



These burgers pure ham

THE CITY: One of our columnist's suggestions comes with the taste of Tim Best in every bite
By IAN GILLESPIE, THE LONDON FREE PRESS

Last Updated: April 7, 2011 7:38am



They want the mayor to name a burger. But before he does, Joe Fontana has a question.

“You got a licence?” he asks.

They don’t. Not yet. So the beer will have to wait.

Still, Fontana soldiers on. After gamely sampling a tray of patties at The Works, a new gourmet burger bistro scheduled to open in May at 145 King St. (across from Covent Garden Market), the mayor bites into one with chipotle ketchup, caramelized onions, havarti cheese and four strips of double-smoked bacon.

I politely inquire if his worship has recently had his cholesterol checked. “Who cares?” he says.

Something is dripping from the mayor’s mouth. No matter. He christens his burger the “Smokin’ Joe.”

Fontana has been partial to the moniker ever since an inspired copy editor used it to caption a *Free Press* photograph of the former MP, who’d donned boxing gloves and struck a pugilistic pose for the camera. (The caption was an obvious homage to the great boxer, “Smokin’ Joe” Frazier.)

Now it's my turn. The folks at The Works have invited a few local notables (I'm not sure how I got on the list) to name a few of their 68 hamburger variations. There are six of these restaurants in Ottawa; now co-owners Kris Hunter (born in London, but raised in Peterborough) and Ian Roden (from Ottawa) have brought "Ottawa's best-kept secret" to the Forest City, where they'll employ 40 workers. (They'll be accepting job applications here April 7-9 and 14-16 from 3 to 8 p.m.)

Apparently, city councillor Judy Bryant stopped by earlier and picked a burger garnished with grilled eggplant and fresh avocado. (Figures.) She called it "the urban burger."

Me? I'm taken by a burger adorned with wild mushrooms, brie cheese and crisp bacon, henceforth known as the LFPress burger.

But frankly, I think they missed a few opportunities. I mean, if they want their food to have a local flavour, then they should consider these delectable choices:

— **The Tim Best Burger:** A hefty helping of beef generously marinated with beer and vodka, which runs from the scene of the meal in delicious style.

— **The Downtown Burger:** Wrapped in an old, left-over heritage bun, this burger looks a bit rundown and scary, but it's actually quite safe.

— **The Fontana Burger:** Like London's taxes, this tasty treat is served frozen. But it's dressed with an unpredictable smattering of baloney and spicy provolone cheese.

— **The Guy Lombardo Burger:** Special honey sauce makes this offering sweet and vaguely familiar, but totally unrecognizable to anyone under 50 years of age.

— **The UWO Burger:** Features our highest-priced ingredients and condiments, paid for by your parents.

— **The Fanshawe Burger:** Lightly grilled over a pile of flaming furniture.

— **The JLC Burger:** This mouth-watering option is half-sized, overpriced and inexplicably popular.

— **The Chris Bentley Burger:** A safe, predictable favourite served with white bread, processed cheese and an incomprehensible legal waiver.