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Canadian Culinary Champs

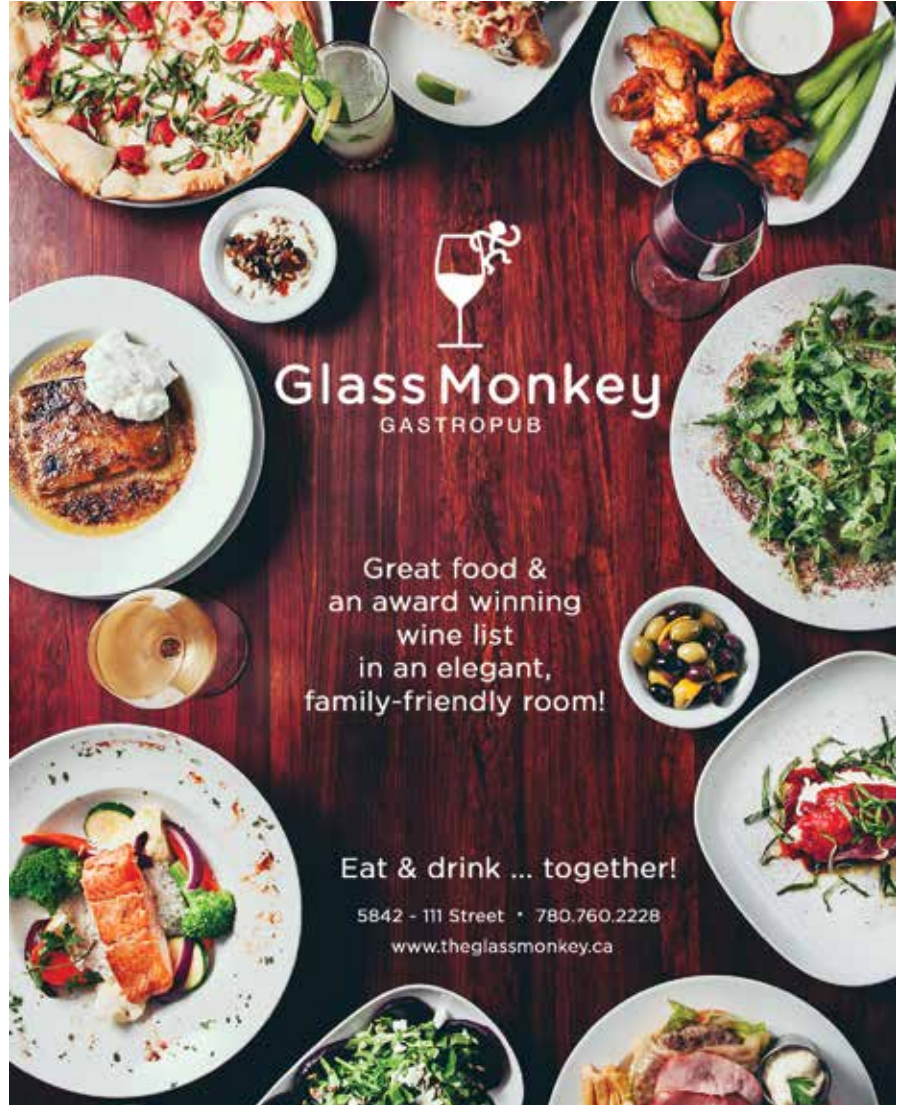
Top 100 Best Things
to Eat and Drink

Easter Family Favourites



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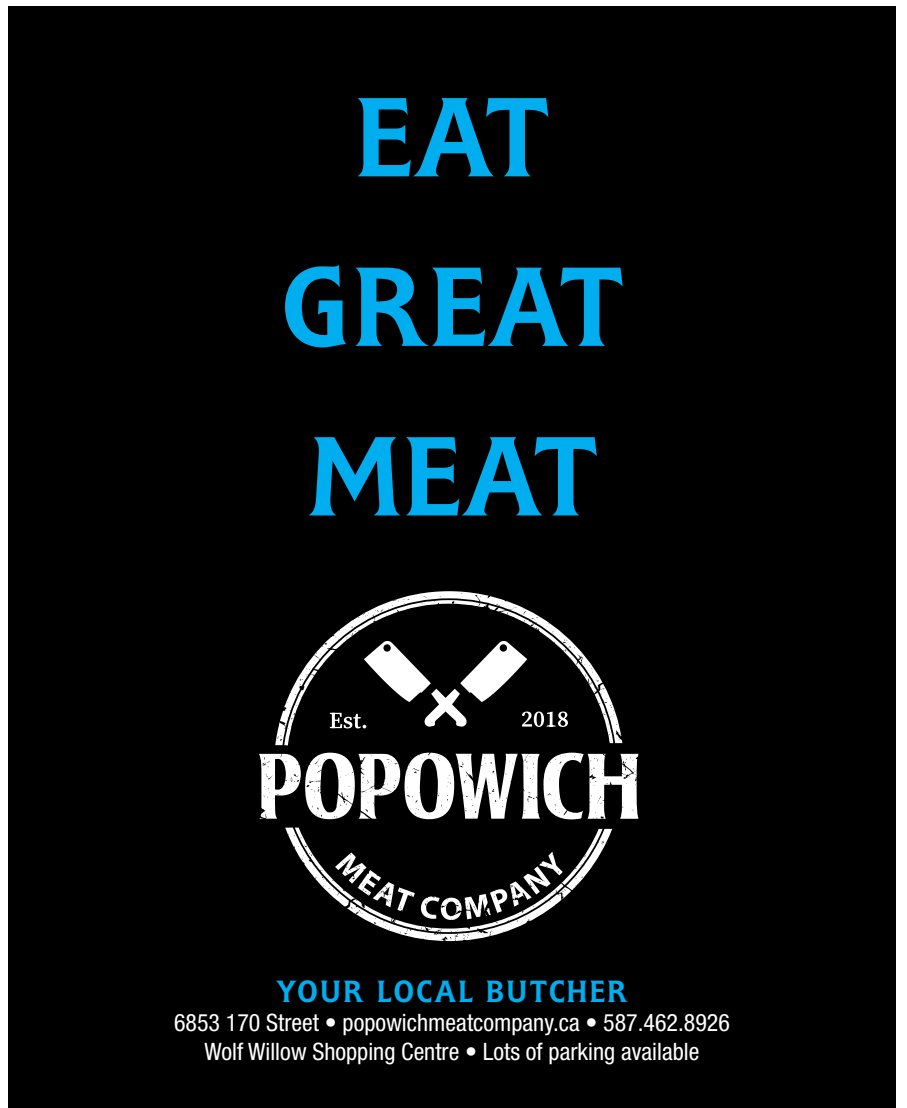
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On the cover: winners on the podium at the Canadian Culinary Championships in Ottawa. From left: chefs Bobby Milheron (Vancouver, Silver), Briana Kim (Ottawa, Gold) and Serge Belair (Edmonton, Bronze). Ben Champoux photo.

CRAWLING SAVINGS?



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Judy Schultz remembers Jean Paré

Jean Paré who celebrated her 95th birthday on December 7, was the woman behind the most user-friendly cookbooks any of us have ever owned. In the end, 30 million copies have her name on them. As her official biographer (*Jean Paré: An Appetite for Life*) it was my privilege and pleasure to get to know the woman behind the publishing empire.

It took a while, as Jean was the definitive private person. Throughout her long and amazing career, there were good times and bad, plenty of each to go around, but the ones she talked about celebrated the people she loved. Friends. Family. Company's coming? The whole darned world could come for dinner, she'd feed them. Whenever there was something to celebrate, she cooked.

She started small, as Jean Lovig—Vermilion, Alberta's go-to caterer. But with her first book celebrating 150 squares (scrumptious mouthfuls my aunts referred to as 'dainties') she conquered the nation.

Her cookbooks were written with friends in mind and Jean was everybody's friend. Women who juggled careers and families had less time to cook, but Jean's down-to-earth recipes were their safe place. We loved her accessibility, her stress-free, fuss-free attitude to feeding people, her ability to produce a meal using whatever was in the fridge, freezer, cupboard. She brought respect back to canned soup and casseroles, and she understood the power of a great cookie. Jean became a world traveller.

I'm writing this from New Zealand, another of Jean's favourite spots, and I plan to celebrate her life on New Year's Eve by baking one of her favourite things: a pavlova. A simple meringue, whipped cream, strawberries. A few slices of ripe kiwi. I think she'd have enjoyed it. Jean Paré died December 24, 2022.



don't miss wing wednesday, a fundraiser for meals on wheels

Meals on Wheels has been delivering meals in home for 54 years. Long may this essential service continue, and you can help. Buy a ticket for Wing Wednesday hosted by Jennifer Crosby and Rob Christie. It's happening in the Stantec Tower, Wednesday April 5, from 4-7pm. Tix, \$45, at mealsonwheelsedmonton.org. Cash bar, biz casual dress and the chance to enjoy some hot wings? Sounds like a great time.



