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A donair from Richard's Donair, Curtis Comeau Photography

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sundog at bountiful

Sundog Organic Farm has just opened a booth at the Bountiful Farmers' Market. That means more opportunity to pick up their fresh veg. Right now, it's root season—plenty of squash and some lovely kale too.

clink for flavour

The new low- and no-alcohol cocktails called Clink Mimosa and Raspberry Limoncello are made with natural flavours, cane sugar, orange juice concentrate and raspberry juice (the low alcohol are vodka-based). Low in sugar, with no artificial anything, and they are made in Airdrie! Find by the can at Central Social Hall and by the four pack at major retailers and wine shops such as Sherbrooke. Or check the store locator on the website. Additional flavours coming in the spring, clinkbeverageco.com.



go in the side door

Have you checked out the Side Door at the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market yet? It's the farmers' market for when the market isn't open. Visit Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 6pm for everyday foods—fresh produce, eggs and dairy, meats and honey. You will find many of your favourite OSFM vendors at the Side Door. Side Door at OSFM, 10310 83 Avenue.



congrats scott!

One of our favourite resto people, Scott Downey is one of *Edify Magazine's Top 40 under 40*. Scott and his wife Jillian own and operate the Butternut Tree (2017) and they purchased iconic bistro, The Marc, from Patrick and Doris Saurette in 2024. Trained as a chef, Scott's philosophy is a long term one. "I never wanted it to be a restaurant that blew up, was successful for a couple years and then died off," he says. "I wanted it to be something that was a part of the city, a part of the community, and that was here for a long time. I think that's why we're still here today." Congratulations to Scott and Jillian!

bringing pizzazz to downtown

Downtown says welcome to Fennec, an intimate wine and cocktail bar/bistro in the City Centre Mall. The new venture joins sister restos Boxer and Coterie; the chef is Jack Dickson. Primarily small plates—duck croquettes, scallop crudo, Brussels with miso and candied peanut—with a few larger dishes at night—braised beef, roast cod. Enjoy lunch Monday-Friday and dinner (for now) Thursday-Saturday, from 4pm. Fennec, 10250 101 Street fennecyeg.com.

more bebs at more locations yaay!

Beb's On Whyte (The Hub in the iconic Hub Cigar building, 10345 82 Avenue) is now open Thursday-Sunday from 11am-4pm. Delicious sandwiches on offer too, depending on location. You can pre-order fresh bagels for pick-up on Fridays at Relish in the Ritchie Market (9570 76 Avenue) and Meuwly's (10706 124 Street) on Saturday. Or take your chances; there are limited walk-up bagels at all locations, and fresh Beb's with schmear every day at Transcend Coffee, Candid Coffee (Highlands) and OBJ3CTS on Jasper Avenue, bebsbagels.ca.

valentines at home

Emile Henry has a new line of oven-to-table ceramic serving ware that is just right for Valentine's Day (or birthdays, or any romantic occasion). Beautiful colours and easy clean up, microwave and dishwasher safe, in the \$60-\$77 range. Find at Bella Casa and other quality home stores.



we are 30!

We have been telling stories about our shared food culture since September 1996—the people and places that not only make our long winters worthwhile, but taste great too. What to expect from our 30th year? Lots of stories about food and drink businesses that have gone the distance—businesses that are beloved by Edmontonians; businesses that are generational. Join us in celebrating the people and places that make Edmonton memorable. 🍷

Clockwise from lower left: Stonefruit salad with burrata at Fennec; Clink drinks in a can; Jenny and James at Bountiful; bagel makers Lindon Carter and Luke Breiteneder; Emile Henry's heart-shaped serving dish; Edmonton restaurateur Scott Downey; editor Mary Bailey celebrates 30 great years.



Cheap and Cheerful Winter Dishes

Recipes that not only nourish but are easy on the budget and the body.

It's the season of simmer, whether that's a pot of lentils or a pot of soup, braised meats and recipes suitable for batch cooking.

We asked some of our favourite chefs what they want to eat in the winter with health and budget in mind. They came up with delicious recipes that highlight in-season vegetables, inexpensive cuts of meat and ordinary pantry ingredients. Good cooks know how to play with aromatics—herbs, spices—and use cooking techniques that make the most of these often-overlooked ingredients. Some of the recipes may look long and complicated, but read through and you will see they are all quite easy.

Cooking at home and making your own stocks, soups, even granola, saves money. Nothing beats gathering around a steaming pot of delicious nourishment on a cold winter's night.

Happy cooking and winter eating.

Very Prairie Berry Granola

"I love making homemade granola in big batches and storing it in the pantry. It makes for a quick and nutritious breakfast on busy days. This recipe mixes ingredients farmed on the prairies along with native plant species that are found here on the land (you can purchase these ingredients if you do not have access to harvesting your own). I love the way the chamomile flavours your milk when you eat it as a cereal. I hope you enjoy!"—chef Holly Holt

¾ c	honey
2 T	purified bison tallow (or substitute coconut oil)
pinch	salt
3 c	rolled oats
½ c	sunflower seeds (not roasted)
½ c	pumpkin seeds (not roasted)
1 t	dry chamomile tea, ground into powder
½ c	dried blueberries

Preheat oven to 300°F.

Put honey, tallow and salt into small saucepot. Place on medium heat until it just starts to boil.

Put oats, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds into bowl and drizzle the hot mixture over top. Stir together well with a big spoon. Clumps are ok.

Line baking sheet with parchment. Spread oat mixture out onto baking sheet.

Bake 25-35 minutes, stirring once halfway. Do not let darken too much, you want barely golden brown.

Remove from oven and sprinkle with chamomile powder and the dried blueberries. Let cool completely for 20 minutes. It will feel soft but will harden once cooled.

Break mix apart and store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks. Enjoy as a cereal with milk of your choice.

Makes about 5 cups.

SOUPS

Zuppa di Ceci (Chickpea Soup) with Parsley Pesto

Growing up in a Southern Italian family, dishes like this were part of the rhythm of our table—simple, nourishing and built on flavours that felt like home. This soup is inspired by those memories—humble ingredients, slow-cooked comfort and thoughtful layers of flavour. You'll find

versions of chickpea soup throughout Italy. The parsley pesto adds a bright herbal pop that brings everything to life."—chef Daniel Costa, Corso Group

¼ c	extra virgin olive oil
1 sm	yellow onion, cut into large pieces
1 sprig	fresh rosemary
2 cloves	garlic, left whole and lightly smashed
3 T	(heaping) tomato paste
2.5 t	kosher salt
2 cans	(3 cups) canned chickpeas, strained
1 sm	Yukon Gold potato, peeled and cut into 8 pieces
5 c	water
2 t	red wine vinegar
1.5 T	Pecorino Romano, grated

Gently fry the onion, garlic, and rosemary in oil in a medium-high heat pot until softened, around 5–10 minutes. Add the tomato paste and salt.

Cook for 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Add chickpeas, potato, water and vinegar. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer for 25 minutes with the lid ajar.

Remove from heat, discard rosemary, and blend until smooth. Add water if needed. Stir in pecorino.

Adjust seasoning. Serves 4-6.

Parsley Pesto

	zest of ½ lemon (approx.)
1-2 cloves	garlic (approx.)
1 head	Italian flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped (including tender stems)
5 T	extra virgin olive oil
2 T	Pecorino Romano, grated
2 T	Grana Padano, grated
pinch	dried chilli flakes
4 slices	sourdough bread

Grate a little garlic and lemon zest into a food processor. Add the remaining ingredients, except for the bread. Pulse until chunky and emulsified. Reserve.

