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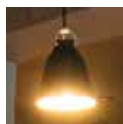
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On the cover: Bar Bricco team from left; Stephen Hlushak, Matt Guerin, Allen Anderl, Daniel Costa, Micah Joffe, Kaitlyn McWilliams. Photo Curtis Comeau Photography.

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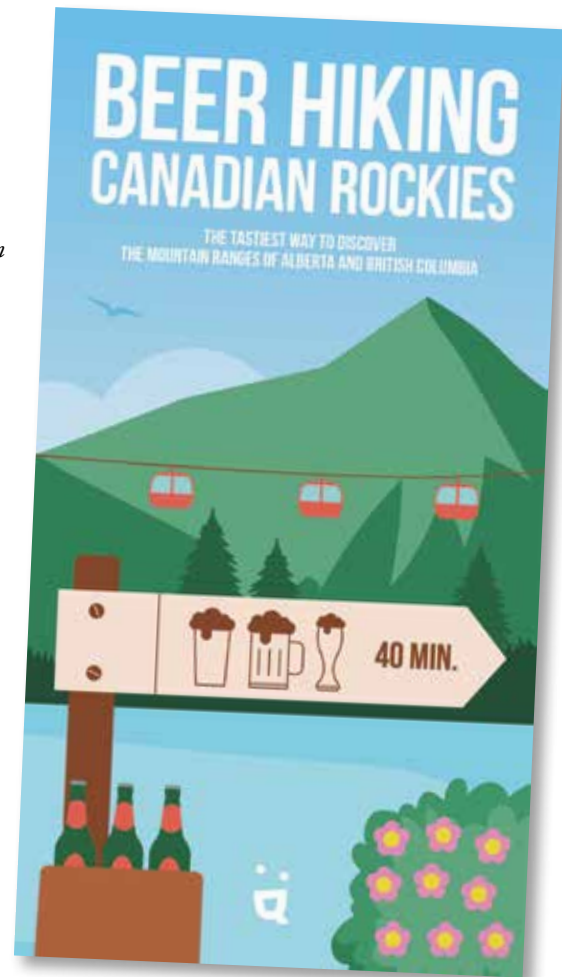
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Dish

a hike followed by a beer? i'm in

Love beer? Love hiking? The new guide *Beer Hiking Canadian Rockies: the tastiest way to discover the mountain ranges of Alberta and British Columbia* is for you. Meant for both the casual walker (the Policeman's Creek walk ends up at Sheepdog, one of our favourite Canmore brewers) and the most gung-ho elevation seeker, the book travels through craggy terrain, alpine flora and fauna and inland rainforests. Hikes are rated easy to strenuous and take you to not only the best scenery and views, but the best beers too. Impeccably researched and written by Banff native Kendall Hunter, who knows her way around the Kootenays, the central Rockies and the foothills. Indispensable for beer and hiking fans both. *Beer Hiking Canadian Rockies* (\$34.50, Helvetiq).



gotta get some cabbage rolls

Ukraine's Kitchen is the first Ukrainian kitchen in Canada run entirely by newcomers who left the war in Ukraine. All the delicious things are here—*varenyky* (pyrohy) with various fillings, *nalisniki*, borsch, three kinds of *holubtsi* (cabbage rolls). Order frozen online or pick up at the store when you come for lunch. They also cater. Chef Brad Smoliak is their advisor and helps out in the kitchen.

Yes, Ukraine's Kitchen sells delicious food, but its main purpose is to provide training and jobs. Scott Kelly of Butchers & Packers provides the space free of charge. "We have about 10 people on the payroll," says Jorgia Moore,



Yuliya Shabanova and chef Brad Smoliak

who started the business with her mother Janice Krissa and another partner. "Our goal is for everyone to have at least 30 hours per week. This starts them on the road to permanent residency."

Yuliya Shabanova was a physicist in Ukraine. Now she is the manager at Ukraine's



Photo Curtis Comeau Photography

Dana Holst's custom-designed wall art enhances Bar Bricco's moody and sophisticated atmosphere.

Kitchen. "I thought all the time about what is happening in Ukraine. Now I have a job and I almost don't think about the horrible things in my motherland. With these people I can just forget sometimes, look to the future. Now, I have more friends, it's a warm atmosphere in this job." Did I mention that Yuliya didn't speak English when she came? Ukraine's Kitchen, inside Butchers & Packers, 12225 Fort Road, is open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm and Saturday, 11am-2pm.

tara smith fortifies the l'oca team

Tara Smith has signed on to L'oca Quality Market as team lead liquor (head somm) responsible for the wine lists in the restos and the liquor store. What a dream team—Tara, chef Tony Tipping, pastry and bread king James David and exec chef Paul Moran. Opening spring Sherwood Park.



reimagining bar bricco

Bar Bricco (10347 Jasper Avenue) has reopened. The space unites the aura of Bricco—moody, mysterious, surprising—with the modernity of Corso 32. The heartbeat of this beloved downtown bar/resto lives on. "It was a delicate transformation," says founder-owner Daniel Costa. "Corso 32 was my first restaurant, it's so

close to my heart. I did not want to change the spirit of Bricco but we wanted to spread our wings a little further. The only way to do that was to dive deeper into what Bricco means to us, to keep it personal, with more maturity. Bricco is more upbeat now, a little more fun and much more musically driven," he says.

By we Daniel means the new ownership group. Chefs Matt Guerin, Stephen Hlushak and Micah Joffe join Daniel and Allen Anderl as partners in Bricco.

The menu? Less meat and cheese, more delightful little dishes. "With chefs Matt and Mike, there is a different expression in the menu, it's more collaborative," says Daniel. "We're cooking out of a full kitchen now, we're able to put more complex dishes out. We can actually fry things, we have a hood." And, yes, dear reader, the focaccia is still on the menu.

The look is luxuriously quirky and deeply personal, filled with Daniel's own photos and vintage materials. Artist Dana Holst created the wonderful wall art (don't ever call it wallpaper). Designer Peter Turner is responsible for many of the lovely old furniture pieces. In one corner is a vintage cabinet from Paris, where the Amaro lives with two funky little lamps.

The new Bar Bricco is polished, yet still homey, sophisticated yet with even more heart. Edmontonians have responded in droves, packing their 60 seats every night.

Welcome back Bricco.

have your party at the sub

The Irrational Brewing Company (10643 124 Street) in the impeccably restored 1938 heritage substation, has a new event space called the Sub Room. Book it as a cozy nook for 45 or book the whole taproom for up to 75 people. There is a special on right now with promotional pricing for bookings outside Irrational's regular hours. Email about the Winter Special to events@irrationalbrewing.ca.



Photo The Irrational Brewing Company

Local art hangs above a banquette in Irrational Brewery's Sub Room.

CHRISTMAS DINNER WITH THE DOWNEYS

Chef Scott Downey, The Butternut Tree

The holidays are the time of year when everyone, the cousins, the aunts, the uncles, the grandparents, can all get together. It's the time to celebrate, catch up and just spend valuable time together.

Growing up we always had the same traditional meal—stuffed roast turkey, mashed potatoes, mashed turnip, gravy, cranberry sauce, broccoli casserole, sweet potato with marshmallows, tomato aspic and the cherished family Christmas pudding. It's a most special meal, so incredibly delicious and nostalgic, part of our family history.

But it always brought the busy to the holidays. Not to mention the mess in the kitchen at the end of the night.

When I grew older and became a professional chef, I wanted to put my cheffy twist on things. Nuts and wild mushrooms to the stuffing, Clementine and clove to the turkey.

The funny thing? Before I got the opportunity to put my twist on this sacred holiday meal, my life changed dramatically. I became a dad, which is the best thing that has ever happened to me. But, between running the restaurant and being a dad, was there really time to do the traditional holiday dinner? And, our parents wanted to spend time with their grandkids. Nobody wanted to be stuck in the kitchen.

I realized it wasn't the menu that had to change but how we did it.

The last-minute flurry of jockeying for space in the oven and on the stove top, the isolation of the folks in the kitchen while everyone is chatting and getting into the spirit of things in the living room. The staggering out of the kitchen with the massive bird on display ready to be ceremoniously carved. The messy kitchen, with counters and sink overflowing with every dirty pot, pan and utensil.

Nope, not for us, not anymore.

Now we prepare all the vegetables a few days before, ready to be roasted right before dinner. Salad dressing is made in advance. Other family members bring stuffing and mashed potatoes in serving dishes, ready to be reheated.

