

No. 6 on Farm Burger's menu, this burger boasts house-cured bacon, a sunny-side-up egg, pepper jack cheese and salsa verde.



Yeah Burger's onion rings and bison burger



# WHERE'S THE BEEF?

BY H.M. CAULEY

**W**ith the possible exception of apple pie, what is more patriotic than a burger? When the grills get fired up this holiday weekend, the vast majority of them will be topped with some variation of the classic: Beef, turkey, tofu—anything you name, it will be put in burger form.

And burgers aren't just patriotic; they're cheap. With just about everyone except Warren Buffett pinching pennies these days, burgers are making a big comeback. Sophisticated establishments such as the Ritz-Carlton's Dining Room and, most recently, Repast and Joel have faded into the culinary past, but metro area diners are still going all out for affordability on a bun. "Grabbing a burger" doesn't mean the drive-thru at Mickey D's anymore.

The list of recently opened burger joints includes Flip Burger Boutique, Grindhouse,

Fatburger, Cozy Burger Town, the Counter, Cheeseburger Bobby's, Canyons Burger Company and, somewhere in the metro area, a Five Guys. Now add to that list Yeah Burger on the Westside and Farm Burger in Decatur. Both do the basics well with a similar format: Place an order, fill up on soft drinks and find a table. The efficient wait staff delivers the goods to the dining room or patio. Pull up a seat at the bar to watch the show behind the scenes, or check out the crowd of all ages (including lots of kids) settling in for lunch or dinner.

Yeah Burger, on the edge of the White Provisions complex off Howell Mill, is the creation of Atlanta celebrity chef Shaun Doty, owner of Shaun's in Inman Park and veteran of several other venues before that. Yeah is a sleek space of dazzling white tile, high ceilings and buffed concrete floors that appeals to a wide range of customers shopping for no-frills service and a flavorful food.

In fact, it's so pristine you're almost embarrassed to let the signature chipotle mayo and meat juices drip down your fingers and splash onto the wood-topped tables.

Doty, a self-professed burger lover, has created a build-your-own menu that starts with beef, bison, turkey or veggie burgers. From there, the options run through white, whole wheat, gluten-free and lettuce-wrap buns; cheese, toppings and dipping sauces; and sides of fries, onion rings, fried pickles, slaw, chips and chili. Other options include a chicken breast sandwich, three salads, three hot dog options and a kids' menu. A full bar features cocktails, wines and beer, and there are floats, milkshakes and sundaes as well.

The kicker here is that it's all about organic and natural. The burgers come from

continued on 34

COVER

SP explores two of the newest burger joints in town

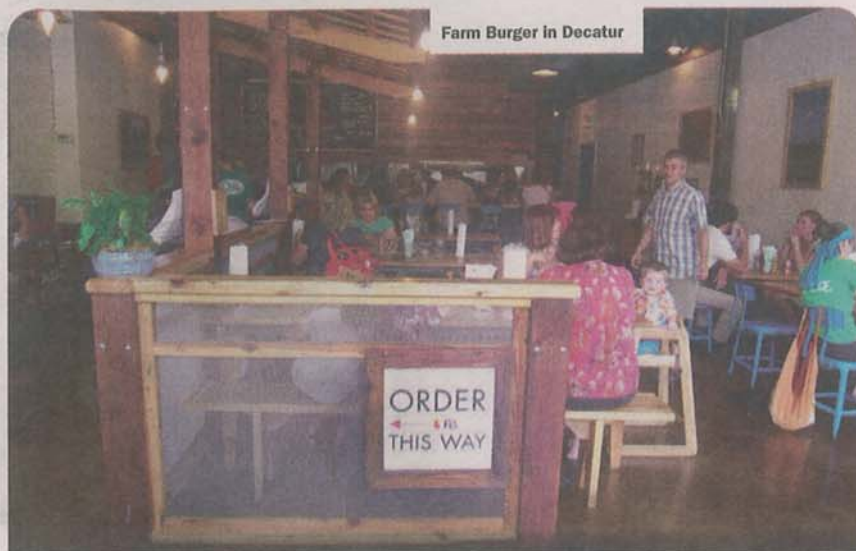
## FARM BURGER

410-B W. Ponce de Leon Ave., Decatur  
404-378-5077  
www.farmburger.net  
Hours: Sun.-Thu. 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m.; Fri.-Sat. 11:30a.m.-midnight  
Reservations: No  
Dress: Casual  
Cost: Entrees, \$6-\$11; salads, \$3-\$7; desserts, \$2-\$3  
Alcohol: \$2.5-\$10  
Parking: Tight around the building, but there's more on the surrounding surface streets.

## YEAH! BURGER

1168 Howell Mill Road  
404-496-4393  
www.yeahburger.com  
Hours: Sun.-Thu. 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; Fri.-Sat. 11 a.m.-11 p.m.  
Reservations: No  
Dress: Casual  
Cost: Entrees, \$5.99-\$6.99, with some toppings \$1 each; salads, \$5.99-\$9.99; desserts, \$2.99-\$4.99  
Alcohol: \$5-\$10  
Parking: A few spaces in front and behind; plenty in the nearby free parking deck





Farm Burger in Decatur

continued from 33

grass-fed Georgia cows. The chicken and turkey are certified organic, as are the cheeses, the toppings, the milk in the shakes and the flour that goes into one of the buns. The gluten-free options range even into the beer.

“So someone who is gluten-intolerant could come in and have a burger and a beer and not have to worry,” says managing partner Erik Maier.

The only disappointing moment at Yeah comes only if you’ve ever been to Shaun’s and slobbered over the french fries that are cooked in duck fat. Admittedly, some diners back away from the calories when they hear that, but for a taste sensation, it’s darn close to french-fry nirvana. Unfortunately, the fries and onion rings at Yeah don’t fare as well. On a recent visit, the onion rings were thin and stringy; the fries undercooked. But the grass-fed beef hot dog and the double-stack burgers are the standouts here.

On the opposite side of town, Farm Burger has guests lining up on the Decatur sidewalk most nights to snag a coveted spot at one of the casual eatery’s picnic tables or one of the few sidewalk seats. (The secret to avoiding the line is to keep an eye on the bar and grab the first seat that opens there.)

Though the concept isn’t as line-by-line organic as Yeah is, there is definitely a dedication to going organic, local and sustainable wherever possible, says co-owner George Frangos.

“Our baseline comes from the hamburgers,” he says. “They’re all local, grass-fed beef; that’s where we’re strict.”

The other aspects come into play in special sides, sauces and salads. “Right now, we’re getting a lot of local okra, so we’re

doing fried okra with a spicy paprika mayo,” says Frangos. “We’re also talking about changing some of our specialty burgers as we move into the height of the growing season, adding heirloom tomato and fresh basil as toppings, for instance. Our market salad changes almost every day. We also do things with our daily burgers, like adding a peach chutney with Sweet Grass goat cheese on top.”

Farm Burger’s small space is packed with picnic tables, and there are a handful of seats on the front patio. It’s likely to be loud and crowded, and no one will look twice if you lick your fingers. **SP**



Yeah Burger in West Midtown