Toast the sourdough slices until golden. Spread generously with pesto. Serve alongside warm bowls of soup. Makes about 1 cup pesto.



Daniel Costa's Zuppa di Ceci

Steven Bobish photo

Winnie's Won Ton Soup

"I chose this as a budget dish because it's versatile, filling and easily stretched. Homemade stocks are probably the number one way to bring a dish to the next level, all the while using what might otherwise be food scraps. The wonton broth recipe here is optional, you could use chicken or veg stock instead but it makes a world of difference. The proteins used are inexpensive and the way the roasted shrimp shells enhance the depth of flavour is just lovely. (Seeing the way my mom would hoard frozen shrimp shells in the freezer make so much more sense now.) This dish is a jumping off point, if you want to make the proteins go a bit further take some leftover leafy greens that are maybe on their way out, blanch, then chop in a food processor. Wring out as much

ZOFIA'S DAILY TONIC

Chef Zofia Trebaczkiewicz, the EPL Teaching Kitchen coordinator, swears by this home-brewed beet tonic, an old family recipe she has been making for decades.

Kvass (Fermented Beet Juice)

"It supports digestive health (probiotics from lacto-fermentation) and heart and liver function. It is full of vitamins and minerals (C, folate, manganese, betalains and antioxidants that can reduce chronic inflammation). Beet kvass is not recommended for people with low blood pressure and people with kidney stones."
—chef Zofia Trebaczkiewicz, EPL Kitchen.

1 kg	red beets
2 L	water (spring /filtered)
2 T	salt (about 20 gr per litre) to make a 2 per cent salt solution
a few cloves	garlic (I like to blast them with boiling water to kill any mold before putting them into the jar)
	bay leaf, peppercorns, allspice berries
1" piece	fresh horseradish or horseradish leaf
	Blackcurrant leaf or sour cherry leaf (optional in the winter)
1 seed head	dill flower, or 1 t dill seed

Wash the beets and slice or dice into cubes that will stack well in your jar.

Prepare jar or pickling vessel by washing and disinfecting it with boiling water. Layer the beets with aromatics in jar, making sure aromatics are covered by the beets. Boil the water, add salt and wait till lukewarm before pouring over the beets.

Make sure the beets are submerged and that nothing is sticking out of the (salted water) brine. Cover with cheesecloth or parchment.

Leave in dark place at room temperature for 4-7 days. Strain the kvass and place in refrigerator. Start drinking small amounts, 1-2 ounces daily.

moisture as possible and fold that into the dumpling filling too. Other things I learned from my mom to jazz up this dish: she would use the leftover wonton wrappers as noodles by cutting them in half and it'd be like a silky pappardelle noodle in the broth, adding another interesting textural element. Plus, making wontons is fun.”
-chef/owner Winnie Chen, Fu’s Repair Shop.

Wonton Broth

1 c	shellfish shells, including the head and shells from the peeled shrimp
2 c	pork or other bones for stock
5 L	water
4 cloves	garlic, lightly crushed
1	1.5-in piece of ginger, peeled and lightly crushed
½ c	Shaoxing wine or cooking sherry
1 lg	onion, peeled and quartered
1	carrot, roughly chopped
2	green onions, roughly chopped
1	bay leaf

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spread the shells and bones on a tray and roast for about 10 minutes. Transfer roasted bones and shells to a stock pot and add the water. Put the heat on high until there is some movement in the water, and bubbles are just beginning to form. Don’t let the water boil, reduce the heat to medium and try to maintain this temperature. Do not stir the shells as it will muddy the stock. Skim any foam that forms. Let the shells and bones cook for about an hour. At this point, there should be less foam consistently forming. Add the rest of the ingredients. Bring the pot up to a light simmer and lower the heat again to maintain this. Let the stock simmer for at least 30 more minutes, but a few hours would be ideal. With a spider or tongs, remove some of the larger pieces from the stock then strain the remaining liquid through a cheesecloth-lined strainer. Use immediately or cool and store.

Wontons

30-40	wonton wrappers
15-18 pcs	small or 10-13 medium shrimp (for the purpose of this recipe, use shell on)
1 c	ground pork (200g approx.) can sub chicken but pork makes a tender and bouncy wonton
1 T	finely grated ginger
1 T	minced garlic
1	shallot

2	green onions (whites and greens divided)
2 t	light or regular soy sauce
2 T	Shaoxing wine or cooking sherry
½ t	salt
½ t	cornstarch
½ t	MSG (optional, but this is how my mom made it)
¼ t	white pepper (Optional, but I really like how it pairs with the sesame oil.)
2 T	toasted sesame oil

Make the Filling

Peel and chop the shrimp into small pieces. Reserve. (Keep the shells and heads if you are making broth.) To a large bowl, add the ground pork, ginger, garlic, shallot, white part of the green onions, soy sauce, Shaoxing wine, salt, cornstarch, MSG, white pepper and sesame oil and whip everything together with chopsticks, or in a food processor for a few minutes, until the mixture resembles a paste. Then mix in the chopped shrimp.

Fold the Wontons

With the wrapper in the palm of your hand, add about a teaspoon of filling to the middle. Brush along the edge of the wrapper with water and fold the wrapper in half (the 2 wet edges will seal the wonton closed), forming a triangle over the filling. Try to press closed any space around the filling so there are no air pockets inside the wonton. Now brush a bit of water on one of the outer tips of the triangle, bring the 2 outer tips together and press to seal (similar to folding a tortellini). Continue until the filling is used up (any extra wontons can be frozen).

Add the wontons to the boiling water and cook for 4-5 minutes, until they begin to float and the filling is cooked through.

Make the Soup

1.5 L	broth from above or a good quality chicken or veg stock
2 T	light or regular soy sauce
1-inch	piece of ginger (if not using recipe broth)
1 T	white sugar
1 t	white pepper
	salt to taste
	toasted sesame oil, for drizzling
	scallion greens
4 pcs	bok choy, washed, quartered and blanched

Combine all the ingredients (except sesame oil, scallion greens and bok choy) in a large pot and heat. Set aside and keep warm while you cook the wontons.

To serve: Add the wontons to the bowl with the blanched bok choy, then cover with the hot soup and garnish with the scallion greens and a few drops of sesame oil. Optional: a side of red vinegar with ginger and chilli oil to dip the wontons.

Makes 2-4 servings.

Creamy Ginger and Carrot Soup

“This soup is bright and warming. The ingredients are accessible and may be in your pantry already. I love simple but impactful flavours that help me relax on a chilly evening.” –chef Veronica Morin, Kommune.

3 lg	carrots
½	onion
2 stalks	celery
1 knob	ginger
3 cloves	garlic
2 c	vegetable stock
	salt and pepper to taste
1 t	sweet paprika, red chilli flakes
1 T	yellow curry powder
1 can	full-fat coconut milk
	chilli oil to preference

Sauté all the veggies together until softened. Add ginger and garlic and sauté for another minute. Add the stock and spices. Cook until the carrots are fork tender, then blend until smooth. Add the coconut milk and cook until heated through.

Serve with chilli oil and your favourite croutons.

