mozzarella cheese, tomato and onion (\$10)
- *Clutch*—Cheddar, Swiss, Jack and smoked Gouda cheeses (\$10)
- *Mastodon*—barbecue sauce, Cheddar cheese, bacon and frizzled onions (\$10)
- *Led Zeppelin*—pulled pork, bacon, Cheddar cheese and pickles (\$11)
- *Judas Priest*—bacon and blue cheese dressing with apples, walnuts and dried cranberries (\$10)
- *Motorhead*—goat cheese, kalamata olives, oregano, tzatziki, onion and tomato (\$10)
- *Dark Throne*—chipotle peppers, goat cheese and fresh pico de gallo (\$10)
- *Goblin Cock*—bacon, Cheddar cheese, a ¼-pound Vienna hot dog, tomato, onion, green relish, Chicago-style sport peppers, pickles, celery salt and mustard (\$12)

- **Plague Bringer**—roasted-garlic mayonnaise, tortilla strips, Co-Op Image hot sauce, garlic, pepper Jack cheese and sliced jalapeños (\$12)
- **High On Fire**—sriracha chile sauce, prosciutto, roasted red pepper, grilled pineapple and sweet chili paste (\$12)
- **Lair of the Minotaur**—caramelized onion, pancetta, Brie cheese and bourbon-soaked pears (\$12)
- **Bongzilla**—¼-pound Sheboygan Bratwurst, smoked Gouda cheese, caramelized onion, Dusseldorf mustard and jalapeño-apple chutney (\$13)

Sandwiches & Sides (served with waffle fries or housemade chips; substitute house or Caesar salad for \$2)

- **Pig Destroyer**—slow-cooked pork in barbecue sauce on a pretzel roll (\$10)
- **Hate Beak**—Buffalo chicken with extra Buffalo sauce, Monterey Jack cheese, butter lettuce, tomato and red onion on a pretzel roll, served with blue cheese dressing (\$10)
- **Make Your Own Mac & Cheese**—prepared with a choice of two ingredients from bacon, prosciutto, andouille sausage, chicken, roasted red peppers, caramelized onions, sun-dried tomatoes, broccoli, peas, mushrooms, scallions and sweet corn (\$10; extra ingredients \$1 each)

Appetizers

- **Fried Calamari**—served with cherry peppers and lemon aioli (\$9)
- **Buffalo Chicken Tenders**—with blue cheese dressing and celery (\$8)
- **BBQ Pork Fries**—with Jack cheese and barbecue pork (\$9)
- **P.E.I. Mussels**—served with a sauce of Allagash White Belgian-style ale, garlic, butter and chiles (\$10)

Salads

- **House Salad**—with basil vinaigrette (\$5)
- **Mesclun Greens**—with candied walnuts, dried cranberries, goat cheese, red onion and cranberry vinaigrette (\$10)
- **Grilled Chicken Caesar**—grilled chicken, romaine hearts, herbed croutons, Parmesan cheese and housemade Caesar dressing (\$10)
- **Grilled & Glazed Chicken Salad**—with honey mustard (\$10)

Operator Briefs

Bakers Square introduced a new collection of summer salads billed as the perfect way to “go green.” The five new entrée salads are:



Bakers Square introduced a new collection of summer salads including a Chicken & Fruit Salad.

- **Coconut Chicken Salad**—crispy orange-glazed chicken tenderloins coated in toasted coconut and served over romaine lettuce, pineapple chunks, Mandarin oranges, crispy wontons and red grapes, tossed with sesame Asian dressing
- **Chicken & Fruit Salad**—grilled and sliced chicken breast, almonds, red grapes, strawberries, cantaloupe and honeydew over mixed greens, served with poppyseed dressing
- **Apple Walnut Chicken Salad**—romaine lettuce mixed with blue cheese, dried cranberries, tomatoes and red onion, topped with a scoop of apple-walnut chicken salad and served with a light olive-oil vinaigrette

- **Strawberry Spinach Salad**—sliced chicken breast, strawberries, avocado, crumbled feta cheese and pecan pieces over a bed of spinach, served with poppyseed dressing
- **BBQ Chicken Salad**—diced crispy chicken tenders glazed with barbecue sauce over mixed greens, shredded Cheddar cheese, sliced cucumber, tomatoes and avocado, served with ranch dressing. *(Company Website 8/13/09)*

