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# THE TOMATO

food & drink

The mindful  
pleasures  
of winter





# THE TOMATO **Top** **100**

## best things to **Eat** in **Edmonton.\***

***What's the  
best thing  
you ate  
last year?***

***It could be:***

- a restaurant dish
- a farmers' market specialty
- a product from your favourite local farmer
- a snack food
- a condiment

***Whatever makes  
your mouth hum!***

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We'll add it to our list of the 100 best things to eat in Edmonton

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The **top 100 best things to eat and drink** will be featured in the March April issue of The Tomato food & drink.

*\*For the purposes of this competition, Edmonton includes Sherwood Park, St. Albert and surrounding communities — we'll drive for food!*

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# Contents

## Features

- 6 Seasonal warmth à La Cité Francophone**  
In the depths of a prairie winter | Steve Grubich
- 10 Eating mindfully and well at Rge Rd**  
With Dr. Alda Ngo and chef Blair Lebsack | Mary Bailey
- 12 The cat's meow**  
The growing appeal of non-alcoholic cocktails
- 16 How to make risotto**  
With chef Alberto Alboreggia | Mary Bailey
- 18 What's on top**  
At the Alberta Beverage Awards | Tom Firth

## Departments

- 5 Dish**  
Gastronomic happenings around town
- 8 Beer Guy**  
The near beer is here | Peter Bailey
- 20 Feeding People**  
Seriously picky produce person | Jan Hostyn
- 22 Wine Maven**  
Mary Bailey
- 25 Kitchen Sink**  
What's new and notable
- 26 The Crossword**  
Myles Mellor



*On the cover: La Cité Francophone's annual Flying Canoë Volant Festival,  
photo: natureslight@gmail.com*



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Modern Canadian Cuisine

## feeding the freezing father

Peter Burgess, his wife Candace and son Ben lost daughter and sister Elan in 2007 to a sudden illness. They know from personal experience the difference the Stollery makes in people's lives. Peter is camping out again to raise funds for the children's hospital. Several local chefs and restaurants are providing breakfast and dinner to the freezing father: Todd Rutter, A Cappella Catering; Serge Bélair,

Edmonton Conference Centre; Lindsay Porter, London Local; Rylan Krause, NAIT; Charles Rothman; JP Dublado, River Cree; Steve Buzak, Royal Glenora Club; Paul Shufelt, Workshop Eatery; Gregg Kenney, Vivo and Doreen Prei, Zinc.

To help the family raise funds for Stollery, visit Peter at campsite #29 at the Rainbow Valley camp ground, from Sunday, January 5 to Friday, January 10 or donate at [freezingfather.org](http://freezingfather.org). Funds raised this year support Stollery's Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team. "CISM positively impacts patient care and satisfaction," says Candace. "When care givers are exposed to particularly difficult situations in carrying out their work, CISM becomes integral to supporting them."



## satisfy your cravings at smokey bear

The new Strathcona eatery Smokey Bear (8223 104 Street, 587-759-0209, [smokeybearveg.com](http://smokeybearveg.com)) is delicious and lovely. The open kitchen houses a giant wood-fired contraption with several levels allowing the cooks to adjust by moving food nearer or further from the flames. The result? Beautifully charred meats and vegetables with varying degrees of smokiness in the flavours. Stand outs: Gruger Family oyster mushrooms in an umami-rich glaze, the shareable Bear and the Flower pork chop and an irresistible flatbread with spicy 'nduja. (Oh yeah.) There is something atavistic and absolutely compelling about the warmth of that fire on a cold Edmonton night.

Smokey Bear has the makings of an Aussie culinary invasion—head chef/owner, Riley Aitken, sous Campbell Evans, chef de partie Denis Martin and sommelier/general manager Ashleigh Smith are all from the land down under. Chef Aitken (originally from Edmonton) spent several years cooking in Denmark, Bali and Australia, most recently at Biota Dining with James Viles where he fell in love with open flame cooking. There is a tidy wine list featuring primarily organic and biodynamic wine producers plus craft beers and cocktails. Choose from a few stools at the bar, 12 seats at the kitchen counter and 55 seats at tables. Well-lit and very comfortable. The plan is to change the menu often depending on what looks good in season. Closed Monday and Tuesday.

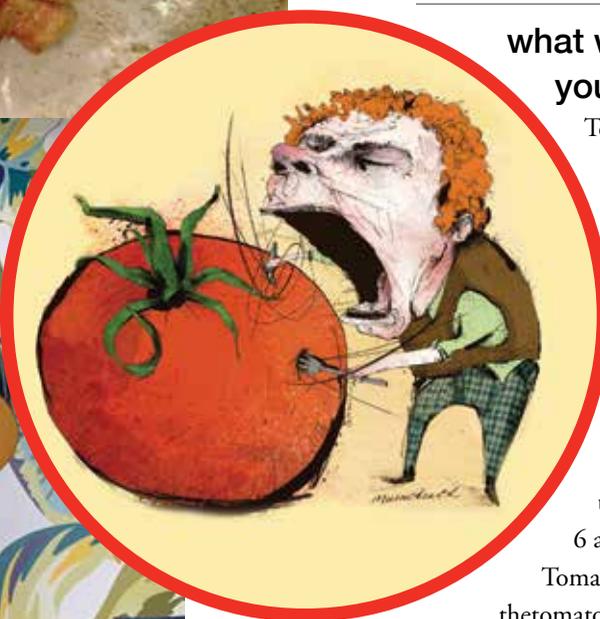
## a little samba with your coffee

Check out the new Bite of Brazil (10114 104 street, [abiteofbrazil.com](http://abiteofbrazil.com)) for delicious things like *pão de queijo* (gluten-free) cheese bread; *coxinha* (chicken fritters); *latte de doce de leite* (caramel latte); truffle-like *brigadeiros* and coffee made with Brazillian beans locally roasted by Roasti Coffee Co. Susana and Beatriz started at the Downtown Farmers' Market. Now, they have teamed up with Pampa Brazilian Steakhouse and chef João Dachery to offer a taste of Brazillian culture every day. "It's all the things we love back home, and we believe Edmontonians will enjoy as much we do," says João. The room is a delight, a colourfully modern space perfect for a casual nosh.



## what was the best thing you ate last year?

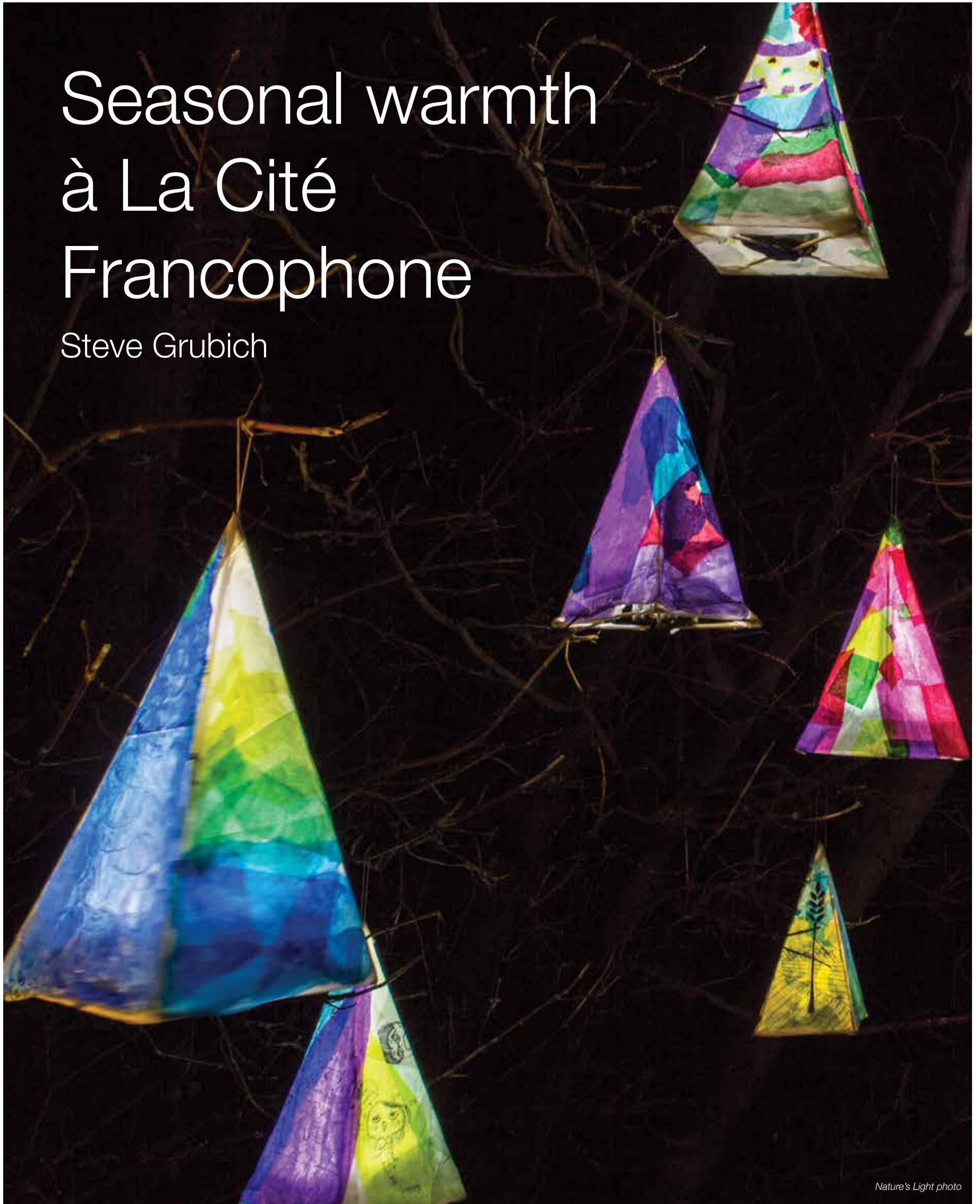
Tell us what made your mouth water, what you loved, what you couldn't stop talking about. Was it a dish at a restaurant? Was it a drink? A snack? A condiment? Something from the Farmers' Market? Something from your favourite farmer? Let us know between January 6 and January 31, for the TomatoTop100. Details online at [thetomato.ca](http://thetomato.ca).



