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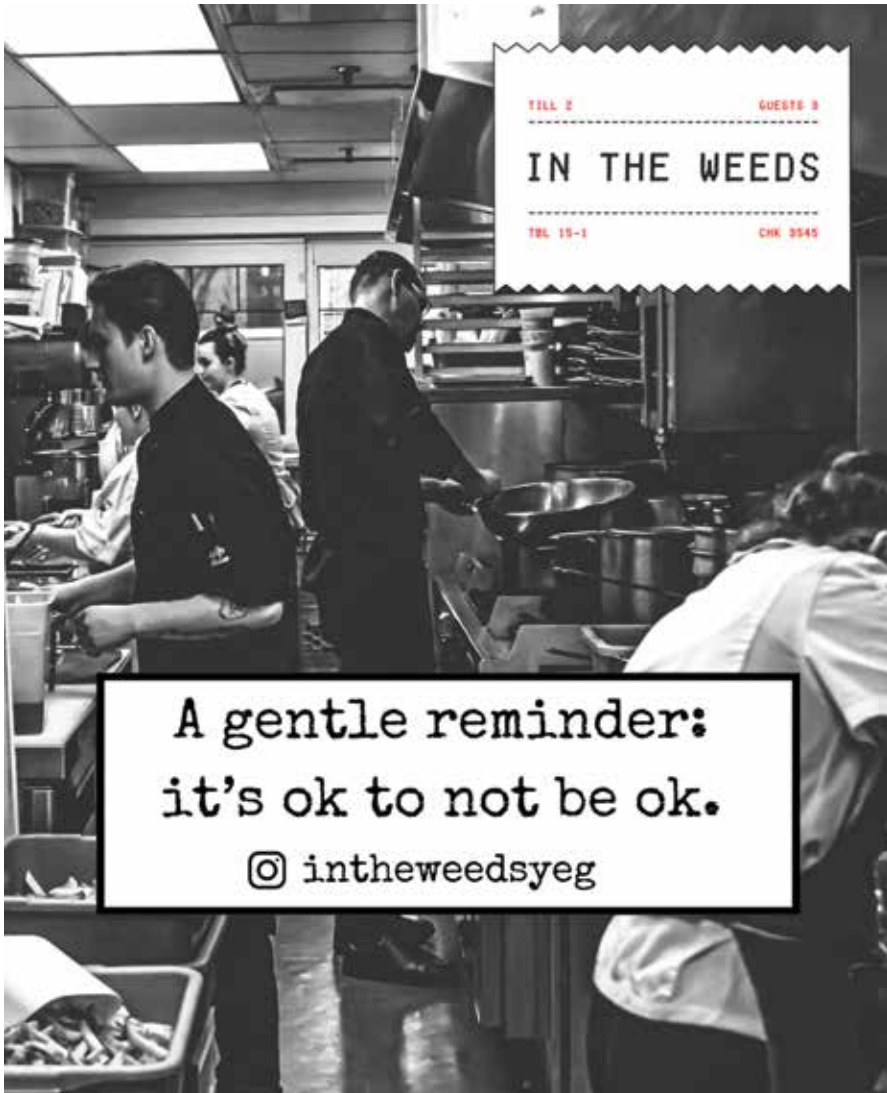

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**A gentle reminder:
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Number one on the Top100: Bar Bricco's poached leeks. Randee Armstrong photo.



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bibo is back.

We are loving the new Bibo in the Strathcona Hotel. Modern look, clean lines, airy, looking into the alley across from the Old Strathcona Market. The tapas-style menu is easy to enjoy—pulled pork, the delicious Truffula fermented cashew cheese, El Chorizo Latino charcuterie boards and Lakeside Farmstead or Bonjour Bakery cheese boards. We are especially excited about the premium sake menu as Bibo's GM Aya Shiga used to be with Ikki Izakaya on Jasper. And there is talk about a summer patio in the alley. Bibo Strathcona, 10302 82 Avenue, 780-250-2426, culinafamily.com.

chef raga is here!

Check out the new menu at Belgravia Hub in McKernan, which highlights perennial favourites (corn fritters anyone?) and new dishes by chef Nagendra Singh. Chef Raga has parlayed his experience in various luxury properties such as Oberai, Taj Maldives and Kempinski to a new life in Canada and a contemporary casual style of cooking, elevating comfort food to a new level. Chef is also responsible for the menu (recommended: the mussels in tomato broth and the spicy butter chicken) at the west end's NV Restaurant. Check them out! Belgravia Hub, 7609 115 Street, 780-756-3344, belhub.com, NV Restaurant, 20015 Lessard Road, 780-705-6160, nvrestaurant.ca.



the freezing father says thank you.

Peter Burgess, Candace Toews and their son Ben were bereft after the tragic and still unexplained loss of their daughter Elan in July 2007. They wanted to give back to the doctors and nurses who had helped so much, but how? In Candace's words:

"Peter had a passion for the outdoors. Why not camping in the winter to raise money for the Stollery Children's Hospital? On January 6, 2017, Peter pitched his orange tent at campsite #29 in the Rainbow Valley Campground and stayed there for seven days and nights.

"In 2017, I picked up fast food, but the next year Edmonton chefs and restaurateurs answered the call: could you help this guy out? There was not a moment's hesitation, always something hot and delicious, every breakfast and dinner was spoken for with no hesitation. They braved Edmonton's plummeting temperatures, arriving with hot food and other times cooking over the fire. We watched cracked eggs freeze on their descent to the frying pan, and we watched wine become slush as it was poured from the bottle. Piping hot coffee

was essential for a cold and tired 50-something guy with a sore hip, rolling out of a sleeping bag in minus-20-degree weather.

"To: Todd Rutter (A Cappella Catering); Ryan Hotchkiss (Bundök); Brad Lazarenko, Cindy Lilge (Culina); Serge Belair (Edmonton Convention Centre); Charles Rothman (Food Service Solutions); Doreen Prei (Glenora Park Retirement Living); Rylan Krause (NAIT); Lindsay Porter; Shane Chartrand, Winnie Chen, JP Dublado (River Cree Resort); Steve Buzak (Royal Glenora Club); Shawn Balog (Snow Valley Ski Club); Manas Sawant (Starbucks); Mary Bailey (*The Tomato food & drink*); Paul Shufelt (Workshop Eatery); Gregg Kenney (Vivo Italian Ristorante); Todd Weimer (VSSL Gear); SiteOne Landscape Supply. Together we raised \$182,797.11 for the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation." Candace Toews, A Freezing Father's Fundraiser, freezingfather.org. 🍷

From top: the newly reopened Bibo; A Cappella Catering's Todd Rutter (L) and The Freezing Father Peter Burgess; left Belgravia Hub's chef Raga.



The Tomato Top 100

How to take the pulse of a city's food scene? Find out what people really like to eat. Every spring we ask readers what is the best thing they ate or drank last year. This year there is more fish and local makers (sweets, vegetables and chocolate), less pizza and fewer burgers, which is very surprising. Read on for the top 51 and find the complete list at thetomato.ca.



Randee Armstrong photo

1

1. Poached Leeks, Bar Bricco

Nominators found it hard to pick just one thing on the reimagined Bar Bricco menu. Yes, the egg yolk ravioli and the focaccia. Yes, delicious pasta such as the *malloreddus* with mussels or the *fonduta agnolotti*. Yet, the votes say the dish that best illustrates the energetic new approach is the poached leeks with ricotta and spicy topping. Bricco's talented kitchen puts this humble vegetable front and centre. Tuna crudo is another dish given the inventive and delicious Bar Bricco treatment. "Hard not to order everything. From the anchovy crostini and tuna crudo to culatello and porchetta, we love everything about this menu," Christina J. And that's before we talk about the Negroni and the exceptional Italian wines and amaros on offer.



