

Bryan Schaaf:

Back here on the Meat Speak Podcast, powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand. Bryan Schaaf, coming to you from the inner sanctum of the world headquarters of premium beef Certified Angus Beef, somewhere north of Amish country, south of Cleveland, in the heart of it all. We appreciate you for taking time to give us a listen. Before we proceed with today's episode, I do have a note from our social media guru, Paige, who wants me to remind you that if you could, know that you can find us across all of your major podcasting platforms, but we'd like to specifically focus on Apple Podcasts. It's the little purple icon. Give us a star rating, preferably five stars. Anything above two, go ahead and round that up if you would, and leave a comment. It's not about our egos, it is just about our visibility and searchability. I don't know anything about this because I'm old, but if you wouldn't mind taking the time, that would certainly be of great assistance.

Bryan Schaaf:

So that said, let's dive into the, no pun intended, the meat of today's episode, because I'm super excited to share the story that we are about to share, because I mean, it's pretty remarkable. So I'll go ahead and dive in, in a city known as the dry-aged beef capital of the world. Our guest today is meat industry royalty. As the second-generation owner of one of New York City's best-known and most respected meat purveyors for more than half a century, his company takes care of some of the most renowned chefs on the planet, especially those with a clientele hungry to experience true New York City dry-aged beef. In 2005, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York Guild of Chefs, and currently sits on the board of trustees at the prestigious Culinary Institute of America, as well as the Escoffier Society. Please welcome to podcast the man who I don't even know if he knows this, first introduced me to dry-aged burgers. All the way from DeBragga & Spitler in Jersey City, the great Marc John Sarrazin. How you doing, sir?

Marc John Sarrazin:

Wow. Maybe I should just stop now. With an introduction like that, that's a lofty billing to live up to, Bryan. I'm not sure I can handle that, and I actually, now that you mentioned it, do recall introducing you to dry-aged ground beef, but that goes back a few years. So my memory doesn't serve me 100% right, but I do remember having a conversation about it, and we're still selling a lot of it, so it must be okay.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. I've actually had a few different iterations of your dry-aged burgers, and honestly, I don't know if I've actually had one in New York City. I've had it in different cities, I think down in Greenville was the last one I had in South Carolina. Unbelievable. If you have never had a dry-aged burger, just trust, trust, trust. You won't regret it.

Bryan Schaaf:

So sir, DeBragga & Spitler, we want to talk about two things, but it's funny how they sort of closely align with each other, right? New York City, of course, I mean, it's the kingdom of steakhouse, it's the kingdom of dry aging and what you guys do at DeBragga, I mean, you are the gold standard for dry-aged beef pretty much anywhere. And not coincidentally, you guys service a lot of those famous restaurants there in town. So if you could, tell us about DeBragga, because you have a long, long, long history in the city.

Marc John Sarrazin:

So, I mean, I'm not going to bore your audience. I'll kind of go with the semi Reader's Digest version. I mean, we actually were founded in the late '20s, so we're nearly a hundred years old from origin, it was called Washington Hotel Supply, and then in 1945, I believe, it became incorporated as DeBragga & Spitler, and the company then moved to 15th Street in New York City. That was the day of the fancy old Ford delivery trucks with really cool multicolored panels, and we were delivering product in wicker baskets, dragged along sidewalks of New York to restaurants. Pretty, pretty cool stuff, but standard for the time.

Marc John Sarrazin:

We then moved into the Gansevoort Meatpacking District, the Gansevoort Meat Market, probably in the late '50s, and we were in the Meatpacking District right up until about 10 years ago, when we finally realized that running the kind of operation we wanted to run and how we wanted to grow, being in a very heavily congested metropolitan area and city, we were paying congestion pricing for tractor-trailers coming in. It was time, it was time. So with the advent of the Whitney Museum, they were kind enough to buy us out of our lease, and we took that money and built this new facility in Jersey City, where we were able to triple the size of our dry-aged facility. We're now in 25,000 square feet, as opposed to about half that in the city, proper loading docks. It's just a world apart. It's allowed us to really grow our business, and to do a much better job for our clients than we had in the past.

