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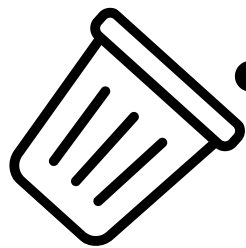
food & drink



Kitchen Party Chefs 2025



deleTABLE



• The
• Future
and
Fragility
of
Food

An AGA Community Gallery Exhibition

September 6-November 8 2025

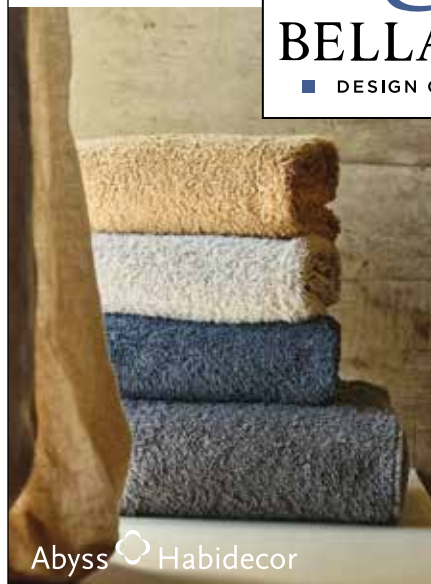
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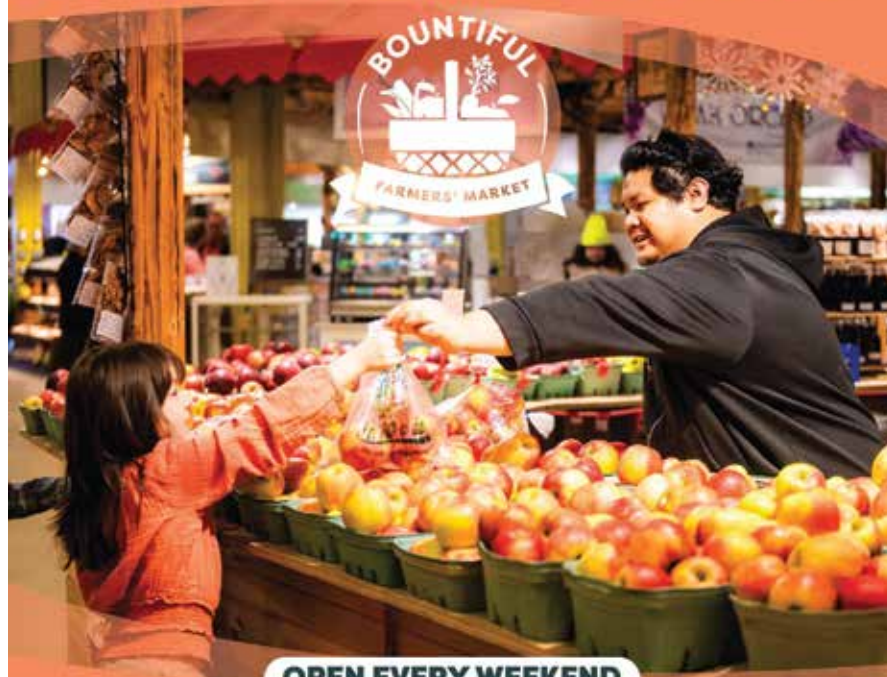
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Distribution

Greenline Distribution

For editorial inquiries, information,
letters, suggestions or ideas, contact
The Tomato at 780.431.1802 or email
production@thetomato.ca.

**The Tomato is published
six times per year:**

January/February, March/April, May/June,
July/August, September/October,
November/December

by BGP Publishing
Edmonton, AB T6E 2G1
780.431.1802

Subscriptions are available
for \$25 per year.

thetomato.ca

The Tomato food & drink
is located in Amiskwaciwâskahikan
on Treaty 6 territory, the territory
of the Papaschase and the
homeland of the Métis Nation.



Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



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What's new and notable

The 2025 Kitchen Party chefs, top row from left: Joseph Vuong, Tyson Wright,
Levi Biddlecombe, Sophie Brosseau. Bottom row from left: Robert Wick, Rose Colangelo,
Jason Greene, Abigail López Velasco. All photos supplied by chefs.

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rita trattoria now open

Daniel Costa, Micah Joffe, Allen Anderl and team’s newest venture captures the vibe of a casual Italian eatery and brings it to Jasper Avenue.

A little bit raucous (like all the best trattoria), bright and warm, on two levels with some bar seating too. The concise menu and wine list is all you want. The focus is pasta but we did start with exceptional lamb chops

scottaditto—which means, basically, eat with your hands, so we did. Can’t wait to gather a few folks to order

Domenica, Rita’s homage to the fabled southern Italian Sunday meal: *ragu napoletano* along with various braised meats and salad. Do save room for the *torta di pinoli*, the delicious pine nut tart with the texture of a blondie and flavours of the Italian forest. Make a reso, or take your chances with a walk in, Wednesday-Sunday, from 5pm.

Rita Trattoria, rita-trattoria.com.



Mary Bailey photo



Geoff Lilje photo

culina famiglia opening soon in little italy

Brother and sister duo Brad and Cindy Lazarenko have been creating food memories in Edmonton for a very long time. First there was Culina and Bibò Wine Bar (the first Bibò) in Mill Creek and Cindy’s restaurant in the Highlands (now Bodega). Their latest collaboration is Culina Famiglia, in the Piazza, smack in the middle of Little Italy. We can expect delicious, approachable, family-style food, pizza and an easy atmosphere. Good food and good drink, just the kind of place you want to drop into on a weekday night. Culina Famiglia, 10821 95 Street, culinafamily.com.



deletable at the aga community gallery

deleTABLE: the Future and Fragility of Food features art by students from three different schools: University of Alberta Art and Design Departments, HDK-Valand Academy of Art and Design in Gothenburg, Sweden and Portage College in Lac La Biche. The artists explore our bonds with food, both tenuous and enduring. Many are from the north (in both Canada and Sweden) and several are indigenous.

“The table is where we gather,” says Pierre Öberg, Fine Arts instructor, Portage College. “It’s where we bond, but now even the table is precarious, due to the complexity of the world. What is also wonderful about this exhibition is it gives the student artists a chance to be in the art world. It helps provide connections, momentum, what they need to have a career as an artist. It helps set them up for success.”

Expect a thought-provoking experience and a beautiful one with over 100 artworks, including an interdisciplinary cookbook. The exhibition runs September 6 to November 9, and the reception and artists’ talk is on November 1.

The Community Gallery works a bit differently; it’s part of the art rental and sales so all the works will be for sale. The show is curated by Royden Mills (UofA) and Pierre Öberg with key contributor Carl-Johan Skogh, University of Gothenburg.

AGA Community Gallery, 2 Sir Winston Churchill square, youraga.ca/whats-on/community-gallery.

el jardin now open

The inspiration is Oaxaca. Consider this: dishes like *sikil p’aak de la casa*, a smoked pumpkin seed dip, to start. Then: *tasajo asado*, thinly sliced, wood-grilled beef, a specialty of the markets in Oaxaca City, empanadas, a trio of moles and a full tacos menu. The Passport to Mezcal is a guide to mezcal at all levels and yes, of course, there are beautiful mezcal cocktails too. Hospitality maven Flavius Iulian heads up the management/ownership team and Luis Borracha is the head chef. We can’t wait. Open Tuesday-Saturday from 5pm. El Jardin, 10359 104 Street in the Mercer Building, eljardinyeg.com.

Clockwise from upper left: pasta at Rita; the cosy new Culina Famiglia; a dish at El Jardin; Nourish by Jada Issac; Last Place by Abigail St Jean; Fool’s Harvest by Emily Shirt.

Family Harvest Recipes from Kitchen Party Chefs

What do the 2025 Kitchen party chefs like to eat in the fall? Salads and hearty vegetable dishes, BC plums and peppers, Brussels sprouts, winter squash and turkey hash—all the good things that taste best with a bit of a nip in the air—ideal for everyday dinners or for your Thanksgiving table.



Bacon Tomato Jam

“Much like a quick pickle, this is not a true jam, but it is quick, easy and lasts for 14 days in the fridge. Have it on a burger, hot dog, with toasted baguette, and I make the same jam, without the bacon, to go over baked brie at the restaurant. It gives the vibe of an apricot or fig jam but is much more savoury while still having a sweet finish.” —chef Sophie Brousseau, The Alfred.

- | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| ½ lb | bacon, diced |
| ½ med | onion, diced |
| 1-2 sprigs | thyme, leaves only, chopped |
| 3 sm | containers cherry tomatoes |
| ⅓ c | apple cider vinegar |
| ⅓ c | brown sugar |

Start off in a pot cooking your diced bacon thoroughly, then add your onions and sauté until translucent. Add the rest of the ingredients and bring to a boil, uncovered. Lower the heat to med high and cook, stirring often, for about 20 minutes or until the tomatoes start to thicken and reduce. Lower the heat to a simmer and cook for another 15 minutes or longer as needed, stirring regularly, until the mixture becomes thick and sticky with a glossy finish. Makes 3-4 cups.



Tomato and Blue Jay Pepper Salad with Basil Cucumber Dressing and Truffle Burrata

“I picked up these purple peppers at the Italian Centre. If you can’t find the purple, use regular bell peppers.” —chef Abigail López, Everyday Food Company.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1 | Blue Jay pepper (about 290 g) |
| ½ sm | container (150 g) cherry tomatoes |
| 1 sm | container yellow grape tomatoes |
| 50 g | fresh basil leaves |
| 1 | English cucumber |
| 1 | ball truffle burrata |
| 1 T | extra virgin olive oil |
| | sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper |
| | drizzle honey |

Wash all produce thoroughly. Halve the cherry and grape tomatoes, then place them in a bowl. Slice the Blue Jay pepper into strips and add to the tomatoes. Season and toss gently to coat. Set aside to marinate while you make the dressing.

Basil Cucumber Dressing
Peel the cucumber, remove the seeds and juice it along with a handful of basil leaves. If you don’t have a juicer, blend the cucumber and basil, then strain through a fine mesh sieve to extract the liquid.

Stir in a drizzle of honey and the oil; whisk until well combined.

To serve: Arrange the marinated tomatoes and peppers on a serving plate. Spoon a small amount of the dressing onto the plate. Tear the truffle burrata into small pieces and nestle among the vegetables.

Finish with small fresh basil leaves for a bright aromatic touch. Serve immediately.

Serves 2-3.

Roasted Plums with Whipped Ricotta and Shaved Brussels Sprouts

“This dish is a celebration of that beautiful seasonal overlap—when summer’s sweetness meets earthy fall flavour.” —chef Rose Colangelo, TULIP.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2 c | pitted, quartered plums (sour cherries would make a great swap) |
| 1 T | honey |
| 1 t | extra virgin olive oil |
| 1½ c | ricotta |
| 1 | lemon (zest + juice) |
| 2 c | Brussels sprouts, shaved |
| 2 T | extra virgin olive oil |
| | salt and pepper, to taste |
| ½ c | toasted hazelnuts, chopped |

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).

