

Bryan Schaaf:

On the Meat Speak podcast, powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand from the dining room of Little Goat Diner in Chicago. I'm so happy to be, not only out of Ohio, but I'm going to tell you, this is my Chris Farley interviewing Paul McCartney moment. I am sitting across the table from Stephanie Izard. Right? Iron Chef, James Beard Award winner, food and wine, Best New Chef, the list goes on and on and on and on. How are you?

Stephanie Izard:

I'm good. I'm tired. I'm always tired. A lot going on, but everything's good.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's awesome.

Stephanie Izard:

Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's awesome. It's funny, and this takes me back. Before I was ever even involved in food, my background is in journalism and actually I started as a sports writer way back in the day, but one of the first things that I got addicted to was this show called Top Chef. I remember you and Richard Blais and Tom Colicchio. I think my wife was like, "His eyes are so dreamy."

Stephanie Izard:

He's one of those that you're like, "He did age well."

Bryan Schaaf:

That's what we all strive for. But you look back at when all that happened in 2010, Girl & the Goat opened, and here we are 10 years later, you've got three projects all thriving in Chicago.

Stephanie Izard:

Four. There's four. We have Cabra, too.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, that's right. I always forget about the rooftop.

Stephanie Izard:

Yeah, there's four in this little two-block radius. Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's amazing. When you look back at where you started, do you pinch yourself sometimes? Or is it you're just so busy you just keep pushing on?

Stephanie Izard:

Yeah, I think the latter. I just keep pushing on. We just had our 10 year birthday at Girl & the Goat in July, a little bit not as super exciting big party as we wanted to have, but we still internally celebrated and just... That was one of those moments where you're like, "Holy crap, 10 years." You just said that and I'm like, "10 years." It's like 10 years of my life is gone, but I think about all of the hundreds and hundreds of people that have worked with us, and a lot of them now off doing super cool things. Look at Joe Flamm used to work with me and now he's doing... There's so many things, memory, some things I want to block out, especially all the hard moments, and then also we were real crazy back in the day. We'd talk about Girl & the Goat in the beginning, we were like, "What in the heck was up with us?" But yeah, it's a really cool journey. I thought I'd retire when Girl & the Goat hit 10 years. I always said I was going to drop the mic. I'm holding a mic, so I literally could do that, but I don't want to ruin your equipment. But then we just keep going. We're opening in Los Angeles soon.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. The LA project, it's been out there for a while.

Stephanie Izard:

It's been out there for a really long time.

Bryan Schaaf:

Obviously, the whole world has been affected by the last 10 months.

Stephanie Izard:

Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

Seven months, I guess. It probably feels 10 months. If you could walk us back, you're originally from Evanston, right? You're from not far from here, which when I think of Evanston, I know a lot of people think of Northwestern University, I always think of Trio, with Rick Tramonto and Gale Gand and Grant Achatz and Shawn McClain. When you were in Evanston, do you trace your culinary roots back there or is it just a happy coincidence?

Stephanie Izard:

Yeah. More of a happy coincidence of where I happen to come from. I was born in Evanston, but I actually grew up on the east coast. My whole family's from out in that direction. I have family that lives in Evanston, Winnetka, Wilmette, whatnot. My mom grew up in the suburbs, my dad grew up in the city. We grew up on the east coast, just outside of New York City in the Stamford, Connecticut. I ended up, I went to culinary school. Or I went to Michigan for undergrad, then went to culinary school in Arizona, and then just happened to find my way back here. It's interesting. Funny you said Shawn McClain. I actually worked for him, too. Not at Trio. When he opened Spring, I had been working at a restaurant downtown, one of Jean-Georges restaurants, Vong, which is no longer. It was really awesome though. When I found out that Shawn McClain was opening a restaurant, my chef was nice enough to set up an interview for me. That was really awesome. That was one of my... I still work with some people that I worked with then, still work with me now, which is so crazy.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's amazing. Now, if you fast forward to where you're at today, and I apologize, of course I forgot about Cabra. Cabra's actually the one that I haven't been to, because when I was... About a year ago, when you guys were open, you were so slammed, it was impossible to get in.