Black-eyed Pea expanded its menu with a number of new burgers and sandwiches. Among the additions are two new burgers, each available with a choice of ½-pound Angus beef patty or all-white-meat turkey patty. Menu additions are available at select locations. The new menu items include:

- **Caliente Burger**—with roasted jalapeños, pepper Jack cheese and pico de gallo on a whole-wheat bun
- **BBQ Ranchero Burger**—with barbecue sauce, Cheddar cheese, smoked bacon and an onion ring on a whole-wheat bun
- **Cod Fillet Sandwich**—a 4-ounce hand-battered cod fillet, tomato, lettuce, and pickles on a corn-dusted bun
- **Caliente Chicken Sandwich**—grilled marinated chicken breast, roasted jalapeños, pepper Jack cheese and pico de gallo on a corn-dusted bun
- **Colorado Turkey BLT**—thin-sliced roasted turkey breast, smoked bacon, lettuce, tomato and sliced avocado on toasted wheat bread
- **Hot Open-Faced Turkey Sandwich**—hand-carved roasted turkey breast and cornbread dressing on whole-wheat bread, smothered with turkey gravy and served with cranberry sauce
- **BBQ Ranchero Chicken Sandwich**—grilled chicken breast basted with barbecue sauce, Cheddar cheese, smoked bacon and an onion ring on a corn-dusted bun. *(Company e-Newsletter 8/13/09)*



Bonefish Grill added a new American-style Kobe Beef Burger.

Bonefish Grill added a new **American-style Kobe Beef Burger**. Priced at \$9.90, the premium burger features a wood-grilled Wagyu beef patty, lettuce, tomato, onion, pickles, special sauce and Cheddar cheese on a soft brioche bun. It's served with fresh greens or housemade chips. *(Company Website 8/18/09)*

Buca di Beppo introduced a new **Limoncello Martini** made with Danny DeVito's Premium Limoncello. Available chainwide, the summer-inspired martini is composed of limoncello, Absolut vodka, housemade sour mix and a splash of lemon-lime soda. The drink is shaken, strained and served with a garnish of mint leaf. *(Company Release 8/13/09)*

Bugaboo Creek Steak House revamped its lunch and dinner menus to offer a broader array of flavors and more customizable meal options. New shareable starters, available for lunch and dinner, include **Hickory Bourbon Wings** for \$7.99 and **Lumberjack Fries** for \$6.49. New dinner-only entrées are **12-ounce Roasted Garlic and Parmesan Crusted Prime Rib** for \$18.49 and **Woodlands Grilled Chicken** for \$13.79. In addition, Bugaboo Creek rolled out a build-your-own combo for dinner called **Summer Grillin' at the Creek**. Priced at \$16.99, the limited-time combo allows diners to pick two of five signature items along with a choice of salad and a side. Signature items offered include baby back ribs, barbecue chicken breast and three varieties of shrimp.

(Nation's Restaurant News Online 8/14/09; Company Website 8/17/09)

***Burgerville** featured Oregon-grown cherries on its seasonal menu for August. The limited-time menu additions were **Cherry Chipotle Pulled Pork Sandwich**, with slow-cooked pulled pork soaked in cherry-chipotle barbecue sauce and topped with cabbage slaw on a toasted cornmeal bun, and **Oregon Cherry & Walnut**

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Salad, with spring greens, dried Oregon Bing cherries, toasted walnuts and goat cheese crumbles, topped with Bordeaux cherries and served with cherry-balsamic vinaigrette. As a complement to the two cherry-inspired dishes, Burgerville also added limited-edition beverages and desserts featuring Oregon-grown blackberries. Selections included milkshakes, smoothies, lemonades and sundaes made with ice cream or non-fat yogurt. Burgerville typically showcases one in-season ingredient each month. *(Company Website 8/4/09)*



Carl's Jr. launched the Big Carl, a knockoff of McDonald's signature Big Mac.

