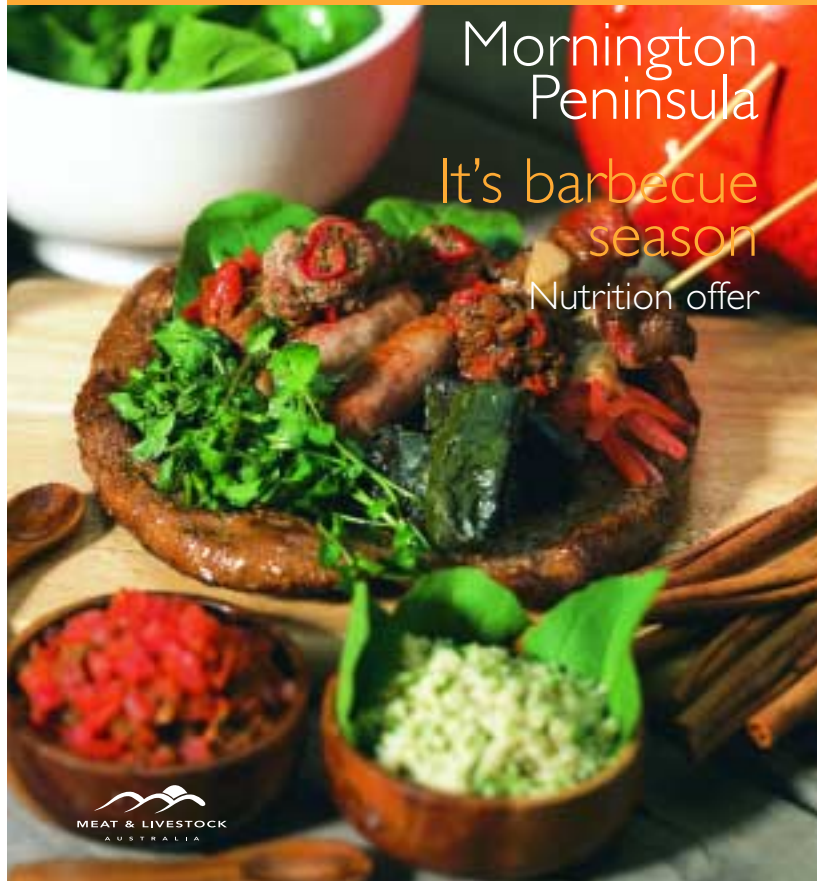


chef'Special

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Mornington
Peninsula
It's barbecue
season
Nutrition offer




MEAT & LIVESTOCK
AUSTRALIA

f r o m t h e e d i t o r

chef's special

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Cover

Mediterranean Style goat on it's
own bread plate with cous cous
and tomato dip.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the latest issue of *Chef's Special*.

Spring is well and truly with us, and planning is underway for the busy Christmas and holiday season. In this issue, we also help you look ahead to the summer and beyond.

As the peak barbecue season approaches, we look at the enduring appeal of the cook-your-own pub barbecue. Just why do we love it so much? We also have some suggestions for native Australian ingredients and the barbecue, courtesy of Vic Cherikoff from Cherikoff Food Services Pty Ltd.

We've even got some beef and lamb suggestions for your Christmas Day buffet, so don't be a turkey!

We look at lamb's year-round relevance (it's not just for spring), visit the award-winning Magnums Bistro in McLaren Vale, and profile the cuisine of the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria. Finally, we celebrate the rebirth of the Wellington.

Nutrition is an issue of increasing interest to us all, a trend that is likely to continue as the population ages. Authoritative new research on beef and lamb in the Australian diet has just been released by the Red Meat & Health Expert Advisory Committee, and *Chef's Special* is giving you the opportunity to receive a free summary. For your copy of *'The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets'* (expert summary), just fill in the coupon on the opposite page. Don't miss out!

Culinary regards



Lachlan Bowtell
National Operations Manager, Marketing
Meat and Livestock Australia

Get the latest nutrition news on red meat

A new report from the Red Meat & Health Expert Advisory Committee has given Australian beef and lamb a major endorsement as having "an important place in a healthy diet".

