MENU

CANADA'S FOODSERVICE MAGAZINE



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Farmers & Foodservice Working Together

CANADIAN TEQUILA TAKEOVER?
It's Definitely a Thing

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Syria & Antigonish

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LES CLEFS D'OR:
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Becky Doherty
STONEPOST FARMS, ALBERTA

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Restaurants Canada
The voice of foodservice | La voix des services alimentaires

As the heat of another summer gives way to leaves cascading down from trees and autumn breezes, diners continue to pursue local and organic fare—and they want to be conscious about where it's sourced. While Canada, by and large, keeps developing as a metropolitan country, through food we are connected to the farm. In this issue, we identify the myriad ways Canadian farmers are collaborating with professionals from the fields of foodservice, as well as the modern measures required to render these partnerships prosperous for each party involved.

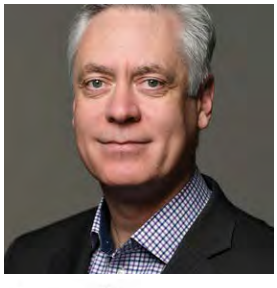
The agriculture and agri-food trade industry contributes over $110 billion annually to Canada's GDP. Which means it's increasingly vital for restaurateurs, suppliers and the like to seek out synergy with our nation's agricultural producers.

Restaurants Canada is thrilled to unveil its alliance with Cyberisk Chek Inc., a pioneering cybersecurity solution provider. These days, sadly, it's not a matter of "if" but "when" you'll be targeted. The first line of defence? Recognizing where you stand against cyber-related harm. This collaboration affords foodservice operators a new tool to counter online threats to their customers, as well as the practices which can hurt their revenue.

As you'll soon read about in *People, Planets & Profit*, we're incredibly excited to announce RC Show 2019 has taken on SustainABILITY as the theme of its fast approaching 74th edition. ABILITY being the operative term; we believe the definition of 'sustainable' reflects so much more than just "going green." The definition of 'sustainable' refers to the so-called triple bottom line—a process by which companies, such as yours, manage their financial, social and environmental risks, obligations and opportunities. RC Show 2019 will not only explore how to build and bolster your business, your people and culture; but pay mind to your geographical area and accomplish it all lucratively.

Really, for us, it boils down to purpose. Younger generations want to interact with businesses that are value-driven and mindful. And we believe sustainability is the perfect path to being mindful of purpose and making a difference in your community.

Fall remains a season of transition: the foliage turns, the weather gets cooler and the birds migrate. With the foodservice world braced, as always, for evolution; and Restaurants Canada is as committed as ever to forward thinking, let's take the initiative together to get ahead of the times ourselves.





Patrick Saurette
Chair of the Board

Shanna Munro
President & CEO



September/October 2018
Volume 3 Number 5

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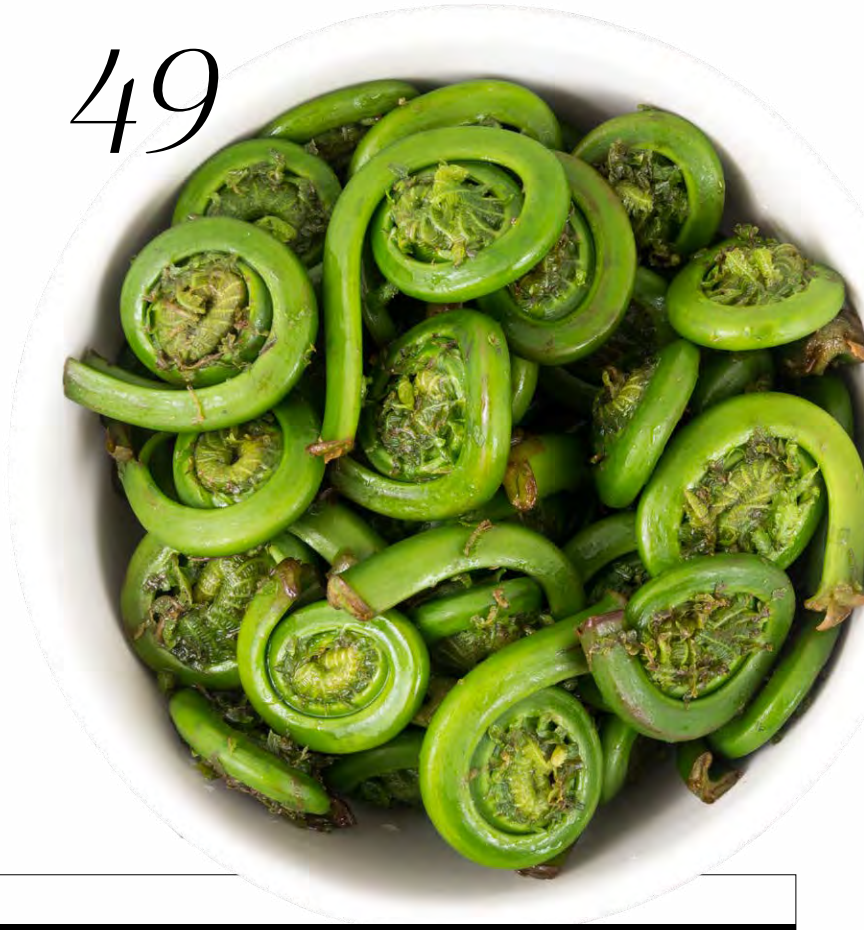
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RC Show • THE HOSPITALITY EVENT OF THE YEAR • Restaurants Canada

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GATHERINGS

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Donna Dooher and Laurie Dawe at the Fairmont Royal York



Kaoutsar Entifi Taoud of Gourmet Macarons by Rep Champion at the Canadian Coffee and Tea Show, September 2018



Zon Tea of Jamaica at the Canadian Coffee and Tea Show, September 2018.

EVENTS

OCTOBER

OCT 1-2 Restaurant Realities Redefined
Toronto, ON

OCT 2 Prairie Grid Dinner Series
Saskatoon, SK

OCT 4 Prairie Grid Dinner Series
Winnipeg, MB

OCT 12-13 Calgary Rocky Mountain Wine & Food Festival
Calgary, AB

OCT 13 Canadian Hospitality Foundation Annual Scholarship Gala
Toronto, ON

OCT 13 Saskatchewan Craft Brewers Festival
Saskatoon, SK

OCT 14-16 Pacific Alliance Trade Show
Toronto, ON

OCT 15 Cacao Barry Flavour Dinner
Toronto, ON

OCT 15 Infused Innovations Initiative: Conference
Toronto, ON

OCT 16 Infused Innovations Initiative: An Evening with Chris Sayegh
Toronto, ON

OCT 23 Harvest Festival
Lloydminster, SK

OCT 23-24 Grocery Innovations Show
Toronto, ON

OCT 29 Taste Canada Awards Gala
Toronto, ON

NOVEMBER

NOV 3-4 Wine & Spirits Gala
Regina, SK

NOV 3-10 Terroir Tuscany
Castello Di Potentino, Italy

NOV 7 BCWGC Fortify Conference
Penticton, BC

NOV 8 Chef To Be
Calgary, AB

NOV 8-18 Cornucopia
Whistler, BC

NOV 22-24 Banff Craft Beer Festival
Banff, AB

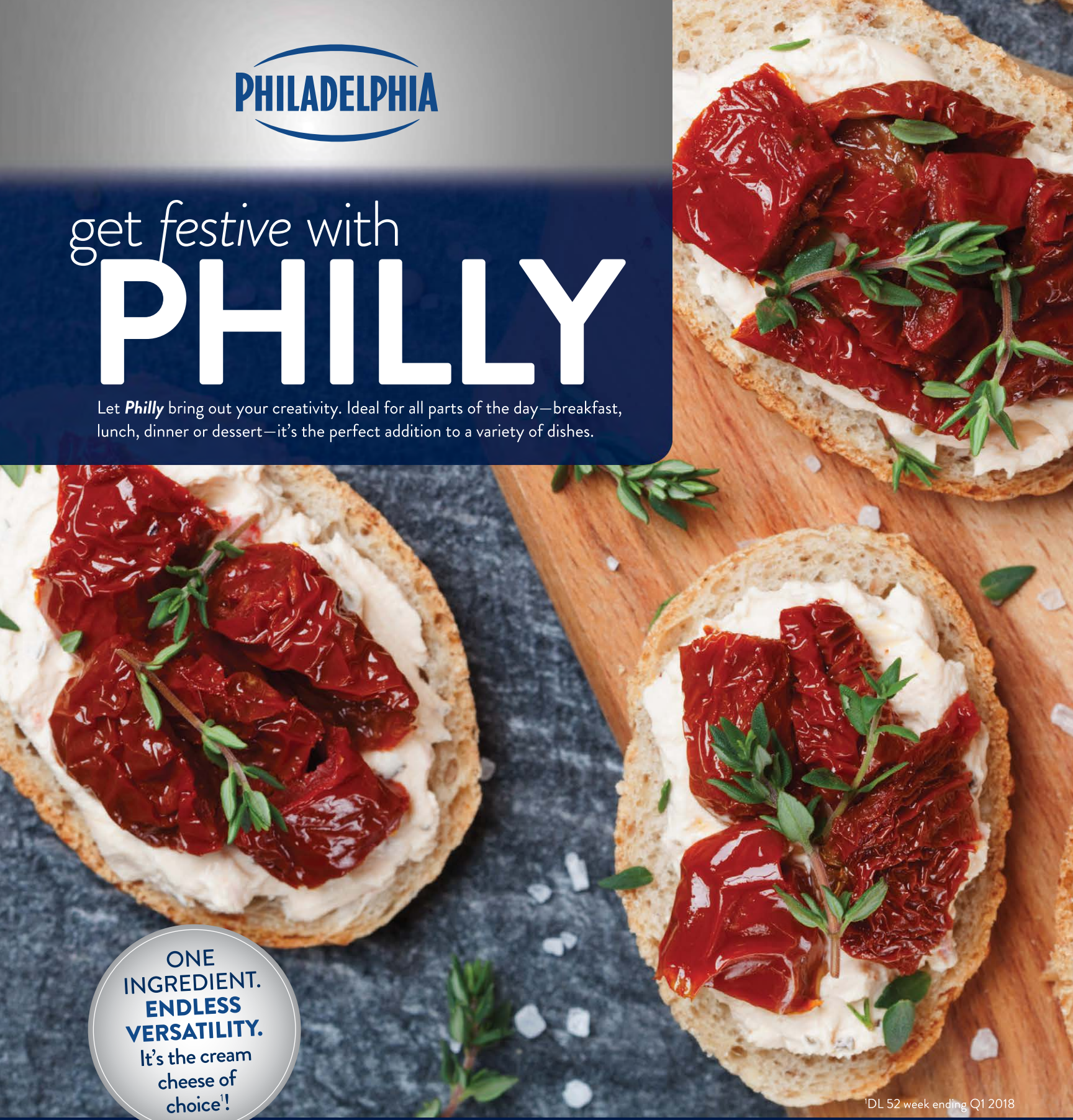
NOV 26-28 TIAC Tourism Congress
Gatineau, QC

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GET THE CONCIERGE ON YOUR SIDE

WITH CAROLINA AVARIA, PRESIDENT, LES CLEFS D'OR CANADA

BY ARDEN JOBLING



There's little that pleases the avid traveller more than a fantastic meal in a foreign city. From street food in Bangkok to recommendations for high tea in the heart of London, uncovering culinary gems can easily make (or break) a holiday. With hundreds of travel sites, apps and blogs available online, tourists have the ultimate food experience at their fingertips. In lieu of phone books and travel guides filled with phone numbers and addresses of reputable restaurants, tourists now access an online hodgepodge of reviews, ratings, images and paid partnerships designed to drive business. Soliciting a real review of potential eateries has never been so complicated.

KEEPER OF THE KEYS

There exists a global network of professionals within the hospitality industry whose very existence is based on the provision of high-quality information and service. A vastly untapped resource of knowledge committed to unlocking the most incredible experiences in any given city. They are trained to make the impossible, possible. They are members of Les Clefs d'Or.

Les Clefs d'Or, or Golden Keys, is an international professional organization of hotel concierges dedicated to maintaining the highest possible standards of service for hotel guests. Carolina Avaria is their president and today, Avaria can be found at the Four Seasons Hotel Toronto leading a team of individuals ready to go above and beyond for any and every guest. "It's an incredibly passion-driven atmosphere," says Carolina, insisting that the most important work takes place beyond hotel walls. "If you're not kind to people you're not going to get anything done," says Avaria, laughing as she returns from sourcing an oversized bubble maker for a client who saw one in the park and wanted one of their own (by 8 am the following day).

NO RESERVATIONS? NO RECOMMENDATION.

While concierges may be called upon for just about anything and everything, they are sought after for their ability to uncover unforgettable culinary experiences. "We study trends, we study chefs, we always keep our eyes open when we're travelling anywhere just to be sure that if there's anything new and exciting, we know about it."

And while many establishments offer exquisite dining options on premises, concierges know that tourists want to explore life beyond the hotel. So, what motivates a concierge to recommend one restaurant over another? Location, experience and product are all major considerations but, in the end, what matters most is ensuring the client gets a seat at the table. "One of the hardest trends that has come along for a concierge recently is the lack of reservation-taking atmosphere. It immediately disengages us. We can't make magic happen when someone doesn't take reservations."

