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THE TOMATO

food & drink



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Dear Edmonton,

We have always been thankful for your support and humbled by your appreciation of our restaurant. Over the last 9 years that Pampa has been part of the Edmonton culinary scene, we have served many of you, some multiple times, even on the same day! And today, more than ever, we want to extend our sincere GRATITUDE for your continuing support.

We simply want to say THANK YOU. We feel we do not say it enough! These last few weeks have been quite challenging for all of us, near and far. At Pampa, the dining rooms have been silent and there is no hustle and bustle in the kitchen. A sad time one might say, or perhaps a time to reflect on what a wonderful journey we have had to date; all thanks to you, our dear guests.

Our city boasts a myriad of wonderful locally owned eateries, and like Pampa, they have all fell silent over the last couple of months. To our restaurant friends, we want to say “Força” (Portuguese for “Be Strong”). We have no doubt that our entrepreneurial spirit will see us through this unimaginable time, and the Edmonton restaurant community will come back stronger and more determined than ever.

We want to thank all Edmontonians for continuing to support our city’s local culinary establishments during this turbulent time. The spirit of our city has once again shone through, and we cannot wait to see you and serve you all again.

Grande Abraço Virtual! (Huge Virtual Hug!)

Oscar Lopez & Joao Dachery
Co-Founders
Pampa Brazilian Steakhouse

Susana Simon & Beatriz Ubeda
Co-Owners
A Bite of Brazil by Pampa

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On the cover: Chef Rosario Caputo, Cibo Bistro, curbside. Mary Bailey photo.



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Covid stories

Covid-19 has been catastrophic for hospitality businesses. Many chose to close in early March, before anyone deemed it necessary. It was stepping into *terra incognita*, who knew what was going to happen or how long it was going to last? One thing we know for sure now, is that the community has attacked the situation with vigour and imagination.

What we all love about independent restaurants is that they are—just that—independent, different from each other, each a creative outlet for their chefs and owners. And they all love to feed people. In a remarkably short time, many have pivoted to a new way of cooking for their customers—take-out. Each operator has chosen a different approach.

“We closed at first, as we didn’t know yet what would be best for our customers,” says Patrick Saurette of The Marc. “We made a plan.” And what a plan it is. Patrick’s small team has managed to put The Marc’s characteristic French bistro deliciousness and warm hospitality into a bag and deliver it to your car. Yes, frites, at home. Maybe they are not quite so crispy and delicious as they could be, but they are still pretty darn good.

The Corso 32 group took a few days to work out what was the best way to offer the flavours of the three restaurants. They hit on the idea of pasta kits, frozen sauces and some greatest hits from the restos such as Corso 32’s whipped ricotta. “We didn’t want to have restaurant prices, but people still want something special,” says chef Daniel Costa. “It’s about cooking at home and having a fun experience with their kids, drawing on the boxes.”

XIX is keeping it interesting with special menus (Chinese, tacos, burgers) on different days of the week while also hewing closely to the big and bold flavours of the regular menu. As is Smokey Bear, offering guest-chef gigs within their Pedro’s Taco offerings. RGE RD offers unusual (for them) items—pot pies, empanadas, shepherd’s pie, meatloaf—which have been a big hit with their customers.

“We closed for almost three weeks, and when we decided to open for pick-up we wondered if we would have traction. We’re not a take-out kind of restaurant. Would the response be positive?” says chef Rosario Caputo, Cibo Bistro. “It’s been overwhelmingly positive. I’m talking with guests who have been dining with us for nine years. We started as a way to get me out of the house and make some tasty food, but now we know our customer needs us—not doing it is not an option.”

Some have chosen to close temporarily and use their skills to help others. “We talk about opening for take-out every week,” says chef Ryan Hotchkiss, Bündok. “Is it worth it? I have two little ones at home. We have a social responsibility; I want to protect my family and my staff.

We decided to find surpluses in the food system within our network of farmers and make meals to give away. Our cooks Danny Rienich and Tyler Biollo came up with the idea. We make about 100-150 meals a week.”

Filistix immediately pivoted to pick-up and delivery with owner Ariel Rosario doing most of the deliveries himself. “What we discovered is that people who wouldn’t come downtown to eat with us—people at home in the suburbs with kids—are now ordering from us regularly,” says Ariel. “It also showed us the fundamental problem with delivery services. The big players are always on top. We never showed up in the top ten choices, nor as a choice outside of a certain radius. It wasn’t worth the fees.

“We decided to establish our own. It was a pretty straightforward transition to develop a delivery website via our Clover system,” says Ariel. “What this time has shown us is that, when we are back to normal with dining rooms open and full staffing, delivery will remain a viable way to get our food to people. It will be the new normal.”

“This is like starting a new business,” says Rob Filipchuk, Glass Monkey. “We are thinking hard about what our guests want. We’re discovering they want one stop—pick-up dinner for tonight; soup for tomorrow; a diy kit for two days from now and something to pop in the freezer. I just carved up some rib-eyes for grill-at-home kits; 40-day aged steaks.

“We have to be creative; we may be doing business like this for months and we want to come out the other side stronger than ever. We want to get people back to work. That’s the next challenge.”

However restaurateurs have pivoted or transformed their businesses, they have made huge sacrifices. At best, receipts are maybe 50 per cent of what they were pre-Covid. That’s probably a generous estimate. It’s not a recipe for long term success. But owners are making do, being creative in their offerings, refining delivery and take-out systems all the while practicing food and Covid-19 safety. It’s a tall order.

Local restaurants are a vital part of our community and contribute much to our culture and the economy. Kris Harvey and Katy Ingraham have marshalled the power of the group to create The Edmonton Independent Hospitality Group. They are asking for support for measures such as rent and property tax forgiveness. “Our priority is people’s lives,” says Kris Harvey, Chvrch of John, “we can’t operate, we are flattening the curve. Oil and gas employs 140,000 people, hospitality is not far behind with 132,000. We have obligations and investments in this community as employees and landlords.”

Our restaurant community makes me so proud. I am in awe of their creativity, their resourcefulness and especially their resilience. “We have always been jugglers,” says Rob Filipchuk. “We deal with crap very day—people not showing up; power going off in the middle of a busy shift; food deliveries gone wrong. Restaurateurs are the best problem solvers.”

