

chef'Special

ISSN 1444-223X

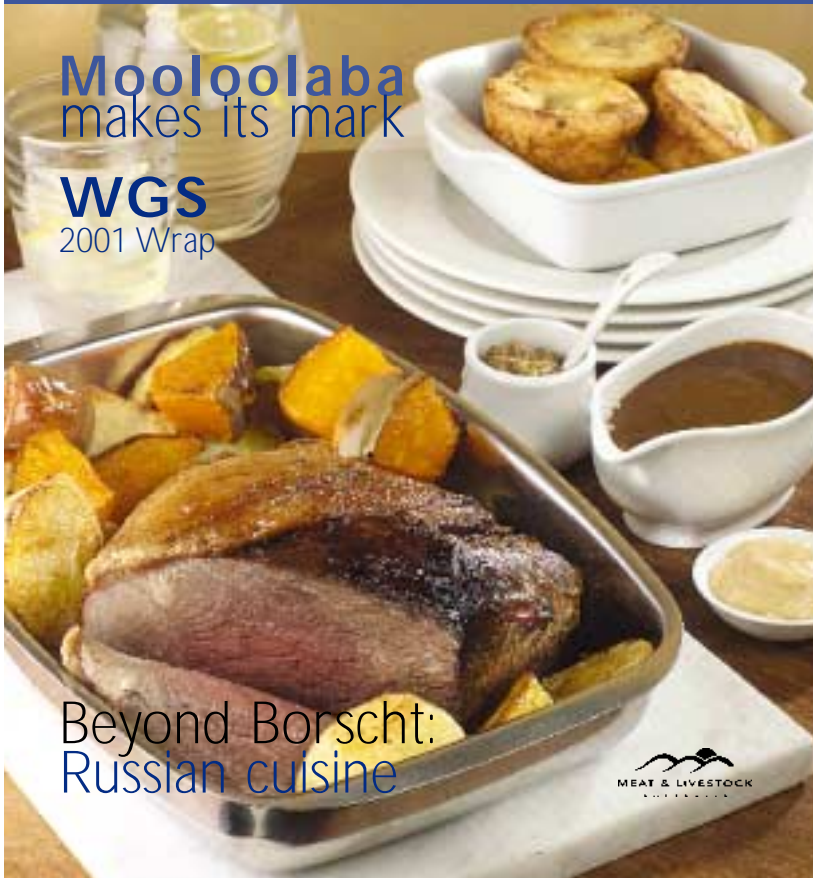
issue 36/may 2001

Mooloolaba
makes its mark

WGS
2001 Wrap

Beyond Borscht:
Russian cuisine


MEAT & LIVESTOCK
AUSTRALIA



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

chef's special

PHONE 1800 5500 17

NSW/ACT:

Level 1, 165 Walker Street,
North Sydney NSW 2060

VIC/TAS:

832 High Street,
East Kew VIC 3102

QLD:

Level 3, Milton Business Centre
349 Coronation Drive,
Milton QLD 4064

SA/NT:

2 Portrush Road,
Payneham SA 5070

WA:

Suite 7, 7 The Esplanade
Mt Pleasant WA 6153

Cover: Roast beef with individual
Yorkshire puddings, root vegetables
and traditional condiments.

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Livestock Australia Limited (MLA)
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from the editor

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

The last, lingering warmth of summer is well and truly behind us, and it's time for rich, hearty and satisfying meat dishes to drive away the chills!

In a nod to the cooler weather, this issue includes an article on the traditional cuisine of Russia, a country which really understands cold! But we also look at the booming Queensland tourist town of Mooloolaba, where a surge in tourist numbers is driving an explosion in dining.

We look at the correct way to cut meat for a range of different Asian cuisines - what's the difference in width between slices for *sukiyaki* and those for *shabu shabu*? And we look at Anthony Flowers at the Stamford Plaza Hotel in Sydney, a boutique, all-suite operation with an emphasis on quality food.

There's all the latest from MLA's trip to the World Gourmet Summit 2001 - don't miss out next year! And finally - for something completely different - we take a look at a new pairing of flavours, "Lamb & Dam?".

