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2023 Kitchen Party competing chefs: 1. Levi Biddlecombe, Backstairs Burger; 2. Bri Campbell, Restaurant May; 3. Earl Briones, Birdog; 4. JP Dublado, Red Deer Resort and Casino; 5. Winnie Chen, Fu's Repair Shop; 6. Jesse Woodland, Central Social Hall; 7. Doreen Prei, Riverview at Glenora Park; 8. Robert Wick, Northern Chicken. Cover photo-illustration Jan Thalheimer.



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Dish

got your tix? kitchen party is october 12

On Thursday October 12, eight Edmonton chefs will vie for the opportunity to compete in the Canadian Culinary Championships next February. The contenders: Levi Biddlecombe, Backstairs Burger; Earl Briones, Birdog; Bri Campbell, Restaurant May; Winnie Chen, Fu's Repair Shop; JP Dublado, Red Deer Resort and Casino; Doreen Prei, Riverview at Glenora Park; Robert Wick, Northern Chicken; Jesse Woodland, Central Social Hall (see photos on the cover). It's a fun night with great food, live music and the chance to support youth via Musicounts, SpiritNorth and local food charities. Enjoy nibbles by the 2022 champ, chef Serge Belair, and a special tasting of some of Canada's best wines with David Lawrason at the VIP event. Tix: greatkitchenparty.com.



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chartier is closing

Chartier is closing at the end of September. This is sad news for all the fans of this wonderful spot on Beaumont's main street. Chartier was a perennial on the Tomato Top 100. We will miss this cheerful spot, the delicious food and drink they served and the atmosphere they created over the past eight years. "The outpouring of support has been incredible," says Sylvia Cheverie, co-owner of Chartier. "People are rallying around us asking what can they do, how they can help." The news reminds us that while running a restaurant has always been hard, it's even worse now. "It's unsustainable. Flour has tripled, salt has quadrupled. Our utilities are \$4,000, \$5,000 a month. Interest rates, we are paying more just to exist. Everything has gone up far quicker than the consumer is willing or able to support. This is an issue happening across Canada," says Sylvia. "Other independent restaurant owners are seeing the same things. It's an industry-wide problem that needs to be solved."



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dolly's cocktail bar

It's pink, it's whimsical and has great food. That's Dolly's Cocktail Bar, located in the former Fu's (and even further back, Glenora fish and chips) on 109 Street. It's been the summer of pink for sure, but the namesake here is Dolly Parton, not that other dolly. The inventive menu by Joshua Nhan, with Peruvian, Italian and Asian influences, has lots to love, starting with a salmon sashimi

with a piquant passion fruit sauce. The Huancayo-style fried potatoes (with a spicy cheese sauce) were delicious as was the *lomo saltado* (grilled steak) on risotto. Speaking of cocktails, when Niki Willis is in the house, you know the drinks will be delicious. Dolly's is light-hearted and fun, definitely another winner from The Common/Fu's group of restaurants. Open Wednesday to Sunday from 5pm. Dolly's Cocktail Bar, 9902 109 Street, www.dollyscocktails.ca.

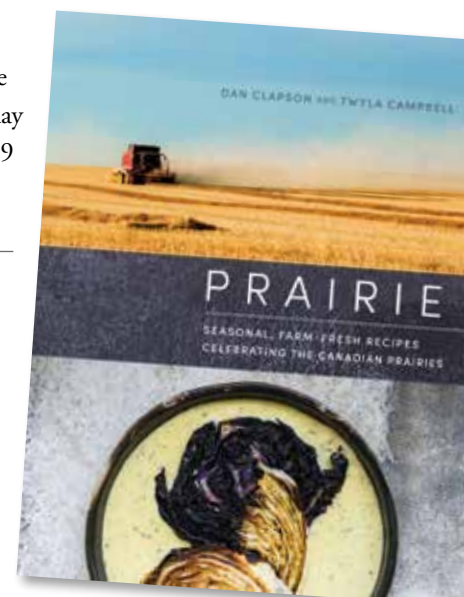
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the prairie companion

Twyla Campbell and Dan Clapson debut *Prairie: Seasonal Farm-Fresh Recipes Celebrating the Canadian Prairies* (Appetite by Random House, \$37.50). This collection of 100 recipes is a winner. These two Alberta food writers know their stuff. The layout is straightforward, by season (the winter section starts with the sentence: 'Minus 30



doesn't scare us'). Each section ends with cocktails that incorporate fruit wine, mead and other things grown here. The last chapter, called Staples, is a goldmine, with recipes for syrups, sauces and spice rubs, dressings, vinaigrettes and chef Carla Alexander's recipe for ricotta. The book is clever, it's funny and there is some delicious cooking in these pages. We can't wait to make Twyla's crispy sunchokes, or Dan's version of chef Christine Sandford's cheese curds. The gorgeous photography is by Calgary-based Dong Kim. *Prairie* is a treasure; it belongs in every good cook's library. More about Twyla Campbell in Feeding People, page 16.



barrel fest tickets on sale now

Brewers across the country are devoting time and energy to the wonders of barrel fermentation and barrel-aging. Blind

Enthusiasm wants you to taste why. The Ritchie-based brewing company, headed by Greg Zeschuk, hosts the inaugural Barrel Fest to explore and celebrate this unique style of beer. Taste beers and ciders from Category 12 (BC), Nokomis (Saskatchewan), Low Life (Manitoba), 2 Crows (Nova Scotia) and Alberta breweries such as Annex, Blindman, Blind Enthusiasm, Cabin, Campio, Endeavour, Establishment, Grain Bin, Town Square, Trial & Ale and Uncommon Cider. Sounds like a blast. From 1pm-5pm, Saturday, September 23 at Ritchie Park, 7727 98 Street. Tix: \$35+ \$4 pours, includes a commemorative glass, blindenthusiasm.ca/barrel-fest.

eat more beans ...

... and lentils and chickpeas. Alberta Pulse Growers held a dinner this summer at the Old Red Barn near Leduc. The challenge for chef Jesse Chambers of Wetaskiwin's Farm to Table Catering? Incorporate Alberta-grown beans and lentils in every course. Challenge more than met; challenge exceeded. The menu was delicious—fava beans and sprouts on crostini, red lentils in the soup,

Chef Jesse Chambers and kitchen crew.



green lentils in the elegant beet salad, pinto beans in the hearty cassoulet served with braised bison short rib and a flourless chickpea and chocolate brownie with haskaps for dessert. "We buy from all the local farmers' markets and Gallimax Trading (based in southern Alberta) supplies what we can't get from next door," says chef. Bravo to chef and the Alberta farmers growing all those delicious pulses. Find many tasty recipes using pulses here: albertapulse.com/recipe.

gotta get that sinclair street candy!

Thane Chambers and Jason Webb make an amazing peanut butter brittle. "It's a soft brittle with some addictive qualities," says Thane. Roger that. It's so delicious, you will have a hard time stopping at one piece. They met in the kitchen at Chateau Lake Louise. Now, Thane is a librarian and Jason, the food service manager at a seniors' community, but they still like to explore in the kitchen. Taste their delicious candy at the St. Albert Farmers' Market on September 16 and 30. While you are picking up boxes of brittle, ask for a taste of whatever they are working on. Caramels maybe? Or peanut butter taffy? Yum. Sinclair Street Candy Company, sinclairstreetcandycompany.weebly.com.



l'oca is coming

Plans for L'oca Quality Market, the upscale grocery store opening in Sherwood Park in the spring, are being hatched in an Edmonton strip mall. There, in the test kitchen, the team has been testing recipes and cocktails, sourcing local and beyond suppliers and setting up an efficient back office. Joshua Thatcher heads up the team with Paul Moran as culinary director and James David running the bakery. There will be grocery, gourmet take-away, a full service bakery and chocolatiere, specialty cheese, a deli, butchery, foundry (roisserie and wood-fired pizza), coffee and two restaurants (the higher end, sleekly modern Oro, and the more casual Pyro, with wood-fired food) and a wine shop with somm Tara Smith. If you are familiar with Eataly, it's a similar concept. The second location at Ellerslie Road and Calgary Trail is already in the works. The Sherwood Park location is expected to open after Easter, 2024. L'oca, 340 Baseline Road, Sherwood Park, loca.ca.

new japanese in crestwood

Chef Tony Le (Century Hospitality Group) has opened a new resto in Crestwood, the Japanese-inspired Stingray. Highlights: the gyoza, the rainbow grilled veg and of course sushi and sashimi—spicy tuna handrolls; torched salmon with tobiko and cucumber. It's somewhere you can take the whole family, with a cute kid's menu called Lil Samurais and there's even a burger. Open daily, from 3pm on Sundays and holidays. High Tide Happy Hour daily and Sundays. Check it out! Stingray, 9682 142 Street, centuryhospitality.com/stingray.

Below: exec chef Tony Le in the kitchen at Stingray.



KITCHEN PARTY CONTENDERS FAVOURITE FALL DISHES

Eight chefs, eight recipes. We asked the 2023 Kitchen Party contenders for their favourite fall recipes. A hearty soup or salad for a light dinner, vegetable sides suitable for Thanksgiving, a delicious duck breast with autumn fruit and an apple crisp with a twist. Dive in!

Roasted Broccoli Salad with Concord Grapes and Goat Cheese

“This salad has a variety of textures and contrasting flavours—the toastiness of the broccoli, the richness of the cheese and the dressing, along with the hit of pickled apple and fresh grapes. I chose Okanagan concord grapes for their bright flavours—crisp and acidic yet fruity and sweet. You can also add toasted pumpkin seeds for a nutty crunch.”—Robert Wick, exec chef, Northern Chicken

- 1 sm apple
- ½ c white wine vinegar (or white vinegar)
- ¼ c white sugar or honey
- 250 g (1 medium head) broccoli florets only

- 100 g (about 15-20) Concord grapes, halved
- ½ c balsamic vinegar
- ½ c concord grape juice
- 100 g (about ⅓ c) goat cheese salt and black pepper extra virgin olive oil

Pre-heat oven to 375°F.

Cut the apple in half and remove the core. Cut each half into thin slices. Dissolve the sugar in the vinegar and pour over the apple slices. Let sit for 30 minutes. Reserve.

