

NO. 78 FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANTS : SETTING AMERICA'S TABLE

REMEMBERING  
CHEF FLOYD  
CARDOZ

SUPPORTING  
STAFF DURING  
SHUTDOWNS

# FSR<sup>®</sup>

YOUR  
STORIES OF  
RESILIENCE

THE CIA-FSR  
PLANT-  
FORWARD LIST

## WHEN WILL THEY COME BACK?

FIGURING OUT THE NEW NORMAL IN A POST-CORONAVIRUS WORLD



#Downunder7

# Quality Aussie lamb for every occasion.

Changing the way you think about lamb—by exploring different cuts and considering seasonality of accompanying flavors—can help you stay relevant and profitable in today's business climate.

Chefs are meeting that challenge with Australian pasture-raised lamb on the menu to please both guests and bean counters, with outstanding flavor and presentation, and a **food cost under \$7**.

## THE DISH

### Lamb Kleftico

The cut: **Aussie lamb shoulder**

Where it fits on the menu: **Small plate, sharable app**

Estimated  
Food Cost\*  
**\$6.25**

Estimated  
Food Cost %  
**30%**

\*food cost estimates are based on the chef's own work, and do not represent a pricing proposal or guarantee

## THE CHEF

George Pagonis, Anessa Taverna, NYC

"This traditional Greek dish takes advantage of the clean, natural flavor of slow-cooked Aussie lamb. It's also a great way to use leftover roasted lamb, stretching the food cost even further. I add a bit of feta for saltiness, and enhance it with melting kefalograviera, which is like a Greek gruyere."



Scan the QR Code for more ideas under \$7 food cost, or to sign-up for True Aussie's monthly e-newsletter.

[www.trueaussiebeefandlamb.com](http://www.trueaussiebeefandlamb.com)



@aussiebeeflamb





SPONSORED BY TRUE AUSSIE BEEF &amp; LAMB



## Finding Comfort and Value in Sustainable Proteins

Turning to  
value cuts can  
save money  
while still  
adding interest  
to menus.

**IN TIMES OF STRESS**, from financial crises to pandemics, American diners renew their focus on comfort food. With consumers spending prolonged periods of time around the house dreaming of eating at restaurants again, something about rich, familiar meals really speaks to the American consumer. According to Datassential, by the end of March, consumers were eating 33 percent more comfort food than they had been before.

Experts believe consumers are—and will continue to be—willing to pay for comfort food that's a cut above what they'd cook at home, so long as the dish brings something new and exciting to the table. Adam Moore, corporate chef with True Aussie Beef & Lamb (TABL), recommends using value cuts of meat to add a new dimension to comfort food dishes. Think of your famous mac n' cheese loaded with slow-braised lamb shank, a slow-cooked lamb shoulder sugo, or beef sliders with a grass-fed chuck roast or chuck eye roll.

SPONSORED BY TRUE AUSSIE BEEF &amp; LAMB

"One of the things we've seen taking off lately is family-style portions of familiar comfort food," Moore says. "For operators, it's an opportunity to take a larger protein and really stretch it out. Not only is that providing value, but it is takeout friendly for in-demand family meals or across many portions."

One of the most poignant and lasting lessons of the current moment might be a renewed understanding of just how tight restaurant margins are. Even if that's old news to operators and chefs, trying to make the most economical usage of proteins and ingredients will remain top of mind for years to come. That means value cuts will offer comfort to both diners and operators alike.

So what is a value cut? Really, any cut can be a value depending on the situation. One of the expert tips Moore gives chefs is to look for those cuts that might not be popular during a given season. He says a good meat partner will speak candidly about what they have available and what they might be trying to unload at a nice price.

"If most chefs like to do a braising cut with a tender chuck or a chuck roll and slow cook that during the fall and winter, maybe look to buy those cuts during the spring and summer," Moore says. "That's a way to set your own trends and find a lot of value."

Operators shouldn't confuse value cuts for "cheap cuts," and certainly shouldn't market them as such. For a generation of diners so enthusiastic about quality meat, sustainability, and where their food is coming from, even value cuts have a story. The marketing of the meat's origins can help produce the margins operators need to be successful.

In fact, according to a recent Menu Matters study funded by TABL, 68 percent of chefs say their grass-fed beef program is very or extremely successful, while 62 percent of chefs say the same about lamb. At the same time, while over half of the chefs surveyed mentioned cost as the most significant drawback, this was far outweighed by the value these products brought to the table in diner satisfaction, gross margin, quality, appeal and sustainability.

"Telling the provenance story actually gives consumers additional value, and the confidence that they're being delivered quality," says Catherine Golding, business development manager at TABL. "Even with off-premises, some brands right now are doing a great job with that via their social media channels, or putting little menu cards in deliv-

ery orders that give additional information about where the food is coming from."

In the aforementioned study, it was found that 45 percent of menus were now calling out "grass-fed" which was up 20 percent since 2017. Popular reasons stated for the growth in menu call outs included that it "impresses patrons," and "customers care about transparency." The same study found that for diners, where the meat came from actually indexed as a higher priority than price. "We know operators, more than ever, need to please both guests and bean counters," Golding says. "Exploring cuts and seasonality, along with menu cues, show that you care about safety, quality, sourcing, and sustainability."

"One of the things we're super proud of from the Austra-

**"Telling the provenance story actually gives consumers additional value, and the confidence that they're being delivered quality."**



**AUSSIE GRASS-FED STRIP STEAK WITH JICAMA AND CHIPOTLE HONEY, A DISH BY MAC'S ON MAIN CHEF AND OWNER RENA FROST, ILLUSTRATES HOW TO USE PREMIUM CUTS AND STILL KEEP PLATE COSTS LOW.**

**CHEF RENEE SCHAROFF'S AUSSIE LAMB PITA WITH HARISSA AIOLI OFFERS AFFORDABLE FOOD COSTS THAT COME ALONGSIDE BOLD FLAVOR AND PRESENTATION.**



lian point of view, is that we've made the commitment to being carbon neutral by 2030, and we would become the first in the world to do it," Golding says. "That's a great story to tell, and one diners are really connecting with right now. The health and well-being of the planet will remain a priority for consumers going forward. As an industry, we're already making those conscious decisions to be a part of that movement." **BY CHARLIE POGACAR**

**For more information on True Aussie Beef and Lamb's #Under7 Series, visit [www.TrueAussieBeefandLamb.com](http://www.TrueAussieBeefandLamb.com).**

MEAT &amp; LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA/2