Whether a client is in town, on business or pleasure, locating the perfect restaurant is a staple in the repertoire of any quality concierge. But how valuable is that recommendation for restaurants?

According to Kevin Curley, manager at Bauhaus in Vancouver, concierges are an integral part of the system, and while the restaurant now sees more traffic coming from reviews provided on websites like TripAdvisor, they still go out of their way to cultivate a relationship with hotels in the area.

Patrick Chow, the event coordinator and front of house manager at Fanny Bay Oyster Bar & Shellfish Market, another Vancouver favourite, claims that the restaurant sees some tourists come in based on recommendations provided by concierges, motivation to keep up a warm relationship between businesses. "Once every few months, we'll go out to all the concierges

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

"IF YOU'VE GOT MY FAVE FRIES I'M THERE."

#1

41% of patrons go out of their way to find their favourite fry.*



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*Lamb Weston Proprietary Research, 2017



We study trends, we study chefs, we always keep our eyes open when we're travelling anywhere just to be sure that if there's anything new and exciting, we know about it.

around town, say hello, make friends with them, give them some oysters, give them some gift cards or something like that. We keep them in the loop of what's going on, so they know what styles of restaurants there are out there. We help them; they help us."

François Dallaire is the restaurant director at Restaurant Épik, a modern Italian restaurant located in the heart of Old Montreal. In his opinion, most tourists stumble upon the restaurant due to its location or visit as a result of ratings and reviews on websites such as TripAdvisor, Google and OpenTable. Despite the frequency of tourists who visit based on online research and reviews, François actively pursues a warm relationship with concierges in the area.

"In early January of this new year, I visited every hotel located within three miles of our restaurant, bringing personalized invitations to every concierge to come and try our restaurant." François handed each concierge a card that looks like a credit card and invited them to try the restaurant and bring a guest. "After all, how can we expect them to recommend us if they never tried it themselves? Our welcoming philosophy speaks for itself because we know how to host and treat our guests."

According to Avaria, other restaurant owners should be following Dallaire's lead. "It's the entire experience that we need to sell to our guests, and that is done if we are experiencing it ourselves. If there is an opportunity to connect yourself with a concierge, tell them what you're doing, invite them to experience it."

Looking to connect with a member of Les Clefs d'Or? Visit lesclefsdorcanada.org.



BONJOUR NEIGHBOURS!

Rendez-vous Québec event to bring Québec products to Ontario on October 22

COURTESY OF MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE DES PÊCHERIES ET DE L'ALIMENTATION DU QUÉBEC

The Bureau du Québec à Toronto, in association with the Québec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, is holding the eigth annual Rendez-vous Gourmet Québec event. The event showcases Québec products to potential Ontario buyers. "Québec has 33,000 high-quality and distinctive food products, and we know chefs and creators are always looking for quality products and key ingredients, so it was natural to build an event around these products and suppliers," says Agrifood attaché David Dupuy.

Approximately 50 Québec producers will be on hand in Toronto for the event on October 22, to be held at the Arcadian Studio and Loft. "I'm so proud of this initiative which has contributed to create strong ties between our Québec suppliers and the Ontario market. Our unique products are a true inspiration for chefs and the food industry," says Dupuy.

Québec is often associated with the same foods by people not familiar with the vast array the province has to offer. The usual suspects include poutine, smoked meat, and, of course, Québec's liquid gold better known as maple syrup. But Québec has much more to offer. Some of the producers who are participating in this year's event include Première Moisson bakery, Fontaine Santé and Fromages CDA, and there are the lesser known producers like Crickstart, VegNature, Qantu Chocolate and Northfork Bison, looking to make a name for themselves. "This year, I'm very excited to have Qantu Chocolate on board. They produce bean-to-bar chocolate using biological ingredients and select their beans from small lots in Peru. At the Academy of Chocolate 2018 Awards, Qantu achieved double success in the Golden Bean category with its Chuncho 70 per cent and Morropon 70 per cent bars," says Sylvain Talbot, market development officer at the Québec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

A new feature this year is the inclusion of a bar section with signature cocktails and food pairings. This is quite the opportunity for the likes of Brasserie New Deal, Omerto, and Vignoble Saint Armand Inc., who are all participating to show Ontario just how they mix it up! In the last five years, Québec has produced and crafted numerous alcohols and spirits, including those from the producers of Les Subversifs. Their products have been available through the LCBO for three years. However, they recently changed the name and branding of their products; using depictions of people from Québec's history, for example, adorning Les Subversifs Vodka is the image of Irma LeVasseur who was the first French-Canadian woman doctor in Québec, forced to study in the United States for four years because the universities in Québec did not accept women in medicine. LeVasseur went on to co-found Sainte-Justine Hospital. Visit their booth to taste their gin!

Chefs attending include Jonathan Lapierre-Réhayem, the new chef at the Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec restaurant in Montreal and Chef Charlotte Langley, PEI native best known for her Scout Canning company, as well as her event series Bibs and Bubbs. M

I'm so proud of this initiative which has contributed to create strong ties between our Québec suppliers and the Ontario market. Our unique products are a true inspiration for chefs and the food industry

DIG IN

Interested in attending? Please RSVP or for more information please visit quebecgourmetevents.ca



One Peace Won't Hurt

CHOCOLATE IS UNIQUELY UNIFYING

BY CAELI MAZARA

The story of the Peace by Chocolate company is one of success, loss, family and change, and it goes all the way back to Damascus, Syria, where the Hadhad family built a thriving chocolate enterprise—the second-largest in the Middle East. The Syrian civil war brought the 30-year business to a sudden stop when first the factory and then the Hadhad family home were bombed in 2012. The Hadhads fled to Lebanon, where they spent three years as refugees, waiting to find a new home.

Tareq Hadhad is the eldest son and handles most of the company's media relations. He recalls the stress of waiting to find out where home would be: "I was trying to get my family to a country that valued freedom and human rights, to start their lives again," he says. "Canada was the destination because it is known across the globe as a country of welcome, of diversity, of multiculturalism, and support."

It was Antigonish, Nova Scotia, where the family found sponsorship in early 2016, and the nine of them flew across the world to the small town in eastern Canada. They were one of eight Syrian families to settle in Antigonish, and the town continues to raise money to bring more families to safety.

"Immigrants usually pick big cities to settle in," says Hadhad. "We came from a big city—Damascus has 10 million people—and we wanted to be sure there were opportunities. We didn't know if a small town would give us this, but we were very wrong. We found a family of 4,000 people around us. All the people in the town believed in us and helped us translate our experiences and our skills to Canada."

The community welcomed Tareq and his family with warmth and generosity, and the family wanted to express their gratitude; the Hadhads turned to something they knew well—chocolate. They spent a week in February 2016 making their chocolate and invited the community to enjoy it at the Antigonish Potluck. It was such a success that the Hadhads decided to bring their product to the local farmers' market. The first weekend they went, hundreds of people showed up to





"I truly believe food is identity; it's an ambassadorship for the different cultures this country is built on. It's a representation of Canada—every piece of our chocolate describes something different, to reflect what this country is about."

sell them out. At this point, the family realized they had an opportunity on their hands. They registered the company under the name "Peace by Chocolate." From the family kitchen, the company grew into a small warehouse, which the people of Antigonish helped build. It has since outgrown this and is set to double in size again, ahead of the Christmas 2018 season.

"Every culture has a very different concept towards chocolate," says Hadhad. "Different percentage of cocoa, the temperature the cocoa beans have been roasted to, the fillings used in the chocolate. We try to integrate our tastes with Canadian chocolate. I truly believe food is identity; it's an ambassadorship for the different cultures this country is built on. It's a representation of Canada—every piece of our chocolate describes something different, to reflect what this country is about."

Peace by Chocolate produces boxed chocolates and chocolate bars, as well as wedding favours and seasonal chocolates, like the Pride bars released this past summer. A line of multilingual chocolate bars was launched in May. The first one was called Wantaqo'ti, after the Mi'kmaq word for peace.

For Hadhad and his family, Peace by Chocolate is not just about the chocolate.

"It's about the message inside each box and on the chocolate bars," says Hadhad. "We have two major slogans in our company: 'One peace won't hurt' and 'Peace is beautiful in every language.' We've been carrying this responsibility to be a positive example about what kindness can do, how kindness can beget kindness and how opening the doors for those who are fleeing persecution and war is the right thing to do."

The chocolates the company produces are diverse in colour, shape and flavour. For Hadhad, chocolate represents a moment of sweetness, of pleasure, easily shared among friends.

"Growth doesn't happen in a company without the communities and people who support them," he says. "Like Antigonish—when we are bringing people to work, the town is growing and the economy of the town is also growing. We all grow together." M



Peace by Chocolate is now available in stores across Canada and will be available online through Amazon by December. Vendors interested in Peace by Chocolate products can reach out to the company through the vendor page of their website: peacebychocolate.ca





TEQUILA TAKEOVER

PREMIUM CANADIAN-OWNED TEQUILA + EARNING A PLACE ON EVERY BACK BAR

BY ANDREA YU

Like many of us, Eric Brass at one time treated tequila as a "close your eyes, plug your nose and hope for the best" experience. But that all changed after he went to Mexico on an exchange semester in 2005 and tried good tequila for the first time.

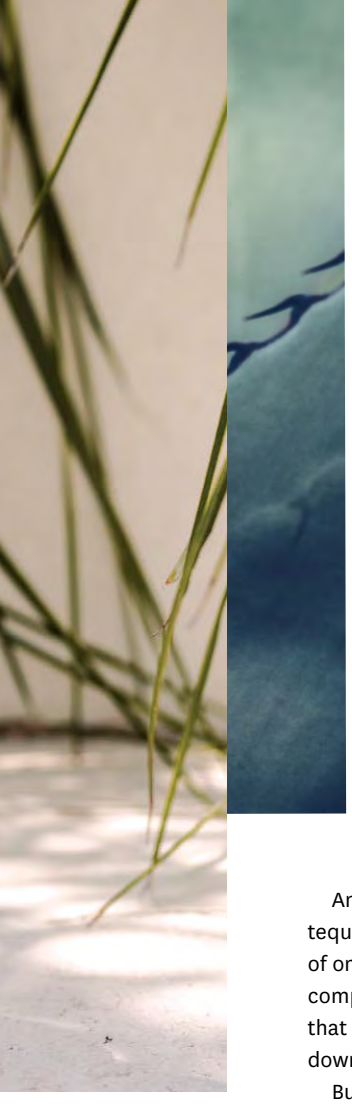
"I thought 'this is incredible.' It was like a cognac or a fine wine or scotch," Brass recalls. The experience stuck with him as he returned to Canada and discovered a gap in the market between cheap, low-quality tequila and high-end varieties favoured by celebrities and bottle service seekers. Brass filled that gap in 2012 by launching Tequila Tromba—a premium craft tequila that offers finer nuances of taste and flavour without the exorbitant price tag.

While Brass is Tromba's CEO and founder, he relies on some pretty skilled folks down south to create his product. By chance, while on exchange, Brass befriended Rodrigo Cedano who is the son of Marco Cedano—the original master distiller for one of tequila's biggest names: Don Julio. Brass appealed to the elder Cedano, who was ready to shift gears. He agreed to hop on board with two conditions. The first: Cedano needed to be a partner in the business. And the second: "no gringos in the kitchen," Brass recalls with a laugh. Brass didn't hesitate to oblige and still relinquishes all control of production to the Cedanos, who rely on deep connections in and knowledge of the tequila-making process to make Tromba what it is.

One of the most important relationships that the elder Cedano has formed is with the region's jimadors—harvesters skilled at identifying agave plants ready to pick. Only blue agave plants grown in the province of Jalisco are used for making tequila. These succulents will grow for seven to 10 years before they've matured and the nectar becomes sweet and flavourful enough to produce a quality tequila. The region in which agave is grown also affects the flavour of the tequila—some being sweeter while others with a minerality and vegetal quality if grown in volcanic regions.

Following centuries-old traditions that are still heavily regulated by the Mexican government, jimadors precisely hand-cut leaves from the agave plant to release and uproot the plant's bulb, called the piña. It weighs an average of 35 kilograms or about 77 pounds and the jimadors transport them to the factory by horse or donkey.

The piñas are then quartered and slow-cooked in a traditional brick oven at around 100 degrees Celsius for over 40 hours, depending on the recipe. This helps flavours mature and brings out the sweetness of the agave. Once cooking is complete, the agave is crushed to extract its sweet juices and a yeast is added to ferment the liquid. Once fermentation is complete (which takes up to four days), the liquid is then distilled twice (although some makers will distill up to four times) and bottled to create a "blanco" tequila. The tequila can also be aged in stainless steel or oak barrels to further develop flavour and complexity, creating a "reposado" (aged up to one year), "añejo" (aged two to three years) or "extra añejo" (aged over three years) tequila.



Canadian-owned tequilas

Looking to dive deeper into premium tequilas? Try one of these Canadian-owned varieties.

