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Bryan Schaaf:

[inaudible 00:00:00] on the Meat Speak podcast powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand. Bryan Schaaf joined here in studio in the basement of the world headquarters of premium beef, joined by meat scientist, Diana Clark Schaaf, Tony Biggs. How you guys doing? Happy June.

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Tony Biggs:

Can you believe it's June?

Diana Clark:

Goodness. This went by fast.

Bryan Schaaf:

Right.

Tony Biggs:

Too quick.

Bryan Schaaf:

Happy June. Two things, two things that happy June should be known for when Beaver Cleaver's mom is happy.

Tony Biggs:

She can plant her flowers.

Bryan Schaaf:

Also, though, June if you are in the food world, especially if you are a steakhouse, it is steakhouse month. I make no bones about it, I'm not big on food holidays because I will decided what food I want to celebrate today. Steaks, steakhouses get a whole month and-

Diana Clark:

Which they deserve.

Bryan Schaaf:

Absolutely. But it's funny, you talk to some chefs in steakhouses like, "What do you mean?" They don't know because for them, every month is steakhouse month.

Diana Clark:

That's true, that's a good point.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. It is steakhouse month and what a fantastic reason to celebrate. Hopefully, the steakhouses out there are finding multiple reasons, not just because it's steakhouse month, but by now it's June of 2021. If you go back over the previous calendar year obviously no secret that it was a difficult year for restaurants everywhere, but the steakhouse in particular had a hard year for a lot of different reasons. Namely, the fact that steaks don't really do well in a takeout setting, we've got a whole episode about that. Tell us about that a little bit. We are over a year into the COVID, the takeout thing, and we've still yet to find the perfect solution to get a steak from restaurant to home and have that same experience.

Diana Clark:

You think about the heating of the steak and everything, usually that had to be, I can only imagine, a hard adjustment even for that. A chef preparing a steak that that person's going to sit down and eat it right in front of them, you have this whole preparation, this standard method that you follow to make that perfect steak, but now it's I'm putting it in a box and letting it carry. There's so many variables within there, like what type of box you're using, how far is it going, how fast is your driver going, how many red lights are they going to get stopped at? Even when it gets to the door, are they going to eat it right away, are they going to put it on their counter, what are they going to do with it? So it just adds those variables, you have moisture in there, you have more heating. Do you under cook it, but then is it going to be too under cooked? Just so many challenges and you honestly, you don't know what that person's going to do at the end.

Diana Clark:

That's, to me, the beauty. Usually, a steakhouse has, over any operation, is that they control that cooking, that eating experience. When, a lot of times, if a person's going to go buy a raw steak, and take it home, and cook it, it could be the best, the most expensive steak that they've ever purchased in their life, but if they don't know how to cook it, well then they could just screw it all up. In the steakhouse experience, that chef takes that amazing steak and just makes an incredible dining experience at the same time because you have someone that's knowledgeable and knows what they're doing to deliver. So it's combining that challenge, now I'm trying to cook this for you and provide it to you, but we still have all these variables in between. So yeah, it's not going to be the easiest thing done, for sure.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. You mentioned packaging, Chef. You obviously did a lot of homework on packaging. Right now, knowing where we are now, the knowledge base that we have, what's the perfect package to... If your hands are tied and you still have to do this, where are you going?

Tony Biggs:

Well, from previous episodes we did on this topic during the COVID, it was just so interesting. My eyes were open because we visited some major branded steakhouses, and so they even admitted, and as Diana mentioned, it's so difficult to get a steak from A to Z and we all know that steam is a steak killer. So some of the packaging I kind of liked was these corrugated plastic with the little grooves in the bottom and then they had steam vents, at least they were thinking about this. They were thinking about their business, how to... I think there was a lot of complaints, even from these great steakhouses, I got steak home, and as Diana mentioned again, from A to B could be 25 minutes, it could be 30 minutes, and when I got my steak home it was well done and you're talking about a \$95 tomahawk steak. Do you really want that? Do you expect that? It would've been better, and I hate to say this, if steakhouses just admitted it and said to the customer, "Hey, this is what you're going to get and these are the problems

you might have if you don't eat this right away and what happens." At least you're honest about it, you're not selling a \$95 tomahawk with the bone disattached and it's well done.