Stephanie Izard:

Yeah. Cabra's been great. When you say you're in [inaudible 00:04:44], you should totally pop up there. It's this project that kind of just happened. I wasn't planning on opening another restaurant. When Duck Duck Goat opened, I had told myself when we opened... Girl & the Goat, 10 years ago, Little Goat, seven or eight years ago, eight years ago, I guess, I said I would never open another restaurant because the opening of Little Goat was an absolute nightmare. We had 95 menu items, we were open all day. It was just this whole new world. You didn't have the day to fix what's going to happen at night, we were just open all the time. I said to my mom, I remember, my mom has since passed away, but I remember the conversation. I was like, "Mom, if I ever say I'm going to open another restaurant again, just tell me not to."

Stephanie Izard:

Then I found myself one day, we were doing this dinner upstairs, and it was a Chinese dinner, a Sunday supper thing, and I took home the leftovers and I was like, "This is really tasty. I feel like we should open a Chinese restaurant." So I went to my partners, I was like, "Can we open a Chinese restaurant?" And they were like, "Yes." Their eyes lit up. They thought it was the most fun idea. So there we were again, we did that.

Stephanie Izard:

Then, with Cabra, there was another chef that was going to be on the project and he ended up leaving the company, so there was suddenly this Peruvian rooftop idea, no menu or anything like that, just a kitchen built and a rooftop designed. It looked like it was going to be beautiful. And I was like, "Heck yeah, sign me up. All right, I'm going to get a ticket to Peru." So we hopped on a plane and went to Peru, and I fell in love with it. The food there is amazing. The people there are amazing. It's beautiful. If you haven't been, you have to go. The food up there's great. I love it. It's so sunshiny, you do feel like you're on vacation, which is great.

Bryan Schaaf:

The views of the city are... It sort of takes you back to... Oh gosh, now I'm totally blanking on the name. John [Joho's 00:06:31] place super high up in...

Stephanie Izard:

Oh, yeah, yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. Old school Chicago, right?

Stephanie Izard:

Yeah, it's nice. Hopefully they won't... I think there's threat of some other really tall buildings going up around this neighborhood, even though you're supposed to not be able to, but I guess you're allowed to leave the facade of the old neighborhood and then just build up really high. Hopefully nothing blocks our

entire view up there, but there's definitely been some tall buildings. We're like, "Um." But at the same time, it's cool to be up there and look out at this neighborhood. I wish there was time-lapse photography of this neighborhood, because you said you haven't been here in a while, and it probably is different than when you were here last time. This building right behind Little Goat, that wasn't there the last time you were here. It got built during quarantine. I came back, I was like, "Whoa. Okay, well that's almost done. Those guys have been busy, because they're outside working." It's crazy to watch. But from Cabra, you can see all the construction happening and you can geek out on watching things just go up and up and up.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. That's amazing. Since we're there, when you go back to when you opened Girl & the Goat in 2010, this neighborhood was completely different.

Stephanie Izard:

Oh, completely.

Bryan Schaaf:

What was it like back then? I always liken it to actually a chef who's participating in the Harvest Festival, Jonathon Sawyer. When he opened Greenhouse Tavern in Cleveland, it was on the street that nobody wanted to go down, and that neighborhood has come back in a huge way. What was Randolph like?

Stephanie Izard:

Randolph, similar. Paul Conn was already in the neighborhood with Publican, but I remember coming to Publican and you would think, you're like, "Where are we? What is this neighborhood?" Where we're sitting now used to be a restaurant called Red Light. The Spinning Goat is where there used to be a big red light, and that's why we put the Spinning Goat there. Yeah, the neighborhood, there was nothing. Now, suddenly... It was Girl & the Goat, and there was Publican, and then there was not much in between, a couple other little restaurants. But now there's 25 or 30 restaurants have opened in the past 10 years just in a few block radius. Each time one opened, I would be like, "Oh my God, nobody's going to come. We're going to lose all of our business." But what happened is it just brought more people to the neighborhood, and now all of the restaurants do really well around here. And at night, even now during quarantine, we're in these new times. On a Friday or Saturday night, it's a hopping neighborhood. There's people all over the place. It's just like, "What are you going to do tonight?" "Go to Fulton Market area."

Bryan Schaaf:

It great. It almost seems like there are two Chicago's going on within a mile of each other, really, if you go over to the Magnificent Mile versus over here in the Fulton Market area. There are a lot of fine dining, and I know fine dining is something that's really taken a hit over the past several years. I actually happened to be at True during the week that they closed a couple years ago, which was pretty special. But you've got a lot of those. Over here, there's fantastic food that's being put out, but it seems to be a little bit more approachable everywhere you go.

