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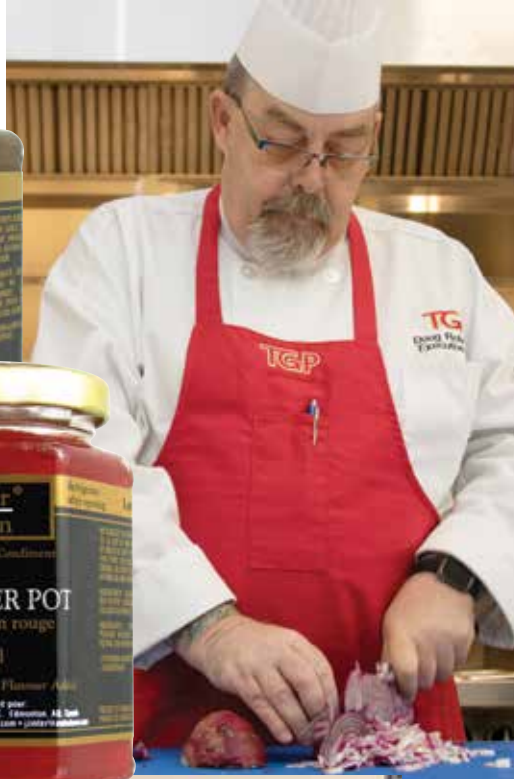
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zinter brown is 35!

“The idea was to make handy items for busy cooks,” says Joanne Zinter, of Zinter Brown Taste Treats. “Our first product I made with my partner at the time, Doreen Brown, was antipasto. We sold it at the Old Strathcona Farmers Market. It was a hobby business then, but eventually, I bought out my partner, continued on with the farmers market and gained our first retail customer, Andy’s IGA.

The whole line is not earth shattering,” says Joanne, “but it’s high quality and they taste good.” Amen.

We’ve been impressed for a long time with the quality and the usefulness of Joanne’s products. We love the fresh mint sauce with steamed carrots; the pepper jellies and the garlic onion jam are wonderful glazes for pork chops (or tofu), or with cream cheese on a bagel (try a dollop on your cheese board). Find at Andy’s IGA, all Italian Centre Shops, Popowich Meats, Save-On, Sunterra.



best of both worlds at the new tgp

The Grocery People (TGP) have moved from their spot on the Yellowhead to a brand spanking new store (63,000 square feet) called TGP Wholesale Market in the Nexus Business Park (11628 142 Street). “We were Edmonton’s best kept secret,” says Kevin Johnson, TGP. It’s true! Did you know anyone can shop there? You don’t have to be a chef, and you don’t need a membership. “Our food service customers are food truck operators, diners, schools and golf courses and convenience stores, truly an outlet for independent operators,” says Kevin.

Find both food service sizes and regular retail grocery packaging. Buy a 50-pound sack of onions or buy just a few. They also offer split cases of vegetables and a custom cutting meat program.

The Grocery People story begins in 1960, when a group of Alberta grocers, unhappy with their wholesale offerings, banded together to create something new. This was purchased by Federated Co-op in 1992, carrying on a proud Prairie tradition. The new Culinary Centre with chef Doug Robertson has cooking sessions for operators and TGP plans to host industry nights with the In The Weeds mental health organization. Check it out!

new spot for wine, spirits and beer deep on the south side

Check out this new shop in the Century Park development. The approach is irreverent and fun, and with Melinda Stewart (yes, Melinda from the Hardware Grill) you know it will stay easy-going and knowledgeable. They are still growing their product selection but from what we saw so far, this will become a regular stop. Century Park Cellars (2349 111 Street NW, 780-395-0503, centuryparkcellars.com)



dee hobsbawn-smith’s new book bread & water

Chef, mother, poet and writer Dee Hobsbawn-Smith has a new book of essays written from her life—canning with her kids, a train trip on assignment, how the loss of a beloved dog reminds us of the losses we endure as we pass through life. Outdoor bonspiels; running races, her love of riding; life on the family farm both then and now; a confounding trip to Trickle Creek Ranch and Weibo Ludwig. Dee’s writing is honest—sometimes brutally so—as well as lyrical. When the subject is food, it sings. This is a book for a dark winter’s night beside the fire. University of Regina Press, \$27. 🍷



this monsoon is welcome

Monsoon is a new and delicious addition to our food scene. It’s an attractive room serving sophisticated dishes, primarily based on Mughlai cuisine. Highlights: the sharable vegetarian flight of toothsome corn fritters, roasted cauliflower, potato cakes and paneer yogurt croquettes; lal mass (lamb); the naan (dill or garlic, both tender and airy) and dal quereshi. Loved the Sharabi and Singh is King cocktails, as well as the attentive service. All our we-know-nothing questions about the food were answered with enthusiasm. There is an extensive tea service in its own salon—not high tea, something more relaxed and intimate. The owner, local restaurateur Goldie Hazrah, knows how to make guests comfortable.

Monsoon Bistro & Bar, 4485 Gateway Boulevard, 587-882-6130, monsoonbistro.ca.



From top: classic tastes from Zinter Brown; chef Doug Robertson from TGP; Melinda Stewart and Val Boruch at the new Century Park Cellars, Dee Hobsbawn-Smith’s new book; delectable dishes from Monsoon Bistro.

Holiday Menu

Noche Buena by chefs Ariel del Rosario and Roel Canafranca, Filistix

Filipinos love to celebrate. From baptisms to *debuts* (18th birthday parties) to *despedidas* (going away parties) we are always looking for a reason to throw a fiesta and bust out the videoke machine. But, in terms of holidays, none is more important than the Christmas holiday season. It is so important, in fact, that the Philippines has the longest Christmas season in the world. Carols and decorations can already be seen as early as September and last all the way until mid-January.

Noche Buena (the Good Night) is celebrated on Christmas Eve. It is the most elaborate feast of the year—a whole family affair with different elements of the meal prepared throughout the entire day. Roel and I grew up in a large family with our grandma at the center of the cooking. Family and friends are expected to

come over after midnight mass and enjoy the various delicacies until late into the night.

The spread can be and often is, intimidating. The sheer array of dishes signifies generosity and hospitality—two well-known characteristics of Filipinos.

It is our pleasure to share some quintessential holiday dishes that you can prepare and share with your close family and friends.

—Roel Canafranca and Ariel del Rosario, Filistix.

Lumpia Shanghai

Lumpia (spring rolls) are a staple on any festive spread—a must for any party. They are the ultimate finger food and an easy sell to the kids. I like to make a big batch of these spring rolls, then freeze in Ziploc

bags. This way, you always have a quick lunch or snack at the ready. To fry, do not thaw. Carefully add the rolls into hot oil for about 4-5 minutes or until golden brown and delicious. This recipe will make five dozen (60) pieces.

- | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 lb | ground chicken or pork |
| ½ c | green onions, finely chopped |
| 1 can | (8 ounces) water chestnuts, drained and finely chopped |
| 1 med | carrot, peeled and shredded |
| 3 cloves | garlic, peeled and minced |
| 1 T | soy sauce |
| 1 t | salt |
| ½ t | ground black pepper |
| 60 | small spring roll wrappers |
| | canola oil |

In a bowl, combine ground chicken or pork, green onions, water chestnuts,

carrots, garlic, soy sauce, salt, and pepper until well distributed.

Separate wrappers into individual sheets and lay on a flat working surface. Spoon about 1 heaping tablespoon of meat mixture on the lower end of the wrapper, closest to you.

Fold the bottom of wrapper over filling and continue to roll tightly into a thin log about ¾-inch thick. Wet the remaining edge of the wrapper with a dab of water to completely seal. Repeat with the remaining mixture.

In a pan over medium heat, heat about 2-inch deep of oil. Add *lumpia* in batches and cook turning on sides as needed, for about 3-4 minutes or until golden brown and crisp and meat is cooked through.

Using a slotted spoon or tongs, remove from the oil and drain on a wire rack set over a baking sheet. Serve immediately with sweet and sour sauce or banana ketchup.

Lumpia Shanghai

Lechon Kawali

Pancit Palabok

Sopas

Beef Caldereta

Sopas

Nothing is more comforting than chicken noodle soup and Filipinos have a rich and creamy version called chicken sopas. Though we do make this all year round, it is closely associated with the holidays and Christmas time. This recipe does take a little bit of time so I would make it a day ahead, less the pasta. This is also a great way to repurpose leftover chicken or turkey. Makes about 8 servings.

2 lb	chicken thighs, drumsticks or breasts
1	onion, peeled and quartered
1 t	peppercorns
4 cloves	garlic, peeled and crushed
2	bay leaves
	salt and pepper to taste
10 c	water
1 T	canola oil
4	hot dogs, sliced diagonally into ½-inch thick
1	onion, peeled and chopped
2 stalks	celery, cubed
2 lg	carrots, peeled and cubed
2 c	elbow macaroni, uncooked
1 can	(12 ounces) evaporated milk
	salt and pepper to taste
½ sm	napa cabbage, chopped
4	eggs, hardboiled, peeled and halved
	green onions, chopped

In a large pot, combine chicken, quartered onions, peppercorns, garlic, bay leaves, 1 tablespoon of salt, and 10 cups water. Bring to a boil, over medium heat, skimming any scum that may float to the top. Once the broth clears, lower heat and cover. Continue to cook for about 20-30 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and fork tender. With a slotted spoon, remove chicken from the broth. Allow the chicken to cool to the touch, then pull the meat from the bones, shred and set aside. Return the bones to the pot and bring to a boil. Lower heat, cover, and simmer for at least 30 minutes to 1 hour. Using a fine-mesh sieve, strain broth to remove sediment. Reserve about 8 cups.

In another pot over medium heat, heat oil. Add hot dogs and cook, stirring regularly, for about 1-2 minutes or until lightly browned. With a slotted spoon, remove from the pan and drain on paper towels. Keep warm. Add the chopped onions, celery and carrots to the pan. Cook, stirring regularly, for about 3-5

minutes or until softened. Add the macaroni and cook, stirring regularly, for about 1-2 minutes.

Add the reserved broth and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 8-10 minutes or until the pasta is tender. Add the reserved evaporated milk, shredded chicken, and the hot dogs. Continue to simmer until heated through. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add napa cabbage and cook for about 1 minute or until tender-crisp. To serve, ladle soup in individual bowls and garnish with eggs and green onions, if desired. Serve hot.

Pancit Palabok

Noodles are always present on a holiday menu, especially around the New Year. It is auspicious to serve noodles during significant celebrations such as Noche Buena or Media Noche and birthdays, as noodles symbolize prosperity and long life. This dish is made with rice vermicelli and a rich and thick shrimp gravy. What makes this dish unique is that you can customize it to your own liking with a myriad of toppings. Make the gravy and the toppings first, then finish the noodles.

For the Gravy

	Shrimp heads (reserved from peeling the shrimp)
5 c	water
¼ c	canola oil
2 T	annatto seeds
⅓ c	flour
2 pieces	shrimp bouillon
	salt and pepper to taste

With a knife, coarsely chop reserved shrimp heads. In a pot over medium heat, combine shrimp heads and 5 cups water. Bring to a boil, skimming any foam that rises on top. Lower heat and simmer for about 10 minutes to extract flavor. Using a fine-mesh strainer, strain liquid and discard shrimp solids. Reserve 5 cups of the stock.




In a saucepot over medium heat, heat ¼ cup canola oil. Add 2 tablespoons of annatto seeds and cook, stirring regularly, until oil is infused with deep-orange color. With a slotted spoon, remove seeds and discard. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, for about 1 minute or until smooth. Slowly add shrimp stock, whisking vigorously to prevent lumps. Bring to a boil and then lower heat to a simmer. Add shrimp bouillon and stir until dissolved. Cook, stirring regularly for about 3-5 minutes or until thickened. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serves 6.

