



Tony Tristani



Trevor Tristani



Trevor & Dylan Tristani

Just four years ago Tony Tristani and his family, owners of Diamond T Ranch, knew very little about the Wagyu breed – or ranching in general. But today, Diamond T Ranch at Jacksonville, TX, has a herd of 300 cattle consisting of registered fullblood, black Wagyu cattle and recip cattle used for their embryo program. In those few short years, they've amassed a keen grasp of the

Wagyu breed – and have a grand champion steak award to prove it.

The Diamond T Ranch earned the title of Grand Champion Grain Fed Beef in the 5th Annual American Royal Steak Contest held in November 2016 in Kansas. Of the accomplishment, Tristani notes, "We've only been in business three-and-a-half years. The steak we entered was from a fullblood Wagyu steer that was born, raised, and

fed here; so it was pretty rewarding to achieve that."

He underscores that everything Diamond T Ranch has achieved in establishing their Wagyu program over the past few years has been the result of a team effort from the entire Tristani family, as well as other workers at the ranch. Of course the Diamond T cowherd and sires are the real working team for the operation.

Champion Beef

by Kindra Gordon

Winning Wagyu



Why Wagyu?

How did Tristani come to be involved with the Wagyu breed? It started from a business trip he was on, and at a restaurant he had “the best steak he had ever tasted in his life.” Being the business man that he is, he inquired of its origin and learned it was Wagyu.

That is when the research began about Wagyu cattle for Diamond T Ranch. Several hundred acres were

purchased and sons Dylan and Trevor Tristani began working and laying out the plans for the ranch. Several Wagyu ranches were visited and the purchases began.

The first truckloads of Wagyu cattle arrived at the ranch in June 2013; the milestone moment was likened to a movie as they were being unloaded. The excitement was high – which fueled the family’s goal to raise the very

best beef in America.

Diamond T has begun selling some Wagyu beef via word of mouth to consumers, but their ultimate goal is to source their beef to restaurants under the brand name Pinnacle Beef. With metropolitan areas like Dallas, Houston, and Shreveport just a few hours from the ranch, the ranch operators anticipate those opportunities exist, and as they grow and develop, a full-time

[Page 14 >>](#)

marketing manager will likely be added to their team.

Eventually, Tristani's intent is to have the ranch be a place that will be a retreat for children suffering from illness and their families to come and enjoy animals and the outdoors. Additionally, the cattle on the ranch would help keep the operation sustainable by generating a source of income.

Learning Journey

As Tristani reflects on the last few years, he says it takes dedication and a constant willingness to learn, change, and improve where you can to reach the goals set by a working productive ranch. Everything has been pieced together by learning from others – whether it be good or bad,

and being able to take information and put it into action.

Diamond T team members have traeled to Wagyu

events in Florida, Denver and the World meetings in Australia to learn from speakers and other breeders in attendance – gaining pieces of information to help put the puzzle together.

Ahead, Diamond T ranch has their sights set on their next goal – they are gearing up to enter the World Steak Competition.

Learn more about Diamond T at <http://diamondtwagyu.beef.com/>. 🌱

Two Wagyu operations took Grand and Reserve honors in the 5th Annual American Royal Steak Contest. Diamond T Ranch of Texas was announced winner of the Grand Cham-

pion Grain Fed Beef (see a feature about their ranch operation on page XX), while Reserve Cattle Company, of Garden City, Missouri was awarded Reserve Grand Champion Grain Fed Beef. Awards were announced in November 2016.

The Wagyu breed was well represented with Wagyu genetic steaks taking the top six spots in the grain fed division of the 2016 competition. The contest also annually includes a grass-fed beef division.

Chris Brant, who established Reserve Cattle Company in 2010 with his wife Veronica Anwuri, has entered the contest the last two years. In 2015, his Wagyu steaks earned first in the grain fed division and second in the grass fed division. His 2016 Wagyu entries took second, third and fifth in the grain fed division.

Brant was pleased with the performance of the Wagyu breed all around. He notes that he was the one who had encouraged Diamond T to enter, so he didn't mind passing the Grand Champion title to them this year, given that he had three steaks in the top five. Brant's previous life was in construction, when that industry slowed, he and his wife decided to start a farm. When asked why Wagyu, he says, "We're kind of food snobs, too."

They began by buying embryos and putting them in Angus cows. Today, they boast a herd of 60 fullblood Wagyu. Their primary business is selling embryos and semen, and they've connected with customers worldwide. Of their award-winning beef, Brant says, "The beef is a byproduct of our



genetics."

Brant notes that finishing Wagyu animals takes time for the marbling to develop. He acknowledges the finishing period of 30 months, compared to 18 or 24 for conven-

tional beef. But, he's a firm believer that the extra time is worth it in a superior product – and he's got the awards to prove it.

Contest Details

For the competition, three, unseasoned ribeyes had to be shipped frozen on dry ice in late October to the K-State Olathe Campus. Ribeyes also had to be bone out and cut to a thickness of one and one-half inches.

On November 14, a panel of invited judges in the fields of production, journalism, and culinary arts assembled in the test kitchen on the campus of Kansas State Olathe to participate in a blind judging of steak entries. The assembled judges evaluated 40 steak entries submitted from 16 states. Event organizers report that this year's contest was the largest in its history with nearly double the number of entries from the previous year.

Steaks were judged in a blind taste test based 60% on Flavor (Overall 30%, Sustained 15%, and Finish 15%) and 40% on Texture (Juiciness 20% - 10% Initial, 10% Sustained, and Tenderness 20%).

Of the contest, "Lynn Parman, President and CEO of the American Royal, stated, "The American Royal Steak Contest provides beef producers with the opportunity to put their best steaks up against steaks from other top producers for the chance to be named the best tasting steak in the country. The contest continues to grow and this year we saw an increase in the number of entries and the number of states represented." 🌱

