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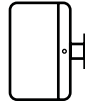
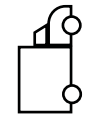
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**Editor**

Mary Bailey  
marybee@telus.net

**Publisher**

BGP Publishing

**Copy Editor**

Shauna Faragini

**Contributing Writers**

Peter Bailey  
Curtis Comeau  
Jan Hostyn

**Illustration/Photography**

Curtis Comeau Photography  
David Benjestorf

**Design and Prepress**

Bossanova Communications Inc.

**WebMeister**

Gunnar Blodgett, COPA Jurist

**Printer**

**CentralWeb**

**Distribution**

Greenline Distribution

For editorial inquiries, information,  
letters, suggestions or ideas,  
contact The Tomato at 780.431.1802  
or email [production@thetomato.ca](mailto:production@thetomato.ca).

For advertising information  
call 780.431.1802.

**The Tomato is published  
six times per year:**

January/February  
March/April  
May/June  
July/August  
September/October  
November/December

by BGP Publishing  
9833 84 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T6E 2G1  
780.431.1802

Subscriptions are available  
for \$25 per year.

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*On the cover: David and Aimée Benjestorf's garden. David Benjestorf photo.*



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### the butchery opens this month

The Butchery is set for its debut. Rustic and modern, airy and welcoming, RGE RD's sister business is looking good. "Think of it as a retail butcher shop," says Blair Lebsack, exec chef and co-owner along with his partner Caitlin. "We work with a lot of great local suppliers—Jeff Nonay, Nature's Green Acres, Adrian Hykaway of Tandria Dexter, Red Tail Farm. Four Whistle Farm will supply the turkeys and ducks, all the fowl. We'll have roasts, ground meats, weekday steak not necessarily rib eyes only; turkeys, duck, ground pork. And we age meat."

It's not just a butcher shop. There will be RGE RD's loaves direct from the wood oven, pâtés and terrines, frozen meat pies and empanadas and local gourmet dry goods. The Butchery has its own kitchen. "Our idea is sandwiches

we call hand-helds and features like charcuterie or kitchen boards," says Blair. "People can order small plates, dim sum-style, more than one bite, like a beautiful plate of gizzards."

They will have three tables with about 12 seats and a separate dining room for meetings and events. But we might be waiting awhile for that yet. Eventually, people will be able to gather over breakfast sandwiches and coffee in the morning and later in the day with a beer. "We started in 2013 with 1700 square feet. Now we're over 8000 square feet," says Caitlin. "We're invested."

The Butchery, next door to RGE RD, 10643 123 Street, closed Sunday and Monday.



### here's to a wonderful fall

"We reopened Café Bicyclette on June 11," says Daniel Cournoyer, executive director, La Cité Francophone, "and things have been good so far. The patio and the warm weather and music series helped a lot. We'll have music outdoors until Thanksgiving."

The indoor seating now runs down the glass hallway towards the rotunda to give diners lots of room to social distance.

"The positive is that we have been able to focus much more on the restaurant side of our operations and apply some of the changes we have wanted to do for a while now," he says. "We are working on fall and winter patio initiatives to keep those seats full." Café Bicyclette, 8627 91 Street, 587-524-8090, [cafebicyclette.ca](http://cafebicyclette.ca).

### the 2020 great kitchen party is friday, october 23

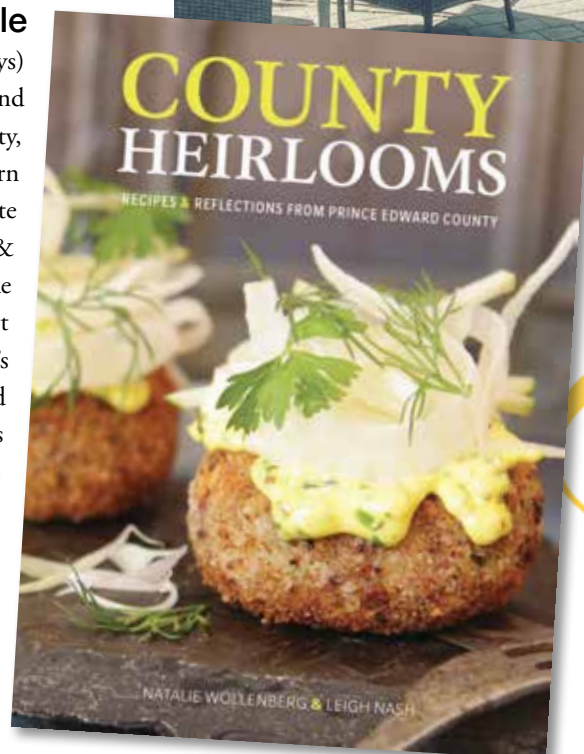
Yes, there will be a Kitchen Party this fall. Yes, it will be different. What hasn't changed—the chance to eat some really good food, support some terrific organizations and have a really wonderful time. The purpose remains the same—to celebrate Canadian excellence in food, music and sport and make a difference for youth. The chefs competing this year: **Levi Biddlecombe**, Why Not; **Scott Downey**, The Butternut Tree; **JP Dublado**, River Cree Resort and Casino; **Ryan Hotchkiss**, Bündok; **Medi Tabtoub**, Vivo Windermere and **Spencer Thompson**, The Marc.

There's how it works: order the Kitchen Party three-course meal. Enjoy at home, or in a small group along with the online show. Check the website for all the details and to order: [greatkitchenparty.com/ca/cities/alberta](http://greatkitchenparty.com/ca/cities/alberta) or to buy multiple meals email [lisa@comlinks.ca](mailto:lisa@comlinks.ca) or call 780-448-5945. 🍷



### prince edward county on the table

Armchair travelers (aren't we all these days) will love this book, a collection of stories and recipes from bucolic Prince Edward County, a food and wine destination in eastern Ontario. Recipes from a couple of favourite spots in the county—Enid Grace, Fire & Flame and Quinta do Conde—will make you want to check out this wonderful part of our country. For now, recipes from PEC's inns, farms, food trucks, brew pubs and restaurants (like pickerel cakes from Stella's Eatery and Honey Pie Hives & Herbal's hazelnut honey buckwheat brownies) will have to do. All royalties to Food to Share, a county-based initiative working to address food insecurity. *County Heirlooms*, by Natalie Wollenberg and Leigh Nash, Invisible Publishing, \$27.95.



Top: RGE RD's Caitlin Fulton and Blair Lebsack; the sunny patio at Café Bicyclette; Wollenberg and Nash's collaborative cookbook.



# The Tomato Food and Drink Kitchen Design Awards 2020



*New Build winner.*

## **New Build Winner**

### **Brenda Brix, AMR, over \$40K**

This kitchen is truly the centerpiece of this home. We were able to use a large area on the main floor to house their kitchen and pantry. The kitchen is suited with light wood grain Panasphere Melamine custom cabinetry and paneled appliances including two dishwashers as well as a Miele gas cooktop, double wall ovens and custom Vent-A-hood fan. The back wall is covered with a slab of marble-look porcelain from Fiandre. We also incorporated classic elongated tile and herringbone glass in the pantry. Both of the islands have waterfall quartz Caesarstone countertops with integrated Bocci outlets that appear seamless.

Another stunning feature of this kitchen is the Julian Social stainless steel corner sink with custom storage

underneath. This kitchen is not lacking in storage or beauty and the timeless colour palette means this home will be loved for many years.

### **Judges' Comments**

Although some of the judges found this kitchen to be a bit clinical and were divided on the double island (both with sinks) concept, overall they were impressed with the amount of light and the simplicity of the design.

The relationship of appliances is ideal, and the eating island is ideal for cold prep and serving.

The almost monochromatic materials are sleek, uncluttered, and visually appealing. The room really benefits from the walls of glass.

