

From the Gridiron

The State's Most Unique Burgers



BY MARTA
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AUTUMN IS approaching and soon the cool mountain air will turn the hills red, yellow and orange. With the changing season comes another change—the boys of summer become the men of the gridiron.

As we gear up for football season, *West Virginia Executive* invites you to take a little detour from your typical tailgating burger and try one of several unique burger recipes popular in West Virginia's great little burger joints. Add one of these tasty gourmet creations to your tailgate menu, and then visit *West Virginia Executive* on Facebook to let us know which one is your favorite.

Mount Vesuvius Burger

Fairplain Yacht Club
3984 Cedar Lakes Road
Ripley, WV
(304) 372-8918

Located in southern Jackson County, the Fairplain Yacht Club, a delightfully renovated pole barn, dishes out delicious, affordable food and great entertainment in the region's biggest dining and entertainment venue, where diners can enjoy the comfort of an indoor table or relax with friends and family outside on the 50-foot covered porch. Owners Jeff Paxton and Cindy Vennare love providing patrons with simple but unique taste combinations, and the menu includes many samplings as proof. Pasta dishes with fresh sauces—inspired by Vennare's Italian roots—and the Friday night prime rib special accompany the Yacht Club's extensive gourmet burger menu.

One of their creations, the Mount Vesuvius Burger, is designed with tangy steak sauce, Swiss cheese and sautéed mushrooms erupting from a stack of thick-cut onion rings on an 8-ounce Angus patty and a large cornmeal-dusted Kaiser roll. This twist on the traditional Swiss and mushroom burger is sure to blow your top off.



Hillbilly Burger

Hillybilly Grill
Stonecoal Road
Buckhannon, WV
(304) 471-2223

Trecia and Larry Alderman made their dream of becoming restaurateurs come true when they opened the Hillbilly Grill on Stonecoal Road in Buckhannon. The restaurant was hand-built by Larry and features a restaurant, bar, children's playground and glass-enclosed deck that offers scenic views of the countryside. With something to offer the entire family, the Aldermans and their two children who also work there have made it the place to be in Buckhannon.

While experimenting in her kitchen, Trecia was hit with an epiphany. She started with an ordinary 8-ounce beef patty on a sesame seed bun and topped it with American cheese, horseradish sauce, shaved prime rib, white queso cheese and honey mustard. Called the Hillbilly Burger, there's nothing ordinary about it.





Photography by Sarah Fawcett Photography

Pickles Burger

Pickles' Grog & Grill
419 Fulton Street
Wheeling, WV
(304) 905-9008

Pickles' Grog & Grill, founded in 2009 in Wheeling by brothers Scott and Rodd Franke, has become one of the area's most popular places to be. The property has undergone a complete renovation in order to create a neighborhood pub feel in a clean, friendly environment. While the sports bar atmosphere makes game days special, it's the generous portions and signature menu items like the wings, the Fulton Philly, homemade soups and fried pickles that keep people coming back.

The Pickles Burger, considered the kitchen staff's masterpiece, combines two of their most popular offerings—fried pickles and a hamburger. It consists of a Kaiser bun piled high with 8 ounces of Grade A beef, two deep fried pickles, hot pepper jack cheese and a splash of homemade ranch dressing. This burger is designed for those with a hearty appetite and a taste for robust flavor.

