

The Philadelphia Inquirer

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NEW SONG RELEASE ON PHILLY.COM CORNERS THE MARKET ON AN AMERICAN CLASSIC: THE CHEESEBURGER

Inquirer Restaurant Critic Craig LaBan Takes a Different Track to Voice His Culinary (Re)Views

PHILADELPHIA, May 25, 2007 – Inquirer Restaurant Critic Craig LaBan set out on a quest to find the best cheeseburger in the region. And, in the process, he began dreaming about the perfect patty. He became so obsessed, he composed a burger poem, and then, one night, he unexpectedly awoke humming a cheeseburger tune.

“Cheeseburger, I Hold” is a ballad to the burgers of his life, from In-N-Out in California to the Camellia Grill in New Orleans, to the local beauty stuffed with blue cheese at the Good Dog Bar that inspired the song.

LaBan has a musical background that saw him playing guitar and singing in bistros in Paris. But this is the first song he has ever recorded. And certainly his first music video.

“It came from a true moment of burger inspiration,” he said. “One gushing bite of that Good Dog burger, and I knew that the usual words wouldn’t do. It felt like a juicy haiku. And suddenly, it became the musical soundtrack to my great burger quest.”

LaBan sinks his teeth into “fast food stand-ins,” “patty smashers” and “topping fools” - all “frauds between the buns.” In the final verse, however, he croons over the memorable burgers of his life, from Krazy Jim’s Blimpy Burgers in Ann Arbor, Mich., to Tommy’s Westwood “chile bombs,” as well as local favorites including Barclay Prime’s kobe sliders, Rouge’s ‘biggies,’ and, of course, the Good Dog’s cheese-stuffed wonder.

LaBan joined the Inquirer as its restaurant critic in 1998 after a stint covering the food beat for the Times-Picayune in New Orleans. Averaging 500 restaurant meals a year ever since, dining at haute cuisine temples, beery gastropubs, cozy BYOBs and a multitude of greasy-but-great steak joints, he’s eaten his way to the top of the Philadelphia-area food chain.

Now that this anonymous critic has stepped into the limelight (in disguise, of course), log on to philly.com to watch and listen to the debut of “Cheeseburger, I Hold.”

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