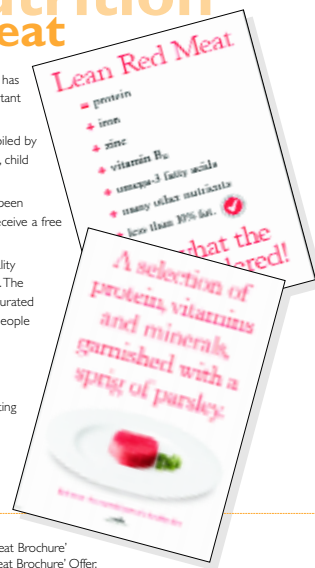
The report – *The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets* – was compiled by a group of experts and academics in areas such as nutrition, public health, child health, gastroenterology and food science.

A brief summary of the report, designed for the general reader, has also been produced, and Meat & Livestock Australia is offering you the chance to receive a free copy! Simply fill out the form below and send it to us.

The report said red meat is important in healthy diets, supplying high-quality protein, easily-absorbed iron, zinc and vitamin B12, among other nutrients. The Committee also concluded that red meat is not a major source of fat, saturated fat or cholesterol in the Australian diet, and is therefore appropriate for people who suffer, or are at risk of suffering, heart disease.

It also concluded that lean red meat is not linked to the development of colorectal cancers, provided it is cooked without excessive charring.

Commonwealth Government guidelines suggest Australians should be eating meat 3-4 times each week, with a recommended serving size of 100g for women and 125g for men. However, research indicates that 50% of women and 40% of men eat red meat less often than this.



YES

Please send me a free copy of 'The Role of Red Meat Brochure'
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WHY AUSSIE MEN LOVE the thrill c

IS IT A LAST REMAINING VESTIGE OF HUNTER-GATHERER INSTINCTS? AN EXAMPLE OF THE CONTROL FREAK WITHIN? OR JUST A UNIQUE SOCIAL PHENOMENON?

Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that Australians – and men in particular – love nothing better than to stand around a barbecue, drink in one hand, tongs in the other – even when they're eating at the local.

Chef's Special spoke to 3 hotels offering a "barbecue-your-own" option, 2 in Sydney and another in Perth, in an effort to understand the enduring appeal of this casual dining format.

The Oaks Hotel, Neutral Bay NSW

The Oaks is one of Sydney's longest-established hotels, and has been offering "cook-your-own" for at least a decade. And, says the hotel's Denise Brinson, "they're still coming – in their thousands!".

While the clientele changes from day-to-day, with a big business crowd on weekdays, young people and families on weekends, and even regular visits from a local mothers' group, Ms Brinson reports that, if there's a man in the group, he's most likely to take the tongs.

The Oaks offers MSA-graded steaks, and is currently offering "the best meat we've ever had", although its supplier has not

changed for many years. Top sellers are Scotch fillet (rib-eye) and rump, which sell "neck-and-neck". Accompaniments include a range of house-made salads, which move so quickly "we can hardly keep up".

However, Ms Brinson contends the meat on offer is "too good to cover up with a sauce".

She is unsure why the concept has worked so well, for so long, at The Oaks, but notes its longevity means people know they can go The Oaks for this type of meal.

"It's hard to know, because if you put it on in another hotel, it might not work...it works here at The Oaks, and we're lucky that it does!" she says.

Apart from top quality meat and fresh accompaniments, Ms Brinson nominates fastidious hygiene and the right price-point as important. As she sums it up "It's easy – they don't have to fire up the barbie – and they get a good cut of steak for a reasonable price, with salads and so on."



Steak and salad at The Oaks.

The Mean Fiddler Tavern, Kellyville NSW

At The Mean Fiddler – a popular barbecue venue which has been open for 5 years – manager Grant Iverson sees the appeal of cook-your-own as part of a wider movement in the hotel industry.

"With pubs now, there's a social aspect coming back – it's not just a place to drink. Like a lot of good pubs now, alcohol is the last part of the equation – we put the emphasis on food, entertainment,

presentation, service and security. If you get those things right, the alcohol sales will follow anyway," he said.

He sees cook-your-own as part of that social atmosphere, and the tavern certainly has the sales to prove it. The menu features 7 items, of which 3 are cook-your-own, these 3 items account for 80% of turnover.

Of these items, by far the most popular are the steaks, a 300g premium rump and a smaller rib-eye. With 2,500 cook-your-own meals each week, the steaks account for around 1,000 each. Both cuts are MSA-graded, and each is sourced from a different wholesaler.



