

DINE Entertainment Magazine - Outback Platinum



OUTBACK PLATINUM PUT TO THE TEST

Reproduced with kind permission of DINE Entertainment magazine

Issue no 48 of the Fourth Edition 2005, page 17

<http://www.dinemagazine.co.za/>

A review, An adventure

PUT TO THE TEST The Outback Platinum Gas Barbecue. A hooded, 6-burner gas grill with built in temperature gauge and easy integra spark rotary ignition. At least that's the official definition. We took a long hard look at one of the best pieces of outdoor cooking equipment we have ever seen and then discovered it was also one of the best we had ever used in our road tests – let's get that clear from the beginning.

At first glance the Outback Platinum looks quite overbearing. It's hefty and could be compared to some extent, in the culinary field, to a shiny new-fangled Range Rover. Large, in charge, sleek, shiny with great lines. Six burners instantly ignite a bed of lava rocks, which retain the heat from below and gear-up the grill above for a definitive cooking experience.



The Specifications:

- 6 Cast Iron Burners – providing optimal power
- 1 Porcelain Coated Cast Iron Griddle 48 cm x 26 cm
- 2 porcelain Coated Cast Iron Grills – 48 x 52 cm together
- Heat Indicator
- Swing Away Warming Rack
- 2 Utensil Trays

This gas hob comes out of the Elite range of Outback gas BBQ's. The design is linear, elegant and largely practical. It has exceptional build quality with lines cast from wood and aluminium. It has a porcelain coated cast iron cooking surface which is both rust proof and hygienic. It has a detachable side shelf for compact storage, split level base shelf ease of use as well as a gas bottle holder. The drip tray is expertly designed to reduce fat fires without the need for sand. A built in temperature gauge and Integra Spark rotary ignition add the finishing touches. Rubber tyre wheels are very useful.

Advantages:

Instant heat, on wheels, plenty of cooking space, fairly even distribution of heat, large cooking area. Quality unsurpassed. Very no-nonsense, and sensible design and working components.

Disadvantages:

Large and heavy (but that's why you bought it), no front window for visual access, wood needs some maintenance, 2 people needed to assemble (only a disadvantage if you do not enjoy such weekend activities).





Cooking capacity road-tested:

We can safely assume that your cooking requirements can be handled easily for each of the following:

You can comfortably cook 4 whole chickens at once.

6 rolls of boerewors (medium)
 30 Lamb Chops
 7 kilograms of steak
 6-7 kilograms of fish (about 3 well sized linefish)
 32 potatoes
 16 good-sized hamburger patties
 2 large pots, or 4 medium sized pots (for vegetables etc).
 2 large frying pans.

The warming rack holds 20-24 rolls (round), or 3 medium sized focaccia breads.

On the flat cast iron griddle you can

prepare sumptuous breakfasts (not to mention delicious starters, mushrooms, fish, meats and even certain sauces):

30 strips of bacon
 10 eggs
 25 slices of tomato
 25 pork sausages

There are 2 trays; we assign one to sauces (6 bottles on the one tray). On the other we assign a brush (always brush the grid before cooking with olive oil), tongs, a lifter and a fork and knife. The unit comfortably hold onto it the medium gas bottle (9 kg's). It also holds 2 cases of beer on the tray underneath as well as 4 ingredients bowls (your tomatoes, onions, etc.) The two side trays (one of which is fold away) can hold a large chopping board each or an array of possible ingredients.

The fat dish can hold about one litre of fat, which will give you ample cooking time, and should not fill even after several hours of cooking (actually will never quite get there).



The Road-Test Judge:

Name: Kelvin Hayes
Title: Executive Chef, Indaba Hotel
Age: 38
Qualification: Chef's Diploma, Apex Chef's Training

Chef profile:

Kelvin started his career in Food & Beverage Industry at the age of 17, as a waiter at the Riverside Sun Hotel. He soon showed a keen interest in cookery and catering and was offered the opportunity to commence training in the Kitchen under guidance of the Chef and completed a formal In-Service training course through the Southern Sun Group.

Kelvin worked at various hotels and through hard work, dedication and his love for the trade soon held the position as a Sous Chef. He then spent a period in Europe gaining invaluable skills, exposure and knowledge of European catering trade and international cuisine.

