What an unusual day. Mostly I did not work or even think about working or even plan meaningful activities instead of working. Mostly I did whatever I wanted.

Today did not start with a trip to Derek’s Main Line Prime. It started with a trip to Matt Guyer’s Beer Yard in Wayne, where I spent several hundred dollars on a variety of beers from the US and Belgium that are rare, or even almost impossible to find. Some of them, like Sam Calagione’s Theobrama from Dogfish Head, are both very impressive and seriously weird, with a recipe that goes back to the Aztecs and includes chipotles and cocoa. Others, like the Hopfen Weisse from Garrett Oliver and Schneider in Bavaria, or De Proef Signature and De Proef Les Deux Brasseurs, represent rare and unusual transatlantic experiments. The first is a collaboration between Schneider and Brooklyn breweries. The Signature and Les Deux Brasseurs are collaborations between De Proef and two US breweries, with Tomme Arthur of Lost Abbey in San Diego and with Jason Perkins of Allagash in Portland, Maine. The Westmalle Tripel is marvelous, among the best Tripels I can get in the States, and sometimes even the importer, Merchant du Vin, cannot find it for me. I’d never seen the Double Dead Guy from Rogue before. Almost everything was new to me, and I was delighted to grab whatever I could find. I suspect that most of the expense, however, was Jean’s single case of rare upstate New York Saranac diet root beer but I cannot prove this.

Then, of course, Jean and I did head to Main Line Prime, for a quick look at Derek’s meats. It was not an easy choice to make, of course, but we left with a huge Hereford dry-aged bone-in rib steak for me and a double cut Jameson lamb chop for Jean. Hard to get out with just a couple of dinners, though, so we got a chowder of wild King salmon, some heritage Green Zebra tomatoes, some coleslaw and some extra rare roast beef for sandwiches over the next couple of days and, pretty much, whatever else seemed indispensable.
Dinner actually looked pretty wonderful even before I unwrapped it, and the red bow wrapped around butcher’s paper is an interesting touch.

My steak looked even better sitting on a hot grill with a thick layer of dry Memphis rub. As pleased as I am with the various rubs, and the way each interacts with and complements the flavors of different meats, Jean still prefers her lamb with just a touch of garlic and rosemary.
Of course, in the mood I was in, with great new beers in the cellar, and with great meats on the grill, even the smoker looked pretty good to me! Yes, hickory smoke and charring beef make an inviting combination even from across the yard, if the wind is blowing in the right direction.

And of course the meats looks magnificent as they got ready to serve, nicely colored by the wood smoke and the charring of their surface spices.
And then, of course, there’s dinner. The meat, charred, seared, and rare. A salad that Jean made of heirloom tomatoes, fresh feta, Kalamata olives and English cucumbers, and a touch of oregano and lemon juice. A steamed artichoke with a little olive oil. And, of course, a baked potato and sour cream. Baked potatoes complement lamb and steak marvelously, but they are also a marvelous way to set up a big Cabernet or Bordeaux. The 1990 Cos d’Estournel just worked wonderfully with everything on the table.

Eventually, of course, there is nothing left but rubble. But oh what rubble this was. Enough steak for tomorrow’s dinner. And a freshly baked gingerbread cookie and the remains of a bottle of 1988 Rieussec. As my undergrads would say, “how fun is this!”
Jean baked the cookies with cinnamon and ginger from Penzeys, my spice provider for the barbecue rubs. Is this a participation externality or an example of economies of scope? In any event it was an unanticipated and yet wonderful use of the spices. And the sweet spice of the cookies worked wonderfully well with the Sauternes.

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