

# SouthwestNOW

M A G A Z I N E

NOVEMBER 2025



## A Sanctuary for Jazz

Cat Garner brings music home to the community

2025 Holiday Shopping Guide

Featured Business:  
Fort Worth Refinishing

Also inside:  
Scavenger Hunt

In the Kitchen With  
Tim Walker

Medicare Open  
Enrollment  
Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> –  
Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>



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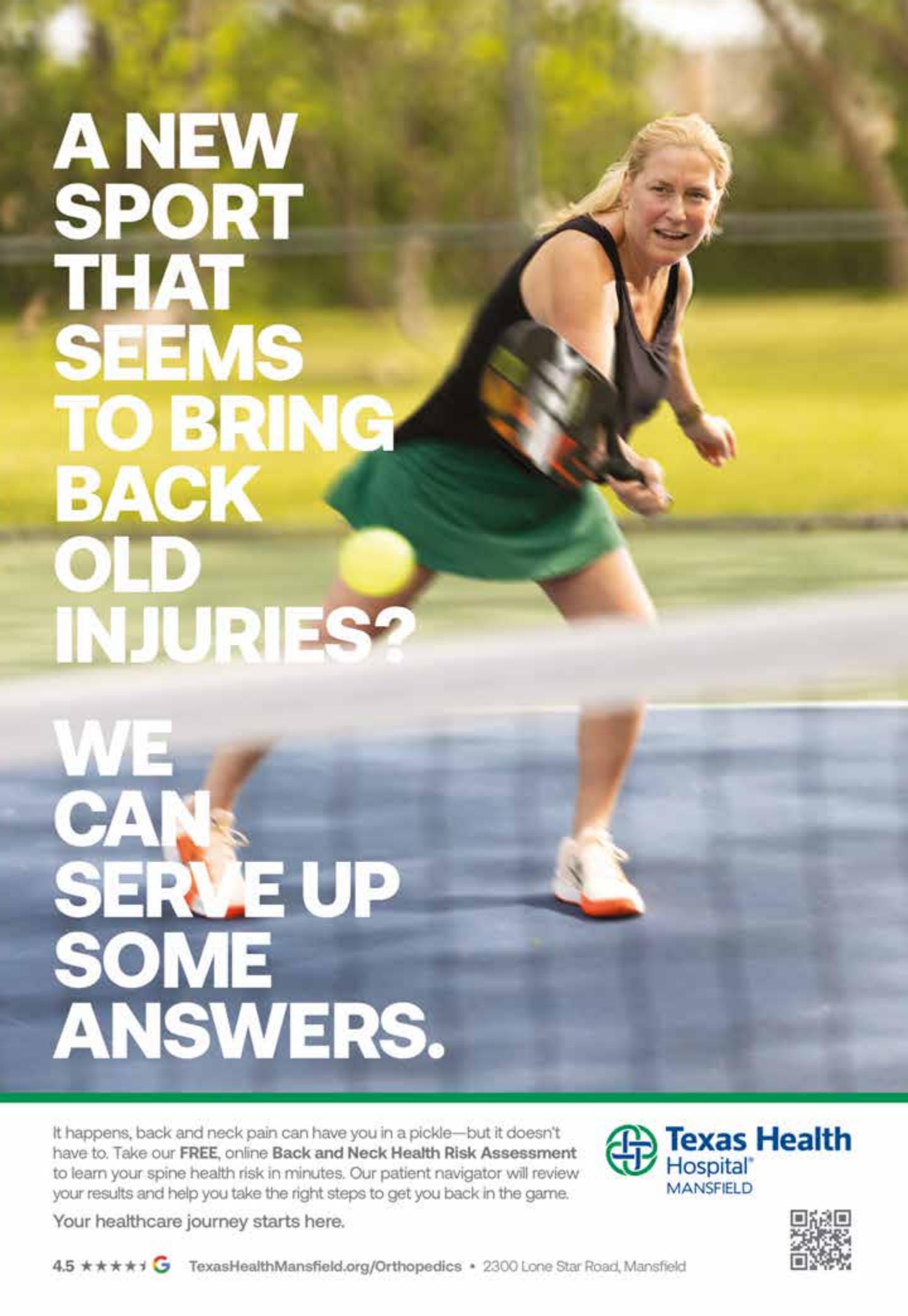
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A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black tank top and green shorts, is playing pickleball on a court. She is in a crouched position, holding a paddle and looking towards the ball. A yellow pickleball is visible in the air between her and the camera. The background shows a grassy area and trees.

