

Brew pub has prize burger



General manager said he's more accustomed to praise for his pints

By **ROBERT SALONGA**
The Salinas Californian

The Monterey Coast Brewing Co. scored triple bragging rights this year winning nods as "Best Bar/Pub," "Best Beer on Tap," and "Best Hamburger" from Salinas Californian readers.

The hamburger honor took general manager José Sánchez a bit by surprise, if only because the establishment is known more for its brews than its buns.

But he welcomed the recognition.

"This is more like a beer place than a food place," Sánchez said, "but the food is as good as the beer."

The hamburgers, made from lean Angus beef, are grilled and feature fresh produce. Fixin's such as lettuce and tomatoes are sliced and prepared only slightly ahead of time to ensure they're not sitting out for too long before being served, Sánchez said.

Winning recognition for beer was not as much of a surprise for him. He noted the restaurant offers 90 kinds of beer, from light Harvest Wheat to Scottish Red Ale. The Brewing Co.'s own concoctions use malt imported from England.

The source of the malt is no surprise, considering the enterprise has English brew masters, Sánchez said.



RICHARD GREEN/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

A burger and a beer, two of the reasons readers love Monterey Coast Brewing Co. in Oldtown Salinas.

"They want to keep the same atmosphere as the pubs in London," he said.

To that end, the place features redbrick walls, a bar surface made of eucalyptus imported from Australia, and sconces and a chandelier brought in from Morocco.

Sánchez had a recommendation for a seasonal offering.

"The Imperial Porter is strong," he said, adding that it's served in small volumes, in a wine glass, because of its 11 percent alcohol content. "After that beer, you don't need coffee, because it will warm up your body."

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Monterey Coast Brewing pours 90 kinds of beer.

MONTEREY COAST BREWING CO.

n **WHERE:** 165 Main St., Salinas.

n **HOURS:** Lunch: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Dinner 4 to 9:30 p.m. daily.

n **PHONE:** 758-2337

n **PARKING:** One-hour free parking on Main Street, free parking in Monterey Street garage after 6 p.m.