

Feral Food in South Australia and Oak Park

In this country and this village, restaurants can't legally serve wild animals

Tuesday, November 29th, 2011 12:00 PM



By **David Hammond**

One big difference between what you can order in an Australian restaurant and what you can order in a U.S. restaurant is that in Australia, the animals on the menu may actually be wild, not farmed.

I was in South Australia a few weeks ago, and I made it a point to eat as much of this "game" as possible.

Kangaroo is one of those foods that is harvested from the wild and on the menu at many Australian restaurants. My understanding is that hunters are given licenses to shoot a fixed number of kangaroos when the herds have to be culled; the meat can then be sold to restaurants. The red meat of the kangaroo is a lot like beef. As you might suspect, it's very lean (unlike beef, it's not fattened up on corn; living in the wild, kangaroos eat whatever they can forage – and they get a lot of exercise).

Emu is both wild and farmed, redder than chicken, a lot like ostrich. And like kangaroo, it's very lean. I had it as both a pate and a filet; it was tasty enough if not particularly distinguished.

Goat, though regularly farmed in the U.S., is listed as "feral" on some menus, which means either that it's always wild or that it was once domesticated and is now wild (in the case of goats, this means some must have escaped from captivity and started breeding in the bush). Of all three meats, goat has the most flavor, and is the only one of these three feral meats that you can easily acquire in the U.S.

In Oak Park, there are several meat animals, including raccoon and squirrel, that are considered food in many parts of the country and the world but which are not regularly featured on menus because usually they're wild. I say "usually" because raccoon can actually be farmed (the fur is still used for clothing in some parts of the world), and it's the farmed variety that's served at one of my favorite food events of the year: the annual **Tom McNulty Raccoon Feed** at the Delafield, Wisconsin, VFW Hall. If you're a fan of the feral, this is not an event you want to miss.



Mixed Feral Grill at Prairie Hotel, Australia, courtesy David Hammond