Kevin Kossawan photo

2

2. The Road Trip, RGE RD

RGE RD has been a champion of local for over a decade and one of the dishes that best typifies this is the road trip experience. Nominators love this culinary adventure, year after year. "The road trip is adventurous dining at its best," says Kyle F. "We have tried so many things on the road trip menu that weren't ever on our radar and loved them." The bison tartare has loads of fans too. "Perfectly balanced flavours; will leave you dreaming of

it later," Vanessa L. The pepper-crust duck breast and the butcher's cut beef also garnered noms. We love the attention paid to seasonal eating and thoughtful wine choices at this Edmonton gem.



Randee Armstrong photo

3

3. Ravioli di Zucca, Uccellino

People have pasta revelations at Uccellino. Nominations for the pastas—the sublime ravioli di zucca, the hearty paccheri, the briny spaghetti with prawns (last year's most nominated dish)—topped the charts. Then there is the charred cabbage, "Makes you think of cabbage in an entirely new way," says Karl M. And the house-made goat cheese ricotta crostini which has graced this list many times over. Nominators didn't ignore the outstanding main dishes served family style (chicken cooked under a brick, the sablefish) or the beautiful Sicilian salad on the winter menu. Uccellino has major fans.



4

4. Lakeside Dairy Fromage Blanc and Squash Dumplings, Biera

Several dishes on Biera's clever menu—grilled ACME chicken, smashed cucumber salad, the sunflower seed risotto—received votes, but it's the squash dumplings in that delicious cheese sauce that sent nominators into a frenzy. Tastes delicious with either Blind Enthusiasm beers or wine. The bright and comfortable room, essentially the tap room for the brewery, also offers great

small bites and an outstanding rotating cheese selection. There are big fans of Biera's brunch; "the breakfast bowl with herby potatoes and the 1608 cheese is my go-to," says Kathy M. And nobody ever says no to another order of sourdough nuggets with beer cheese during happy hour.



5

5. Grilled Pork Chop, The Marc

Chef Cara Lazarevich's menu pays homage to the French bistro faves the Marc is known for (entrecôte and frites anyone?), while adding a subtle Mediterranean influence, with dishes such as the daily burrata with grilled bread. Nominators love Sunday supper, Alsatian Week and the Marc's Frites and Champagne birthday celebration every fall. The dish with the most raves this year? The grilled pork chop. "Best restaurant dish this year," said Leanne S. "Juicy, always cooked right and great flavours. It tastes like a dish my nonna used to make," Dillon D. The ultimate compliment.



6

6. Miso Cod, Darling

Chef Lindsay James has found her groove, with dishes like the exceptional croquettes (changing daily, just the thing with a glass of wine before a movie) the tender octopus and the brioche French toast. The dish most

loved is the miso cod, the fish on point, the leek dashi buttery and flavourful. Then there is the brassica salad. “You may have heard the phrase ‘you don’t make friends with salad,’ which is typically true. However, Darling’s kale and cabbage salad is the exception. A symphony of salty and sweet, it is lick-your-bowl delicious. Share this delight with a friend to cement your status as best friend ever,” Hannah H. Leave room for the dark chocolate semi freddo to share with your pals. Chic and modern, casual, with a terrific patio and lovely wines.



7

7. Pacific Ling Cod, The Butternut Tree

Chef Scott Downey’s ethos? All Canadian ingredients, from coast to coast, even in the cocktails. Wild, raised, grown, and foraged—think northern ocean fish, Acadian caviar, Alberta beef. Nominators voted for the Pacific ling cod with fennel and einkorn in droves. “Flaky and flavourful and never overdone. We love ordering the cod when it’s on the menu!” says Gina T. Also, the special event high teas and brunch dishes (beef wellington and the fried chicken with maple sausage, woo hoo!). The Butternut Tree is not just for special occasions, you can pop by for a few appetizers and a glass of wine during happy hour to gaze at that glorious river valley view.



8

8. Parmigiano Soup, Bündok

Yes, cheese soup. With leek and bacon. Nominators are in love with this umami bomb. “Hard to believe that something that starts with cheese rinds could taste this good,” says Bryan G. Also nominated—the bright-tasting steelhead crudo, rich and delicious gnocchi Parisienne, and the grilled broccoli. Hard to go wrong with this

menu. Always a well-chosen wine list too. The soup is just one example of chef Ryan Hotchkiss’ ongoing commitment to sustainability. Chef continues to do things his way in Bündok’s intimate room with the open kitchen. We are so glad.



9

9. Shanghai Noodles, Fu’s Repair Shop

Fu’s Repair Shop is not only a terrific place to go dancing, the food by chef Winnie Chen’s team is top notch. Tops for noms is the Shanghai noodles. “The noodles are so fresh and so amazing. The pork is cooked to perfection. The texture? What heaven tastes like. The flavour takes you to flavour town and you never wanna leave,” Anna L. Next up was the warm yeh choi salad. “The salad has lots of texture components with brown butter, shio miso, pickled red cabbage, temperature diversity. You get loads of funky notes from the compressed kimchi. It’s a delightful salad easily shareable with the entire table.” Robert T.



10

10. Black Cod, Little Wolf

“The black cod belly at Little Wolf is one of the most complex, interesting and delicious dishes I had in 2023. The rich, buttery flavour and texture of the perfectly seared cod belly is balanced by these delightfully tangy, fermented Gull Valley tomatoes. Cucumbers and kaffir lime add another layer of freshness, crunch and zip to this dish. Balancing interesting flavours and textures like this takes a deft hand, but chef Shaun Hicks is more than up to the task with this delightful plate,” Ian B. Also nominated: the chicken thighs with focaccia “This dish was savoury and delightfully subtle. The chicken thighs were tender and falling off the bone delicious, while the focaccia was warm and fresh with a spectacular hummus. Brava!” Jason K. Chef’s new spot near the High Level Bridge is tremendous value and has exceptional cocktails.



11

11. Milk Bread French Toast and Chicken, May Restaurant

“The flavours pair so well together. The maple syrup and spicy hot sauce are the perfect complement to the crispy chicken thigh. Perfection,” Caroline A. There were several noms for the tempura oyster mushrooms with pan-seared trout too. “The mushrooms with smoked black garlic cream is easily one of the best things in the city. The kimchi broth is perfectly spicy, well balanced with the rest of the dish and the crispy salty skin of the trout pairs perfectly,” Declan Y. May offers an attractive room with a fun cocktail list, mostly local brews and a concise wine list along with delicious food that’s meant to be shared. Can’t beat that.



12

12. Brussels Sprouts, Tryst Wine & Small Plates

This casual, easy-going St. Albert spot has delicious food and lots of fans. “I can’t even begin to wax poetic about the Brussels sprouts; a perfect mix of warm sprouts, chunky bacon and crispy cheese. It’s truly heaven. This is truly one of the best kept secrets in the Edmonton region,” Tam B. Also popular with nominators, the beet flatbread. “The chewy delicious sourdough crust is enough to make me want to nominate it and the house-made beet jam, roasted garlic, goat cheese and arugula make this the absolutely most flavourful flatbread. It looks beautiful and tastes better. It is just as good cold the following day, if you happen to have any left,” Alana E.