A new butcher shop in town and it's great

Check out the new Ribeye Butcher Shops (935 St. Albert Trail and Manning Town Centre). Super bright and spacious, with on-site butchers ready to carve a steak to your liking. The offerings are extensive—dry-aged beef, Japanese and Canadian Wagyu, pork, game, lamb, sausages and

burgers, along with charcuterie, prepared foods, seasonal items and deli. And, you can pick up Bonjour Bakery bread at the St. Albert location! Wow. Enjoy a large cup of their savoury house-made bone broth and a deliciously grilled smash burger and fries. Licenced too, so you can enjoy a beer or glass of wine with your burger. The shop in Erin Ridge opened just before the holidays and Manning Centre opened February 10. Open 10am-7pm daily and check out the curated box program available online. Planned: Terra Losa and Windermere locations.



bartender extraordinaire James Grant leaving yeg

James Grant, cocktail impresario and the 2021 World Class Global Bartender of the Year, is the new director of mixology at the Fairmont Royal York in Toronto. The idea is to elevate the Royal York's bars into contention for the world's bests lists, (such as Barcelona's Paradiso or London's The Connaught).

We will miss his extraordinary knowledge and the best-kind-of-silly banter he is known for, plus his amazing ability to spin cocktail gold. Congrats and bon voyage James!



Mushrooms & Thyme photos

From top left: the inimitable Jean Paré; Meals on Wheels fundraiser; co-owner Sam Gundy in the Erin Ridge Ribeye Butcher Shop; the luxe new vibe at Confederation Lounge, and menu offerings; Ramon Miranda (L) and James Grant before his *Build Your Own Bad-ass Home Bar* class at Color de Vino.

revamped, revised, rewarded; the new confederation lounge

How long have we been waiting for this reveal? The renovated Confederation Lounge is here and it's gorgeous. "Fairmont Hotel Macdonald has been dedicated to connecting our local community and hotel guests to extraordinary settings in the heart of Edmonton for over a hundred years. The renovated Confederation Lounge will continue to celebrate our history while embracing its new era of dining," says the Mac's general manager, Garrett Turta. Exec chef Jiju Paul and exec restaurant chef Brett Van Allen have worked closely with local purveyors to create a sustainable and regional menu. Think oysters or a scotch egg, bao bun or a Mac burger with a Reposado Negroni or a peek at the rare Dalmore collection. Check it out! 🍷



THE TOMATO TOP 100

BEST THINGS TO EAT AND DRINK IN EDMONTON

Every year we ask people to tell us what was the best thing they ate or drank the year before. This year, more seafood and shellfish and beef. More salads, fewer cakes. We love our local charcuterie and noodles and burgers. Pasta is king. We are happy to be back in restaurants but we still love the convenience of snacks. Conclusions? None. It's messy and weird and we love it. Congratulations to all these beautiful dishes and thank you for nominating your favourites. **Find the complete Top100 at thetomato.ca.**

1. Spaghetti with Wild Pink Shrimp, Uccellino

With its casual yet refined vibe, the just-the-right-amount-of-attention service and the consistently delicious food, Uccellino makes it look all so simple. But, we know simple isn't easy. The care and attention behind the scenes, vital to the polished experience that diners enjoy meal after meal, is why Uccellino tops the list this year. Nominators had a hard time choosing between their favourite dishes. "House-made goat ricotta. It's the best thing to eat in Edmonton, nobody comes close," Daniel S. "Endive, pear and roasted almond salad. I could happily nominate everything on the outstanding Uccellino menu, but this creative and tasty salad deserves a special mention," David P. Also nominated: Icelandic cod, plump, silky, satisfying. The spaghetti with wild pink shrimp and bottarga? Tastes like the sea itself.

2. Smashed Cucumber Salad, Biera

Chef Christine Sandford continues to create robust and inventive dishes from what some could say are mundane, everyday ingredients. Like cucumber. "Smashed cucumber salad," Janice H. "Stunning. Among the best dishes I've had, hands down." "Biera chefs transformed the mild flavour of cucumber into this deeply umami-rich yet refreshing cucumber salad with XO sauce and chili oil." "The steelhead trout carpaccio is well-balanced and highlights locally-grown young ginger—fresh and delightful," Paige A. Also nominated: BC striped prawn crudo, the beef tartare.

3. Road Trip, RGE RD

RGE Rd offers a sublime dining experience probably best illustrated by the Road Trip tasting menu. Nominators love the inventiveness, the seasonality and the originality of putting themselves in the chef's hands for the night.



1



2

Also nominated, the bison and the pumpkin salad from the winter menu. Then there is the hunting lodge meets Wes Anderson vibe and the well-chosen wine list. Exec chef/co-owner Blair Lebsack, his wife Caitlin Fulton and their team interpret Alberta cuisine at a deliciously high level and patrons respond with a full house. Best kept secret: slide into one of the bar seats for a quick appetizer and glass of wine on a weekend night before the movie.

4. Kale and Kohlrabi Salad, Bündok

Nominators love the hand-made food at Bündok, the compact restaurant downtown on 104 Street, particularly the Parisienne gnocchi, the grilled striploin with black garlic butter and, especially, the kale and kohlrabi salad with its toothsome vinaigrette and crunch of puffed wild rice. As well, "the charred broccoli and chicken skin snacks are my go-to," Shauna F. The modern French bistro cooking of chef Ryan Hotchkiss is delicious, day in and day out.

5. Focaccia, Bar Bricco

Nominators found it hard to pick only one delicious thing from the Bar Bricco menu of impeccable meats, cheeses and *spuntini*, aka the best bar snacks in town.

Prosciutto and potato chips, the mortadella and pistachio, the OG egg yolk ravioli, the various crostini and, of course, the focaccia, which our friend Amanda calls birthday cake. "Giant chunks of crispy saltiness on the outside and chewy warm deliciousness on the inside," Angie R.



4



5

Steven Babish photo



6

6. Sablefish, Hayloft Steak + Fish

A casual west-end room that is completely serious about its beef, sourced from Sturgeon Valley's Jeff Nonay, then dry-aged to perfection. The fish, particularly the sablefish, was the top dish nominated, the type and preparation depending on the season. Leave room for Basque cheesecake (yes, it's supposed to have a burnt top) and the chocolatey peanut crunch cake. "Always such great service," says Vicky S. "They are so generous to the community. The fries are awesome, the ice cream sandwich to die for, and my absolute fave, the Brussels sprouts!"

Curtis Comeau photo



7

7. Entrecôte Frites, The Marc

This is the resto everybody wants to call their neighbourhood joint. Whether it's for frites and a glass of Champagne at the bar on a Wednesday night, dinner with family and friends or the Sunday Supper dining experience, diners rely on the Marc for consistently well-prepared French bistro classics. Nominated: mushrooms on toast, French onion soup, the daily fish, the unctuous short ribs (pictured). "The French onion soup is the ultimate comfort food on a cold winter evening—perfectly cheesy, gooey and full of flavour. Delicious! I dream of it," Amy D. "The entrecôte frites is the best, hands down—hot, crispy, salty fries, simple salad and the generous ribeye cooked to perfection. It never disappoints." Lori R.



8

8. Bacalhau, Sabor

Was it the extravagant lobster risotto? Or the braised pork cheeks? The Ocean Wise fish choices? Yes. But what nominators really love is the *bacalhau frito*, a heritage dish for chef Lino Oliveira. Sabor's warm hospitality, award-winning wine list and menu featuring the flavours of the Iberian Peninsula continues to win over diners year after year.



9

9. Fili Beef Bowl, Filistix

The Fili Beef bowl (formerly known as the Thai basil beef bowl) was tops for nominators. "A hearty, tasty, generously portioned meal! Always perfectly seasoned beef and rice, with the best slaw (seriously, what is in that dressing, it is pure magic) and a splash of chili oil to add that perfect kick," Sanjula K. Also, the South Pacific coconut chicken (pictured). "It is delicious every single time," Trina C. We love Filistix for its full-throttle approach and the attention paid to the flavours and textures of their Filipino heritage.



10

10. Tandoori Lamb, Monsoon

The tandoori lamb chops are a big hit at this contemporary south-side restaurant. "Very flavourful dish, best ever," Sat S. Also nominated was the smoked butter chicken with its "unique smoky flavours in a rich creamy spicy tomato sauce," Jaseep H. And the decadently rich daal tadka and the Singh is King cocktail. Catch one of Monsoon's wonderful wine dinners, a delightful collision of east and west.



11

11. Chocolate Mousse, Dalla Tavola Zenari

"I could talk about the wonderful atmosphere, staff, cocktails, wine menu, mains, et cetera, at Dalla Tavola Zenari—but let's talk mousse. It's definitely for chocolate lovers. But what makes it really special is the aquafaba (chickpea water, or vegan egg white). To have an egg-free, gluten-free dessert that is truly satisfying is rare. And to have it crafted in Edmonton by a local restaurant that strives to make accessible comfort food, where you don't even feel embarrassed about ordering the same dessert every single time you're there because it's that good?" Rachel S. Jessica M says the muffaletta (pictured) is "hands down one of the best sandwiches in Edmonton. And there were nominations for the *cipolle* and the *pate di noci*, the walnut spread which is a dead ringer for chicken liver pâté.

Please see "Top 100" next page.

Top 100

Continued from previous page.



12. Smørrebrød, Three Viking

Fan favourites at this friendly pub are the *frikadeller*, the Norseman burger and those adorable open-faced sandwiches (*smørrebrød*). About the *frikadeller* (patties, gravy and potatoes) Shane N. says, “this dish feels like a warm hug from your Mom, with the most savoury gravy.” But it’s not all Scandinavian classics. “I nominate the chicken tartelette with kale caesar. The food is consistently excellent; the beer selection acceptable indeed; and the servers are exceptional. My favorite place to meet friends for lunch,” Lance B.