TROMBA
Launched: 2012
Founder: Eric Brass
Products available: Blanco, Reposado, Añejo
Blanco tasting notes: caramelized agave, pineapple, pressed agave fibre, bread, white pepper

SIEMPRE
Launched: 2017
Founders: Alex Lacroix and Monica Sanita
Tasting notes: spice, herb, pepper, brine/sea salt and citrus with candied, floral notes and hints of caramel and sweet fruit

AGUAMIEL
Launched: 2018
Founder: Craig Shaw
Tasting notes: black pepper, vanilla bean, grilled pineapple, lemongrass, green vegetables

Another important classification to note is "mixtos" tequila. These cheaper, lower quality tequilas are made of only 51 per cent agave, while the other 49 per cent is comprised of sugar, corn syrup or caramel, resulting in that harsh, unpalatable flavour that necessitates shooting down and chasing with a squeeze of lime.

But Jay MacRaild, general manager of Calgary's Añejo Restaurant and now the Añejo Group's director of operations, has seen an enormous transition in his customers' attitudes towards tequila since Añejo opened in 2012. "The tequila industry has made, and is making, a huge transition, from something people threw up on at college parties, to a premium spirit that deserves its place on every decent back bar in the world," says MacRaild.

For those still recovering from their "mixtos" days, MacRaild suggests sipping a 100 per cent agave tequila neat

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 18







at room temperature. “There is a large range of flavour and nuance to tequila and it can't be appreciated if you overload your senses by shooting it,” he says.

For those ready to go deeper into the tequila journey with equally deep pockets to match, Añejo stocks a handful of extremely high-end tequilas that cost over $100 an ounce. These are all “extra añejo” tequilas that have been aged for at least three years. The most expensive on the list is Patrón en Lalique, ringing in at a whopping $1,200 an ounce. The bottle, handmade by French crystal makers Lalique, certainly contributes to the tequila’s high cost, but so does the formulation; a blend of Patron’s oldest and rarest tequilas (some aged in barrels for up to seven years) to offer nuances of vanilla, pecans and caramel.

Thankfully, premium tequila like Brass’s Tromba remains at an affordable price ($9 an ounce at Añejo or about $50 retail per bottle). But that could soon change if free trade between Mexico and Canada under NAFTA falls apart.

Torontonian Craig Shaw, who founded Aguamiel Tequila this year is hopeful that trade relations will remain open. “Premium tequila is at such a high price today that if there are any more tariffs or taxes added onto that product, the prices are going to go through the roof,” says Shaw. “We’re already having a hard-enough time trying to compete with the vodkas and gins out there that are made within the province.”

The tariffs could potentially put a damper on a healthy, vibrant craft tequila scene that’s been steadily growing in Canada. The Liquor Control Board of Ontario reported that tequila sales grew 12.7 per cent from 2016 to 2017, ahead of gin (11.9 per cent growth) and whisky (6.8 per cent), reflecting consumers’ “premiumization” of tequila, trading up from cheap mixtos to 100 per cent agave varieties.

Bars and restaurants have undoubtedly been pivotal in fueling this trend. Aguamiel’s Shaw has partnered with restaurants that are creating dishes to pair with and play on certain notes in his tequila. Mixologists are increasingly incorporating tequila into their cocktail menus in what Tromba’s Eric Brass calls a “tequila takeover.” Classic cocktails like a Negroni, for example, might be made with tequila in place of gin or a Caesar with tequila instead of vodka. Brass, who built his brand by appealing to bartenders and bar owners, is grateful for the support of mixologists who have sung the praises of finer tequilas to their customers, busting myths and misconceptions along the way.

“Bar owners and bartenders are at the forefront of educating their consumers.” M

Salted Agave & Apple Sour

.75 oz	Tromba Reposado
.5 oz	lemon juice
.5 oz	salted agave nectar
1.25 oz	fresh squeezed Granny Smith apple juice
1	egg white (to be added just before shaking so alcohol and citrus don’t cook it)
+	apple slices for garnish

Combine all ingredients and dry shake, hard. Add ice, shake and pour over fresh ice in a rocks glass. Garnish with apple slices.

Vida Rosa

2oz	Siempre Plata
1 oz	hibiscus agave
1 oz	fresh lime juice
+	hibiscus salt for rim and garnish
+	lime wheel for garnish

For hibiscus agave, steep two hibiscus tea bags in 1 cup of boiling water. Soak for 4 minutes and remove. Add 1/2 cup of agave to water while still hot and stir to dissolve. For cocktail, half rim a rocks glass with hibiscus salt and fill with ice. Pour Siempre Plata, hibiscus agave and fresh lime juice into a shaker filled with fresh ice. Shake vigorously and fine strain into a glass. Garnish with a lime wheel half-coated in hibiscus salt.

Inverano En Jalisco

2 oz	Aguamiel Tequila
.75 oz	fresh lime juice
.75 oz	jalapeno syrup
.5 oz	fresh pomegranate juice
+	soda water
+	lime wedge for garnish

Shake all ingredients and top with soda. Garnish with a lime wedge.



tasting tequila

Monica Sanita, co-founder of Siempre Tequila, guides us through the three components of tasting tequila.

VISUAL: Swirl some tequila around a clear glass and hold it up to a natural light. The body should hold itself together well, with uniform tears forming after a minute. Submerge the tip of your index finger in the tequila and feel the liquid against your thumb—an oily body means a great tequila.

AROMA: When nosing the tequila, keep the glass around an inch from your nose and gently inhale with your mouth open to let the aromas travel over your tongue. They should be soft and inviting without any burn.

TASTE: Take a small sip and coat your palate before swallowing. Take a second sip and concentrate on the flavour on your palate. A good tequila will create salivation without burning. Swallow the tequila and exhale to express the alcohol vapours over your tongue, leaving the lingering finish and the notes of the tequila behind on your palate.

FOR EXAMPLE: On the nose, Siempre is peppery with fresh agave and a hint of cotton candy. On the palate it tastes soft, sweet and savoury with an exceptionally smooth spiced pineapple finish. Distilled in Tequila by Master Distiller, Agustin Sanchez Rodriguez, Siempre is made using traditional processes in a 150-year-old distillery. Made using 100per cent blue weber agave, Rodriguez uses a unique 50/50 fusion of highland and lowland agave for the fullest expression of tequila. It is then slow cooked in traditional brick ovens, double distilled and blended with volcanic spring water.

Source: Siempre





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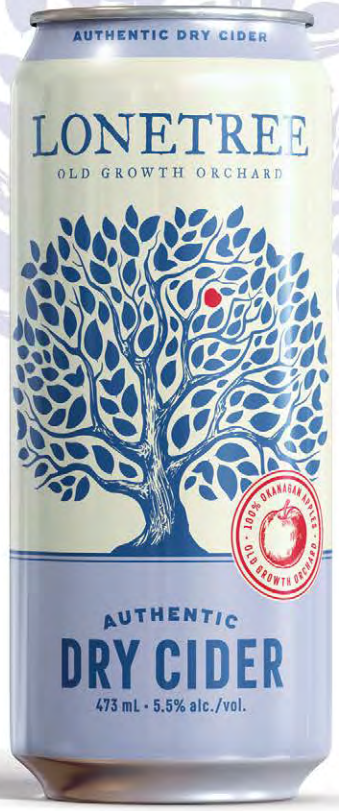
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Partstown

partstown.ca

LONETREE CIDER

BY WILL DIXON



Lonetree Cider is an entirely Canadian product, conceptualized and canned in British Columbia using only the best that British Columbia's orchards have to offer.

There were only two lines of cider at one time according to Janet Vouzas, marketing director for Lonetree. They were mostly too sweet and manufactured, typically using neutral grain spirit and juice concentrate. So, the market in 2011 was ripe with opportunity for a craft cider using fruit and fermentation. To get started, Lonetree partnered with a local apple orchard in the Okanagan region. The third-generation family farm was producing wine, but they also had an apple orchard and they were looking for options for what to do with their apples. Lonetree still works with that same farm to this day; a fact they proudly share. Lonetree defines itself as "old growth orchard," because their apples come from trees that have been around for over 80 years, producing an authentic dry cider.

As the market for ciders grew over the years and as Lonetree got bigger and more popular—becoming a favourite on the West Coast—the demand for more products loomed over the small company and family farm.

While they still work with the original orchard, Lonetree also receives prized BC apples through partnerships with BC Tree Fruits.

"It's great that we still get to support local," says Vouzas, as they're still working with BC fruits from over 500 orchards in the province. "It's really allowed us to scale upwards as demand has grown over the years."

That local flavour is what helps to make Lonetree what it is; with a well-developed recipe that has produced a consistent cider for years, while they've also built on the taste here and there, developing new lines of flavours from ginger to peach to meet consumer demand.

"We might have something for 2019," Vouzas hints. "We have been experimenting with new things." Not giving too much away, she mentions barrel aging as an avenue they've been exploring. "We keep getting wood chips in the cider right now, so we're not ready!" Vouzas laughs.

The initiative and drive to reinvent and look at their product with a critical eye is part of what makes Lonetree a favourite on BC Liquor Store shelves. "We really listen to our customers," says Vouzas. "We make sure that we get back to them." Lonetree takes customer feedback and runs it through their systems, checking which batch was best and which didn't turn out quite so well. Constantly demanding more of their product and their operations is ingrained in Lonetree's approach to business.

Lonetree's Facebook page is brimming with photos of events, including a chronicle of their participation at the Toronto Cider Festival in August. It's important that they research their products and customer-base, to preserve the quality they are known for. With five lines of naturally flavoured ciders, Lonetree Cider claimed four prizes at the World Cider Awards in 2017, which took place in London, England, and Lonetree's Apple Ginger Cider took home a silver at this year's WineAlign national competition.

Brewing competitions in Canada have been opening up to allow for more categories, including cider. "It was an easy way to market ourselves," said Vouzas, getting their brew into the hands and glasses of their peers. Even if they didn't bring home any awards, they still would've taken a lesson from it. "It was important for us to know how we rate against the other ciders out there."

Another way they get their brand out there is partnering with local restaurants, bars and cooks who, in turn, create recipes with the cider, becoming the best kind of brand ambassadors.

"Generally, we work with restaurants and mixologists," said Vouzas. "Cider-Can Chicken is easily the most popular thing to make." Recipes and cocktail ideas populate the Lonetree website and their social media. It's a great way to get people interested in the product in more ways than the conventional; it also helps to encourage the community to experiment and share their ideas.

Vouzas says that cider can be substituted in almost any recipe that calls for white wine. "It pairs up nicely with most things like cheese," she says. While other flavoured ciders, like ginger apple cider, go well with sushi and other fish dishes.

At the end of the day, Vouzas attributes Lonetree's success to its award-winning recipe. Even as they mix multiple batches of apples from a variety of farms across BC in their Kamloops facility, drinkers can still expect the same terrific taste time and time again. Lonetree's method is tried and true; the quality is proof enough of the small but dedicated team's efforts. They called their operation Lonetree, because even as the market for cider continues to grow across the country, they stand apart from the rest.

VERY VERY LEMON LEMON

SPARKLING LEMONADE, SIP AWAY





DIVERSITY + INCLUSION

IN THE WORKPLACE

BY JILL HOLROYD

The washroom at Anh and Chi restaurant in Vancouver has been getting a lot of attention lately. It's a gorgeous room, and it's a finalist for this year's Cintas Canada Best Restroom Award. It's also gender neutral and symbolizes a deeply rooted commitment to diversity and inclusion.

This isn't just a heartwarming anecdote; it's the story of a smart business strategy.

Amelie Nguyen and her brother, Vincent Nguyen, took a career detour into the restaurant business eight years ago, after their father died at the age of 55. Their mother needed help to run Pho Hoang, a Vietnamese restaurant she created with her husband in 1983, a few years after arriving in Canada as refugees.

It soon became clear that Pho Hoang had reached a plateau. The family made the difficult decision to close the restaurant and completely reinvent it while preserving and building on their family's culinary heritage. Anh and Chi (it means eldest brother and eldest sister in Vietnamese) was unveiled two years ago to rave reviews. The Main Street restaurant employs 50 people and is the kind of inclusive and busy gathering place Amelie dreamed of. A vibrant mix of cultures, languages, genders and ages.

"We wanted to make sure our restaurant is very inclusive and speaks to people intergenerationally and interculturally. We are highly committed to inclusion and social connectedness," says Amelie, who has a background working with vulnerable communities.

Hiring and training have been pivotal to the restaurant's transformation. "We hire for values and attitudes over skills any day," says Amelie. "We have deep and meaningful conversations with our team members, and we're honest and respectful about our commitment to diversity."

Several former Pho Hoang employees, who had been part of a nearly all-Vietnamese team for many years, joined the diverse new team at Anh and Chi. "We made a point of sharing with older

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



LEFT TO RIGHT: LY NGUYEN, MOM & CHEF; VINCENT NGUYEN, BROTHER & OWNER; AMELIE NGUYEN, SISTER & SUPPORTER

> WE WANTED TO MAKE SURE OUR RESTAURANT IS VERY INCLUSIVE AND SPEAKS TO PEOPLE INTERGENERATIONALLY AND INTERCULTURALLY. WE ARE HIGHLY COMMITTED TO INCLUSION AND SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Photo credit: Alyssa Dawson

employees that our community has changed and we need to change too. We value their loyalty and the fact that they stayed with us," says Amelie.

