



## Bill Boggs Corner Table: Gallagher's Steakhouse

It's so nice to have you back where you belong!



Boggs with executive chef (and Billy Joel look-alike) Alan Ashkinaze

The classic and classy [Gallagher's Steakhouse](#) opened in 1927 on 52nd street between Broadway and Eighth Avenue. And like many New Yorkers of a certain age, last year it was time "to get some work done." Owner Dean Poll closed for seven months to renovate and freshen both the atmosphere and the menu. The doors swung open two weeks ago and the result is a triumph. The clubby feeling remains and Gallagher's now feels like a hipper version of the old restaurant. A new glass-walled open kitchen faces the main dining room. If you watch, you'll see meat grilling over hickory logs. Executive Chef Alan Ashkinaze told me that you can't build a restaurant kitchen in New York today that will allow you to cook over wood coals. But this place opened in the roaring 20's, so hey, no problem, it was grandfathered in.

For sightseers and people looking for meat in the Times Square area, huge slabs of aging beef are still on display in the iconic humidity-controlled meat locker facing 52nd street. That's all the better for the

meat-eating stars of the mega-hit "Jersey Boys," playing across the street. The 52nd Street location allows Gallagher's to be close enough to the action to be a pre-theater restaurant but just far enough from the heart of the theater district so you won't be swept away by a frenzied tide of theater goers if you are just there for dinner. And you should be. Let's look at the menu.

The steaks and chops section of the menu is classic steak house -- big portions of porterhouse, New York sirloin, bone-in sirloin, filet mignon, rib steak, roast prime rib of beef, veal chop, lamb chops and chopped steak. I'd venture to say it's as well prepared as any steakhouse in town. Great meat cooked perfectly. Their basic steak sauce imparts a smoky pleasure that makes you guilty for ever using ketchup. The appetizers and salads excel. My jumbo lump crab cake was extraordinary, with a clean taste and light, almost feathery texture. It comes with a cucumber salad. The beet and arugula salad with goat cheese, oranges and pistachios was terrific. And then there is the mouth-watering veal carpaccio with pickled vegetables, parmesan and basil. The jumbo shrimp cocktail restores my faith in the word "jumbo." These are colossal-sized shrimp, the largest available.

Midway through our meal my assessment was that this is really refined food combined with on-the-money preparation of steak house meat or seafood like the grilled swordfish, broiled lemon sole, or 3 1/2 pound Maine lobster.

That refinement is especially apparent in Chef Alan Ashkinaze's raw bar dishes like hamachi or fluke crudo, spicy tuna poke, and salmon tartare.

These dishes represent the evolution Gallagher's has made into a modern incarnation of what a steakhouse can be. For example, I like the idea of going to Gallagher's not for the meat but to sit at the original horseshoe-shaped bar and have a couple of dry white wines with a few selections from the raw bar. Or maybe I should go back and have the filet mignon again. And don't even talk to me about the chocolate cake.

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