Please see “Top 100” on next page

Cooper & O'Hara photo

Shaun Hicks photo

Top 100

Continued from previous page.



13

13. Fries, Happy & Olive

You know how fries are often so disappointing? Limp, or overly crispy? Over seasoned, or worse, bland? This Goldilocks is thrilled that Happy & Olive gets it right every time with the rosemary parm fries with lemon aioli. Nominators agree. “Those fries,” says Janine M. “Super crispy, with so much flavour they don’t even need ketchup.” Also nominated, latkes (with mushroom, smoked salmon or smoked meat) and the *vada pav* sliders, Indian-spiced potato patties with chutney. Is there a potato theme happening here? Maybe. And why not, potatoes make everybody happy.



14

14. Sushi, Kobachi

This bijou Japanese resto in Sherwood Park has legions of fans. “Not only is Ron the friendliest and most respectful restaurateur I have ever met, the sushi, maki and sashimi are the freshest and most delicious. Six out of six family members would choose Kobachi as our number one, and with three of us having celiac disease, the food meets dietary requirements without compromising on quality,” Krista S. “Their à la carte sushi is consistently the best I’ve had in Alberta while being affordable. Fantastic stuff!” Shaun H. “The duck udon, I’ve never had something so rich in flavour before. The duck was tender and flavourful, the udon al dente and the broth rich,” Katie P. There you have it.



15

15. Ki Dal Makni, Monsoon Bistro and Bar

Nominators loved the tandoori lamb chops last year. This year it’s all about the lentils, especially the gingery-scented *ki dal makni*, a savoury blend of black lentils in cream and garlic. Also nominated, the *murgh methi dhabewala*, chicken with fenugreek leaves, the dill naan and yes, the toothsome lamb chops. Don’t miss the Singh is King cocktail either. Goldie Hazrah is the hospitable owner and it’s a great spot for a birthday celebration. Bring all your friends so you can share more dishes. Don’t miss Monsoon’s fun, generous wine dinners or whisky nights.



16

16. Carpaccio, Hayloft Steak and Fish

Paul Shufelt and team know seafood, and they know meat. If you want an exceptional steak, go west. “The close relationship between the restaurant and the beef supplier allow for some of the best tasting beef in Alberta to be dry-aged in house,” says Stephanie F. The Nonay club cut was singled out as a particularly good value, but it was the exceptional carpaccio with pickled mushrooms and crispy capers that wowed nominators.



17

17. Tuna Twists, XIX Nineteen

Nineteen’s menu is an intriguing blend of exec chef Andrew Fung’s influences: classic French cuisine (he did cook in Switzerland after all) and contemporary

Cal-Ital freshness, informed by elegant Japanese and Chinese flavours. It makes for a deliciously heady dining experience. The tuna twists—ahi tuna served on a spoon with spicy Thai noodles and Asian-inspired slaw—have been a stalwart on this list from the get-go. Nominators also love the mussels with gorgonzola, the robust duck confit and that outrageous burger, the Baconator, on a sesame milk bun.



18

18. Fish n’ Chips, Sabor

“I grew up on Vancouver Island. I know what fish n’ chips should taste like and they taste like Sabor’s. Flaky, perfectly cooked west coast halibut in a light, crispy batter with house-made tartar sauce—reminds me of home,” Colleen M. Every Friday in August, Sabor offers take away fish n’ chips to raise funds for Ronald McDonald House and Santa’s Anonymous. The rest of the time? Sabor’s menu, inspired by the flavours and technique of the Iberian coast, offers a veritable feast. Nominators love the Portuguese salt cod fritters, the grilled octopus and the range of *jamon*. Best deal in town? The seafood platter.



19

19. Chip Stack, Nowhere Wine Bar

“Nowhere Bar has a menu full of unexpected bites but never has a dish surprised me more than the chip stack. The perfect dish to snack on over a glass of wine—salty, fatty and crunchy, with a little sweet and a little spice to hit all the notes you crave. One of the best dishes of 2023

for me,” says Lindsay H. “Meatball Mondays at Nowhere are incredibly fun; the smell of marinara and toasty brioche is lovely, especially on a night when most spots are closed. The meatballs, made with beef from Modest Meats, are incredibly flavourful and juicy, and properly finished in the marinara before hitting the cheesy bun and heading to the countertop oven. The whole thing is sprinkled with a generous helping of Parm. The meatball sub is additionally an achievement considering Nowhere functions without a full kitchen,” Marianne S. “Chef Filliep’s tartare is the best in town! The combo of local Alberta beef with fresh dill and sour Polish pickles makes it uniquely delicious,” Barry S.

20. Salmone Crostone, Dalla Tavola Zenari

“I love the smoky taste of the salmon combined with the delicate dill cream cheese that melts in your mouth. Now that I am 10, I’ve learned to appreciate how the flavour of the salty capers adds to the dish,” says Victoria L. Nominators also love the creamy pâté di noci and the porcini risotto. “Rich mushroom flavour, just the right amount of cheese, perfectly prepared—ideal for a winter supper. It should be on the regular menu,” says Alex A. And the lasagna bianca? “Amazingly delicious twist on a classic Italian dish—so good your tablemates will gasp with jealousy when they see yours,” Tatum W.



21

21. 'Berta Sushi Rolls, Central Social Hall

The tasty beef and rice rolls topped the noms for Central Social Hall this year. Noms for wings, the Ronald burger and the honey fried chicken sandwich were close behind. Celina R. had this to say about the chicken sandwich, “You have the crispy chicken with the honey drizzle, the slaw and the cheddar served on a nice bun. So good, 10/10.” “Best wings in the city. The Texas dry rub has just the right amount of spicy and salty, cooled down with the house-made ranch,” Jeremy Z.



Linda Hoang photo

22

22. Boar Cheeks, Bodega

It’s the red wine-braised boar cheeks that garnered the most nominations for Bodega this year. “Flavourful, unctuous and just plain delicious,” says Alex A. This friendly neighbourhood outpost by chef Lino Oliveira and Christian Mena of Sabor, is a terrific spot for tasty snacks such as grilled sardines and piri piri prawns. Nominators also love the lobster risotto. “Bodega makes an amazing risotto. Each location has a great atmosphere and extensive wine list. Quite affordable too,” Tara B.



23

23. Arctic Char, Café Bicyclette

The Arctic char on corn millet pilaf topped the noms again for this charming resto in the French quarter. “It is the most unique seafood dish in the city. The dazzling contrast in colours of the fish, sauce and sides seduce the eyes before electrifying one’s palate,” Lorna L. Also, the *boeuf aux mille saveurs*, braised Chatsworth Farm beef brisket: “the inspired fusion of Chinese flavours and western favourites is such a trip. Every dish chef Joseph and his team create takes my mouth on a journey. This is a cultural mosaic on a plate,” says Crystal A. Then there is brunch. “Everything on the brunch menu is so unique. From bennies to tartines, and their scratch cinnamon raisin brioche french toast with cheesecake icing and berry compote; everything is a work of art followed by a sensational orchestra of flavours in your mouth,” Jiahao W.



