

Patience and burgers

At Tyler's Burgers in Palm Springs, longer wait is half the experience

By Dan Carlin

In France, healthy men and women are often sent to the holy city of Lourdes to gather blessed water for their infirm relatives so that the bedridden faithful can still partake of the grotto's healing powers.

In Palm Springs, the young and fleet of foot make a similar pilgrimage — to Tyler's Burgers. The modest burger joint is so renowned for its satisfying food that the elderly and immobile send for it by name from their beds.

Even the rich and famous are happy to queue outside for the chance at a table — Bill Gates reportedly dined at Tyler's not long ago.

Of course the burgers are good, but why so much hype for a restaurant that specializes in America's most plebeian dish?

Part of it is location (the sun-baked Plaza overlooking Indian Canyon Drive). Part of it is the cachet of a now legendary establishment that's been around for seven years. But for most people standing in line at lunchtime on a Thursday, it is quite simply about the food.

"If you just stand here, lean forward and sniff, you can just ... ah-hh," smiles Tip Huffman blissfully, savoring the aroma of a fresh burger as it wafts onto the sidewalk where he's waiting for a table.

"It's totally worth the wait," he says, standing with his wife Vicki. "There is no bad food here. Nothing's been sitting around. It's all



freshly made and always amazing."

Florence Jacques, a Virginia-born dame who lives in Riverside, doesn't have much to say about the food itself. But she felt a trip to Palm Springs just wouldn't be complete for her visiting sister and brother-in-law without a burger at Tyler's.

"Huell Howser did a TV special on this restaurant. I think it was a bus stop many years ago," she says. "It's kind of a Palm Springs landmark."

"I know the food is excellent," she adds. Owner Diana d'Amico "does her own grounds, and they specialize in a sandwich called a 'slider.'"

Rather than wait in line, Kate

Young came scurrying by car to pick up a pair of burgers for herself and her 90-year old mother.

"She can't handle all of this, so I phoned in my order," says Young while waiting in her white Cadillac for a waiter to deliver her food.

Young says she came after the activities center at the Palm Springs Racquet Club suggested a trip to Tyler's would be a "fun outing for the week."

But ordering take-out seems to be only half the experience.

Tyler's is an adobe hut sandwiched between two covered patios. There is hardly a slow moment here at lunchtime, when the well-dressed patrons waiting in

line usually flow out onto the nearby parking lot. Many of them read complimentary design and fashion magazines.

On the shady patio, plates heaped with burgers, cheeseburgers, Sommersize burgers (bunless burgers approved by Suzanne Sommers' low-carb diet), hot dogs, or Tyler's famous cole slaw and potato salad go whizzing by salivating diners.

The operation is ruthless in its precision and efficiency, but once diners are seated, the experience is pure tranquility and down-home gastronomie.

"They say it's all about the burgers," says John Carter, a Palm

TYLER'S BURGERS

149 S. Indian
Canyon Drive
Palm Springs
(760) 325-2990
Reservations not
accepted.

Hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
daily

Entrees: \$2.50-\$7.75

Cash only

Takeout available
Beer/wine only)

Waiting is half the fun at Tyler's, the famous burger joint on Indian Canyon Drive. Complimentary magazines make the clock tick faster.

Dan Carlin/Desert Post Weekly

Springs regular waiting for his meal, "but most people don't know it's really all about the potato salad and the lemonade. Everything here is great."

Carter and his friends have secured a prime table close to the kitchen — after waiting nearly 20 minutes on the sidewalk outside — and all is well.

The impatient often storm off after missing their name call or settle for a seat at the bar inside.

But Carter says waiting is half the fun. "It's always exciting when they finally call your name."

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