Cut the broccoli into small florets and toss in 2 tablespoons oil. Roast for about 10-15 mins until a nice roasted color is achieved. Reserve.

While the broccoli is roasting, make the dressing. Bring the balsamic vinegar and

the concord grape juice to a boil and reduce until it holds a line on the back of a spoon. (Dip a spoon in the dressing and, using your finger, run a line across in the liquid on the back of the spoon. If it holds, it's done.)

Combine the roasted broccoli and the grapes, season with half of the dressing. Season to taste.

To serve: Smear the goat cheese on the bottom of the plate. Place the broccoli and grape mixture on top of the goat cheese. Lay the pickled apples attractively on top. Drizzle more dressing over the dish, now it's complete to enjoy.

Serves 2-4.

Squash Soup with Crispy Eggplant and Pan-Seared Halloumi

“A delicious fall soup that happens to be vegan and gluten-free too.”—Doreen Prei, director of culinary services, Glenora Park, Revera

Squash Soup

- 1 onion white, peeled, cut in slices
- 5 g ginger, peeled and chopped
- 1 sm red chili, cleaned, cut in small rings
- pinch cinnamon
- 2 T curry powder
- pinch turmeric
- 1 squash (such as kombucha, butternut, etc.), peeled, washed, seeds removed, cut in small pieces
- 2 tomatoes, washed, cut in quarters
- vegetable stock as needed (recipe follows)
- lemon juice to taste

- salt to taste
- 100 ml canola or peanut oil
- 100 ml dry white wine
- 600 ml coconut milk

Heat a pot to a medium high heat. When hot, add the onions and season with salt. Cook the onions until nicely caramelized. Add the ginger, red chili and spices and sauté for one minute. Add the squash and sauté until caramelized. Add salt. Add the tomatoes and sauté for another minute and season with salt. Deglaze with the white wine and wait until the wine is fully reduced.

Add the vegetable stock to cover the ingredients. Add the coconut milk and turn the heat to low. Simmer until the squash is falling apart and is very soft. Season with lemon juice and adjust with salt if needed.

Purée the soup in a blender and adjust the thickness with your remaining vegetable stock.

Serve with crispy eggplants and halloumi cheese.

Vegetable Stock

- 1 carrot, peeled, washed, cut roughly
- 1 onion, peeled, cut roughly
- ½ blub fennel, washed, cut roughly
- 1 leek, washed, cut roughly
- fresh herbs such as chives, parsley, optional

Place all ingredients in a pot and cover with 2 litres of cold water. Bring to a boil and strain through a sieve.

Crispy Eggplant

- 1 eggplant, cut in thin slices
- salt
- rice flour or sweet potato flour
- canola oil for frying



Roasted Broccoli Salad with Concord Grapes and Goat Cheese

Place the sliced eggplants on a tray with parchment paper and season gently with salt on both sides. Wait for 15 minutes. Pat the eggplants dry with a paper towel. Toss the eggplants gently in the rice or sweet potato flour.

Heat a frying pan to medium-high heat. Once hot, add enough canola oil to the frying pan to submerge the eggplants. Fry on both sides until crispy. Use a spider or a slotted spoon to remove the eggplants safely from the frying pan and place on a plate with paper towel. Serve immediately.

Halloumi Cheese (for garnishing your soup, optional)

1 block halloumi, cut in small pieces
olive oil for frying

Heat a frying pan to medium high heat. Once hot, add the olive oil. Add the halloumi and fry until crispy by constantly moving the cheese with a heat-proof spatula or wooden spoon.

Seared Duck Breast with Fall Fruit Sauce

Levi Biddlecomb, exec chef/owner, Backstairs Burger

4 duck breasts
2-3 plums, diced
8-10 blackberries
1 med onion, diced
1 clove garlic, minced
½ c red wine
½ c chicken stock
⅓ c cold butter, cubed

Pat the duck breast dry and score the skin in a crosshatch pattern. Season both sides of the duck with salt and place skin side down in a cold pan. Turn the pan to medium heat and leave the duck until the fat is rendered and the skin is crispy. Once the skin is crisp, flip the breast over and continue to cook to an internal temperature of 125°F.

Remove the duck from the pan and allow to rest. To the duck pan add onion and garlic and sauté until translucent. Add red wine, stock, plum and blackberry and cook down until almost dry. Turn off the heat and swirl in the cold butter. Season gently to taste with salt.

Slice the duck breast into thin slices and fan or shingle over couscous, your favourite carb or salad. Spoon the pan sauce over the duck and enjoy.

Serves 4.

All photos supplied by the chefs.

Deep-fried Brussels Sprouts

“Possibly one of the simplest dishes, but it’s one of my favorites. I can’t count how many times I convinced kids that vegetables are good just from this dish. You could roast them, but deep frying is better. It’s perfect just like this but you could garnish with a few dollops of Japanese mayo and a shower of grated fine Grana Padano.” –JP Dublado, exec chef, Red Deer Resort.

Cut Brussels sprouts in half (score the stem if it’s thick). Deep fry until dark golden. Place in a bowl and season generously with salt and pepper. Toss in a generous drizzle of good quality Canadian maple syrup (dark if you have).

Serves 2-4.

Roasted Parsnips with Coconut Cardamom Carrot Puree and Pumpkin Seed Dukkah

Parsnips are my favourite vegetable of all time. I wanted to show how delicious they are by letting them shine in this recipe. – Bri Campbell, exec chef, Restaurant May.

1 lb parsnips
1 t extra virgin olive oil
kosher salt and coarse black pepper
fresh mint for garnish

Pre-heat oven to 325°F.

Give parsnips a wash and keep the skin on because they say the skin is good for you. Cut parsnips in half or in quarters lengthwise if they’re really big, place in a medium bowl, toss in the oil, and season



Roasted Parsnips with
Coconut Cardamom Carrot Puree
and Pumpkin Seed Dukkah

Deep-fried
Brussels Sprouts



to taste. Place parsnips cut side down on a parchment paper-lined baking pan. Roast for 45 minutes or until fork tender.

Coconut Cardamom Carrot Purée

3 T extra virgin olive oil
1 lb peeled carrots, grated
1 can coconut milk (400ml)
seeds of 6 cardamom pods (crushed)
1 t kosher salt

Heat a thick-bottomed pot on medium heat. Add the oil and grated carrots. Stir carrots until they start to become soft. Add crushed cardamom seeds and stir for another 2 minutes to bring out the oil in the seeds. Add the coconut milk and lower heat to medium low. Let simmer for about 40 minutes. Stir often. The

coconut milk will start to reduce and thicken. The carrot mixture is done when the coconut oil starts separating from the pudding, it will be orange just like the carrots. Put the mixture into a blender or food processor with a teaspoon of salt and blend until smooth. It is ready to eat now! Yum!

Pumpkin Seed Dukkah (doo-kah)

½ c shelled pumpkin seeds
¼ c whole almonds
¼ c sesame seeds (half black sesame, half white sesame is nice)
¾ t ground coriander seed
¾ t ground cumin
¼ t fennel seed
¼ t red chili flakes
1 t kosher salt

Combine all ingredients. Place a medium-sized frying pan on medium-high heat until you see smoke vapours coming from the pan. Then immediately turn the pan off and toss in your seed and nut mixture. Toss continuously or it will burn. This roasts the nuts, the seeds and the spices and brings out the natural oils. Give the seeds and nuts a good 6-8 tosses, then remove from the pan. Transfer into a food processor. Using the pulse button, pulse the dukkah to your desired size. It should resemble a nice seedy crumble.

Store in an airtight container for later use. Can be used on vegetables, salads, meats or eggs.

To serve: Once the parsnips are roasted place a generous spoonful of the carrot

Please see “Recipes” on next page.

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Recipes

Continued from previous page.

purée on a plate (or a larger serving platter). Arrange the parsnips on top and scatter around your pumpkin seed dukkah. Garnish with fresh mint if using.

Serves 2-4 people.

Heirloom Cauliflower with Pistachio Aioli, Roasted Apples and Tomato Chips

"This is an ode to both fall and our great local producers and sellers. I found beautiful heirloom cauliflower at Reclaim." —Earl Briones, exec chef Birdog.

- 1 head flame star hybrid (golden) cauliflower
- 1 head depurple hybrid (purple) cauliflower
- 1 head green cauliflower
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 Gala apples
- 10 g crushed pistachios
- 40 ml olive oil
- 4 oz pistachio aioli (recipe follows)
- 4-5 tomato chips (recipe follows)

Pre-heat oven to 425°F

Cut the cauliflower into nice bite-sized florets. Cut the apples into half inch wedges. Lay the florets, apple wedges and garlic on a baking sheet and cover well with olive oil and salt and pepper. Roast for 15-20 minutes or until sufficient browning has happened and the cauliflower is tender.

Let cool on the sheet pan for 2-5 minutes.

Pistachio Aioli

- 90 g ($\frac{7}{8}$ cup) roasted pistachios
- 80 ml ($\frac{1}{3}$ c) water
- 2 egg yolks
- 10 g ($1\frac{1}{2}$ t) condensed milk
- 9 g (scant $1\frac{1}{2}$ t) kosher salt
- 200 ml ($\frac{7}{8}$ c) pistachio oil or extra virgin olive oil

Add the pistachios, water, egg yolk, condensed milk and salt to a blender or a food processor. Blend until smooth. Pour oil in slowly while blending on medium speed. Blend until thick and emulsified.

Tomato Chips

- 2 Roma Tomatoes
- 10 g ($\frac{3}{4}$ T or so) granulated sugar
- 5 g (3 t cayenne pepper)



Heirloom Cauliflower with
Pistachio Aioli, Roasted Apples
and Tomato Chips

Slice the tomatoes into $\frac{1}{4}$ -thick slices. Remove seeds if desired.

Arrange the tomatoes on dehydrator trays, utilizing a mesh liner to prevent smaller slices of tomatoes from falling through the holes as they shrink. Sprinkle the sugar and cayenne pepper onto the slices. Dehydrate at 135°F (57°C) for 6-12 hours until the tomatoes are dry and hard—they should not bend. Let the dried tomatoes cool completely before storing. (Or, you could dehydrate tomatoes in the oven; 250°F for 1.5-3 hours and keep in the fridge until needed.)