A focus on cross-cultural communication also smoothed the transition. For example, Vietnamese people tend not to respond directly with "yes" or "no," or may avoid eye contact out of respect, notes Amelie.

And the gender-neutral bathroom?

"The positive feedback has been incredible—people saying they haven't been to Anh and Chi but now they look forward to visiting us."

Restaurants across Canada increasingly recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion—whether it's providing more opportunities for people with disabilities, seeking out racially and culturally diverse candidates, creating a safe and welcoming environment for the LGBTQ community or striving for gender balance.

Those who succeed understand there are two parts to the equation. It's been said that diversity is the mix and inclusion is making the mix work. It doesn't have to cost a lot, and the return on investment is huge.

Cyrus Cooper, professor and program coordinator of the Hotel, Resort and Restaurant Management graduate certificate program at Centennial College in Toronto, recently led a Restaurants Canada webinar on creating positive and inclusive workplaces. "Inclusion is good business. It's simple, and it can be done within your workplace," he states.

Getting the right team in place (the mix) is important, but so is creating the right work environment (making the mix work). "Be nice, be approachable, follow the Golden Rule and do unto others as you would want done unto yourself," advises Cooper. "When you listen, you provide an opportunity for people to grow, develop and participate in the actual process. That's when we really see dividends."

There's plenty of research to back that up. Numerous studies show that diversity and inclusion result in less employee turnover, higher profits and more innovation. For example, a 2014 study by the Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance (cited in Restaurants Canada's "How to Create a Positive and Inclusive Workplace" guide) showed that companies with diversity and inclusion strategies reported 15 per cent - 19 per cent lower turnover in restaurant hourly employees and 7 per cent lower turnover in restaurant management employees.

A 2018 McKinsey & Company study, *Delivering through Diversity*, looked at the profitability of more than 1,000 companies across 12 countries, and makes a compelling case:

- Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 21% more likely to outperform the competition on profitability in terms of earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT)
- For cultural and ethnic diversity the number rises to 33 per cent likelihood of outperformance on EBIT margin
- Companies in the bottom quartile for both gender and ethnic/cultural diversity were 29% less likely to achieve above-average profitability

Multiple studies also show that diverse teams have a measurable advantage over homogenous teams. They're better at focusing on facts, they make better decisions and they're more innovative.

"When you have a diverse workforce you perform better. You have more perspectives, you have different people with different experiences and you're able to solve problems more effectively," says Hadiya Roderique, a lawyer, journalist and researcher in organizational behaviour. "Secondly, it's just the right thing to do. Your workforce should reflect the diversity of the community that you're in, and if doesn't it suggests that there might be some kind of bias somewhere along the process."

Roderique's 2017 essay for *The Globe and Mail*, "Black on Bay Street," sparked a national discussion about the barriers to inclusion that still exist in many workplaces. When the business case for diversity and inclusion is so strong, why is it still an issue?

When you listen, you provide an opportunity for people to grow, develop and participate in the actual process. That's when we really see dividends.

"We are social animals, and we tend to gravitate towards others who are like us," says Roderique. "We're asking people to do something that's difficult. Don't choose someone who's just like you. Look for and acknowledge the value in someone who's different from yourself."

Actively seeking diversity is the first step; embracing the new dynamic is the next. Having diverse voices around the table will shake up your decision-making process, and it's change for the better. "We tend to think that easiness is a sign that we're on the right track, that we're making the right decision," Roderique says. "When actually, when you're all in agreement that means you're not looking at different perspectives. You're not doing the things that would make the process more challenging. It's going through the process of that challenge that makes you make a better decision."

One of the first steps to creating and sustaining a workplace where everyone feels welcome, included and respected is acknowledging that certain groups face systemic barriers that others don't.

"Exposure to people who are different from us has been shown to change the way we think and open your eyes to some of these differences," says Roderique. "There are people who don't realize that some things are monumentally harder for some people than others. You don't even realize what happens to some other people if you don't surround yourself with diverse people."



KATHERINE POWER

CYRUS COOPER

Centennial College's Cyrus Cooper sees Canada's cultural diversity as a strategic advantage for restaurateurs. "We pride ourselves on our cultural diversity in Canada. We have to cherish it and take it into our advantage—use it to compete with other countries and attract talent. People bring amazing qualities to the table."

Like Amelie Nguyen of Anh and Chi, Cooper believes in hiring from diverse groups and focusing on the candidate's potential. "Skills are skills," he says, "but potential leads to greatness. The restaurants that are successful now are the restaurants that find new ways to attract talent, retain that talent, grow that talent and show opportunity for that talent to one day be the future leaders of tomorrow."

Sodexo Canada Ltd., a leading provider of integrated food and facilities management services, has made tremendous strides in this area. The company was recently named one of Canada's Best Diversity Employers by Mediacorp for the fifth straight year. Over 65 per cent of Sodexo employees are women; 33 per cent are visible minorities; 5.5 per cent are Indigenous; 3.2 per cent have a disability; and 87 per cent of their Canadian management teams are gender balanced.

"It's not a huge investment. It's the will of the leadership," says Katherine Power, Sodexo Canada's vice president of communications and corporate affairs. "It's around the culture you create, where people are safe to be themselves and safe to speak up. It's not expensive; it's not time-consuming. It's a mindset and a commitment."

It's also a competitive advantage in today's mar-

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

ketplace. Employee surveys show that diversity and inclusion is the top driver of employee engagement and the top reason why employees join Sodexo. And, many clients choose to work with Sodexo because of their shared values around diversity and inclusion.

Power, who was volunteering and cheering on two Sodexo employees at the Special Olympics in Antigonish when we spoke by phone, says Sodexo is currently focused on hiring people with disabilities. "It's an untapped market of qualified candidates who make amazing employees," she says. "They are innovative, eager to work, and they bring a different perspective to the business. And it feels good! It's a win-win strategy to do something that's altruistic and good for business."

Restaurants are a business like no other. In Canada, they touch the lives of 22 million customers a day, and more than one million employees. That makes diversity and inclusion all the more important and impactful in this industry.

"On the surface, restaurants are about food and drink," says Amelie. "But social connectedness is our contribution to society. We create spaces where people feel like they belong, they are connected and they are supported."

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Talking about issues like bias and discrimination can be intimidating, but it's necessary to achieve change. Hadiya Roderique offers this perspective:

"It's going to be impossible for you to have a perfectly pleasant, happy conversation about race and exclusion in the workplace. These are difficult topics, and you have to face some uncomfortable truths. In order to do so, you have to have some uncomfortable conversations. You are going to say something wrong, and that's okay. People will point that out, and you'll learn and grow from that. You don't learn from doing everything perfectly."

Recommended Reading:

So You Want to Talk about Race, by Ijeoma Oluo

Difficult Conversations, by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen

Nonviolent Communication, by Marshall B. Rosenberg



RESTAURANTS CANADA RESOURCES



Restaurants Canada and Centennial College's Centre for Global Citizenship, Education and Inclusion recently launched a comprehensive resource for foodservice operators: *How to Create a Positive and Inclusive Workplace*. It covers laws, regulations and best practices in the areas of human rights, workplace health and safety, and employment standards.

The unique advantage of this "how to" guide is it covers a wide range of issues through a foodservice lens: everything from dress codes and tip pools to mental health and religious accommodation.

The guide "gives everyone working in foodservice a starting place for having conversations about how they can be more inclusive, with resources for more guidance and support," says Restaurants Canada president Shanna Munro. "It's also given us a great way to showcase some of the successes that businesses in our industry are having making their workplaces more inclusive so that others can follow their lead."

The guide is part of an ongoing effort by Restaurants Canada, and its partners such as Centennial College, to help foodservice operators create positive and inclusive workplaces.

"The needs of the people we work with and the communities we serve are always evolving, so it's incredibly important to keep these conversations going," says Munro. In addition to hosting educational webinars, the team at Restaurants Canada is continuing to develop sections of the guide and plans to introduce certification programs to help foodservice professionals stay on top of best practices for building awareness, skills and leadership around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

"Together we can raise the bar for foodservice workplaces in Canada and set an example for the rest of the world," says Munro.

Restaurants Canada members can log into the Member Portal at RestaurantsCanada.org to download the guide. Not a member? You can sign up online or contact the Member Services team at 1-800-387-5649 or membership@restaurantscanada.org, and start ramping up your diversity and inclusion strategy.

Taking Action

If you haven't formalized your diversity and inclusion strategy, or it needs some fine-tuning, here's some food for thought based on my conversations with Amelie, Hadiya, Cyrus and Katherine:

Educate yourself

READ AND LEARN ABOUT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Restaurants Canada has published two excellent guides, specifically for the foodservice industry:

- *How to Create a Positive and Inclusive Workplace*
- *Diversity Toolkit: Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Workforce*

Both are available in the Member Portal at RestaurantsCanada.org.

COLLECT QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYEES

In addition to tracking the numbers, Hadiya Roderique suggests an anonymous survey to encourage people to talk about things they've experienced in the workplace, as well as exit interviews to find out why talent is leaving. "It's hard for numbers to capture lived experiences. The numbers don't tell you how that experience feels or what it means to someone."

"Do your employees feel safe, secure and proud to be part of this organization? You need to ask yourself that and canvass your team," says Cyrus Cooper.

LOOK FOR DIVERSITY IN YOUR JOB APPLICANTS

Are you attracting diverse candidates for your job openings? If your applicants and interviewees all look and sound the same, there may be bias in your recruitment process.

Rethink your recruitment + hiring process

RECRUIT FROM DIVERSE SOURCES

"If you want diversity, you need to recruit from diverse sources," says Katherine Power. Consider posting jobs with colleges, universities, libraries and community centres. "You're now being a participant in the community and attracting talent from all walks of life," adds Cooper.

REMOVE BIAS FROM THE SCREENING PROCESS

A 2016 University of Toronto study showed that black and Asian students were twice as likely to get a call-back from an employer if they "whitened" their resumes by toning down racial identifiers such as name, education and interests. This held true even for employers with diversity statements. To counter this bias, consider anonymizing resumes, and conduct diversity and inclusion training to address any organizational issues.

HIRE EMPLOYEES WHO SHARE YOUR VALUES AROUND DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

This can be a tough one to assess, but Amelie Nguyen has this suggestion: "Listen to how they speak about other people, how they refer to people. Some are not familiar with terms around inclusion and social connectedness, but they are warm-hearted about it. Others are not familiar and cold-hearted. You can tell the difference by listening."

Embed diversity + inclusion in your culture

WRITE IT DOWN

This is especially important in the foodservice business, with its relatively high turnover rate. "Having things written down keeps the compass for your organization on track. Managers change, people move around. If that message leaves your organization and is not written down, you're constantly going to be in a state of flux," says Cooper. But, he cautions: "When you mention something once or put it on the bulletin board it goes there to wrinkle and die. When you continue to mention it and make it part of your culture, it nourishes and becomes ingrained, and you start seeing dividends."

TALK ABOUT IT

Successful companies embed diversity and inclusion in their organizational culture. "You can include D & I in your values and strategy, or put it on a poster on the wall, but if it's not part of the culture, it doesn't exist. We track it, we talk about it, we celebrate it. It's part of the conversation at work on a daily basis. It's the way we do things," says Power. And if things go off track, deal with the situation quickly, directly and respectfully.

WALK THE TALK

A few years ago, Sodexo offices displayed an anti-homophobia poster that featured two male hockey players kissing. At one location employees objected and removed the poster. "Our president at the time called it out in a direct statement on his blog," says Powers. He used the opportunity to explain why talking about diversity is important—and non-negotiable. M

CYBERATTACKS

RESTAURANTS CANADA PROVIDES CRITICAL CYBER EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RESOURCES FOR CANADIAN FOODSERVICE OPERATORS

As more operators adopt daily e-commerce and online technology, the inherent risks should be top of mind. A cyberattack could close your business and/or seriously impact your reputation. An attack usually originates from an outside computer, from anywhere in the world, which targets your confidential client information. It is important to understand that cyberattacks are not just a BIG company problem. Attackers know that your business has digital assets. This puts foodservice operations especially at risk. With the increased use of customer-facing technology, there are a greater number of access points. Think about all the connectivity from outside suppliers who may have access to your operations today.

Our industry processes millions in credit card transactions annually. Restaurants Canada has initiated an industry leading partnership with Cyberisk Chek. Cyberisk Chek is a Canadian cyber innovation company that is globally recognized for educating businesses on the risks associated with cyber transactions.

President and CEO of Cyberisk Chek, Domenic Trotta, indicates that cyber security is growing across the globe, however, Canada is trailing. Security measures need to keep pace with the growth of e-commerce in general. And, as with any growing business, the criminal element is often ahead of the curve. "Our goal is to provide a simple, self-assessment, cost effective tool that will help operators gauge their cyber risk points and outline steps that an operator can [take] to minimize risk. The growing complexity of cybercrime makes preventing these attacks especially difficult for small businesses with limited resources," says Trotta.

DO WE HAVE YOUR ATTENTION?

