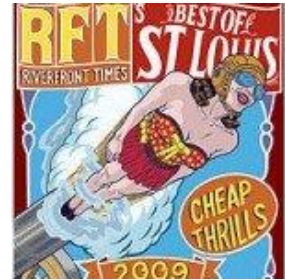




## Best Meat Counter Baumann's Fine Meats

Jim Lucas knows meat. The former stock trader used to stop at Baumann's Fine Meats on his way to the lake to buy what he felt was the best in sirloin, hamburger, ground chuck, sausage (you name it, really) so he could blow away his friends at the barbecue.



He liked the butcher shop so much, he bought it last year. Some things he kept the same, and some things he changed to make it even more of a place for meat connoisseurs.

Baumann's makes its own jerky on site, and it's plenty good. Ditto the sausage, which is gorgeous and smooth-tasting at the first bite, but, as Lucas puts it, "It's got a bit of a runner in there." (Translation: The heat builds.) In one corner are the locavore goods — steaks and sausages and fish from Missouri and Southern Illinois.

The main draw, though, is the meat counter itself. It's stainless steel and tall, and behind it stands a grinning Jim Lucas, who is more than delighted to talk cuts and how to cook them. After a while Lucas excuses himself: A guy's come in to buy a few steaks. He's going to the lake this weekend.