Marc John Sarrazin:

So that's kind of the timeline. My dad was first generation. My dad was a French immigrant, came over to Bermuda at the close of World War II, and he was actually the butcher garde manger at the Castle Harbour Hotel. Went back and forth, married my mom, she went down, she was a waitress. They had some very hardworking years, but years they look back on very, very fondly. And then they came to The States, where that was kind of the pipeline. A lot of chefs went to these Caribbean resorts and then made their way to The States. And then my dad was a really good butcher, but he worked for the El Morocco Club, he worked at Delmonico's, he summered in some hotels in The Hamptons, and he was buying meat at the time from Mr. Spitler at DeBragga & Spitler, or the chefs that he was working with were doing business with him, and he got to know Mr. Spitler very well, and being a good, hardworking man, he wanted more for himself.

Marc John Sarrazin:

At the time, butchers are cool now, but at the time, being a butcher was not exactly the most sought after profession. You were just another hourly employee. No one thought much about you. You did your work, there was not a lot of room for growth. If you weren't the executive chef at a property, you weren't really getting anywhere. So he wanted more. So he thought he could sell a product, so he went to Mr. Spitler and said, "Yeah, I'd like to make meat sales," and the guy gave him a commission, no expenses, no draw, no medical, and said, "Give it a whirl, see what you can do," and he did great, because he came out of apprenticeship, as many young chefs did, and they were all in the same school. So whether you were a chef or a butcher, there were a lot of Europeans at that time, Italians, and French, Spanish, there wasn't the advent of the American chef that we now have, and with the era we're living in today where you don't need to import chefs. At the time, they were always importing chefs.

Marc John Sarrazin:

So he did very, very well with these guys, and got to the point where they couldn't afford to pay him his commission, so that means he was doing a lot of sales. So they sold him 10% of the company at a fairly

cheap price, and over time, he was able to buy more, and just by sheer will and fortitude, he saved, my mother worked, they saved, they started a family. And when his predecessor, Mr. [Stouter 00:07:42] passed away, he was able to buy the company and take it on himself. It was in 1973 or four, something like that, maybe '73. I think I was just getting out of high school when my dad bought the business, and the rest is sort of history.

Marc John Sarrazin:

I finished my education at Fordham University. I graduated with a degree in English in 1977. Wasn't too happy with the way I performed in school, went back and got my Master's Degree in Finance, where I graduated with honors, so that was a little better. I guess I was paying my own money a little bit then, so I wanted to make sure I got the benefit of the education. And then I started working with my dad in '77 full-time, and he passed nearly 21 years ago, but he left a very strong legacy for the company, and now I'm very proud that both my sons are working with me now. Peter and Eric, they're both taking the bull by the horns. They're really doing a lot of the operational work. They're doing the heavy lifting now.

Marc John Sarrazin:

I'm not quite out to pasture yet, Bryan, but I'm trying to learn to function differently in a new era. And COVID certainly, for many people, has had a tremendous impact. For us, the side benefit is that I've been staying home more. They've had to step up and fill a role, so it's actually helping with transitioning some of the responsibility to the next generation. So we're three generations strong, and we're proud and we're happy.

Bryan Schaaf:

Excellent. All right. If you could, talk to us a little bit about that, because when we talk to, especially farmers and ranchers, right? The idea of, of passing down a farm to the next generation, it's something that I think a people don't necessarily think about. It's just something they instinctively do. The kids grow up, they take over the farm. Was this something that just organically happened? Obviously, from your father to yourself, and now it's your kids, was it always sort of in the plan, or did you have to go out and say, "You know what? I want to come back and do this. That's what I want to do with my life?"