Toss the plums with honey and 1t olive oil. Spread on a parchment-lined baking sheet and roast 12-15 minutes until soft and the juices thicken slightly.

Using a whisk or food processor, whip ricotta with lemon zest until smooth. Season lightly with salt.

Toss shaved Brussels sprouts with the rest of the oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Spread the whipped ricotta on a serving platter, top with the sprouts, and spoon the plums and their juices over the top.

Scatter the toasted hazelnuts over.

Serves 4-6 as a side.

Maple Bourbon Brussels Sprouts

“Enjoy this dish with family around the dinner table on a cool evening.” —chef Tyson Wright, Old Red Barn

- | | |
|------|------------------|
| 1 lb | Brussels sprouts |
| ½ | green apple |
| ¼ lb | bacon |
| ½ c | maple syrup |
| ¼ c | butter |
| ¼ c | walnuts |
| 1 oz | Canadian bourbon |
| ½ c | microgreens |
| ½ | lemon |
| 2 c | water |

Clean the sprouts: remove any bruised leaves and slice the bottom off the base; but leave enough of the core to hold the sprouts together, this will help with cooking. Rinse carefully, then slice in half vertically and set aside.

Dice the bacon and place in cold pan, render fat out (reserve the fat) and bring to almost finished, about 90 per cent cooked. Remove the bacon and place on paper towel to drain. In another pan slowly toast the walnuts until the beautiful nutty, smoky aromatics realise (about 12-15 mins).

Cut the apple and core, then cut in a medium dice. Reserve in lemon water. Using the reserved bacon fat and pan place the sprouts cut side down and cook on med-high heat until a beautiful golden brown color is achieved. Flip, then deglaze the pan with the whisky. Add butter and brown (about 5-7 mins). Stir in the maple syrup. Cook until the syrup is looking nice and velvety, when it will run off a spoon slowly, but is still fluid enough to pour and not be tacky (about 5 minutes). Take off the heat and add the diced apple.

To serve: place in a large, family-style bowl and finish with the toasted walnuts and microgreens.

Serves 4-6.



Spicy Sausage-Stuffed
Roasted Squash

A hearty and delicious version of stuffed squash by chef Robert Wick, Workshop Eatery. To chiffonade kale: roll tightly and cut into narrow strips; a useful technique when you want to chop any sort of leafy green like spinach, Swiss chard or basil leaves.

- 2 T extra virgin olive oil
- 2 med butternut squash, halved and seeded
- kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 lb spicy sausage or ground pork
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 sm red onion, diced fine
- 6 oz cremini mushrooms, trimmed and chopped
- 2 T chopped fresh sage
- 1 c chiffonade kale
- 1 c cooked brown rice
- 1 c grated Gruyère (about 4 oz.)
- ¼ c chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ c freshly grated parmesan cheese

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a rimmed sheet pan with parchment paper.

Oil and season the squash with a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Place the squash cut side down on the prepared sheet pan. Pierce the outside of the skin with a sharp paring knife several times. Roast until the squash is tender, 40-45 minutes.

Meanwhile, brown the sausage in a large skillet over medium-high heat, crumbling it as it cooks, 5-6 minutes. Remove to a bowl. Add the garlic, onion, mushrooms and sage to the skillet. Cook, stirring, until the mushrooms have released their moisture and the onions have softened, 5-6 minutes. Add the kale and brown rice, season with a generous pinch of salt and pepper and stir well to heat through. Transfer the mixture to the bowl with the sausage. Add the Gruyère and 2 tablespoons of the parsley. Stir to combine.

Remove the squash from the oven. Using a spoon, scrape some of the flesh from the

neck of the squash, creating a small trench, adding the removed flesh to the bottom of the well where the seeds had been. Divide the filling mixture between the squash, filling up the seed well and the neck. Return the squash to the oven and bake until the cheese is fully melted and the filling is hot throughout, 10-12 minutes. Top with the remaining parsley and parmesan.

Serves 4-6.

Korean Cheesy Turkey Hash

Find Gochujang paste and bulgogi sauce at Superstore or H-Mart.” –chef Levi Biddlecombe, Backstairs Burger.

- 1 sm sweet potato, peeled and diced
- 2 russet potatoes peeled, diced and rinsed
- 1 T canola oil
- 1 t sesame oil
- salt to taste
- 1 lb ground turkey
- ½ red pepper, diced
- 1 med onion, diced
- 1 c shaved cabbage
- juice of 1 orange
- 1 T Gochujang paste
- ½ c bulgogi sauce
- 2 t black pepper
- salt to taste
- 2 c shredded mozzarella

Garnish:

- black sesame seeds
- sliced green onion

Toss your sweet potato together with the russet potato, canola oil, sesame oil and salt and put in the air fryer for 12 minutes at 400°F.

While the potato mixture cooks, fry your ground turkey 80 per cent of the way. Add your pepper, onion, cabbage, orange juice and Gochujang and cook over medium heat until the vegetables are soft, the Gochujang is evenly incorporated, and most of the liquid has evaporated. Finish with the bulgogi sauce and salt and pepper to your taste, mix through gently.

Place your cooked potatoes in the bottom of a casserole dish, evenly spread turkey vegetable mixture on top of the potatoes and cover with the cheese.

Bake at 400°F for 12-15 min or until cheese is slightly browned.

Remove from the oven and sprinkle black sesame and green onions on top.

To serve: scoop desired portion onto a plate and enjoy.

Serves 4-6. 🍴

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The Roasters

Mary Bailey and Curtis Comeau

WHAT HAVE WE DISCOVERED AS WE DELVE DEEPER INTO YEG COFFEE?

Every coffee professional we talked to had their own story, and things often turned out much differently than expected.

Former city planner Peter West discovered that coffee shops were an ideal way to practise urbanism. Joe Parrottino’s pursuit of the best coffee blend led to Ace Coffee. Nuestra’s Nichola Hildebrand found coffee was the best way to revive a cool building and create community, even though she doesn’t actually drink coffee. Liberta’s Seung Paik and Sue Park, who also wanted to create community all over the world.



Above: a flight of coffee at Aspen. At right, Aspen Coffee’s Alison Sails and Gordon Taylor enjoy a cuppa.



ASPEN COFFEE

For Alison Sails and Gordon Taylor of Aspen Coffee Roasters? Coffee found them, in a bar in Maui.

They started chatting with an Australian couple (Craig Muzeroll and Veronica Rhodes) from Perth during the happy hour at Tommy Bahamas. “They had a coffee company called Antz Inya Pantz,” said Gordon. “What intrigued me was that they served 700 cups of coffee between 5am and noon.”

Australia has a thriving independent coffee culture and they hadn’t seen that in Edmonton. Still, they were curious. Their journey led them to Diedrich Roasters in Idaho.

At first it was a fun project, roasting coffee for themselves and friends. They were already busy—Gordon has an oil distribution business and Alison is a family doctor in Beaumont. But that conversation in a bar led to a family business with a roastery and two cafés. They formed the company in 2017 and started roasting seriously in 2020; opened a café, moved to the Ritchie space in 2023, then opened the second café in Zocalo earlier this year.



“I love it,” says Alison “It’s an interesting sideline, kind of a combination of science and gardening. I loved the process of roasting the beans. Our machine is a small batch roaster which does 12k of beans at a time. It’s like cooking, you can’t leave the machine when it’s running. The process is precise, yet there are so many variables.

“My mom was chief roaster but now we have Avram Sanders who has passion and a taste for coffee,” says daughter Jasmine Venkatraman, who manages the cafés. “We have some really talented staff members.”

I asked Jasmine about their roasting style. “We like smooth fruity flavours, not over roasted, but we sell more nutty, chocolatey flavours.

“We looked for ways to embrace our community,” says Jasmine. “We thought hard about how to fit in with the Happy Beer Street concept, so we started coffee flights, which have taken off. We have worked with the Ritchie Community League on several projects. Currently we offer a Ritchie blend where \$2 of each bag goes to the community league.”

Opening a second location can be fraught.

“Zocalo came about via a pop up with Good Goods. It turned out to be a great fit, it suits our vibe and aesthetic.”

The wholesale side of the business is where individual roasters run up against the prevailing notion that coffee is just a commodity. “You can always get cheaper coffee,” says Gordon; “but we are interested in value. We are a premium product.” Find Aspen coffee at the Glass Monkey, Derrick Club, Dining Car Café and roaster of the month at the Alberta Museum. 9951 76 Avenue and Zocalo, 10826 95 Street.

TRANSCEND COFFEE

Poul Mark opened the specialty roaster/coffee shop, Transcend Coffee, in 2006.

“In law school I was into wine (still am) and from that, coffee. I thought I would open a coffee and wine bar. I knew nothing until I did some training in Vancouver, and that was my first introduction to the idea that coffee actually came from someplace. Then I watched the doc *Black Gold* (coffee farmers in Ethiopia trying to get a fair price for their coffee).

“Instead I opened Transcend. I bought coffee from an importer in Seattle. I started doing coffee tastings, eventually became a coffee judge. I was in Panama at a coffee competition and met a coffee producer who inspired me, walking the side of volcanos.

“These early experiences opened my eyes to what drives quality and to the coffee poverty crisis.

“That is how I got involved in coffee. I realised I can support a producer and not contribute to that coffee poverty cycle.

“It satisfies my social justice bent, but maybe not the

best business model to pay a lot for coffee for years.

“There is a global coffee shortage and coffee prices are out of control, but producers still are caught in that cycle of never making enough money to even cover the cost of production.

“Most people think of coffee as a caffeine delivery system, it’s all about convenience and so Nescafe and Starbucks still rule the market, billions of dollars.”

There is a ray of light however.

“I do feel that the growing number of independents creates more awareness. It’s us against Tim Hortons and Starbucks, and that makes higher-quality specialty coffee more available.

“Coffee is a relationship. Producers need stability. For example, we have been buying coffee from Ricardo Pérez in Costa Rica for 15 years. We are fully behind the idea of transparent trade.

“We have had several locations, on 99 Street in the Western Living building, the old Pharoh’s Pizza near campus, we roasted out of the old Java Jive location, but the Ritchie Market is the best thing we ever did. Our coffee bar near 124 Street was kind of the opposite, it took a year and a half longer than expected;

We would like to have two or three more locations because that makes us more efficient as a roaster, but I’m gun shy now. The challenge is that the average ticket is small, it’s about volume, so you have to have a lot of traffic.

“We have learned a lot. I would say that we had very specific ideas about coffee in the early days and came off as arrogant, hipsterish. We’re so much more appreciative of people coming through the doors now.”