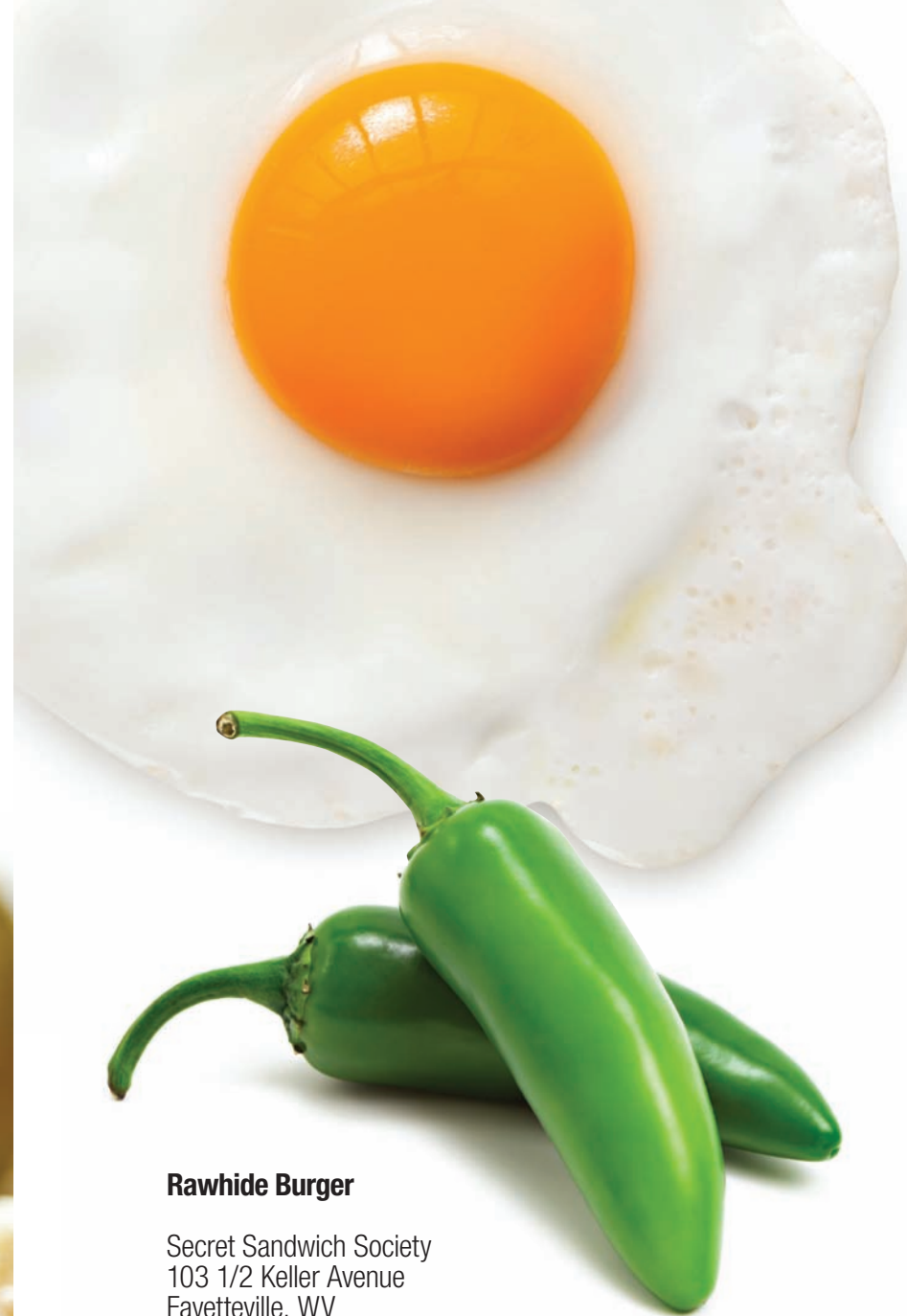


Mason Burger

The Mason Jar
62 E. Main Street
White Sulphur Springs, WV
(304) 536-5001

Chef Adam Sydenstricker took the helm of The Mason Jar in White Sulphur Springs in July 2011, and since then, he has enhanced the interior with pictures and decorative objects from friends' and family members' farms to add to the country atmosphere. The Mason Jar, recently named in the "101 Unique Places to Dine in West Virginia" and filmed for a Travel Channel feature, is known for serving high-quality, homestyle cuisine. Sydenstricker, together with his team, has more than 70 years of experience working in five-star restaurants, including The Breakers in Palm Beach, FL and The Greenbrier. He says the key to providing good food is selecting the freshest ingredients, and he promises that no frozen burgers are ever served at The Mason Jar, where they strive to provide an upscale dining experience.

The Mason Jar's signature burger, the Mason Burger, begins with 8 ounces of fresh USDA prime ground beef seasoned and grilled to perfection and placed on a sesame seed bun. It is piled high with grilled ham, American cheese, fresh lettuce, tomato, onion and pickles and topped off with the Mason Jar's own distinctive dressing. Built to satisfy the hungry, the Mason Burger is one hearty burger.



Rawhide Burger

Secret Sandwich Society
103 1/2 Keller Avenue
Fayetteville, WV
(304) 574-4777

The Secret Sandwich Society is modeled after the speakeasies that were popular during the Prohibition of the 1920s and have been experiencing a renewed popularity throughout American and European cities. All of the sauces, spreads and dips at the Society are created in-house where the flavorful creations combine unexpected and delicious ideas using the best ingredients owners David Bailey and Tashia Hippler and their staff can get their hands on. Each sandwich is a measured mixture of sweet and salty, smooth and crunchy or hot and sour.

While the Secret Sandwich Society has several unique burgers to explore, the Rawhide Burger is one that will set your taste buds a-flamin'. Combining 100 percent Angus beef with fiery jalapeño peppers, farm-fresh sunny-side eggs, pepper jack cheese and creamy roasted garlic aioli, this inferno of flavor will keep you coming back for more.

Salmon Burger

Star Mercantile
14 Barley Lane
Wardensville, WV
(304) 874-3663

Star Mercantile, located in historic Wardensville, is housed in a 120-year-old building built by the great-grandfather of owners Elizabeth Orndoff Sayers and John Sayers and manager Howard Orndoff. Over the years, the building has changed hands and functions several times and has been the home of H. R. Orndoff Mercantile, Odd Fellows Lodge, White Star Restaurant and Capon Valley Bank. The Sayers purchased the building again in 1992 and transformed it into a general store and restaurant where shoppers can browse the eclectic selection of gourmet jams and jellies, pickles, antique dishes, vintage jewelry, tin toys, local art and books while they enjoy offerings from the menu.

Known for standard American fare-like burgers on jumbo grilled buns, homemade potato chips and crisp kosher dill pickles, one of Star Mercantile's specialties is the Salmon Burger. Served on a grilled Kaiser roll with lettuce, tomato, Vidalia onion and either the homemade dill or homemade caper sauce, this lighter version of the American burger is sure to please the most discriminating palate. ■