“As terrible as this is, it’s bringing out the beauty and the compassion of the community,” says Daniel Costa.

It’s tough times for hospitality. Whatever the new normal is, let’s not forget local restaurants and watering holes. We need them as much as they need us. 🍷



Mary Bailey photos



Brave new world, from top: Allen Anderl, co-owner Corso 32; Patrick Saurette, The Marc; RGE RD curbside; Filistix takeout ready and waiting.





Daniel Costa's simple pastas for home cooking

People are having to cook a lot at home these days. I thought these pastas—simple, with easy-to-find ingredients and minimal clean-up—make for an easier night of cooking during this overwhelming time.

—chef Daniel Costa

Linguine with tuna and capers

All photos Steven Babish, @stevenbabish

Simple dishes deserve quality ingredients. Daniel recommends Rustichella d'Abruzzo or Mancini dried pastas and the Sicilian Val Paradiso extra virgin olive oil, all available at the Italian Centre Shops.

Linguine with Tuna and Capers

Olive oil preserved tuna is something I always have in my pantry. There are so many quick and delicious recipes that we make with it and this is one of our favourites. I also like to substitute dill for the parsley as a great alternative.

- 250 g linguine
- 1 x 160 g tin olive oil preserved tuna (Rio Mare and Callipo brand, available at the Italian Centre Shops) drained
- ½ med red onion, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 3 T capers
- juice and zest ½ lemon
- ½ t salt
- 4 T high-quality olive oil
- handful Italian flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped
- black pepper or dried chili

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the linguine, cook until al dente (roughly 1 minute prior to package instructions).

While the pasta is cooking, heat the olive oil in a wide pot or large deep pan over medium-high heat. Add the onion and

salt, sauté until lightly softened, add the garlic and capers and fry for an additional minute. Add the tuna and remaining ingredients along with 2 ounces of the pasta cooking water, continue to cook for 1 minute. Remove from the heat until ready to add the pasta.

Using tongs, pull the pasta directly from the cooking water directly into the pot of tuna sauce. Return the pot to high heat, stir constantly until the sauce is creamy and is coating the pasta, approximately 30 seconds, adding a little more pasta water if necessary. Serve immediately with a little fresh-cracked black pepper or dried chili flakes.

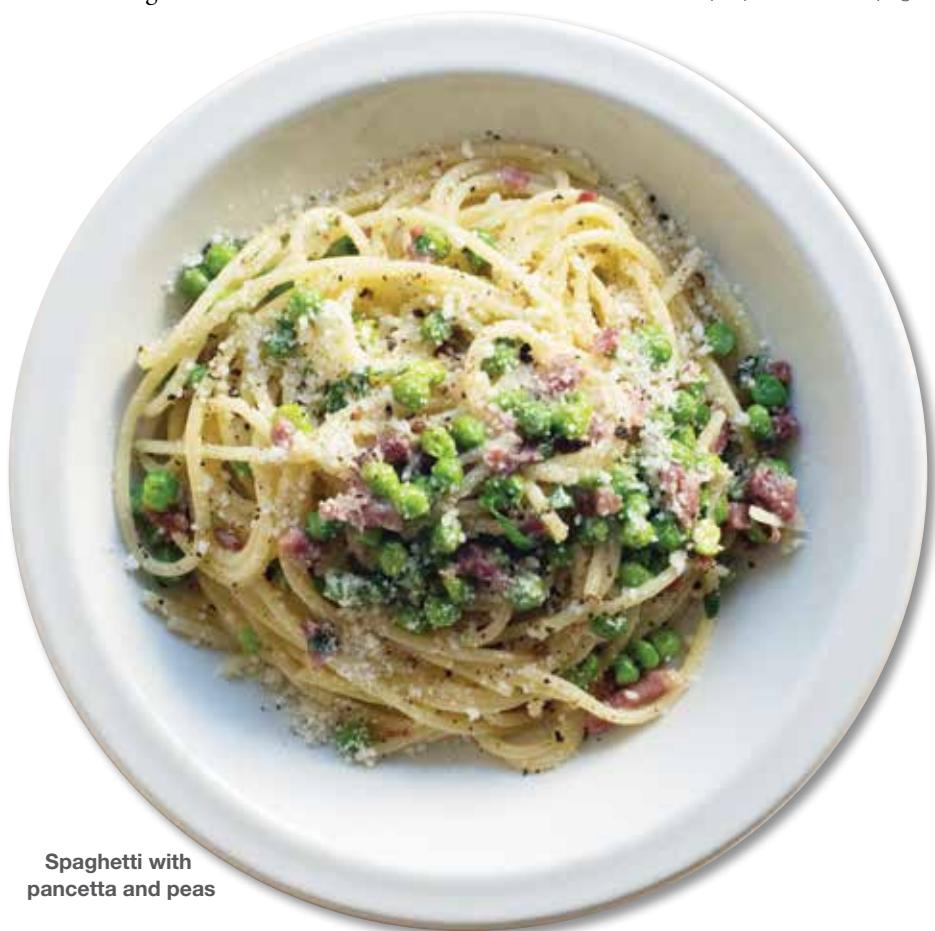
Serves 2.

Spaghetti with Pancetta and Peas

Salty pancetta and sweet peas are such a delicious combination! Try substituting smoky speck for the pancetta or remove the sage and parsley and stir in fresh mint for a variation on this classic recipe.

- 250 g spaghetti
- 100 g sliced pancetta, cut into small pieces
- 1 c fresh or thawed frozen peas
- 1 clove garlic, thinly sliced
- 50 g unsalted butter
- 3 leaves fresh sage
- ⅓ c grated Pecorino Romano cheese

Please see "Simple pasta" on next page



Spaghetti with pancetta and peas



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Rigatoni with ricotta, lemon, basil and roasted pine nuts

Simple pasta

Continued from previous page

1 t extra virgin olive oil
handful Italian flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped
black pepper

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. If using fresh peas, boil them for 1 minute, then remove using a spider; if using frozen, skip this step. Add the spaghetti, cook until al dente (roughly 1 minute prior to package instructions).

While the pasta is cooking, heat the olive oil in a wide pot or large deep pan over medium-high heat. Add the pancetta, allow to cook while constantly stirring until golden. Add the garlic, peas, sage and half of the butter, cook for 30 seconds then remove from heat until the spaghetti is cooked.

