

# for immediate release **NEWS**

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## **Come taste the passion**

*CAB-licensed restaurant reveals recipe behind national award*

Mixing integrity, passion and service together created a recipe for success for one Nebraska restaurant. Uncle Ed's Steakhouse in Grand Island won the Beef Checkoff Program's 2009 National Beef Backer Award for independent restaurants last month. Ed Sabatka, otherwise known as Uncle Ed, says his Certified Angus Beef LLC-licensed steakhouse is "a dream come true," and the recognition is nice, too.

"This award is a validation of everything we have been doing in our restaurant for the past 16 years," Sabatka says. "We are what the consumer is after, which is a superior product."

The Beef Backer Awards go to independent and chain restaurants that promote beef and the beef industry through innovative menuing, promotions and delicious beef entrees that draw customers back time after time.

What started as a hobby is now a booming business for Sabatka and his wife Anita. It began as Uncle Ed's Barbecue catering service in 1994, named by his 4-year-old nieces. The avocation complemented Sabatka's profession as a feedlot nutritionist. After 20 years of being on the road and working in the cattle industry, his passions converged into a new reality.

Starting in Broken Bow, Neb., population 3,400, Uncle Ed's Steakhouse moved to Nebraska's "Third City" seven years later to exploit a larger market with a population of nearly 50,000.

"Before long, we took over the top restaurant spot in Grand Island," Sabatka says.

In 2008, the Sabatkas' restaurant was runner-up in the state Beef Backer contest. Unsatisfied with the ranking, "Uncle Ed" decided to up his ante.

"I knew we were better than that, so I contacted the Nebraska Beef Council and we put together more steak promotions and featured *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> (CAB<sup>®</sup>) products and recipes," Sabatka says.

He explored all avenues of advertising, including a live cooking radio show to promote his high-quality beef, as well as his CAB products, he explains.

An 11-year CAB licensee, Sabatka has worked with CAB products, particularly steaks, since his catering days. “We would cater bull sales and people just couldn’t get over the amazing taste of our steaks,” he says.

A self-taught chef, Sabatka says he knows how to handle a higher-grade product.

“After working with mainly Angus cattle producers for 20 years, licensing with CAB was just natural. I already understood the carcass data and the components of meat,” he says. “I have never used anything but CAB and I never will. Price takes care of itself, if quality is there.”

The steakhouse’s menu showcases Sabatka’s love for beef, as steak is his most popular entree. “There aren’t any slacker entrees on my menu, but my steak is the star; it’s why our restaurant has the reputation it does.”

The owner-chef spends countless hours in the kitchen perfecting his product with a process based on meat science and frequently turning steaks. “Our high standards ensure a mouthwatering, exciting and satisfying beef experience,” he adds.

Helping Sabatka run the restaurant, wife Anita handles the office work, waitress training and other aspects of the business, sharing in business decisions.

Besides friendly service and great food, Sabatka says his waitresses are trained to serve information on CAB products.

“Eating at my restaurant is a memorable experience,” he says. “It is not about just coming in and eating the food. It’s about how the food makes you feel after you leave, and believe me, our customers leave here feeling very happy.”

To be able to satisfy those customers with high-quality beef, Sabatka realizes the ranching roots of Angus cattlemen. He says he is representing their hard work each time he sells a steak. “I fly their flag on a daily basis, and I have flown CAB’s flag for a long time and I love doing so. It’s a win-win situation.”

Thinking ahead, the reigning National Beef Backer has thought some about another location.

With no plans to change the recipe for success, Sabatka has considered sharing it.

“I don’t know if we ever need to have a Four- or Five-Star status, but we will continue representing a quality, superior product and maybe at some point teach other people how to increase their quality experience.”

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