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ELIZABETH OLSEN

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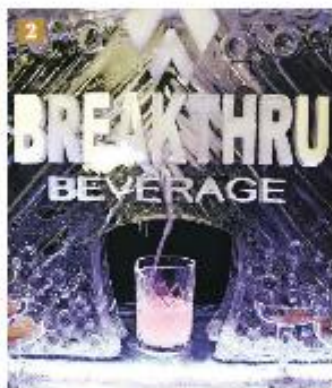
on the SCENE

BY JALYNN RUSSELL

UPPING THE STEAKS

The hip new MB Steak opened at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, with 500 of the Morton brothers' best friends in attendance.

1. Michael Morton, chef Willem DeMarco and Jenna Morton **2.** Icy cocktails from Breakthru Beverage **3.** Matt Walebin and Stephanie Wilson **4.** Phil Reynolds, Christi Takar, Cray Beaumont-Pynn, Shaun Saunders **5.** Eilan Schaner and Heidi Sarno Straus **6.** Above this bar is a skylit living wall—but guests at the opening had their eyes on the prize



THE PARTY For opening night at Michael and David Morton's MB Steak, the legendary hospitality family pulled out all the stops over its two-floor restaurant, with gourmet stations in every room. Fittingly, the brothers cut the commemorative ribbon with a meat cleaver before the party began. **THE GUESTS** The cast of *Magic Mike Live*, DJ Lydia Ansel, Las Vegas Mayor Carolyn Goodman (who proclaimed the day "MB Steak Day") and Clark County Commissioner Mary Beth Scow joined friends and family. **THE HIGHLIGHTS** Guests loaded their plates at a caviar bar; carving stations served MB Steak's dry-aged tomahawk and Wagyu strip loin, and decadent side dishes like creamed corn with crab. An elaborate candy and dessert bar, as well as chilled Hangar One vodka, and Champagne and wine stations kept the party going late.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS

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The name may be low-key, but the flavor is enormous. Newly opened in the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino—it even has its own valet parking!—MB Steak is a welcome addition to Las Vegas' legendarily hot prime-beef scene. Some MB dishes take steakhouse fare to new levels, with standouts that include the buttery A5 Japanese Wagyu, a dry-aged tomahawk that more than earns its name, and souped-up sides such as Brussels sprouts with pickled shallots, creamed spinach augmented by truffle Gouda, and mushroom-studded grits finished with pecorino.

Though co-owner Michael Morton is known for doing fantastic restaurants around town—he started N9NE, which arguably launched Sin City's modern steakhouse craze; and owns the wine-centric La Cave at Wynn, tapas-formatted

Crush in MGM Grand and cool downtown Mexican eatery La Comida—for this one he has particular incentive to reach for greatness.

A partnership between Michael and his brother David Morton (MB Steak's name stands for My Brothers), the restaurant also serves as a tribute to father Arnie Morton, who passed away in 2005. Michael feels certain his dad would be pleased with MB and his approval would go beyond the beef. "I think our father would be proud of the non-steak items on the menu," he says. "The sea scallops were inspired by him. Scallops were his favorite thing. Every menu he ever did had scallops on it."

Michael, who's enjoyed great success on the Vegas food landscape, learned the restaurant business by toiling for Arnie. "I swept floors, did linen orders, worked every station," he says. "I cut whole lobsters in half, pulled out



Brand of BROTHERS

The Morton family (yes, that steakhouse family) is summoning its famous legacy in MB Steak, the city's new-meets-old-school steakhouse.

By Michael Kaplan // Food photography by Jim Decker, interior photography by Barbara Kraft, portrait by Denis Trucello



Clockwise from left: The styff spears bar; David and Michael Morton; seared Sonoma foie gras

MB STEAK
Hard Rock Hotel & Casino
702.483.4888

Mon.-Thurs., 5-11pm;
Fri.-Sat., 5pm-12am;
Sun., 5-10pm



« *"We always sat facing the door because, God forbid, a guest walked in and was unattended. Dad would jump up and take care of the person himself."*
 — DAVID MORTON »

the stomachs, poured the cream in, gave them a splash of butter and threw them in the oven. I was a server and a busboy. This was during high school and after college."

David, who traded commodities before jumping into the food biz by launching DMK Restaurants, found inspiration in how his father handled himself as a restaurant owner: It was on display whenever the family dined together at one of Arnie's spots. "Two things happened religiously," David remembers. "We always sat facing the door because, God forbid, a guest walked in and was unattended. Dad would jump up and take care of the person himself. He always had a comment for the chef; while we ate, they'd banter about little things to tweak. If the phone rang more than twice he jumped up to answer it. He was maniacal about that."

The hands-on attitude is reflected in MB's stylishly masculine design that includes charred-wood paneling downstairs, a private cocktail lounge, cool and modern chandelier presiding over the main dining room, and a living wall upstairs. Considering it all, Michael concludes, "This would have spoken to my dad so much. It has the potential to be the best thing I have ever been involved with." *Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, 702.483.4888, mbsteaklo.com* ■



From top: The braised, pepper-crusted 32-ounce bone-in short rib is a perfect dish to share with your date—and then some; the main dining room is all sexy natural woods and this spiky, "rock candy" chandelier. That corner table in the back is the one to sit for if you're a believer in the concept of the Vegas power seat



FOOD & DRINK
review



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Clockwise from left: The night operator bar, David and Michael Morton, seated. sonnetvibe.com

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From top: The braised, pepper-crusted 22-ounce bone-in short rib is a perfect dish to share with your date—and then enjoy the main dining room in all its natural beauty and this table's "rusty cowboy" chandelier. That corner table in the back is the one to sit for if you're a believer in the concept of the Vegas power seat