Generally, I like the look and the amount of natural lighting that enters the space. This is quite a large and elaborate kitchen with an excellent amount of storage space.

## New Build Honourable Mention

### Nicolas Galick, under \$40K

We host big gatherings and intimate dinner parties and want our guests to be part of the whole experience. We worked with the home builder to get it exactly as we wanted—an efficient kitchen built for entertaining. We installed a custom-built hood vent from Modern Aire with a 1400 cfm fan mounted on the roof and a separate make-up air heater system to ensure a quiet experience. The Wolf 48-inch double griddle gas range is installed on the 14-foot island so we can get our Japanese Village on. We have a wall oven and a counter depth fridge with an ultra-quiet dishwasher, a huge basin sink as well as prep sink on the island. The challenge was that our house is a small bungalow (1430 square feet) so we had to be very aware of the space—everything was maximized.

### Judges' Comments

The judges felt the function was great, especially for such a small kitchen.

Please see TKDA on page 8



New Build honourable mention.

## The Judges



**Rebecca Gagne**, co-owner of Cucina Bella, a kitchen design shop in Edmonton's west end, has been designing kitchens since 1996. She is a cabinet nerd at heart and lover of all things kitchen. As well, she is a CKD (Certified Kitchen Designer, National Kitchen and Bath Association) and instructs the Metro Continuing Education Kitchen Planning Course, [cucinabella.ca](http://cucinabella.ca).



**Darrell Halliwell** is an architect and managing principal for DIALOG's Edmonton Studio. He

is a member of the firm's leadership team, responsible for strategic direction and management of the firm across Canada, [dialogdesign.ca](http://dialogdesign.ca).



**George Ilagan**, a partner at Hastings Ilagan Design, is an architect by training and passionate

about design. George has designed a myriad of kitchens, ranging from the simple to the sublime, [hastingsilagan.ca](http://hastingsilagan.ca).



**Michele Roach**, principal and co-owner of Wolski Design Group—one of Edmonton's top interior

design firms—is a minimalist-design pioneer, animal print enthusiast and self-proclaimed creative problem solver with a soft spot for logistical nightmares, [wolskidesign.com](http://wolskidesign.com)

*All kitchen photos supplied by entrants.*

### New Build Honourable Mention Judges' Comments cont'd

It looks like it works really well, you have the counter space you need. A good wide galley kitchen is ideal for being fast in the kitchen.

They met the design intent in a great way. I would want to go to a dinner party here.

Although this kitchen is the smallest of the new kitchens, it works just as efficiently. A lot has been accommodated in the under 40K budget and in such a small footprint.

It is open yet the working area and the hang-out area are well defined.

The length of the island is perfect for multi-person preparation as shown in one of the photos and the relationship of appliances is ideal.

The exhaust hood feels a bit heavy with the corner struts. Something lighter would have been better from a visual perspective.

Backsplash and wall tile could have been a bit simpler and I'm not a fan of dark cabinets.

### Renovation Winner

#### Paul Whincup, Habitat Studio, under \$40K

The ultimate reward of the transformation of a small and enclosed U-shape kitchen was the creation of this beautiful open concept kitchen. The homeowner's priority was to have a kitchen open to the dining and living spaces, making entertaining enjoyable and inclusive for all. We converted the existing single garage to provide room for a generous kitchen with walk-in pantry and a new dining and living area. Unifying the old garage structure to the existing house structure created some challenges; any deviations would not be acceptable. The existing interior load bearing wall was replaced with a dropped beam, establishing a sense of architecture and visual interest. The white ceramic tile backsplash flows from counter to ceiling, providing a crisp and clean area to feature the central gas range and decorative hood fan. Large windows flank the cooking area, spilling in natural light and giving views to the mature backyard garden. Bringing additional warmth to the kitchen zone are the wood cabinets which tie into the oak hardwood flooring on the main floor. A stunning black granite countertop makes the island pop. Taking a nod from the vaulted ceiling overhead, the island includes angled details to playfully connect with this original feature of the home. The tapered waterfall edges along with the asymmetrical pendant lights add fun and elegance to the design.



Renovation winner.



### Judges Comments

This kitchen feels light and bright and open, a huge difference from before. A really nice reno for the space.

The use of space was great, with lots of counter space on the island. Would hang out here.

There is a nice mix of materials with variation and interest without being overwhelming. Classic palate. Timeless.

A great transformation of a tired old space. I like how it ties into the adjacent dining area as well as living space. Materials are complimentary and the space feels integrated and thought through.

### DIY Renovation Honourable Mention

#### Dan Swanson, under \$40K

My house is an old one in the Idylwyld neighborhood, built in 1952. I designed this kitchen to be as efficient as possible as there is not a lot of space. With the help of a couple of handymen from Woodart Finishings, I believe we have succeeded in just that. We removed the plastered demising wall between the kitchen and dining room and created a peninsula with a couple of bar seats. This makes this house feel twice as big and has created great flow in traffic and conversation. I opted for the smaller, counter depth Liebherr fridge and the 18" inch Bosch dishwasher. Above the fridge is the hidden microwave. The biggest win was not having to move the kitchen sink plumbing. I would argue that this kitchen has as much horsepower as kitchens twice the size and cost. This new space is a great environment to cook and entertain in.

### Judges Comments

The judges didn't like the open shelf across the peninsula, feeling it cluttered up what was otherwise clean design. Nor did they like the wine rack on top of the refrigerator, but the homeowner clarified that they 'keep the good stuff in the basement.'

Cute space!

This kitchen reminds me of a New York apartment kitchen. It's constrained but does provide for the basics—refrigerator, washing

and cooking. Given the space, the counterspace has been maximized.

Good choice of tile but is a bit busy

and broken up on the sink side. It would have been better if he had just gone for it. Too much open shelving for an open space. 🍅



Renovation honourable mention.

# The Pandemic Planting Project: David and Aimée Benjestorf's garden for Edmonton's Food Bank

*How one couple responded to Covid-19: by growing a lot of vegetables,  
for the first time ever, to help address food shortages.*

—Mary Bailey—



*Top: David Benjestorf in the garden; above left: zucchini blossom; right: fresh produce ready to go. David Benjestorf photos.*

“We’ve had this piece of land for several years now. I knew I wanted to grow something, but didn’t know what,” says David Benjestorf, vice chair of Edmonton’s Food Bank.

“We knew that Alberta’s economic hardship had created record high numbers at the Food Bank in March. Then, as Covid became a reality, it became clear that Edmontonians would face significant challenges. Would we need to serve double or triple the current record numbers? Could we get value priced food? What about the border closure? Will there be healthy and fresh food choices available? What about the cancellation of most of our fundraisers?”

“Then, one night we watched a show called *The Biggest Little Farm*. It was my aha moment. In an instant, I knew what I would do with our land: build a farm and donate most of it to the Food Bank.”

That was April 15. By May 16, David and Aimée had the garden ready to plant. The deliveries to the Food Bank started a month later with early season leafy greens and radishes.

“I had never grown anything before. I didn’t really know where to start. I started watching YouTube videos and reading every book I could find on how to be a market gardener, what grows in this zone, what to plant, how to plant,” says David. “There were a lot of good people who were happy to talk to me, like Doug and Kelly at Lady Flower Gardens. They’ve been gardening their whole lives and they put me in touch with other vegetable growers like Dieter Kuhlmann. I have been incredibly fortunate that there has been someone willing to give us an answer every time we asked. People have been really gracious with their time. It’s been fantastic.”

Along with those early lettuces and radishes, which they have replanted three times, they sowed 21 different vegetables including: 137 tomato plants; two kinds of beets and carrots; three varieties of onions; Swiss chard, kale, broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts; three kinds of beans; two kinds of peppers; two varieties of peas; asparagus, fennel, corn, zucchini and pumpkins; flowers, some herbs (rosemary, basil, thyme, sage), garlic and potatoes, lots of potatoes.