Please see "Holiday Menu" on page 28



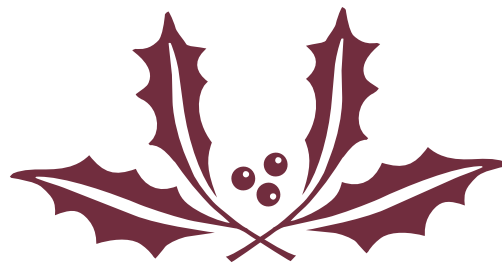
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WINES

FROM THE RICH UNCLE & THE CASH-STRAPPED FRIEND, 2021 EDITION

We ask the folks in the know—wine agents, wine shop owners and managers, chefs and restaurant people, WSET'ers and somms for the wines and spirits they yearn for—what they would like to see under the tree—from a wealthy and generous relly and from the has-more-taste-than money friend.

This year wines from the Rhône Valley, Italy and Chile were top choices from the saavy friend, while Champagne, artisan spirits and rare vintages were on the wish list from the rich relative. Get ready to make your very own wish list for holiday dinners, gift giving or squirrelling away in the cellar. Dig in!

.....
Stacey-Jo Strombecky,
Renaissance Wine
Merchants

Cash-strapped Friend

Romain Duvernay Côtes du Rhône Blanc (Rhône Valley, France), \$20

I am shaking my fist while I ask this—why isn't everyone drinking Côtes du Rhône Blanc? Truly fantastic value can be found in the Côtes du Rhône in all categories, and the whites are especially noteworthy. While the acidity is fresh and lively, what I love most about Côtes du Rhône Blanc is the body—ranging from round and generous to some serious richness on the higher-end bottles. This offering, a lovely blend of Roussanne (30 per cent), Viognier (30 per cent) and Grenache Blanc (40 per cent), is a



bouquet of flowers and a bowl of peach and exotic fruit all rolled into one modestly priced bottle. The little kick of spice on the finish plays nicely with food, so don't be shy trying it with a wide variety of dishes.

Rich Uncle

Jacopo Poli The Great Negroni Cocktail 3L (Bassano di Grappa, Italy), \$250

You read that right—three full litres of Negroni. Because what is better than opening your fridge and having pre-batched Negronis waiting for you? Nothing, my friends. Absolutely nothing. Jacopo Poli easily holds top spot for artisan grappa and high-quality grappa-liqueurs, but his more recent foray into vermouth, gin and bitters has the cocktail nerds all over town *verklemt*. This ready-to-



drink offering comes in a handy bag in a cylindrical box. It's the perfect balance of Jacopo's famous Marconi 46 Gin, his stunning Gran Bassano Rosso Vermouth, and the newly released bitter, Super Taurus. Pour an ounce or two into a pretty glass, and the resulting cocktail needs only ice and an orange peel garnish, saving you valuable time to nosh on some salty nibbles and visit with friends. (Mid-November arrival—availability extremely limited.)

.....
Christina Masciangelo,
Salivate Consulting
Cash-strapped Friend
2020 Pievalta Verdicchio Castelli di Jesi DOC (Le Marche, Italy) \$25

I adore both this white grape and



producer because they possess the three elements I look for in wine—freshness, flavour intensity (without excessive alcohol) and grown with respect for the environment. Let's not forget value for money. From the Adriatic coast of central Italy, this wine from native grapes would typically be enjoyed with the local seafood, pasta and lighter dishes. It's the perfect start to an evening or paired with a special main course. Delish.

Rich Uncle
2016 Barone Pizzini Franciacorta DOCG Rosé (Lombardy, Italy) \$60

Even in the premium category one can appreciate great value. This way, you can stock the cellar with several bottles instead of just one! Franciacorta is a high-quality winegrowing region northeast



of Milan that specializes in traditional method (aka Champagne method) sparkling wine. Due to its temperate climate, the wines made here are riper and richer when compared with the cooler Champagne region, yet just as complex. This top-notch organic producer blends 70 per cent Pinot Noir with Chardonnay and ages on the lees for approximately three years. Enjoy as a starter or with a special meal.

.....
**Patrick Saurette,
 The Marc**

**Cash-strapped Friend
 2020 Huber Vision
 Grüner Veltliner
 (Niederösterreich,
 Austria), \$25**

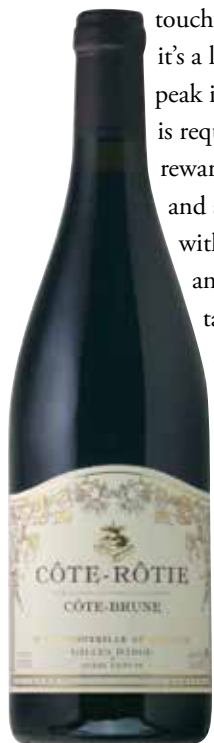
This checks all my boxes—high acid, cool climate, over-delivers value and is fun to say. Grüner cannot be ignored! Refreshingly tangy, super minerality with citrus and stone fruit notes with white pepper. Order a bottle and say, “I’ll take the schnitzel.”



Rich Uncle

**2014 Domaine Barge Côte Brune
 Côte Rôtie (Rhône, France), \$135**

This Syrah starts life together with a touch of Viognier, and it’s a long life that can peak in 20 years. Patience is required but you are rewarded with a precise and aromatic wine, with black fruit, olive and violet notes, soft tannins, long-lived acidity. Killer pairing? PEI Blue Dot grilled striploin and a pinch of sea salt.



.....
**Misun Bu, sommelière,
 Post Hotel & Spa, Lake
 Louise**

**Cash-strapped Friend
 2020 Sibiliana Roceno Grillo
 (Sicily, Italy) \$20**

My fun, easy-going friend knows how to enjoy the moment (without breaking a bank) even when the world seems so dull and depressing. This delicate, bright Sicilian white from the Grillo grape has good minerality and satin-like texture with a white peach and nectarine nose. It will make our sushi and spicy Korean food night instantly fabulous.



Rich Uncle

**1970 Taylor
 Fladgate Very Old
 Single Harvest 1970 Port (Douro
 Valley, Portugal), \$279**

I have been fortunate to open many very old wines, and every time, I feel as if I am taking a time machine and going back to the time the grapes were harvested. My rich uncle will be happy to spoil me with this lovely time machine of subtlety, complexity and



Please see “Wines” on next page

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Wines

Continued from previous page

endless joy. I will enjoy with caramel popcorn, roasted pecan, dried fig and apricot while watching the good old movie *Love Story* (from 1970!).

Juanita Roos and Kelsey Roos, Color de Vino

Cash-strapped Friend
2020 Claus Preisinger
Puszta Libra,
(Burgenland, Austria),
\$28

This juicy, perfumed and floral Austrian red is a blend of Zweigelt and St. Laurent made in the Burgenland Beaujolais style. Checks all the boxes for a *vin de soif* (easy-drinking) holiday pick with solid crowd appeal. This is a wine we recommend to everyone, including vegans.



Rich Uncle

2002 Billecart-
Salmon Le Clos Sainte-Hilaire,
(Champagne, France), \$760

This Blanc de Noir is a masterpiece and a rare find. What makes it so pricey? Only 3,700 bottles were made of this concentrated, complex and superb Champagne from an acclaimed vintage. If ever there was a year to indulge, this is it. Drink now, but as it's vintage Champagne, you could also add to your cellar and hold for a decade in anticipation of that magical moment.



Gabriella Bergsten, Garneau Block

Cash-strapped Friend
2020 Il Farneto
Giandon Rosso
(Emilia Romagna,
Italy), \$25

Hailing from the gorgeous Emilia Romagna, this wine is perfect for both everyday and fancy

meals, and for the person who isn't sure where to start with natural wine. Grown biodynamically from organic Marzemino, Malbo Gentile and Lambrusco Grasparossa grapes, it's the perfect easy-drinking red to give to a friend (or keep for yourself, it's super tasty!)

Rich Uncle
Delinquente Bizzarro
Bitter Aperitivo
(Riverland, Australia),
\$32

I can't stop dreaming about Bizzarro. We first tasted it last Christmas and fell in love. This is vermouth, made with organic (hand-peeled!) lemons, oranges, and other traditional aperitivo ingredients like rhubarb and gentian root, with beautiful spice both on the nose and the palate. Something you want to be drinking while watching those movies or baking cookies.



Marcia J. Hamm, Everything Wine & More, Sherwood Park

Cash-strapped Friend
Casale del Giglio Bellone
(Lazio, Italy), \$20

My friend knows a great wine when they taste one and gets how amazing some white wines are.

This Bellone drinks well above its price point. Lazio is known for culture and tourism, where good wine is hard to find, but this winery is doing some amazing thing with native grapes such as Bellone, one of the quality native grapes of the region. Excellent flavours, zesty acidity and a salty tang, pair with your Christmas dinner.



Rich Uncle
2017 Poggio alle
Gazze dell'Ornellaia
(Tuscany, Italy), \$75

It's been a tough year for rich uncle Bob, and although he may not spend as much as usual, he's still got great taste. This unique blend of 81 per cent Sauvignon Blanc, 10 per cent Vermentino, six per cent Viognier and three per cent Verdicchio shows off Ornellaia's unique Mediterranean Tuscan microclimate. This is the last vintage Verdicchio was included in the blend—a small amount that adds loads of texture. Even from the hot 2017 vintage, there's still lots of ageing potential here.



Susan and Barb Giacomini, WineQuest Wine & Spirit Brokers

Cash-strapped Friend
2017 Navarro López
Para Celsus Organic Old
Vines Tempranillo (Vina
de la Castilla, Spain),
\$20

You know that feeling when you taste something really good and you go, "ah.... mmmm!" Well, if you don't, you'll know what we mean after you taste this. Lovely soft, dark, ripe, luscious fruit with a good amount of appealing acidity and structure—it's not a sloppy sip. It's a certified organic, gold-medal winning wine that is inexpensive—people will think you spent more.



Rich Uncle
2016 Capezzana Ugo Contini
Bonacossi Sangiovese (organic)
(Tuscany, Italy), \$105

Who doesn't love a paragon that's both stylish and classic all at once? This wine is like a colourful Missoni sweater, full of intricately woven strands of flavours that, with elegant verve, meld into each other, fading and re-appearing clearly and powerfully with intense concentration. We're talking red fruit, rose and violets, tobacco, cedar, mint, spice, cacao and more. A highly regarded Super Tuscan that was also awarded a Gold at the Sommelier Wine Awards.



Tara Smith, Boudreau Wine Spirits Beer, St Albert

Cash-strapped Friend
2020 Estampa Viognier
(Colchagua, Chile), \$20

Chile continues to be an underappreciated country for wine. This has long been one of my favourite house whites, but it was out of the market some time. It overdelivers in complexity—predominantly Viognier with a splash of Chard, full of honeysuckle, apricot, flowers, pineapple and a nice zesty acidity to keep it lively. Priced right for a Tuesday night glass, but also interesting enough to sip with an array of appetizers.





Rich Uncle

Taittinger Les Folies de la Marquetterie NV Brut (Champagne, France), \$105

An amazing single vineyard Champs from the renowned house of Taittinger. Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are vinified in small batches and aged in oak, before being meticulously blended and bottle aged for another five years. This full-bodied, creamy wine reminds me of stone fruit and has a long persistent finish—definitely the bubble to drink with a rich meal.



Tony Kokoroyannis, David Herman & Son

Cash-strapped Friend

Falernia Grand Reserva Carménère (Elqui Valley, Chile), \$23

At Chile's most northerly winery, winemaker Giorgio Flessati makes this rich, full-bodied Carménère by using 60 per cent *appasimento* technique (partially drying the grapes pre-fermentation) showcasing his Italian heritage. Brilliant deep colour and intense aromas of fruit, vanilla and white chocolate. Pairs beautifully with roast and braised meats.



Rich Uncle

Kaiyo Mizunara Oak Cask Whisky (Japan), \$110

Distilled and matured in Japan. Then, to encourage further flavoursome interactions, the casks undergo a three-month ocean voyage from Osaka to Liverpool before bottling. Mizunara oak is the modern signature of fine Japanese whisky, imparting spice, incense and sandalwood flavours of this rare wood to the whisky. Picked as one of the Top 20



whiskies of 2019 by the Whisky Advocate.