MAINS

Charred Cabbage with Porcini Miso Butter and Fasolka Po Bretońsku (bean stew)

“Fasolka po bretońsku is a Polish bean stew traditionally made with a heritage variety of fasola (runner bean) called Piękny Jaś from the Dunajec Valley. These beans have a thin skin that does not require long cooking and are creamy, almost sweet tasting. Dried Jasiiek beans are available at the Italian Centre Shops, Baltyk Meat and Deli and the European Market in Callingwood. Cook Jasiiek as you would any dried bean. The traditional version includes smoked bacon and sausage that I substitute with porcini and smoked plums (and pears if available). Start with a hispi or pointed cabbage (Strathcona Farmers’ Market) or green cabbage that

is not too dense or compact (The organic cabbage at Superstore works well),” –chef Zofia Trebaczkiewicz, EPL Kitchen.

Cabbage

Slice the cabbage into (8 or 6 or 4 depending on size of cabbage) wedges making sure the core is intact, to keep the slices together.

Fry the cabbage on both sides on medium-high heat, using enough olive oil to cover the bottom of the pan. Cook until golden brown or lightly charred, about 3 minutes per side. Lightly salt the cabbage wedges on both sides.

Arrange cabbage in cast iron pan or baking sheet and slather with miso porcini butter (recipe follows). Reserve some butter for serving.

Roast at 375°F for 15 to 30 minutes (depending on size of cabbage) until tender. Keep warm until ready to serve.

Porcini Miso Butter

Mix 200 grams of soft unsalted butter with 2 tablespoons of white miso paste, 1 tablespoon of porcini powder and zest of 1 lemon. I like to use a food processor to get a butter that is smooth and easily spreadable.

Fasolka Po Bretońsku

4 T	extra virgin olive oil
1 med	diced onion
3	bay leaves
6	allspice berries
4 cloves	garlic, finely diced
3 T	tomato paste
1½ c	passata
5-6	smoked prunes, chopped (1 t smoked paprika instead)
½ t	caraway powder
1 t	marjoram
½ t	dried lovage (available at the Italian Centre or European Deli)
½ t	ground coriander
1 t	porcini powder (or a few dried porcini, rehydrated and chopped)
¼ c	sundried tomatoes, finely chopped
1 c	vegetable stock (optional)
	chilli flakes to taste
	salt/pepper to taste
	green onions, chives, flat leaf parsley, or any favourite herb for garnish and a burst of freshness
2 c	cooked Jasiiek beans, or any white bean

Continued on next page



Cheap and Cheerful

Continued from previous page.

Heat the oil in a large pan/Dutch oven and add onions, cooking until translucent. Add bay leaves, allspice berries and garlic, cook for 2 minutes. Push vegetables to the side and add tomato paste, cook for another 2 minutes at medium heat, mixing vigorously. Deglaze with passata. Add the remaining ingredients (not beans) bring to a boil and simmer for 5-8 minutes. Add vegetable stock if necessary—depending on your preference. Add the white beans and cook on low for another 10-15 minutes.

Place the charred cabbage wedges over the bean stew and top with reserved miso porcini butter and herbs of choice.

Serves 4-6.

Bangers and Mash

“A classic plate of mashed potatoes and onion gravy, traditionally served with sausages, but easily adapted with crisped chickpeas for a meat-free alternative.”
—chef Shaun Hicks, Little Wolf and Okie Dokie Smokies.

Mash

- 1 kg Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 4 T butter
- ½ c warm whole milk
- salt and white pepper to taste

Place potatoes in a large pot of boiling water. Cook until tender.

Drain and return to the pot. Add butter, warm milk, and salt to taste, then mash until smooth and creamy. Season with salt and white pepper. Reserve.

Prepare the Protein

Sausages: Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add four sausages and cook slowly, turning occasionally, until evenly browned and cooked through.

Crispy Chickpeas:

- 1 can cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed.
- 1 T extra virgin olive oil
- pinch smoked paprika
- salt

Toss chickpeas with olive oil, smoked paprika, and salt. Roast at 425°F for 12-15 minutes or pan-fry until crisp.

Onion Gravy

- 2 lg onions, thinly sliced
- ½ c of whatever you might be drinking, wine, beer, cider

- 1 c beef or vegetable stock
- 1 t Dijon mustard
- 1 t Worcestershire sauce (or vegetarian Worcestershire)
- salt and black pepper

In the same skillet used for the sausages (or a clean pan if using chickpeas), melt the butter. Add onions and cook over medium-low heat until soft and caramelized, about 12 minutes. Add cider or beer and scrape up any browned bits. Stir in stock, mustard, and Worcestershire. Simmer until thickened. Season to taste.

To serve: Spoon mash onto plates. Top with sausages or crispy chickpeas. Finish with a generous ladle of onion gravy.

Serves 2.

Peposo (Red Wine and Black Pepper-braised Beef)

A true Tuscan classic found throughout the small towns of Chianti. Since this recipe originated in wine country it is understandable that there is an excess of wine in the recipe. The result is an incredibly deeply-flavoured dish.”—chef Daniel Costa, Corso Group.

- 3 T extra virgin olive oil
- 1 k beef chuck cut into 1½-in cubes
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and left whole
- ½ t whole peppercorns
- 20 coarse cracks of black pepper
- 1 t kosher salt
- 1 bottle Chianti
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary, left whole
- 2 T tomato paste

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

Heat the olive oil in a medium-sized, heavy-bottomed pot over high heat. Sear the cubed beef until caramelized on all sides. Add the garlic cloves, peppercorns, cracked black pepper and salt. Cook for 45 seconds while continuously stirring. Add the wine, rosemary and tomato paste. Bring to a simmer. Place a tight lid on the pot and place in the oven. Allow the beef to braise for 3 hours or until fork tender. Remove the pot from the oven and allow it to rest at room temperature for 1 hour. If the sauce is very runny, return the pot to medium-heat and allow the wine to reduce until lightly thickened. Serve with cannellini beans, potatoes or crusty bread.

Serves 6-8.

Kala Chana Masala with Cumin Rice

“We make chef Madan Lal’s recipe for Black Chickpea Masala quite regularly at the Kitchen. It is easy, healthy, delicious, and versatile. Black chickpeas are also known as kala or desi chana and can be found at Indian or South Asian grocery stores, but also at Superstore—Sunaj brand. I have not come across canned black chickpeas. I would suggest cooking a big batch and freezing portions for later use—they are a great tasting and healthy addition to salads and vegetable bowls. They have a firmer texture and an earthier flavour compared to garbanzo beans, but higher protein, fiber, mineral, vitamin content along with a low glycemic index.”—chef Zofia Trebaczkiewicz, EPL Kitchen.

- 1 c kala chana (black chickpeas)
- 3 c water (for cooking)
- 2 T oil or ghee
- 1 t cumin seeds
- 1 T chopped garlic
- 1 med onion, finely chopped
- pinch asafoetida
- 2 tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 T chopped ginger
- 2 green chillies, slit (optional)
- ½ t turmeric powder
- 1 t coriander powder
- 1 t cumin powder
- ½ t red chilli powder
- 1 t garam masala
- salt to taste
- 1 t lemon juice or tamarind paste
- fresh coriander leaves for garnish

Drain soaked kala chana and rinse well. Cook with 3 cups water and a pinch of salt until soft. Set aside, reserving cooking water.

Heat oil or ghee in a pan over medium heat. Add cumin seeds and let them splutter. Add the garlic. Sauté, stirring frequently, until the garlic turns light brown and fragrant (about 2–3 minutes). Add the onions and cook until golden brown. Add asafoetida and mix well.

Add the chopped tomatoes, ginger and green chillies. Cook until the tomatoes soften and oil begins to separate from the masala. Stir in turmeric, coriander, cumin, red chilli and salt. Cook for 2–3 minutes, mixing well. Add the cooked kala chana along with some reserved cooking water. Mix well and simmer for 10-15 minutes to blend the flavours and thicken the curry. Stir in garam masala and lemon juice or tamarind paste. Cook for another 2 minutes. Garnish with fresh coriander leaves.