Outdoor seating at The Oaks.

of the grill

Mr Iverson believes it's important to offer superior quality meat, precisely because it's not being professionally cooked – a margin for error. While 2-3 people in a group might participate in the cooking, it's men who predominate, making up 80% of cooks.

Accompaniments include a range of salads – which change from summer to winter – plus potatoes and a bread roll. Condiments include tomato, barbecue and sweet chilli sauces.

There's a focus on quality and hygiene, with one staff member fully focussed on the state of the barbecues, and another at the salad bar (which also helps keep little hands out of the salads).

"We try to keep things clean and well-presented 100% of the time, because with the volumes we're doing, we can afford to, and because it's important," Mr Iverson said.

Gosnells Hotel, Gosnells WA

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, the popularity of cook-your-own in Perth hotels shows it is far from being an east-coast phenomenon.

At the Gosnells Hotel, the concept attracts families, tourists, sporting clubs – even diners from the city's posher suburbs, such as Dalkeith, which would normally be considered outside its natural catchment.

"People like the idea of a barbecue with their friends and family where they just have to cook the meat, and where they can eat it indoors – and there's lots of rooms for the kids to run around," said Chef Ray Styles.

As with the other two venues we spoke to, the Gosnells Hotel reports that men tend to be the ones wielding the tongs most of the time.

The hotel offers a range of MSA-graded cuts, including top-sellers porterhouse and sirloin, tenderloin and rump.



Chef Ray Styles



Grilling times at Perth's Gosnell Hotel.



Select your steak

Rump steaks are especially popular with tourists from Japan, who will often have their photographs taken with the meat before they cook it!

Accompaniments include a range of salads, vegetables and a selection of condiments. Diners can also create their own gravy at a bar offering plain gravy, mushrooms, peppercorns etc.

A "degrees of doneness" cooking chart near the barbecue area, which includes suggested cooking

times for the desired result, has been a real hit. Customers no longer ask staff for advice on how long to cook their steaks, whereas before, Mr Styles says, "it used to be constant".

The consistency of the MSA-graded beef has also been a plus.

"You really can't fault it," Mr Styles said of the grading scheme.

"We very rarely get a complaint about the meat now. The last one was a bloke complaining that his steak was too well-done: we said we couldn't do anything about that, because he'd cooked it himself!"

industry profile

Wine country bistro takes major meat award





A HOTEL BISTRO IN THE MCLAREN VALE WINE AREA HAS TAKEN OUT A MAJOR SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MEAT INDUSTRY AWARD, THANKS LARGELY TO THE EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY OF THE BEEF IT SERVES.

At the recent 2001 South Australian Meat Industry Awards for Excellence, Magnums Bistro, in the historic Hotel McLaren, won the foodservice and hospitality category. Richard Gow, a director of the company which owns the hotel, said the award was a reward for the hotel's investment in meat quality.

McLaren Vale was originally surveyed in 1839, and the first villages were established during the 1840s. The town of McLaren Vale is home to more than 40 vineyards and wineries, including the historic Hardy's and Seaview wineries.

Situated in the town's main street, the heritage-listed hotel has been owned by interests associated with the Hardy wine family since 1878. Its restaurant – Magnums Bistro – features polished timber, a garden outlook and views through the atrium of an impressive 150-year-old Moreton Bay fig.

"It's a nice restaurant, but it's not fine dining," Mr Gow observes. "We try to keep it casual, like a hotel bistro should be."

The varied clientele includes international business travellers, tourists – especially on weekends, as Adelaide's CBD is only 30-40 minutes' drive away – as well as plenty of locals. The 100-seat bistro serves around 1,000 meals each week.

The meat industry prize is largely a recognition of the hotel's efforts to improve the quality of its steaks. Late last year, the hotel identified a new beef supplier, and the MSA-graded Murray Grey beef they are now purchasing from a NSW producer has been a great success. "We were looking for something a bit different to offer our customers, and being a



Murray Grey producer myself, I was keen to source that breed, rather than something like Angus or Hereford," Mr Gow said. "We're very proud of the product, and we make a point of promoting it within the business – on the menu, on flyers and so on."

Char-grilled steaks on offer include a 300g rump (also sold through the front bar for counter meals), a 300g porterhouse and a 500g prime rib on the bone, all served with a choice of sauces. There's also the "Magnums Mignon" – again 300g – and a Surf 'n Turf option.