Dix Richards, Bin 104

Cash-strapped Friend

2019 Paranga Red (Macedonia, Greece), \$23

This lovely blend of Merlot, Syrah, Xinomavro brings to mind roses, dark cherries and exotic spices. Totally approachable, with a silky mouthfeel layered with beautiful lush

dark fruits sprinkled with cocoa and cinnamon. Enjoy on its own or with some delicious Christmas treats.

Rich Uncle Padre Azul Super Premium Añejo Tequila (Jalisco, Mexico), \$155

Sexy, fancy and fun, this premium añejo reminds us that not all tequilas are created equal. Open



Please see "Wines" on next page

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Wines

Continued from previous page

this beautifully-dressed bottle and pour this delightful nectar into your glass. Aromas of orange and apricots fill the air while a fiesta of vanilla, chocolate and orange dance across your palate. A sipper not only for the summer, enjoy this ambrosia on a frosty winter's eve, curled up with your favourite book to enjoy the warmth of this delicious drink inside and out. *Feliz Navidad!*

Caitlin Fulton and Blair Lebsack, RGE RD

Cash-strapped Friend Benjamin Bridge Piquette, Gaspereau Valley, Nova Scotia, \$9, 250 ml can

This is the year of wine in a can! There is something about a cute, portable little package of light, refreshing juice that has brought comfort as we've surfed the waves of this uncertain year. Not quite wine, piquette is a low alcohol, lightly-sparkling beverage made from the pomace—pulp and skins leftover from pressing grapes.



Benjamin Bridge's version remains a house favourite. And what better beverage to reflect a year and a half marked by improvisation and reinvention? This year we've opened a can or two of piquette in one of the licensed picnic sites in our glorious river valley. This drink is meant to be as carefree and fun as the package in which it's delivered. It has a distinct floral nose and is super zippy in the mouth with crisp and refreshing notes of grapefruit and sea breeze. Don't think about it, just crack a can and quench your thirst.

Rich Uncle 2015, Domaine Belleville Gevrey-Chambertin Creux Brouillard Burgundy, France \$130

We have a sentimental appreciation for the wines of Burgundy, but Grande Cru Bourgogne is out of reach most nights, even Village iterations are a rare treat. But, this year there has been the odd Wednesday where we dipped into the

stash in the basement and pulled out a special bottle that we were saving for a special occasion. We opened this bottle to drink with some spruce grouse that Blair had hunted earlier in the morning. We'd never had spruce grouse and couldn't believe how rich, gamey and robust the meat was and how perfectly that was reflected in this wine. This Gevrey-Chambertin (from a vintage considered legendary) is a powerful example of Pinot Noir, with all the woody flavours, firm, yet integrated tannins and a long finish. It's those deeper notes of spice, anise, cedar and forest floor that make this a wine for meat eaters—we do operate a butcher shop after all. This is a wine to drink slowly—reward yourself by opening and drinking over a couple of days to fully experience all the expressive layers. Like we did, the second night with bison smokies.



Dianna Funnell, Sherbrooke Liquor

Cash-strapped Friend 2018 Pago Casa Gran Casa Benasal Elegant Red (Spain), \$25



The Elegant is a refreshing, medium weight blend of Garnacha Tintorera, Syrah and Monastrell. It's a highly rated organic grown on wine white clay and sandy soils (which lend a roundness to the palate that make it oh-so-moreish) and relies on indigenous yeasts for fermentation. Pago Casa Gran brings us some fascinating wines. The vineyards are in a valley in Spain where evidence of winemaking has been found from the 4th century BC.

Rich Uncle 2009 Calera Mount Harlan Selleck Vineyard Pinot Noir (California, USA), \$170

I love it because it's from one of the highest and coolest vineyards in California, which helps make the wine more complex and reflective of terroir. In addition to the elegant fruit, you can virtually taste the limestone soil in which it grows. A wine geek's wine and a beautiful representation of Pinot Noir.



Jenny Book, Fine Vintage, Calgary

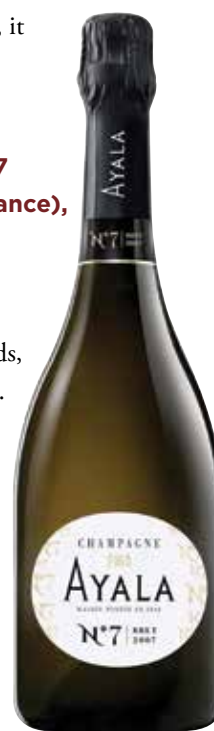
Cash-strapped Friend 2018 Sumarroca Brut Reserva Cava (Catalonia, Spain), \$24



Bubbles are for all occasions. This Cava Reserva punches way above its price point and can be opened any day of the week. From organic fruit, aged two years on the lees, it can easily flex into occasions that require an elegant bottle to impress. Buy a case, it disappears quickly!

Rich Uncle 2007 Ayala No. 7 (Champagne, France), \$150

Single vintage Champagne, seven Grand Cru vineyards, 11 years on the lees. Need I say more? You want to get your money's worth at any price point, and despite the hefty price tag, Ayala No. 7 is straight up killer



value. Fine, focused, wildly complex, this wine delivers the impressive depth you'd expect of any prestige cuvée.

Margaux Burgess, Lingua Vina

Cash-strapped Friend 2019 Petit Pérou Pisse Vieille Brouilly (Beaujolais, France), \$25

The Thévenet family have been growing grapes and making wine in the heart of Beaujolais for almost 120 years. The fifth generation now operates the winery, and they know a thing or two about the region and its singular red grape Gamay. The Brouilly appellation is home to fruit-driven wines with lots of plum, cranberry and raspberry and, while some wines can be simple, the experienced hands at Petit Pérou create wines with complexity and density while not losing the freshness or the lifted aromatics. I will be enjoying this with all forms of turkey and cranberries throughout the holiday season.



Rich Uncle 2013 Perrier-Jouët Belle Epoque, (Champagne, France), \$250

Instantly recognizable. The Emile Gallés rendition of Japanese white anemones adorning the outside of the art deco bottle Belle Epoque was launched in 1964, six decades after the bottle was originally designed. It was an immediate success and the finesse and character have not changed. Belle Epoque is known for its elegance and abundant fruit in the style of a classic brut Champagne. Much of this character is from Perrier-Jouët's Chardonnay



vineyards in the Cramant commune in Champagne and thus cannot be recreated by other Champagne houses. Older vintages only become more captivating as depth and seriousness increases. I might even get greedy and ask that rich uncle for two bottles—one to take pleasure in now and another to appreciate in a dozen years or so.

.....
**Paulette Scott,
 Pacific Wine &
 Spirits**

Cash-strapped Friend
2019 Viña Chocalan
Gran Reserva
Carménère
(Maipo Valley,
Chile), \$20

This Carménère delivers flavour—generous dark chocolate and lush blackberry, love the clove and cedar spices and the finish is long and fruity. Pairs well with stews, lamb, game meat, vegetarian curry or chicken. New to Alberta, certified sustainable, wine well worth exploring and great to enjoy over dinner by the fire.



Rich Uncle
Waterford Distillery
Hook Head Edition 1.1
(Waterford, Ireland),
\$113



The twice-distilled, single-farm Origin Series is an uber-provenance, terroir-driven range of limited-edition releases of natural whiskies from individual Irish farmers. The Edition 1.1 is from barley grown in County Elton by Martin Foley. Some

history: located ten miles from the distillery on the southern coast of the stormy Atlantic Ocean is Hook Head Lighthouse—Oliver Cromwell vowed to take Waterford ‘by Hook or by Crook.’

A seriously amazing whisky that requires more than a dram, by hook or by crook.

.....
Joe Gurba, Vino al Vino

Cash-strapped Friend
2019 Azimut Blanc (Catalonia,
Spain), \$24

I love the singularity of Assis Suriol’s wines, unique while remaining delicious. Azimut is the second label of Cellers de Can Suriol, made with their neighbors’ organic fruit. Perhaps it comes down to the dense and dynamic yeast population in their 350-year-old cellars. Whatever it is, this blend of indigenous varieties is loaded with sea spray-like minerality, peach skins, tropical fruit and a yeasty nuttiness, all robed in a lovely, soft leesy texture.



Rich Uncle
2015 Casa Raia
Brunello di Montalcino (Tuscany,
Italy), \$105

Casa Raia’s wines are rare treats. This is minimalist Brunello from a tiny four-hectare estate, purchased from Biondi-Santi, who originally planted these vines right beside the old town of Montalcino in the ’70s. For almost 20 years now, the Monnoyer family have been nurturing the low-yielding old vines by restoring the soil through biodynamics.

This wonder couple—Canadian vigneron Kalyna and Parisian Pierre Jean, sommelier turned Chinese tea specialist, turned farmer—craft three wines only. Their Brunello is their most highly sought, made from the fruit of their oldest vines (slightly more than one ha of Sangiovese) and aged four years in



Please see “Wines” on page 25

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Beer Guy

The dark is rising

The pandemic proceeds, the days get short, the nights grow long. We need solace in these dark times. We need dark beer.

As Dubliner Flann O'Brien wrote in the dark days of 1939:

*When things go wrong
and will not come right,
Though you do the best you can,*

*When life looks black
as the hour of night –
A pint of plain is your only man.*

A pint of plain in Irish pubs of O'Brien's era may have been a pint of stout, but for decades previously it would have meant plain porter. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries porter was the most popular beer style in England and Ireland, and it spread to North America with exports and emigrants. Born in London in the early 1700s, porter was a darker, richer version of English mild, a brown ale. The style first found favour with London dock workers or porters, gaining the nickname porter beer as a result. When Arthur Guinness founded his brewery in Dublin in 1759 he brewed other ales, but by 1803 Guinness brewed only porter and was exporting it around the world.

Guinness and other porter brewers developed a bigger, bolder porter called stout porter, which over the years became known simply as stout. The child outshone the parent, with porter declining in popularity in the 20th

century, falling completely out of favour by the 1960s, while stout, specifically Guinness Stout, established a place with beer drinkers all over the world. Then, the rebirth. Beginning with Anchor Brewing's Porter in 1974, North American craft brewers took hold of the nearly extinct style and reinvented it, making new world porters robust, full-flavoured beers. Guinness Stout served as a gateway beer in North America, helping to sell beer drinkers on the

idea of dark beer, and prodding craft brewers to develop their own stouts. It took some time in Alberta, but today there are excellent homegrown porters and stouts from brewers all over Alberta.

With nine months of winter and three months of tough sledding, dark beers fit Alberta well.

Both porter and stout are full-bodied, top-fermented dark ales, with a unique roasted flavour and black colour that comes

from the use of roasted raw or malted barley. The roasted grains give these beers distinctive coffee and chocolate tones, making them brilliant dessert beers, ideal accompaniment for a cold winter's night by a fire with the remainder of the Christmas chocolate. Rich and flavourful, stouts and porters are comfort beers, pairing nicely with the comfort foods of winter like hearty stews.

The pandemic will end. The sun will return. Summer will come again. In the meantime, remember its better to pour a delicious porter than to curse the darkness.



Credit: Heen/Stock/Courtesy HBO

Rising dark six pack

Only a few years ago Alberta was a dark beer desert. Today we can choose between dozens of great porters, stouts and other dark beers, either at the breweries or from fine beer shops around town.



Medicine Hat Brick & Mortar Porter, Medicine Hat

Named after the historic clay trade that put Medicine Hat on the map, this porter is a slightly smoother, sweeter version of a robust porter, with elements of the lighter London style. Chocolate, coffee and caramel notes with a lightly sweet finish. Gold, 2020 Canadian Brewing Awards.

Establishment Fat Sherpa Robust Porter, Calgary

Fat Sherpa established the brewery as the real deal, winning Establishment their first gold medal in the Alberta Beer Awards. Establishment was named Brewery of the Year at the 2021 Canadian Brewing Awards. This porter is incredibly rich and roasty, with deep layers of malt, chocolate and coffee.



