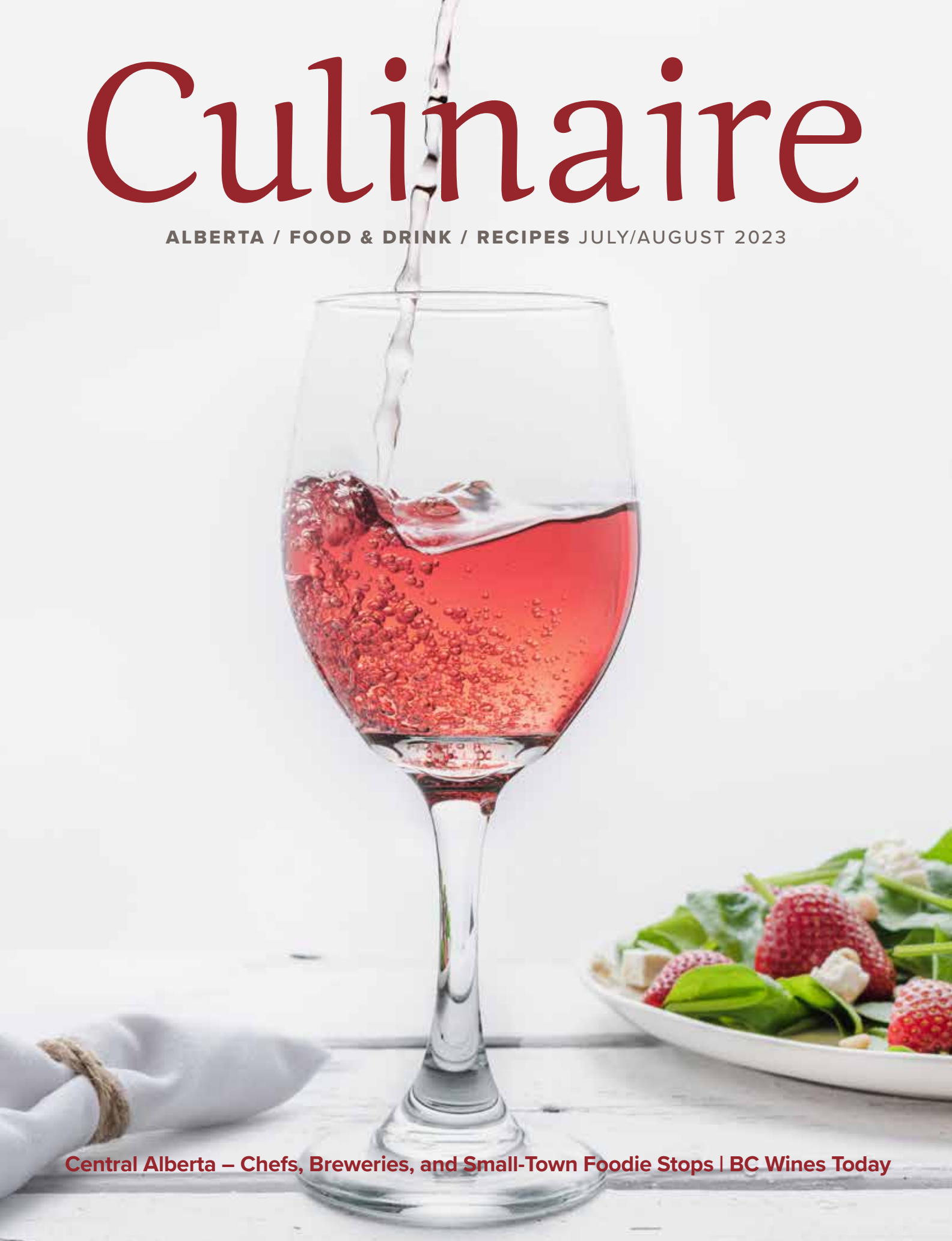
Culinaire

ALBERTA / FOOD & DRINK / RECIPES JULY/AUGUST 2023



Central Alberta – Chefs, Breweries, and Small-Town Foodie Stops | BC Wines Today

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TOAST WITH A LOCALLY CRAFTED SPIRIT THIS CANADA DAY

DRINK SMART® ® of Alberta Distillers Limited Calgary, Canada

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Managing Director
Syndicate Hospitality Group



ON THE COVER

Can there be anything that sums up summer more than a chilled glass of rosé with a beautiful, fresh summer salad? We just want to be there in Sundre with Katarzyna Kowalewska, of Live Your Dream Photography, while she photographs this exquisite pour so we can clink glasses with her afterwards at having captured it so well! Cheers!









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Summer is Served...



THAT WAS THE HEADLINE OF OUR summer issue last year, and I can't think of a better way to sum up this issue too.

We've turned our attention to Central Alberta, the area between Edmonton and Calgary that is all too often sadly overlooked, and we felt it was time to remedy that as we know you'll be looking for good places to visit, eat, and drink, on your road trips and excursions. There's certainly no shortage of good places to stop in at, just about all privately owned, and a very wide choice of local brews in this region too!

It's by no means exclusive, and there are more than 100 working farms participating in Open Farm Days on August 19 and 20, (2023 is year of the bison, so do check out albertaopenfarmdays.ca/things-to-do/ bison), which we just don't have room for here, but we hope you'll take time to visit and learn where our food comes from.

Food Day Canada is August 5, and in this issue, as always, we support local first. We're looking at the BC wine industry with suggestions of wines to enjoy on your patio and with your BBQs too, as well as suggestions for rosé wine picks for those extended, warm evenings or even for brunch on the deck.

It's a wonderful time to be outdoors for food and drink lovers, with a multitude of markets around the province to visit as well as seemingly a multitude of festivals, whether food-focused, music, craft, or cultural (my favourite to learn foods that I may not have had chance to enjoy yet!), and other interests, most of which include food and beverages too, and I urge you to explore and discover new producers and new tastes.

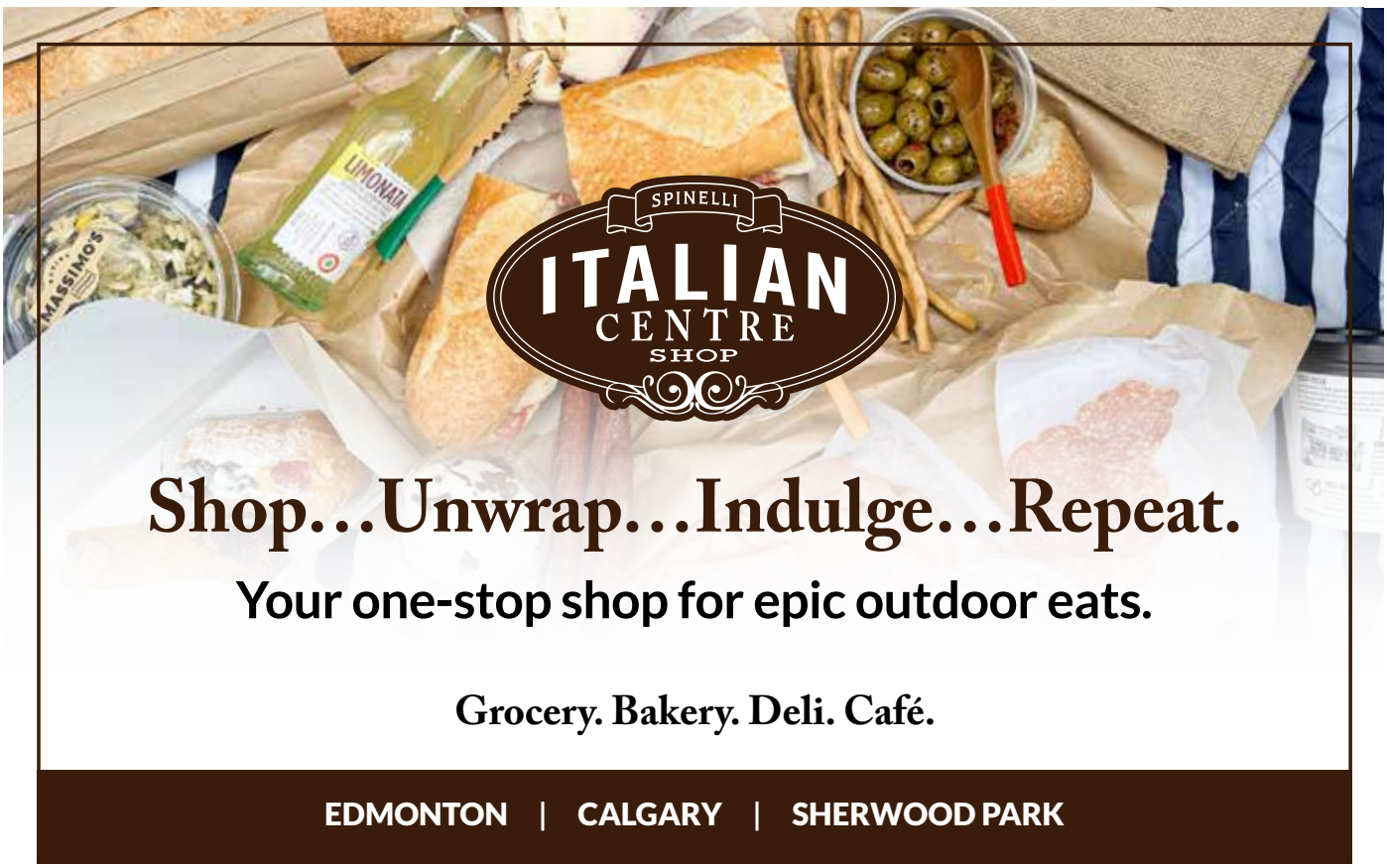
We'll be setting up and running the eleventh edition of our Alberta Beverage Awards, an enormous undertaking in itself, with several thousand pours over three days to bring you the best available in our province, which we can present to you in our October results issue, and soon to be announced tasting events!

Here's hoping for a warm - but not too warm, dry but not too dry, fun filled (can there be too much fun?) and delicious ('too delicious' is not an expression!), couple of months until we meet again,

Cheers



Linda, Editor-in-Chief



Culinaire

Alberta / Food & Drink / Recipes

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Lucy Haines

A long-time freelance writer, Lucy specializes in travel, food, arts, and entertainment. In a 30-year-plus career writing newspaper and magazine features, Lucy has interviewed celebrities, reviewed restaurants and sampled foods around the world. After writing news and features for Metro Edmonton for a decade, Lucy is now editor at Alberta Prime Times, a monthly lifestyle newsmagazine for 50-plus Albertans.



Kurtis Kolt

A West Coast-based wine consultant, Kurtis writes and speaks on wine, judges competitions, and works with restaurants on their wine programs. A former Vancouver International Wine Festival Sommelier of the Year, he has written for Eater.com, Decanter, and Maclean's, and run wine service at James Beard House in New York, where he's also participated in Wine & Spirits magazine tasting panels.

Culinaire Magazine acknowledges that we live, work and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their home in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

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1 Supper Studio sisters, Leah and Lori, have opened a storefront in Calgary's Marda Loop where, in addition to their kitchen on Elizabeth Street, Okotoks, you can pick up their ready-to-cook (or freeze), healthy meal kits. They create 12 new dishes every month of these quick and easy, affordable meals, with generous portions for 4-6 people or 2-3. They also took over Just Baked Cake Jars last year, and now offer 10+ varieties of cakes in jars! 1934 34 Avenue SW, supperstudio.ca

2 Also in Marda Loop, Diner Deluxe has opened Side Hustle – a casual, easy going, and unpretentious, watering hole with really good classic and remixed cocktails, wine, beer, and of course, a small menu of delicious food (try Tom's Sausage Rolls, Cheese Fondue, and Rösti with Smoked Haddock Mousse!). Frank Architecture have created a great space for this relaxed little 22-seat neighbourhood drop-in spot tucked away in the alley behind 2252 33 Avenue SW. Weekly features, Wednesday-Saturday, 4 pm-close. sidehustleyyc.com

Feng Donburi is Edmonton's newest Japanese restaurant and has opened in Windermere. There's a wide selection of small plate items, tempura, sashimi and sushi rolls, udon dishes, and of course, Donburi bowls, as well as family-style platters and the tempting Takoyaki Poutine and Baked Mussels with Spicy Miso Sauce. Lunch and dinner, closed Tuesdays. 16408 Ellerslie Road SW. fengdonburi.ca

Japonais have opened their second location also in Windermere, at 6138 Currents Drive. You'll find the same lively music and high-energy vibes, and innovative dishes such as Eel Bibimbap with Lobster Cream, Hot Stone Wagyu stone-grilled at your table, and Koji Kamo - teriyaki brussels sprouts with 24 hour marinated duck breast. Lunch and dinner seven days, Omakase Thursday-Saturday. japonaisbistro.ca

3 George Stanley (the designer of the Canadian flag) Calgary heritage home is now Ruby and The Beast, a whimsical, fantastical, and fantastic new restaurant at 1111 7 Street SW. Kathleen Davidson is from Tofino, and her family has two restaurants on the Island. We love the welcome table greeting of dukkah-spiced pumpkin seeds while you're perusing Chef Cody Fummerton's (ex-Living Room) menu of elevated bistro classics, such as fried artichokes, confit duck wings, heirloom tomatoes with hummus, and coffee-braised 'beast', and the small list of accessible wines, local beers, and cocktails. There's a gas fire and sheepskin fleeces in the covered atrium. Lunch and dinner, closed Mondays. rubyandthebeast.ca

The former Station on Jasper space is now home to Edmonton faves, Fu's Repair Shop, sharing with their music and event venue, Double Dragon. Now there's more room to enjoy your all-night dim sum, excellent shareable small eats, big dish Wok Hay, and creative cocktails, while still keeping that fun and hip, speakeasy feel. DJs every Friday/Saturday at 10524 Jasper Avenue. Closed Monday-Tuesday, fusrepairshop.ca

Nowhere Wine Bar has opened in Edmonton's West Village MacLaren Building. Chef Filliep Lament (of Cafe Linnea, North 53, and Montreal's Au Pied de Cochon) has created a menu of shareable plates to accompany your wine from the list on the wall of this dimly lit bar. Come for Free Pour Fridays, when you can order wine by the ounce that's regularly only sold by the bottle! 4pm-late at 12315 102 Avenue, closed Sundays. nowherewinebar.com

YYC Kitchen Bar is the new sister restaurant to YYC Pasta Bars and now open at 412 Memorial Drive NE, for brunch, lunch, and dinner. Chef Yash has created a lovely, bright, light, and fresh space with lots of hanging plants and natural south-facing light. And that's not all – there's easy, free parking; it's terrific value and has great service! Do try the wild mushroom and garlic ravioli with Gorgonzola cream sauce, beer-battered truffle fries, garlic cheese chili toast, and braised lamb shank, and build your own mimosa/beermosa with your choice of juice, bubbles, and toppings! 8am-9pm, closed Tuesdays.