From top: Peter Burgess, the Freezing Father, Smokey Bear's luscious chop; a touch of South American warmth at Bite of Brazil; chowing down with The Tomato's Top 100.

# Seasonal warmth à La Cité Francophone

Steve Grubich



*Nature's Light photo*

**In the depths of a prairie winter, where do you find warmth?**

You could head south to a resort, cruise or snow angel community. Or, you could go to Edmonton's French Quarter. Warm winter experiences are waiting there for you.

"Bonjour," she says as I step forward to the counter to scan the overhead menu board. It's in French. In this moment, I wish I had taken French beyond the required first year of high school. "Ummm *un café s'il vous plaît?*" She smiles. "Would you like something to eat with your coffee? That moment was my first contact with on-purpose, Franco-Albertan hospitality.

I discovered Café Bicyclette on a morning walk, shortly after moving to Bonnie Doon, a mature central-east neighbourhood just south of the North Saskatchewan River. Not only was 2013 a transition year for me, it was also one for La Cité Francophone, the home of Café Bicyclette.

Over two decades La Cité Francophone had developed in reputation and feel into an office building. The office building vibe was a symptom, a by-product of where the local Franco-Albertan community was headed, to becoming a closed community. Even with a performing arts theatre, "the building was alive for only 20 minutes before and after shows," said executive director Daniel Cournoyer over a late afternoon coffee.

Cournoyer took on the executive director role in 2012 with clear intentions to transform La Cité Francophone into a true cultural center. "We could be firmly Franco-Albertan, open and hospitable." His hands animate the transformational vision, tightly cupped for the office building era and palms up and stretching out when describing the idea of a welcoming La Cité. The bistro café was part of that vision.

I've been to Café Bicyclette many times since that first encounter. This is where I visit with friends, read, meet with clients and snack on the best poutine in town. A variety of francophone sounds fill the air courtesy grandmère's HiFi playing vinyl records. Sometimes I chat with people at an adjacent table. This is how I met Pierrette Requier, local poet and Strolling Poets Society organizer.

"Art happens there," she says about Café Bicyclette. This is true. I go to a lot of live theatre. When in people-watching mode, it's common to see familiar artists in a working meeting at the café, then later that year, live on-stage together.

Welcoming artists and dignitaries is part of Requier's leadership role (including Edmonton's Poet Laureate 2015-2017). For French speaking visitors, the first stop after the airport pickup is Café Bicyclette. They are amazed. "It's as if this café was transported whole from Montréal," she says.

Please see "Seasonal warmth" on page 24



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## Beer Guy

### The near beer is here

**When life gave Ted Fleming lemons, he didn't make lemonade, he made beer.**

And not just any beer, Fleming created one of the world's best non-alcoholic IPAs. To do this, Fleming founded Calgary-based Partake Brewing, Canada's only brewer dedicated to non-alcoholic beer. In the past year Partake has sold over three million cans of their IPA and other styles. At Ontario's 684 LCBO stores, Partake is outselling non-alcoholic Heineken and Budweiser combined. Fleming isn't stopping there, telling me his aspiration is to be able to "go to any bar or restaurant in North America and feel like there's a good chance I can order a great-tasting non-alcoholic beer."

Wait, back up, I hear you say. Great-tasting non-alcoholic beer? Isn't that an oxymoron? For the most part, yes, I agree, non-alcoholic beer is terrible. To borrow a line from the '90s band, the Odds, it's 'close but kind of meatless, like actors who play Jesus in movies of the week'. Ted Fleming agrees; in fact, that's why he started Partake. In 2005, he was living in Toronto, enjoying the growth of the local craft beer scene, when he was diagnosed with Crohn's disease. For a time Fleming tried to continue with beer, but after a few years the correlation between alcohol and symptoms worsening was undeniable. Fleming told me, "It was very difficult to give beer up. I searched for a good substitute and there really wasn't one at the time. This spurred me on to solve my own issue, and in doing that, I solved a problem for a lot of other people it turned out." They say, 'write the book you want to read.' For Fleming, it was 'brew the beer you want to drink.'

An engineer by training, Fleming approached creating good non-

alcoholic beer as a problem to be solved. Without much money or an existing brewery, Partake started from scratch; "It freed us up creatively to think of different ways of how to create a non-alcoholic product." He worked with Ontario's Durham College to develop a proprietary hybrid process of making non-alcoholic beer.

Partake IPA launched in 2017 and has not looked back, distributed around the world, including into the U.S.

with Whole Foods and liquor giant Total Wine & More.

The timing was fortuitous, for non-alcoholic beer is having a moment. Or more than a moment. *Food & Wine* called 2019 the Year of Non-Alcoholic Beer. While non-alcoholic beer sales in 2018 were only around one per cent of total Canadian beer sales, the sector's sales have grown by 50 per cent since 2013 and predictions are for growth to accelerate. Wellness is a growing trend, particularly with younger people, who are drinking less alcohol than their parents, and non-alcoholic beer is considered a healthier product.

The popularity of the Keto diet and other low-carb diets sends people to

non-alc beer. Dry January is

ever more popular, as is the idea of being sober curious. (Sobriety is sexy, apparently.) Beer giants, including Coors, Heineken and Budweiser, are betting big on non-alcoholic beer, investing millions in new products such as Heineken's 0.0. Fleming feels this is a good thing, for the millions spent on marketing by the big guys helps the whole sector rise. While Fleming feels Partake is headed for big success, what continues to drive him is changing the game, "so that for people like me, people who decide not to drink or can't drink, a bar or restaurant can be a safe place, an accessible place, a welcoming community space, where we feel we can partake on our terms."



## Moderation six pack

Ready to crush Dry January? Good for you. Here's some no- and low-alcohol beers to help you on your way.



### Partake IPA (.03 per cent ABV) Toronto

A ground-breaking non-alcoholic beer designed from the ground up to be a great-tasting craft beer. Made with bold Cascade, Amarillo and Citra hops, checking in at a modestly bitter 26 IBUs, this is a punchy, hoppy northwest-style IPA. With only 10 calories a can, go ahead and have another!



### Village Local Pale Ale (.03 per cent ABV), Calgary

A very light and quaffable non-alcoholic pale ale, with a touch of hop bitterness from Citra and Ella hops and sweetness from Alberta caramel malt. At only 35 calories for a tall-boy can, this refreshing ale could work as a post-workout recovery drink or as a shower beer in a beer league hockey dressing room.



### Red Racer Street Legal IPA (.05 per cent ABV) Surrey

Simply put, this is an outstanding non-alcoholic beer, coming the closest I found to matching the full flavour and mouthfeel of an alcoholic beer, such as Red Racer's iconic IPA. Street Legal is brewed traditionally before the alcohol is removed through a reverse osmosis process. At 40 IBUs, it's nicely bitter but well-balanced.



### Dandy Ultra Pils (3.0 per cent ABV) Calgary

For years craft brewing raced towards bigger hops, bigger malt and bigger alcohol. A welcome change has been brewers taking a different tack, brewing sessionable beers with less alcohol. Dandy's Ultra series uses non-enzymatic or cold mashing to brew full-flavour/low alcohol beer. A delicious Czech-style Pilsner is out now!



### Blindman Super Mild (3.4 per cent ABV) Lacombe

The English Mild style is the original session ale, low in alcohol but full in flavour. Blindman's take is a chestnut brown ale with notes of hazelnut, caramel, oats and chocolate. Great unique packaging in a tall stovepipe can, with labels publishing 28 different very short stories from Alberta authors.



### Ribstone Abbey Lane English Mild (3.6 per cent ABV) Edgerton

Ribstone's English Mild reveals the beauty of Canadian Prairie malts, predominately tasting of roasted, toasted, malty nuttiness with notes of chocolate and dried fruits. A Gold Medal Winner in Session Ales at the Canadian Brewing Awards and a Silver Medal in Brown Ales at the Alberta Beer Awards. 🍷

*Peter Bailey believes January is dry enough already around here. He's on Twitter and Instagram as @Libarbarian.*



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# *Eating mindfully and well at RGE RD*

with Dr. Alda Ngo and chef Blair Lebsack

— Mary Bailey with photos by Romy Yamsuan —



*The final plate: braised grass-fed beef with a black garlic coulis with farro and lentils, vegetables, toasted nuts and seeds and a squash and kale salad in cayenne mignonette.*

Chef Blair Lebsack of RGE RD joined with the Whole Family Health Clinic to raise awareness and funds to support men's health research and services. Together, they created a mindful eating cooking class at RGE RD to support Movember, the worldwide movement for men's health.

"There is a gender health gap. Studies show men are in poorer health," says Dr. Alda Xuan-Mai Ngo, co-owner of Whole Family Health Clinic.

"Studies are showing the impact of diet on men's health. For example, we are learning what the best foods are for fertility, prostate health, cancer and heart disease prevention as well as mental well-being," says Alda.

The idea was to create a meal that modelled mindful eating and to talk about why and how being mindful matters.

"We had a group of 12 men. Most were new to RGE RD and over half came with tickets bought by their wives and one mother-in-law," said Blair.

On the menu was grass-fed beef, an assortment of seasonal vegetables, nuts and whole grains. The plate followed the new Canada Food Guide which recommends that half our plates are vegetables, one quarter is protein and one quarter is whole grains.

St. Albert's Hutch & Howl provided a juice made specifically for prostate health and Eric Whitehead from Untamed Feast made chaga tea. Both will be available at the Butchery (the store next to RGE RD) when it opens later this year.

"Grass-fed beef has five times the Omega-3 acids," says Alda. "Whole grains reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and chronic inflammation. Some types of fiber in grains act as prebiotics and support beneficial gut bacteria too, which helps to lower the stress hormone cortisol. There are studies that say colourful vegetables can help prevent prostate cancer. The phytochemicals that make them colourful are also powerful antioxidants, which reduce tumour growth," says Alda.