Canmore Chocolate Maple Porter, Canmore

A winter family tradition is hitting up the Canmore Brewing tap room after a day on the slopes. It's always a delight when this delicious winter seasonal is on tap. This smooth, dark porter has a full bodied, roasted maltiness with a hint of maple sweetness. Gold, 2021 Canadian Brewing Awards.

Snake Lake Ice Cutter Vanilla Latte Stout, Sylvan Lake

British brewers departed from the Guinness dry stout template by adding lactose (milk sugar), creating a sweeter milk or cream stout. Here Snake Lake bumps it up a couple more notches by brewing with lactose, vanilla and coffee from Red Deer's Maker House Coffee. Silver, 2020 Alberta Beer Awards.



The Growler Golden Ticket Vietnamese Coffee Stout, Edmonton

On a sunny but chilly late fall afternoon I had a pint of this stout on nitro on The Growler patio. Totally worth the cold hands. Smooth and sweet, rich and roasty, this delicious stout is brewed with lactose and locally roasted Vietnamese coffee from Edmonton's CRW Orient Coffee.

SYC Invierno Winter Stout, Edmonton

A big, bold, full-bodied Imperial stout made with the frigid Edmonton winter in mind. At 9 per cent alcohol, this rich stout will warm you up après ski, après curl, après skate or après walking to the liquor store. Fun fact: *invierno* is Spanish for winter. ❄️

Peter Bailey is dancin' in the dark. He's on Twitter and Instagram as @Libarbarian.

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The Food and Drink Lovers Gift Guide

For the cocktail mavens, the cheese board aficionados, the ingredient and equipment gurus, the sweets lover, or just for yourself. After all, who knows best what you really want than... you?

For the Cheese Board

Alemanys Nuts

The Alemany family in Catalonia, Spain makes really good nuts—the peeled (or unpeeled) and salted Marcona almonds, native to Spain, are terrific with a glass of bubbly or cocktails, and the Caramelized Hazelnuts with Honey for snacking or for dessert. Find at Italian Centre South and Sherwood Park, \$13. The Caramelized Hazelnuts at Bon Ton Bakery also.

Vacherin Mont d'Or

This exceptional cheese made high in the Swiss Alps is rare and delicious. Creamy, complex flavours, so delicious. Made from summer milk only, it's the cheese that comes into perfection at the holidays. The package needs no adornment, except perhaps, a bottle of Champagne, 500 g \$60. Find at Cavern Cheese.

Meuwly's Salami

Can't have a terrific board without Meuwly's charcuterie. This dry-cured mini salami in six flavours—Rosette, Cacciatore, Fennel, Abruzzo,



Hot Sopressata and Veneto—comes in its own wrapper for a cheese board on the go, or a savoury snack on the slopes, 100g, \$8. Find at Bon Ton Bakery, Darcy's Meats, Meuwly's, Popowich Meats, Public Outpost shops, and Empire Provisions in Calgary.

El Gringo Christmas Pack

The Edmonton condiment company has a holiday gift pack—six varieties of salsa (Original, Verde, Spicy Mango, Spicy Pineapple, Fiery Peach, Inferno) with one bag of their deliciously crunchy chips, delivered to your door, anywhere in the Edmonton region, \$47.

Mini Kitchen Chutneys

Edmonton-based Mini Kitchen makes a delicious range of condiments, including several chutneys that bring a certain south Asian vibe to a cheese board, or turkey sandwiches. The Cranberry may replace your regular cranberry sauce, we love the Tamarind for its sweet and sour deliciousness, the Saskatoon for its berry heart and the Peach is made with Okanagan peaches! Each \$13, Find at Popowich Meats, Meuwly's and online at minikitchen.ca.



Fine Cheese Company Pickled Cherries

Pickled fruits are terrific partners to cheese. Or, up your Manhattan game by garnishing with these pickled cherries, 340g jar, \$9. Find at Careit Urban Deli and Italian Centre Shops Sherwood Park and South. Also the Fine Cheese Pickled Figs and Pickled Pears at Italian Centre Shops South and Sherwood Park.

Truffle Hunter Condiment Discovery Range

Drizzle the white truffle honey over any aged cheese—especially delish with Pecorino or Cheddar; dust your pasta; add a smattering of the Black Truffle Sea Salt to your house-made cracker; use the Black Truffle Mustard, Ketchup or Mayo to salad dressings, glazes, or have with a smokie, \$38. Find at Barb's Kitchen Centre, Bon Ton Bakery, Careit Urban Deli, Freson Fort Sask and Rabbit Hill, all Italian Centre Shops, Heart of the Home, Paddy's Cheese, Twig (Camrose).

The Cocktail Hour

Meuwly's Lemon Cordial

Made with fresh citrus, super concentrated, makes delicious whisky sours or lemonade, 450ml, \$14. It won Best in Class at the Alberta Beverage Awards. Find at Bon Ton Bakery, Meuwly's, Popowich Meats, Public Outpost shops, Royal Alberta Museum Shop and some boutique wine shops.

Conservas de Cambados

Superlative tinned seafood: Small Sardines in Olive Oil and Mussels from Galicia in Marinade. Make a tapa to have with cocktails or place on the cheese board right in the can, \$10. Find at Cavern Cheese. Additional Conservas de Cambados selections at Careit Urban Deli.

Bittermilk No. 7 Gingerbread Old Fashioned

Stock your home bar for the holidays. The No. 7 is made just for the season, with orange peel, cinchona bark and fresh ginger juice. Each mix contains a bittering agent, a sweetener and an acid to ensure a balanced cocktail; the egg nog and old-fashioned recipes on the bottle are the bomb, 251ml, \$23. Find at Bon Ton Bakery, all Freson Bros., all Italian Centre Shops, Lift Me Up Market, Maven & Grace, Sunterra, Swish+Co., Twig (Camrose).

Belazu Nut Mixes

For the minimalist, a cocktail with some lovely nuts is all you need really. The Smoked Chili Mix has cashews, almonds and corn; the Truffle and Pecorino—almonds, macadamias and pecans with pecorino and white truffle; the Rose Harissa blend has cashews, almonds and peanuts redolent of harissa spice, \$8 each. Find at Bon Ton Bakery, Freson Rabbit Hill, all Italian Centre Shops, Lift Me Up Market, Maven & Grace, Sunterra Marketplace, Swish+Co., Twig (Camrose).

Please see "Gift Guide" on next page



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Gift Guide

Continued from previous page

Lake Life Caesar Mix

A zesty blend of spices, hot sauce, Worcestershire, horseradish and barbecue sauce made by two teachers in Lloydminster. “My husband makes really good Caesars,” says Sondra Pearn; “but it was too easy to forget one of the ingredients when we were going to the lake. And we love going to the lake. He said, ‘I’m gonna put all my favourite things together.’ He put everything in a mason jar, and we’ve made our Caesars that way ever since. Our friends started requesting it. Then, last year, I put it on my Facebook page and we sold 100 jars. We continue to be blown away by the support from family and friends.” The 480ml jar makes about 20 Caesars or Bloody Marys, or use as a marinade and in chili, \$22. Find at Heart of the Home, all Italian Centre Shops.



Zinter Brown Mulling Spice

This sugar-free blend of warm spices—cinnamon, cloves, allspice—is what you want for mulled wine. No muss, no fuss, all natural, \$7. Find at Italian Centre Shops and Popowich Meats.

Liquid Heaven

2013 Zenato Amarone della Valpolicella Riserva Sergio Zenato

Many, many people would be thrilled to find a bottle of Amarone under the tree and this one is top-notch. Made only in the best years, a blend of 80 per cent Corvina, 10 per cent Rondinella, 10 per cent Oseleta and Croatina. The grapes dry for over four months, concentrating all the sugars and extract.

Follows is a slow natural fermentation, then the wine is aged in large casks for four years, followed by bottle aging for one.

Though the current vintage is delicious right now, it will reward further aging. Think beautiful red fruit, cherries and currants as well as spicy notes with a long sweet finish.

A wine for contemplation, \$120. Find at better wine shops.



An extraordinary teapot by Mary Rose Young

UK ceramic artist Mary Rose Young makes pottery with a whimsical Alice in Wonderland vibe. This porcelain tea pot with gold edge was created by hand in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, \$575. Find at Zocalo.

cold year and they lost fruit. Fragrant, elegant, light on its feet, complex, with a super long finish. Organically grown, only 4500-5000 bottles per year, with 50 per cent whole cluster fermentation. A stellar wine. \$135.

2016 Malbec Argentino: The label tells the story of Malbec’s journey from France to Argentina in a visual allegory featuring Eleanor of Aquitaine, the immigrant, lady phylloxera and Adrianna Catena. The wine is blended fruit from the Angélica (planted in 1930) and Nicasia (1996) vineyards. Deeply flavoured, complex, full of power and nuance. Lovers of Malbec, rejoice. \$135.

MD Distillery Discovery Pack

The limited-edition gift pack (in both a Christmas theme and the stylish Still One theme) contains six mini (50mL) bottles—Still One Premium Vodka (100 per cent Alberta wheat, no sugar); Dry Gin (made with eight botanicals); Sour Cherry Vodka (real cherry infusion); barrel aged Vintage Vodka; LemonCello (real lemon infusion) and the MintCello (real mint infusion). This is a fun gift

for those who like to try new things, \$40. Available at several Christmas markets including Wholly Handmade and the Nosh Food Festival in Sherwood Park, the Indoor Christmas Market in St. Albert and at the MD Distillery in St. Albert.



Two Vivid Wines from Catena Zapata

Laura Catena’s father Nicolás was the first to plant at high altitude in Argentina at 1500 metres in the early ’90s. He had learned that to create balanced wines with freshness they needed a cooler climate—either south (Patagonia) or up. He chose up.

2017 Fortuna Terrae: Meaning luck of the land and from a single parcel in the Adrianna vineyard, the Fortuna Terrae is outstanding, even though 2017 was a

Sherbrooke Beer Advent Calendars

Sherbrooke has wonderful advent calendars, especially the **24 Days of Beermas**—24 different craft beers with a focus on brand new and limited edition seasonals with an emphasis on local Alberta beer, but with some imports, \$145. Find at Sherbrooke Liquor.



Belberry Elderflower Syrup

Use this concentrated syrup made from the delicate spring flower for a cocktail;

add to sparkling water for a mid-afternoon pick me up, flavour your panna cotta, be like Harry and Meghan and bake a cake, \$23. Find at Barbs’ Kitchen Centre and Italian Centre Shops North and Sherwood Park.



Lone Pine Gift Boxes

Lone Pine Distillery creates fun gift boxes with everything you need to make a delish cocktail. There are five different versions—BeeBalm, Gateway Caesar, Creamsicle, Rhubarb G&T and the Chickadee Grey, \$55 each, plus the holiday edition with their Christmas Gin, \$60. Find at Lone Pine Distillery.



Color de Vino Advent Wine Box

Color de Vino has their wonderful Advent boxes again this year. Choose from a few different selections, to build a collection, put some special bottles away, or to enjoy this season, \$350-\$750. Find at Color de Vino.

Gifts for the Culinarily Inclined

Bosch Universal Plus Mixer

Mix, knead, whip. Sturdy and powerful. Celeste Nicholson, the owner of Barb's Kitchen, loves it for making bread dough. Comes in black, \$645, and white \$565. Find at Barb's Kitchen Centre.



Please see "Gift Guide" on next page

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Gift Guide

Continued from previous page

Souper Cubes

Too plebian for Christmas? But so handy! The silicone trays make freezing soups, stew, shepherd's pie and casseroles easy peasy. Pour into the tray. Put the lid on and freeze. When needed, heat in the microwave, on the stove, or in the oven, various sizes, \$26-\$46. Find at Barb's Kitchen Centre.



FolkRoll Rolling Pins

These charming rolling pins are handmade in Poland. Solid wood, in eight different patterns such as honeycomb, owls, Christmas creatures, for the sweetest cookies ever, small \$40, large \$69. Find at Zocalo.