Bryan Schaaf:

But I will tell you, literally, what? Less than 48 hours ago I was in Louisville, Kentucky which I love Louisville. Hold on, let me... Louisville, right? That's how you say it? It helps if you [crosstalk 00:05:34]. It actually helps if you eat some peanut butter and leave some on the roof of your mouth, Louisville. Louisville, Kentucky, home to a lot of things, but I will tell you that less than 48 hours ago I was sitting in a steakhouse and it was packed. It was called Steak and Bourbon, phenomenal place. Part of the OLE Group, Zack Wolf is the chef. Unbelievable, but the restaurant was packed, steaks were coming out of the kitchen. It felt like we have arrived, at least in Louisville, Kentucky and we see it happening in Ohio, we're starting to see pockets here. We want to take today and really talk about the great steakhouse comeback because there are a lot of steakhouses, a lot of restaurants that did not come out of the pandemic.

Bryan Schaaf:

There are also several in our guests, we have Chef Shawn Heine from Prime Cincinnati, Chef Glenn Wheeler from Spencer's in Omaha. You know it's a proper steakhouse, you're in the middle of cattle country out in Omaha. On that note, we are going to take a break and turn the page and welcome to the podcast our good pal, Chef Shawn Heine from Prime Cincinnati and our buddy, Chef Glenn Wheeler from Spencer's For Steaks and Chops in Omaha, Nebraska. Coming back with you in a minute here on the Meat Speak podcast powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand.

Bryan Schaaf:

Back here on the Meat Speak podcast powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand, Bryan Schaaf coming to you via Zoom with two guests today who are the faces behind some of the most hallowed halls of beef in the country and are here to talk about the great come back of the American steakhouse, the genre of restaurants that was hardest hit during the pandemic. Joining us all the way from Omaha, Nebraska at Spencer's For Steaks and Chops, Chef Glenn Wheeler. How you doing, sir?

Glenn Wheeler:

I'm doing good, Bryan. How are you?

Bryan Schaaf:

Man, I'm living the dream right now. And joining him if you look actually slightly diagonal and to the right on my Zoom screen, although I realize this is an audio medium. Coming to us from the queen city, Prime Cincinnati, Chef Shawn Heine. How you doing, sir?

Shawn Heine:

Doing great, man.

Bryan Schaaf:

Outstanding. This is Shawn's second appearance on the podcast, we've now officially been around long enough that we're having some folks making multiple appearances. So you've officially moved into a tie atop the leaderboard with Nick Solares and Alvin Cailan, so if you're keeping score at home. Gentlemen,

I'll throw a question out to both of you guys to start. Again, I know it's always something you always want to look to the future, it's tough to sit back and dwell on the past, but I wanted to talk to you guys first about steakhouses. You guys in particular, Spencer's in Omaha, Prime Cincinnati, you guys are both downtown in two of the largest cities in the country, talk to us about what happened to you guys, I guess, during the pandemic in terms of what was the story when you got the word, when you had to shut down. How long were you down for before you really started to see things open back up? Glenn, if you don't mind, tell us about you guys.

Glenn Wheeler:

We shut down on March 16 of 2020 and we were shut down until... We reopened June 15 of 2020, so three months we were closed. Take out just wasn't an option for us, with our high price point steaks, we just didn't feel like it would work for us. Everybody was furloughed and we were on our own for a few months. We opened back up, it continued to be extremely slow. We rely a lot on business travel and events being downtown, we're surrounded by the convention center and the main arena, the opera hall, the Broadway musical hall, all that. So with everything being shut down, there wasn't a lot of people coming downtown so it was extremely hard. We had to really make some cutbacks. We used to have a staff of 36 people and we currently have a staff of 17 people. That's total, that's with servers and everything. It's been a tough battle.

