

MARK'S REMARKS



WHAT'S THE BEEF?
Grass vs. Grain
●
A Matter of Taste

To understand good steak, it helps to know a thing or two about how it gets on your plate. These days, most calves are born on ranches and then sent out to pasture. When they reach 6 months, they're sent to a feedlot where they're "finished" on grain, usually corn. Grain isn't a cow's natural diet, but it's the feed of choice for two reasons: It makes cattle gain weight quickly, and it results in well-marbled beef.

But according to the ranchers and food scientists, there's a lot more to a good rib-eye than intramuscular fat. A few other factors to consider:

Breed. Angus is currently the most popular among ranchers. This is partly due to economics—Angus cattle mature quickly and put on weight well—but also because Angus beef is reliably marbled and tender.

Feed. Just as soil affects the quality of wine, a cow's diet can change the quality of its flesh. Some cattle are finished on wheat or barley rather than corn. Others naturally feed on grass. Raising a cow on grass alone is ecologically friendly. But does it taste better than grain-fed?

See "The Beef" on page two



Reality BITES

Welcome to the Inner Circle

Monti's ● Stark's Steakhouse ● Willi's Seafood & Raw Bar ● Willi's Wine Bar

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One of the things very close to our hearts is encouraging young people to train in the culinary arts. We've had the privilege of working with dozens of budding chefs over the years and helping them to grow and achieve their goals. This year, we're sponsoring the Stark Reality BATTLE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CHEFS. Stick around after the Rose Parade on May 15 and head over to Courthouse Square in Downtown Santa Rosa to support your favorite student chef team. See page two for more details about the competition.

-Mark & Terri Stark
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FREE PARKING IN RAILROAD SQUARE
Who has THAT? STARK'S Steakhouse!

Mother May I?

Every Mom is a star in her own way. Choose a custom-fit dining experience to delight her on MOTHER'S DAY

MONTI'S in Montgomery Village is the place to indulge for brunch, lunch or dinner in the cozy dining room or on the airy patio. Kids' menu, chalk & chalkboards to keep the whole crew happy. Maybe a little shopping spree for dessert? **WILLI'S WINE BAR** Perfect for the family that shares, or to send Mom around the world sampling small plates with varied global influences. Dine indoors or out at this wine country favorite. **WILLI'S SEAFOOD AND RAW BAR** where Moms go wild for Crabcakes & Cosmos - Oysters & Chardonnay - Tuna Tacos & Brews. Watch the world go by (or at least downtown Healdsburg) from the patio or lounge around in the dining room. **STARK'S STEAKHOUSE** Something she can sink her teeth into. House-aged beef, freshest seafood, generous salads and expertly crafted cocktails. Classic ambiance in Historic Railroad Square with convenient FREE PARKING.

STARK NAKED

news

TOP 100 AGAIN

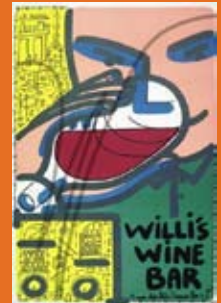
Willi's Wine Bar selected by Michael Bauer of the SF Chronicle 2009 & 2010 100 Best Bay Area Restaurants

Faux Real

Mark Stark on meat alternatives (yes, you read correctly) Featured in Sierra Magazine and The Huffington Post

Flip over for:

A Tale of 2 Willi's



BATTLE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CHEFS

AFTER THE ROSE PARADE

MMMMMmmm... Mouthwatering Moroccan Lamb. Mark shares his secret recipe



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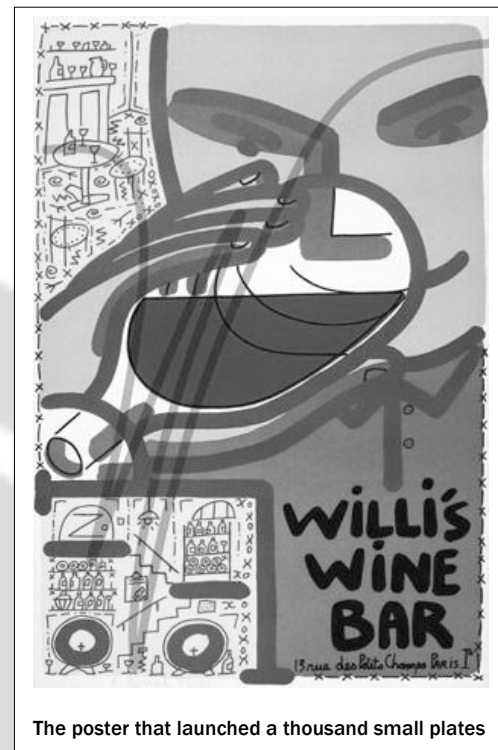
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STARK REALITY RESTAURANTS