“Mindful eating is not just about what, but how and why to eat certain foods,” says Alda. “We have to be in the bigger picture—knowing where the ingredients come from helps us appreciate and enjoy the food more. Slowing down allows us to be attentive to texture, smells and to absorb more nutrients. And there are the benefits of gratitude,” she says.

“Eating with the seasons gives your body what it’s looking for. Your body responds. Our local root veg helps us get through the cold dark winter,” says Blair.

“It’s not as hard as you think to choose food that is not only good for us, but delicious too,” says Blair. “If we show men how simple it can be, and the huge benefits small changes can have, they’ll practice mindful eating.”

Are there plans for more events? Yes! say Blair and Alda.

“The response was really positive. I was impressed by the men and how open they were. There was quite an age range, from a father and son to a man in his 70s. Helpful that it was at RGE RD—it was a delicious meal and Blair is a great ambassador,” says Alda.

## Braised Grass-fed Beef with a Black Garlic Coulis with Farro and Lentils, Vegetables, Toasted Nuts and Seeds and a Squash and Kale Salad in Cayenne Mignonette

*Blair based this menu for four on the new Canada Food guide—half the plate fruit and vegetables, one quarter whole grains and one quarter protein.*

### Grass-fed Beef

2 oz/per (8 oz total) Rge Rd uses beef from Tandria Dexter or Nature’s Green Acres

½ c beef tallow (or oil, grape seed or canola)

### Black Garlic Coulis

2 bulbs black garlic

½ c vegetable stock or water

2 t sherry or cider vinegar

½ t lemon juice

15 g hemp seeds

1 t kosher salt (maybe a bit more to taste)

½ shallot

1 t hot sauce

Put all ingredients into a blender and blend. Wipe down sides with spatula and re-blend until smooth and thickened. Makes about 1 cup.

### Farro

Rinse the farro with water. Add 1 cup farro to a pot with 3 cups of water. Bring to boil and then reduce heat to a simmer. Cook until the grains

are tender, about 25 minutes. Add 2 teaspoons salt after the farro is cooked.

### Lentils

Rinse the lentils with water. Add 1 cup of lentils to a pot with 3 cups of water. Bring to boil and then reduce heat to a simmer. Cook until the lentils are tender, about 15-20 minutes. Add 2 teaspoons salt after the lentils are cooked.



Top L-R: Christina Pistotnik; Alda Ngo (co-owners Whole Family Health); Blair Lebsack (RGE RD); Kelsey Shaw; Paige Wyatt; Catherine Woodlock (Whole Family Health); wearing their Movember moustaches. “Don’t be afraid of the big gnarly squash,” says chef Blair Lebsack.

## Vegetables, Nuts and Seeds

½ medium-sized Hubbard squash (blue Hubbard or red October are great)

2 carrots, peeled and small diced

1 leek washed, trim off green top, slice thinly

2 T mixed herbs (finely chopped parsley, thyme, sage)

handful cherry tomatoes, sliced in half, sprinkled with a little salt and warmed slightly, reserve

Cut squash in half, scoop out the seeds and discard. Peel squash (probably with a knife because of the tough skin). Make ribbons with vegetable peeler first, dice the remaining. Reserve the ribbons for the salad. Toast the nuts and the seed in a pan or in the oven at 350°F. Break walnuts into smaller pieces once toasted.

Add 2-3 tablespoons of beef tallow (or oil) to a pan over medium heat. Add the carrots, leeks and diced squash and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring as needed. Add pre-cooked lentils and farro and cook for 5 minutes, adding ¼ cup of water or vegetable stock. Add nuts, seeds and herbs, stirring to incorporate all ingredients. Season with salt and pepper.

## Squash and Kale Salad

squash ribbons

1 bunch kale

Wash kale and tear into bite-sized pieces.

Toss kale and squash in cayenne mignonette and 1 teaspoon salt and let marinate while preparing the meal.

### Cayenne Mignonette

2 T pickled cayenne (or other pickled pepper like banana peppers)

½ c Riesling vinegar (white wine vinegar)

½ shallot

dash salt

Mix and toss with the kale and squash.

To serve, slice beef if necessary. Place a dollop of black garlic coulis on four plates. Add the beef on top. Divide the vegetable mixture between the plates, as well as the tomatoes, then follow with the salad.

Serves 4. 🍷

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# The Cat's Meow

THE GROWING APPEAL OF NON-ALCOHOLIC COCKTAILS

*Love cocktailing but don't like the after-effects?  
Doing Dry January? Cutting back after the hols?*



Evan Watson photo

There are many good reasons to cut back on alcohol anytime of the year. Yet the idea of the usual suspects to drink is just not that appealing. But, making the switch to a non-alcoholic version of your favourite cocktail, or something brand new is possible. Here's how.

The trouble with most non-alcoholic cocktails is the lack of complexity and the high calories—sometimes they just seem like fruit juice with soda—which is fine if you desire fruit juice and soda. But what if you are looking for something more? Alcohol brings complexity, flavour and depth to the mix. How to achieve that without it?

One way many bartenders are building complexity and flavour is to incorporate unusual ingredients such as herbs, bitters, tinctures, concentrated syrups or vinegars. Take the non-alcoholic cocktails at Uccellino for example. Balsamic vinegar, an amarena cherry syrup they make in house and fresh basil is used to create tasty drinks with depth and length.

The other way is Seedlip\*, the liquor alternatives created by Ben Branson. Herbs, vegetables and other botanicals are macerated in neutral spirits, then the alcohol is boiled off to produce a soft distillation. The process takes six weeks and the result is something like gin, minus the alcohol. Branson is fascinated by distillation. “To take real ingredients from the field or garden and capture it in a liquid that smells and tastes of the raw material; that enraptures me,” he says.

There are now three concoctions; the original Garden 108—leafy and herbaceous—tastes like spring; Spice 94 with its darker flavours of bark and spice and Grove 42 which sings of warm orange. All have plenty of pungent grown-up flavours, along with no sugar, no calories and no alcohol.

“I like Seedlip because their sole focus is non-alcoholic beverages, and they are the first major company to bring a high level of detail to the drinks market,” says Camilo Torres, Bar Bricco bartender

and Color de Vino staffer. “You can go about building a non-alcoholic cocktail the same way you would a drink with a spirit. It's useful because it adds length to the drink without sugar. People can expect a non-alcoholic drink that is more than just juice and syrup.”

*\*Find Seedlip at the Italian Centre Shops, Sherbrooke Liquor (in the gin section) and Maven and Grace.*

## Earl Grey Fizz (Early Riser)

*“This non-alcoholic drink would make a delicious punch for entertaining.”*

— Camilo Torres

3 oz	Seedlip Spice 94
4 oz	Earl Grey tea (brewed double strength, lasts a week in the fridge before it turns bitter)
2 oz	fresh lemon juice
2 oz	vanilla syrup*
1 dash	Scrappy's Lavender Bitters

Shake with ice, strain into a Collins glass and top with soda. Garnish with a lemon peel.

Makes 2 cocktails.

## Seedlip & Tonic

*“The Seedlip Garden 108 works really well with tonic water, and it's delicious as a Spanish-style gin and tonic, minus the gin. What's a Spanish-style gin and tonic? One served in a big wine glass with lots of garnish, as many aromatics as you like: lime peel, grapefruit wedge, a stick of cinnamon, sprig of rosemary or thyme, bay or sage leaves. These are all things you might have in the kitchen and they add another layer of flavour.”*

— Camilo Torres

3 oz	Seedlip Garden 108
	Fever Tree Mediterranean tonic, less bitter, with more Provençal herb notes than their classic tonic water
	or
	Q Indian tonic, sweetened with agave and carbonated at a higher pressure.

Build over ice with all those garnishes.

Makes 2 cocktails.

Please see “Cat's Meow” on next page.



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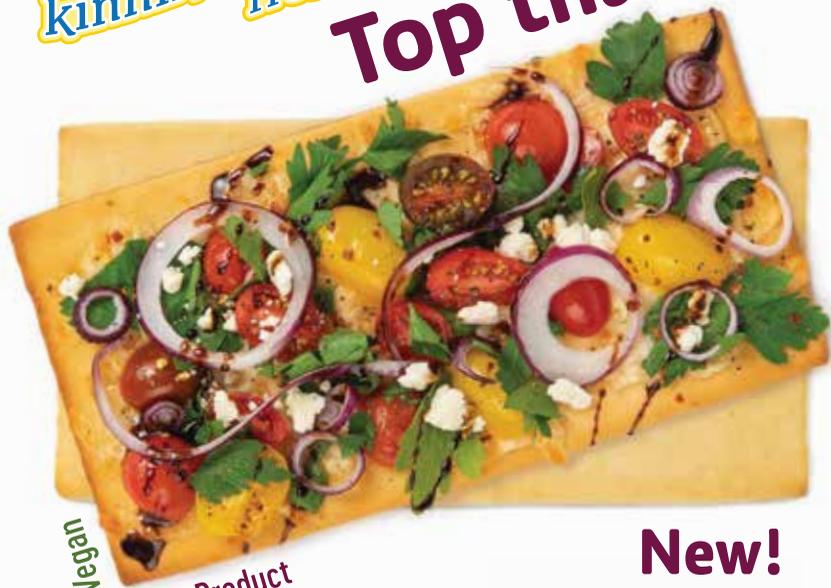
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## Cat's Meow

Continued from previous page

## Hibiscus Daisy (Daisy's Fool)

*A non-alcoholic version of a margarita, the world's most popular daisy cocktail, made with a hibiscus agua fresca.*

– Camilo Torres

- 4 oz hibiscus agua fresca (recipe follows)
- 1.5 oz fresh lime juice
- 1.5 oz grenadine (recipe follows)
- teaspoon honey

Combine ingredients and shake with ice, strain into a salt-rimmed rocks glass with ice.

## Hibiscus Agua Fresca

Combine 2 litres water and 2 tablespoon hibiscus petals over low heat for 15 minutes. Add ¾ cup sugar and stir until dissolved. Chill before serving.

## Homemade Grenadine Syrup

Combine 500mL pomegranate juice and 2 cups sugar, with 2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses over low heat until dissolved. Don't let it boil, then add ⅛ teaspoon of orange blossom water at the end. Chill before serving.