To serve: Lay your cauliflower in alternating colors on a platter. Place the apple wedges around the cauliflower florets. Drizzle with the pistachio aioli and garnish with crushed pistachios. Scatter tomato chips over.

Serve 4-6.



Colcannon

Colcannon

"Colcannon is a holiday staple at every family get together. The recipe is extremely versatile and can be used with almost any vegetable, and it doesn't need to have bacon either. You name it, we've probably thrown it in a colcannon. We usually use whatever herbs and vegetables my mom



Goat Butter Bourbon Apple Crisp

“Goat milk gives the dish this incredible tang, absolutely unlike any regular apple crisp. The Italian Centre and Blush Lane sell goat milk butter, or you could make your own using a high fat goat milk.” – Winnie Chen, exec chef, Fu’s Repair Shop

Adapted from a recipe by Ambition Kitchen.

Crisp Topping

- 1.5 c flour
- 1.5 c old fashioned oats
- 1.5 c packed dark brown sugar
- ¾ c goat milk butter (cut into small pieces, then chilled)
- 1 pinch salt

Combine flour, oats, and brown sugar in a large bowl and stir well. Then with your hands or a pastry cutter, cut or pinch in the pieces of chilled goat butter until the texture of the mixture resembles crumbly wet sand.

Place the topping mix in the refrigerator to chill while you work on the filling.

Apple Filling

- ½ c goat milk butter
- 1 T vanilla extract
- 5 lg honey crisp apples (peeled and cored, sliced thinly, roughly 2mm)
- ⅓ c dark brown sugar
- 1t ground cinnamon
- ¼ t ground nutmeg
- ¼ t salt
- 1T bourbon

Preheat oven to 350°F and grease an 8 x 8-inch baking pan.

Filling

In a saucepan, heat the goat butter at medium heat and let brown. The butter will crackle and foam, you may stir to reincorporate the milk solids. Once the butter becomes dark caramel in colour and emits a pleasant nutty smell, turn off the burner and remove from heat and let cool for a minute. In the same pan, stir in vanilla and apples and stir to thoroughly coat. Then add in the brown sugar, bourbon and spices. Toss again to combine, then add 1/3 of the topping mixture to the filling mixture. Stir thoroughly. Transfer to the prepared baking pan and sprinkle the remaining topping over top.

Bake for 55-60 minutes or until the crisp is golden brown and the filling is bubbling.

Eat with ice cream. Makes 1 crisp. 🍷

has—Brussels sprouts, onions, scallions, bell peppers, corn. Here I used kale, garlic and potatoes from my mom’s garden.” – Jesse Woodland, exec chef Central Social Hall.

- 1 lb starchy potato, washed, skin on. I prefer russets.
- 4 L cold water
- 3 T kosher salt (fine salt or table salt works too, use 1T if so)
- ¼ c butter
- 3 strips bacon, minced
- 1 head garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 bunch kale, destemmed, washed and chopped
- kosher salt and fresh cracked pepper to taste

Wash the potatoes under cold running water and scrub gently with a soft bristle brush. Place the potatoes in a large pot and cover with the cold water. Add the salt. Place on the stove on high heat and bring to a boil.

Once the potatoes have come to a boil, reduce the heat to a simmer and allow the potatoes to cook thoroughly (45-90 min, depending on the size of the potatoes).

When you think the potatoes are done, insert a sharp knife into the center of the largest. If the knife comes out easily and doesn’t lift the potato, the potatoes are cooked. Strain the potatoes and place in a bowl to mash by hand or use a food processor.

Mix in the butter and season gently with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, begin cooking the minced bacon on low heat to render it and release the fat. Once the bacon is 75 per cent cooked to your preference, add the minced garlic. When the garlic begins to darken and becomes aromatic, add the kale with a spoonful or so of cold water. Once the kale brightens, remove from heat and mix with your mashed potatoes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Serves 4-6.

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The Smos at Home

Leanne Smoliak

Smos on the road

The highlight of our summer was an accidental 21-day road trip. Now, one might ask, how can a 21-day road trip be accidental?

This is how. We were invited to a family wedding in Boston. Flights booked, bags packed, then, wham, Brad's doctor told him three days prior to our flight that he could not fly. He did say Brad could drive. Three and a half days later we were in Massachusetts.

Somewhat apprehensively we chose to go through the USA. It was a quicker route, and we would see many states we had never been through. We weren't sure what we were headed for but we wanted it to be as easy as possible. Quick also mattered as we only had a short time.

Every person we met was warm, kind, and helpful. We were particularly impressed with the roadside rest stops. Each state had a design theme—from rustic cottage, to mid-century modern. The best thing? Washroom attendants.

Brad remembered that road-tripping with his family always included a cooler packed by his baba containing a mason jar of cherry Kool-Aid along with ham bunwiches. In the spirit of recreating these sweet memories I packed these items in our cooler.

GPS is just fine for directions but not for trip planning. Our paper maps reminded me of my mom as the ever-present navigator in the passenger seat during our family's road trips.

Off we went. We planned our trip so that we spent nights in small places, or on the perimeter of big cities. Truck stops, cafés and diners were what we were after. Brad went for every special on the menu. Some were more special than others. Chicken fried steak? Not so bad. The white gravy on top of the Plaster of Paris-textured mashed potatoes, not so good. We had some of the best eggs, hash browns and sausages in diners that had been around for 85 years and fantastic Reuben sandwiches from roadside truck-stops delivered by waitresses who had been working there since the sign went up.

The worst meal? Not in a homey diner. It was in a chain called Crackerbarrel. I ordered chicken and dumplings. I had a bite, Brad had a bite, then I asked the server to take it away. I could not look at it. Raw dough in more of that goopy white gravy. What is it with the white gravy?

Best part? The server whispered to us; 'I don't eat here.' Ha ha.

In New England we ate our weight in oysters and became connoisseurs of clam chowder. It was at an old dining car in Worcester, Massachusetts that we found the best clam chowder, not at the fancy pants restaurant that claimed to have the award-winning clam chowder. Brad ate two entire lobsters one night, along with a pound of butter.

Boston is a food mecca. Of course, there is a lot of seafood, but it was the north end, Boston's Italian section, that got my attention. Larger than NYC's Little Italy. We had some of the finest Italian food we have ever had. One morning we sat in the centuries-old Caffe Vittoria enjoying the most perfect cappuccino and cannoli. The cannoli were filled to order which meant that the ultra-smooth ricotta filling was surrounded by a crispy, not soggy shell. I can never go back to a pre-filled cannoli again.

We took our time and saw the sights on our way home. We filled the car with snacks, just as we did as kids. (Pringles were a delicious blast from the past.) We picked up some yummy snacks from Trader Joe's too.

A car makes travelling so much fun. We always had local beer and cider in the cooler along with some wine for our evenings at our motel. Speaking of motels, they are hard to find. Lots of Hilton Garden Inn-style hotels to be found though. We did find the perfect 1960s motel in Whitefish Montana. We will be going back to the Chalet Inn for sure.

Road tripping isn't for the faint of heart. You better like each other—really like each other. If you have lots of time, good food, a variety of playlists, and a deep love for one another, it is a blast. Brad tells the same jokes and stories he did 32 years ago and he still gets me going.

So, after 21 days, over 9,500 kms, 14 states, nine of them twice, and two provinces, would we do it again? You betcha! We are already planning our next road-trip. 🍷

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."

The Troublesome Turkey

— Jan Hostyn —

I heard car doors slam. My doorbell would be chiming at any moment now. But what would usually be an altogether normal, fairly low-stress occurrence wasn't exactly worry-free today. Something crucial was missing. My kitchen and my home did not smell. At all. And that was not a good thing. You see, my guests had come for dinner. Thanksgiving dinner.

Growing up, there was no escaping the smell of Thanksgiving. Everywhere you turned you were met with the swirling, heady, exquisite aromas of thyme and sage, onions and butter, sugar and cinnamon and then, more butter (my mom adored her butter). There were copious pies and trays of pyrohy to make in the days leading up to Thanksgiving, and there was always a massive pot of rich and fragrant turkey stock bubbling away the day after. The aromas tucked themselves into every nook and cranny possible, reluctant to eventually drift away.

That, however, was not what was happening in my small, could we say newlywed, bungalow. No wafting aromas, no smells of thyme and sage.

This was going to be the very first Thanksgiving dinner I had ever hosted. Not that I was a complete rookie—I had always pitched in with all of the preparation and cooking when I was growing up. That helping, though, included everything but the turkey.

So the whole let's-roast-a-turkey thing was new to me. Both my mother and my mother-in-law had been turkey-cooking wizards and, to be honest, I had zero interest in the whole thing. I hadn't even touched a raw turkey before. Handling raw meat of any sort did not rank up there with my favourite things to do, and heaving around twenty pounds of raw, slippery flesh didn't add to the appeal.

But parents get older and circumstances change. If I wanted Thanksgiving dinner this particular year, I was going to have

to cook it myself. And Thanksgiving dinner called for guests. Just a few, mind you, to make it more manageable: my mother-in-law, along with my brother-in-law and his wife. I was nervous but excited. Was this my entry into the grown-up cooking world?

Even though I grew up with way too much food and far too many dishes on Thanksgiving, I knew enough to show restraint. The pyrohy and nachynka, annual staples, were ditched, along with most of the other side dishes I was used to. But what terrified me the most was the thought of roasting an actual turkey, so I decided to take the whole simplifying thing even further: I would cook a Butterball Boneless Stuffed Turkey Breast.

That decision still baffles me. You will not find any of the things I love—crispy turkey skin, juicy dark meat and, most of all, my mom's can't-get-enough-of stuffing—in a frozen mass-produced, stuffed turkey breast. Maybe it came down to that old adage that you always want what you can't have. Every turkey I had ever dug into had been carefully roasted and stuffed by someone I knew. In comparison, the stuffed turkey breast seemed innovative and intriguing, not to mention easy. A stuffed turkey breast it was.

I honestly don't remember much about the actual cooking process. I know that I followed the instructions meticulously (I was an obsessive instruction-follower back then), and I know that I built in

an extra half hour of cooking time, just in case. I had learned something from watching my mom.