Using tongs pull the pasta directly from the cooking water directly into the pot of pancetta and peas and return to high heat. Add 2 ounces of cooking water, return the pot to high heat and stir constantly until the sauce is creamy and

is coating the pasta, approximately 30 seconds, adding a little more pasta water if necessary. Remove from the heat and stir in the pecorino, remaining butter and parsley. Serve immediately with a little more grated Pecorino and fresh-cracked black pepper.

Serves 2.

Rigatoni with Ricotta, Lemon, Basil and Roasted Pine Nuts

This recipe is one of my favourites from Micah Joffe (chef of Bar Bricco). I love the rich and creamy ricotta combined with the pop of the lemon and basil. This dish is also very adaptable to other combinations such as chili and parsley instead of basil and pine nuts.

250 g rigatoni
300 g fresh ricotta
½ t kosher salt
zest of ½ lemon + 1 t juice
handful fresh basil leaves
2 T pine nuts
⅓ c grated Pecorino Romano
black pepper

Roast the pine nuts over medium high heat in a small pan until lightly golden, ensure to constantly move the pine nuts around the pan to avoid burning.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the rigatoni, cook until al dente (roughly 1 minute prior to package instructions).

While the pasta is cooking, place the ricotta, salt, lemon zest and 4 ounces of



Paccheri with puttanesca sauce

Orecchiette with tomato, chile and mint



pasta cooking water in a wide pot or large deep pan, using a wooden spoon to mix all the ingredients until smooth. Place the pot on medium heat, stir constantly until the ricotta sauce just comes to a simmer. Remove from heat immediately.

Using a spider, remove the rigatoni directly from the water to the pot of ricotta sauce. Stir in the Pecorino, pine nuts and lemon juice. Serve immediately, top with more pecorino, a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and fresh-cracked black pepper.

Serves 2.

Paccheri with Puttanesca Sauce

A classic Neapolitan sauce and cut of pasta that is rich and full of deep flavours. I love the texture of paccheri and find that it works so well for a sauce like this. Avoid over salting the water or sauce as the majority of ingredients in this recipe are preserved in salt and bring a powerful punch!

250 g	paccheri
½ tin	San Marzano tomatoes (796 ml tin), crushed by hand
½	red onion, sliced
1 clove	garlic, thinly sliced
2 fillets	anchovy, finely chopped (optional)
⅓ c	pitted Taggiasca or Gaeta olives
1 T	capers
3 T	extra virgin olive oil
¼ c	white wine
pinch	dried chili flakes

Heat the olive oil in a wide pot or large deep pan over medium-high heat. Add the red onion, sauté until lightly softened, add the garlic and anchovy and cook for an additional 3 seconds stirring constantly. Add the white wine and chili flakes and allow to cook for 1 minute. Add the tomatoes and cook until reduced by almost half, approximately 8–10 minutes. Add the olives and capers, cook for 1 minute. Remove from the heat until ready for pasta.

While the sauce is cooking bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the paccheri, cook until al dente (roughly 1 minute prior to package instructions). Using a spider, remove the paccheri directly from the water to the pot of sauce. Return pot to high heat, add a splash of pasta cooking water. Cook stirring constantly, until the sauce is thick and coating the paccheri, approximately 30 seconds. Serve immediately.

Serves 2.

Orecchiette with Tomato, Chile and Mint

This recipe is inspired by Sicily and is a classic combination of high spice and fresh, cooling mint. A long noodle such as spaghetti also works beautifully with this sauce.

250 g	orecchiette
1½ c	quartered cherry tomatoes
1 med	fresh chili, finely chopped (fresh finger chili or fresh cayenne pepper work well)
2½ T	extra virgin olive oil
2 cloves	garlic, thinly sliced
10 leaves	fresh mint, roughly torn
⅓ c	grated Pecorino Romano
½ t	salt

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the orecchiette, cook until al dente (roughly 1 minute prior to package instructions).

While the pasta is cooking, heat the olive oil in a wide pot or large deep pan over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and salt and sauté until just beginning to golden. Add the tomatoes and chili, cook for 2 minutes, then remove from heat until the orecchiette is cooked.

Using a spider, remove the orecchiette directly from the pasta cooking water directly to the pot of sauce. Return the pot to high heat, add 2 ounces of the pasta cooking water, stir constantly until the sauce is creamy and is coating the pasta (approximately 30 seconds) remove from the heat. Stir in the Pecorino and mint. Serve immediately topped with a little more Pecorino and fresh chili.

Serves 2. 🍷

Chef Daniel Costa operates three restaurants in Edmonton's downtown core, well-known for authentic and delicious Italian cooking—Corso 32, Bar Bricco and Uccellino. The dining rooms are closed to help flatten the curve, but Corso at Home offers delicious food for pick-up via corso32group.com.

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CARROTS

in the time of cholera

JUDY SCHULTZ

Garden seeds are everywhere, but never better than in greenhouse displays. Talk about selling dreams! And this year, above all others in memory, we could use a few dreams.

So off I went to my local garden shop, determined to ward off fast-approaching cabin fever while social distancing in the prescribed two-metre manner.

It's like an art gallery in there; a wall (two, in fact) of vegetables and flowers pictured in their full, glorious maturity. Did rainbow chard ever glow so brightly? Were carrots ever so perfectly formed, so gleamingly orange?

Actually, yes. Given enough good weather, with timely rainfall and some decent dirt, carrot seeds are a terrific

return on investment, practically, psychologically and socially.

For the past several years we've farmed a 10x20 plot at Old Man Creek, a community garden where, among the beans, beets and tomatoes, our greatest success has been carrots. After a few hiccups and re-plantings, they've been amazing. Ask our neighbours, the ones

who find carrots on their doorsteps at all hours in August.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Back to the seeds, all neatly lined up in their packages, looking gorgeous. Long, slender Nantes, short-and-stubby Thumbelinas, and then there's a five-colour heritage pack. Sucker that I am, I bought two packs of Burpee's



Kaleidoscope, a variety that promises carrots in purple, red, white, yellow and of course orange, which apparently was not the carrot's original hue.

For an initial investment of \$2.95 plus tax I have this promise of spring, and eventually a planting day (plant carrots two weeks ahead of the last frost, germination in three weeks). Then comes the joy of seeing that first tiny ruffle of green, so small and insignificant I'll need a magnifying glass.