Meat & Livestock Australia has some fantastic new beef and lamb cuts charts available. These fantastic charts would make an attractive and extremely useful addition to any professional kitchen. Just fill out the form opposite to receive your free copy (and don't say we never give you anything). As always, we look forward to your feedback on the magazine, and what sort of topics you'd like to see covered. ■



Culinary regards
Lachlan Bowtell
National Operations Manager, Marketing
Meat and Livestock Australia

Winners all round in MSA promotion



Executive Chef Martin Webster Williams and (above) one of the beef dishes featured during the promotion.

A menu promotion featuring guaranteed-tender MSA beef has boosted beef sales significantly at Sydney's Blacktown Workers' Club.

The MSA - (Meat Standards Australia) - program is designed to make it simpler to buy beef and have confidence in its eating quality. This is backed by a tenderness guarantee, as long as the recommended cooking method is used.

The system was developed following the world's largest product testing programme, with more than 14,000 cuts of beef subjected to 140,000 consumer tests.

Blacktown Workers' Club Catering Manager John Joyce says that before the club began buying MSA-graded beef, he spent a lot of his time answering diners' complaints about tough steaks. At that point, the club was buying carton beef at the lowest price.

"Since changing over to MSA beef (in August last year), complaints have dropped to virtual zero and trade has been steadily building," Mr Joyce said.

He pointed out that recently the club's own General Manager had been unable to get a table at its Parklane Steakhouse without a booking - and that was a Tuesday lunchtime!

The menu promotion, in conjunction with Meat & Livestock Australia, ran for 5 weeks from the final week of February in two of the club's eateries - the Parklane Steakhouse and Hi-Lights Revolving Restaurant. Diners ordering any beef cut were eligible to go into a draw for a Royal Doulton dinner setting for four people. There were also weekly prizes of restaurant vouchers, plus staff incentives.

In the fourth week of the promotion, Mr Joyce revealed it had been a major success, with sales of beef up 30%. The majority of this increase came from Hi-Lights, since the Parklane is a steakhouse and would already be selling a high proportion of beef meals.

"The greatest benefit is making the public aware that we use MSA beef," Mr Joyce said.

"The comments we get back are outstanding. All in all, with MSA beef, the club and the patron win." ■

YES

please send me a free set of Lamb and Beef Cuts Charts

Return this coupon by mail to Chef's Special Cuts Charts Offer,
PO Box 1514, Crows Nest 2065 or by fax (02) 9439 6614

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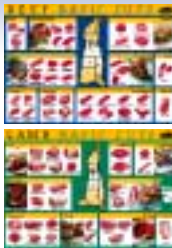
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The Russian word for hospitality, *khlebosol'stvo*, is formed from two words - *khleb*, meaning bread, and *sol*, salt.

This symbolises the pivotal role of hospitality in traditional (pre-Revolutionary) Russian society, from the poorest peasant to the nobility.

Before the 1917 Russian Revolution, in particular, the great majority of Russia's population were peasants, isolated from the few cities by distance and a lack of transport. Most had to provide food for their families from what could be grown on the family farm or gathered nearby.

Bread was the great staple, the dough prepared in the evening and baked in the morning. Rye was the most common grain used - it is easier to grow under Russian conditions than wheat - but millet, wheat and barley could also be used. The resulting bread is dark and heavy with a slightly sour flavour.

Another important food was *kasha*, a preparation of buckwheat grains or groats that could also include a range of other grains. The grains would be fried to brown, then placed in an earthenware pot, covered with water and baked, with more water added as needed. The aim was for the grain to absorb as much water as possible without becoming mushy. *Kasha* could be eaten alone, but stock, meat, vegetables or egg were added when available.

Peasant dinners were traditionally one-pot affairs, accompanied by bread. Soups were favoured as an economical, adaptable choice, well-suited to the weather afflicting much of the country. Many soups were made in different ways according to what was available. Two of the most popular were *shchi* (cabbage soup) and *borsch* or *borscht* (beetroot soup).

Shchi at its simplest was cabbage (fresh in summer, sauerkraut in winter) simmered in water with other vegetables and flavoured with dill or parsley. But a more prosperous family would simmer the soup with a soup bone, or add a rich stock made with beef brisket and marrow-bones. And yet further up the social scale, the soup would be thickened with flour browned in butter, and cooked with a large piece of meat, which was served separately.

Borsch was treated in a similar way according to the family's circumstances, the region they inhabited and the season. (Summer *borsch* is generally meatless). Even at their simplest, these soups added valuable nutrients to a largely grain-based diet. Other popular soups include *okroshka* (chilled beef & vegetable); *rassolnick* (sorrel with kidneys); *miasnaya solianka* (meat soup with tomatoes, onions & cucumbers); and *parcha bozbash* (Azeri lamb soup with chestnuts, quinces and prunes).