Seventy-seven per cent of small businesses that own their domains are concerned about falling victim. Unfortunately, 36 per cent are not investing any money in protecting against cybercrime.

The number of businesses reporting a million+ loss has risen to 7 per cent from just 1 per cent two years ago. (Source: Ponemon Institute for IBM: *2016 Cost of Data Breach Study*)

The use of ransomware in cybercrime is growing exponentially by cyber-predators and Canada is a hotbed. This malware

CAUTIONARY TALES FROM PAST BREACHES:

2018

Tim Hortons restaurants indicated that as many as 1,000 locations may have been impacted forcing many to close as they sorted it out.

2017

Chipotle Mexican Grill POS system was infected with malware designed to steal card numbers, expiration dates and verification codes. Chipotle admitted that most of its 2,250 restaurants during that three-week period of time were affected by the attack.

McDonald's Canada discloses a data breach of 95,000 job applicant's personal information.

Purdys Chocolatier of Vancouver, BC, breach of information of 12,000 Canadian buyers.

Arby's: 355,000 customers payment card information may have been compromised from their point-of-sale system.

2015

Wendy's restaurants reported criminal cyberattacks from service providers' remote access credentials being compromised, and deploying malware to some franchisees' point-of-sale systems.

2014

Restaurant chain P.F. Chang's continues to investigate payment breaches and payment card fraud.



BE AWARE AND BE PREPARED

Conduct your Risk Evaluation today and receive a detailed risk assessment report and your prioritized action plan. Restaurants Canada members benefit from a reduced rate along with a free 32 page Cyber Self-Help Guide (valued at $49.95 USD).

Go to **info.restaurantscanada.org/rc-program-cyberiskchek** or to find out more call 1-800-387-5649 and speak with a Member Service Representative. Be sure to use the Restaurants Canada promo code CAA5B200 to receive the reduced rate and guide. Take the first step in cybersecurity today.

locks systems, then the hackers demand payments to unlock your systems.

There is a misconception that having data backups will prevent a cyberattack from locking down your business. In reality, restoring, unknowingly, from an infected back-up may potentially aggravate the situation.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOUR OPERATIONS?

There is a lot you can do to protect your restaurant against cyberattacks. Simply put—Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond and Recover. The Cyberisk Chek tool is an on-line self-assessment available through Restaurants Canada that provides you with a detailed inexpensive report and preparation guide with an action plan. This assists you in assessing your level of preparedness to a breach and, most importantly, gives you a step-by-step guide on what to do next.

The Cyberisk Chek security assessment asks five key questions.

1. **What do I need to protect—what assets are critical to the operation?**
2. **What security measures do I have available to me and are they up to date?**
3. **How do I even know if a cyber breach occurs?**
4. **If a breach occurs how do I reduce the impact of the attack to all involved parties?**
5. **How do I recover post attack? Do I have an Incident Response Plan?**

The first step in awareness may only cost less than a hundred dollars and will provide you with the tools to respond and resolve many of your internal security risks immediately and within budget.

WHAT KIND OF VULNERABILITIES DOES CYBERISK CHEK LOOK FOR? WHAT ARE KEY ACCESS POINTS?

POS SYSTEMS Attacks on point-of-sale terminals directly affect credit card data. They look for end-to-end encryption, iPad secure interfaces and anti-virus software. Compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) is also key.

WI-FI GUEST NETWORKS In order to help ensure that guests cannot access your business network, guest networks must be stand-alone and should be professionally installed. You may also want to configure your routers and firewalls to block certain types of data on the guest network to protect your company's reputation.

NETWORK ACCESS Consider listing your network access policies on a splash page that connecting guests must pass through before connecting to the network. Often these pages include a "click here to agree" button.

GUEST PASSWORDS Don't give out one password to everyone. Look for third-party services that automatically assign security keys on a per-user basis. Per-user, per-session keys make it easier to block a specific troublesome user with no interruption to everyone else.

CREDENTIALS EXPIRATION Login credentials for guests should expire after a predefined period, such as every four hours or at the end of the workday. Credentials that don't expire often become a security hole, allowing unauthorized re-entry onto the network down the road.

THE HUMAN FACTOR People are the weakest link in cyber resilience. Statistics have demonstrated that insider threats are the most common entry point for cyber criminals. Human error is also a factor from a lack of awareness on the part of users. It is integral to provide digital literacy training, cyber awareness training and technology solutions.

This is a critical time in the life of a restaurateur. You are a target. Cyber threats will not go away, and the digital age is here to stay. Make sure you are aware and protected before an attack jeopardizes your operations. M

CONSIDER THIS:

60% of small/medium businesses go out of business within six months of a cyberattack

70% of cyber attackers deliberately target small businesses

71% of cyberattacks hit businesses with fewer than 100 employees

$180,000 is the average loss for small/medium-sized businesses

Data security has now become crucial to a restaurant operation's success. But, is it top of your mind?

Serving up eCommerce for your business

Canadian restaurant operators have a unique opportunity to capitalize on an explosive trend

BY NADER HENIN, DIRECTOR DIGITAL PAYMENTS, INTERAC CORP.



Running a busy restaurant while avoiding turning away customers is an ongoing challenge for operators. Quick service restaurant owners often feel this tension, as long lineups mean good business, but can also mean lost opportunities. Potential customers may turn away at the sight of a long line, which leads to lost revenue and negative customer experience. To solve this, and to disrupt the traditional walk up, order and pay model, many restaurant operators have sought food ordering apps to transform how they do business.

Appetite for growth

Online purchasing and ordering, also known as e or mCommerce (mobile commerce), is a rapidly growing trend in Canada with no sign of slowing down. eCommerce purchases will make up nine per cent of all retail sales in 2018, a whopping $56.96 billion in value. This presents a unique growth opportunity for restaurant operators, as 17 per cent of all eCommerce transactions in 2017 were in the food vertical.

These numbers highlight the changing relationship between consumers and retailers. Customers are looking for a seamless way to shop, order and pay with their smartphones, and restaurant operators can provide this experience through an eCommerce strategy.

Customer experience on the menu

Canadians are enthusiastic adopters of new technology, and they love their smartphones. It is predicted that mobile transactions will make up 30 per cent of all eCommerce transactions in 2018, up from 28.5 per cent last year. What motivates Canadians to shop with their phones? According to the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), ease, convenience and time savings are major motivators for Canadians to turn to their smartphones for online shopping. This is important to keep top of mind when developing your eCommerce strategy.

Payment is a key part of designing a great customer experience. Research shows that the way Canadians pay in-store is the way they want to pay online. This means that if a customer is accustomed to using their debit card at your brick and mortar location, their preference will not change when they buy from you online. Millennials, in particular, are currently using their debit card for 80 per cent of their in-store purchases. This is a natural opportunity to offer the same payment option in restaurant apps and on websites.

Trust is a recipe for success

Brands today are under more scrutiny than ever when it comes to building and maintaining trust with their stakeholders. Collaboration is essential for technical innovation, and that same approach will help lead restaurant operators to success. When considering who to work with to launch an eCommerce strategy, keep trust in mind. Consumers are not only selective about where they spend their money but also how. Offering consumers a secure and trusted payment method is equally important for in-store and online payments. M

*All statistics sourced from eMarketer, *eCommerce in Canada 2018, eMarketer's Latest Forecast, with a Focus on Grocery*, January 2018 and *eMarketer, Products/Services Purchased Digitally by Digital Buyers in Canada, 2014-2017*, November 2017



NEW MERCHANT FEE AGREEMENTS

Providing relief for foodservice businesses and consumers

In August, Restaurants Canada welcomed an announcement from Finance Minister Bill Morneau, and Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion, regarding new agreements, effective 2020, with major credit card companies to reduce the fees they charge Canadian businesses.

The voluntary, five-year agreements with Visa, Mastercard and American Express will provide welcomed relief for foodservice operators, who spend billions of dollars each year on credit card interchange and processing fees.

"Today's announcement is a step in the right direction. Restaurants Canada has a long history lobbying for a reduction of credit card interchange fees, including supporting the work of MP Linda Lapointe to alleviate their burden on small- and medium-size businesses." said Shanna Munro, Restaurants Canada president & CEO. "Eighty per cent of our members tell us that interchange fees hurt their bottom line. We are pleased to see the government respond to their concerns and we will continue to work towards achieving greater relief. The businesses impacted most are run by middle-class Canadians, and when their businesses thrive, so do their communities."

Visa and Mastercard have committed to lowering the fees they charge businesses to an average annual effective rate of 1.4 per cent—down from 1.5 per cent—for a period of five years and narrow the gap between the highest and lowest rates they collect from retailers.

American Express has promised to provide more fairness and transparency as part of a separate voluntary agreement that recognizes its unique business model.

Merchant fees in Canada are among the highest in the world and have long been a major concern for foodservice operators across the country. Interchange and other fees continue to rise as consumers are enticed by premium reward cards. The rewards are financed not by the card companies or issuers, but by restaurateurs and other small businesses.

"On a typical restaurant meal, the credit card issuer often makes more profit than the restaurateur," said David Lefebvre, vice president, Federal & Quebec, at Restaurants Canada. "We look forward to continuing our work with government creating a fair and level playing field for all restaurant owners and entrepreneurs."

As a next step, Restaurants Canada is looking forward to working with the federal government toward a cap on interchange fees and prohibiting credit card issuers from increasing and adding new fees without regulatory oversight. The association is also looking to government to remove interchange fees from the tips and taxes portion of purchases. M

Source: Restaurants Canada



CREAM OF THE CROP

Farmers and foodservice working together

BY BETH POLLOCK

CANADA IS A PREDOMINANTLY URBAN COUNTRY, BUT FOOD IS GOING BACK TO THE FARM



More than ever before, diners are asking for local food, organic food, and farm-to-table restaurants, and they want to know where their food is sourced. For many chefs, working closely with farmers helps to fulfill those requests; it also offers access to great products and a relationship with the people who provide them. Here are a few ways Canadian farmers are working with chefs and other foodservice industry people, with ideas on how to make those relationships successful for everyone.

1 EVENT DINNERS

One of the most exciting ways farmers and chefs team up is at special event dinners. Sometimes these happen on a farm, and sometimes the farm comes to the city. But wherever they happen, they're a great experience for guests, who enjoy meals while learning more about the people who produce their food.

The sixth annual Alberta Open Farm Day event was held in August, engaging over 100 farms at 16 culinary events. This "province-wide open house" let guests hear stories about farms and farmers while enjoying local food. Chef Eric Hanson of Prairie Noodle Shop said his involvement in the Grand Taste Tour event was an easy sell. "A long table looking out to the lake, mountains, sunset—it took me three seconds to say yes!" He added, "We have a short summer. Any time I have the chance to cook outside, I take it."

I'm inspired by whatever ingredients are in their prime. I make the food right there, and customers are eating it five minutes later.

Farmer Becky Doherty hosted the Grand Taste Tour event at beautiful Stonepost Farms, where they grow and produce free range eggs, free range chickens and turkeys, naturally grown and seasonal produce, natural unpasteurized honey, humanely raised grass-fed beef and humanely raised grass-fed pork. She enjoyed working with a chef who was open to suggestions. "We have a booth at the local farmers' market, and it's just a few blocks from Prairie Noodle Shop. Chef Eric often stopped by to talk about the event, and about our produce. His flexibility and creativity about what was on the menu made it a great experience."

Chef Hanson said he decided what to make when he arrived at the farm the day of the event. "I'm inspired by whatever ingredients are in their prime," he says. "I make the food right there, and customers are eating it five minutes later. That's the best food, and the most exciting way to serve it."

And his open-mindedness made the event a success for both sides. Hanson asked the farmers, "Is any of your produce shining right now? Is there anything you have an excess of?" Doherty said, "We had lots of chicken drumsticks, and Hanson was able to incorporate those in his meal. Working with such an open-minded chef made it a true partnership."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34



The importance of communication

Every farmer I spoke to for this story talked about how important it is to maintain open communication in any joint initiative or project. But what does that mean for chefs and foodservice people?

Here's what one farmer and one chef had to say about it.

Gemma McNeil, of Zaklan Heritage Farms in Surrey BC, sells to about 20 restaurants a week. "We love to have consistent orders as they are easier to plan for, but we also like chefs who are up for trying new things and taking on extra produce when we have an abundance."

What does open communication mean to her? "So much of what makes our relationships with chefs work is having a constant conversation about what's happening on the farm and how things are working for them in the kitchen," McNeil said. "We like to hear feedback when our produce is great, but we also want to know when it doesn't work so we can improve or change how we grow something to better meet a chef's needs. We plan our season with chefs in mind, and have end-of-year conversations with them about what worked and what didn't."

Chef Ben Kramer prepared the food for September's Farmers' Feast in St. Norbert, Manitoba. He said, "Many of the farmers we work with for this dinner are the same farmers we use all year, so the relationship is already there." For chefs looking to get involved with local farmers, he says, "My best advice is to simply talk to them. Build that relationship. Make an arrangement that works for both of you."

He made a generous offer to other Manitoba chefs: "I've been in Manitoba since 2000. I've been working with many local farmers since then and have an ever-growing network. If anyone has questions or needs someone to point them in the right direction, they can reach out to me. I'm happy to help make introductions."

