



## ★ HOW NOW BROWN COW ★

A little over a year ago I started receiving annoying press releases on some kind of unpronounceable Texas-raised cattle called Akaushi. Say what? The stuff was ex-pen-sive, and you had to order it days in advance, even in restaurants. It sounded like a bunch of hype. I thought of the old joke about the difference between ignorance and apathy: I didn't know and I didn't care. ★ Fast-forward to September of this year. Two friends and I walked into Bohanan's Prime Steaks & Seafood, in San Antonio, and the head waiter started raving about Akaushi beef. Damn. The cheapest cut was \$95, for a twelve-ounce filet. Deciding to take one for the team, I ordered it. It arrived. I took a bite. Ohmigod. It was so delicious I almost fainted. My friends noticed and tried to sneak pieces off my plate while I was semiconscious. We were fork-fighting and groaning and carrying on like spotted hyenas. It was that good. ★ If Akaushi ("Ah-ka-oo-shee") sounds like what's called Wagyu, source of notably succulent Japanese beef, it's because they're kissing cousins. Actually, "Wagyu" is a general term meaning "Japanese beef." The correct name for those famous fat-ties is Kuroushi—"kuro" meaning "black" and "ushi" meaning "cattle." (In case you're wondering, Kobe beef is Kuroushi raised near Kobe, Japan.) Akaushi means "red cattle," though they're really reddish-brown. In 1994 eleven lone Akaushi were imported by HeartBrand Beef to its South Texas ranch outside Yoakum. From that small pool, they've increased to five thousand and are the only breeding herd outside Japan. ★ If you were to compare Kuroushi with Akaushi, you'd detect little difference. They're both fabulous. But some Kuroushi in Texas have been crossed with Black Angus, and that meat is generally of a lesser quality. By contrast, all Akaushi are purebred, so they always produce splendidly tender meat with loads of near-microscopically fine fat marbling. On top of this, beef from both Kuroushi and Akaushi is better for you than regular old American beef, because the meat has lots of monounsaturated (good) fatty acids. ★ But don't take my word. Try some yourself if you can spare about a hundred bucks. That's not much for a memory you'll never forget.

Go to [texasmonthly.com/akaushi](http://texasmonthly.com/akaushi) for restaurants and stores carrying Akaushi products.

Revelations continue in the appetizer department with richly sauced crab cakes, nicely garnished with fresh lump crabmeat and a giant succulent shrimp. You'll even find extravagant wet-aged Kobe and Wagyu beef on the menu, for a pretty penny. But you'll likely be just as satisfied with the towering, abundantly

marbled New York strip seasoned with cracked black pepper and kosher salt. Chef and owner Ron Killen, a Pearland native, buys his beef from Allen Brothers of Chicago, and the quality shows. All steaks bear a dark tan from the broiler, and about the only criticism is that they occasionally arrive too rare. While the

salad dressings don't thrill, sides of beautifully fried onion rings and jumbo hollandaise-blanketed asparagus amaze. You're limited on your wine choices, but there's no end to the smiles and the homey, small-town welcome. 2804 S. Main, 281-485-0844 or [killenssteakhouse.com](http://killenssteakhouse.com). Dinner Mon-Thur 5-9, Fri & Sat 5-10. Closed Sun.

### PONDER

## RANCHMAN'S (PONDER STEAKHOUSE)

- ★ **USDA CHOICE**
- ★ **WET-AGED FOR 14 DAYS OR MORE**
- ★ **COOKED ON A GRIDDLE**

Ask about Grace "Pete" Jackson in this part of north-central Texas, and you'll hear only nice things. She started this revered restaurant in 1948, and though she died in 1998, her spirit remains. In fact, the spare, rustic dining room looks much like it did half a century ago, from the vintage booths to the wagon-wheel chandeliers. Over the years, it has attracted attention from the Food Network's Bobby Flay and *Playboy* magazine, which once held a shoot here. Your waiter may act disappointed if you pass on the calf fries, but you have to be in the right mood (sometimes you feel like a nut, sometimes you don't). Be that as it may, the quail quarters make for a tasty appetizer. While the rib steak, served with melted butter on top, is great, many customers' favorite is the eight-ounce club steak, a surprisingly tender small T-bone minus the usual filet. Two final instructions: Preorder your one-pound baked potato before three o'clock in the afternoon (it's that good) and don't even try to stop at one bite of the homemade coconut pie. 110 W. Bailey, 940-479-2221 or [ranchman.com](http://ranchman.com). Open Sun-Thur 11-9, Fri & Sat 11-10.

### SAN ANTONIO

## BOHANAN'S PRIME STEAKS & SEAFOOD

Bohanan's is one of our top three steakhouses in Texas. Read about it on page 145.

## FLEMING'S PRIME STEAKHOUSE AND WINE BAR

- ★ **USDA PRIME**
- ★ **WET-AGED**
- ★ **BROILED AT 1,600 DEGREES**

The salad plates are icy, the smoky mac and cheese is steaming, and the bits of lobster and vegetable tempura are so hot and light they almost glisten. Such attention to detail makes you appreciate how often other restaurants flub quality control. Fleming's occupies a freestanding building in the Alamo Quarry Market, where it attracts townies and tourists alike. The look is expensive, but not too, with the usual dark woods and warm colors, plus paintings of wine bottles and sparkling glasses that beam a subliminal message your way ("Wine is nice, you want to order wine, very expensive wine..."). Appetizers include a good wedge, spruced up with blue cheese crumbles, pretty little grape tomatoes, red onions, and a not-too-sweet ranchy dressing. While French onion soup came off slightly scorched under a sludgy Gruyère, Swiss, and Parmesan topping, that lapse was balanced by a straightforward broccoli side dish with a decent hollandaise. But the pièces de résistance are the steaks: meaty, delicious, and satisfying all carnivorous expectations. By the way, several sauces will be suggested, but don't bite. The flavors are muddy, and all they do is distract from the pure flavor of excellent Prime beef. And after all, red meat is why you came. 255 E. Basse Rd., in the Alamo Quarry Market; 210-824-9463 or [flemingssteakhouse.com](http://flemingssteakhouse.com). Dinner Mon-Thur 5-10, Fri & Sat 5-11, Sun 5-9. Also located in Austin, Houston, and the Woodlands.

## RUTH'S CHRIS STEAK HOUSE

- ★ **USDA PRIME**
- ★ **WET-AGED**
- ★ **BROILED AT 1,800 DEGREES**

Except for the absence of people walking around wearing mouse ears, San Antonio's Sunset Station looks like something from a Disneyland Victorian village. In one of the restored