Marc John Sarrazin:

It was really never in the plan. When I was in college, I was a premed major for two years. My father never pushed me to go into the business. He wanted me to do whatever I wanted to do. He knew it was a hard business, a lot of responsibility, lot of long hours, it's like being a chef. You're building something, you kind of kill yourself. It's really a labor of love, and you have to love it. But I came to that on my own. I started working there in summers, and it's something I wanted to do, so I just kind of slid into it. There was no real, "Hey, I want to do this," or not, he was happy to have me and I just jumped in, and that was easy.

Marc John Sarrazin:

With my sons, and I've done some of these studies when you look at generational businesses, second-generation businesses can do very well. By the time you get to a third generation, oftentimes those businesses suffer. It's not always easy to go three generations deep, and I think even in farming, I think generations of farmers have had the same issues. So I actually tried to push them away. What I did do is I said, "Whatever you guys do, you need to go work in an industry somewhere else. You need to have a boss outside of me. You need to know what it's like to have to answer a bell and get to work at a certain

time, and go through employee reviews." I wanted them to have that experience, because I never really had that.

Marc John Sarrazin:

I worked with my dad. Once I decided that's what I wanted, I didn't have an experience outside of that, and I thought for them, it was very important. And honestly, it was Eric first who came to me and said he was working in digital marketing ads, and he would've been fine in another career, but he said he really wanted to do this. Just the idea that I was in the business, that my father had been in the business, their grandparents, it's something he wanted to do. So I sat him down and I went to my CFO, and I went to our accounting firm and I said, "Tell him the truth. Don't let him think he's coming here because he's going to make a fortune right away. That's just not how this thing works. This is like farming. When we have a good year, we have a good year. When we have a bad year, we have a bad year." So I wanted him to come in with his eyes open, and he still came on board. It's been great.

Marc John Sarrazin:

And then three, four years after that, Peter came to me, the youngest. Same thing, he was doing other work, he was working for Salesforce in Chicago, and he had a career path as well, but then his brother was there and he really thought it's something he wanted to do. So now they're both with me and it's awesome, but I'm glad I pushed back a little bit and I'm glad it came from them wanting to do it. I think it's not like they had to settle. They made a conscious decision that this was the career path they wanted to take. So, and I will say now, of course, with the blush of now it's done and they're here, and we're in bed together sort of, it's unbelievable having them. It really is. It's a great source of pride as well, and I always like to think my dad's up there looking down, smiling as well, so.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, that's wonderful. That's wonderful. All right. Hey, I want to talk to you about specifically, I'd completely be remiss, I think Nick Solares would probably beat me up if I didn't talk to you at length about dry aging, right? So dry-aged, we like to think about dry aging as one of those things that for a century or more, it was something that just, I mean, that's how beef was, right? It was generally dry-aged, a hanging carcass. Assuming going back to when you guys started, or I guess your predecessors would've started, at what point did that shift happen in the company where it just went from, "This is beef, this is how beef moos," to "We're going to really put a focus on dry aging these subprimals these things?" Dry aging, I won't say it's a fad by any stretch, but it's certainly become a more focused effort that we're seeing nowadays.

Marc John Sarrazin:

Well, I don't know. I think for us, I don't think it's a refocus on effort, we've just all always done it. I think the focusing the effort on dry aging is coming from around the rest of the country, where other parts of the world that never used to really dry age or never had an appreciation for it, they're now jumping on board. I mean, you'll see supermarkets with little small coolers hanging behind the butcher case, and they've got five pieces of meat in there, and they're trying to dry age. I go to the local butcher shop just to see what's going on, and they have a small aging cooler. It's now become fashionable and hip. I don't know if everybody necessarily gets the full benefit of it buying it that way. I think dry aging is not that simple, but it's not that hard.

Marc John Sarrazin:

We do a very good job with it, but so do a lot of other companies, and I was speaking to someone yesterday, I was speaking to a chef yesterday and I was talking to her about dry aging and she said, "Well, can you get the same benefit if you did your system, or how we dry age in a different..." I said, "I think every cooler is different. I think every physical space, every geography, climate, humidity, general humidity in the air, I think if I did the way I dry age, if I did it in 10 different coolers, I think the results would be a little bit different in each cooler."