“Lady Flower usually does acres of potatoes, but this year, due to the shortage of volunteers, they cut back. We were able to beef up our potato crop. We doubled the planting and anticipate 50,000 pounds,” says David.

They harvest Sunday evenings, then drive the bounty to the Food Bank early Monday morning. From there the vegetables go out to the 265 different agencies and soup kitchens that rely on the Food Bank (Mustard Seed, Hope Mission, YESS). “The Food Bank is uniquely positioned to take wild game and a variety of fresh produce. The Food Bank has a great relationship with the food inspectors and has food handling facilities that others don’t have,” says David.

Several of the couple’s friends and colleagues signed on to help. “We have 11 volunteers including one seasoned gardener, Cathy. Everybody is responsible for a row, though we take turns watering the whole garden. When it’s time to harvest, we all pitch in and volunteers can have as much as they want for their families and the rest goes to the food bank.”

The farm is beautiful, northwest of St. Albert backing on to the Sturgeon River, with a fenced main garden and a cluster of vegetables outside the fence, almost seven acres all told planted this season. It’s verdant and green, bursting with vitality in mid-August. “We did plant about 10,000 feet outside the fence and didn’t water or weed that. It’s amazing how similar it is, just a bit delayed compared to the garden inside the fence.”

Even the wildlife seem to know it’s a special place (there is a trail camera to catch the action when no one is there.) “We have deer, moose, coyotes, rabbits and porcupines around but no wildlife damage at all,” says David. “They do eat the weeds, so we decided that we wouldn’t spray this season, so we can leave something for the animals.”

Their focus back in May was to get everything into the ground. “I’ve never grown anything in my life,” says David, “and one thing I learned was that there is a thousand right ways to grow vegetables. I picked one, but there’s always a better way. The tomatoes for instance: I put them near the water source because I thought they need lots of water. But that

made it very difficult to use row covers (for hail, or frost, or moths). Next year they will go in one long row so they can be covered easily and watered with a dedicated line.

“We had just planted the baby tomato plants when there was a frost warning. I ran to Value Village and got 50 bed sheets. Aimée and I came out in the rain and snow and mud and spent four miserable hours covering all these plants. Never again. Later that night I watched videos on how to make hoop houses from scratch. And we laid sod in some of the rows and experimented with cardboard and hay in others, to deal with the mud,” he says.

“The market gardeners say you will learn your soil like the back of your hand,” says David. “We were told our soil was very good, so we simply added compost to the raised beds. We did have potato beetles early, so we bought ladybugs to eat the larvae.

“I never thought I could get excited about a garden, but every day I come

out, something is blooming, growing or transforming. Just five months ago I didn’t realize that vegetables came from the flowers. I’m sure I learned that in elementary school, but it never resonated with me until I watched the process daily with my own eyes. We had a canopy of peas climbing a six-foot trellis covering a walkway. The peas are done now and, as we march into the end of the season, I was surprised at the sadness I felt.

“With all the negativity that Covid has created, it’s nice to have this release,” says David. “You are in nature, you are growing and you are helping—it’s a tonic. You feel pretty good about yourself and what we’re accomplishing as a team.”

For more info on Lady Flower Gardens, [ladyflowergardens.com](http://ladyflowergardens.com).

For more info on Edmonton’s Food Bank, [edmontonsfoodbank.com](http://edmontonsfoodbank.com).

*Mary Bailey is the editor of The Tomato food & drink.*



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## Beer Guy

### Beer is community

*There were no good old days,  
These are the good old days.*

—The Libertines

Hey, remember that fun time in that New Orleans bar five years ago? I know I'm not the only one wallowing in nostalgia during the pandemic, pestering people with memories of the BC (Before Covid) times. Arcadia Brewing owner Darren McGeown will have none of it. Be present, live in the moment, make right now the good old times. "These are scary times," McGeown acknowledges, "but it feels like things are simpler. We're not as go, go, go at the moment. We're definitely appreciating the people around us." Like so many local entrepreneurs in craft beer and hospitality, McGeown isn't going to let a little thing like a global health crisis break him. As Chumbawamba sang—they get knocked down, they get up again, you are never gonna keep them down.

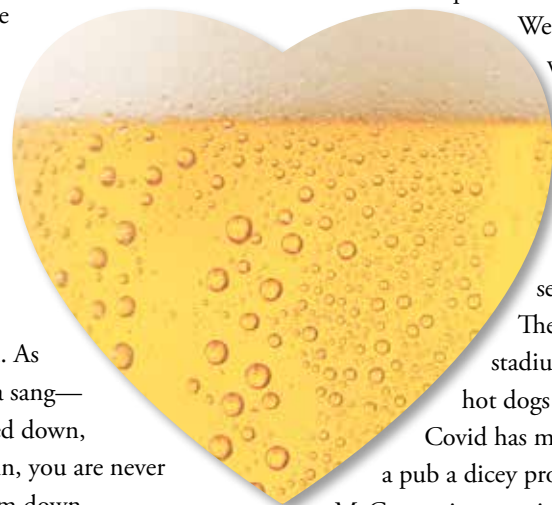
From Northern Ireland, McGeown retains his Irish optimism. I met him in 2012 when he founded the first Arcadia bar on the site of the legendary Bruin Inn in St. Albert. Alas, that location is star-crossed, the site of many failed cafés and bars. Undeterred, McGeown quickly made Arcadia a community space, hosting open mic nights and hanging local art on the walls. Just over a year later McGeown had to close Arcadia but he vowed to reopen in a new location. In 2014 he did indeed open a new Arcadia in a tiny space on 124 Street in Edmonton. With trivia nights, live music, cask events, a vegan menu, exclusively Alberta craft beer and a lot of hustle and work, McGeown made Arcadia a success. He made real the dream he'd had when he was six years old, sitting in an Irish pub with his parents: "I was hooked at a young age. I loved the atmosphere, the

comradery, the joy—everything." It's not about the beer, the building or the food, it's about people and the magic that happens when we get together. He vowed to create a place where strangers could come together and create a community. A huge fan of the British band The Libertines, he borrowed their idea of Arcadia, a pastoral utopia where harmony reigns, for the name of his community-focused pub.

Now McGeown is on to his next dream. He closed Arcadia the pub in March as the pandemic hit, with plans to open Arcadia the brewpub in October. Arcadia will be located in the Manchester Square development in Westmount. Beer will be brewed onsite in a small 3.5 hectolitre system and may feature lower-alcohol, sessionable beers. The menu will be stadium food—panini, hot dogs and nachos. Covid has made opening a pub a dicey proposition, but

McGeown is committed to the concept, which will have 31 seats on the main floor, 37 seats upstairs and 12 seats on a small patio. McGeown believes in the power of the people, with the pandemic encouraging people to drink local like never before, supporting local breweries and the people who run them.

If karma means anything, it will mean success for Arcadia Brewing, for not only does McGeown build community inside his pubs, he devotes much time and effort to charitable work. From the start of Arcadia he has raised funds and run events like winter coat and water drives, block parties and the Be More Kind Day for the Boyle Street Community Centre. Inside or outside Arcadia, the goal remains the same—bringing people together, connecting people who weren't connected before. As Joe Strummer, another musical hero of McGeown's, said, "Without people, you're nothing."



## New school six pack

Great beers from new breweries in Edmonton and nearby. Pick them up at beer shops like Sherbrooke or Keg n Cork, or even better, drop by the brewery. They'll be happy to see you.