What’s it like now? “We roast and sell bagged coffee, have two coffee shops and small wholesale business. We’d really like to grow the online but it’s a tough business.”

And what about that roaster? “It’s a K&M Probat UG22, manufactured in Germany in 2017,” says Poul. It’s a cast-iron drum roaster, which relies mostly on convection to facilitate the roasting of coffee. We roast 40lbs per batch. It’s one of the best small roasters available, and is a key element of our ability to develop coffee as well as we do.”

Ritchie Market 9570 76 Avenue, 12332 106 Avenue.

Continued on next page



Transcend’s Poul Mark and his big orange roaster.



Above, the Rogue Wave Coffee team, from left Ply Pasarj, David Walsh, and David Laville. At right David Walsh roasts coffee. Below, the finished product.



Coffee

Continued from previous page

ROGUE WAVE COFFEE ROASTERS

David Laville, Ply Pasarj and David Walsh own and operate Rogue Wave Coffee Roasters.

“We are on year three with a 15k Loring drum roaster from California,” says David Laville. “We like that it creates a good workflow. It recycles the hot air, so you don’t need an afterburner. It’s a closed system which creates a more stable environment; our extreme temperature changes are not good for roasting coffee. We had a Giesen (Dutch) roaster but it was always needing parts.”

David, along with David Walsh started roasting beans in university.

“We would buy green coffee at Java Jive, take it home and roast it. We’ve been friends since Grade 7, born and raised on the north side. It was a hobby, novelty factor, the unknown, we would tell people we were roasting coffee.

“We got serious in 2015. You get older and start thinking, if not now, when? We decided to turn our hobby into a business and contribute to the fabric of Edmonton.

“Ply came on board later. He was a customer and a biochemist—he knows a lot about coffee extraction.

“Our niche is pour over. We love the café side, and we love what we do. We are essentially an online business, and it’s pretty robust. We exported to 50 countries in 2024, mainly Japanese roast coffee equipment which is geared to handcrafted coffee, not espresso machines.

“Our love for pour over coffee extends to every part of the business—the competitions, sourcing exceptional coffee, refining it, brewing it and roasting it. Handcrafted coffee.”

I asked David what, exactly, is third wave coffee. I had heard so many different explanations of this term.

“Our interpretation: cafés and roasteries with an intimate knowledge of where the coffee comes from. The ethos of honouring the human labour behind the cup.”

Rogue Wave, 11322 119 Street.

ROASTI COFFEE COMPANY

Andrew Hayes’ journey to the coffee business is unusual.

“I started roasting coffee because I couldn’t do anything else.”

Andrew left the University of Regina after severe post-concussion symptoms made it impossible for him to continue.

“I spent a few years trying to find answers, just trying to feel better. I had always thought I’d do something in sports, keep playing hockey in Europe, use my sports management degree, but working was out of the question.

“It’s a pretty dark hole when you are dealing with concussion and pain. I needed to find something calm, super chill, I could do on my own, when I did feel good.

“My Dad has a colleague in Brazil, Henrique Cambraia, who knew green coffee growers. They thought ‘hey you can put a little roaster in the garage and sell to friends. You don’t have to work normal hours.’ I could work when I felt ok. I thought, ‘if I can sell a couple of 60k bags of green coffee a month, I’ll be ok. Well, it worked out to more than a couple of bags, but that’s how it started. I could make a life for myself not working for someone. Best case? A simple life and make a cool product.

“So, I started roasting in my parent’s garage in 2017. Things grew pretty quickly, farmers’ markets, then door knocking... try to talk to a barista, drop off samples. My first customers were the Nook Café and Simon from Café Rista.



Above: Roastie Coffee's Andrew Hayes roasting beans. At right, Andrew enjoys the outcome.

My mom was my right-hand man, pricing, packaging, getting to and from. She still helps with invoicing and accounting

"After a couple of years, we needed to grow and found a space in an old strip mall that turned out to be very cool inside, we exposed a cedar ceiling and beams. The fire trucks used to fill up at the gas station that had been there, so they all became customers. Over time it's turned into an amazing community hub.

"It's a special place—the little business that I was doing for myself now employs 16 people.

"Now, we help a lot of coffee shop owners get going with training and mentoring. There are probably 70 shops across the country that serve and sell our coffee in their cafés.

"We currently have a 12 K Probat Drum roaster from Germany. Such high quality, so consistent, it's a different world. On our bar is the La Marzocco espresso machine. We partner with Jim and his son Gio at National Cappucino. The first time I went in there I had no idea what I was doing and they treated me with respect.

"At first I didn't understand the impact buying coffee can have. We had a long-term relationship with Henrique, now we ship three containers a year from those guys, but other than that we would just pull



samples from importers. We know now how important it is to have that direct personal relationship with all our growers in Guatemala and Columbia too. The key to that is transparency. We work with mostly smaller Canadian importers now, the monster importers cannot supply that transparency."

19, 52 Brentwood Blvd., Sherwood Park. ☎

Mary Bailey, editor of the Tomato, says coffee is why she gets up in the morning. On rotation now, Transcend's Farami, Costa Rica.

Curtis Comeau's passion for the culinary world is evident in his work, where he captures the essence of restaurants and tells stories from the industry. His diverse portfolio includes commercial works, NHL hockey players and well-known Canadians.

In the November/December issue: *Coffee Business Plus: The Columbian, Iconoclast, Square One.*



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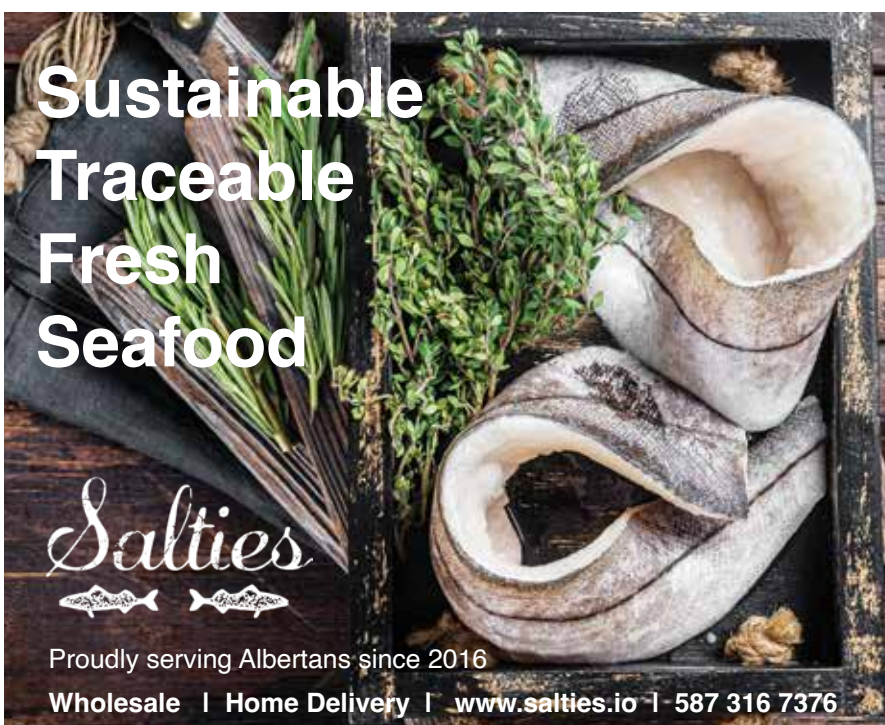
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Beer Guy

The beers of October

“Baseball breaks your heart. It is designed to break your heart. The game begins in the spring, blossoms in the summer, and then as soon as the chill rains come, it stops and leaves you to face the fall alone.” –A. Bartlett Giamatti

Baseball does indeed break your heart. Perhaps this is why beer goes so well with baseball—a refreshing beverage to cry into when the game goes awry. Beer and baseball have gone together from the start, beginning with the elemental pleasure of an ice-cold beer on a sunny, hot day at the ballpark, then to the major leagues with breweries owning teams and building stadiums. In the 1880s, brewers, distillers and saloon owners and their upstart American Association (nicknamed derisively, the Beer and Whiskey Circuit) forced the staid National League into selling beer at games and playing on Sundays. In 1977, Labatt Brewing brought major league baseball to Toronto with the Blue Jays. But it wasn't until 1982 that Toronto the Good allowed beer to be sold at games. Jays' fans at cavernous Exhibition Stadium would chant 'we want beer!' at games.

Hockey can break your heart too; see the Edmonton Oilers this spring. But before the heartbreak there was the bliss of an extended Stanley Cup playoff run. It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all, am I right? That potent feeling of community during the Oilers' run was best felt at outdoor neighbourhood watch parties around town. My local watch party was nearby in Manchester Square, just off 124th Street. Rhubarb supplied the cocktails, Arcadia Brewing the beer, with Oilers superfan and Arcadia owner Darren McGeown bringing enthusiasm and energy.

Following the Oilers' crushing game six loss, Oilers Nation turned its lonely

eyes to ... baseball. The Edmonton Riverhawks baseball team began their fourth season of summer collegiate wood bat baseball in June. The bridge between hockey and baseball in Edmonton is championship-era Oilers defenceman Randy Gregg, who led local investors in launching the Riverhawks in 2022. As Gregg noted to the Edmonton Journal, “in Canada, the sport will always be hockey... and it's a fabulous sport, indeed. But we don't play hockey in the summertime.” Gregg knows baseball well, playing at the national level in the 1970s. With clever marketing, quirky promotions, a good on-field product, some Canadian players and RE/MAX Field—one of Canada's prettiest ball parks—the Riverhawks have become the most successful team in the West Coast League, with nearly 132,000 fans this season. As Dale and Heidi Jacobs noted in their fantastic and fun book, *100 Miles of Baseball: Fifty Games, One Summer*, sometimes the most enjoyable baseball comes from games outside the big leagues where friends and families gather for the sheer love of the game and the pleasure of a hot dog and cold drink.

For the Riverhawks, the secret sauce might be beer—local craft beer brewed right here in Edmonton (making RE/MAX Field the only city-owned major sports facility to serve Edmonton-made beer—I'm looking at you, Rogers Place and Commonwealth Stadium). Support local and the locals will support you. The Riverhawks teamed up with Edmonton craft beer pioneers Alley Kat Brewing to serve only local craft beer at Riverhawks games. In turn, Alley Kat has collaborated with other local brewers to bring their beers to the park. As Randy Gregg noted in 2023, “We did this not because we wanted to make a lot of money, we did this because it was good for the community.” So, let's root, root, root for the home team. If they don't win, it's a shame!



Baseball beers

Some people say mass-produced industrial lagers are best for baseball. Those people are wrong. Here are five craft beers you can enjoy at ball games and one for the hockey fans.