Many soups contain *kvas*, a beverage similar to the "small beer" once drunk in western Europe. It can be made from grain, but is more often prepared by soaking leftover black bread in hot water and allowing it to ferment. The end result is used both as an everyday drink and a soup stock.

A number of Russian dishes that we would see as appetisers were actually created to help stretch small amounts of food into a meal. This is especially true of the filled dumplings and pastries like *piroshki*/*pierogi*(e), *varenyky*, Siberian *pelmeni* (frozen on floured boards at the beginning of winter), Uzbek *mantı*, and *vatrushki*. Most are made with a variety of fillings - meat, cabbage, mushroom, sour cherries, cheese, and potato & cheese are all popular - and can be steamed, poached or fried. The *blini*, a yeasted pancake often associated with haute cuisine, was also a rustic invention.



Russian beef with leek and turnip.

Main dishes, as eaten by those who can afford more than soup, range from the familiar to the exotic. *Shashlik* (grilled lamb skewers) and *beef stroganov* (although created by a French chef) are well-known in the West, but what about *kishke*, a combination of spiced beef liver, lung and mince stuffed into beef intestines, simmered until tender and served sliced? *Forshmak* combines minced beef and lamb with salted herring and cheese, while *blinchaty pirog* is a stack of savoury crepes with a meat & mushroom filling and yoghurt sauce. *Golubtsi* (cabbage rolls) can be made with a meat or rice filling, and *kholodetz* is a summer recipe of mixed meats in gelatine with mustard sauce.

Side dishes are largely based on root vegetables, cabbage, mushrooms or dried beans, although a version of the

Hungarian tomato & pepper dish *lecsó* is also enjoyed in season. Salads tend to feature boiled vegetables, fruit & eggs, although a garlic salad (30 cloves for 3 servings!) breaks the mould somewhat.

The cooking of Russia has been strongly influenced by the surrounding countries, now independent but considered a part of the country for many years. Climate and terrain have also played their part, producing a generally frugal cuisine highly dependant on preserved ingredients such as pickled vegetables and smoked or cured meats. The result is that the prevailing heaviness of much Russian food is lifted by the frequent addition of pickles, vinegar, *kvas*, Russian mustard and the like. ■

Peasant simplicity from Russia's wintry heart



feature cut

"Slice thinly" - "Cut into small cubes"

LOOK SHARP: cutting meat for Asian dishes

WHEN IT COMES TO ASIAN RECIPES WRITTEN IN ENGLISH, PRECISION DOESN'T ALWAYS SEEM TO BE A PRIORITY. SO HOW AUTHENTIC ARE YOUR ASIAN AND ASIAN-INFLUENCED MEAT DISHES?

Cuts such as "stir-fry strips" are a Western interpretation, and are not always appropriate if you are seeking an authentic result. If the meat is cut into inappropriately-sized pieces, this can affect the texture and tenderness, degree of doneness, and even the impact of flavourings such as spices. But don't despair!

Chef's Special has done the research, and presents a brief summary below, dealing with several popular cuisines. As you would expect, there are significant differences from country to country and even from region to region.

As a general rule, remember that partially-frozen meat can most easily be sliced thinly and that cutting across the grain will give you a more tender result.

Korea: Strips for the popular Korean barbecue dish *bulgogi* ("fire beef") should be sliced around a third of a centimetre thick (about 3mm), and should be 7.5cm-12.5cm long and 3.75 cm wide. Recommended cuts are Scotch fillet or sirloin, and meat should always be cut across the grain.

Beef short ribs for the Korean dish *kalbi* need to be prepared in a special way. The meat should be sliced thinly while "unrolling" the rib, to give a strip of meat the width of the bone and about 15-20cm long. The meat should be of a uniform thickness, with the bone and cartilage still attached, and should be marinated for a minimum of 2 hours before cooking.

Japan: Beef for *sukiyaki* or the Japanese barbecue-style *yaki niku* should be sliced very thinly - about a third of a centimetre. Ribeye or sirloin are preferred. For ricebowl dishes like *gyudon*, the thin slices are then cut again into bite-sized pieces. For *shabu shabu*, beef needs to be even thinner - no more than 1.5mm. This is because the slices are only in the cooking pot for 5-10 seconds. Sirloin is the traditional cut.

