

# What's Cooking at CAB

With Chef Michael Ollier

## Steak-induced elation

The look on their faces says it all. It's a look of awe, disbelief, and utter elation. It's the look of a person who just tasted the best steak of their life. Wow. That's a look every chef loves to see; but unfortunately (kind of) for me, that look usually has little to do with my culinary expertise and is more associated with the incredible natural flavor of *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand steaks.

I've been on the road a lot lately, serving steaks at fancy dinners, as samples in stores and at culinary events, which means I've seen that steak-induced elation a lot lately. People always want to know exactly what I do, how I prepared this incredible steak. They almost can't believe it when I admit that the secret is just a little salt and pepper and letting the beef flavor shine.

I'm now getting used to attending culinary events where other chefs are working with five, 10 or more ingredients on a plate. I often just have one, a great big CAB steak that dominates the center of the plate. That's all we need to steal the show. It's incredible.

Of course, it helps to have the right cut of steak to proudly display. There's just something about the look of a beautiful cowboy steak or porterhouse that fascinates people. I also try to spend a lot of time helping people understand how to navigate a meatcase — what different cuts look like, how to prepare them, how to select for quality.

But I understand many of you probably don't spend a lot of time at a grocer's meatcase. Your meatcase probably consists of your freezer and restocking it once or twice a year when you pick up meat from your local processor.



► CAB meat scientist Phil Bass assisted Chef Michael Ollier in providing tips to ranchers to process their own meat.

When we started planning for the American Angus Association board of directors to visit our Ohio office this June, I kept that in mind when planning a special meat-education session for the board members' spouses. I got together with our CAB meat scientist, Phil Bass, and talked about what a rancher/farmer needs to know when they are processing their own meat to get the best quality out of it. Here's what we came up with:

**Ask about your butcher's comfort level with trying something different.** Keep in mind that you are often at the mercy of your processor. His time, skill and expertise will dictate the end product that you get. Some beef cuts take a lot more time to extract, and the techniques have developed rapidly in the past few years. If you want to ask for new cuts or a different order, be prepared to bring along a beef cuts chart (available at [www.certifiedangusbeef.com/cuts](http://www.certifiedangusbeef.com/cuts)) to show exactly what you're talking about.

**Ask them to age your product at least 14-21 days.** Aging will make a huge difference in the taste and tenderness of your beef. However, it takes up cooler space, and some small processors don't have the luxury of devoting space to your aging cuts. If they can't age the meat there, ask if they can vacuum-seal it. Then, if you have the refrigerator space, leave the steaks in there for the remaining days before freezing.

**Ask for some unique cuts, as their expertise allows.** Three cuts that processors will rarely fabricate unless requested are the tri-tip, the flat-iron and the *teres major*. The tri-tip, cut from the sirloin, is more common in Western states. The flat-iron (shoulder top blade) and *teres major* (shoulder petite tender) both come from the chuck. The chuck would normally be used for roasts, but these are two very tender cuts that have a bold beef flavor and are suited for grilling.

**Make yourself an expert.** Many small, local processors do not employ USDA beef graders. So, unless you have a trained eye, it'll be hard to tell if your beef is stacking up to the quality standards you want. Go to [www.cabpartners.com](http://www.cabpartners.com) and search for "beef grading" to learn more, then see where your steaks stack up.

**Ask for more bone-in cuts.** It adds incredible flavor, so see if they can leave the

bone in when cutting ribeyes, rib roasts and even roasts from the chuck.

One of my favorite bone-in cuts is the porterhouse, very similar to the T-bone, but with a larger filet portion. If you're not getting this steak processed currently, I highly recommend asking for it next time you talk with your butcher. Enjoy this great grilling recipe. That's what's cooking at CAB.

Until next time,  
— Chef Michael



## Perfect Backyard Porterhouse

### Ingredients:

- 4 (18-oz.) CAB® porterhouse steaks
- Alternative cuts: T-bone steak, ribeye steak
- 2 lb. baby new red potatoes, cut in 1-in. chunks
- 1 fennel bulb, cored and thinly sliced (optional)
- 1 shallot or ½ onion, peeled and finely diced
- 5 Tbs. unsalted butter
- ½ cup red wine
- ½ lb. asparagus or green beans, cut in 2-in. pieces
- 9×12-in. aluminum foil pan
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions:

Place potatoes, fennel, shallot, butter, red wine, salt and pepper in foil pan. Seal tightly with aluminum foil and place on medium-high grill to steam, approximately 20 minutes.

Add asparagus to vegetable tray; stir and continue to cook on medium heat 5-10 more minutes. Season steaks with salt and pepper. Grill to medium rare or desired doneness. Remove steaks and let rest for 5 minutes.

Serve steak with vegetables and sauce from pan.

Serves 4