Cumin Rice

- 2 c basmati rice
- 2 T ghee or oil
- 1 T cumin seeds
- 4 c water
- salt to taste

Wash the rice 3 times in water. Heat the oil in a pan, add cumin seeds, let them splutter, then add the rice and the water. Add the salt and cook on low heat until the rice is done.

Serves 2-4.

Ziti with Sugo alla Napoletana

“A southern Italian classic, especially on Sundays when you have to feed a ton of people. Both dishes are prepared in one pot and served across two courses, the pasta first with the sugo, and the meat second.”
—chef Daniel Costa, Corso Group.

Bracirole

- 6 pieces beef or veal, pounded to ¼ inch thickness
- grated Pecorino Romano
- Italian parsley, roughly chopped
- fresh breadcrumbs
- pepperoncini or hot chillies
- kosher salt

Spread the cuts of beef on a work surface, season with a little salt. Sprinkle pecorino, breadcrumbs, parsley and the peppers over each piece. Roll into cylinders and tie with butcher’s twine. Reserve.

Make the Sauce

- extra virgin olive oil
- 3 links Italian pork or lamb sausage
- 4 chicken legs
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 6 c canned San Marzano tomatoes, passed through a food mill

Heat the olive oil in a deep pot on high heat. Sear the sausage, chicken legs and bracirole on all sides in batches and set aside. Drain some of the oil from the pot, add the onions and cook until translucent. Add the garlic and continue cooking another 2 minutes. Add the tomato and gently place the meat back in the pot. Simmer on low for 2½ hours, stirring occasionally. Add a little water while the sauce is cooking if it becomes too dry.

Pasta

- 4 T kosher salt
- 1 lb ziti
- extra virgin olive oil
- more Pecorino Romano, freshly grated

Add a generous handful of kosher salt (4 T) to 12 cups of water in a large pot and bring to a boil. Add the pasta and cook until al dente. Save 1 cup of the pasta cooking water. While the water is boiling, gently remove all the meat from the sauce. Cover and set aside as the second course to follow the pasta. Toss the pasta with enough sauce to coat all of the ziti. Serve immediately with a little pecorino and a good drizzle of extra virgin olive oil on top.

Serves 6-10.

Slow-Cooked Green Lentils

“This recipe is adapted from a Julius Roberts’ recipe called Goat Man’s Lentils with sausages and aioli. I serve it at Awn with roasted squash or beets, feta and lots of fresh herbs. It’s equally as delicious with braised cabbage, melted leeks or sautéed greens. I’ve taken the base recipe and cooked the lentils a bit further with more stock and blitzed it down and made it into a cottage pie as well.”
—chef Kaelin Whittaker, Awn Kitchen.

- 2 T extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lg onion, finely diced
- 3 stalks celery, finely diced
- 2 leeks, sliced
- 2-3 carrots, finely diced
- 5 bay leaves
- a few sprigs of thyme
- a generous glass of wine
- 500 g Puy lentils
- 1.2 L stock
- 1 T Dijon mustard
- a big handful of chopped parsley

Heat the olive oil in a large cast iron pan. Add the onion, season with salt and pepper. Cook for ten minutes before adding the rest of the vegetables, adding a bit more salt and pepper, and cook for a further 10 minutes. Add the wine, cook off and then add the lentils with the stock, season again. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 1 hour until lentils are tender but still soft. Keep adding more stock (or water) as needed. When lentils are ready, turn off the heat, add the mustard and parsley. Taste and correct the seasoning. These will keep for four or five days in the fridge and can be added to soups, stews, or served with lots of lovely roasted roots.

Serves 4-6. 🍷



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DONAIR WARS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CURTIS COMEAU

Sometimes I like to fire up the boys on my Dirty Birds ball hockey group chat. A month ago, I asked a simple question. ‘Fellas, where is the best donair in Edmonton?’ Fourteen friends gave me sixteen different answers.

Richard’s. Swiss. Firezone. The list went on and on. Seeing there was no consensus, I decided to ramp up the debate; ‘should a donair have sweet or garlic sauce?’

Chaos on the chat. I then took it to another level: ‘does lettuce belong on a donair?’

The debate raged. One of my chat friends, Melly, posted a poll to block me from future chats.

I had gone too far with the lettuce question.

As middle-aged native Edmontonians, we all agreed on one fact—donairs are Edmonton’s most extraordinary culinary treasure. Hey, if Philadelphia claims the Philly cheesesteak and Chicago claims the deep-dish pizza, why can’t we claim the donair?

According to a 2023 *Edmonton Journal* story, Edmonton boasts more than 120 donair shops, while Toronto has around 20. We have the ONLY pro sports team with a Donair Launcher. It is a fantastic sight to see the Oilers hype team fire delicious foil-wrapped donairs into the air to the applause of 20,000 screaming fans. Our civic donair loyalty gained international attention when Prime Time Donair owner Adil Asim bid a whopping \$16,000 for a giant-sized Donair mascot costume, so that it wouldn’t end up in the Maritimes. Where is it now? Still safely in Edmonton.

What is donair anyway?

Beef (or chicken), spices and some binder that has been squooshed together into a big cylinder by a special machine called *gyro* in Greece and *doner* in most of the Mediterranean basin and Germany. Both mean spin, in reference to the slowly rotating cones of meat found in every donair shop.

Donairs were first introduced to Canada via Halifax sometime in the ‘70s. The Halifax Donair, as it is known, has strict culinary rules: shaved donair meat, sliced tomatoes, cubed onions, wrapped in pita, and covered in donair sauce, which

we call sweet sauce here in Edmonton. The Edmonton donair, by contrast, often contains lettuce and is offered with sweet or garlic sauce. I have learned, thanks to my Dirty Birds chat, that donair traditionalists think this is an abomination—lettuce should never be put on a donair.

By and large, most donair meat served here comes from three major factories in the Edmonton area: Aladdin Donair Wholesale, Athena Gourmet Foods, and the relatively new DK Donair Factory and Restaurant.



In 1995, after getting married, Athena owner Sam Tawachi decided to leave construction in Fort McMurray and enter the food business in Edmonton.

“I started with a Mr. Sub, and I followed that with Mister Donair and Sub. The first donair shop was a Greek guy downtown, then Charles Smart from Nova Scotia, and I was the third.”

Why name the business Athena? “Our meat looks Greek (the cylindrical shape is like gyro), and, remember, this was when we had phone books? A is at the beginning of the book!”

“We make beef only, 13,000 kilos twice per week. We sell primarily through distributors, and I believe we have 80 per cent of the market, including selling to Swiss Donair.”

The other titan donair meat supplier is Aladdin Donair Wholesale. Owner Alaadin Rakhmiah bought Richard’s Donair in 2001. By 2006, he had opened the large CFIA-certified plant, Aladdin Donair Wholesale. You can still find Aladdin Donair meat at Richard’s, and many other shops throughout the city. It is truly a family affair—all four children work in the business.

A newcomer to the Edmonton donair meat scene is DK Donair Factory. “My father started this business in Germany 25 years ago, and my uncle is running it here,” says Renaz Kisa. Renaz has deep roots in the European food business. There have been some adjustments coming to Edmonton. “In Europe, doner kebab is served with tzatziki or cocktail sauce, not sweet sauce, and we put the shaved meat in a sandwich bun, not a pita, and we don’t eat pickles with it,” says Renaz.