In 1995 he started working for the then Karos Hotel Group in Richards Bay and in 1996 he was transferred to the Indaba Hotel, the biggest and busiest unit in the group. In this time, the Indaba Hotel won for the second time, the Conference Venue of the Year Award – City Venue with Accommodation.

In 1999, he was promoted to Executive Chef with a staff compliment of 44. During this time he was tested to the maximum and managed to pull the kitchen through peak seasons with the limited staff yet providing quality service and achieving high revenues.

Just the guy we were looking for! We get Kelvin to the road-test the Outback Platinum and put it through its paces in executive chef style. You thought it was a 'sear-your steak' kind of grill? Not in the slightest, all things are possible with this comprehensive type of unit. The dishes you prepare are only therefore limited to your knowledge and imagination. To illustrate this, Kelvin prepares a special recipe on the grill for you to enjoy on your Outback. He gives us two preparation options; one of baking as well as grilling in the Outback. Bon appétit!



400g cocktail tomatoes



SEARED SCOTTISH SALMON WITH SAUTÉED SPINACH, POTATO AND TOMATO SALAD

PREPARATION TIME 25 MINUTES

SERVES 4

4 x 120g salmon escalopes

Juice of ½ lemon

5 tablespoon olive oil

30g roughly chopped fresh basil leaves

2 garlic cloves finely chopped
300g new baby potatoes
1 stable spoon balsamic vinegar
200g chiffonnade of spinach
1 table spoon sunflower oil
4 sprigs of fennel for garnish
Salt and coarse black pepper for seasoning

METHOD:

Cook the potatoes in a pot of salted boiling water for about 15 to 20 minutes until tender and strain
Mix garlic, olive oil balsamic vinegar together in a mixing bowl.
Sautee off spinach basil and cocktail tomatoes and add to mixture of garlic, olive oil and balsamic.
Pre heat sauté pan with sunflower oil and pan fry escalopes for 2 minutes on one side only. Remove from pan place on plate fried side up and season with salt pepper and lemon juice. Divide sautéed spinach, potato and basil mix on to four plates and place salmon escalopes on top and garnish with a sprig of fennel.

PREPARING AND COOKING:

Salmon is very versatile and adapts well to different cooking methods whether steamed, poached, grilled, baked, fried, smoked or eaten raw. Which ever method you choose to utilise it is vital that you do not overcook the salmon, in practice this means that the salmon should still be pink inside when it is served. The following are examples of the different cooking methods that can be used for cooking the perfect salmon on the Outback:

Traditional baking on the Outback:

Preheat the grill, with lid closed, to 200°C.
Drape the fillets of salmon with butter or olive oil, season with salt and pepper to taste. Grease grill and place the salmon fillets onto it, close the lid and cook for 7 to 8 minutes.

Grilling on the Outback:

Preheat the grill.
Line the grill with foil. Drape the salmon with olive oil. Once heated up, place on the foil and grill for 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Season with salt, pepper and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice and serve.

Steaming, the healthiest way to cook salmon. Arrange some fresh tarragon or thyme at the bottom of your steamer and bring to the boil. Drape salmon with olive oil and place on steamer tray, close the steamer and cook for +/- 8 minutes. Remove from the steamer and season with salt, pepper and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice.



The comments we heard during the road test:

Should come standard with a cover. It is beyond anything we have ever seen. You will never need any more "horse-power". The quality of the unit is felt in its weight, it is solid and assuring. It looks as good as it works. What is that? Takes a while to heat (as opposed to indoor) but when it gets going.... The ultimate. Oh my Gosh!

Overall verdict:

We really tried to look at every aspect of this unit. Because it looks so good, we were sure it would lack in the cooking locale. But, it does not. Although fairly expensive you must remember that the VALUE is very good. There are imitations by the dozen that will only frustrate in the end, these units normally don't last either. If looked after you will never need to replace it (get a cover). It is solid, practical and very easy to use. The final verdict demands that we again express that this is the finest piece of gas cooking equipment we have yet seen, we have almost tested them all. Five Stars!



© Copyright DINE Entertainment Magazine 2006

<http://www.dinemagazine.co.za/>

A Gas Barbecue is known as a Gas Braai in South Africa