24

24. Massaman Braised Chuck, Arbour

The newish Arbour on Whyte has gained many fans already, especially for chef Greg Sweeney’s braised chuck in Massaman curry. “From the tenderness of the beef to the depth of flavour in the sauce, this dish will have you wanting to lick the plate clean,” Alex M. “Everyone needs to try this flavour bomb,” Jude W. “It’s non-traditional, delicious and super tender. Always look forward to enjoying this and many more of the great dishes at Arbour,” Dale C. Second in terms of noms were the Red Curry Mussels. “The best mussels in Edmonton,” says Sarah S. “The curry is made from scratch and has enticing layers of flavour. It’s fresh, the flavours are balanced and it’s warm, not too spicy. Order extra of the sourdough focaccia to sop up all the sauce.”



25

25. Currywurst, Otto

We love a restaurant with an unapologetic point of view—that’s Otto. Proprietor Ed Donszelmann prefers to keep it simple. Take the cocktail list. You will find a substantial number of gins and Negronis (currently at seven). Only. The all-Canadian (mostly Alberta) beer list includes several ciders and three meads from Fallentimber Meadery. The menu? Sausages, pretty much. Otto is a cosy and easy place to hang out. “Some of the simplest things are our greatest pleasure. I love the German street food, the currywurst, which they have executed brilliantly. The Fuge bratwurst is grilled perfectly and is the ideal combination with the house-made curry ketchup. They make their own at Otto, and it is so much more than just curry powder and ketchup,” says Brad S. “Leave room for the cheesecake,” says Juanita R.; “and go for the fish n’ chips on Wednesday!”

Please see “Top 100” on next page

Top 100

Continued from previous page.



26

26. Charcuterie Boards, Art of Charcuterie

Diana Harrison's elegant charcuterie boards have garnered legions of fans. The delightful selections come in unos, duos and boxes for up to eight people. AoC is also known for their large tableaux created in situ for parties and events. "Diana produced some exquisite charcuterie boards for our rural wedding in May. Her amazing flavours and presentation lit up the cocktail hour," Norman H. "Artful, colourful, abundant, full of surprises. Top quality, with unusual spreads, condiments and accents that make the eating experience special and memorable," Daya R.



27

27. Smoked Nonay Short Rib, The Workshop Eatery

The partnership between Paul Shufelt (Robert Spencer Hospitality) and Jeff Nonay (Lakeside Farmstead and Nonay Beef) pays off in flavour. "We had the Nonay short rib along with several other dishes to share. It was amazing, so juicy, tender and flavourful," says Mona B. Along with the various Nonay cuts nominated, guests love the crispy Brussels sprouts, the beet and wedge salads and wakey wakey eggs n' bakey at brunch.



28

28. Copenhagen Pølse, Three Vikings Pub

Nominators love the *smørrebrød*, those delicious little open-faced sandwiches, the *frikadeller* (especially in the Friki benny at brunch) and, especially, the Copenhagen *pølse*. This is not some ordinary hot dog. It's the quintessential Copenhagen street food—a K&K European wiener with Danish remoulade, crispy onions and house-made sweet pickle on a Bon Ton bun. "This takes a hot dog to another level, and goes best with a Sea Change Irish Red Ale," says Ben T.



29

29. Stuffed Pork Loin, Popowich Meat Company

Nominators love the west end's Popowich Meat for its variety of great cuts, customer service and the house-made, ready-to-cook items like Maui ribs and the stuffed pork loin. "Their sausages are consistently the best tasting with the best texture. The owners are super nice people that go above and beyond for their customers. Everything from here is top notch," Jennifer R. "Whenever we have a large family gathering, or a get away for a weekend at the lake, my first stop is Popowich. I always know I am getting the best cuts of meat to serve my friends and family. From briskets to roasts to sausages and appetizers, Popowich Meats has everything I need to prepare a fabulous meal on any occasion," Dennis K. "Really high-end product. Always trimmed perfectly. Mike will cut bones off and re-tie them to the roast," Jim N. Need something special? Like a stuffed pork shoulder? Just ask.



30

30. River Valley Road Ice Cream, Kind Ice Cream

Of all their beautiful ice cream flavours nominated—Maple Bourbon Pecan, Birthday Cake, Dunkaroos—it's River Valley Road with the big fan base. "Loaded with brownies, marshmallows, candied walnuts. Surrounded by milk choc ice cream. What's not to like?" says Ryan L. "My kids alternate between Rocky Road and Dunkaroos when available. Next year they will be big enough for their own cones," says Maggie W. We like the way this mom measures time.



31

31. Yubu Bites with Bulgogi, MJ's Korean Kitchen (Bountiful Market)

"It's the tastiest explosion of flavours to pop in your mouth. I can't stop going back to the market for it. Every. Week. It's a problem. The owner is the loveliest and most down-to-earth person," Crystal B. "Pastry chef by day and culinary entrepreneur by night, Min Jin, the owner of MJ's, has realized a dream of bringing the gourmet flavours of Korean food to us in fresh and innovative ways. All her carefully crafted foods are next level delicious! A must try for those with curious palates," Tracey C.



32

32. Pastel Azteca, Luna Cocina Mexicana

"This delicious dish is incredible. It has all the flavours and soul of Mexico, but presented in the style of an

Italian lasagna. Rich and creamy with poblano peppers, salsa verde and crema. A truly one-of-a-kind dish, not to be missed!” Lynsee L. “It’s hard to pick just one, but this dish is unique, you won’t find it in any other Mexican restaurant in Edmonton, it’s home-made traditional Mexican. I am from Mexico, and even in Mexico, it is not that common to find, unless your mama cooks it for you,” Angelica L.



33. Dry-aged Steak, Ribeye Butcher Shop

In the short time Ribeye has been open they have garnered a lot of happy customers. Nominations ranged from the toothsome Smash Burger (last year’s Top100 pick) duck fat potatoes and various cuts of meat. About the dry-aged rib steak: “It’s absolutely exquisite. It was very close to the quality of Wagyu in taste, texture and marbling. These steaks don’t require more than basic seasoning as the flavour stands on its own: balanced, buttery, beautiful,” says Paul D. “I have bought plenty of steaks from them, marinated, dry aged, or just normal. I have never had a bad cut. The staff is also very friendly and helpful. Along with steaks they also have poultry, drinks, a frozen section and many other food items,” Michael E.



34. Sugar Skull Burger, Backstairs Burger

Backstairs has legions of fan, for the duck tots, the OG burger and the crack fries, but this year it’s the Sugar Skull. “Amazing balance between sweet and savoury,” Efeoghene O. “This burger is unbelievable. The horseradish and beef with the bone marrow-caramel glazed bacon and ruffle chips. Pickled onions bring a beautiful crunch and tang. This is a must have,” Kelly V.



35. Take and Bake Meals, A Cappella

Nominators love the convenience and the variety of choices—chicken cacciatore, beef roulade, beef on a bun, chicken parm. “We have taken these meals to the mountains and I delivered them to my mother when she was recovering from surgery. They taste homemade and it’s so easy—you just order the day before,” says Christine J.



36. Bibimbap, Buok Fresh Korean Kitchen

“Simply amazing! Packed with flavour, my go-to for comfort food that is healthy and delicious,” Mike S. The *japchae* was also nominated by many. “This dish is a wonderful blend of glass noodles and veggies. It’s a delicious dish that isn’t spicy, filling when eaten with rice, a perfect meal when you need to be refreshed,” Colleen S.



37. Devilled Egg, Partake

“The preparation changes slightly throughout the year, but the devilled eggs (currently with leeks, mushroom duxelles and crisp smoked bacon) are always excellent. The house-made popcorn when you first sit down is a nice snack with an interesting wine by the glass, or non-alcoholic cocktail from bartender Jenn,” Cindy G.



