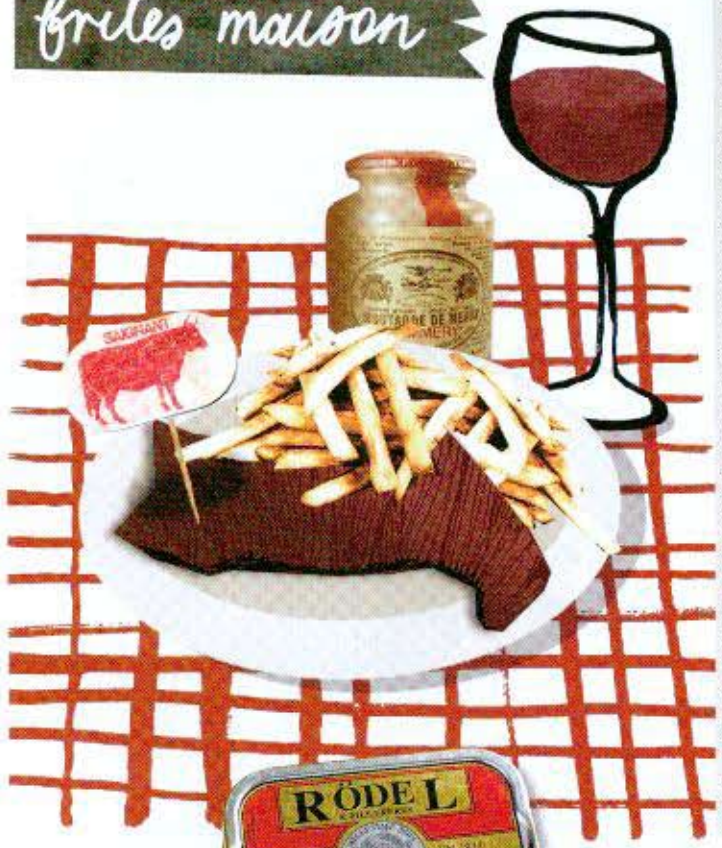
gourmetnews

EDITED BY PAT NOURSE

FOOD * DINING * CULTURE * DESIGN

PLAT du JOUR

bavette frites maison



TREND WATCH

LOVE ME (LESS) TENDER

Get your teeth into this season's hot cuts: skirt and flank.

Whether it's creative initiative or simply a move to cut costs, many chefs are supplementing or replacing their selection of sirloins, rib-eyes and fillets with skirt and flank cuts. The general theme of cuts from the skirt and flank is a sacrifice of tenderness for the sake of more flavour, but with meat that has been well hung (ideally dry-aged) or raised in the manner of the best wagyu for greater intramuscular fat content, toughness is less of an issue. Onglet is of particular interest to us in this French issue. *Larousse Gastronomique* describes it as "a French cut of beef consisting of two small muscles joined by an elastic membrane (the supporting muscles of the diaphragm)" and notes that, like most of these bistro grilling cuts, it must be well hung and not cooked much beyond rare in the interests of tenderness. "In the past it was not a popular cut," the article continues, "but it is now accepted that it makes a prime steak." The seventh edition of the *Handbook of Australian Meat* identifies it as thick skirt, "the lumbar portion of the diaphragm," and its alternative description, hanging tender, reflects the popular American name, hanger steak. French beef butchery is different from our own, so the term bavette here can apply to different cuts, including both skirt (d'aloyau) and flank (de flanchet), typically trimmed and flattened for grilling. These steaks can be fibrous, and should be trimmed thoroughly, cooked with a close eye to doneness and then served sliced thinly across the grain, but handled with care they yield flavour that no fillet can rival.

Sardine devotees: GJ Food now stocks the 2005 vintage from Rödel, a Breton brand recognised as one of France's finest, for $10.60 per 115gm tin of olive oil-preserved fish. *gjfood.com.au*

CUT THE MUSTARD

Marcel Recorbet's classic Dijon, hot English and herbs de Provence mustards bring fine and piquant flair to the table for $7.95 a jar. *(03) 9689 0466.*

SHELL SHOCK

Phillippa's, Melbourne's trusted bakery brand, now produces tartlet shells, just the thing to shore up the last-minute entertaining armoury. Fill them with scrambled eggs and caviar or lemon curd and they're good to go. They're $12 the dozen. *phillippas.com.au.*