

LIVING

FOOD & DRINK

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SECTION

CONTACT
Mimi Beck Knudsen
775.788.6556
MKNUDSEN@RGJ.COM

eating news & notes

Red Robin burgers good for Food Bank

Every Monday from now through July 27, Red Robin restaurants in Reno and Sparks will donate to the Food Bank of Northern Nevada 50 cents from every gourmet burger sold. Red Robin is at 4999 Kietzke Lane in Reno, 4712 Galleria Parkway in Sparks. Food Bank details: www.fbnn.org or 775-331-3663.

CINCO DE MAYO

Crawl: Grand Sierra Resort Casino, 2500 E. Second St., presents "Cinco de Drinko Pub Crawl" from 8 to 11 p.m. Friday at various property bars. Tickets: \$10. Drinks/specials extra (prices vary) at each stop. Purchase tickets at Mustang's bar at GSR's north entrance. Details: www.grandsierraresort.com or 775-789-2000.

TASTING

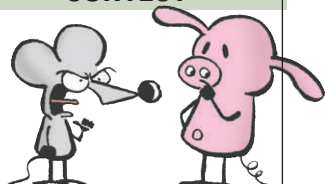
Australia: Beginning at 6 p.m. Saturday, Luva Bella Wine Gallery, 13925 S. Virginia St. in The Summit, is offering a tasting of six wines from Mollydooker Winery, one of Australia's most respected producers. Cost: \$15. A tasting of highly regarded '07 Velvet Glove is \$15 extra for two ounces. Details: 775-851-1110.

GIANT PUMPKIN

Class: Moana Nursery's Garden Center, 1100 W. Moana Lane, is offering a free class on growing a 500-pound pumpkin beginning at 2 p.m. May 9. Topics: Site selection, soil preparation, germination, transplanting, watering, fertilizing and more. Details: 775-825-0602.

— Johnathan Wright, RGJ

CONTEST



ACT NOW: RGJ 'PEARLS' CONTEST ENDS TOMORROW

Want to win an autographed copy of a "Pearls Before Swine" collection?

Send us an e-mail telling us which comic strip you'd most like to live in, given the opportunity. Send your messages by Thursday to entertainment@rgj.com

Write "comic contest" in the subject line and include your mailing address. We'll draw random winners on Friday.

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ACES BALLPARK GAME GRUB

Aces Ballpark offers some solid concession food; here's your guide (hint: skip the pizza)

BY LAURA LONGERO AND DAVID HEGLER
Reno Gazette Journal

Ah, baseball, the great American pastime. Going to baseball games is one of the quintessential pleasures of summer. Watching the action, feeling the sun and indulging in cold beer and ballpark food — there's nothing quite like it. With the opening of Reno Aces Ballpark, Reno Gazette-Journal food writer Laura Longero and Metromix producer David Hegler attended a game with ample appetites and tried some of Reno's ballpark fare.

Three different concession areas, plus the beer garden and a smattering of grills, offer gamegoers a plethora of choices. Feel like Italian? There's pizza. Mexican? Tacos for you. Standard American? Try a jumbo dog or soft pretzel.

Lines generally aren't too long — about six people deep at most at concession stands — and they're nearly nonexistent at smaller grills.

And don't forget the beer — Coors Light and Miller Genuine Draft are available at all three concession areas. The beer garden also offers Sierra Nevada and Fat Tire ale, and the 360 bar among the berm seating offers cocktails and beer.

But drink early — there's no booze sold after the bottom of the seventh inning.

With so many options, it was hard to decide where to start, but we began with traditional game fare sold at the stand by the third-base line and moved to the Mexican- and Italian-themed stands. Here's a rundown of what to try — and not to — at the ballpark.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Aces Ballpark, 250 Evans Ave.

