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Home / Life / Flavor / Restaurants

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Insanely over-the-top burgers and shakes from Guy Fieri protégé now at Chesapeake arcade bar

By Matthew Korfhage
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Courtesy Gameworks



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Ever eat a hamburger and think to yourself: "Man, this would be really good if it had an entire grilled cheese sandwich stuffed inside it?"

When you eat a milkshake, do you find yourself wishing there was bacon and an inch-thick Belgian waffle on top? Plus maybe some booze in it?

Oh boy, you're in luck.

[GameWorks](#), a mini-chain of video game bars with one in Chesapeake's Greenbrier Mall, is making two big bets this year, according to spokeswoman Susan Lewis.

One is competitive gaming. The Chesapeake location [plans a couch-filled lounge devoted to players of esports, a world of competitive gaming that attracts spectators every bit as rapt as the ones at a football game](#) – with prize pools that can climb into the millions.

The other is some seriously over-the-top food.

Already this year, two other bar arcades have been announced for Norfolk: Richmond's The Circuit [plans a Granby Street location](#), while [Bourbon Smokehouse and Arcade will open on Colonial Avenue](#).

At its seven locations from Las Vegas to the Mall of America, GameWorks had served a food and bar menu full of standards – nachos, burgers, wings, lemon drop cocktails.

But new corporate chef Tony Leitera is a veteran of multiple celebrity kitchens, including Wolfgang Puck and the Las Vegas outpost of Guy Fieri's Vegas Kitchen, known for its big flavors and often bewildering mash-ups.

"Guy was a huge influence on my career and personal life," Leitera told The Pilot. "He's turned into a close friend and a tremendous mentor that's shaped who and what I am."

Fieri's big, beefy influence is on display in the new menu, which is being served as of Monday and includes an "8-Bit Burger" stuffed with fried mozzarella and pepperoni.

But Leitera also traveled the country, he says, looking for trends in dining to bring to the GameWorks restaurant, which the chain is calling the Works Kitchen.

Turns out, this includes the vegan restaurant staple of buffalo fried cauliflower, dry-rubbed wings with a battery of sauces, and a "Movie Theater" milkshake wrapped in red licorice rope and served on a bed of M & Ms and caramel corn.

The latter is a gesture toward the seemingly undying national trend of rainbow-colored "unicorn food," often custom-made for Instagram.

"The milkshakes are above and beyond," Leitera said.

Is it all too much? Unhealthy excess gone haywire? Maybe. Leitera says the menu was designed to suit GameWorks' crowd of gamers.

According to Lewis, the food and cocktails – which will soon likely include boozy versions of those goofball milkshakes – will be delivered to gamers at the console machines, the esports couches in the forthcoming lounge and other areas.

And as for that towering \$21 double-patty burger stack with grilled cheese inside it? Apparently it's already pretty popular.

"I wanted to do something over the top," Leitera said. "There's bacon, barbecue sauce, onion straws. It's a pound and a half of food. It's over the top, almost too much to eat. But people are pounding them. They're really putting them away."

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Esports lounge to be built at the GameWorks arcade in Chesapeake

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