

# Restaurant Expo Recap News and updates from partner-restaurants participating at the hugely popular March event



Catholic Charities had a top “people’s choice” booth at the annual restaurant expo, where Chef Jeff Zearfoss was giving away samples of Callicrate Beef barbecue brisket topped with caramelized onion and bacon and brie fondue, and served in a pretzel bread bowl. Jeff said he got his start volunteering at the Marion House before forming his own full-service **Common Cause Catering**, which is organized as a social enterprise entity melding the for-profit model with a nonprofit mission. “We didn’t just want to be caterers, we wanted to make a difference,” he said. To that end, Common Cause employs people who are transitioning out of homelessness, helping them earn a living while gaining valuable work and life skills.

By offering hearty, creative food at the booth, Jeff also wanted to dispell the image many people have of the local “soup kitchen.” He explained: “We serve 200 people for lunch everyday, and it’s not just soup and salad. It’s a four-course meal. Everything is made from donated food, so in the morning when we come to work, it’s like an Iron Chef-style competition everyday.”

Sterling Spiers, bartender at **Jake & Telly’s Greek Taverna**, competed in the event’s friendly cocktail mix-off by making a blood orange Old Fashioned. Asked about Callicrate Beef, Spiers said, “I eat it all the time. My birthday was a couple of weeks ago, and I had four steaks that week... Jake (Topakas, the owner) cares so much about what goes into his restaurant. He’s the best boss I could work for.” A loyal Ranch Foods Direct customer, Jake & Telly’s celebrates its 17th anniversary in May.



Old Colorado City’s **2 South Food and Wine Bar** was handing out samples of braised Colorado lamb belly seasoned with five spices, paired with Melbourne apple and dressed in a honey reduction. Owners Rod and Ami Quass believe pork meat and Filipino style foods are the most up-and-coming flavor profile in the restaurant world today. 2 South grinds their own burger in-house, adding rendered pork tallow for extra flavor (the burgers are then topped with creative cheeses like smoked gouda, an aioli sauce and their famous in-house

spicy pickles.) They also specialize in house-cured meats. As for the interest diners have in local food, Rod says there is no question about it: “When we tell people we are serving Callicrate Beef, they say, ‘oh, that’s so great.’”



**Sonterra Grill** sampled Callicrate Beef steak tacos with queso fresco, chipotle vinaigrette-marinated kale and rosemary potatoes, while Executive Chef Josh Davis was busy defending his title as the previous year’s overall champion in the Iron Chef-style chef’s competition.



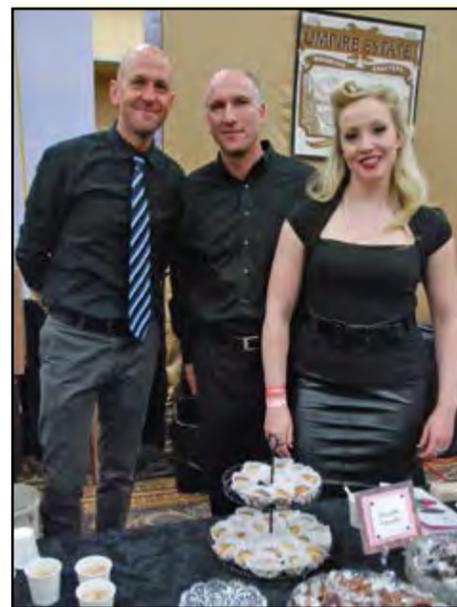
**TAPateria’s** huge pan of paella was made with Kielbasa sausage from Ranch Foods Direct. The restaurant’s popular “paella on the patio” returns this summer!



Paired with local food editor Teresa Farney, Chef Brother Luck cooked the winning appetizer during the iron-chef contest.



Greg Howard, shown above surrounded by his crew from **McCabe’s Tavern**, said, “I am a huge Callicrate cheerleader.” For years, Greg remained skeptical about putting Callicrate burgers on his menu, he recalled, mostly because he doubted customers would be willing to pay more for a better burger. But after he finally gave it a shot, he soon went from selling 50 burgers a week to 200 and his customers were thrilled. He now has several creative Callicrate burger versions on the menu, including a black and bleu, BBQ bacon and the Philly. This year he took another leap of faith: his signature dish, the cubed corned beef, is made from Ranch Foods Direct-supplied bottom round. The same source is used for his Reuben sandwich, uniquely configured by mixing cubed corned beef together with Swiss cheese and sauerkraut, which he modestly describes as “the best Reuben in the world.” Of Callicrate Beef, he says simply: “I swear by it... We’re a small business, and you guys are a small business, and we need to work together. We get 70 percent of our ingredients from within the state, including the booze. If we send our money out of state, we lose.”



Eric Umerhofer, owner of **Colorado Coffee Merchants** (center) is using his expanded retail space to help Stephanie Matthews (right) launch Steffi’s Confections, source of handmade espresso-infused caramels and other delectables. (Sweet Daphne still provides the shop’s pastries and Ranch Foods Direct the ever-popular breakfast burritos made with Callicrate Beef.) Eric celebrates 10 years in biz April 1 with a special customer appreciation cocktail party; other special events are planned throughout the year, including an art opening and a Steve Barta jazz concert. Meanwhile, the shop’s East Fillmore expansion also frees up room for Saturday seminars on the art of fine coffee.

## High time to order your CSA



**Greenhorn Acres** of Fowler makes convenient deliveries of fresh produce throughout the growing season directly to Ranch Foods Direct as part of their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Pay upfront and pick up a generous weekly portion of whatever is being harvested at the farm by Marcy Nameth and her four hard-working sons. (Family-sized shares are \$550; half-shares are \$350. Payment plans are available.) Sign-up at **GreenhornAcres.com** or pick up an application at the store. Irrigation water is flowing again in the Arkansas Valley this year, so Marcy expects to be growing all of your old favorites along with some new ones too! (Ever tried flower sprouts?) Deliveries could start as early as mid-May, depending on the weather.

## Pueblo meat market signs on

Jodi Metzger, owner of **Brink’s Meat Market**, 2029 S. Pueblo Blvd (south of downtown, 719-242-1928) now carries Callicrate Beef, individually cut or by the bundle. “I wanted something as local and fresh as possible. My customers can tell the difference. I’m getting a lot of positive feedback,” she says. Fifteen months ago Jodi purchased the market, known locally for specialty items like pinwheels and poppers, beef pot pie and 24 different sausages, all made in-house. She’s part of a revival of interest in old-style neighborhood meat shops: “It seems like more people are searching for that, educating themselves and asking questions about their food. It’s really exciting.”



During the restaurant expo, Danielle Pollack handed out gluten-free treats on behalf of **Coquette’s Bakery, Restaurant & Bar**, a Ranch Foods Direct partner-restaurant now located at 321 N. Tejon downtown.