TICKETS: \$7 to \$23

FOOD: \$4.50 to \$13

ON THE WEB: www.renoaces.com

NEXT HOME GAME: 6:05 p.m. today vs. Portland



Triple play barbecue sandwich

1 TRIPLE PLAY BARBECUE SANDWICH: This towering sandwich comprising three slices of bread, pulled pork, brisket, cole slaw, two meatballs and assorted pickles and peppers. The sandwich is enormous — and frankly should be for \$13 in these recession-weary times. It's a great buy for barbecue aficionados, but give up any hope of trying to look elegant while you chow down. The pulled pork and brisket were decent, albeit a bit dry to our tastes (pass the sauce!), and there was a bit too much coleslaw, but overall, the sammie offered a nice departure from more typical ballpark food.

Cost: \$13.



Aces cheese steak

2 ACES CHEESE STEAK: Cheese steak sandwiches were an appealing burger and hot dog alternative. A white bun held bite-size pieces of tender steak, melted pepper jack cheese and grilled onions and bell peppers. The ingredients formed a moist mass that needed no condiments.

Cost: \$6.50

3 SOFT PRETZEL: An old favorite. Who doesn't like pulling apart fragrant, doughy pieces studded with salt and dipping them into bright yellow mustard? No Grey Poupon here. The pretzel was a perfect small snack for gamegoers. The only thing we missed was gooey cheese sauce.

Cost: \$3.25

4 PARMESAN GARLIC FRIES: Garlic, one of the world's greatest ingredients. Not minding potentially odorous — at least to some — breath, we tried some fries. They were a bit soggy, but a covering of pungent minced garlic and a smattering of parmesan and parsley flakes partially made up for this misstep. Since the dish had parmesan in its name, we expected a bit more cheese. Nonetheless, the garlic delivered, so we were happy overall.

Cost: \$4.50

5 NACHOS GRANDE (CHICKEN OR PORK):

If you're feeling chips, go with these nachos instead of the "snack" nachos for \$2 less. The chips were piled generously, and though they were bland, the toppings made things pop. Jalapeños were reliably hot; tomatoes, onions and sour cream added cooling variety. The meat started out a little dry, though.

Cost: \$6.50

6 JALAPEÑO POPPERS: As spicy-food fanatics, we love all things jalapeño, so we went for these five fried nuggets of jalapeño filled with cream cheese and served with ranch dressing. The exteriors were



Nachos grande

PHOTOS BY AMY BECK/RGJ

SEE ACES ON 6C

MAKE IT EASY WITH JENNIFER BUSHMAN

Affordable lamb loin chops are quick to the table

Lamb on weeknights? Absolutely. "Make It Easy" with Jennifer Bushman's budget-friendly grilled loin chops, which can be on the table in about 30 minutes. Bushman serves the chops on a warm bed of spinach and beans bound with a handful of cheddar cheese. For everything lamb, visit the American Lamb Board at www.americanlamb.com.



ON THE WEB

See Jennifer make the recipe at RGJ.com/MakItEasy



1 cup finely chopped white onion
2 (15-ounce) cans white beans,

drained and rinsed
2 cups fresh baby spinach, stems removed
1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese
1 lemon cut into 8 wedges

Preheat grill or grill pan to medium. Place chops on grill and grill 5 to 7 minutes, until desired doneness is achieved. Turn lamb chops and spread thinly with mustard and sprinkle of sugar. Turn and do same on other sides. Cook a few minutes more, until lightly browned and bubbly. Allow to rest a few minutes.

Meanwhile, heat olive oil in pan and cook onions 3 to 4 minutes, until softened. Add spinach and cooked until slightly wilted. Add beans and cook gently 2 to 3



RICHARD STOKES/RGJ

Grilled lamb loin chops are served atop spinach and beans.

minutes, stirring occasionally, until warmed through. Add cheese and warm through. Divide spinach and beans evenly among

4 plates, top each bed with 2 chops and garnish each with 2 lemon wedges. Serves 4.

— Johnathan L. Wright, RGJ

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800-NEXTWINDOW

YOUR RECIPE BOX

For Derby Day, juleps built with Bulleit bourbon

The 135th running of the Kentucky Derby takes place Saturday at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky. About 175 years ago — 40 years before the first Derby — Augustus Bulleit began crafting bourbon from Kentucky's limestone-filtered water, two-thirds corn and one-third rye.

