



Porterhouse steak



Baby beet salad



Roasted baby carrots

## GET TO THE MEAT *Simple preparations put beef in the spotlight*

BY E.C. GLADSTONE

Anyone who has watched chef Tom Colicchio dress down a contestant on TV's *Top Chef* has inevitably wondered "Well, how would you do it?" That question is aptly answered at his Craftsteak, an understated modern cow palace that makes perfection look simple.

While you're unlikely to see the on-the-go Colicchio here in person very often, you're certainly in good hands with his chef de cuisine Matt Seeber, general manager Jason Bartucci and bar manager Jeff Taylor, leaders of a team who will want to know if anything isn't just right. Their formal but friendly approach matches a comfortably modern design that makes

a big room seem cozy—particularly in the spacious lounge, inviting bar and ample booths serenaded by a down-home blues soundtrack.

Certainly the meat is the main attraction here, including three grades of wagyu (aka Kobe) from Idaho, Australia and Japan, in several different cuts, as well as a great deal more corn-fed Certified (CAB) and Prime Angus (usually wet aged for 18 to 21 days). The former may be the star—try a flavorful cut like flatiron, which is almost as tender as filet. The grilled 16-ounce prime ribeye is a dense, flavorful delight, the 12-ounce CAB skirt steak balances a good char with surprising

tenderness inside, and the 12-ounce hanger steak I've tried before was aged so thoroughly it had the distinct essence of blue cheese (an incomparable experience for the price).

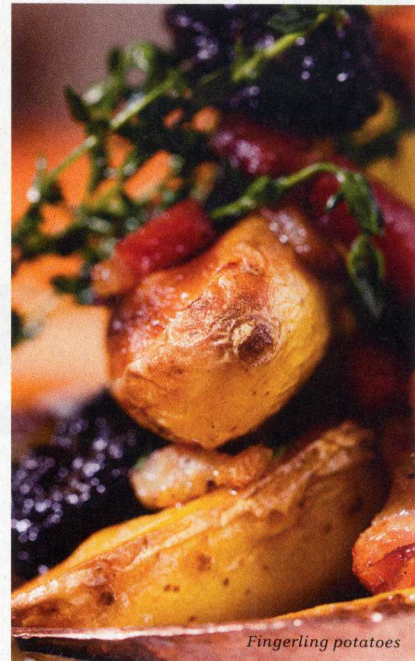
Craftsteak also offers an unusual ribeye for two, as well as several roasted choices. All enjoy a family-style presentation that is like something out of a magazine: simple, glistening, pure, wading in a house-made bordelaise reduction-washed copper pan. And unlike a magazine, the fragrance accompanies the vision, an ecstasy of carnal titillation.

Taken with the *Wine Spectator* award-winning wine list and small but nicely balanced cocktail menu, I only noticed on my most recent visit the remarkable number of single-malt scotches Craftsteak offers behind their brushed-metal bar—a category-killing 150-plus! There are also more than two dozen bourbons and other blended whiskies, heaven for fans of the sipping liquor.

A perfect accompaniment to a scotch flight would be the well-portioned charcuterie, offering a taste of butter-soft San Danielle prosciutto along with four other cold cuts, presented with orange zest, dollops of four mustards and hearty hot pretzel boules. Other nice starts include their signature Persian cucumber salad—like nothing you've had by that name before—and in season, an exceptionally delicate speared avocado served with red onion, parsley and light dressing. If it's on the menu, don't miss it. **LVM**

### CRAFTSTEAK

MGM GRAND, 6-10 P.M. SUN.-MON.,  
5:30-10 P.M. TUES.-THURS., 5:30-10:30  
P.M. FRI.-SAT. 702.891.7318



Fingerling potatoes



Charcuterie sampler  
with aged scotch