Glenn Wheeler:

We actually started to see it turn around in February of 2021, that's when we started turning the corner, I think. We had, of course, Valentine's weekend in there and people just started feeling more comfortable coming back out. We had our... Let's see. We went probably 100% back in, I want to say, December probably. So we opened back up, as far as restrictions, fairly quick, at least with... Even when they said 100%, but then they had the six feet tables so you really weren't 100%. But we weren't filling 50% up at that point in time, so it didn't make a difference. We could space you out, we're a pretty spacious restaurant as it is, so we could space you out. It's wide open now, the events centers have opened back up so we've been having some sporting events. No concerts yet, but they're coming in the next month, I believe. We have had some big tournaments, and we had the women's volleyball, the collegiate women's volleyball bubble was here for their tournament, for the volleyball tournament. So there was 48 teams to start with, they kind of did the same thing as they did basketball in Indianapolis. They did the bubble here in Omaha, so we saw some families. We actually even fed a couple teams, too. Although, they weren't allowed to come to the restaurant, so we had to pack it up to go.

Glenn Wheeler:

Anyhow, yeah. So we're starting to see. In the near future, we did have one of our major events always every year, the Berkshire Hathaway shareholders meeting was supposed to be last weekend, that did get canceled because there's so many international travelers to that they just went ahead and canceled it. So that got canceled, but we're re hosting the US Olympic swim trials in June. College world series will be back in June at a 50% occupancy, but still, that's better than nothing. The US senior open in July, that's not a downtown area, but last time they held it here like four years ago people still stay downtown, so a lot of the golfers and road crews and what have you. So it should be... I think we're off to a good start for the summer.

Bryan Schaaf:

Outstanding. Shawn, how about you guys? You guys are, I guess, similar to Spencer's. You guys are right downtown, you're a couple blocks from Great American Ballpark, you're right near the arts district, I guess. What has it been like for you guys because I remember being down in Cincinnati, a little more drivable from Wooster, Ohio than Omaha during the pandemic, and six to eight months ago it was a little quiet down there.

Shawn Heine:

Yeah, it was. We never shut down, we did take out through the whole thing. PVP grants really helped us along and kept our employees... We tried to keep as many employees employed as we could. Everybody took a pay cut, me and all the managers, we took pay cuts to be able to help out the hourly staff that we could, to keep on that we could. Luckily, we did it since we're coming out of this and there's no hourly staff to be had anywhere. I got a solid crew that has been with me for a long time, thankfully. Other than that, without the grants we wouldn't have survived. [inaudible 00:15:02]

Shawn Heine:

We got the Aronoff that's right across the street and that was our big business, too. The Aronoff Theater, but Broadway just signed back up and they're starting again in September so that's huge for us. Not shutting down, I think, helped us out a lot, it kept us going. Downtown was pretty dead, Fifth Third is big with us, they're right upstairs and they moved their building. They're starting to come back, I think, about 50% right now for lunches and stuff. Our lunches aren't doing too bad, we do probably around 50 covers of lunch which is pretty good. It pays the prep bills. Dinners on the weekends have been killing it, we're doing 200, 220 every Friday and Saturday night. Sundays are pretty good, about 100 people. It's coming around, man, it's coming back.

Bryan Schaaf:

Excellent. How about as you guys were going through and exploring the idea, I'm sure takeout was the thing, actually, we cut another podcast. Chef Tony, people give me a hard time because I travel and eat a lot. Chef Tony spent most of his winter going around and ordering takeout from places to assess their packaging and how steaks would hold up, and just to get an idea of what really works, what doesn't work, and eat a lot of steaks because we all make sacrifices. What was your experience trying to get steak in a to go type setting? It's one of those things, it's try as hard as you like, is it possible to really recreate what you'd get in a restaurant from the kitchen to your table?

Shawn Heine:

I don't think you can do that with any kind of food, really. Our menu we took down to stuff... Our to go menu and online ordering for our to go is... Of course, we're not going to have calamari and stuff like that on there, but our steaks, I box them up in plastic, it seems to hold them pretty well. I under cook them just a little bit just so if they do need to heat it up a little bit at home or whatever, they're going to be able to. The flavor's always going to be there, it's just the doneness of it, I think, we compromise a little bit. We got pretty good reception about it, Nelson's got pictures of a line wrapped around the block waiting to pick up takeout. Everybody got that extra check and they're out spending.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's good, take it right to the restaurants. Chef Glenn, did you guys do a whole lot of takeout? Did you have to navigate that?

