

FRESH IN THE WEST

In 1976 Texas Tech University found the Masked Rider banned from away football games and was in need of a sideline presence. Famous cartoonist and Texas Tech supporter Dirk West stepped in with the now infamous Raider Red.

West created the iconic mascot and symbol which represents Texas Tech at every sporting event. Knowing that without the Masked Rider, Tech would be left without spirit, energy and pride, he innovated, took a shot in the dark and created a legacy.

Four decades later, his legacy carries on through his bloodline. Like his grandfather Dirk, Cameron West and his wife Rachel saw Lubbock was in need of a fresh creation. With farm to table options in mind, The West Table was created.

With more than 20 years of restaurant experience between them and a second child on the way, Cameron and Rachel knew it was time to take a leap of faith. They both come from backgrounds where agriculture and fine dining played key roles.

"I think we are doing a disservice to our population by letting major restaurant chains take over," Cameron said. "We need to keep the 'mom and pop' shops."

Cameron, whose grandfather worked as a farmer his entire life, said he has an appreciation and high level of respect for the efforts of producers in his local area. With this in mind, he put his culinary talents to work and opened The West Table with his wife, Rachel in October of 2014.

As a native of Lubbock and the descendant of famous cartoonist Dirk West, the inventor of Raider Rd and a former Lubbock Mayor, Cameron knew Lubbock would feel like home. Rachel joined her husband's adoration for Lubbock and for the community.

"He's a hometown boy," Rachel said. "I'm familiar with Lubbock as well; it's actually where Cameron and I met."

Not only did their roots play a key role in their choosing of Lubbock, but their dedication to creating what they see as the ideal restaurant, one which works alongside agricultural producers, motivated them to work in agriculture-driven communities. Cameron and Rachel

believe strongly that food is not being consumed the way it should be anymore.

The West Table is serving as an experiment from their perspective. To their knowledge, there are no other establishments in Lubbock working as closely with producers as they are. This includes ordering beef from

an operation in Wolforth, Texas known as Holy Cow Beef. According to Cameron, Holy Cow Beef process under ten head of cattle per week, making the product more fresh and high quality in his opinion.

"Why fight flavor profiles when you can just get the best product that is out there?" Cameron said emphatically. "If the producers do the job on their side, I don't have to do anything on mine."

As head chef of The West Table, Cameron said he believes that their operation falls under the category of farm-to-table. According to The Gasoline Alley Foundation, Farm to Table is the concept of connecting communities to

local farmers in order to make healthy food more accessible to more people.

Cameron said he believes that doing so also helps to establish better relationships with customers. Many of whom he said are more than willing to pay \$5 extra for a locally-sourced cut of beef.

"We try to get the best quality products so we aren't having to do a lot to improve upon it," Rachel said. "We have found in Lubbock, people appreciate that; they get as excited about it as much as we do."

According to Rachel, who in addition to co-owner, also serves as manager for The West Table, said they sold out of beef within three days of serving Holy Cow Beef products. Cameron and Rachel believe there is a market in the Lubbock area which wants a stronger connection to their food and they believe The West Table can provide that.



*"It's about the way we
are supposed to eat."*