Farmer steaks his claim on depth of flavour

Rockpool waiter Craig Cadman with a longhorn steak

months for most other breeds, to ensure marbling is at its best and the flavour its deepest.

“We’re not aiming for the world’s most tender steaks, we’re asking for flavour, we’re dry ageing to enhance the flavour, we’re finetuning how we’re breeding it,” Mr Gunner said. “As with wagyu, the marbling is what people are looking for and they can market it at different levels, but it’s the longhorn flavour that’s the most important.”

The breeding process has been a labour of love for Mr Gunner, who has now produced three generations of calves.

He has plans to produce enough pedigree stock to kill 10 a week, distributing cuts to Rockpool Bar and Grill and Bistro Rex in Sydney and Shobosho, Zonfrillo’s Orana and Blackwood in Adelaide.

Rockpool Bar & Grill head chef Corey Costelloe said Mr Gunner’s meat had an edge to it.

“With a lot of meat that you get nowadays, it’s the fat that contains a lot of the flavour. What I find with the Richard Gunner meat is that the actual meat contains a lot of flavour.”

“Even though (Gunner’s) meats aren’t as marbled as others and has a leaner sort of coverage, the meat is really, really flavoursome and has a real clean beef flavour to it.”

“It’s different to a lot of meat these days in the way it’s really dynamic, kind of lactic and has a sourness to it that I really like... the rump in particular is probably my favourite cut.”

Mr Gunner’s journey to breed and produce English longhorns on his property 140km southeast of Adelaide began in 2012 when he sat down with chef Jock Zonfrillo to find an alternative to angus cattle, because becoming overused and losing premium status.

Zonfrillo had spent a decade working with Britain to define the musk ox breed, with English longhorns winning out.

The breed almost went extinct in Britain after World War II but numbers rose steeply after the market resurgence because of its rich flavour rather than its potential to produce milk and pull carriages.

The English longhorn, since become so revered, only a week it was named best rib eye at the World Challenge in London.

“There’s a depth of complexity that for other breeds,” Zonfrillo.

“There’s a difference in marbling, and it’s important that you don’t normalise it with other grass-fed breeds.”

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH: OLVIE