

Good food, good people

Plano's newest burger joint digs out niche market

Liz McGathey November 26, 2016



Liz McGathey / staff photos

Patrick Cokley prepares a burger for a customer at Dugg Burger in Plano.

In the world of fast-casual dining, there are burgers and then there are Dugg Burgers. Since June, one of Plano's most recent additions has been scooping the competition with its unique concept for crafting a better burger.

On the menu at Dugg Burger, located at 4701 W. Park Blvd. #110, are more than a dozen toppings that customers can pile on top of their choice of beef, chicken or portabella mushroom cap. Customers can pick their toppings from the Dugg Dozen, an array of choices that range from the traditional to the bizarre.

“We have a 13th topping that alternates,” said Greg Watson, co-owner and head of operations. “We’ve done everything from fried egg to guacamole to pico de gallo to Sicilian eggplant caponata to marshmallow fluff with habanero jelly to banh mi slaw – you name it.”

Using a custom-made serrated tool, cooks dig out a portion of the brioche bun (from Dallas's own Empire Bakery), leaving just enough room to house the toppings and keep them in place to optimize flavor. The dugout bun rests on a dome specially made to toast it evenly on the grill.

“At the end of the day it's just a burger, but we really try to enhance the experience and elevate that burger to the best of our ability,” Watson said. “And we show our guests, we tell them what we're doing and why we're doing it. We explain what's in everything so they can go and replicate this at home. We really want to help people make better burgers.”

And the best part? All that bread doesn't go to waste. Dugg cooks use it to make their increasingly famous sticky-sweet bread pudding with caramel sauce. If that doesn't quite satisfy a sweet tooth, they also offer hand-scooped milkshakes in chocolate, vanilla and Oreo, made with Henry's Homemade Ice Cream, located just down the road.

For the full experience, customers have their choice of craft beer from one of two local breweries. Watson said he typically stocks two breweries at a time and rotates after about six weeks.

As if the food wasn't enough to guarantee return customers, Watson and Dugg Burger's four other owners –Jeff Braunstein, Jeremy Samson, Scott Terraciano-Spence and Martin Hennessey – want to make sure the customer experience tops off mealtime.

“We have a lot of fun, and that's part of our whole concept,” Watson said. “Yeah, I want people walking out of here going, ‘What a great burger,’ but it's more important that they walk out of here going, ‘That was a good time. That was a great experience.’”

He said it all starts with the hiring. Simply put, Dugg Burger hires nice people.

“It says it on all of our hiring materials – ‘Now hiring nice people,’” Watson said. “I can train somebody how to do this stuff. I can't teach you how to be nice; you either are or you aren't.”

And the owners don't just talk the talk. Watson frequently takes time to chat with customers and help out in the kitchen. What's more, the restaurant has been working to give back to the community that has welcomed them. With dining to donate-style fundraisers, the restaurant donates 20 percent of their sales made during designated hours to local organizations.

In addition to the Plano and Dallas-Casa Linda locations, Watson said he and his partners plan to add more restaurants around Dallas. As they actively pursue a third locale, burger fans haven't seen the last of the Dugg Dozen.



Dugg Burger co-owner Greg Watson discusses the restaurant's multiple choices of toppings.