Edmonton has a new taqueria, Marlo from the folks behind Pal's, Pip, Meat, and The Next Act, at the former Pip location, 10403 83 Avenue. They're serving up tequilas and local beers alongside a small menu of chips and dips, tacos, and burritos, with handmade corn tortillas. Seven days 11am-late, marloyeg.com

Florida sandwich shop, Jon Smith Subs has opened their second Alberta location in Sherwood Park at 222 Baseline Road #326, serving up a choice of more than 24 loaded, 6" and 12" giant deli subs. They bake their bread fresh every day but you can also turn any sandwich into a salad - the same ingredients without the roll! Seven days, jonsmithsubs.ca/sherwood-park

Also in Sherwood Park is Strathcona County's newest microbrewery: Manual Labour Beer Co. Owners Richard and Nicole turned their long-time home-brewing hobby into a business, and spent most of the last 18 months bringing it to life themselves. Four flagship beers and four rotating summer beers, and food from That BBQ Place and Nitza's Pizza delivered to your table (or bring your own and have any other food delivered!)
80 Portage Close, closed Monday-Tuesday, manual-labour.ca



4 Chef Duncan Ly's much-anticipated Bar Chouette is open in The District at 227 11 Avenue SW, Calgary! It's a contemporary wine and cocktail bar where you'll come for drinks and conversation – and stay for his buddy, Michelin-starred Chef Neil McCue's menu, with his classics of Le 1608 Cheese Souffle (remember that from Whitehall - it's back!), smoked trout paté, duck confit pie and peas, and maitake mushrooms with Marmite butter! There's loud, beaty music and a curated drinks list with cocktails and many natural wines, happy hour 3-5pm, and reverse happy hour with 30 percent off everything 10pm-close! 3pm-late, closed Mondays. barchouette.ca

Bridgette Bar has opened a Canmore location, with just a few swaps to the Calgary menu, so now we can get our favourite Bridgette dishes in the mountains, alongside a curated drinks list and a 2-5 pm happy hour with half-priced pizzas and bevvies. 1030 Spring Creek Drive, Thursday-Monday 11-11 pm, bridgettebarcanmore.com

Do you have a notable achievement we should know about? A new opening, launch, rebrand, or accolade? Email us at info@culinairemagazine.ca!

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

There has been a lot written about "generative AI" – technology that uses data captured from the internet to produce text as well as images – and while it presents enormous opportunities, it also presents enormous risks in the form of false news, security issues, and copyright issues and most importantly, it's a disingenuous way of taking noteworthy and relevant news in Alberta and presenting it to our readers.

We tasked a popular AI bot to write a few hundred words for us on cloth v paper napkins, the result of which is below. From question to delivery, it took about a second (it might have taken me several hours to weigh the pros and cons and write a cohesive argument).

As you can see, it isn't up to our standards and is rather poor overall.

Every publication has a voice, and ours is chatty and friendly, but informative and conversational, and our AI generated discussion came back wooden and academic, and a little repetitive too.

We're not waiting for you to ask, we want to come straight out and declare that our articles in Culinaire will always be written by real people – not computers, with content you can trust.

Sincerely,
Linda Garson

DISCUSS WHETHER PAPER NAPKINS OR CLOTH NAPKINS ENHANCE THE DINER'S EXPERIENCE AT A RESTAURANT

"The choice between paper napkins and cloth napkins in a restaurant can indeed impact the diner's experience. While both options have their advantages and disadvantages, the use of cloth napkins generally enhances the overall dining experience for several reasons.

Cloth napkins exude an air of elegance and sophistication. They contribute to the ambiance of the restaurant, elevating the dining experience to a higher level. The tactile feel of cloth napkins adds a sense of luxury, providing a pleasant touch to diners' hands and faces. Moreover, cloth napkins often come in a variety of colors and designs, allowing restaurants to coordinate them with their decor, enhancing the visual appeal of the table setting.

In terms of functionality, cloth napkins tend to be more efficient. They are generally more absorbent and durable than their paper counterparts. Cloth napkins can effectively clean up spills and messes, ensuring that diners feel comfortable and clean throughout the meal. Their durability also means they can be used multiple times before laundering, reducing waste and environmental impact.

Furthermore, cloth napkins offer a sustainable option. Disposable paper napkins contribute significantly to the accumulation of waste in landfills. By opting for cloth napkins, restaurants can promote eco-consciousness and demonstrate their commitment to environmental responsibility. This can resonate with diners who value sustainability and contribute positively to their overall dining experience.

However, it's worth noting that there are situations where paper napkins may be more appropriate. Fast-food restaurants or casual eateries that prioritize convenience and quick turnover may find paper napkins more practical and cost-effective. Paper napkins are disposable and require less maintenance, making them suitable for high-volume establishments.

In conclusion, while paper napkins have their merits in certain contexts, cloth napkins undoubtedly enhance the diner's experience in a restaurant. Their elegance, tactile quality, functionality, and sustainability contribute to a more enjoyable and refined dining atmosphere. The choice of cloth napkins reflects a commitment to quality and attention to detail, leaving a lasting positive impression on diners."

Cold (in a) Snap!

BY **KEANE STRAUB** PHOTOS BY **DONG KIM**

It comes in domes. It comes in waves. It can sink in and linger, oppressive, relentless, unforgiving. We're talking about heat, and not just any kind: real Alberta summer heat. And when it's that hot, the last thing anyone wants to do is turn on a stove or stand over a grill. Give us something cold, refreshing, and delicious, please!

Central Alberta chefs heard our cries and saved us from sweating over supper with dishes that are cool, refreshing, and most importantly, delicious! Move over chilled beer and wine, and make room for these cool eats!



As part of Red Deer's Heritage Ranch, **The West Lake Grill** takes local fare like lamb, beef, bison, and an abundance of produce, and creates classic dishes with contemporary twists, resulting in dishes to suit anyone's palate or diet. For Executive Chef **Chelsea Morey**, it's all about food as a communal experience.

"My fascination with how food brings people together inspires me," she explains, "and the joy it brings is my inspiration."

And while rich, decadent items like the Ranch Approved Beef Ribeye and the Drunk Mussels are some of Chef Chelsea's favourites, there's nothing wrong with keeping things simple, especially when it's hot outside.

A bowl of chilled Radish Dip served with fresh veggies does the trick. "It's light, refreshing, and easy to prepare," she adds. "Use only the freshest ingredients, and evenly chop the radish to keep the flavours consistent.



Radish Dip

Serves 4

450 g fresh red radishes
½ cup (125 mL) cream cheese, room temperature
1/3 cup (80 mL) sour cream
2 Tbs fresh chives, chopped
To taste salt and pepper
To taste hot sauce
Crudités (sliced or whole raw vegetables) and/or crackers, for serving

1. Chop the radishes to the desired chunkiness of the dip and set aside.
2. Place sour cream and cream cheese in a bowl and fold together until smooth.
3. Fold in chives and radishes, and season with salt, pepper and hot sauce.
4. Serve chilled with crudités or crackers.







Lacombe's **Milly Oak Café and Catering** is what one would expect from a restaurant in central Alberta: drool-worthy comfort food served with a hearty side of small-town warmth you don't find in the big cities.

The business itself takes its name from owner **Derek Layden's** grandmother (Mildred) and his high school culinary instructor, Mr. Oak. "I created Milly Oak in honour of these inspirational people who helped shape the chef I am today."

There's plenty to choose from on the menus, but Derek has no problem narrowing it down to the favourites: "Our classic breakfasts and salads showcase comfy, hearty, beautiful food by using local ingredients from local farmers."

"There is no better flavour than when a tomato is picked right off the vine," Layden continues. And those local tomatoes are the star of the show in Milly Oak's recipe for Sun-dried Pasta Salad. Keep it simple, says Layden, and always try to find local produce.

But it takes a special ingredient to make this dish really shine: "Cooking together as a family, as a couple for date night, or with a friend or loved one makes memories that will leave a lasting impression for you and for them."

Sun-Dried Pasta Salad

Serves 4

4 cups uncooked fusilli pasta
6 sun dried tomatoes, chopped
60 g arugula
½ red onion, small diced
20 cherry tomatoes, halved
1 cup corn salsa (see below)
1 cup (240 mL) sun-dried vinaigrette (see below)

1. In a medium pot, fill with water and salt until water tastes like the ocean. Bring the water to boil and add pasta. Simmer until pasta is al dente.
2. When pasta is al dente, strain and rinse with cold water to stop the cooking process. Store in fridge.
3. In a medium bowl place all ingredients and toss lightly allowing all ingredients to be covered with the vinaigrette.

Corn Salsa

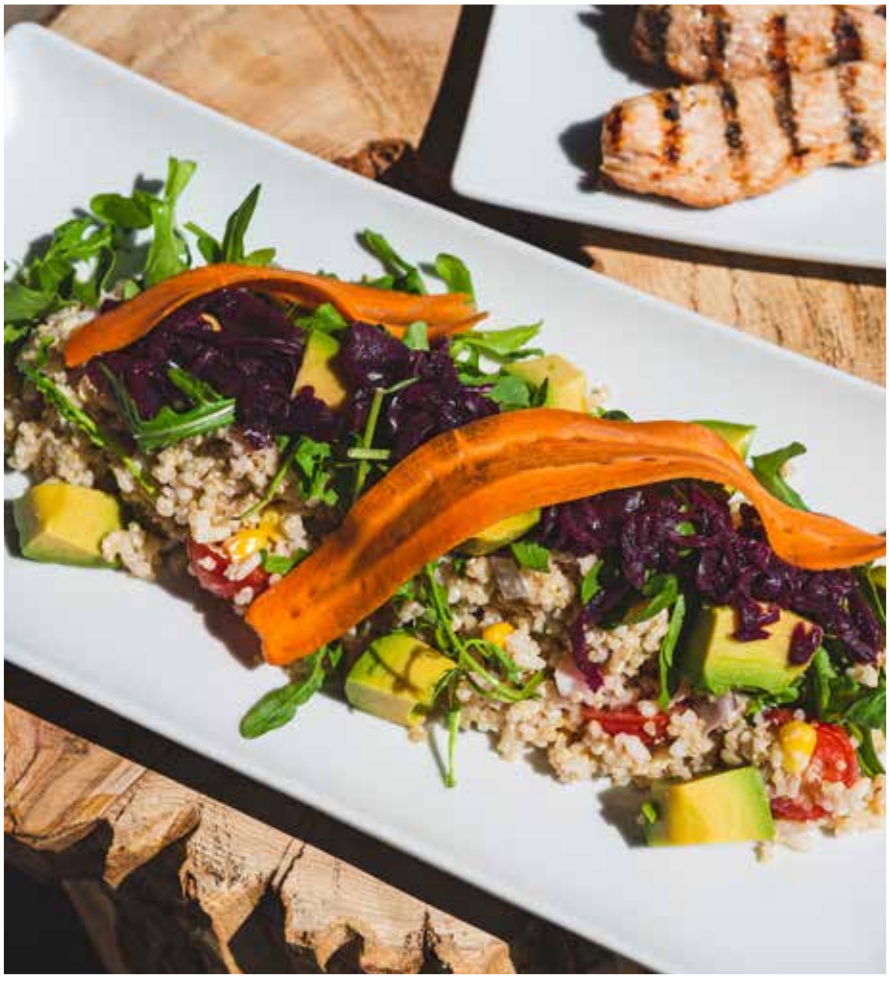
1 ear corn
1 Tbs cilantro, chopped
½ tsp paprika
2 Tbs red onion
2 Tbs (30 mL) fresh lime juice

Peel corn and boil in water for three minutes. Remove corn and place on a BBQ to get grill marks. Cool, then cut corn off the husk and mix with rest of ingredients. Set aside.

Sun-Dried Vinaigrette

1 tsp (5 mL) yellow mustard
4 tsp (20 mL) lemon juice
2/3 cup sun-dried tomatoes
2/3 cup (160 mL) sun-dried tomato oil
1 tsp minced garlic
1 tsp salt
Pinch white pepper
1 tsp dried thyme
1 tsp dried oregano
2 tsp (10 mL) honey
2 Tbs + 2 tsp (40 mL) water

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until emulsified.







Darryl Bernsten, Executive Chef at Cochrane's **Rocky View Brewing**, says that staying up to date with what's in style on the food and beverage scene sets the pace for what's coming out of the kitchen. "I try to watch trends and predict what's new and exciting. Right now, I try to adapt everything to a gluten free/celiac style."

Fish tacos are Chef Darryl's go-to these days: "I just feel it says summertime with a plate of fish tacos."

Salads also say summer, like Chef's Maple Tahini Power Bowl. Cold, crisp, and tossed with a flavourful dressing, "it works for almost anything you have in the fridge."

"This recipe is my go-to at home with my wife and daughters. After a surprise birthday trip to the mountains for my wife, we stopped in Canmore and they had a bowl with tahini dressing. I said to my wife, 'This is good, but I think I could make it even better.'"

"Don't worry about making it perfect," says Chef Darryl. "Plate it how you want: deconstruct it or mix everything together in a bowl and serve it that way."

Lemongrass Chicken Power Bowl with Maple Tahini Dressing

Serves 4

The beauty of this bowl is you can put whatever you want into it as the dressing works with most ingredients, making the options limitless.

Your Power Bowl

1. Cook and cool your choice of grains (quinoa, rice, barley etc.) Chef usually uses quinoa for this, but recently has been mixing in some brown rice for a bit of chewiness.
2. Dice or julienne your chosen vegetables such as red onion, sweet peppers, broccoli, avocado, carrots, red cabbage etc. and place on top of your grains.
3. Add sliced lemongrass chicken (see below) and maple tahini dressing (see below) as desired.

