

## the concept

At Citizen Burger Bar, we believe in the importance of the simple things. Things like kicking back with friends, tipping back beers, and enjoying some tasty burgers. (This is America, after all. A delicious burger is your right – perhaps even your responsibility.)

To secure that sacred right for the people of Charlottesville, we teamed up with a few exceptional nearby farms and designed a menu around locally produced, top-tier ingredients. It's a simple plan. No muss, no fuss, and definitely no hormones – just uncommonly good stuff to eat and drink, much of it hailing from our own little patch of earth.

Since nothing's simpler than a burger, we aim to keep things pretty straightforward and let ours speak for themselves. Our partner farms like to keep things simple as well – we're talking happy grass-fed cows and free-range chickens here. We hope you'll agree: if you're going to eat meat, this is the way to do it.

While we're proud of the menu, we must say the bar is no slouch, either... We've stocked our coolers with a huge, carefully curated collection of beers (110+ and growing, many of them VA-born and bred), and created what we'd like to call a pretty crafty list of cocktails. Our wise and benevolent bar staff can recommend the perfect libation to complement your meal or your mood – just ask 'em. Our bar caters to the discerning drinker along with the avid sports fan: Citizen is fully game-day-ready with tons of big-screen TVs. (*As the saying goes, "Give me burgers, beers, and ballgames, or give me death!"*)

Our vision is anything but complicated: we believe in good food, cold drinks, and common ground. We know we're not alone on that – and that's how Citizen came to be. This is the people's burger bar. Please, make yourselves at home.

## the space

Located at 212 E. Main Street, right in the heart of Charlottesville's historic downtown mall, Citizen occupies a charming and very unique old building. The sky-high ceiling and surprising length from front door to the rear of the restaurant are uncommon finds on the mall, and are therefore usually the first observations locals make about our space. The restaurant's indoor seating is comprised of several six- and eight-top booths, and roughly 30 seats at our generously sized bar; outside, there is ample room for drinking and dining at our patio tables.

Citizen is right across the street from The Paramount Theater (a C-Ville institution since 1931). The years have endowed our long-standing building with a certain nostalgic quality of its own – we were elated when we unearthed pieces of original 1925 downtown mall sidewalk while working on the floors near our bay windows.

We're honored to have such rich history all around us, and that it's reflected so clearly in the features of our space. Since age builds character, we've taken care to preserve and protect many details of this remarkable building. Every aspect of the room – be it original or brand new – was carefully considered prior to the opening of Citizen, as we worked to cultivate the most open and positive atmosphere possible for the space.

With atmosphere in mind, the aesthetics of the two busiest (and most productive) zones – the kitchen and bar – were of utmost importance during our design process. The exposed kitchen, with its tiled counter and cook-view barstools, invites your eyes into our culinary process. An integral part of the lively, approachable vibe in the room, it adds style and profoundly enriches the sensory experience of being in a restaurant. Then, the bar – our very long, very well-stocked pride and joy – designed with painstaking attention to detail and a near-religious devotion to its perfection. We hope you'll find it to be a perfectly practical, high-functioning yet intimate and welcoming bar.

## the company

The Virginian belongs to a restaurant group called The Virginian Restaurant Company (The VRC). The VRC is heavily focused on its employees being the driving force behind all of its success. There is a strong focus on training, management, and building loyalty. Through perks and rewards unique to the restaurant industry, like establishing a company minimum wage or shutting down and taking all of the employees to an outdoor party, The VRC has maintained an extremely low level of turnover and high level of employee loyalty.

## the owner

I grew up in Alexandria and went to the University of Virginia and studied finance at the McIntire School of Commerce (graduating in 2001). While in school, I waited tables at local college restaurants to help support myself. I was an ok server, but I was a better debater, and after months of hearing how I would do things differently and joking about buying the restaurant, the owners of the tiny but venerable Virginian started to take me seriously. In August of 2001, at the ripe old age of 22, I became a restaurant owner. A consummate optimist and a burgeoning pragmatist, I actually spent the first year of ownership thinking I could work my finance job in New York and absentee own the Virginian at the same time. For any restaurateurs out there, they know how ridiculous that is. I wasn't gone long, but when I came back restaurants became my life. The struggles of a small business owner are almost impossible to properly convey, but one could argue the more you've had to struggle, and the more you've had to sacrifice, the more you appreciate coming out on the other side, and I am not short on appreciation. The Virginian did take a long time to get on the right path, but eventually it allowed me to open a second restaurant, and then a third. After buying and selling another restaurant on the UVA Corner, all of this led to Citizen Burger Bar, a restaurant and concept I had wanted to try forever, and a place whose success and reception has been profoundly humbling. We have a number of other concepts in the pipeline and are always growing, especially with multiple amazing partners at this point. Overall, my company is employee focused. I believe the best restaurant and business owners realize that their employees are more important than they are. Finding and guiding good people makes this company what it is. I can't thank all of my employees and all of my guests enough.

I am so grateful for all of those people who have helped me along the way, but particularly my family. My younger brother and sister who are always willing to lend a hand, and especially my older brother, who was the first GM this company ever had, my mother who never stops thinking of new ideas, and my father, whose wisdom and support and guidance are the only reasons I am even remotely successful.

–Andy McClure (Owner – The Virginian Restaurant Company)