### Arcadia Whistling Pig, Edmonton

Arcadia's flagship and first release is a soft, easy-drinking hazy pale ale brewed at Situation Brewing under the watchful eye of Arcadia Brewmaster Shawn Nest. Owner Shawn McGeown managed to get a musical idol, Carl Barât from The Libertines, to name the beer.

### Rural Routes L.A. Vice Hefeweizen, Leduc

Braden and Chelsea Folk launched Rural Routes in L.A. (Leduc, Alberta!) at the end of 2018 as a complete brewpub with a full food menu. The Folks made a nimble pivot to curbside and canning because of the pandemic. Their hefeweizen smells like banana bread, tastes of creamy malt with a touch of bitterness and is can-conditioned to create abundant carbonation.

### Sturgeon Combine Cream Ale, Morinville

Josh Watson, Kerry Lamoureux, and DJ Halpin hoped to make their brewery a community hang out but the pandemic caused a shift in plans. In April they launched as a growler-only takeout brewery and were rewarded with a sellout on day one. They make approachable beers for everyone, like their cream ale, made with local malt from Hammer Malt in Westlock.



### Foxtail Next Chapter IPA, Edmonton



Launched in 2019 by Michael Fox-Junker, Edmonton's Foxtail looks to make quality versions of classic styles. Fans of big West Coast IPA, they amped up their first IPA with more hops (Moteuka, Ekuanot, Azacca and Amarillo). Using both Pacific Northwest and Southern Hemisphere hops gets them traditional piney bitterness balanced with new world citrusy fruit.

### Hawk Tail Rye Milk Stout, Rimbey

Located in the pleasant farm town of Rimbey, right in the middle of prime grain growing country, Hawk Tail was launched in December 2018. The taproom is worth the drive, one of the nicest in Alberta, with big windows looking out at fields of grain. The Rye Milk Stout is as



black as a prairie night, tasting of coffee and chocolate with a subtle hint of rye spice.



### Red Hart Irish Red Ale, Red Deer

Red Hart launched in early 2019 just outside Red Deer with a focus on British-style beer. Their Irish Red is a delicious amber ale, showcasing the biscuity, caramel flavour of local malt from Red Shed Malting. Silver medal winner for amber ale at the 2020 Alberta Beer Awards. 🍀

*Peter Bailey got knocked down but he got up again. He's on Twitter and Instagram as @Libarbarian.*



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# The Art of Takeout

Curtis Comeau  
photos and text

Perseverance. Is there a better word to describe Edmonton's restaurant leaders? In early March when our government ordered the shutdown of many business it was perceived by many as an immediate death sentence for the restaurant industry. Then, something happened. Unable to serve their customers, creative restaurateurs and chefs pivoted to survive by shifting to takeout.

It was a challenging experience for all chefs. The vision of a beautiful plated dish served to the table customer moments after leaving the kitchen was gone. There were challenges: how to transfer the feeling of dining in a great restaurant to a take-out container? The dish had to taste delicious as much as 30–45 minutes after it was made. When it did arrive, it couldn't be a mash up of ingredients because it didn't travel well.

The first step was to figure out which dishes simply couldn't be served as take out at all and take them off the menu. Next was to find out which items would travel well in appropriate containers. "Presentation is always a big part of the experience when you eat at The Marc, so it's important that our curbside edition looks good too," says chef Spencer Thompson.

Corso 32 chose to pivot in a different direction. They wanted to create the same feeling of superb dining and well-crafted dishes available in their restaurants in the Corso at Home offerings. Their approach was to help the client learn to cook pasta the Corso way and to offer some of their greatest hits, iconic dishes that would travel well. They came up with precise pasta kits with detailed instructions and selected items, such as the house-made goat ricotta with rosemary and olive oil from Corso 32, the marinated Nocellara del Belice olives from Uccellino, and, occasionally, the outrageously delicious focaccia served at Bar Bricco.

As much as Corso at Home is successful, it has not been easy on the staff. "I am happy at how well Corso at Home is doing, but I miss cooking for people. When I cook for someone at one of our restaurants, I get to see

*This page:*  
**The Marc's** decadent chocolate cake with caramel sauce, top, (the sauce is packaged separately to-go) and the toothsome crab cake.

*Facing page:*  
Upper left: **Japonais Bistro's** elegant bento boxes for takeout sushi and sashimi. Upper right: a selection of **Corso at Home** offerings, clockwise from top: house-made goat ricotta; olio santo (chile oil); pesto sauce; a package of house-made fusilli; pasta kit instructions and marinated Nocellara olives. Lower left: **The Butternut Tree's** popular beef wellington and sides. Lower right: available at **The Glass Monkey**: clockwise from upper right: shrimp risotto; roasted beet salad; spicy wonton noodle bowl with red sauce (separate container), along with house-made pickled and jarred green beans, Brussell's sprouts and carrots.

the smiles on their faces. That's what I'm missing right now," says Bar Bricco's chef Micah Joffe.

Chef Scott Downey of The Butternut Tree decided to offer more complex family-style premade meals, things most people don't have the expertise, time or patience to make, like the classic beef Wellington.

Take out packaging was a major concern. Do you invest in custom packaging or just use generic takeout boxes? Japonais Bistro designed their own custom containers similar to a bento box. "Sushi is a work of art—it is important for us that it looks the same when they get it home as it would in the restaurant," says co-owner Issac Choi.

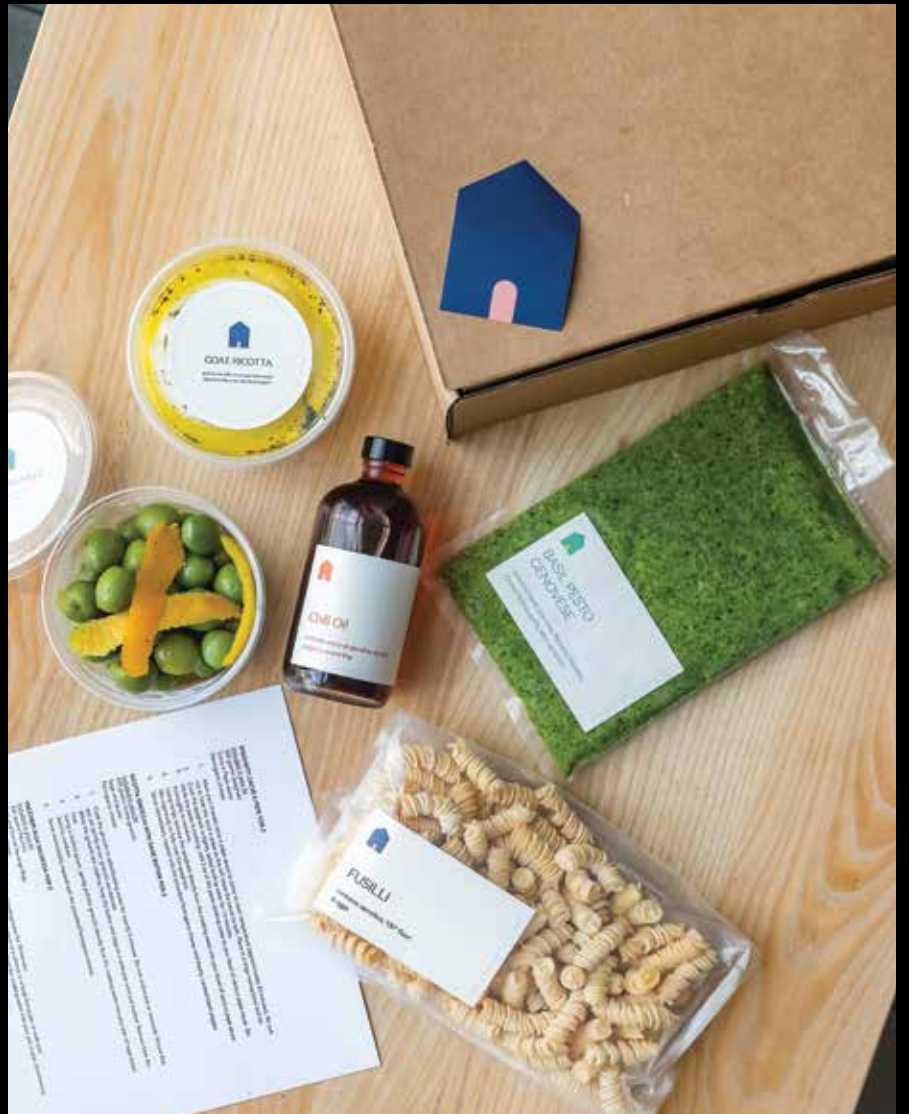
Other restaurants are experimenting with what they offer and have added entirely new sections or feature nights for takeout. The Glass Monkey gastro pub offers burger nights, Ukrainian nights and the occasional Chinese menu. "Ginger beef and wonton soup are not typical