2 SELLING TO RESTAURANTS

One of the most popular ways for farmers and chefs to work together happens when restaurants buy directly from the farmer.

I asked Rob Tait of Dutton, Ontario's Celtic Ridge Farms how he and his wife Maryjo got involved with the restaurant business. "We started working with a small local restaurant, Tasty Sweets Café and Bakery, in West Lorne. We supplied them with beef for their sandwiches, soups and chili."

As their business expanded, they wanted to be able to count on regular shipments to ensure a guaranteed monthly income. They were contacted by Chef Danny McCallum of Toronto's prestigious Jacobs & Co. Steakhouse.

"We were floored to be considered for their menu," Tait says. "We spoke with Danny and immediately had an amazing connection." They took some samples to Toronto, and the relationship was established. They now supply McCallum with tenderloin, strips and rib eyes.

As a result, they needed to find a home for the rest of the animal. "We were able to do this with a local restaurant, Tall Tales Café in Wallacetown. They go

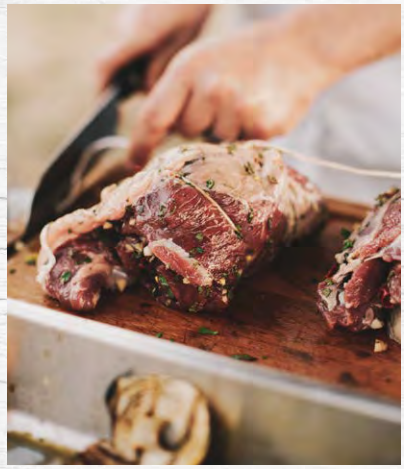
LEADERSHIP IN AGRI-FOOD SUSTAINABILITY

Becky Doherty of Stonepost Farms comes from southeastern BC where she was raised in a small rural community and was heavily involved in the family trail riding business. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Geography and Geography Information Systems (GIS). Her husband John Doherty, with whom she owns and runs Stonepost Farms, comes from southern Alberta, where he was raised on a small family farm. John has a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science, and has extensive experience in the agriculture industry. The ability to produce their own food in a natural and healthy fashion, and with the sustainability of the land in mind—these are values she hopes to pass down to the next generation of farmers, which includes their kids.

Stonepost focuses on regenerative farming techniques, going beyond sustainability. Regenerative farming is a holistic approach to farming which allows farmers to better the land and the soils around which everything on the farm revolves. At Stonepost, they continually seek new opportunities to learn and adopt new best management practices, techniques and technologies, allowing them to better operate the farm and return the land and environment to a more natural state.

To read more about Becky and John Doherty, please visit stonepostfarms.ca





through a lot of hamburgers, and that was exactly what we needed to make the deal come full circle for us!"

Their relationships with the three restaurants form the basis of their business. They also supply meat to a butcher/distributor (The Packing House) on a monthly basis, which in turn distributes the meat to other Toronto restaurants.

Tait said the key to a great relationship between farmers and chefs is understanding and patience, and he has excellent relationships with his chef customers. "Beef farming is different from being a baker," he says. "A muffin or a cake can be made quickly and easily. If they don't turn out well, you can make another batch. In beef farming, the beef on your plate is a process of over three years, from conception and pregnancy, through raising the calf, backgrounding it, and finishing it. We have a limited number of animals, and we take great pride in raising the very best beef."

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 36





It's great to see schools supporting local farms. They're not only supporting a local business, but they're also passing along the importance of eating local and supporting local to students and families.

3 SCHOOL CAFETERIAS

Perhaps one of the best ways to educate consumers about local food is to connect the next generation with it.

In 2015, Lester's Farm Market in St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, was approached by St. Bonaventure's College, where students were looking for healthy choices in their cafeteria lunches. That conversation led to the creation of Newfoundland and Labrador's first farm-to-school salad bar.

Susan Lester and the team at Lester's Farm Market work with Food First NL, Chartwells Food Service, and Farm to Cafeteria Canada (F2CC). "We all went into the venture knowing it was going to be a learning curve," Susan says. "We talked about the best way to incorporate our fresh veggies, while keeping in mind that Chartwells already had a well-established way of doing things."

I asked what advice she had for chefs and foodservice organizations wanting to work with farmers on a project like this. She stressed the importance of flexibility. "Crops are sometimes unpredictable, and sometimes when you're looking for a crop it may not be available." And the issue of cost came up. "Local food may not always be the economical choice. In Newfoundland and Labrador, it's a lot easier to get imported food at a lower cost than local food."

But the positives far outweigh the negatives. "It's great to see schools supporting local farms. They're not only supporting a local business, but they're also passing along the importance of eating local and supporting local to students and families." And Susan said the partnership goes beyond the food they provide. "We've had students to our farm for field trips, and I've gone to the school to speak to junior-high students about farming as a career."

Farmers and farm organizations are involved in many other interesting initiatives. Here are just a few more examples of how they're leading the way.



SUCCESS FOR WOMEN IN AGRI-FOOD

The Alberta Food Council runs a number of innovative programs and services. Farmer Becky Doherty was involved with the Success for Women in Agri-Food program. "I was partnered with a mentor, and that's how I got involved with Alberta Open Farm Days," Doherty said. "She suggested it would be a good way to get our names out there—and it was!" The program also offers workshops and a business skill learning series.

OUR FOOD HAS A STORY

Clinton Monchuk, of Farm Food Cares SK, said #OurFoodHasAStory is an important part of Saskatchewan's Agriculture Month. "Using the hashtag allows both farmers and non-farmers to post stories about their food," he said. "Having people post personal stories about their experiences of eating and growing food helps us all build an appreciation for agriculture, and creates great dialogue."



FARMS AT THE TABLE CONFERENCE

Farm Food Care SK hosts an annual conference to share ideas about food trends and connecting with consumers. "The goal of the conference is to provide people in the food industry with more information on how to build trust in food and farming," said Monchuk. He'd love to have more foodservice industry insiders attend, saying the conference "allows for great dialogue and engagement."

HEALTH CARE

The Farm-to-Salad project isn't the only way Food First NL promotes healthy eating. They've also established a pilot project to boost the use of locally-produced food at health care facilities. Chad Pelley, Communications Manager of Food First NL, said, "We're in the advisory stages, talking to farmers, foodservice professionals, health care practitioners, and other stakeholders, to find a pilot hospital for our province's foray into the farm-to-healthcare movement." The advantage doesn't just accrue to health care consumers; Pelley pointed to the purchasing power of hospitals and other institutions. "If they purchase and serve more locally produced food," he said, "they could be serious economic drivers for local agriculture, fisheries, and other food producers."



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GUT INSTINCT

Scrutinizing food trends: what this means for digestive health and consumer awareness.

BY CAELI MAZARA



Gluten-free. Paleo. Raw. Clean eating. Probiotic. Prebiotic. High fibre. Low FODMAP. The food industry is awash with buzzwords around dietary choices, many garnering a fair share of scrutiny. For Canadians living with digestive disorders, however, getting a bite to eat may require sifting through such terms to find a safe meal. The Canadian Digestive Health Foundation (CDHF) estimates this population to be around 20 million. That is, nearly two in three Canadians are living with a digestive disorder, and this health epidemic places an annual burden of $18 billion on our national healthcare system. These disorders range from Celiac disease (affecting roughly 330,000 Canadians) to Irritable Bowel Syndrome (for which Canada has one of the highest rates in the world) to Crohn's, colitis, digestive cancers and heartburn. Managing these issues may be painful, embarrassing, costly and frustrating.

Allen Rekunyk, vice president of the CDHF, explains the organization's role. Says Rekunyk, "We are the charitable foundation of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology. Our mission is to provide content, direction, support services and feedback in a couple of areas. The first is on the disease side, providing information on the various types of disorders. The other side of our foundation, where I'm focused, is on health and wellness, giving the public information on ways they can improve their digestive health."

Rekunyk credits the growing number of digestive disorder sufferers on better diagnostics, but also on a diet that has largely shifted from home-cooked to processed. "Processed foods are highly refined, with a higher sugar content typically," he says. "And these tend to aggravate digestive disorders."

For those suffering from such problems, eating out can be difficult or even impossible. "There's a lot of people with digestive issues out there who are saying, 'We can't even walk into that restaurant because we know there won't be anything we can eat,'" says Rekunyk.

In a national study conducted in 2014, nearly 65 per cent of respondents reported that they were trying to eat a healthier diet. More than half also indicated concerns around finding processed food options that they could consider healthy.

If we extrapolate this to mean that potentially two in three Canadians are walking away from food establishments, this constitutes a massive untapped resource. The CDHF works with foodservice entities to bring those with a selective diet through the door, with specially-crafted menu items and products.

Rekunyk says that CDHF is there to provide Canadian restaurants with what they need to cater to those

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

Potentially two in three Canadians are walking away from food establishments, this constitutes a massive untapped resource.



customers. The CDHF will help restaurateurs with their strategies, and help them market their menu items and food items to the public. "By aligning with the Canadian Digestive Health Foundation, they're attaching their name to the most recognized source of information out there for these folks," says Rekunyk. This means credibility—that the establishment is a trusted source of healthy food options.

The CDHF Symbol of Distinction marks menu items or products as digestive-health friendly and may be placed on items that are less processed, gluten- or lactose-free, or high in vegetables and clean proteins, for example. The seal is scientifically supported, with analysis by gastroenterologists and dieticians before approval.

With a public more informed than ever before on digestive health, and with many Canadians simply looking to follow a healthier diet, putting gut-friendly foods on the menu is in the interest of the food industry. According to the 2014 study, Canadians perceive items as healthier if they are less processed, contain less sodium and contain more vitamins and nutrients. The CDHF wants to see more fibre, pre- and probiotics (from foods like honey, whole grains and fermented foods), and lean proteins like chicken, turkey and fish.

"We believe that there's an opportunity to educate the industry on digestive disorders and the issues, but that's there's also a solution," says Rekunyk. "There are ways that we can support the industry to help attract more customers into their restaurants who otherwise would have avoided them. Endorsement from the CDHF allows restaurants to say, 'We work with the CDHF, and we use them as a source of factual, scientifically-based information to support what we are doing as a foodservice establishment.'"

Digestive problems are on the rise, and the Canadian food industry can play a role in bringing healthier options to the menu. If this means adding 20 million more dinner reservations country-wide in the future, everybody wins.

(Sources: cdhf.ca, ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3900450)

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[1]Based on lab tests by fsSTRATEGY Inc., assuming operators use pre-cut vegetables to produce their scratch soups. Average time saved of the soups tested is 33 minutes. Labour and elapsed time savings are greater if operators cut their own vegetables.

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Charcuterie Curation:

A ROBUST PRESERVING CULTURE IN CANADA & ONTARIO CHEESE: HOW TO OFFER A UNIQUE TABLEAU OF REGIONAL FOOD

BY PAMELA HAMEL, FOODS BY NATURE

As a culinary crusader from northeastern Ontario, I'm driven to get more local on the table. Armed with my experience as a foodservice key account manager, food stylist and event food curator, I set out to explore a few Ontario cheeses and their makers to offer best bets and a few insider tips for turning up a varied-cost charcuterie experience for fellow restaurateurs, chefs and buyers who face real-world challenges in the local and artisan supply chain.

Halifax, Toronto and Vancouver have all become culinary destinations, and it's in large part because the independent foodservice sector is turning its tables toward local sourcing and taking the leap to celebrate regional farm-to-table bounty. The charcuterie board is a reinvigorated trend that offers a unique tableau of regional food craft that features savoury cheeses at its core.

Regional offerings from fine cheeses to regal cheddars are bringing that experience to life when paired with cured meats, jerky, kielbasa, fresh fruits and pickled or grilled vegetables. Luckily, we're also blessed with a robust preserving culture in Canada, which makes charcuterie curation not only simpler but creative. You can make house pickles or jellies—and hats off to you for it—but you also have Toronto greats like Manning Canning, Stasis Preserves and others ready to pluck from your local farmer's market. We're armed with world-class charcuterie artisans like Mario Pingue at Niagara Food Specialties, Chef Paganelli of Speducci Mercatto and northern Ontario's Bay Meats Butcher Shop (owned and operated by a Finnish family offering nitrate-free jerky from Thunder Bay).

"I'm putting it out there—Ontario has arrived." – Pamela Hamel

Crafting your unique Ontario cheese selection can run from as high as $100 to as low as $10 per board, without sacrificing quality or creativity. You can craft to your customer needs based on price point, style, terroir or even more nuanced charcuterie preferences—some groups may favour less meat and more crudité and cheese, or vice versa. Grazing is one of the big features of charcuterie, which is designed for lingering, sipping and sharing—curate for your guests and they'll appreciate your thoughtfulness and attention to detail.

In my many years of catering, I've explored this high-to-low range, from inventing the single-serve "charcuterie cone," which is ideal for mass crowds and features flavoured cheese curds paired with a pickle and pepperette, all the way up to 50-foot installations for gatherings of a thousand. As a devoted locavore, there are a few challenges when purchasing in bulk formats, such as buying full wheels that can be near impossible to cut into smaller portions!