Alley Kat Squeeze Play Grapefruit Ale, Edmonton

This renamed version of Alley Kat's popular Main Squeeze is a light wheat ale, flavoured with real ruby red grapefruit and hopped with Cascade hops for a nice light bitterness. All in all, a fantastic, thirst-quenching beer, perfect for an afternoon in the bleachers at RE/MAX Field.

Manual Labour Bat Flip Red Ale, Sherwood Park

A baseball-friendly version of Manual Labour's My Wife's Red Ale, on tap at Riverhawks games this season. An Irish Red Ale, made with classic British ingredients: Fuggle hops, light crystal malt and roasted barley. Balanced and refreshing, with fruity malt up front and a crisp finish.



Town Square Sunset Slammer Salted Lime Cerveza, Edmonton

A refreshing, light (4.3 per cent ABV) beer perfect for a sunny day at the ballpark. Or your backyard. Brewed on a pilsner base, with a squeeze of tangy lime and a dash of salt, this beer is eminently quaffable.

Hard Knox Dawgs Water Blood Orange Blonde Ale, Diamond Valley

The Okotoks Dawgs are a successful baseball team playing in the summer collegiate Western Canadian Baseball League (WCBL) at Seaman Stadium in Okotoks, near Calgary. Alberta craft beer is available, including this blonde ale with zesty citrus notes from Hard Knox Brewing, in nearby Diamond Valley.



Bellwoods Jutsu Pale Ale, Toronto

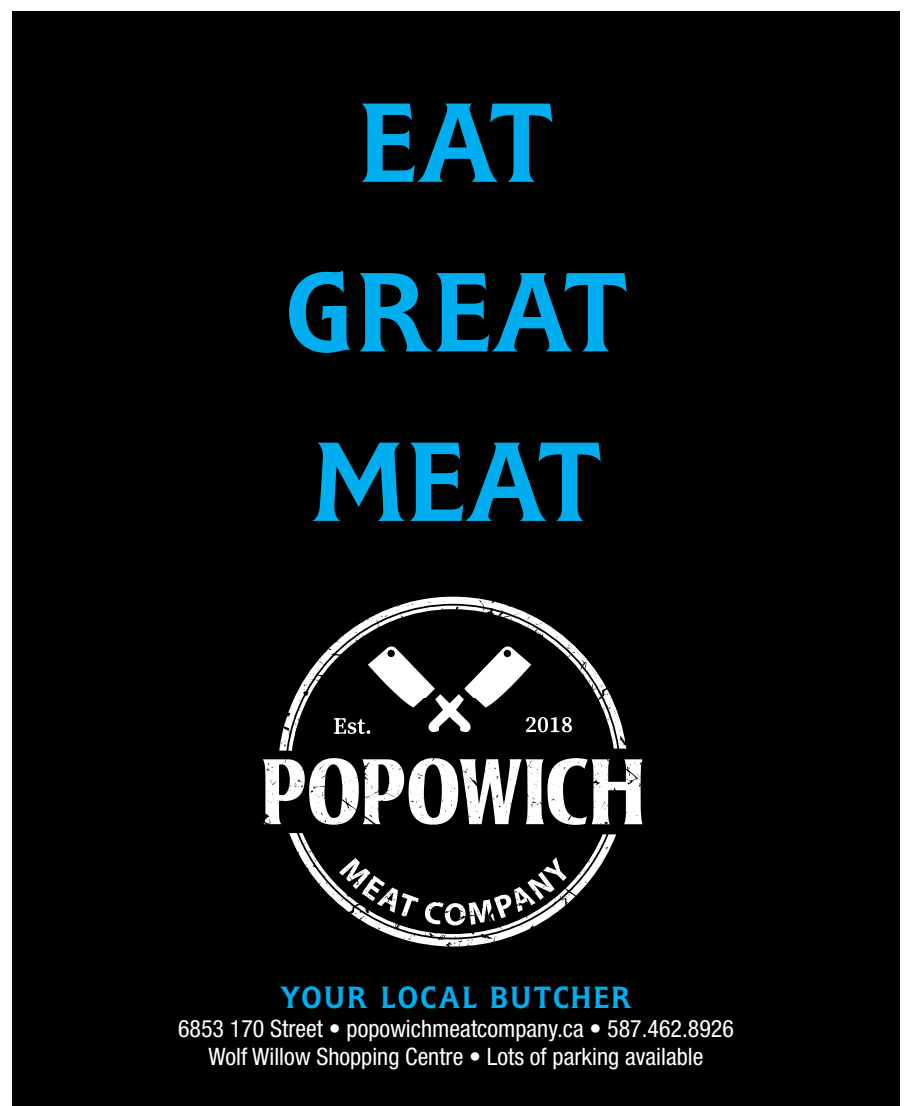
I'm sure it's just a coincidence that the Blue Jays share part of their name with Labatt's number one beer in 1977, Labatt Blue. Toronto has come a long way from the no beer days, with great craft beer at Rogers Centre (SkyDome) if you search hard enough. Jutsu is a juicy, light and hazy pale ale.

Arcadia Coliseum Blonde Ale, Edmonton

Arcadia's beery homage to Northlands Coliseum, where Dr. Randy Gregg and the classic Oilers won the Stanley Cup five times: 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, and 1990. At Arcadia you can sit in actual seats removed from Northlands, enjoy this light, easy-drinking blonde ale and hope for better luck next year. 🍀



Retired library CEO Peter Bailey will see you in the bleachers. He's on Bluesky and Instagram as @Libarbarian





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Feeding People

Tired of pumpkin spice sips? Try these tasty alternatives.

I'll never forget the first time I made pumpkin spice muffins. I was eleven years old, living in rural Nova Scotia, and my aunt was visiting from Toronto for the summer. At that young age, I was already an enthusiastic baker and whipping up a batch of muffins for a guest was an easy task. It never occurred to me that autumn-y muffins might not be everyone's preferred flavour in July, but I was eleven and my aunt was gracious.

Little did I realize that I was on the cusp of what would become one of North America's biggest culinary trends. I was a pumpkin spice girl before there was pumpkin spice!

While I stand by my choice that pumpkin baked goods are delicious, no matter the season, I can't help but notice that the world has gone pumpkin crazy. We now live in a world with pumpkin spice salmon, kitty litter and cough drops. And lattes.

The pumpkin spice latte (PSL) debuted in 2003—twelve years after my muffins. It's taken on a life of its own; the wildly-popular drink is rolled out earlier and earlier every year. Who wants to drink hot pumpkin in August? Not me. No wonder so many people are sick and tired of the nutmeg-scented onslaught.

But what do you do if you actually love cozy cold-weather beverages, but you just can't face another year of PSL overkill? Never fear here is my list of delicious alternatives that are sure to inspire.

Sip a sweet *cajeta* latte

Cajeta, a type of *dulce de leche* made from caramelized goat's milk, is delicious on ice cream, churros, and sliced fruit. However, this Mexican treat is an absolute powerhouse in lattes, its rich sweetness standing up perfectly to a strong espresso. It's equally tasty melted into hot milk for a unique take on a steamer.

Make chai extra cozy

The aromatic spices of a chai latte are delicious all year round, but when the weather turns cool, sipping on tea infused with ginger, cloves, and cinnamon is especially nice. Take that snug feeling to the next level by adding a shot of vanilla-flavoured syrup. It's like having homemade gingerbread with vanilla ice cream on top.

Amp up your hot chocolate

Think that hot chocolate is just for kids? Add a generous pinch of cardamom powder and you'll think again. This aromatic, earthy spice has a savoury kick (mint, pepper, and pine are just some of its tasting notes), making it the perfect choice to balance out the sweet creaminess of a hot cocoa. If your favourite café doesn't have cardamom on hand, have them add in a dash of chai syrup.

No, really. Amp up your hot chocolate

Is cardamom too tame for you? Make your hot chocolate or mocha Mayan-style: add in a generous pinch (or two!) of chilli powder along with a dash of vanilla and black pepper.



Get creative with classic coffee

Even those who drink percolator or French-press style coffee can get in on the autumnal action. Make your coffee Moroccan style. For every half-cup of coffee beans, add in a teaspoon of cinnamon, a pinch of cloves, nutmeg, and whatever other flavours your heart desires. Grind your own beans at home? Add whole dried spices (like cloves, cardamom pods, and peppercorn) to your grinder. The result is a subtle, seasonal touch.

Not sold on spices? Try this sweet alternative

Not everyone loves spices, and that's okay! Whip up a honey bee latte. Simply whisk honey into the milk as you heat it up and pour over espresso. The result is much richer and more nuanced than a traditional latte with table sugar.

Make apple cider with a twist

Pour a splash of cranberry juice into your hot apple cider to cut the sweetness and add a rosy hue. Simmer your cider in a crockpot? Add a knob of fresh ginger as a zingy alternative to the traditional cinnamon stick.

Make tea terrific

Pumpkin-spiced teas are nearly as common as their namesake lattes these days. Not your jam? Consider seasonal tea blends such as apple, black currant or hibiscus instead. Perfect traditional black tea? Opt for lapsang souchong. Its smoky flavour comes from being dried over a pinewood fire and will bring to mind bonfires and long walks among the leaves.

Embrace a nostalgic steamer

Butterscotch is easily overlooked in favour of its much cooler cousins (like cajeta), but this old-fashioned favourite is absolutely delicious. Mix some homemade butterscotch syrup into steamed milk (or take the easy route and ask for a shot of butterscotch syrup at your favourite café). Fantastic for crisp, clear nights on the patio with fluffy sweaters. Your kids will love it.

Try a turkey spice latte

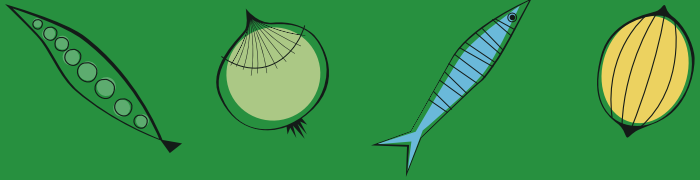
Why should pumpkin have all the fun? If you're not into sweet drinks, but love creative combos, consider a turkey spice latte. No, really! Add some rosemary syrup to your latte. The natural sweetness of the milk and the astringency of the espresso are the perfect pairing for the woody, savoury, floral notes of rosemary. Just think twice before you sprinkle some gravy mix on top. ☘

Writer Vanessa Chiasson makes no apology for baking pumpkin muffins year-round at her house in Ottawa. Find her go-to recipe at: canadianliving.com.

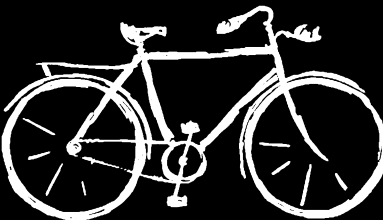


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The Smos at Home

The Smos go home

Family history has a way of calling us back to our origins, doesn't it? Especially as time passes and our curiosity about previous generations grows deeper.

