

## Comfort and Contrast

There's a new kid on the restaurant row that is South Tamiami Trail, opposite Sarasota Memorial Hospital. It is Square 1 Burgers & Bar, in the real estate formerly occupied by Lonjevity Café. Several improvements are clear before tasting a thing, because the new operators are greatly expanding the parking space and have come up with an interior design that is comfortable, stylish and quite unlike anything else in town.

They call it "cowboy chic." "Sexy saloon" would be another option, given features that range from deco echo chairs with pony-upholstered seats to an astounding red chandelier hanging over a corner booth — worth a visit in and of itself.

It is the menu, however, that is most intriguing. Jack and Mrs. Spratt could eat here together on options that range from flat-out comfort food to happily healthful.

For Mrs. S: "X-rated grilled cheese," a gilded lily with gruyere and cheddar, dill pickle slices, beefsteak tomato and mayonnaise — all grilled together on sourdough bread. (Yes, you can order it with bacon, too.) The mac and cheese is made with cheddar and swiss and topped with breadcrumbs, just like many mothers used to make it. Of course, there are burgers galore, made with Meyer Angus beef from humanely raised, vegetarian fed, hormone-, antibiotic- and steroid-free cattle. And the fried dill-pickle chips served with ranch dressing, well, think tempura and munch away.

There are an equal number of options for the "eat-no-fats" gang. There are burgers of turkey, chicken and buffalo — the leanest of meats. There are burgers of ground ostrich, which is quite lean. Vegetarian choices include a portabello burger and a "Very Vegan Veggie Burger." Most intriguing: an Ahi Burger of tuna steak seared and served rare. At \$13.99, it is the most expensive item on the menu. Burgers (including sides of fries, steamed broccoli or coleslaw) start at \$6.99; the mac 'n' cheese, \$3.50 (small) and \$6.50 (large) and the X-rated grilled cheese, \$7.99. The priceless pickle chips are \$5.99.

Square 1 has a kids menu and small but tempting selection of dessert options, featuring four flavors of cupcakes: red velvet, vanilla, carrot pecan and dark chocolate. All are baked in-house from family recipes of Joanie Corneil, who owns the restaurant with partner Bill Shumate. There are mini cupcakes to tempt the Jack Sprats and cupcake sundaes with an Italian-inspired, espresso-scented Chocolate "Zuppa" for his Mrs.

**Square 1 Burgers & Bar**  
1737 South Tamiami Trail  
11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 12 a.m. Friday through Saturday  
Phone: 870-8111  
[www.square1burgers.com](http://www.square1burgers.com)  
Owners: Bill Shumate and Joanie Corneil

