

HENDRIX EXCLUSIVE:

Never before published images from Jimi's Bakersfield Show
Interview with Ron Raffaelli, Photographer to Rock-n-Roll's Greats!

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Bakersfield

Best Burgers

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Best Burgers

History of the Burger

It's no easy task finding Bakersfield's best burgers. Since hamburgers are the nation's most popular sandwich, Bakersfield has scores of places selling burgers. Hamburgers account for 40 percent of all the sandwiches consumed in the United States, according to the website Answers.com. And according to Ask.com, Americans eat about 14 billion burgers a year.

Of the top 100 food chains in the United States, a survey by *Nation's Restaurant News* reports, 15 are burger places. McDonald's is the largest restaurant chain in America, followed by Burger King at No. 4 and Wendy's at No. 5. Sonic is No. 12, and Jack In The Box is No. 17. California darling In-N-Out Burger is No. 67, not bad considering it's only in California and four other Western states. And many of the other chains listed, such as Applebee's, Chili's, and Denny's, feature hamburgers prominently on their menus.

Is it any wonder, then, that so many restaurants, from high-end to low-end, have burgers on their menus?

As impressive as these statistics are, when I last searched for Bakersfield's best burgers, back in 2006, 60 percent of all sandwiches consumed nationally were burgers, meaning Americans' dining habits have changed significantly in the past eight years, reflecting, no doubt, a shift to healthier foods.

The hamburger's origin is a bit hazy, but from different sources (About.com and Wikipedia) I've pieced together what seems to be a fairly accurate tale. The name "hamburger" stems from the German port of Hamburg, which was an important trading center in the Middle Ages. One theory has it that Arab merchants brought a concoction of ground lamb and spices that Hamburg residents adopted, using ground beef or pork instead of lamb. Another source claims the source of the ground beef was from

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~ Most "Over-the-Top" ~

Muertos



Muertos 1514 WALL ST. ALLEY

First, let's talk about the venue. It's in an old brick building that a century or so ago housed a Bakersfield fire station and barn where the horse-drawn fire wagons and horses were maintained. It's been retrofitted for earthquakes, but if you love history this is a great place to visit.

It's also the site of the former Suds Tavern, across the alley from The Alley Cat bar. The interior gives you the sense of being in a living museum, which in essence, you are.

But innovative is the word here when

it comes to burgers. You can get the ANGELO, described as a classic cheeseburger with lettuce, tomatoes, onions, pickles, and mayonnaise. But that's not why Muertos wins the Most Over-the-Top award. That would be for the FERNANDO.

The Fernando will light you up! I love spicy food, but this one is really spicy! Let's start with the half-pound patty, standard on all Muertos' burgers. Then add crushed red peppers, pepper jack cheese, chipotle mayonnaise, and topped with jalapeños. *Bring on the ice water!*

~ Most Unexpected ~

Brimstone at The Padre Hotel

1702 18TH ST.

While I believe that any place worth its salt has a good burger, I was delighted to find how good Brimstone's was. It's certainly among the best in town. What I didn't expect to find was the two types of burgers available:

THE PADRE BURGER

-with lettuce, tomato, a dill spear, onions, and your choice of cheeses: American, cheddar, Swiss, or provolone.

THE BISON BURGER

-with cumin mayonnaise, California chili, grilled red onion, and cheddar cheese.

On a recent visit I opted for The Padre Burger. OK, you ask, if the

Bison Burger, a rarity to be sure on any menu, was unexpected, why did you choose the beef? Because I also didn't expect to be hooked by this fabulous burger!

The bun for either burger is a delicious bakery bun, lightly brushed with butter on the top. The patty is cooked to order (I prefer medium), juicy and flavorful. The burger comes with a light application of mayonnaise, and additional condiments are available upon request (I asked for extra mayo and mustard).

Once you take a bite it's difficult to put the burger down; one bite leads to another and the next thing you know you've almost forgotten that it came with a side dish.

Yes, it's that good.