About 55 days later I should have buckets of delicious carrots. Is there anything so crunchy-sweet as a carrot freshly pulled from sun-warmed earth, dusted off on your shirtsleeve, eaten right there among the mosquitoes? (Yes, I know, wash the carrot first, but I've been eating them this way forever.)

A carrot isn't just a pretty face. The fluffy tops are edible, rough-chopped in a salad, and they make a pretty good garnish, deep-fried, as you would parsley.

Here's another carrot idea. I wouldn't call it a recipe. It's a pan-fry-glaze

method that produces a darkly sweet version of an old-hat vegetable. Goes well with ham, lamb, chicken, pork, beef. Fish? Not so much, for some reason.

I first read about this method under the title 'Carrot Hater's Carrots', but if that's how you feel about carrots, I say move on to another vegetable. The molasses likely won't change your mind. Meanwhile, I'm calling this dish **Carrots in the Time of Cholera**, with apologies to Gabriel García Márquez.

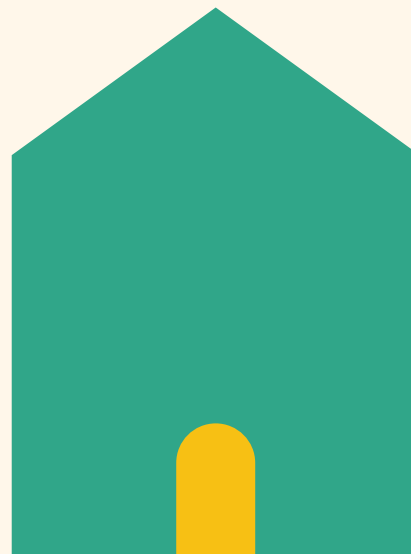
Scrub carrots. Cut into coins. Boil until barely tender but still resisting the fork. In a small frying pan, melt a small blob of butter; bacon butter is even better, if you have any. (Melted bacon fat, melted butter, one-to-one; store in fridge.) As soon as it sizzles, add carrots and drizzle with a bit less than a tablespoon of fancy molasses. Lid on, reduce heat to medium. When carrots are tender, turn heat to high, lid off, and finish the glaze. Speck of salt, grind of pepper. Yum. 🍷

Judy Schultz likes carrots but hates parsnips, even pan-fry-glazed.



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The Proust Culinary Questionnaire

Jeremy Charles, Raymonds Restaurant and The Merchant Tavern,

In the late nineteenth century, French novelist Marcel Proust participated in an exercise which could be thought of as the Facebook of its era—he answered a questionnaire about himself in a friend's Confession Album.

Proust's answers have been published, in one form or another, for more than a century. Many have used the questionnaire for their own devices, the most notable being Vanity Fair's Proust Questionnaire featuring celebrities. The Tomato gives it a culinary twist.

"We have been tying a lot of salmon flies," says Jeremy Charles, on the subject of what he has been doing during the shutdown. "Salmon season starts in three weeks; we will be ready." Although his restaurants, Raymonds and The Merchant Tavern, co-owned with Jeremy Bonia, are closed due to Covid-19, The Merchant has been offering takeout Thursday-Saturdays. "We hired five staff back and are doing 50-60 take-outs a night, five minutes apart. It's bringing in a bit of cash flow and saving some jobs.

"It's been quite nice actually. I have been able to spend a lot of time with my son and daughter (Iris 5, and Hank 8) camping out in the shed with the wood stove watching movies. (What movies? "Tank, Chronicles of Narnia, Harry Potter," says Hank).

Chef Jeremy Charles' deep reverence for nature and for the ways of Newfoundland inspires everything he does. His goal as NAIT's Chef in Residence is to inspire this same passion in the students. The passion for what he calls 'cooking from your backyard.'

Hometown
St. John's, NL.

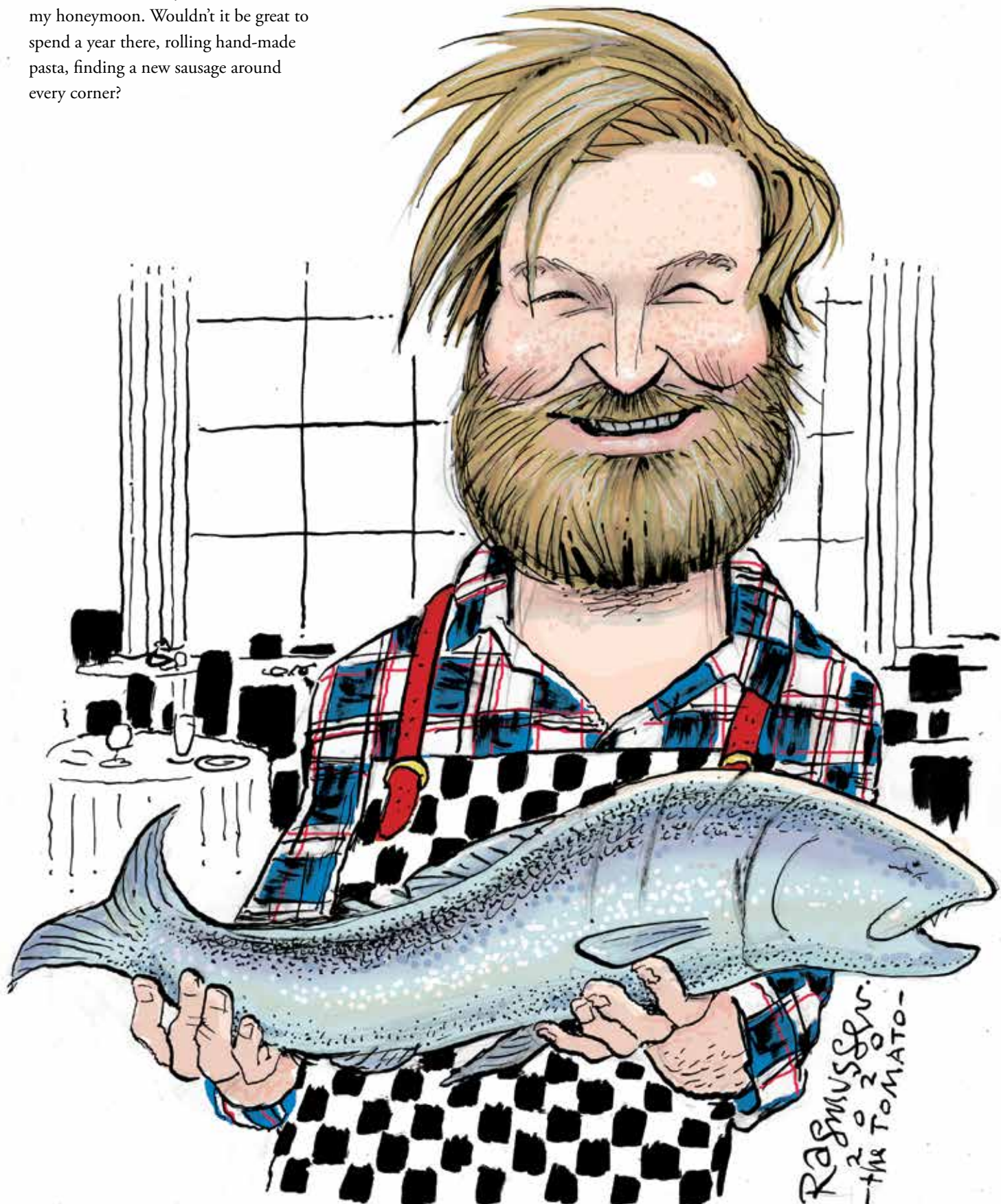
Years cooking
22 cooking for a living.