Above: the cheese donair at Richard's. Below: Swiss Donair's jumbo combo with fries.

The Dirty Birds hockey chat debate motivated me to take my own Donair City Tour. I decided to try some of the donair shops touted as the 'best.' I will reserve judgment on calling any one shop the best, but it's safe to say the boys certainly know how to pick a donair joint.

RICHARD'S DONAIR

A vocal group of the Birds held fast to Richard's. Soccer blasting on the TV, a stocked Pepsi cooler, and a tile-adorned ordering counter make you feel like you're at an OG donair shop. Fresh baklava for sale at the counter and a super-friendly staff with a slight air of overconfidence in the quality of 'Their Donair' topped off my ordering experience. The cheese donair was recommended. Sauce isn't a joke at Richards. Make sure to get extra napkins because that little bag it comes wrapped in won't help. Awesome experience.

SWISS DONAIR

The fellas definitely mentioned Swiss a lot. It's a lively joint, packed with families, solo diners and small groups. A massive 12-foot mural of the Canadian flag, with welcome messages in dozens of international languages, greets you. Staff members immediately recommended the 'jumbo donair combo with fries and a side of sweet donair sauce.' A solid recommendation, but I was unable to finish the donair itself. Incredible value and vibe.

Continued on next page.





Donair Wars

Continued from previous page.

FIREZONE DONAIR

Complete transparency: My visit to Firezone came about because I lost a hockey bet to one of the guys on Birds Chat. The loser had to buy lunch. Firezone was his choice. I could see why. Again, like most donair joints, it's nestled into a small area in a random strip mall, blink and you miss it. "My dad has had our restaurant for 12 years now, but there are so many donair shops in Edmonton, we keep our prices low and do our best to give people the best food possible," said the owner's son, who brought us our jumbos. I didn't mind paying for lunch that day.

FAMOUS DONAIR

Up for a drive? Famous Donair is nestled into a quaint strip mall in Sherwood Park. If I was surprised that one of the boys mentioned this place, it didn't take long to realize why it was called Famous and why it was recommended. I decided to change things up a bit and order the regular donair poutine. (I have learned during this quest to order the regular size, of anything.) It didn't disappoint—a heaping bowl of crispy fries, curds, gravy, donair sauce and shaved meat piled high. It was impossible to finish. God help those who order a Jumbo Donair Poutine.





SIMON KING DONAIRS

I remember visiting the legendary Charles Smart when I was younger. Simon King captures those retro donair shop vibes perfectly. Located in an industrial area of South Edmonton, it is precisely what you expect—white interior, simple tables, red chairs, red platters and plenty of napkins—the perfect backdrop for ordering one of their many donair choices, such as mushroom, super mix and the king spicy donair. Parking is plentiful at all times of day. Want retro vibes? Visit Simon King.

BURGER BARON (99 STREET)

A random Bird recommended the donair at the Baron. Seemed a bit of an odd choice, but he is an odd fella, so it evened out. Given that this location recently underwent a renovation, I thought I would check it out. They did a fantastic job on the interior, a slight retro vibe that stayed true to the Baron roots. Their donair didn't disappoint; quick service and a milkshake to boot made for a perfect top-off. They do have a drive-thru, so next time I may try ordering the donair in my car.

SIMPLY DONAIRS

Simply was sixth on my list, and my waistline needed a break. I ordered a donair platter—generously shaved meat, with a nice mix of fresh veggies and garlic sauce, which made me feel a little less guilty this time around. I mean, come on; it's basically a salad. Due to its location, it gets quite a lunch rush, so get there early if you can. Parking can be a little challenging. The restaurant itself has a humble feel, giving it an in-and-out kind of vibe. 🍷

Curtis Comeau has never caught a donair at an Oilers game.

Clockwise from top left: Firezone's jumbo donair; Simon King's classic donair; Burger Baron's donair with milkshake; the donair platter from Simply Donairs; the donair poutine at Famous Donair;.



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Feeding People

Bad tea at a funeral? In Cape Breton, that's sacrilege.

I was about eight years old when I started serving tea within arm's reach of a coffin.

This isn't the beginning of a macabre fairytale. You see, I had a Cape Breton childhood. That meant serving tea at every function, from church fetes to fundraisers to—you guessed it—wakes and funerals.

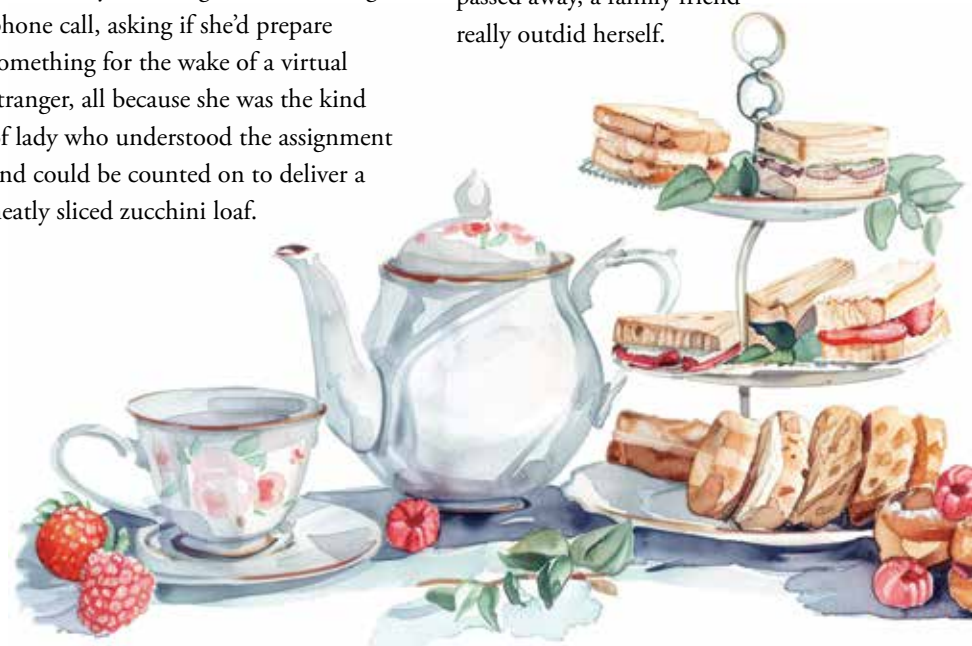
A Cape Breton tea is much more than its namesake beverage. Tea is ritual, refreshment and reckoning, with a side of sandwiches and small sweets. Hosting a community event without a tea is unthinkable. At a funeral or wake, it's sacrilege. As such, all hands are on deck. The requisite hot drinks and light eats are always organized, prepared and served by women. Nice little girls are expected to help—or at least they were during the formative years of my childhood. Whether you actually knew the deceased was irrelevant, and casket-side squeamishness was out of the question.

The job of organizing a proper tea typically falls to a combination of the deceased's family and the women of their respective church. Extended family, friends and community members contribute ample nibbles. However, the church ladies are on hand to balance things out should the deceased not have a large family or (scandal!) their family can't be relied upon to organize a respectable tea. I can't count the number of times my mother got a late evening phone call, asking if she'd prepare something for the wake of a virtual stranger, all because she was the kind of lady who understood the assignment and could be counted on to deliver a neatly sliced zucchini loaf.

The church ladies also marshal the volunteers who arrive early to stoke the furnace, plug in the coffee urns and take receipt of shortbread, pink-frosted cherry bars and ham salad rolls flecked with little green specks of sweet relish. No wonder that young girls who could be counted upon to wear a clean shirt and balance a tray of cookies were pressed into service!