38. Effing Fish Filet, Woodshed Burgers

The beer-battered flaky cod burger is a winner. “It is the best fish burger I’ve ever eaten. A generous portion, fresh, crispy coating, great toppings and so delicious!” Kay U.



39. Rose Saffron Pistachio Ice Cream, Twice Cream

The charming Westmount area ice cream shop comes up with amazing flavours—Dark Cherry Lemon Curd, Michel Cluizel Chocolate and the much-nominated Rose Saffron Pistachio ice cream, classic Persian flavours in a creamy delight. “It smells beautiful, it’s not too sweet and I love the crunch of the pistachios. This ice cream makes me feel like a million bucks,” says Chris S.



40. Kouign Amann, Lock Stock Coffee

“It is so flaky, tender, buttery and the perfect combination of salty and sweet. If you love French pastry you need to try this. We plan coffee dates at Lock Stock specifically for their kouign amann,” Lindsay S. We concur.

Please see “Top 100” on next page

Top 100

Continued from previous page.



41

41. Candied Bacon BLT, Meuwly's

We think of Meuwly's for excellent ham, terrific charcuterie and an excellent selection of locally-made food stuffs. We forget that their sandwiches are second to none, especially the Candied Bacon BLT. "Super fresh, huge tomatoes and delicious candied bacon. The chive mayo really elevates the whole experience. I've never been disappointed by this sandwich and it would take me more than two hands to count how many times I've enjoyed it," says Bee A.



42

42. Vancouver Fog Doughnut, Doughnut Party

"The Vancouver Fog is a perfect combination of earl grey tea, vanilla, and maple and it is one of the best desserts I have ever had. Soft, flavourful and comforting—everything you could ask of a doughnut," Hazel O.



43

43. Girls' Night In Cookie, Sugared and Spiced

The charming south side alley bakery has heaps of nominations for the turtle tart, chocolate chip cookie, lemon tart and the picnic cakes. But it's the Girl's Night In that was the "all-time favourite cookie. The caramel

and the sea salt combined with the chocolate and cherry adds another level of texture, appealing to those who crave both salty and sweet," Connie R.



44

44. Crossing the Bridge Rice Noodle Soup, Dagu Rice Noodle

The name references a love story from Yunnan province about a wife who discovered that if she kept the soup and noodles separate and layered the hot broth with chicken fat to insulate it, she could bring her husband a hot lunch. Hugo L. called Dagu's version the "ultimate cold weather comfort soup." "The food is fresh and tasty! The service is top notch, Vicky the owner takes great pride in making sure her customers are well taken care of," Donna N.

45. Rocky Mountain Gin, Lone Pine Distillery

This crisp and flavourful gin is made with wild bergamot, mint and rosehips, all native to the western alpine. "We love it for G&Ts, so clean and refreshing," says Gordon P. There were also nominations for the Earl Grey Gin and the Ginski, a unique blend of whisky and gin aged for 33 months in oak.



45

46. Halo Halo, Yelo'd Ice Cream + Bake Shop

"On a hot summer day nothing hits quite like Yelo'd Halo Halo, a divine combo of red beans, ice cream (soft or scoop) jellies, jackfruit, and shaved ice," says Cathy C.



47

47. Dry Gin, MD Distillery

The St. Albert distillery is known for its exacting distillation using only Alberta wheat and water. The result? Spirits with absolute clarity, harmonious flavours and no sharp edges. Margo H. had this to say about the double-infused Dry Gin with notes of juniper and coriander. "We love this gin for martinis with a twist because it's so smooth and flavourful." MD also makes some nifty cocktails in their tasting room—try the French 75 made with Rhubarb Gin.

48. Distemperance Mulled Haskap Mocktail, Token Bitters

"Seriously, the mulled wine needs to become YEG's official drink for winter," says Meghan T. "It's rich and smooth, not too sweet and anyone can drink it because there is no alcohol." Made with Token Calder Chai bitters, local haskaps from Rosy Farms, orange zest and baking spices and created by JoAnne Pierce of Mock-Ups Mocktails. Drink warm.



48



49

49. Carrots, Sundog Organic Farm

Among all the Sundog vegetables nominated, the cabbage and carrots were tops. "What is it about these carrots?" asks Roger B. "So fresh, so sweet, so crunchy—better than all the other carrots." Find them at the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market or sign up for the farm share.



50

50. Cinnamon Buns, Awn Kitchen

Awn Kitchen's cinnamon buns are a thing of wonder—light (if you can call a cinnamon bun light), fluffy and not too sweet. The café may be closed now, but you could take a class to learn how to make these delicious treats yourself.

51. Spicy Crispy Fried Chicken, Northern Chicken

"The smells, the crunch, the authentic real greasiness, it's all made with love!" Keisha W. Sadly, Northern Chicken is now closed. We will all miss this delicious chicken. 🍗

Cooking School

Not very many people know this, but the Smos both graduated from NAIT Culinary Arts. The difference? We took different routes.

As a wide eyed 17-year-old, I was one of the only women in the two-year commercial cooking program at NAIT. Women were rare in the culinary field at that time, but I knew this was what I wanted to do. I devoured *Bon Appetit* and *Gourmet* every month. When I read about Alice Waters' restaurant, Chez Panisse, I knew I found my calling.

Back in the early 80s the culinary program was a different beast. Our access to ingredients was average at best, but I did taste prosciutto for the first time. Did I need to know the many buffet accoutrements that I learned then? Hard-boiled egg penguins, meats shiny with aspic gel, huge hams adorned with pineapple. You get it. The program was geared to large hotel or camp kitchens. The best part was learning great knife skills, Escoffier's five mother sauces, butchery and baking.

I found peers who were like minded and our instructors seemed to enjoy teaching us. We had a blast. Together we started on our path of food and wine appreciation. I loved every second of it.

My first job was in a small nondescript restaurant, a year later I was the executive chef at the Café at Holt's at Holt Renfrew. What a ride. The best ingredients, reign over the menu, discounted clothes shopping! It was terrific, but a big job for a gal of 20. I felt I needed to grow, so I left for a long trip to Europe. Not long after I got back my phone rang and it was Holt's asking 'did I want to come back?' How fantastic was that.

It wasn't long before I realized that I was craving the front of the house. You know I love to talk. I wanted to be with the guests, so I transitioned from the back of the house to the front of the house. As they say, the rest is history.

Brad always wanted to cook, but as someone with a congenital heart defect, his doctors and parents said 'no way.'

Instead Brad took the Business Program at NAIT, majoring in marketing. During school and afterwards he worked in many restaurants as a busboy and then working as a server.

This is our meet cute. We both loved the industry. I hired Brad as the assistant manager at Philip's Fine Dining Room when I was the manager. Yes, I know, group eyeroll. Nobody knew, but it wasn't long after he was hired that we started dating (on the sly).

Then I took a job at the Hotel Macdonald and Brad became the manager of Philip's. We were destined to marry. We both loved food, wine and people.

Not long after we were married Brad said, "I want to be a professional cook." After I threw out many expletives followed by 'cooks work all the time, don't make any money,' I then said; 'go for it.' Many of his dreams had been crushed because of his heart condition. Why not go for it?

His training ground was Earl's. They had a fantastic training program, used quality ingredients and offered opportunities to grow. That's where we met Larry and Melinda Stewart (and went on to partner with them in the Hardware Grill). The Culinary Institute at Greystone in the Napa Valley was Brad's next step.

Back at the Hardware Grill he was in a position to be mentoring NAIT apprentices, so he fast tracked his apprenticeship and wrote the Red Seal exam, all in record time.

