

Food + Chef

MAGAZINE

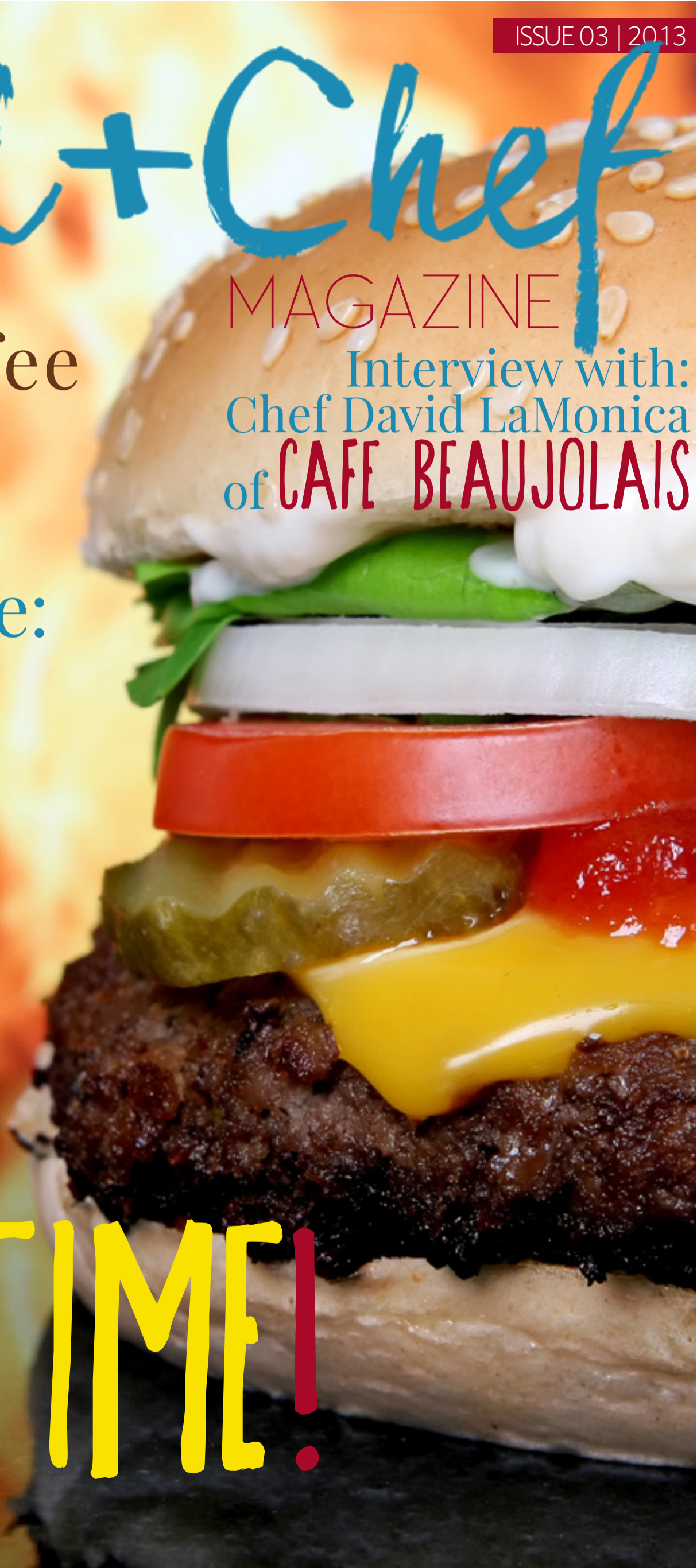
Interview with:
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MEDITATION

What is Simple:
Thoughts on
Turkish
Cuisine

summer
smoothies

BBQ TIME!



HEY YOKELS

Drink Local!

By Josh Agate

With the number of breweries in America reaching historic levels, it is a great time to be a craft beer drinker. The variety of breweries and new styles of beer can make beer runs a little daunting. The next time you are having a difficult time making a decision, I encourage you to seek out a local brew. Drinking local has a number of advantages that allow you to maximize your beer drinking experience.

- **Local beer is the freshest.** The fresher the beer, the more the hop characteristics are going to shine. Beers from local breweries spend shorter times on trucks, meaning they have less exposure to the elements. In general, small local breweries produce smaller batches meaning there is more turnover and beer stays fresher.
- **Drink green.** And I am not talking about St. Patty's day. A beer that comes from an in-state brewery doesn't have to travel as far on a truck as one coming across the US. Believe it or not, but by drinking local beer, you are actually decreasing your environmental impact by limiting the amount of emissions put into the air.
- **Local brewers and local ingredients.** Breweries are starting to source more of their ingredients locally. Beers such as Lakefront Wisconsinite and Rogue Portland State IPA source all their ingredients from within the

state making them not only fresher, but again decreasing emissions required to get ingredients to the brewery.

- **Wet hopped beers.** An emerging new beer variety is the wet hopped beer, where the hops go directly from the vine into your beer. Most hops used are dried and processed down into a pelleted form. Wet hopped brews are released around harvest time in the fall and have a noticeable brightness to them that cannot be achieved by pelleted hops. A few examples of beers that use locally sourced wet hops are New Holland Hopivore and Almanac Brewing Company California Fresh Hop Ale.
- **Support your local economy.** More than anything, drinking locally supports your city and state's economy.

Here are a few suggestions on ways that you can easily get out and enjoy great local brews

- **Take a brewery tour.** If you have a free weekend, map out a couple of local breweries and take a road trip to visit them. Brewery tours are great for learning more about the brewing process and give you the opportunity to try the absolute freshest product. **Quick Tip:** Find out which ones give free samples at the end of the tour.
- **Visit your local brewpub.** It is hard to find a beer fresher than one brewed at your local brewpub because these beers go directly from fermenters to tap lines. If you don't



know what to order, ask the bartender to make a suggestion based on your personal tastes. **Quick Tip:** Take some friends and try a flight of beers, this allows you to try a variety of beers so you know what to order on your next visit.

- **Don't forget a growler.** Before you leave the brewpub, get one of these 64oz jugs filled to take home with you. This way you can enjoy your favorite brew from the night over the next couple of days. **Quick Tip:** Next time you go to a party, stop back in and have your empty growler filled with something to share with your friends.
- **Find a local beer fest.** These festivals are the best way to try many different beers from a variety of breweries. They usually give preference to local breweries so you are bound to find some great local options that you can buy the next time you are looking for a 6 pack. **Quick Tip:** You would be amazed how fast a lot of 2oz samples sneak up on you, make sure you have a designated driver.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Josh Agate- Lifelong resident of Southern Wisconsin and lover of all things beer. Homebrewer under the moniker of Third Tier Brewing. I started writing about beer because it allows me to engage in conversations and meet people I might not have had the opportunity to otherwise. Follow me on Twitter @ jagatelife so you can share your thoughts, questions, and criticisms with me. Why am I here you ask...I am Here for the Beer! www.HereForTheBeer.com