Marc John Sarrazin:

So I think there is kind of a science to it, but it's also just an organic process, and everybody believes differently. Some people dry age with anti-desiccants, they want dehumidifiers, they want to really lower the humidity. They want to have very, very cold temperatures. They want to really lock this thing down, and lose your moisture quickly. That's one way. I believe quite the contrary. I believe it's kind of more old fashioned. I believe very high humidity, very high fan speed to keep the air turning in the room, and I believe the temperature's a little bit warmer, 36, 37. I don't want to have it near freezing. I want the meat to age, and by aging, I want it to really shrink. I want it to lose moisture. So we're going to lose on average, about 15% the body weight by the time we start, from the start of the process to when we sell something, Bryan.

Marc John Sarrazin:

So we pay for 100%, we only have 85% left to resell. So there's a cost. So a lot of people shortcut dry aging a little bit to get it to where they only lose seven or 8%, so then they have 91 or 92% of the value left to sell. We don't take those shortcuts. What dry aging, if you think of curing a ham, if you think of hanging a [inaudible 00:16:56], it's the same idea. You're really drawing the product out. So the key to that, though, the key to that is you have to have product that has a lot of marbling. You have to have a product that has a lot of quality in the first place, because as you remove all that moisture and you sell this product to someone, they want to still have a juicy, good beef eating experience. So if there's not enough marbling in the product, you don't get the right end result.

Marc John Sarrazin:

I think it's a change. Some people call like umami, and I don't know. I'm not that smart, but I do think that dry-aged beef, you're definitely changing the flavor profile of the protein, and I think as the lipids break down, that change in the lipids breaking down is what releases and gives that meat that kind of nuttier, sort of semi-sweet nutty flavor that you get out of dry-aged, and that really wonderful aroma. It shouldn't be sourish. If you're getting dry-aged beef that's bordering on sour, it wasn't dry-aged well, people didn't know what they were doing, or they got stuck with something really old that never moved.

Marc John Sarrazin:

So, I think that's kind of our philosophy. I don't want to say it's scientific, but we have a certain methodology of how we introduce meat into the room, how many pieces of meat go into the room each day. We monitor the humidity levels every day, we monitor the temperature levels every day. Even myself or my sons are in that room every single day, walk in the box, smell in the box. Is it where we think it needs to be? So it's a labor of love, and it's almost half of our inventory total in the plant, is in the dry age room. So right now, we're sitting on almost 4,000 pieces of meat in that room. So 4,000 pieces of beef, and no guarantee that they're all sold. So, we count this stuff every day, we barcode everything. We know exactly what's in that room. It's a lot of value, and if we make too many missteps, we can lose too, so it's not such a simple process.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. I tell you, one of my first experiences actually working at Certified Angus Beef was going through your original dry age room and you could see, I mean, the tags that we're hanging on the ribs, I mean, it's like a who's who of, especially French chefs in New York City, like Éric Ripert, and Jean-Georges, and all sorts of folks like that. As we've talked about on the podcast, especially with Diana, from a meat science standpoint, she talks a lot about the idea of good molds and good mold growth. When you guys had an opportunity to build your current facility, and with all of this extra space, how intentional did you have to be to make sure that you had the right stuff growing in there to make sure that you continued to get I guess, to get close to at least what you were pulling out of the old facility?

Marc John Sarrazin:

It was a very big challenge. so a brand new facility, right? Got it. New coolers, new floors, new walls, new ventilation, new refrigeration, different condensing system and different evaporators. The whole thing was brand new, spanking brand new, never had a piece of dry-aged beef in it. So we moved over the weekend, we were weaning our inventory down so we'd have less to transfer, but we moved about 2,000 pieces of meat over from one day to the next, and just put it into this new facility.