Where would you like to live?
I'd love to live in Italy. I went there on my honeymoon. Wouldn't it be great to spend a year there, rolling hand-made pasta, finding a new sausage around every corner?

Your Favourite food/drink?
I love a glass of white Burgundy and a piece of roasted fish or snow crab.

What would you be doing if you weren't cooking?
I'd be working as a guide on a salmon

river in Labrador. There are no commercial fishing rights for Atlantic salmon but you can fly fish for them, to catch one or two for your own consumption. Indigenous people can net outside the ocean. It's a hot topic. Controversial.



St John's, NL

What do you most appreciate in your friends?

People who are easy-going, kind, laid-back, who enjoy the outdoors. Low stress, loyal.

In a dish?

I really enjoy simplicity and freshness. And terroir driven.

In a cook?

Passionate, open-minded, hard working. We've been fortunate that way.

In a wine?

Love white Burgundy, the acidity, freshness, the complexity, the balance.

Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

Are you sure? Looks good. Hey bro. "Hey dude," says Hank.

Who would be at your dream dinner table?

"I know who," says Hank; "Levi." (Their firstborn, who died in infancy.) Lee Wolf, a fly fisherman who was the first to fly fish in the wilds of Newfoundland. My dad's dad who was a fisherman and hunter; Joey Smallwood, (I love Newfoundland history); Jacques Pepin and Wayne Gretzky.

Who would cook?

My grandmother. She's 92 and makes beautiful Newfoundland food—fish and brewis, jiggs' dinner. "I love her pumpkin pie," says Hank.

Current culinary obsession or exploration

I have been making a lot of hand pies, sweet and savoury with the blueberries we freeze in season and a moose ragout. Turkey dinner with peas pudding. We cook the carrots, rutabagas, parsnips, potatoes and carrots in the salt meat broth and serve with pickled beets, mustard pickled vegetables and Newfoundland stuffing made with Mt. Scio Farm savoury, a staple 'round here.

Best (cooking) thing that ever happened to you?

Cooking with Michael Stadtländer at the chefs' conference on Eigensinn Farm when I was pretty young. It's a magical place. It was my first experience with Canadian cooking; I met chefs from across the country. It was life changing.

Meaningful/crazy food experience?

Two weeks with Anthony Bourdain, hunting and fishing. Dave McMillan (Joe Beef) called me and said, 'Anthony Bourdain is coming to see you'. I was a bit nervous, but the time we spent together was quite amazing and totally unexpected. We were in the woods hiding (moose hunting). No paparazzi. He really enjoyed the simplicity and the natural beauty. No egos, no flash, just the ruggedness of it all.

Mentors?

Otto Daniels taught me in school at St. Pius X Culinary Institute, he opened some doors and sent me on my way. Claude Pellerier, one of the first chefs I worked for in Montreal. In Chicago Paul Kahan took me under his wing and became a friend. How he ran his business and operated his life taught me a lot.

Favourite casual cheap and cheerful/afterwork food?

I love pizza. I go to Venice Pizzeria and order the thin crust Hawaiian with feta and hot peppers.

Philosophy

Simplicity. Respect the ingredients; let them speak for themselves. Regional cooking—cooking from your own backyard. I just think keep it simple.

What's next

Fishing! Going out in nature. I'm trying to simplify things. We have been joking around about another book—*Cooking at Moose Camp*. We did a cooking segment for *enRoute* and the book website is up now, wildnessbook.ca 🍷

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Wines for dinner and back porch parties, six feet apart

We're not drinking rosé on café patios; we're not having wine with dinner in restaurants.

But we're still drinking wine. With dinner at home; with Facetime conversations; in Zoom cocktail hours, on House Party. And, sitting six feet apart in the backyard. Here's what goes with that.

THE WHITES

1. 2018 Drouhin Mâcon-Villages (Burgundy, France)

This is classic Mâcon-Villages, a Chardonnay lover's standard. Fresh and light-bodied, with subtle floral notes, the characteristic tang of warm citrus and hints of hazelnut, balanced with fresh acidity. It's the perfect lunch wine—with a goat cheese salad, nuts and cheeses or cod.

2. 2019 Mission Hill Reserve Sauvignon Blanc (Okanagan Valley, BC)

Crisp and thirst-quenching, loaded with green gooseberry and herbaceous notes and a lovely lemon-lime quality. Six months in oak add gravity and texture. Have with a grilled cheese sandwich or the Happy Camel's delish red pepper and feta dip.

3. 2018 Mission Hill Reserve Chardonnay (Okanagan Valley, BC)

Made with fruit from Mission Hill's Oliver, Osoyoos, and Naramata Ranch vineyards. The majority of the juice was fermented and aged in oak, with 25 percent in concrete egg and stainless steel, giving us the best of both worlds—a well-balanced wine with lemony citrus, honeycrisp apple and tropical notes. Have with salmon on the grill, roast chicken, creamy pasta.