Carl's Jr. launched the **Big Carl**, a knockoff of **McDonald's** signature **Big Mac**. Priced at \$2.49, the copycat burger features two 3.5-ounce charbroiled beef patties, two slices of cheese, whole-leaf lettuce and a Thousand Island-style sauce. Like the Big Mac, the Big Carl features a seeded bun, but it's not split into thirds like the Big Mac. Carl's Jr. says that its Big Carl features twice the meat and cheese as the Big Mac, but is priced lower. Big Mac prices vary, but the burgers generally sell for about \$3 in markets where the two chains compete. Carl's Jr. says that its new Big Carl burger should help the chain combat perceptions that it offers only premium items and not value-priced items. The Big Carl is available at participating locations. *(Company Release 8/18/09; Orange County Register/Fast Food Maven Online 8/18/09)*

Carvel Ice Cream added an Oreo cookie version to its line of **Lil' Rounders** take-home novelties. The chain's new **Oreo Lil' Rounders**, sold in packs of 18, are made with vanilla soft-serve ice cream sandwiched between two Oreo cookies. Introduced late last year, Carvel's Lil' Rounders mini-treats are also available with sugar, chocolate-chip and double chocolate-chip cookies. *(QSRWeb Online 8/10/09)*

CKE Restaurants partnered with **Monster Beverage Company** to add **Monster Energy** drinks as a permanent menu item at all **Carl's Jr.** and **Hardee's** outlets. CKE says that its restaurants will be the first quick-service chains to offer the popular energy drink. Monster Energy is currently available at all Carl's Jr. stores and at company-owned Hardee's units. Franchised Hardee's outlets will get the drink some time in the future. CKE says that offering an energy drink will help draw in more young males. *(Company Release 8/30/09)*

Corner Bakery Café added **Whoopee Pies** to its dessert list. The new treats are composed of either vanilla buttercream or peanut-butter cream sandwiched between two chocolate cake rounds. *(Facebook.com/cornerbakerycafe 7/30/09)*

Denny's expanded its kids' menu with a variety of better-for-you options. Healthier kids' items include **Tumbling Vanilla**, vanilla yogurt with strawberry topping; **High Diving Veggies**, carrots, celery and cucumber; **Apple Dunkers**, cut apples with dipping sauce; **Spaghetti, Set, Go!**, spaghetti with marinara sauce; and new dessert choices such as pudding and **Jell-O**. Denny's also eliminated several items from the previous kids' menu, including **Big Dipper French-Toastix**, hot dogs, and **D-Fusion** sugared beverage packets. Pricing for the new items starts at \$2.99. The kids' menu refresh is part of Denny's Better For You initiative, which launched in June. *(Business Wire 8/24/09)*

Domino's Pizza added **Chocolate Lava Crunch Cakes** to its dessert menu. The oven-baked chocolate cakes feature a crunchy outside with warm chocolate fudge on the inside. An order of two cakes is priced at \$3.99. *(Company Release 8/3/09)*

***Dunkin' Donuts** added a pair of fruity new flavors to its lineup of **Coolatta** frozen beverages. The new **Grape** and **Watermelon Coolattas** are currently available at participating shops in New England, New York State and the Philadelphia area. Available through October 6, the new drinks sell for \$2.79 for a 16-ounce small. Boston-

**Limited-time offer*

area customers can purchase a small serving for the discounted price of \$1.99 through August 25. The Coolatta lineup also includes coffee, strawberry, orange and vanilla bean flavors. (PR Newswire 8/20/09)

Fuddruckers introduced a new frozen-beverage treat called the **Fudds Freeze**. The new drinks are prepared with a choice of Pepsi-brand soft drink blended with the chain's vanilla shake mix and are finished with whipped topping capped with a cherry. (Company e-Newsletter 8/10/09)

Hardee's added a new **Oscar Mayer Fried Bologna Biscuit** to its morning menu. The breakfast sandwich features egg, cheese and a folded slice of fried Oscar Mayer bologna between halves of a scratch-made biscuit. (Company e-Newsletter 8/17/09)

Jack in the Box debuted the **Chorizo Sausage Breakfast Burrito**. The new item, available all day, features hash brown sticks, scrambled eggs, crumbled chorizo and Cheddar cheese sauce in a flour tortilla, served with fire-roasted salsa. The burrito sells for a suggested price of \$2.99. Jack in the Box claims that it is the first major quick-service hamburger chain to offer a product featuring chorizo. (Company Release 8/3/09)

Krispy Kreme brought back football-shaped donuts and tailgate packs for the start of football season. Available at participating stores nationwide, the football-shaped treats are yeast-raised donuts topped with chocolate icing and white icing "laces." The donuts may also be customized with team colors. Tailgate packs consist of a dozen football donuts and a dozen of Krispy Kreme's **Original Glazed** donuts. The seasonal treats are available daily through September 30 and on weekends only through February 1. (Yahoo! Finance 8/17/09)

***L&L Hawaiian Barbecue** added USDA Choice sirloin steaks as a limited-time entrée option on its menu of plated meals. The grilled 8-ounce steak is served with two scoops of rice and a scoop of macaroni salad. The \$6 steak plate is available at participating locations in Hawaii. (StarBulletin.com 8/14/09; Company Website 8/18/09)



LongHorn Steakhouse introduced a number of new food and beverage options on its specials menu including its Vidalia Onion BBQ Ribs & Filet.