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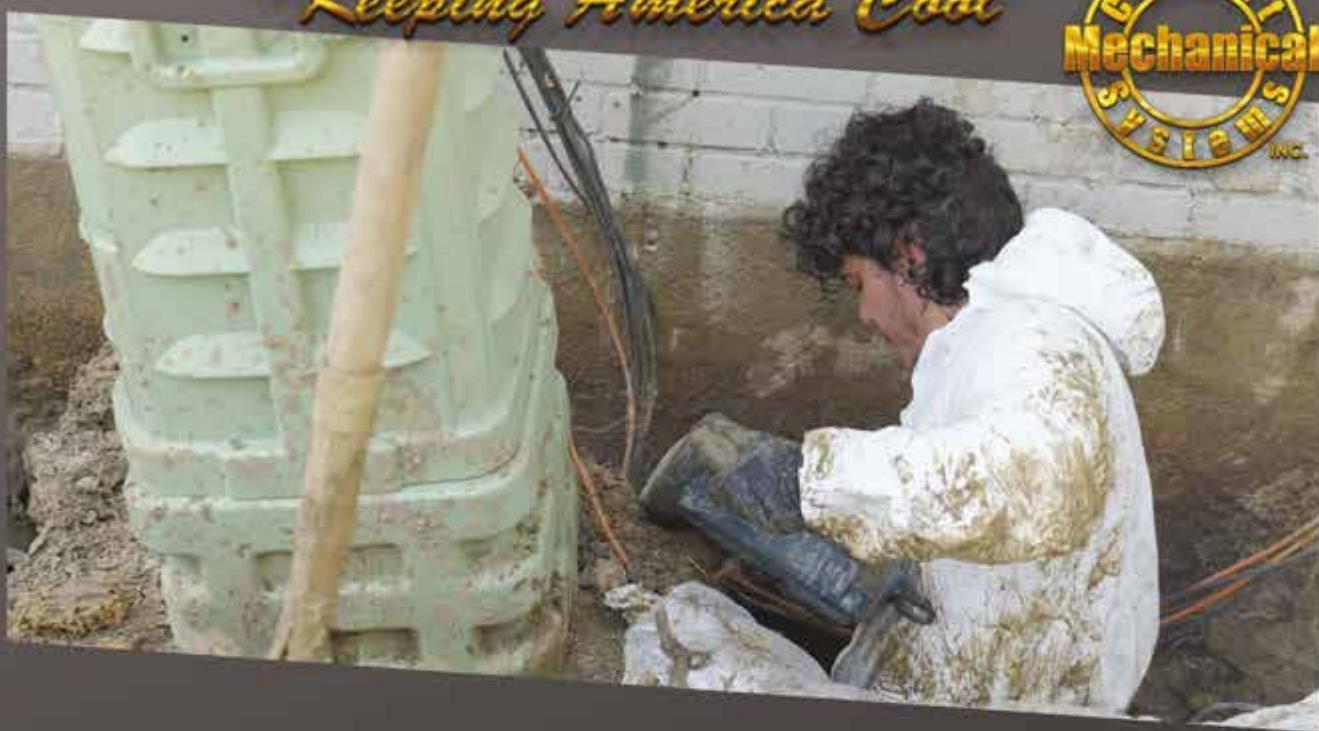


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# EDITOR'S NOTE

Thanksgiving is ...

A holiday that has gotten lost in the shuffle for a long time. Black Friday sales started creeping backwards to start on Thursday afternoon. People spent Thanksgiving camped outside stores to be the first in line to beat someone else half to death over a toy or a TV. A lot of us had to work that day, getting ready for the retail nightmare. Then COVID came along and shut all that insanity down. It hasn't returned. Not anything like it was before. This year, many big retailers are going to be completely closed for 24 hours or more for Thanksgiving, to give their employees time with their families.

As a culture, we've forgotten how to be thankful. We need to stop and think about what we have to be thankful for. Sure, there's a lot of awful

things going on. The news serves a heaping plate of trauma several times a day. But look closer to home, and you might find some reasons to be happy. This meal is supposed to be about recognizing all the blessings in our lives. Sometimes, they're easy to see. Sometimes, it takes a little more contemplation. But they're there.

... Giving thanks!

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BEFORE

AFTER

November 2025  
Volume 19, Issue 11

## ON THE COVER



Cat Garner celebrates jazz.