Today, Tom Bulleit, Augustus Bulleit's great-great-grandson, continues the family spirits with small-batch Bulleit bourbon made using a similar recipe of corn, barley malt and rye — especially rye. Bulleit's higher (and signature) rye content helps create its smooth character and long, smoky finish.

In honor of the Derby, the folks at Bulleit shared this trio of recipes for the mint julep, the incarnation of spring in Kentucky. For Derby details, visit www.kentuckyderby.com. For more on Bulleit, visit www.bulleitbourbon.com.



PHOTOS BY ANDY BARRON/RGJ

Tom Bulleit of Bulleit Bourbon displays his family's spirit during a recent Reno visit. A Bulleit ancestor created the family's first bourbon in the early 19th century using corn, rye and Kentucky's limestone-filtered water.

SIMPLIFIED MINT JULEP

- 1 teaspoon white sugar
- 1.3 ounces Bulleit bourbon
- 4 sprigs mint, divided
- Ice
- Spoon
- Knife
- Straw

Toss sugar into glass. Add Bulleit bourbon. Stir until sugar is incorporated. Break up 3 mint sprigs into small pieces and drop them into glass. Place ice in resealable bag. Using Bulleit

bottle, break up ice as much as possible. Top drink with crushed ice. Swizzle drink with knife; ice will go down a bit. Top again. Garnish with remaining mint sprig. Drink with straw. Serves 1.



Bulleit bourbon is made according to a recipe inspired by a 175-year-old family formula. The bourbon's higher rye content, its signature, helps to create smoothness and a smoky finish.

Cut 2 straws so they extend only 3/4 inch above mint; place straws into mint garnish so each sip provides fresh mint essence. Serves 1.

MINT JULEP DELUXE

- 2 tablespoons demerara sugar (a raw golden specialty sugar)
- OR light brown sugar
- 5.25 ounces Bulleit bourbon
- 32 sprigs mint, divided
- 5 dashes Peychaud's bitters
- plus extra for garnish
- 4 cups ice
- 8 Straws

In blender, combine demerara sugar and Bulleit bourbon. Pulse until sugar is dissolved. Take 12 sprigs mint and strip leaves from stems.

Add leaves to mixture. Add Peychaud's bitters. Add ice. Blend until smooth.

Divide mixture evenly among 4 julep cups. Garnish each cup with 5 mint sprigs (for a total of 20), with bottoms cut off to allow mint flavor to bleed from stalks.

Dash Peychaud's bitters on top of mint. Cut straws so they extend only 3/4 inch above mint; place straws into mint garnish in each cup so each sip provides fresh mint essence. Serves 4.

— Johnathan L. Wright, RGJ

WHERE TO BUY

- Ben's Fine Wine & Spirits locations
- Booze Bros, 2285 Kietzke Lane, 775-284-5360
- Raley's locations
- Scolari's locations
- Star Liquor, 1495 E. Prater Way, Sparks, 775-356-7827

MINT JULEP VARIATION

- 6 sprigs mint, divided
- 5 ounces freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/2 ounce simple syrup (1 part sugar dissolved in 1 part boiling

water, then all cooled)

- 1.3 ounces Bulleit bourbon
- Ice, cubed
- Straws

Take 1 sprig mint and rip into 3 pieces of equal size; repeat with 2 other sprigs and place all in glass. Peel lemon lengthwise. Squeeze essential oils of lemon peel onto mint. Add lemon juice, simple syrup and Bulleit bourbon. Let sit 1 minute. Stir briefly to incorporate all ingredients.

Add cubed ice. Garnish with remaining 3 mint sprigs, bottoms cut off to allow mint flavor to bleed from stalks.

DEADLINE COOKING

Something new — pesto with pig instead of parmesan

BY J.M. HIRSCH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

It was an interesting dinner dilemma. A huge bag of incredibly aromatic fresh basil. A heap of pasta that just begged for pesto. And one lactose intolerant dinner guest who couldn't eat the parmesan cheese that gives pesto its deeply savory flavor.

My options seemed bleak.

Vegan pestos were out; they fool no one. I was leaning toward thinly slicing the basil and tossing it with the pasta along with some extra-virgin olive oil, minced garlic, a pinch of red pepper flakes, and salt and pepper.