India: Indian food also displays regional differences, both in the way meat is cut for curries and their heat! Aromatic North Indian curries require 5cm cubes, while fiery southern curries use a smaller dice about 2.5cm. This may allow better penetration of other flavours such as spices, due to the greater surface area.



"1 dice" - "Cut into large pieces"

China: Chinese cuisine varies markedly from region to region, so we have examined the regions separately. In western Sichuan, meat is traditionally shredded for dry-frying. Shreds should be 5cm long by 0.6cm. For stir-fry style dishes, meat is cut into a 2cm dice. In nearby Xian, thin slices are often used.

In Canton, beef for stir-fries is cut from a piece which is 2.5cm thick. The resulting slices are 5cm-7.5cm long by 1.25cm. Alternatively, slices can also be cut 2.5cm long and 0.3cm thick. Other Cantonese dishes, especially those using marinades or batters, use a 2.5cm dice or smaller.

In Hunan, meat for twice-cooked dishes is cut 0.6cm by 6cm, while stir-fries call for very thin slices.

The north, around Beijing, is famous for its mutton dishes. Meat is traditionally cut into strips 6cm long, 3cm wide and only 5mm thick.

The Eastern provinces are best known for their "red-cooked" dishes, in which a piece of meat is cooked whole and then sliced for serving. Other slow-cooked dishes and claypots require a small dice.

And Hong Kong-style stir-fries use strips 10cm long and 0.6cm thick.

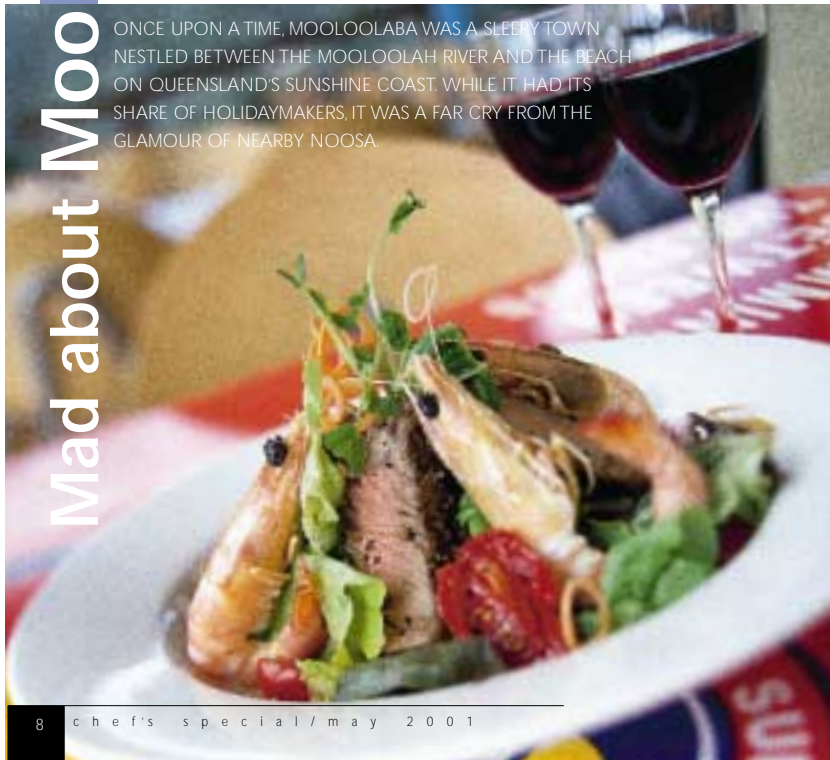
Mongolia: The Mongolian barbecue and Mongolian hot-pot are actually not authentic Mongolian dishes at all, and were probably created in neighbouring countries like China and Tibet. Meat in Mongolia is most often minced and used to stuff dumplings. To help them through winter, Mongolians produce a dried meat called *borts*. The meat is separated from its fat layer and cut into strips 20cm-30cm long and 2cm-5cm thick. It is dried for 4-5 months, then cut into smaller strips for use. If soaked in water, the meat will expand in size up to 2½ times, and should then be cooked for 18 minutes.