Marc John Sarrazin:

We struggled for probably two to three months to get it right. It was not right. We're taking meat that was already aged or on the way to being completely aged, so that meat was fine, but as we were putting new meat on the shelf and starting to rebuild our inventory, we discovered, we thought we had enough air flow, we didn't. We thought the humidity was too low, it wasn't. We needed to raise the humidity. We thought the space was correct, it wasn't. We ended with too much moisture at one point, we were getting a little too wet, it was getting a little too moist and it's not drying correctly. We had to quickly go out and do some investigating. We invested in some high speed fans. We had a guy come to work with us, what direction do the fans have to blow to really circulate the air correctly?

Marc John Sarrazin:

And then as we started getting through it, and this is the process of checking every day, it's I guess no different than a guy who puts cheese in a cheese aging room, he's going in to check the mold, he's going in to check how his cheese is aging. We're doing the same thing, and it took about a month and a half, it probably took six weeks before we had the right amount of humidity, air circulation, and where I could see, "Okay, we're starting to get there." And then I would say another six weeks with a continual turnover, so moving product in, and new product in it, it took probably three months in all for it to get back to what I thought was really where we wanted it to be. It's not still not exactly what it was in the old place. Different environment, lower ceilings, but we're very happy with where we're at now, and now it's just a maintenance function.

Marc John Sarrazin:

Now there's so much meat in that room. The beautiful bacteria, the floor of the room, it's really in really good shape. We put a fresh batch of meat in there and the whole room goes, "Oh, dinner!" They all jump onto the new meat going into the room, and we're really excited about how we've been able to grow that. We expanded the dry age room three years ago again to put another thousand pieces of meat in there. It's just, it's [inaudible 00:22:49] that keeps growing. So we're proud of it, and again, we're not the only ones doing it, so I don't want to lay claims to being some guru, like you were saying, and I appreciate it. I'll take the compliment, but I think other people believe they do a good job as well.

Marc John Sarrazin:

We just think that what we do is the right.... Think about it, Bryan, we buy a piece of meat on day one, put it on the shelf, maybe two weeks later, because we're taking a rotating stock of what inventory, so now it's 14 days old. Then we age it for 45 days, now it's two months. Then we sell it to a customer. Customers don't pay you COD. So sometimes it's two, four or five, six weeks before we get paid. Sometimes it's three months before we're seeing our initial investment back. It's costly and it's expensive. So I think where we hang our hat with pride is that we have not taken a shortcut during this entire pandemic. We just kept doing our thing, doing our thing. We're going to come out of this on the other side. I was very positive we would, although there was a lot of suffering like everybody else did along the way, and we have, and now we still have a room that's in great shape, we have lots of meat in it, customers are starting to come back, so it's very, very gratifying.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, that's awesome. Well, I mean, you mentioned the pandemic, you mentioned COVID, right? One of the things that is consistent across companies like DeBragga is the challenges that you guys have faced over, I mean, over the better part of the last century. I mean, you were there in 2001 during 9/11 and everything that followed that. Where does what the last two-ish years or 18 months or so, where does that kind of fit in, in terms of, "You know what? We've faced challenges before, we get past them," I guess, how difficult truly has this been?

Marc John Sarrazin:

Well, I mean, there's the financial impact, which when your sales go from 100% to 15% one day to the next, and you're sitting on \$2 million worth of inventory and you're like, "Shoot, where am I going to put all this stuff, and who's going to buy it?" But I think it's different. I think 9/11, that was in New York City, it was a worldwide thing, but it was here, it was in an isolated area. Out west with the fires they're having in the last few years, that's isolated to that area. Farmers dealing with drought, losing crops. A lot of what we've done with as a world and what we've suffered through, is often regionally based. Look what just happened in New Orleans with these [inaudible 00:25:31] of this last hurricane.

Marc John Sarrazin:

I mean, so you see those pockets of things around the world, and it's frightening. This pandemic though, I don't want to say it was easy, but when everybody's in the same boat, I think everyone suffered. I mean, I truly do. This was a global thing. So I think for me, it was more like, "Okay, we as a country, we as a world, we have to get through this all together." Maybe there were pockets where it wasn't felt quite as severely as it was in New York, but I think everywhere suffered. I think this was hard on everybody, and there's no solace.