Sonoma County CA USA
www.starkrestaurants.com

Yes Terri, there really is a Willi's

Once upon a time (1992 to be exact), a gift arrived from Paris for a young Terri. "A poster for me!" she exclaimed. "I love it." She framed it and hung it in a place of honor and it stayed with her as she moved from her swinging singles apartment to her newlywed digs with Mark. Like so many misguided souls before them, chef Mark and manager Terri dreamed of someday having a restaurant to call their own. In 2002, through hard work, hardscrabble, and sheer WILL (not to mention a slew of generous relatives and absurdly high credit card limits), the Starks purchased the old Orchard Inn in Santa Rosa. Inspired by the poster, they decided to name it Willi's Wine Bar. "Great idea," said Mark, "especially since it honors my dad." Mark's dad's name is Gerry, but for some reason, he is known to all as "Uncle Willy." Before Mark and Terri had breathed a word of their choice of name to anyone, out of the blue (*sacrebleu!*) a friend of Terri's returned from France with a menu from Willi's Wine Bar in Paris. "It's a real place?" Terri gasped. She'd always assumed the motto on the poster was some sort of atmospheric artistic license. Was this a good omen or a bad one?...Fortunately, the rest is delicious history. Before long, Willi's Wine Bar in Santa Rosa had a Healdsburg sibling, Willi's Seafood & Raw Bar. Terri continues to collect WWB Paris posters, and recently the owner of the original Willi's sent Terri a copy of the latest edition. Many of our friends and loyal customers have made the pilgrimage to Willi's Wine Bar in Paris. If you're ever in the City of Lights, stop by and say hello (or *bonjour*) from Sonoma County. Send us a photo of yourself there. Maybe it will find its way into a future Stark Reality Bites.



The poster that launched a thousand small plates

"REALITY" SHOW comes to Courthouse Square - Stark Reality

Restaurants sponsors the **Battle of the High School Chefs** as part of the Rose Parade festivities.

- "Iron Chef" style competition to take place live on stage in Santa Rosa's Courthouse Square immediately following the Rose Parade on Saturday, May 15.
- 3 teams from Piner, Maria Carrillo and El Molino create 3 small plates with a secret ingredient to be tasted and judged on stage by a panel of local celebrity judges.
- Participating teams will receive a prize package. The winning team will receive a deluxe prize package and have the opportunity to train at one of the Stark's restaurants over the summer in a paid internship position.

CHEER ON YOUR FAVORITE TEAM. COMPETITION STARTS AT NOON.

THE BEEF (continued)

Aging. Traditionally, beef was hung in a dry, cold room, where natural enzymes would break down the muscle fibers to make a tender steak. Dry aging, as it's known, isn't cheap, the beef loses weight to evaporation. In the 1970s, processors opted for wet aging—sealing entire cuts of beef in cellophane—because it's cheaper. But most beef connoisseurs agree that dry-aged beef tastes better. Before you walk into your neighborhood butcher and say, "Three Prime rib-eye Angus steaks, please, pastured in the foothills, finished on barley and corn, but with a hint of oats, and dry-aged for 28—no, make that 29—days," keep in mind that as a consumer, such choices are rare in the retail market, which is why at Stark's we offer a variety of choices including naturally raised, grain-fed, and grass-fed beef. But which *steak is for you?*

My tasting Notes:

Prime Certified Black Angus Beef. Only the top 2% of cattle are in this category. These cattle are finished on grain at a feedlot, which makes for well-marbled steak that is consistently tender.

The Taste, juicy, tender, and, most importantly, bursting with flavor, full bodied with "a good steaky taste."

Grass-Fed Beef. Like great wine and cheese, grass-fed beef possesses different qualities depending on where it's grown and what time of year it's harvested. The cattle graze on orchard grass, alfalfa, and clover in the summer and chopped hay in the winter.

The Taste, The flavor, look, smell, and texture of grass-fed beef differs slightly from grain-fed beef. A cleaner, iron-rich flavor, yet slightly more chew than the Prime Angus grain-fed, because of less marbeling. So you may have to learn to like grass-fed beef. But many enjoy it immediately because it actually tastes like beef is supposed to taste. Others will gladly learn to like it simply because it does their body good.

But, what ever your tastes for beef are, make sure you are getting the quality you deserve.

Stark's Steakhouse - All Prime All the Time!

MOROCCAN BBQ SAUCE

Great on grilled lamb chops. At Willi's Wine Bar, double-cut lamb chops are marinated.

grilled and drizzled with Moroccan Barbecue Sauce and Fresh Mint Chutney and served with Orange-Scented Couscous Salad.

- 1 1/4 cups honey
- 1/2 cup rice wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 3/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 each cinnamon stick -- broken up
- 2 each star anise
- 2 each garlic cloves -- smashed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cardamom seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon chili flakes
- 1 1/2 teaspoons black peppercorns
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried lavender
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh ginger -- chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon whole cloves
- 1/2 bunch cilantro
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Place all the ingredients in a saucepan and simmer on medium heat until the sauce is reduced to the consistency of a light glaze
Strain and cool. Store in refrigerator. Yield: approximately 3 cups

WAITER, IS THAT A TOM ON MY TRAY?

Don't be surprised to find Mr. Jefferson in your change this month. We've joined the Sonoma County Tourism Bureau & other businesses in the "Spend Tom" campaign. Tracking specially marked \$2 bills helps identify the impact of tourism and leisure dollars on our local economy. Visit SPENDTOM.COM to learn how to WIN PRIZES.