THE ROSÉS

Not simple, not insipid; these pink wines have character and presence in spades, ideal for the cocktail hour or for dinner.

1. 2019 Capezzana Vin Ruspo (Carmignano, Italy)

A terrific wine from the Capezzana family, who have been making wine in Carmignano, east of Florence, since the 9th century. This blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Canaiolo (typical for Carmignano) is beautifully balanced and fresh, tasting of wild red berries with a lovely tension on the palate. Drink with charcuterie and Pecorino, cheesy pastas, or with salty popcorn.

2. 2018 Cantina Gorgo Chiaretto Bardolino (Veneto, Italy)

The blend of the region's Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara grapes comes alive in this sprightly wine. It has gorgeous minerality and savouriness from the salty soil and citrusy flavours along with Bardolino's classic cherry notes. Chiaretto refers to rosé made east of Lake Garda. The wines are having a moment, bringing renewed attention to Bardolino, which is too often in the shadow of its more famous neighbours Soave and Valpolicella.

3. 2018 Tantalus Rosé (Okanagan Valley, BC)

Young Pinot Noir was whole-bunch fermented with old vine Pinot Meunier (plantings from 1985) resulting in this zesty and refreshing rosé. Enjoy the red berry and Texas ruby red grapefruit flavours; along with the Tantalus signature of on-point acidity keeping things fresh.

4. 2019 Mission Hill Reserve Rosé (Okanagan Valley, BC)

Expect juicy watermelon, raspberry and wild strawberry flavours in the easy-going rosé. It's an interesting blend of 50 percent Merlot, 45 percent Syrah and five percent Pinot Noir contributing to the refreshing berry fruit. Drink with snacks.



5. 2018 Prieler Rosé vom Stein (Burgenland, Austria)

This bright Blaufränkisch is from Preiler's vom Stein vineyard, steep, with diverse soils—mica-slate, marine limestone, loamy sand with pebbles. Its precise minerality along with concentrated and luscious red berry flavours is appealing as is the delightful spiciness. Drink through the summer and beyond.

6. 2018 Birgit Braunstein Rosé (Burgenland, Austria)

A blend of Zweigelt and Blaufränkisch grown on the schist and shell limestone of the Leitha mountains. Lively and crisp, with tremendous finesse. Intense mineral notes and flavours of juicy strawberries and red grapefruit make this wine an ideal partner to anything with bacon, duck confit, olives and potato chips.

7. 2019 Riedlin Rosé (Baden, Germany)

Limited production, Demeter certified, a glorious taste of spring. Incredible mouth feel, bold, with lots of red fruits, with balanced acidity and a long finish. Drink with grilled pork, mushrooms on

toast, salmon. Wine geek note: fans of Sybille Kuntz's Mosel Riesling will be happy to know that this Spätburgunder rosé is made at her husband's (Markus Kuntz-Riedlin) family vineyard in Baden. It drinks well now, but you might want to put a few bottles away as it promises to age with grace.

8. 2018 Soli Rosé (Thracian Valley, Bulgaria)

This unique blend of Syrah, Cabernet Franc and Melnik (Bulgaria's own) is fresh and fruity, with lovely wild strawberries and raspberry aromas and flavours. Great price too, around \$20!

9. 2018 Chateau La Sauvageonne La Villa Rosé (Languedoc, France)

The wine has tremendous minerality, even salinity, and a beautiful velvety texture with power and freshness too. Every effort is taken to harness the freshness, the hall mark of great rosé—the altitude creates a large degree of difference in day and night temperatures; the grapes are hand-picked at sunrise; the Grenache is co-fermented with the Vermentino and Viognier and only free run and first press juice is used. This wine is delicious!

10. 2018 Domaine de la Mordorée La Dame Rousse Rosé (Tavel, France)

This classic Tavel rosé whose weight and structure, along with voluptuous flavours and textures, will encourage even the most obdurate red wine drinkers to give rosé a whirl. Made of mostly Grenache and Syrah with Cinsault and Carignan displaying heady aromas of old roses, citrus and red currant. Lots of freshness. Have with Asian food such as spicy noodles and Middle Eastern food like lamb tagine.

11. 2018 Clos du Temple Rosé (Languedoc Cabrieres, France)

Taste stone fruit, spicy green pepper, some tobacco in a characterful wine with a long finish. This complex blend of Grenache, Cinsault, Mourvedre and Viognier spends six months in new wood on fine lees (protecting the wine, making added sulphur unnecessary). Drink with chicken skewers, hummus or vegetable pastas.

Please see "Wine Maven" on page 17



In Season: Edgar Farms Asparagus

Mary Bailey

“I can’t tell you how weather dependant this crop is,” says Elna Edgar. “One second it’s peeking up, then there’s frost, then it’s hot and it grows in one day. Ba-boom is a good way to describe it. One day you are sitting there thinking ‘will we pick next week?’ And then, you’re picking the next day.”

The Edgar family farm near Innisfail has 28 acres of asparagus along with a cow/calf operation; wheat, barley and canola; 15 acres in peas, broad beans, rhubarb and green and yellow beans—all hand-picked—and they produce several delicious relishes, pickles and pie.

“We have a foot of snow still (April 20), but there is not much frost in the ground—our soil is sandy, so it warms up quickly. One year we had snow on the ground on April 30 and we were picking on May 7. The latest we’ve had asparagus come up is May 24.”

Elna expects to be at the farmers’ market with fresh asparagus sometime in May. “Edmonton is huge for us. We’ve been standing at that booth for 20 years. People are so appreciative of our asparagus, so happy.”

It wasn’t always like this. “In 1986 we started looking into growing asparagus on our farm. They were testing it at the government station in Brooks. Their verdict? It wasn’t a commercially viable crop in Alberta. And, really it isn’t.”

Peru is the world leader in asparagus, where they pick twice in a season. “Our climate doesn’t allow that. We

pick for six weeks. We have to stop picking at the end of June as the plants have to go to fern stage and have at least eight frost-free weeks developing ferns to get through the winter. But our climate also means the asparagus tastes better. Our cool nights produce asparagus that is jam packed with flavour.”

After being told it wasn’t commercially viable, the Edgars developed an acre in asparagus, which they sold at central Alberta markets.

