

Jeff Around Town – August 5th, 2025

Jeff: Joining me on Jeff Around Town is Todd Simon, fifth generation family owner of Omaha Steaks, where he serves as chairman. And I love this Chief Steak Evangelist. Todd, you're also a big proponent of the arts in Omaha. We'll talk about that in a second. But here's the burning question I've always wanted to ask you. You are known for Omaha Steaks. How do you cook a steak? What is your preferred method? Or maybe you have multiple methods for that.

Todd: Yeah, I do have multiple methods. And so, it really depends on kind of the time, the extent of the project, how many people are over, that kind of a thing. You know, if I'm just gonna cook a steak during the week, you know, for myself or my family, we have a gas grill right outside the kitchen. I'll fire that up and just use it because it's so easy, so convenient. But I also have a wood pellet smoker that I use.

Jeff: Oooh.

Todd: And I'll use that sometimes to cook, you know, steaks and salmon and things like that. Oftentimes to do briskets or pork butts or ribs. And then I have a, for lack of a better term, an Argentinian grill. In Argentina they cook a little differently. They cook over embers that are generated by logs in a firebox next to the grill. And the gentleman who's the vice president of production at Omaha Steaks is from Argentina, and he designed this grill. And he said, I'm getting one of these built, do you want one? And I said, absolutely.

Jeff: Of course.

Todd: And then, but I see it, you have to come over and show me how to use it. So, he's given me a couple lessons, and now I have mastered the Argentinian grill as well. And that is a, that's a big project. That's like, you know, you start the fire, you know, two hours before you're ready to cook, and then you, you know, you cook much slower. And so, you know, you've really got a, it's got, it's one of those like caveman, you know, gather around the grill kind of thing.

Jeff: So, let's switch gears. You are a huge proponent of the arts in Omaha, a philanthropist. And this community, we were talking before we started this chat about how there's so much to do. And for me, in this community, I recall back in the day, there would be one or two things going on. And even if you weren't going to do that particular thing, you were aware of it. Now there's so much happening, it's hard to keep up. But that's, it's incredible what's happening in our community.

Todd: No, it's really great. I mean, any night of the week, you know, you can find some sort of art happening in Omaha. Particularly, you know, there's, there's festivals last night, I went to the Nebraska Crossroads Music Festival out on the Gene Leahy Mall. Of course, the mall has been a great addition for, you know, free performances and in the community for that kind of thing. You know, there's always something going on at the Joslyn, there's always something, something going on at the Bemis, at the KANEKO. There's a bunch of smaller art spaces in town. There's Benson First Fridays. I mean, just, you just keep going and going, going. I think you could probably find something to do, you know, every night of the week, whether it's music, live music, a play. I went to the Shelter Belt Theater the other night, saw an amazing play.

Jeff: Todd, what, in the arts, how has this impacted you personally? How has it maybe changed you or inspired you to see all the creativity that's happening in our community over the years? Do you, do you feel like you have shifted your thinking about the world because of creativity in Omaha over the years?

Todd: Well, for sure, I think that, you know, we always, we don't always know what's giving us inspiration or what's going to give us the next great idea. And what I find is that when I'm in an artistic moment, I oftentimes start, my mind will sometimes wander to other parts of my life, and I'll think to myself, wow, this could be, you know, something I could apply in my business or something I could apply in my personal life. I think there's a, I think just putting yourself in a place where you are experiencing something new, new ideas, new visual input, new, new audio input, whatever it is, just broadens the way that your brain works and allows you to apply and sort of inspire creativity in places that would be more what you would consider to be more pragmatic.

Jeff: Yeah.

Todd: And I think that that just happens over and over again. I also think that it's been fabulous for the business community, making Omaha an amazing place to live, meaning that when students graduate from college, they're not immediately leaving Omaha, but they're looking for opportunities here because the cultural environment is so rich. And it's also a way when you're trying to recruit people, and, you know, recruiting is always a challenge to get someone to come to Omaha, you know, uproot their family, you know. And we've got a lot of other great things going for us, fabulous schools, beautiful neighborhoods, and all that fitting together as a portfolio for why we want to, why we want to continue to have a rich cultural scene to attract and keep talent in Omaha.

Jeff: I love it, and thanks for all that you do, have done, and continue to do for arts and culture in Omaha. Todd Simon, thanks very much for being on Jeff Around Town.

Todd: Great to be here. Have a good one.