items you would have found on our menu pre-Covid. Why not try something a little outside the box? Our customers trust what we do, the food tastes great and it travels well," says owner Rob Filipchuk.

As these innovative chefs and restaurateurs continue to shift, pivot, tweak and experiment to survive in a post-Covid world, it's important to remember that none of this would be possible if diners did not support the restaurants when they needed it most. They are grateful.

*Editor's note:* Like most restaurants, The Butternut Tree, The Glass Monkey, Japonais Bistro, The Marc and Uccellino are all open for limited dine-in service according to health regulations. The patios are open during nice weather and all are encouraging take out. Corso 32 will be open soon, they had to deal with a flood in the basement right before reopening. Bar Bricco remains closed for the time being. Sob. 🍷

*Curtis Comeau is an award-winning Edmonton-based photographer.*



# What are *you* thankful for?

## Chefs share family Thanksgiving recipes

Whether your bubble is one person or a dozen, there are ways to gather, connect and support safely this Thanksgiving. There will be things to be grateful for. Chefs share their stories of community, resilience and family recipes.

### Doreen Prei exec chef, Zinc at the AGA

When Covid hit and the restaurant closed, I had a hard time at first. My job was so busy, and, as a single mother, we would hustle through the days. But I would never have had this time with them without Covid. I'm thankful that I could spend another half maternity leave with my children. We are intently together. It's not easy, it's not like licking honey, but we have bonded in a completely different way. Now I get to spend quality time with my children. I am also thankful for my community—it's been fun exploring the neighbourhood.

Maybe I'll be back to work in November? Most likely we're looking at January for Zinc to reopen.

### German-inspired Bread Dumplings with Turkey Leg Confit and Wild Mushroom Sauce

1 loaf	sourdough bread, 2-4 days old, cut in ½-inch slices
10 leaves	fresh sage, chopped
1	turkey leg confit, pulled into small pieces salt to taste
1	egg, beaten with 100 ml of whole milk (or more milk added after, depending on the bread)
30 g	dried cranberries, chopped

30 g pumpkin seeds, chopped  
olive oil and unsalted butter for frying

Combine all ingredients (except oil and butter) and ensure the mix is not too wet or dry.

Fill a pot wide enough to poach the bread dumplings with water and bring to a simmer.

Put cling wrap on your counter and add some of the bread dumpling mixture and shape into a long roll, 1-1½ inches wide. Roll into the cling wrap like you would make a sushi roll. Try to roll as tight as possible so that you avoid air bubbles in the roll. Tie a knot on both ends.

Place the rolls in the simmering water (avoid rapid boiling) and place a kitchen towel over top to allow even cooking. Poach for about 10 minutes and cool down in your refrigerator for at least two hours. Ideally you hang the rolls to keep the shape.

Remove the cling wrap and cut the bread dumplings into about ½-inch slices. Heat a frying pan to a medium-high heat. Add olive and butter (about the same amount) and fry the bread dumplings on both sides until golden brown.

### Turkey Leg Confit

1	turkey leg salt the turkey leg and leave uncovered for at least 12 hours in your fridge.
2	bay leaves
5 sprigs	fresh thyme
1 bunch	fresh sage
5 cloves	garlic, crushed salt and pepper
1 kg	duck fat or any vegetable oil (you can reuse the fat after cooking)

Preheat your oven to 300°F.

Season the turkey leg with pepper. No salt needed since it's been added to cure beforehand. Melt the duck fat in a pot and add all the other ingredients and the turkey leg. Place parchment paper directly over the fat and cover the pot with tin foil. You can also use a casserole dish.

Cook for 3-4 hours or until fork tender.

Allow to cool down for at least 15 minutes and pull the meat when it's still warm.

### Wild Mushroom and Cassis Cream Sauce

100 g	wild boar bacon or pancetta, small diced extra virgin olive oil (needs a lot since mushrooms soak it up)
50 g	butter, unsalted
80 g	morel or shiitake mushrooms or both, dried or fresh, sliced (if dried, pour boiling water over the mushrooms and soak for a minimum of 15 minutes; keep the soaking liquid)
100 g	oyster mushrooms, cleaned and cut in strips
80 g	crimini mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
2	shallots, finely chopped
100 ml	crème de cassis
250 g	whipping cream mushroom soaking liquid lemon juice, to taste salt and pepper to taste
1 bunch	fresh flat leaf parsley, finely chopped

Heat a frying pan to medium high heat. Once heated add 5 tablespoons of

olive oil and add the bacon. Sear until caramelized. Then add the shallots and mushrooms (you might need to add more olive oil at this point) and season with salt and pepper. Sauté until the mushrooms are caramelized. Add the crème de cassis. Reduce the heat to medium and allow it to cook for about 5 minutes. Add the mushroom soaking liquid and cream and reduce by half. It should be a creamy consistency. Add lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste and the parsley right before you serve with the bread dumplings.

### Dylan Prins exec chef, Red Ox Inn

I am thankful for the sense of community among farmers in the Edmonton area. My family are farmers and when our backs are up against the wall, the co-op and other farmers have jumped in to help. We grow potatoes (Yukon golds, Red Norlands, White Warba, Russian Blue) and the bulk of the crop is sold through the Edmonton Potato Growers for the seed market. We had mechanical failures last harvest and we were behind. Another farm sent out their equipment to get the crop out of the ground. Then, this spring with the rain—they sent their planting rig, so we were able to get the planting done in two days. Yes, we eat a lot of potatoes—when they are new, we roast; the rest of the year it's mashed or baked.

We are on hold at Red Ox, it's difficult to open there, so we are cooking at Canteen, developing new dishes and bringing back some old favourites.

### My great-grandmother Vera McRorie's Carrot Pie

*At Thanksgiving we have my great grandmother's carrot pie. They didn't have*



pumpkin all the time in Saskatchewan, but they always had carrots. The vinegar keeps the gluten from forming long strands, so you are pretty much guaranteed a tender crust.

### Never-fail pie crust

5½ c	all-purpose flour
1 lb	lard
2 T	sugar
2 t	baking powder
1 t	salt
1	egg
¾ c	cold water
1 t	vanilla
1 t	vinegar

Sift dry ingredients. Cut in lard. Beat together egg, water, vanilla, and vinegar. Incorporate wet to dry until flour is just hydrated. Divide into 5 and wrap in cling film, let sit in fridge overnight.

### Carrot pie filling

1 c	boiled and mashed carrots
2	eggs
⅔ c	brown sugar
½ t	cinnamon
½ t	ginger powder
1 c	cereal cream (half and half, 10 per cent bf.)

If the mashed carrots are a little wet spread them on a tray and dry them in the oven a little bit. Roll 1 ball of dough and line a 9-inch pie pan. Beat together carrots, egg, sugar, and spices. Whisk in cream. Pour filling into the pie crust and bake at 325°F for about 45 minutes until done.