"We do a lot of traditional beef lines, but they go so well that we don't really need to go outside those boundaries," Mr Gow said, adding that head chef Mark Smitheman's mushroom sauce "is to die for".

The rest of the menu features classic pub fare like roasts and schnitzels, as well as more contemporary dishes displaying Mediterranean and Asian influences. So alongside roast of the day is the pasta of the day, while the savoury crepes are saved from retro by a filling flavoured with Thai yellow curry. Mr Gow describes it as "modern Australian, with something for everyone".

Lamb racks are a popular offering on the weekly specials board, and the double-braised lamb shanks are almost a signature dish, so popular that people reserve their serving when they call to book a table!

Mr Gow is convinced that the Meat Standards Australia (MSA) eating quality assurance scheme has been of great benefit to the foodservice industry.

"MSA is a godsend – it's put some consistency back into the product. Our problem has always been to get a consistent product, and this takes the guesswork out of ordering," he added.



A lamb for all seasons

Right now, we're all licking our lips over the tender, delicately-flavoured lamb which makes this time of year such a pleasure for lamb devotees. But there's more to lamb than spring lamb, and today there's no reason not to serve – and enjoy – top quality lamb all year round.

The increasing number of specialist and branded lamb producers are all aiming to give you the most consistent product possible. Through feed regimens and other innovations, they are countering the toughness which we once expected of winter lamb.

Of course, traditional recipes often reflect the seasonality of ingredients for example, a classic navarin printanier was a spring dish, designed to match tender spring lamb with fresh young white turnips, new potatoes and young carrots and

onions. Equally, the Nepalese *gorkhali* lamb was a summer preparation, when tomato and capsicum were abundant, while Iran's *dolmeh beh* – quinces stuffed with a mixture of spiced minced lamb and baked – originated as a delicacy for autumn. And Scotland's haggis, with its traditional accompaniments of bashed neeps (swede puree), potatoes and whisky, was a dish for the depths of winter.

Australia's diverse climate zones mean this type of strict seasonality no longer applies to fruit and vegetables, with a few exceptions. However, produce is generally at its best when it's most available, so the seasons still have an impact on ingredients, as well as the style of a dish. And since every season of the year yields ingredients which make perfect partners for lamb, it would be a shame not to enjoy it more often.

As we head into summer, think lamb salads, light lamb noodle dishes, kebabs and grills. Complementary summer flavours

might include asparagus, zucchini flowers, snake beans, eggplant, tomatoes, figs and stonefruit, as well as basil and rosemary. Be creative during the festive season (see page 12), and into the New Year and holiday period – there's more to life than turkey and seafood!

Of course, lamb is an ideal choice to enjoy on Australia Day – after all, it's "the flavour of Australia". Barbecued, of course.

Make the menu even more patriotic by using Australian ingredients like lemon aspen juice, native thyme, native pepperberries or akudjura (see page 14 for more ideas). Moving into autumn, it's time to start thinking about more substantial, warming dishes featuring lamb. Seasonal partners include pumpkin, chestnuts, fennel, tatsoi, kipfler potatoes and quinces. Pulses are also excellent with lamb, and a natural for

the cooler months. Of course, lamb is a traditional choice for Easter Sunday – try a traditional Greek *lambrotis andros*, a whole roasted baby lamb stuffed with spinach, feta and rice.

Once winter bites in earnest, braises, curries and hearty soups are called for. Spice mixes like the North African *chermoula*, South Indian *sambar powder* or Moroccan *ras el hanout* add flavour, fragrance and a touch of heat. Team lamb with sweet potato, spinach, cumquats, Jerusalem

artichokes, celeriac, baby beetroot and bok choy.

Lamb's wide range of cuts, and the way it works with other flavours, make it a meat for all seasons – not just spring. While new season's lamb remains a special treat, quality lamb is available all year round.

Lamb rump on creamed polenta with baby onions
Murray Williams - Baguette Restaurant QLD



We love our
Lamb





Clay baked lamb Leg cooked in embers.

Recipe:

1 medium size lamb leg
 Assorted fresh herbs
 Flaked sea salt
 5kg Terracotta potting clay

It is important to start the pit fire in enough time for the embers to gain heat.

Rub the lamb leg with sea salt and fresh herbs then leave to stand for 1 hour.

Seal the lamb leg in a large frying pan until golden brown.

Roll out the clay on a non-stick surface i.e. silicone paper until about 5 millimeters thick.