Marc John Sarrazin:

They say, "Misery loves company," I'm not so sure that misery loves company, but when you know you're not alone in it, everybody pulls the boat in the same direction. Chefs are more understanding, banks are trying to be understanding, everybody's like, "Okay, you got to..." Especially, everybody thought the first month, "Okay, it's four weeks, six weeks, we'll be past this." Then came month two, then month three, then the reality was like, "Holy hell. We're not coming out of this anytime soon." It really was the pandemic nature finally reared its head, that this was something that globally, we were going to have to deal with.

Marc John Sarrazin:

So I think the fact that it was so widespread and affected everyone, in some ways, made it easier, and I think it helped everybody band together more. I think the spirit of cooperation amongst many different groups and types of people, and where sometimes a restaurateur would be like, "Hey, I've got to have my order now. I'm so-and-so, don't you know?" Now it was like, "Hey, I get it. We'll work with you. Let's figure it out." There's a really, and to this day still, I think there's a better spirit of cooperation between the old front of the house, back of the house, right? The old chefs versus the waiter as well. This is clients versus suppliers, versus the end user. We're all in this together, and I think that's made it in some ways easier, quite honestly. It's easier to band together when everybody's in the same boat.

Bryan Schaaf:

Amen. Well, and on that note, I'm actually very excited, I'm heading into your neck of the woods next week, actually, for the opening of the new Hawksmoor in New York City. How is the city now? I guess, where is it at in terms of... I mean, does it feel like things are starting to get back to normal there?

Marc John Sarrazin:

Boy, I think I would say prior to the real advent of this Delta variant, so I guess maybe even six, eight weeks ago, seven, it was feeling like we're getting there. Places were reopening, the Restaurant CARES Act, as much as no one likes a government handout, it was really, it was essential. These restaurants could never have reopened, and vendors like myself needed the help, and I think everyone who needed the help, and hopefully got it, it helped start to get the healing going, and restaurants were reopening, there was some activity. In New York, we got 67, 70% of the population vaccinated. Quickly is not true, but far enough down to road that things were improving. Certainly in the Lower East Side, The Village, The Upper East and West Side, local restaurant joints were starting to hop a little bit.

Marc John Sarrazin:

Midtown, Times Square area was still struggling, the hotels were struggling, tourism was still way down, and now you add the wrinkle of this Delta variant and people not knowing what's going on, it's been difficult. I know Google has already announced that they're not going back to their offices until January of 2022. So, think of all those people, we're a city of eight and a half million people, so you think of half of them still working from home, a third of them working from home, and now the masks mandate and the needing to have proof of vaccination to go into a restaurant. I know some restaurants and clubs that have lost small functions already, because they don't want to take a chance on inviting a bunch of people and having half them not show up, because they don't have a proof of vaccination card.

Marc John Sarrazin:

So I think we're still on the upswing, I think we're still on a better road, but I still think there's some hurdles to be had. I'd be lying if I thought it was already done and dusted, but yet, Hawksmoor, incredible place, a beautiful facility, one of the biggest restaurant openings we've had in New York in a long time, they're killing it. Some restaurants are flat out still killing it. COTE is doing very well, Daniel has bounced back fairly well and doing really well, Éric Ripert has just reopened for lunch as well. So there is an appetite. People want to go out, people want to have a good time, but they're doing it cautiously.

Marc John Sarrazin:

So I mean, personally, I'm very optimistic that we're still heading in the right direction, but I still think there's going to be a few bumps in the road before we find really strong relative health, I guess, and maybe that's the way it is around the rest of the country. You would know better than I do, Bryan. You do a lot of traveling, more so than I do, but I think as far as New York City's concerned, we took the punches, we took the blows, we're still standing, and looking to fight again for another day. That's as much as I can tell you on that.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's a pretty good New York statement right there. You guys... Right? Everybody knows the history of New York City. All right, I'm going to ask you a few personal questions-

Marc John Sarrazin:

Uh-oh.

