

BURG finally opens in Newark's Military Park

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The Korean burger at BURG. (Evan Sung/Courtesy of BURG)

It's not every day a major force in New Jersey dining opens a restaurant in Newark. Heck, it's not every year. But Chris Siverson, the acclaimed chef behind Maritime Parc in Jersey City, has finally thrown open the doors of BURG, his casual restaurant in the newly rehabbed Military Park.

After long delays (the restaurant was initially expected to open in the spring of 2014), BURG officially opened Monday. Siverson blames the hold-ups on "a complex and unfortunate

combination of issues, including typical bureaucratic mishaps from a variety of agencies coupled with a kitchen supplier who was simply not competent."

For the first couple of weeks, the restaurant will only be open Mondays through Fridays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., but Siversen says BURG's regular hours will be 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. or so, seven days a week. That's in a city where upscale nightlife often struggles without a headliner at NJPAC or the Prudential Center. In fact, the flourishing Asbury Park-based Smith restaurant group just shut down the Monk Room, a block south of the Prudential Center, in September after two years.

But Biederman Redevelopment Ventures, which oversaw the park renovation, believes that BURG could revitalize the area in much the same way Bryant Park Grill did for Bryant Park in the 1980s. (Although with President Obama in town, Monday might not be the best day to check it out.)

Burgers are, of course, the speciality of the house at the BURG, starting at \$8.50 for a classic cheeseburger with lettuce, tomato and special sauce. (The priciest item on the menu is the double burger for \$15.)

The speciality burgers include the Korean, with kimchi relish, spicy gouchujang mayo, fried egg and a cucumber-scallion slaw; the Cowboy, topped with roast beef, barbecue sauce, griddled onions and lettuce; the Greek Lamb, with feta, black olive hummus, tzatziki and lettuce; and a veggie burger with curry mayo, apples, lettuce, tomato and onion rings. There's also Buffalo-style pork riblets, crispy broccoli, fried pickles, and, bien sur, disco fries. For dessert, check out the soft serve, bag o' doughnuts with cinnamon sugar or the coffee float with maple bourbon ice cream.

There are eight beers on tap, currently including New Jersey's River Horse Hipp-O-Lantern Imperial Pumpkin Ale, and eight wines by the glass.

The 40-seat BURG, styled like a vintage diner, will offer a daily happy hour from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. There will outdoor seating opening in the spring.