Lay lamb leg face down and wrap clay around it being careful not to split. Cut off any excess and have a bit of fun decorating with more clay.

Whilst clay is still wet insert a meat thermometer into the leg so you can check later using the same hole. Move some of the coals aside and lay the leg directly onto the coals and cover with the rest. Add more wood if necessary to keep the heat constant. Keep checking with a meat thermometer until the temperature reaches 55 degrees, cooking should take around 2 hours when cooked, crack open the clay and carve away.

r e g i o n a l p r o f i l e

Mornington Peninsula



The Peppers Delgany country house hotel

The Mornington Peninsula is Victoria's holiday playground, with its beaches, national parks, historic sites and Australia's greatest concentration of quality golf courses.

Frankston, gateway to the Peninsula, is just one hour's drive from Melbourne, and Portsea, at the tip of the Peninsula, an hour more, making the region easily accessible to visitors.

And since the 1970s, the Mornington peninsula has established another claim to fame, with more than 100 vineyards.

Chardonnay is the major variety but the region is probably better known for its cool-climate pinot noir and pinot gris.

Historically the major produce of the area has been fruit and seafood, but today there are a range of market gardens, orchards, herb farms and cheesemakers supplying the local foodservice operators.

At the 5-star Lindenderry at Red Hill resort, executive chef Martin Bainbridge uses local berries, cherries, quinces, lettuce and cheeses, including a fresh goat curd which he serves in a smoked tomato soufflé. He's in no doubt about the pleasures of working in the region.

"Being so close to Melbourne, the people are very food-educated – they know good food, good ingredients, and they certainly know their wine," he says. "They're a clientele that you can experiment on and use new things, and that's always nice for a chef."

The influx of tourists to the area means summer is far busier than winter, and menus tend to change dramatically in style between the two seasons.

"We tend to do more complex dishes in winter, and in summer everyone lightens it up and simplifies things," Mr Bainbridge said. "To some extent, it's a matter of what a kitchen can physically produce."

He believes a Mornington Peninsula cuisine is "very much a

work in progress", and it is still a little difficult to get growers to produce anything outside their "traditional boundaries". But none of the local restaurants is doing the same thing for years on end, which makes for an exciting local food scene.

"The wines down here are getting better and better, and the chefs have risen to the challenge and are producing food that can stand with the wines," he said.

Mr Bainbridge said there was great local interest in food. A chef's table held monthly at Lindenderry's The Linden Tree restaurant, which features a 5-6 course degustation menu with specially selected wines, is booked out two months in advance.

"There seems to be a lot of young chefs coming through and making their mark, both here and in Melbourne – a bit of a changing of the guard," he noted. "It's very exciting, because these guys bring new flavours, new ideas and new ways of looking at food, which augurs well for dining on the Peninsula."

The Peppers Delgany country house hotel at Portsea is a Victorian icon, and its Castle restaurant is respected and influential. Executive chef Craig Gorton describes the Peninsula as "a fantastic area", praising its wineries, beaches, proximity to Melbourne, gold courses and produce. He is also very happy with his Hermann Schneider-designed kitchen at Delgany, saying it is "one of the best equipped and designed kitchens" he has worked in.

Mr Gorton uses local fruit, lettuces, herbs, tomatoes, seafood, cheese and Stoney Creek preserves from Shoreham – he's particularly impressed by their raspberry jam. He believes all the local chefs make an effort to feature local produce.

"Hopefully, if we keep on the way we're going, one day there will be such a thing as a Mornington peninsula cuisine," he commented. "But it won't be the same sort of strict regional cuisine you see in Italy or France – we're too eclectic."

Wine seems to be a recurring motif in Mr Gorton's life – he

served his apprenticeship in the Hunter Valley, works on the Mornington Peninsula, and his parents own a winery in Mudgee. He sees a bright future for the Peninsula region.

"The quality of the restaurants has definitely been going up for the 3 years I have been here, and with experienced chefs and young Australian chefs moving into the area, it has to be a good thing for food and wine on the Peninsula," he said.

Many credit Hermann Schneider with kick-starting the Mornington Peninsula's food scene when he moved from Melbourne to Delgany in the mid-1980s. Today, the Schneider family runs Arthur's Peak, a restaurant and function centre on the spectacular Arthur's Seat.

