

NEW YORK, NEW YORK:

IT'S A STEAKHOUSE KIND OF TOWN

By *BILL BOGGS with Jane Rothchild*

Millions of visitors come to New York City each year from around the country and the world and flock to renowned attractions like The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The High Line, Lincoln Center, Central Park, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the famous shopping areas like Fifth Avenue, SoHo, and Madison Avenue. Yet, one kind of historically-linked restaurant also serves as a destination for the many visitors where they rub shoulders with both native New Yorkers and celebrities: THE NEW YORK STEAKHOUSE!

Steakhouses originated in New York in the late 19th Century as an evolution from 17th Century Chophouses in London which served large individual portions of meat. In the late 1800's, they were "male only" establishments where men sat in huge halls, unhindered by tableware like knives, forks and napkins, as they washed down massive amounts of meat with pitchers of beer. Around the time women got the right to vote, steakhouses truly expanded by adding appetizers, like shrimp cocktail, vegetables and huge desserts, most famously, New York Cheesecake. However, steakhouses still exude a uniquely masculine aura and attract seemingly a free-spending male clientele.

The excellence of the New York steakhouse can be traced to one word: MONEY. New York has always been a center of commerce and business, and when the customer demands and can afford the best, the best is provided. Thus, New York restaurateurs had first choice of the best cuts of meat thanks to the meatpacking district downtown and the ability to pay for top quality.

WOLFGANG'S is a well-known name in the steakhouse world. Wolfgang's began with one location in Manhattan on Park Avenue and now has five, and has successfully expanded to another ten around the world. Co-owner, Zio Music, explains the key to Wolfgang's success: "We use the best of the best, from meat to dry goods. Each steak is hand-selected by either a chef or partner. It's simple but everything is NOTHING but the best". A hit on the menu is the Porterhouse Steak with portions suitable for one, two or three people. Also fabulous is the Filet Mignon dinner, finished off with Chocolate Mousse Cake!



Wolfgang's



Sparks Steakhouse

SPARKS STEAKHOUSE, 210 East 46th, is a well-known, family-owned business operating since 1966, and is famed for having one of the largest selections of fine wines in the United States. SPARKS claims a secret aging process which is a combination of dry-aging in a cooled locker and Cryovac, which ages in a sealed plastic package. All steaks need to be aged and the taste that each method evokes is a matter of individual preference. As you visit the various steakhouses, pay attention to the aging method used and see which you prefer. As you might imagine, dry-aged meat is drier, denser and more charred when cooked. Some of the fat has disappeared during the aging process. Meat dried in Cryovac stays more moist and has a cleaner flavor. On the menu at SPARKS are items like Steak Fromage with Roquefort Cheese, Fresh Lemon Sole, Three Extra-Thick Rib Lamb Chops, and Live Lobsters up to 5 ½ lbs.



Rocco Steakhouse

ROCCO STEAKHOUSE, 72 Madison Avenue at 28th Street, has an extensive menu which features traditional cuts of beef and excellent fish, such as Chilean Sea Bass. Pete Pjetrovic, General Manager, said: “One of the aspects of our menu that differentiates us is offering Italian dishes such as Veal Parmagiana and Osso Buco”. The waiters must have a minimum of 10 years experience specifically in steakhouse service. The restaurant has a warm vibe with a large bar kept busy with locals and visitors.



The 212 Steakhouse

The 212 STEAKHOUSE, 316 East 53rd Street, has a unique distinction. It is the only New York restaurant recognized by the Kobe Beef Marketing and Distribution Promotion Association of Japan. As legend has it, farmers feed the cattle beer, play them music, and give them massages. 212 STEAKHOUSE offers excellent value for their Kobe Beef, costing half of what it would in Japan, for the cut of your choice: Ribeye, Tenderloin or Sirloin. Kobe is known for the melt in your mouth taste due to the fat being so evenly distributed. This is an example of the ever- evolving changes being made in steakhouses. 212’s owner, Nicholai Volperi, says that “Most times when you see Kobe on a menu, it’s ‘American Kobe’, and not the rarified product you get from Japan”.

One thing is for sure.... the owners of ALL these great New York Steakhouses will tell you: “You certainly won’t leave here hungry”!

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Hunt & Fish Club

The goal of the **HUNT & FISH CLUB**, 125 West 44th Street, is to bring back character and romance from the past. They worked hard to create a space where Sinatra would have been comfortable. Eytan Sugarman, the owner, explained that the design is “an homage to old school, mid-century steakhouses and their classic red leather banquettes”. Their menu is suggested at four courses – Appetizer, a tasting portion from a unique selection of Pasta dishes, an Entrée, and, of course, Dessert.