

FLORIDA WEEKLY CUISINE

OUR THREE FOR **3**Places for
a great
burger

A trio worth noting

1 THE COOPERPGA Commons, 4610 PGA Blvd., Palm Beach Gardens; 622-0032 or www.thecooperrestaurant.com.

The Cooper Burger is a classic done right — an 8-ounce patty of his butcher's blend beef, plus lettuce, tomato, aged Vermont cheddar, secret sauce (it's mayonnaise-based), all served atop a griddled challah bun. Not craving beef? The Cooper also offers turkey burgers — with goat cheese and roasted tomatoes.

2 PARK AVENUE BBQ & GRILLEWith Palm Beach County locations in Jupiter, North Palm Beach, West Palm Beach, Wellington and Boynton Beach; www.pabbqgrille.com.

You may find more classically authentic barbecue at other places. But you're hard-pressed to find food that's as consistently well prepared and served as Dean Lavallee and his team do at Park Avenue BBQ. PA is known for its baby back ribs, but some folks claim the restaurant's half-pound burger is the best anywhere. Be sure to try the Dean's Way burger — topped with American cheese, bacon, grilled onions and finished with a smear of Stupidaise (spicy mayonnaise).

3 DARBSTERWith Palm Beach County locations in Jupiter, North Palm Beach, West Palm Beach, Wellington and Boynton Beach; www.pabbqgrille.com.

Just because it's a burger doesn't mean it has to be bad for you. That's the case Darbster makes with its Black & Bleu Burger. It's vegan, but you won't miss the meat, what with the blackened brown rice and lentil burger that's topped with tempeh bacon, caramelized onions, veganaise, balsamic ketchup, tofu blue cheese and served on a challah bun. It's a fun space, too, situated on the north bank of the spillway that divides West Palm Beach and Lake Worth Beach. ■

— Compiled by Scott Simmons, ssimmons@floridaweekly.com



COURTESY PHOTO

The Cooper Burger is a classic done right.

THE DISH:

Highlights from local menus

The Dish: "Hot Mess" Burger

The Place: Cathy's Beach Connection, 12850 U.S. 1, Juno Beach; 561-626-2262 or www.cathysbeachconnection.com

The Price: \$13.95

The Details: A hot mess is how one might have described a recent Monday — a little too much to do, with too little time to do it.

Of course, somehow, it all gets done.

This burger is much the same — there's a lot going on with it, but it all comes together nicely.

Meaty chili, jalapeños, grilled onions, cheddar cheese and an onion ring served with sour cream top a large patty.

The cheese and sour cream tamed the heat of the chili and the jalapeños. Fresh

tomato lent a sweet note and the burger itself was nicely seasoned and cooked medium as ordered. The onion ring was light and crispy.

It's a great place to sit outside and enjoy the day — there's always a breeze — and service was friendly and efficient.

Two minor nits: The slaw was not particularly noteworthy — its dressing tasted bland — and the iced tea could have been fresher.

Still, I'll return to Cathy's for the sandwiches and order something different for a side and a beverage.

That burger was too good not to repeat. ■

— Scott Simmons,
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LIBBY VISION
Butcher cut steak with loaded potato Mille-Feuille from Aquagrille.

AquaGrille launches new menu with focus on steaks, seafood

FLORIDA WEEKLY STAFF

AquaGrille has debuted an upscale steak- and seafood-centric menu.

Led by "Top Chef" All-Star **Stephen Asprinio**, AquaGrille's cuisine enhances the coastal American dining experience.

The Juno Beach restaurant now offers an extensive selection of shellfish with an upscale twist, including Little Neck Clams Aguachile, Alaskan king crab cocktail, butter-roasted king crab, oysters Basquaise, and Shrimp Michelada. The menu's "Fun & Fancy" section features a seafood plateau with East Coast oysters, citrus-poached shrimp, littleneck clams and Alaskan king crab, along with accoutrements. Small plate selections include American Wagyu steak tartare prepared with preserved wild mushroom, black truffle, and bone marrow toast and Caviar "Fish & Chips" served with potato mille-feuille, crème fraîche and chives.

Beef dishes include petite eye of the rib, skirt steak, New York strip and ribeye cap.

Other items include blackened mahi-mahi Creole served with popcorn grits, Zellwood corn, lemongrass and okra; Maine lobster roll served with leeks and harissa on a "fricôd" brioche; and wood-grilled short rib "Frenchy" burger with a bacon-onion marmalade and mimolette espuma.

Also featured on the menu are a seasonal winter squash bisque, a Belgium endive and pink lady apple salad, and freshly baked bread service such as the bone marrow "PB&J." Whimsical plays on traditional sweet indulgences served as the finale include Key Lime Baked Alaska and chocolate crème brûlée.

Info: 561-355-0438 or aquagrillejuno.com. Reservations are encouraged.

Regional offers Sunday brunch

Sunday brunch buffet has returned to **The Regional**.

Chef **Lindsay Autry** offers a range of chilled selections (smoked salmon and smoked whitefish salad, Old Bay poached Florida pink shrimp, deviled eggs), hot selections (scrambled eggs, buttermilk waffles, fried chicken and biscuits with honey and hot sauce) and loaded grits, a Regional Benedict (with tomato pie filling) and other dishes, plus mimosas and Bellinis by the glass and by the carafe, and a Regional Bloody Mary (with pickled okra, no less).

Brunch begins at 11 a.m. It's \$55 per person for adults, \$25 for children 12 and under, plus tax and 18% gratuity.

The Regional is at The Square, 651 Okeechobee Blvd., West Palm Beach. Reservations: www.eatregional.com/reservations or 561-557-6460. ■



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The "Hot Mess" Burger from Cathy's Beach Connection in Juno Beach.