Stephanie Izard:

Yeah. No offense to Magnificent Mile, but Chicagoans don't go hang out at an... I was just talking about that yesterday. I'm like, "We don't go to the Navy Pier, we don't go to the Magnificent Mile. We go to neighborhoods." A lot of people live in Logan Square and it's super cool up there, or going to over on Damen area where Bucktown and Wicker Park cross paths, or this neighborhood. Now shops are coming and it's becoming this whole little bustling area where you don't have to leave, which I live a few blocks away, so I just don't leave. This is my little Chicago where I live. You know?

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, yeah. Of all the restaurants in your portfolio. It's amazing that you're able to keep doing what you do every single day and not just crash. You're so busy. I think you just did a cooking class for, what was it, New York City Wine & Food last night. But when you look at your restaurants, do you have... I know it's like asking this about, if you have multiple children.

Stephanie Izard:

Your favorite?

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. Do you have one that's a little more, man, yeah, that's probably the one that-

Stephanie Izard:

Is most me or something?

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Stephanie Izard:

This is what I tell my cooks about, which is my favorite, or my sous-chefs or CDCs, I'm like, "If you don't see me here that often, that means you're doing the best job, so I'm not worried. And I love you the most right now." That's the insider answer. Otherwise, it kind of changes all the time. Like I said, Cabra is so sunshiny and bright, and the food up there, once I cracked the code on Peruvian cuisine a little bit, or our version of it, and I was like, "Oh my gosh, it's so fun, where Italian food and Japanese food and lime juice come together and make this amazing cuisine." And then you start seeing that trickle on to my other menu. Whenever I start... I love studying other cultures, but you'll see little tiny bits of Peruvian food on the Girl & the Goat menu, little tiny bits of Chinese influence perhaps on that, because I get all excited about it and you can see it trickle around.

Stephanie Izard:

Girl & the Goat, it's the classic. I think that I would have to say, it's the original, and that's where, if you just are going to go to one goat restaurant, maybe going there first, because it's the original, what we do. But then we also added on, we have Tiny Goat now, too. Tiny Goat is a little spinoff restaurant that we do upstairs here that's a tasting menu. It gives me an opportunity to be a little bit more fine dining, if you will, I guess. Our version of it, which is much more casual. But same thing, I like a theme, so I pick a theme for the menu and then find these new flavors or ideas on that menu, and then you'll see it, when that menu goes away, it trickles onto the other menus. I don't know. Secretly, whichever one is causing

me the least pain is my favorite at the time. Everybody's doing so great right now that, honestly, I've been focused so much on stuff here at Little Goat. We're launching a whole new company. I don't know.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's amazing. Well, over here-

Stephanie Izard:

That didn't answer your question whatsoever. I just started babbling. I apologize.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's good. It's good. Although, I will say, I just cashed the corn beef hash, and it's right on par. It's exactly as I remembered it from the last time I was here.

Stephanie Izard:

The corn beef hash was this whole argument with Jan. I mentioned this one guy, Jan, we worked together at Spring back when I was in my early 20s, so 20 years ago. He works with me now still here. He just won't go away. No, I'm just kidding. Take that from the record. Just getting. Jan, he's actually the one who made the corn beef itself. He loves playing with meat products and does really great things with that. And then when we came to the hash, he wanted to do more of the big chunks. You know when you get it and it's all fancified, and I grew up eating it out of a can. My mom was a great cook, but we still ate corn beef hash out of a can. And I was like, "No, it's got to be more like the chopped up stuff with the potatoes." We ended up at this sort of semi-mature, and we sliced the beef so it's not giant chunks, and then we made this super tasty shredded potatoes. But it was funny, I just remember having all these discussions and arguments about how the corn beef hash was going to be. But I like where it ended up. It's delicious. The potatoes are nice and crunchy and shredded and yummy.

Bryan Schaaf:

I don't mean to pick sides, but I think he won. Last night I devoured a goat shank at Girl & the Goat across the street. Tell us about this tie. Where does the goat even come from in yourself and in the restaurant concepts? I guess, what led you down that path to really make this a central feature in your restaurants, and honestly, a revolving guy on top of this one?