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 283-1170 or visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

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# A SANCTUARY FOR JAZZ

— By Adam Walker



Cathy Garner, known on stage as Cat Garner, has lived a life steeped in jazz. Growing up in Chicago, her parents introduced her to the music she would fall in love with. "My parents went to the Cotton Club. The next day, they would blast jazz albums — Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Betty Carter, Nancy Wilson. I'd stand looking in the mirror and pretend to sing into my hairbrush. My brother, Conrad, was a jazz musician. It was all around me. But I never sang publicly, only at home or around friends." Thousands of little girls have probably done the same.

"Years later, I moved to Dallas. I met my then fiancé, who insisted that we have a church wedding. I kept thinking, *Who will I get to sing at my wedding?* Then it hit me, *Duh, I can do it.* When my friends and family heard my voice, they were wowed. That was all the confirmation I needed to sing in public. My first gig was in Deep Ellum, at the Stephanie Ward Art Gallery. Doug Baskin, a music educator, was on keyboard. We started a band. I made him my music director, and I took care of the rest." The Cat Garner Trio performed at the Dallas Museum of Art's Jazz in the Atrium events and frequently at the House of Blues Dallas. "We played at various elegant events for DeSoto ISD, the city of DeSoto, the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce, local wineries and private parties. Then the pandemic came and shut everything down."

After that, Cat was looking for a new direction, and a new church home. She found New Covenant Christian Fellowship. Years ago, when she was new in Dallas, Cat had been a frequent attender at the Jazz Vespers services at Highland Park United Methodist Church and deeply enjoyed them. When she met Pastor André Byrd at a DeSoto Chamber luncheon, they got to talking, and Cat discovered that he had been at many of those same vespers. Charles Winslow, Jr. was the pianist for those events. Pastor Byrd was also a pianist and had been a mentee of Charles Winslow, Jr. Cat began attending



Pastor Byrd's church, and they started talking about the possibility of doing something similar to the vespers they remembered, only in this end of town. That was the birth of Jazz in the Sanctuary.

"Pastor Byrd knew I was a jazz singer. And Charles Winslow had told him that he should do something similar to the Jazz Vespers at his church," Cat said. When she joined Pastor Byrd's church he made her the ministry lead in charge of pulling an event together. "He had one stipulation — that the first concert have the original musicians from the vespers we had attended years ago." Mr. Winslow had passed, but was replaced with Myles Tate. Cat got as many of the old crew together as she could and dedicated the first concert to Mr. Winslow. "It was *beau-ti-ful*," Cat said. "The community enjoyed it.

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Since then we've been doing Jazz in the Sanctuary four times a year. It's always one hour on a Sunday evening. The next one is this month, with Linny Nance Trio featuring American actress Liz Mikel on vocals."

Pastor Byrd feels the same. "Jazz in the Sanctuary is a cultural experience geared to a sophisticated audience in an intimate setting," he said. "It is a free event that brings the community together to enjoy the musicality of diverse professional artists. We do not charge a fee, however, we accept donations to support the ministry.



Our church provides a creative space for musicians that is entertaining and informative for music lovers. We are proud to continue the legacy that was started by the late Charles Winslow, Jr. and invite everyone in the Best Southwest area to come hear!"

Cat, an indie music recording artist, usually collaborates on a song or two with each of the featured artists. "We're creating a space for talented musicians to play and jazz lovers to attend. There's no place else like this south of the Trinity. Everything cultural is always in North Dallas. It's important to have good, quality entertainment here in our community. People like myself enjoy jazz because of its

improvisation, creativity and musicality. People want to hear live music from professional musicians. Tom Braxton, an international saxophonist, has performed here several times. He is featured on one of my singles entitled, 'I Love You More Than Shoes,' which was produced by Akachi Music Group, my brother's production company."

Tom has good things to say about working with Cat. "My experiences at Jazz in the Sanctuary have been a blessing, and I look forward to my next performance in the series," he said. "Cat pays close attention to detail, engages the audience, and they're ready to receive our show every time! It's always a pleasure to work with Cat Garner, and I look forward to future collaborations with her."