Lemongrass Chicken

450 g chicken breasts or thighs
1-2 tsp (5-10 mL) lemongrass paste (found in the vegetable cooler section)
½ thumb-size piece of ginger
2 Tbs (30 mL) light soy sauce
1 tsp (5 mL) fish sauce
2 Tbs brown sugar
2 Tbs (30 mL) olive oil or canola oil

1. Combine all ingredients except chicken in a jar and blend with an immersion blender.
2. Place chicken in a bowl with a lid or in a resealable bag and add marinade. Let sit minimum 4 hours, the longer the better.
3. When marinated, grill or pan fry chicken until cooked through but not dry. Cut into strips.

Maple Tahini Dressing

1 small clove garlic, peeled
½ cup (120 mL) avocado oil or canola oil
3 Tbs (45 mL) white vinegar
2 Tbs (30 mL) maple syrup
¾ tsp salt
¼ tsp freshly ground pepper or white pepper
¼ cup (60 mL) tahini

1. With an immersion blender purée garlic, oil, vinegar, maple syrup, salt and pepper in a jar or measuring cup.
2. Whisk in the tahini. You might need to add more water and a touch of vinegar to thin. Put into a glass jar or other resealable container. The dressing will last for 2 weeks.

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Inspiration flows from several different springs for **Chris Hartman**, chef and owner of Cochrane's **Fence & Post**. "My cooking is influenced by my training in classic French cuisine, my curiosity for new flavours and ingredients, the beauty of nature, and the creativity of other chefs."

Not one to be fenced in by one or two favourite dishes, Chef Chris' preferences all depend on his mood. It could be the Eggplant, Wedge Salad, or Elk: "All hold a special place in my culinary affections, each for their unique attributes and overall enjoyment they bring."

Pavlova is another dish that is close to Chef Chris' heart. "It holds sentimental value for me because it transports me back to the time I spent in Australia and New Zealand." By sharing it with you, he hopes to continue the legacy of the dish. "It is a dessert that never fails to impress guests and loved ones, making it an excellent choice for special occasions or simply as a treat to brighten up any day.

"Prioritize taste, freshness, and creativity," he advises. "It's very easy to switch it up by using different ingredients depending on the season."

Fence & Post Pavlova

Serves 4

4 egg whites
250 g sugar
1½ tsp (7.5 mL) distilled white vinegar
1 Tbs corn starch
1½ tsp (7.5 mL) vanilla extract

1. Whip egg whites, gradually add in the sugar, whip until firm peaks and sugar has dissolved.
2. Fold in vinegar and then fold in cornstarch and vanilla.
3. Pipe to 90 mm diameter and 60 mm high, using a wet spoon make an indent in the top.
4. Bake at 250° F for 30 minutes, then turn the oven off and leave in for another half hour.

Pastry cream:

60 g egg yolks
1¼ cups (300 mL) milk
50 g sugar
30 g cornstarch or Birds custard powder
Vanilla bean or extract

1. Whisk yolks, cornstarch (or custard powder) and sugar together until light in colour.
2. Bring the milk to a simmer with the vanilla bean (if using).
3. Pour 1/3 of the hot milk into the egg yolk mixture, mix well and sieve (to prevent lumps) back into the milk. Cook over medium heat stirring constantly with a whisk until it comes to a boil. Simmer for 30 seconds.
4. Pour into a shallow bowl and place plastic wrap in contact with the surface. Cool completely. Once cold, whisk until smooth.

Whipped cream:

60 g whipping cream
35 g sugar

Beat cold whipping cream with sugar in a bowl for 2 - 2½ minutes or until it forms soft peaks.

Take a meringue and top with the pastry cream, top with your favourite seasonal fruits (poached rhubarb and fresh strawberries are great for summer). Top with a dollop of whipped cream (or if feeling fancy use a piping tip and make a nice swirl).

> *Note:* Do not make more than an hour or two ahead of time, otherwise the meringue will get soggy

Keane Straub has travelled from Tofino to Charlottetown, sampling the different flavours Canada offers. The passion people have for their craft and culture inspires Keane to tell their stories.







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The Challenges and Changes for BC Wine

BY **KURTIS KOLT**

While there is a rhythm of ebb and flow in the evolution of a wine region, the wine industry in British Columbia has seen marked change in the last few years. Much of this change was related to outside elements like climate change, but there was also the necessary pivot of winery operations as the COVID-19 global pandemic forced many wineries to be nimble on their feet and constantly adjust everything from tasting room etiquette to how to farm sustainably with a reduced labour force – or how to attract out of province visitors. As with every other industry, COVID-19 brought much change, and some of that change is here to stay.

"During COVID, we saw an uptick in web sales and an overall downturn in tourism, however the tourism was only slightly down," says David Paterson, the general manager and winemaker at Kelowna's Tantalus Vineyards. "The demographic changed with more domestic tourism and (we saw) little to no international tourism."

Ria Kitsch of nearby Kitsch Wines confirms these points. "The 2020 and 2021 seasons were marked with increased Canadian traffic and a strong desire to buy and support local. 2022 saw a great return to international travel by Canadians, and while the doors to Canada were generally open, the amount of travelers visiting the Okanagan did not seem to keep up with the number of people who traveled abroad. Similarly, direct-to-consumer sales peaked during those couple years and has slowly declined. Offsetting this are restaurants, which went to zero for some months, have steadily increased since COVID, and are back to pre-COVID levels."

Down south in the Oliver-Osoyoos region, Severine Pinte, executive winemaker and viticulturalist at the Le Vieux Pin and La Stella wineries, did what most wineries did when the pandemic hit: switching to appointment-only in their tasting rooms. The opportunity for appointments has

remained across broad swaths of BC wine country, with many keeping those slots while allowing walk-ins when time allows. "Both tasting rooms stayed really busy during the season as we received a lot of visits from out of province, Albertans in particular."

There was some expansion of bottlings for Pinte, along with a couple of shifts due to the pandemic. "As we grew and became more knowledgeable about our terroirs, our climate, we introduced smaller batches: at La Stella Classico d'Osoyoos, and at Le Vieux Pin: Cuvée Dorée. It was part of our natural evolution and it happened to fit the higher direct-to-consumer mid-pandemic demand. For our natural line Artakama, we did switch from 1.5 litre magnums to 750 mL as a direct correlation to COVID, as people partied less with friends, and needed smaller containers to consume at home."

Packaging, of course, remains top of mind for producers. Glassware costs have gone up and availability can be scarce. Fortunately, there are alternatives. "We would love to trial cans or bag-in-box, but it's simply a matter of limited bandwidth at this time. We have so many various projects and growth happening currently, that throwing another ball at our winemaker would make his juggling act too cumbersome at this point," says Chris Turyk, marketing and sales director at Vancouver Island's Unsworth Vineyards. "Having said that, I would never rule out alternative packaging, especially through the lens of combining sustainability and trimming ever-increasing packaging costs."



Combining sustainability, as a business and environmentally, is something Paterson is currently tackling at Tantalus. "We have changed our wine a little by adding grapes from southern vineyards into the mix. This was a product of four brutal winters in a row," he says. "We decided to branch out and play with new varieties partly through interest in playing with those varieties and partly because we lacked sufficient volumes from our estate vineyards to remain a sustainable company. We have also introduced some piquettes (a historic style of wine made from post-winemaking grape must) into our line-up."

Kitsch Wines have also added a canned piquette as a creative solution to low-yield years, owing partially to climate change – a concern shared by most in the industry, along with Ria Kitsch. "The effects of climate change are multi-pronged: extreme cold affects yields and increases cost of goods, and decreases margin and operational sustainability. Increased wildfires affect tourism as well as vintage quality if the fires are at the wrong time and place."

Another challenge to establishing a truly globally recognized wine region is the ability to get our wines distributed beyond British Columbia.

"With the winters seemingly getting colder and the peak of the summer getting hotter, which stresses the vines, it results in a decline in yields across the province," shares Paterson. "This makes it more and more challenging to remain a sustainable and profitable company."

Over on Vancouver Island, Turyk has similar sentiments. "It's hard to talk about BC wine without remarking on climate issues. In the Okanagan, between hard winter freeze, untimely frost and wildfires, vintages can be hugely variable in volume of wine produced. Part of that makes it an exciting and scarce commodity at times, but it's hard to run a business or an industry contending with unexpected natural events that can cut the yield of fruit to almost nothing in a matter of a few days."

"Another challenge to establishing a truly globally recognized wine region is the ability to get our wines distributed beyond British Columbia. There is a high cost of land, labour, hard costs, and production costs; therefore, shelf prices are high. On the one hand, we get to live and make wine in one of the most amazing places on the planet and enjoy unparalleled local support for our wines. On the other hand, exporting beyond BC results in higher prices the further we get from home."

So is it all doom and gloom? Not at all. He continues, "the most exciting things for BC wine right now are diversity and age-ability. British Columbia's wine has wonderful natural acidity and they age extremely well on the back of that. The best producers are now consistently producing world class wines that are uniquely BC. With many micro-climates and excellent terroir expression, there is a ton to be excited about."

Ria Kitsch continues her analogy of aspects of industry being multi-pronged. "I see two opposite ends of the industry getting interesting: one is the small independent creatives making really cool wine in an authentic, community-oriented way, and the other is groups with deep pockets that are able to build





incredible world-class facilities that will help build the tourism and recognition of the region – and both have made great wines."

Turyk's on the same page. "British Columbia is celebrating its diversity of regions and therefore styles, which hugely benefits us in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island. The wine trade is now accurately aware of what is happening in Cowichan, and we are seeing that trend also happening in consumer awareness for the region. Taking Pinot Noir for example, the diversity in expression of the wines from Cowichan Valley versus up and down the Okanagan Valley, is vast and interesting enough to grab some serious international attention for the respective quality and regional distinction evident in the glass."

Pinot noir, one the globe's most coveted varieties, seems to relish the cool climate setting of Vancouver Island. This is noticed industry-wide, particularly when iconic regions in places like California have been constantly decimated by wildfires in recent years. It's not lost on many why California's Jackson family (think Freemark Abbey, Kendall-Jackson, and Stonestreet Estate Vineyards) have recently scooped up two Vancouver Island wineries: Unsworth Vineyards from the Turyk family, and Blue Grouse Estate Winery.

So. BC wine continues to up its quality, and many wineries have fun, new, projects on the go, but labour and other costs are high, and climate change in the vineyard means we're always dealing with a bit of a coming wildcard. So where do these things leave Albertans and their perspective and palate for BC wine, coupled with an economic climate where we're seeing inflation as an ongoing concern?

"There are more and more producers making wine in British Columbia than ever before. Lots of fresh eyes and palates in the market delivering very fresh and vibrant wines," says Calgary-based sommelier and consultant, Brad Royale. "This movement away from oak and over-extraction (of fruit) is very welcomed! As well, some established producers have found their rhythm and are making some of the best wines they have ever produced."

The numbers game is what weighs heaviest on the retail side, as mentioned by Erin Loader of Market Wines. "The most notable thing from pre-COVID to now is the number of discussions I've been hearing regarding pricing between BC wine in BC, and BC wine in Alberta. It seems to have resulted in selling less BC wine in Alberta than we did before."

"The market looks different now. In 2021, we saw a lot of folks head to BC for vacation because international travel was still off the table. That meant a lot of people visiting BC wineries and stocking up when they saw how much more inexpensive the wines are at the cellar door. Luckily now that people from other countries are visiting again, and word about Canada producing world class wine is getting around; a lot of tourists are looking to discover Canadian wine, and given Alberta's proximity to BC, they tend to put to focus on the category."

Yet the pricing element remains difficult. "Yes, if you buy a case directly from a winery in BC, you'll likely get free shipping, but you have to buy a full case," she says. "If you pay for shipping though, and factor in the taxes, you're likely only paying a few bucks less than you would if you were supporting a local, Alberta-based bottle shop."

So, as we continue to swirl our glasses and sip. It's a good reminder that supporting local can at once mean both continuing to buy BC, but also doing so while supporting local, independent Alberta restaurants and retail shops.

Kurtis Kolt is a Vancouver-based wine consultant who writes about wine, presents seminars, hosts events, judges wine competitions, and works with restaurants on their wine programs.

Bee-yond EXPECTATIONS

CALGARY FARMERS' MARKET

Discover what the buzz is about:
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Eleven-year-old flutist Grace is a proud member of the Youth Orchestra of Northern Alberta. With funding from Edmonton Community Foundation, YONA-Sistema is helping young people living in priority neighbourhoods learn social skills, receive support, succeed academically, and gain confidence through music.

Donations to ECF inspire hope, create opportunity and enhance the Edmonton lifestyle. We work with our donors to give, grow and transform. ecfoundation.org hits all the right notes.

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Pan Bagnat

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY
RENÉE KOHLMAN



If you've been lucky enough to have traveled to France, chances are you've seen Pan Bagnat scrawled on menu boards, or even eaten this classic sandwich yourself. Translated as "bathed bread" which honestly doesn't sound that appealing, I've learned not to judge a sandwich by its translation!

The sandwich is a Niçoise salad but in sandwich form. Originating from the south of France, the sandwich has the same crossover ingredients, like oil-packed tuna, olives, and tomatoes, but like most classic sandwiches, there are a million variations added to these essential ingredients. Slices of hard-boiled eggs are popular, as are torn pieces of marinated artichoke hearts, leaves of fresh basil, peppery radishes, and slices of crunchy cucumbers.

Anchovies add essential umami, but if you couldn't possibly think about sliding some onto your sandwich, just smash them into a garlicky vinaigrette and no one will be the wiser - the sandwich will indeed be better for it though. Some folks like to toss the cucumbers in the vinaigrette and have them as a base for the sandwich, but I like to finish assembling the sandwich then pour the vinaigrette over the top of everything then add the top layer of bread. The vinaigrette soaks into the bread, and makes this sandwich next level delicious.

The thing that sets this sandwich apart is the smashing of it. That's right. You get to pile the ingredients on top of one another, and then squish the bread together. At this point you'll want to wrap the sandwich tightly in foil and it's imperative that you weigh it down, with either a heavy cast iron skillet, or even a small child. If going the child route, be sure to wrap the foil-wrapped sandwich inside a plastic bag. Do this for about 20 minutes, so that the juices of the ingredients marry together, and the bread becomes moist, or in this case "bathed."