I loved being one of only a few women in the industry—I was breaking ground. I feel rather good about that.

As for Brad: the number of young chefs that were mentored by him and became major players in the restaurant game can't be counted. He was also the first chef to put pyrohy on a fine dining menu. Pretty cool. 🍷

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."



Feeding People

Hot chefs, cool bEATS: better every year

Imagine over 15 food and drink stations by an eclectic group of Edmonton chefs—to music. That is Hot Chefs, Cool bEATS, a fundraiser for the High School Culinary Challenge happening May 2 at the Mosaic Centre.

Chef Peter Keith, chair of the Canadian Culinary Fund and the Culinary Challenge is head of a volunteer group putting it together. “It’s going to be vibrant,” he says. “Every floor will have a different theme based on a genre of music. In the parking lot we will have blues and rock n’ roll with food trucks and barbecue. The main party area will be hip hop with DJ’s. Up on the terrace there will be jazz-themed pizza improv with an outdoor pizza oven.”

The dynamic event has a serious purpose—to raise money for full ride scholarships for up to eight high school students from the High School Challenge for the cook apprenticeship program at NAIT.

Simon Smotkowicz (Team Canada, Culinary Olympics, retired), started the Challenge in partnership with Edmonton Public Schools and NAIT in 2008. The program identifies talented cooks in high school and helps them find the early mentorship and training they need to be successful.

“There is a big debate in the chef world right now,” says Peter. “Do chefs have to go to culinary school anymore? They can learn different techniques off Tik Tok and YouTube. But, learning theory and classic technique is always going to benefit a cook, and the last thing we want is for there to be a financial burden.”

“The scholarships cover tuition, knives, books and uniforms. It also provides job placements at some of the best kitchens in town. We have relationships with all top chefs, those are the jobs where students can learn the most.”

Alberta Pork, Alberta Chicken and the Alberta Pulse Growers are sponsors; expect tasty pork, chicken and bean dishes.

What are the various chefs serving? We don’t have the entire menu quite yet, but Peter Zukiwsky from Pitt County BBQ is plating “a nice, elevated version of our signature dish, pulled pork.”

Winnie Chen, exec chef/co-owner of Fu’s Repair Shop looks at Hot Chefs as a way to increase knowledge. “I like to use events as a reward, or incentive for our cooks. We come up with a dish that inspires or aligns with the cooking style or heritage of the cook, so they can learn and practice exploring that part of themselves from a culinary point of view.”

Serge Belair, exec chef at the Edmonton Convention Centre, loves how it brings chefs together. “It’s a great collaboration for a good cause. We always get together before to brainstorm ideas and to make sure we deliver the best possible experience to our guests,” says Serge. “I want my passion to come through—to show my heart and soul in my dish. So make sure you come see me!”

Don’t miss Hot Chefs Cool bEATS, May 2, at the PriMed Mosaic Centre. Tickets are \$125/p+ (includes all food and drink) edmontonchefs.ca.

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



Food images clockwise from top; Kelsey Johnson’s chicken, El Mero Mero tacos and a sandwich from Drift Food Truck. Facing page: 15 of the 16 participating chefs, not pictured: Paul Shufelt.



Jiju Paul, Edmonton Expo Centre



Jacqueline Jacek, Jacek Chocolate Couture



Aron Pakan, Meat



Tamara Solon, Chartier Restaurant



Serge Belair, Edmonton Convention Centre



Kelsey Johnson, NAIT



Colin Fryer, Joey Restaurants



Conor O'Kell, Pip



Myles Fedun, Meuwly's



Ariel del Rosario and Roel Canafranca, Fillstix



Winnie Chen, Fu's Repair Shop



Nevin and Kara Fenske, Drift Food Truck



Scott Downey, The Butternut Tree



Peter Zukiwski, Pitt County BBQ



Alfonso Gutierrez, El Mero Mero Taquería

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Beer Guy

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Choosing a favourite beer is like choosing your favourite child. It's impossible.

That's my stock response to someone asking me for my favourite beer. Or I'll make like Rob Fleming in the novel (and film) *High Fidelity* and propose a list or two: Desert Island Top Five Beers or Six Beers to Drink at My Wake. As difficult as I find it to choose, I too like knowing people's favourite beers, which is one reason I love the Alberta Beer Awards. Founded and organized since 2017 by Edmonton beer experts Jason Foster and Owen Kirkaldy, the annual awards are done right, with certified beer judges doing blind tastings. The 2023 award winners include perennial medalists like Blind Enthusiasm, Blindman, Cabin, Campio and Establishment Brewing, as well as some new faces, including the New Brewery of the Year, Calgary's Stonyslope Brewing. Most surprising for me was Sherwood Park's Manual Labour Brewing, which only opened in May of 2023, but picked up a gold for their brown ale and a silver for their dark lager.

Manual Labour Brewing is the passion project of Richard McLeod and Nicole Perkes, partners in beer and in life—co-founders, co-owners and husband and wife. Both are medical doctors: Richard, an orthopedic surgeon and Nicole, a family doctor. Perhaps beer really is good for all that ails you? Richard retired from medicine to run the brewery and overall operations. Nicole manages the taproom and communications but continues to work full-time as a family physician at clinics in Fort Saskatchewan, Sherwood Park and Edmonton. To make the brewery

a full-fledged family affair, they've brought on Richard's 76-year-old father, Archie and their son Ethan full-time! As Nicole describes it, their vision for the brewery is "making high-quality, highly-drinkable beer in a variety of styles, so that every person who walks through the doors can find a brew they enjoy."

Richard was a homebrewer for years before making the leap to commercial brewing. "This is the most complex thing I've ever done, even more than orthopedic surgery," he recently told the *Sherwood Park News*. Clearly, with two Alberta Beer Awards so soon after opening, he knows what he is doing.

Nicole tells me they submitted their beers to the awards and then forgot about it, so it was a big and pleasant surprise when the winners were announced. Of course, awards are great but their focus is on making the taproom a go-to local watering hole. The brewery and taproom are located in an industrial area just south of the Yellowhead Highway and just north of Millennium Place. There's seating for 45 upstairs, with free pinball machines and pizza delivered to your table by local fave, Nitz's Pizza. The support they've had from the Sherwood Park community already means they're well on their way.

And even though these are tough times for craft brewers and everyone in the food and beverage industry, Edmonton's beer community has stepped up too. Richard singles out Brandon Boutin of Town Square Brewing as particularly helpful, and Nicole points to the support of the many women in the Edmonton brewing community, including those she met through the Pink Boots Society. Indeed, I'm no scientist or physician but I'd suggest this correlation: great beer is made by great people.



YEG faves six pack

Great Edmonton (and area) beers, all Alberta Beer Awards winners.



Manual Labour: Born Ready Brown Ale, Sherwood Park

Brewer and owner Richard McLeod tweaked this recipe over and over as a homebrewer until it was just right. Richard describes his Brown Ale as a 'classic, traditional, quintessential British ale'. Made with chocolate and Maris Otter malts and Fuggle hops for a smooth, creamy and earthy taste. Alberta Beer Awards: Gold – Brown Ale.

Blind Enthusiasm: Lager O'Darkness, Edmonton

Blind Enthusiasm's homage to the classic light-bodied dark beer, walking the line between easy drinkability and rich maltiness. Black in colour, clear, with low bitterness and notes of dark chocolate and toasty malt. Alberta Beer Awards: Gold – Amber & Dark Lager.



