

EATS



BY PETER SHERWOOD

BRGR

287 Seventh Ave (btwn 26th/27th Sts)
212-488-7500
brgr.us

Back in the '80s, Wendy's hit the jackpot with their "Where's the beef?" ads featuring the feisty Clara Peller. Were she to raise the question today, "Manhattan" would seem a likely answer, for suddenly the burger is back in style and more fashionable than ever, making appearances all over town in places such as BLT Burger, Burgers and Cupcakes, and Stand. My friend and I stopped by Chris Russell's newly opened BRGR recently and delighted in the fare we found at the hip, renovated space with its exposed beam ceilings, brick-faced interiors and an inviting counter facing the open grill. Our only caveat was the too-bright lighting.

Liquor license pending, we ordered two *Peroni* (\$5) pints before sampling a Brewmaster Reserve from the rotating Brooklyn Brewery selection. We were lucky to try the *Smoked Weissbock* (\$5), flexible for any season, rife with nutty flavor and cloves, and perfect for our burgers, which start at 1/3 lb but can be doubled or tripled. Scrumptious sides for the onslaught of meat included the *Sweet Potato Fries* (\$2.50), *Russet Potato Fries* (\$2.50) and the curiosity-inducing *Onion Hay* (\$2.50), thin slices of flash-fried red

onion posing as a kinder, slimmer version of onion rings. The *Beef Burger 03* (\$9.50) with Roquefort, smoky bacon, sweet onion marmalade, lettuce, tomato and pickles was excellent. Not content to rely on its grass-fed Montana Legend Angus beef alone, BRGR goes the extra mile in choosing its toppings, too. One only need take a bite of the Sour Pickles from The Pickle Guys on the Lower East Side for proof. The *Beef Burger 05* (\$8.50) got high marks too with its terrific combination of cheddar, bacon, horseradish cream, onion and once again, the holy trinity of lettuce, tomato and pickles. Dressed with a mild slice of gruyere, brgr sauce (rightfully described as a sexy Russian dressing by manager Jason Diamond), grilled onions, lettuce, tomato and pickles, the *Turkey Burger 07* (\$7.95) was so fantastic in that it could almost be mistaken for beef. The all-natural turkey comes from the Plainville Turkey Farms in the Finger Lakes region.

For dessert we ordered an extraordinary *Black & White Milkshake* (\$5.50) made with Ronnybrook Dairy Hudson Valley vanilla ice cream and milk, although mango and blueberry-pomegranate shakes were also tempting options. We then drooled over the creamy *Vanilla Ice Cream Cookie Sandwich* (\$3.50) featuring Ronnybrook ice cream and Tall Blonde Cookies.

BRGR may be a few letters shy in name but it leaves nothing out when it comes to delicious, honest food. Mmm! **N**