

**THE PRODUCT:**

These gluten-free crafted burgers are "born, raised and harvested in the USA and each burger is crafted using a special family recipe so every burger tastes like you made it in your kitchen."

**THE PRICE:**

\$13.99 for a 2-pound box with six burgers

**THE PLUS:**

Consumers who tested the burgers **loved the imperfect, hand-crafted appearance of the patties, their beefy flavor, and their juiciness.**

**THE PROBLEM:**

The packaging has some explaining to do with regard to the composition (Angus, short rib) of the burgers and why consumers are paying a higher price for them.

# Hone your craft

Consumers rave about the flavor and texture of Rastelli Foods' short rib 'Craft Burgers,' but want more information about their composition and price.

**THE DEMOGRAPHIC**

We're seeing the word "craft" and "crafted" more and more on labels for non-food and in food ranging from beers, street food, mayonnaise and now even frozen burgers. "Crafted" is defined as "something produced using skill and experience." Rastelli Foods Group recently launched a line of Craft Burgers to the frozen food case, and we were asked to provide feedback on their Angus Beef Short Rib Craft Burger variety. Our contributors featured a variety of families ranging in age from 13 to almost 70. Because these Craft Burgers are also gluten-free, we made sure we included a few gluten-free participants for their unique input.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

Consumers were confused on the meaning of a "short rib burger," suggesting that Rastelli should provide more information on its exterior packaging: "What is a 'craft burger'? What are

the 'benefits' of an 'Angus short rib burger?'"

one of our older couples asked. A mom, who has a culinary background, also commented on the 'Angus/Angus beef short rib' description, noting, "It's not 'Certified Angus Beef' so I'm not sure what just 'Angus' beef means, and the box doesn't tell me. And then I'm not sure where the short rib comes in. Are the burgers made from ground boneless beef short ribs?"

As for the interior packaging, testers were also at odds: "I like that the burgers are vacuum-sealed in different packages so you don't defrost the whole pack!" said a 47-year-old mom.

But an older male taster commented, "[T]he inner plastic packaging looked like it had pull tabs to open and should be easy to open; but ultimately we had to use a knife to cut the plastic open."

**PREPARATION**

All our tasters grilled the burgers on their outdoor grills. "We prepared the burgers on an

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**marel**

## TASTE *test*

outdoor charcoal grill,” said a 60-plus married couple. They continued, “The product cooked up easily and evenly on the BBQ; no fat was dripping out or causing a flame-up.” A mom of two teen sons said, “The patties cooked nicely. We prepared them from medium-rare to well done, and each person commented that they were juicy. I was particularly surprised that the well-done burger could remain so juicy.”

### TASTE AND APPEARANCE

Consumers had high praise for the appearance, flavor and juiciness of Craft Burgers. Our 19-year-old noted, “The patties look like they are handmade due to their irregular shape.” Her 18-year-old brother agreed, saying, “They look ‘real.’” “I liked the non-perfect appearance,” added another mom in her 40s. “I loved mine – it

***“The fact that they are short rib doesn’t really do anything for me, nor does the ‘born, raised and butchered in the U.S.’ I just don’t care about that. I WANT A BEEFY TASTE AND JUICY MEAT – WHICH IS WHAT IT GAVE ME.”***

melted in my mouth. Very flavorful. We added American cheese,” explained a 50-plus mom who grilled the Craft Burgers for herself and her gluten-free husband. She continued, “My husband said the flavor was good and said it was a good solid hamburger.” Our 23-year-old female who doesn’t eat much meat “because of its texture” remarked, “It was really juicy, tender, hearty and robust. Some frozen burgers cook mushy inside – these are really good.”

Our mom and her two teen sons added, “The flavor of the burgers was really nice, and the texture did not seem like a prefab frozen burger.” She went on, saying, “The burgers were extremely juicy, which is why my 13-year-old son said it was the best hamburger he ever had!” Another 50-something mom said, “I don’t get the short rib thing, but ... the crisp edges taste just like the

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*That's A  
Wrap!*

# TASTE *test*

char-grilled flavor of a bone-in ribeye steak. I loved it!”

## UPSHOT

“I would buy it again in a heartbeat!” said our mom with the gluten-free husband. Our mom with two teen boys said, “The

price was high, but for the rave reviews I might buy them occasionally, but not for a crowd.”

She added, “The fact that they are short rib doesn’t really do anything for me, nor does the ‘born, raised and butchered

in the U.S.’ I just don’t care about that. “I want a beefy taste and juicy meat — which is what it gave me.”

The moral of the story is, Rastelli has a compelling story to tell about its Angus Beef Short Rib Craft Burgers — and they

need to do a better job telling that story on their package and their website.

Also, since tasting the burgers turned many of our participants into Craft-Burger-lovers, perhaps Rastelli should consider

in-store sampling as a way to garner trial — because at this relatively high price point, trial on its own may be hard to come by.

It’s really a very good product that warrants valuable in-store freezer space.

by **Jacqueline Beckley and Anna Marie Cesario, the Understanding and Insight Group**

Food product development and consumer research veterans Jacqueline Beckley and Anna Marie Cesario, join Meatingplace Magazine as regular contributors to Meat-ingTaste, a consumer sampling of new products featured in our monthly Taste Test column. Here’s how the program works: The meat item is distributed to consumers, including the core demographic, for preparation in their own houses. No instructions are provided to the consumer, other than to write their overall impressions of the product, as well as to evaluate the flavor, texture, packaging and ease of use. Beckley and Cesario look for common threads by using Getting It!, a system developed to listen to consumers about products (Getting It!®). The sample of people is not intended to be a “taste test” in a controlled setting, nor is it intended to simulate a focus group. Others are doing both. Rather, the intent is to interpret the response of the people who might purchase a product like this and use it, simply based on their encounters with the product in their individual, unique home environment. That is how U&I has been developing cutting-edge product and people understanding since 1999.

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