

# Boston

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## FOOD + DRINK Technique

### You Want Prize with That?

Turns out the best burger in the country is made right in our own backyard. Yours, too, if you follow these tips. **By Jolyon Helterman**

In an upset victory at the South Beach Wine & Food Festival in Miami this February, Radius chef Michael Schlow's eponymous Schlow Burger beat out more than a dozen bunned contenders to be crowned best burger in America. Just in time for cookout season, we grilled the burger king himself for pointers on turning our own humble hockey pucks into prizewinning beauties.

**SOLID GROUND** Bite the bullet and use fatty ground chuck (80 percent lean). Salt the meat generously, then shape into 9-ounce "fat boys" about 1½ inches thick. Gently, though: A loosely packed burger has more air pockets, which capture flavorful juices. Adding a tablespoon of olive oil per burger further keeps the meat moist, even when pink-fearing guests demand well done.

**CRUNCH TIME** For a contrast to the softer ingredients, toast the cut sides of the bun for 30 seconds on the grill. Watch carefully: There's about a 10-second window between toasted and blackened.

**AGE BEFORE BEAUTY** Aged cheeses look ugly when melted—but this is a burger, not a pageant con-

**SUPPORTING ROLL** Leave the tooth-tugging rustic bread for fancier affairs. Radius bakes its own soft, fluffy buns, but for a good substitute, try the potato rolls from Hi-Rise Bread Company in Cambridge.

**VEG OUT** Salads belong on plates, not buns, says Schlow. Forgo tomato and lettuce in favor of toppings that lend both potent flavor and textural interest—like onion slices deep-fried to a crisp.

**POUR IT ON** Schlow slathers his burger with a creamy horseradish sauce spiked with bracing lemon, providing a cool, refreshing foil to all the hot, savory components. "It's the glue that holds everything together," he says.

**SLOW AND STEADY** High temperatures cause beef protein to seize up and become tough. Schlow recommends searing the patties on high heat for three minutes per

