

Grilling and more

• ARTAMOS SPECIALTY MEATS & DELI •

By Bill Lubing



Artamos, an ancient Greek surname for “the butcher,” is the name behind a great specialty deli at 714 South Whitney Way, in Madison, Wisconsin, right next to the Seafood Center. “We figured if we were going to sell meat that is raised as meat originally was raised, then the name should be one of the original names for ‘butcher,’” explains Eric Roenning, who with Jason Kreutzer co-owns Artamos Specialty Meats & Deli, which they founded in 2004. “I’m sure there are more ancient cultures with older names for butcher, but we like ancient Greece’s link to ingenuity, progress, and academia.”

Meeting at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, Eric and Jason had worked together on numerous research projects. “So we knew we could work together,” says Eric. After they graduated from the University with degrees in Biology and Wildlife Management with emphasis on grassland ecosystems, Jason approached Eric about opening a meat and specialty market that featured organic and sustainably raised meats.

Eric says they purchase locally whenever possible and organic whenever available. “The bulk of our organic is going

to come from a lot of small farms,” he says. “Our beef, pork, and chicken are all certified organic. Our duck, geese, and pheasant are grass fed but not necessarily organic.”

A great way to buy in bulk or to get a sampling of the products offered at Artamos is to buy one of their meat bundles. Featuring organic and grass-fed products, the 25-pound bundle features beef and pork roasts, steaks, chicken breasts, and whole chickens. Also available, and quite popular, are domestic lamb, bison, ostrich, emu, and rabbit.

Artamos also carries the “Boar’s Head” brand of deli meats that it sells by the pound or in their popular sandwiches and deli plates. A very popular item, the Boar’s Head products contain no by-products, cereals, or fillers and no artificial flavors or colors. The ham is trimmed by hand while the turkey and chicken is oven roasted.

The salad case includes their Tomato Basil Mozzarella Salad, Chicken Salad and Bleu Cheese Chicken Salad, Creamy Coleslaw, and Penne Regate Salad, all of which they make themselves. A great hot deli case features daily specials and regulars such as French Onion Beef, Barbeque Pork, and Buffalo Wings.





Also very popular are a variety of deli platters. The Cheese Garden includes four types of cheese, including Baby Swiss, Colby-Jack, Monterey Jack, and Muenster. The All American features a meat and cheese combination, while the Turkey Tableau serves all-white Boar's Head turkey that includes Maple Glazed Honey, Cracked Peppercorn, Ovingold, and Black Forest turkey. The Italian Pinwheels Sandwich Platter is especially popular with the business luncheon crowd and contains roll-ups containing Pesto Cream Cheese, Deluxe Ham, Genoa Salami, Provolone Cheese, Fresh Spinach and Olives, and Roasted Red Peppers. The platters come in three sizes, to serve from 8 to 28 people.

Now that grilling season is upon us, it's nice to know that the staff at Artamos makes their own fresh and precooked organic brats and sausages. They are more than happy to make grilling recommendations, especially when it comes to some of the more unusual products they carry, such as emu, ostrich, bison, or rabbit.

In short, Artamos food tastes great. And just as important, you can trust that it was raised in a humane, sustainable fashion ... a fact that is at the core of the guiding philosophy of Artamos and one that the helpful staff is more than happy to explain to customers. Eric is particularly passionate when it comes to raising grass-fed livestock in terms of taste, animal health, and environmental impact.

While the term "corn fed" brings visions of health, robustness, and cleanliness to those of us in the Midwest, when it comes to farm animals, particularly cows, Eric says the opposite is actually true. "A cow is not designed to eat

The Great Grill Debate

Almost as important as the philosophical discussion of good versus evil is the debate over charcoal versus gas grilling. Proponents of both types are diehard and steadfast. So which one should you buy? Here are some of the pros and cons.



Gas vs. Charcoal

Cost: Pound for pound, a gas grill is going to cost you more every time. They have all sorts of technology built in to start with and that technology will most likely have to be repaired or replaced somewhere down the line. Bear in mind however that, properly maintained, a gas grill will outlast a charcoal grill by a significant time span. But once you own it, gas is a less expensive fuel than charcoal.