Tibet: In Tibet, beef and mutton are also dried for the winter, then barbecued or eaten raw. Water is rarely used in Tibetan cooking, as the altitude means it boils at a much lower temperature than would be the case at sea level. However, one dish - translated as "finger meat" - involves boiling large chunks of meat in a pot. It is served when the colour changes. Tibetan stir-fry dishes call for meat to be cut into strips a third of a centimetre thick and 5cm square. ■

Mad about Mooloolaba



ONCE UPON A TIME, MOOLOOLABA WAS A SLEEPY TOWN NESTLED BETWEEN THE MOOLOOLAH RIVER AND THE BEACH ON QUEENSLAND'S SUNSHINE COAST. WHILE IT HAD ITS SHARE OF HOLIDAYMAKERS, IT WAS A FAR CRY FROM THE GLAMOUR OF NEARBY NOOSA.





David Bryan at the Mooloolaba Surf Club



IN THE PAST 5 TO 7 YEARS, MOOLOOLABA HAS SEEN SOME BIG CHANGES WITH THE ARRIVAL OF HIGH-RISE TOURIST ACCOMMODATION AND AN EXPLOSION IN TOURIST NUMBERS. GIVEN ITS LOCATION, ONLY AN HOUR'S DRIVE NORTH OF BRISBANE AND THE FACT THAT ACCOMMODATION IS MORE REASONABLY PRICED THAN IN THE MORE ESTABLISHED RESORTS, IT'S HARDLY SURPRISING THAT MOOLOOLABA HAS BECOME SO POPULAR.

All those tourists have to eat somewhere, and the town's foodservice sector is growing rapidly, including several al fresco cafes along the waterfront esplanade. All the popular cuisines are represented, from Mod Oz to pizza, Turkish to Thai.

The Mooloolaba Surf Club is a local institution. Executive Chef David Bryan, who has worked there for 8 years, says the club has an amazing 13,000 members, many living in Brisbane.

During his time there, the town has "changed completely - for the better". The club serves around 4,200 meals a week during the off-season, and a massive 7,000 a week in summer. As well as light and snack-style offerings like nachos and bruschetta, there is traditional club fare like steaks, as well as salads, pasta and wet dishes.

"Unlike a lot of clubs, we try to cater more for the over-30s, we get a lot of young families coming in," Mr Bryan explained. "So the food is not overly spicy but we do offer a lot of specials to try and encourage people to try something new."

Red meat dishes include a warm lamb fillet salad with roasted Mediterranean vegetables, grilled lamb medallions ("very popular"), a rib steak and a 400g T-bone. There is also a selection of wet dishes, and during winter, Thursday is Curry Night.

The club switched to MSA-graded beef a little over a year ago, and Mr Bryan is extremely happy with the results, particularly for the T-bone.

"We're selling more T-bones than ever," he says, even though overall steak sales have declined somewhat in favour of lighter dishes.

Local produce is used wherever possible, including beef from Gympie, cheeses, and fruit - especially mangoes.

Earth Bar & Bistro fills a different market niche. Since opening in December 1999, this much-awarded eatery has delighted locals and tourists alike with its stylish bistro fare. Chef Gareth Collins says tourism is still booming but believes about 60% of his trade comes from locals.

Tourists are more likely to visit the beachfront establishment at lunchtime, straight from the beach, and enjoy a cold drink and some tapas.

"The evening is more serious dining," Mr Collins explains.

Dishes include Kobe beef served with pan-roasted vegetables, aged Gympie goat cheese, candied shallots and a raspberry vinegar jus.

Local produce is used "as much as we can - we like to support the local producers", including vegetables, cheese, seafood and game.

For most of the year, Earth Bar & Bistro serves 420-500 meals a week. But during the peak season, this rises to 750. The establishment received 9 awards in its first year, including Best Sunshine Coast Restaurant and Queensland's Best Tourism Restaurant, and has been a finalist in many others. It has reached the finals of the upcoming Best Wedding Reception Venue award for Queensland.

Mooloolaba's dining scene offers plenty of other delights, including the modern casual Hot Pip's Café, plus familiar franchises from elsewhere, such as Montezuma's Mexican restaurant. There are home-grown themes, too, including the Hard Clay Café (DIY ceramics glazing plus food and coffee) and Voodoo's.

Mains at Voodoo's have such fascinating names as Young Warrior (sauteed veal escalopes flamed with dry sherry); Tribal Eye (a seared beef eye fillet with a red wine jus and a blue cheese topping); and Evil Bone (rack of lamb with redcurrant & port glaze).