Bryan Schaaf:

... right? Shoe size. No, so-

Marc John Sarrazin:

11 and a half.

Bryan Schaaf:

So I don't want to put you in a position where it feels like you're playing favorites, right? But we always look at a lot of our guests as, I mean, you guys are the local experts there. When you are dining in the city, and now DeBragga is technically across the river over in Jersey, but when you're dining in Manhattan, do you have some favorite spots that when folks go in, they need to hit?

Marc John Sarrazin:

Well, yes. I have to always be very politically correct here. I don't want to name certain people that don't name others, and "How come you thought of him, and not me?" I will say though, that you're going to like this, a lot of the restaurants that I like to go to are big supporters of Certified Angus Beef.

Bryan Schaaf:

Check's in the mail, sir.

Marc John Sarrazin:

There you go. No, I'm pretty flexible. It doesn't necessarily have to be a steakhouse. There's a little restaurant in the Lower West Side called Anton's, which is really cool. Really, really cool. The chef's a great guy. COTE is this very hot Korean steakhouse, I guess not Barbie, Korean steakhouse, which they're doing just incredible, incredible work. I'm very excited about the Hawksmoor opening. I still like going to get a good burger. A lot of places to get a good burger. There's a lot of places to get a good skirt steak. I still, I'll go to TAO once in a while to get some fun Asian food. I mean, if I'm really going upscale, I still love Daniel, and Le Bernardin as kind of two go-to places where the food is great. Any of Tom Colicchio's restaurants. Craft is still putting out, after all these years, putting out solid, solid, great American fare.

Marc John Sarrazin:

So there's tons of places to choose from, Laurent Tourondel places. I mean, you can go on, and on, and on. There's there's a lot of great food, so I can't say I'm limiting myself to any particular restaurant. Lucciola's, great Italian restaurant in New York City serves Niman Ranch Certified Angus Beef prime in an Italian restaurant, and he kills it. I mean, the food is spectacular. So as you can tell by now, I just like to eat, so I'm very flexible.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well, we are in the same boat with that, sir. All right, here, you can choose favorites and not have to worry, right? Our social media folk's like, "All right, every guest, we want to know, do you have a favorite cut of beef, and what about it is what draws you to it?"

Marc John Sarrazin:

I have always been a dry-aged, bone-in rib fan. I like a French rib steak, dry-aged prime. I just love it. I like the richness, I love the fattiness of it. As I keep getting fatter or thinner, depending what month I'm in, but in terms of just purely the flavor of that piece of beef, I love it. And I love skirt steak, I love skirt steak with some homemade chimichurri, just on the grill, sliced. I love it.

Bryan Schaaf:

Is it difficult to work in your building knowing that like, "I can go have a DeBragga dry-aged rib-eye anytime I want?" And it's because I've been there, you guys have a fantastic kitchen there as well, so.

Marc John Sarrazin:

We have a nice little test kitchen, and my assistant is also our chef, and she's a very good cook, Lydia, so that's problematic. I will say this, just because it's an anecdotal, funny story, a few years ago, we switched over and we now barcode all of our inventory. We put a whole warehouse management system in, which has been awesome. But prior to that, if I'm working like eight hours and I haven't eaten anything, I might say, "Lydia, throw a pork chop on the grill," and she would be happy to do it, and it happened right away.

Marc John Sarrazin:

The first time I asked after we went to this bar coding system, I'm waiting, I said, "What?" Because now we got to put an order in, we got to scan the stuff out of inventory to account for all the pounds, I said, "You know what? Forget it. I ordered a sandwich from around the corner. It was just easier." But no, we have a nice kitchen. We don't eat beef every day like that. It's just, there's always too much work to do. But when we have clients and our guests in, or when you pop in it and we want to show you what we're doing new, it's nice to have a place to show it off.

