

CONSUMING NEWS

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A Passion for Beef

By Chef Michael Altenberg, Owner of Bistro Campagne

There is a handful of restaurants in the Chicago area, (Bistro Campagne being one of them) who have latched onto the concept of "grass-fed" beef with a passion that is seldom seen among restaurateurs these days. Carnivorous connoisseurs and beef loving chefs alike will tell you there is no other quality taste like it around.

What makes this type of beef taste so great is the manner in which the cattle are raised. Grass-fed is really about getting back to our grass roots – a time when cattle were free to roam openly in the Prairies grazing on the grass of the land naturally rich in nutrients and anti-oxidants.

Back at the Ranch ...

Cattle ranching changed greatly during World War II when there was a surplus of cheap corn provided to ranchers by the government. What ensued was herds that gained weight quickly and were tasty because of excess fat...cha-ching. The industry cycle sped up to a 14-16 month period from grain feedlot to the table (grass-fed cattle are raised over 20-26 months). It took more than fifty years for nutritionists to realize that "corn-fed marbling" produced cows full of what we now know of as the bad fat,

Omega-6.

Grain is also difficult for cattle to digest, which is what necessitated the use of antibiotics and hormone injections. Add to this the fact that many grain-fed cattle are also fed animal by-products and you have a good idea of what underlying issues contribute to "mad cow disease". Grain-fed cattle also have high stress levels which are caused from the use of confined feedlots, cages and unnatural environments. (Like us, a less stressed cow, is a healthier cow.)

Grass-fed Benefits...

Natural grazing is providing a wealth of renewed health benefits to beef eaters. Grass-fed cattle have up to: 50% less fat, a minimum of twice the amounts of Omega-3 essential fatty acids (that's the good fat that reduces cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol and high blood pressure found primarily in green leafy vegetables, flax and oils extracted from cold-water fish like mackerel, salmon, tuna or cod) and as much as five times the amount of CLA (Conjugated Linoleic Acid), a fat which promotes cancer prevention and helps improve metabolism. Grass-fed beef also contains four times more the amount of carotenoids than grain-fed cows and twenty times more Vitamin E than corn or soy.

Grass-fed cattle also promote a

Tallgrass Short-Rib BBQ

- 4 Pounds Tallgrass Beef Short Ribs
- 3 Pieces Star Anise
- 6 Pieces Cracked Tellicherry Pepper Corn
- 1 Bunch Cilantro
- 4 Cloves Garlic, crushed
- 10 Pieces Crushed Coriander Seed
- 1/8 Cup Organic Raw Cane Sugar
- 2 Cups Pineapple Juice (reduced by 2/3 water)

Preparation: Make a dry rub mixture with all ingredients except juice and season ribs. Cover and chill for 10 hours.

Cook: Remove dry rub and grill on the least hot area of the grill until the ribs begin to slowly caramelize. (About 30-35 minutes)

Serve: Brush ribs with pineapple juice and remove from grill. Let cool 20 minutes until the ribs are golden and fully caramelized.



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better ecosystem. This type of grazing management results in healthy soil, healthy growth of indigenous grasses, and natural 'organic' fertilizer, spread out over larger areas to avoid pollution problems.

As I mentioned earlier, there are several restaurants (and the number is growing) in the area that carry only grass fed beef and specifically so from the Tallgrass Beef Company, which was founded by Chicago's own,

Bill Kurtis. Consumers can also buy Tallgrass Beef at Sunset Foods, Foodstuffs and Fox & Obel.

When you consider the facts that grass-fed beef is better for our health and our environment, not to mention it tastes phenomenally good, there are only great reasons for trying it. I firmly believe you will have the same reaction as I did when I had my first Tallgrass steak; it was truly "love at first bite".

On the Shelves



Cathi V. at the Fancy Food Show

I attended the NASFT Fancy Food Show in NY last summer, where the largest of manufacturers, down to the smallest of companies showcased their products, some of whom spent years and millions of dollars making their signature products healthier. The following are some of my favorite items from the show – some healthy and some that just were plain 'ole lip smacking good.

Ever wonder why a power bar tastes like a crow bar and sometimes, just as hard? It's due to the percentage of dry ingredients versus

the addition of any fats or natural oils used to soften and sweeten the bar. And if you're looking for a great tasting organic variety, try *Organic Double Dark Chocolate and Dark Chocolate Raspberry* from NuGO Nutrition due out on the shelves this fall.

On the gourmet snack front, *Carriage House* should be proud as their line of Cheese Straws and Pecan Biscuits. These preservative free snacks are made from old-fashioned recipes and quality ingredients. You can shop them online at: www.cheesestrawsva.com.

For the sinful sweet tooth in all of us, *Molten Cake* by *Kings Cupboard* is the 'cu de gra' of dessert you can prepare at home. It was easy to make

and gives the best Lava Cake from the finest restaurant a run for its money! KC's cake was also a finalist in two categories at the NASFT's Product Awards Competition last spring.

Known for their variety of Scottish cookies and savory short-breads, *Walkers* also has an extensive line of Oatcakes, a traditional Scottish cracker that's high in fiber, GMO-free, wheat free (for those with allergies) with no added sugar.

Look for more to come from *Walkers* this holiday season. Toast soda to your health! If you haven't checked out *Nutrisodas*® by Ardea Beverages yet you should. These natural flavored pops come in a variety of fruit combined flavors and are nutrient enhanced aimed



at tantalizing your taste buds while elevating your state. No mood rings needed with these choices: Focus, Immune, Calm, Slim, Energize, Flex and Slender, available at a wide variety of retailers. Earlier this year, PepsiAmericas bought Ardea, which is a good clue that this product chalks up to its promises.

That's my sneak peek at some treasures to be on the look out for. In the next, On the Shelves: Great Holiday Gift Ideas – edible and otherwise.

Shop Hard, Buy Smart!

Cathi Volante,
"The Gadget Diva"

What is the NASFT

The NASFT (National Association for the Specialty Food Trade) is a not-for-profit business trade association established in 1952 to foster trade, commerce and interest in the specialty food industry composed of domestic and foreign manufacturers, importers, distributors, brokers, retailers, restaurateurs, caterers and others in the specialty foods business.

For consumers, the NASFT has developed the Specialty Food Market, an on-line catalog of hard-to-find gourmet products. They also recently launched a publication for consumers only. Go to www.specialtyfood-market.com for more info.

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