



Well-seasoned rustic mood spices rib-eyes

By [Richard L. Eldredge](#) | Monday, May 28, 2007, 06:40 PM

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Positive signs abounded as we poked our head inside Inman Park chef **Kevin Rathbun**'s latest restaurant, Kevin Rathbun Steak, recently for an advance peek.

For one thing, we arrived just as the liquor was being unpacked. Also, co-owner **Cliff Bramble** proudly pointed out that Rathbun has opted to keep the pre-existing graffiti on the building's exterior. After contractors finished cutting away a section for the restaurant's front entrance, they discovered the remaining letters spelled: "M-O-O."

Explained Bramble: "How could we alter *that*?" Earlier, Rathbun and workers had unearthed an ancient steak sauce bottle hidden in the floor of the former cotton warehouse. (Signed photos of the relic are now being sold for a \$100 donation to the Atlanta Community Food Bank.)

The high-end lodge vibe inside was created by the **Bill Johnson** Studio. The interior contains hand-cut and hand-stacked walnut wood walls and a custom-built, 20-foot brush-aluminum-tree-branch chandelier in the dining room. Large pillar candles will be utilized for added atmosphere. Just before our arrival, a colorful, commissioned portrait of Rathbun painted by Atlanta artist **Steve Penley** made it up onto the wall.

Nestled up against the city's beltline, a sofa-strewn lounge area greets those wanting a casual cocktail outside. Inside at the bar, Rathbun has created and had installed two train "destination scrolls," signs with neighborhood stops like "Old Fourth Ward" and "Federal Penitentiary" detailed on them.

In addition to the joint's trademark dry-aged steaks, the inaugural menu includes sweet corn risotto, chilled seafood towers, beltline chowder, pork porterhouse, elbow mac and cheese tart and a daily deep dish pie.

The eatery at 154 Krog St. officially opens for dinner Wednesday.

"We're only taking 100 reservations for Wednesday," Bramble told us. (More than half are already taken.) "Kevin begged us to start off slow so we didn't make him completely crazy back there in the kitchen!"