Choice of bread is super key. You want a crusty country loaf, or ciabatta buns. Something with a chewy crumb but substantial enough in the crust department so that the sandwich doesn't fall apart and get all soggy. No one likes a soggy sandwich. Ever.

This is a bold, fresh-tasting sandwich that has no shortage of flavour. Be sure to use oil-packed tuna, which just tastes so much better. Tins of this fish are readily available in most supermarkets. It might seem odd to have slices of hard-boiled eggs in the sandwich but the fat from the yolk really helps to balance out the saltiness of the fish and the acidity of the dressing. Slivers of red onion add brightness to the sandwich, and I like the addition of peppery arugula for the same reason.

This is the perfect make-ahead sandwich, ideal for toting along on picnics. Even after the sandwich is wrapped and smashed, it can be refrigerated overnight then eaten for lunch the next day. It'll be like you've taken a trip to the south of France, without the bothersome ticket price and limited carry-on space.

Just be sure to pack lots of napkins.

Pan Bagnat

Serves 4

Dressing:

2 anchovy filets, minced
1 garlic clove, minced
1 Tbs (15 mL) red wine vinegar or lemon juice
1 tsp (5 mL) Dijon mustard
Pinches of salt and pepper
¼ cup (60 mL) extra virgin olive oil

Sandwich:

1 - 20 cm crusty country loaf, or 4 small ciabatta buns, halved
2 mini cucumbers, sliced on the diagonal
2 medium-size ripe tomatoes, sliced
½ small red onion, thinly sliced
3 radishes, thinly sliced
3 marinated artichoke hearts, sliced
1 can (198 g) olive oil packed tuna, drained
10 large basil leaves, torn
2 Tbs pitted kalamata olives
2 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and sliced
Generous handful arugula



1. Make the dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together the anchovies, garlic, red wine vinegar, mustard, salt and pepper. Gradually whisk in the olive oil. Taste to adjust the seasoning.
2. To prepare the sandwich: If using the country loaf, pull out some of the soft interior crumb to form a cavity. If using the ciabatta buns, you can use as is.
3. Spread the cucumbers on the bottom half of the bread. Top with tomato slices, red onion, radishes, artichoke hearts and tuna. Finish with the basil leaves, olives, slices of hard-boiled egg and arugula. Pour the dressing evenly over the top of the sandwich. Cover with the second half of the bread and firmly press the sandwich together.
4. Wrap the sandwich tightly in foil or waxed paper. Put the sandwich under a weight, such as a cast iron pan topped with a full tea kettle. Weight the sandwich for 10 minutes, then flip and weight it for another 10 minutes. Unwrap and slice. Serve immediately or keep it wrapped and refrigerated for up to 8 hours.

Renée Kohlman is a busy food writer and recipe developer living in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Her second cookbook, "Vegetables: A Love Story" has just been published.



A-Buzz About Honey







Bees are irreplaceable contributors to a healthy environment and key players in the success of our food ecosystems. How we care for our bees – and we have a serious responsibility for every one of them – speaks to who we are as people. This means at one point there must have lived among us some spectacularly beautiful human beings to recognize the sweet results of bees' labours, and introduce to us the magic that is honey. For the family at the heart of Good Morning Honey, life is all about our bees and this delicious magic.

Amber and Richard Ozero started beekeeping in 2011 with 920 hives, quickly growing that to 3,200. They now have more than 4,000 hives. "Alberta produces the most honey in Canada and we're so proud to be part of this strong beekeeping community", says Amber. The family apiaries at Good Morning Honey cover a diverse area of natural land and working farms in Parkland County, just west of Edmonton. Their bees collect pollen from a variety of wildflowers, clover, alfalfa, and canola to produce some of the world's finest honey. When honeybees are used as pollinators, crop yields can be increased by up to 300%. That's good farming and helps maintain a healthy ecosystem.

Having so many apiaries means that Amber and Richard are guardians of a lot of bees. There can be between 20,000 and 80,000 honeybees in one hive: as low as 10,000 to 15,000 in spring, increasing exponentially by end of summer. Each hive/colony has a queen with the rest made up of workers (female) and drones (male). Worker honeybees are the ones that might sting and will do so only if they feel threatened; when they sting, they die. So when you're watching them buzz lazily about a fragrant lavender bush or zip over to a flower, give them a little space and you'll get along just fine. With keeping this many honeybees happy and working, we can easily conclude that the Ozeros are passionate about their bees.

The magic that is honey is part of the wonder that is natural science. Honeybees collect the nectar from flowering plants and store it inside their bodies, visible to us as little pollen pellets carried seemingly along the outside. It takes one hive/colony of honeybees to pollinate an acre of fruit trees, and one honeybee can visit between 50 and 1,000 plants each day.

The pollen/nectar from the honeybees is transferred into a beeswax comb where it thickens and becomes honey, and then the bees cap their combs with wax before moving along to the next. One colony of thousands of honeybees can produce up to 300 lbs (136 kg) or more of honey over

a six-week period, typically between June and August. The average honey yield per hive in Canada is twice the world's average, thanks to our long warm summers and agricultural crops.

Carefully hand-harvested from their beehives, Good Morning Honey products are 100% Canadian unpasteurized honey prized for colour and a silky-smooth texture. With honey an obvious backbone of their lineup (including creamed, blueberry, and dandelion), the Ozero family also produces honeycomb, bee pollen, and beeswax products like lip balms and candles. All are certified organic, allergen-free, dairy-free, and-gluten free.

Good Morning Honey is also a member of BeeMaid Honey, a Canadian company started in the 1950s by a group of beekeepers with the intention of producing, packing, and distributing their own honey. Today, BeeMaid has two facilities: in the origin city of Winnipeg and the other in Spruce Grove. BeeMaid members are "committed to beekeeping in Canada, supplying a 100% pure product and caring for the bees that provide us with their honey." This dedication to local agriculture and food production resonates with Good Morning Honey.

"Our focus here is really on the power of community and the importance of supporting local", says Amber Ozero. "Being part of Made in Alberta makes all the difference for us, as farmers and producers. We work hard to contribute to the local economy and are so grateful



for the community's support in return." Owning and operating a small business can be challenging, especially in agriculture, but loyal customers and a supportive business community like Made in Alberta helps to keep the Ozeros motivated.

Working the business as a family also means having the ability to build operations in a way that represents their family's values. "Our record keeping provides traceability of the honey, from the hive to you." It's a commitment to producing the best quality products in the most accountable way that also naturally aligns with the Made in Alberta program."

"Buying local empowers beekeepers to thrive, safeguards vital honeybee populations, and ensures the pollination of our precious flowers and crops", says Amber. If you want to shop locally and are looking for a call to action, this is one that we can easily heed. A tenet of the Made in Alberta program is helping us know that our hard-earned dollars are supporting the people in our communities who are also working hard to build them.

Edmonton locals and visitors can find and ask for Good Morning Honey at their favourite shops, or see them at markets like Callingwood (June to October), Southwest Edmonton Farmers' Market (May to October), or 124 St Grand Market (May to October). For those outside of the area, Good Morning Honey has a wealth of honey information and resources on their website plus a robust online shop – something that's almost as sweet as being there.





Our unique Made in Alberta label clearly identifies local food and beverages that are made right here in Alberta. By purchasing Made in Alberta products, you are supporting Alberta's growers, farmers, producers, and processors. When we choose local, we choose our neighbours. ***madeinalberta.co***

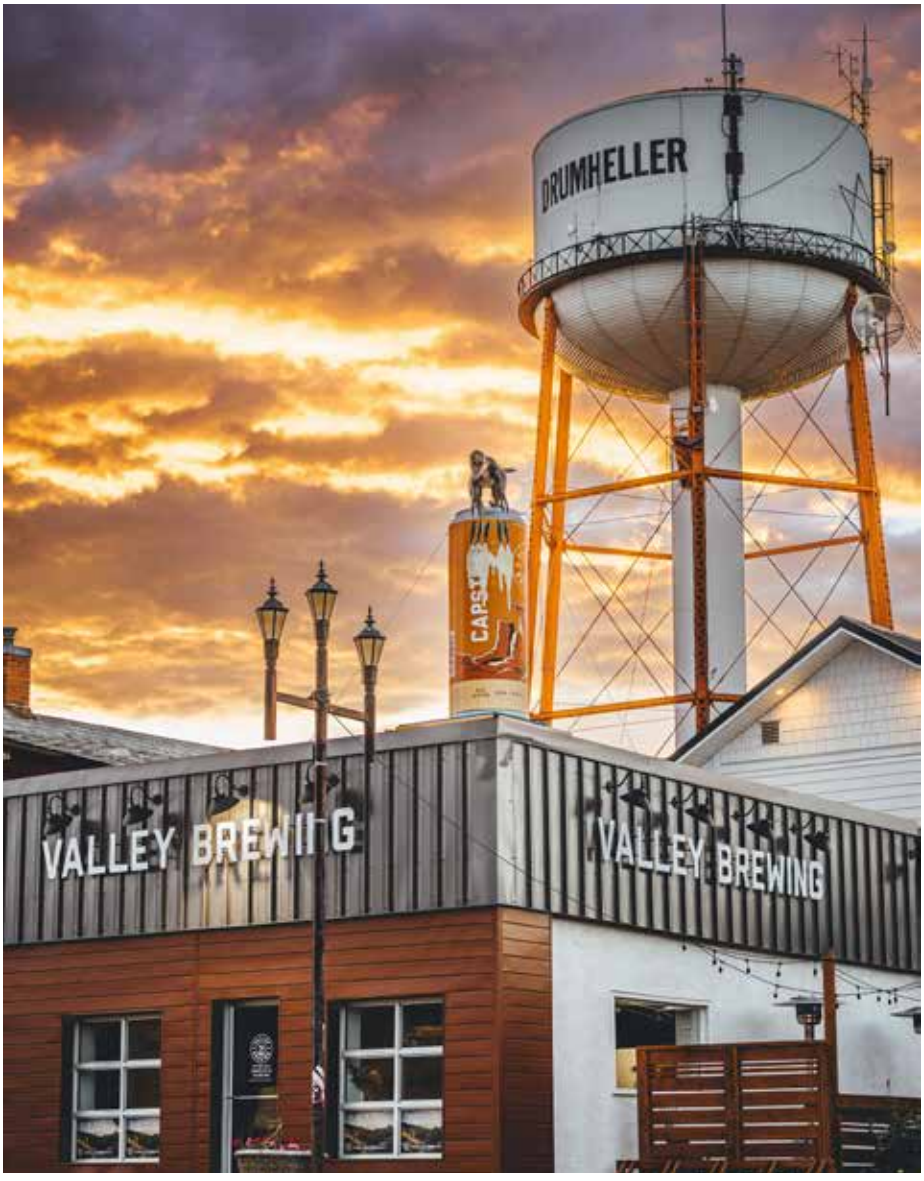
Alberta's Small Town **Foodie Stops** *with* **Big Taste**

BY **LYNDA SEA**

DRIVING BETWEEN THE BIG CITY metropolises of Calgary and Edmonton, you'll find a number of worthwhile spots to eat and drink that deserve a pitstop or a day-trip destination on your summer road trips.

Half the fun this season is adventuring into our great little Alberta towns, hamlets, lake communities and municipalities. The other half is noshing and imbibing at new-to-you eateries, restaurants, and breweries - that locals may want to keep a secret - but are worth telling everyone about.

Happy travels.



Valley Brewing



Valley Brewing

Valley Brewing (Drumheller)

Since it opened August long weekend 2019, Valley Brewing has not only survived the pandemic but thrived, as it's now a source of pride for Drumheller locals and a tourist draw in the summer months. The brewery and tasting room is right downtown and the large patio is adjacent to Drumheller's Munchie Park. It's a great place to enjoy their brews, which range from smoked lagers to fruited kettle sours, to west coast and hazy IPAs to oak-aged apple cider and ginger perry. Try their award-winning beers like the

'Miners - Schwarzbier' or the Prairie Icon Farmhouse Ale. Brewmaster Nick Patterson says the Discovery - Mixed Berry Ale, a wheat ale with raspberry and strawberry puree, sells the most but that Valley Brewing is also known for its Devils Row - Coffee Lager which uses coffee beans from Friend Folk Coffee Roasters. "We steep a hefty amount of whole beans in the finished beer prior to packaging to give it a blast of coffee aroma and flavour while maintaining the straw colour of a light lager." valleybrewing.ca

Saskitoba Diner (Nisku)

Tucked in a business park in the industrial area of Nisku, this authentic Ukrainian family restaurant is totally worth a detour. Don't let the nondescript interior fool you as Saskitoba Diner serves up authentic Ukrainian food that's heart-warming with its stomach-filling portions. Everything is made from scratch like the borscht and holubtsi (cabbage rolls). The hand-pinched pierogies are boiled, then tossed in sauteed butter and onions with dill sauce, and are the absolute not-to-be-missed item. Order a combo, which gives you six to nine potato cheddar pierogies, cabbage rolls and choice of grilled kubasa (pork sausage with garlic), Manitoba farmer's sausage or meatballs and gravy, with slaw. The weekend buffet is usually very busy but gives you a chance to try a bit of everything. Prices are incredibly reasonable, and you can even load up on their frozen pierogies, rolls and more foods from the freezer to take home. facebook.com/saskitoba

Blue Dragon Fine Thai & Khmer Cuisine (Red Deer)

The next time you pass through Red Deer between Edmonton and Calgary, bypass Gasoline Alley's usual suspects of chains and fast foods. Instead, stop at this off-the-beaten path Southeast Asian family restaurant in the city's north. While Thai places are pretty common nowadays, it's not often you'll find Cambodian restaurants in Alberta, which makes Blue Dragon quite special. Brothers Spon and Dany Sok whip up all sorts of coconut curries, noodles and stir-fries here. Don't miss their Khmer beef skewers which are marinated in a traditional blend of herbs and spices, or the Cambodian stir-fry which has tender pieces of chicken, green beans and tomatoes all sauteed in a sauce with kaffir lime leaves, lemongrass and coriander, topped with cilantro. The menu has plenty of vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free dishes too. Their other family establishment is Bamboo Hut Southeast Asian Cuisine, in Sylvan Lake. bluedragonreddeer.ca



Sea Change Brewing Co.

