

## BOOMERANG'S BRINGS THE 'PIE FLOATER' TO AUSTIN

by Marsha Mann

**A**s if it weren't enough to make the perfect meat pie - chock full of grilled steak or chicken, sautéed veggies and cheese, enveloped in a tender, butter-flake crust; Boomerang's takes it one step further, adding a huge scoop of freshly mashed potatoes on top and drenching the whole thing in a savory, dark brown gravy. Lovingly called a 'pie floater' in its country of origin, Australia, Boomerang's version of this down-under specialty is on its way to becoming the comfort-food-of-choice for many Austinites as well.

Anyone who attended the ACL Music Festival in September, might have noticed the brisk business Boomerang's food stall was doing. While other vendors were frantically trying to fill orders, these guys had it down to a science... pre-made yet delicious, heat 'n serve meat & veggie pies, ready for mass consumption - a simple and tasty alternative to a greasy hamburger or soggy piece of pizza.

The story of Boomerang's began when Jack Fennell,



a U.T. Grad and manager at Dell Computers, applied for an overseas position with the company. "My wife had a really good job at the time, but when they offered me a three-year stint in Australia, she didn't hesitate... the opportunity was too exciting to pass up".

Once there, the couple took up residence in the charming seaside town of Manly, just north of Sydney, where they had their first encounter with an Aussie staple - the meat pie. It was love at 'first bite' and instantly became the inspiration for Boomerang's: healthy, gourmet meat & veggie pies served in a casual atmosphere, at a price even students could afford.

When they returned to Austin, Jack hired two chefs from the Texas Culinary Academy to develop the ideal product. He insisted on using the best ingredients possible - unbleached flour, real butter, fresh-daily produce (organic when available), and quality meat from local suppliers.

Boomerang's opened at its 31st and Guadalupe location in January of 2006. The sleek but casual eatery offers 14 varieties of pies, including Guinness Steak & Potato (wildly popular with the guys since you can actually taste the beer), and Thai or Curry Chicken (both perfectly seasoned and supremely satisfying). All the meat pies are \$5.50 and can be turned into a 'Pie Floater' for an additional \$1.75. If you want to pass on the extra carbs, try a generous side salad made with super fresh romaine lettuce, cherry tomatoes, and your choice of dressing (\$2.50).

In the veggie category, I highly recommend the savory Spinach & Mushroom, with Monterrey Jack cheese and an herby cream sauce that ties it all together... comfort food at its best and darn healthy to boot.

Just maybe that explains a curious phenomenon the entire staff has noticed - pregnant women love these pies, in particular, the Chicken & Mushroom version (you

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photos by Greg Cooper

guys out there better pay attention to what your gal is ordering!).

You can also stock up on 'frozen' Boomerang's Pies (they come individually wrapped for convenient storing), or have them shipped to friends and relatives. Jack is planning to make Online Ordering available by early 2009.

Since I've heard Texas called 'the Australia of America' (ponder that one for a minute or two), it seems totally appropriate to be adopting one of their favorite foods. And with winter upon us, it's the perfect time to have a golden brown, tummy-warming, meat (or veggie) pie... think I'll make my next one a 'pie floater'. 3110 Guadalupe (entrance on 31 1/2 St.), 380.0032. Open Mon-Fri 11am-8pm, Sat-Sun 12pm-6pm. \*