## The Junior

*Recipe courtesy Bar Clementine.*

- 4 oz Seedlip Garden 108
- ½ oz lime juice
- ½ oz buckwheat honey
- dash Scarborough Bitters
- dash absinthe (optional)

Build in a tall glass over ice. Garnish with olives and Italian parsley.

Makes 2 cocktails.

## Panoma

*A new version of a Paloma, sans tequila. Recipe courtesy Seedlip.*

- 4 oz Seedlip Spice 94
- 2 oz fresh grapefruit juice
- 1 oz fresh lime juice
- 1 oz simple syrup
- sparkling water (or soda) to taste
- grapefruit peel for garnish

Combine all ingredients (except soda) in shaker. Shake and strain over ice in a highball. Top with sparkling water. Stir.

Makes 2 cocktails.

## Rosemary, Honey and Grapefruit Spritzer

*A refreshing drink for brunch, best made with the juicy ruby grapefruit that we find in the markets in late winter.*

- ⅓ c honey
- 6 sprigs rosemary
- 1¼ c freshly squeezed grapefruit juice (about 5 grapefruit)
- 4 pieces grapefruit peel (garnish)
- sparkling water

Combine the honey and 2 sprigs rosemary over medium-low heat until the honey begins to bubble around the edges, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and let steep for 5-10 minutes.

Once the honey has cooled slightly, remove the sprigs of rosemary and transfer the infused honey to a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Add the grapefruit juice and shake vigorously until combined and frothy. (Or put in a blender and pulse).

Divide the mixture between 4 glasses filled with crushed ice and top with sparkling water. Garnish with rosemary sprigs and grapefruit peel.

Serves 4.

## Garden Sour

*Crisp and refreshing. Recipe courtesy Seedlip.*

- 4 oz Seedlip Garden 108
- 3 oz fresh, cloudy apple juice or good quality cider
- 2 oz fresh lemon juice
- 2 t apple cider vinegar
- 1 egg white
- sprig fresh rosemary
- sprig fresh thyme

Add all ingredients, including the herbs, to a cocktail shaker. Fill with ice and shake to chill and dilute until the outside of the shaker frosts. Strain into a chilled coupe. Garnish with fresh rosemary needles.

Makes 2 cocktails.

## Mulled Wine

500 ml	pomegranate juice
25 g	light brown sugar
handful	frozen blackberries
250 ml	apple juice
1 stick	cinnamon
1	star anise
4	cloves
3	black peppercorns
1	orange, quartered
1 T	balsamic vinegar, or to taste (optional)

Put all ingredients but the vinegar into a saucepan. Heat gently until simmering. Add balsamic if using, taste for sweetness, then strain into heatproof glasses.

Serves 3-4.

## Shrubs

*A shrub is essentially a drink made by macerating fruit with sugar and adding vinegar. Because shrubs are generally high in acidity (if you use a vinegar of at least five per cent) shrubs can be an excellent way to enjoy summer's bounty of rhubarb, berries and other fruit. Distilled white vinegar, champagne vinegar, sherry vinegar, apple cider vinegar even balsamic vinegar (though these are not for keeping long) add different flavours and layers of pucker. The sugar could be white, brown, or honey. The process builds complexity which is vital to a successful non-alcoholic drink.*

### Cranberry Apple Shrub

Recipe via Food 52

3 med	apples, quartered (no need to seed or core)
1 c	cranberries
1 c	apple cider vinegar
½ c	brown sugar

Shred the apples using a box grater or a food processor.

Add cranberries and vinegar to a blender and blend until puréed.

Add the shredded apples, cranberry-vinegar mixture and the sugar to a nonreactive container. Cover and leave in a cool place on the countertop for up to 2 days. After 2 days, strain apple-cranberry mixture using fine-mesh strainer. Squeeze or press to remove

any remaining liquid. Discard solids. Pour liquid into clean mason jar or glass bottle. Cap, then shake well to combine. Keeps, refrigerated, for about 6 months.

### Raspberry Shrub

300 g	raspberries
50 g	honey
75 ml	raw apple cider vinegar
	mint leaves

Put half the raspberries in a large bowl and lightly crush some of them with a muddler or a potato masher. Pour over the honey, stir well, cover and leave in the fridge overnight. The next day stir in the vinegar, then sieve the mixture over a bowl or jug. To serve: Add remaining raspberries, mint leaves, sparkling water and ice. Stir gently to combine.

Makes 6-8 drinks.

### Strawberry Balsamic Shrub

Recipe via Food 52

2 c	chopped strawberries
1 c	sugar
1 c	balsamic vinegar

In a medium non-reactive bowl or container, macerate strawberries with the sugar. Cover and refrigerate for about a day, or until the sugar draws out the juice and makes a syrup. Strain the fruit solids, pressing firmly to extract as much syrup as possible. You can use the fruit solids as a dessert topping or discard it. Add the vinegar to the syrup. Transfer to a bottle or jar. Store, covered, in the fridge for up to two weeks.

### To make a drink

Fill a tall glass halfway with ice, add 1-2 T shrub syrup, or to taste and top off with sparkling water or soda. Makes about 2 cups shrub. ☺

*\*Vanilla syrup. "You can make your own or the Coffee Bureau stocks some great small-batch syrups" – Camilo Torres.*

*Tomato editor Mary Bailey likes a Ponomo with no simple syrup and a salted rim.*

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# how to make risotto

## *with chef Alberto Alboreggia*

“Lombardia is to rice as Tuscany is to wine,” says Sorrentino’s exec chef, Alberto Alboreggia. “I grew up with risotto and I love making it.”

Chef is from Lombardia, where the short grain varieties of rice ideal for risotto are grown. This rice contains a starch called *amylopectin*, which allows the rice to become very creamy and absorb a lot of liquid (up to twice its weight depending upon the variety), yet never becomes mushy.

“Making risotto is very simple yet very hard,” he says.

“You must use the right ingredients. There are three kinds of rice for risotto—arborio, which is longer and good for seafood risotto. Canaroli is short and fat and my favourite is vialone nano. I use all of them depending on what kind of risotto I am making. I like the Aquarella brand.

“You must have a good savoury broth. And it’s got to be hot. You must *tostatura*. This is when you first oil the rice, then you let it turn gold and get very hot. This means the rice won’t break later.



“You must be sure the liquid is absorbed after every step. You stir all the time, slowly,” says chef.

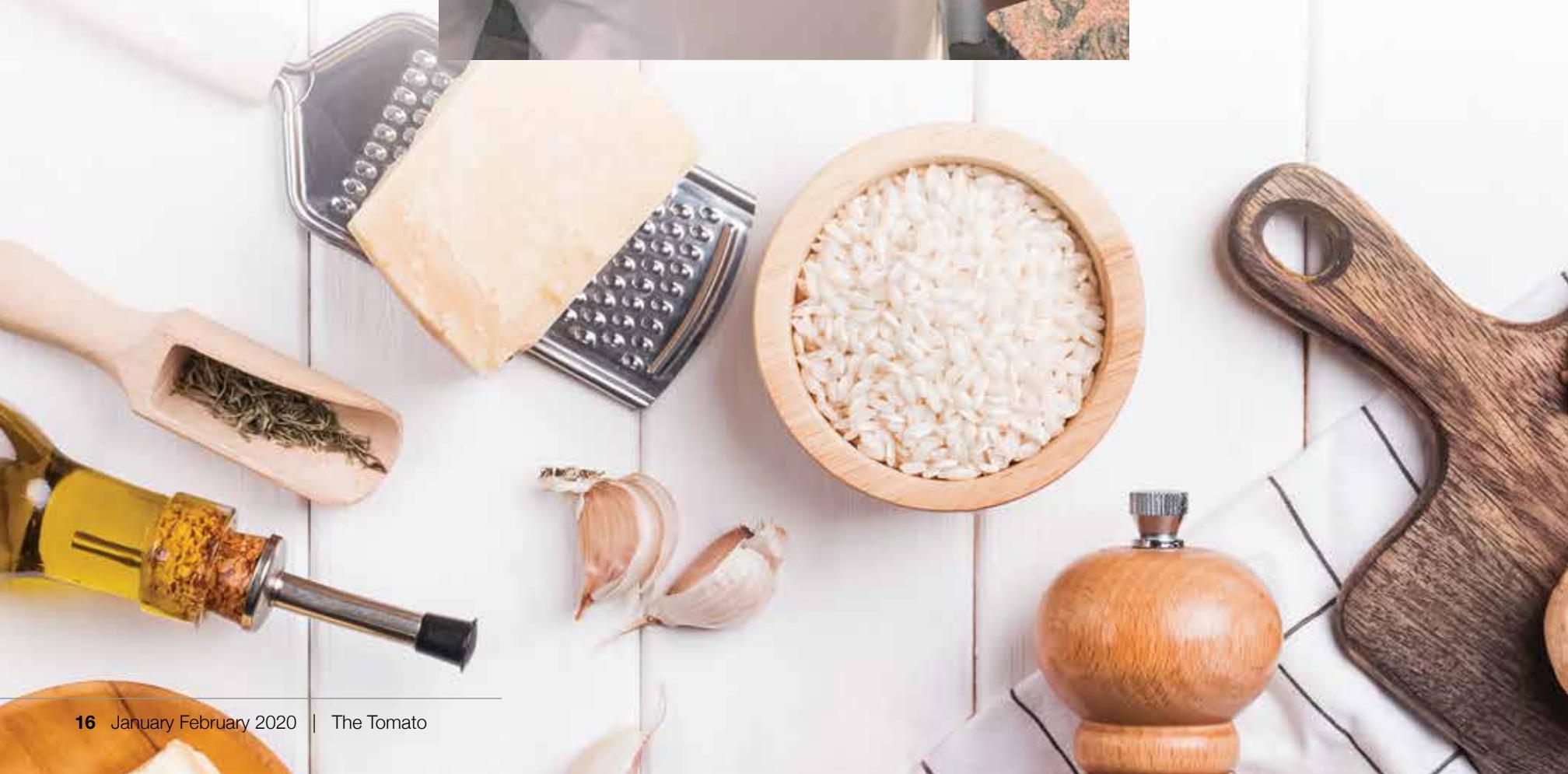
This is where most people fail. You can’t leave, you have to stand there and stir. But, think of it as a meditation, a brief time out, as you can’t do anything else while you are making the risotto.