Cat and her husband, Lloyd, have been DeSoto residents for 35 years. They are the proud parents of Dr. Cora Garner. With Jazz in the Sanctuary, God is Cat's guide tone to bring harmonic clarity to the community she loves. **NOW**



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BusinessNOW

# Fort Worth Refinishing

— By Adam Walker

**Fort Worth Refinishing**  
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(817) 633-9100  
[FtWorthRefinishing.com](http://FtWorthRefinishing.com)

**Hours:** Monday-Saturday: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

If you have unsightly problems in your bathroom or kitchen but don't want the expense and delays of remodeling, Luis Santillan of Fort Worth Refinishing has an option for you. "We refinish your existing surfaces," he explained. "So, it only costs 8-15 percent of what it would to replace, and we're usually done in one day or less."

They offer a range of services for your kitchen and bathroom. "We resurface bathroom vanities and kitchen countertops. We also resurface bathtubs, soaking tubs and shower stalls. We can install custom shower enclosures and safety options, such as pull-up bars for getting in and out of the tub if you have mobility issues. We can even do tub conversions to allow disabled people better access to their tub."

Luis and the Fort Worth Refinishing crew make health and safety a priority. "During our walk-throughs, to assess the job, we enjoy handshakes. While working in your home, we vent properly and exhaust the air from the work space to keep out smells and fumes." This is done while performing involved repairs or applying high-tech acrylic urethane coatings that create strong vapors.

Fort Worth Refinishing offers seven standard solid finishes for tubs and showers, from bright white to almond, but they can also do color matching to accommodate whatever custom finish you may have or want. "For

countertops, we have a variety of stone-color finishes that look like virtual granite," Luis added.

Quick service is one of the biggest advantages of resurfacing over remodeling. "A standard bathtub usually takes us a day to complete. A small vanity or kitchen countertop normally takes a day or less, sometimes only a few hours. And you don't have all the mess that comes with remodeling. We're not tearing out walls, so you don't have all the dust to deal with, and two days doesn't become two weeks or more with whole crews of strangers in and out of your house. Resurfacing only costs a fraction of what remodeling does, with little to no disruption for the homeowner. We cut that time down significantly."

**"IT'S GOOD TO BE ABLE TO OFFER A SERVICE THAT'S MORE ECONOMICAL TO EVERYONE IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES. ENJOYING TIME WITH YOUR FAMILY IS THE MOST PRECIOUS COMMODITY IN TIMES LIKE THESE."**

Luis Santillan and Fort Worth Refinishing are glad to be part of the community. Luis has more than 20 years of experience in the industry, and Fort Worth Refinishing has been serving the community since September of 2019. "We branched off from a leading company in the industry. It's good to be able to offer a service that's more economical to everyone in these difficult times. Enjoying time with your family is the most precious commodity in times like these. At Fort Worth Refinishing, it's our goal to make sure you have a smile when we leave," Luis reported. Maybe that's why their motto is, "Why make do, when you can have better than new?" **NOW**

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A quick look at the gift items and discounts available locally.



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**YMCA Santa Run**

Saturday  
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Scan here for  
a complete  
list of events!





## Zoomed In: A.J. Santos

By Adam Walker

A.J. Santos was taking Rocky the Corgi for a walk at Armstrong Park. "We're getting some exercise. We do this a couple of times every day. Sometimes, we grab a coffee at Gahwena in the morning.

"He's an active guy," A.J. shared. "He just turned 2. He likes to go for all the walks. Sometimes we walk here. Sometimes we go to Grand Prairie to Epic Central Park. Sometimes we go to Cedar Ridge Nature Preserve. This pup has tons of energy," he said with a smile.

Rocky made sure to prove A.J. was telling the truth by staying in constant motion. He sniffed every object within the range of his leash and made sure all of them were safe and secure, pausing occasionally for pets.



Kevin Driggs and Abel Perez show off the CHFD's 1923 LaFrance fire truck.



Ofc. Sanchez and Community Engagement Ofcs. Richard Martin and Nikki Giles set up for National Night Out in DeSoto.



The Duncanville Police Department welcomes the community to National Night Out at the Rec Center.



Stacy Sala-Walker volunteers at Girls in Aviation Day Dallas.

# NOW



Cedar Hill High School's Red Army Band wins the annual State Fair Classic Battle of the Bands for the eighth time in the past nine years.



Pamela Simon and Donita White encourage Dewey Decibear in his efforts to get people to sign up for library cards.



Nicholas Mayberry teaches Jacoby Carthan the finer points of boxing.



DeSoto cheerleaders celebrate homecoming.