Pie Shop and Eatery, Rosebud Country Inn (Rosebud)

Rosebud is a tiny hamlet in the river valley of Wheatland County most known for the Rosebud Theatre, a dinner theatre in Alberta's prairies. Just over an hour from Calgary, it's an escape from the city to take in Rosebud's art galleries, antique shops and natural attractions. Whether you're coming for the day, for a show or staying the weekend, the town's full of charming B&Bs and inns. The iconic yellow building of the Rosebud Country Inn houses a great little eatery great for a lunch break. Enjoy an assortment of sandwiches, homemade soups, and buns. While the inn's 'pastry charmer' Darlene retired in December 2022 so they don't do their famous pies anymore, you can still get cinnamon buns, chocolate tarts, and other sweet treats here. Keep in mind it's only open Wednesday to Saturday from noon to 4 pm. Open to inn guests and public. rosebudcountryinn.com

Sylvan Star Cheese Farm (Red Deer County)

You can find Sylvan Star Cheese products at several Edmonton and Calgary farmers markets and many other Southern Alberta groceries, but the dairy farm and store between Sylvan Lake and Red Deer is a great road-trip destination. Sylvan Star Cheese is known for their award-winning Dutch-style Gouda cheeses made from heat-treated milk that has no additives, no antibiotics, and is lactose free. It is now run by Jennifer and Art Snoek who took over from John Schalkwyk in February 2022 when he retired. Snoek is a sixth-generation cheese maker who is continuing the Schalkwyks legacy that saw its cheese win awards like the extra-aged gouda (Grizzly) which is ranked 4th in the world. At the farm storefront, you can find more than 25 different flavoured gouda cheese, meats from central Alberta butchers, jams, honeys, condiments and European housewares and crafts. Book a cheese tour to see how the cheese is made. sylvanstar.ca

Sea Change Brewing Co. (Beaumont)

Sea Change Brewing was started by a group of friends in 2017 who were a motley crew of musicians, artists, creatives and craft brewers in Edmonton,

and quickly made a splash on the Alberta brewing scene. While both the taproom locations in Edmonton and Beaumont serve the same award-winning beers, the food menu and specials vary. Beers that have taken home gold provincially and nationally include its hazy pale ale "The Wolf", light lager "Death Wave" and "Turbo Stout" with 10 different malts and real vanilla and notes of chocolate, toffee, caramel, biscuit and dark fruit.

Grab a pint, beer cocktail, a flight and pair with mouth-watering grub. At the Beaumont location, get the ceviche (diced mild whitefish and shrimp in lime juice with tomato, onion, and cilantro) or the delicious beef barbacoa tacos made with slow-cooked pulled beef in lime juice and Irish red ale, served with salsa roja and pickled carrots. seachangebeer.com

Loco Burro Fresh Mexican Grill (Vegreville)

In February 2019, this family restaurant opened its doors in the town of Vegreville and has been steadily growing since. The bright colourful and clean interior is very welcoming, and portions are very generous. Everything is made in house with fresh, local ingredients and the flavours are inspired by Mexico. At Loco Burro, you choose your vessel (burritos, burrito bowls, tacos and quesadillas) and then pick your fillings (chicken, pork, beer-battered cod, chorizo, slow roasted beef) and salsa (fresh tomato, roasted corn, tomatillo green chili, or the extra spicy red chili). The family recipe BBQ pulled pork is a crowd favourite. Since the menu is customizable, there are lots of options that cater to vegans, vegetarians, celiacs and those with food allergies. facebook.com/locoburrogrill

Holey Grail Donuts & Bakery (Pigeon Lake)

This family-owned bakery is run by father and daughter duo Sabrina and Dan Stanton. The family considers the summer village of Pigeon Lake its second home as they have a 50-year history of being a part of the local community, spending weekends and holidays there. With Holey Grail, they've brought a fun donut shop offering inventive flavours to locals and tourists alike. Their fried yeast donuts are made fresh daily and come in an assortment of flavours, like a signature



Loco Burro Fresh Mexican Grill

black forest; champagne-flavoured glaze sprinkled with fizzy PopRocks; and the cheeky Saturday Morning Cartoons donut (a milk-flavoured glaze topped with Froot Loops). One of the most popular flavours is the Banana Split, a chocolate dipped yeast donut, cut in half and filled with sliced fresh strawberries and bananas in between layers of whipping cream. Keep in mind summer hours means they are closed Mondays and Tuesdays. On Fridays, they host Games Night with board games and puzzles available. holeygrailbakery.ca

The 1906 Bistro Bar (Didsbury)

Didsbury might not be the first place you think of for fine dining but at The 1906, you'll feel transported to a chic Parisian restaurant that'll surprise you with its European tastes and flair in small town Alberta. It opened in October 2021 in a historic brick building with a beautiful courtyard back patio. The menu changes frequently but you can expect perfectly plated dishes like a seafood ragout in a caper, lemon, white wine sauce on puff pastry and crisped saffron rice and asparagus. Whether you get the charcuterie boards, schnitzels, oysters, and tapas platters or steaks, the dining experience for sit-down dinner or a quick snack is memorable because you'll feel the cozy ambiance immediately. They serve classic cocktails and yummy desserts like German apple cake and Sicilian cannoli and espresso mascarpone cream, and everyone raves about the gelato bar if you're looking for a cold treat on a hot summer day. the1906bistrobar.com

Sorso Lounge (Airdrie)

If you love Caesars, hop in the car and make the drive to this Airdrie lounge as people rave about their classic house Caesars. In 2021, Sorso was crowned winner of Mott's Clamato's Best Caesar in Town, beating out more than 250 other restaurants across Canada. Their "Suffering Caesar" was made with pineapple rum, black fermented garlic, mango nectar, and bone marrow ice cubes. In Italian, Sorso means sip, and this neighbourhood spot has great patio vibes so you can enjoy their cocktails and libations with burgers, flatbreads, or mains. It's a popular brunch spot where you can get a spiked honey latte and choose from an extensive menu of bennies, omelettes, and scramblers. Don't miss the popular chicken peanut satay rice bowl served with fresh naan or better yet, order a bunch of shareables with friends, such as the pork belly skewers, bacon wrapped pickles,

and tempura mushrooms. A favourite is the Korean Chicken BBQ Tacos that have fried chicken in sweet-fire Gochujang and wasabi mayo. sorso.ca

Starlite Diner (Bowden)

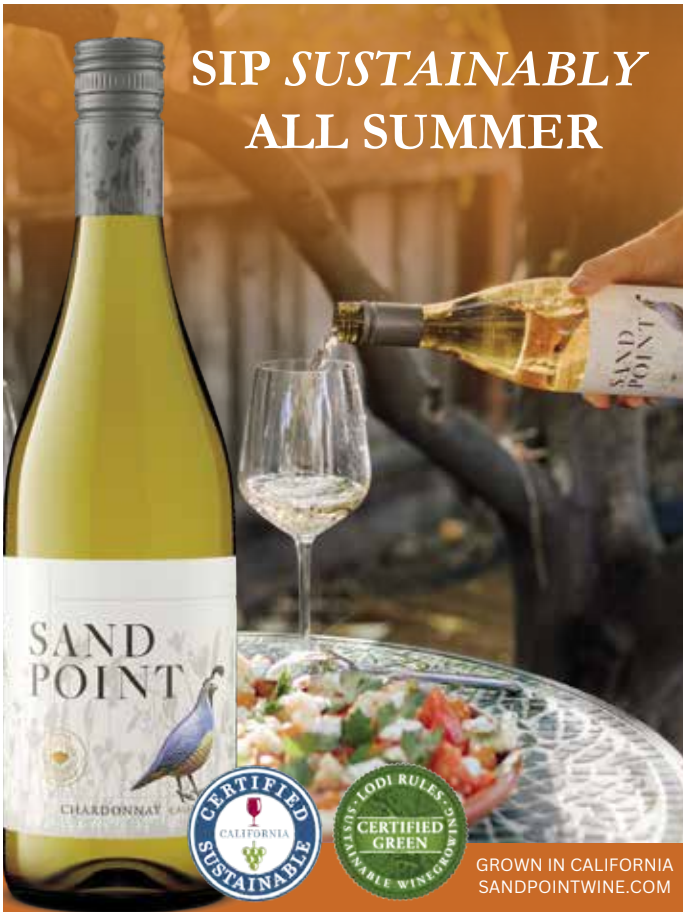
For those familiar with the drive along the QE2 corridor between Calgary and Red Deer, the Starlite Diner is a visual landmark off Highway 2 in Bowden. It's hard to miss the shiny red and chrome repurposed train car with the UFO perched on its roof but if you pull over for a meal here, you'll be treated to a quirky, retro diner with red booths and the iconic long counter that's all alien-themed inside. Think sci-fi posters and kitsch menu names like a Crop Circle salad (their version of a cobb salad) or the Meteor burger (all beef patty) and Eclipse burger (a grilled Cajun chicken breast with all the fixin's) and that's Starlite. They also do great milkshakes and poutine, and it's a perfect food stop if you're coming for the Eagle Creek Farm, Sunflower Maze, or Gopher Museum nearby in Torrington. starliterestaurant.ca

Grouchy Daddy's (Olds)

Grouchy Daddy's in the town of Olds serves up big city food in a small town. The trendy, but on-point, casual dining experience with dishes by head chef Ian Miller, is a bit of a revelation in this agricultural rural town. Even if you don't live in town, it's definitely worth the drive to check this place out. Try the Shipwreck pizza with candied salmon, spinach, onion, pico de gallo, feta, dill lime mayo, mozzarella, and pizza sauce, or the Dirty Caesar burger made with a butcher block patty, cheddar, bacon, pickles, onion, tangy clamato sauce, horseradish mayo and Montreal steak spice, topped with a breaded pickle spear. Interesting chicken wing flavours include honey habanero dust, Tahiti lime pepper, truffle parm, and sweet Kentucky bourbon. In May, Grouchy Daddy's started featuring regional local breweries and offered a bucket of brews mixer so you could enjoy on ice, just in time for patio season. And definitely save room for their donuts or brownies for dessert. grouchydaddys.com



Holey Grail Donuts & Bakery





Stick to it with ~~Skewers~~

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY **NATALIE FINDLAY**



SUMMERTIME AND THE LIVIN'S EASY. Why shouldn't meals be the same?

The warm weather and long, light-filled days inspire ease, fun and as much time outdoors as possible. This carefree feeling also translates to mealtime. Quick meals, no recipe-recipes that are delicious and easy to make, is the motto of summer mealtime.

Skewers meet this challenge. They are quick, easy, and can incorporate multiple food preferences at the same time. Since the skewers are so quick and easy to make, we want our sides to match - quick, easy, and delicious.

For seafood lovers, it will take longer to heat up the barbecue than it does to cook the skewers. There are all kinds of seafood skewers to enjoy: shrimp, fish, scallops. These don't require a lot of seasoning to taste amazing. But time on the barbecue is of utmost importance. They will need very minimal time touching those grates or you will end up with rubbery, dried out seafood that even melted butter can't save.

Shrimp Skewers

Makes 2 skewers

12 shrimps
1½ tsp (7 mL) olive oil
Pinch sea salt
Parsley sauce or spicy butter to serve

1. Heat barbecue to 350° F.
2. Peel and devein shrimp leaving the tails on. Brush olive oil on shrimp and sprinkle with sea salt. Pierce shrimp with skewer twice to form a "U" shape. Place 6 shrimp on each skewer but don't push them too tight together.
3. Place on barbecue for 2 - 3 minutes total. Do not leave on longer as they will dry out and you will lose the delectable taste and texture of the shrimp.
4. Serve with spicy butter or parsley sauce to add punch.

Spicy Butter

Makes ½ cup

½ cup butter
1 clove garlic, peeled and grated
½ tsp chili powder
¼ tsp cayenne
1 Tbs parsley, finely chopped

In a small saucepan, add all ingredients except parsley. Place saucepan on the top shelf in your barbecue or on the side that the heat is turned off and let butter melt and stir to combine all ingredients. Add parsley just before serving.



Parsley Sauce

Makes 1/3 cup

½ bunch parsley, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, peeled and grated
1 lemon zested (reserve juice for another use)
1/3 cup (80 mL) olive oil

Add all ingredients into a small bowl and let sit for an hour. Drizzle over top of skewers.



Veggie Skewers

Makes 4 skewers

Veggies reign supreme when barbecued. Plus, it's much more fun to eat your vegetables after they have been skewered and even better when you can pick only the vegetables you want.

½ yellow zucchini
½ green zucchini
½ red sweet pepper
½ orange sweet pepper
¼ red onion
8 button mushrooms
8 cherry tomatoes
2 Tbs (30 mL) olive oil
1 tsp parsley, finely chopped
1 tsp oregano, finely chopped
Pinch sea salt
Pinch pepper

1. Heat barbecue to 350° F.
2. Gather all ingredients. Cut into bite sized pieces leaving the mushrooms and tomatoes whole and thread onto the skewer.
3. Combine olive oil, parsley, and oregano in a small bowl. Brush olive oil mixture onto skewers and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
4. Grill 4 minutes on each side.
5. Serve with a simple savoury yogurt dip.

Savoury Yogurt Dip

Makes 1 cup

1 cup (240 mL) greek yogurt
4 cm cucumber, grated
1 clove garlic, grated
½ lemon, juice and zest
Pinch sea salt

1. Place yogurt in a cheese cloth or milk bag and strain over a bowl to release the extra liquid for 2 - 4 hours. Reserve yogurt.
2. Grate the cucumber and squeeze to remove as much liquid as you can. Grate garlic.
3. In a small bowl, combine yogurt, cucumber, garlic, lemon juice and zest and salt.



Barbecue Steak and Potatoes

Makes 4-5 skewers

9 baby potatoes
1 - 250g steak
Pinch sea salt
Generous amount of black pepper
8-10 button mushrooms
2 asparagus stems
½ red sweet pepper
¼ cup barbecue sauce

1. In a small pot fill three-quarter with water and place over high heat. Add baby potatoes.
When pot reaches a boil reduce to low and cook just until the potatoes are soft enough to be pierced with a fork (approx 15 minutes). Let cool.
2. Season steak with salt and pepper and cut into cubes. Cut pepper into bite size pieces and asparagus into 3 or 4 pieces.
3. Thread the skewer with all ingredients. Brush with barbecue sauce. Grill 3 - 4 minutes on each side or until your steak is cooked to your liking.
4. Remove from grill and enjoy with a big Caesar salad.

