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DISCOVER SD

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FREE



FASHION THAT FLOWS

LOCAL CLOTHING LINE REFLECTS
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S
ACTIVE LIFESTYLE **16**

Only one more week to catch "Tokyo Fish Story" at The Globe. **Details on page 2**



INSIDE

INFORMATION

DISCOVERSD PRODUCT MANAGER
Leslie Hackett, (619) 293-2627
 leslie.hackett@sduniontribune.com

DISCOVERSD EDITOR
Michelle Dederko, (619) 293-2322
 michelle.dederko@sduniontribune.com

DISCOVERSD LIFESTYLE / ENTERTAINMENT WRITER
Liz Bowen, (619) 293-1538
 liz.bowen@sduniontribune.com

ADVERTISING
Markey Daniels, (619) 293-2322
 markey.daniels@sduniontribune.com

MAILING ADDRESS
 DiscoverSD, 350 Camino de la Reina,
 San Diego, CA 92108

GETTING LISTED
 Event information should be submitted to our online calendar at discoverSD.com/events at least three weeks before publication. Limited space prevents printing all submissions, but we attempt to publish a representative sample.



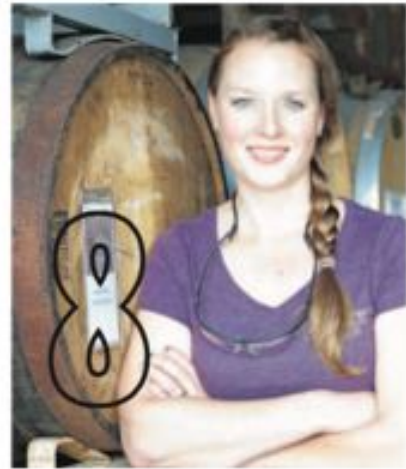
YES, A RAMEN BURGER

From the moment they flip over the wooden sign to OPEN until closing time at RakiRaki on Conroy Street you will be in for a tasty treat.

TALK TO US

MAKING IT HER WAY

Liz Chism grew up in a family that made everything. Maybe that's why she enjoys being the Council Brewing Co. brewmaster.





KATIE DILLON

KATIE
@LAJOLLAMOM.COM
TWITTER
@LAJOLLAMOM



COURTESY PHOTO

Yes, that hamburger bun is made of ramen.

Ramen burger with skinny fries

It wasn't quite 5 p.m. when a line began to form outside of Raki-Raki Ramen and Tsukemen.

The big wooden sign outside was flipped over to reveal "Open" and within minutes the modern-meets-rustic dining space was nearly full.

It was the ramen burger that got me in the door this time as I was curious to see if its cronut-like status still had legs.

Apparently, people are still ordering it with such gusto that owner and Executive Chef Junya Watanabe, famous for his handcrafted noodles, still sports a ramen burger menu with a choice of patty including beef, turkey, pork loin cutlet, veggie and triple-pressed ground chicken.

Near the turn of the millennium, he correctly recognized that ramen could be the comfort food the United States didn't yet know it needed.

So despite a master's degree in economics and first career in fashion as business partner to popular gown designer Tadashi Soji, he followed his culinary dreams. Years

RAKIRAKI RAMEN

Address: 4646 Convo St., Kearny Mesa

Online: rakilakiramen.com

of diligent study even included apprenticeships with some of Japan's most notable ramen chefs.

It shows. Meshing traditional methods with his own touches, Japanese dishes like curry, ramen and sushi reflect his eye for detail. The ramen burger does, too. He uses alkaline water in the ramen broth (it is also served on every table) to neutralize acid as well as locally sourced produce in his dishes.

I opened the glistening metal menu flooded with photos of gorgeous noodles and wanted to eat all of them.

But I came for a ramen burger and at the direction of my server ordered the most popular: the Beef and Underbelly California Ramen Burger. Thank goodness for boot-

camp.

This decadent dish sandwiches a third of a pound of 100 percent certified angus beef, prime X.O. underbelly, lettuce and tomato in a signature ramen bun made with fresh house noodles.

"And while the outside ramen noodle bun is lightly crisped, the noodles are still quite soft and juicy on the inside," Watanabe said. The quality of the meat is excellent but the texture and flavor of the unusual bun makes the dish. These aren't your college noodles.

We'd started with a generous heap of Japanese fried chicken (Chicken Karaage) that lives up to its reputation as one of the best fried chicken options in town especially when dipped in spicy Japanese mayo or house ponzu.

I found myself also dipping the ramen burger in the spicy mayo in lieu of ketchup and mustard.

Go big, I figured, even though the ramen burger came with a generous side of skinny sweet potato fries sprinkled with powdered sugar. Filling is an understatement.

The ramen burger is definitely a

novelty item ... something you'd likely not order during every Raki-Raki visit and that's OK given what's on the rest of the menu.

Probably my favorite items so far: the Black Edition Hakata Tonkatsu Ramen with flame blistered underbelly.

The silky smooth, mild pork bone broth is fermented with organic garlic oil roasted with natural bincho charcoal for 18 hours and the generous double-thick noodles hit the spot any time of day (you can order ramen until 2 a.m. Thursday through Saturday).

The Red Edition is a similar, spicy version but rest assured heat can be tempered with a Kirin Ichiban frozen draft beer (yes, it's like a beer slushy), Ramune or even a glass of wine.

RakiRaki will open a second location in Little Italy that will also feature yakitori and Chef Watanabe has even more projects up his sleeve.

Katie Dillon is a lifestyle and travel writer who believes that one of the best ways to explore a city is through its food and drinks.