



July 21, 2014

## **Burger 21 opens today in Scottsdale**



The promise of a juicy Angus burger smothered in blue cheese and bacon on a toasted brioche bun might be enough to lure customers to Scottsdale's new Burger 21 restaurant.

But the management of the fast-casual chain is upping the ante. It's offering a free Burger 21 T-shirt to the first 100 customers showing up for the Monday, July 21, opening event in the Scottsdale Seville shopping center at

Scottsdale and Indian Bend roads. That's a nice deal — if you were to purchase a T-shirt from the chain's online store, it would set you back \$9.50, plus tax and shipping.

Still, T-shirts are hardly the main idea behind Burger 21, a Tampa, Fla.-based franchise concept founded by the owners of the Melting Pot Restaurants Inc. (The fondue restaurants are operated under separate ownership groups).

This is the first Burger 21 restaurant in the Western United States. According to local franchisee Dan Lenhauser, the Scottsdale location was selected because of the variety of gourmet sandwiches offered on the menu for a relatively low price point. With so many other high-end burger concepts clamoring for consumers' dollars, a price range of well under \$10 is thought to be a strong selling point.

As the name implies, 21 burger combos are available, in proteins including beef, chicken, tuna, spicy Thai shrimp, turkey, veggie and black bean. Sandwiches range from about \$6 to \$8, nudging \$10 to \$11 for the panko-crusted ahi model topped in Sriracha aioli, caramel soy, avocado and pickled cucumber; and the OMG version of a double-patty burger topped in lettuce, tomato, red onion, applewood-smoked bacon and cheese.

Already, Lenhauser has plans to expand, with a second Burger 21 slated to open in Chandler later this year.

It's been a fast path to success for the concept, which debuted its first store in Tampa in November 2010. The brand was named one of *QSR Magazine's* "Best Franchise Deals" for 2014, and it earned the No. 5 ranking in fastcasual.com's "Top 100 Movers and Shakers" of 2014 (up from No. 22 the prior year).

With the debut of the Scottsdale location, Burger 21 will have 13 restaurants open, plus 23 franchised locations in development across the country. And there are more to come in the Valley.

The company plans to develop at least 10 units in metro Phoenix over the next several years, according to Mark Johnston, Burger 21 president/chief concept officer and president of the Front Burner Brands management company for Burger 21.

Besides burgers, the stores feature handcrafted shakes, fancy hot dogs, hand-breaded chicken tenders and big salads served in a contemporary-style diner atmosphere. The Scottsdale location employs 75 people.

As part of its community outreach, the franchise will donate 10 percent of Scottsdale's opening day proceeds to the 100 Club of Arizona, a local non-profit that provides assistance to Arizona's public-safety agencies, officers, firefighters, paramedics and their families.

**Details:** Seville Shopping Center 7001 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale. 480-607-0421, [burger21.com](http://burger21.com). Hours: 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sundays.