

Drop in for a Pint and a Certified Angus Steak at The Keating Channel Pub and Grill



If you work in the Port Lands, you almost certainly know about The Keating Channel Pub and Grill. More likely, you have dropped in for a fast-and-tasty lunch, or a pint of one of the establishment's 18 draught beers. If you're a regular, owner Shakir "Shaq" Omar has probably greeted you warmly, by name. "We know nearly everyone on a first-name basis," said Shaq, adding that the pub has occasionally hosted celebrities such as Alannah Myles and Tom Cochrane, and even served as a filming location for movies such as *The Lost Girl*. "It's a casual, and very fun place." Located at 2 Villiers Street, and featuring a 275-seat waterside patio, an impressive view of downtown Toronto and 150 spaces of free parking, The Keating Channel Pub and Grill has a long history in the Port Lands. From 1979 to 2000, it was an Irish-themed pub, owned by the legendary Irish Rovers band. With an impressive 28 years in the hospitality industry, Shaq himself has a connection to that period of the bar's history: he started out as Corporate Chef, and worked his way up to become General Manager before the Rovers decided to get out of the bar business. After laying vacant for several years, the site was reborn as an "Old Town Toronto"-style gastropub in January 2004, featuring a plethora of vintage photographs and other reminders of Toronto's past.

While the Port Lands have been extensively redeveloped over the past decade, The Keating Channel Pub and Grill remains the only real bar in the area. Before it opened, local workers were forced to brown-bag their lunches because there simply wasn't anywhere else to go.

While the pub is certainly a popular location for drinks, especially with sports teams who play nearby at the Cherry Beach Sports Fields, Shaq noted that his establishment is known for its food, and that half its revenues are generated by the 70 menu items prepared by head chef Balan Balavijith. "We specialize in steaks," replied Shaq when he was asked to recommend the pub's signature dish. For years, Shaq has insisted on serving only certified Angus beef to customers, and he is committed to maintaining high standards. The Keating Channel Pub and Grill is open seven days a week and is available for catering and private parties. For more information, please visit www.keatingchannelpub.com.