"Delgany was a very different food operation to the one we're running now," Mr Schneider notes. "Here, we are catering for a vastly greater market – everyday tourists, functions and special occasions, and still a lot of support from people in Melbourne – it's a broader market with a more casual emphasis."

The more casual venue has seen a move away from what Mr Schneider calls "the absolutely prime cuts". Instead of lamb racks, he now features lamb chump (rump), and instead of beef tenderloin, he now uses striploin.

Mr Schneider uses a wide range of local ingredients, including berries, vegetables and seafood. More than this, he says working in a wine-producing region "influences our selection of dishes" to a significant extent.

"I strongly believe that the ingredients should be complementary rather than dominant, because of the produce itself, but also because highly-seasoned dishes

destroy the flavour of the wine," he said.

"Food and wine have always been – and are becoming more and more so – great partners. It's important that dishes are wine-friendly"

He added that some "very attractive cuisines" simply do not complement

wine, especially those which are very heavily spiced. In addition, it's important to let the flavours of the main ingredients shine through.

"Our quality of meat is good, so you don't need to mask it or use very strong flavours – let the quality of the meat be the main flavour of the dish."

Food and wine are not the only things Mr Schneider enjoys about the Mornington Peninsula. "I love the enthusiasm of a lot of the people down here", he said.



Lindenderry at Red Hill

Dishes from The Linden Tree, Lindenderry at Red Hill:

- New season's lamb rump with a potato mousseline, fresh spinach and truffle-roasted baby beetroots with lemon-peach chutney
- Fillet of beef on a crab & pea risotto with roasted pearl onions and a fresh tomato relish

Dishes from Castle, Peppers Delgany:

- Char-grilled beef fillet Rossini with a Heidi gruyere & potato gratin and creamed spinach
- Roast saddle of lamb filled with spinach and raisins, served on potato roesti with sweetbreads, lamb's tongue and Madeira jus
- Poached beef fillet rolled in sweet herbs with set consommé, blue cheese and white truffle aioli
- Roast saddle of lamb in shiitake mushroom mousseline with buttered kipfler potatoes and broad beans
- Roasted lamb loin with mushroom custard, white asparagus and parsley & hazelnut vinaigrette

Dishes from Arthur's Peak Restaurant:

- Oven-baked spring lamb chump (rump) served with fresh broad beans, baby turnips and carrots and fresh young peas
- Beef sirloin, served with a shallot & red wine mustard butter

l o o k i n g a h e a d

THE CHRISTMAS TABLE:

DARE to be different

WHAT WITH CHRISTMAS IN JULY AND THE EVER-LENGTHENING CORPORATE CHRISTMAS PARTY SEASON, BY THE TIME DECEMBER 25 ACTUALLY ROLLS AROUND, THERE ARE PLENTY OF DINERS FOR WHOM HAM IS HUMDRUM AND TURKEY IS TEDIOUS. SO WHY NOT ADD SOME INTEREST TO YOUR CHRISTMAS DAY BUFFET WITH DELICIOUS AUSTRALIAN BEEF AND LAMB.



Our festive season bias to pig and poultry is a relatively recent development – once upon a time, choices weren't so narrow. In Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (1843), we are told that at Fezziwig's Christmas party "there was a great piece of Cold Roast and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled". While the meat is not explicitly identified, it is most likely to have been either beef or mutton.

Turkey became the Yuletide roast-of-choice in some Northern Hemisphere countries for reasons of climate – it was one of the few animals which could provide a large roast in mid-winter. Goose gained popularity in other countries for the same reason. But surely, with out summertime Christmas, these historical considerations should not affect festive menus in Australia.

And as for the "new" Christmas trend – the cold seafood buffet – how long does something stay new? Seafood buffets are now ubiquitous, not just at Christmas but throughout the year. Time and temperature are also of greater concern when it comes to seafood, whether cooked or raw, due to the potential for spoilage or contamination.

Beef and lamb roasts can present spectacularly – a saddle of lamb or baron of beef (double striploin plus rump) are both imposing cuts. But even the more familiar roasting cuts can be presented in delicious and interesting ways.

What about a lamb leg pit-roasted in clay (see page 9), or a Jubilee lamb leg? For added aroma, you may choose to use a covered (kettle-style) barbecue to cook a butterflied or tunnel-boned lamb leg – flavours can range from Mediterranean garlic, lemon and rosemary to the complexity and richness of a Malaysian perchick, flavoured with Spanish onion, garlic, ginger, dry-roasted cumin, turmeric, palm sugar, garam masala and dried cranberry raisins, then basted with a sauce of coconut milk, coconut cream, lime juice, kaffir lime leaves and lemongrass. Lamb racks can be ordered as a crown rack (talk to your wholesaler) or presented as a "guard of honour" for added impact.