“We had 250 pounds of surplus that we wanted to sell. We didn’t know what to do with it, so we thought: let’s try Edmonton. People threw money at us. At the end of the day I went to the manager of the market, and said; ‘We’re going home to plant more asparagus. We’ll be back in five years with enough to supply this market.’”

“Really, if it wasn’t for Edmonton, we would not be growing asparagus. Our daughter Keri and her husband Randy were able to come back to the farm in 2007 due to the asparagus.”

It’s a fast and furious season. “We go over the field every day, and pick by height. Fat asparagus isn’t older, it’s just fat,” she says. “The same crown will have fat spears and skinny spears, we pick both. Last year though, we had a hailstorm on July 10, so that will mean less asparagus this year. It might crash a little sooner.

“Asparagus keeps perfectly well in the fridge for a good week or so, standing up in some water,” says Elna. “It does not freeze well, gets kind of stringy and mushy. You are better off to puree a big bag of perfectly ugly asparagus and freeze that for soup in the winter.”

What does life on the farm look like during this time of social isolation? “We’re busy calving and are kind of out here on our own, so haven’t changed too many things yet. We’re making a few less trips to town and being more efficient when we go.”

The market stands will look very different. “We’ll be wearing masks and will have shields up; we’ll be putting the stalks into plastic bags and have a separate area for cash.”

Farmers are perhaps best suited to dealing with an extraordinary thing like Covid. They work with whatever nature gives them, year in year out. “We roll with the punches,” says Elna. “You never know what’s going to happen. If you can’t fix it with money or work, it’s not worth worrying about.”

Find Edgar Asparagus at Bountiful, the Downtown Farmers’ Market and Old Strathcona Farmers’ Market. 🍷

Tomato editor Mary Bailey eats fresh Edgar asparagus with her fingers.



Asparagus in fern stage, after picking.



Asparagus ready for picking.

Photos Edgar Farms

THE REDS FOR THE BARBECUE

1. 2018 Brolio Chianti Classico (Tuscany, Italy)

A straightforward Sangiovese with floral notes, lovely soft red fruit and a long finish. Well-balanced, with easy-going tannins, this is the everyday go-to drop for pasta and burgers.

2. 2016 Cune Crianza DOC (Rioja, Spain)

Mostly Tempranillo which makes it such a great partner with so many foods. Ripe and mellow tannins, balanced acidity, red berries and liquorice, youthful, with warm spice

3. 2017 Mission Hill Reserve Merlot (Okanagan Valley, BC)

The grapes are sourced from the diverse Black Sage Bench (Oliver) and Osoyoos. Taste fig, blackberry, plum and cedar—lush and pleasing—have with lamb from the grill.

4. 2018 Henry of Pelham Baco Noir (Niagara, Ontario)

Generous aromas of smoky cedar, coffee and plum with flavours of black cherries; ideal with anything off the grill—peppers and sausage,

5. Caymus Bonanza (California, USA)

This new offering is multi-vintage, a bold Cabernet Sauvignon very much in the style of Chuck Wagner, with lots of ripe black fruit and smoky oak notes. An everyday cab for California Cab lovers, have with steaks and chops. 🍷

Find at better wine shops. Wine shops are offering online and telephone ordering and curbside pick-up. If open, they are practicing social distancing and hyper-cleaning regimes.

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**CONTINUING
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Beer Guy

Pints in a Pandemic

Hayden is right—beer drinking during a pandemic is certainly different. With bars, pubs and taprooms closed up, beer drinking has moved into our homes. Certainly, it's convenient and cheap to walk a few steps to your own fridge for a great craft beer. But drinking beer isn't just about the beer—it's about people. It's about conversations. It's about community. Sure, drinking a pint with friends by video conference was fun once or twice, but it's a poor replacement.

Tough times spark new ideas. And beer people are creative souls who are open to new things, including ways to (safely) share a beer with friends during a pandemic.

I saw this the first warmish afternoon in April, when I was out walking my dog Pippin. Coaxed by the sun, Pip urged us on further than usual, towards Edmonton's Brewery District. Within sight of the old brick Molson tower, we came across two gentlemen on the winter-brown grass just off the walking path. They stood the pandemic-appropriate two metres apart, each with a pint glass full of beer. On the ground was a big bottle of Jester King Provenance lemon and lime Belgian-style saison, a rare and unique beer from Austin, Texas. I knew I had found my people.

Both men are brewers, meeting in open space to celebrate a birthday and to mourn the cancellation of the Craft Brewers Conference in San Antonio, which is where both were scheduled to be that day, pre-Covid. Matthew Cockle is head brewer for The Growlery, a new craft brewery located just outside the Blatchford development in northwest

Edmonton. Matt told me the pandemic had been tough on the Growlery but he was looking forward to adding canned beer to their product line via the purchase of the Two Sergeants canning line.

Like many other craft breweries, The Growlery's business model relied on people coming to them for beer. With taprooms and bars closed they've had to turn on a dime to survive. The Growlery co-owner Kevin Danard told me "it was extremely difficult for us at the

beginning. We were about 40 percent taproom and 60 percent keg sales before this happened and we essentially lost that business." What do you do when 100 per cent of your revenue disappears overnight? You scramble, you hustle, you get serious and you get creative. Local breweries quickly built online systems and began home delivery of beer. "We're trying all we can to get beer into people's hands," says Danard.

"People like drinking beer. People are still drinking beer. It's just where and how they're drinking it that is very different."

*—Hayden Dewes,
Cabin Brewing*

One positive from the pandemic is people embracing local. Danard says "support throughout the city has been exceptional." Beer builds community and now, during a crisis, that community is giving back, supporting their local breweries. Let's hope this continues post-pandemic, when breweries are going to have to survive through the tough economic times to come. Not every brewery will make it through to the other side. But like many Albertans, Alberta brewers are resourceful, resilient and tough. Beer drinkers, beer makers, beer suppliers, beer workers—we're in this together, and together we'll make it through.

Pandemic Pack

Six local favourites to get you through the tough times, all winners at the Alberta Beer Awards, held online on April 7. Pick them up at the breweries or have them delivered!



Campio All-Malt Lager, Edmonton

Alberta Beer Awards: Silver, Brewery of the Year: Bronze, All Alberta Malt Beer. Like Biera, Town Square and Situation, Campio is a brewpub, so hit especially hard by the pandemic-forced closure. But you can buy this delicious, malty lager, made with Olli heritage barley farmed by the Kozak family in Clear Hills, Alberta, through local liquor stores.