Once I popped the frozen breast into the oven, I went to work on the sides: a simple salad, some mashed potatoes and plain old peas and carrots. There was also homemade cranberry sauce waiting in the fridge and some fresh buns from a nearby bakery. Nothing elaborate. I didn't even make gravy. (I know. Gasp!)

So I guess there must have been a bit of a smell when my guests arrived. Not anything resembling turkey, though, the supposed star of the night. But I put my trust in the instructions and the process. I mean, how hard could it be to cook a frozen turkey breast?

When my oven timer dinged, I pulled open the oven door only to discover absolutely no sizzling and practically no browning. It was almost like I had forgotten to turn on the oven (I hadn't). Further investigation revealed a still partially-frozen turkey breast.

I was horrified, not to mention mortified and puzzled. After a muffled conversation with my mother-in-law (who had poked her curious head into the kitchen), it became readily apparent that my very first Thanksgiving dinner was going to be a turkey-free one.

Thankfully my brother-in-law gallantly stepped in to save the day. My husband's family had grown up on Kentucky Fried Chicken, and my brother-in-law's suggestion that he run out and pick up some KFC was warmly embraced. A bucket of fried chicken it was (along with an unexpected side of gravy). I have a feeling my guests were secretly delighted.

That episode ended my brief relationship with frozen stuffed turkey breasts. On my next attempt I went straight for the real thing, and I haven't looked back since. I can't say the end result is ever beautiful (a spatchcocked, splayed-out turkey never is), but it always tastes pretty darn delicious and my house smells like I'm actually roasting a turkey. Yes, I even make gravy. 🍷

Even though Jan Hostyn has become adept at roasting turkeys, she much prefers roasting (and eating) veggies.

Make-Ahead Turkey Gravy

I love making this gravy—it makes the last-minute rush of trying to get everything finished and on the table so much easier. Adapted from a recipe in Cooks Illustrated. —Jan Hostyn

6	turkey thighs, trimmed, or 9 wings, separated at the joints
2 med	carrots, coarsely chopped
2 med	celery ribs, coarsely chopped
2 med	onions, coarsely chopped
1 head	garlic, halved
	vegetable oil spray
10 c	low-sodium chicken broth, plus extra as needed
2 c	dry white wine
12 sprigs	fresh thyme
	unsalted butter, as needed
1 c	flour

Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 450 degrees. Toss the thighs, carrots, celery, onions and garlic together in a roasting pan and spray with vegetable oil spray. Roast, stirring occasionally, until well browned, 1½ to 1¾ hours.

Transfer the contents of the roasting pan to a large Dutch oven. Add the broth, wine and thyme and bring to a boil, skimming as needed. Reduce to a gentle simmer and cook until the broth is brown and flavorful and measures about 8 cups when strained, about 1½ hours. Strain the broth through a fine-mesh strainer into a large container, pressing on the solids to extract as much liquid as possible. Discard the solids. (The turkey broth can be cooled and refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 2 days or frozen for up to 1 month.)

Let the strained turkey broth settle (if necessary). Spoon off and reserve 1/2 cup of the fat that has risen to the top (add butter as needed if short on turkey fat). Heat the fat in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat until bubbling. Whisk in the flour and cook, whisking constantly, until well browned, about 10 minutes.

Add to the broth and heat until bubbling and thick and glossy.

Serves 10 to 12 (makes about 2 quarts).

Adventures in Mushrooming

My journey into mycophilia (no, it's not a fetish).

— Daniela Zenari —

During our annual family vacations, my dad would abruptly pull off the highway anytime he saw a cluster of mushrooms growing on a stump in the forest along the road. In Italy, where he grew up, there is a culture around foraging.

My interest in mushrooms (and foraging) ignited when I travelled to Italy as an adult. The feeling of searching the woods, slowly weaving through the trees, gaze lowered to the ground, earth's treasures sprouting up the more my eyes attuned to the undergrowth. The satisfaction in finding, harvesting, cleaning, cooking, eating and sharing the bounty. It was the first time I stopped to think about where our food comes from and how much nature offers.

After a few successful mushroom-hunting trips, I wondered what I could find—or grow—in Alberta. A soggy summer helped me along in my first fall forays, and I found some boletes and honey mushrooms right here in the Edmonton river valley. I even found some morels when hiking in the mountains near Jasper. But when a few taste tests led to stomach aches, my exploration of local fungi became cautious.

“You're really smart to do that because many poisonings are due to people being too confident,” says mushroom expert Candice Cullum.

“Some mushrooms here, like the King Bolete (*boletus edulus*) or porcini, are almost identical to European mushrooms. But others, like the honey mushroom (*armillaria mellea*), can look very different.”

Candice's interest in mushrooms came from an epiphany in the blueberry patch. Her son found mushrooms growing there, and as he threw them at her head, she thought, “How can I learn more about these?” She joined the Alberta Mycological Society (AMS), where she is still a long-time volunteer. (The AMS has many mushroom resources available such as foraging videos, articles, books and mushroom identification keys.)

Still hesitant to eat my foraged mushrooms, I decided to grow my own at home, but the information overload paralyzed me.

You know the feeling when you search for how-to information online? You're swimming in a sea of subculture dos and don'ts that see even the best-intended fail miserably.

Luckily, I met Jason Cameron from Block Farmer, a small mushroom producer,

at a local farmers' market. Blue Oyster mushrooms grew from a block, a thick plastic bag densely packed with growing medium (wood, grain or hay infused with mycelium). It displayed the mushrooms that were for sale, but the block caught my attention. Whether it was because he saw my keen interest or just to get rid of me, he offered to sell me the block.

I was hooked when the first signs of more new tiny mushroom caps appeared. But, once the block was spent, I couldn't find Jason's contact information. I looked online, and, just like those little caps that appear from nothing, I realized that Edmonton has a budding fungi community.

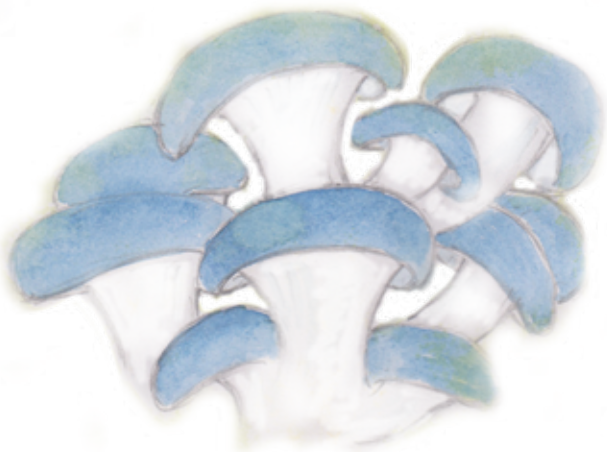
I found Planet Mushroom, which makes grow-at-home kits, gourmet soup and risotto mixes and medicinal tinctures. I ordered a Blue Oyster grow kit and picked it up from their stall at the Bountiful Market. The kit was a single block, about the size of a Nalgene bottle. Inside the usual thick plastic bag, I could see the white tendrils of the mycelium already spreading through the growing medium.

After a couple of weeks, with the first signs of growth, I felt a surge of satisfaction at my impending harvest. Within days it was exponential. Blue Oyster mushrooms were bursting from the side of the plastic bag, the crisp white gills running along the stems of the mushrooms. The edge of the caps darkened ever so slightly with a greyish-blue hue (I later learned that introducing UV light can bring out more colour).

As my mycophile journey continued, I found satisfaction quickly turned into frustration with temperature and humidity changes, mould, bacteria and fungus gnats. I faced every challenge as it came with the occasional small win, but the gnats were too much. I did my best to seal my block using packing tape, hoping to hold off the gnats while I regrouped.

I was discouraged and slightly defeated, but my interest wasn't, so I pitched this story for a shot of external motivation and shifted to researching mushroom producers.

I talked to Janine Aube from Red Fox Fungi in Calgary. She noticed it isn't just pests that eat mycelium. “I went outside, and the whole garden was moving.” She saw that the bees from nearby hives liked the spent logs in their compost heap. “The bees are producing really well, and they've been super healthy.”



Blue Oyster
(*Pleurotus ostreatus*)



King Boletus
(*Boletus edulus*)



Lion's Mane
(*Hericium erinaceus*)

Illustrations: Jan Thalheimer

The bees supported something that had already grabbed my attention as I fell down the mushroom rabbit hole; the medicinal benefits of mushrooms. They have anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and even anti-cancer properties, and there is ongoing research to determine how much mushrooms can help us.

Jack Martin, owner of Woodland Mushrooms outside of Sherwood Park, knows this from personal experience after a motorcycle accident left him hospitalized for a month with a head injury. Jack researched mushrooms' medicinal benefits and found Lion's Mane to help improve brain function.

The more local mycologists I talked to, the more I realized that the community in Alberta isn't huge, but it's tight-knit and supports each other. Every conversation with one person led me to another, fuelling my fascination. After talking to Meghan Vesey from Fungi Akuafo (where they sell spawn—think mushroom seeds—and grow-at-home education workshops), she put me in touch with some of the innovative local producers she works with.

That's how I met Alex Villeneuve. While in the Brewmaster program at Olds College, he had an idea for a fun side project to grow mushrooms from brewing byproducts and Ceres Solutions was born. Over several years Alex developed unique processing equipment to combine the major steps of gourmet mushroom farming into a mostly automated process.

Learning about it blew me away.

Between the blur of life, work, and talking to fellow mycophiles in my spare time, I noticed something on my abandoned mushroom block. Five small mushroom heads had pushed through the tape and dried up from neglect.

