

## **The Inside Scoop on Father's Day**

First, whatever you do, don't let Dad read this article. That would be like providing the other team with your playbook the week before the big game. As a father myself I've had to muster up my best genuine grin of gratitude as I opened up another tie and it's about time someone let you in on the inner workings of the mind of the typical male blessed with children. That tie you've been giving every year triggers the Sunday "tomorrow is back to work day" reaction. Not a good thing and you need to understand that. It's a noose and you know what people use those for.

Now if you are the Mom in the family and you've ever been given something for cleaning as a gift, say laundry detergent, then you know what I mean. If your husband gave you that gift then he deserves the tie. You don't really need to read any further.

For the sake of argument, we're going to assume that the Father in your life is basically a good egg and that you want him to be happy with his Father's Day experience. That being the case, you'll want to give him something that he'll treasure long into his life. It should be something he can enjoy that has "love" written all over it.

Homemade is usually better than bought and you should give some thought to a gift that Dad will benefit from long after the children are grown and on their own. I like gifts that make me tear up when I look at them for the right reasons and make me feel better about myself. Dads always have doubts about how well they did their "daddy" duties and reassurance is a pretty terrific thing.

That's why I suggest the "letter."

I attended a party for a young lady who was graduating from high school a few weeks ago and on a table covered with mementos of her life up to that point was a beautifully framed letter she had written her father a few years before. It explained what she loved and appreciated about him. You guessed it. My wife asked me if I was all right. I told her I must have gotten some dust in my eyes.

This year I urge you to tell him why he is special and if the kids are small, give them some help in the form of questions or prompts. "When is daddy the most important to you? What has daddy done for you lately that made you love him a whole bunch?" That's the sort of thing that your 6-year-old might need to hear when he or she is in the throes of a creative moment that lacks focus. I think you get my drift and I promise that a well-written letter with an honest, genuine message will be treasured by Dad for many years and be read over and over again.

The Dad you want to give the star treatment to this Sunday may have some other favorite dish but I would wager that an awful lot of steaks will be hitting the grill this weekend and I hope you're willing to go that extra mile to make sure that the one your favorite Dad gets will be a great one.



Here are some tips for finding a great cut of meat and how to best prepare it.

There is a combination of things you should look for in a great steak but the best way to be absolutely sure is to find and become friends with a great butcher. A talented butcher will spoil you and once you've experienced the benefits of an "inside man" you'll never want to buy a prepackaged steak out of the meat cooler again.

After you've determined what kind of cut you would like, buy the best grade of meat that you can afford...Prime, Choice, or Select, in that order. The steak should be firm to the touch with fine texture and well marbled; that's the thin threads of fat running through the meat that qualifies it as Prime and provides incredible flavor. Your steak should be a light cherry red in color, not deep red, and dry aged if at all possible. A steak can actually be too fresh. I know that's hard to believe but your butcher can explain the whole process to you.

My personal favorite is either a ribeye or a porterhouse cut about 1-inch thick with good marbling taken from an Angus beef that is Certified Black Angus (CBA). On rare occasions you can find a cut available call sirloin tip or tri tip steak. If you see it, snarf it up as it is not only a terrific value but one seriously delicious steak experience.

A grill is really the only way to go when available and charcoal offers a decided taste advantage over gas every time. I like to use mesquite or hickory charcoal and have a preference for natural charcoal, not the briquettes. To fire up your charcoal there is an electric starter on the market that you plug in and place in the charcoal which enables you to start everything without the use of lighter fluid.

Some people think I'm crazy but I swear I can taste lighter fluid in the steak when someone uses it to start their fire.

Allow your fire to reach its full glory. The charcoal will not only be at its peak of heat but will have a powdery gray appearance. Make sure your grill surface grate is clean and I suggest that you spray Pam or cooking oil on it to prevent the steaks from sticking. The grate should be hot when you place your steaks on it, never cold.

The most important and most difficult part of preparing a great steak is your ability to determine if it is properly done to the desired level. The best way to accomplish this is to purchase a good quality instant read digital thermometer. Many people swear by their ability to touch the steak and get it right every time. More power to them but I'll bank on the thermometer every time, thank you very much.

The internal temperatures you are looking for are 150°F for rare, 160°F for medium, and 170°F for well done. When you hit those temperatures the steaks are ready for removal but you should allow them to rest off the grill for about 5 minutes to settle the natural juices before they are cut with a steak knife. If you fail to do this, the first cut will allow most of the natural juices to flow out leaving you high and "dry."

Mom, if Dad is a wine lover and particularly enjoys a big red wine with his steak, there will be no greater thrill than to pour him a glass of really nice Cabernet Sauvignon as he sits down for his Father's Day feast with that "Lord of the Manner" expression on his face. The **2004 Peirano Estates Heritage Collection Cabernet Sauvignon** from Lodi, California, is one of those really fine Cabernets that fits almost any budget and really surprises most wine lovers with how good a wine can be and still not cost an arm and a leg.

Peirano Estates is a very old family owned operation that you really should get to know given the quality of almost everything they bottle. The Cabernet has the fruit and style of one you would normally expect to pay \$40 or more for. I think he'll love it!

If you can use some help locating the Peirano wines or just want to tell us about how great a father you have in your family feel free to contact us any time at 888-288-0668 or visit us on the web at [www.winedog.com](http://www.winedog.com). We love hearing from you. Cheers.