

Texas Monthly rates Perini Ranch as state's No. 3 steakhouse

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Photo by Thomas Metthe

Tom Perini's Perini Ranch Steakhouse was recently picked as the No. 3 steakhouse in the state by Texas Monthly Magazine.



Top Texas Steakhouses

Three more steakhouses within a reasonably short drive from Abilene also appear on Texas Monthly magazine's list of the best steakhouses in the state.

Fort Griffin General Merchandise Restaurant (Albany)

Wildcatter Steakhouse (Graham)

Line Camp Steakhouse (Tolar)

Here's Texas Monthly's list of the state's 38 top steakhouses:

No 1: Papa Bros Steakhouse in Houston and Dallas

No 2: Bohanan's Prime Steaks & Seafood in San Antonio

No 3: Perini Ranch Steakhouse in Buffalo Gap

Other restaurants named on the list (not ranked in any particular order):

- Eddie V's Edgewater Grille (Austin)
- Fleming's Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar (Austin)
- Ruth's Chris Steakhouse (Austin)
- Doe's Eat Place (Bryan)
- JR's Steakhouse (Colleyville)
- Al Biernat's (Dallas)
- Bob's Steak & Chop House (Dallas)
- Capital Grille (Dallas)
- Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steakhouse (Dallas)
- Nick & Sam's (Dallas)
- N9ne Steak House (Dallas)
- Silver Fox Steakhouse (Dallas)
- Billy Crews (El Paso)
- Great American Land and Cattle Company (El Paso)

- Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steakhouse (Fort Worth)
- Duce (Fort Worth)
- Steakhouse at The San Luis (Galveston)
- Grey Moss Inn (Helotes)
- Bob's Steak and Chop House (Houston)
- Brennen's Steakhouse on the Bayou (Houston)
- Ruth's Chris Steak House (Houston)
- Smith and Wollensky (Houston)
- Strip House (Houston)
- Taste of Texas (Houston)
- Vic & Anthony's (Houston)
- Lisa West's Double Nickle Steak House (Lubbock)
- Killeen's Steakhouse (Pearland)
- Ranchman's (Ponder Steakhouse - Ponder)
- Fleming's Promise Steakhouse and Wine Bar (San Antonio)
- Ruth's Chris Steak House (San Antonio)
- Backstage Steakhouse and Garden Bar (Spicewood)

SOURCE: Texas Monthly magazine

Want a good steak?

Texas Monthly magazine has the place for you -- on a ranch in Buffalo Gap.

An article in the magazine's December issue lists Perini Ranch Steakhouse as the third-best steakhouse in Texas.

Out of the hundreds of steakhouses in Texas, the Buffalo Gap eatery trailed only top-rated Pappas Bros. Steakhouse in Houston and Dallas and No. 2-ranked Bohanan's Prime Steaks & Seafood in San Antonio.

Tom and Lisa Perini, owners of Perini Ranch Steakhouse since opening it in 1983, called the restaurant's high ranking "very exciting."

"When you consider how many steakhouses there are in Texas now, that's a real honor," Tom Perini said. "We're not fancy. We just try to be real, real good."

"It takes a team of employees to work together," Lisa Perini said.

According to Texas Monthly's cover story, Perini Ranch Steakhouse's appeal is "complex."

"But it starts with one word: mesquite," the magazine writes. "The scrubby, thorny trees grow everywhere in this arid terrain, provoking the ire of ranchers but also providing an excellent medium for cooking any meat you have a mind to throw on the grill. The logs and glowing coals yield a pungent smoke that perfumes the air and evokes the land in all its flinty, hardscrabble glory. Out here, you'd feel cheated if your steak wasn't cooked over mesquite."

The magazine notes that Perini Ranch serves only three cuts of meat -- ribeyes, tenderloins and strips -- but adds that the "slim collection doesn't bother most customers."

"Nor does the fact that the meat is USDA top choice, rather than prime," the article states. "The expert cooking and the judicious application of a dry rub consisting of garlic, salt, pepper, oregano, and beef base more than compensate."

The magazine also touts side items such as Perini Ranch's hominy with green chiles, bacon, and cheddar and a dish called Zucchini Perini that features sliced squash with a tomatoey pork-and-beef sauce and melted Parmesan cheese topping.

"Big-city meat emporiums are all about the twenty-first century," the magazine concludes. "Here (at Perini Ranch Steakhouse), you're reminded that Texas was part of the Wild West not that long ago."

Meanwhile, Tom Perini said his family has made a conscious effort to remain a "mom and pop" restaurant, and there are no immediate plans to open another location.

"We want to make this restaurant as good as we possibly can," Tom Perini said. "I would rather have one restaurant than have two or three. At this stage, we're trying to keep this as good as we can."

Many people come into the restaurant, Tom Perini said, and "ask how we make it so -- Texas."

"My response is: I don't make it Texas. It is," he said.

