

Norwich Bulletin

Foxwoods steakhouse tops Zagat list

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Norwich Bulletin
May 23, 2009

Mashantucket, Conn. —

A steakhouse that opened at Foxwoods Resort Casino about a year ago has been named Connecticut's best new restaurant by a national rating agency. And it's reaching out to local suppliers to keep momentum going.

David Burke Prime is named Top Newcomer in the prestigious Zagat Survey released today. Chef Christopher Shea, who came from New York to run the kitchen for founder David Burke, said he's thrilled by the honor.

"We've been very fortunate," said Shea, who lives in a rented home in Norwich. "And we're looking forward to a great summer."

Zagat Survey, run by New York-based couple Tim and Nina Zagat, gave Burke a ribbing about his Foxwoods prices but the restaurateur shook it off good naturedly.

"Maybe I've become jaded by New York prices but I think we're positioned right," Burke said, adding that his \$32 prime rib isn't outlandish.

Connecticut has the most affordable dining in the tri-state area, according to Zagat. An average Connecticut meal costs \$37.71, a 1.8 percent increase from last year. While this is above the national average of \$34.49, it is below the Westchester/Hudson Valley region of New York (\$38.99), New Jersey (\$39.24), and New York City (\$40.78), Zagat reported.

Robert Burke, the founder's brother, is working at the Mashantucket location. David Burke praised his Connecticut staff as well as Foxwoods managers.

"The casino has been very supportive," he said by telephone from New York.

The 13,000-square-foot steakhouse, which seats 280 people, is patterned after the prize-winning David Burke's Primehouse in Chicago. Business at Foxwoods has been good despite the struggling economy, Burke and Shea said.

The restaurant will buy more local produce and seafood, Shea said.

"We're partnering with area farms for more strawberries, blueberries and other fruits and vegetables," he said. "We also like the quality of oysters in Connecticut and Rhode Island."

Burke opened a Burke in the Box, specializing in hamburgers, at Foxwoods two months before the steakhouse. The Burke in the Box is still operating.