Makes 1 pie. The other doughballs can be frozen.

### Carla Alexander chef de partie, RGE RD

I'm really thankful for my health and the health of my family and for the street that I live on. When we had to shut down, my husband started a group chat. Now there are messages like 'I'm going to the store, does anybody's child need chalk or bubbles?' Or, 'I have an extra pizza, anybody want it?' We had all lost our childcare and removed ourselves from our jobs, and we have kids, so it was like we were banned from public places. We needed that support for mental health and juvenile anxiety. It's awesome communal living down my street, with the kids playing together, having scavenger hunts outside. When I see other kid's bikes on my lawn I feel as though we belong. Right now, in today's world and with the global racial movement, I'm happy for my family and the neighbourhood.

I am back to work at RGE RD and loving it.

### Tourtière

*My mother was introduced to tourtière in the early '80s through her best friend's mother who lived in the Laurentians in Quebec. Okay, now, normally and traditionally, this tourtière would be made and served as a Christmas dish, but my mother and I have it on Thanksgiving, Easter and Christmas as part of our ever-changing family occasion menu. Enjoy your French-Canadian savoury pie of love. And let's be thankful for the people we love that will share it with us. This tourtière definitely tastes better when shared.*

### Pastry

2 c	unbleached all-purpose flour
½ t	kosher salt
⅔ c	butter or lard
6-7 T	cold water (make sure butter or lard is very cold)
2	eggs (optional).

Mix in mixer until dough comes together. Do not over mix, it's okay if you can still see small pieces of butter or lard. Place in dough in the fridge for 1-2 hours.

### Filling

1 lb	ground pork (beef if pork is not a desired option or half beef half pork)
2 c	water
¼ c	oatmeal
1 med	onion, diced small
1-2 cloves	garlic, minced
¼ t	dry thyme
¼ t	dry oregano
¼ t	ground allspice
¼ t	ground cloves
¾ t	sea salt or season to taste
1-2	red or golden potatoes

Sauté ingredients in large pan. Boil the potatoes until soft. Rice or mash and fold potato in with the meat mixture in your pan. Let mixture cool before placing in pie shell. Once the mixture is cool, place in pie shell and brush sides with egg wash. Add dough top. Use a fork to connect edges. Brush whole tourtière pie with egg yolk.

Bake at 400°F until golden brown (about 45 minutes to an hour).

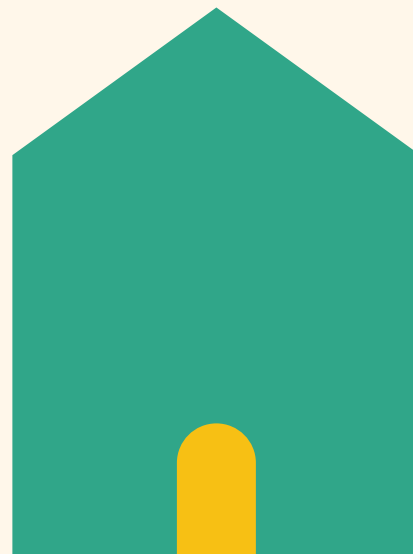
Allow tourtière to rest so the inside can set.

Makes 1 pie.

Please see "Thankful" on page 19.

## Corso at home.

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There is a compelling movement in wine to less intervention, less messing about with the soil, a more live-and-let-live, or natural way, to deal with pests and a deeper understanding that grapes need to grow within a more uncultivated environment. Along with a less is more approach in the field, the best winemakers are learning to let go, not try to control everything all the time, to be more intuitive, to allow for natural fermentations, less sulphur, more diverse flavours. Amen to that.

These two Italian producers are well versed in the way of the grape and are examples of what happens when you let go and work with rather than against.

### Serafini & Vidotto, Veneto, Italy

**Oenologist Francesco Serafini and viticulturist Antonello Vidotto** are known for their care and attention to natural processes. Preserve the soil's vitality, plant with the right density and don't overproduce (each vine yields about one bottle of wine) could sum up Serafina and Vidotto's approach to growing wine. This philosophy is ideal for growing grapes in Montello-Colli Asolani DOC, just north west of Treviso. The rolling hills are bound by the Piave River and the geology and aspect are ideal for Cabernet and Merlot and the white grapes of the region.

#### 2018 Manzoni Bianco DOC

Manzoni is a unique grape. Italy is home to over 2000 autochthonous varieties, according to Italian wine grape expert Ian D'Agata. Yet, Manzoni is a crossing of Riesling and Pinot Bianco created in 1926 for the Piave area by professor Luigi Manzoni. There is only about 50 ha of Manzoni planted in Italy; it's worth looking out for. We love the clarity of the Serafina & Vidotto bottling, the pale gold colour and the aromas of herbs and elderflower. This light-bodied wine is fine and elegant with beautifully balanced acidity and a lingering minerality. Enjoy with seafood risotto, pizza bianco or vegetable dishes.

#### 2018 Pinot Nero Giovane IGT

This Pinot Noir has gorgeous wild strawberry and thyme aromas, pretty berry flavours, gentle tannins and spot-on acidity. Its medium body makes it a great transition wine from summer to fall. Drink with grilled vegetables and salmon, roast chicken or pork.

#### 2017 Phigaia Rosso DOC Montello Colli Asolani

This generous blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc is deliciously rich with cherry and blackcurrant flavours. The forthright

structure and beautifully ripe tannins surround substantial body—think grilled meats or strong aged cheeses. A delicious wine for dinners on crisp fall nights.

### Tenuta de Angelis, le Marche, Italy

Quinto Fausti and his son Alighiero own and operate Tenuta de Angelis in southern Marche close to the border with Abruzzo. A lovely family and responsible stewards of the land, they use only their own certified organic grapes. Wines are vegan, fermented with native yeasts and their use of sulphur is low, the maximum allowed is under 80 grams per litre.

#### 2019 Marche Rosato IGT

This zippy rosato with lots of citrus notes was the wine of the summer. Let's hope for sunny days this fall to enjoy it with grilled shrimp, roast chicken and the last of the tomato sandwiches. The grapes, 50 per cent Montepulciano, and 50 per cent Sangiovese are from DeAngelis' certified organic vineyards in Ascoli Piceno.

#### 2019 Pecorino Offida DOCG

I remember a delicious Fausti family lunch of toothsome Marchigiani dishes that started with this wine. Evanescent citrus and floral notes both on the nose and the palate. Full-bodied, impeccably dry, but with a slightly creamy texture, seductive minerality, excellent acidity and a distinctive sit-up-and-notice-me quality that's rare to find in a bottle of wine this affordable. Delicious with any sort of pasta with cheeses, stuffed tomatoes, cabbage rolls. Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay lovers, give this Pecorino a try.

#### 2018 Rosso Piceno DOC

Rosso Piceno is practically mother's milk in this part of le Marche. This DeAngelis bottling is a blend of 70 percent Montepulciano and 30 percent Sangiovese. Think aromas and flavours of soft berry fruit and wild herbs, with refreshing acidity and super drinkability. Easy-going, medium-bodied, a pleasure to drink. Enjoy with hearty ragus and bean dishes. 🍷

*Find at better wine shops.*



## Thankful

Continued from page 17.

### Rob Filipchuk owner, The Glass Monkey

I feel thankful for my dedicated staff, and our clients who have supported us through all of this and thankful I have been able to provide stability and positivity to staff and customers. That's the vibe that has kept me going. The business is a place of stability and consistency to our small group of nine people. Everyone has families to support and uncertainty in their lives—I'm thankful I have been able to go into work and be surrounded by like-minded people and thankful they can come to work. The biggest positive factor that keeps me jumping out of bed in the morning is making our work place a safe zone and a place of comfort.