“Some people put the cheese and butter in early. You can’t do that. It must be *mantecatura*, stirred in at the end.”

At a dinner featuring Tuscan producer Volpaia, chef made an amazing beet risotto, so creamy and flavourful. I wondered how he could have such perfect results for that many people. What about pre-cooking risotto?

“Yes it can be done,” he said, and started to explain. The process involved cooking the risotto half-way, chilling it, then resuming with the bit of broth, stirring, bit of broth, stirring, all best done in a restaurant kitchen with staff and space.

Instead, let’s celebrate the process and take some time to make risotto the classic way, standing by the stove.



## Mushroom Risotto

Alberto Alboreggia, *exec chef Sorrentino's*

4 c	chicken broth
100 g	Italian arborio rice
4 T	olive oil
100 g	portobello mushroom, sliced thin
100 g	frozen porcini cubes
100 g	oyster mushroom, sliced thin
50 g	chanterelle mushroom, sliced thin
50 g	chopped onion
25 g	chopped garlic
½ c	dry white wine
50 g	fresh cream
150 g	Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
3 T	butter
50 g	Italian parsley, chopped
3 t	white truffle oil
	salt and pepper

In a saucepan, warm the broth over low heat. Warm 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir in the mushrooms, and cook until crispy and gold, about 3 minutes. Remove mushrooms and their liquid and set aside. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil to skillet and stir in the onion and garlic. Cook 1 minute. Add the rice, stirring to coat with the oil, about 4 minutes. (This is the *tostatura*.) When the rice has taken on a golden color, pour in the wine, stirring constantly until the wine is fully absorbed. Add ½ cup broth to the rice and stir until the broth is absorbed. Continue adding broth ½ cup at a time, stirring continuously, until the liquid is absorbed, and the rice is al dente, about 15 to 20 minutes. Add all the mushroom, the parsley, truffle oil.

Add the cream. Remove from heat and stir in the Parmesan and butter. (This is the *mantecatura*.) Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Serves 4 or 4-6 as a side dish.

## Butternut Squash Risotto

Alberto Alboreggia, *exec chef Sorrentino's*

4 c	vegetable broth (or chicken stock)
100 g	Italian arborio rice
4 T	olive oil
150 g	butternut squash puree
3-4	sage leaves
50 g	chopped onion
25 g	chopped garlic
½ c	dry white wine
50 g	fresh cream
150 g	Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
3 T	butter
50 g	chives, chopped
1 T	hazelnut oil
50 g	crumbled goat cheese
	salt and pepper

In a saucepan, warm the broth over low heat. Warm 3 tablespoons olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onion, garlic and sage. Add the rice, stirring to coat with oil, about 4 minutes. (This is the *tostatura*.) When the rice has taken on a golden color, pour in the wine, stirring constantly until the wine is fully absorbed. Add the butternut squash puree. Add ½ cup broth to the rice and stir until the broth is absorbed. Continue adding broth ½ cup at a time, stirring continuously, until the liquid is absorbed, and the rice is al dente, about 15 to 20 minutes. Add the fresh chives, hazelnut oil. Add the cream. Remove from the heat, and stir, adding the Parmesan and butter. (This is the *mantecatura*.) Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the crumbled goat cheese on top of the rice. Serve immediately.

Serves 4 or 4-6 as a side dish. 🍷

Tomato editor *Mary Bailey* likes to drink a glass of Franciacorta while standing at the stove stirring.



**XIX**

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# WHAT'S ON TOP

## at the Alberta Beverage Awards

Tom Firth

The Alberta Beverage Competition brings together sommeliers, beverage retailers, drink educators, media types and restaurateurs for three days of blind tasting in July. After all the work is done—collecting, categorizing, opening, tasting for soundness and working with a dozen volunteer stewards—the best thing about running Alberta's largest beverage competition is seeing the results come in.

Alberta is the only market in Canada with a private liquor model. This means that we have a tremendous variety of wines, beers, and spirits (and everything in between), but also that the system is highly competitive. We want the best thing, from the classics to the cutting edge from around the world. Retailers aren't working with a liquor board's choices, but are looking for the most suitable products for their shelves at the prices they need. Restaurants choose whatever they think will fit their clientele and the beverage trade. Looking for the next big thing? Trust me, it's already here.

That's why a competition like the Alberta Beverage Awards is meaningful. We get some of the best tasters, to taste dozens of categories blind (brand, price and region are not known) to find the best examples, whether it's Cabernet Sauvignon or Chardonnay, available. At this year's competition, the seventh, with almost 850 entries, the following wines were chosen as the best in the category.

### SPARKLING WINES

#### **Gremillet NV Brut Organic Cuvée Prestige, Champagne, France (1)**

A treat for the palate. Lean and crisp with tight mineral presence and mildly toasty notes, \$62.

### CAVA

#### **Tied for best Cava:**

#### **Parés Baltà NV Cava Brut, Penedes, Spain**

Parés Baltà is making some seriously good, mineral-laden cava. A solid cava to have on hand for guests or when bubbles are in order, \$21.

#### **Tied for best Cava:**

#### **Villa Conchi NV Brut Seleccion, Catalunya, Spain**

Villa Conchi is all about clean fruits and zippy acids, \$19.

### PROSECCO

#### **Masottina NV Treviso Prosecco Brut, Treviso, Italy**

Plenty of celebratory bubbles, clean apple fruits and all those food-friendly acids that pair with almost anything, \$24.

### WHITE SINGLE VARIETIES

#### **Bellingham The Bernard Series 2018 Roussanne, Coastal Region, South Africa**

Roussanne is a sadly overlooked grape that brings all sorts of beautiful fruits to the table, as well as clean tea leaf aromas, \$32.

#### **Jacob's Creek 2018 Double Barrel Chardonnay, Australia**

Australia is able to produce some of the finest, well-priced chardonnays in the world. Jacob's Creek hits it out of the park with this Double Barrel line, \$24.

#### **Veramonte 2017 Reserve Sauvignon Blanc, Casablanca Valley, Chile (2)**

The Veromonte features prominent melon fruits balanced by bright acidity, \$16.

#### **Upper Bench 2018 Riesling Naramata Bench, British Columbia**

This Riesling hits each and every note—from the slate mineral character to the tight lemon and flintiness, \$30.

#### **Peller Family Vineyards Pinot Grigio, Canada**

This Pinot Grigio hit all the right notes with clean fruits, a refreshing palate and the balance we crave, at a price we love, \$11.

#### **Wild Goose 2018 Gewürztraminer, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia (3)**

Our top gewürzt in 2018 as well, Wild Goose hits the sweet spot with bright tropical fruits, vibrant floral tones and restrained sweetness. A fantastic bottle, \$25.

### WHITE BLENDS

#### **Clos du Soleil 2016 Capella, Similkameen, British Columbia (4)**

The Similkameen is well worth discovering for exceptional wineries like Clos du Soleil. A blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon with the best of both grapes coming through, \$30.



## AROMATIC WHITE BLENDS

### Torres 2017 Vina Esmeralda Catalunya, Spain (5)

A dynamite bottle of pure refreshment, the Vina Esmeralda is a consistent winner at the Alberta Beverage Awards, \$17.

## ROSÉ

### Sandhill 2018 Rosé, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia (6)

Our judges loved this rosé. Well-balanced with tart strawberry and raspberry fruit and mouthwatering acidity, quite dry, \$25.

## RED SINGLE VARIETIES

### Tied for best Merlot:

#### Upper Bench 2015 Limited Release Merlot, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia (7)

Deep, plummy fruit and prominent tannins offer superb weight and balance, \$38.

### Tied for best Merlot:

#### Black Sage 2016 Merlot, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia

A generous and polished Merlot with big black fruits and plenty of savoury herb character, \$31.

#### Boekenhoutskloof 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch, South Africa

Our judges loved the big, chewy tannins with all the classic Cabernet flavours. Drinks well now or can be cellared for years, \$70.

#### Fontanafredda 2014 Serralunga d'Alba Barolo, Piedmont, Italy

This Fontanafredda bottling is a top-quality wine at a very reasonable price. Big and youthful with deep fruits and tannins perfect for the cellar, or, big red meats, \$46.

#### Upper Bench 2016 Pinot Noir, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia

A delicious example with all the bright fruit, herb, and vegetable leaf one wants from great Pinot, \$35.

#### Masi Tupungato 2017

#### Passo Doble Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina

From the Argentine estate of the Italian wine legends Masi, the Passo Doble shares some techniques with Valpolicella's Ripasso wines to incredible effect, \$21.

#### Peter Lehmann 2017 The Barossan Shiraz, Barossa Valley, Australia

Peter Lehmann was one of Australia's most iconic wine-makers. This Shiraz is bursting with fruit, but also earth and spice, making for a tasty Shiraz experience, \$24.

#### Vina Zaco 2016 Tempranillo, Rioja, Spain

Spain is one of the hot countries right now for well-priced and tasty wines and this Tempranillo is excellent with roasts or earthier dishes, \$20.

## ITALIAN BLENDS

#### Tenuta San Jacopo 2015

#### Orma del Diavolo, Tuscany, Italy

A delicious blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Sangiovese, also organic and vegan, with delicious with cherry and spice flavours, \$35.

## SANGIOVESE AND BLENDS

#### Castello di Radda 2013

#### Chianti Classico Riserva, Tuscany, Italy (8)

Seriously good in every way that matters, from the savoury spices and mild earthiness, to the bright cherry fruits with tart acids. Fantastic, \$41.

## RHONE-STYLE BLENDS

#### Cims del Montsant 2012, Montsant, Spain (9)

Rhone-style wines are made from Syrah, Grenache, and Mourvèdre. This wonderful blend is well-suited to rich meaty dishes or the earthiness of mushrooms, \$21.

