



CASE STUDY // ARTHUR HOWELL

WILLIAMS REFRIGERATION
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TRADITIONAL BUTCHER IMPRESSED BY INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY – AND IT’S GIVEN BUSINESS A BOOST

The Howell family business first opened a butcher's shop in the beautiful North Norfolk coastal town of Wells-next-the-Sea in 1889. Not surprisingly, the family believes strongly in traditional methods, provided they deliver the quality their customers expect.

On the other hand, Arthur Howell and his family are not ones to rest on their laurels – over the past years they've opened up a bakery, deli, fish monger and, in the neighbouring village of Binham, a smokehouse.

As a traditional butcher, Arthur has always been keen on meat ageing. So when Williams Refrigeration launched a meat ageing cabinet he was keen to try it out. "Dry meat ageing is a centuries-old method and the reason it's back in fashion is all about quality," he says. "The process delivers more flavour and tenderises the meat. Having said that, it's also about theatre – if you want to stand out you need to be different and the more you display, the more you sell."

The Williams Meat Ageing Cabinet is a very attractive display unit. The full length glass door and internal display lights ensure the meat is eye catching, while the solid, stainless steel construction looks great and is easy to keep clean and smart.

The Pink Himalayan Rock Salt Williams supplies with the cabinet adds a touch of the exotic, as well as helping the meat ageing process. Arthur says, "When we first installed it, it was the talk of the shop for weeks. It's a real conversation starter. For example, customers will ask about the darkness of the meat, and they'll say things like, "Dry aged meat – wow! That's different." There's no doubt it's had a positive impact on business."

The cabinet comes with either a hanging rail or shelves. "We prefer shelves – we have four and the meat looks very good, and there's plenty of space."

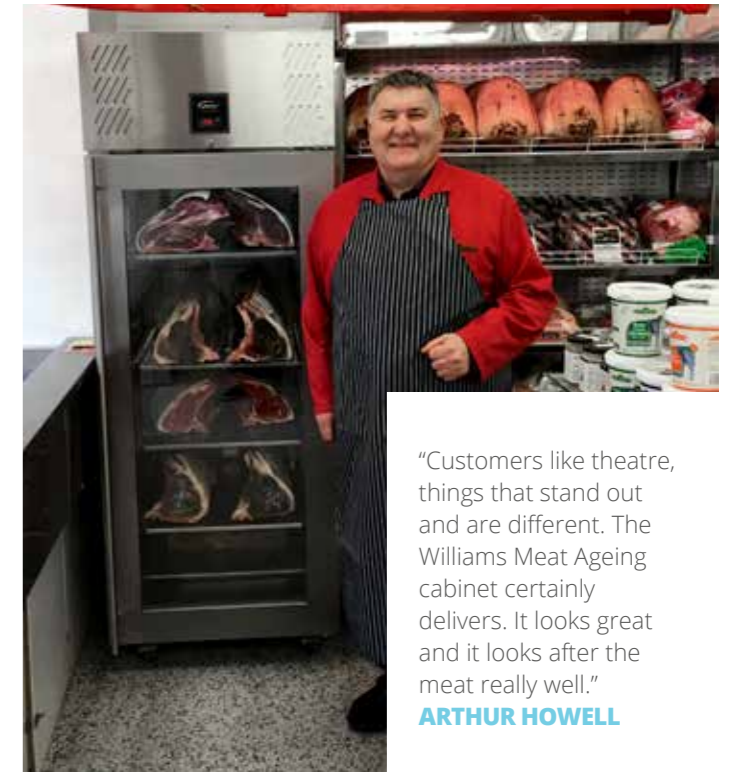
So it looks good, but how about the results? "We'll keep the meat for 4-6 weeks and all the joints are expensive cuts of meat – mainly sirloins and ribs. So we need to be confident that the cabinet will look after it! And it does: all the meat ages really well. As the meat loses moisture it shrinks a little – over four weeks in the Williams cabinet we're losing less than 10%. Also, with dry aged meat there can be an issue with mould. We've had none of that with the Williams cabinet. I can't fault it!"

Dry ageing the meat adds to its value – and the price customers are willing to pay.

"At the moment we're adding £4 a kilo, so a sirloin that starts off as £26 a kilo will be £30 once it's been aged. It's early days but I reckon customers would be happy to pay more for the meat, because it has great flavour and tenderness."

Staff like the Williams cabinet, too. "It's easy on the eye and it's easy to look after and clean," says Arthur. He also likes the solid, robust construction, "The door is nice and heavy," he says. The Howells have Williams products in other shops, including a Multideck in the deli and a freezer in the bakery. "Another plus with Williams is that it's easy to get service and to get hold of spares," says Arthur.

The Williams Meat Ageing Cabinet is designed to hold meat in ideal conditions, so it operates at a temperature of +1 to +6°C and controls relative humidity at 60-90%. The refrigeration system's CoolSmart controller ensures it always operates safely and as energy efficiently as possible, by only switching the system on when it's required – so during quiet periods, such as overnight, power consumption is minimal. It's also available in a wide range of colours and textures, thanks to Williams' Chameleon vinyl wrap service, to match a site's décor.



"Customers like theatre, things that stand out and are different. The Williams Meat Ageing cabinet certainly delivers. It looks great and it looks after the meat really well."
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Made of stainless steel throughout, the cabinet has a capacity of 620 litres and measures 727mm wide by 889mm deep and 1960 high. It runs on eco-friendly natural refrigerant (R290) with low GWP and zero ODP. The insulation foam is precision injected, high density 80mm thick polyurethane, delivering maximum thermal properties with low GWP and zero ODP.

ARTHUR HOWELL'S TIPS ON MEAT AGEING

- 28 days is the minimum to make a real impact on taste and texture.
- Beef is the most popular meat to dry age, but lamb works well, too. I would only dry age lamb under 21 days.
- If the meat is on show make sure there's plenty of light in the cabinet.
- Keep meat on the bone during ageing.
- Avoid cuts like topside: you don't want too much lean meat on the outside edge.





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Installation of all Williams products requires adequate ventilation.
Williams reserves the right to modify the design, materials and finish in accordance with its progressive development policy.

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