That would have been fine, but then I started considering other ingredients that share parmesan's seriously savory (also called umami in the food world) flavor profile. And of those ingredients, which one could handle being ground up into pesto.

Bacon.

Just trust me. It was a stunning success. The resulting pesto was meatier than conventional recipes, but not heavy in the way a meat sauce is.

And as it does with parmesan, the herby taste of the basil cuts through the fatty bacon.

This pesto is delicious tossed with pasta, but it's also great smeared onto slices of sourdough bread, topped with tomato and a slab of fresh mozzarella, then briefly broiled.



LARRY CROWE/AP

Bacon replaces the parmesan in this hearty, versatile bowtie pasta with bacon pesto. This unusual pesto lets your lactose-intolerant dinner guests enjoy a pasta dinner without going the vegan route.

saucepan salted water to boil. Add pasta and cook according to package directions. Reserve 1/4 cup of pasta cooking water, then drain pasta, return to pot and set aside.

In food processor, combine bacon, basil, pine nuts and garlic. Pulse until well chopped. Then, with processor running, drizzle in olive oil until ingredients form thick paste. Stop processor and scrape sides with rubber spatula as needed. Season with salt and pepper, then pulse again to blend.

Add pesto to pasta and toss well. Add just a bit of pasta cooking water and toss again. Serve topped with diced tomato. Serves 4.

Aces/Ballpark offers solid grub

From 1C

crisp and gave way to creamy filling. Poppers are another great option when you want something small to nosh on.

Cost: \$5
7 JALAPEÑO CHEESE FOOT-LONG CHAR DOG: The bun wasn't big enough to hold this dog (a good inch or so flopped beyond), which was blanketed with nacho cheese sauce and sprinkled with pickled jalapeño slices. The char dog was by far the biggest sausage item offered at the park. The "jumbo" hot dog (\$4.50) was about half the size.

The smokiness of the grilled dog went nicely with the cheese sauce and jalapeños. For those who are hungry but want less spice, the regular foot-long char dog sold at other stands would be a generous option in lieu of two jumbo dogs.

Cost: \$7

8 ITALIAN SAUSAGE WITH PEPPERS: A great value that was just a dollar more than a traditional hot dog but delivered much more flavor and heft. The grilled sausage nestled inside a fluffy bun and was topped with grilled onions and green bell peppers. We wished for spicy brown mustard — yes, we were at a ballpark, but still — but we settled for yellow mustard instead. The casing popped when bitten into, and the onions and peppers provided depth.

Cost: \$5.50

9 PIZZA (FOUR CHEESE, PEPPERONI, THE WORKS): It was a bad sign when the pizza boxes were sitting — pizzas tucked inside — under a heat lamp. For starters, they were way too small to warrant the \$7 price tag. A works pizza had about three pieces of sausage on it, large onion pieces, a stingy amount of pepperoni and minced bell pepper. This was

one ballpark item that was entirely forgettable — save your pizza fix for Blind Onion or Big Apple Pizza.

Cost: \$7

10 S'MORES DIPPERS: The only atypical dessert (other options included soft-serve ice cream and cotton candy) at the park. The dessert would have been easy to make at home, which meant it was nearly impossible to mess up. Seven graham cracker squares sat next to a dish of chocolate syrup and marshmallow cream, which was topped with teeny tiny marshmallows and a dusting of cocoa. We disagreed here — one of us enjoyed the s'mores while the other would rather have had a beer.

Cost: \$5.50

In all, Aces Ballpark had solid concession items for decent prices. Pretzels and poppers aren't foie gras, but then again, what is?

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BOWTIE PASTA WITH BACON PESTO

- 6 slices thick-cut bacon (preferably smoked)
- 12 ounces farfalle pasta
- 2 1/2 cups (about 4 ounces) fresh basil
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 tomato, seeded and diced

In large skillet over medium-high, cook bacon until crisp, about 8 minutes. Use slotted spoon to transfer bacon to paper towels and drain well. Let bacon cool slightly.

Meanwhile, bring large

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