How did our families end up where they did? What drew them to the quiet corners of Alberta? What stories, lost or remembered, shape the lives we now lead?

Brad's DNA kit revealed unwavering Ukrainian heritage. Maternal roots from East Slavic tribes and paternal Armenian, Balkan and Greek traders' migration merged in the Ukrainian homeland, until emigration to Canada.

But the tests cannot answer the more personal mysteries: why our people chose these particular paths, or what inspired them to settle in small-town Alberta.

For those, we rely on memory, stories and the living links to our past.

We resolved to capture the Smoliak family history before it's lost. Brad's father, Nick, passed nearly 25 years ago. In those days we lived facing forward, never thinking to ask the questions that now feel so vital. And it's not the only family stories we want to know (I'm fortunate: my own mother, brilliant and wise, is assembling an album chronicling my father's family, and she's already shared much about her own lineage. Brad's mother, Pat, has recounted aspects of her Ferbey heritage, including a road trip to the Crowsnest Pass. But we want to know more, while she is still this high-spirited woman I call my mother-in-law.)

As for the Smoliaks, the knowledge keeper is Uncle Andy—a sharp-witted 89-year-old who now lives in Campbell River, BC.

Andy joined us for an Alberta road trip this summer, to help fill in the blank pages of the Smoliak story.

Our Smo family journey began on a perfect July morning. First to Vegreville, then, east to Musidora, a near-forgotten town, its heyday long passed. Next up was Beauvallon, where the family story began to gain some traction. Andy and his young wife Sylvia operated the local hotel and tavern there—a lively place marked by the occasional dust-up spilling onto the streets.

Life was vibrant, even if the town itself has since slipped into quiet decline, a reminder that even prosperous farmland cannot always keep rural communities afloat.



We wound through the rolling hills toward Myrnam, a place dense with memory and beauty. I'd always considered the Cowboy Trail the scenic jewel of Alberta, but this landscape—awash with golden canola, lush barley, wheat, hay and corn—was utterly gorgeous, displaying the promise of a bountiful harvest.

As we drove, Andy continued his tales from another era: of the Smoliak family's two farm parcels, the hardships of the 1930s and '40s, the long, punishing days he and Nick spent picking rocks from the soil, their hands blistered and raw under the relentless sun. Lunches were simple bowls of soup. Gido—their father—was a stern, stoic figure who gave little thanks for their hard work. It was Baba, their mother, who was the warmth and kindness of the household.

The family grew: a baby brother, Orest, arrived, then, years after the farm was left behind, a sister, Shirley. Andy reminisced about Nick's baseball prowess on the now overgrown field where he played, and he showed us the house where his beloved wife Sylvia—his partner for over sixty years—had

Inset photo: the Smoliak family. From left aunt Sylvia, uncle Andy, Brad Smoliak, aunt Shirley.

Leanne Smoliak

lived. We passed the two farmland plots Gido sold, now ablaze with blooming canola. Andy and Nick had once dreamt of farming the land themselves.

Perhaps the most moving moment was when we visited the great Baba’s former home. Tiny, and miraculously, it still stood, lovingly restored. When Aunt Shirley approached for a closer look, a generous stranger invited us all inside. The memories flowed as Shirley described holiday gatherings, when over thirty family members somehow squeezed into the cramped space, feasting on traditional dishes—*holubtsi*, *nalysnyky*, *pyrizhky*, *varenyky* and every manner of roast—prepared by skilled hands in the smallest of kitchens.

Food, always at the heart of Ukrainian family life, bridges generations. Brad, having learned to cook at his Baba’s knee continues this legacy. He’s passing these recipes to our son Nick, who shares Ukrainian flavours with friends and family in far-off Glasgow.

No rural Alberta visit is complete without a stop at the cemetery and the local diner.

We traced the names of ancestors on the graveyard’s stones—Brad’s infant uncle, Ralph Nestor, whose short life is memorialized among other lost children, and soldiers from both World Wars. Many Smoliaks rest here, including Brad’s Gido, whose presence in Brad’s life was distant, while Baba’s love and culinary gifts left a lasting legacy .

Lunch at the Myrnam Diner was a treat. While Ukrainian fare was on offer, we opted for classic diner food. My clubhouse sandwich was heaped with cheese, ham, bacon, turkey, crispy lettuce and ripe tomatoes—I’d return for that sandwich alone. The others savoured juicy burgers, and we all devoured true lemon meringue pie for dessert.

Andy’s stories continued to keep us company on the way home.

The Smoliak family came to Alberta with the first wave of Ukrainian immigrants in 1898 seeking relief from hardship and for the opportunity of homestead land—160 acres for just \$10. Ukrainians proved well-suited to the rugged prairie, and the area northeast of Edmonton became the world’s largest

Ukrainian farming community outside of Ukraine.

I feel immense pride in having married into this heritage. I cherish the traditions of the Smos and treasure their warmth and hospitality. I’m grateful that, through stories, food and memories, we can keep the family spirit alive for generations to come.

Kapusnyak (Sauerkraut Soup)

Ham Broth

- 1 smoked pork hock or ham bone
- 6 c cold water
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 peppercorns
- 1 lg carrot, rough chopped
- 1 rib celery, rough chopped

Simmer all ingredients for 2 hours, cool slightly and strain. Reserve stock and remove hock or ham bone from the strained ingredients. Pull meat off the bone and chop into ½ inch pieces. Discard leftovers.

Sauerkraut Soup

- 3 T sunflower oil
- 1 med onion, chopped medium
- 1 clove garlic, smashed
- 1 rib celery, chopped medium
- 4 med or 3 large potatoes, peeled and chopped into ½” cubes
- 3 c well drained sauerkraut, rinse if very sour
- reserved chopped meat
- reserved broth
- 2 c water
- salt and coarse ground pepper
- sour cream
- chopped fresh dill

In large soup pot heat sunflower oil and sauté all vegetables except potatoes until onions are translucent. Add broth, potatoes, reserved ham and sauerkraut and simmer until potatoes are fork tender. If the soup is too thick add water to your desired consistency.

Check for seasoning and add salt and pepper as desired. Serve with sour cream and fresh dill.

Serves 4-6. 🍷

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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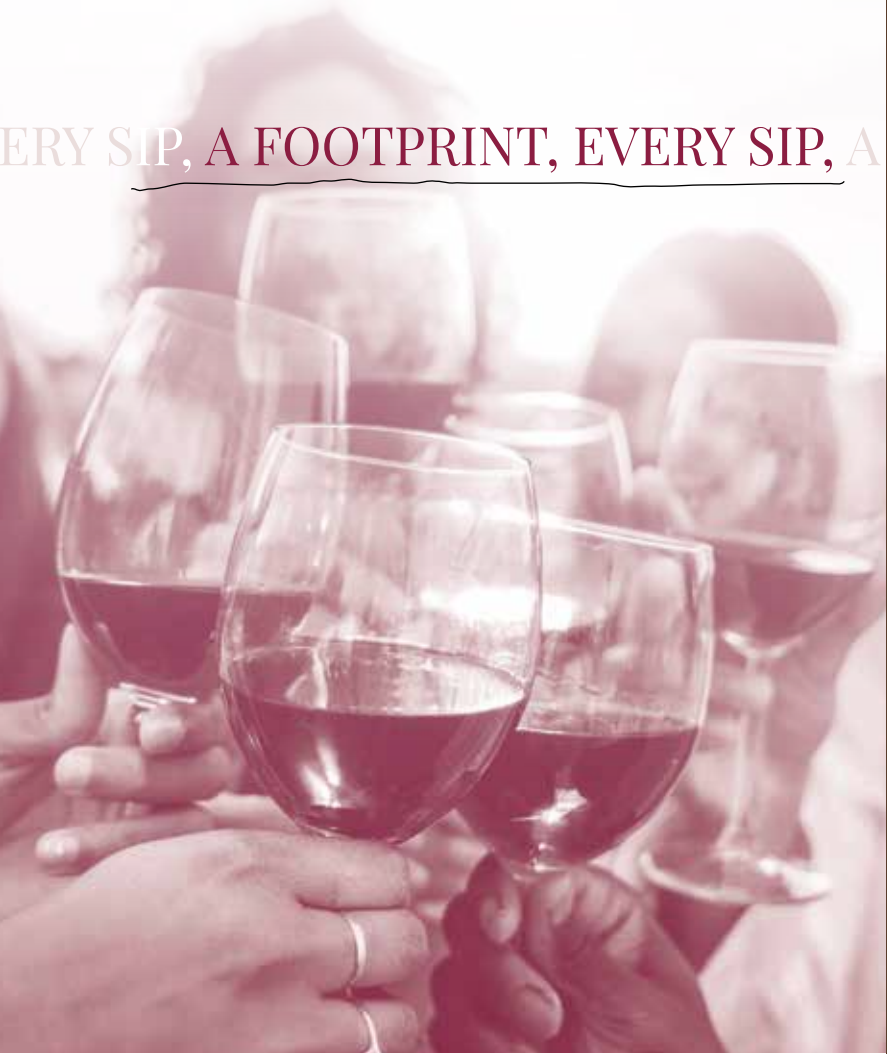


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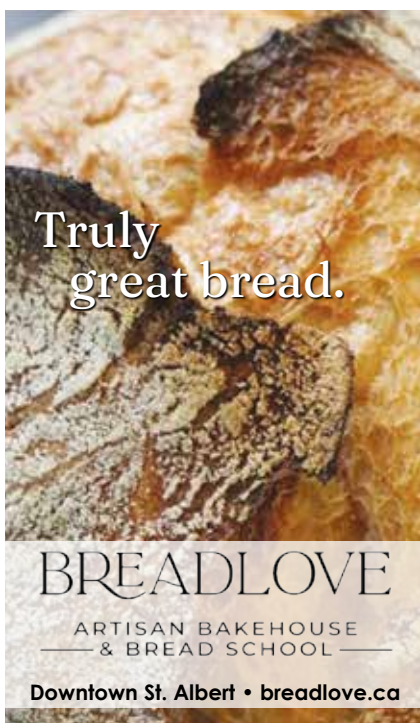
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The Proust Culinary Questionnaire

Mariel Montero Sena, Luna Cocina Mexicana

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

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

Luna is not just a friendly neighbourhood hang, it's a place to enjoy authentic Mexican flavours. The owner/executive chef Mariel Montero Sena was born in Puebla, the home of *mole* and *chiles relenos*.

"Pueblan food is a historical mixture of the old Catholic system brought by the nuns and indigenous ingredients and flavours," says Mariel. "There is a saying in Mexico, if you can make it in Puebla, you can make it anywhere, as people there are known to be hard to please. This is the food of my grandmother and that's what we cook at Luna, in a contemporary way."