Belberry Andalusian Pickled Oranges

Pile on the cheese board, plate with pâté or ham or serve over ice cream for a savoury effect. Use the Moroccan Preserved Lemons for seafood. Gorgeous packages too, 325g, \$23. Find at Careit Urban Deli, Italian Centre South and Sherwood Park, Swish+Co.



Holiday Sweets Beyond the Terry's Orange

Lakrids by Bülow Liquorice

The limited-edition Classic Salt and Caramel Liquorice is a treat. \$15. Find at Bon Ton Bakery, Careit Urban Deli, Homes and Cottages, Italian Centre Shops North, South and Sherwood Park, Maven & Grace, Swish+Co. The Winter Selection Gift Box has eight different flavours of liquorice, 335g, \$45, at Careit Urban Deli and Swish+Co.

Amadei Due Gift Box

All the Amadei decadence in one place. Luxurious bars, pralines and a top-notch crema, 780g, \$200. Find at Italian Centre South and Sherwood Park.

Dufflet Night Before Christmas Mouse

Solid Belgian milk choc in a darling gift box, ideal for stuffing stockings or for an Advent calendar, \$2. Find at Bella Casa Design Centre, Bon Ton Bakery, Careit Deli, all Freson Bros., Lift Me Up Market, Maven & Grace.

Amadei I Neri Collection

Chua Extra Dark 70 per cent—the wild Mayan bean is like no other. Nor is this bar. Porcelana Extra Dark—70 per cent dark chocolate, made from pure Criollo—aromatic, balanced and harmonious. 9-75% Extra Dark—from nine plantations, impeccably blended by Amadei, powerful and distinctive. All 50g bars, \$22. Find at Italian Centre South.

Fudge Kitchen Himalayan Salted Caramels

Vanilla, milk choc and a scattering of pink Himalayan salt—luscious, creamy delicious, 125g, \$17. Find at Bon Ton Bakery, Careit Urban Deli, Heart of the Home, Maven & Grace, Sunterra, Swish+Co.

Amadei Hot Chocolate

Flakes of 63 per cent cocoa with ground almonds and hazelnuts makes for the creamiest, richest, most delicious hot chocolate, 200g, \$30. Worth every penny. Find at Italian Centre South and Sherwood Park.

The Natural Company Candy

Good old-fashioned Lemon Bonbons and vegan Traditonal Fruit Marbles are made with natural flavours and colours only. Both, 200g, \$7 each. Find at Barb's Kitchen Centre, Careit Urban Deli, all Freson Bros., Italian Centre South and West, Sunterra, Twig (Camrose).

Holdsworth Bee Friendly Vegan Chocolate Selection

Dark chocolates and truffles including a crispy hazelnut praline, 300g, \$20. Find at Careit Urban Deli, Italian Centre South and Sherwood Park; Lift Me Up Market, Maven & Grace.



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Joe & Seph's Prosecco Caramel Sauce

Luscious! Plop on a brownie, stir into a cheesecake recipe, eat right out of the jar, with 5 per cent Prosecco and fresh heavy cream, 230g, \$12. Find at Bella Casa, Bon Ton Bakery, all Freson Bros., all Italian Centre Shops, Homes & Cottages, Lift Me Up Market, Mercato (St. Albert).

Baru Mini Mallows

Pastel tinted mini mallows for your inner child, 220g jar, \$10. Find at Barb's Kitchen Centre, Bon Ton Bakery, Careit Urban Deli, Homes & Cottages, Heart of the Home, all Freson Bros., all Italian Centres Shops, Lift Me Up Market, Maven & Grace, Sunterra, Swish+Co, Twig (Camrose).

Cocoba Hot Chocolate Bombe

Hollow Belgian milk chocolate bombes chock full of mini marshmallows. Put in a mug, pour steaming milk over, watch the bombe unfold. A decadent treat, \$9. Also in a three pack, \$20 (not all locations have both). Find at Bon Ton Bakery, Careit Urban Deli, all Freson Bros., all Italian Centre Shops, Lift Me Up Market, Mercato (St. Albert), Sunterra, Twig (Camrose).

Fudge Kitchen Christmas Crackers

Snap these pretty crackers to find three kinds of outrageously delicious handmade fudge, no silly hats at all, 65g, \$7. Find at Bella Casa, Bon Ton Bakery, Careit Urban Deli, Freson Rabbit Hill, all Italian Centre Shops, Heart of the Home, Lift Me Up Market, Twig (Camrose).

It's beginning to smell a lot like Christmas

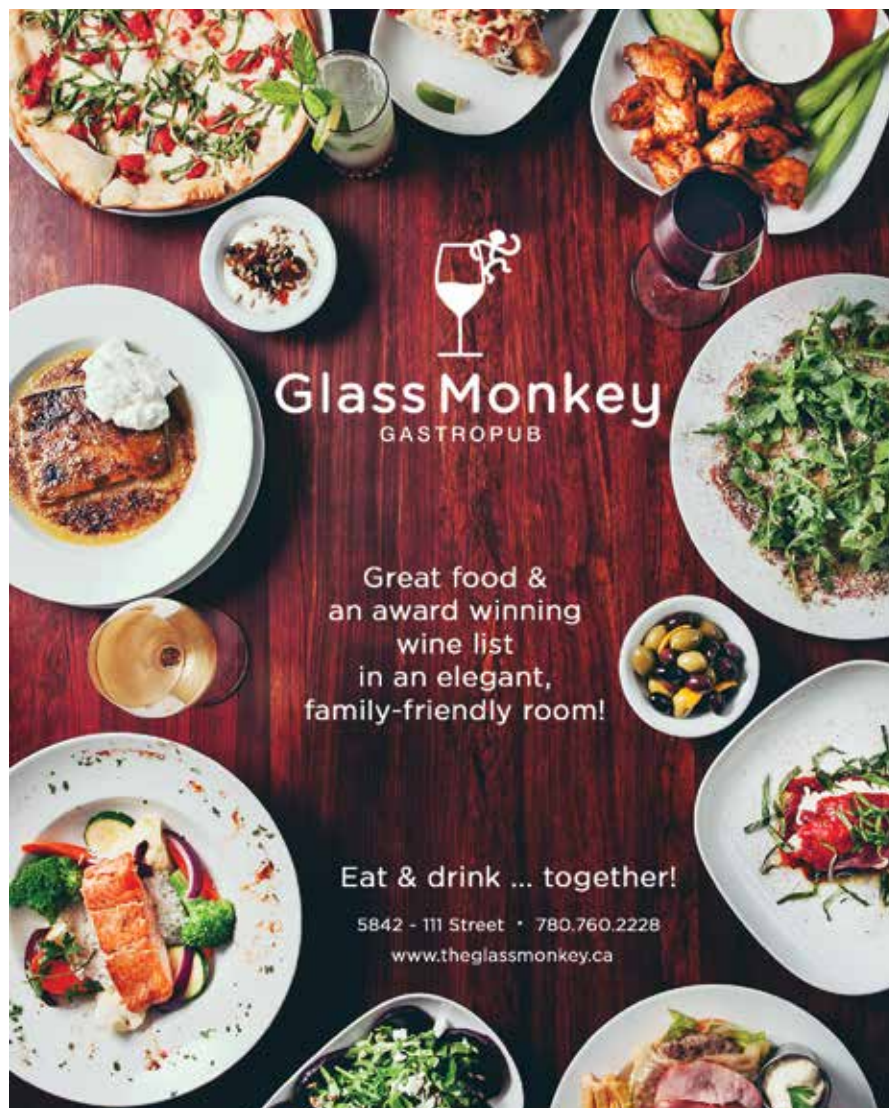
Maison Berger Festive Fir

Lampe Berger scents are made with essential oils and are natural and fresh, never overpowering. The Festive Fir fragrance is reminiscent of bracing fir-scented winter air. Fragrance, classic perfume bottle shaped lamp and car diffuser, \$95. Find at Bella Casa.



Blk Rose Candles

Check out these stylish candles by Kejina Robinson. "I couldn't find a candle company that fit with my values, so why not make my own?" she says. The winter collection honours three wise black women, Angela Davis, Nina Simone and Toni Morrison. These premium candles are hand poured in small batches in Edmonton with 100 per cent soy wax, 90g, \$48 each. Online only for now, blkrosecandle.com.



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Holiday Recipe Collection

For cookie making with the kids or the cookie exchange, a couple of simple desserts, some gluten free treats, appetizers for casual entertaining and, for when you can't do another thing, a toothsome pasta from pantry ingredients.

Ted Lasso Cookies

The official Ted Lasso cookie (aka shortbread). Don't you think Rebecca would love the lemon version?

- 2 sticks (8 ounces) unsalted butter, plus more for the pan
- ¾ c icing sugar
- 2 c all-purpose flour
- ¼ t kosher salt

Place 2 sticks room temperature butter in the bowl of a stand mixer (or large bowl if using an electric hand mixer). Coat an 8- or 9-inch square metal baking pan with more butter.

Beat the butter on high speed with the paddle attachment until fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes. With the mixer running, gradually add ¾-cup icing sugar and continue to beat until pale and fluffy.

Stop the mixer. Sift the flour into the bowl, then add the salt. Mix on low speed until just combined. Transfer to the prepared pan and pat to an even thickness no more than ½-inch thick. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. Meanwhile, arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 300°F.

Slice the dough into rectangles or squares in the pan. Bake until golden-brown and the middle is firm, 45-60 minutes. Let cool completely. Re-slice, if needed, before serving. Lemon version: add zest of one lemon to the dough after the butter.

Cranberry Apple Crisp

Crisp are an easy dessert to put together and the cranberries keep things tart.

- 2 Pink Lady, Honey Crisp or the apples-from-next-door apples (peeled, cored, and cut into 1-inch pieces)
- ½ c old-fashioned oats
- ½ c + 2 T flour

- ½ c dark brown sugar
- 5½ T butter (cold; cut into 1/4-inch pieces)
- 12 oz cranberries (about 3 cups)
- ¾ c granulated sugar
- grated zest of 1 orange
- ½ c orange juice (from about 1 orange)
- ¼ t ground cloves

Heat the oven to 375°F. In a medium bowl, combine the oats, the ½ cup flour, and the brown sugar. Add the butter and rub it into the flour mixture until small crumbs form.

In a large bowl, combine the cranberries, apples, granulated sugar, the 2 tablespoons flour, orange zest and juice, and the cloves. Transfer the fruit to a buttered 8-inch square baking dish or a 2-quart soufflé dish.

Top the fruit with the crumb mixture. Bake until the fruit is tender and the crumb topping has browned, about 45 minutes. Let cool at least 15 minutes before serving.

Dulce de Leche Crispies

Adapted from a recipe by Marcia Kiesel, Food & Wine.

- ¾ c crispy rice cereal
- 1 t + ½ t vegetable oil, plus more for coating
- 1¼ c blanched sliced almonds
- 5 T dulce de leche at room temperature, plus more for topping

Preheat the oven to 350°F. In a small bowl, toss the cereal with 1 teaspoon of the vegetable oil. Spread the oiled rice in an even layer on a large non stick rimmed baking sheet. Bake until the rice is very crisp, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a plate and let cool to room temperature.

In a large bowl, mix the sliced almonds with the toasted rice. Using a rubber spatula, blend in the 5 tablespoons of

dulce de leche and the remaining ½ teaspoon of oil, stirring well to coat the rice and almonds thoroughly.

Lightly oil 2 large nonstick rimmed baking sheets. Scoop rounded tablespoons of the rice-almond mixture onto the pan and gently flatten them into 2½-inch-wide disks. Lightly sprinkle the crispies with salt. Bake them until they are lightly browned, about 15 minutes.

Let the crispies cool on the baking sheets for 1 minute. Using a spatula, carefully transfer them to a platter to cool completely. Dollop each one with ¼ teaspoon of the remaining dulce de leche (if desired) and serve.