Glenn Wheeler:

We really didn't do a whole lot. We do takeout on a regular basis, so we didn't really do anything different. Like you said, we always discourage people from ordering a calamari or something to go because that's the worst, it's not worth it. That's something that you should really stay away with, but we don't have a specific takeout menu. They can order whatever they want, but we try to gear them away from anything that doesn't travel well or won't reheat well.

Bryan Schaaf:

Excellent. I guess, before we turn the page, tell us about your restaurant. The history behind it, how long it's been there because one of the things is, it almost seems like you can get so caught up in vernacular and what people are eating. The steakhouse is an American institution, we talk about how much meat people eat. It's a lot and hopefully, this is a testament to exactly that. Restaurants come and go, trends come and go, the steakhouse, though. A couple weeks ago we had Ryan Wilson from Lawry's Prime Rib on. There's something about those steakhouses that, I don't know if you could say it's immune to trends and therefore, protected in the fact that people always come knowing that they can get something that is just grand and beautiful. I guess, can you talk about that? In this whole process was your faith kind of restored in what you guys are doing? That you've built it and, sure enough, the people are coming back?

Shawn Heine:

Everybody's got to celebrate, everybody's got to celebrate. You got birthdays, anniversaries, all that. If people are going to go out, they're going to go out to a nice dinner. So they're not going to an Applebee's or anything like that, they're coming to spend their money in the fine dining world. If they [inaudible 00:20:01], they can go next door to the pub.

Bryan Schaaf:

Chef Glenn, how about yourself, man?

Glenn Wheeler:

I agree with Chef. That's one thing we're seeing right now, it's graduation season, it's prom season, everybody wants to go out to a nice place where they can... Especially after being cooped up for a year, they're getting out and they're celebrating. They can always count on that they're going to get a great product here and stuff, and it's a nice place to celebrate at. I think that's one of the things. Same way with business travel. The business travelers, they just want to go out and impress their guests or what have you. They want the wine, the bourbon selection, and all that that goes along with the good beef.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. There's something about going to a restaurant, even for people who are fantastic cooks, that you just can't replicate it. The bourbon, certainly, is a pretty big... It's a big [inaudible 00:21:16] for myself, but for both of you guys, as we're coming out of this moving forward. Talk a little bit about your menus and how those, maybe, look a little different. Our friend Matt Mytro up in Cleveland at Flour had suggested that they've actually got one of their guys who is... All he is doing now is takeouts because they did so much takeout that it stuck, and so now that the restaurant is back up and running, they've got that plus they're doing takeout with that they've done the whole thing. How are you looking a little different coming out of this? So I guess, things that you've learned or adjustments that you've had to make.

Glenn Wheeler:

I think that... Sorry, go ahead.

Shawn Heine:

No, go ahead.

Glenn Wheeler:

I think that it's evolution, man. People are definitely spending their money, but it's driving... I don't know about everybody else, but our meat prices and everything are ridiculous right now. I'm paying over \$18 a pound for that great Omaha.

Bryan Schaaf:

I have nothing to do with it, for the record.

Glenn Wheeler:

My prices are going up. I got rent to pay and bills to pay, people are going to be, "Oh, that's so expensive, expensive." But there's nothing else I can do, it's supply and demand, I guess, supposedly. [inaudible 00:22:46] my cabin. I just paid \$1,500 for my porch, just material.

Bryan Schaaf:

Right, and it was all plywood, right?

Shawn Heine:

We're taking the street city into a different direction, also. We're working [inaudible 00:23:05] bourbon lounge, private bourbon lounge. Kind of like a speakeasy kind of thing. We got a lot of things going on, and you know Nelson, it's nonstop with him. Me and him are texting each other three in the morning, what are we going to do tomorrow? What are we going to do next week? It's innovation and just keeping on staying ahead of everybody else, if you can. Our takeout still does all right, with the pub it's probably about 50% takeout with the pub still. Unfortunately, we have to use Grubhub and all them other that take 30% and don't allow you to raise your prices which is ridiculous. It's just keep on keeping on.

Bryan Schaaf:

How about you and Nelson on a tandem bicycle delivering? Chef Glenn, how about you guys? I know you have dabbled quite a bit. I say dabbling, that's probably underselling it. You've got really kind of throwing yourself into barbecue pretty hot and heavy, haven't you?