The turkey? We brine it before and cook the morning of. After resting we carve

it and hold it in the refrigerator. (Re-heating instructions are in the recipe).

The only thing that hasn't changed? Grandma's Christmas Pudding. We always made that in advance. Now we make the sauce early too and freeze it.

No longer do we have the presentation of the roast bird, but that's a small price to pay for the time gained with family. And, the house still has that same inviting smell of roast turkey.

Take it from an individual who grew up with this nostalgic, delicious and labour intensive dinner, this new method works. It even got the 'best turkey I have ever eaten' from my mom last year; the head curator of holiday meals in our family.

Nobody fights about loading the dishwasher. It's so easy compared to the kitchen disaster of the past.

Here's to spending the holidays with the people you love, not hidden away in the kitchen.

No Fuss Roast Turkey

Remember to plan ahead for the brining, then cook to time with dinner. We cook ours around 9am, to be finished cooking by around 12:30pm. We let it rest for 20 minutes, then we carve the turkey, cover with tin foil and refrigerate. This means the carving mess and clean-up is sorted prior to the guest's arrival. When carving the bird, take off all the extra skin from the bottom of the bird and around the legs and place on top of the carved meat, skin side up. These pieces have the highest amount of fat and create a natural lid that keeps the meat moist. We re-heat right before we plan to serve.

12-16 lb	fresh turkey
8 T	kosher salt
12 sprigs	rosemary
12 sprigs	thyme
6 sprigs	sage
2 heads	garlic
2 onions	rough chopped
2 carrots	rough chopped
2 sticks	celery, rough chopped
¼ c	butter, room temperature

The most important step: brine your turkey! Brining keeps it moist and flavourful, even more important when you plan to reheat later.

Heat 8 cups of water and 8 tablespoons kosher salt in a large pot until the salt is fully dissolved in the water. Take off the heat, let it cool to room temp (refrigerate if you have room). Gently rinse turkey with cold water and place in a large brine bag (available at grocery stores during the holiday season) or large container such as a Cambro (even a cooler!). Pour the cooled brine over the turkey, covering completely. Add half the herbs and garlic and seal tightly. Make sure the turkey is completely covered in brine, and pop in the fridge. If necessary, add more cooled brine and weigh down the bag with a brick. Let brine for 24-36 hours. When ready, take the turkey out of the brine and pat dry. Let it sit uncovered in the fridge overnight. This dries out the turkey skin so it will crisp up and become golden brown. Take out of the fridge in the morning and bring to room temperature (about 1-1.5 hours).

Pre-heat oven to 400°F.

Place the chopped onion, carrot and celery in roasting pan. Fill the cavity of the bird with the remaining herbs and head of garlic. Place turkey, untrussed, onto the vegetable bed and put in the oven for 20 minutes, then lower the temperature to 350°F, brush with all the butter and proceed to cook the turkey for 12 minutes per pound.

Brush the turkey with pan drippings about 4-5 times through the cooking process, approximately every 30 minutes. When the cook time is completed, check the temperature in the thickest part of the breast and the thigh along the bone to ensure the meat is cooked. I prefer to cook it to 170-175°F prior to resting as it creates super-tender leg meat and the brine will keep the breast moist. Tent with tin foil and let rest at room temperature for 30 minutes, then carve the turkey in the roasting pan and refrigerate until you need it. To reheat: add ½-cup pan drippings, cover with tinfoil and place in 400°F oven for 20 minutes.

To serve: arrange the turkey pieces attractively on a platter and serve with gravy and all the vegetables.

Brussel Sprouts with Pickled Onions and Blue Cheese

½ lb	bacon, cut into lardons
2 lb	brussels sprouts, halved
3 T	canola oil
⅛ c	pickled red onions
4 T	apple cider vinegar
⅛ c	blue cheese
	kosher salt and fresh-cracked pepper

Cook the bacon until just before crispy; strain and reserve bacon fat. Toss sprouts with bacon and canola oil, season and place on sheet tray. Put in the fridge if you are doing ahead of time. To serve: Roast sprouts for 15 minutes at 400°F; when everything is out of the oven and the table is being set with all the side dishes, turn it to broil and cook sprouts for 5-10 minutes until crispy. Toss with the pickled onions, cider vinegar and blue cheese and serve.

Serves 10.

Kale Salad

2 bunches	kale cut into ¼-inch strips.
¼ c	dried cranberries
⅛ c	pumpkin seeds
⅛ c	sunflower seeds
⅛ c	walnut pieces
1	apple, cut in small dice (best to cut just before serving)
¼ c	shaved parmesan

Make-ahead Dressing

⅓ c	mayo
⅓ c	bacon fat, topped up with canola oil to volume
⅓ c	sherry or red wine vinegar
1 T	Dijon mustard

Mix together mayo, bacon fat, mustard and vinegar. Reserve.

To serve: Toss kale with the dressing and top with seeds, nuts, dried fruit, apple and cheese.

Serves 10.



Great Grandma's Christmas Pudding

- 1 c brown sugar
- 1 c beef suet (butchers can provide during the holiday season)
- 1½ c raisins
- 1 c grated carrot
- 1 c grated potato
- 1½ c flour
- 1 t baking soda
- 1 T lemon juice
- ¼ t each clove, cinnamon, nutmeg

Dissolve soda in 1T warm water, then mix ingredients in the order provided. Place in a large old soup can, cover with tin foil and place in a pot with boiling water up halfway of the can. Place lid on the pot and steam on low heat for 3 hours. Serve warm with heart sauce and vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

Serves 8, recipe can be doubled or tripled if desired.

Heart Sauce

We always called it heart sauce, that goes back to my grandma making it with her mother.

- ¼ c butter
- 2 T flour
- 1¼ c brown sugar
- ½ c water
- ½ t vanilla
- pinch nutmeg

Melt butter, stir in flour and add in brown sugar until paste forms. Whisk in boiling water until smooth and silky. Serve warm.

For Scott's roast carrot and gravy recipes, visit Christmas at the Downys at thetomato.ca.

Scott Downey is exec chef and owner (with his wife Jillian) of the Butternut Tree in downtown Edmonton, thebutternuttree.ca.

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On Our Table Charcuterie Boards

The excellent **Hole Slab Charcuterie Board** by Geof Lilge and Cindy Lazarenko's **On Our Table** is back in production. It is 24 inches long and nine inches wide, perfect for kitchen island parties. In walnut, \$260, in white oak, \$198.

Order at onourtable.co.

Kitchen Aprons Designed by a Chef

These attractive denim and canvas aprons by chef **Victor Hugo** are designed in Edmonton and made by family members in Mexico. Sturdy, hard-working and well-priced, \$60-\$70 each, vhkitchenapparel.com.

PS: Chef Hugo also makes really great tacos.

Love Tomatoes?

Where would we be without tomatoes? Explore 80 mouth-watering recipes in the cookbook *Tomato* that capture the flavours of the fruit in its rapturous summer glory, but also use canned in the depth of winter. This is chef Claire Thompson's,

also known as the 5 O'Clock Apron, sixth cookbook. It's a winner. *Tomato* by Claire Thomson (Quadrille Press, \$48), at Zocalo, 10826 95 Street.

A Beautiful Platter for Your Table

Always need more platters at Christmas and these **Vietri Medici** platters are stunning. Hand-made of *terre bianca*, a white clay found in Umbria. Hand painted in Italy. Find at Bella Casa, 9646 142 Street, from \$245-\$325.

Stocking Stuffers for Gift Baskets

Lessig Ferments Hot Sauces. Chef **Roger Letourneau** makes really tasty hot sauces with just the right amount of heat. The fermentation technique brings added depth of flavour and concentration—truly local and so delicious. Find at Acme Meats, Biera Market, The Butchery, Color de Vino, Good Goods Co, Meathead, Meuwly's, Modest Meats, and all Ribeye Butcher Shops.

Lakrids Frozen Crispy Mint Liquorice. The high-quality, handmade boiled liquorice from Denmark has a new flavour for the holidays: Frozen Crispy Mint—sweet liquorice wrapped in dark Belgian chocolate with peppermint, \$10-\$25. Find at Heart of the Home and the Italian Centre South.

Chocolate

Holiday Collections, Advent Calendars, bon bons and bars by three Edmonton-area chocolatiers.