Mariel has lived in Montreal, Madrid, Germany and Paris. Her Edmonton journey started with Earl's. Her big breakout? The first season of HGTV's *Chopped Canada* where the whole country was introduced to her vibrant personality and flavours. Then came a business making *queso fresco* ("I wasn't going to put feta in my *ensalada*.") and two years of taco pop-ups. Huma was funded by her grandmother ("she gave me my inheritance early"). Then came divorce and the dream of Huma was gone.

"I was sad to say goodbye to Huma, but now we have Luna."

Luna Cocina Mexicana

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lunamexicanrestaurant.ca

Hometown:

Puebla, Mexico

Where would you like to live?

Portugal. This is nice! Calm and light, life. If not, I'd like to live in a magical town in the mountains. (Mexico's *Pueblos Magicos*.)

Your Favourite food/drink?

Ham and cheese-stuffed zucchini from my grandma with a mezcil from Oaxaca.

What would you be doing if you weren't in the resto biz?

I'd be a psychologist. After six years of therapy and being in the hospitality business, I understand behaviour. I'm very interested in mental health.

What do you most appreciate in your friends?

Honesty. Cannot stand sugar coating.

In a dish?

Texture. I like to feel all the different textures at the same time.

In a chef/cook?

Calmness. I don't believe in the Gordon Ramsey-style yelling kitchen. We're dealing with fire and knives, everybody needs to be calm. We have to respect each other, no matter how rushed it is. The kitchen is not a pyramid, it's a line—we all work together. And the dishwasher is the most important.

Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

My staff would say...Are we ready to rock?

Would you pay for this? Then no, don't give it to me.

Who would be at your dream dinner table?

Rock stars! Freddy Mercury, Curt Cobain, Oasis. Those kinds of characters. We see a lot of musicians at Huma; I invite them to sign the *piña*. And Anthony Bourdain of course.

Who would cook?

My grandmother.

Favourite casual cheap and cheerful/afterwork food?

Los luchos. Yes, it is my grandmother's recipe. I used to cook them for my friends after a night out. Now that they are on the menu, I can just take them home with me.

Current obsession or exploration?

Another Mexican chef, Israel Alvarez, who has a tortilla company called MAiZ in Victoria, hooked me up with a Canadian source for *huitlacoche*, a corn fungus that's important for Mexican cuisine. I reconnected with Israel recently, which was very cool, and now we use his excellent tortillas too.

Best thing that ever happened to you? Meaningful/crazy food experience?

This is not really about cooking. Every time I travel with my grandmother amazing things happen. We were in New Orleans and went to Emeril Lagasse's restaurant, no reservation, and he came out to talk to us. In Vancouver, at Cioppino's, same thing. At Tojo's! They all want to meet my grandmother. And she doesn't speak English. It happens every time I have dinner with my grandmother. They just seem to know.

Philosophy

You create your own world. One of my tattoos is a quote from Frieda Kahlo; '*vive como piensas.*' Live as you think.

What's next

We share something meaningful; we share our food. We are with people during some of their most important occasions—weddings, anniversaries. That's inspiring and a responsibility. My desire is to keep the people who inspire me very close—make my world around those people in an authentic way. 🍅





Three classic Greywacke wines for your Thanksgiving table.

The **2022 Chardonnay (Marlborough, NZ)** has just enough oak influence to allow it to stand up to turkey and all the fixings. Pretty lemon meringue tart notes in the aromas, with compelling flavours of stone fruit and fresh hay, bound by pleasing minerality and acidity.

The **2023 Pinot Noir (Marlborough, NZ)** is always best in class, intensely aromatic with an elegant presence, not a heavyweight. Gorgeous texture with fine tannins and a long, slightly spicy finish. Drinks beautifully now or keep for Thanksgiving 2026 and on.

The **Greywacke 2023 Wild Sauvignon (Marlborough, NZ)** will blow your mind, super textural, with layers of flavour—woody herbs, guava, fleeting hints of ginger and wet stone. Completely wild fermented, just delicious. Drink with grilled scallops, we also like it with cheesy tomato dishes.



Juanita Roos (Color de Vino), Count Sebastiano Capponi (Villa Calcinaia), Kelsey Roos.

Count Sebastiano Capponi of Villa Calcinaia (Tuscany, Italy)

was in town recently with the new vintages. His family has been making wine in Greve in Chianti since the 16th century. Be sure to get your hands on the Grechetto-based **Comitale Bianco** when it's back in stock, just a terrific white wine to have in the fridge door, especially for the upcoming entertaining season.

2022 Villa Calcinaia Chianti Classico DOCG. Each block of Sangiovese and Canaiolo are vinified and aged separately; the blend is 90 per cent Sangiovese, 10 per Canaiolo. A classic Chianti Classico with the aromatics and flavours of dusty brick, earthy forest floor and cherry, little bit of spice. Drink with anything tomato based or mushroom dishes.

2018 Vigna Bastignano Chianti Classico DOCG Gran Selezione. The classification of Chianti Classico vineyards and bottling continues with various vintages. Gran Selezione is the highest quality tier, with stricter aging requirements.



The grapes must be estate grown, but not necessarily single vineyard. This one is—the family had been making wine from this particular limestone terrace since 2006. It's all Sangiovese and what a great example. Gorgeous mulberry notes, fine rolling tannins, compelling, complex, with a stunning finish, a glorious wine. Drink with beautiful pastas.

Not classic choices for your Thanksgiving dinner:

The **2024 Tovo al Pigno Soave Classico (Veneto, Italy)** is from a single vineyard in the hills of Soave, 100 per cent organically grown Garganega. Love the almond and chamomile notes. Fermentation and aging in cement encourage a mouth-filling texture, it's crisp and generous on the palate, with a tremendous finish, a delicious white. By the glass at Bar Bricco. Drink with fish dishes, potato gratin or pretzels.

2024 Gérard Bertrand Le Chouchou (Languedoc, France). This light and zesty red was on repeat this summer, but it will be just as refreshing on a sunny fall day. Made from organically grown Grenache, Cinsault and Syrah with soft tannins, loads of berry fruit contained within a bit of structure from the Cinsault. Lowish alcohol, very much in the *glou glou* style. Drink slightly chilled with popcorn, tacos, even on ice.



Elena Sindayen (RGE RD), Tanis Palmer (Keg n' Cork), Ben Franchetti, Lisa Zinck, importer (Boutique Wines), Marcia J Hamm.

We met Ben Franchetti on his first trip to Edmonton

this summer at a tasting at RGE RD. Lucky us! He is continuing the work of his father, wine pioneer Andrea Franchetti, on Mt. Etna at Passopisciaro and in Tuscany at Tenuta di Trinoro. There will be more on Ben Franchetti and the Tuscan wines in the Nov/Dec issue, but for now, let's get to Mt. Etna.

2023 Passobianco (Sicily, Italy) is, surprisingly, 100 per cent Chardonnay (you might expect Catarratto). The soil is deep in lava dust. The wine? Outstanding. Singular salinity and minerality, lovely and fresh, tangy citrus notes with a long finish. You just keep wanting to take another sip. Drink with oysters, chicken dishes, anywhere Chablis or white Burgundy lives.

2023 Passorosso Etna Rosso DOC, (Sicily, Italy), is a juicy, joyous, a little rambunctious Nerello Mascalese, the red grape of Etna. Unfiltered, with snappy red fruit and lively herbaceous notes and wafts of exotic spice. Drink with pasta, birds, braised meats.

2023 Contrada G Terre Siciliane, (Sicily, Italy). The *Guardiola Contrada* (single vineyard) sits just at the edge of the 1947 lava flow. Ben talked about the difficult vintage, but the painstaking selection of the berries resulted in a spectacular wine. The aromas promise an intense experience followed by a lively, almost delirious, lightness and dimension. It shimmers with flavour. Drink with hard cheeses, grilled meats.

