

taste
of Melbourne

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Beef a family affair

The personal touch has taken a Grampians cattle company's meat onto the menus of Melbourne's top restaurants

David Maconochie was six months into his university course when he decided to quit. He reasoned that there was little he could learn about agriculture at college that he could not learn on the 1600 hectares that has been home to three generations of Maconochies in western Victoria.

And besides, as the renown of Hopkins River Beef was spreading, he would be well placed to support its growth.

The Hopkins River Pastoral Company, set in the picturesque Grampians at Dunkeld, was started by his parents, Sandy and Claire Maconochie. That company spawned Hopkins River Beef, which now supplies the preferred beef of many of Melbourne's top restaurants. The meat is the result of growing the cattle on rich pastures for up to 18 months and then finishing them on grain to complete the ideal combination for beef flavor and consistency. Its annual turnover of cattle is between 12,000 and 14,000.

"Ours is quality Angus beef," David, 25, says. "The people who own the business also run it. We have control all the way from the

paddock to the plate."

It's not quite an all-family affair. Adam North, a friend of David's, was invited to join the business shortly after he completed his commerce degree. He is now a director and part-owner of Hopkins River Beef. Since taking over the helm of the company five years ago, David and Adam have seen a surge in business. They are now supplying their beef to Melbourne restaurants and are negotiating to take their meat to Sydney's restaurants.

"We have an extremely good reputation for providing premium-quality beef," Adam says, by way of explaining the company's year-on-year growth over the past five years. "But we're not a huge company so our customers get very personalised care."

The Hopkins River Pastoral Company has not been idle either. Still run by its founders, Sandy and Claire, as well as their youngest son, Sam, it will now be providing its quality cattle to Melbourne's consumers under a joint venture with Coles. The beef will be stocked in 27 of Coles selected stores.

TASTE OF MELBOURNE'S SEARED HOPKINS RIVER BEEF, SHITAKE AND AGED SOY DRESSING

- BY JOSH EMETT

300g Hopkins River Beef sirloin
Breakfast radish

MARINADE

75 ml soy sauce
50 ml sesame oil
200 ml canola oil
75 ml balsamic vinegar
1 tsp fresh ginger
1 clove garlic
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 bunch mixed soft herbs
salt
black pepper

METHOD:

Place all ingredients in a mixer and blend until smooth. Char the sirloin of beef all over, keeping rare, then drop into the marinade. Leave for 3-4 hours.

SHITAKE PUREE

200g shitake mushrooms
3 shallots
75g butter
1 kg button mushrooms
40ml mirin
80ml soy sauce
100ml thickened cream

METHOD:

1. peel and slice the shallots finely
2. slice the shitake and button mushrooms finely
3. cook shallots down in the butter until soft. Add the shitake and buttons to the shallots and cook until it starts to slightly caramelize (about 5 minutes)
4. Add mirin and soy sauce and reduce to glaze. Add cream to finish then puree. Check for seasoning.

PICKLED SHITAKE

250 g shitake mushrooms
100mls chardonnay vinegar
30ml water
50g sugar

METHOD:

1. bring the chardonnay vinegar, water and sugar to the boil, take off the heat and cool.
2. slice and sauté the shitake quickly then let pickle for at least 2 hours.

TO SERVE:

Bring the beef sirloin back up to a warm temperature through the oven. Slice finely, squeeze a couple of dots of shitake mushroom puree, then sprinkle pickled shitake mushrooms and breakfast radish



Recipe provided by maze Melbourne chef de cuisine, Josh Emmett.
www.gordonramsay.com/mazemelbourne