Chef’s Log 20 February 2011
Excess is More Fun than Moderation

I tried moderation, and did moderately well for a moderate period of time. Tonight was about excess. At Genuardi’s, a good local super-market, I bought two small standing rib roasts, perhaps 2 ¼ pounds each. You could view either one as dinner for two easily. I decided to treat them as single serving steaks.

Jean’s was kept pretty basic. Mine was rubbed with Cajun blackening spices. I slow smoked them for a while in the Bradley over oak, and then finished them in the big Weber. I love the way the wood smoke colors the meat, of course; I also love the way the wood smoke flavors the meat. Oak is pretty serious stuff, and able to stand up to the Cajun spicing.

Finishing in the Weber had always been part of the plan, of course, but it took on added importance when the power went out early in the smoking process. I had started with relatively cold smoke, at about 160 degrees, so that I could get the meat intensely smokey while still keeping it very rare; rare is on one thing, but these puppies were still raw when PECO checked out and the generator kicked in. My generator covers the most important functions in the house, like the computer, the internet, and HVAC. My electrician refused to believe that the Bradley smoker needed to be covered on the emergency generator.

The first picture shows the steaks just as I started them in the Weber. The second shows the steaks after the Cajun spices had blackened and the steaks had darkened over direct heat.
Finally, I plated the steaks with risotto and spring vegetables, courtesy of Jean, and with caramalized Brussels sprouts courtesy of Food Source. Plated hardly seems the right word; the beast barely fit. The http://beeryard.com/ provided a Pannepot Reserva and my cellar provided a 1982 Lascombes. All is well. And tomorrow is another day … we were, indeed, unable to finish the roasts in a single go.
Of course, once you forego and forget moderation, entire new possibilities arise. Memphis-style rib rub on loin porkchops. Cottage cheese and diet coke, good bye. Smoked meats, barbecue sauce, and beer, welcome home.