13. Braised Lamb Shanks, Glass Monkey

The braised lamb shanks, halibut, Salt Spring Island mussels and the house-made pappardelle with braised pork and wild mushrooms topped the raft of nominations for this easy-going Lendrum-area eatery. “The Glass Monkey knows how to prepare anything seafood. It is always done to perfection,” Denise B. “A local gem.” Wonderful staff and service,” Cameron K. And for dessert? “Bread pudding, Fantastic dessert. Especially with a Taylor 20,” John A.



14. Piri Piri Shrimp, Bodega Tapas & Wine Bar

The Sabor folks have grown Bodega into a neighbourhood phenom with six locations (including Sherwood Park, St. Albert and, opening soon, Ellerslie) with a fun and tasty tapas menu. Highlights according

to nominators are the piri piri shrimp, sardines and the braised bison cheeks. As well, the quince jelly-glazed bacon wrapped dates and patatas bravas.



15. Tagliatelle, Impasto Lab

The nominations poured in for the mortadella crostini and various tagliatelle. “Cocoa tagliatelle with rabbit ragu,” Jon C. “It’s creative yet simple, delicious and all the ingredients are locally sourced.” “*Fatta a mano al ragu Bolognese* (pictured). Best Bolognese in the city, you can taste the love in this dish,” Sherwood S. Chef Rosario Caputo closed his restaurant Cibo during the pandemic. Now he explores all permutations of fresh pasta and bread and hosts private dinners.



16. Arctic Char, Café Bicyclette

The arctic char in a maple black garlic sauce was the top dish, according to nominators. You would expect a resto in the French quarter to be nominated for their *tarte au sucre* and poutine. But a burger? Yes. And the bacon and eggs? Yes. And the brownie? Yes! About that burger. “It is what every backyard barbecue burger wishes it could be,” Odin N.

17. Sushi and Sashimi, Kobachi

The tiny perfect Japanese resto in Sherwood Park consistently delivers beautiful sushi and sashimi. Seasonal items such as king salmon and BC side striped prawns as well as tuna nigiri, duck udon topped the nominations as did the chirashi bowls and chicken katsu. “It is the only place in all of northern Alberta that serves sushi



and fish that makes you feel like you are in Vancouver. Unbelievable service and experience,” Scott. G. “Kobachi is authentic and welcoming, truly a hidden gem,” Gwendolyn H.

18. Tuna Twist, Nineteen

Along with the now legendary tuna twist, nominators love the KFC (Korean fried cauliflower) and the lobster ravioli. “Like all of their dishes, the ravioli is flavourful, well-executed and made with quality ingredients,” Maria B. There are also many fans of exec chef Andrew Fung’s special events, such as Peking Duck Night.

19. Popowich Meat Company

Nominators raved about the Maui ribs, (“you don’t need to go to Hawaii to get a taste of the islands, it’s in your own back yard,” Neil C.), the sausages, (“I love Doritos. I love jalapeño. That Popowich is able to combine these flavours in a delicious pork sausage is mind blowing,” Chris H.), pork chops (“they are nice and thick and juicy and tender! Super on the barbecue or in air fryer!” Brian G.) and steaks (“beef tenderloin, best in YEG,” Carol F.). “Great staff, great selection and great location. One of my few weekly errands where I leave with a smile every time,” Jim R. “The quality and service are second to none when it comes to purchasing high quality proteins in Edmonton.”



20. Apple Turnover, Awn Café

The apple turnovers and the cinnamon buns were neck and neck with nominators. “The homemade puff pastry, made with the best quality butter, is truly outstanding, and with the apple filling, it’s flaky, buttery, apple-y deliciousness,” Johanna W. “They make the best cinnamon buns in the city and they support local farmers and producers,” Kathy H. The sausage (and lentil) rolls also saw lots of love.



21

21. Mini Beef Dip, Partake

The *croque 'mon' soubise* is still top with nominators but they love the mini beef dip at least as much. “Every single item on Partake’s menu is perfect, but the mini beef dip will transport you to another dimension. The meat itself falls apart like butter. The buns are pillowy nuggets of joy. I would like a dump truck of the Gruyère. Given the opportunity, I would drink the jus,” Keltie Y. Another winner? Sunday Sip n’ Snacks. “Such an amazing deal to try high-quality unique dishes,” Michelle D.



22

22. Smoked Duck Breast, Meuwly’s

“I love how Meuwly’s creates new products for us to enjoy. This smoked duck breast is a star,” Vanessa B. Nominators also love the monthly subscription service called Charcuterie Club, and the holidays hams. Can’t beat that.



23

23. Honey Fried Chicken Sandwich, Central Social Hall

The energetic downtown and St. Albert spots are lauded for the hearty Ronald burger. This year nominators are giving the honey-fried chicken sandwich some love too. “It’s crispy, crunchy, sweet and savoury— all the things I look for in a chicken sandwich. The pickles are made in house and are so yummy,” SJ. “They are so underrated when it comes to the food and prices. They have the best wings in town; not sure if wings would ever grace the

Top 100 though, haha!” Blair J. Thirsty? “Central Social Hall’s botanical cocktails are almost too pretty to drink,” Martha T.



24

24. Prahok Ktiss, Pho or Kuy Teav

This modest north-end spot serving Vietnamese and Cambodian dishes hit the list last year with the super savoury Super Satay #24. This year nominators also love the lemongrass beef and the *prahok ktiss*. “This is the best! Made from scratch, love the lemongrass. Served with fresh-cut vegetables, cabbage, cucumbers, carrots and you scoop the goodness with minced meat. Also, it’s gluten free!” Mike G. “The lemongrass beef sticks served with *chrouk* (chili paste). The combination of flavors is just perfect. You get a bit of spice, sweetness and tanginess when you combine the pickled veggies with the beef,” Julie S. “Anyone who enjoys Asian cuisine should give it a try, it’s the perfect place to eat Vietnamese or Cambodian food,” Kevin T.



25

25. Smash Burger, Ribeye Butcher Shop

This new St. Albert butcher shop, which opened in November, has made waves already with their offerings, including the made-to-order smash burger. “The dry-aged steak melted in my mouth. My nine-year old (who might be the pickiest eater I know) asked me the next day if we can make the steak we had for dinner last night again,” Trevor Y. “The best burger! The quality of the meat was next level and customized with the toppings I love. I got to eat it in-store with an order of dirty fries and a cold beer while the staff prepared my dinner roast—delish!” Sara D. “Great selection of deli meats and cool sauces and a fresh and juicy smash burger and so cool to find it tucked in the back of a real butcher shop.” Mike W.

26



26. BLT, Lock Stock Coffee

The cosy spot reinvented the coffee scene downtown, leading the way for the return of the independents. Not only is the coffee consistently on point, the menu is delicious; think classic breakfast items with a twist. Nominators love the *kouign-amann* (layered Breton pastry), the savoury scone, the ham and cheese tartine and the BLT (tomato jam, white cheddar, arugula and lemony mayo on an English muffin or focaccia, pictured, or on a biscuit on weekends). “It’s incredible, the best of sweet and savoury. An absolute must-have, best breakfast sandwich in the city,” Becca W.



27

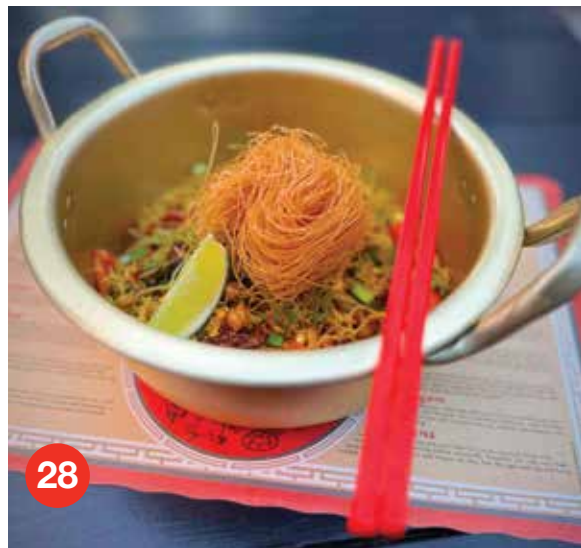
27. Charcuterie Boards, Art of Charcuterie

Art of Charcuterie’s boards, boxes and tables are works of art with numerous fans. “The highest quality local ingredients and the love and creativity that go into the charcuterie presentations, not to mention the diversity of ingredients; an utter delight for the eyes and palate,” Leanne H. “The Duo Box is gorgeous and delicious— fantastic option for date night,” Tamarah W. “Better yet, hire Diana to create a grazing table in your home. It’s a work of art, made with her particular kind of rare, warm, magic,” Marina M. “Outstanding artistic creations!” Maria W.

Please see “Top 100” next page.

Top 100

Continued from previous page.



28

28. Crazy Rich Rice Noodles, Fu's Repair Shop

Fu's has cheeky fun with our idea of the Chinese restaurant. The crazy rich rice noodles (Singaporean-style curried rice noodles with chili oil, tofu and veg) are no exception and a big hit with Fu's regulars. "The name alone! Chef Winnie Chen has created another delightfully modern take on standard Chinese menu fare. I appreciate anyone making tofu come to life...this dish does it three ways," Elizabeth D. And don't miss the Viet Coffee Negroni with all-day dim sum.

29. Currywurst, Otto

Otto's fan love the sausages and the easy-going vibe of this unassuming storefront in Norwood. Nominators love the veggie meatballs with curry tomato sauce, the currywurst, the feature dog and the fish and chips. Excellent local beer selection too.



