Chef’s Log 20 September 2008
Market Crash Chicken

Black Saturday in the Clemons household. Market crashing all week. Will I ever be able to retire? Will I be able to eat after I retire? Will I be able to eat until I retire? This was not a week for dry aged Charolais Prime from Main Line Prime. Today we had chicken. Not branded chicken, not Empire, not Perdue. Store brand, generic young chicken, in the bonus-sized economy pack, at $0.99 per pound for chicken thighs. Like, under a dollar a pound? That’s, like, round-off error in the butcher’s scale until this week.

Jean followed a Cornell marinade recipe. That’s basically a highly seasoned home-made salad dressing, of oil, vinegar, lemon juice, and Italian spices, thickened with an egg. It’s slightly thicker than a commercial dressing and without the metallic after-taste that I usually associate with bottled Italian dressing. We let the chicken sit overnight in the marinade, then started a one-hour slow grilling process over hickory and apple smoke.
After 60 minutes in the Bradley the chicken was certainly smoked. The skin was not yet crisp and I was not sure the chicken was quite as cooked as I wanted. So, next the chicken got ten minutes of high indirect heat in the Weber. Finally, about four minutes a side over direct flame crisped the skin and finished the cooking.

The chicken was served right off the grill with a massive baked potato, some Brussels sprouts, and a Victory Hop Wallop beer.

Honestly, poverty never looked this good!
I can imagine eating this again. The legs were juicy, smoky, and well seasoned. They were not at all dry nor did they really taste like chicken; I hate anything that tastes like chicken, and make no allowances even for chicken that tastes like chicken. Of course, in the end we were eating chicken, just an evolutionary hop, skip, and jump from eating dinosaur. But although dinner was chicken it was tasty and most importantly it photographed well. If we do this again I will prepare a more heavily spiced marinade, maybe one with some real bite, perhaps based on a medium hot curry.

Yeah, if the market does not come back I could end up eating a lot more chicken. I may even have to cut back on the spectacular baking potatoes, which cost about the same per pound as the chicken, and find some substitute starch. But we’re not there yet!

ekc