At most celebrations of life, a person is remembered for their deeds and character. Eats are an afterthought. But not in Cape Breton! There, wakes and funerals have one purpose: to allow the mourners to judge the dearly departed and their family based on the quality of the tea. As such, you must strike a tricky balance. First, is the tea piping hot and adequately strong? Have you mastered the basics (airy biscuits, creamy egg salad sandwiches, robust molasses cookies), but also included something special, yet homey (Queen Anne squares, Hello Dolly squares, date squares)? Do you have food that's appropriately hearty for those who have travelled a long distance, like a platter of deli meat, cheese and rolls? Do you have sweets that aren't too sweet (like lemon loaf), but also some truly sweet sweets (like 'pork pies', a tiny tart that's filled with whipped dates and zero meat)?

When my grandfather, a respected municipal councillor who successfully advocated for a non-denominational, village-owned funeral home, passed away, a family friend really outdid herself.



Vanessa Chiasson

She brought homemade apple pies and a basket laden with fried chicken to his wake. She certainly didn't do that for just anyone! I was just a teenager when he died, but I still remember her softly folded pie crusts and the golden-brown wicker basket that held the chicken. Alas, I didn't try either as I was—you guessed it—serving tea! These culinary delicacies were irrefutable proof of the esteem in which my grandfather was held, as was my tireless clearing of cups and saucers.

I'm not sure why sharing and serving tea became so important in Cape Breton, but I have a theory. The island has a history of economic struggle. Many of our most delicious treats, including oatcakes and bread with molasses, are actually quite thrifty. Could it be that when everyone contributed their best frugal yet fantastic recipe, the entire community ate well? In any case, it's a tradition I'm glad to have been a part of, open caskets and all.

Curiously, there was one event in my Cape Breton childhood where tea wasn't commonly served: Weddings. Perhaps everyone felt that tea was redundant when a wedding dinner was imminent. But when I got married, I saw the need. Guests had time to kill between the ceremony and the reception while we were having our photos taken. Light refreshments would be just the thing. I reached out to the women who usually handle such matters at the church with my request. Alas, they were rather befuddled. A tea? At a wedding? I was having trouble communicating my vision until I said, "Imagine it's like a funeral, but everyone's alive." That did the trick. Their dainty sandwiches and squares were much appreciated and, for once, I didn't have to serve a thing. ☺

Vanessa Chiasson is a Nova Scotia-raised, Ottawa-residing writer who loves vintage cookbooks and taking cooking classes wherever she travels. She believes oatcakes should be thin, lemon loaf should be thick, and tea actually should be coffee.





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With our long, cold, dark winters, stout fits Edmonton well. Stout, a full-bodied, top-fermented dark ale, can thank well-roasted barley for its black colour and rich flavour. Stout is comfort beer, pairing nicely with winter comfort foods like hearty stews. The roasted grains also give stout delicious coffee and chocolate tones, which makes them excellent dessert beers; ideal accompaniment for a cold winter's night by a fire with the last of the holiday sweets.

Stout's roots go back to the old sod. It began as a stronger style of porter, which in turn began as a darker, richer version of English mild, brown ale. From the 18th into the early 20th century, porter was the most popular beer style in England and Ireland, and it spread to North America via exports and emigrants. While Arthur Guinness had success exporting porter around the world, through the 1800s, Guinness and other porter brewers developed a stronger porter that came to be known simply as stout. The child outshone the parent, and by the mid-20th century, Guinness Stout served as a gateway beer in North America, helping to sell beer drinkers on dark beer, and prodding craft brewers to develop their own stouts. It took some time in Alberta, but today there are excellent homegrown stouts from many Alberta brewers.

Edmonton's Omen Brewing makes several excellent stouts, as well as many other dark beers, including Irish red ale, Belgian dark strong ale, English brown ale and black IPA. I popped into Omen's taproom recently on a classic Edmonton winter day; bitterly cold but sunny. Omen's brewery and tap room is on 67

Avenue, near the south end of Happy Beer Street. There was a dizzying 20 beers on tap, including three different stouts: their award-winning milk stout, Spilt Milk, the Púca Dry Irish Stout and a special anniversary stout, Black Forest Cake Stout. Omen was founded in 2018 by the three Oswald brothers Rhys, Andrew, Spencer and their father Tony. Spencer Oswald is the head brewer. Right from the start, the Oswalds' mission was to celebrate and promote the beauty and wonder of dark beer. In light lager-loving Alberta, focussing on dark ales was a nervy choice, but

given that Omen celebrated their 7th anniversary in December, they have found their niche.

As Omen shows, there's a world of stouts beyond Guinness. Milk stout is brewed with lactose (dairy sugar) for a sweet creamy beer. Oatmeal stout is brewed with added oats, which creates a smooth, velvety texture. Imperial stouts are big stouts, brewed bolder and sweeter, to higher alcohol percentages. Blindman's Ichorous Imperial Stout comes in at 11 per cent alcohol. Oyster stouts may have oysters in the brew, but more commonly it's simply a stout that pairs well with oysters, like Dandy Brewing's Dandy in the Underworld Oyster Stout. Stout's big, roasty flavour lends itself well to the addition of many ingredients, from berries to chocolate to coffee to pastry or even mole sauce, as in Irrational's Constellation Mole Stout, which has cacao nibs, ancho and guajillo chillies and cinnamon.

So go with the flow and snow and try a pint of stout. The sun is on its way back. Winter will end. Summer will come again. Meanwhile, it's better to pour a pint of stout than to curse the darkness.

Stout six pack

Find these great Edmonton and area stouts at the breweries or at fine beer shops around town.

Omen Púca Extra Stout, Edmonton

Púca is an Irish Gaelic word for a mischievous spirit or goblin, which gives you a hint about the nature of this delicious beer. It leads with the classic smooth and dry Irish stout style but follows up with a pleasing and surprising amped up bitterness and bite, including higher alcohol (7 per cent). Try it on nitro tap at Omen if you can!

Leduc Black Knight Oatmeal Stout, Leduc

Founded in 2023, Leduc Brewing aims to unite Leducians and create community through beer. Their tasty, smooth and silky oatmeal stout is named for the Canadair CT-133 Silver Star jet fighter on display in Leduc next to the QE2 highway, which honours the RCAF 414 Black Knights Squadron and Leduc-area veterans.



Endeavour Better Latte than Never Milk Stout, St. Albert

A smooth and creamy stout brewed with Endeavour's in-house roasted El Salvador single-origin coffee. Rich notes of roasted malt and espresso shine through, balanced by a touch of sweetness from milk sugar. Full-bodied and coffee-forward, this brew delivers the perfect blend of roast, cream, and comfort.

Snake Lake Ice Cutter Vanilla Latte Stout, Sylvan Lake

A richer, sweeter stout brewed with lactose, coffee and vanilla. Named after a historic ice-cutting business which cut blocks of ice from Sylvan Lake in winter, which kept things cool for area residents in the summer, before power came to Sylvan Lake in 1932. Silver, Best in Show and Gold, Spice Beer, 2025 Alberta Beer Awards.



Folding Mountain Jacek Chocolate Covered Cherry Stout, Hinton

Folding Mountain's 9th annual collaboration with Jacek Chocolate Couture is a rich, velvety Chocolate Cherry Stout. Layered with dark cocoa and tart cherry, it's brewed to warm up your winter with every sip. Silver, Porter and Stout, 2025 Alberta Beer Awards.

