



Tasting Truly Is BELIEVING

Written by Mona Howe

As the old adage goes, seeing is believing, and that is certainly true when evaluating meat quality. But anyone who has tasted the premium beef that is prepared to perfection knows that it is the taste, and taste alone, that keeps you coming back for more. The folks behind the Taste to Believe event were counting on it!

“I would describe the marbling, the color, the flavor, the texture, the beefy aroma of the meat while cooking as very flamboyant, very exceptional. The beef is just spectacular.”

The idea for the dinner grew out of real, honest discussion between passionate breeders around how to paint the true picture of the Speckle Park breed to the rest of the beef industry. “We decided, let’s prove what we’re talking about,” recounted Rob Harasymchuk who helped spearhead the event. From there, Rob’s wife Janice along with Harv and Fran Fehr of Highmark Stock Farms took charge of putting together the specifics of the affair. Not a single detail, from the venue to the invitations to the menu was overlooked, ensuring this would be a very high-quality event. Because, as Rob so accurately stated, “You only get one chance to make the right first impression.”

Champêtre County, a picturesque resort with the perfect country setting,

was selected as the ideal location. The next task was nailing down a chef befitting of the occasion. One simply can’t have a 5-star meal showcasing the best of the breed without a chef that knows his way around beef. Enter Red Seal chef Derek Martens, whose impressive resume boasting 40 plus years of experience in food service more than qualified him for the task at hand. Derek prepared a tasting menu featuring five different cuts of beef including a Swedish meatball with ground beef, a beef bourguignon with stew meat, a braised short rib, a grilled tenderloin and a thick-cut ribeye, with each dish designed to highlight the natural flavor of the meat.

The two steers destined for the meal were hand selected from the SpecklePark Reserve pen at Red Coat Feeders by Rob himself and processed by Trent Enns at Smoke Haus Meats. The date for the event was set based on a 21-day dry age of the beef to ensure the best possible eating experience.

Regarding the beef, chef Derek said the following, “I’ll admit, before signing on for this event I never even knew the Speckle Park breed existed. However, I would describe the marbling, the color, the flavor, the texture, the beefy aroma of the meat while cooking as very flamboyant, very exceptional. The beef is just spectacular.”

With a relatively short guest list of only 60 people, the invites were done strategically. “It was important to have a cross section from all facets of the beef industry, including butcher shop owners, restaurant owners, cattle

It's safe to say that the success of the event exceeded all expectations.

buyers, auctioneers, cattle feeders, the media and breeders,” explained Janice.

Facilitating the event was Canadian Speckle Park Association Marketing and Promotions manager, Cayley Brown, who spoke about the breed, shared some of the recent data gathered and ensured the evening flowed smoothly for the guests.

“You couldn’t have asked for a better atmosphere with the way it was set up to have these people from different parts of the industry sit together, talk to one another and learn from one another all while experiencing the product itself,” conveyed Rob.



“In the end, that was our goal, to empower other people, giving them an easy way to share the product, to share the story,”

It's safe to say that the success of the event exceeded all expectations. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from those in attendance coupled with the gratitude from a fellow breeders made it a very humbling and rewarding experience, agreed both Rob and Janice.

The best part, though, is that this inaugural event is only the start of bigger things to come. During the organizing process Janice simultaneously developed a template so that this exceptional experience could easily be replicated, designed so that someone could duplicate this anywhere.

“It gives other breeders the opportunity to do what we did. In the end, that was our goal, to empower other people, giving them an easy way to share the product, to share the story,” acknowledged Rob. As Janice also pointed out, this type of event can be hosted by anyone in the supply chain, “Some of our clients with butcher shops have since hosted their own similar events on a smaller scale with phenomenal feedback.”

It is events like these that will help the breed continue to gain traction in the marketplace, furthering the demand for this premium product that is Speckle Park beef.

For more information about the SpecklePark Reserve or to work with the group, please contact Vince Stevenson at (306)297-7950 or go to www.speckleparkreserve.ca

Testimonials

from Taste To Believe Dinner

It was fantastic to see the culmination of all your hard work and efforts with this project and the breed. Loved the dishes! Delicious.

This event was phenomenal, and I can't think of a single thing that I would change. Surprisingly to me, I think the tenderloin was my favourite, but everything was amazing! Mouthwatering good! Thanks for hosting such an amazing event!

Tonight's service was excellent. The food was outstanding. Thank you very much for this special night. Every bit was memorable.