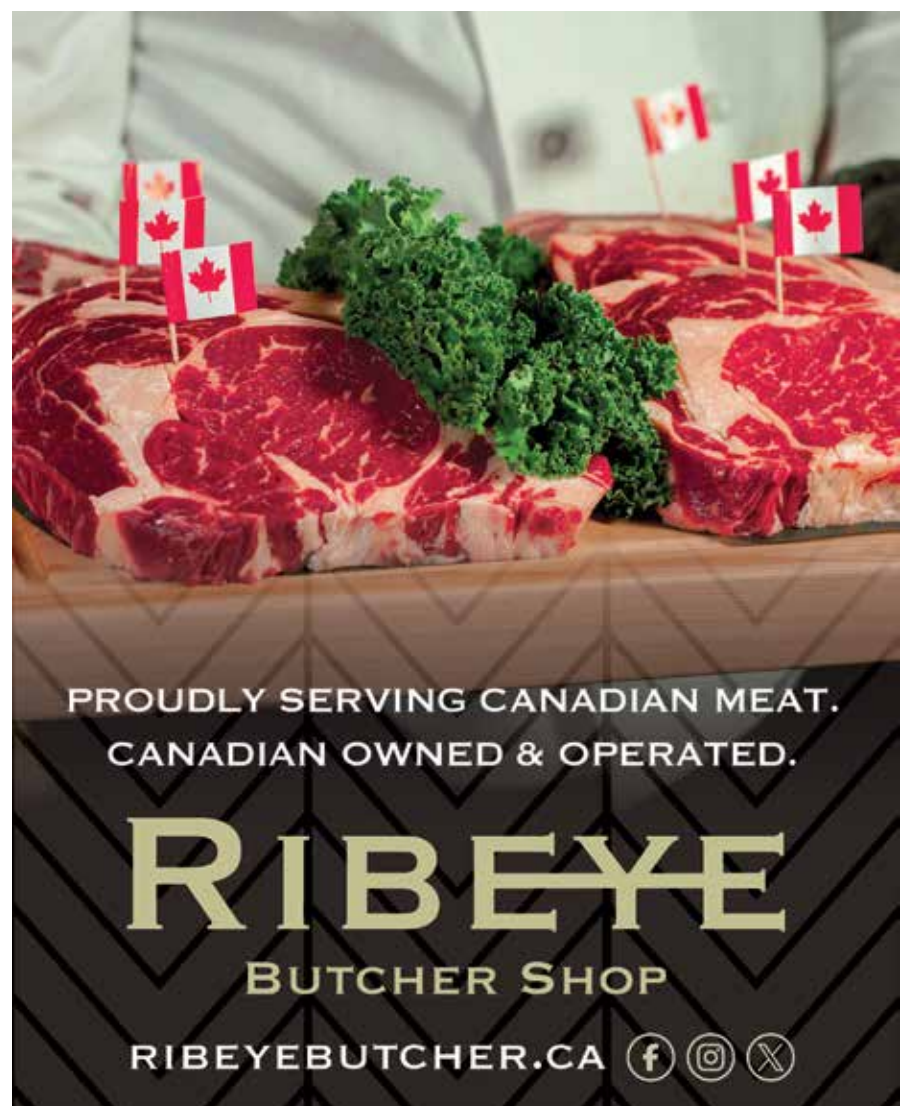
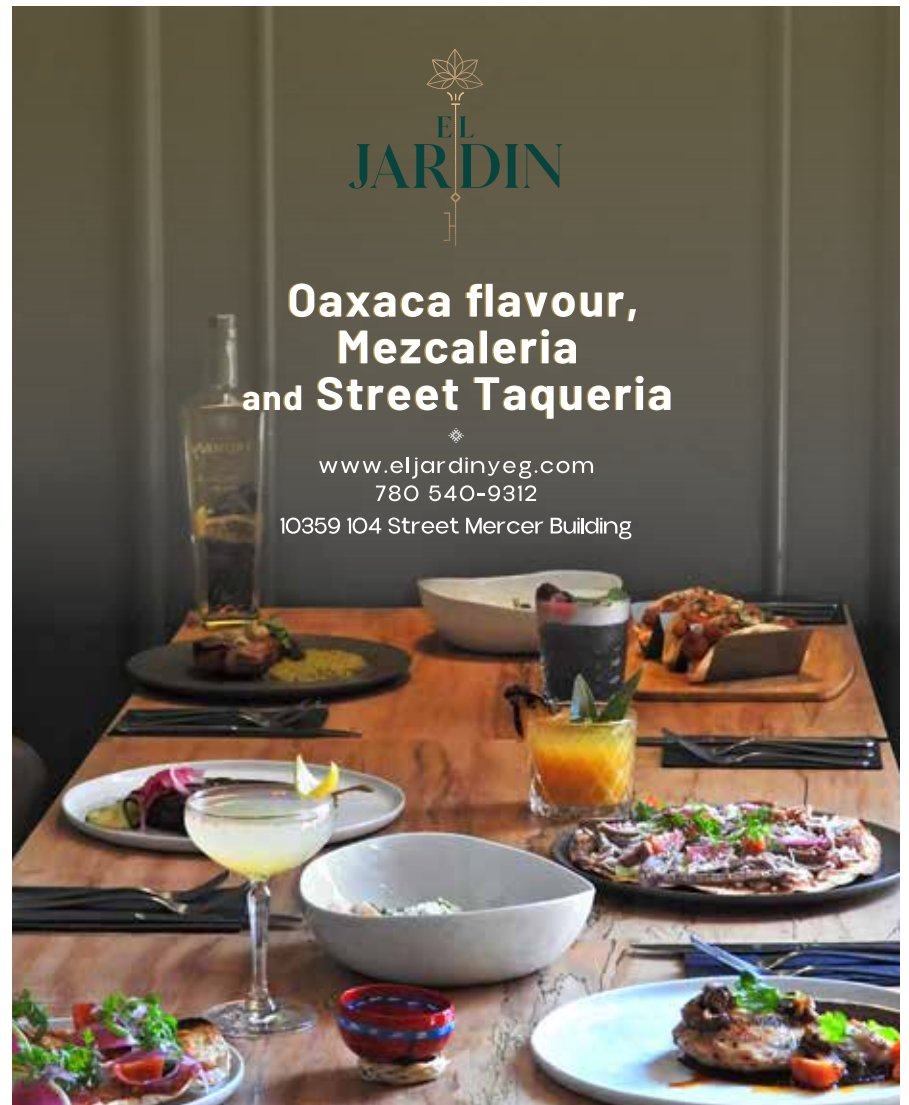
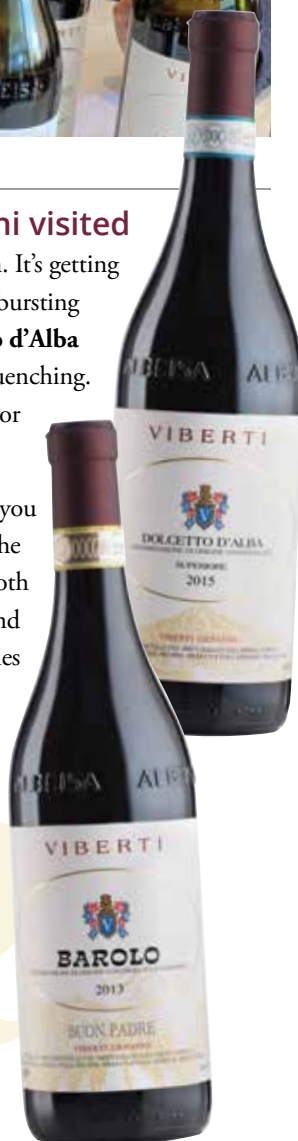


Curtis Bawden (Pacific Wines), Andrea Masuelli (Viberti).

Andrea Masuelli from Viberti Giovanni visited this summer and brought some beautiful wines with him. It's getting harder and harder to find lovely gracious Dolcetto, ones bursting with fruit and vitality. Look no further. **Viberti Dolcetto d'Alba Superiore DOC (Piedmont, Italy)** is lively and thirst quenching. Drink while making dinner and with charcuterie boards or pizza.

2018 Viberti Buon Padre Barolo (Piedmont, Italy). If you are curious about Barolo and want to get your feet wet, the Buon Padre is an excellent place to start. It's accessible, both in structure, flavours and price. And it's delicious—a blend from the top vineyards—with aromas of roses, strawberries and forest floor, with attractive bitter notes providing some tension along with dried red fruits. Ripe tannins and balanced acidity create a structure for aging but go on, enjoy this right now. Drink with roast beef or rich pasta dishes. 🍷

Find at better wine shops. Not all selections at all shops.



Meet the 2025 Kitchen

A new crop of chefs compete at Kitchen Party events across the country every fall; all vying to reach the podium at the Canadian Culinary Championships.

THE NEWBIES



Abigail López Velasco,
Everyday Food Co.

Chef's dish is locked in. "We are making a beet-cured salmon gravlax with halibut. The sauce has celeriac, fennel, tarragon, shallots and a mix of beautiful funghi from Mona Mushroom.

"Gravlax is one of the first dishes I learned to make in Canada; it doesn't exist in Mexico," says Abi. "I love competing, to show my passion and love for food and to share my love of cooking. I competed at the PEI Seafood Championships last year. It was an amazing experience, challenging, I bonded with several other chefs and we had great ingredients to cook with—what a learning curve. I'm also excited to represent the company I work for, a Canadian company with good food and fair prices.

"The most important thing for me is that we celebrate Canada using Canadian ingredients and wine." Abigail is still debating the pairing though. Will it be a Niagara Gamay or a BC sparkling? We'll find out October 2.



Tyson Wright, The Old Red Barn

"I'm feeling good," says Tyson. "We did a tasting last night with most of the team and chose the wine, Dirty Laundry's Que Syrah, to go with the bison dish I'll be preparing, I'm Metis so I think Syrah ties into my French roots.

"My dish pays homage to the prairies. What we have to offer here might be lean, but it's brave and bold. I love living and connecting with the farmers and hearing their stories. My idea is to source everything from within 50km. The bison is from Sych Family Farms, 10k from my hometown of Camrose. The veg is from Grey Arrow, we get their weekly box. There will be Saskatoons to remind me of family berry picking expeditions.

"At the Old Red Barn we cook without electricity. Everything is in cast iron, on the fire. I'll be doing all the prep the same way.

"Super excited to be competing," says Tyson. "I think I might be the first Edmonton Kitchen Party contender to be from a rural area."

Canada's Great Kitchen Party
Edmonton: Thursday, October 2,
Edmonton Convention Centre
greatkitchenparty.com



Sophie Brousseau, The Alfred

I caught up with Sophie just after she had come back from the test kitchen at Sysco. "Bouncing some ideas off them, just figuring it out as I go." She is thinking pork belly but hasn't fully decided.

"The beverage pairing? That has been some drama. I am not a wine drinker, I'm a beer lover, beer through and through, I have a tattoo about beer, I love beer, so I'm going with a Japanese rice ale from Ole Beautiful.

"I'm excited to learn new things, to work with my team, and to make some great food. The goal is to make great food, it's as simple as that."

Rose Colangelo,
TULIP Sandwich Shoppe

Chef Rose Colangelo is the head chef at TULIP Sandwich Shoppe, which is within Otto on 95 Street.

Although not new to cooking or restaurants, Rose did just graduate from NAIT Culinary Arts this year. Brava! This is her first Kitchen Party heading up a team, but not her first experience at the event. "I worked with chef Brie a few years back, I volunteered and, at the time thought, wow, what an undertaking.



But I think I'm here for the right reasons. I love to take care of people with food and here's an opportunity to do this on a much larger scale.

"My Dad was a chef, so yes, there were many lovely Italian dinners. But the Costa Rican side of the family is where I learned food is fun and brings people together."

Rose's dish is not 100 per cent decided. "I know I want to represent my cultural background. The ingredients might be humble, but every meal felt like a party. I want to bring that energy. I'm leaning towards barbecue meats or ceviche with beer. Costa Ricans, that's our jam, great food and cold beer—you know that saltiness when you lick your lips? Bentstick has a beer called Salinity Now, I'm leaning towards that.

"I can't wait to see what the other chefs come up with. It'll be incredibly humbling and such a concentrated learning experience. I want to make my mom and my family proud. I want all the staff who work with me to have a phenomenal experience—have a really positive fun time and serve a really delicious plate of food."

Party Chefs

THE VETERANS



Pauline Yu Photography

Jason Greene, Braven
Chef Jason Greene took bronze last year and he's back for a second time. "I feel really good about it," he says. "We learned some lessons last year, especially about set up and execution. We are feeling confident."
"The idea for this year's dish is more classically French, incredibly technique heavy, served at room temperature, with an unconventional pairing. Yet the style is very Albertan. Don't have all the flavour complements nailed quite yet but we know we're pairing with Blind Enthusiasm. I have loved their beer for a really long time and it will be exciting to work with them."
"I'm thinking along the lines of not only what I can do as a chef, but how beer can be paired with food if treated with the same respect. The intention is to find a beer that has the complexity and ability to enhance a dish like wine does—that hits the palate in a similar way. I think we've found that."



Levi Biddlecombe, Backstairs Burger
Chef Levi Biddlecombe is a popular Kitchen Party competitor, back again this year. "As soon as I finish the competition I'm thinking about what I would do the next year, so I've been thinking about this for two years now."
"Feeling good about the dish, still tweaking, little details mostly, and figuring out the pairing. This dish has Japanese breakfast vibes and it needed to have a lot of technique. I decided on side strip prawns; toast the shells with miso and build that into a sauce. Lemony yuzu notes, micro salads, textural components like a tapioca prawn cracker, tamago. We'll make sure the prawn is poached properly, so the texture is right. The key to the dish is the right balance of acidity; to match the richness and acidity with similar flavours and textures in the wine—thinking a nice buttery oaky Chard with higher acidity."
"Our team is a mix too, with some young cooks who are ready for the experience, to show what they can do."