Stephanie Izard:

Yeah. My last name. We say Izard, but in French, it's Izard. It's a mountain goat that lives in the Pyrenees mountains. If you look up izard mountain goat, it's this cute little goat. It's like a goat antelope sort of situation. I found that out a couple of years before opening Girl & the Goat. My first restaurant that I owned, I was 27 when I opened it, it was called Scylla. It was a Mediterranean seafood restaurant, and that was from The Odyssey. Turns out she's a total evil sea monster, and someone told me that that word in Greek is synonymous with B-I-T, you can finish that word, and I was like, "Great, great. I'm so glad I named my restaurant that." When I found out my last name was a type of... I was like, "Yeah, awesome."

Stephanie Izard:

When I found out my last name was a type of goat, I was like, "Well, that's an easy word to pronounce." Nobody could pronounce Scylla, and it's just goat. It was going to be The Drunken Goat originally,

because I was in my 20s and I definitely liked to have a good time, up until about 35 when I tamed down a little bit. But then The Drunken Goat cheese lady was not super pumped about that, or her lawyers weren't. She was [inaudible 00:15:10], and her lawyers were like, "No, no, no." So we did Girl & the Goat, and now we have a big painting. When Little Goat opened, we were like, "Should we do it? Should we get a giant, six-foot goat and have it spinning around on top?" I remember the day that got delivered to the neighborhood, and I was like... I didn't want it to be tacky and, "Oh, look at us." So it came, and when you see it when it's sitting on the street, I was like, "Holy crap, that's huge. We are such douche bags." Once you put it up and it's spinning, it's just super fun. It's like this little beacon and we have all these restaurants around here now, so you can just be like, walk around, "Good morning, goat. Hey."

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, it's amazing. Just so we have this dated. We're sitting here at the beginning of October, he's wearing a mask.

Stephanie Izard:

Yes, he is. When he put the mask on, on the goat's birthday. When Girl & the Goat turned 10, I just called that... It's the birthday for everybody that works in goat land, as we call it. It's 10 years of the goat's birthday. He put on a party hat he had on for a bit and the mask.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's so awesome. That's so awesome. Take us a step farther, though. It's not just a clever name.

Stephanie Izard:

We cook goat.

Bryan Schaaf:

You guys legit put goat on a plate to the extent that nightly specials that are always going to be goat.

Stephanie Izard:

Yeah. At first we were like, "Is anybody going to order goat?" A beginner level thing is the goat empanadas. We sell a ton of goat empanadas because people that are a little nervous, anybody can eat an empanada. You can't tell it necessarily. It could be beef in there and you probably wouldn't be able to detect a difference because the cheese and everything. They're delicious. Then we go into we have goat belly, goat shanks. Goat neck is my favorite. Whole goat legs, whole goat shoulders, which you can actually now order direct from... On goat belly, we do national shipping. You can get goat tacos shipped to your house anywhere in the country, or goat shoulder. We ship them out on Wednesdays, which is super cool. You can have your friends over and just eat a whole goat shoulder.

Stephanie Izard:

I remember after we opened Girl & the Goat, there was a butcher that used to be right next door to here, which is now I think it's a weed shop. Times have changed. It was a tiny butcher. We were sitting in Girl & the Goat one day at [inaudible 00:17:18], and I look out the window and I was like, "What the heck are they painting on that butcher across the street?" I look over and they had painted a goat, because they had started carrying goat meat, because after we had opened more people were going in and being like, "Do you carry goat?"

Bryan Schaaf:

That's awesome.

Stephanie Izard:

I was like, "That's so super cool." Goats, I love them for goat cheese, and yes, they are really cute animals, the ones at the goat cheese farm. But it's a great meat that I think is in the world it's eaten a lot, but not in the US. So hopefully we've introduced it to a lot of people.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. That was my next question. Where we reside in Ohio, we're on the north side of Amish country, so there are meat goats everywhere. Make your passion defensive goats. They're delicious if done right. Right? It can obviously go wrong.