Colleen's Chocolates. Colleen

Heidecker offers a dizzying array of flavours in bars, barks, even chocolate-covered gummies. Special for the holidays: **Holiday Stuffed Bar Collection**, \$24, **Smash Santa**, \$25 and the **25 Day Chocolate Experience**, \$80—truffles, mini bars, stuffed bars, with 80 per cent locally sourced ingredients for the fillings. The full range at

colleenschocolates.com. Find custom bars at Culina To Go, Fawkes Coffee and the Daisy Chain Book Company.

St. Albert's **Priya Winsor of Compass Chocolates** works primarily with French-made Valrhona. Her creations are velvety textured, with distinct flavours, beautifully balanced, never too sweet. **Holiday assortments** (maple, caramel ginger, apple

cinnamon, Irish coffee, mint and eggnog) start at \$16.50, the **Advent Box** is \$74 (order by November 15). Find Compass online at compasschocolates.ca and in person at Klondyke Flowers in St. Albert and Freson Bros on Mullen Road.

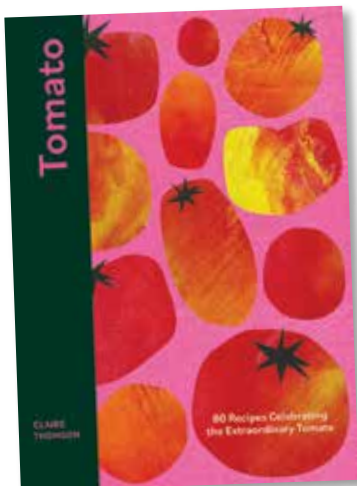
Jacqueline Jacek is the cocoanista behind **Jacek Chocolate Couture** which she founded in her basement in 2009. Since then, Jacek has garnered a raft of awards and fans. The holiday collection starts at \$15, the **10th Anniversary Edition Advent Calendar** is \$68 and the **Large Joy Box** is just the thing for the fashionable chocolate lover, \$135. Find at the Jacek boutique on Kaska Road, Sherwood Park and online at jacekchocolate.com. Opening soon is

the new boutique in Crestwood, right by Happy & Olive.

For your Charcuterie Board or for your Toast

Thursday Cottage Cherry Curd, handmade in small batches in Somerset, UK, is bursting with tart cherry flavour. Pair it with an aged cheddar or make a tart, \$12. Find at Heart of the Home.

Hawkshead Relish makes delicious sauces, jams and relishes that are gluten- and nut-free, suitable for, well, just about everyone. Made in





the UK. The **Sour Cherry & Prosecco** is not too tart, not too sweet, the perfect indulgence for holiday breakfasts. **Chilli Jam** is sweet and hot with chillies, onion, garlic and spices, \$12. The **Cheeseboard Chutney** with fresh figs, cranberries and apples, finished with Pinot Noir, has complex flavours, \$12. The **Posh Pickle Sauce**, packed with gherkins, dill and onions, is equally fabulous with hot dogs, fish or burgers, \$10. Find Hawkshead at Freson Bros, various locations.

Love Tea?

Zocalo stocks the **Amulet Tea**

Infuser made by Vancouver's **Danica Studio**.

Charming scarab beetles and herbs clamber across the double-walled borosilicate glass of this durable travel bottle complete with a stainless steel removable infuser and a bamboo screw-on lid, \$32.



Bella Casa stocks the **Creatures of Curiosity** fine bone china from Britain's **Portmeirion**.

The wild and fantastical designs, featuring a menagerie of snakes, animal print and bold florals, are inspired by the Victorian obsession with the natural world. Teapot, mugs, creamer and sugar, \$40-\$140.



The Drinks

Split Tree Cranberry Ginger Cordial. Whole cranberries, white ginger, fresh lime juice, sugar, that's it. Drink with soda, or reinvent the Cosmo, \$16. Find at the Italian Centre Shops, South and North and at Maven & Grace.



Coriander Liqueur. We are a big fans of this spirit by Edmonton drinks specialist **Warren Johnston of Above Average Drinks**. We love the racy herbaceous quality it brings to a Negroni, or enjoy on the rocks with a twist of orange. Find at Biera Market, Color de Vino, Dorinku, Lone Pine and Marlo Tacos.



Jaya Chai Liqueur. **Faiza Ramji** is upending the spirits line-up. First it was **Sweet Pea Amaro**, the made-in-Alberta amaro she makes with the peas from southern Alberta farmer (and business partner) **Lindsey Good**. Now, she is honouring her family's chai recipe ("every south Asian family has their own way of blending spices," she says) with Jaya Chai Liqueur. Boozy chai on Christmas morning? Giddy up. Find at Lone Pine Distillery and better wine shops, TasteJaya.com.



The **Lone Pine Christmas Gin** is delicious, with warm spices reminiscent of mulled wine and juniper, citrus and a subtle note of peppermint. Makes a fantastic eggnog or make a Christmassy martini. Instead of an olive, garnish with cranberries or a stalk of rosemary. 🍷



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GIFTS FROM your Rich Uncle and your Cash-strapped Friend

We ask the wines and spirits pros—wine shop owners and managers, somms, agents and restaurateurs what they would like to see under the tree from both the skint yet wine-savvy friend and the rich and generous relative. Make your very own wish list for gifts, holiday dinners, or tucking away in the cellar.

.....

Patrick Saurette, The Marc



Cash-strapped Friend
2022 Malivoire Ladybug Rosé
(Beamsville Bench, Canada)
\$19

A friend once said to me that ‘chicken is not a celebratory dish.’ One may feel the same about rosé but the Ladybug begs to differ. Every year for the past 20 years the magicians at the sustainable Malivoire vineyards have consistently blended together a mix of Cabernet Franc, Pinot Noir and Gamay to produce this delicious wine. It will hit you on the nose with red cherry and wild strawberry notes, its texture dances on your tongue, grips it and finishes you off with the tension between the cranberry flavours and acidity. I would pair it with chicken, probably roasted, call my cash-strapped friend to come over and celebrate how good life can be together.

Rich Uncle
2020 Château de Chantegrive Caroline
(Bordeaux, France) \$55

My rich uncle and I drink more and more white wine as of late and Chantegrive Caroline might just be his best kept secret value. This vintage is a blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon and a whiff of Sauvignon Gris. Vivacious, with a creamy mouth feel, bright tartness and lovely lemon curd notes. Apple, pear, grapefruit, papaya all play a part in this young toasty wine. This wine expresses a genuine purity



and is enjoyable now, but it will develop for many years to come. Caroline is elevated with food, in particular a butter-poached scallop and prawns on butter leaf lettuce salad with shallot vinaigrette.

.....

Joe Gurba, Vino al Vino Imports



Cash-strapped Friend
2022 Zillinger Velue Grüner Veltliner, (Velue, Austria) \$30

That Johannes’ wines do not cost more is a constant astonishment. Zillinger has the gift. Perhaps he picked it up in Georgia, the ancient cradle of wine, where he studied before taking over the farm from his dad. He’s able to coax forth so much from his Grüner. All the textbook notes of quince and white pepper and salty savoury nuance are presented in such high fidelity that the rest comes out from hiding, those shy notes of great pleasure that are usually banned from polite wine-marketing—notes of mortadella, parsley, chive, sweet onion, and salted lime; of river stones; of thunderstorms

nearing or departing; of a skatepark after the rain. Biodynamic, hand harvested, foot-tread, unfiltered and unfiltered.

Rich Uncle
2020 Domaine Belargus Quarts Sec
(Anjou, France) \$135

The Chenin Blancs of Domaine Belargus rank among the finest wines I’ve ever had the privilege of tasting. Ivan Massonnat



has brought his passion and resources to acquiring millennium-old Chenin vineyards throughout the Anjou and Savennières and installing the finest team of veteran vigneron. The goal? To restore Chenin to the degree of medieval monastic site specificity still seen in Burgundy. All fourteen of their cuvées are glorious, but the Quarts is an especially rare pleasure. This is the dry wine made from the partially botrytised fruit of the famed Quarts-du-Chaume Grand Cru’s eponymous vineyard. It’s power and beguiling depth of information trap your head in the glass and obliterate your surroundings. It’s the kind of high only the greatest wines can deliver. Only 36 bottles for the province—or 30 rather, if you don’t count the ones in my basement. Age for five to 25 years, or, if you crack it now, do decant for at least an hour.

.....

Juanita and Kelsey Roos, Color de Vino

Cash-strapped Friend
2021 Aneto Tinto
(Douro, Portugal) \$29

A vibrant and aromatic Portuguese blend offering complex notes from the barrel (vanilla and spice) mingling with ripe, dark and lush fruits. Would pair beautifully with traditional holiday dinner or a charcuterie board.