30

30. Sausage Roll, The Butchery

Along with outstanding dry-aged cuts source from local ranches, The Butchery offers several prepared items to-go, such as daily soup and salads and their hearty sausage rolls. "I nominate the sausage roll from The Butchery by Rge Rd. I could easily eat four of these in a row," Sandi H. Warm or cold, with a dab of mustard and a little salad you have lunch.



31

31. Three Berry Beef Brisket Sandwich, Pei Pei Chei Ow

"This sandwich couldn't be any more perfect. There's a crunchy baguette which holds tender beef brisket, marinated in Scott's signature three berry barbecue sauce (made in house), topped with sweet sautéed onions, and a dash more of sauce. This is a big sandwich, the kind where you eat half and say you're gonna eat the rest at home. But then you pull over into a parking lot, so you can eat the rest of the sandwich." "Nish klik (pork cutlet sandwich) and Cree coffee. This business is owned by a great couple who put Indigenous food education and sovereignty at the forefront. Their food is delicious and crafted from love and family history," Kylie C. "Big Bannock Loaf. Stopped in for a bag of hot breakfast items and made an impulse purchase of a large round loaf of bannock. Toothsome and crusty, it was a crowd pleaser," Thea W. Check out this cute café tucked away in the Whiskeyjack Art House or take a class with chef Scott Isherwood.



32

32. Lemony Buttermilk Pancakes, Rosewood Foods

The chicken katsu and the chocolate chip cookie have a lot of fans. The lemony buttermilk pancakes have worshippers. "There's a lot of uncertainty in life, but the lemony buttermilk pancakes at Rosewood Foods helps keep worry at bay one plate at a time. The pancakes, with Gosford Farm maple syrup, have just a hint of lemon that hits like the first time, every time. Count on it," Andrew M.



33

33. Crispy Colonel, Woodshed Burgers

Nominators rave about all the Woodshed burgers (Juicy Lucy and the Woodshed for sure, such great beef) but the chicken burger? Oh yeah. It topped the noms this year. "Large juicy locally-sourced chicken, fantastic thick-cut pickles, crispy lettuce and sauce, I would eat it every day if I could." Jordan R.

34. Pâté de Campagne, La Petite Iza

The country pâté, the steak tartare and the house frites (fried in duck fat) were nominated. "The house fries are hot, extra crispy and served with a delectable aioli. The perfect accompaniment is the country pâté, with astringent pickled veg and crunchy baguette," Claudia K.



35

35. Act Burger, The Next Act

"The Act burger has a lightly-toasted fresh brioche bun, very good meat that's not overcooked and traditional toppings. A little bit of mayonnaise adds to the luxurious mouthfeel. A classic," Louise M.



36

36. Lemon Pie, Birdog

The much-nominated lemon pie is Chef's Tony Lee's homage to chef Peter Johner's lemon pizza. (Remember Boccalino and Packrat Louie's?) The modern interpretation is delicious, just the thing to have with a few cocktails at Birdog's bar.



37

37. Baguette Ham Sandwich, Eleanor et Laurent

E&L's take on the classic French *jambon-beurre* hits the mark. "Simple but elevated; what a ham sandwich should taste like," Johanna W. Also nominated was the country sourdough and baguette, and the excellent chocolate croissant.

38. Little Bird, Chartier

Nominators love Chartier for their bread program, the holidays season *tourtière*, the brunch eggs benny and their feature burgers highlighting staff members. And for the drink called the Little Bird. "I'm not a coffee drinker and wanted to try something that was unique to Chartier. The server suggested the Little Bird (cucumber, mint, lime juice) and what a great choice it was—refreshing, unique and beautiful," Charlotte W.

39. Old English Battered Fish & Chips, Catch of the Week

"The perfectly light and crispy batter encases flavourful, tender, flaky cod—served with the right amount of house-made tartar sauce and a fabulous creamy coleslaw. And the chips! Classic homemade fries that are crisp on

the outside and soft on the inside. These fish and chips (and if we are lucky, a visit with chef Brad Smoliak in the kitchen) and a bottle of sparkling wine is the perfect takeout combo," Juanita R.



40

40. Maple Bourbon, Kind Ice Cream

Kind Ice Cream was the first of the indie ice cream shops. And all of a sudden going for ice cream became a thing again. Now there is two (soon to be three) locations, which takes the pressure off the Richie spot where the lineup can stretch around the block. Nominators went crazy for the Maple Bourbon and the Lemon Jammy Strawberry (vegan too!) as well as the Birthday Cake (especially if you are under 10). And yes, there were votes for vanilla.



41

41. Baguette with Dukkah and Olive Oil, Cavern

Cavern is the place for fine, well-conditioned cheese, but it's also a terrific place to have snacks and wine. "Of course, the cheese boards (pictured) are amazing, as was the dukkah and olive oil with baguette with a lovely glass of wine," Cindy G. Cecilia Groblicka, Cavern's

co-owner, says the dish is a classic wine bar snack down under (she is Australian). Their dukkah (a Middle Eastern condiment made with seeds, nuts and herbs) is delightful, with cumin and coriander seeds and toasted pistachio and almond nuts.



42

42. Pita and Roasted Garlic Hummus, The Happy Camel

The Happy Camel's hummus is always fresh and tasty. As is the pillowy (Israeli-style) pita. "The pitas are always so fresh with the perfect texture and the roasted garlic hummus is my favorite. Not just for pita but veggies too it's perfect every time," Anita A. Also nominated, the dill pickle hummus with its bits of dill pickle, robust pickle flavour and creamy texture.



43

43. Cured Sammie, Caffé Sole

"The number 1, the Cured Sammie, is a delightful flavour combo. The three different types of salami make each bite different and the bread it's on is delicious. Lovely owners, great cafe, the best coffee in Edmonton," Kenneth B. "The number 7 (Cheezy Prez) and an Americano. On those days that you don't feel like going to exercise class, the thought of having these two is what gets me going—a great combo," David W. "It's a cozy little cafe with a wonderful atmosphere, nice to visit to get a coffee or one of their delicious Mexican hot chocolates," Anna Y.

Please see "Top 100" next page.

Shawn Hicks photo

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Top 100

Continued from previous page.

44. Michel Cluizel Chocolate, Twice Cream Ice Cream

This newish (opened summer 2022) shop across from the park in Westmount makes ice cream with an astonishing depth of flavour and beautiful texture. Nominated: Michel Cluizel Chocolate, Brazilian Canadian Coffee and Rose Saffron Pistachio ice creams. Look for features and rotating flavours like the Choco Cherry and the vegan ice creams made with cashew and coconut milk.

45. Spicy Pepperoni and Dill Pickle Soup, Pals Sandwiches

“The spicy pepperoni and dill pickle soup is a perfect mix of warm, creamy, spicy and pickled. It is the best soup in Edmonton and it’s not even close,” Riphay A.



Curtis Comeau photo

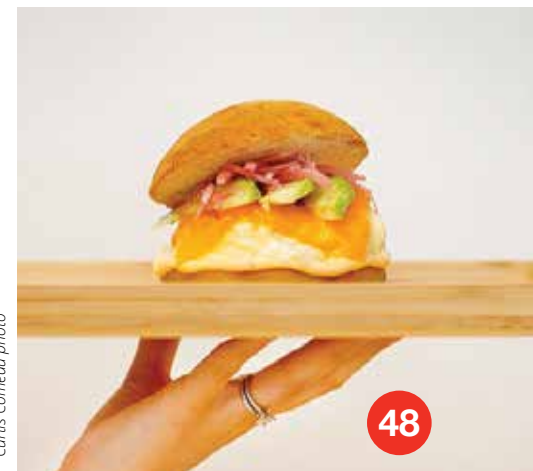
46. Uncle Le's Lemon Chicken, Rebel Food and Drink

“Uncle Le’s lemon chicken is a unique dish from exec chef Tony Le—karage chicken, Meyer lemon, citrus honey, fresh herbs, yummy,” Curtis C.



47. Sour Cherry Gelato, Little Bear Gelato

“The sour cherry gelato is tart and sweet and truly my favorite frozen dessert,” Anita A. Nominators also love the Belgian choc and the mango passion fruit—so full of rich natural flavours. “Great taste, great flavour selection. High quality product,” Kim Q.



Curtis Comeau photo

48. Good Morning Bunwich, Brown Butter Café

House-made milk bun, egg and pickle. That is, essentially, the ingredients of this ever-popular breakfast sandwich at the south side café. “It’s oh so delicious! “All of the ingredients come together so well and the specialty buns are to die for,” Nutavikarn C. “This bunwich has a perfect combination of sweet, savoury and a little bite from the pickled onion. It is a perfect combination for a breakfast sandwich,” Madeleine D.

49. Prairie Fairy, Sea Change Brewing Co.

Among the many Sea Change beers nominated, the Prairie Fairy remains the favourite. Here’s why. “This brewed in Edmonton blackberry-raspberry wheat ale is a delicious and refreshing beer that gives back to the 2SLGBTQ+ community. A portion of proceeds from every can and keg has helped to raise funds to support over 30 different community groups in Edmonton. This beer tastes great and makes the world a better place, one pint at a time,” Keith A.

