

ABSENTE FRIENDS

The Sazerac is made traditionally with Cognac or whiskey, but lately we've been making ours with rum. The current GT recipe involves rinsing a glass with Grande Absente absinthe (\$93, Cerbaco), pouring in a healthy measure of 23-year-old Zacapa Guatemalan rum (\$100, Diageo), a splash of sugar syrup, a few dashes of Peychaud's bitters and an orange peel garnish. Stockists p201.



SAZERAC:
Fabric used as wallpaper, Japanese Floral, from Signature Prints. Reidel O Glass from Peter's of Kensington. Tray from Chee Soon & Fitzgerald. Leather coaster from The Bay Tree. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p 201.

THE PRODUCERS

MOONDARRA TAJIMA BEEF

Everything you like about wagyu – only grass-fed.

Where Moondarra, Gippsland Highlands, Victoria.

Who Before he opened St Kilda's Birdcage, which was a big hit in the early 2000s,

Neil Prentice worked with Melbourne hospitality pioneers Donlevy Fitzpatrick and Iain Hewitson. He and his parents had also bought a farm where his dad could raise cattle and Prentice could grow wine. Unhappy with the quality of beef they were initially producing from British breeds, they investigated Japanese wagyu cattle, then new to Australia, and bought their first small herd in 1996.

How Since then, the Prentice family has improved the genetics of its herd, concentrating on Tajima cattle. Tajima is a type of wagyu raised in the Hyogo prefecture (of which Kobe is the major city). Tajima are small and late-maturing, and the cows are poor mothers. The plus-side is that their genetics help produce the best eating beef. The Moondarra herd is free-ranging, sheltered from the prevailing winds by neighbouring state forest. The cows are joined only at 18 months and the calves are left on the mothers for almost 12 months. For the next year, they're feed on grass and silage (fermented pasture), then hay until they're slaughtered at three-and-half years (most Australian cattle, by contrast, are slaughtered at 12 months) and dry-aged for up to a month.

Why Being grass-fed, Moondarra Tajima has more substance than most wagyu. The muscle is still shot with pale fat but is slightly gamy and has a minerality that reflects its grass-fed provenance. Available through T.O.M.S at South Melbourne Market. Eye fillet, Scotch or porterhouse start at \$60/kg retail, or wholesale Australia-wide through Gamekeepers of Australia on (03) 5998 8188. RICHARD CORNISH