Gluten Free Buckwheat Gingerbread

Adapted from a recipe by Mani Niall

- 2¼ c buckwheat flour
- ½ t baking powder
- ½ t baking soda
- ½ t cinnamon
- ½ t freshly grated nutmeg
- ½ t kosher salt
- ¼ t ground cloves
- 1 stick unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ¾ c packed light brown sugar
- 2 lg eggs, 1 at room temperature
- 1/3 c buckwheat honey
- 2 T finely grated peeled fresh ginger

In a medium bowl, sift the buckwheat flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and cloves. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the butter at medium speed until creamy. Add the sugar and beat until fluffy, 3 minutes. Beat in the room-temperature egg, the honey and ginger. At low speed, beat in the dry ingredients in 3 additions, just until combined. Turn the dough

out onto a work surface and pat it into a 6-inch round. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface. Divide it into 6 equal pieces. Form each piece into a 6-inch-long log; if the dough is sticky, wet your hands slightly. Transfer 3 logs to each baking sheet, spacing them 3 inches apart.

In a small bowl, beat the remaining egg and brush it all over the logs. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until the logs are springy to the touch. Transfer to a rack to cool completely. To serve, slice the logs on the diagonal into ½-inch-thick cookies.

Francois Payard's Gluten Free Chocolate Walnut Cookies

- 2¾ c walnut halves (9 ounces)
- 3 c icing sugar
- ½ c + 3 T unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder
- ¼ t salt
- 4 lg egg whites, at room temperature
- 1 T pure vanilla extra

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Position 2 racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven. Line 2 large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.

Spread the walnut halves on a large rimmed baking sheet and toast in the oven for about 9 minutes, until they are golden and fragrant. Let cool slightly, then transfer the walnut halves to a work surface and chop finely.

In a large bowl, whisk the icing sugar with the cocoa powder and salt. Whisk in the chopped walnuts. Add the egg whites and vanilla extract and beat just until the batter is moistened (be careful not to overbeat or it will stiffen). Spoon the batter onto the baking sheets in 12 evenly spaced mounds.

Bake the cookies for about 20 minutes, until the tops of the cookies are glossy and lightly cracked and feel firm to the touch; shift the pans from front to back and top to bottom halfway through.

Slide the parchment paper (with the cookies) onto 2 wire racks to cool completely before serving. Makes 12 cookies.

The Duchess London Fog Shortbread

Recipe from the Duchess at Home Cookbook, by Giselle Courteau, Duchess Bake Shop

325 g	(2¼ c)	all-purpose flour
35 g	(¼ c)	rice flour
½ t		salt
240 g	(1 c + 2 T)	unsalted butter, at room temperature
115 g	(½ c + 1 T)	sugar
1 T		finely ground Earl Grey tea leaves
1 t		vanilla extract or paste

Icing:

120 g	(1 c)	icing sugar, sifted
2 T		whole milk
½ t		vanilla paste, or the seeds of half of a vanilla bean pod
		Earl Grey tea leaves, for decoration

Line the baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, rice flour, and salt. Set aside. Place the butter and sugar in a stand mixer bowl.

Cream on medium speed for 2 minutes, or until light and fluffy. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add the tea and vanilla and mix again.

Add the flour mixture and mix on low speed until small pebbles form. Turn the mixer up to medium and mix until large pebbles form and the dough starts to come together. Stop the mixer and remove the bowl. Use your hands to shape the dough into a flattened ball.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to about ½-centimeter thick. Using a round cookie cutter, cut out cookies and gently place them about five centimeters apart on the lined baking sheets. Continue to re-roll dough scraps and cut out cookies until all the dough has been used.

Place the baking sheets in the refrigerator or freezer for 15-20 minutes to chill the cookies prior to baking. You can bake them directly after rolling them, but they

may spread a little or end up with more air bubbles.

While the unbaked cookies are chilling, preheat your oven to 275°F (135°C). Bake for 40-45 minutes, until the cookies are slightly golden but still quite pale in colour. Cool completely before icing.

Ice and finish the cookies: Whisk together the icing sugar, milk and vanilla paste or seeds. Dip each cooled cookie face down in the icing. Lay them flat, using your finger to catch any drips. Sprinkle with a few Earl Grey tea leaves and allow to set.

Roasted Grapes

Roasting grapes brings out the sweetness and deepens the flavour. I love to use the Coronations or Concord when in season, but regular red grapes are just fine too. Use in sweet and savoury ways—serve with burrata, with some honey drizzled over, with brie on a cheese board or pile on the side of a nut tart or over ice cream.

½ kg	red grapes, cut into 10-12 bunches
1 T	neutral oil (grapeseed or canola)
	crushed fresh thyme or rosemary
lg pinch	sugar
pinch	salt

Preheat the oven to 450°F. On a baking sheet, toss the grapes with the oil, sugar and salt. Roast for 12 minutes, or until the skins are slightly blistered. Serve warm.

Bagna Cauda

Bagna Cauda is a popular dish in northern Italy, in the Piedmont region, often served as part of the Christmas Eve buffet. It is a terrific party dish—super savoury and flavourful and a great way to eat crudité. Serve with some good bread to catch the drips.

¾ c	olive oil
6 T	(¾ stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
12	anchovy fillets
4-6 lg cloves	garlic, chopped
	assorted vegetables (fresh celery, carrots, green beans, cut in 2-4 inch pieces; cauliflower florets, radishes, small roasted potatoes, roasted turnip and parsnip sticks)

Please see "Holiday recipes" on page 30

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Averill Creek (Cowichan Valley, Vancouver Island). Edmonton expat Andy Johnson carved out a special vineyard on Mount Prevost in the early 2000s. The wines were good. With vines maturing and winemaker Brett Rowland arriving in 2018, the wines are stellar. It's more about what they don't do (mess with the wine, or the vines) than what they do (wild ferment, no enzymes or nutrients added and little to no sulphur.) Most are unfinned and unfiltered. We tasted the new releases with the winemaker at Color de Vino in late fall.

The Averill Creek Charme NV is completely charming. From Pinot Gris and Noir, barely noticeable sweetness, creamy, lively and bright. Made using the Charmat method and perfect for brunch or lazy holiday afternoons, \$38.

The 2019 Pinot Noir—evanescent aromas of woods and berry that evolve into concentrated flavours. It has lovely tension, with firm acidity and ripe tannins providing structure, a graceful and appealing wine. If you have a roast for Christmas, this is your wine, or enjoy with grilled salmon or mushroom dishes, \$45.



NV Cune Cava Rosé (Spain)

Note to self: have lots of good bubble around for the holidays. Especially this rosé—great taste, great price, \$20.

Still One is releasing their

Premium Vodka (\$35) and Dry Gin (\$40) in a high-quality frosted bottle just in time for the holidays.

They expect to launch a special Cello (as in lemoncello) in the frosted bottle soon as well.

The relatively new distillery in St. Albert is the real thing—the mash and fermentation is all in house (some distilleries use purchased spirit) and the water is filtered and purified in house as well. There is no artificial colouring nor preservatives used and infusions are made in house using real fruit, not concentrates.



Black Tot Rum

Inspired by historic British Royal Navy blends, Black Tot is produced with molasses spirit from three different Caribbean distilleries (4 Square Distillery in Barbados, the Diamond Distillery in Guyana and the Long Pond Distillery in Jamaica) ranging from unaged spirit to five years aged. The Spirits Business Gold medal winner in 2020. Stylish, not heavy, with rich and complex flavours of warm spice, leather and sweet brown sugar notes, along with apple and dried tropical fruit. The finish is long and warm and not too sweet, \$65.



Peat's Beast Single Malt Whisky

If you love peated malts, these are your jam. Three styles—Single Malt, Batch Strength and PX Finish. The Single Malt has notes of liquorice with a heathery freshness peeking through the smoke. The Batch Strength is fiery, with ginger and cumin along with milk chocolate and some citrusy orange (think Terry's Chocolate Orange) aromas and flavours. The PX Finish brings dried fig and date into the mix. Created by two long time whisky aficionados in 2011, the whiskys are not chill filtered and have no additives or colouring, \$68-75.

2020 Gérard Bertrand Change

Merlot (France), Gérard Bertrand is upending tradition in the south of France, with a strong and ongoing commitment to organic farming and climate change. The Change wines are from vineyards that are converting to organic farming. Well-priced, great for every day, this may become your new popcorn wine. There is a Change Sauvignon Blanc too, ideal with winter salads, \$20.



2020 Vasse Felix Filius Chardonnay

Nothing like a vibrant Chard to have with turkey dinner. This offering from Margaret River's Vasse Felix is zesty and bright with subtle tropical fruit notes, creamy and herbaceous lemon with underlying toasty hazelnut notes from the oak. Lovely with grilled salmon, pasta or with mushrooms or pork roast, \$30.

2019 Zsirai Olaszrizling (Hungary)

Olaszrizling (Welschriesling in Austria) is the most widely planted white grape in Hungary, from Somló, where the soil is volcanic (basalt) and quality can rival a great Furmint. Loads of extract and refreshing acidity. Drink with chicken, roast turkey, egg dishes at brunch. Delicious, \$26.

2018 Yalumba Eden Valley, Viognier (Australia)

Sometimes, especially at the holidays, you need a wine that will please many different taste and palates. This is it. Yalumba is a specialist in Viognier, each vintage is a treasure. This bottling has the fleshy apricot and peach notes you have come to expect, reigned in with beautiful refreshing acidity. Ideal with Asian food especially, such as lemongrass and pork dumplings. It would be excellent with the Filistix holiday entertaining menu on page 6, \$28.



Lone Pine's Christmas Gin

Redolent of mulled wine—cinnamon, anise and nutmeg— along with notes of peppermint, citrus and juniper. Sip on its own, warm, or with an ice cube, make a long drink with cranberry and soda or pour into the egg nog, \$33.

Find at better wine merchants and liquor stores, Not every product in every store. Price are approximate.



Wines

Continued from page 13

traditional 3000L oak botti as opposed to smaller French barrique. This is hands-off Brunello, showing a world of dried cherry, tobacco and herbs with an eyes-wide-shut acidity that charges the wine with life and longevity. And the

only thing better than the 2015s are the newly arriving 2016s.



Lisa Rogers, Select Wines

Cash-strapped Friend

2019 Ogier Héritages Côtes du Rhône Rouge, (Rhône Valley, France) \$20

From Ogier who also brings you Clos de l'Oratoire Châteauneuf-du-Pape, this blend of Grenache, Syrah

and Mourvèdre has it all! With a name dating back to 800 AD and producing wine for over 162 years in the Rhône Valley, you can't go wrong with this baby Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Finesse and elegance, freshness and structure, and all at a low price from a producer with incredible history and pedigree free other Rhône producers can touch!

Rich Uncle

2018 Domaine Laroche Les Clos Grand Cru Chablis, (Burgundy, France) \$140

Domaine Laroche is intimately linked to the history of Chablis—1216, when the monks built the first press for the winery and in documents from 1128, when it was first mentioned as a wine producer. The 90ha of vineyards are in three Grand Crus and 11 Premier Crus plots. This year is the first time Alberta has seen such an amazing selection of



the Grand Crus and Premier Crus in the market. This 100 per cent Chardonnay is full-bodied, deliciously mineral with notes of lemon and peach and a long finish. Long-lived too, age up to another 20 years.

Rob Filipchuk, The Glass Monkey

Cash-strapped Friend
2019 Dog Point Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough, New Zealand), \$25

This was my go-to wine this past summer—such a great balance of crisp acidity, zippy citrus components and ripe melon richness. Truly a great value white wine and my favourite pairing with the Spicy Wonton Noodle on the menu at The Glass Monkey.



Rich Uncle

2016 Dominus Estate Red, Christian Moueix (Napa Valley, California), \$1125

This iconic red never fails to impress. Exhibiting notes of dark red berry fruit with notes of juniper and earth now, this young, powerful wine that will improve over the next couple of decades (especially in magnum format) and evolve to reveal notes of dark cocoa, lavender and truffle. Pair it with your favourite cut of beef grilled over charcoal.



