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BOSTON BEEF in Norwood ‘meats’ all your needs

By Jeb Bobseine
Walpole Times

“I can’t tell you. Then I’d have to kill you.”

Mike Quinn, owner of Boston Beef, has just been asked to divulge the recipe for his legendary marinade. It appears Quinn is joking, but it’s hard to tell, as he’s holding a butcher’s knife.

Quinn is more forthcoming regarding the history of the marinade. He came up with the recipe at a party in New Hampshire, he says. He just “started throwing things together.” After he finished, “My friends told me if I didn’t sell it, I would be crazy,” Quinn says.

His friends, it seems, were right. Since he started selling his marinated beef tips, they have simply “exploded.”

“We sell 1,800-2,000 pounds in a week,” he says. “For the Fourth [of July] we’ll do 3,000 to 4,000 lbs. – just tips.”

Moving that much meat seems like it might get complicated. But Boston Beef manages to keep it simple. The location is the same as it has been for 40 years; even the walk-in freezer is the same.

“There used to be sawdust on the floors,” Quinn says, “but the Board of Health didn’t like it much.”

The sawdust disappeared sometime when Tony Ferretta owned Boston Beef, from 1966 to 1988. That’s when Quinn, an employee of Ferretta’s since the early 80s, took over the name, the location, and the guiding philosophy.

Quinn holds true to a maxim that

he learned from Ferretta: “If you wouldn’t bring it home to your family, don’t sell it.”

“It’s an old school butcher shop,” Jackie Driscoll says. Driscoll has worked “off and on for 10 years” helping her cousin, Mike Quinn, run the business.

The customer-first philosophy pays off with loads of the right sort of customer.

“The customers here are unbelievable,” Quinn says. “It’s a huge family atmosphere,” Driscoll adds.

Saturdays, in particular, get a little hectic. “You come in . . . we’re making fun, telling jokes and stories, going out of our minds,” Quinn says.

“We’re very fortunate with our customers . . . they rule.”

While Quinn cuts up various meats on a solid wooden table-top, Driscoll and summer employee Chris Groves direct customers to the right freezer, or tug at the heavy black wooden door to the meat locker, carrying armloads of meat.

Quinn’s knife strokes are deft; even as he tells stories he makes quick work of a bucket of beef.

“I just came up with a new marinade for chicken last Saturday,” Quinn confides. He hasn’t integrated it into the business, but Driscoll and Groves have tasted it, and they like it, according to Quinn.

Even without the new marinade, it’s worth a trip to 1216 Washington St. in Norwood. Quinn, who says he eats more meat than anyone, says T-bone is his favorite. Driscoll prefers filet mignon or crab legs, and Groves sticks with the beef tips.

“We’re a rare, old-style butcher shop with high quality beef and a finicky butcher. All the beef is certified Black Angus, no fillers, no dyes, no steroids,” Driscoll says.

“If you need anything special, we can get it in here,” adds Quinn.



Photos by Jeb Bobseine

Above: Jackie Driscoll hams it up for the camera with Chris Groves (left) and Mike Quinn. Above right: Driscoll waits on customers Thursday at Boston Beef. At right: Quinn trims the fat from a piece of beef.

BOSTON BEEF

1216 WASHINGTON STREET, NORWOOD

HOURS

WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY 9AM-5PM

THURSDAY 9AM-7PM

SATURDAY 9AM-4PM



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