Rich Uncle
2020 Chateau Mangot Saint Emilion
(Bordeaux, France) \$60

What a fabulous splurge this would be for any wine lover’s stocking! This delicious Bordeaux will delight every wine lover. Layers of cherries, plums, wild blueberries, herbs, forest floor



and florals on a velvety soft palate with a long, lingering finish. An absolute gem that can be enjoyed now in its youth or tuck away for a decade or two.

.....
Daniel Costa,
Corso 32 Group

Cash-strapped Friend
2020 Abbia Nova
Passerina (Lazio, Italy)
\$27



Passerina is a rare and ancient grape from Le Marche. Slightly oxidized with notes of pear, apple, some salinity and a great balance of acidity. I will definitely be opening a bottle or two of Abbia Nova on Christmas Eve.



Rich Uncle
2017 Le Ragnaie Brunello di Montalcino (Tuscany, Italy)
\$110

Le Ragnaie is located at a very high altitude which results in a unique expression of Sangiovese and the Montalcino terroir. I love the floral and herbaceous qualities of this wine. Will be perfect with roasted quail or duck ragu over the holidays.

.....
Tara Smith, head somm,
L'oca Quality Market

Cash-strapped Friend
2021 Winery of Good Hope
Bush Vine Chenin Blanc
(Stellenbosch, South Africa)
\$23

It's no secret that I enjoy South African wines and Chenin Blanc is easily the signature white. Radford Dale produces this low intervention Chenin in an infinitely approachable style—fruit forward, with fresh citrus and the texture and minerality to balance out the beautiful ripe fruit. I often recommend Chenin to those who want something different from the usual Pinot Grigio or Sauv Blanc. This one is a winner.



Rich Uncle
2011 Champagne Gardet
Prestige Charles Gardet
Rosé de Saignée Millésime
(Chigny les Roses, Champagne)
\$130

Another badly kept secret is how much I love champagne and sparkling wine. An extra treat? Vintage champs. This is wonderfully expressive, with lots of red fruits and hints of cream. Due to the extended maceration time, the colour is as rich and luscious as the palate. One of the most voluptuous Champagne I've had in a long time, and the finish just doesn't quit.



.....
Curtis Bawden,
Pacific Wine and Spirits

Cash-strapped Friend
2018 Viña Chocalan Gran
Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon
(Maipo, Chile)
\$20

This wine is fantastic in every way, shape and form. From the weight of the bottle, its look and style, not to mention how it tastes! If you are on a budget then this wine is for you, the wine is big and bold with a deep concentrated nose, rich and full bodied on the palate with forthright blackcurrant and blackberry flavours followed up by firm tannins. This is the perfect wine for steaks, ribs and delicious charcuterie boards.



Rich Uncle
2017 Henschke
Mount
Edelstone
Shiraz (Eden Valley, Australia)
\$270

It's not every day that people are able to get their hands on the Mount Edelstone. It's rare and highly sought after. When they do, they will savour every sip—violets and blackberry aromas, savoury red and black fruits on the smooth and velvety palate with elegant tannins on the finish. Should you receive it from someone special, this is exactly what they are telling you, you ARE special!



.....
Christina Masciangelo,
Salivate Wines

Cash-strapped Friend
2022 Corte Manzini
Bolla Rossa
Lambrusco (Emilia Romagna, Italy)
\$26

If you haven't yet discovered this Italian bubbly, you must check out this juicy, highly versatile wine made from red Lambrusco grapes. Bright purple, with a delicate frothiness, enticing fruity aromas and a sleek texture. This small, high-quality producer farms its



.....
Lisa Rogers,
Select Wine Merchants

Cash-strapped Friend
2021 Viña Carmen Gran
Reserva Pinot Noir
(Leyda, Chile)
\$23

This single-vineyard, hand-picked, small (4,500 case) production Pinot Noir from Chile's oldest winery is grown 14 kilometres from the Pacific Ocean. The cooling winds allow this Pinot Noir to retain its freshness and acidity. Black cherry and strawberry notes shine through with a touch of spice and earthiness on the finish. A perfect pairing for turkey or ham.



Rich Uncle
Ramos Pinto 20 Year
Tawny Port (Douro, Portugal)
\$100

Ramos Pinto is unique in that they hold the largest proportion of vineyards in relation to its production, giving them a high degree of control and allowing them to produce single vineyard Tawny Ports. This Tawny comes from their Bom Retiro vineyard and is still made the traditional way, foot trodden in a lagar. Flavours of apricot, almonds, toffee and spices, serve it slightly chilled, paired with fruit cake, cheeses or desserts that aren't overly sweet this holiday season.



Please see "Rich Uncle" on next page

Rich Uncle

Continued from previous page

grapes organically, which is a bonus. It is great as a starter wine, but it can easily transport you through a main course. Perfect for the festival season, and easy on the wallet!

Rich Uncle

2019 Poderi Colla Roncaglie Barbaresco (Piedmont, Italy) \$75

If my rich uncle gave me this wine, I would promise to share it on its 10th anniversary. Beautifully balanced, elegant, intense, with a very long finish. A rare and classic Italian wine from the

Colla family, who are deeply rooted in this region. The fine Nebbiolo grapes are sourced from one of the best hillside sites of the Barbaresco subregion, called Roncaglie. A great vintage to be anticipated in a celebration yet to come.



.....

Dianna Funnell, Sherbrooke Liquor

Cash-strapped Friend 2021 Assuli Carinda Insolia Sicilia DOC (Sicily, Italy) \$25

Salty nose of jasmine, wet clay and stone fruit with a dense attack of rich, bright fruit and a lovely bitter almond finish. Organic fruit. Perfect for the holiday meals.



Rich Uncle

2014 Château Meyney Saint-Éstèphe (Bordeaux, France) \$115

This vintage is fresh and fragrant but also rich and concentrated with a great mid-palate and velvety sweet tannins. From one of the oldest estates in Medoc. Sustainable. Dreamy.



Stacey-Jo Strombecky, 2851 Selections

Cash-strapped Friend 2022 A&D Wines Liv Vinho Verde (Minho, Portugal) \$23

Vinho Verde has consistently provided us with bright, flavourful and playful wines, of which I am a huge fan. A&D is Alexandre and Dialina Gomes, who produce a dynamic portfolio of Vinho Verde wines representing several generations of experience in Minho.

The connection to land, coupled with clean, green farming is evidenced when you taste this aromatic beauty—a fresh lively wine expressing white and yellow fruit and the trademark minerality. I could keep going, but I feel the need to throw a bottle in the fridge right now.



Rich Uncle

2018 Chiara Condello Le Lucciole Romagna Sangiovese Riserva (Emilia-Romagna, Italy) \$300 magnum

Chiara Condello is considered a rock star by top sommeliers and restaurants around the world. She was born into a winegrowing family, yet it's the wines she's making in the Predappio hills of Romagna that have everyone's attention. Le Lucciole is sourced from a tiny plot of poor calcareous-clay soil; her work is to have this organic wine express its unique terroir. The captivating result? Dark, intense, and savoury, with crushed red berries and dried herbal notes. The mineral core is simply incredible, with flavours and acidity lingering through the long, structured palate. If cellaring, hold for at least 12-15 years.

..... Cynthia Vermette, Bonvida

Cash-strapped Friend 2022 Expression Sauvignon Blanc Touraine (Loire, France) \$23

This elegant Sauvignon Blanc is smooth and fresh with a lingering citrus finish. The taste will please everyone at your dinner table, but it will also impress with its wax-dipped top, giving it the look and feel of a wine from your rich uncle.



Rich Uncle

2010 Valdicava Madonna del Piano Brunello di Montalcino DOCG Riserva (Tuscany, Italy) \$380, 750ml; \$775, magnum

This rare single-vineyard Brunello possesses a magical combination of strength and finesse—velvety texture, firm tannins, with flavours of cherries, plums and tobacco. It would be a crown jewel in any collectors' cellar (100 points James Suckling). Find limited quantities at select boutique retail stores and restaurants.

.....

Tony Kokoroyannis, David Herman & Son

Cash-strapped Friend

2016 Conde Valdemar Crianza (Rioja, Spain) \$24

This polished 90 per cent Tempranillo and 10 per cent Graciano Rioja shows cherry and berry flavours mingled with forest floor, black tea and vanilla notes, while juicy acidity balances the tannins. Pairs well with roasts, grilled meat and stews, as well as mature cheeses like Manchego.