Bent Stick BS Wit, Edmonton

Alberta Beer Awards: Bronze, German and Belgian-Style Wheat Beer. A refreshing, tasty witbier that pairs nicely with spring sun. Soft yet crisp, this unfiltered wheat beer is lightly spiced with citrus peel and coriander.



Sea Change The Wolf, Edmonton

Alberta Beer Awards: Gold, Hoppy Sessionable Beer. Sessionable? More like crushable! An easy-drinking hazy pale ale made from Alberta barley, white wheat and flaked oats. The Wolf and other core brands sold out within 24 hours of Sea Change offering delivery service early in the crisis.



Endeavour Sudden Draft IPA, St. Albert

Alberta Beer Awards: Bronze, IPA. Co-owners Matt and Georgia Atkins have created a real community-oriented brewery in a nondescript industrial area of St. Albert. It's great to see one of their core beers getting recognition. Sudden Draft is a balanced mid-Atlantic IPA, made with British malts and yeast and American hops.



Siding 14 Coal Pusher Stout, Ponoka

Alberta Beer Awards: Silver, Stout. An early adopter of the field-to-glass concept, Siding 14 makes use of barley grown just north of Ponoka. Their coal-black stout has hints of coffee, molasses and chocolate. Siding 14 is delivering into Edmonton.



Alley Kat Olde Deuteronomy, Edmonton

Alberta Beer Awards: Best in Show, Beer of the Year, Alberta Beer Awards. As Alley Kat founder Neil Herbst helps new owners transition in, it must be gratifying to see one of Alley Kat's originals be awarded Best Alberta Beer. Olde Deuteronomy is a Canadian classic, a rich, full-bodied barley wine with aromas of dried fruits, toffee and brown sugar. 🍷

Peter Bailey will bring a beer glass next time he walks his dog. He's on Twitter and Instagram as @Libarbarian.

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With environmental pressures rolling in on us, new ways and places must be found to grow food a bike ride from home. You can find ways to grow food on property you don't own.

There is more wasted space in forgotten back yards and laneways than you can possibly imagine. Walk or bike along the city's back lanes and you will find open ground full of weeds (weeds that the city is trying to eradicate.) Open ground appropriate for growing edible perennials on land ripe for rescue, is land you can discover and negotiate for access.

You may be thinking, isn't that the role of community gardens? Consider this: Edmonton has over 100 community gardens, most with a waiting list. My advice? Don't wait! Form a small group and find the land. Of course, you will need permission; Sustainable Food Edmonton can help with assurance and perhaps even funding.

Consider that as many boomers are getting older and perhaps deciding not to manage a vegetable garden, unused yard space is going to increase. Perhaps you can negotiate a shared plan. The owner gets some of the crop, a friendly visitor once a week and the city gets help with those weeds. A local initiative, Abundant Community Edmonton, is already doing this on a small scale.

Perennials offer great potential because they don't require a lot of space, or time. Lovage, by year two, will fill in a cubic meter and that amount will feed a group of 20 gardeners. One clump of chives will provide for a family and dozens of bees. In contrast to the repetitive seasonal process of planting annuals, planting perennials is a one-time endeavour. Yes, 2019 was a difficult growing season in Alberta. Yet, perennials, against the same rain-soaked odds, produced a better crop than many of our garden annuals.

Zero work gardening is an oxymoron, an urban myth, and perennial eatables are no exception. They need occasional weeding, watering, fertilizer and deadheading, but none of these tasks takes a lot of time. Smart gardening strategies like simple mulching will reduce the time required for each job, lessening the over-all effort.

Many of the edible perennials that can be grown in Edmonton's climate (zones 3b to 4a) are herbs and adjuncts to our beloved comfort foods, like dill and potatoes. They rescue many a dish, and in the process, add interest, and nutrition.

This is a list of plants that are easy to grow in our climate that are also dependable and fun to work with. Some, like chives, may seem boring, but often they are under-appreciated and under-used, except by professional chefs who are wise to the wonder they contain.

Chives: (*Allium schoenoprasum*)

Chives are high in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, and are easy to grow. A clump of chives is like a pot of green gold. When your mom said 'Eat your greens, or no dessert,' she meant eat your chives. The flowers are pretty and tasty too.

Dill: (*Anethum graveolens*)

We are cheating a bit here because dill is actually an annual, but it self-seeds so readily you can be guaranteed it will pop-up the following spring. And what a wonderful opportunist it is—dill on salmon, dill in potato salad, dill seed in cucumber pickles, dill butter, dill and beets.

Giant Hyssop: (*Agastache foeniculum*)

Tasting of anise and mild mint, hyssop can be used in everything from salads to dessert and is often dried as a tea. Beautiful in the garden, it also makes a lovely cut flower; but leave some for our native bees, who just love, love, love this native plant.

LOVE LOCAL?
listen up



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Lovage: (*Levisticum officinale*)

Lovage is challenging, in part because it is not well known in our gardening and culinary culture. It is an herb well worth discovering. Just wait until you try a leaf in a Bloody Mary; bruised, not muddled. It makes a great pesto and puts even more zip in a chimichurri.

Mint: (*Mentha*)

Caution: mint is invasive, it will spread everywhere, between patio stones, under the fence and down the lane. It can be used in cucumber salad or in sauces, like tzatziki. Also in teas, or in soups, like pea, or in a mohito. Use fresh, dried or frozen.

Rhubarb: (*Rheum × hybridum*)

Have you heard, rhubarb is going steady with sugar, they're more than an item, they're inseparable. The two

of them show up in pies, crumbles and compotes, in Italian amari such as Sfumato and Zucca Rabarbaro. In many parts of the world, rhubarb is still used for medicinal purposes. Don't eat the leaves though, with their high levels of oxalic acid and anthrone glycosides.

Sorrel: (*Rumex scutatus*)

Its tangy and lemony flavour is much appreciated in French cuisine, and most European countries cook with it. Sorrel soup is a classic European dish. It often accompanies eggs, adds zest to a salad or a fish sauce. It can be started from seed, but once established it will need care, as in weekly watering and weeding. ●

Morris Lemire lives in Edmonton, where he gardens, cooks, drinks wine and writes about it.



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