

# *Santa Fe Burger*

## *Circus Café*

**I**t's not surprising that we've chosen a burger from the stable of Circus Café since they've won The Saratogian's Best Burger award more times than we can remember. But it's their Santa Fe Burger — a burger that brings a little of the Southwest to the Northeast — that has people talking. It's a blend of flavors you wouldn't normally associate with a burger, but the combination of ingredients and textures make it a winner.

"It's gorgeous," says Christel MacLean, who along with her husband, Colin, owns the 6-year-old establishment. (The pair also owned Hattie's from 1993 to 2001.)

"Chef David Hernandez came up with it three years

ago, and now people ask for it all the time."

The chef starts with a signature burger made of lean ground beef from a purveyor in the Bronx, then treats it on the chargrill before quickly moving it to the flattop.

"We don't want it overly charred but still want that crunch, which gives it its distinctive taste," says MacLean. "He then



adds Vermont sharp cheddar, guacamole, jalapenos, caramelized onions, chipotle pepper mayo, lettuce and tomato.

"And, of course, everyone is very particular about their buns, and we looked at everything from hard rolls to Kaisers," she says. "But in the end, we decided on a nice soft bun that doesn't compete with the burger at all. That bun is really a friend of the burger."

Diners can choose from Circus fries or a side salad. At \$9.99, the burger saves you the \$500 roundtrip airfare to New Mexico, and it's quickly becoming an enemy to that state's Chamber of Commerce.