50. Po'Boys, DaDeO

The enduringly quirky Whyte Avenue eatery inspires devotion and not only for the po’boys. “The ownership is kind and considerate, the servers are attentive and professional. It would make our heart swell with pride if you could pass along some love for this divine restaurant. Dadeo is an Edmonton gem and the world should know about Dadeo. We can’t imagine Whyte Avenue without Dadeo,” Sean W.

51. Tap Water, Epcor

“The drinking water in Edmonton is under-rated, but you wouldn’t know that until you move away. I moved from Edmonton to Toronto and what the 6ix does not have is Canada’s best drinking water, which Edmonton truly does have. I’ll have a cold, wet, glass of the Sask any day,” Michelle L. 🍷

London calling

Every parent of adult children has been caught saying ‘it feels like it was just yesterday that you were born.’

We have been reminiscing about the 28 years since Nicolas completed our little family. I believe this to be normal for parents to do when their child gets married.

Nic is marrying his forever love Lindsay in London this spring. We could not be more excited. A whole crew are headed across the pond for the occasion.

Nicolas is a rare bird among the Pawl/Smo family. He is the only Pawl grandchild and only one of two Smo grandchildren. This is a big event for all of us.

Are UK weddings the same as Canadian weddings? What do we need to know? Will it be a hat or a fascinator? Long dress or short?

Our only points of reference are royal weddings. Although this will be lovely it is far from a Buckingham Palace event. There will be no glass carriage, but there will be a double decker bus. Lindsay and Nic will not have 30 people in their wedding party, but they will have their best friends and a dapper 4-year-old ring bearer in his traditional kilt of family tartan. There are family jewels: Lindsay’s engagement ring was Nic’s Granny’s, and his wedding band was his great grandfather’s.



What we have learned is that UK weddings are marathons. Wedding at 12:30pm, followed by cocktails and canapes, then speeches and lunch, then dancing to a band, more food and more dancing to a DJ. There will be multiple shoe changes. The fascinator will come off (or fall off). The perfectly applied make-up will slide off. I’m sure one of my earrings will end up on the floor and, as you can only stuff yourself into a sausage casing for so long before you’ve got to let yourself free, my expensive Spanx will likely get thrown in the bin.

The food, always important for this food-obsessed family, is going to be special. Nic consulted with the chef and culinary team on the menu. It’s something extra special, with kielbasa as a nod to Canada; bowls of fresh English peas with Maldon salt; porchetta and warm Jersey Royals (potatoes) with dill cream. The pudding (aka dessert) is cranachan, a traditional Scottish dessert made with whiskey, heather honey, cream and oats. The wine? Curated by St. John (where Nic works part time). The venue is a reclaimed, over 200-year old dairy, the perfect backdrop for this unique couple’s reception.

The Smos are over the moon!
PS: It’s short dress and fascinator. 🍷

Leanne Smoliak’s greatest compliment came from her father-in-law: “She’s the perfect Ukrainian wife, she keeps a full fridge and a well-stocked bar.”

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Easter Family Favourites

We asked good cooks around town about what dishes make them happy at Easter and what traditional foods they may have grown up with. The result? A collection of Ukrainian, British, Italian, Filipino and Danish family favourites. Happy Easter!

Easter Babka

“The Ukrainian Easter tradition is to prepare a basket of specific foods on Saturday. They are blessed, then eaten after Sunday mass. These foods include butter, cheese, salt, kielbasa or ham, pysanky, beet relish or vinaigrette, boiled eggs and babka or paska. They are often decorated with flowers, candles or embroidered cloth.”
—Cindy Lazarenko, Culina Family

In a large mixing bowl add:

- 1 c granulated sugar
- ½ c unsalted butter (softened)
- 10 egg yolks

Cream together until smooth. Set aside.

In a medium bowl add:

- 1½ c milk
- 1 pkg traditional yeast
- 1 c all-purpose flour

Whisk until foamy. Then add:

- 1 c warm water
- ½ t salt
- 1 t vanilla

Stir well. Add milk mixture to egg mixture. Then add:

- 7 c all-purpose flour
- 1½-2 c raisins (soak in 1/3 cup water or rum for 20 minutes and then drain)

Mix all ingredients well until dough forms a ball. Dough will be sticky.

Transfer dough to a floured surface, adding more flour as needed and knead for 5 to 10 minutes. Place dough in a lightly greased bowl and cover with a clean tea towel. Let rise for two hours. After two hours punch down with your fists to deflate. Then let rise for another two hours.

Grease your hands and pinch off pieces of dough and drop into well-greased tins, approximately 1/3 full. Press gently with floured fingers to fill in gaps and smooth tips.

Let rise for another 1½ to 2 hours (cover with tea towel).

Brush with egg wash (1 egg + 1 T water). Bake for 30 minutes at 350°F until very golden brown. Leave in cans for 10 to 15 minutes and they should pop out easily.

Let loaves cool on their sides, rotating every so often to help keep their shape.

Yields 6-7 loaves depending on size of tins.

Tips: We use 796 ml tomato cans. Make sure the cans are food grade-safe when heated and that their interiors do not have a coating inside (usually white) because the plastics and chemicals in the coating can leach into the bread. Babka is traditionally baked in cylindrical tins but can be baked in regular loaf pans or even a Bundt pan. Whichever you choose, be sure internal temperature reaches 200°F.

Hot Cross Buns

“Be patient with the dough—it will take some time—be sure to wait until it holds a fingerprint during the initial rise and resists being pinched in the final prove.”
—Kaelin Whittaker, Awn Kitchen

Dough

- 625 g strong (bread) flour
- 80 g brown sugar
- 1 t ground mixed spice (not allspice)
- 1 t ground ginger
- 1 t ground cinnamon
- 15 g fine sea salt
- 25 g zest of 2 oranges (optional)
- 25 g fresh yeast (half the quantity of dry)
- 2 egg yolks (save the whites for meringues)
- 250 g cold water
- 50 g warm water
- 125 g unsalted butter, at room temperature, cut into 1 cm cubes

Dried Fruit

- 125 g citrus peel
- 125 g raisins
- 125 g currants

Mix the yeast with the warm water and set aside. In a large mixing bowl, mix your flour, sugar, spices, citrus zest (if using). Make a well in the centre and add the cold water, yeast mixture and egg yolks. Holding your dominant hand like a claw, and using your other hand to support the bowl, get in and begin to

mix the dough. You can either mimic the motion of a dough hook on a machine, or just mix. If you feel that you do not have enough liquid in the dough at this stage, it is better off to add a bit more (starting in 15 g increments) before you have mixed the dough beyond looking shaggy, or it will be much harder to incorporate. Keep in mind that there can be a lot of moisture on your fingers, so it is worth stopping and using a dough scraper to clean off your hand. Once you have a rough dough, turn the dough out onto a clean work surface, scraping the bowl clean with your dough scraper. Begin kneading the dough by pushing the dough away from you, folding it over itself and giving the dough a quarter turn, repeating this motion until you have a smooth dough that is no longer sticky.

Once your dough reaches this point, knead in the fruit into the dough ensuring it is incorporated well. Tidy the dough into a round and place back into the mixing bowl and cover.

Leave the dough to rest until it has doubled in size; this will take 1-2 hours. Your dough should hold an indent when pushed with your finger at this point and not spring back.

Tip the dough out onto a well-floured work surface, divide into 2 equal pieces for loaves or 120 g pieces for buns. Shape into rounds and place on a parchment lined baking tray. Leave to prove for about 1 hour until they have doubled in size and when pushed lightly there is a spring in the dough.

The Cross and Egg Wash

- 100 g strong flour
- pinch sugar
- pinch salt
- 120 g water

To make the cross, mix the flour, sugar and salt together, add the water and whisk using a fork into a thick paste. Fill into a piping bag or a zip lock bag and cut the end of opening a small hole.

Once the buns have proved, brush on the egg wash (1 egg plus 1 t water) and pipe a cross onto each bun.

Bake in a preheated oven (400°F) for 5 minutes before turning down to 375°F to finish baking for a further 12-15 minutes or until golden.

Makes one large or six small buns.

Grattini in Brodo

“A soup of rich chicken broth, Parmigiano Reggiano and nutmeg bring my sensory memory directly to Easter.” —Daniel Costa, Corso 32 Group

Chicken Broth

Make a day ahead or morning of.

- 2 chicken carcasses
- 1 T olive oil
- 1 carrot, peeled and halved
- 2 stalks celery, halved
- 1 yellow onion, halved
- 1 sprig rosemary
- 1 sprig sage
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 t peppercorns
- 2 rinds Parmigiano
- 12 c cold water
- 1 t salt

Preheat the oven to 450°F. Roast the chicken carcasses on a baking sheet or oven proof pan until deep golden brown. While the chicken is roasting, heat the olive oil in a deep pot over high heat. Add the vegetables and herbs. Fry until the carrots are golden. Add the water, roasted chicken carcass and remaining ingredients. Simmer gently for 3 hours. Strain the broth through a fine mesh sieve, discard the solids. Allow the broth to cool slightly and remove the fat from the top of the broth.

For the Grattini Pasta

- 200 g semolina
- ¼ t kosher salt
- 8 grates nutmeg
- zest from ¼ lemon
- 3 T grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 2 eggs
- 1 T water

Place the semolina, Parmigiano, lemon zest, salt and nutmeg in a food processor. Turn on, add one egg at a time followed by the water. The mixture should resemble coarse couscous. Add a little more semolina if the mixture is too wet, or water if it is too dry. Dump the mixture out onto a kitchen cloth and allow to dry for 1 hour.

