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Old bones, contemporary cuisine

GALLAGHERS STEAKHOUSE 228 W. 52nd St.; 212-586-5000 ★ ★

NOSTALGIA neanderthals, rejoice with me: Gallagher's is back, minus the apostrophe and an unknown number of the celebrity/sports photos that defined the place for 87 years.

Although not the best steakhouse in town, it's as stirring a resurrection of a classic beefery as Keith McNally's Minetta Tavern transformation in 2009.



**Steve
Cuzzo**
Free Range

At the atmospheric, Prohibition-vintage bar, you can now order fluke crudo. This in a place that until a few years ago served Eisenhower-era beer battered shrimp.

Gallaghers, rescued by Central Park Boathouse operator Dean Poll, isn't the original "speakeasy"

launched in 1926. Yes, the great horseshoe bar and windowed front meat locker remain after an 18-month restoration. So do most

of hundreds of black-and-white photos of Hollywood and Broadway stars, baseball greats and racehorses from old New York.

But as much as I miss old Gallagher's with its red-and-white check tablecloths, it was often quiet. So Poll cut the number of seats by 40 to a mere 220. The foundry-like open kitchen is wrapped in leaded glass. Twenty-first century booths and banquettes in maroon leather break up tables which now sport white linen.

The cuts of beef I had — despite bearing the gold-standard, USDA Prime imprimatur, and dry-aging — didn't measure up to those at other high-profile steakhouses.

But Gallagher's priciest aren't

as pricey, either. Porterhouse for two is \$98 compared with \$122 at Costata. Like bone-in filet (\$42) and rib-eye (\$52), it was good but lacked the concentrated flavor depth I expect from dry-aging.

Yet other dishes are almost disconcertingly good. Chopped steak (\$23), a supple grind of rib-eye, chuck and short ribs, delivers the magic its more expensive cousins don't. There are expertly turned out, fresh and moist grilled salmon (\$32) and lemon sole.

"Specialties" to evoke old Gallagher's include "stuffed," juicy jumbo shrimp (\$42) with crab on top. New Gallagher's is attuned to today's tastes without blowing off the past. Another 87 years, please.