For smaller establishments, larger wheels can be cumbersome to handle and care for properly. Ontario cheesemakers have become more innovative, and few now offer convenient cater packs. These small pack varieties reduce your inventory cost and can be replenished with each week's order. I've also found cheesemakers to be very accommodating with pre-cut portions and direct shipping if you don't have access to a distributor.

I'm deeply driven by aesthetics. Cheese is sexy and sensory; we eat with our eyes first. That's why cheeses should be chosen not only for flavour and texture but also their visual attraction and aroma.

Take Devil's Rock, the blue cheese by Thornloe Cheese in Temiskaming, Ont. It's named after the iconic cliff made famous in the *Hardy Boys* series, and the shape of the cheese is a grand depiction of northeastern Ontario's inimitable landscape and terroir. The cheese is easily cut into a butterfly fashion or quartered to use on several portioned boards. It is visually striking and bears a great story.

Then there's the family of beer and wine-washed rinds, rubs and infused cheeses, which are plentiful in Ontario. Let's start with what I refer to as speckle-body cheeses, which are infused with herbs like the assortment at Mountain Oak from New Hamburg, Ont. Try

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I'm deeply driven by aesthetics. Cheese is sexy and sensory; we eat with our eyes first. That's why cheeses should be chosen not only for flavour and texture but also their visual attraction and aroma.

nettle, celery, black pepper or fenugreek cut into spears or the marbled caramelized onion cheddar from Pine River Cheese and Butter Co-op in Kincardine, Ont.—both make a striking visual impact.

Washed rinds are fantastic too, such as Gunn's Hill's Handeck, 5 Brothers or Tipsy, which is soaked in Palatine Hills Cabernet Merlot. Tipsy has a striking aesthetic and crafted taste by the Oxford County, Ont., artisan cheese maker.

Creating a signature style is as unique as our Canadian history and landscape and is integral to the overall customer experience. Tell your charcuterie terroir story; make your muse your region or theme and don't be shy to play it up with a local harvested board. On this mission, I went to Indie Alehouse in Toronto's Junction Triangle, my local favourite, where they knocked it out of the park with a honeyed hop syrup paired with World Champion Lankaaster, made by Glengarry Fine Cheese; it is named for the town Lancaster, Ont., in which this Dutch-origin cheese is finely crafted.

Single-cheese charcuterie is one of my go-to platters. They're easiest to price, and the focus on one cheese provides an anchor to the board curation. Try the burrata from Quality Cheese in Vaughan, Ont. in a serving for two along with a cured meat, seasonal fruits from the Niagara basket or wintery-roasted hothouse tomatoes with salty nuts, crusty bread and a garnish of basil. This fusion of fresh with old-school basics delivers Italy to the palette—the kind of experience you want to deliver.

Ontario cheeses always measure up with variety, taste and authenticity, when you take on the mission of sourcing them. Simple staples, such as flavoured curds from Thornloe Cheese, Ivanhoe or Balderson aged cheddars or Sabana's Latin Queso Fresco served with roasted peppers and chorizo, go the mile across a unique menu. And let's celebrate an Ontario twist on Swiss Appenzellers and Dutch Goudas, from Mountainoak Cheese and Thunder Oak Cheese Farm's aged varieties. Not to be overlooked is the legendary Niagara Gold by Upper Canada Cheese Company in Jordan Station, Ont., and the northern Ontario newcomer The Opasatika, a French Tomme from Fromagerie Kapuskoise in Kapuskasing.

In every province of this great country, your local cheesemakers are the foundation of the charcuterie board. A few Canadian favourites of mine that must be mentioned are Louis D'Or crafted by Fromagerie du Presbytère in Sainte-Élizabeth de Warwick, Que., and Castle Blue made by The Farm House Natural Cheeses in Fraser Valley, BC.

As I said, we eat with our eyes first and our noses second. Be sure to try the aromatic washed rind of Grand Trunk from Stonetown Artisan Cheese in St. Marys, Ont. Washed rinds are becoming more popular with the proliferation of craft breweries and cideries. I'm anticipating there are a few new and creative washed-rind cheeses in the making that won't be released until the aging is complete.

Charcuterie has evolved over the last 10 years, and it's a trend that's on the rise due to its versatility, and expressiveness. Buying local reduces your carbon footprint, and once your basic charcuterie template is set for the season, anyone working back or front of house can whip one out, which makes it a labour saver too! My recommendation? Put charcuterie on your menu and go the mile with local Ontario cheese!

A sustainable move for your menu...

While we chefs, caterers and restaurateurs are often the first to know about new and exciting local offerings, we often struggle to get our hands on the goods. Should we try to buy direct or get local listings from our distributor sales representative?

Sourcing local cheeses, meats and preserves for charcuterie is a home run on quality, variety and sustainability. While sourcing closest to home demonstrates your commitment to many types of local farming, it also strengthens local economies and helps raise the Ontario bar on cheese and local food craft. Demand for local cheeses, meats and agri-foods is ultimately demand for quality and encourages all processors and producers to strive for perfection.

Be it the Atlantic or Pacific coast or smack in the middle like Ontario, the pitfalls of local sourcing matched with labour struggles makes a local menu challenging, which is why the partnership between Restaurants Canada and Dairy Farmers of Ontario is so important. Although we've made tremendous progress with our broadline distributors, accessing and perception of local remains a challenge for everyone in the chain.

We're about 10 years into this trend, and we're seeing no signs of it coming to an end. I foresee the popularity of charcuterie growing beyond what it is today. It's a solution to labour costs and shortages—there's no cooking. Portion out, pair, present and offer a pour to go with it.

Necessity is the mother of invention: The Charcuterie Cone

This version of the charcuterie cone is tried and true and pairs ideally with weddings, craft beer festivals and anywhere you need to serve up the masses. The only challenge I've encountered was the sales pitch: "It's your granny's old-school cheese and pickles gone a new way!" I realize I've dumbed this down to the point of "ultimate charcuterie basics," and I'm fine with that. It's always been about delivering a cheese curd experience. And it works. M

Pamela Hamel, Foods by Nature

Pamela likes to say she's "comfort food in a dress" with a fierce northern spirit, paired with a pragmatic approach to the food business. Pamela brings a deeply held commitment to sustainability, sharpened while working with marginalized communities and learning the craft of wild harvesting. Pamela laddered her way up from coordinating community gardens to executive director roles in the hospitality sector, and today she's an independent blogger, agri-food brand manager and Torontonian pursuing big markets for northern Ontario food and travel trade. A native to the region of Temiskaming, Pamela shares her time between north and south and brings a unique perspective on both urban and rural food sourcing to the foodservice sector.

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3 Ways That Restaurant Technology Can Save Your Bacon

How to use environmentally and fiscally sustainable technology to reduce operational costs and boost your bottom line!

BY CHRIS SNOYER

Bacon seems to be everywhere these days, from snack bar menus to ironic tee shirts, and this article will be no exception. We'll take a look at three ways that restaurant technology can save your bacon (literally and figuratively), and in some cases, help you bring home more of it!

1. SAVE TIME
BY STREAMLINING PROCESSES

To save one's bacon traditionally refers to saving one from bodily harm. When you consider the hours kept by many in the industry, I think it's fair to say that working in hospitality is a full-contact sport and that you'd be a life saver if you helped them get a few hours back in their day or week.

That's why many restaurants are looking to technology to help automate tasks like basic training and staff scheduling. For example, apps like 7shifts allow restaurants to cut down on time drastically it takes to create and maintain staff schedules while providing the labour insights needed to optimize labour costs long-term without sacrificing service.

Inventory, staff scheduling and training are all necessary for the running of a restaurant, but these administrative tasks are not the reason that any of us got into the industry.

2. SAVE MONEY
BY REDUCING FOOD AND LABOUR COSTS

As rising food and labour costs continue to squeeze margins, operators are looking for a lifeline. Some have chosen to cut hours or reduce food quality to make rent, but some steps can be taken before such drastic measures. Consider whether there's some slack to be cut in other areas.

Without proper training, your online ratings would plummet, but labour isn't cheap. Does all training need to take place at a Sunday morning seminar, or could you deliver menu knowledge to their phones? Does every new employee need THAT many shadow hours, or is there a more efficient way to deliver the straightforward elements of that training?

What about food costs? Are you running a tight ship on your inventory, or is there some waste that could be snuffed out? Inventory control systems like Fytics were created to cut costs, track and reduce wastage, and improve your bottom line. From counting to re-ordering, and even recipe costing, these systems are helping operators to right the ship without sacrificing food quality. If bar inventory is the bigger thorn in your side, check out Wisk Solutions.



3. BOOST SALES
BY GROWING YOUR AVERAGE CHECK

Savings are important, but they're only half of the equation. There are also plenty of opportunities to boost your bottom line by increasing your average check. For many restaurants, their most knowledgeable servers sell 10 to 20 per cent more than less savvy peers. Decreasing the amount of time it takes an employee to be running at full speed can have a massive impact (The Center for Hospitality Research at Cornell estimates that lost productivity due to turnover costs $3,000 EVERY time you hire someone new*), but optional product training sessions aren't well-attended. Training technology is the solution, and it works.

Retail employers have used training technology to reduce their turnover costs by over 40 per cent relative to hospitality, and restaurants are now following suit by delivering information via mobile, where it can be accessed from anywhere, at any time, and is more likely to be consumed by today's millennial workforce. Platforms like Spiffy also take out the guesswork by offering reporting options for measuring employee progress, so it's well known which employees are prepared to perform.

TO SUM THINGS UP

Inventory, staff scheduling and training are all necessary for the running of a restaurant, but these administrative tasks are not the reason that any of us got into the industry. Automating these tasks and streamlining operations—this is sustainability in action.

About Chris Snoyer

Chris Snoyer is the founder of Spiffy: a restaurant education app with free modules on beer, wine, spirits, and other important topics like sexual harassment in hospitality. Aside from helping restaurants automate their staff training, Snoyer stays connected to the industry by organizing Toronto's restaurant tech meetup, speaking at industry events, and occasionally hopping behind the wood to make sure he's still got it!

* (Source: therail.media)



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Consumers age 14-49 account for 76% of all espresso consumption in Canada. [1]

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People, Profits & the Planet

RC SHOW TAKES ON SUSTAINABILITY AS THE THEME FOR 2019

As our planet and culture shifts; sustainability has emerged at the forefront of issues facing our global society today. The foodservice industry is both part of the problem and the solution. We are now asking vital questions as a collective. What is the foodservice industry doing to help the environment as a whole? What about food waste diversion? Are we reducing plastic use? Are we adding more sustainable menu options?

RC Show is looking to tackle these issues from every angle. The show will look at how to build and sustain your business, your people and culture while focusing on the environment and doing it all profitably.

Operators will learn where to source sustainable foods, incorporate plant-based menu options and waste diversion techniques all while shopping for leading-edge products and services on a show floor that covers over 250,000 square feet. A show that has eight curated pavilions showcasing everything from the latest in coffee and tea, leading-edge technology, bar and beverage needs, Canadian and international food flavours, all under one roof!

Operators will also learn from over 100 expert-led talks, covering a wide range of business-driven topics, including how to prepare and practice sustainability to prosper. You'll learn how to minimize your food waste and energy consumption to lower your ecological footprint and costs. You will discover how to reach millennials: countless studies have shown this cohort cares deeply about where their food comes from, they want to eat healthier and they're influencing the way in which we consume in general. You'll find out how you can embrace local without limiting your menu. Operators will learn where to source sustainable foods, incorporate plant-based menu options, waste diversion techniques and more.

RC Show 2019 will look to showcase restaurants that are celebrating the best in sustainable, ethical and traceable practices. You will feel, touch, taste and learn how these practices can positively affect your bottom line.

RC Show 2019 will empower you—with real, actionable insights—to reduce costs and provide everything your business needs to achieve measurable sustainability in your operations and give operators the ABILITY to do more!

THE RC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

If you are interested in ensuring your business is sustainable and reaching a growing population that cares about the planet and doing good, RC Leadership Conference is for you. Here, for the first time, you will hear from Canada's top research data companies all under one roof, as they delve into stats and findings about what customers are buying, how they are feeling and how the food industry is changing. Brand guru Terry O'Reilly of CBC's *Under the Influence* fame will be a keynote speaker, sharing his









100+
expert-led talks

COVERING A WIDE RANGE OF BUSINESS-DRIVEN TOPICS, INCLUDING HOW TO PREPARE AND PRACTICE SUSTAINABILITY TO PROSPER

expansive knowledge on branding—when it works, when it flops and how to integrate the right formula to build customer loyalty and business profitability...responsibly. Donald Burns, US-based Restaurant Coach and author of *Your Restaurant Sucks!*, will also provide insights on improving your operations.

BREAKFAST WITH CHAMPIONS

Hungry for more? Start your day with a power breakfast at Breakfast with Champions. We've rallied together the businesses that are transforming foodservice and restaurant operations into multi-faceted brands and industry leaders. Hear their stories, learn their tricks and walk away inspired to sustain and gain.

INSPIRATION ISN'T JUST HAPPENING ON STAGE

Want to uncover ways to achieve business sustainability now and into the future? RC Show 2019 will showcase the latest trends, concepts, cutting-edge technologies, sustainable products, practices and flavours that will positively impact your bottom line in a kitchen of the future exhibit. This interactive exhibition will weave the latest innovations in sustainability, leading companies and celebrity chefs into an exciting learning experience.