Lighting: A charcoal grill is messy and temperamental to start and even when using a chimney starter, considered to be the best method, it's going to take at least twenty-five minutes to get the coals ready. With a gas grill, open the valve, turn the knob, push the ignition, and your grill is good to go immediately.

Temperature control: Gas grills just can't achieve the high temperatures or radiant heat necessary to properly sear meat, but unless you're Bobby Flay, controlling the cooking temperature of a charcoal grill is a very tricky proposition. Changing the temperature on a charcoal grill means either letting the coals burn down or adding more coals. Either way

you'll be waiting awhile. Gas grills are easy to control and respond immediately but are limited to about a 500°F maximum.

Flavor: Charcoal has this aspect in the bag. What is charcoal made of? Wood, of course. Burning wood imparts that great smokey taste that burning propane simply doesn't have. Smoker boxes help with gas grills but it's just not the same.

Seasonality: The time it takes to light a charcoal grill and maintain the coals in the dead of a Wisconsin winter is a major disadvantage while the instant on and off of gas means you only have to spend a nominal amount of time outdoors tending your grill and makes year-round grilling much more attractive.

According to the 18th Annual Weber GrillWatch™, gas continues to be the most popular type of outdoor grill owned (67 percent) but one-half of all grill owners now have a charcoal grill. They also say that 29 percent of all grill owners didn't make a decision at all they have both gas and charcoal grills so they can choose which to use based on what they are cooking.



corn, it's designed to eat grass. Antibiotics make it possible to feed a cow corn and that helps it gain weight quickly, but it's not good for the cow or the environment. That's why at Artamos a great deal of emphasis is placed on free-range, grass-fed nutrition, not just organic.

"Organic wants to work with the environment to promote itself, not work against it," says Eric. "You raise crops responsibly with a diverse range to them and work to improve the soil's health. The soil is the basis for all of the nutrition that we all have. We literally are what we eat. Good healthy soil is going to produce good healthy crops. Crops you're going to eat and feed to your animals. It goes right along.

"Garbage in, garbage out," continues Eric. "If you give your animals bad feed that is raised where you're throwing technology into fertilizers and pesticides to get it done, then you're not going to get a great return on that animal and those crops.

"We want to interrupt that model. We say we want to have healthy land, get healthy cows, and healthy feed that's going to taste good. And there's the perk. Anybody can taste it and say that it tastes better."

At Artamos Eric says he's proud that their products are "good for your family, is good to eat, and is raised by good people. It's all about raising good products responsibly," he says. And there you have it ... great food that's raised humanely and in a sustainable manner.

• IF YOU GO •

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MEATS & DELI

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Smokin'!

One of the reasons for grilling is to give your food that woody smoked flavor that reminds you of your camping trip to the Boundary Waters area. The problem is charcoal grills impart too little smoke flavor and gas grills none at all. The solution is adding smoking wood to the mix.

There are dozens of woods available as chips for cooking, each with its own unique flavor. The general rule is if the wood comes from a tree that produces fruits or nuts you would eat, go ahead and use it. If the tree produces resin, don't put it under your food. Mesquite and acacia that have strong flavors are better for foods with short cooking times, while apple or cherry have a light flavor better suited for longer cooking times. Avoid cedar, cypress, elm, eucalyptus, pine, fir, redwood, sassafras, spruce, and sycamore.

For longer cooking times you may want to use wood chunks. The larger size means longer burning time. Soak the wood chips or chunks in water until they are saturated. With a charcoal grill, add the chips directly to the coals just before you start cooking. With gas, put the chips in a smoker box or a packet made from aluminum foil with a few holes poked in it and put them directly over the burners under the grate.



Send us your recommendations!

Tell us about your favorite foods, recipes, and places to go and buy food and earn the gratitude of thousands (as well as getting your name in Bountiful Cupboard).

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