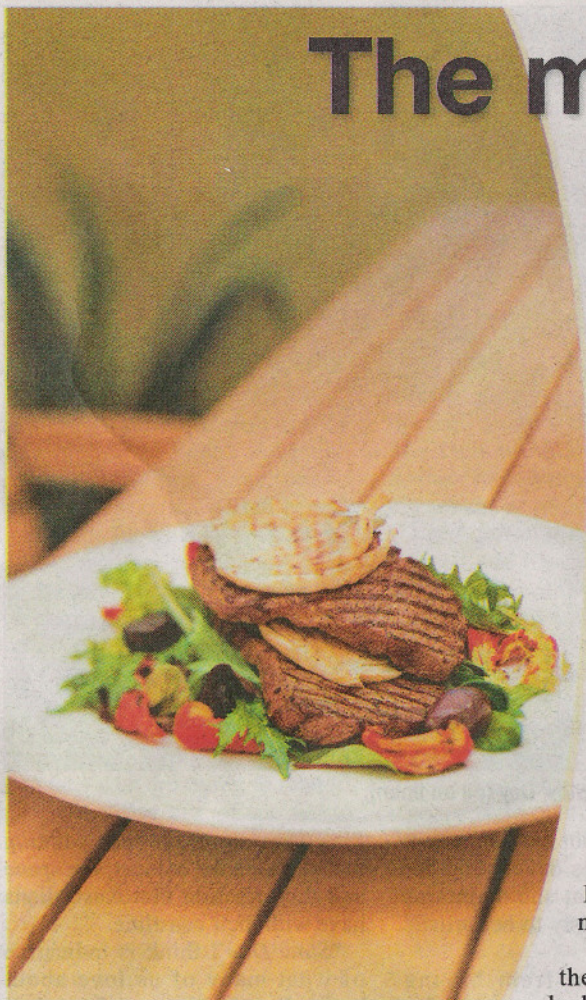


# The meaty Aussie classic



Great on the plate... summer barbeque beef salad.

## Samuel Spurr

As summer approaches with its sultry temperatures and days spent at the beach, one thing that will accompany the clinking of beer bottles and chardonnay glasses is the humble steak taking centre stage on the family barbeque.

## An Australian love affair

Australians have always had a love affair with beef and the trend does not appear to be slowing. We are, on average per year, consuming close to 39kg of beef per person. This figure is up 3 per cent on previous years and looks set to easily top the 40kg barrier.

Beef production and consumption has been a major part of Australian life since the arrival of the first fleet. The cattle industry grew quickly once Shorthorns and Herefords made their grand appearance in 1825, with the Shorthorn breed being well suited to the northern parts of Australia. Our first exports were received by England and have since included the US, Europe and now many parts of Asia.

## Aussie beef: A cut above the rest

“Aussie beef is leading the way in regards to research and development and this aspect of the industry is demonstrated by our increasing export markets,” explains Lachlan Bowtell, the trade marketing manager for Meat and Livestock Australia.

Lachlan says the average punter visiting the butcher is picking up the best cuts for barbequing – rump, scotch fillet and sirloin – to hoist onto their barbeques at home. He also said that over the past years “there has been a huge increase in satisfaction from consumers with 90 per cent of consumers rating our beef an 8 out of 10 or better.” He puts this down to Australia’s high standards. “Australia is envied around the world in regards to quality and when exporting, produces to individual needs whether it is prime cuts to Japan or grinding beef for American hamburgers.”

## Throw another steak on the barbie

And what about our continuing love affair with outdoor cooking? “It remains a male domain however there are increased sales of barbeques, especially the higher end ‘Rolls Royce’ BBQs and outdoor kitchens with more people taking an interest in proper barbequing techniques.”

Peter Hammerschmidt, proprietor of “La Grillade” in Crows Nest, knows all about proper cooking techniques and guarantees the best quality to his customers. He is in constant contact with suppliers on a day-to-day basis ensuring a complete “paddock to plate” process.

“I always want to know which breeds are available and how long the product has been grain fed,” says Peter.

His main dishes centre on export quality sirloin, scotch fillet, cube roll and eye fillet. He explains that quality is important, especially with the scotch fillet; “I ensure that it is grass fed only, making it free of hormones. This aspect of beef production is very important to diners.”

Peter oversees the cooking methods at his restaurant with all beef being char-grilled, rested for five minutes then completed according to the customers specifications.

## Historically speaking

Historically, the word “steak” is attributed to the Saxons, who shortly after conquering Great Britain brought their cooking skills with them. They enjoyed cooking their beef on a pointed stick over a campfire.

This process, known as “steik”, literally meant “meat on a stick”. Although our process of cooking up a few kilos of beef has changed it is easy to understand how a former barbarian tribe’s cooking method ensures that men get their social engagement watching meat cook.