Polyrhythm, The LP Imperial Stout, Edmonton

A big, bold, full-bodied Long Player (LP) Imperial stout made with the frigid Edmonton winter in mind, full of chocolate roasted notes, nutty malt character and layered coffee tones. At 9.5 per cent alcohol, this rich stout will warm you up après ski, après curl, après skate or après walking to the liquor store. Gold, Imperial Strength Beer, 2025 Alberta Beer Awards. 🏆



Retired library CEO Peter Bailey is not afraid of the dark. Mostly. He's on Bluesky and Instagram as @Libarbarian.

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Wine Maven



Valenti Llagostera (Mas Doix) with Wade Brintnell (The Wine Cellar).

“Wine is what you feel,” says Valenti Llagostera, of Catalonia’s Mas Doix, at a tasting at The Wine Cellar. He paired each wine with a particular song, and yes, I asked for the playlist.

Wine growing in the Priorat (southwest of Barcelona) started with Carthusian monks in the 12th century. The modern era began in the early 1990s when Valenti and his brother reinvigorated their uncle’s vineyard, first planted in 1850. “We grew up in Barcelona but always went to the vineyard in the summer,” said Valenti. (I had met Valenti in Priorat a few years ago, so it was a reunion of sorts and a birthday party for the Wine Cellar—40 years in business!) Their first vintage of Doix was 900 bottles, in 1999.

It is a stunning landscape, steep slopes with the distinctive *llicorella* slate gleaming black and the Mediterranean shimmering in the distance—an extraordinary place to grow grapes. The ancient rock, formed by the movement of tectonic plates, develops fissures which allows vines to push their roots deep into the soil. Geology and the climate (hot days, cool nights) means extremely low yields of high-quality fruit. *Cariñena* (Carignan) and *Garnacha* (Grenache) thrive here. “Carignan is all about the soil; Grenache is all about the sun,” says Valenti. “Wine should express the place, facilitate conviviality and be something distinctive.”

That they do. Mas Doix wines, super expressive, bursting with life, communicate their terroir and vintage like no other.

2022 Les Crestes is primarily Grenache with Carignan and Syrah grown on both hillside *llicorella* and clay/limestone soils, ranging from 10-25 years. Lively, juicy, warm but not desiccated, velvety textured, with rolling tannins. The most accessible Mas Doix, drink with charcuterie, pizza, bean dishes.

2021 Salanques is from 25-50-year-old vines are grown on steep *llicorella* in the Salanques de Poboleda Ravine area, 25 per cent Carignan, 10 per cent Syrah. Aromatic floral notes, along with mouth-filling juiciness, fresh plum and earth, vibrant, electric, with more verticality than Les Crestes which makes it fantastic with food. Silky tannins with a long finish, a beautifully balanced wine. Drink with meat dishes and Amy Winehouse.

2017 Doix The first vintage was 1999. Extremely low yields (300 g per vine) from 50-120-year-old bush vines in Poboleda, 55 per cent Carignan, 45 per cent Grenache. Valenti calls Carignan an introspective variety—intense, brooding, yet silky and weightless. Beautiful flavours, some chocolate notes developing, a little spicy. This wine needs fat, drink with your best steak cuts.

We also tasted a delicious white, the **2022 Murmuri** and the spectacular **2016 1902 Tossal d’en Bou** (Centenary Carignan). Beautifully structured, concentrated and complex, with lovely secondary savoury notes developing. Everything that is unforgettable about Carignan is in this bottle. Of course I bought one.

The Veneto’s Bussola Tommaso has been out of market for several years—it’s great to see this producer become available again.

Start exploring with the **2019 Bussola Amarone della Valpolicella Classico**, which rewards fans of the Amarone style. Sweet notes of balsamico, woody herbs and dried fruits, with opulent flavours—dark chocolate, fig, plum and cherry and supple tannins. A warming wine, drink with aged cheeses and leftover Christmas cake.





I have become a huge fan of Heimann wines since visiting in 2021. The new vintages of Bikavér and Kadarka do not disappoint.

2022 Heimann & Fiai Szekszárd Bikavér is the first Bull's Blood-style wine from Zoltan Heimann and it's delicious, with robust red and black fruit, firm tannins and a lengthy finish. Drink with grilled sausages and mash, or braised beef.

The **2024 Kadarka BIO** is bright and lively, super juicy, tastes like crushed fresh raspberries. Love this with pork tenderloin, pastas and chicken dishes.

Two delicious wines from Marotti Campi (Le Marche):

2021 Salmariano Castelli di Jesi Verdicchio Classico DOCG Riserva is a stunning Verdicchio—opulent, textural, yellow flowers, herbs and some attractive minerality. This is an outstanding white to age.

Lacrima is a dark-skinned aromatic grape native to Le Marche. It's difficult to grow (it splits easily, hence its name, *lacrima*, meaning tears) but Marotti Campi has made a specialty of it.

The **2023 Orgiolo Lacrima di Morro d'Alba DOC Superiore** is another wine we haven't seen recently—gorgeous jewel-like colour, fragrant, a little spicy with evanescent aromas of powdered ginger and Szechuan pepper, rich red fruit. Velvet textured, with supple tannins and a memorable finish.

Wine lovers are discovering that lighter-bodied, lower-alcohol reds like these benefit from chilling—dunk in the snow for 10 minutes or in the fridge for 20. Too many restaurants do not have adequate storage for the reds—ask for an ice bucket if necessary.



Left to right: James Grant (Fairmont Royal York), Dave Mitten (Pernod Ricard) Steven Jorgensen and Ben Staley (Kin Bar).

There was a hugely entertaining and informative whisky tasting at Kin Bar with Dave Mitten, the global ambassador for several venerable Canadian whiskies.

We Canadians take our whisky for granted, and global awareness doesn't stretch past a few brands. Canadian whisky needs champions and Dave Mitten is one of the biggest. "I loved the challenge of telling people about Canadian whisky, the history and process. I saw this as potential to educate the world, to show how innovative our whisky is."

The first bottle of Gooderham and Worts was in 1832, that's older than Jack Daniels. JP Wiser's has a similar history. John Phillip Wiser, an American cattle baron, bought a distillery in Prescott, Ontario in order to make spent grain to feed his cattle. Gooderham and Worts were two grain millers from Suffolk, credited with inventing double column distillation. They started distilling grain because it was a better way to use up excess grain than making flour. As Dave told stories about our whisky history, we tasted several of these delightful whiskies.

Highlights: **JP Wiser's 18 Year Old**, is 100 per cent corn whisky aged in used Canadian casks. The distinctive green apple notes keeps things fresh. **Pike Creek 10 Year Old** is double column distilled corn with less than five per cent rye, finished in rum barrels. Think Christmas cake, dried fruit and raisins. **Lot 40** was released for the first time in the '90s when no one was drinking dark spirits, reappearing in 2012 to win major awards around the world. Made from 100 per cent unmalted rye grain, both double and pot distilled and aged in new American oak—a characterful spirit with softness, elegance and verve—spicy citrus notes with oregano and mint, red berry fruit. Our favourite bartender, James Grant of the Fairmont Royal York likes to use Lot 40 to make cocktails with rhubarb. 🍷



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The Smos at Home

Leanne Smoliak

The next chapter

We were deeply rooted in our home for three decades. Now, we're simplifying life. We sold our darling bungalow.

The kitchen was very much the heart of our home. We all love to cook and the double Miele ovens, the six-burner Thermidor cooktop and an island big enough for Nicholas, Brad and I to cook side by side were ideal. We'd plan the menu, sharpen our favourite knives, and begin the *mis en place*. The two ovens worked hard, sometimes with a pork roast and potatoes in one, and veg and dessert in the other. We passed spoons to taste and adjust seasoning; Nicholas always suggested a squeeze of lemon.