Longroof: 2nd Perspective Porter, Edmonton

A quaffable and quality porter tasting of chocolate, coffee, molasses, and a touch of dark fruit. Enjoy it inside the taproom of these Happy Beer Street stalwarts while we await spring and the opening of their fabulous patio. Alberta Beer Awards: Gold – Porter.

Growlery: Big Oak Stout, Edmonton

A big stout aged on toasted oak spirals, which impart complexity and richness to the brew. A smooth, full-bodied beer tasting of chocolate, vanilla and a bit of woody oakiness. If you see it on nitro on the menu at the Growlery taproom do not hesitate to buy a pint. Alberta Beer Awards: Gold – Stout.



Apex: White Raven IPA, Edson

Back in the day this west coast American-style IPA was one of the beers to lead Alberta out of the IPA desert. It remains a personal favourite so it is great to see it and Apex flourishing in 2024. This IPA has big hop aromatics of fruit and pine, balanced with a solid malt backbone. Alberta Beer Awards: Bronze – IPA.

Sea Change: The Wolf, Edmonton

With its ubiquity on taps and in hands around town, The Wolf might be Edmonton's favourite craft beer. This likeable, easy-drinking hazy pale ale is made from Alberta-grown barley, wheat and oats, with Vic Secret and Citra hops for a tropical fruit character of pineapple, passionfruit, orange, guava and mango. Alberta Beer Awards (2020): Gold – Hopy Sessionable Beer. 🐺



Ask Peter Bailey for his favourite beer and watch him stumble over a reply. He's on X/Twitter and Instagram as @Libarbarian.



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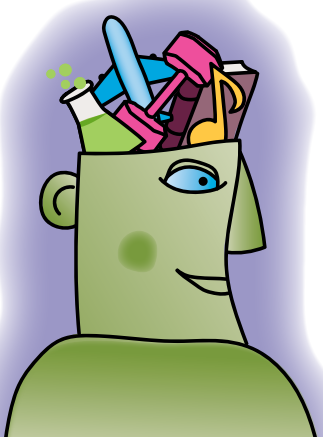


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Canadian Culinary Championships, Ottawa, February 2024

There was delicious food and wine, chef camaraderie and not much sleep at the 2024 Canadian Culinary Championships (CCC) held in Ottawa in February. The annual event gathers 10 chefs (the winners of regional Kitchen Parties) in a gruelling three-day competition—Mystery Wine Challenge, the Black Box and the Grande Finale. The CCC provides an opportunity for chefs from across the country to make lasting friendships, building a network of chefs and Canadian cuisine from coast to coast. It also showcases some of Canada's best wines and raises funds for Spirit North and MusiCounts nationally and, in Ottawa, the Boys and Girls Club and the Ottawa Network for Education. Congratulations chefs!



Gold

Chef Jasper Cruickshank
Wild Blue Restaurant + Bar, Whistler, British Columbia.

Wine Pairing Grand Finale:
2021 Roche Tradition Pinot Gris, Naramata Bench, British Columbia.

Elegance, balance and ineffable finesse are the hallmarks of Jasper's cooking. His Mystery Wine and Black Box dishes each demonstrated innovation and superb control, seamlessly marrying modern and classic techniques. Yet the BC chef's Grand Finale dish is what truly locked down the championship. It was, in a word, sublime.

Jasper's Wild BC Experience was an ethereal, heartfelt expression of reverence for the west coast's rich seafood bounty. Texturally playful, it highlighted the natural sweetness of sidestripe shrimp terrine with the light acidity of verjus-pickled tapioca, alongside a crisp leek-wakame tuile and a daikon parcel filled with leek purée. A Dungeness crab tartlet completed the trifecta, topped with crab espuma and masago rice pearls. The immaculate geoduck reduction was the

finishing master stroke. Chef's pairing of Roche 2021 Tradition Pinot Gris was exceptional, its minerality and subtle almond notes impeccably complementing the oceanic flavours of his dish.

"Winning this competition solidified that the hard work, dedication, and perseverance was worth it," Jasper reflects. As for what lies ahead? "I take this as a stepping stone. I've been cooking for 17 years now, and still have only scratched the surface of what's possible."

*Joie Alvaro Kent,
British Columbia Judge*



Silver

Chef Rupert Garcia
Hawthorn Dining Room & Bar at the Fairmont Palliser, Calgary, Alberta.

Wine Pairing Grand Finale:
2021 Monte Creek Frontenac Noir, Thompson Valley, British Columbia.

Two days after winning silver at the 2024 Canadian Culinary Championships in Ottawa, Rupert Garcia is back in his kitchen at the Palliser stacking pots for the evening service. He's exhausted from the competition, but his enthusiasm is dialed up to maximum, graciously thanking his culinary team and all the teachers and mentors who have helped him along the way.

Garcia has a talent for working with ingredients to present beautiful, creative, tasty dishes. His gala dish of cured and cranberry-glazed trout wrapped in a trout skin tuile with smoked trout caviar, an apple crème fraiche and cranberry pickle was stunning.

Born in the Philippines, Garcia immigrated to Canada at age 10 with his family, which includes many excellent home cooks. But it wasn't until he started working in fast-casual

restaurants as a young dishwasher that he began to appreciate the potential of food. He enrolled in SAIT and quickly took to the kitchen, entering numerous competitions. In 2014 he represented Canada at the Chaîne des Rotisseurs global competition in South Africa, bringing home a silver medal from that too.

And next? "I'd like to do the Bocuse," says Garcia, aiming high.

But first, he has a kitchen full of pots to stack.

John Gilchrist, Calgary Judge



Bronze

JP Dublado

*Red Deer Resort and Casino,
Red Deer, Alberta.*

Wine Pairing Grand Finale:

*Frind Sparkling Brut, Kelowna,
British Columbia.*

Chef Dublado competed at the CCC in 2020, where he took People's Choice at the Mystery Wine challenge. This year,

JP had a different attitude. "Then, I was super happy just to be here among all the chefs," he said. "I felt I had won already." This year? "My goal is podium. I'm ready mentally, more serious; I know what to expect." Dublado (with sous chef David Jenkins) won People's Choice at the Mystery Wine Challenge again



this year with a bold tuna and beet dish. It rounded with the earthy red fruit flavours of the 2021 Lailey Zweigelt chosen by national wine advisor, David Lawrason (who always chooses something clever). Chef carried the momentum of the win through the competition to a bronze finish overall. His gala dish, sable fish and Hokkaido scallop with local corn and miso, enlivened with calamansi and herbs was a beautiful dish. (He had us at the tiny beet root tartlette holding a bijou sphere of corn and foie gras mousse.)

He has the heart of a true competitor. Within five minutes of expressing his joy of a podium finish, JP was thinking about his next goal—gold. 🏆

Mary Bailey, Edmonton Judge



The winners from left, chefs Rupert Garcia, Jasper Cruikshank and JP Dublado. All Photos Julian Sun, Jordan Chan.

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Spirits for spring



Bridgeland founders Daniel Plenzik (L) and Jacques Tremblay.