~Bakersfield's Best~

Moo Creamery

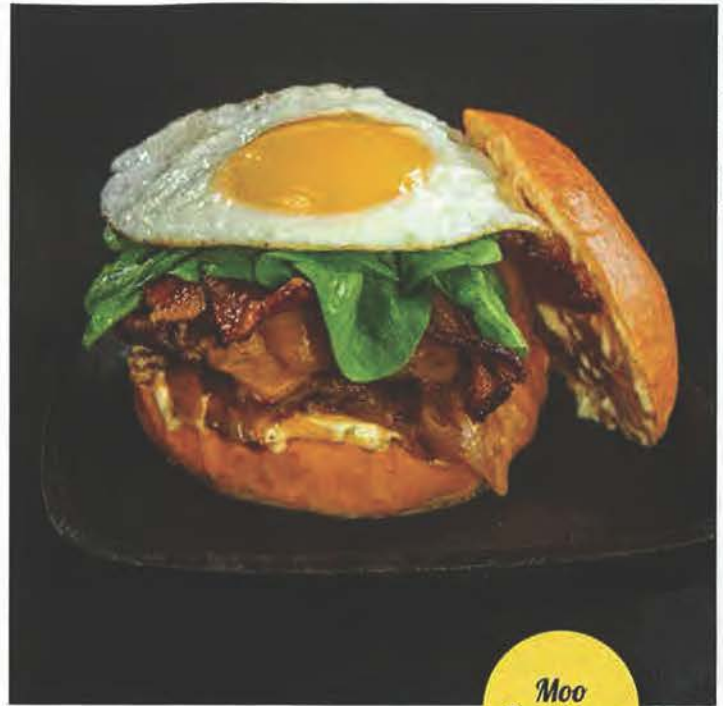
4885 TRUXTUN AVE.

This place is so good we should count ourselves lucky to have it in Bakersfield. It's owned by the husband-and-wife team Richard and Jessica Yoshimura. They opened their restaurant in December 2008, believing that a restaurant whose focus was fresh, imaginative, and flavorful would find a niche in Bakersfield. Their faith has been rewarded.

The décor is a 1950s soda-fountain style. Shiny steel chairs, checkerboard décor. It's a step back in time.

The step forward is the burgers—contemporary, imaginative. Check out the **SPANISH CHORIZO BURGER** (on front cover). It's a burger to savor. The beautifully browned brioche bun is baked on the premises, as are all baked goods at Moo. The medium-rare beef patty is a half-pound at least. It's topped with manchego cheese, slices of Spanish chorizo sausage, date spread, pepper relish, and caramelized onions. It is unlike any burger I've ever had, and it's delicious. Don't even think of adding other condiments; this burger is perfect as it is, with the sweetness of the dates, peppers, and onions—a perfect complement to the manchego and the meat. It tastes so good, you don't want to get to the end.

The Spanish Chorizo Burger is not only Jessica's invention but also her favorite burger on the menu. It used to be mine, too, until Richard convinced me to try the **24-HOUR BURGER**, a concoction available, as its name implies, any time Moo is open, which is for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. The 24-Hour Burger has sharp cheddar, applewood smoked bacon, caramelized onions, arugula,



Moo Creamery PHOTOS BY ERIC JAMES

Moo Creamery



Brimstone



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#BestBurgerBako

Moo sauce, and a fried egg. On your first bite, the sunnyside-up egg yolk breaks, drizzling all over the burger. *It's delicious!*

There's also the Atomic Bacon Cheddar Burger. This hottie comes with roasted jalapeños, habanero ketchup, and chipotle mayonnaise. It's not as fiery as Muertos' Fernando, but it will get your attention.

The fries and onion rings are fabulous, and be sure and save room for some ice cream, made on the premises with organic cream from a Marin County dairy. I love Bacon Love. That's right, bacon ice cream. *It will get you in the moo-d. >>*

BURGER GAL. PHOTO BY SCHAEFFERT/ISTOCK/BRIMSTONE