Beef cuts to consider could include a whole rump, rib eye or

Scotch Fillet with Honey Mustard Glaze

3.5 Kg piece Scotch fillet, trimmed and tied with string

3 tbspn olive oil

1 tbspn butter

Freshly ground black pepper

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1 cup seeded mustard

1/2 cup honey

Pre-heat oven to 220°C. In a large baking dish heat butter and oil on stove top until foaming. Add scotch fillet and cook over moderate heat until lightly browned and sealed on all sides. Place in oven and allow to cook for 10 minutes before reducing oven temperature to 190°C. Allow to roast for 30 minutes. Remove from oven.

Combine mustard and honey and spread over surface of fillet. Return to oven and allow to cook further 25-30 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to rest for 20 minutes before carving.

Tip: Use pan juices to make sauce

SERVES 10-12

striploin, or the small and tender eye of rump. The rostbiff – prepared from the rump – also presents well, while some processors are creating impressive carvery roasts from the leg (shank). Festive beef roasts may be enhanced by the use of crusts, studs, bastes or spice rubs. Wholegrain mustard is a great basis for a herbed crust, but can also be used as a baste, when combined with beer, cracked pepper and thyme. Or go for something more exotic, like a spicy Jamaican jerk seasoning (allspice, chilli, ginger, black pepper and thyme), fragrant Middle Eastern baharat, or a house-made infused oil. Again, you may choose to use a kettle barbecue for the special flavour and fragrance it lends to meat. There are also plenty of delicious hot- and cold-smoked beef and lamb products now available, to add extra depth and interest to your Christmas buffet.

Jubilee Lamb

2 large legs of lamb

2-3 tbspn olive oil

1 tspn sea salt

freshly ground black pepper

4 cloves garlic, peeled and cut into slivers

20 small sprigs rosemary - approx 3cm long

1 cup redcurrant jelly

Pre-heat oven to 220°C. Combine oil with salt and pepper and rub lamb all over with mixture. With a small sharp knife make small incisions - approx 1.5-2cm deep in lamb at regular intervals. Insert garlic and rosemary sprigs, creating a diamond pattern. Place lamb in racks in a large baking dish and place in oven, allow to roast for 25 minutes. Reduce temperature to 180° and continue to cook for further 25 minutes. Remove from oven and spoon redcurrant jelly over lamb. Return to oven and allow to cook for further 25-30 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to rest 15-20 minutes before carving.

SERVES 10

Flavouring meats with marinades, seasonings and rubs with **Australian** rare herbs & spices

Vic Cherikoff
Cherikoff Food Services Pty Ltd.



As the season of slow-cooked meat dishes comes to an end, many of us are looking for ways to add flavour to meat while maximising its tenderness and appearance. Many chefs will opt to use marinades, rubs and other seasonings. But these are not ideal in every situation.

You may have noticed it can be difficult to cook marinated beef, veal or lamb to a pink centre, and that it tends to brown more quickly than meat which has not been marinated. This effect comes from using a marinade which is high in acid – from vinegar, tomato juice or sauce, lemon juice etc. This acid reacts with the red pigment in meat (myoglobin), turning it brown.

So what about using herb mixes or flavoured salts as marinades? Well, unfortunately, these coat the surface of meats, but do not penetrate far without a liquid carrier. They can certainly be used to add a visual effect, but the flavour is generally destroyed by the heat of cooking. Additionally, adding salt pulls juices from the centre of the meat, causing it to dry out. But there are plenty of ways to add flavour to meat without compromising its tenderness, juiciness or presentation. This is where native Australian ingredients really come into their own, particularly since many of the most popular ones are heat-sensitive.

Once the meat cut is fully cooked and resting in a warm place, it begs to be seasoned with herb and spice mixtures including ingredients such as lemon myrtle, native thyme, pepperberries or akudjura. Interestingly many of these herbs are also good anti-oxidants, slowing the oxidation of fats, which is a benefit for pre-prepared dishes and manufactured meals.