Best in show

Meet the Best Canadian Whisky at the 2023 Alberta Beverage Awards, the **Bridgeland Single Blend Whisky**. Bridgeland Distillery owners **Jacques Tremblay** and **Daniel Plenzik** met at a distiller's workshop in 2016. They were both interested in starting something around brandy and whisky. In 2018 they left their full-time jobs (both were engineers) and built the distillery. One of the first things they did was purchase a copper pot still, the "best piece for whisky and brandy," says Jacques. "Though brandy is grape-based and whisky grain-based there are a lot of similar processes. Our goal was to make both. We wanted to produce an original product, a reflection of our terroir. We are right next to the Rockies and chinooks create drastic changes in temperature and barometric pressure, which has a big effect on the barrel aging. We source grains locally—barley from the Hamills in Penhold; wheat, rye and oats from Red Shed Malting in Red Deer County and corn from Molnar's Farm in Taber. But we make the brandy like they do in Cognac. We distill the wines (Gewurztraminer from St. Hubertus in the Okanagan and California Moscato Canelli) then age separately in oak."

Bridgeland's 15 different products (four expressions of whisky and three of brandy, plus grappa, honey liqueur, and ready-to-drink cocktails), are available at over 40 different liquor stores in Edmonton, including Color de Vino, Sherbrooke, Wine and Beyond and Vines Riverbend.



Tasting Tesseron

Cognac from this highly-regarded, small-production, family-owned company is in great demand. Allocations around the world are measured in dozens of bottles not thousands of cases. **Emilien Bouchab** (Director Americas) led a tasting of these fantastic spirits earlier this year.

Composition VSOP is the bottling you are most likely to find on the back bar. An outstanding VSOP, subtle, harmonious with finesse, and very very drinkable. Then we get into the aged expressions. The **Lot N° 90 XO Ovation** has amazing depth, complexity and length with intriguing limey citrus notes. The **Lot N° 53 XO Perfection** has amazing savoury notes, salinity, dark chocolate and oatmeal, with a lengthy finish. The **Lot N° 29 XO Exception** was crazy—vivacious, lively, penetrating yet subtle. And, if this matters to you, the only Cognac Robert Parker has ever given 100 points. Spectacular.



Emilien Bouchab, Tesseron Cognac at the Confederation Lounge, Fairmont Hotel Macdonald.



Mary Bailey



Jason Gredainus of Grey Dog Distilling with Casey, his 11-year-old Labrador mix.

Jason Gredainus loves rum



You could say it comes with the territory. Jason is a sailor and he opened **Grey Dog Distilling** after a long career in the Canadian Navy. Naval references abound, from the name of the distillery to the names of the spirits—**Sea Dog Spiced Rhumb**, **Main Brace Rhumb** and **Flagship Oaked Rhumb**. Jason is an experienced brewer and distiller who uses Alberta beet sugar and puts together his signature aromatics from dried concentrates. “Hobby distilling is legal in Nova Scotia for personal consumption,” he says. “I made my own still out of a beer keg. When I moved back here (I grew up in Edmonton) I decided to start the business.” The Sea Dog Spiced Rhumb was a Judges Selection (out of a crowded field) at the 2023 Alberta Beverage Awards. Why rhumb? “Rum has to use cane sugar and be aged a minimum of one year. I wanted to use Alberta-grown products and have more flexibility in aging.”

Find Grey Dog Rhumbs at Sherbrooke, Crossroad and Little Guy Liquor Co. in Sherwood Park and at various Safeway and Sobeys Liquor stores. ●

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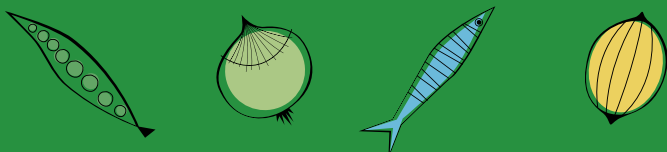


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A Freezing Father's Fundraiser is the brainchild of Peter Burgess, who lost his daughter Elan to an as-yet undiagnosed condition in 2007.

Winter camping, a favourite activity, is one way Peter, Candace and Ben keep their memories of Elan alive.

A Freezing Father's Fundraiser would not have been possible without our generous sponsors. Together over five years we raised \$182,797.11 for the Stollery Children's Hospital. Thank you!

You can find the sponsorship list and donate at www.freezingfather.org



Kitchen Sink What's new and notable

restaurant buzz

Bar Henry (160, 10220 103 Avenue) is now open in the Henry Singer in the Stantec Tower. Enjoy cocktails, wine and little bites in a jewel box of a space, Wednesday to Saturday, from 4:30pm. "It's a concept inspired by our experiences in northern Italy," says **Daniel Costa**. "The food is snacky, light and quick bites, but the pace is leisurely."

The Butternut Tree (9707 110 Street, 780-760-2271, thebutternuttree.ca) has launched its new spring à la carte and tasting menus. Book now for the ever-popular Easter High Tea, a fun a creative expression of Easter through small bites, on Saturday, March 30. Seatings from 10am-1pm, \$65/p.

Everybody's favourite chicken place has closed. **Northern Chicken** fried its last bird in late February. Thank you for the great food and fun memories. Good luck with new adventures and we hope you keep on cooking something, somewhere.

Downtown Dining Week starts March 20 and runs until March 31. Enjoy special dishes and menus at over 50 downtown spots. Find all the deets at edmontondowntown.com.

product news

Find the delicious Edmonton-made, small batch, **Fuge Sausage** at your local **Italian Centre Shops** and **Freson Brothers**. And don't forget, from 11am-2pm every Friday at their shop (6736 99 Street). They have delish sausage in a bun for only \$8!

Wondering where that great coffee at the downtown market went? Find **On the Edge Coffee** at **Meuwly's** (10706 124 Street) on Saturdays. Pick up a cup of coffee and take some of their small-batch, direct-trade beans home.

Join **Paul Moffat** at **Community Natural Foods** (7917 104 Street) for **Back to Basics: Sunshine, Dirt & Everything in Between**, 1pm, Saturday, March 9. Paul will talk about the significance of Vitamin D3 (the sunshine factor) and essential minerals. Free sign up:

communitynaturalfoods.com/events. And **Member Appreciation Day** is March 22. It pays to become a member—save 15 per cent on all regular priced items in-store and online.

Heart of the Home (12539 102 Avenue 780-705-4928, heartofthehomeyeg.ca) is having a sale on **Wrendale Designs**, get 20 per cent off during March. **Ripple Towels** (thick and thirsty Turkish towels) are on promo in April at 20 per cent off. New hours for spring, Monday-Saturday, 11am-5pm, Sunday noon-4pm. Heart of the Home is closed Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The cheerful **Easter Store Event** happens Saturday, March 30.

Meuwly's (10706 124 Street) offers the most amazing hams for Easter, lightly smoked, boneless, in three sizes, so it's just right for every family. Comes with a jar of house-made grainy mustard too, which you will need for all those delish ham sandwiches on Easter Monday. Pre-order online at meuwlys.com.

wine tasting happenings and events

Discover the next generation of student chefs at the **Awards Ceremony** for the winners of the **High School Challenge**, 6pm, Monday, March 18. Tix: \$20/p, edmontonchefs.ca.

Pitt County BBQ will be onsite at **Little Wolf** (8424 109 Street) over the St. Patrick's Day weekend featuring Nonay beef ribs and sandwiches. Expect more pop-ups at **Blind Enthusiasm** and other breweries this summer.

HIV Edmonton is looking for restaurant partners for its annual fundraiser **A Taste for Life**. Interested? Call Jade at 780-488-5742.

Wing Wednesday is happening Wednesday, April 17 at **Stantec Tower** in the Ice District. The hot and spicy event raises funds for **Meals on Wheels** programs and services. Tix: \$75/p+, mealsonwheelsedmonton.org.

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



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