Another option for skewers is the single item skewer. These are great when you want to make sure everything cooks evenly. This is also great for those who don't like different foods to touch.



Roasted Tomatoes on Toast

Makes 2-3 toasts

2-3 slices sourdough bread
3 Tbs (45 mL) olive oil
4-6 medium tomatoes
½ cup (120 mL) soft goat cheese
Pinch sea salt

1. Heat barbecue to 350° F.
2. Brush bread with olive oil on both sides. Thread tomatoes on skewers and drizzle with remaining olive oil.
3. Place bread and tomatoes on barbecue. Grill bread until gently browned with grill marks on both sides, and tomatoes until they are warm and softened with juice bursting out.
4. Remove toasts and spread with goat cheese and place tomatoes on top and gently press on tomatoes to encourage the insides to flow out. Top with a generous pinch of sea salt and another drizzle of olive oil.

Note: you can make extra skewers (they will keep in the fridge for 3 days) so that you can enjoy the many different ways to serve up this favourite summer-time vegetable. Roasted tomatoes can be added to dishes like pasta, topped with basil and Parmesan, or a pot of cannellini beans along with some fresh oregano.

Natalie is a freelance writer, photographer, and pastry chef. A graduate of Cordon Bleu's pastry program, she manages her own business too to create custom-made cakes.

Exploring Central Alberta's Breweries

BY **DAVID NUTTALL**



Although, geographically, the centre of Alberta lies somewhere north of Edmonton, when most people refer to Central Alberta, they are talking about the area south of Edmonton and north of Calgary, essentially bisected by the Queen Elizabeth II Highway. Commonly, people only see this countryside at about 120 kph while driving up and down Highway 2, but they are doing themselves a disservice by not stopping and checking out what this region has to offer.

While you can find several provincial parks and numerous lakes all through the area, there is also a great selection of breweries here too. This part of Alberta is full of small towns of around 5,000 people, and many of those have a brewery. Add in tourists visiting from other provinces and countries, plus the over two million people who are within a two-to-three-hour drive, and several of these locations have become a must visit for any beer lover.

Given that most of the towns in Central Alberta were established in the middle of an agrarian economy, the ties to the land are strong here. Barley and wheat are some of the leading crops in the area, so beer's main grains feature prominently in local brews.

Canada Malting, the country's largest maltster, has four of their grain elevators located here and malt giant, Cargill Malt is in numerous towns, while Rahr Malting has a production plant in Alix. Smaller specialty malt companies Red Shed Malting and Hogarth Malt are located just outside Penhold and Olds respectively. In addition, this area also has some of Alberta's fledgling hop farms, which allows visitors to get a true "field-to-glass" experience when sampling at the local taprooms.

The following breweries are all located between Leduc and Airdrie, east of the foothills to the Saskatchewan border.

Troubled Monk, Red Deer *(LC)
Opened in 2015, it was the first Alberta craft brewery to win a major international award with their Open Road American Brown Ale taking a silver in 2016 at the World Beer Cup. They now also make spirits, sodas, and hard iced tea in addition to an extensive line of beers.

Blindman Brewing, Lacombe (LC)
The other "elder" statesman in central Alberta, also opening in 2015. Won Brewery of the Year for 2022 at the Alberta Beer Awards. Known for their wide array of beers, especially their barrel and foeder-aged special releases and now their new open-topped koelschip allows for spontaneously fermented brews.

Olds College, Olds (LC)
Olds College began their Brewmaster and Brewery Operations Management Program in 2013 and has supplied hundreds of graduates to breweries not only in Alberta, but around the world. The college has its own brewery, store, and restaurant where you can sample some of the students' homework.

Norseman Brewing, Camrose
The first brewpub in the region opened in 2010. Located inside the Norseman Inn, their beers are normally not found outside

Camrose, which also has another brewery; **Battle River Brewery** (LC).

4th Meridian, Lloydminster (LC)
Alberta's most eastern brewery has been around for over seven years. Late last year, they acquired Ribstone Creek Brewery, formerly of Edgerton, and will produce their beers in Lloydminster.

Field and Forge, Innisfail (LC)
Known for their solid core beers and full menu gastro pub, they also contract brew numerous other beers in their 25 HL brewhouse. Innisfail's other brewery, **Dark Woods Brewing** (LC), opened in 2020 and is also a coffee roaster in addition to their beer and locally sourced food menu.

Snake Lake Brewing, Sylvan Lake (LC) **and Familia Brewing, Westerose** (LC)
There is something special about breweries located on lakes. Snake Lake has been around since 2018, while Familia opened in 2022 on the shores of Pigeon Lake. The summer season is the busy time, so the breweries need to be creative to stay busy the other 11 months of the year (I jest of course).

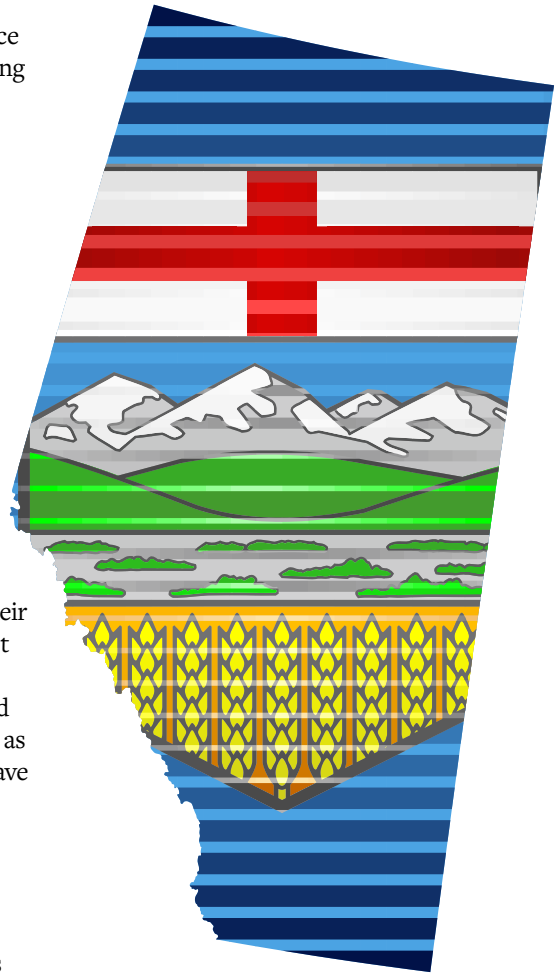
Valley Brewing, Drumheller(LC)
Speaking of tourist spots, the Badlands and Royal Tyrrell Museum are certainly Central Alberta's most famous attractions. Fortunately for visitors, Valley Brewing has been producing a wide variety of award-winning beers since 2019. Recently, they have begun producing ciders from BC grown apples.

OTHER BREWERIES IN THE AREA:
Rival Trade Brewing, Alhambra (Rocky Mountain House)
Prairie Brewing Co., Three Hills (LC)
Cowtown Brewing, Didsbury (LC)
Detention Brewing, Rosalind
Belly Hop, Red Deer (LC)
Red Hart Brewing, Red Deer (LC)
Something Brewing, Red Deer (LC)
Sawback Brewing, Red Deer (LC)
Siding 14, Ponoka (LC)
Hawk Tail, Rimbey (LC)

All these breweries have tasting rooms, most with patios, where you can try all their current products, some of which don't get distributed beyond the area. You'll also find numerous meaderies, distilleries, and cideries sprinkled throughout the region, as well as some excellent restaurants that have great local drink menus.

There are a few resources if you are looking to head to Central Alberta to do some brewery touring. Central Alberta Tourism (visitcentralalberta.com) covers the area. There is also a Red Deer Ale Trail (reddeeraletrail.ca) for a tour around the region's largest municipality. Take a trip and discover some great local beer, and more.

** (LC) Indicates some of their products are listed in Liquor Connect, so can be found province wide.*



David has worked in liquor since the late 1980s. He is a freelance writer, beer judge, speaker, and since 2014, has run Brew Ed monthly beer education classes in Calgary. Follow @abfbrewed.



How sweet it is:

Albertans have plenty of reasons to love this local Meadery

BY **LUCY HAINES**

JUST AS THE BEE IS A CRITICAL pollinator for crops and flowers, working as part of a community devoted to the cause (colony) and queen, Fallentimber is a one-for-all family operation finding success with impressive value add-ons for their beloved honey crop – part of a third generation, beekeeping family – tending honeybees and hives in the southern Alberta foothills since the 1960's.

There's the growing commercial operation (with about 20 employees) that includes retail and online sales of traditional and modern meads - a handful of each type - that has made Fallentimber the province's, and Canada's, largest meadery. Then there's the expanding Agri-tourism element of the business, focused on educational tours and tastings at the property an hour outside Calgary (now even featuring wood-fired pizza sales). If this Alberta family are the worker bees, their honey is the queen, from which all things flow.

"Around 2010 we seriously looked at how to refine the honey, to put it in a different state and find ways to potentially employ more than one person and make it a viable business," says Dan Molyneux, a company founder who left the hospitality world to help create something beyond the apiary. Dan spent much of his youth (with brother Chris, now on board as sales manager) at his aunt and uncle's 160-acre farm/apiary near Water Valley, so he says it felt natural to join the beekeeping side of the family (Kevin and Pat Ryan, and their sons Dustin and Nathan) and jump into the unknown world of mead-making.

Though it's always been a labour of love, there have been some growing pains too: a necessary expansion in 2018, a learning curve about distribution and government regulations, and even sourcing more high-quality honey when their own supply wasn't enough to meet growing demand. And then there's the challenge of getting product in front of customers, which is where craft beer festivals, markets and the tasting room comes in. Still, Dan says these are good problems to have, adding the founders have a "palpable passion," to see the meadery fulfill its potential. "We don't feel like there's a lot of direct competition with mead; we know we've got something special here."



Kevin Ryan took over the apiary from his own father on the southern Alberta property. Fallentimber is one of 1,400 beekeeping operations in Alberta.

Most of the core crew have harvested honey, experimented with recipes, and offered samples at farmers' markets (and continue to be a presence at markets in Edmonton and Calgary). While retired beekeeper Kevin still helps son Dustin (head beekeeper and Fallentimber CEO) manage the bees and about 1,000 hives, Dan and Chris handle retail/wholesale sales, business development and product distribution. Alberta remains Fallentimber's core market, with product in over 60 per cent of the province's liquor stores and some restaurants too.

"At a beer festival a few years ago, a North American pioneer of craft brewing sampled our cocktail meads and said, 'I thought I'd seen everything, but you have the most innovative product in the room, and in the industry," said Dan of the memorable moment. "We just love to surprise people; to have them try our products and watch their faces explode."

"I've always been a cheerleader for Fallentimber, and to be part of it here in the honeypot of North America. This is such an interesting product and I could see the potential," adds Chris, who took a science degree at university and

Give it up for the honeybee: the folks behind Fallentimber Meadery do.



Nathan Ryan regularly shows visitors the workings of the meadery, from the honeybee hives and combs creating honey at the apiary, to the processing plant for traditional bottled and new-fashioned sparkling meads.



Some of Fallentimber's founding fathers: Chris and Dan Molyneux, and Nathan Ryan.

then left a thriving restaurant career to join the family business in 2018, as its modern meads were starting to take off. "Even though there's more awareness than ever about mead, it's still a constant education game. It's not a wine, not a beer; it's fermented, not distilled. It can be dry or sweet - a bottle to go with dinner, or somewhat rivaling the ciders and sour beer products on the market."

Indeed, while traditional mead holds a mythical allure at medieval or Viking-themed events, (the company doesn't shy away from that aspect), Fallentimber's bottled lineup comes in varying levels of sweetness and can work like a dry dinner wine too.



The most popular of the modern mead lineup - the one that keeps the lights on, is the meadjito, a mojito like cocktail of honey, lime, and mint.

Though old-fashioned mead accounts for over ten per cent of sales, there's no doubt where the market is headed: the lion's share of last year's 300,000-litre mead production went toward Fallentimber's new-fashioned sparkling meads. After creating the province's first bubbly mead, consumer reaction led the way. "The public was ahead of us on this one; they ask for it, and some come from outside the province to get it," Dan says. "It's what we're known for now."

"I take credit for creating the meadjito - that product alone keeps the lights on," he says, adding the honey, mint and lime cocktail has found broad appeal. "It's a great choice for sipping on the patio, or at a backyard barbecue." The modern mead lineup also includes a pineapple and coconut honey colada, a honey ginger lemonade, an apple/raspberry mead - even a radler and upcoming line of braggots - an ancient style of beer that is a marriage of malt and honey.

As for that golden liquid (created by the bees mostly from clover and wildflowers), Fallentimber produces some 300,000 pounds of it each year. The number seems huge but represents only about one per cent of the province's output as the fifth largest honey producing region in the world. And though it is just one of 1,400 beekeepers in Alberta, the folks at Fallentimber recognize they can be a vocal advocate for honey, which is an Alberta signature food (joining beef, bison, saskatoon berries, canola, red fife wheat and root vegetables).

It's that aspect of the business that really excites founder/cousin Nathan Ryan. While a bee allergy kept him off the field growing up, Nathan has found his place, overseeing facility operations and using his carpentry skills (plus enlisting a few friends) to build the new 3,500 square foot deck outside the store/tasting room. "It's nice to make money in your backyard," says Nathan, the company's former mazer (mead maker, with a background in tourism) who's now busy running tours of a sample hive and the processing operation, and getting the food service into gear.

Nathan says part of his focus is on making the meadery a go-to spot for Albertans looking to spend an enjoyable

day in the country, relax on a hammock, toss a ball around with the kids, go for a walk on nearby paths, or enjoy a pizza and picnic. Corporate events or private parties? Weddings? Why not? says Nathan of the property - a site at the end of a gravel road next to forested public land. Now that's value-added thinking.

"We have a massive honey crop in Alberta; as an entire community/ region we could make more mead - Alberta could be to mead as champagne is to France," adds Dan on the company's sometimes out-of-the-box brainstorming. "We were thinking ahead when we expanded our own property too, building out in a way that we can grow and increase volume as needed."

"A lot of tap rooms have a restaurant component, but they don't have the bees," adds Chris, who works with Travel Alberta, Open Farm Days, Cochrane Tourism, and Alberta Food Tours, among others, to spread the word about the importance of bees and honey to the ecosystem and Alberta economy.

