

## Bing's for a Day

Every once in a while, it's good to take a break from the stresses and diet restrictions of everyday life — if even for just a day — and one of the best places to let loose is Bing's Burger Station in Cottonwood.

By ROGER NAYLOR

SUDDENLY, BURGERS ARE SEXY. High-end burger joints have sprung up everywhere. They lure customers in with garish toppings, like lobster and foie gras, and serve Kobe beef from beer-fed, hand-massaged cows. So it's no surprise those burgers are pricey, especially when you factor in the cow's bar tab and tip for an undoubtedly startled masseuse.

### COTTONWOOD

Then there's Bing's Burger Station in Old Town Cottonwood. At Bing's, owner Judd



PAUL MARKOW

Wasden tamps down the gimmicks, doing little beyond slapping a fresh, hand-formed patty of premium meat on the flattop griddle. A couple of spatula flips later, and you're being served a mouthwatering burger. The certified Black Angus meat is firm but tender. The flattop sears in a sweet juiciness. Then the burger's topped with lettuce, tomato, pickles and a thick-cut slab of onion so fresh it cracks like a rifle shot at every bite.

The essence of a great burger is simplicity, using fresh ingredients to achieve the perfect union of meat and bread, where accessories enhance, not overpower. Wasden takes the same deliberate approach with his fries. They start the morning as potatoes and then are sliced thin, skinned, and cooked in rice oil. The result is a virtually greaseless, utterly spudtastic fry. Shakes and malts are also made the old-fashioned way, with hard ice cream whipped in milkshake mixers.

Bing's occupies an old gas station and is disguised as ... you guessed it, an old gas station. Wasden wanted to pay homage to his grandparents, who ran a small-town American Standard station. The place fits in perfectly with Old Town, a history-rich stretch of shops and restaurants housed in Prohibition-era buildings and fronted by covered sidewalks. Out front, beside antique gas pumps, sits an orange 1950 Plymouth Special Deluxe that Wasden found in Flagstaff and restored. The interior of Bing's features clean lines and shiny chrome and is stocked with authentic service-station memorabilia.

Everyone needs safe harbor from the small storms of everyday life. Bing's, like all good hamburger joints, offers sanctuary. A burger is the ultimate comfort food because it's a flashback on a bun. With the first taste you're transported to a more innocent time when your world revolved around simple pleasures like cartoons, running fast down a hill for no reason, and throwing rocks at someone you had a crush on, then refueling with a burger and shake.

So forget about office woes and cholesterol levels for one day. Slide into a booth at Bing's Burger Station and bite into your delicious past.

Would you like fries with that?

Bing's Burger Station is located at 794 N. Main Street in Cottonwood. For more information, call 928-649-1718 or visit [www.bingsburgers.com](http://www.bingsburgers.com).