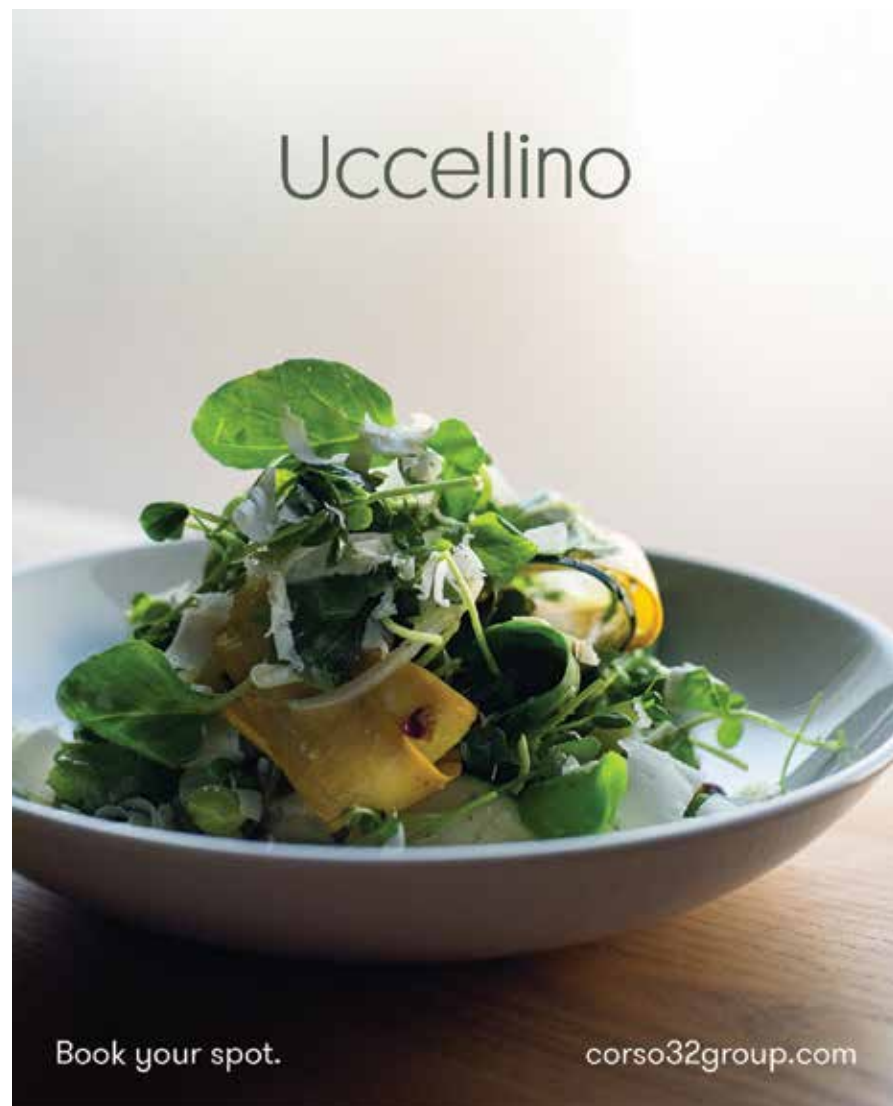
Now that I am armed with all the resources, workshops, and community support, I will try again.

Whether they've been foraged, grown, or bought, the best part about mushrooms is eating them, and Jack gave me a hot cooking tip.

"A dry sauté. Chop up your mushrooms and throw them in a saucepan covered, on medium heat, with no oil, no other vegetables. Let them sink into the pan. They'll steam themselves. They'll release a lot of moisture. Then you let that water evaporate. Then treat them like normal mushrooms and pop them on your pizza or in your stir-fry with everything else."

I tried it, and within minutes my house was filled with the aroma of mushrooms. A peek under the lid showed the mushrooms in a mini-jacuzzi of their bubbling juices, getting steam-infused in their mushroom goodness. The results were tender, meatier, and tastier. 🍄

Daniela Zenari grew up in her family restaurant Zenari's. She writes about food, foraging and family. Her other phobias include anthophilia, apiphilia, botanophilia, cibophilia, graphophilia, hylophilia, and sinistrophilia.



“My desire is to share my passion for wonderful Indian dishes, warm hospitality and tasty drinks in an elegant and inviting space.”

Goldie Hazrah, owner

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Tips on mushroom foraging, identification and growing

Alberta Mycological Society: www.albertamushrooms.ca

Candice Cullum: [@full_baskets](https://twitter.com/full_baskets)

Mushroom Grow-Kits, Spawn and Tinctures

Fungi Akuafo: fungiakuafo.com

Planet Mushroom: planetmushrooms.com, Bountiful Farmers' Market

Woodland Mushrooms: woodlandmushrooms.com

Buy Mushrooms

Block Farmer, block-farmer.com; St. Albert and Callingwood Farmers' Markets

Ceres Solutions: ceres-ab.com; Most Southern AB Farmers' Markets; Innisfail Growers Booth; Calgary area grocers and restaurants

Red Fox Fungi: redfoxfungi.ca; Community Natural Foods

Rice's Gourmet Mushrooms: rices-gourmet-mushrooms.business.site

Wines to enjoy with the fuller flavours and richer textures of fall.

2018 La Castellina Squarcialupi Chianti Classico (Tuscany, Italy)

Mostly Sangiovese with 10 per cent Colorino. It delivers classic Chianti, flavours and enjoyment with red fruit notes, especially cherries and some spice. The sprightly acidity gives a lift, medium-bodied, just the wine to drink with cool weather food—spag bol, lasagne, roast turkey and fixin's at Thanksgiving.

2021 Delas St-Esprit Côtes du Rhône (Rhône Valley, France)

This hardworking everyday red from Rhône specialist Domaine Delas is mostly Syrah with some Grenache. White pepper and red fruit, well knit, good finish, easy-drinking, perfect for Friday night pizza or chili.

Two new amaro in town, from Sicily, made with wild Sicilian herbs.

Nepeta is a natural infusion of wild mint, other aromatic herbs and zest from the Syracuse PGI lemon. It has none of that jarring, over the top mintyness some amaro are known for. Rather, it's harmonious and refreshing with complex, balanced flavours. Easy to mix in a mojito or to have on the rocks, **Majora** is delicate and harmonious. Marjoram is a sneaky little herb, similar to oregano, but not as spicy, more floral and delicate, beautiful.

We tasted delicious Chilean and Argentinian wines with Jose Tomas Urrutia, export manager for Lafite/Domaines Baron de Rothschild.

Bodegas Caro is the project between the Catena family and the Rothschild family begun in 1999. The venture grows primarily Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon in Luján de Cuyo and the Uco Valley. The wines are really great value. The **2021 Amancaya Malbec** has sweet raspberry and strawberry aromas; it's juicy, fresh and well balanced. An enjoyable drink. Have with casual foods or chill for 10 minutes and have with chips.

Los Vascos is the Chilean property of Lafite, well established, first planted in 1988 in the cooler Colchagua Valley, cooled by ocean breezes. **2020 Cromas Cabernet**, predominately Cabernet Sauvignon with a small proportion of Syrah and Carmenère. Well-balanced, good structure, with elegant tannins and forthright acidity, a lovely wine with grilled steak or lamb chops.

The flagship **Le Dix** is from an old plot of Cabernet Sauvignon called *El Fraile* (monk) with some Syrah and Carmenère. Expect intense aromas of cassis and black cherries, some plum, baking spices and graphite. A stunningly delicious wine, fragrant, concentrated, great structure, lovely vital tannins and a long finish. Drink with roast beef or lamb.

Mary Bailey photo



Jennifer Chaput (Trialto Wine Group) Maja Jeramaz, (Grgich Hills) Ryan Everitt (Trialto).

Maja Jeramaz was in town this summer to talk about the family winery Grgich Hills.

It is the quintessential Napa story. In a nutshell: Maja's granduncle Miljenko (Mike) Grgich made the 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay that shook the wine world at the Paris Tasting in 1996. Shortly after, Austin Hills and Mike Grgich formed the partnership that is now Grgich Hills. Mike's daughter Violet runs the company and Ivo Jerama, Maja's Dad (and Mike's nephew) is the winemaker in charge

of the vineyards. Ivo is all in on regenerative farming. "We were certified organic in 2006. It took me a while to understand. I was trained as a mechanical engineer," said Ivo, on the phone from California. "What I have found is that if you build the soil, it feeds the plants. I don't care for theories or hypothesis, I care about results and every year, I learn and see something I haven't seen before. Another major principle of farming this way is that you take care of the people too."

We tasted through the wines with Maja. The **2020 Sauvignon Blanc** is beautifully balanced with an appealing jalapeño note. Six months in large oak foudres (the fumé style first popularized by Robert Mondavi), gives the wine gravitas and great texture without a heavy oak impression. On to the flagship Chardonnays. The 2015 is coming into its own, effortless, textured, with lovely hazelnut notes, with a finish that goes on and on. Worth every penny. Have with your best roast chicken or mushroom pasta. The **2020 Chard** is elegant, complex, a little spicy and, judging by the 2015, well worth aging. The **2010 Cab**; soft and luxurious, well-integrated tannins, with black olive, oak and walnut notes. The **2018 Cab** is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Franc, Petit Verdot and Merlot—ripe and juicy with chewy tannins and a spicy finish. The **2018 Zinfandel** is from Calistoga; it's fresh and immediate. Fun to drink, especially with burgers.

Warren Johnston knows cocktails.

His company Above Average Drinks partnered with world-class bartenders like James Grant to make bottled cocktails during the pandemic. His new project is **Coriander Liqueur**. "We made it with bartenders in mind. We wanted to bring the same attention to ingredients and technique that you see in the top European liqueurs, using Alberta ingredients," says Warren. Made at Lone Pine Distillery, it's delicious, with warm and harmonious herbal flavours. Try it in a Negroni or on the rocks with a twist of orange. Find at Biera Market, Color de Vino, Lone Pine and Dorinku, Marlo and Smokey Bear.



Elena Pozzolini, CEO and winemaker for the Bolgheri estate Sette Cieli, held a tasting at RGE RD.

Sette Cieli (seven skies) is 15 hectares of vineyards nestled in over 80 ha of forested hills. Elena is convinced this is the reason they have healthy grapes even during dry years. “The forest is our neighbour, the trees respire, and the fog saves us,” she says. She explains the difference the soil makes in the fundamental character of the wines. “There are two distinct soil types in Bolgheri,” says Elena. “At elevation, the soil is argillite and stone, calcareous soil in clay, very old, 60 million years. The vines thrive at the altitude because “we are on a hill protected by the sea and we have the same exposure as Sassicaia,” says Elena. “The wines are more vertical, more floral. Closer to the sea there is warm soil with more silt and sand.”