"We just did a big push with new products and finished the huge deck to accommodate so many more visitors," Nathan says. "Things are settled now, so it feels like a good time to get people out here to enjoy the space, have some food and drink. The mead is the catalyst that allows it all to work."



Dustin, Dan, Nathan: Dustin Ryan (left) is head beekeeper for Fallentimber Meadery. Cousin Dan Molyneux spent much of his youth on the farm and is now part of the founding group that took the apiary to new heights as a meadery. Nathan Ryan, who is ironically allergic to bee stings, grew up on the farm but contributes to the business inside the facility.

Lucy Haines is a long-time freelance writer, specializing in travel, food, arts and entertainment. When she isn't writing, Lucy is a busy mom to four fantastic kids, and enjoys singing and performing in the local community theatre scene.

Culinaire
VINE & DINE SERIES

Vine & Dine at Las Canarias, July 5
This month we're at Las Canarias for the last of three 6-course pairing dinners of traditional and modern Spanish and Canary Island dishes. Las Canarias are looking forward to sharing their love for this cuisine with you. All our dinners here last year sold out!

A Special Summer Celebration – A One-Off Premium Pairing Dinner at Flores & Pine, July 12
We are excited for our first pairing dinner at the beautiful Flores & Pine where we'll enjoy a chef-crafted menu of inspired seasonal dishes, with a sparkling reception and canapés, followed by a fabulous four course dinner, all carefully paired to complement the flavours of this superb menu!

Vine & Dine at Mot To, July 19 and 27
We're coming back to Môt To, who were awarded #5 in Air Canada's Best New Restaurants 2022, for two delightfully tasty evenings of six delicious pairing courses of innovative, modern Vietnamese dishes!

Vine & Dine at Sapore, August 15
Our evenings in May at Sapore were outstanding, and everyone was impressed with Chef Christopher Hyde's menu – so we're coming back for one more night and a new six-course pairing menu of this incredibly talented chef's decadent, modern, and traditional Italian dishes.

Vine & Dine at Ruby & The Beast, August 17, 24, and 31
We're really looking forward to our Vine & Dine series at the new Ruby & The Beast, and we know how good their elevated bistro classic dishes are, so we can't wait for these three six-course pairing dinners in the heritage house where George Stanley designed the Canadian flag!

Vine & Dine at Sapore, August 29
We're back again at Sapore in August but this time with Calgary celebrity Chef Robin Bowen, who's putting his stamp on an entirely new six-course pairing menu!

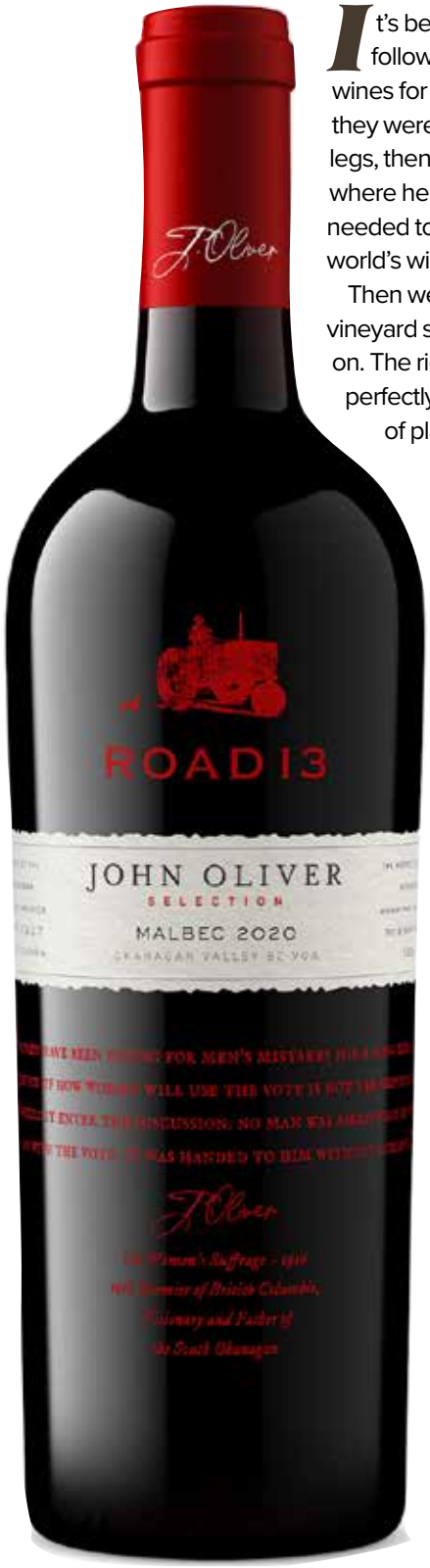
*New events and dinners are added regularly so check **vineanddine.ca** as these evenings sell out rather quickly!*

*Email **linda@culinairemagazine.ca** to reserve your places, and/or to be included in our bi-monthly updates so you hear about events before the rest of the city. We try to cater for all allergies.*


The Wilde
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MAKING THE CASE *for BC Wines*

By **TOM FIRTH**



It's been with great pleasure that I've been closely following the state (and quality) of British Columbia's wines for quite a few years. In the early to mid-nineties, they were getting better – if a little quaint - as BC found its legs, then came several years of rapidly improving quality - where here in the somewhat jaded Alberta marketplace we needed to be impressed as we already had so many of the world's wine, and local was only starting to cut it.

Then we saw an incredible number of new wineries, vineyard sites, and some truly spectacular viticulture going on. The right wines, being produced in the right sites, perfectly showing off terroir, wines with that unique sense of place that gets enthusiasts of the grape all fired up.

These days, the region is one in the global community. These wines compete globally, show exceptionally well with benchmark examples from around the world, and still carry some of that human element. These are often very small wineries, with real people, making great wine, year after year. If you think you are already familiar with BC's wines, I'd highly encourage you to give them another close look, and if you aren't familiar with them at all, give them a try.

Find these wines by searching the CSPC code at Liquorconnect.com; your local liquor store can also use this code to order it for you. Prices are approximate.

Road 13 2020 John Oliver Malbec
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
Road 13 has had a number of recent changes at the winery, but it's wonderfully refreshing to find out that quality and innovation are still right at the top of the list. This malbec, limited in availability, is pretty amazing. A top shelf malbec, that doesn't try to displace those from Argentina, but distills some of the best of the grape with intricate fruits, structured tannins, and remarkably floral too. Something for the enthusiasts of great expressions of malbec.
CSPC 1206227 $80-90 (very hard to find)

Tom has been waxing on (and on) about wine, beer, and spirits for more than 25 years and freelances, consults, and judges on beverages all year long. He is the Managing Editor for Culinaire Magazine, and the Competition Director for the Alberta Beverage Awards.



Gold Hill 2017 Cabernet Franc
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
In so many ways, this cab franc personifies the hot, grape ripening conditions of the South Okanagan, that make it a wonderful home for those heat-loving grapes. Tightly wound with beautiful acids, this red is aged five years before release, letting some mellowness emerge, but also letting these fine spices and red berry fruits show off.
No cellaring required.
CSPC 685685 $35-40



Bartier Bros. 2022 Semillon
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
A tight and vibrant Semillon, perfect when chilling out on a sunny deck or patio. While this is really shining now, there's no rush to drink it as it will develop a little in the bottle for a few more years. Nearly bursting with stone fruits and a tropical melon approach, it's on the palate that the zesty acids support the rich, silky fruits and textures. A real deal wine, that should match up well with poultry or grilled pork.
CSPC 244137 $30-35



Burrowing Owl 2020 Merlot
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
I've long had a soft spot for Okanagan merlot, as it's one of the best places in the world for varietal examples. Burrowing Owl too has long been one of the most consistent producers with this grape in BC. The 2020 is densely laden with intense black fruits and rounded tannins, but also the structure and intensity that make this wine so damn good. Still too young for best drinking, I'd recommend pulling the cork in about two to five years.
CSPC 1072922 $45-48



Wild Goose 2021 Riesling
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
Riesling is truly one of the world's great white grapes and Canada lays claim to some excellent terroir and the skill to make world class examples. Impeccably balanced riesling here, with a rather austere approach permitting green apple and lime fruits with steely acids, brisk mineral tones, and a lengthy, evolving finish. Fall in love with riesling all over again – this will help.
CSPC 414730 $24-27



Hester Creek 2020 Syrah, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
It's been incredible watching (and tasting) the evolution of syrah in the Okanagan, and Hester Creek has figured out a winning expression. Chockablock with intense, small berry fruits, accompanied by dried flower and dried herb notes on the nose, but in the mouth... oh my, such intensity, depth, and yes, balance. A pure example of what the Okanagan can do with syrah. Bring on the burgers!
CSPC 876336 $35-40



Poplar Grove 2017 Cabernet Franc
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
Yes indeed, this 2017 is currently on our shelves, and honestly, this is the right time to enjoy this bottle. Expressive and complex, this is a top-shelf example of the grape with abundant black fruits, loads of spice and earthy characters of cedar, graphite, and dried herbs, but at the same time, tannins that are perfectly offset against those flavours. A beautiful bottle worth stocking up.
CSPC 738640 $42-45



Noble Ridge 2019 Reserve Pinot Noir
Okanagan Falls, British Columbia
Maybe it's just all this hot weather, but pinot noir has been getting a lot of play around here. Noble Ridge makes a number of great wines (including a great sparkler) but this pinot has got it going on. Deeper cherry fruits with clean vegetable leaf and a touch of earthy, resinous complexity, but in the mouth bright and silky textures with mid weight tannins and zippy acids make for a versatile star on the deck or patio.
CSPC 721926 $45-46



Bartier Bros. 2021 Merlot
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
I'm firmly of the feeling that great Okanagan merlot really starts showing it's best around five years after the vintage – but it doesn't stop me from drinking them earlier. Dark and sinuous on the nose with layered herb and spice playing well with black fruits, it's on the palate that it really shines with consistent flavours but also excellent tannin structure. This is a bottle that will show perfectly with smoked brisket or steak.
CSPC 761518 $36-39



Burrowing Owl 2020 Syrah
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
Oh my. It's amazing how great Okanagan syrah can be when it's made by skilled hands and in the right spot. With fifteen months of oak aging, the wine is bright and intense, with plenty of smoked meat, but also wildly intense floral characters and chewy, tight-grained tannins, and a finish that moves slightly towards generous jammy fruit. This is a barbecue all star. Trying matching with smoked meats or maybe a brisket.
CSPC 1074184 $42-45



Wild Goose 2022 Gewürztraminer,
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
Gewürztraminer's very best qualities are often what scares some people away. Brilliantly expressive with rich, identifiable floral characters and fruits on the nose and often a bit of sweetness too can sometimes be a little too much. In the skilled hands of the Wild Goose winery, this bottling is quite dry, but showing off superb spicy characters, and fine balance. Served with a bit of chilling, this is a fine match with fusion style cuisine or spicy foods.
CSPC 414748 $24-27



Osoyoos Larose 2020 Pétales d'Osoyoos, Okanagan Valley
British Columbia
Often approached as being the "smaller sibling" of Osoyoos Larose, the Pétales is a little lighter, ages a little faster, and it's a lot easier on the pocketbook too. A merlot dominant blend of the five Bordeaux varietals, look for a rather deep berry fruit approach with plum and currant, but also a pleasing, floral character. In the mouth, serious, layered complexities sing out for some excellent beef dishes or hard cheese.
CSPC 985812 $35-40



Clos do Soleil 2021 Fumé Blanc
British Columbia
Clos du Soleil is one of the many great wineries of the Similkameen Valley, and sadly we don't see more wineries from the valley. Fumé Blanc, of old, was used to describe sauvignon blanc that would have some barrel aging to soften up some of the more intense flavours. A blend with almost 40 percent semillon, the wine is lightly grassy with still tight lemon and lime characters, melon, and some lively mineral tones. Quite the quaffer, I'd recommend enjoying with seafood or lighter poultry dishes.
CSPC 636936 $28-30

Tickled Pink

BY **TOM FIRTH**

Whether you call them blush, Saignée, pink, or rosé, these wines are enjoying a wonderful renaissance with wine drinkers. Once derided by those serious, vinous connoisseurs (perhaps white zinfandel is to blame) as being simple, flabby or overly sweet, those in the know have always known that rosé has got it going on. In most of the world, from Provence to Paarl, these wines are some of the best and most authentic wines to enjoy, and also wines that manage to evoke like no other a Provençal café experience where a glass of wine was enjoyed.

There are many, many days I've spent long evenings discoursing about wines I've loved, lived, and yes lost, but while this is a noble profession – so I tell my in-laws, truly, some of the best experiences in the wine world are enjoying those bottles where it's enough to say, "yeah, this is good", and more often than not, those truly, meaningfully, enjoyable bottles are of the pink persuasion.

I sincerely implore you, if you can, to take a chance, try some rosé from around the world, and try to while away some of the summer months, with a little pink.