***LongHorn Steakhouse** introduced a number of new food and beverage options on its specials menu, including salads, entrées and adult drinks. Limited-time additions are:

- **Vidalia Onion BBQ Ribs & Filet**—a 7-ounce signature Flo's Filet paired with a half rack of grilled baby back ribs brushed with Vidalia onion barbecue sauce and topped with crisp onion straws, served with a choice of side and salad
- **Spiced Rum BBQ Ribs & Sirloin**—an 8-ounce top sirloin paired with a half rack of grilled baby back ribs brushed with a dark rum barbecue sauce and topped with brown sugar and spices, served with a choice of side and salad
- **Strawberry Pecan Salad**—mixed field greens with fresh strawberries, grapes, Mandarin oranges, candied pecans, red onion and feta cheese in a raspberry vinaigrette
- **Blackberry Firefly Tea**—Firefly vodka mixed with cranberry juice and Monin Blackberry syrup, served over ice and topped with fresh blackberries
- **Lemon Firefly Tea**—Firefly vodka mixed with lemonade and served over ice.

(Company Website 8/19/09)

***Mimi's Cafe** added several summer features to its menu, including new **Just Enough** items, new **Party Packs To-Go** and limited-time dishes that feature seasonal ingredients and flavors. New small-plate Just Enough dishes are **Garlic Fries**, **BBQ Shrimp Cocktail**, **BBQ Pulled Pork** and **Artichoke Asiago Chicken**

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Spghettini. The new all-inclusive Party Packs To-Go are **Jumbo Cobb Salad** and **BBQ Pulled Chicken** or **Pork Ciabatta**. Prices for the party packs, which serve between six and eight people, range from \$24.99–\$39.99. The new seasonal features, available through September 30, are **Monterey Chicken Burger** and **BBQ Ranch “Onion Onion” Burger**. *(Chain Leader Online 8/12/09)*

***Olga’s Kitchen** rolled out a new collection of **Grilled-to-Order Burgers** for a limited time. Each of the new burgers comes with a choice of beef or grilled chicken wrapped inside signature Olga bread. The burgers sell for \$7.99 à la carte or \$8.99 as part of a combo with curly fries and coleslaw. Choices are:

- **Black & Bleu Burger**—with A.1. peppercorn mayonnaise, applewood-smoked bacon, caramelized onion and blue cheese
- **BBQ Club Burger**—with coleslaw, Sweet Baby Ray’s honey barbecue sauce, applewood-smoked bacon and Cheddar cheese
- **South of the Border Burger**—with pepper Jack cheese, avocado, tomato, lettuce and chipotle mayonnaise
- **Smokehouse Burger**—with smoked Gouda cheese, applewood-smoked bacon, caramelized onion and horseradish mayonnaise. *(Company Website 8/10/09)*



Pretzelmaker and Pretzel Time have added Wildberry Lemonade to their drink menus.

***Pretzelmaker and Pretzel Time** have added **Wildberry Lemonade** to their drink menus. The new beverage, available for a limited time, is a sweetened blend of lemons, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and cherries. *(PR Newswire 8/10/09)*

Quaker Steak & Lube launched a new kids’ menu of **Tweener Tunes Meals**. Available for children 12 and younger, the menu lists several kid-sized entrées paired with a choice of side for \$5.99 each. A beverage may be added for an extra 99¢. Entrées are **Chicken & Cheesadilla**, **Double Stack Burger Midgets**, **V-6 Wings**, **Crispy Shrimp**, **Grilled Boneless Wings**, **Crispy Chicken Fenders** and **Double Mac & Cheese Bowl**. Sides include baby carrots with ranch sauce, rice, steamed broccoli, applesauce and fries. *(Company e-Newsletter 8/4/09)*