Stephanie Izard:

It can go very wrong. Yeah. Speaking of that meat place that was next door, there was one day at Little Goat where we ran out of... We used to have goat burgers on the menu. We don't have them currently, just pricing-wise, but we ran out of goat meat, and I was like, "Well, how are we going to not have goat?" So I went next door, I was like, "Oh, they have goat." And I got the ground goat and it looked delicious. It was bright red. It just looked super fresh, and I was all excited. I cooked it off and I spit it out. It was that gamey, funky grossness that people think of when they think of goat. That's why so many cultures put the curry sauces and they cover up the flavor. But the goat that we get, we get it from a local farm called Kilgis Farm. Well, Pleasant Meadows is the spinoff that the son did to raise all these goats. Us and Mick [Belos 00:18:48] are his primary goat lovers. But it's delicious goat. It's very clean-tasting, none of that funkiness. If you eat it next to lamb, it makes you think that lamb is too whack. It's just so pure-tasting. Yeah, I just love it. And it's fun to try to figure out what to do with it.

Stephanie Izard:

Chefs are so used to cooking with beef and with pork, and you introduce goat and it's not like either of them. People are like, "What does it taste like?" I'm like, "It tastes like goat." Some people will be like, "It's a cross between beef and pork." I'm like, "Well, that's a bunch of baloney." Obviously, what does that even mean? Nothing. That means nothing.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, yeah.

Stephanie Izard:

It's cool to try. You're like, "Well, you can't cook it just like beef and you can't cook it just like pigs." It's just different.

Bryan Schaaf:

It was delicious. I was actually sending pictures back to our meat scientist, and we're like, "Look at how..."

Stephanie Izard:



Nice.

Bryan Schaaf:

Because we work a lot with beef shanks. It's like, "Look at how adorable a little goat shank is." It's the cutest thing ever.

Stephanie Izard:

Much smaller. That's funny. We got a whole... I remember when we first opened Girl & the Goat, we got a half of a calf from the same farm. I was like, "Yeah, let's get a cow. Let's bring a cow in here." It was hanging in our beer cooler because we had nowhere else to put it. It's just such a larger animal. Even a calf that was so much smaller. It took us so long to just get through it. I was like, "Oh, this is crazy." You don't think about it, how much amazing meat comes off of one animal.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. We always try and explain to people, they're not all made of ribeyes. You got to find a home for everything if you're going to do this, which I think it's part of the genius of what you guys do, because, if you're creative enough, which obviously you are, you guys put goat out in ways that probably nobody else puts out around here.

Stephanie Izard:

It's funny you say ribeye. We have ribeye on menu for the first time at Girl & the Goat right now because, I'm holding up my hand, that's your yummy, bone-in ribeye, and then your next one, and that little piece that's in between the two?

Bryan Schaaf:

Yep.

Stephanie Izard:

That's only this thick. We buy those.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well, it's perfect.

Stephanie Izard:

Then we dice them and put them on a little skewer and throw them on the grill, and you're able to get all that flavor of a ribeye without paying \$50 for a steak.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah, it's still ribeye.

Stephanie Izard:

It's so good. I went all nuts. I was like, "What?" Matt Ronan from Shirley brought it, and I was like, "This is awesome." And I put it on multiple menus. He's probably going to be like, "Well, now we're going to run out of that piece that's in between those things."

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, yeah. Well, that's the thing. When you find out the how and the why things are cut. A friend of ours, actually he ran Rick Tramonto's restaurant down in Jackson, Mississippi. He would buy the ribeye, just the eye, the heart, so the spinalis removed. Now, granted, the spinalis is delicious, but you can get ribeye hearts really, really cheaply if you allow the distributor to take the spinalis and go find another home for it.

Stephanie Izard:

Oh, interesting.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. It's still ribeye at the end of the day. It's still fantastic.

Stephanie Izard:

I feel like there's also different parts of the cow that keep getting... He's like, "Look, we have this." And I'm like, "Oh." It's not like something else was invented, it came from the same animal. Just a different way of cutting it that has made it more palatable or more tender or something. And I'm like, "Oh, how cool. What is that?" I remember we had a thing on the menu for a while called Zabuton.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yes. Yep.

Stephanie Izard:

I honestly don't even know what it is.

Bryan Schaaf:

I believe it's the Denver steak.

Stephanie Izard:

Oh, yeah, yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

Zabuton is typically a Denver steak off of a Wagyu animal. Yeah, anatomically, it's the short rib muscle. It's crazy.

Stephanie Izard:

We just thought it was really fun. When you're expediting, and you're like, "Pick up a Zabuton."

