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Burlap: Where West Eats Meat in Del Mar

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It's hard to imagine a [restaurant](#) larger in size, attitude, and influence than the mighty [Searsucker](#) in the Gaslamp Quarter. This power eatery is approaching its one-year mark, and continues to pack the house - including every seat at the bar - every night of the week.

When celebrity chef Brian Malarkey, nightlife and hospitality mogul James Brennan, and designer extraordinaire Thomas Schoos collaborated on their first project, San Diego was put on the map in a major way. And now, the award-winning trio is back in action, preparing for the debut of [Burlap](#), a new restaurant and lounge serving "Asian Cowboy" cuisine in an eclectic environment that offers the perfect mix of global sophistication and local cool.

Located within the renovated [Del Mar Highlands Town Center](#), Burlap is destined to become the new *it* spot in San Diego. And timing couldn't be better; Burlap celebrated a soft opening on Wednesday, July 20, coinciding with Opening Day at the [Del Mar Racetrack](#).



While I toured the new digs, Brian Malarkey explained that Thomas Schoos designed Searsucker to represent Malarkey's own "Urban Cowboy" roots, and that Burlap is now a reflection of the acclaimed designer's personal world, hand-built with hundreds of artifacts Schoos collected while traveling around the world. From the Chinese temple house warning off bad spirits at the front entrance, to a revived water buffalo skull perched atop a private glass-encased dining table, cascading vintage Moroccan lanterns overseeing the indoor/outdoor lounge, and the ceremonial dance costume masks from China Town radiating a warm kaleidoscope of vibrant light over the central bar, every authentic element of décor was personally selected by Schoos in Japan, Thailand, Brazil, and South Africa, and stored in his expansive Los Angeles warehouse over the last decade. Burlap is, quite literally, an extension of Schoos and a public invitation into his most intimate creative process.

"It's a dream come true to see not one, but two restaurants come to fruition in almost less than a year," said Executive Chef and Partner, Brian Malarkey. "With Burlap, I'm getting to tap into my roots of growing up on a ranch in Oregon, while still showing love to the sea and my home in San Diego. I'm one lucky cowboy."

Within the main dining room, the walls are covered in real, gritty burlap sacks, with exposed seams creating a playful, two-dimensional texture.

Plush charcoal gray couches with multicolor pillows sit atop vintage Pakistani rugs in the lounge area which is open to all with a casual living room style vibe. Mismatched wooden chairs and tables are placed throughout the bar and dining room, with communal seating, romantic seclusion, and space for larger private parties. Burlap extends into a spacious outdoor patio that is surrounded by bamboo, complete with a Koi pond, heated flooring, and a private bungalow table that is guaranteed to be a hot ticket. The patio wraps around to the second bar, which also connects through the main dining room. My personal favorite room, this bar is made of an original Indian house façade, cut in half and re-positioned into the bottom bar and wall backing. Overhead is a whimsical cluster of Moroccan lanterns dangling in a rustic chandelier effect. Honestly, it's breathtaking.

The always charming celebri-chef Brian Malarkey describes his new culinary vision as "Asian Cowboy" where the "West Eats Meat," and the menu is said to offer a hybrid of meat (raw, cooked and rotisserie), seafood, and bold sides with an Asian influence. In a similar style to the Searsucker dining experience, the Burlap menu will be divided into simple categories, including Land, Ocean, Rotisserie, Raw, Bowl, Stick, and Ours. And yes, a few Searsucker staples will travel up north to the Burlap table, including local favorites, Carb Free Crab Cakes and Duck Wings. For dessert, indulge in the house made gelato. As for the best seat in the house, Malarkey recommends the exclusive two-top tables located within the see-through glass-encased kitchen, where you are literally in the heat of the moment as you enjoy a multi-course chef's choice tasting menu. To cool you down, the bar will be stocked with premium sake, local craft beer, select wines from all over the world, and handcrafted cocktails.

Where West Eats Meat: Burlap celebrated a soft opening on Wednesday, July 20, and is now taking reservations. Burlap will begin with dinner service, and will expand for lunch and weekend brunch throughout the year. For more information, please visit [Burlap in Del Mar](#).



Grand Opening Alert: Become a [DiscoverSD Insider](#) to get Burlap grand opening details first. Anticipation leaving you starving in curiosity? Get a Burlap preview at Malarkey's original restaurant, [Searsucker in San Diego](#).

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Main Photo Left to Right: James Brennan, Brian Malarkey, Thomas Schoos