2020 Yantra Toscana IGT is 60 per cent Cabernet and 40 per cent Merlot, floral with walnut and subtle green notes, red plum, well-knit with ripe rolling tannins, super approachable for drinking now with grilled flank steak.

2021 Noi 4 Bolgheri (Tuscany, Italy), 70 per cent cab, 15 Merlot, 10 Petit Verdot, 5 per cent Cab Franc is powerful, even a bit of a brute at this age, deliciously taut, needs time and will reward that time.

2017 Sette Cieli Indaco Toscana IGT, a Malbec, Cab Sauv and Merlot blend. Concentrated, balanced, with complex black fruit and a soft finish, Elena says “sign of a hot year, less floral.”

2017 Sette Cieli Scipio Toscana IGT, “People who love Bolgheri love this,” says Elena. Red and black fruit, violets, cool mint and spice, elegant, medium-bodied, 100 per cent Cabernet Franc.

We are big fans of Spain’s Compañía de Vinos de Telmo Rodríguez.

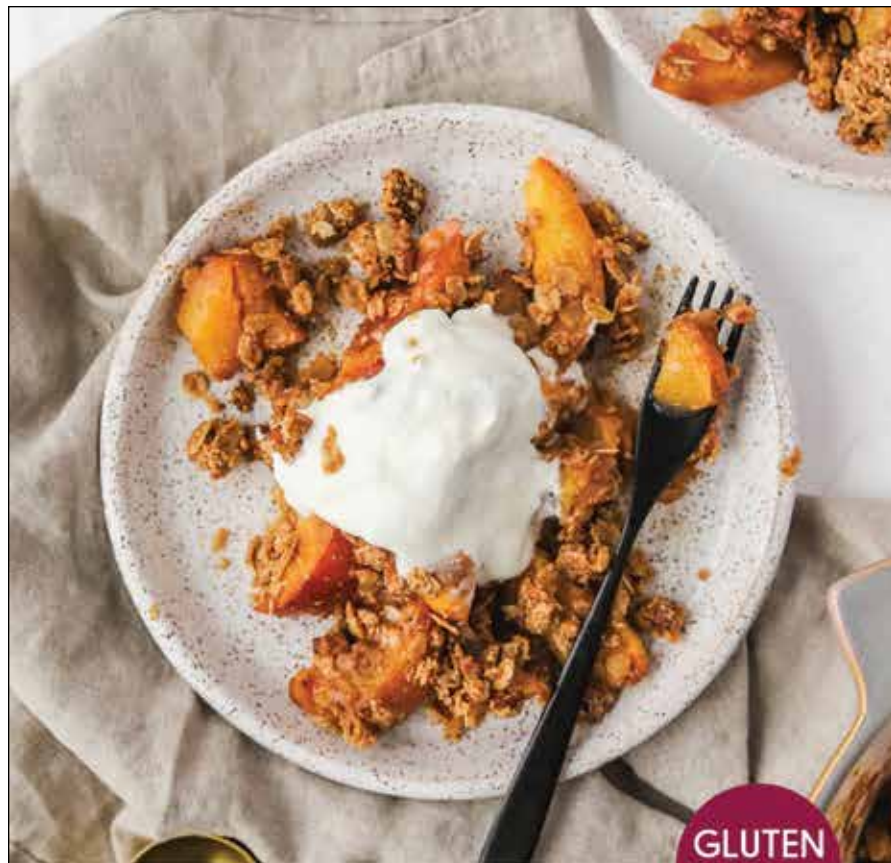
Telmo and Pablo Eguzkiza make characterful wine all over Spain from the native varieties of each region. They recover abandoned vineyards with bush trained vines. They work biodynamically, and they work with local families. The wines, full of character, deserve a place in your cellar. Good value too. We tasted the wines earlier this summer with Ricardo Etchats from the winery.

2021 Mountain Blanco (Sierra de Malaga) Somewhat unusual, dry white made from Muscat d’Alexandria. Taste a wild profusion of stone fruit, and citrus, medium-bodied, long finish.

2017 Lanzaga (Rioja Alavesa) A Tempranillo, Graciano and Garnacha blend, elegant, everything you expect from classic Rioja. Well balanced with beautiful soft tannins, restrained power.

2017 Gago (Toro) is an homage to the eight families involved in the revitalization of vineyards in Toro. Full-bodied, expressive, big flavours and great concentration.🍷

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Peach Nectarine Crisp

Prep Time: 15 minutes Total Time: 60 minutes
Cook Time: 45 minutes Servings: 6-8

INGREDIENTS:

FILLING:

- 7-8 total nectarines & peaches, sliced thin
- 1 tbsp maple syrup
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp arrowroot powder or cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon

TOPPING:

- 1 cup gluten free rolled oats
- 2 tbsp coconut sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped Pecans
- 3/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 1/4 cup melted coconut oil
- 1/4 cup almond butter

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 350F and grease an 8x11 baking dish with coconut oil, nonstick cooking spray or butter. (A 10 inch skillet or 9x9 baking dish would also work).
2. In a large bowl mix together the peach and nectarine slices along with maple syrup, vanilla extract, arrowroot powder or cornstarch and cinnamon. Set aside.
3. In another bowl make the topping by mixing together the rolled oats, coconut sugar, chopped pecans, cinnamon, salt and almond flour until combined. Add the coconut oil and almond butter and use a fork to mix well, it should form small clumps.
4. Pour the peach-nectarine mixture and all of the juices into the greased baking dish. Then sprinkle the topping evenly over the peach-nectarine mixture and pat it down.
5. Bake for 40-55 minutes, until the peach-nectarine filling is very bubbly and the fruits are fork tender.
6. Let rest 10-15 minutes before serving. Top with greek yogurt if desired!



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Feeding People

Little cookbook on the prairie

Twyla Campbell and Dan Clapson's cookbook, *Prairie: Seasonal Farm-Fresh Recipes Celebrating the Canadian Prairies* came out this fall. Long supporters of all things prairie, the authors, both born in Saskatchewan, feature their own recipes as well as recipes from family, friends and chefs from the Prairie Grid Dinner Series, all in a seasonal format.

"It's a love letter to the prairies," says Twyla.

Edmontonians know Twyla, she reviewed restaurants for *CBC Edmonton AM* for over a decade and is a Kitchen Party judge. Dan is a Calgary-based food writer and creator of Food North.

They met on a press trip and were soon travelling together, including a five-week trip to Southeast Asia in 2019. That's when Dan asked Twyla; "What would you think about doing a book on prairie food?"

"That was also the year I was diagnosed with cancer," says Twyla. "Then Covid came and as things changed, then settled, he asked again. We both thought that prairie food gets overlooked and we wanted this book to change that.

"I really liked the idea of a seasonal cookbook. I like how Gail (Gail Hall subject of Twyla's first book, *Maps, Markets and Matzo Ball Soup*) thought about food and it's how I like to cook. We pitched to Random House; they thought a prairie-based cookbook was a great idea.

"I am overwhelmed by the response. *Prairie* is one of Indigo's most anticipated books of 2023. There has been a lot of buzz and media interviews. It's all pretty exciting. And to be an Appetite by Random House book? That's pretty much a dream.

"I am really proud of the first 17 pages. Why we wrote this book, what is seasonal eating. Food waste is so important to me, it was the way I was raised. If it was truly unusable it went to the hogs. How easy it is to make your own ricotta and save the whey? That kind of info is super important."

Putting together the book long distance was a challenge. "We didn't get together as much as would have liked. There were a lot of Zoom meetings, a lot of phone calls. I went to Calgary or Dan came to Edmonton. Our friends came over for dinner. I cooked three beef tongues. Dan and Dong Kim, our photographer, went to Winnipeg for the goldeye recipe.



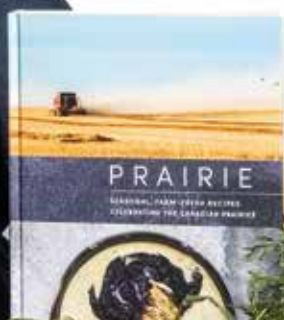
“The book is visually appealing, we have Dong’s photos to thank for that. It’s approachable, but we are two food writers, so couldn’t get away from telling a few stories here and there. We didn’t want to be super wordy in the preambles, but each recipe in the book is there for a reason, it means something to us.”

“We made a spreadsheet to help us decide which recipe and where it should go,” says Twyla. “We talked it through. We plunked in dishes we wanted to make, family favourites. Or, we needed another protein, or we don’t have any fish in this season. Spring was the hardest. Nothing grows in the spring.”

“I am very proud of how it turned out, a huge undertaking. I don’t know if we were prepared for how much work it was. I learned that writing about food and recipe writing is so different—detailed and so technical. How much is a squirt of lemon juice? I found out.”

“The team at Random House was very good—they’ve been around for a long time. We had to trust the process, and do what they said.”

“My favourite recipe in the book is kuppershnuk, a rice, bacon and sauerkraut casserole. My mum learned it from my dad’s mum. I think the dish came out of a mistake It’s a riff on Ukrainian (or Polish or German or Russian) *kapusniak*, which is a soup. We called it kuppershnuk and it’s delicious!”



Curtis Comeau Photography

A Prairie Sampler

RHUBARB SIMPLE SYRUP

Rhubarb is all about the tang, with citrusy yet herbaceous flavour—there’s nothing quite like it. We use this simple syrup in our Rosy Clover (page 68) –Twyla Campbell

2 cups chopped rhubarb

1 cup fine granulated sugar

1 cup water

Add the ingredients to a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Turn the heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes or until the sugar is dissolved and the rhubarb has broken down into a thick stew. Take off the element and let cool. Strain the contents through a fine-mesh sieve into a glass jar and store in the fridge for up to 1 month.

ROASTED SHALLOTS AND GARLIC

Make the most of the garlic and shallot harvests by turning them into an at-the-ready flavour bomb to use when roasting meats or vegetables. –Twyla Campbell

6 large shallots (about 10 oz), sliced into rounds

10 cloves garlic, peeled, smashed and halved

1 cup canola oil

Preheat the oven to 300°F

Combine the ingredients in a baking dish and cover with tinfoil. Set in the oven. Stir after 30 minutes. After one hour, stir again. Take the foil off and continue roasting for a final 30 minutes. Let cool, pour into a sealable jar and store in the fridge for up to two weeks. 🍷

Read more about Prairie in Dish, page 3.