Bryan Schaaf:

It sounds so awesome.

Stephanie Izard:

It is our favorite thing. And then even when we changed it to a totally different cut of meat, we just kept calling it Zabuton, because it's much more fun.

Bryan Schaaf:

Because it's so awesome. If you could, give us a rundown. Obviously, Chicago, it's one of the great food cities in the world, and I know you have a lot of friends, and so I don't want to put you in a position where like, "Oh, I meant to mention them but I didn't." If you are coming to Chicago, take us on the places that you would go eat that are not your classic tourist stops.

Stephanie Izard:

Tricky. You want to start way up north? I'm going to think through some of the chefs that are coming to our Harvest Fest that's coming up because I'm just in the middle of texting with them, and so they're fresh on my brain. You can go get a little casual honey butter fried chicken, and I know that they're probably on the map a lot more and they'd get a ton of tourists now. But it's definitely worth driving up north for that. Deanna Davila is coming and doing a Fest with us. She's in Logan Square. This tiny, little, awesome Mexican restaurant that's... She just puts so much into it. If you have her explain a dish to you, 30 minutes later you might get to start eating because she can talk about every ingredient so passionately. But super tasty and delicious.

Stephanie Izard:

I was telling you about Brian Jupiter at Frontier. Just all into cool meats and things like that. There's so many chefs hiding in different pockets, and then you want to go to and get some of the cool ethnic food. That's what makes Chicago so cool, is go up to Devon Street and get Indian food, go and getting Korean barbecue. There's cool... Gosh, I'm totally drawing a blank on the one that... I finally went to one that's very... It's where you go in there and everybody in there for the most part is Korean, which is a good sign. You feel kind of dumb as someone that doesn't speak Korean trying to order, and you're just pointing at the menu and making a face like, "Did I pick well?" It's on Lincoln Avenue. I will have to remember the name, but you find these little places by asking around to the community, like, "What's your favorite little spot?" Those are the places you want to find.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. That's amazing. I actually popped by yesterday at this... Alvin [Kylon 00:24:16] was like, "You got to go to Fatso's Last Stand."

Stephanie Izard:

Oh, yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's a Chicago icon, right?

Stephanie Izard:

That's funny.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah, yeah.

Stephanie Izard:

I don't think I've ever eaten there because I think I would not be able to handle it. That's an intense situation, but fun, casual, very Chicago.

Bryan Schaaf:

The double Fatso with cheeses.

Stephanie Izard:

Was that your light snack yesterday?

Bryan Schaaf:

It's a lot thicker. That's right.

Stephanie Izard:

You're like, "Oh, I just had this double Fatso with cheese. Give me a goat shank. I'm good."

Bryan Schaaf:

That's right. In between meals. It's a nice pick me up. Before we wrap, this is 2020, obviously, and I always hate to belabor a point. It's a hard year. If you could, talk to us about what this has been like for you. One of the things that I really appreciated when all of this, I think we'd spoke in March, and your first priority was taking care of your employees. Walk us through what this year has been like, and obviously everyone in the industry, it's been a pretty rough go.

Stephanie Izard:

Yeah. I remember the day running around to the restaurant, it was Sunday before we closed down. I was like, "You guys, tomorrow is going to be our last day of service." I was crying trying to tell the staff all of this. Then I was like, "Actually, nevermind. Today's the last day." We closed that Sunday, and the next day came in and cleaned all the restaurants. Yeah, I was home for a little bit, but we wanted to make sure that our employees... It was just suddenly nobody had any income and I didn't really know what was happening with the government giving money to some people and whatnot, so we found ways to give groceries to our staff every week. I still got to go into the restaurant and a few people would come and help and we would put together these big grocery bags, enough food for a week for their family, which is awesome. It gave me a chance to still see everybody and be like, "Oh, my God, I miss you guys."

Stephanie Izard:

We did that, and then I was home for a while being a mommy blogger. That was fun. I was like, "This is what this is." I'd wake up, exercise, hang out with Ernie, do a little Instagramming thing. It was such a different life.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Stephanie Izard:

So many silver linings. I'll say, a terrible year in so many ways, but one thing that came from that is I actually really liked cooking again. I had gotten to a point with all of these fantastic stuff going on in the restaurants, and I wasn't cooking as much as I wanted to because I was running around trying to put out fires and work on the new restaurant in LA and things like that. After being home and just cooking all day, every day, I was like, "Oh, I do love cooking still." I need to find a way to make sure not to take every other tiny detail so hard that it takes my passion away. So that was a good thing.