## Nachynka

*"This is my mom, Baba Anne Filipchuk's, recipe for nachynka, handed down from her mom."*

—Rob Filipchuk, The Glass Monkey

1 lg	onion, chopped
½ c	butter
1 c	cornmeal
1 t	salt
1 t	sugar
1½ t	pepper
3½ c	milk
½ c	light cream (optional)
2	eggs, well-beaten

Fry onion in butter until tender. Add the cornmeal along with the salt, sugar and pepper. Mix cornmeal thoroughly with butter and onion. Gradually add milk and mix until no lumps remain. Cook until thickened. Remove from stove, blend in cream. Beat the eggs and fold into cornmeal mix. Spoon into buttered casserole. Bake uncovered at 360°F for one hour or until golden.

### Oscar Lopez, Pampa

When we closed down in March, it was as if you were going 120k down the highway, and then. You stopped. All of a sudden you are bowled over, you are stuck and you don't know what happened. For the first couple of weeks I was lost—just kind of sat at home. That forced me to reflect where am I personally and professionally and to rejig priorities. We used to prepare for the year, then execute the plan. That's all been shelved. Now we think maybe a week ahead? Who knows? Now, I am thankful for the time to slow down, stop and think,

reevaluate life in general, for my family, my wife, myself, and Pampa. It's time to reflect.

## Salvadorean-style Thanksgiving Turkey

Family recipe by Miss Zaira Bolanos.

1 lg	fresh turkey (8 kg)
1 c	white vinegar
½ c	fresh lime juice
2 med	yellow onions
2 med	green peppers
6 lg	garlic cloves
6	chicken bouillon cubes
½ c	dry red wine
3 med	cans diced tomato
1 med	can crushed tomato
6 T	relajo (black peppercorns, cloves, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, roasted peanuts, bay leaves, dry oregano, dry thyme, and achiote powder)*
1	dry chile guajillo, chopped
1	dry chile ancho pasilla, seeded and chopped

Wash turkey in the vinegar and then the lime juice and rinse with water.

In food processor, add 1 onion, 1 green pepper, 3 garlic cloves and 3 chicken bouillon cubes to make a paste. Mix with red wine.

Place turkey in a large deep baking pan. Poke turkey and rub paste over the skin and stuff some of the paste inside the turkey. Cover with plastic wrap and leave in the refrigerator overnight.

Pre-heat oven to 375° F.

In a frying pan, mix 7 tablespoons of water, 1 medium chopped onion, 1 chopped green pepper, 3 diced garlic cloves, the chopped chile guajillo and the chile pasilla and cover over low heat and stir occasionally. When the water has evaporated and the chile guajillo and chile pasilla are soft, then it is ready.

In a food processor, blend all the canned tomato, the sautéed chile and vegetables, 3 chicken bouillon cubes and the relajo. Place the turkey breast down and fully cover it with the salsa (the paste used on the turkey overnight stays on, do not remove.) and cover with aluminum foil and bake in the oven for 1 hour. Flip to the rest of three sides, each time adding more salsa to ensure it is covered. Each side must be cooked for 1 hour. 🍷

\*Relajo can be purchased ready to use at Latin supermarkets.



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## Feeding People

Jan Hostyn

### Confessions of an online shopper

**I sat in front of my computer, my head spinning. There were so many options.**

Did I want broccoli stalks or broccoli crowns? By the piece or by the bundle? And how many exactly? Next came mushrooms. Did I want to dictate the exact number of mushrooms, or should I simply buy a package or two? Precisely how many mushrooms did I want, though? I'm not in the habit of counting out each individual one as I plunk them into the bag. Like most things, I just get whatever seems like enough. And the options kept coming.

I was not having fun.

Just months after publicly declaring that I would never consider letting someone else pick out my groceries for me, here I was doing exactly that. I was online grocery shopping, and those groceries included fresh fruits and veggies, items I am ultra-picky about.

Sigh.

In my defence, that declaration came before the whole Covid-19 pandemic hit and our world changed almost overnight. It also came before I underwent major surgery, just one day before elective surgeries were put on hold indefinitely because of the pandemic. Leaving the house was not only off the table because of my physical state, but Covid-19 complicated things even more. The last thing I needed was to come down with something that might hamper my recovery, and that something included Covid-19.

Online grocery shopping it was.

The whole process took more brainpower than I ever could have imagined. When I go to the grocery store, I am armed with a list. I also shop with my eyes, though. My list is comprised of things I want to get, but a good chunk of my shopping is based on how things look, particularly when it comes to fresh fruits and veggies. Produce that looks good finds its way into my cart, produce that's wilted, old or compromised gets a pass.

The thing is, though, you actually have to see the produce to make that kind of decision. Pictures on a computer screen simply don't cut it.

But the computer screen was my only option.

There were decisions galore. Exactly how many bananas? Boxed spinach or bunched? What kind of apples? The choices seemed never-ending. And I couldn't say it depends—it depends on how ripe the bananas are, how fresh the bunched spinach is, how good the apples look.

I did my best. And after spending far too much time making decisions and checking boxes, I was finally done.

Just before I paid, a box popped up asking if I wanted to authorize the store to make substitutions if necessary, whether it be a different item or a different brand. I selected NO. That would be giving away way too much control. Besides, I was choosing the items I did for a reason.

This was at the very beginning of the pandemic, and consumer demand was overwhelming the system. It was almost a week later when my husband went off to pick up our order. I was looking forward to getting the groceries (our fridge—well, our fridges—had never been so empty), but I admit I was also a tad apprehensive.

Unloading the groceries took forever (again, this was early on, when the recommendation was to disinfect everything that came into the house), and it seemed like I held my breath every time I reached into a bag to retrieve an item. What would I pull out?

I won't dwell on every little thing that went wrong, but the end result was disappointing, to say the least.

My two bags of broccoli were overwhelmingly yellow, far too old to be even remotely edible. I don't know that I have ever seen broccoli that bad, so I was shocked to find it in one of the bags, shocked a store would actually sell something so compromised. Returning items was unthinkable back then, so

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all the broccoli went straight into the garbage.

The bananas that emerged from another of the bags were green, really really green. So green I was doubtful they would ever ripen. They eventually did (yay), but it was weeks before we ate any of them.

Thankfully the broccoli and bananas were the worst offenders. The rest of the produce fluctuated between being just fine and not exactly stellar. Acceptable, though, especially considering the challenges of the times.

There were other issues, though. My no substitutions request was completely ignored. Store brands were substituted for some of the name brands we had ordered, and different kinds of lettuce, apples and assorted other items than the ones we had requested littered our counter. And size specifications seemed to have been overlooked as well. The lemon juice I unpacked was so big that, if it didn't have a best before date, it could potentially last forever. Again, all were things I could deal with, but they certainly didn't endear me to the whole process.

There you go. My first and only online grocery shopping experience.

I went into this whole process knowing things would not be perfect, knowing I needed to put my pickiness aside and just make do. Simply getting fresh produce at this point was going to be a treat. I honestly think I had a fairly open mind. It's also worth noting that my husband had already done the grocery shopping a

couple of times, so I was getting used to having fresh produce in the house that wasn't exactly what I would have chosen.

It didn't help that this came at a time when the whole system was extremely overloaded and stretched well beyond its limits. The stores couldn't keep up and were navigating through myriad new challenges as well. So, this might not be exactly typical.

Still.

My husband was back on full-time grocery shopping duty after that, and that came with its own set of challenges. But through it all, I did feel fortunate just to get groceries. The whole experience also gave me a new appreciation of frozen fruits and veggies—saviours, since popping into the grocery store became a thing of the past.