Rich Uncle

The Legendary Silkie Irish Whiskey (Donegal, Ireland) \$75

Silkie is a blend of double and triple distilled malts, soft grain whiskey with a hint of peated malt by Sliabh Liag (sleeve



leeg) Distillers, who took inspiration from 19th century Donegal whiskey. The name Silkie is from the Celtic mermaid legend of shape-shifting sea creatures who transform into irresistible human-like beings. On the nose—hints of apricots, clotted cream and buttered hot cross buns. The soft gentle smoke is a great introduction to peated whiskeys—think smoke from a distant fireplace, not the medicinal-iodine smoke of Islay malts.



.....
Gabriella Bergsten, Garneau Block

Cash-strapped Friend

2022 Delinquente Pet Nat (Riverland, Australia) \$40/4pack

Pet Nat in a can—could it get any more fun? We love canned wines as stocking stuffers or as a little treat while we're baking or watching a movie.



It's refreshing, balanced, with a pop of citrus and floral notes. If you're looking to get your someone excited about natural wines, this is a great place to start.

Rich Uncle

2022 Anders Frederik Steen and Anne Bruun Blauert I Wear Blue, When I Don't Know What Else to Do (Alsace, France) \$75

This wine is made with Gewürztraminer, lightly oxidized, which adds layer upon layer of elegance and complexity and balance. All of Ander's and Anne's wines are magical to me—their hands-off approach allows the grapes to tell the story in each glass. This is a very special treat for the natural wine lover in your life to sit back and enjoy together by the fireplace.



.....
Caitlin Fulton, RGE RD

Cash-strapped Friend

2021 Malivoire Farmstead Gamay (Beamsville Bench, Canada) \$23

Endlessly versatile and food friendly, one of my favourite wines period is Gamay. Fresh, bright and juicy, red fruit is beautifully balanced by refreshing acidity and a hint of clove and pepper. This is the wine for spicy foods and a wide variety of cuisine and is the perfect bottle to grab when heading to a



dinner party. Malivoire produces several Gamay cuvées and I am just as happy to enjoy the well-priced Farmstead with a charcuterie board from our shop, The Butchery by RGE RD, of course.

Rich Uncle

2020 Domaine Dujac Morey Saint-Denis 1er Cru (Burgundy, France) \$400ish

There is a reason why Dujac is DJ Khaled and Jay-Z approved—the wine is at once lyrical, expressive and nuanced while maintaining a deep, muscular core—much like the driving beat of *Top Off*, which references drinking 'Dujac by the mag.' We wish. Domaine Dujac represents our aspirations—whether that's an invitation to a dinner party



with Beyonce and Jay-Z or simply knowing that a family-owned operation is championing responsible viticulture along with inclusion and diversity within the wine industry. These are values we can get behind! Full, plush and finely knit with dark berry and plum fruit rolling into earthy tannin with a long, dense finish. Like the best designer garments, it will only soften and become more expressive with time, making this Morey Saint-Denis 1er Cru from Dujac the very definition of quiet luxury.

.....
Marcia Hamm, Canadian Liquor Store

Cash-strapped Friend

2021 Casale del Giglio Bellone Bianco IGT (Lazio, Italy) \$22

The Casale del Giglio Bellone boasts notes of tropical fruit, stone fruit, hints of citrus and bitter almonds. There's a great texture to this wine and the marked acidity makes it ideal for pairing. My friend, who knows Italian wine well, knows that I will appreciate this wine made from a native grape of Lazio.



Rich Uncle

2014 Chateau Brane-Cantenac Margaux (Bordeaux, France) \$140

From a very good vintage, this 2014 is in a great spot for drinking now. Aromas of black currant, cedar and floral notes waft out of the glass while the palate is smooth, elegant, and velvety with a finish that lasts almost forever. It's a pleasure to drink and Uncle Bob knows it.



.....
William Bincoletto, Vines Wine Merchants

Cash-strapped Friend
2022 Muralhas de Monção

(Minho, Portugal) \$23

So rare to see a Monção at this price. This Vinho Verde is a blend of 70 per cent Alvarinho and 30 per cent Trajadura, a combination that creates pronounced notes of stone fruit with hints of lemon zest. Floral yet aromatic is what makes this wine so appealing!



Rich Uncle

2019 Tenuta Argentiera Bolgheri Superiore (Tuscany, Italy) \$130.

This is a brilliant and delicious Super Tuscan (50 per cent Merlot, 44 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon, 6 per cent Cabernet Franc) that presents a mixture of boldness, concentration, silkiness, lushness and elegance on all fronts. Has the ability to age for another 12 years. Rated highly, this is one of the rare times I concur with the top reviewers. 🍷





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The Smos at Home

Leanne Smoliak

Just the two of us

“Just the two of us, building them castles in the sky, just the two of us, you and I.”

—Grover Washington Jr.

Getting old. Most people dread it. The Smos are loving it.

It is the time of year where houses are bursting with the craziness of the holiday season. It starts in November and doesn't end until the last of the holiday ornaments are put away. Crazy with the insanity of baking, decorating, shopping, wrapping, cooking and entertaining.

Not at the Smos.

Yes, the Smos bake, decorate, cook and all the rest, but it is slow, steady, quiet and relaxing. Best of all, it is just the two of us. There is something to be said about having no kids around during the holiday season. Yes, we know Christmas is for kids. Perhaps one day we will have kids around again. For now, we are enjoying this time where it is just the two of us.

We are at that time in life where we don't need to go out every night during the holiday season, a few well-chosen parties are all we need. Dressing up is still nice and seeing our friends is great but bedtime is 11pm at the very latest. Brad always laughs because it takes me an hour to say goodnight.

Our favourite part of the holiday season is staying in and having our own mini-cocktail parties. We pull out the stops and open our finest wine (especially bubbles) indulge in chilled oysters, paté or a classic jumbo shrimp cocktail, or feast on one of our favourite meals, cioppino, with an entire baguette. We are at a lovely stage in our 32-year marriage where we are never short of conversation. We still make each other laugh and love to talk about past trips or trips to come. The two of us are still making memories with each other and look forward to what 2024 has in store for us.

Cioppino for Two

This is the easiest, most romantic dinner dish we make.

- 2 T extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ medium yellow onion, peeled and diced medium
- 1 rib celery, chopped medium
- ½ green bell pepper, cored, seeded and chopped medium
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 t dried oregano
- 1 t dried basil
- a few chili flakes
- ¾ c crushed Italian tomatoes
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 4 lg shrimp (20-25 count)
- 4 lg scallops
- 12 mussels (scrubbed and debearded)
- 250 g firm white fish fillet such as halibut or cod (cut into 1½" pieces)
- 250 g skinless salmon (cut into 1½" pieces)
- kosher salt and fresh-cracked pepper

Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onions and sauté, stirring often until translucent. Add the celery, garlic and chili flakes, continue to sauté for a further 5 minutes over low heat. Add the crushed tomatoes,

¾ cup water, bay leaf, oregano, wine and season to taste.

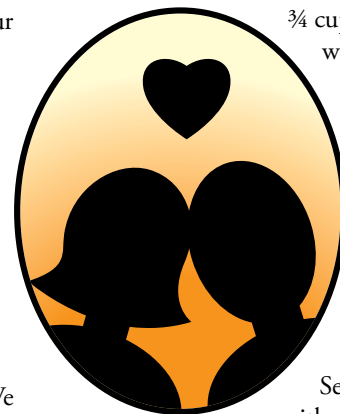
Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low, stirring occasionally, for ½ hour. Turn to simmer, add the scallops and the shrimp, then the fish. Stir and let simmer for about 5 minutes, or until seafood/fish has changed colour.

Serve in heated big bowls with warmed baguette.

Serves 2.

Find Leanne's recipe for paté at thetomato.ca.

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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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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Beer Guy

Beers of the year

It wasn't the beer; the real treasure was the friends that we made along the way.

Don't get me wrong—sometimes, most times it is about the beer, but looking back at this year of beer it's the people and the places that come to mind.

Sharing a glass or two of great craft beer with family, friends or fellow beer fans is truly one of the great joys of life.

My 2023 Faves

Annex Metes and Bounds XPA. My son got married in Canmore this summer and he and I spent a day shopping for beer and spirits in Calgary just before the wedding. I'm so glad we paused at Annex Ales for a burger and a beer on the sunny patio. Father and son talked of everything and nothing and it was delightful.