Stephanie Izard:

Then we slowly started to reopen and we pivoted so much with the restaurants. Little Goat, we've only been open for regular service three days because this was filled with boxes because now we do national delivery and we started doing all these meal kits. My pastry chef, Nate, wasn't able to come back to work because his son has asthma, so he's still at home, and so I've been working closely with who was our pastry sous-chef. We realized how much we love making all these whackadoodie cakes and pies and stuff, and now we're launching this whole new brand of sweets. It's made me rethink how everything works a little bit.

Stephanie Izard:

We're very, very fortunate. My partners, Kevin and Rob, have put a lot of personal finances into saving all of their restaurants, which is great. I don't have that weight on my shoulders that a lot of my chef friends do who own their establishments outright. All my partners are very, very supportive, which is awesome. A lot of employees we weren't able to bring back yet, and so we're still trying our best to extend their insurance as long as we could and all of that. I don't know, end of the day, we're in a different place and it feels like the weird new normal with some pivots that we've made that are going to change the way we run business forever, smaller menus, a little bit smaller staffs, things that we should have done but we never really even thought about before. I'm sure it's happening to everyone, where we're going to come out on the other end of this with a little bit smarter and I'm doing things just a little bit differently forever, which I think is... You have to try to find the good in all of this wacky, wacky year, that hopefully has some change happening soon.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well said, and was inspiring.

Stephanie Izard:

That was like therapy for me, so thank you. Let's do this. Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's a healthy outlet. It's a healthy outlet. You'd mentioned the pastry shop, I guess, what's next for you? Where are you going? I'll tell you, I walked down here a couple nights ago when I got to town, and Girl & the Goat, busy as ever, people outdoor dining and all those things like that. I guess, where does this continue to go?

Stephanie Izard:

I don't know. I'm in this little rollercoaster ride myself, always wondering what's going to happen. We're opening Goat LA. I think it's going to open sometime around February or March. It's already built. If you walk by it right now in LA, it looks like it's open. There's chairs and everything. But I haven't actually seen

it since it got finished being built, so hopefully going to go out there as soon. We're opening the Sweets Company Sugar Goat, which will be awesome. We have avocado toast cake and a pie that tastes like you dipped french fries into a frosty, and really cool wacky stuff, which should be fun. You'll be able to walk down the street in December, you'll see another Goat down the street that's actually just for me personally with my brand, This Little Goat Sauces and Spices.

Stephanie Izard:

I bought a headquarters kitchen. It's a test kitchen. I'm putting in equipment to do packaged meals that you'll be able to get in grocery stores and such. That's crazy. What was I thinking? I don't know. I wake up and do it and different ideas every day. I'm the type of person that just goes for it and is like, "What the heck? Why not just try?" So, who knows? I do want to retire at some point, and I have a four year old right now who's... I try to spend as much time with him as possible, too. And he looks like a surfer dude. So, who knows? We'll end up on a beach somewhere at some point.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's why you're in LA, right?

Stephanie Izard:

Right.

Bryan Schaaf:

It makes perfect sense. Excellent. Well, Stephanie Izard, Girl & the Goat, Little Goat Diner, Duck Duck Goat, Cabra. What am I missing? What am I missing in there?

Stephanie Izard:

Well, now Sugar Goat.

Bryan Schaaf:

Sugar Goat.

Stephanie Izard:

This Little Goat. All the goats. Goats everywhere.

Bryan Schaaf:

Goats. So many. It's a little goat herd. Before we leave, can you give us a quick rundown of where people can find you, where people can follow you on social media?

Stephanie Izard:

Sure. Instagram is @StephanieIzard. That's the best place to follow, see what I'm up to. And then it links to all of the restaurants. There's so many. We were going over Instagram posts, I'm like, "Oh, my gosh, there's so many different things that go up every day for all the restaurants." But you can start on mine and then go from there.

Bryan Schaaf:

This transcript was exported on Oct 26, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

Excellent. Excellent. Chef, we appreciate you taking time to join us.

Stephanie Izard:

Thank you.

Bryan Schaaf:

Thank you so much.