Pizza fanciers are well catered for, with Angello's Ristorante & Pizzeria, winner of the recent Dairy Farmers pizza competition, and La Porchetta Pizza Restaurant, which makes the claim "awarded best value for money pizza restaurant in Australia for the last 12 years".

There's even a "cyber noodle and sushi bar", Hot! Noodle, offering curry of the day and a selection of noodle stir-fries - you choose the cuisine, the noodle style and the protein component - as well as sushi and spring rolls.

Not all the locals may be thrilled with the changes but, as David Bryan says, "there are so many good restaurants and cafes in Mooloolaba now." Gareth Collins agrees, adding that during the off-season he serves "lots of locals from the hospitality industry checking us out."

There's no going back. ■

e v e n t s



The MLA group in Singapore. Front row (from left to right) chefs Jim McGuire, Jake Ward, Harry Lilai, Staha Johnson, David Thomson, David Fryer and Massimo Diluca and MLAs Gerard Doherty. Back row John Psanis, Allan Koh, Robert Blackborough and MLA's Lachlan Bowtell.

WORLD GOURMET

8 DAYS
IN SINGAPORE...

THE WORLD GOURMET SUMMIT 2001 WAS AN INCREDIBLE AMALGAM OF CUTTING EDGE FOOD, FINE WINES, MASTERLY TECHNIQUES AND INFORMED OPINIONS, PARTICIPANTS SAY.

Rubbing shoulders with - and enjoying the food of - some of the greatest chefs from around the region and around the world; taking in both traditional and contemporary cuisine in Singapore; and networking with thousands of other culinary professionals was an intensely satisfying and stimulating experience.

Running from April 22-27, World Gourmet Summit 2001 (organised by the Singapore Tourism Board and Peter Knipp Holdings) is the 5th annual event of its kind. This year's Summit was organised under the theme, "The Rising Stars of the Century".

Meat & Livestock Australia's National Operations Manager Lachlan Bowtell, and Victoria/Tasmania Food Service Manager Gerard Doherty, led a group of 9 Australian chefs visiting the Summit. The group included front row (from left to right) chefs Jim McGuire, Jake Ward, Harry Lilai, Staha Johnson, David Thomson (guest chef at Gourmet Summit), David Fryer and Massimo Diluca and Gerard Doherty. Back row John Psanis, Allan Koh, Robert Blackborough and Lachlan Bowtell.

During their visit, they enjoyed the Masterclass programme - highlights included the Pan-fried lamb chops in almond crust filled with goose liver & black truffle prepared by Claudio Sadler of Sadler Restaurant in Milan; and Seared filet mignon & foie gras medallion with truffled celeriac mousseline, foie gras sauce and fig glaze from Michael Ginor of Hudson Valley Foie Gras, US.

The group also attended one of the themed Masterchef Safaris, enjoying the cuisine of Claudio Sadler, So Kai Chiu (Golden Leaf, Conrad International, Hong Kong), Paul Urchs (the Ritz-Carlton Schlosshotel Berlin), and Reinhard Gerer (Restaurant Korso bei der Oper, Austria). And they attended a vintner's dinner for Californian label Inniskillin, where the accompanying dishes (created by So Kai Chiu) included Spiced sliced calf's shin and Mongolian-style baked lamb.

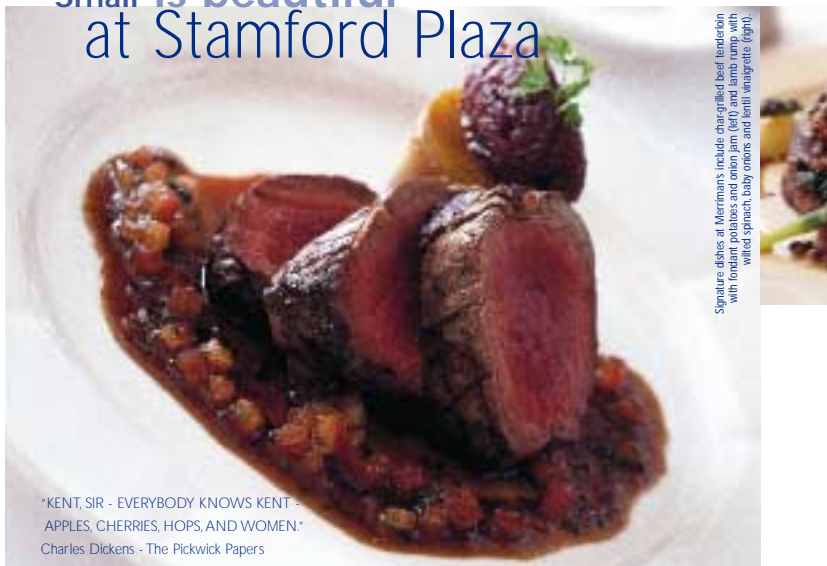
The Awards of Excellence were considered a great success in their first year, and as they develop, they are expected to be extended to other countries in the region.