## BORDEAUX BLENDS

#### Dourthe 2014 Chateau Pey La Tour Reserve, Bordeaux, France

How refreshing to have a wine from Bordeaux win the award for Bordeaux blends. Pey La Tour comes in at a solid price and delivers loads of cherry and cedar character, \$23.

## OTHER RED BLENDS

#### The Social Collection 2013 Bin #115, Mendoza, Argentina (10)

A different blend of mostly Bordeaux varieties with Syrah in the mix. The Social Collection is exclusive to Co-op's liquor stores—perfect for when one needs a big, rich red for any sort of social event. \$22.

## FRUIT WINE

#### Field Stone Strawberry-Rhubarb, Alberta (11)

This is a not too sweet, refreshing fruit wine from off the beaten path, \$22.

## AFTER DINNER AND DESSERT WINES

### Tied for best Dessert:

#### Inniskillin Niagara 2017 Vidal Icewine, Niagara Peninsula, Ontario

Rich and sweet with flavours of nectarines and citrus, seriously good, \$60.

### Tied for best Dessert:

#### Paradise Ranch 2014 Sauvignon Blanc Icewine, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia (12)

Icewine? Made from Sauvignon Blanc? Yes! And it works. Melony flavours plus herbaciousness and bright lemon tones are well suited to the sweet, golden nectar that is icewine, \$65.

## FORTIFIED WINES

#### Kopke 10 Year-Old Tawny, Douro, Portugal (13)

Tawny Ports are some of the best value in fortified wines and Kopke's is packed with nutty and toffee flavours, along with spice and just a touch of berry fruit, \$42. 🍷

*Tom Firth is competition director for the Alberta Beverage Awards, held annually in Calgary. For the full results of the 2019 competition, visit [culinairemagazine.ca](http://culinairemagazine.ca)*



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## Feeding People

### Seriously picky produce person

I watched in fascination as the cart pushed past me, multiple bins nestled next to each other on multiple different levels.

My eyes couldn't tear themselves away as the cart-pusher pulled up next to a row of apples, hastily plopping a few seemingly random apples into a bag before depositing them into one of the many bins. So quick, so perfunctory and so very, very unlike me.

That cart, those bins and that person are all part of something I have a hard time wrapping my head around:

online grocery shopping. The thought of someone else picking out my groceries — my apples, my bananas, my cauliflower, my everything — absolutely horrifies me. I don't even like it (really

don't like it, actually) when my husband pops into the store on his way home from work and surprises me by picking up a few things. (You bought what?)

So to watch a complete stranger pick out groceries for someone else, well, it kind of makes me shudder.

What if the apples aren't quite the right size? What if they're bruised? And what if there are better apples in the display, maybe just up a bit higher?

It's not just the whole online shopping thing that perplexes me. It's other shoppers. Well, some other shoppers. The ability (although I'm not sure ability is quite the right word) to pick something up and casually plunk it into your cart without even giving it a second glance, well, I find that completely unsettling.

I am very particular about my produce. Some people might call me annoying. Maddening. Even infuriating. I examine, I feel, I rummage, I smell. And it all takes time. There is nothing even remotely speedy about the process.

Even though I like doing my own grocery shopping, it's more than that: I need to do it. We're talking about food that I am going to feed my family and myself and that makes grocery shopping serious business.

There are just so many variables that come into play when it comes to picking out groceries.

Take bananas.

For bananas to make it into my cart, they need to meet certain criteria. They can't be too green — if they are, they might never ripen (usually a Costco phenomenon).

They can't be too yellow, either.

Yellow bananas run the risk of becoming overripe practically before they make it out of the store. More importantly: they have to have a distinct curve to them. My daughter swears that bananas that are verging on straight simply aren't as sweet as the curved ones.

My oranges and pomelos have to be heavy, my grapes need to be crisp and hard, and my bags of mini peppers have to have more orange peppers than red or yellow ones. Different bags of mini peppers all have slightly different assortments of colours (yes, they really do), and since I have a thing for orange peppers, I dig until I find that particular bag that contains the most orange ones.

Ultimately, it all comes down to flavour. If something isn't going to taste good, it's not making it into my cart. Looks



## Jan Hostyn

aren't as important. Just like in life, it's all about personality and what's inside that counts. Aesthetically speaking, anyway. Rotten or moldy bits definitely count, as do large bruises and anything else that indicates inferior quality.

Because of that, my grocery shopping is what you could call flexible.

I don't shop with a list that's set in stone. I can't, it all depends on what's available that day and what looks or feels or smells good (or what doesn't). Cauliflower might be on my mind, but

if the cauliflowers of the day are looking brown and compromised, they'll get a pass and I'll reassess.

Off to the broccoli or bok choy I'll go.

I might have an idea what type of apple I'd like to buy, but if

that kind isn't having a good day, I'll simply see

what other kind looks good. I might be partial to Fujis, but only to Fujis that are hard and crisp.

Then there are certain things I never buy...

Peaches in January? Absolutely not. Peaches are a summertime fruit. They are grown in the summer, and they only taste like juicy, fragrant, glorious peaches in the summer. The January impostors are typically mealy and flavourless and resemble peaches in name only.

So yes, shopping seasonally is huge for me. We don't celebrate Christmas all year round (although the Christmas season seems to start earlier and earlier every year), so why should we expect (or want) to eat asparagus (or cherries, or plums, or anything else that strikes your fancy) all year round?

There are also some things that I wouldn't even consider buying at the grocery store. Yes, I'm talking about you, tomatoes. Grocery store tomatoes have absolutely nothing in common with the luscious, vibrant, amazing creatures that you can find at the farmers' market (or in your own garden) in the summer.

I am a big farmers' market fan, summer and winter. Local means fresh, and fresh means flavour. Plus there's something to be said for knowing the people who grow the produce you purchase, raise

the meat you buy, make the cheese you eat and tend to the chickens whose eggs you use.

There's nothing like B.C. fruit from the farmers' market in the summer. Or carrots that magically taste

like they were pulled practically straight out of the garden even in the middle of

January. Or real spinach that's thick and a little curly and tastes so earthy and sweet and different from the grocery store variety. Or super-fresh eggs.

It all comes down to flavour. And freshness.

So the next time you see someone taking an extraordinary amount of time in the grocery store, stop by and say hi — it could very well could be me. I'm really not as annoying as you might think, or at least I hope I'm not. There are just some things I take very seriously. Or try to. 🍷

*Jan Hostyn's latest obsession: locally-made, small-batch ice cream. You won't find it at the grocery store, but it's definitely worth seeking out, even in minus 20 temperatures!*



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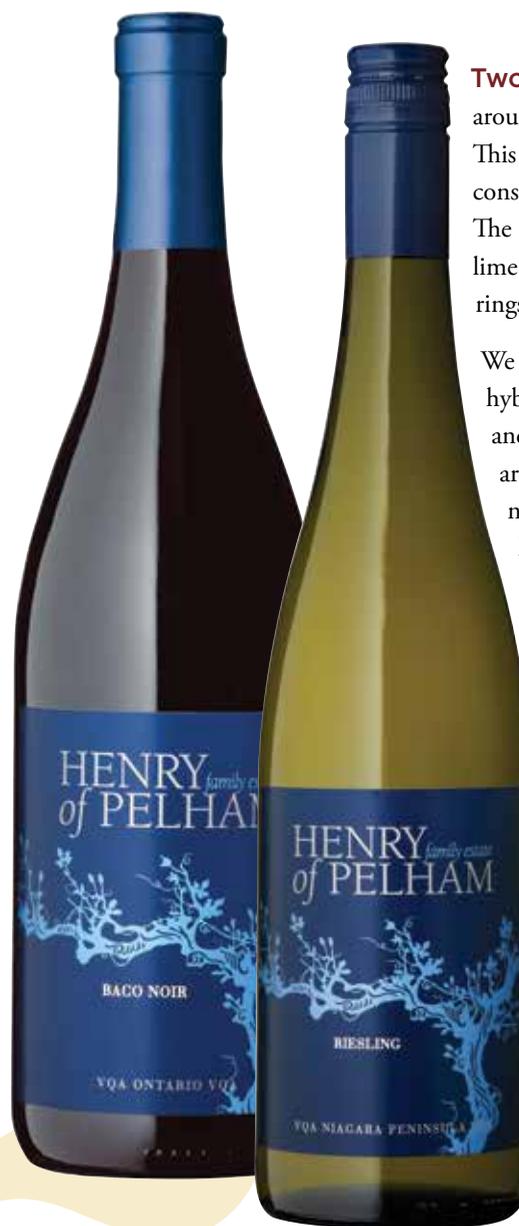


Juanita Roos (Color de Vino) and Tyler Harlton (TH Wines) taste at Odd Company Brewing in the Oliver Exchange.

**We found out late last year that this is Tyler Harlton's last vintage.**

“The past couple of years I have felt the pull of some other work in food and farming, which I haven't been able to pursue owing to the work at the winery,” says Tyler. “I've taken risks to build skills that afford me amazing opportunities and it's time to put those skills to work on a new project, as yet determined.” The wines have always been a group effort with friends and family pulled in to receive the grapes and start them on their journey to bottling. Tyler has been making **TH Wines** by hand out of a small facility in Summerland for almost a decade. We have been a huge fan of TH wines since the beginning, and, although sad he won't be continuing, we're curious to see what Tyler gets up to next. If you are going to the Okanagan this year, pop in to say so long, Tyler will be in the tasting room. In the meantime, pick up the 2015 TH Riesling, drinking perfectly right now, and look forward to the 2019 vintage being on the shelf in the spring.