Bellwoods Jelly King Dry-Hopped Sour.

I'm very proud of my daughter, making her way in Toronto as an artist, writer and baker. But as a beer guy I'm tickled about her working at Toronto's Bellwoods Brewery. My wife and I got to see her in action in February and to see how Bellwoods treats their employees (and their families!) with care and respect.

Sheepdog Kelsey's West Coast IPA. My son married into a Canmore skiing family, and I've been honoured to go on some backcountry ski trips with his in-laws. In March we skied 12 kilometres uphill to Lake O'Hara, staying at the Alpine Club's Elizabeth Parker Hut. No beer ever tasted better than the Sheepdog IPA schlepped in by the man I called 'The Beast'.

Small Gods Rascal King Hazy IPA. My Dad has never been a beer guy, so it was a pleasant surprise on a visit to Vancouver Island in July for him to suggest a walk downtown for lunch and flights at Sidney's Small Gods Brewery. And stops at the bookstore and the library too!

Russian River Pliny the Elder. Touring wine country is very romantic, they say.

Maybe less so when you roar through Napa and Sonoma in one day, all a prelude to getting to Russian River Brewing in Windsor and then Santa Rosa too. But that first sip of iconic Pliny the Elder Imperial IPA was totally worth it. Thank you to my wife for indulging my obsession.

Anchor Steam. Beer and baseball are a great match, and when you're talking the San Francisco Giants at Oracle Park and a tall can of Anchor Steam beer, it's a perfect pairing. Sadly, Anchor Brewing closed indefinitely just before we visited San Francisco in August, but there remained a supply of it around town. Kudos to the Edmonton Riverhawks for featuring Alley Kat beer at their games this summer.



Pilsner Urquell.

Slow Pour Beer Bar in Oliver has been a great addition to the Edmonton beer scene. My men's book (and beer) club met there and drank the Pilsner Urquell keg dry.

Whistler Brewing

Grapefruit Ale. Vancouver Folk Fest had a near-death experience, so my wife and I supported it by attending the Fest in July. So many wine drinkers at the beer tent.

Longroof Glimmer of Hop Pale Ale. Happiness: a sunny day riding your e-bike through the river valley, stopping for a pint at any of the Happy Beer Street or Hop Pocket breweries.

Sea Change The Wolf. Many Fridays I'm at Original Joe's Glenora with pals I've known for 40 years. But once a year we travel somewhere and meet up with other old pals. In May we met in Montreal and hit Pit Caribou, Brasserie Mellön, Cheval Blanc and a blur of others!

Happy New Beer! I hope 2024 finds you among the people, places and the beer you love.

Beers of the year six pack

Great beers of the year, chosen by six of the best beer people in Alberta.



Aecht Schlenkerla Rauchbier Märzen, Bamberg, Germany

Stephen Bezan, the purchasing manager at Sherbrooke Liquor notes “I took a small step back from the constant barrage of new releases to revisit the classics this year. With its deep, rich, complex, and intensely smoky flavours, Aecht Schlenkerla Rauchbier Märzen is one of those brews that reminds us why beer is so special in the first place.”



Ale Architect: Balsam English Dark Mild, Edmonton

Andrew Ironmonger, publisher of the *Alberta Craft Beer Guide*, says “Don’t let the dark facade intimidate you, this beer is all about balance. The right amount of roasty character dances alongside the light, creamy, refreshing body. A beer you can drink three of and enjoy thoroughly from top to tail. At 3.8 per cent you can have a pint for lunch and move on to a productive afternoon.”



Bent Stick: Hay-Maker Wheated Pilsner, Edmonton

Owen Kirkaldy is a Master Ranked BJCP beer judge, 28-year homebrewer and co-founder of the Alberta Beer Awards. “My regular taproom is Bent Stick, ever since they moved to the 99 Street/Happy Beer Street brewery district, and Hay-Maker is probably the beer I have drank the most of this year. It is just a perfect easy summer beer to enjoy on a hot day.”



Bruery: Mallow-Dramatic Bourbon Barrel-Aged Imperial Stout, Placentia, California

Don Tse, aka The Don of Beer, is a Calgary beer writer who has sampled over 27,000 beers. “Bruery has been a favourite of mine for many years. They ride that fine line of being creative without tipping into weird. Mallow-Dramatic was a limited-release, 15.3 per cent stout that knocked my socks off. The aroma was so wonderful. Any Bruery beer will be sure to amaze.”



Establishment: Left My Wallet in El Segundo, Calgary

Jason Foster is a beer writer and educator, creator of Onbeer.org and CBC Edmonton beer columnist. Jason notes “This beer is brave and delicately balanced. Lichtenhainer is a rare historic German style, here with pineapple added. Quietly tart with a soft pineapple fruitiness on a light pilsner malt sweetness. It has a wisp of smoke in the linger to round out the experience.”



The Monolith: Spontaneous Manifesto, Edmonton

Jason van Rassel, beer writer for *Edify* magazine, notes “Spontaneous Manifesto is lush and bright with apricot, peach and lemon aromas and flavours, moderate acidity, and subtle tannins. Impressive in that it’s the product of spontaneous fermentation, relying entirely on airborne microbes to start it on its way to becoming beer. Brewer Doug Checknita tamed these wild, microbial beasts by blending several barrel-aged batches into a delicious and complex beer.”

Peter Bailey knows the best beer is the one in your hand. He’s on X/Twitter and Instagram as @Libarbarian

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Wine Maven

Henschke was here, also Mazzolino and a host of things to drink this winter.



Caitlin Fulton (GE RD) and Johann Henschke (Henschke).

Johann Henschke, the 6th generation winemaker at **Henschke**, in Australia's Eden Valley, was in town for a trade tasting and dinner at RGE RD. Their history in wine dates back to 1841, when Johann Christian left Silesia due to religious persecution. "Johann arrived a widow, his wife and child lost at sea," says Johann. "He ventured up to the Barossa, to what's now called Keyneton, built a barn, started to farm and grew vines. The 2018 vintage celebrates 150 years of winemaking by our family."

Cut to the present. The Henschke family is known throughout the world as the standard bearer of beautiful, elegant, site-specific wines made from a preponderance of old vines. His mother Prue is a botanist. "My mother introduced Australian grasses to the vineyards. They are adapted to the climate and don't compete for water with the vines. Instead of roses at the end of every row, my mother planted the native Christmas bush. It attracts all the predator wasps that eat the insects that prey on the vines. We use biodynamic compost, no fertilizers, no synthetic pesticides; we mulch with straw for better soil health. We've been doing that for a long time. My family jokes that when she heard the term regenerative agriculture, my mother said, 'there's a word for what we've been doing?'"

"We are farmers, we are scientists and we are lucky phylloxera has never come to south Australia. We have incredibly old vines. Our genetic diversity is based on the selections that were made decades before," says Johann. "We think the old vines amplify the character from these sites—old vines turn up the expression."

2021 Henry's Seven name refers to the original vineyard planted by Henry Evans in Keyneton. Mostly Shiraz with Grenache, Mataro, co-fermented with two per cent Viognier. From youngish vines, first vintage was 2001. Love the herbal green notes, plum, white pepper, well-knit raspberry jam and spice. Super fresh, juicy, alive, even a little rambunctious. Drink with ribs, grilled meats, birria tacos.

2021 Johann's Garden is mostly Grenache and some Mataro. Johann considers these grapes to be practically indigenous grapes in south Australia, "it's what the first red

wines, the clarets were made from and important varieties for our future." The colour is almost transparent, super pretty with floral and spice, cherry and a citrus, blood orange note. Delicious, not heavy. Drink slightly chilled with popcorn, light meats, grilled salmon. The name reflects the German heritage—weingarten for vineyard.

For more Henschke, the 2018 vintages of Cyril Henschke, Mount Edelstone and Hill of Grace find online at the.tomato.ca.



From left: Stefano Malchiodi, Francesca Seralvo (Mazzolino) Cynthia Vermette (Bonvida Wines).

Francesca Seralvo and Stefano Malchiodi of Mazzolino were in town recently with the new vintages. The winery is in Oltrepò Pavese, a small DOC in north west Lombardy, very close to Piedmont, known for Pinot Nero. Mazzolini specialises in both Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Over a fantastic spread at the Butternut Tree, we talked about, well, what else? Wine and food and dogs. But first: the soil.