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The Proust Culinary Questionnaire

Rachael and Andrew Borley, Woodwork

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

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

Over a decade ago, Andrew Borley and Jeremy Bouw started a roving cocktail company called the Volstead Act. Andrew worked at an architectural firm, but he had a side passion exploring the world of craft cocktails. Enter Mike Scorgie. “He was the caterer at an event we were doing,” says Andrew. Together with Andrew’s wife Rachael, who acted as general manager, they refined the idea of a place that celebrated wood, in cocktails and in food. The Borleys and Mike Scorgie found a space and opened Woodwork 10 years ago.

“We were pretty naïve”, says Rachael. “We were inspired by bars we had seen in Portland, San Francisco. It was the time of *Mad Men* and we thought Edmonton was a great place to do it. If we have lived in NYC we never would have opened anything.” Mike Scorgie moved on, and in two years or so, the Borleys were able to buy him out.

Woodwork was innovative, even revolutionary. It’s unique brand of

cocktails and wood-fired food garnered accolades and awards by the handful. They installed the first Grillworks system in Canada. The interior looked amazing (still does). It’s a fun place to hang out.

“We always wanted Woodwork to be as much a cocktail bar as known for food,” says Rachael. Every good bartender did a stint at Woodwork at some point—James Grant (Royal York, Toronto); Jeff Savage (The Botanist, Vancouver); Natasha Trowsdale (Baijiu). Notable chefs have run the kitchen—David Leeder, Tony Tipping, Lindsay Porter—which is now ably managed by Trevor Johnston, hired as a sous chef in David Leeder’s time

“You move from one big hurdle to the next. I stepped out for a while when Mike was there and then I took a big break to have babies,” says Rachael. “Then there was Covid.”

In the meantime, they opened two more—Clementine, which also celebrates the art of the cocktail, and the new Leopard, which explores cocktails on tap and sourdough pizza. (Leopard refers to the char spots made when you

combine high hydration doughs and high heat.)

“Now, my role is operations over all three restaurants (Clementine and the new Leopard). Dylan Leduc is the general manager at Woodwork and Leopard and Mitch Caddick runs Clementine.” Jordan Clemens is the bar director at all three spots.

“We owe a lot to our community. When we opened it felt like a lot of people our age, young entrepreneurs, were trying to be something new, something unique, like Nate Box and Linda Ha with Barber Ha. And we supported each other. Now there are lots of cocktail bars and we feel like we had something to do with that.”

“We are on an upward trajectory now,” says Rachael. The pandemic is behind us, we have great people, we have air conditioning at Woodwork now.”

Hometown?

Two towns in Manitoba—Rapid City and Swan River.

Years in restaurant business?

Ten. I was 12 years in coffee with Starbucks. Andrew had a degree in architecture and worked in that field.

Where would you like to live?

Rachael: I dream of a place with open sky and open water, and I found it in northern Sweden—hills around an open field and a lake. Andrew: Coincidentally, my grandfather is literally from Sweden, right on the sea.

Your Favourite food/drink?

Andrew: Really simply prepared rib eye (reverse sear, cooked on wood) from Modest Meats with Côte Rôtie. Rachael: Home-cooked Bolognese on spelt noodles. I love a good Negroni.

What would you be doing if you weren’t in the restaurant biz?

Rachael: A little pottery shop and a women’s knitting club.



Andrew: I would build the pottery shop. I would be in some sort of design role.

What do you most appreciate in your friends?

Rachael: Honesty. Can't stand those beating around the bush conversations.

Andrew: Friends that push you to be a better person.

In a dish?

Rachel: Garlic! Something local, in season. And I love fermented foods.

Andrew: I would say simplicity. The longer I've been in this, the more I appreciate good ingredients prepared simply and well.

In a chef/cook?

Rachael and Andrew: Well-rounded, down to earth. Dependable, a team player and collaborative. Someone who tries to drive the business forward.

In a cocktail?

Rachael and Andrew: Balance, the classics, tried and true. They have the knowledge and the history.

Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

Rachael: Andrew says literally. I get teased for my corporate lingo—saying beverage, or opportunity instead of problem.

Who would be at your dream dinner table?

Queen Elizabeth, Winston Churchill, Ryan Gosling, Charles and Ray Eames, Grandpa Fred (Swedish granddaddy of Andrew).

Who would cook?

Frances Mallmann, José Andrés, Deb Perelman from Smitten Kitchen.

Current obsession or exploration?

Rachael: We just came back from Tales of the Cocktail, and two seminars really stood out. Mine was defining values in your business. Andrew: Ice. Using

freezing the same way a chef would use heat. Distilling by freezing rather as a way to concentrate flavours.

Best thing that ever happened to you?

Our ten-year wedding anniversary happened right after we opened Woodwork. We gathered at Woodwork and opened a bottle of Hanzell that we had picked up at the winery. It represented a personal and professional milestone. I'd love to recreate that for our 20th.

Meaningful/crazy food experience?

Rachael: We went to Galliano Island for two nights, just to go to Pilgrimage. Andrew: Bazaar Meat in Las Vegas. It was perfect, the service, all the meats are cooked over oak, tableside beef tartare.

Mentors?

Rachael: The person who hired me at Starbucks, Michelle Dearcangelis. That's where I learned how to be a manager. Andrew: I was hired at a design firm and the person I was replacing, Bob McMullen, took me under his wing. Our restaurant mentors are Patrick and Doris Saurette at the Marc.

Favourite casual cheap and cheerful/afterwork food?

It was always shawarma at La Shish and Pho Hoan Pasteur.

Philosophy?

With Woodwork, we were introducing a new experience to Edmonton. We are still pushing boundaries. The key to that is happy employees having real, meaningful connections in our spaces. Creating a culture that has work/life balance for everyone.

What's next

No more restaurants! Having a brand-new restaurant (Leopard) is like having a new baby. We are coming out of the craziest time and we are so grateful to come out the other side. Kudos to our community to making that happen. 🍷

PRO TIPS FOR BEING A COOL NEIGHBOUR



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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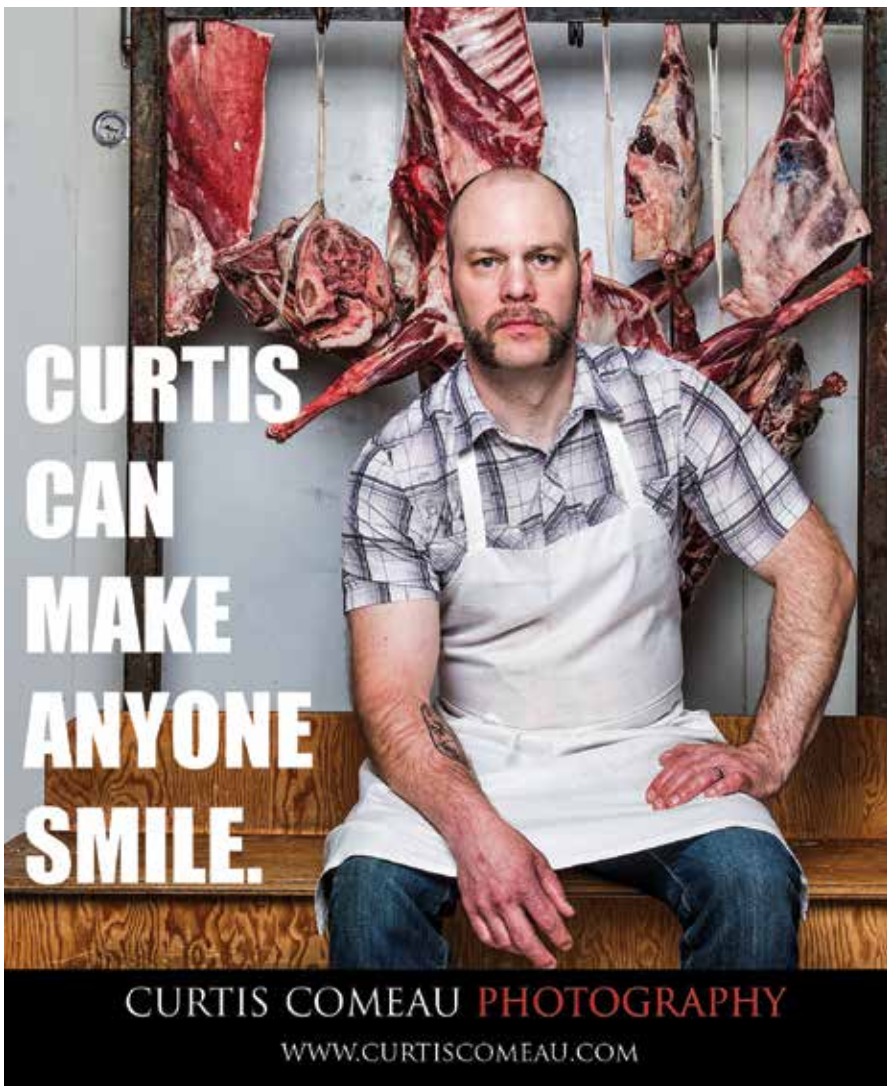
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Beer Guy

The hop pocket

**Northside—still alive!
Beer-wise, that is.**

After years of looking on with envy, watching craft breweries pop up southside in Edmonton, northsiders can take heart with some beery energy happening north of the river. Eight of these north-central breweries—Arcadia, Asymmetrical, Brewsters, Campio, The Growlery, Irrational, Odd Company and Polyrrhythm—have gotten together to form the Hop Pocket collective.

The Growlery co-founder Kevin Danard tells me the goal of the Hop Pocket “is to highlight the fact that we have eight awesome breweries all within about a short bike ride from each other. It makes sense for us to band together, it makes us more creative and elevates the beer scene in Edmonton.” Polyrrhythm co-owner and head brewer Chelsea Tessier hopes the collective “brings awareness to all of the breweries in the Hop Pocket and builds a community for customers and ourselves as breweries.”