The International Food & Beverage Forum was, as usual, thought-provoking and inspiring. The major topic for this year's Culinary Insights session was "Being a Rising Star Chef - when you have the talent, how influential can marketing be?", although other suggestions included "Is fine-dining a lost experience?" and "Fusion - or merely confusion?". Scheduled speakers during this session included chefs of varying levels of experience from the US, Singapore and Australia.

In all, Singapore should be proud to have mounted such an inspiring culinary event. ■



Small is beautiful at Stamford Plaza



"KENT, SIR - EVERYBODY KNOWS KENT -
APPLES, CHERRIES, HOPS, AND WOMEN."
Charles Dickens - The Pickwick Papers

Dickens' description may have been right on the button for the English county, but it bears little resemblance to the Sydney street of the same name.

Running from the Latin Quarter to the Harbour Bridge, Kent St today certainly has no shortage of places to eat and drink, and among the best of these may be the Stamford Plaza Hotel, on the site of the old Caltex office building. Now approaching its first birthday, the hotel - on the busy approach to the bridge - is a small but elegant all-suite property with a flagship restaurant, a street-level café and conference and function facilities.

Executive Chef Anthony Flowers has been on the scene from the start. In fact, while the hotel opened its doors last May, he joined its staff the previous August, overseeing kitchen design, equipment purchase, employment and training of staff, supplier liaison and, of course, menu development.

This had its benefits, Mr Flowers says.

"Staff know from day one how you work, and we've managed to keep the team together and achieve very high morale," he said. "This is a small property, so the executive chef can't just sit behind a desk - it's very hands-on".



Anthony Flowers

The hotel's feature restaurant is Merriman's, a 55-seater with stunning working-Harbour views across Walsh Bay. Mr Flowers describes the food as "Australian brasserie-style, with an emphasis on quality", and says the menu changes regularly to add interest for both regular customers and staff.

Signature dishes include:

- Char-grilled beef tenderloin with fondant potatoes and onion jam;
- Grilled & slow-roasted vegetable terrine with tapenade; and
- Lamb rump with wilted spinach, baby onions and lentil vinaigrette.

There's also a substantial wine list, mostly drawn from Australian boutique wineries.

The café, Clarke's on Kent, also offers take-away and home delivery meals. Given the explosion in apartment living in this section of the CBD - including the Stamford on Kent luxury apartments adjoining the hotel - this option has proven popular.

There is a large function room with balcony, which can also be configured as two smaller rooms, and a small conference room called The Library, perfect for corporate lunches or small dinners.

Because the hotel is small, Mr Flowers has the ability to liaise with suppliers personally. He said he obtains "very good quality" product from his meat suppliers by explaining clearly what he wants, then tasting it when it arrives - checking portion size, ensuring there is no excessive sinew, and testing the flavour and marbling.

"My passion is cooking, and I'm definitely quality-driven," says 32-year-old Mr Flowers. The English-born chef has been working in Australia since 1992, with stints at the Park Lane (now Sheraton on the Park), Forty One, the Hotel Nikko Darling Harbour and the Sydney Hilton, plus time spent travelling in Asia. In his first Executive Chef position, he is also Sydney team leader for the chefs of the Stamford Hotel group, which has 6 properties in Sydney.

"For me, the emphasis is on the whole dining experience. I want people to come away not just having enjoyed the food, but also enjoyed the service, the ambience of the room, the style of food and the presentation," he said.

"It only took a couple of weeks to build a base of regulars, and it's all been through word-of-mouth. Up to now - touch wood - the word-of-mouth has been fantastic." ■



AREN'T WE'RE LUCKY TO BE LIVING IN AUSTRALIA AT THIS TIME IN OUR HISTORY?