I'm now back to doing our grocery shopping, and that includes plopping mushrooms into a bag without counting them. Even I've changed, though, and perhaps for the better. I am still picky, but definitely less so. And I've had to rejig the way I pick things out—I use my eyes more and try to take only what I touch. I definitely still like to be in control of what ultimately goes into my fridge, freezer and cupboards, though, and I can't see that changing anytime soon.

But we shall see—this world seems to have a way of throwing the unexpected at us. Never say never. 🍷

*Jan Hostyn still prefers her broccoli green and her bananas yellow.*



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At the Edmonton City Club there are **various pricing options** available for our members – we can help you select the membership most appropriate for you.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	LIMITED TIME OFFER ENTRANCE FEE	ANNUAL DUES
<b>RESIDENT INTERMEDIATE</b> (Age 18 - 29)	<b>NEW MEMBER: \$250</b> (50% Off Regular Price of \$500)	<b>\$800</b>
<b>RESIDENT INTERMEDIATE</b> (Age 30 - 39)	<b>NEW MEMBER: \$475</b> (50% Off Regular Price of \$950)	<b>\$1,600</b>
<b>RESIDENT</b> (Age 40 - 64)	<b>NEW MEMBER: \$750</b> (50% Off Regular Price of \$1,500)	<b>\$1,950</b>
<b>SENIOR</b> (Age 65+)	<b>NEW MEMBER: \$375</b> (50% Off Regular Price of \$750)	<b>\$1,200</b>
<b>NON-RESIDENT</b> (+75km from City Centre)	<b>NEW MEMBER: \$375</b> (50% Off Regular Price of \$750)	<b>\$750</b>

Once Edmonton City Club is open, Members (excluding Non-Resident Members), will be invoiced at the start of each quarter for a Food & Beverage minimum of \$125 (a credit to be used within the club), which will be payable in advance.

\*All fees, dues and F&B minimum are subject to current GST tax rates. Membership fees and annual dues are based upon various memberships available, terms and conditions may apply.

### JOIN OUR COMMUNITY AND STAY CONNECTED

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the deadline for the pre-opening membership entrance fee has been extended until further notice. We will continue to share the details of our progress via social media as we re-imagine our club experience, market new memberships and work towards choosing our new location in the downtown business district. For more information visit our newly updated website or email [membership@edmontoncityclub.com](mailto:membership@edmontoncityclub.com)

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Formerly known as Edmonton Petroleum Club.

After 30 years, Jerry is closing down the First Nature Farms stand at the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market (OSFM).

I call Jerry while he's having his morning coffee, waiting for the hay to dry.

"It was a great year for producing hay, but it's hard to get it harvested between the showers. We were baling hay last night, but then it drizzled. Red clover has a thick stem and takes a long time to dry," he says.

Jerry keeps up a running commentary about what he's looking at while we talk. "I'm staring at Luna, Donovan's and Lisa's dog, a big white Hungarian, lying in the driveway with a bunch of chickens," says Jerry. "The other one, the big white Pyrenees, is Galileo. Our choir was learning to singing Bohemian Rhapsody, so I end up calling him with *galileo galileo, galileo, galileo figaro magnifico*."

Our discussion veers to the farm donkeys. I recall meeting Joe (a cheeky Jerusalem donkey) on a visit to the farm a few years back. Now there is Juanita and Juan (all the donkey's names start with J). I ask if they are used to help protect the animals. "Wildlife control? Not at all," says Jerry. "They do nothing, just get into trouble and try to escape. One jumps and the other one goes underneath, and they head right over the grain bins."

Such is life on the farm, which Jerry will be getting even more of. After 30 years, Jerry is closing down the stand at the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market. He starts to talk about the early days.

"I worked for Agriculture Canada doing research into saskatoon berries. I had to drive a half hour in every direction. I passed all these farmers who got to stay home. So, I quit my job and became a full-time farmer.

At the time it was a big chunk of land 17 quarter sections and another 13 quarter sections leased. There were four partners; I was the only one from a non-farming background. This was an abandoned cattle ranch built for cows. We got a loan from the Feeders Association for 130 steer," he says.

"That was our start, slowly we all did our own thing. Then some pigs, then turkeys, then chickens. The farm was certified organic in 1990."

# Jerry Kitt on First Nature Farm

— Mary Bailey —



Lea Matton, Jerry Kitt and Rita Allen at OSFM.

First Nature Farms is near Hythe, about 45 minutes west of Grande Prairie in the Peace region. "Beaverlodge is where we do our shopping—if you climb a tall tree you can see the B.C. border," says Jerry.

"For the last 20 years it's just been myself. I still have 13 quarters of leased land and 6 deeded quarters." It's a beautiful place with most of it in natural land. Six creeks flow through on their way to the Peace. "Bordering us on the east side is a nature conservancy; on the west, south and north it's crown land. Good neighbours."

Sam and Jerry's kids Donovan and Keri grew up on the farm. Keri goes to cooking school in P.E.I. in the fall and Donovan and his wife Lisa have Homestead Farm at the Grande Prairie Farmers' Market. "They grow all types of vegetables and garlic. They also built a super energy efficient house nearby. We went together on the solar array. According to my first bill from the power company, I made \$4.

"My birthday present to Donovan was to have all the manure they had piled up from the old cattle ranch levelled on a nice gentle slope for his future market garden. It's old manure, not perfectly balanced, but with lots of biodiversity. There will be five acres of vegetable garden eventually, but it won't be me."

Sam lives next door now. "Her dream was to live a quiet life on the shores of a lake. That's what she has now, a little house on the shores of a big beaver pond, off the grid. She grows beautiful flowers and vegetables. When spring comes, when we are being forced to go to the grocery store, she'll say 'want some carrots and potatoes? Want some squash?'"

"It's not the drive, I love the drive, it's like a meditation, the slower I drive, the more time I get to spend. But, a lot of our regular customers aren't there anymore—people don't want to stand in line. Not only that. No one has Covid where we are on the farm; if we do go into Beaverlodge or Grande Prairie we use

hand sanitizer and wear masks. We are in a safe community and I want to keep it that way. I don't want to be the one who goes to the city and brings something back."

Jerry may be leaving the market, but he's not leaving farming—he's still taking care of animals and fixing machines. "Most of my income comes from Vancouver. I raise pigs for Whole Foods and Choices and other stores in Vancouver. I was at a food show in Vancouver when this gal came by and started talking with me. Then they called and asked if they could come for a visit. They spent two days here. We canoed around to Sam's place to get onions. I'm quite impressed. They are meticulous in their standards. We will sell the rest through my son's Homestead Farm and by email."

Jerry will keep on writing the *Farm News*, his entertaining monthly journal on life on the farm.

The other thing Jerry will still do is accept woofers (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms) when it's feasible to do so again. "Woofers and young agrarians. I was to host a second-generation woofers from France with her daughter, but Covid put an end to that. I did have a dentist from Fairview and a chef from Banff."

I ask Jerry about his favourite things about life on the farm. "There are so many things that make living on this farm a positive thing," he says "I feel really good as a food producer. Also, thankful that I could live in this remote place—watch the milk cow walk by, watch the goat looking at the cow, as if to say, 'where are you going?' The swans swimming. I have Woofers who want to become farmers—they are so appreciative of everything I show them. We are a great neighbourhood and community."

October 3 is First Nature Farms last market day. You can purchase Jerry's beef, pork and chicken by email, [jerrykitt@gmail.com](mailto:jerrykitt@gmail.com). Sign up for the *Farm News* too.

For more information on WWOOF, visit [wwoof.net](http://wwoof.net). 🍅

*Bio Mary Bailey, editor of The Tomato, has been buying Jerry's turkeys, chicken and other meats for longer than she'd care to admit.*



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