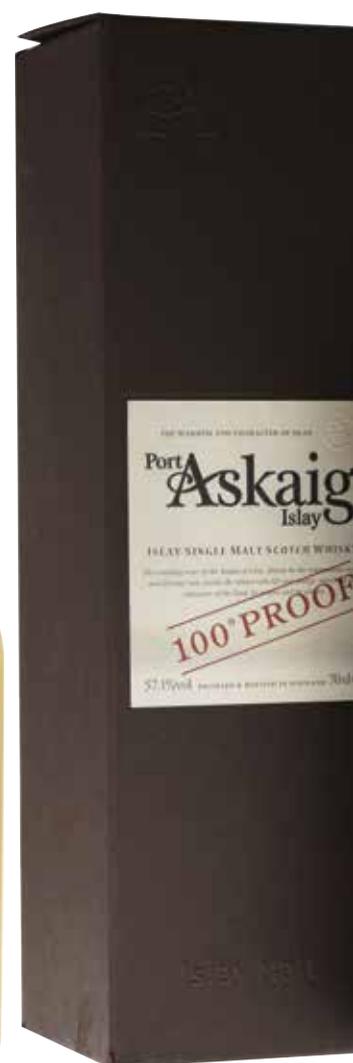
*Find these wines and spirits at Color de Vino , Sherbrooke, Vines Wines and other fine shops. Not all products are in every store and prices are approximate.*



**Two of the best value wines** around are the wines of **Henry of Pelham**. This family winery in Niagara has been consistently delivering well-made wines. The **Classic Riesling** is off dry, with lemon lime flavours and well-balanced acidity and rings in around \$21.

We are noticing an elevation of the humble hybrid grapes by eastern (Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia) growers. Producers are making no bones about the wines not being made from vinifera, saying hybrids are Canadian and suit our climate so well. Henry of Pelham has been saying that since 1988 when they released their first **Baco Noir**. It's always stood out, a great buy, wonderful flavours with rich berry fruit, smoky like peated whisky deeply-coloured, full-bodied, lowish tannin with bright acidity—ideal for wintry braises, \$21.

The Speck Family Reserve and Old Vines Baco Noirs are also worth giving a go, for a little more cash.





**We are loving the wines of Tenuta di Castellaro grown in** the volcanic soils of Lipari and Sicily. The wines are well-made with little obvious intervention—picked by hand, fermented naturally and the reds are left to clarify on their own—resulting in fresh wines that are a pleasure to drink. The **2017 Bianco Porticello Sicilia IGT** is a taste of summer in the dreariness of winter. It's a blend of island varietals, Carricante, Moscato Bianco and Malvasia delle Lipari, possesses characteristic and delicious salinity, aromas like a summer breeze and fresh green and stone fruit flavours. Sprightly. Drink with seafood, vegetables and roast chicken, \$30. **2016 Ypsilon IGT Terre Siciliane Rosso**, is a Nerello Mascalese blend with Nero d'Avola and Corinto Nero. It's just so exhilarating, similar in body to Pinot Noir, with a puppy-like exuberance that's hard not to love—fresh red fruit, lively acidity and fine-grained tannins. Drink slightly chilled with crostini. The **2013 Ossidiana Nero Sicilia IGT** is Corinto Nero with 10 per cent Nero d'Avola. The result is a delicious wine, deeply coloured, a little bit spicy and salty on the nose, with complex flavours, fresh and elegant on the palate, expressing the true nature of these volcanic soils. Drink with braised meats or octopus in red sauce, \$42.

**Sometimes you just need** a little pink in your life. We're happy the **Côte des Roses Rosé** comes in a half bottle, so we can enjoy a glass or two of its citrusy, red berry deliciousness.



**It's always good to have a nice bottle of whisky stashed in the cupboard,** especially so for Robbie Burns Day on January 25. And, although Japan and Canada are making some fine whisky, it seems bad form to not make it Scottish. They did invent it, after all.

Like it smoky? You got it! **Elements of Islay Peat** comes in two expressions **Pure Islay** \$55 and **Full Proof**, \$60. Both brimming with full-on smoky maritime flavours. Two distilleries are featured in this blended Islay malt, with 80 per cent from Caol Ila and 20 per cent from Lagavulin.

**Port Askaig 100 Proof Islay Single Malt** possesses salty, sweet and spicy aromas followed by an austere approach that opens into flavours of citrus and soot, medicinal notes and tar. The finish is briny yet soft and creamy. This bottling is from the Caol Ila distillery. \$70

Of the many **Lismore** bottlings available (10, 12, 15, 18 and 21) we like the **8 Year Old** for the price/value ratio. Subtle, gently spiritous, with floral notes and marmalade flavours. The Lismore range of Speyside malts, created by Wm Lundie & Co., was named after the Inner Hebridean island between Mull and the mainland, \$50.

The **Glenfarclas 25 Year Old** is a lovely whiskey, aromatic, with creamy barley notes and a hint of the oloroso sherry cask it lived in, \$280.

The Grant's have made Glenfarclas, nestled at the foot of Ben Rinnes, for over six generations. The whisky draws its water from pure springs of these mountains, just a mile from the River Spey. Glenfarclas is one of the few family-owned and operated distilleries in Scotland. The prized single malts are matured almost solely in sherry butts and are aged onsite—the 28 warehouses hold 52,000 casks. 🍷



## Seasonal warmth

Continued from page 7

The blackboard menu is only in French. “We had a quick reference guide for a while, with images such as a chicken. But, we always come back to that menu being only in French.” says Cournoyer. (There is a written English menu both in the café and online.)

Why? “The personal exchange with staff to understand menu options initiates patrons to Café Bicyclette culture,” he says. A French immersion student ordering brunch for their English-speaking parents. Brief catch-ups with regulars. “These are important moments. We make time for these moments to happen,” he says.

Prairie winters give many good reasons to stay indoors. La Cité Francophone chooses to move beyond good reasons and embrace this time of year with the winter patio and outdoor events.

“I wanted the winter patio to be like my cabin at the lake,” says Cournoyer. Chopped wood creates a wall near wood-burning stoves. Lounge style

chairs, coffee tables and plentiful blankets are an invitation for long visits and Friday live music nights.

Every February, team La Cité extend their warm embrace into nearby Millcreek Ravine. The Flying Canoe Volant Festival is a walking tour that compels visitors to stay awhile, no matter what the prairie winter has to say. The festival is dedicated to the Quebec legend of the flying canoe, leading people through the ravine at night to tell the tale. I have joined Canoe goes (35,000 plus in 2018) three times and once as a festival volunteer. The indigenous tipi site and hypnotic lantern light art installation. Learning winter square dances and baking campfire bannock at the Metis Camp. Being drawn into the legend by a voyageur in the Trappers’ Cabin. Riding a horse carriage back to La Cité for live music, cider and dancing to close off a magical night in Edmonton’s French Quarter.

Forget going south, this is where the warmth is. ☺

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*Writer Steve Grubich likes his poutine with a shot of maple syrup.*



Benjamin Lemphers photo

# SQUEAKY, CHEESY DELICIOUS!

Iain Ilich

Can't get enough squeaky cheese curds? La Cité Francophone is only a stone's throw away from the Cheese Factory (8943 82 Avenue), where they make and sell fresh cheese curds daily for those with a hankering to make poutine at home, or who love nothing more than scarfing them down straight from the bag. We won't judge.

And when it comes to cheese curds, freshness counts. In fact, as soon as they're made, the curds at the Cheese Factory are bagged and put on the shelf at the shop where they sit at room temperature for maximum squeak and springy texture, ready to be snapped up by eager curd enthusiasts. It's just like buying a bag of curds from the counter at a Montreal dépanneur.

So, what makes a cheese curd a cheese curd? Simply put, cheese curds start out as cow's milk, which is then pasteurized and turned into curd with the addition of a bacterial culture. While other cheeses may be further transformed through additional steps and aging, cheese curds are quickly cut up and sold within hours of starting the cheese-making process.

If you want to get your hands on a bag straight from the source, you can buy them directly at the on-site shop, or visit their booth at the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market on Saturdays. Once they run out, they run out.

For the full experience, including their unique texture and squeaky sound, eat them fresh on the day you buy them. If you don't have time to eat them right away, you can store them in the fridge for a few days, though the texture will quickly change. Once they're more than a few days old, you can still use them for other kitchen things, like topping a hot bowl of chili or adding some cheesy goodness to an omelette. ☺

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*Iain Ilich blogs about curious grocery items at [nearof.com](http://nearof.com). His daughter volunteered to taste test cheese curds in the interest of thorough journalism.*



## wine tastings, happenings and events

**The Marc** (9940 106 Street, 780-429-2828, themarc.ca) has two fine **Sunday Supper Clubs** coming up. On Sunday, January 19, have dinner with **Peter Jackson**, the creator of **Jack's Grill**. Peter grows grapes in Nova Scotia now for Lightfoot & Wolfville Winery. Tix: \$130/p all in. Sunday, February 16 is the **Spain and Tapas Dinner** with menu by the Marc's chef Spencer Thompson. Tix: \$85/p all in. Call to book.

The **Edmonton Whisky Festival** is Wednesday, January 15 at the Delta Edmonton South. The event features some of the world's best whisky—175 selections from Ireland, Scotland, Canada and the USA. Enjoy VIP admission early; the Victoria Caledonian Masterclass with Graeme Macaloney; bid on a number of whisky-themed items and try some haggis (or not). All proceeds to the MS Society of Canada. Tix: \$90-\$175/p+, Eventbrite.

Learn to make your own fine chocolates at **Sweet Lollapalooza Confections** (10155 102 Street, 780-436-3190, sweetlollapalooza.com) with owner/chocolatier Brett Roy, Saturday, January 25, from 12-3pm. Tix: \$100/p++, Eventbrite.

The **Edmonton Permaculture Guild** is having its AGM and community potluck on Saturday, January 18, from 2:30-5:30pm, at the Ritchie Community League (7727 98 Street). For more info, visit the League's website at edmontonpermacultureguild.ca.

Like beer? Love pizza? Check this out. **Favoloso Italian Café** (13240 118 Avenue, 780-454-6329, favolosocafe.com) first beer school of the year kicks off with **Seven Degrees of Wild Pizza and Wicked Beers**. Taste seven terrific pizzas specially created for the night paired with seven craft beers from the **Ale Architects**, **Bent Stick**, **Banff Brewing**, **Ecliptic**, **De Ranke**, **Brouwerij Bosteels** and **Folding Mountain**, Saturday, January 18, 7-10pm. Tix: \$75/p++ Eventbrite.

Learn about single origin coffee and chocolate and how to pair them with **Jacek Chocolate** and **Credo Coffee**, Saturday, January 18, 7:30-9:00pm at Credo Coffee (10350 124 Street, credocoffee.ca). Tix: \$100/p++, Eventbrite.

