

What follows is a much more civilized version of the arguments that went on during the writing of this book. We've included only the restaurant's most ardent supporter and its most vocal critic, since the third person's vote was rendered irrelevant. Let the bickering begin!

BACHI BURGER

Asian Burgers

470 E. Windmill Lane, Suite 100
(702) 242-2244 / bachiburger.com
Sun.-Mon., noon-10 p.m.; Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-midnight

NOMINATED BY JACOBSON

I went out of my way to keep burger joints off this list, but I'm a huge fan of KGB Burger, BLT Burger, and of course, the place that got all of the burger places rolling, Burger Bar. But Bachi Burger isn't about that burger thing; it's about being pan-Asian, hip, and original. The name is short for hibachi, and the kitchen can be torturously slow. It's worth a wait, though, for Lorin Watada's banh mi burger with Vietnamese nuoc mam fish sauce, the tsukemono Japanese pickles, or his Kalbi burger, a ground-beef, pork, soy, garlic, ginger, green onion, and hot Korean bean paste creation. The amazing sweet potato fries come in a metal cone lined with paper. Also try the Peking duck steamed buns stuffed with spice-crusted Muscovy duck. Coffee is by Pacifica of Portland. The Hawaiian sea-salt coffee



Eating Las Vegas

comes with condensed milk and salted whipped cream on top, and is like eating salty caramels at a County Fair.

VETOED BY CURTAS

If Bachi Burger were in any other town—meaning: any other town with a real food culture containing locals with something close to discriminating palates—it wouldn't have lasted six months. It neither grinds nor packs nor seasons its fusion burgers correctly (too fine, too hard, not enough), the service is agonizingly slow, and the menu not nearly as Asian-fusion-cool as its owners and patrons pretend it to be. (Kalbi burgers? Steamed buns and banh-mi? Innovative chefs on both coasts got there eight years ago—the Chinese, 3,000.) Fried doughnuts are gummy one time, hard another, and nothing is worth the time it takes to entice your order out of the kitchen. Those who think a pork-belly bun (comprised mostly of pork fat, btw) is the end-all and be-all of creative, hip, youthful, energy-charged cuisine (like a certain aging hipster/critic I know), will be enchanted. Anyone who eats outside of a five mile radius of this place won't be.

BRATALIAN

Italian

10740 S. Eastern
(702) 454-0104 / bratalian.com
Tues.-Sun., 5 p.m.-10 p.m.

NOMINATED BY MANCINI

When Carla Pellegrino left the kitchen at Rao's, I was worried Vegas might lose her for good. Sure, the Rao's family recipes will be safe with her successor, but Carla is a nationally-acclaimed chef with serious chops, and one of those larger-than-life, "only in Vegas" characters that makes this town great. So I was relieved when Pellegrino announced that she was sticking around to open a new restaurant in the Tropicana (Baccio by Carla Pellegrino), and the quaint little Bratalian near her Anthem neighborhood. While she leaves most of the cooking at Bratalian to her sister Alessandra, Carla's presence is obvious in every aspect of the place, from the food to the laundry hanging from the rafters in tribute to Naples' Spanish Quarter.

Vetoed