Continued on next page



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Robert Wick, Workshop Eatery
Robert Wick is the food director at Robert Spencer Hospitality and the head chef at the Workshop Eatery. It's his second Kitchen Party.

"I'm nervous, always nervous about everything like this. Last time I overthought it. This year I'll keep it simple."

But as every good cook knows, simple isn't easy.

"Food for me is very much connected to memory, especially of my grandfather's house. It's always present when I'm thinking about a dish, and I want to evoke similar feelings and flavours. The dish will showcase the local farmers and producers we work with, Nonay Beef and Erdmann's Farm for vegetables.

"We loved working with Bella Wines and showcasing a small winery, but they have very little production this year. We are probably going to be pairing with a wine from Mission Hill. Beef with a red that will stand up beautifully.

"This competition is wonderful, it really is one of the notches every chef should try to get on their belt. And it gets better every year."



Joseph Vuong, Café Bicyclette
Chef was in the middle of Fringe prep when I called to ask how he was doing. So, yeah, busy.

"For many of my colleagues at different restaurants August is dead, but for us it's super busy with events, especially Fringe. I worked at Northlands for 11 years. Between K Days, The Derby and the racetrack, I'm used to a busy August.

"A little bit nervous, this year I have writers' block, don't quite have a plan yet. By this time last year, we had three practices already. Kitchen Party is a week earlier this year, feels like it's coming up soon. Gotta roll with that, I know I'll get it.

"I'm choosing between two Okanagan Pinots and then I'll decide which flavours I want in the dish and the wine. I do know hascaps are a component of our dish, we get beautiful berries from Rosy Farm, and use them in our duck dish and compote. The team this year is essentially the same, so they know what to expect. We'll be ready!" 🍷

Mary Bailey is the editor of The Tomato.



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

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Kitchen Sink

wine tastings, happenings and events

Barrel Fest is happening at Ritchie Park (7727 98 Street) from 1pm-6pm, Saturday, September 13. There are some spectacular brewers coming from across Canada: Quebec's **Brasserie Dunham**, **Nokomis Craft Ales**, Saskatchewan, **Grain Bin Brewing** from Grande Prairie plus many home-grown faves like **Endeavour**, **Sea Change** and of course **Blind Enthusiasm**. What do they have in common? They all make beers that spend some time in wood. Tix: \$38/p+ on Eventbrite.

The **Vagabond Pop-Up Closing Party** at **Under the High Wheel** is happening Sunday, September 14, from 6pm with local chefs, wines by **Color de Vino** and cocktails by **Above Average Drinks**. Walk in or make a reso here: vagabondpopups.com.

Mark your calendars: Sunday, September 21 is the **Art for Everyone** launch party at the **Art Gallery of Alberta** (2 Winston Churchill Square, youraga.ca). Enjoy refreshments, gallery tours and art making from 1pm-4pm as well as the pop-up art market with over 60 pieces of art by Alberta artists, curated by **Dana Holst** and **Jill Davies-Shaw**. The idea? Create an exciting afternoon at the AGA. The mission? To bring the membership list up to 10,000 people. This is possible in a city of over a million people, isn't it? See you there!

The fall may be the best time to enjoy a visit to **Blooms on 7** just outside Sherwood Park. The days are crisp, there are no bugs and there are tons of beautiful blooms. Or, sign up for a **Sip & Snip** floral design class or a botanical dyeing experience. Find all the deets and book at bloomson7.ca.

at the cooking schools

Breadlove's (46C St Michael Street, St. Albert) popular breadmaking classes begin again in September after a summer hiatus. See the schedule and book at breadlove.ca.

Learn to make some tasty Ukrainian food during **Sundays in the Kitchen** at **Don'ya Ukraine's Kitchen** (12153 Fort Road). Classes include a full meal. Tix: \$30/p: donyaukraine.ca/shop/cooking-classes.

Check out **Awn Kitchen's** new fall class schedule, with every level of sourdough making, plus pasta, puff pastry or

dumplings, soups, and the Harvest Table. The six-week cooking skills program begins September 10. Find all the info at awnkitchen.com.

Celebrate the harvest season with the farmers of the **Old Strathcona Farmers' Market** during the **Annual Harvest Festival**, September 27 and 28 during market hours in front of the market. Find all the deets here: osfm.ca.

restaurant buzz

The **Atrium at Sabor** (10320 102 Avenue), opening the first week of September, offers café service from 8am Monday-Friday plus lunch, happy hour and dinner, as well as Saturday dinner from 5pm. It promises a vibrant evening event space too. That's all we knew by press date, but we're expecting great things from the Sabor team. It's in the Revillon Boardwalk, right around the corner from Sabor. Check it out!

Vagabond (Roger Letourneau and Christine Sandford) is cooking up an eight course collab with **Francine's** from Calgary (bar by Nate Wry and chef Garrett Martin) with wines from **Vine Arts**. September 20 and 21. Tickets on Eventbrite.

Chinatown's **Boa & Hare** (10520 97 Street) is now fully open for coffee, cocktails and dinner. Yaay!

More on the new **El Jardin**, **Culina Famiglia** and **Rita Trattoria** in the DISH column on page 3.

Lots of cool things happening at **The Marc** (9940 106 Street) this fall. Bring on the choucroute! The **Alsace Feature Menu** runs from September 20-October 5, featuring all those delicious Alsatian dishes the Marc does so well. Love chocolate? The **Sunday Supper Club** on September 28 features **Delavoye Chocolate**. Oh boy! Enjoy **Harvest & Vin**, to celebrate *les vendanges* (wine harvest) with a different French regional menu every week during October. The October 26 **Sunday Supper Club** will feature northern Italy. Visit themarc.ca for details and menus.

What's new and notable

The Butternut Tree celebrates the Canadian harvest bounty with menus highlighting ingredients such as game meats, mushrooms and pumpkin. Mark your calendars for a wine dinner with **Joe Gurba**, from the importer **Vino Al Vino**, Thursday, October 16.

product news

Bella Casa (9646 142 Street, bellacasaddl.com) is having some great sales this fall: 15 per cent off **Portofino** and **Abyss** towels until September 6. From September 8-13, 20 per cent off all robes, slippers and pajamas as well as deals on **Michel Design Works** and **Thymes** lotions. From September 15-October 6 all **St. Geneve** stock is 20 per cent off. For Thanksgiving, check out all the new turkey tools from October 6-11. On Thursday October 11, bring in your Henckels knives for sharpening from noon-3pm.

Don'ya Ukraine's Kitchen's delicious frozen cabbage rolls and other Ukrainian delights are now available at the **European Market** (6607 177 Street, europeanmarketandproduce.com). Don't forget to get your orders in for Thanksgiving, donyaukraine.ca.

The **Back to the Kitchen Sale**, with 15 per cent off cookware is on now at **Heart of the Home** (12539 102 Avenue, 780-705-4928). Call to reserve your spot at the knife sharpening clinic, Friday, September 26, from 1pm-4pm. The monthly promo for October is super savings on knives. Heart of the Home will be closed October 13 and October 19/20.

The new (and we hope permanent) location of **The Art of Charcuterie** (6728 99 Street, 780-232-3857, artofcharcuterie.ca) is now open, just a few doors down from **Fuge Sausage**. This is becoming a fun little foodie spot with **Bagel Bin** opening a location there too. Pay them a visit!

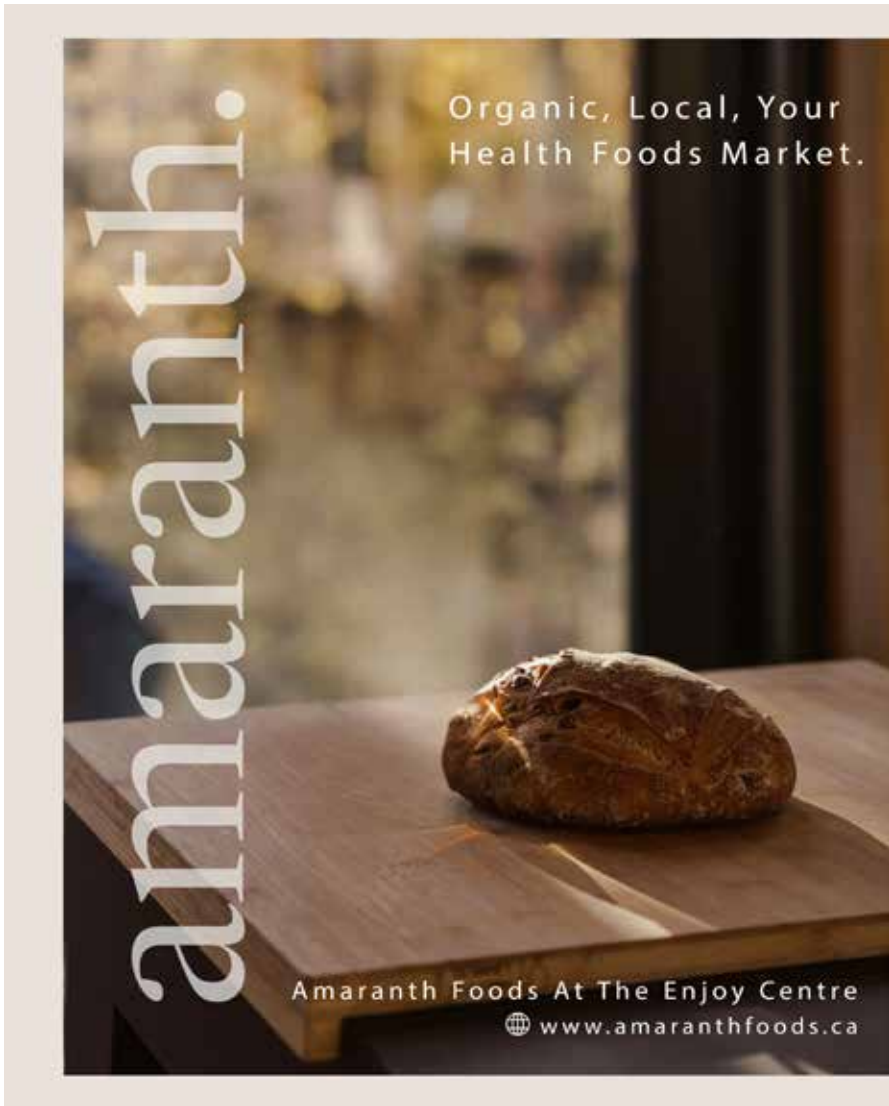
Bountiful Farmers' Market (3696 97 Street) has over 120 local vendors, comforting fall meals, and live music every weekend this fall, Friday-Sunday until 4pm. Bountiful is open year-round, rain, snow, or shine. ☀

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



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