Glenn Wheeler:

Yeah, yeah. I'm trying to find some time to do some type of pop up menu here during barbecue month. It's just we've been, like I say, we're running skeleton crew, we can't find anybody to work as everybody's... That's across the board, I think, everybody's situation right now. But yeah, we were doing the Thursday night burgers, trying to just bring in business to the lounge and stuff, different little popup menus, what have you. When we came back we slimmed down our menu quite a bit, we took off stuff that we knew would probably be slow moving and or spoil. We took off oysters, and we took off prime

rib, and we'd run prime rib maybe on a Saturday night only. So I'm trying to get that menu back a little bit more. We still got the big selection, but we took off bone-in filet which I'm going to put back on here pretty probably this weekend, actually. Stuff that we just weren't doing the volume, so we were trying to slim it down a little bit.

Glenn Wheeler:

Like you said, prices right now are kind of through the roof and availability is terrible. Delivery, I think, transportation problems and stuff like that's causing havoc. Buckhead Beef in Chicago, for the last... Oh, I think two weeks ago or so, they stopped cutting Coulotte steaks because of the labor involved in it. So we were using the Coulotte for our steak frites, and it switched back to a flat iron. You just got to kind of move with what's going on, but you're just seeing lots of shortages and stuff like that. Our providers, not going to call anybody out, have been atrocious because they're short drivers, getting deliveries has just been trying. Especially when you're waiting for a delivery going into a busy weekend and it comes at 6 o'clock at night.

Bryan Schaaf:

Nothing else going on at 6 o'clock on a Friday night.

Glenn Wheeler:

[inaudible 00:26:57]

Bryan Schaaf:

It is amazing. I remember we had a call with the president of one of the larger meat companies that we would work with, and he was a little winded when he hopped on the Zoom call with us because he was actually out helping load trucks, as well. The worker shortage seems to be impacting folks all the way up the chain, so it's a difficult time to... You both had mentioned the menu changes that you'd make, was there anything that you would say was maybe a positive? Did it force your hand to remove some of those slower moving items, maybe streamline things a little bit?

Shawn Heine:

Like he said, [inaudible 00:27:43] we took oysters off, we took stuff like that off, too. They're coming back, I just put lobster tails back on last week. Now, my king crab is \$800 a case from \$520.

Glenn Wheeler:

Crab and U-10 scallops, U-10 scallops are through the roof.

Shawn Heine:

Yeah, I'm like 250, 3 right now for U-7 scallops, U-8.

Bryan Schaaf:

Imitation king crab on the menu.

Shawn Heine:

I'm sure that will start rising, too. Don't worry. You can't find blue crab. My one provider... Actually, [inaudible 00:28:23] out of Cleveland, they don't even have any crab.

Glenn Wheeler:

Same here.

Shawn Heine:

It's crazy.

Glenn Wheeler:

The jumbo lump crab meat we use for the crab cakes, you can't... The only thing I was able to find was the cheap Vietnamese back fin and it's up too. Not a good situation right now with that.

Shawn Heine:

It's not, it's not.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's good to know that beef isn't alone in this.

Shawn Heine:

Yeah. It's everything.

Bryan Schaaf:

I will say, since Chef Glenn mentioned it to our listeners. If you're in Omaha, if you're in Cincinnati, I tend to eat my fair share of burgers, as my annual wellness check up will reflect. Two of the best burgers that I have ever had, both came from your steakhouses. Again, you're a steakhouse, but holy cows, you guys know how to make a burger or two. Shawn, I'm going to put you on the spot first. Tell me about the dry aged burger because that's the one, it's got so much funk that if I didn't understand dry aging, man, I'd wonder like, "Man, what is this?" Tell me about this thing.

Shawn Heine:

Unfortunately, that one took a hit, too. I took that one off, too. There's no more dry aged burger.

Bryan Schaaf:

Heartbroken, heartbroken.

Shawn Heine:

Our regular burger's pretty damn good, though.

Bryan Schaaf:

The pub burgers, the FC Cincinnati burger is another one of my favorites, as well.

Shawn Heine:

[crosstalk 00:30:04] Sunday.

Bryan Schaaf:

What's that?

Shawn Heine:

FC's opening up this Sunday.