Bryan Schaaf:

Hey, and I'm always very appreciative when you do.

Marc John Sarrazin:

Anytime, anytime.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, that said, Marc John Sarrazin from DeBragga & Spitler, in technically Jersey City, but of course, known for their fine works with many of-

Marc John Sarrazin:

Don't forget our tagline. Our tagline, "DeBragga: New York's butcher."

Bryan Schaaf:

New York's butcher, that's right. Oh-

Marc John Sarrazin:

We're we're like the Giants, we're the New York Giants, but they play in Jersey. So, it's the Tri-State area. We're a tight bunch here.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, you know what? Before I turn you loose, can you give us some plugs? You guys do a lot of online sales as well. I mean, where can people go to find you guys, to taste your stuff?

Marc John Sarrazin:

I thought you'd never ask, Bryan. I was waiting. I had on my little list here at the end, "Say, Bryan, what's going on?" So-

Bryan Schaaf:

I'm new at this, I'm sorry.

Marc John Sarrazin:

No, that's all right. We did start about six, seven years ago an online presence, an e-commerce site, debragga.com, D-E-B-R-A-G-G-A.com. We ship fresh product around the entire contiguous US. We've shipped to all 48 states at this point. You've can find anything that these great chefs buy, is exactly what you'll find on our website, from dry-aged rib steaks, to Japanese Wagyu, to naturally raised, to Angus product, locally raised hogs, we have it all. So anything you would want for your dinner plate, you could certainly find. Very easy, you go online, you scroll through, click in your order, just like going to Amazon. You put in your credit card, and it shows up two days later on your front door in a nice styrofoam box, ready to go.

Marc John Sarrazin:

So yeah, that's a business that has, fortunately and unfortunately, the pandemic brought about a lot of people eating at home, so that actually helped push that piece of our business much harder. And even now, as people are back in retail stores and retail's kind of resettled, we're still doing very, very well with it, and it's great, because every time we have something new and we want to showcase something, we're in a position to do it. And we're here, we have the butchers, we the infrastructure, and we're able to do a good job with it. So yeah, that's been terrific and has done very well for us. Thank you, Bryan, for allowing me to plug.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, hey, my pleasure. I will say, this is my own personal plug, I got to eat some of your stuff, gosh, it's been a couple weeks ago, down outside of Washington, DC, at an event. You guys graciously shipped some product down for our buddy Lamar Moore, so-

Marc John Sarrazin:

How did that go? Was it a good event?

Bryan Schaaf:

Amazing, amazing, amazing. Hopefully it becomes an annual thing, because the turnout was great. Yeah.

Marc John Sarrazin:

Well, we sell great product, but we need great chefs too, because you could take a great product and screw it up, Bryan, you know that.

Bryan Schaaf:

I've done it many times myself.

Marc John Sarrazin:

Yeah. So, we're fortunate that we have good product, but we're also working with chefs that really know what they're doing. That's as gratifying as anything else.

Bryan Schaaf:

Outstanding. Well said, sir. On that note, we will turn you loose to go back to your daily business. If this is the first time that you've caught the Meat Speak Podcast, powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand, you can find us across all of your major podcasting platforms, or by visiting certifiedangusbeef.com/podcast. And again, just to make sure, Paige, the social media gal is getting heard, please go to the Apple Podcasts, specifically, leave a rating, leave a review, try and say nice things, honestly. I think you could even say something negative, and it still helps us out, so gotcha there. That said, on behalf of Certified Angus Beef, Marc John Sarrazin from DeBragga & Spitler, New York's butcher. Thank you so much for taking time, sir. It's been a pleasure.

Marc John Sarrazin:

It's been my great pleasure, Bryan, and I hope that your future broadcasts are as successful as this one hopefully will be.

Bryan Schaaf:

Excellent. Thank you, sir. All the best, and you take care of yourself.

Marc John Sarrazin:

My pleasure, Bryan. Thank you.