For finishing

fresh lemon juice
Parmigiano Reggiano
black pepper
nutmeg

Bring 4-6 cups of the broth to a simmer. Add the grattini and simmer for 4 minutes. Remove from the heat. Season the soup to taste with salt and a squeeze of lemon. Spoon into warmed bowls, top with grated Parmigiano Reggiano, black pepper and a few grates of nutmeg.

Serves 2.

Slow Roasted Cod with Dill Pickle Cream Sauce

“I met a chef from Boston who slow-roasted his thicker cuts of fish, which kept them moist all the way through. I have adopted this method and I think you should consider it too. I am preparing this simple recipe with cod, cold-water fish, often coming from Iceland, mild and meaty with nice big flakes. You can use Arctic char or salmon, serve it family style, or plate it for a formal dinner party.”
—Brad Smoliak

4 6 oz cod fillets
1 T canola oil
salt and pepper

Pre-heat oven to 250°F.

Place the fillets on a parchment lined baking sheet. Drizzle the canola oil over the fillets and season with salt and pepper. Use centre rack of oven.

Cook for 18-20 minutes for medium-white in the middle, firm to the touch.

Dill Pickle Cream Sauce

1 T butter
1 T flour
1¾ c milk
¼ c whipping cream
1 T fresh dill
1 T fine sliced green onion (green part only)
2 T fine-chopped dill pickles
salt and pepper to taste

Melt butter, whisk in flour making a roux. Cook over low heat for 3 minutes. Slowly add milk, whisking vigorously to ensure that no lumps form. Cook for 5 minutes to cook the flour out. Stir regularly making sure you tuck into the edges of the pot. Stir in cream and cook another 2 minutes. Take off the heat and add the rest of the ingredients. Salt may not be needed depending on the salt level of your pickles.

To Serve: Place fish on plate and nap sauce on mid portion of fish. A lovely

accompaniment of oven burst tomatoes with olive oil and fresh herbs and roast little potatoes would be ideal.

Serves 4-6.

How to Cook a Raw Ham

“The crackling is the best part for us, and we find that our ham is so delicious that it doesn't need any fancy treatment. We always cook far more than we need, as cold cooked ham in the fridge is perfect for leftovers. Our hams are smoked, but uncooked. So proper cooking is essential. Most grocery store hams are fully cooked when people buy them, so cooking a raw ham is novelty for some.”—Nicola Irving, *Irving's Farm Fresh*

Take ham out of the packaging and dry off the skin. Use a very sharp knife and score the skin in a ½-inch criss-cross pattern. Rub in a small amount of salt. Place into a roasting tin. Bake uncovered at 425°F for 40 minutes, and then turn down oven to 375°F. Bake for approximately 20 minutes per pound, ensuring internal temperature of 160°F is reached.

If the skin is not crispy enough at the end of cooking, you can place under a broiler for a few minutes but be careful not to burn it.

Ukrainian Nachynka (Cornmeal Dressing)

“This was a family favourite passed down that was always popular for Easter and is wonderful served alongside ham. My personal favourite.”—Myles Fedun, *Meuwly's*

½ c unsalted butter
½ c finely chopped yellow onion
1 c yellow corn meal
pinch nutmeg
5 c whole milk
1 can evaporated milk
3 lg eggs
½ c whipping cream
1 t baking powder
salt and pepper
2 T butter

Preheat oven to 350°F and butter the bottom and sides of a 5L casserole dish or roaster. Set aside.

Sauté the onion in butter until soft and translucent over medium heat. Add the cornmeal and mix until it has soaked up all the butter. Continue to cook for 1 minute to toast the cornmeal. Add nutmeg and set aside. In a saucepan over medium heat, warm milk and evaporated

milk until simmering. Add the cornmeal mixture and cook over medium low heat until mixture is thick and coats the back of a spoon.

In a medium bowl, whisk eggs with cream until smooth. Slowly temper half of the cooked cornmeal mixture into the egg mixture. Be careful not to add it too quickly so the eggs do not curdle. Once half of the corn meal mixture has been added to the eggs you can add this mixture back to the remaining cornmeal. Mix thoroughly.

Stir in baking powder and salt and pepper to taste. Pour the mix into your prepared buttered casserole dish. Dot the top of the cornmeal with butter like you would a pie, cover and bake for about 45 minutes. The edges should start to turn golden brown and the mixture will be set. Remove the lid and bake for another 15 minutes until the top is golden brown as well. Remove from oven and let sit for 15 minutes before serving.

Serves 6-8.

A Danish Easter

Easter in Denmark is celebrated with friends and family over a beautiful luncheon called Påskefrokost. The table would likely include pickled herring, gravlax, marzipan eggs, Danish Easter beer (påskebryg) and lots of snaps! These recipes are inspired by the Danish Easter table.”—Stephanie Moore, *Three Vikings*

Cabbage Slaw

“Historically, on the Thursday before Easter, Danes would eat a soup made from up to nine types of cabbage to ensure good health for the coming year. I have made a slaw inspired by this tradition. If you can't get your hands on nine different types of cabbage, just use what you can find and adjust the amounts accordingly. I wasn't able to find Romanesco so I increased the cauliflower and lacinato kale.”

½ c white cabbage, shredded
½ c red cabbage, shredded
½ c savoy cabbage, shredded
½ c kale, shredded
½ c lacinato kale, shredded
½ c Brussels sprouts, shredded
½ c cauliflower, finely chopped
½ c broccoli, finely chopped
½ c Romanesco, finely chopped
½ c cooked bacon, diced
⅓ c sunflower seeds, toasted
¼ c green onion, chopped

Dressing

3 T olive oil
3 T apple cider vinegar

2 T Greek yogurt
1 T honey
¼ t salt
¼ t pepper

Whisk the dressing ingredients, then toss with the vegetables in a large bowl.

Serves 6-10.

Ale Lamb Shanks with Caraway and Lingonberry

3 T olive oil
4 c thinly sliced onion
1 t caraway seeds
4 cloves garlic, minced
3 T lingonberry jam
2 T apple cider vinegar
1 t chopped fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
3 c dark ale (a Danish Easter beer if you can find it; I used Longroof Brewing 2nd Perspective porter)
3 c unsalted chicken stock
1 t salt
½ t pepper
3 T olive oil
6 lamb shanks
salt and pepper
¼ c cream
2 T parsley, chopped

Heat the oil in a large roasting pan on low heat. Add onions and cook, stirring often, until caramelized. Add the garlic and caraway seeds. Continue stirring for about 2 minutes until the garlic is fragrant. Stir in lingonberry jam, vinegar, thyme, bay, beer, stock, salt and pepper.

In a large frying pan, heat 3 T olive oil on medium-high heat. Season the shanks and brown them on all sides, 2 or 3 at a time, and then put in the roasting pan with the cooked onion mixture. If there are any brown bits in the frying pan, add some stock to loosen them up and add to the roasting pan.

Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer for 1 hour. Turn the lamb and let simmer for another 1½-2 hours until lamb is very tender.

Remove lamb and cover with tin foil. Remove bay leaf. Using an immersion blender, carefully blend the braising liquid. Continue to simmer, uncovered, and reduce for 20-25 minutes until thickened. Stir in cream and check seasoning.

Pour sauce over shanks and sprinkle with parsley to serve.

Serves 6-8.

Please see “Easter” on page 17.

Canadian Culinary Championships

Ottawa chef Briana Kim wins the gold, Edmonton chef Serge Belair takes home the bronze, Vancouver's Bobby Milheron, the silver.



At left: Chefs Bobby Milheron, Briana Kim and Serge Belair celebrate podium finishes. Inset: chef Serge Belair with sous Francis Flores.



It's our first time back in Ottawa since 2019 with a fresh crop of regional winners ready to compete. It's chilly in Ottawa (-30!) but we're cosy inside tasting some great dishes.

There are no guarantees in this competition which starts with the Mystery Wine Challenge (Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Niagara's Clos Jordan). Ottawa chef Briana Kim is on top with an outstanding dish, and chef Belair made a toothsome pâté en croute—a solid performance. Saturday morning's Black Box is cancelled due to a power outage. Tough for the chefs—what do they do with that performance

adrenaline? The judges, on the other hand, went for breakfast.

Edmonton contender, Serge Belair, executive chef at the Convention Centre wins over the audience and fellow competitors with his characteristic bonhomie and relentless focus on excellence. "We want to change the perception of convention food," he says at the Thursday night welcome reception. He continues to alter perceptions all weekend. The end result? A well-made mystery wine dish and lovely and delicious dessert culminates in a bronze medal finish. A dessert at a competition of this calibre is an audacious move, but it paid off and landed him on the podium. Ottawa's

Briana Kim took gold and silver went to Vancouver's Bobby Milheron of Homer St. Cafe & Bar, Tableau Bar Bistro and Maxine's Cafe & Bar.

As one judge said about chef Kim's stunningly good plant-based cuisine, 'we are tasting the future'. Of Briana's competition overall, Ottawa head judge Anne DesBrisay wrote:

"Nobody makes mushrooms taste more muscular than chef Briana Kim. The trick is with fermentation, a weapon in plant-based cuisine that Kim wields with spectacular results at Alice, her four-year-old restaurant in Ottawa's Little Italy and, most recently, at the 2023 Canadian Culinary Championship where she

won the coveted gold medal. Her final dish paired cured maitake mushrooms with a ring of smoked potato, charred corn and barley porridge, funky-sweet rhubarb jerky, petals of pickled onion and a beautiful onion tuile. This was treated with kombu smoke and presented sous cloche. Over this pretty composition, Kim poured a steaming trail of lacto-fermented green tomato brine and koji 'butter' broth, two years in the making and Pearl Morissette's 2019 Irreverence. Her Mystery Wine Pairing dish won the crowd's heart too: she was the People's Choice at that competition, as well as the judges' unanimous first pick."