Bryan Schaaf:

So, hopefully the pub will be jamming. Talk to us about that. You started on this burger idea because of trim that you had saved, you had a wall of trim at one point that was-

Shawn Heine:

I got another one. It's back, it's back.

Bryan Schaaf:

The wall of trim spurred you guys to really go into the burger game?

Shawn Heine:

Yeah, for sure. With the pub, too, we got the pub putting out burgers, too. We're trying to use up as much as we can, and then we got ATPs happening this year, the tennis tournament. So we'll be there slinging burgers, slinging sliders there. I don't know if we'll do 9,000 like we did a couple years ago, but hopefully we'll do somewhere around that.

Bryan Schaaf:

The tennis crowd loves the burgers, right? I don't know that I would've guessed that. Glenn, how about you guys? Obviously, you have a number of burgers, as well. The Big Spence, though. You guys went full R and D mode to make the Big Spence, right?

Glenn Wheeler:

Yeah, I really got into it. Tried all kinds of different grinds and stuff like that. We went down to the Sysco test kitchen, tried a bunch of stuff. We were doing our burger previous to that with our trim and it was very good, it was inconsistent, though. So I wanted to get a little bit more specific in the grind and stuff like that, so we ended up going with a short rib, brisket, chuck grind. We put in a good amount of R and D into that thing, and it's a good burger. It's a good burger, for sure.

Bryan Schaaf:

I can attest to it, so fingers crossed coming back this summer to feast again and again. I'm the guy who goes into a steakhouse and gets the burger, so forgive me. I'm not the guy you're probably making big margins on, I'm just the fat guy who-

Shawn Heine:

Actually, you are. I make more margin on my burger than I do my steaks.

Glenn Wheeler:

Yeah, really.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well, then put me down for at least a couple of them. Last question before we turn you guys loose, and I appreciate you taking time before the evening shift going on. Moving forward, the steakhouse, it's reverent, it's one of those things in America that people still get dressed up to go to steakhouses. It's one of those things, it's timeless with your dry aged beef, your dirty martini, everything is just... I think you hit the nail on the head, people want to celebrate still, no matter what's going on in the world. Where is this thing going? Do you guys see any major shifts? Pricing issues, which will hopefully wax and wane as we continue, but where is this thing going? Are steakhouses that bastion that's always going to be there in the American lore?

Shawn Heine:

Yeah, I don't see steakhouses going anywhere. It is a celebration place, it's where people want to spend their money when they do go out and they have a special occasion. I don't see us going anywhere, and hopefully we can continue to build on it, really.

Glenn Wheeler:

Yeah, I agree. If you look around through the history, I think they've stood the test of time. You look at your Smith and Wollensky's, you could go on and on. There's some steakhouses that are 50, 60, 70 years old, I think they've stood the test of time. So that's one good thing.

Bryan Schaaf:

Amen. All right, last question before we go. Glenn, we'll start with you knowing your menu the way that you do. Just figuring out how diners are a little different. In Omaha, what's the number one steak people are buying?

Glenn Wheeler:

It's a filet, the filet has always been the number one seller followed by our Spencer steak which is our boneless rib eye. It's always the filet for us. Believe it or not, I don't know what it is, but New York strips don't sell as well. It just depends on who's in town. It's a bone in rib eye sells well, that would my favorite steak, that tomahawk... Well, cowboy, I mean, not a tomahawk. Yeah, filet mignon, eight ounce, number one seller followed by the 14 ounce boneless rib eye.

Bryan Schaaf:

Excellent. Shawn, how about you guys?

Shawn Heine:

Unfortunately, it's the filet. Ours a six ounce, our six ounce sells crazy. It's not rib eyes and strips, what else you going to do in a steakhouse, right?

Bryan Schaaf:

You're tied to it. Is there a part of you being the meathead that you are, you're like... Tenderloins good, it's going to be tender, but you're like, "How about we roll the dice a little bit, trust us."

Shawn Heine:

The great Omaha tenderloins I get, they're marbled. They do got the marbling. Not as good as the rib eyes, but they got the marbling in the tenderloin. [crosstalk 00:36:00]

Bryan Schaaf:

Outstanding. On that note, we are going to let you guys head back into your fine dining establishments and hop back in the studio with Chef Tony and Diana Clark. Chef Glenn Wheeler from Spencer's in Omaha, and Chef Shawn Heine from Prime Cincinnati in Cincinnati, it's not just a clever name. It would be a little strange if you had Prime Cincinnati in Columbus. So if you guys ever look to expand, we need to have that conversation. Guys, thank you for taking time. Join us here on the Meat Speak podcast powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand.