Join wine lovers for a spectacular night at **For the Love of Wine**, the fundraiser for Kid's Kottage, Saturday, February 1 at the DoubleTree Inn. The VIP experience features superlative Italian reds chosen by **Juanita Roos** of Color de Vino. (Juanita and family are major

sponsors of the event, donating time and wine, with the help of several wine agents and producers). The VIP starts at 5:30pm, the main event at 7pm. This is a beautiful event with amazing wine. Tix, from \$100/p, kidskottage.org.

Love beer, spirits and winter sports? Enjoy them all at the **Jasper Beer & Spirits Festival**, January 31 to February 2 at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge. Book the weekend VIP retreat or just the grand tasting events. Tix: from \$99/p+. Visit albertabeerfestivals.com.

From Thursday, January 30 to Saturday, February 1, the Mill Creek Ravine transforms into a mystical place of myth, light and merriment. It's the weekend of the **Flying Canoë Volant**. Inspired by the legend of the flying canoe and French Canadian, First Nations and Métis traditions, the interactive cultural event celebrates our beautiful Mill Creek Ravine, the French Quarter and the magic of a winter's night. There are lighting installations, canoe races, actors, the Métis Camp (bannock!), the Trappers Cabin (to hear the legend), music and dancing, food and drink, along with a full program for the kids. Program at flyingcanoevolant.ca.

## restaurant buzz

**Chef Roger Létourneau** is joining the **Meuwly's** (10706 124 Street, 587-786-3560, meuwlys.com) kitchen team. He's working on an evening menu that will debut this spring, depending on the liquor license. We are very excited about this—Roger is a terrific chef and can't wait to see how he will work with Meuwly's signature charcuterie and preserves. It's also great to know that Meuwly's will be open at night.

Two new spots by restaurateur Kevin Cam opened downtown late last year; the eagerly awaited **Royale Burgers & Beer** (10145 104 Street, royalyeg.com) and yes, that is a Pulp Fiction reference, in the old Blue Plate Diner space and **Pablo** (10432 Jasper Avenue, pabloyeg.com) with a laid back '70s vibe, James Grant shaking cocktails and a secret entrance. Check them out!

Attention all somms! The **La Chaîne des Rôtisseurs Regional Jeunes Sommeliers Competition** (ages 21-31) is in Calgary April 4 and 25 sponsored by the Wines of Argentina trade group. Candidates will be tested in theory, service and blind tasting based on the Court of Master Sommelier competition rules. The top candidate will have the opportunity to write the Canadian National Chaîne des Rotisseurs Jeunes Sommeliers exam, with the national winner to competing in Paris in September. All Alberta

sommeliers are invited to enter; deadline for registration is March 20. Visit chainecalgary.ca to enter.

## product news

Find lots of cool specials every weekend in January and February, and on the weekend of January 11, **Heart of the Home** (12539 102 Avenue, 780-705-4928, heartofthehomeveg.ca) is having their annual **Warehouse Sale**. Heart of the Home is closed Mondays and Tuesdays until March.

**Zocalo's** (10826 95 Street, 780-428-0754, zocalo.ca) **Happy Hour in the Greenhouse**, Thursdays and Fridays from 4-8pm, resumes the second week in January. Enjoy a libation amidst the greenery—what a lovely respite from winter—as well as their delish tapas menu to nosh.

Love to share charcuterie with the ones you love? **Meuwly's** (10706 124 Street, 587-786-3560, meuwlys.com) offers the special **Charcuterie for Two** boxes for Valentine's Day—house-cured salami, pickles, condiments, cheeses and a fresh baguette. Yum. Visit the website to order.

## at the cooking schools

It's time to embrace your inner Baba at a Ukrainian cooking class at **Kitchen by Brad** (10130 105 Street, 780-757-7704, kitchenbybrad.ca). Learn to make the classics—pyrohy, nachynka, nalysknky and other Kitchen specialties like cabbage rolls with bacon, bigos and Ukrainian gravy with wild mushrooms. Classes are Saturday, January 11, 18 and 25, starting at 12:30pm. Tix, \$145/p+, book at kitchenbybrad.ca.

The **Ruby Apron's** new schedule drops January 6. See something you like? Don't delay, these classes fill up quickly, especially the sourdough. Book at therubyapron.ca.

**NAIT's** legendary Boot Camps are back! **Pastry Boot Camps** (BAKG330) are offered July 6–10 or July 13–17 and the **Culinary Boot Camps** (CULG305) are offered July 7–10 or July 14–17. There are no better comprehensive cooking courses offered in the area other than these. NAIT also holds a raft of other cooking classes from kitchen skills to baking, pizza, vegan and vegetarian and international cooking. Visit nait.ca for more information and to register. 🍷

*Send interesting food and drink news for Kitchen Sink to hello@thetomato.ca.*



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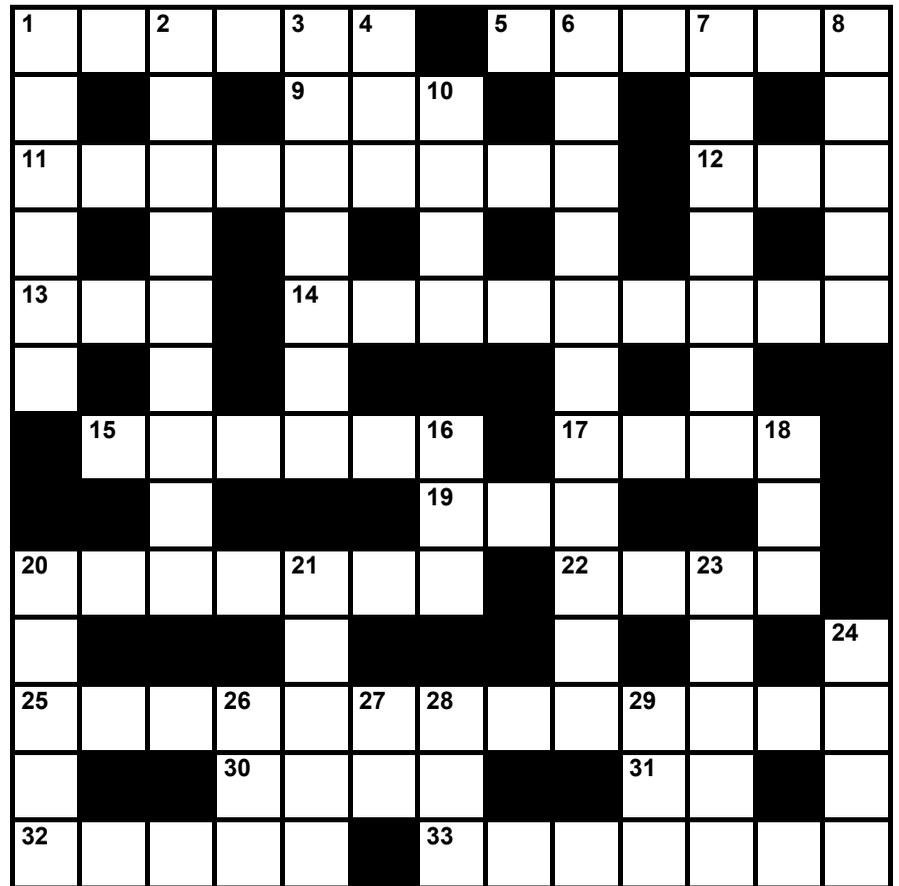
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## Tomato Crossword

Myles Mellor



### Across

- 1 Luxury Edmonton hotel offering high-end buffets, 2 words (nickname)
- 5 Flank and skirt
- 9 Top Indian model and actress. Aishwarya
- 11 Krug Clos du Mesnil Champagne would be from this wealthy relative, 2 words
- 12 "What, chopped liver?" - 2 words
- 13 Corn section
- 14 Too rare?
- 15 Hungarian wines
- 17 Protein used in shakes
- 19 Sushi delicacy
- 20 Serving with ham and gravy
- 22 Croque Madame ingredients
- 25 Fruity desserts, 2 words
- 30 Chocolate \_\_\_\_\_ Cakes
- 31 \_\_\_\_\_ Capitan
- 32 \_\_\_\_\_ Gold potato
- 33 "The Four Seasons" composer
- 6 New brewery in Blatchford, 2 words
- 7 It's known as *awabi* in a sushi restaurant
- 8 Cake portion
- 10 Readied the bubbly
- 16 Arrange the table
- 18 Sure!
- 20 Hockey legend Orr
- 21 City related
- 23 Patio appliance
- 24 Goes with Spumanti
- 26 "All Over the World" band
- 27 Electric vehicle, for short
- 28 Toyota SUV, with 4
- 29 Round green veggie often used in stews

### Down

- 1 Bird that is basted
- 2 Popular French delicacy
- 3 Green salad choice
- 4 Soup container



### Nourishing Entertainment!

Metro Cinema is a community-based non-profit society devoted to the exhibition and promotion of Canadian, international, and independent film and video.

Adult: \$13, Student/Senior: \$10 (\$8 matinee), Child: \$8

[metrocinema.org](http://metrocinema.org)



### Color Out of Space Opens January 24

After a meteorite lands in the front yard of their farm, Nathan Gardner and his family find themselves battling a mutant extraterrestrial organism that infects their minds and bodies, transforming their quiet rural life into a technicolor nightmare.

### Awards Night at the Garneau February 9 at 6PM

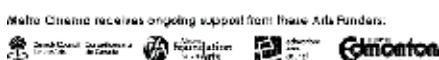
Join Metro Cinema for the biggest film celebration of the year as we splash the awards up on the big screen. Dress as your favourite actor or movie character, or just feel free to dress up however you like. There will be food in the lobby, raffles, prizes, and more!



### Breakfast at Tiffany's February 16 at 1PM

A struggling writer Paul Varjak, moves in above Holly Golightly, a socialite, gold digger, fashion icon, and partier. She fascinates him enough to start writing again. As they begin to get to know each other, Paul realizes Holly has a heart behind the act she puts on.

Metro Cinema at the Garneau  
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