

Wild game chef to explain how to cook the meat perfectly

By Kristi Buffo

PLACERVILLE – How long should you dry-age your elk meat? What size pieces of meat should you use? How much time for deer versus elk versus other game?

Chef John McGannon has made it his life's work to answer questions like these.

"Good hunters are usually people who want to know the whys behind what they see and hear in the field. It's the same with good cooks," says McGannon, who will be sharing his 35 years of knowledge about wild game cuisine during a presentation at the fairgrounds in Placerville this weekend. He's one a couple dozen top outdoor guides and experts participating in the first annual Gateway to the Sierra's Sportsman's & Outdoor Expo, Oct. 1-3.

"If you've ever wondered why your prize meat is gamey or tough, why your meat appears burned and haggard after a few months in the deep freeze or why specific cuts of meat are best suited for different cooking techniques, you're not alone," says McGannon. "As someone who craves the autumn ritual of heading into the hills in search of nature's bounty—and has an equal passion for the culinary result of all that great hard work – I've made it my business to learn the answers to those whys."

An author and television host on the Outdoor Life Network, McGannon is widely recognized as one of the leading authorities on fine wild game cuisine and has achieved an almost cult-like status among the fishing and hunting community. In 1996, he founded Wildeats Enterprises, a food company providing wild game spices, rubs, tips and recipes.

He's a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and worked his way through some of New York's finest restaurant, such as Le Perigord on Manhattan's East Side and the historic Doros in San Francisco. McGannon went on to open 13 restaurants of his own in New York, Florida, Los Angeles, Hong Kong and San Francisco. He has an impressive list of personal clients and has served eleven times as executive chef for Valley of the Moon at the Russian River's exclusive Bohemian Grove.

McGannon will be hosting a booth at the expo today through Sunday, and will present a demonstration entitled "Getting the Most of Your Wild Game Harvests" on today at 2pm and Oct. 2 at 3pm. Guests will be treated to an assortment of wild game tastings.