



Along the Trail

▶ by Dan Green, "Along the Angus Trail" author

Barbecue grills

"Along America's Angus Trails" is staring at its ancient, grease-encrusted, beat-up old barbecue grill, a relic that reaches so far into its distant past that it can't even remember how it was acquired or how little it cost.

Fancy grills

It predates my marriage, so it probably is more than 40 years old. You see, I'm a big fan of beef cooked over hard wood or charcoal only — no gas, no petroleum lighter fluid — only the wood and/or charcoal to flavor my steaks. I barbecue year-round, as it saves cleaning up the kitchen, and I think nothing of brushing snow off a sizzling piece of beef as it cooks or as I bring it into my dining room.

I pass by my humble old friend on the carport, each time I come and go. It sort of reminds me to crank up the fire when I get home or to take something out of the freezer before I leave in the morning. When I pass by this charred old hunk of metal, I'm well aware it will probably rust through and cave into the ashes one of these days.

As a sign to the beef industry of how crucial grilling is to our business, the barbecuing world has massively surpassed my primitive, extremely low-tech system. Some of the latest advances would completely blow my ash pit away.

To find one of the most popular cooking appliances in a new upscale home, head outside to the built-in barbecue grill in the backyard.

Instead of being wheeled out on a cart, many luxury barbecues are built into elaborate islands that form the heart of the outdoor "kitchen." These days at least 75% of sales of high-end grill companies like Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet, Alfresco Open

Air Culinary systems and RH Peterson are generated by built-in models vs. cart versions. That percentage has steadily increased during the last 10 years.



Open your checkbook

Tricking out one's outdoor kitchen adds up. People typically spend around \$15,000, but that cost can easily rise to \$100,000 or more for a larger project with amenities like a built-in pizza oven, Keegerator and weatherproof pantry unit.

As built-in barbecues become big-ticket purchases, female shoppers have also been drawn into what was a "good ol' boy" industry. Guys care about the gauge of the steel and how hot the grill will get, whereas women care about the elegance of the product, safety features and how long it will last.

You'll sure want to cook *Certified Angus*

Beef[®] (CAB[®]) Prime steaks on one of these babies:

- ▶ The Lynx Smart Grill can detect and maintain a precise grill-grate temperature and text the home chef when it's time to flip the steaks. The grill also boasts a weatherproof microphone that uses voice recognition, so home cooks multi-tasking can ask for an update and the grill will tell them what is happening with the food. It costs just \$8,499.
- ▶ The Hybrid Fire Grill allows home chefs to cook with wood, gas or charcoal interchangeably and offers custom grates that can be designed in the shape of the customer's initials so their monogram can be imprinted onto their steaks. It sells for a mere \$19,495. (I have a crude branding iron I heat up to customize steaks when I have company.)

▶ The Fire Magic Echelon Diamond Grill has a glass front with halogen lights on the food, so the chef can see what's happening at night without losing critical grill temperature by opening the lid. The weatherproof surface ignition system means home chefs can fire up in the snow or rain. It costs just \$8,383.

My old faithful grill doesn't roll anymore due to the brick I had to put under one leg, where one of the wheels broke off several years ago. You could say it is partially built in by all the junk stacked around it on the carport. I have to keep it stacked up, so I can still get my car in out of the rain and snow. Then again, my grill didn't cost

several thousand, either. The cost was probably well south of a hundred bucks, truth be told.

If some museum reading this wants my grill for a few thousand, I am up for one of these ritzy new ones, too.

For *Angus Talk*, I'm Dan Green, *Along America's Angus Trails*.



Editor's Note: Dan Green is a Denver-based historian, author, retired editor of the *The Record Stockman* and the voice of "Along America's Angus Trails," a regular feature on *Angus Media's SiriusXM satellite radio program*, *Angus Talk*. *Angus Talk* airs at 10 a.m., Central time, every Saturday on *Rural Radio*, Channel 80.