Bryan Schaaf:

Talking all things steakhouse and the great American steakhouse comeback post COVID, it's a beautiful thing. Guys, before we move forward, I want you to take a minute, what are some of your favorite steakhouses that you guys love to pop in around the country?

Tony Biggs:

Being a classically trained chef, I have come to love open... I think, if you look back on the old steakhouses from New York, I wasn't a fan of it always, but these sizzling platters. The sizzling platter you get. If you think about it, they were way ahead of their time. Getting that steak off the grill at the right time and making that steak sizzle and have that crust that's known for to your table in minutes. I got to hand it to them, ahead of their time, ahead of their time. There's nothing like that open hearth, like grill, right to your plate, and that's the best way to eat a steak. I tell you, someone's going to open a steakhouse like that one day. Right to your plate, and it's going to be magical.

Diana Clark:

I'm not as traveled, and actually it's very hard for me to pick a steakhouse when we work with Chef Tony here. Really, it's very hard. He's pretty amazing at cooking steak. I still remember the first bite back after COVID when I had a steak from here, I'm like, "Oh, my gosh. I missed this so much." It's the experience, too, that you have. So there's Tom's Steakhouse, one that's Southern Illinois, it's just kind of a hole in the wall, but very classic. Fantastic place. There's another place in Champaign, Illinois, but you actually can cook your own steaks which I kind of like just having that ability, but it depends on what mood I'm in. Really, what drove me is the service I got when I'm there. I maybe had went there two or three times when I was in college, but the waiter remembered what I ordered and made sure that I had my drink ready. I really haven't eaten here that much, I'm a graduate student, come on. The fact that they remember that and take those details, that's, to me, what makes that great steakhouse. You have high quality food, but it's the experience that goes along with it, for sure.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well said. For me, I always notice, I love the old timey steakhouse. I've talked about Tropical Acres in Fort Lauderdale so much on here, but I also love those places, and I always get caught sometimes

because I don't carry as much cash as I should, it's all about plastic. When you go to the places that don't take... It's like, "All right, I know this is going to be good." Peter Luger's is the icon underneath the Williamsburg Bridge in Brooklyn. Here, where we're at in Northeast Ohio, the Green Diamond, it's near Akron. Same deal, and it's like, "Yeah, this is going to be the exact same meal that I could've ordered in 1965."

Diana Clark:

That's what's so cool. How many people have sat and dined in this room, and what did they do? What conversations did they have? It's neat to think about.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well said. I think what we've done, I'm looking at the time here, is we actually... I'm going to split that what we just talked about is what we're going to tack on the end. So I'm just going to do a couple quick transitions. I'll go ahead and wrap it first. On that note, it is time to put a bow and start celebrating steakhouses. We got a whole month, we got a whole month to eat so much steak that you're going to probably need to diet in July. That's okay, it's very hot out so you sweat more. This is why we do this.

Diana Clark:

Protein, a steak is great for your diet. It's never a bad thing.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's all good for you. The creamed spinach, maybe not so much. [crosstalk 00:40:31] It's a mood enhancer. On that note, if this is your first time listening to the Meat Speak podcast, please know that we are available across all of your major podcasting platforms including Google Play, Spotify, and Apple Podcast or simply visit us on certifiedangusbeef.com/podcast. While you're there shop around, give us some clicks on some of the other web pages, too. There's all kinds of nuggets there, degrees of doneness, there's all kinds of recipes and stuff like that or if you just really want to take a gander at Chef Gavin's beard and all of its magnitude. It's definitely worth a visit. On that note, wishing all of you whether you're at home, whether you're driving, whether you're listening to us in your kitchen, a happy, happy steakhouse month. Go celebrate your favorite steakhouses and let's celebrate the great comeback of the great American steakhouse. Until next time on the Meat Speak podcast, I'm Bryan Schaaf, meat scientist Diana Clark, Chef Tony Biggs. We'll see you next time.