Brava to all the competitors and congrats chefs! 🍷

Easter

Continued from page 15.

Citron Fromage

"This is a classic Danish spring dessert that my husband grew up eating. Each family will have their own spin on it."

- 2 c icing sugar
- 6 eggs
- 1½ t lemon zest, divided
- ½ t vanilla extract
- 1¾ c whipping cream
- 2 pkgs powdered gelatin
- ¾ c lemon juice
- ½ c hot water

Using an electric mixer, mix sugar, eggs, 1 teaspoon lemon zest and vanilla until pale and fluffy. In another bowl, whip the cream until fluffy and peaks form. Set aside ½ cup. Sprinkle gelatin over lemon juice. Add ½ cup hot water and stir until dissolved. Slowly pour into egg mixture, stirring constantly. Stir in the whipping cream. Pour into 6 bowls and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Garnish with reserved whipping cream and lemon zest.

Serves 6.

Find the recipe for Danish-inspired scalloped potatoes on our website thetomato.ca.

Easter Filipino-style

"In the Philippines the Easter season is observed from Palm Sunday, followed by Holy Monday, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Black Saturday, culminating on Easter Sunday. We refer to this as Semana Santa and it is the second most important cultural holiday season next to Christmas. The mood of the week is sombre with people practicing the discipline of fasting and abstinence. Maundy Thursday is the beginning of the statutory holidays and the mood shifts to a more celebratory one. Filipinos abstain from eating meat this week, opting for fish, seafood and vegetables. The recipes are for two popular Easter dishes, Ginisang Munggo and crispy pan-fried tilapia. Tilapia is a popular fish in the Philippines because of its low cost and mild flavour. —Ariel del Rosorio, Filistix.

Ginisang Munggo (Stewed Mung Beans)

- 1 c dried mung beans
- 6 c water
- 1 T vegetable oil
- 1 onion, peeled and sliced thinly

- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 1 T fish sauce
- 2 c chicharron (pork cracklings with attached meat)
- 1 bunch fresh spinach, stems trimmed

Sort through the mung beans, discarding discolored or shriveled beans and any grit or dirt. Rinse beans in cold, running water until water runs clear. Drain well. In a large pot, combine mung beans and water. Over medium heat, bring to a boil skimming froth that floats on top. Lower heat, cover, and continue to cook for about 45-50 minutes or until the beans have softened and the skins have burst. Add more water as needed to maintain 4 cups.

In another pot over medium heat, heat oil. Add onions and garlic and cook until tender and aromatic. Add tomatoes and cook, mashing with the back of the spoon, until softened. Add fish sauce and continue to cook for about 1 to 2 minutes. Add cooked mung beans including liquid. Bring to a boil. Add pork cracklings and continue to cook until softened. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add spinach, turn off heat and cover pot for about 1-2 minutes or until spinach is just wilted. Serve hot.

Serves 4-6.

Fried Tilapia

- 2 whole tilapia (1½ lb each, scaled and gutted)
- 2 t salt
- 2 T canola oil

Rinse the tilapia thoroughly outside and inside the cavity, then dry thoroughly with paper towel. With a sharp knife, make 3-4 deep diagonal cuts on the fleshy sides of the tilapia. Sprinkle generously outside and inside the fish with salt and allow to cure for 15-20 minutes. This will season nicely and firm up the flesh to a meaty texture.

Add the oil to a deep wok or frying pan and turn to medium to medium high heat until oil reaches 350°F. Gently lay the fish away from you and cover with splash guard immediately as the oil will sputter and pop, guaranteed. Set time for 6-7 minutes depending on the thickness of the fish. After 6-7 minutes flip the fish and fry for an additional 6-7 minutes until an amber, golden brown. Set aside on a drip rack for 5 minutes to rest and crisp up.

Serve with diced tomato and onion with a splash of soy sauce and vinegar.

Serves 2-3. 🍷

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Wine Maven



Umbrian producer Enzo Barbi (Decugnano) at lunch at Dalla.

Enzo Barbi from boutique producer Decugnano dei Barbi

was in town recently for a series of tasting and dinners. This family winery will have you thinking differently about wines from Orvieto. The **2020 Villa Barbi Orvieto Classico** could become your new fridge door white, soft-textured, with pretty herbal aromas and flavours. The **Mare Antico Orvieto Classico Superiore** was mind-blowing—savoury, a little salty, with amazing presence, evocative, with a super long finish. We tasted the 2019, but the 2021 is in shops soon. Good to know you can drink now or cellar for a few years. The **2019 Umbria Rosso**, a Sangiovese blend, was delicious, and the Syrah-dominant **2019 AD 1212 Umbria Rosso IGT** is powerful, aromatic, concentrated, yet effortless—a brawny wine with elegance. Interesting note, the original cellars date to 1212 and the wines are aged in the subterranean grottos built by the Etruscans. The vineyards will be certified organic in 2024.



Giorgio Bava of Cocchi (centre) with RGE RD's Blair Lebsack (left) and Caitlyn Fulton at The Butchery.



“Cocchi is a family business started in 1891 by

Guilio Cocchi and bought by my family (Piero Bava) in the ‘70s. First and foremost we are wine producers. Everything is wine based,” says **Giorgio Bava** from **Cocchi Asti 1891**. The **Americano Aperitivo** possesses big, round full-bodied flavours of elderflower, orange, tropical fruit. Drink long with soda, or in a Modern Spritz, with fresh grapefruit juice and Prosecco. The **Americano Rosa Aperitivo**, from Brachetto and Malvasia grapes, has such a pretty nose—vanilla, ginger, rose petal. Drink with tonic and a sliver of orange peel, in a Rosa Negroni or a Tequila Negroni. The **Vermouth di Torino Extra Dry** is full-bodied, with a lovely-mouth feel, a hint of salinity and warm citrus flavours. “Vermouth di Torino is produced and packaged in Piedmont with specific ingredients including wormwood. Only Italian wine,” says Giorgio. **Storico Vermouth di Torino** is the classic 1891 recipe made with 30 botanicals—Christmas spices, marmalade, well-balanced, mouth-filling, effortless, fresh. Enjoy with charcuterie. A beautiful drink. The **Dopo Teatro Vermouth Amaro** is a complex after dinner drink—delicate wood smoke, warm spices, wild herbs with balsamic flavours.

“When we think of sherry

we think of Jerez,” says **Alvaro Ruiz, Bodegas Alvear**, “as that was the port it was shipped from. It’s a wine from Andalucia and Bodegas Alvear is the oldest wine company in Cordoba. The company has only had eight CEOs in its history and in the 1800s three of them were women.” Alvear makes their beautiful fortified wines, vermouth and brandy from Pedro Ximénez grapes (aka PX). Recently the wines have found a new audience, in bartenders, mixologist and lovers of cocktails, including Cody Stephenson, bar manager at DOSC.

“The **All Inclusive** cocktail is nice and frothy. Vanilla assists the pineapple with its tropical flavours, lime adds acidity. The rest of the flavours are from the extraordinary sherry.

*1.75 oz cold black tea
1 oz fresh pineapple juice
.25 oz fresh lime juice*

*1 oz house-made vanilla syrup
1 oz Alvear Medium Dry Sherry*

Shake all the ingredients together and strain into a cocktail glass. Makes 1.



Alvaro Ruiz, Bodegas Alvear (right) with Cody Stephenson, at DOSC.



Andreas Bender

was in town recently for a casual wine dinner at Otto. Andreas makes wine in both the Mosel and the Pfalz regions, searching out vineyards with old vines, which are better able to handle extremes in

weather. Riesling and sausage? A given, perhaps, but no less delicious. Look for the outstandingly versatile **Paulessen Trocken** (crisp and juicy) or the ageable **Blattenberg Kabinett Riesling** (balanced sweetness with complexity) and the **Bender Pinot Noir**, which puts paid to the notion that Germany cannot produce excellent red wines. Look for the magnum (we saw them at Color de Vino), well-priced and perfect if you are hosting a crowd at Easter.



Andreas Bender (Bender Wein) with Ed Donszelmann (Otto).



Mary Bailey



Kelsey (L) and Juanita Roos (Color de Vino) with Alberto Paltrinieri.

“People think Lambrusco

is simple, banal and sweet,” says **Alberto Paltrinieri**.

Paltrinieri Sorbara makes Lambrusco that are far from simple, decidedly not banal and not that sweet.

Lambrusco is a family of grapes—26 different varieties. His family is known for Lambrusco di Sorbara. We taste through the wines with dim sum (perhaps Lambrusco’s ideal food partner, after Prosciutto di Parma that is). The first four are all **Lambrusco di Sorbara DOC**.

The **Sant’ Agata Bio** is a revelation. Single vineyard, with subtle flavours, balanced, beautiful texture.

Leclisse is a selection from 45-year-old vines; lovely and fresh with strawberry and lime notes. **Radice** is focused, concentrated, with bright flavours of red fruit and citrus flavours, rich and beautifully balanced. The **Piria** is a 70-30 blend with Lambrusco Salumino, richer, heavier, fantastic with the pork buns. The **Solco Lambrusco dell’Emilia IGT** is 100 per cent Salumino, with mouth-filling flavours of plum and prune, the sweetest of the group, with balancing acidity. Beautiful wines, worth your attention.

