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Lucky Star



Burger Star stacks up

by Hal G. Senal

I won't lie. I've never been a fan of the Hard Rock Café. So, when Burger Star was described to me as little more than a poor man's Hard Rock, I would be lying if I said that I didn't enter the burger joint with trepidation.

Like Planet Hollywood, I've always thought of it as being sort of a trendy, kitschy restaurant, known more for its world-recognized name and razzle-dazzle than its overpriced, so-so food.

To be sure, there are similarities, with hard rock bands such as AC/DC, Aerosmith and Heart playing on the stereo, as well as music videos on the TV. Plus, like Hard Rock Café, there's nary a space of wall at Burger Star that's not covered with old Rolling Stone covers featuring such legends as Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan and Bono, and other music memorabilia.



dateomaha.com

Of course, your restaurant can have all the “flair” in the world, but if the food doesn’t measure up, what’s the point?

And that’s where Burger Star far exceeds Hard Rock Café. I enjoyed the food and my experience at Burger Star a lot more than that of Hard Rock Café.

Never have I needed a tour guide more when dining out. As I entered, my comrade/tour guide practically grabbed me by the scruff of my neck (ouch!) and yanked me back toward the entrance so I could retrieve a menu card and a black Sharpie pen. Huh? I thought

As we made our way through the family friendly establishment toward a booth, I noticed the clever — if somewhat creepy — cow-skin design of the upholstery, indicating that this place was absolutely, positively no friend of PETA.

We brought our cards to the counter and ordered. A quiet young woman clipped our cards to a tight wire that stretched from the register to the kitchen, and forcefully heaved them the length of the wire.

It was obvious that Omaha’s Cutchall Management Company, the team that brought the Famous Dave’s and Sonic Drive-In chains to The Big O, wasn’t kidding around. Aside from an alternative taco selection, the burgers, handmade from fresh ground beef, are the main attraction.

There’s the Burger Star (\$4.95) with a single patty (each patty is 6 ounces), the Rock Star (\$6.95) with two patties and the Super Star Burger (\$8.95) with three. Rest assured, whichever tasty burger you choose, it will be hanging over a freshly baked sesame-seeded bun (the buns are brought in fresh from Paradise Bakery in Regency Court and sliced on site).

While you can pay for certain toppings such as cheese and apple-smoked bacon (each an additional 50 cents) a la carte, it might be easier and less costly to order your burger Star Style. The latter comes with cheese, lettuce, tomato, pickle, grilled onions and the restaurant’s signature Star sauce — a sort of red, creamy tartar-y sauce.

In response to customer comment cards Burger Star has recently added guacamole, sour cream and blue cheese crumbles as toppers for its fare.

“We’re trying to listen to what people want and respond to that on the menu,” said Burger Star General Manager Sean Gillespie.

The decidedly carnivorous joint has also added Morningstar Veggie Burgers to its menu.

My companion decided to be a Rock Star and have his done Star Style, adding onto his order thick fresh-cut fries (\$1.69).

I had bigger aspirations and chose the Super Star, done Star Style, adding mushrooms and bacon with fries on the side. The burger was so huge I had to ask for a fork and knife.

My friend enjoyed his strawberry shake (\$2.75) well enough, but said a vanilla shake he’d had on a previous visit was better. I tried the shake and it was delicious.

Our bill totaled \$29.33. A little bit pricey for burgers, but with the heaping amount of delicious, mouth-watering food we received, as well as the burger joint’s easy-going ambience, it was well worth it.

Hard Rock Café may be all sizzle and no steak, but Burger Star gives you just the right amounts of both sizzle and steak. Er ... burger.

Burger Star, 1222 S. 71st St. is open Mon.-Thurs., 10 a.m.-10 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 10 a.m.-11 p.m. and Sun., 11 a.m.-9 p.m. For more information, call 333-STAR or visit burgerstarusa.com.

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