

THE EPICUREAN CORNER

Steakhouse on the Hill

∞ THE LOCAL ON 17 ∞

BY GEORGENE BRAZER PHOTOS BY PATTI TODD PHOTOGRAPHY



Above: Gertie the 1917 Ford Model T.

Right: Jay Yancy holding a slab of meat to be aged.

GERTIE IS HER NAME. SHE IS A 1917 MODEL T THAT JAY YANCY SITUATES PERFECTLY AT THE FRONT DOOR OF HIS STEAKHOUSE, *THE LOCAL ON 17*. SHE VALIDATES THE FEEL OF HIS ENTIRE DESIGN SCHEME WITHIN THE RESTAURANT: AUTHENTIC, RUSTIC, NOSTALGIC AND MORE BEAUTIFUL WITH TIME.

Jay calls himself the Southern Steak Doctor. He hopes to make “The Local” a dining experience, a special location, refined and affordable. I would describe Jay as tenacious, a man with a vision, a man who plans to bring only the best to his ever-growing customer base.

Prime grade meats, that have been dry aged in house, await his guest’s palates. For the more sophisticated palates, the difference in The Local on 17 and other steakhouses in and around the area is evident in the first bite.

In the kitchen, art and science—and even a little algebra are combined. It looks intense, I note, and Jay simply responds, “It’s a work of art. I check the weight upon receipt of the meat, I weigh the fat that is removed and then calculate the size before cooking.” Like any artist, the steak doctor spends a lot of money on his materials, which is why the price of the finished piece [of steak] is often more substantial than his competitors. “Every steak is aged, custom cut and cooked in an 1800-degree steakhouse broiler... no flavorless meat, that’s not an option,” he adds.



CHANGES ARE HAPPENING DAILY IN RICHMOND HILL as we continue to grow in population. The commercial gaps are beginning to be filled with interesting boutique-style businesses and restaurants. With these new places, we're also learning the stories of the people behind these great changes and experiences now available to us.

I'll share with you the stories behind the transformation of Richmond Hill. The next wave of growth is bringing with it people from all over the country and world, whose stories highlight the city's diversity.



[Epi.cur.ean]

adjective

Refers often to the appreciation of, and indulgence in good food

JAY RECENTLY HIRED A JOHNSON AND WALES EDUCATED CHEF TO HELP HIM ENSURE THE TASTE OF A *LOCAL ON 17* STEAK IS NEVER SHORT OF SUPERB.

The restaurant is dimly lit, masculine and very welcoming. The walls are adorned with local history: Civil War, the Ford era, shrimp boats and military tributes to all branches of service.

Jay speaks of his desire to be like the great steakhouses of New York: Peter Lagers, Gallagher's or Christner's in Orlando. His goal is to be a destination, a landmark, a homecoming for his customers.

He has always strived to be the best, to overcome adversity and be at the front of positive change and success. At the age of eight, he lost his foot leaving only his heel in a train accident. The accident didn't hold him back. He served as a volunteer fireman, as an Infantry Officer in Special Ops, the National Guard and in 2008, he returned to Iraq while working for a security contractor for the Corps of Engineers. It was there that he contracted a MERSA infection. His lymphatic system failed, causing his skin grafts to fail, and he ultimately lost his leg. Forty-five days in a German hospital and six months in a VA hospital stateside. But he was to be the best, to survive and thrive.

Mattie, Jay's wife, "Is the boss." To hear Jay speak of her, "He has the vision, she makes it happen!" Her experience, owning two restaurants before they met, gave her the leadership skills to be the "motherhood of the restaurant." She understands and loves the business and the boss—the Commanding General of the place.

Outstanding service, over the top steaks and an awesome "spin" on local dishes, I welcome you to try the Southern American Steakhouse, The Local on 17. ●

