

# montclair

MAGAZINE

CHRIS  
RICO

AND OTHER  
FAMOUS FACES  
FROM MONTCLAIR  
SCHOOLS

PLUS:

THE AREA'S  
COOLEST  
CONDOS

NEW JERSEY'S  
FIRST ELEVATION  
BURGER

AFTER-SCHOOL  
SNACKS



## The Rise of the Burger

**LOFTY MEAL** The mission of the Elevation Burger franchise is to elevate the experience of feasting on a burger and fries.

Finally, you can have your burger and eat it guilt-free, too. The first New Jersey location of the growing, organic burger franchise, Elevation Burger, opened in Montclair this summer, offering diners an economic meal that's environmentally conscious and healthy as far as fast-food goes.

Elevation Burger grinds its grass-fed, free-range, antibiotic-free beef on the premises. Their fresh cut fries are cooked in olive oil and contain no trans or saturated fats. Or choose from two kinds of veggie burgers, a vegan option and one that's fire-roasted; a Half the Guilt Burger with one meat patty and one veggie patty; or a Vertigo Burger that challenges you to stack up as many patties as you think you can handle. Besides these burger options, they make a signature salad and grilled cheese.

If the concise menu reminds you of the California-based In-N-Out burger chain, there's good reason. Elevation Burger was founded by a Californian, Hans Hess, who missed the popular, no-frills burger joints after relocating to the East Coast. Only Hess set out to take



**ELEVATION BURGER**

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the concept and make it eco-conscious. Compared to conventional corn-fed cows, grass-fed cows help reduce carbon dioxide in the air because pasture does a better job of absorbing harmful Co2 than corn fields. They also recycle and sell their waste oil to be converted into bio-diesel.

Hess launched Elevation Burger in Falls Church, Va. in 2005 and began franchising in 2008, receiving kudos for "best burger" and "best shake" along the way. The Montclair locale will be joined by four others in northern Jersey in the coming years from Back Deck Investments, a.k.a. Matthew Jerkovich, Andy Herriott and Brian Edgar, three college friends who named their venture after the back deck of a favorite hang-out, The Parker House in Spring Lake.

Here's a look at Elevation Burger in Montclair by the numbers. Expect to spend about \$11 for a burger, fries and a soft drink (\$13 if you choose a shake). The sunny dining space measures about 1,800-square-feet and the restaurant employs a little more than 20 people, including a Guest Guru whose job is to make sure the customer is satisfied. "We want everyone to leave here happy," says Jerkovich, chief investment officer.

And a final number to make you happy is five. That's how many minutes it should take between placing your order and biting into a tasty burger. ■

— TERESA AKERSTEN