According to Danard, the north-central breweries had been talking for some time about the things they shared, including Linear Park, the former rail line that is now a long, skinny park just off 121st Street, running south from Blatchford, through Inglewood and Westmount

and down into Oliver. With most of the breweries close to the park, the idea was to promote biking, e-biking and scootering from brewery to brewery. Like all great ideas, it needed someone to take the ball and run with it: that person was Polyrrhythm’s Chelsea Tessier. The Hop Pocket launched in June with a cask relay event, with more events planned for the summer and fall.

Tessier notes the southside brewery collective, Happy Beer Street, was an inspiration for the northerners, as were similar brewery districts like Calgary’s Barley Belt and Port Moody’s Brewery Row. She assures me that there is no beef with the southside folks, that everyone knows everyone in Edmonton’s beer community. Irrational co-owner Wafa Veljee notes that “the craft beer industry is extremely collaborative and the Hop Pocket is a perfect example. Craft breweries benefit from each other’s success.”

With Irrational a few hundred metres from my front door, and Arcadia, Asymmetrical and Odd Company not much further, no one is happier about this initiative and the growth of north-central craft brewing than me! I invite you to join me this fall in exploring all the great breweries of Edmonton’s Hop Pocket.



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Hop pocket sixpack

Great beers from six of the Hop Pocket breweries, available for take-away from the breweries or from better beer stores.



Arcadia Ruff Riland Road Dry Irish Stout

Arcadia owner Darren McGeown says, "Man, I love this stout! So easy drinking, perfect for any weather." McGeown calls it a Goldilocks beer—"Not too sweet, not too rich, not too heavy, not too malty—just right!" Named in honour of McGeown's Dad and Uncle Francis, who were born in Rathfriland, County Down, Ireland.



Asymmetrical Cumulus Lupulus Hazy Pale Ale

The newest of the Hop Pocket breweries, opening in the former Two Sergeants space right beside the Brewery District in Oliver, across the street from St. Joachim Catholic Cemetery. You can ponder mortality with a pint of this juicy, balanced, lower-alcohol ale, hopped with fruity New Zealand Topaz hops.



The Growler's Cold Shoulder Cold IPA

Cold IPAs, dry, hoppy and light in body, are a reaction to juicy, hazy IPAs. Think hoppy lager. The Growler's cold IPA is brewed warm with lager yeast, with added rice to lighten the body. Co-founder Kevin Danard says it is a taproom favourite and has become one of their core year-round beers.



Irrational Masala Dreams Chai Porter

Masala Dreams is a special beer for Irrational co-owners and couple, Wafa Veljee and Nathan Marculis, as it was first brewed by Nathan for their wedding in 2019. Inspired by Veljee's Pakistani heritage, Marculis brewed an American Porter infused with chai masala—a blend of green cardamom, cinnamon, black peppercorn, ginger and clove.



Odd Company Good Chemistry IPA

Odd Company's Jenn Henry says this is the quintessential Odd Company IPA. It is a hoppy, hazy IPA, double dry-hopped with Citra, Mosaic and Sabro hops. With the opening of their second location southside this fall, Odd Company will be a member of both the Hop Pocket and Happy Beer Street!



Polyrhythm Common Time California Common

In 1965, Anchor Brewing in San Francisco launched the craft beer revolution with their iconic Anchor Steam Beer. Alas, in July 2023, Anchor Brewing closed its doors, possibly for good. Common Time is Polyrhythm's homage to Anchor Steam, a California Common beer, like a more bitter amber ale, brewed with woody-tasting Northern Brewer hops. 🍷

Peter Bailey spends his days biking to breweries. It's a good life. He's on X/Twitter and Instagram as @Libarbarian

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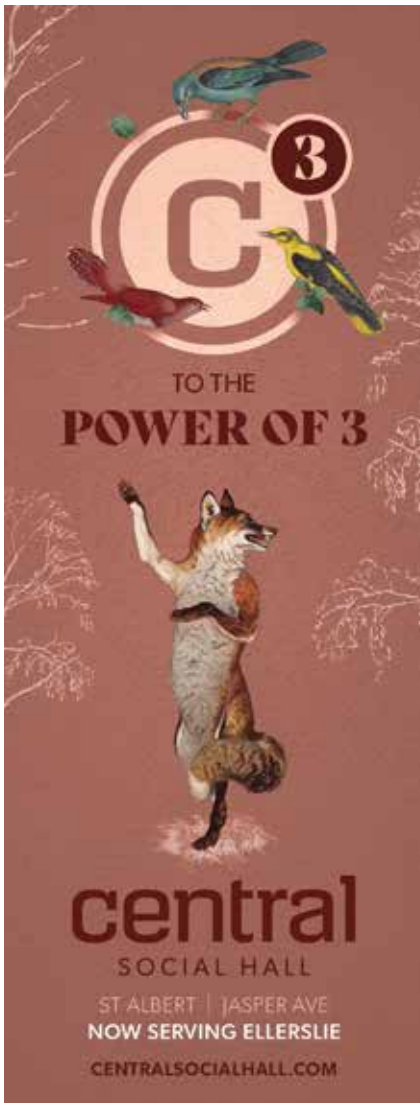
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Nosh Fest is back! Enjoy over 80 food and beverage vendors, from sauerkraut to gluten-free, dairy-free, plant-based meals and local distilleries, September 16 from 10am-5pm and September 17 from 11am-4pm at the Strathcona County Community Centre. More info, visit whollyhandmade.com.

The Marc's (9940 106 Street, themarc.ca) **Sunday Suppers** are back, starting September 24, featuring wines from the exquisite **Presqu'île Vineyard** in California. Special guest is Tony Cha, sales director for Presqu'île. The Santa Maria Valley vineyard is best known for its Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Syrah, to be paired with a multi-course menu by chef Cara. Tix: \$165/p all in, call 780-429-2828 to reserve your spot.

Getting married? Don't miss the **Wedding Open House at The Butternut Tree** (9707 110 Street, 780-760-2271, thebutternuttree.ca) Sunday, October 15. Meet the event team, chefs, preferred vendors and tour the space. Enjoy canapes and menu samples, with signature cocktails and beverages available for purchase. Event planners, or anyone thinking about an anniversary or corporate event are also welcome. Email Samantha (info@thebutternuttree.ca) or reserve complimentary tickets (and a welcome beverage) online at thebutternuttree.ca/events-weddings.

Want to learn more about Lebanese food? Check out these amazing tutorials taught by passionate residents from their home kitchens in Lebanon. Jorj Sayde organized the **Lebanese Food Pilgrimage** to increase knowledge and communication and to help support during tough times. The next session is on September 30. Find tix on Eventbrite: eventbrite.com/e/lebanese-food-pilgrimage-tickets-696122730827?aff=oddtcreator.

restaurant buzz

The beloved **Bar Bricco** (10347 Jasper Avenue, 780-424-5588, corso32group.com) is expanding and plans to reopen in

early September. We are curious to see the redesign and enjoy the best focaccia (and negronis) in town. Giddy up!

The Butternut Tree (9707 110 Street, 780-760-2271) offers the **Halloween High Tea** on Sunday, October 29. Tea at the Butternut is legendary, with sweets and savouries and delicious baking. Reservations from 10am-12:45pm, \$65/p+, exploretock.com/thebutternuttree.

Francois Lecouvez is the new executive chef at the **Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge**. Chef was brought on last summer as the executive sous chef, following a career in France and Thailand. He aims to tell the story of Jasper. "When you are in a national park, you have to care about how you treat our nature and it is important to educate more people about food waste and be conscious of how we cook." We can't wait to see his sustainable approach in action, from upscale Orso Trattoria to the Alpine-inspired Great Hall. To reserve: jasper-park-lodge.com.

Little Wolf (8424 109 Street), Shaun Hicks' first personal project, should be open in early September in the old Three Boars space, (which had morphed into High Dough during the pandemic). "It's kind of a crazy hairbrained idea," says Shaun, about opening a restaurant now. "But this is controllable. I know this space, I know the cost of operating it." Shaun has a long history in the Edmonton food scene. Most recently the general manager at La Petite Iza, Shaun has cooked, consulted on projects, managed restaurants, washed dishes, bussed tables and run bars, helping out where needed, including general manager at Three Boars. He is doing most of the sprucing up himself. Sanding floors, tiling, small renos and improvements. "The big thing now is we have air conditioning." The footprint is similar, 25 seats or so upstairs, 14 at the bar and 15 on the patio which now has an awning. "I was missing the spirit of Three Boars. Previous to Covid, it was kind of a late-night salon, where you could have a drink and something to eat. The name ties into the mythology of the space; Farrow (next door) is a litter of little pigs, we're

What's new and notable

part of the same fairy tale. The menu is Three Boars adjacent, small plates, lots of vegetables, flexible, not expensive. I can do that in a way that works." Open 5pm 'til late for now, with brunches or pop ups eventually.

product news

The next round of **Bountiful Farmers' Market** (3696 97 Street, 780-818-3878, bountifulmarkets.com) loyalty program kicks off September 1. Visit every week for fresh local produce and other foods and collect stamps for a chance to win up to \$300. Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

If you were in love with the cinnamon buns at **Chartier** or their bread (remember the bread window?) you'll be happy to know that their production bakery, **Mother Bakery**, does online pre-orders at motherbakery.ca/preorder. You can pick up your pre-order at Meuwly's and Modest Meats in Edmonton, Effing Seafood in St Albert, Nisku Business and Entrepreneur Centre and Chartier. The classic white sourdough, donuts, the frozen bake-at-home cinnamon buns, those brioche hamburger buns, only a few clicks away.

Heart of The Home (2539 102 Avenue, 780-705-4928, heartofthehomeyeg.ca) promo in September: **Le Creuset** coloured and stainless steel classic kettles at 25 per cent off. **Zwilling Knife Sharpening Clinic** is on September 29. **Emile Henry** is on promo in October, 20 per cent off in-stock items. Don't forget that in October \$1 from every purchase goes to **GEARS** (Greater Edmonton Animal Rescue Society). There will also be a donation bin in-store, beds, toys, treats and food. The shop is closed October 9 for Thanksgiving.

Remember **Ralph's fried chicken** at the Handi-Mart in Strathearn? The chicken that was out for maybe an hour before it was all gone? It's back! **Ralph's Fried Chicken** is in a strip mall in Castledowns at 10807 Castle Downs Road. Still crunchy and moist, still delicious. 🍗

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



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