Rita’s Ice debuted a new Italian ice flavored with **Swedish Fish** candies. The frozen-treats chain partnered with candy maker **Cadbury** to develop the flavor. For a limited time, customers who order the new flavor will receive a complimentary pack of Swedish Fish candy. *(PR Newswire 7/31/09)*

***Ruby’s Diner** brought back its collection of **Halibut Entrées** for a limited time. The three new entrées are:

- **Seafood Combo**—three batter-dipped halibut filets and three jumbo shrimp, served with housemade coleslaw and refillable fries
- **Halibut Fish & Chips**—pieces of batter-dipped halibut served with tartar sauce, housemade coleslaw and refillable fries
- **Halibut Fish Tacos**—two tacos with chunks of fried halibut, cabbage, cheese, fresh salsa, housemade guacamole and sour cream inside warm flour tortillas. *(Company e-Newsletter 8/13/09)*

Ruby Tuesday recently added some meatier options to its list of **Mini Masterpieces** sliders. The four new mini-burgers include double-the-meat versions of the chain’s original Mini Masterpieces as well as a new smokehouse version. The new sliders, each served as a pair, include:

- **Double Ruby Minis**—two USDA Choice beef patties with American cheese, mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup and a pickle

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- **Double Bacon Cheese Minis**—two USDA Choice beef patties with bacon, cheese, mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup and a pickle
- **Double Smokehouse Minis**—two USDA Choice beef patties with bacon, cheese and barbecue sauce
- **Double Turkey Minis**—two turkey patties with Havarti cheese, lettuce, tomato, a pickle and mayonnaise. *(Company Website 8/16/09)*

Smokey Bones Bar & Fire Grill expanded its menu with a range of new options. About a dozen new menu items were added in total, including new starters, salads, mini-burgers and sandwiches. Highlights include:

- **Fire Stix**—crispy seasoned fries topped with melted Cheddar-Jack cheese, chipotle mayonnaise, barbecue glaze, bacon, diced onion and tomato, served with ranch dipping sauce
- **Pretzel Bones**—lightly buttered and salted Bavarian pretzel sticks served with sweet honey mustard, queso and garlic-Parmesan dipping sauces
- **Steak & Spinach Salad**—sliced chargrilled top sirloin over a mix of baby spinach, red onion, blue cheese crumbles, fried mushroom slices and crumbled bacon in a bacon vinaigrette
- **Mini Beefies**—three mini-burgers composed of fire-grilled beef patties glazed in a sweet sauce, sautéed onions, barbecue sauce and American cheese on a toasted mini-bun
- **Mini Hotties**—three chicken sliders featuring chopped chicken fingers tossed in Buffalo sauce, shredded lettuce and blue cheese dressing on toasted mini-buns
- **Smoked Wings**—chicken wings tossed in the chain's signature rib rub, then hickory-smoked, fried, tossed in Memphis-style dry rib rub and finished with a sweet glaze. *(Company e-Newsletter 7/23/09)*



Taco Bell added a new nacho option called Volcano Nachos to its Volcano Menu.

Taco Bell added a new nacho option to its **Volcano Menu**. The new **Volcano Nachos** consist of seasoned ground beef, beans, nacho cheese, jalapeños, spicy Lava sauce, red tortilla strips, regular tortilla chips and a topping of reduced-fat sour cream. *(Company Website 7/30/09)*

***Tilted Kilt** rolled out a new **Blazin' Kilt** menu of spicy dishes. The limited-time menu includes such starters and entrées as **Kilt Burner Wings, Blackened Chicken Salad, Fish Tacos, Pork Carnitas Tacos, Grande Pork Carnitas Burrito** and **Sausage Artichoke Fettuccini**. *(Company e-Newsletter 8/7/09)*

***White Castle** launched its new **Craver Saver** value meals for a limited time. The \$2.99 value meals included a choice of three original sliders, two pulled pork sliders or two chicken-ring sandwiches, along with a Saver-sized fries and a Saver-sized drink. The value meals were available through August 22. *(PR Newswire 7/27/09)*

Wienerschnitzel launched a new value platform dubbed the **UnDER \$1 Menu**. The new value menu, available at participating locations, offers six items priced at 99¢ each. Choices include **Chili Burger, Original Stadium Dog, Corn Dog, Jalapeño Poppers, Chili Cheese Fries Burrito** and small **Tastee Freez Chocolate Dipped Cone**. *(Company Website 8/4/09)*

