



Guide to Meat Ageing

by Shaun Rankin

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Personally I think there is nothing better than entering a restaurant and seeing beautiful cuts of meat hanging in a dry ageing cabinet. They are fabulous sales tools, resulting in the customer already knowing what they want before they even sit down at the table.

I have been lucky enough to be involved in some fabulous projects over the years, including restaurants, hotels, bars and delis. Some have been my own projects, in others I've worked for clients as a consultant, designing the kitchens and back of house operations. I've also had the good fortune to work with designers to create the actual concepts.

So whether it's your money or a client's you're spending, choosing the right equipment for the operation is essential. That's why I have worked with Precision, and continue to support the work the company does.

If you're dry ageing meats, or making your own charcuterie, you need a cabinet you can rely on.

The dry ageing cabinet from Precision has state of the art technology allowing the customer to control the perfect temperature and humidity inside. The Himalayan salt rocks help reduce the moisture inside the cabinet and draw it out of the meat. I also personally think it makes a difference to the overall flavour.

Shaun Rankin



Buying Your Meat

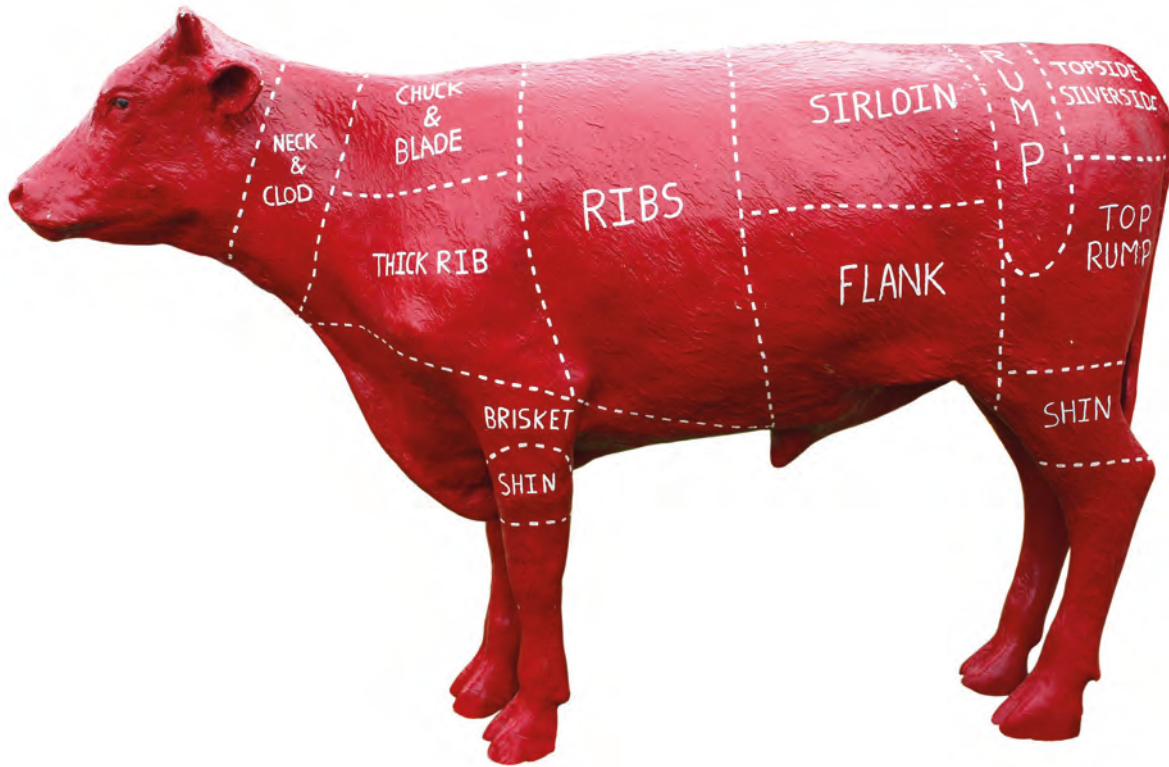
Buying the right meat is so important. Good quality beef is a must. I am a firm believer that if you have great ingredients you can make great food.

I like to make sure the meats come into my kitchens around the 21-day mark. This means you have full control over the ageing process. Most restaurants serve out on a 35 to 50 day window, allowing them to rotate the stock efficiently.

I would recommend using two cabinets, so the meats can be rotated allowing you to control your orders. Use one cabinet for meat 21 days and up, and the second for holding the products that are ready.

Of course, if you wish to take your meat further in age, from 50 to 100 days, then no problem. A great tip is to melt some lard and brush it on the ends of the meat, as this will reduce shrinkage.







What to look out for in the weeks ahead

Make sure you label the meats clearly with the date.

Dry ageing is all about consistency and creating the correct environment. This is why the dry ageing cabinet from Precision is so good, it never fails to perform. The most inconsistent part of the whole process is of course the meat!

This is because no two pieces are the same, just as no two cattle are the same. The only thing you can guarantee is that two steaks from the same cut will be the same.

Dry ageing is all about keeping the good bacteria inside the meat and not allowing bad bacteria in. What you are trying to achieve is a natural breakdown of the structure and fibres.

This process will lead to tender, firm and well-flavoured meat with that distinct aged flavour.

Typical signs of bad bacteria include green showing on the flesh and spores of unhealthy mould. This is when you will know that your cabinet settings are not correct and there is too much moisture inside. Straight away remove the meat, cut the edges off and start the process again. I tend to work on the basis of my temperature being 2°C and humidity being around 55%.

The meats that I tend to use for dry ageing are all on the bone. However, I sometimes place rolled ribeyes in to firm them up for a week. This also helps with the flavour, before either cutting for steaks or using for a roast.

There's so much more you can try out in a meat ageing cabinet, from making your own chorizo or charcuterie to drying your own hams on the bone.



A MEAT AGEING Revolution

Precision's Meat Ageing refrigerator - the perfect temperature-and humidity-controlled environment for all your meat ageing needs. Temperature can be accurately set between 1°C and 4°C and humidity controlled between 55-85%, - without the need for a water supply. Himalayan Rock Salt is supplied as standard to enhance flavour and to optimise humidity regulation. The stainless steel construction provides not just a hygienic solution, but a professional look that can be used back or front of house as the perfect meat ageing and sales tool.

To find out more, visit: www.precision-refrigeration.co.uk

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