Any random Tuesday could be a feast. Over the years, Nick became the better cook of the three of us; he had developed an amazing palate cooking at St. John in London. Now, he takes over the kitchen when he visits from Scotland.

If these walls could talk. There's nothing like family and friends around the table. The best were the casual dinners when we would make a braise in the big ol' orange Le Creuset. Nothing fancy—the kind of dinner where all you need is a group of friends, a few bottles of wine and perhaps some good ice cream—Italian Sunday gravy with sausage, meatballs and ribs in a hearty tomato sauce. Brad would make fresh pasta and we would have a simple salad to go with.

Our house saw its share of shenanigans. Like the Christmas party when sister-in-law Michelle decorated our tree with prosciutto, salami and cheese. In the middle of the night, Cosmo, our dog, went mad sniffing out the various charcuterie decorations and almost toppled the tree.

Cooking spilled into the backyard. Antonio (our pizza oven) took centre stage. Brad became a master at throwing pies. When Antonio cooled down from the blistering temps required for great pizza, in would go a perfectly-seasoned

spatchcocked chicken surrounded by fresh veggies from Gido's Farm (Brad's garden). While we indulged on the juicy bird and a simple salad of greens, a fruit cobbler baked in Antonio. Many bottles of wine would be enjoyed, the sun would begin its descent and, just like that, the garden lights would come on. Brad said we had so many lights a plane was destined to land in our backyard.

Brad's pride was Gido's Farm, the side yard bursting with grapes, tomatoes, roses and herbs. The grapes were magnificent. (He swears it was because he sang to them.) We planted trees and shrubs in memory of loved ones, and we will miss them. We'll have to drive by now and then to say hello.

Our house was the community drop-in centre for Nick's

friends. Chocolate chip cookies ready for the young tykes, then a well-stocked fridge when they got older. Brad's motto then (and now): lots of silliness, no stupidity.

Watching these kids grow up and start families of their own has been a true gift.

So many memories, so much happiness.

Will we miss our magical kitchen and yard? Yes, but we'll be fine. We can cook in another kitchen—although one oven might take some getting used to—and we do have a small yard to plant this spring.

A house is just a shell—the people make it a home. We take the memories—of raising our son, of the dogs, and of the good times with friends—with us.

Our next chapter promises dog walks in the river valley and lots of travel. Brad lives with an artificial heart, a daily reminder to live consciously and fully. Each day, Brad wakes up grateful and that attitude is infectious. Together, we're ready to embrace life's adventures, wherever they may lead us. 🍷

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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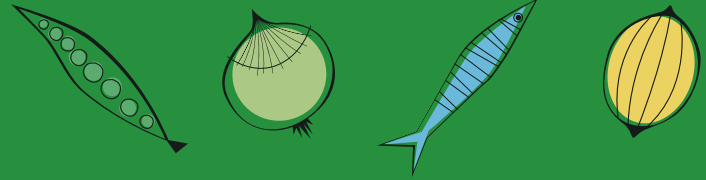



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PRO TIPS FOR BEING A
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1. Introduce yourself! If you can't name your neighbours, you've got some work to do. Knowing who you live next to is a great way to build a strong community.



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.

We are beyond excited to be the cool new neighbour in your hood, and we can't wait for us to become the **BEST OF FRIENDS.**

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Kitchen Sink

What's new and notable

wine tastings, happenings and events

Think you make a terrific pie or dumpling? Enter the **Pyrohy** and the **Tourtière Baking Challenges** at the **Deep Freeze Festival**, January 17 and 18. More deets at deepfreezefest.ca.

The first **Sunday Supper Club** of the year is Sunday, January 25 at **The Marc**. Enjoy five courses with optional wine pairings. Tix: \$95/p++, themarc.ca

The **Flying Canoe Volant** is January 28-31 in the **Mill Creek Ravine**. It's magical, mysterious and a little supernatural. Don't miss it, lacitefranco.ca.

Sicilian & Sausages, 6pm-7:30pm, Thursday, January 29, at **Sherbrooke Liquor**. Yup, you guessed it, robust Sicilian wine with tasty **Fuge Sausage**, just the thing on a cold winter's night. Tix: \$70/p+, on Eventbrite.

Three Vikings is hosting a **Smørrebrød Feast** for Edmonton's **Torskeklubben** on January 15. Everyone is invited, book at torskeklubben.ca.

Save the date: chefs **Davina Moraiko**, **Fillie Lament** and **Peter Zukiwski** are teaming up for the **Slavic Supper Series**, January 31. Tix: pittcountybbq.com.

The Marc's three-course **Valentine's Menu** is available Saturday, February 14 and Sunday, February 15, with reservations from 5pm-9pm. Tix: \$95/p++ themarc.ca.

Valentine's Day at **Birdog** (10181 104 Street, birdogyeg.com) offers a special set menu with Passimiento Romeo & Juliet wine and live music from **Paul Woida**.

At **El Jardin** (10359 104 Street, eljardinyeg.com) features a set **Valentine's** menu paired with wine or Mezcal, plus a guitarist singing *serenatas* all night long. Sounds romantic!

Enjoy a delicious, five-course table d'hôte menu by chef **Joseph Vuong** at **Café Bicyclette**, Saturday, February 14. Seatings from 6pm-8pm, with optional wine pairings available. Tix: \$90/p+, lacitefranco.ca

It's **Valentines Weekend** at **The Butternut Tree**: four beautiful courses, Saturday, February 14 and **Beef Wellington**

for **Two**, Sunday, February 15, thebutternuttree.ca.

product news

Bella Casa's (9646 142 Street, bellacasadcl.com) **Semi-Annual Clearance** is on now, up to 50 per cent off selected products. The not-to-be missed **White Sale** happens January 12-31. Bella Casa now carries the superlative German high-carbon stainless steel Wusthof knives.

The **Old Strathcona Farmers' Market** (10310 83 Avenue) has a new vendor in Row 7, **Delissitude Bakery**, specializing in gluten-, nut- and mostly dairy-free baking. Savoury items too—pyrohy and samosas.

Michael Kalmanovitch's new venture, **Earth's Refillery Co-Op** (10831 95 Street), has a little space for the kids to hang out, while their parents shop. Check it out!

Bountiful Farmers' Market (3696 97 Street, bountifulmarkets.com) is open Friday-Sunday in the winter, with over 120 local vendors and live music every weekend.

restaurant buzz

Out of Bounds (24427 Township Road, Sturgeon County, outofboundsrestaurant.ca) is offering a down-home, smoked brisket dinner complete with cornbread, coleslaw and roasted potatoes on Sunday evenings, from January 11.

Chef Shaun Hicks has opened **Okie Dokie Smokies** in the former Modest Meats space (7345 104 Street, okiedokiesmokies.ca). Expect some very tasty sausages from this innovative chef.

Zenari's Little Italy is now open at **Zocalo** (10826 95 Street) for coffee and small bites. Somehow this feels so right, zocalo.ca.

The casual Beaumont spot **Farina Cucina** (5017 52 Avenue, farinacucina.com) features some beautiful winter pastas and risottos right now. Tasty pizzas too, open daily for lunch and dinner. Check it out!

Jasper's beloved **Patricia Street Deli** has reopened in Edmonton at 10567 111 Street. Pop by and give them a big Edmonton welcome. 🍷

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



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