They brought two small jars of soil to illustrate the unique profile of the Oltrepò Pavese, a chalky clay with calcareous veins. The soil range is so vast (in some areas more chalk; in others more grey silty clay, in varying depths) they have 36 different parcels. The mosaic is so site specific the personalization extends to "the seeds for the cover crop, the pruning, thinking about the wine this vineyard will be doing," says Francesca. That extends to seven different cover crops depending on what the soil needs.

The **2021 Mazzolino Chardonnay Camarà IGT Pavia** is unoaked and has 20 per cent Chardonnay Musque. Lime leaf, herbal notes and apple, clean and fresh, medium bodied, beautiful texture. Just a terrific everyday wine. *Camarà* means friend so yes, drink with your friends.

Mazzolino Chardonnay Blanc Cru IGT Pavia. The must stays in a tank overnight, then put into the barrel the next day. The result? A deliciously chewy texture with nutty notes, lemon peel, touch savoury, complex. The 20 per cent new oak does not overwhelm. Delicious, have with roast turkey, chicken, mushroom pasta.

Mazzolino Pinot Noir Terrazze IGT Pavia is a delightful drink, fresh and lively. Pretty red fruit, strawberries, pomegranate dominates. Refreshing acidity with a velvety finish. Harmonious. Drink with salmon, light meats.

Mazzolino Noir Oltrepò Pavese DOC is from a single cru on the top of the hill, where the clay is deep and the old vine's roots reach down to the chalk below. This

Pinot Nero has lots to say, from the opening notes of sweet spice and red berry, especially raspberry, to the fine persistent tannins providing structure. Deeply complex, approachable now or cellar. Drink with roast pork dishes, mushrooms. Wines are \$40-\$60ish.



Get your hands on the **Vinum** wines from **Radford Dale** in South Africa. Well-priced, incredible quality, these vintages won't last long on the shelf. Made with the minimal handling and respectful technique that creates quality wines—picked at the right time, manually sorted, whole berry, neutral oak maturation.

The **2022 Vinum Gamay Noir** from Stellenbosch is pure exuberance—fresh, a little crunchy, with medium weight and depth of flavour just delicious. Ripe tannins and juicy fruit, red berry, spicy plum. Drink with roast turkey, hummus platters.

2022 Vinum Grenache. The combo of partially crushed and whole berry carbonic fermentation using wild yeast only, then basket pressed creates a dynamic wine, fresh and lively. Lots of red fruit, pomegranate, red current, held together in the best possible way by a just-firm-enough tannic structure. Drink with charcuterie, mezze, eggplant parm.

Pinot lovers rejoice! The **2022 Vinum Pinot Noir** (Western Cape) is a delight. Silky, effortless, with all the Pinot flavours and textures we love. Medium bodied, with dark fruit and clove flavours and a long finish. Drink with roast salmon, creamy mushroom pasta. All wines \$30ish.



There is a long history of wine production in Romania—4000 years worth. Transylvania Spirits has brought in several wines made from indigenous grape varieties you have probably never heard of and will want to get to know. Good value. The **2021 Jidvei Classic Feteasca Regala** (Royal Maiden) has pretty floral aromas, with citrus and yellow fruits on the palate, refreshing. Have with cabbage rolls and varenyky, roast pork.

The **NV Jidvei Sparkling Rose** made from Pinot Noir in the traditional method. Classic biscuit and strawberry aromas and flavours, medium-bodied with a dry finish. An excellent choice for before dinner during the holidays or brunch. Drink with smoked salmon or eggs bennie.

The **2021 Navigo Feteasca Neagra** (Black Maiden) has plush plummy fruit, with fairly significant tannins, well-balanced acidity. Quite fresh and easy drinking. Have with hamburgers, smoky sausage, beef roasts.

Wines are \$25-\$50. Find at Wine and Beyond, Safeway, Sobeys, and Violino.

Please see "Wine Maven" on page 21



FUNCTIONAL CHOCOLATE BARK

Prep Time: 5 minutes Total Time: 10 minutes + 2hrs to set
Cook Time: 5 minutes Servings: 4

ingredients:

- 1 cup cacao butter
- 5 tbsp raw cacao powder
- 2 tbsp Harmonic Arts 5 Mushroom Chocolate Elixir Blend
- 3 tbsp honey
- 2 tbsp dred cranberries
- ¼ cup chopped pecans

instructions:

1. Melt cacao butter over medium-low heat, stirring with a spatula until fully liquid.
2. Move to the counter top and whisk in cacao powder, mushroom blend and honey. Whisk until well dissolved and incorporated. Stir in 1 tbsp cranberries and 2 tbsp pecans. The mixture will be quite liquidy so don't fret.
3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper, making sure the parchment paper goes up the sides of the baking sheet as this is quite a liquidy mixture. Pour onto parchment paper and sprinkle with the rest of the cranberries and pecans. Put in the fridge for at least 2 hours to set.
4. Store in the freezer for up to 1 month.



Edmonton Great Canadian Kitchen Party 2023

Mary Bailey

Eight exceptional dishes by chefs working at the top of their game garnered much conversation and exchange of views among the judges. Ultimately, there was only room for three on the podium.

Chef Bri Campbell (Restaurant May) won not only the People's Choice for the toothsome heritage pork *paté en croute*—a delicious chunky mix of heritage pork, chicken livers, whisky syrup-soaked apricots, toasted and salted pistachios, parsley, allspice, nutmeg and a touch of garlic—served with a fermented Fresno pepper and haskap gel and tangy root vegetable Branston pickle took bronze. The dish, an ode to the Mangalitsa named *Zsa Zsa*, and of memories of eating pork pie with her grandmother, was a fine culinary tribute.

Winnie Chen's (Fu's Repair Shop) theme was comfort—congee (Japonica rice and a long-simmered chicken and pork broth) with a shio koji-brushed duck, pork and century egg rilette and a silky-textured daikon and kimchi-brined potato pavé. The dish juxtaposed ancient tradition with an absolutely modern interpretation. Clever, surprising, on point. Just as surprising (even daring) was her wine, Plot Winery's Cabernet Sauvignon, the pairing one of the best of the night. This was Winnie's first go at Kitchen Party, cooking competitions not really being her thing, at all. Brava!

JP Dublado (Red Deer Resort and Casino) topped the podium with a lovely pairing of sable fish and scallop mousse and Hokkaido scallop *kinilaw* (ceviche) enlivened with a calamansi and herb vinaigrette. The local corn miso sauce, a tribute to central Alberta farmers, corralled the dish into a



Top from left to right: bronze medalist chef Bri Campbell (Restaurant May), gold medalist chef JP Dublado (Red Deer Resort and Casino) and silver medalist chef Winnie Chen (Fu's Repair Shop). Above: the bronze, gold and silver winning dishes. All photos courtesy Great Canadian Kitchen Party.

deliciously harmonious whole. (He had us at the tiny beet root tartelette holding a bijou half sphere of corn and foie gras mousse.) A rich yet delicate, sophisticated and beautiful dish illustrating his Filipino heritage and training in French technique. JP is no stranger to Kitchen Party. He went to Nationals in 2018. "Compared to my previous dishes, this one is restrained. I

think it shows my growth and maturity as a chef." Roger that. JP moves on to the Canadian Culinary Championships in Ottawa, February 2-3, 2024.

Kitchen Party's national wine advisor David Lawrason led the tasting for Best in Show. Judges tasted through over a dozen wines poured at various Kitchen Parties across the country. In Edmonton we loved the 2019 River Stone Corner

Stone (gold), 2022 Terra Vista Fandango (silver) and tied for bronze—2022 Bella Sparkling Rouge and 2020 Uppercase Petit Verdot.

The Great Canadian Kitchen Party supports youth organizations in sport, music and food—E4C, Spirit North and MusiCounts. Info and tickets: greatkitchenparty.com.

Congratulations chefs! 🎉

Wine Maven

Continued from page 19

Japanese whisky has become a big deal for whiskey lovers. Here's a special one—**Matsui Mizunara**, a single malt, aged in Mizunara oak casks. Sweet vanilla, floral and baking spice, with subtle creamy coconut notes. Garnered best Japanese Single Malt whisky in *Jim Murray's Whisky Bible 2020*, \$120.



Adam Kereliuk and **Jayne Donohoe** of **Plot Winery** were in town recently for a tasting at Cavern and dinner at Darling. The wines of this five-year old Okanagan Valley project have just become available in Alberta. I was intrigued after tasting Plot Cabernet, the wine chef Winnie Chen chose to pair with her silver-winning dish at Kitchen Party. **Kevin Rossion** is the winemaker, with five hectares under vine in the home block at Kaleden, sourcing other fruit from various sites (plots) he likes throughout Oliver and Kelowna.