Never before have we had such an exciting range of cuisines to choose from, whether it be in our leading restaurants, our bistros and cafés - or indeed in our homes.

The revolution in what we eat has been rapid. Suddenly all around us, we find Thai, Vietnamese, Korean, Cambodian, Indian and Japanese eateries, all with their own unique approach.

Of special interest is the way in which they deal with two Aussie staples - beef and lamb.

At Simon's Place in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, both beef and lamb are used in a surprising number of different combinations. Simon is committed to making each dish a celebration of fresh ingredients and flavour using quick wok-cooking techniques to achieve this.

Strips of meat are seared quickly in the wok and combined with other ingredients. Thai-style beef dishes include stir-fried beef with finely sliced ginger, onion and red capsicum, cooked in oyster sauce and stir-fried beef with chilli, garlic, red capsicum, onion and shallot.

Cambodian food is less well-known but at Simon's you'll find beef dishes which include stir-fried beef with holy basil leaf, cooked in coconut milk, beef kachai, stir-fried beef fillet with kachai - a spicy rhizome - and pepper, cooked in red curry sauce; and spicy beef mince with green beans, onion, mushrooms, chilli and basil leaf.

Lamb is also treated in tasty imaginative ways - there's stir-fried lamb with fresh basil leaf, straw mushroom, red capsicum, onion and fresh chillies; Sunflower Lamb stir-fried

lamb with fresh red chillies and fresh basil leaves and a Cambodian lamb peanut dish of stir-fried lamb with fresh beans, peanuts and coconut milk, cooked in red curry paste.

It's not just small eateries which are offering this wonderful array of spicy, tasty dishes which treat beef and lamb in imaginative ways. You'll find an equally interesting assortment on the menus of take-away noodle shops. At Vlok on Inn in Sydney you first choose your type of noodle (egg, hokkien, rice), then your style of cooking (Chinese, Malay, Thai), then your favourite ingredients which include beef and a variety of vegetables and seafood. A similar idea operates at the Red Rock Noodle Bar in North Adelaide. Here you can choose from a variety of wok-fried meat dishes (including beef) and choose which flavourings you'd like - choices include Red Rock with garlic, chilli and chopped lemongrass, Pepper Black Bean Sauce with vegetables and Honey with snow peas, chilli, spring and red onions. Thai red and green curries with beef, and Red Rock noodles with beef are also available.

A glance at the menu of Mr. Delivery, a Sydney-based home delivery service reveals a staggering range of dishes from a variety of ethnic restaurants.

From the Blue Ginger restaurant, there are korma and vindaloo curries using both lamb and beef, Lamb Rogan Josh, Bombay Beef with a hint of mustard leaves and cream and Nariel Beef, a special curry prepared with coconut cream.

And remember that these are just a tiny sampling of the multi-cultural approaches to cooking with beef and lamb now available to us throughout the country! ■

feature article

Sassy Ways with Beef and Lamb

Stir-fried beef with chilli, garlic, red capsicum, onion and shallot from Simon's Place, Brisbane.



best of the season

Lamb & Dam? retro or ridiculous?

We've all heard of the suburban staple Surf & Turf, and even the slightly more recent Beef & Reef, so it's probably not surprising that another concept teaming seafood - or more accurately shellfish - and prime red meat has begun to appear on menus.

The latest entrant, Lamb & Dam, was probably inevitable, given the growth of aquaculture in rural Australia. It teams lamb - usually prized cuts like the rack or rump - with that most Australian of shellfish, the yabbie.

Does it work, or is it too big a stretch to combine these flavours? You be the judge. ■

Rack of Lamb with Yabbie, Watercress and Potato Salad. SERVES 4

Ingredients

2 racks of lamb of 6 cutlets
12 yabbie tails (cooked)
1 bunch watercress
12 kipfler potatoes
200g aioli

Vinaigrette:

8 tbspn virgin olive oil
4 tbspn balsamic vinegar
salt and pepper
1 tspn Dijon mustard

Method

Roast the racks of lamb at 200°C for approx 20 minutes. Rest the meat before cutting into cutlets. Make the yabbie salad by combining the yabbie tails with the cooked, drained and diced potatoes, the watercress and the vinaigrette. Serve with aioli on the side.



Tender lamb gets a new partner in this warm salad, which features yabbie tails, kipfler potatoes and aioli.