Yoshinoya Beef Bowl rolled out a new line of barbecue plates. The new dishes include **BBQ Short Rib** plate, **Barbecued Chicken** plate and a combination plate that includes both meats. Each plate includes fried rice, yakisoba noodles and a side salad. Suggested prices range from \$5.25–\$6.25. Barbecue represents a new menu category for Yoshinoya, which specializes in rice bowl entrées. *(Nation's Restaurant News Online 7/30/09)*

**Limited-time offer*

Menu Launches

***Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano** rolled out a seasonal menu featuring the flavors of summer. Limited-time selections are:

- **Grilled Calamari Salad**—grilled calamari flavored with garlic and herbs, avocado, asparagus, cherry tomatoes, capers and lemon oil over arugula
- **Pizza Caprese**—with olive oil, locally sourced heirloom tomatoes, buffalo mozzarella, basil and balsamic vinegar
- **Spaghetti con Pomodoro Crudo**—spaghetti tossed with a cold mixture of tomatoes, onion, olives, capers, garlic, olive oil and spices, topped with toasted Parmesan breadcrumbs
- **Shrimp & Scallop Spiedino**—skewers of seared shrimp and jumbo scallops over vegetable couscous, drizzled with pomegranate-balsamic glaze. *(Company e-Newsletter 7/27/09)*



Elmer's Breakfast. Lunch. Dinner. launched a seasonal menu showcasing Walla Walla sweet onions, including Oregon Trail Steak & Walla Walla Sweet Onions Rings.

***Elmer's Breakfast. Lunch. Dinner.** launched a seasonal menu showcasing Walla Walla sweet onions. The limited-time **Sweet Onion Festival** menu, available through the end of September, features new options for all three dayparts. Selections include:

- **Walla Walla Sweet Onion & Sausage Breakfast Burrito**—scrambled eggs, Tillamook Cheddar cheese, sautéed Walla Walla onions and grilled pork sausage in a large flour tortilla topped with tomato-sweet onion salsa, sliced avocado and sour cream, served with Idaho hash browns or seasonal fruit
- **Northwest Rancher's Breakfast Burger**—a grilled 8-ounce seasoned beef patty topped with two fried eggs, Daily's smokehouse bacon, sautéed Walla Walla onions and Tillamook Cheddar cheese on a grilled English muffin, served with Idaho hash browns or seasonal fruit
- **Oregon Trail Steak & Walla Walla Sweet Onions Rings**—an all-natural flat iron steak topped with signature steak butter and garnished with onion rings, served with a vegetable medley, soup or salad and a choice of fries, baked potato or Yukon Gold mashed potatoes
- **Prime Rib & Sweet Onion Burger**—a burger patty seasoned with A.1. Thick & Hearty sauce and topped with melted Tillamook Swiss cheese, sliced rock salt-roasted prime rib and caramelized Walla Walla sweet onions, served with a choice of fries, cottage cheese or creamy coleslaw
- **Mesquite-Seasoned Steak & Sweet Onion Ring Salad**—sliced seasoned steak over a mix of green lettuce, tomato wedges, green onions, red peppers, olives and locally sourced Rogue Creamery blue cheese, tossed with house blue cheese dressing and garnished with Walla Walla onion rings
- **Grilled Wild Salmon with Summertime Sweet Onion Salsa**—a wild Alaskan salmon filet topped with tomato-sweet onion salsa and served with rice pilaf, vegetable medley and choice of soup or salad. *(Company Website 8/19/09)*

**Limited-time offer*



Uno Chicago Grill launched its Best of Summer Starring Lobster promotional menu including its Chocolate Chocolate Malt Layer Cake.

