

# Could you finish this platter of food ... in 30 minutes?

The name says it all. **The Belly Buster.** It's not one of those wimpy, water-thin burgers slapped with a smear of ketchup on top.

Not even close. This meal, if it can be called *just* a meal, is so big



**Ian Stepleton**

that a plate won't do the trick.

It's hoisted onto a platter. And the burger? Well, there's so much moo that just one bun doesn't begin to contain it.

With a pound of beef and a pound of potato piled high, this is certainly not for the faint of heart.

You're probably asking, "Why on earth would anyone purchase this?"

Because, with a name like The Belly Buster, it's a challenge. It's throwing down the gauntlet and saying, "You can't eat me."

Certainly not in the 30 minutes the **Boathouse Pub at the Heidelberg Resort and Spa** says it has to be finished in order to be named a winner.

Most don't even come close. But they keep coming, because it can be done. So far, in the past year



**JEFF BARBER, FOOD and beverage director at the Heidelberg House Resort & Spa, and Kara Johnson, server at the Boathouse Pub, are dwarfed by this enormous platter of food — all meant to be eaten in 30 minutes.**

*Ian Stepleton photo*

that the Belly Buster has been around, 14 have tried. Just two have succeeded.

The most recent Belly Buster victor? A visitor who stopped in back in late July (who didn't leave his name though the Boathouse likely left a dent on his waistline).

"We've had 14 people attempt" the challenge, said

**Jeff Barber**, food and beverage director at the Heidelberg House. "Two have made it, and every one of them walked away like, why did you put your body through that?"

The concept for the Belly Buster came from within his staff.

"We were talking about

things we could do," Jeff said. "We all watch the **Food Network** and it seemed to be something really hot last year."

They tossed around some ideas, and came up with the Belly Buster.

To be specific, the challenge is for any guest of the Boathouse Pub to finish the

"The guy who did it last year did it in 17 minutes," Jeff said.

And, no, I've confirmed, the man's name wasn't **Joey Chestnut**.

What makes this feat all the more impressive (I think that's the right word) is how far most come from winning.

"I would say half of them come within less than half a pound still on there," Jeff said.

In fact, with the last winner, three buddies all gave it a shot at one time. Two threw in the towel early, with mounds of fries to go. The third? He got it done, but just under the wire.

"He looked a little worse for wear after that," Jeff said.

It's not for a lack of encouragement.

"What we do is we have a time clock. We get it out, and have our servers sit with him and see if he's all right, see if he needs any water," Jeff said. "The girls talk him through it, keep

it light ... We all go down there and cheer them on."

As Jeff explained, it becomes quite the spectacle.

"Everyone kind of rallies when we start pulling out tables and chairs up for the guy," he said. "All of a sudden, chairs turn around ... We've had 15, 20 people surrounding him, watching him eat."

Generally speaking, it usually is a "him" that gives it a shot, not a "her."

But not always. "There was one woman, and she did better than the guys [she was with]," Jeff said.

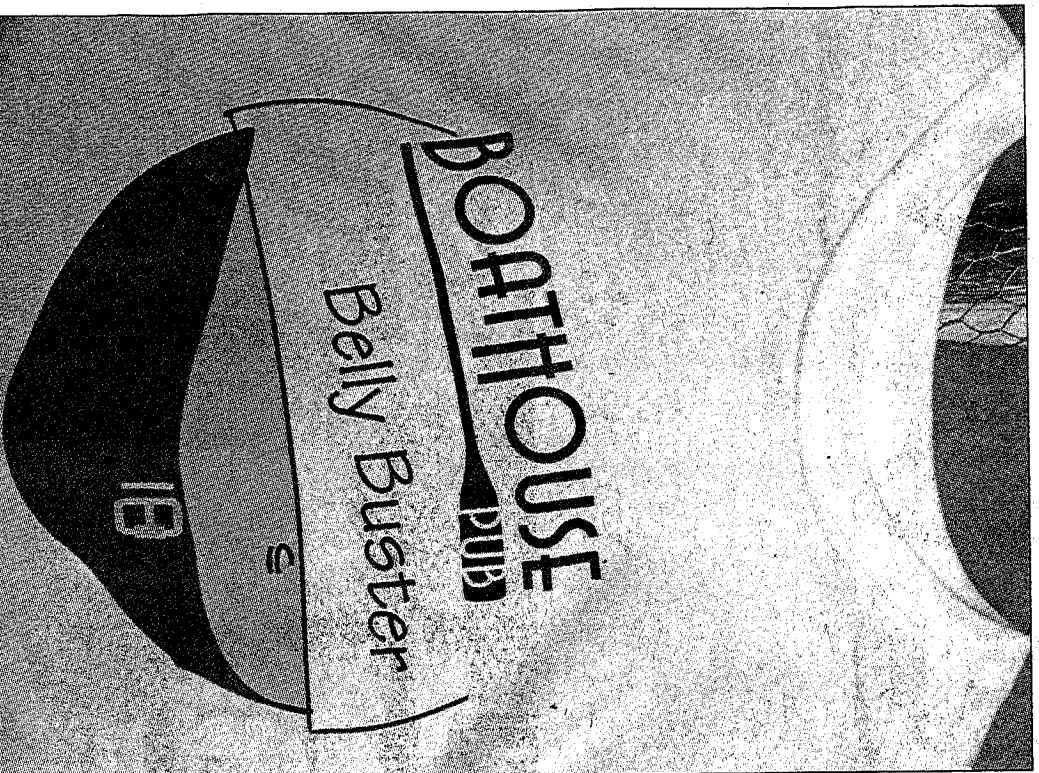
Want to give it a shot? "We'll do it any time someone wants to do it," Jeff said.

This time of year, the Boathouse Pub is open seven days a week, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. (or longer, if customers keep coming in). The cost for the meal is \$25, but don't forget — if you finish it, it's free. But that's a big "if."

Otherwise, just head on over for the fun.

If you're lucky, you can watch someone else dive into the platter.

As Jeff said, "It really brings the restaurant alive."



**IF YOU FINISH, you take home this T-shirt.** *Ian Stepleton photo*

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