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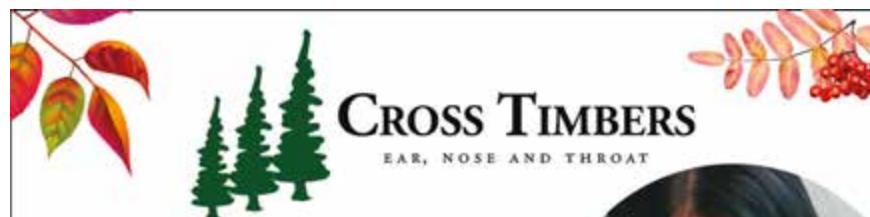
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# CookingNOW IN THE KITCHEN WITH TIM WALKER

— By Adam Walker



Tim Walker enjoys exploring in the kitchen. "I've never studied cooking or taken a class. I'm self-taught for sure. Trial and error are powerful teachers in many things, including cooking. When I think of why I enjoy cooking, I'd have to say it started as a small boy, running in and out of the kitchen 'helping' Mom or Dad cook. Mainly, my help would be as a food taster, from sampling scratch biscuit dough to cleaning off part of a mixer beater that just mixed brownies, cake or corn bread batter. (I had to share with siblings.)

"One of the recipes I shared in this article was inspired by a dinner with my daughter, Zoe, at a restaurant. I recreated the dish we enjoyed from memory, then changed and adjusted it to what is written down now." **NOW**

## Skirt Steak With Mushrooms and Onions

### Hickory wood for smoke

2 lbs. skirt steak

1 onion, cut in rings

3 cans sliced mushrooms

1/2 12-oz. bottle Guinness beer

Salt, to taste

Pepper, to taste

Red pepper flakes, to taste

1 lb. quesadilla cheese

1. Start your smoker with the hickory wood.
2. Sear the steak on both sides, on the grill.
3. Place the skirt steak in a metal baking pan, suitable for grilling in a smoker. Lay the steak flat, not folded. You may need to cut it to fit. Place the onions on top of the steak. Drain two of the cans of mushrooms; put them on top of the onions. Pour the entire contents of the third can onto the steak for moisture. Add the beer to the pan for flavor. Add salt, pepper and red pepper flakes. Place on the smoker grill for 45 minutes to 1 hour at 350-375 F.

4. After the meat is cooked properly, add the cheese; let it melt. Serve with black beans, Spanish rice or mashed potatoes.

## Italian Penne Steak Casserole

1 Tbsp. olive oil

1 1/2 lbs. sirloin or flank steak, thinly sliced

Salt, to taste

Pepper, to taste

1 medium onion, chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 red bell pepper, chopped

1 14-oz. can diced tomatoes with juice

2 cups beef broth

1 tsp. Italian seasoning

1 tsp. red pepper flakes, or to taste

8 oz. penne or fusilli pasta

1 lb. Parmesan cheese, grated

2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

1. Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the sliced steak; season with salt and pepper. Sear until browned. Remove the steak from the pot; set aside.

2. In the same pot, add a bit more oil, if needed. Sauté the onions, garlic and red bell peppers until the onions become translucent, about 3-4 minutes.

3. Stir in the diced tomatoes with their juice, beef broth, Italian seasoning and red pepper flakes; bring to a simmer.

4. Add the pasta to the pot; stir well. Cover; let it cook, stirring occasionally, until the pasta is al dente and has absorbed most of the liquid, about 10-12 minutes.

5. Return the steak to the pot to heat through. Stir in the fresh grated Parmesan cheese until melted and well combined. Adjust seasoning with more salt and pepper, if needed. Sprinkle with fresh parsley before serving.



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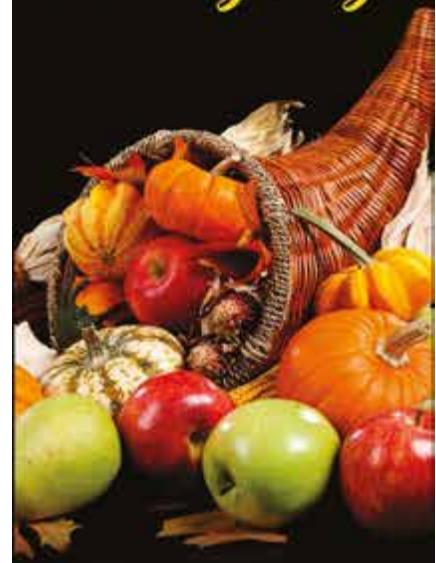
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