



📷 The Colossal BLT features two lbs. of bacon, lettuce, tomato and mayo on Mancini's bread. Photo courtesy of Porked.

Porked — home of the two-pound BLT — is coming to East Liberty this fall

👤 Kristy Locklin 🕒 August 28, 2018 📁 Eat. Drink. Do., Latest News

Natalie Bobak and Tony Molnar knew they had perfected their restaurant's menu when their clothes started to feel a little snug.

"I gained 50 pounds in two years," Molnar says with a smile.

Weight gain is an occupational hazard when you own a place that specializes in bacon.

Porked (<https://www.porkyourhunger.com/>) opened last October in Lincoln Place, a small neighborhood located between West Mifflin and Munhall, and instantly generated a cult following. The 800-square-foot eatery churns out big, swine-centric sandwiches that make customers squeal with delight.

“Once we get you in here, you’re hooked for life,” says Bobak, who retired from teaching middle school to go whole hog. “If you come in on a Tuesday, you’re coming back on Wednesday and Thursday, too.”

To keep up with demand, the partners are opening a second spot on N. Highland Avenue in East Liberty. Located in a storefront that once housed Union Pig & Chicken, the second Porked outpost is twice the size of the original but will feature the same mouth-watering grub.

It’s expected to open in mid-September.

The secret to their success, Bobak says, is simplicity: Each menu item contains no more than five ingredients, which are all fresh and locally sourced.

The Pulled Pork Sandwich, available seasoned, barbecued or Sriracha-style, is the biggest seller. But more adventurous types opt for the Nutty Piggy — peanut butter and bacon between pieces of toasted Mancini’s bread. Three Little Piggies is a triple threat piled high with bacon, ham and hot sausage, and the Pita Pig is bacon topped with lettuce, tomato, onion and house-made tzatziki sauce.



Natalie Bobak and Tony Molnar will open a second Porked location next month in East Liberty.

Every Wednesday, people can make their cholesterol level skyrocket at a discounted price because Porked's Colossal BLT — loaded with two lbs. of bacon — is \$18 instead of the usual \$22. Customers who finish the massive meal don a plastic pig nose and get their picture on the Wall of Fame (or Wall of Shame, depending on how you feel about gluttony).

Non-sandwich offerings include pork chops, smoked kielbasa, pulled pork nachos and angel hair pasta with sausage.

Both locations feature catering menus and are BYOB. Bobak says she hopes to start serving craft beers at the new site by next summer.

Where did the inspiration come from? After wrestling with the idea for 15 years, Molnar modeled his pig-based business on Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers, a fast food chain he frequented while living in Columbus, Ohio. The joint doesn't give a cluck about a having a diverse menu, instead focusing solely on serving breaded, deep-fried birds.

"That was the push that I needed," says Molnar, a Pittsburgh native who has worked in restaurants all over the country. "And at the end of the day, bacon is way better than chicken fingers."

The owners hope they can piggyback off of Porked's initial success and franchise throughout Pittsburgh and into West Virginia and Ohio.

"We take pride in what we do," Bobak says. "There is love in this food."

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Kristy Locklin is a North Hills-based freelance writer. When she's not busy reporting, she enjoys watching horror movies and exploring Pittsburgh's craft beer scene.