

guest chef.

cut to the chase

We ask Melbourne chef and dedicated carnivore Adrian Richardson to share his secrets to cooking the perfect steak, hearty pot-roast or tender braise.

RECIPES **ADRIAN RICHARDSON** WORDS **ALISON PICKEL** PHOTOGRAPHY **MARK ROPER** STYLIST **DAVID MORGAN**



Pot-roasted bolar blade
with port and garlic, and
creamy mashed potato

It may seem natural that Melbourne's Adrian Richardson followed in the footsteps of his grandfather. What's more surprising is that Peter, a well-known chef himself in the 1960s, is a devoted vegetarian, while his grandson is best known for his expertise with meat.

For the past 12 years, Adrian has been the chef and owner of acclaimed La Luna Bistro in Carlton North, where he brings in whole sides of meat and ages it all on-site. He's also written a book, aptly titled *Meat*, and last year shared some of his secrets on TV's *MasterChef Australia*, where contestant Chris described the experience as "like watching a butcher on steroids".

Adrian's passion and respect for food is inherited not just from his grandfather, but also his father and Italian mother – and the childhood meals that came from the family's weekend property in Gisborne, Victoria. "I remember when I was 12, Dad taught me how to butcher a sheep. We hung it ourselves

and cut it up," he says. "Some people might be squeamish, but I loved it. It gave me a real appreciation for where food comes from." So when a teenage Adrian took a part-time job in a pub kitchen to pay for flying lessons (he planned to become a pilot like his father), he found his new career instead.

But in a society that's increasingly concerned with the environmental impact of cattle farming, is there a place for a self-confessed "red-blooded steak man"? "I think it's great people are taking an interest. It means they care about how animals are treated and encourages producers to use more sustainable practices." Adrian recommends finding a good butcher who can tell you how the animals were raised, opting for grass-fed beef and trying less popular cuts so nothing goes to waste. "It's not about how much meat you eat, but buying the best quality you can afford." *La Luna Bistro, 320 Rathdowne St, Carlton North, Vic, (03) 9349 4888, lalunabistro.com.au.*

"Tell your butcher what you want, but let them guide you to find what's best on the day or try something new."

pot-roasted bolar blade with port and garlic

Serves 6

Beef bolar is one of those bargain-basement cuts that's fantastic for long, slow cooking. It's often sold off the bone as gravy beef and makes great pies and soups. Here, I cook it on the bone as a tasty pot-roast. Ask your butcher to trim the meat and 'french' the bone for you for a neat presentation. This dish is definitely better the next day as the flavours develop and intensify with time. I like to serve it with a big bowl of creamy mash and a bottle of full-bodied red wine.

2 tbs olive oil
1.8kg piece beef bolar blade (on the bone)*
100g unsalted butter, chopped
250g thick-cut bacon rashers, chopped
2 anchovy fillets
2 onions, finely chopped
2 carrots, peeled, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
6 garlic cloves, halved
400g button mushrooms, halved
2 cups (500ml) red wine
3 cups (750ml) good-quality beef stock
3 thyme sprigs
2 bay leaves
2 cloves

200g Sicilian green olives
Chopped flat-leaf parsley and creamy
buttery mash (recipe follows), to serve

Preheat the oven to 150°C.

Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole over medium-high heat. Season the beef with salt and pepper, then sear for 4-6 minutes, turning, until browned all over. Transfer to a plate.

Reduce heat to medium, then melt butter in the pan. Add bacon and anchovies and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes or until bacon begins to brown and anchovies start to melt. Stir in onion, carrot, celery and garlic, then reduce heat to medium-low and cook gently for 6-8 minutes, stirring, until vegetables soften. Return beef and any resting juices to pan. Add wine, stock, thyme, bay, cloves, and olives and bring to a simmer. Season, cover and bake for 1 hour. Remove lid, stir in mushrooms, then bake for 1½ hours or until beef is tender.

Carefully transfer beef to a plate and keep warm. Place pan over medium-high heat and bring to a rapid simmer. Cook for 30 minutes or until sauce has reduced by half. Return beef to pan to warm through.

Sprinkle generously with parsley, then serve with plenty of mashed potato.

* Order bolar blade from your butcher.

creamy mashed potato

Serves 4

There must be a hundred ways to make mashed potatoes – nearly all of them good. This is my way, and we can never make enough of it at La Luna. I always peel the potatoes before cooking them whole – I find that if you cut them smaller, they tend to absorb more water. And one thing that's certain is that really good mash is not diet food. The more cream and butter you add, the better the result.

6 (750g total) nicola potatoes (or another yellow, waxy variety), peeled
150ml pure (thin) cream (or more to taste)
150g unsalted butter (or more to taste)

Place the potatoes in a large pan of cold water to cover. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat to medium and simmer for 20 minutes or until tender (depending on the size of your potatoes). Drain well in a colander.

Add cream and butter to the hot pan off the heat. Push the hot potatoes through a mouli or potato ricer (from kitchenware shops) straight into the pan with cream and butter. (Alternatively, mash until smooth.) Beat with a spoon, then season to taste.