***Uno Chicago Grill** launched its **Best of Summer Starring Lobster** promotional menu. The new menu, available through September 30, features a variety of lobster dishes complemented by several summer favorites. Limited-time lobster dishes and seasonal favorites include:

- **Lobster Sliders**—two or three mini-sandwiches with Maine lobster, mayonnaise and shredded lettuce on seeded buns, served with fries
- **Lobster Wrap**—Maine lobster combined with either mayonnaise and shredded lettuce or bacon, tarragon mayonnaise and shredded lettuce in a whole-wheat and flaxseed tortilla, served with fries
- **Lobster Roll**—Maine lobster combined with either mayonnaise and shredded lettuce or bacon, tarragon mayonnaise and shredded lettuce in a grilled split bun, served with fries
- **Lobster & Shrimp Scampi**—lobster sautéed with garlic, diced tomato and basil in white wine sauce, served over vermicelli with Parmesan cheese
- **Watermelon, Blueberry and Spinach Summer Salad**—spinach, watermelon, blueberries, red onion, feta cheese and basil, dressed with fat-free vinaigrette
- **Cheeseburger Deep-Dish Pizza**—with hamburger beef, Cheddar and mozzarella cheeses, plum tomato and caramelized onion, finished with ketchup, mustard and dill pickles
- **Bananas Foster**—a traditional dessert with four scoops of vanilla ice cream covered with a sauce of banana, rum and brown sugar
- **Chocolate Chocolate Malt Layer Cake**—chocolate layer cake with a center layer of chocolate-malt frosting and malt-ball pieces, finished with a warm chocolate sauce and served with vanilla ice cream
- **Carolina Lightning**—vodka-infused sweet tea mixed with lemonade.

(PR Newswire 8/19/09; Company Website 8/19/09)

International Cuisines Take the Spotlight

Inspired by the ultra-popular Kogi BBQ restaurant on wheels, a new crop of mobile food trucks sprouting up across Los Angeles is taking international flavors to the streets. The city's **Marked 5** truck offers a twist on the classic burger with a selection of Asian meats served between two buns composed of pressed rice. The \$5 burgers are available with Angus beef or tofu patties in a signature secret torakku sauce, or with curried chicken or katsu pork. Bánh mì is the specialty from the recently launched **Nom Nom Truck**, which serves the traditional Vietnamese sub sandwiches with charcuterie and pickled vegetables on French bread. And the **Fishlips Sushi** truck offers curbside diners a variety of on-the-go sushi, including spicy tuna rolls, California rolls and crunchy rolls. (Los Angeles Times Online 7/22/09)

Ingredients Behind the Menu

Fried chicken is the latest comfort food to get the royal treatment at restaurants around New York City. Just as chefs have been updating hot dogs and hamburgers with premium meats and upscale toppings in recent years, chefs are

**Limited-time offer*

now looking to take fried chicken to new heights. At **Momofuku Ramen Bar**, chef David Chang recently added a Fried Chicken Dinner featuring two whole chickens, one cooked Southern style with a buttermilk and Old Bay batter, the other with a spicy Korean-style glaze. Priced at \$100, the dinner comes with mu shu pancakes, long spicy peppers, baby carrots and red radishes, Japanese shiso leaves, four sauces, fresh herbs and Bibb lettuce leaves to make wraps. At the **Blue Ribbon Brasserie**, diners can opt for a variety of fried chicken specialties. The restaurant batters its chicken in egg whites and flour spiked with matzo meal, then fries the poultry and dusts it with a seasoning mix made of salt, pepper, paprika and herbs ground and dried in-house. A \$21 plate of the chicken is served with mashed potatoes and collard greens. Jared Greenhouse and Oleg Voss offer their take on fried chicken from a mobile food truck called **Schnitzel & Things**. The duo serves up massive slabs of chicken that have been pounded nearly paper thin, breaded and deep-fried. A platter with sides such as sauerkraut with lemon-caper sauce is priced at \$9. *(Daily News Online 8/16/09)*



Several lounges and restaurants are featuring the sweet, mildly spicy flavor of pears in their house cocktails.

Several lounges and restaurants in the San Francisco Bay Area are featuring the sweet, mildly spicy flavor of pears in their house cocktails. Pear-based spirits used in these cocktails include St. George Spirits pear brandy, Grey Goose La Poire vodka and Absolut Pears vodka. **Fifth Floor Restaurant** features a Swiss-made pear eau de vie by the glass, as well as locally made pear eau de vie and pear liqueur from Alameda's St. George Spirits. Jeff Hollinger, general manager at **Absinthe Brasserie & Bar**, uses pear brandy in two cocktails—the Pearanha and the Perfect Pear. Other pear-flavored cocktails in the region include the Oh Pear at **Trademark** and the Pear-tini at **Hotel Mac**. *(San Francisco Chronicle Online 8/9/09)*