Incidentally it should be stated that if a braise or stir fry is to be made, then marinating is totally appropriate. Some great Australian flavours for beef

marinades include lemon aspen (with chilli or garlic), mountain pepper BBQ sauce, or riberry and Davidson plum with wasabi. For lamb, complementary flavours include Australian native mint or native peppermint, and ginger or curry-spiced marinades, enhanced with forestberry. Our Australian native thyme, lemon aspen and muntharies are particularly suited to marinades for veal.

But it's barbecue season, so what about native Australian ingredients for the grill? As well as the sprinkles mentioned above, to be used once the meat is cooked, there are plenty of other options.

Why not try grilled beef kebab sticks, scented by finishing with a sprinkle of lemon myrtle, and served with spectacular grilled wild lime quarters? Barbecued beef ribs get a real flavour hit if basted with an Illawarra plum-chilli sauce, while mountain pepper barbecue sauce is great on a char-grilled burger.

Add interest to steak with a post-cooking splash of lemon aspen syrup, a sprinkle of native pepperberries or a whipped butter flavoured with pepperberries, gumleaf oil or akudjura. Or add elegant piquancy with a riberry jus.



Lamb is not forgotten, and finds plenty of partners among Australian native ingredients. Try coating a lamb tenderloin or backstrap with our Red Desert seasoning, and serving it flame-blackened.

For a spectacular presentation, pre-braise lamb shanks with lemon aspen and ginger, then wrap in paperbark and "smoke" by blackening the bark on the grill. Add richness and bite to char-grilled new-season's lamb with a sauce of Davidson's plum and port wine, or stuff a lamb rump with refried bunya nut and Australian mint.

However, just because you are using exotic native ingredients, don't forget barbecue basics. Make sure you have given the barbecue long enough to reach the desired heat, and that the grid or plate is lightly oiled so the meat doesn't stick.

Don't turn meat too often - a rare steak should only need turning once, and 3 times should be the maximum, even for well-done. Excessive turning toughens meat by "stewing" it due to a lack of time and heat.

Test for doneness by pressing the meat with tongs - rare meat will be springy to touch, medium firmer and well done very firm indeed. Rest meat in a warm place to maximise tenderness and juiciness - generally a piece of meat needs to be rested for at least one minute for every 100g of weight, so a 300g steak would need to be rested for at least 3 minutes.

Why not create your own signature barbecue dishes using Australian native ingredients and Australian beef and lamb?



Twice-cooked braised shanks with glazed baby onions and quandong, served with native minted sweetpea risott.

The Wellington rises again



Classic beef and lamb Wellingtons with bouquet of vegetables.

The date of its creation is uncertain, but it is believed the recipe was already known across the Atlantic by the late 19th century. Beef Wellington later enjoyed a second life, as the dinner party staple of '70s suburbia. Since then, apart from a strange affinity with wedding reception menus, this dish has languished as an historical oddity, until very recently. But now, many chefs are rediscovering its appeal, especially for special occasion and function menus, and even producing lamb versions.

The classic Beef Wellington was a beef eye fillet, seared, coated in mushroom duxelles and then wrapped in puff pastry, roasted to golden perfection and served with a Madeira sauce. The 20th century version often used pâté and whole or sliced mushrooms, rather than the duxelles, and a greater diversity of sauces was introduced.

Today, individual Wellingtons, Wellington tart canapes, classic Beef Wellington and newcomer Lamb Wellington all add a touch of luxury to menus. This classic combo is also a wonderful foil to full-bodied red wines, which can overwhelm less

forthright flavours. The clean flavour of the meat, richness of the mushrooms and or pâté and delicious crunch of pastry are being enjoyed by a new generation of diners, and after decades in the culinary wilderness, the Duke is claiming his rightful place again.

Its creation is shrouded in mystery – was it the Iron Duke's favourite dish, or was it named because its shape resembled his famous boots? – but there's no doubt that Beef Wellington was named to honour Arthur Wellesley (1769-1852), Duke of Wellington and victor at Waterloo.

Perhaps the English felt it was only fair to honour their hero with a fine dish – Napoleon, after all, had his cook create a special recipe to commemorate his victory at Marengo in 1800 (veal Marengo). And a beef dish was especially appropriate for the man who launched a thousand pubs, since he was felt to embody traditional English qualities of the old school.

Why not increase your sales and put a lamb or beef Wellington on your menu? Let us know what your customers think by writing to us at: Chef's Special PO Box 1514 Crows Nest 2065