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What's Cooking

By Bob Barnes

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T.A.B.L.E. Dinner Spotlights Australian-Raised Proteins

Last month I had the extreme pleasure to take part in an exclusive pop-up T.A.B.L.E. dinner. The acronym stands for True Aussie Beef and Lamb Experience and a delightful experience it was. T.A.B.L.E. has previously held dinner experiences in Washington DC and NYC and our five-course meal, prepared by Chef Roy Villacrusis, was a showcase of proteins raised in Australia: wagyu, lamb, goat and grass-fed beef. Chef Roy is the group's main chef for the popup dinners, and has a past in Las Vegas, having worked as Master Sushi Chef for Shibuya at MGM Grand and as a consulting chef at Andiron.

The purpose of the dinners is to expose chefs to what can be done with Aussie meats; I was one of only five non-chefs to participate, as the room was filled with more than a dozen local chefs. Chef Roy called on his Filipino background for this dinner, as each dish had an Asian flair. We began with kilawin Wagyu beef and kinilaw prawns with crab fat, coconut vinaigrette, labuyo pepper and chicharon flakes that chef described as a Filipino version of ceviche. Next up was kalbi of shaved lamb loin in dolsoot, a play on bibimap with lamb instead of beef. We all got a rare and welcome chance to enjoy goat with Chef's kaldereta of goat with root vegetables and steamed pandan rice. Grass-fed beef was spotlighted in binchotan grilled grass-fed beef kushiyaki with creamed cauliflower, maitake and honshimeji mushrooms in Wagyu fat and truffled soy butter. The final course featured creations all made with rice and coconut milk, such as rice mochi, cassava cake and purple rice cake. Each course was paired with wine, with the likes of Clarevale 2018 Riesling and 19 Crimes Pinot Noir.

At the conclusion of the dinner Chef Roy came out and received a well-deserved rousing round of applause. The presentation of each dish was beautiful and the flavors were superb, putting this tasting of Australia in the best light possible.

The dinner was held at Every Grain at 1430 E. Charleston. The new eatery is by Sheridan Su and Jenny Wong, who have garnered much acclaim for their Fat Choy and Flock & Fowl restaurants. Both were present at the dinner, with Jenny helping out with service. For now, Every Grain is in its soft opening phase and open Tue.-Sat. from 10:30-2:30, but Jenny says the hours will expand and they are in the process of obtaining a liquor license (they got a special permit to serve wine at this special event).

It's possible that we'll be seeing more of Chef Roy. He shared he is planning on opening his own restaurant called Gaijin Asiatic Cuisine, a studio-like space for 8-10 diners serving an Omakase-style tasting menu with a new approach on sushi and other Asian ingredients. After enjoying his Aussome (not a typo, pun intended) cooking at this dinner, I highly recommend checking out his cuisine for yourself once it opens.

Worth noting is that Aussie beef, lamb and goat producers raise much of their livestock on pasture and natural grasslands; in the past 30 years the water use has been decreased by 68%; greenhouse gas emissions have declined by 56% over the last 14 years; and the nation/continent is committed to be carbon neutral by 2030.

For more info on Aussie meat and menus visit www.trueaussiebeefandlamb.com, if interested in being a True Aussie Chef or hosting/attending one of the T.A.B.L.E. events email mleteam@summitng.com and to check out Every Grain, go to www.eateverygrain.com.

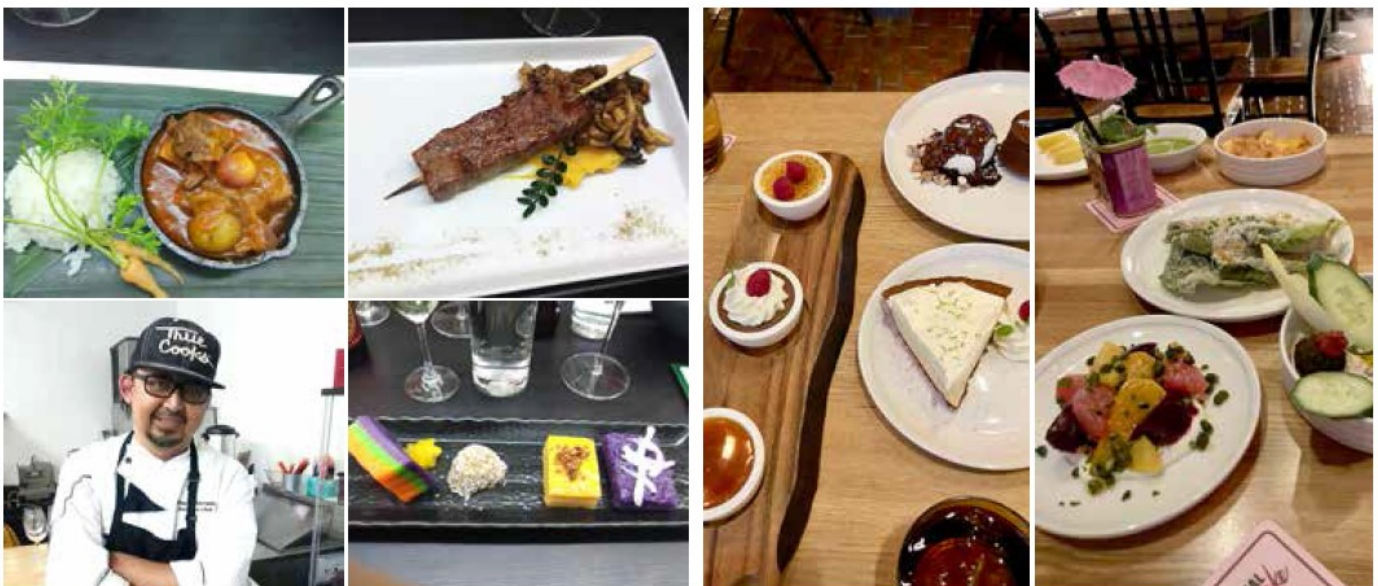


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