Ryan Hotchkiss, Bündok

Cash-strapped Friend
2019 A & M Quenard Chignin Mondeuse Vieilles Vignes (Savoie, France), \$26

Mondeuse is an indigenous and ancient grape (tasting like a cross of Pinot Noir and Syrah) from the mountainous region of Savoie on the western edge of the French Alps. Aged for a year in wood before bottling, the wine is elegant, bright, floral with notes of wild fruit and minerals.



Rich Uncle

2002 Chateau Montus Cuvee Prestige (Madiran, France), \$90

This is everything I love about French wines. Complex, deep, with natural acidity, but still so easy to drink. The Tannat-Cab Sauv blend is about as big as I like to go for wine and this one certainly lends itself to anything rich we cook at the restaurant.



Ruth Blakely, The Wine Cellar

Cash-strapped Friend
2019 Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona IGT Toscana Rosso (Tuscany, Italy) \$25

This bright and fresh Sangiovese blend is medium bodied with plenty of sour cherry notes and a hint of spice. The small amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot provide additional richness in the mouth. It's a perfect match to a charcuterie board or an evening with friends.



Rich Uncle

2016 Mas Doix 1902 Centenary Carignan (Priorat, Spain) \$408

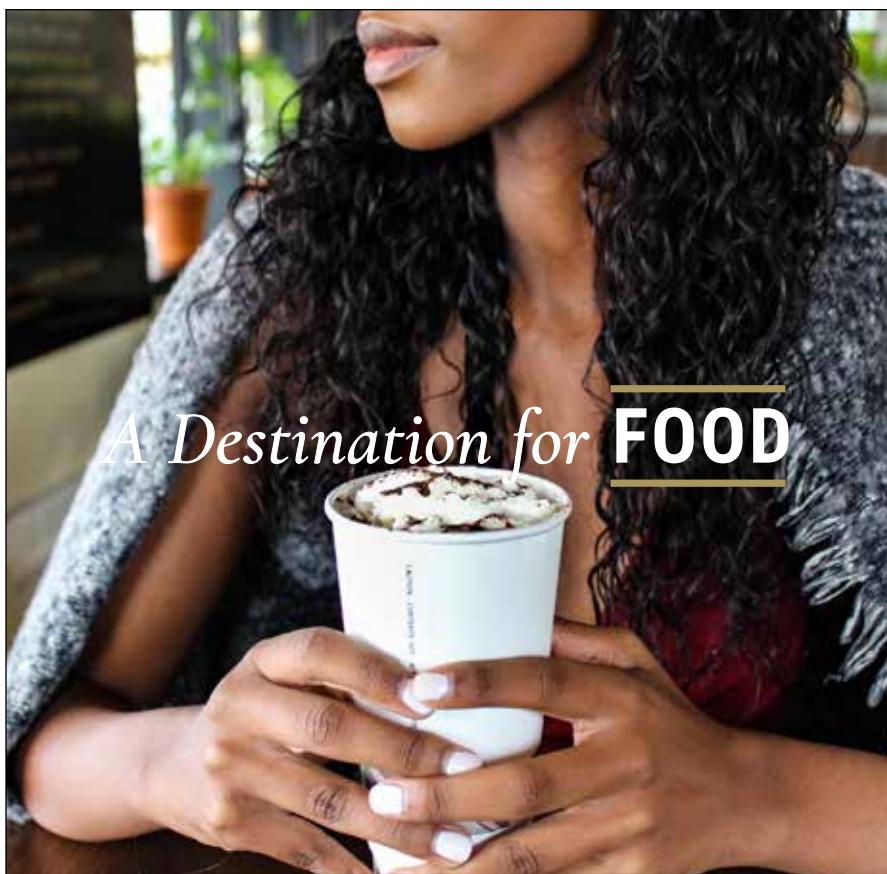
This rare and delectable Carignan is from vines planted in 1902. The aroma of fresh flowers, raspberry and herbs reflects the soil and sun of Spain's Priorat region. The aromas are enhanced by an earthy undertone—rich and lush with excellent structure and a lingering finish. Mas Doix, a darling of wine writers around the world, has a local connection—the estate partnered with former Edmontonian Cliff Lede of Lede Family Wines in 2019. 🍷



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Feeding People

Cooking, conversing, connecting: creating community through food

An Iranian student searched Edmonton unsuccessfully for months trying to find halal meats. A Nigerian student didn't eat fruit and vegetables for a year because a friend said that in Canada, they were grown in labs for winter consumption and could cause cancer. A student from Mexico, where chili refers to the fruit, was surprised to be handed canned chili when she asked for chili at a grocery store.

These are only a few of the stories that participants shared with the University of Alberta's Juanita Gnanapragasam during her research project on international students' food-related beliefs, values and barriers to access. For these students, many of them away from home for the first time, eating culturally familiar foods provided important connections to their countries of origin, helping them to cope with homesickness and providing an anchor when so much about their lives had changed.

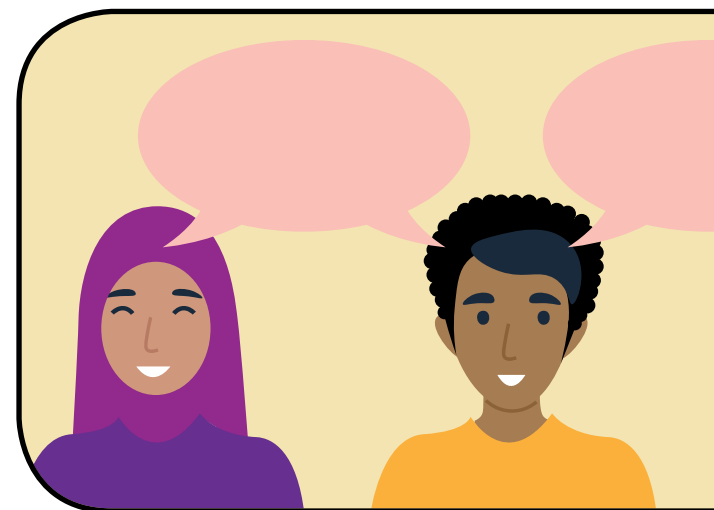
Their challenges with accessing familiar foods were compounded by differences in how Canadian stores display, package, and price foods, and getting heavy bags of groceries back to their homes using public transportation. Many of these students were inexperienced meal planners and cooks, so knowing how to prepare the foods they'd bought was often an issue.

Perhaps most poignantly, these students were lonely. They knew few, if any people, in Edmonton and missed the communal aspects of eating with family and friends. Some ended up going to

restaurants more often than they could afford, simply to re-experience these feelings of connection.

At first, Juanita was disheartened by her research results. "My parents immigrated to Canada from Sri Lanka, and growing up we struggled to recreate culturally relevant, nutritious meals. It was tough knowing that in the twenty-some years since my parents came to Canada, newcomer and international populations still faced the same barriers to eating healthy and nutritious meals."

But one theme of her research came as a pleasant surprise. The more social



support the students had—from a helpful landlady, a group of friends facing the same issues, or a mom back home—the more quickly their access barriers disappeared.

"It was an interesting finding," says Juanita, "because in a time when looking things up on the Internet is so prevalent, there is something to be said about human connections—especially when you're adjusting to life in a new environment."

Juanita shared her study results with her friend and fellow student Mishma Mukith. Both are first generation Canadians—Mishma's parents emigrated from India and Bangladesh—so they understood the joys of cooking and eating together with family, and the role that food plays in maintaining cultural

Pamela Young

identity. They also shared a passion for developing community within student groups. When Juanita pointed out that no programming existed to address the issues identified in her study, Mishma said; “Why don’t we just do it ourselves?”

The Converse and Cook program they created became an instant hit on campus. The first class in January 2018 attracted 80 signups for 25 available spaces, and every subsequent session filled quickly. The classes were free to attend. Students worked in teams to make two recipes that they could easily recreate at home, sharing whatever cooking skills they had and helping each other with unfamiliar tasks. Together with a small team of volunteers, Juanita and Mishma encouraged students to experiment and innovate. When making

Student Food Bank to join the cooking session. Students were much more likely to access the resources that program offered if they’d cooked and shared a meal with one of its representatives.

“We noticed participants came for the free food and stayed for the connection,” says Juanita.

When the pandemic hit, and all in-person classes were canceled, creating those connections became more challenging. Juanita and Mishma wanted to keep their volunteers engaged and provide programming that stayed true to their mission statement of empowering people to explore food, so they organized the volunteers into two teams. The cookbook team compiled recipes from Edmontonians that had brought them comfort and

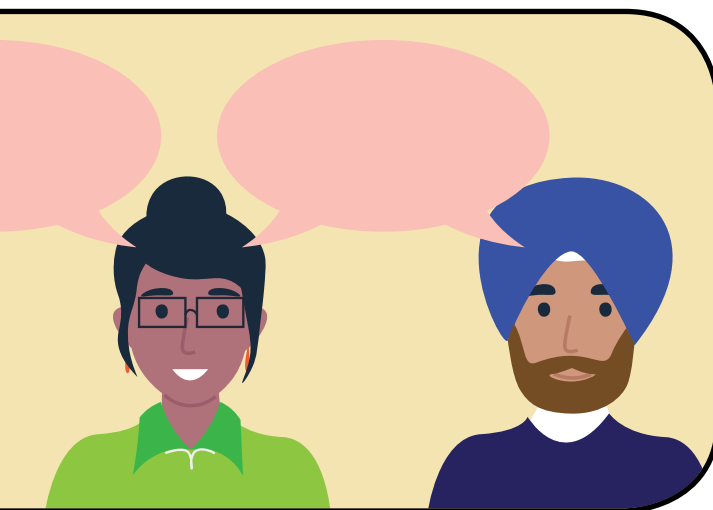
connection during the pandemic. The education team looked for opportunities to engage students online through cooking classes, food-related social events, and a food styling workshop, which attracted participants from around the world.

Going forward, Juanita and Mishma will continue to explore programming in

online spaces while expanding their in-person reach to other non-profit agencies and post-secondary institutions in Edmonton. They envision their classes serving the needs of seniors and children, people of various ethnicities, and the differently-abled. Juanita and Mishma have made all their resources available on their website and are happy to provide support so that others can put their spin on the joys of conversing and cooking.

To find out more about Converse and Cook, contribute to their comfort food cookbook, make a donation, or start a program for your group, visit conversecook.com. 🍷

Pamela Young loves conversing and cooking and Converse and Cook.



roti, there were not enough rolling pins to go around, so they challenged the students to use what they had to flatten the dough. Some students created rolling pins by wrapping cans in tin foil, others whacked their dough flat with cutting boards. “We learn together, and sometimes we fail together, and that’s okay,” says Mishma.

As the students cooked and ate their creations together at the end of the session, they sometimes discovered they were sitting in the same enormous class and made plans to help each other academically. Graduate students advised undergraduates on program choices. A student whose husband was having visa issues found help in her cooking team. Sometimes, Juanita and Mishma invited a guest from a program such as the



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Holiday Menu

Continued from page 7

For the Toppings

- ½ lb shrimp
- canola oil
- ½ lb pork belly, diced
- 8 oz firm tofu
- ½ c tinapa (or substitute bonito) flakes
- 1 head garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 c pork cracklings (*chicharon*), crushed
- 4 eggs, hardboiled, peeled and quartered
- ¼ c green onions, chopped
- calamansi* or lemon, cut into wedges

Peel shrimp, leaving tail intact. Reserve shrimp heads. In a saucepan over medium heat, bring 1 cup water to a boil. Place shrimp in a fine-mesh sieve and dip in the boiling water until the shrimp change color. Remove from the pot and set aside. Reserve liquid.

In a skillet over medium heat, add pork belly and cook, stirring occasionally, it releases oil. Continue to cook until browned and cooked through. Remove from pan and drain on paper towels.

Drain tofu from packing liquid and wrap with paper towels to rid of extra moisture. Cut into ¼-inch cubes. In a wide pan, heat about 1-inch deep of oil. Add tofu and deep-fry until golden brown and crisp. Using a slotted spoon, remove and set aside.

In a pan over medium heat, add 1 tablespoon oil. Add tinapa flakes and cook, stirring regularly, for about 1 to 2 minutes or until lightly browned and heated through. Remove from pan and set aside.