Adam Kereliuk and Jayme Donohoe, Plot Winery.

The **2021 Haze** is a blend of Kerner, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc and Muscat, fragrant, with wonderful texture from the limited skin contact and an attractive tautness on the finish. "This is our intro to orange wine," says Jamie.

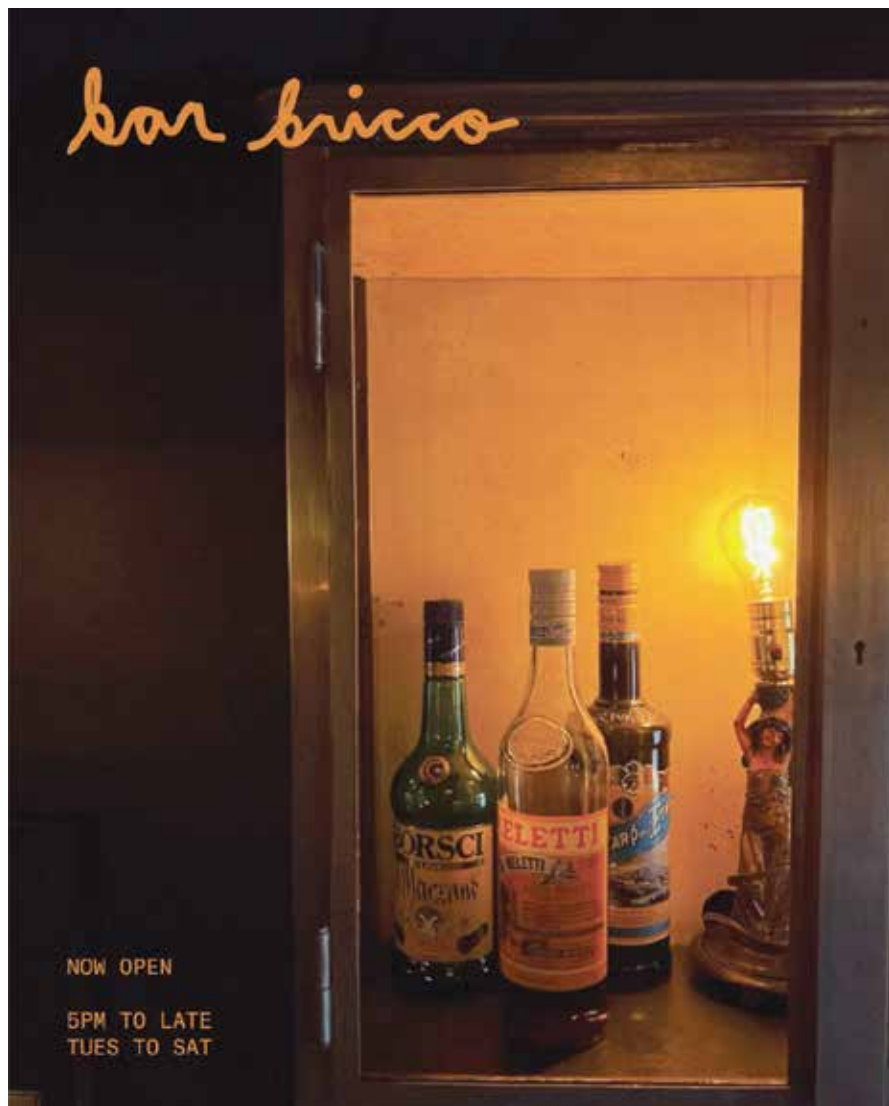
The **2022 Orange** is a heady blend of mostly Gewürztraminer with 11 per cent Muscat Ottonel and Orange Muscat. The Gewürz spends seven days on the skins and six months in neutral oak. Full flavoured, lots of heady tropical notes and spice, touch of sweetness, easy drinking vin de soif. It is their most popular wine.

The **2021 Thick** is a massive Chardonnay Viognier blend with a luscious mouth feel. "All wines but this one ferment with ambient yeast," says Jayme, "but Kevin likes a particular yeast strain for the Chardonnay called Montrachet." Yellow fruits, attractive oak notes, battonage during the 16 months in oak contribute to the rich texture.

The **2021 Neighbour** is a red blend—Cab Sauv dominant, Tempranillo and Malbec too. Delicious red fruit notes and structure, well-made wine. A lively red to go with anything on the grill

The **2020 Plot** is 100 per cent Cab Sauv, from Oliver. Love the sinewy tannins of this wine, the wild ferment, the plum and red berry notes. Not a big heavy fruit bomb, has elegance, a fun wine. Wines are \$35-\$50. 🍷

Prices are approximate, find at better wines shops.



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Goldie Hazrah, owner

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Kitchen Sink What's new and notable

wine tastings, happenings and events

Don't miss this: **Prairie: A Night with Twyla Campbell** at **The Gathering Place Co-Op** (60120 AB-831, Waskatenau) 6pm, Saturday, November 4. Twyla is the co-author of the excellent *Prairie: Seasonal Farm-Fresh Recipes Celebrating the Canadian Prairies*. Chef Neil will be preparing several recipes from the book. Tix: \$50-\$80/p, thegatheringplacecoop.ca.

Enjoy **Wines to Warm from the Inside Out** with **Marcia J. Hamm** at the **Canadian Liquor Store** (101, 18003 105 Avenue) on Wednesday, November 15, from 7-9pm. Tix: \$20/p+, call 780-760-0831, or book at canadianliquorstore.ca. Don't miss their first annual **Christmas Open House Extravaganza** on Saturday, December 2.

The Gathering Place Co-Op (60120 AB-831, Waskatenau) features **An Evening with Steven Chwok**, host of CFCW's Ukrainian Hour, Saturday, November 18, with a hearty menu—meat choices, assorted salads, roasted carrots and beets, varenyky, cabbage rolls, cornbread and desserts. Tix: \$50/p+, thegatheringplacecoop.ca.

All Is Bright, the 124 Street Community celebration of the season happens Saturday, November 18, from 4-8pm. Come for the great food and drink, music, entertainment and the dramatic light up. **Heart of the Home** (12539 102 Avenue) will be open 'til 6pm, with hot chocolate and gift certificates. All the deets at 124street.ca.

Heart of the Home's annual **Christmas Open House** is December 2-3, with 15 per cent off most purchases. Pop down to finish your Christmas shopping.

The Butternut Tree's (9707 110 Street) popular **Christmas High Tea** is Sunday, December 17, 11am-2pm. They are open regular hours for brunch and dinner services up to December 23. After Christmas, December 28-30 for dinner. **New Year's Eve Brunch**, is Saturday, December 30, 9:30am-1:30pm. **New Year's Eve Dinner** is always a big event

at the Butternut. This year it's New York inspired with a terrific five-course tasting menu with optional wine pairings and luxury additions available, \$160/p++ with two seatings. Reservations, thebutternuttree.ca.

restaurant buzz

Daniel Costa (Corso 32 Group) opens **Bar Henry** in the new flagship Henry Singer in the Stantec Tower in December. "The food is snacky, light and quick bites, but the pace is leisurely—a place where you will be able to order a great bottle of wine at 3 in the afternoon." says Daniel. Like all of chef Costa's restaurants, Bar Henry will focus on quality, with unique spuntini and wines and spirits from small producers in Italy, Spain and France. Expect 30 seats in an Italian-inspired space, in the northwest corner of the store, with its own door. Can't wait.

The new **Firefly** (4208 Calgary Trail) opened late October in the old Stanhope space. Didn't get there before our press date, but **Spencer Thompson** (formerly of the Marc) is the exec chef, so you know the food will be good. Check it out!

product news

Don't miss the **Knifewear Fall Garage Sale** (10816 Whyte Avenue) from November 6-12. Samples, new and rare knives, discounts, all sorts of good stuff. Get there early, people line up!

Heart of the Home's Black Friday Sale happens November 24-26. Bonus: gift certificate with a purchase of any Le Creuset or Staub cast iron piece over \$100. Who hoo! And don't miss the **Christmas Merchandise Sale**, December 18-24.

Sherbrooke is bringing back the thirst-quenching **24 Days of Beermas Advent Calendar**. Yaay! Order at sherbrookeliqour.com, or find in-store in late November at Sherbrooke Original, 11819 St. Albert Trail and Sherbrooke Ottewell, 9271 50 Street. 🍷

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



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