Preparation and Presentation Trends

A handful of chefs across the country are turning to fish for a flavorful interpretation of barbecued pork ribs. Fish ribs, which can be somewhat hard to find, generally come from larger species of fish and are comparable in size to pork ribs. The rib meat is often described as more succulent than meat from other parts of the fish since it's next to the bone. Chef Tim Love of **Lonesome Dove** in Fort Worth, TX, says he tries to rescue tuna ribs from carcasses before they end up discarded. For his tuna ribs, Love coats frozen bones with an Asian barbecue sauce and grills them on a 600-degree grill, which keeps the flesh raw in the center. Each bone is then cut to resemble a pork rib. At **Quahog's Seafood Shack** in Stone Harbor, NJ, Chef Carlos Barros features pacu fish ribs as his signature dish. The ribs are marinated in a chipotle-orange barbecue sauce and grilled over high heat on each side. When plated, the pacu ribs resemble light-fleshed pork ribs that are approximately the size of baby back ribs. *(Nation's Restaurant News Online 8/3/09)*

Chefs in the Pittsburgh area are experimenting with how to best prepare grass-finished beef. Many restaurants in the area are looking to grass-finished beef as a more flavorful and healthier alternative to grain-finished beef. However, chefs note that beef from grass-finished cattle can also have a somewhat offputting chewy texture, making it a less attractive option for steak dishes. In downtown Pittsburgh, gourmet hot dog purveyor **Franktuary** recently introduced its new Locavore frankfurter featuring grass-finished beef sourced from Ron Gargas Organic Farm of Volant, PA. At **Mirabelle Restaurant** in Oakmont, PA, Chef John Muth offers grass-finished beef from Horizon View Farms of Laurel highlands, PA, in several preparations, including beef carpaccio, a burger and a sirloin steak. Chef Trevett Hooper of **Legume Bistro** in Pittsburgh's Regent Square has menued a side-by-side tasting of local grass-finished beef and corn-finished beef from Niman Ranch. The pairing allows diners to

experience the differences in taste and texture between the two types of beef. During winter, Hooper plans to feature grass-finished beef in braises and stews. *(Pittsburgh-Post Gazette Online 7/26/09)*

New Products Entering the Market



Kronos Foods Inc. has added new flavors and shapes to its flatbread pita line and has rolled out partially baked flatbread pizza crusts.

Kronos Foods Inc. has added new flavors and shapes to its flatbread pita line and has rolled out partially baked flatbread pizza crusts. New flavors in the flatbread pita line include Italian Pesto, Southwest Chipotle, Sun Dried Tomato and Cinnamon Brown Sugar. New shapes include a 6-inch square, 4-inch round and 6-inch by 9-inch rectangle. The par-baked pizza crusts are available in 12-inch and 16-inch varieties. Individual flatbreads are also available for use with small pizzas or shareable appetizers. Each of the Mediterranean-inspired breads is certified kosher. Chicago-based Kronos Foods distributes its products nationally to retailers and foodservice outlets. *(PR Newswire 8/12/09)*

MCL Fresh Inc. announced that its new Purple Snow Peas are available to foodservice operators and specialty produce retailers. Purple Snow Peas are similar in size and shape to regular snow peas, but come in varying shades of purple to add color to any dish. MCL Fresh's Purple Snow Peas are available in 5- and 10-pound bulk cases as well as 8-ounce bags branded under the MCL Fresh 4-Earth label. Los Angeles-based MCL Fresh partnered with Pea King Produce of Santa Maria, CA, to develop the purple produce. *(PR Newswire 8/10/09)*

S&D Coffee introduced its new Perfect Iced Coffees, available in vanilla, mocha, hazelnut, caramel, unsweetened vanilla and original. Perfect Iced Coffee starts with an espresso blend that's cold brewed in a proprietary process that reduces acidity. The brewed espresso is then combined with flavorings and pure cane sugar and aseptically sealed for a one-year shelf life. To prepare, operators add ice, milk and coffee dilution. Concord, NC-based S&D Coffee is a specialty roaster and coffee supplier. *(QSR Magazine Online 8/12/09)*

Menu Clips is prepared monthly by Technomic Information Services to keep foodservice executives informed on emerging menu trends and concepts through the monitoring of menus and more than 40 consumer and trade publications, as well as field visits and original research. Annual subscriptions are \$295. We welcome your comments.

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