In a small pan over low heat, heat about ¼-cup oil. Add garlic and cook until lightly browned and crisp. With a slotted spoon, remove toasted garlic and drain on paper towels. Reserve 3 tablespoons of the garlic oil.

For the rice noodles

- 1 pkg (8 ounces) rice noodles

In a large bowl, soak the rice noodles in water for about 1-2 minutes or just until loosened. Drain well. In a pot over medium heat, bring about 6 cups water to a brisk boil. Add noodles and cook for about 1 minute. Drain well.

Place noodles onto serving plates. Spoon sauce over noodles. Top with the shrimp, *chicharon*, fried pork, crispy tofu, tinapa

flakes, hardboiled eggs, toasted garlic bits, and green onions. Serve with *calamansi* or lime wedges. Serves 6.

Lechon Kawali

Lechon or roasted suckling pig is the centerpiece of any major fiesta and Noche Buena is no exception. Other than adobo, lechon is probably the most revered delicacy of the Philippines. Anthony Bourdain, on one of his visits to the Philippines, proclaimed it as the 'best pig, ever.'

Unless you are some sort of rotisserie enthusiast, roasting a suckling pig is a challenge, but preparing Lechon Kawali for your feast is a more accessible endeavour. Kawali means, essentially, a wok in Tagalog but it more commonly refers to the method of deep frying, and in this case, pork belly. What you want to achieve is moist and tender meat with a blistered, super crunchy crackling. Pork belly with the skin or rind on it makes for the best results. And since this is a two-step process, ensure that you cool and dry the pork belly well—at least overnight.

- 4 lbs whole pork belly
- 1 head garlic, pounded
- 2 T salt
- 1 T peppercorns
- 2 bay leaves
- water
- canola oil

Spiced Vinegar

- ½ c cane vinegar
- 1 T soy sauce
- 1 shallot, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 bird's eye chili peppers, minced
- salt and freshly cracked pepper to taste.

Mix spiced vinegar ingredients and reserve.

In a deep pot over medium heat, combine pork belly, garlic, salt, peppercorns, bay leaves, and enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, skimming any foam that floats to the top. Lower heat, cover, and continue to cook for about 1-1½ hours or until meat is fork-tender but not falling apart. Drain pork, discarding liquid. Wipe dry, removing any stray aromatics. Allow to cool to touch and pat dry with paper towels. Score the skin using the tines of a fork. Brush the skin with vinegar.

Season the pork all over with salt and layer the skin with a thin film of salt.

Important! Place on a wire rack and refrigerate overnight to completely cool and dry.

Next Day

Remove from refrigerator and scrape off the salt. In a deep, heavy-bottomed pot, heat enough oil (to completely cover the meat) to 375°F. Carefully place the meat in the hot oil and deep fry, turning as needed, until golden and skin is crisp and puffed. Be prepared for the oil to splatter and pop. Use a splatter shield when necessary.

Remove meat from pot and drain on a wire rack set over a baking sheet. Let rest for about 5 minutes and then cut into serving pieces.

Serve with spiced vinegar or liver *sarsa*. Serves 6.

Beef Caldereta

Beef Caldereta is a hearty stew that usually involves tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, and bell peppers. Typically, since it is super expensive, beef is saved for special occasions. This dish is definitely taken from the Spanish influence. The name of the dish itself, caldereta, comes from the Spanish word caldera which mean cauldron or heavy bottom pot.

I tend to use tough, leaner cuts of meat, like eye or round or inside round, but sirloin tip or short rib work well here if you prefer a more decadent cut for the slow cooking process.

- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| ¼ c | canola oil |
| 2 lg | potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch cubes |
| 2 lg | carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch cubes |
| 1 | onion, peeled and chopped |
| 4 cloves | garlic, peeled and minced |
| 2 lbs | bottom round roast, cut into 2-inch cubes |
| 2 c | tomato sauce |
| 2 T | tomato paste |
| 2 c | water |
| 10 | Thai chili peppers, minced |
| ½ c | green olives, pitted |
| ½ c | liver spread |
| ½ c | cheddar cheese, shredded |
| 1 sm | green bell pepper, seeded, cored and cut into cubes |
| 1 sm | red bell pepper, seeded, cored and cut into cubes |
| | salt and pepper to taste |

In a wide pan over medium heat, heat oil. Add potatoes and carrots and cook until lightly browned. Remove from pot and drain on paper towels.

Remove oil from the pan except for about 2 tablespoons. Add beef and sear until medium brown color. Add onions and garlic and sauté until softened. Add tomato sauce, tomato paste, water, and chili peppers. Bring to a boil, skimming any foam that floats to the top. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Lower heat, cover, and cook for about 2 hours or until beef is tender. Add potatoes, carrots, and continue to cook until tender. Add liver spread and cheese, stirring to combine until well-distributed. Continue to cook until the cheese has melted and the sauce has thickened. Add bell peppers and olives cook for another 1-2 minutes until tender yet crisp.

Serve hot with steamed rice. Serves 6.

Buko Salad

Buko salad is the ultimate holiday dessert! This Filipino fruit salad is so simple to make and richly creamy and delicious. Make this a couple of days ahead of time, to get it out of the way, so you don't have to panic the day of the fiesta. Growing up, I would scan the spread for Buko Salad and save a serving for myself because it was always the first dessert to go. Buko is shredded young coconut that can be found at your Asian grocer in the frozen or canned section.

- | | |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------|
| 2 c | buko or young coconut, shredded |
| 2 c | Dole fruit cocktail or tropical fruit mix, drained |
| ½ c | Dole pineapple tidbits, drained |
| ¾ c | palm nut (<i>kaong</i>), drained |
| ¾ c | <i>nata de coco</i> , drained |
| 1 c | sweetened condensed milk |
| 1 | c heavy whipping cream (35 per cent) |

In a large bowl, combine young coconut, fruit cocktail, pineapple tidbits, kaong, nata de coco, condensed milk, and whipping cream. Stir gently to distribute. Chill for a few hours or, for best results, freeze until firm. ❄️

Rather Ariel and Roel do the cooking? Filistix offers the Noche Buena Feast for December 24 and Media Noche Feast for December 31 for take-away and potentially dine-in too. Details at filistix.com.

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restaurant buzz

The Glass Monkey (5842 111 Street, 780-760-2228, theglassmonkey.ca) is now open for lunch Thursday, Friday and Saturday from noon-2pm and open for dinner Tuesday through Sunday at 4pm. The menu features Glass Monkey favourites and weekly specials, as well as some quick lunch options for people on the go. Need to book a venue for your Christmas party? They can do groups from six to 75. Call for more information.

Filistix (10621 100 Avenue, 780-716-4708, filistix.ca) offers the celebratory **Noche Buena Feast** for December 24 and **Media Noche Feast** for December 31 for take-away, maybe dine-in too? Details at filistix.com.

events and happenings

Enjoy roaming performers, on-stage entertainment, cookie decorating, all sorts of happenings to celebrate the winter season. **The All is Bright Light Up Festival** is Saturday, November 20, starting at 4pm. Visit 124street.ca for more information.

The **Bountiful Farmers' Market** (3696 97 Street, 780-818-3878, bountifulmarkets.com) wants to give customers the chance to do some local shopping before Christmas and give vendors extra time with family. Open Thursday, December 23, and Friday, December 24 and December 30, 31 from 10-4pm. They will be closed December 25, 26 and January 1 and 2.

product news

Heart of the Home (12539 102 Avenue, 780-705-4928, heartofthehomeveg.ca) has an animal rescue donation bin and online shopping with both shipping and curbside pick-up available. They are closed Monday, November 1. Open November 11 from 12-4pm. Lots of holiday merriment—the **Christmas Open House** is December 2-5 and the 12 Days of Christmas are December 11-22. December 24, open 11am-3pm; December 31 open 11am-3pm. Closed from December 25-27 and on January 1. Look for their holiday gift guide mid-November. 🍅

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Holiday recipes

Continued from page 23

1 sourdough or baguette, cut into 2-inch sections

Blend the oil, butter, anchovies and garlic in processor until smooth. Transfer mixture to a heavy saucepan. Cook over low heat 15 minutes, stirring, occasionally. Sauce will separate. Season.

Pour the Bagna Cauda (hot bath) sauce into a fondue pot or other flameproof dish. Set over an alcohol burner or gas table burner to keep warm. Serve with the vegetables and bread.

Bette Davis Eyes

Everybody loves it—but what else to do with a round of Boursin? Adapted from a recipe by Antoni Porowski.

Bring Boursin Basil & Chive to room temperature. Toast pistachios in a spoonful of olive oil and a pinch of salt, until golden brown and crunchy. Coarsely chop. Using your fingers, roll or pat each grape all around with room temperature cheese, then roll in the crushed nuts. Cut in half and stick a toothpick into two halves, creating a pair of eyes.



David Lebovitz's Labneh Balls

These little cheesy nuggets are delicious as part of a mezze spread with hummus, baba ganoush, flatbread, pita. Or, spread on a crostini and top with tomatoes, smoked salmon, radishes and cucumber. Store the labneh balls in the refrigerator. The olive oil may thicken, and if it does, remove the jar an hour or so before serving. Keeps for about two weeks in the fridge, completely submerged in oil. After, use the leftover oil for pasta, flatbreads or sautéing vegetables.

4 c Greek or Greek-style plain yogurt
2 c extra-virgin olive oil, plus more if necessary
spices and herbs for rolling: za'atar, paprika (sweet or smoked), sumac, Aleppo pepper, crushed red pepper flakes, fresh thyme or rosemary, mint

Line a mesh strainer with a few layers of cheesecloth or food-grade muslin. Set the strainer over a deep bowl and scrape the yogurt into it. Fold the cheesecloth over the cheese, set a small plate on it with a tin of tomatoes and refrigerate for 2 days.

Prepare any seasonings that you wish to use (if you want to roll them in something) and spread them on dinner plates. Pour the oil into a clean 1-quart (or larger) jar.

Scoop labneh into rough 1-inch rounds. Use your hands to roll them into smooth balls and drop them into whatever seasonings you want to roll them in, if using, then roll them around to coat them. (If keeping them plain, just drop them into the oil with any seasonings added, being careful to avoid letting them slide down the sides of the jar.)

If you wish, add a few branches of fresh herbs, some chile flakes and additional olive oil if the labneh balls aren't completely covered in oil. Cover with the lid and refrigerate until ready to serve. Makes about 15 balls.

Spaghetti with Anchovy and Pangrattato

Chef Daniel Costa's recipe for an easy pasta made with pantry staples is deeply satisfying—handy for nights when the last thing you want to do is cook.

Pangrattato

2-3 t extra-virgin olive oil
1½ c day-old bread, ripped into small pieces
1 clove garlic, whole
 kosher salt

Gently fry the garlic clove in olive oil over medium heat until golden. Add bread and a pinch of salt. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the breadcrumbs are golden. Remove garlic clove.

Pasta

500 g spaghetti
5 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
6 anchovies salt-packed, rinsed and soaked in water for 10 minutes
1 handful Italian parsley, leaves only, roughly chopped
1 t chili flakes (add more if desired)
¼ c Pecorino cheese, finely grated
 extra-virgin olive oil
1 glass white wine

Bring a large pot of water to a boil with a handful of salt. Cook spaghetti until al dente (about 1–2 minutes less than package instructions). Reserve 1 cup of the cooking water.

While pasta is cooking, heat olive oil over medium-high heat in a large, deep frying pan (large enough to comfortably hold all of the pasta). Add garlic and anchovies and fry until garlic is golden, stirring frequently. Add white wine and chili flakes and continue to cook for 4 minutes.

Increase heat to high and add spaghetti, reserved pasta cooking water and parsley. Cook for 1 minute in the pan, stirring frequently. Once sauce is just coating the pasta, remove from heat and toss in the pecorino. Divide pasta between 4 bowls and sprinkle the pangrattato on top. Serve immediately. Serves 4. 🍅



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