Sandhill 2022 Sangiovese Rosé
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
Super pale, with cotton candy colouring, the wine itself is quite ethereal in the glass with delicate berry fruits and a more European-style flavour profile: light, zesty and very dry, but with good complexity and some fine nuances too. Made with 100 percent sangiovese, a good treat for a hot day and a popular wine for a crowd.
CSPC 872153 $32-33



Gruber Röschitz 2021 St. Laurent Rosé
Weinviertel, Austria
While not too common a grape to make rosé from or to see on our shelves, I've actually had a number of wine region visits that make this underrated grape into top shelf rosé. Quite dry, but almost creamy in texture, with fresh strawberry fruits and softer, cranberry and flowery notes. Completely stunning and 100 percent delicious.
CSPC 790515 $34-35



Bertrand 2021 Papilou Pétillant Nature Rosé, France
From one of the most esteemed wine houses from the south of France comes the Bertrand pet-nat rose. Pétillant nature, is a naturally sparkling, low intervention wine made to the highest standards. A blend of cinsault and pinot noir, this is a lively, delicate, and sexy wine where slightly reserved bubbles open the palate for the next sip. Lovely.
CSPC 873848 $35-37



Poplar Grove 2021 Rosé, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
Showing off a beautiful, cranberry cocktail colour in the glass, this summer star is quite intense, and in many ways rather herbaceous, or spicy compared to many others. They keep the blend to themselves, but it's a good secret to keep as it's a good wine to discuss endlessly while the day winds down. Me? I'm enjoying the slightly wild fruit and perfume that changes with every glass.
CSPC 772316 $30-32



Sandhill 2022 Terroir Driven Rosé
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
It's rare to find a winery that is committing to two very different styles of rosé – and Sandhill is doing them (both) right. Made with a range of grapes including some co-fermented viognier and syrah, the colouring is very dark for rosé with intense floral characters and rich blackberry fruit, and a little pomegranate. Still quite dry, with a mild tannin and silky textures. Beautiful.
CSPC 736523 $27-29



Fiol 2020 Rosé, Prosecco, Italy
We already know we love prosecco, so why not try some pink prosecco? Very pale in the glass with that pinkness coming from some pinot noir, on the nose there is a gentle apple fruit but also soft, plummy tones that are nicely delicate and well suited here. In the mouth, light and bright, with an almost simple expression. The right sort of wine that should be enjoyed well-chilled on a hot day, and before you know it, you're on another glass.
CSPC 881962 $19-22



Mission Hill 2022 Reserve Rosé
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
Mission Hill has always known how to make delicious wine in the Okanagan and almost as importantly, make it an exceptional value too. A fine blend of pinot noir, merlot, and cabernet franc, the nose is bright and summery with a hint of candy stick, but also delicately placed light fruit tones. Not too dry for the palate, this is a quaffer in perfect form.
CSPC 814460 $27-29



Long Meadow 2020 Rosé of Pinot Noir
Anderson Valley, California
If the mark of a good rosé is that it invites another glass, this is exactly the sort of wine that delivers on all counts. Blessed with strawberry aromas and a little bit of rock candy, yet at the same time layered floral tones and mild herb and mineral notes, this is a well-crafted, expressive glass of summer wine with a little weight on the mid palate and totally food friendly.
CSPC 459308 $30-33



Amalaya 2021 Rosé, Salta, Argentina
We likely don't think of rosé as coming from Argentina, so this is a welcome bottle on our shelves. Made mostly with malbec and a little bit of torrontés, the nose has a clean raspberry aroma with slightly plummy and brambly berry on the palate, and there's a little bit of tannin and weight too. The malbec comes through in the mouth dominating the fruits, but it's summery and perfect for a hot day - paired with seafood or even a cheese plate.
CSPC 846535 $20-22



Jansz NV Sparkling Rosé, Tasmania
Australia
Delightfully exotic, the wines of Tasmania are a rare treat indeed. A blend of pinot noir and chardonnay with only a bare hint of colour in the glass, the nose is crisp and toasty with gentle, summery fruits, and even better in the mouth with superb balance and great complexity. Very, very tasty and would be nicely versatile at the table too.
CSPC 873558 $39-42



Il Poggione 2021 Lo Sbrancato Rosé
Tuscany, Italy
A great bottle of rosé with a very nice price too. This one, made entirely from sangiovese is also deep and intense, with a touch of spice to go with some ripe and bright berry fruits, including strawberry and raspberry. Not bone dry, and with a mild hard strawberry candy back end. This is made for hot days with well chilled bottles close at hand.
CSPC 834920 $19-21



Planeta 2022 Rosé, Sicily, Italy
Made with equal parts nero d'Avola and syrah, this is the sort of wine that neatly evokes sipping wine in a small café enjoying the hot, Sicilian weather. Summer style fruits abound with a hint of blackberry, and tropical fruit. A smidge of sugar on the palate (about two grams) make it exceptionally dry, but crisp, delicate, youthful, and delicious. A stunner.
CSPC 756117 $23-25



Perrin Studio by Miraval 2021 Rosé
France
The Perrin family of France is famous for some of their most sought-after wines, but the mark of a great producer is also in how they approach the more every day ranges. The Studio blend of Miraval is still part of a famous estate, and under the expert guidance of the Perrins is a fresh and crisp, Provençal-style rose with zesty, fresh fruits, abundant floral tones, and a welcome approach that more wines should embrace.
CSPC 817822 $19-22



Dirty Laundry 2021 Sparkling Rosé
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
Completely refreshing with intense summer fruits like juicy watermelons, strawberries, and cherries. On the palate, the wine has an excellent mousse – balancing those fruit and floral characters. With a good balance of sweetness and those generous fruits, this is perfect for sunny days and hot weather in the summer. Would be a fine accompaniment for fresh fruits, light snacks or just on its own.
CSPC 878088 $23-25



Liquidity 2022 Rosé of Cabernet Franc
Okanagan Valley, British Columbia
Have to say, I'm really enjoying this deep dive into these ethereal, delicate pink wines. From Liquidity, which I always look forward to tasting, comes this completely fascinating, restrained, and elegant rosé. Made from 100 percent cabernet franc, it's delicious for certain, but also discussion worthy. Perfect for a summer day, or just a breezy afternoon. Don't serve it too cold though.
CSPC 758521 About $35

Summer Spirits

BY **TOM FIRTH** AND **LINDA GARSON**















With the hazy, not-so-lazy days of summer upon us, our evening downtime is sure to involve a few cocktails. Rich smoky spirits like rum and Islay Scotch for the cooler hours, and perhaps bright gins when the sun is still shining.

Ometeo Mexican Gin No. 1 Mexico

When you think of a white spirit from Jalisco, probably gin isn't first to come to mind, but Ometeo might just broaden your horizons. Handmade, with 10 organic botanicals, it's juniper and citrus forward from the Jalisco lime and Colima green lemons (picked early before they change to yellow) with coriander, mint, and lavender behind. It makes a beautiful martini with just a green olive, and equally good as a simple G&T!

CSPC 887498 $61-65

Bombay Citrus Pressé, England

Move over limoncello! This vibrant new release from Bombay Sapphire is a zesty (truly, with the juice too of hand-picked and hand-peeled lemons!) expression that's going to brighten our summer and our cocktails. We love that there's no added sugar, and how versatile it is for everything from a terrific adult lemonade, to pressé and tonic, to an elegant Tom Collins and more.

CSPC 884122 $34-40

Malfy Gin Rosa, Italy

A perfect-for-summer gin, we're in Italy with Malfy's Gin Rosa – top to bottom - water from Piedmont and pink grapefruits from Sicily! It's fresh and citrusy with some rhubarb notes (and colour) and red licorice too. Honestly, I'd just top it with prosecco over ice (you could add equal parts sparkling water too if you like) and call it your favourite summer spritz!

CSPC 802167 $50-60

Empress 1908 Elderflower Rose Gin, Canada

Closer to home, Victoria Distillers (best known for their colour-changing Indigo Gin) have a new gin just for us and BC. The jewel-like, raspberry, garnet colour comes from rose petals and black carrot (!) which, when you add lavender, elderflower, cinnamon, and coriander, creates a floral and spicy spirit with a smooth and rounded, viscous mouthfeel – perfect for summer sipping and cocktails!

CSPC 884744 $53-57

Ardbeg Heavy Vapours, Scotland

A limited-edition release for last month's Ardbeg Day, Heavy Vapours is the result of their first ever experiment removing the purifier (the thingummyjig that removes the heavy peat compounds to balance peat and fruit) to result in an amazingly complex and flavourful whisky with aromas and flavours of smoky almonds and lime peel, coconut, cocao nibs, and mint – add more than a few drops of water to enjoy it fully, it's cask strength!

CSPC 1204470 Around $175

Navy Island XO Reserve Rum Jamaica

Perhaps the best thing about this rum is that it's brimming with authentic, tropical aromas, but still has all those rich, caramel, vanilla, and buttery characters we expect. Smoky, and a little chewy on the palate, with some heady molasses and crème brulée sweetness, yet some serious earthiness that will put the punch in those umbrella style cocktails.

CSPC 842799 $63-66

1731 Fine & Rare Single Origin 7-Year-Old Rum, Belize

For rum lovers, there is probably no better time to be in Alberta – if you love trying rums from the various islands and nations in the Caribbean and nearby. Hailing from the tiny nation of Belize, this bottling also bears a respectable age statement. The nose is quite spicy, and prominent butter... (sigh) rum (those lifesavers right?!) and leather, ginger spice, clove, and pineapple citrus tones, all come together so damn well.

CSPC 842858 $83-87

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Melati Non-Alcoholic Botanical Aperitif

We love seeing all these interesting and tasty non-alcoholic offerings on our shelves and this is a must try for fans of goji berries, hibiscus, and rich spices. Meant to be served cool (but if too cold it can show off bitter spices) and would work in all manner of simple cocktails or mocktails. We tried it much like a virgin Kir Royale and were very pleased – but this would be loads of fun in a summer punch bowl, or with served with soda and ice. CSPC 874983 (500mL) About $40-45



The Spice Age

Rebecca Perkins is a Calgary girl who loves quick dips, but powder mixes often contain flavour boosters and colourings, so she made her own – and now has a range of 100 percent natural seasoning blends, dip mixes and salad dressings, widely available across the country including, as of a month ago, Alberta Sobeys stores! We tried them and enjoyed them all, especially the Greek Salad Dressing, Sergeant Pepper Dip, and Cheeky Tsatziki! About $7, thespiceage.ca

Ninja Woodfire Outdoor Grill & Smoker

Not all of us have back yards, and sometimes it can be quite problematic for us condo dwellers who would like to BBQ and smoke our food on a small balcony. Ninja have found the solution – their new outdoor grill is electric, yet it chars and sears, and it's a smoker too. And if that isn't enough, this weather-resistant (yes, it comes with a cover!) grill also air fries, bakes, roasts, broils, and dehydrates... and it's portable! Whether cooking for one or for a crowd (it fits 6 steaks or 30 hot dogs), it gets our vote! $400-450.





Auralis Botanical Tonics

These Canadian-made alcohol-free tonics have no sugar or artificial ingredients, but are brewed with Lions Mane, Chaga, and Reishi functional mushrooms for flavour and substance. We tried all three, and found them tasty and refreshing but perhaps gave the nod to the Chaga with spruce and blueberry, which had a bolder flavour of backwoods adventure and a little weight on the palate. At natural food and organic markets. $17 (4 pack). auralisbotanical.com



Dennis' Horseradish

It must be fun working with Dennis' Horseradish when the three co-owners are all called Mark! This small-batch, premium brand, with the upside-down jars, from Norfolk County, Ontario, has been going strong for 60+ years but we've only just discovered the Original, Extra Hot, and Horseradish Mustard – and the real thrill is the Horseradish Beet Relish, which I'd never seen here but was always on the table at home with our fried fish. For stockists see dennishorseradish.com

Cuisipro All Purpose Eco-Cloths

Don't you just hate smelly dishcloths? We've been trialing these Cuisipro Eco-Cloths and they dry quickly, meaning less odours, and can be washed in your dishwasher or washing machine! They absorb up to 15 times their weight, and are equivalent to 40 rolls of paper towel or 6 sponges, and bonus - they're 100 percent biodegradable, so when they wear out, just pop them in the compost bin. Singles or 2 packs, $5-$9.



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AMARULA

...with Nick Suche

BY **LINDA GARSON**



Growing up in Calgary, Nick Suche's first job was at Joey's Seafood as a dishwasher, and he'd work in restaurants each summer, until moving out east for a Bachelor of Commerce degree at Dalhousie in Halifax.

The program included work experience, and he loved his six months in Australia and again in Copenhagen, but on returning to Calgary he had no obvious career. "I had a degree, but no idea what I wanted to do," he says, "so I did door-to-door sales, which was challenging, but teaches you a lot of skills."

After a year Suche was ready to move on. He'd saved some money, and started traveling - and at the same time started a digital design business, teaching himself about websites and branding. Having seen other great cities, he was intent on leaving Calgary when he came back, so it was serendipitous that as he was preparing to go, his design business started picking up, and he decided to stay.

"I ran that business for about eight years, but I missed hospitality," he explains. "There is something about the hustle and the energy that got me hooked. I wanted to do something like I'd seen in Berlin - dark, intimate bars for small groups of people." Taste Restaurant was closing, and he purchased the assets, planning to design and redevelop it himself. "It was incredibly rewarding to see a space and a vision come to life - more so than I'd experienced in the digital design world," he says.

Shelter opened in 2017, and it was a couple of years before Suche approached Chef Jenny Kang about working together on something bigger. "For Orchard, I had a clear vision, and we worked with a lovely designer, Kayla Browne from Bold Workshop, to make that space a reality. I'm on the conceptual side, my strength lies in developing the experience, and I need talented people to make it happen," he adds. "We work with experts to breathe life into them." It was a great success, despite the launch almost coinciding with Covid, something not in his business plan.

One of Shelter's rotating pop-up chefs, Mikko Tamarra, is now chef at Fortuna's Row. Trained in Mexican and Peruvian food, he tested his concept at Shelter, and it was such a hit he launched Con Mi Taco. Tamarra wanted to create a higher-end experience, and when Suche was looking at the old Booker's space, he saw the room behind with enormous skylights, and knew it was too beautiful to let go. "I worked with Meghan Bannon and Tara Marshall at Mera Architecture, and that was by far the largest undertaking we've ever done."

"I'm looking for the next concept we can add to our portfolio. For a restaurant to work you need the space, the talent, and the deal. Usually, you can find two and have to fit the last little piece into place. There's a couple of spaces I've seen that are quite cool, and there's a couple of chefs. Can we get that deal right where it's going to make sense for us to do it?" We can't wait! "I can't wait either," he laughs.

So what is Suche's special occasion bottle?

"It's a single malt Japanese whisky, and it's very special," he says. Saburomaru Distillery has been producing whisky for 70 years, and in 2016 started to produce only malt whisky. "This is the first edition, and it's based on tarot cards. It's "O - the Fool" all about new beginnings. It's very unusual for Japan, which is a very traditional culture, to do something this different."

"It was given to me by a really close friend at the launch of Fortuna, and it's a thoughtful gift aligning with the direction we're going. I think he got the only two bottles in Alberta, there's only 2,000 bottles globally."

"We just cracked into it", Suche laughs. "It's uncharacteristic, as I have this habit of receiving a high-end gift like this that looks gorgeous, and I'll sit on it and wait for the right occasion. And sometimes the right occasion never comes, right? So this is a fantastic gift, and I'm like, let's try some right now, let's do this today."


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