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- 1. Introduce yourself!** If you can't name your neighbours, you've got some work to do. Knowing who you live next to is a great way to build a strong community.
- 2. Roll up your sleeves!** If you see your neighbour out in their yard doing spring cleaning, head over and offer to lend a hand. You may even get to share a tasty beverage with a new friend.
- 3. Find out your neighbour's favourite beverage.** That way, you can stock up at Sherbrooke before inviting them over.

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Spring beer

**“Springtime in Alberta
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~ Ian Tyson

We lost Alberta icon Ian Tyson just after Christmas but we know his music will live on. Every Alberta spring when the ‘warm sunny days, endless skies of blue’ end when ‘another winter storm comes raging through,’ I’ll cue up *Springtime in Alberta* on the stereo. Often that means the car stereo as we head through an April snowstorm on our way to Easter with family. Upon arrival, conversation moves from the road report and the weather to ‘what wine goes with ham (or turkey or lamb)?’, with the beer guy interjecting, “Well actually, beer pairs better than wine.”

Wine gets most of the glory in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Jesus turned water into wine. Passover and Holy Communion are marked by the sharing of wine. And of course, wine filled the Holy Grail at the Last Supper. In 2016 two Italian archaeologists postulated that the Last Supper menu may have been lamb, a bean stew, olives, bitter herbs, unleavened bread, dates and aromatized wine (wine flavoured with fruits, spices and florals). Still, twelve men meet for their good friend’s send off and no one drinks beer? Seems unlikely! Beer and Christianity do go way back, with many saints of suds and apostles of ale over the years. St. Brigid, the Irish saint of beer, made one barrel of beer last all Easter weekend, with enough ale for 18 churches. She changed a leper colony’s bathwater into beer through the strength of her faith. Blessed St. Brigid!

It was medieval monks in Europe who kept the knowledge of brewing alive during the dark times and advanced the art and science of beer making with their monastery breweries. The remaining Belgian Trappist monastery breweries of Achel, Chimay, Orval, Rochefort, Westmalle and Westvleteren carry on the brewing tradition today. One of those monkish traditions is the brewing of bock beer during the winter, for enjoyment in spring and at Easter with the end of Lent. Bock is a German style of dark, strong, malt-forward lager that began with monks in the 14th century in the northern German city of Einbeck. Bock and its sub-styles, Helles Bock, Maibock, Weizenbock and Doppelbock remain popular with German brewers and drinkers, but not so much on this side of the Atlantic.



Shiner Bock and Rogue Dead Guy Ale are the two notable exceptions to the rule that craft brewers don’t brew bock beers. Here in Alberta, Fahr Brewing makes traditional German styles but only brews bocks like Weizenbock or Doppelbock as limited release seasonals. Malty beer fans need not despair, for Alberta brewers were busy brewing some bock-adjacent beers this winter, for release this spring. We’re talking rich, malt-focussed dark lagers, black/Cascadian ales and IPAs and amber ales and lagers—all beers that can transition us from the heavy stouts and porters of winter to the lawnmower lagers of summer. And yes, they go well with ham, turkey and lamb, so go ahead and bring them to the dinner table at Easter or Passover or your spring bacchanal.

Spring beer six pack

Celebrate spring with six brand new beers that transition us from the big beers of winter to the light lagers of summer. Available at the breweries or from better beer stores.



SYC Night Rider Robust Dark Lager, Edmonton

Tell me you've made a bock without telling me you've made a bock. This rich, dark lager has all the hallmarks of a bock: full-bodied with notes of espresso and dark chocolate, a fragrant nose of dried figs and oatmeal cookies, flavours of roasty malts, sweet molasses and dried dark fruit.

Blindman Foedered Lager: Amber, Lacombe

The latest from Blindman in their series of lagers aged in the 3,000 litre oak foeder nicknamed Woody Barrelson. This amber lager balances malty sweetness with some assertive bitterness. It is biscuity with rich malty flavours. Blindman notes it is perfect for post spring skiing, or settling in for the night.



Alley Kat Black Gold Cascadian Dark Ale, Edmonton

Cascadian, dark or black ales and IPAs are the perfect spring beers, with the rich malt taste of a wintry stout or porter plus the fresh hop bitterness of a summertime IPA. Alley Kat's take is a rich dark ale, with aromas and flavours of roasted malts, coffee and toffee plus a hint of hoppy citrus.



Annex Dark Adaptation Black IPA, Calgary

Annex says this Black IPA is as bright on the palate as it is dark in the glass. Grounded in dark malt, they hopped heavily with Vic Secret and Amarillo hops to bring out the IPA side of things. A throwback to the days when Black IPAs were big, bold, roasty, aromatic and bitter.



Blind Enthusiasm Sojourn in Sicily Wild Ale, Edmonton

Sicily in spring? Yes, please. Blind Enthusiasm's new mixed fermentation blend spent 20 months fermenting in Sicilian Marsala wine barrels, resulting in a robust, complex beer with a subtle red berry aroma, walnut and maple flavours and medium high acidity.

Establishment Beyond the Pines West Coast IPA, Calgary

Sometimes it snows in April but sometimes it's summer-sunny and warm. That's when you need a West Coast-style IPA like this new one from Establishment. It's their first West Coast IPA in years, 'a pleasant, sunny afternoon stroll down a forested path'—properly piney and purposely clear and loaded with classic American hops. 🌲



Peter Bailey is a true believer in beer, books and bagels. He's @Libarbarian on Twitter and Instagram.



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Kitchen Sink What's new and notable

wine tastings happenings and events

Lone Pine Distilling (10375 59 Avenue, 587-469-8099, lonepinedistilling.ca) has an engaging series of events coming up. On Thursdays March 16 and April 6, enjoy a comedy show with national and international comics and Karaoke every Friday night from 8pm. The Edmonton Craft Beer Festival is happening March 10 and 11. On March 11, get rid of all your frustrations at **Pound and Pour**. It's a 45-minute intro to Pound Fitness class followed by a cocktail. Proceeds to the Rock and Roll Society's Centre for Arts and Music (CAM) program, \$40/p++. Tix to all events on Eventbrite.

Café Bicycleette (8627 91 Street, 587-524-8090, cafebicycleette.ca) brings back its extraordinary *terrasse à sucre* (sugar shack dinners) on March 24, 25, 31 and April 1, 8, 14 and 15. Enjoy a taste of Quebec in five courses in a wood-heated, outfitters tent. Expect maple. Tix: \$85/p all in, on Eventbrite.

Take **A Study of French Red Wine Regions** with sommelier **Stacey-Jo Strombecky** at **Color de Vino** (9606 82 Avenue, 780-439-9069, colordevino.ca). In this four-class primer, Stacey-Jo will tour you through four major wine regions, talk about and taste the differences in vinification, viticulture and history. Expect to taste both classic and contemporary wine styles. Headed to France? Or just want to expand your knowledge with an expert; this class will give you a good foothold. Four Wednesdays (March 22 and 29; April 5 and 12), both online and in-store (limited seating) tickets available, \$149.99/p++ tickets on Eventbrite.

restaurant buzz

Three Vikings (10713 124 Street, 780-249-6302, threevikings.ca) is hosting the **Dead Vinyl Society** from 3-6pm, Sunday, March 5. Peruse great vinyl while you snack and sip on frosty pints. Find their tasty snacks at the **Edmonton Craft Beer Festival**, March 10 and 11. Expect Irish food specials and Irish beers and ciders on special St. Paddy's Day, Friday,

March 17. But we can't promise you it will be green. And, there is a beer pairing event with **Longroof Brewing** in April, no other info as yet. Let's hope for sunny skies in April for patio beers!

Win a trip to Italy! What a way to celebrate an anniversary. **Rosso Pizzeria** (8738 109 Street, pizzeriarosso109.com) is turning 10 this year and they want to send two lucky people to Italy. Pop in soon for a delicious wood-fired pizza and all the details on how to win.

product news

Meuwly's (10706 124 Street, 587-786-3560, meuwlys.com) spectacular smoked honey hams are available for this Easter. Each order includes a jar of their delicious house-made grainy mustard. Pre-order on their website and pick up in-store, April 6-8.

Heart of the Home (12538 102 Avenue, 780-705-4928, heartofthehomeyeg.ca) donates \$1 from every sale this March to the **Alberta Homeward Hounds Local Animal Rescue**. You could top up too, at the donation box in the store. **Fuse & Sip** in-stock merchandise is 25 per cent off this month. On St. Patrick's Day weekend (March 17-19) all things green are 15 per cent off. The **Annual Easter Egg Hunt** is Saturday, April 8. On Easter Weekend, the shop will be open Good Friday from 10am-4pm, and closed Easter Sunday.

Congratulations to the **Old Strathcona Farmers' Market** (10310 83 Avenue, 780-439-1844, osfm.ca) celebrating 40 years in the community this year. The Market started July, 1983 in the parking lot on Gateway Boulevard with a handful of vendors. Eventually, it moved into its present home, the TransAlta Bus Barns and became a year-round market. Today, you'll find over 130 local vendors, including originals like Maplewood Acres, Riverbend Gardens and the Holden Colony. There is a block party and other events happening in July. Stay tuned! 🍷

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