COMPETITIONS THAT WILL TEST THE INDUSTRY'S BEST

Glasses will fly, fires will flare and the cream of the crop will rise to the top! Competitors will be placed on the chopping block as Canada's top culinary talent, baristas and bartenders will go head-to-head in this year's competition line-up.

- Coffee will be turned into beautiful works of art at the 2019 **Canadian Latte Art and Coffee in Good Spirits National Championship**
- **Beyond the Rail** brings the country's best bartenders and mixologists together to mix, muddle and stir creative concoctions
- **The Speed Rack** women are back to showcase their talents and support Rethink Breast Cancer
- Watch top chefs compete on the **Garland Canada Culinary Stage** which will showcase top and emerging chefs to compete for a $5,000 grand prize!

UNCOVER AMAZING OPPORTUNITIES

Once inspired and entertained, you will be ready to take action. RC Show 2019 has created a carefully curated exhibition to make your shopping and business growth experience as easy and intriguing as possible. Attendees will be able to shop all in one spot, network and take advantage of show specials and incentives.

Connect at Canada's largest annual foodservice event through RC Show 2019's Opening Night Reception, Top-to-Top Reception and the new Bar Crawl where bartenders, sommeliers and Cicerones will treat attendees to cocktails, wine and beer tastings with live entertainment.

RC Show 2019, Feb 24-26, the hospitality event of the year.

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Canada-Style

10 ways to write, and sell, a Great Canadian Menu

BY ERIC PATEMAN

For the past 25 years, I've been championing Canadian cuisine around the world—first as a chef and now as a consultant. I travel more than 250 days a year sharing culinary stories with governments and the private sector, presenting culinary tourism and hospitality strategies. I've had the opportunity to work on projects like collaborating with Greg Klassen and his team at Twenty 31 on the framework for Canada's National Culinary Tourism Strategy. I have worked with the Province of New Brunswick and Town of Shediac businesses to create a Canadian Seafood Centre of Excellence and Innovation. I also regularly get to be the keynote speaker on Culinary Tourism at events around the world.

Through my travels and my culinary journey, it's become clear to me that labelling food as "Farm to Table" or boasting that you "Buy Local" isn't enough in itself, not when even the largest chains on the planet talk about locally inspired menus.

It's time to find new ways to stand out.

According to the UN World Tourism Organization's Gastronomy Network Action Plan, over 88 per cent of destinations consider gastronomy as a strategic element in their image and brand. That means almost nine out of 10 of us are fighting for the same customers, not only in our markets but with destinations around the world. How do you differentiate your business from your competitors whether they're around the corner, or around the world?

I believe that we have a killer advantage—we can offer a truly Canadian experience, and no, I don't mean just moose, maple syrup and Mounties! The definition I use when talking about Canadian cuisine around the world is "local, seasonal and sustainable cuisine in the hands of many cultures." Canada's culture is a mosaic, not a melting pot. Each place or person brings unique flavours and experiences to our national dishes. Indigenous cuisine laid the foundation for what would become Canadian cuisine, and we now have hundreds of cultures represented from coast to coast to coast. The fact that we can blend all of these cultural influences into our cuisine without rules speaks to who we really are—a land of opportunity, diversity, acceptance and creativity.

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 50

BUILD YOUR

Great Canadian Menu

1

Focus on your local geography

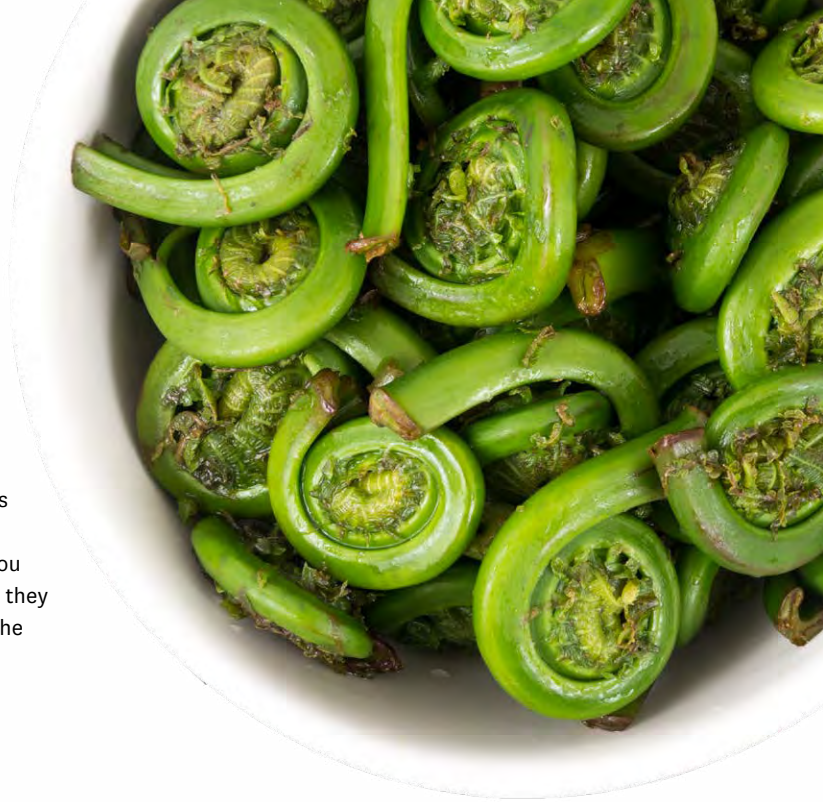
what does the land offer you seasonally, what can be foraged, what is special? Whether that's wild chanterelles in British Columbia, fiddleheads in New Brunswick or moose in Newfoundland—make those local foods your menu's seasonal star.



2

Buy local

whenever possible and work with small producers and farmers (or wholesalers who support small-scale farming) to showcase their best products and make a commitment to pay top dollar for them, so you are supporting them just like they are supporting you. And let the ingredient shine.



3

Showcase and learn from local cultural influences

be it a single culture or a range of cultures—pull the best of each and make it your own. Think about spices and techniques from cultures other than your own.



4

Don't be afraid to try new things

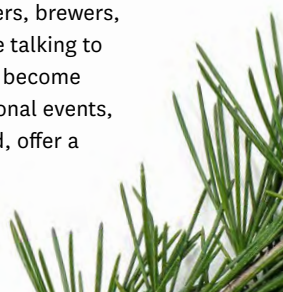
when you combine different cultures and techniques, but try it, test it and treat it seriously. Vancouver restaurant Kissa Tanto blends Corsican and Japanese flavours and techniques. Kissa Tanto has received international awards and packs rooms since opening.



5

Put feelings into the flavours

by celebrating the people and the story. Make cultures, chefs, farmers, fishers, artisan producers the rock stars. Because of them, we have a distinct cuisine and culinary identity. Name producers on your menu, host collaborative dinners with farmers, winemakers, brewers, etc., and have them at the table talking to your guests. Edible Canada has become famous for these, and international events, such as Outstanding in the Field, offer a showcase for producers.





7

Stop trying to "define" Canadian cuisine

and instead appreciate the people, the ingredients and the no-rules style and own it! I don't believe we will ever have a dish-specific national identity in the same way that French or Italian cuisine does: but what we do better than anyone is offering an abundance of high-quality ingredients.

8

Share the stories

of your dishes on your menu, on social media, and anywhere else you can market them. Stories engage people and fuel the movement. Make it easy for your guests to share the stories too by including hashtags, social media handles, etc., on menus and free WiFi in your venues. At Edible Canada we have had huge success with our mailing list and we have great engagement on social media channels.



6

Price your food fairly

to support the whole supply value chain. The days of $25 entrees need to end, and the whole industry needs to significantly increase pricing on menus if we are to make farming and fishing more sustainable and have access to the best of our local products. Whether it's mustard seed, PEI beef or spot prawns, we export most of our top-grade products because overseas markets pay top dollar for them. Guests come to Canada looking to eat the best of Canadian food, so make sure you can serve it to them by fostering relationships with your suppliers which make financial sense for them.

9

Collaborate

with others to bring people together—chefs working with chefs (both local and international), winemakers, brewers, distillers, producers and other industries, and create an opportunity for others to work together and help share the story. Our Cross Canada dinner series was hugely successful; we invited chefs and storytellers from each province to collaborate on a dinner with us at Edible Canada. Think outside the box: we partnered with Audi Canada to do food and wine driving trips, and we host the Wine Islands Vintners Association showcase annually.



10

We eat multiple meals a day

give potential guests a reason to share one of those meals with you. Create menus that give people a reason to come, host special events, add new menu items regularly and create occasions. Oyama Sausage on Granville Island does a great job of this, running different themes each week showcasing different products.





Finally, don't forget that although Canada is a casual country, people still want to feel taken care of. Make Canadian dining a byword for technically perfect service without pretension! M

About the Author

Eric Pateman is one of the world's leading experts on culinary tourism and one of our nation's leading ambassadors of Canadian cuisine, a storyteller for hundreds of small artisan food companies, farmers, fisherman, foragers and is known to bring together chefs and influencers from all aspects of the culinary world. Pateman owns and operates the successful Edible Canada brand of companies, which includes restaurants, retail stores and a culinary travel division. Eric also has an award-winning salt company and consulting practice that keeps him travelling around the world working for both public and private sector clients to define cuisines, build brands and shape the future of food.

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Instagram

HELPING RESTAURANTS CHANGE THE GAME

BY KARTIKEY BHARGAVA
DIGITAL MARKETING EXPERT, RESTAURANTS CANADA

There's no doubt that social media has changed the face of business in many ways. For Canadian restaurants, Instagram has increasingly become one of the more popular platforms for engaging guests and potential guests on the social stage.

With new and innovative add-ons for businesses such as booking tables while on the app, the platform is helping to facilitate better and deeper engagement. No surprise when you consider Instagram has always been very business friendly, but for restaurants, especially, Instagram is defining engagement with guests. Not only are customers likely to post images of their experiences and dishes, a new range of messaging tools and a more business-focused approach on the platform is helping restaurants to really stand out.

According to Instagram COO Marne Levine, a restaurant's Instagram success is driven by creating a good business profile on the platform. "I highly recommend any restaurant having a business profile. First of all, it helps the restaurant stand out to their customers as being a business. Second, it gives customers a lot of really important information about who that business is," says Levine.

THE STATS THAT MAKE INSTAGRAM WORTHWHILE

Use Instagram and you'll find more than just foodie snaps and videos in your timeline; the platform uses the most popular hashtags for dining and restaurants in the world. For example, according to Instagram, 111.9 million posts have used the hashtag #yummy. And the fourth most followed hashtag with over 250,000 followers is #foodstylist.

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 54



#YUMMY

Just a decade ago, some high-profile chefs and restaurants scoffed at the idea of taking photos of food. In fact, some actively discouraged diners from doing so. Now, 10 years on, most businesses realize the power of this kind of advertising and marketing. Not only do they want guests to take images and post them, the wide use of Instagram in restaurants has influenced how managers and owners design and light their restaurants and present their food.

Instagram differentiates itself from other social media platforms because of the larger number of users who choose to follow a particular business. With over 200 million active users who visit at least one business per day and 150 million that further engage in conversations with businesses each month, the potential is there for all to take advantage of.

A popular tool today for engaging with users is Instagram "Stories." Pioneered by rival Snapchat, one-third of users (guests or potential guests) have started a conversation with a business after viewing an Instagram Story. Stories work simply and dynamically. For instance, a restaurateur might create a Story containing images and videos of you serving a particular customer in your restaurant or a longer timeline of the working day of your chef.

The truth is that Instagram has been at the forefront of creating a wide range of business tools that allow restaurants of all kinds to engage with potential guests and raise their profiles.

CREATE A BUSINESS PROFILE

Research by Ipsos MORI shows that 59 per cent of Canadian consumers say they are inspired by content they see on Instagram and a quarter of them use this platform to decide whether to buy something or not. Setting up a business profile on Instagram is important for any company. It's a particularly powerful tool for restaurants where the visual side of things is so important and brand development is vital.

Assets such as allowing a user to book a table with the simple click of a button on Instagram are starting to provide an invaluable way to boost business as it is rolled out globally. According to Marne Levine, it's key to make use of all the tools now available if you want your restaurant business to stand out on Instagram. "Feed, stories, photos, and videos, try out the polling sticker by engaging the community and seeing what they might be interested in and experimenting with those things. Potentially, try IGTV. Give it some time and see what's going on," says Levine.

Direct messaging has been developed on the platform over the years and has improved since it was bought out by Facebook. Now you can get inbox management tools with filtering capabilities so that you are able to better manage engagement with customers. New buttons that allow users to book a table or pay for an order means that potential customers can now take direct action without leaving their home.

Twenty-five companies are currently working on or have completed their integration with Instagram and that includes fast food restaurant A&W in Canada.

They ran an Instagram campaign over a period of five weeks to attract new, younger customers to the brand. This involved posting a series of photo ads featuring close ups of their food which ran concurrently with another campaign on TV. Over the entire campaign, A&W registered a 39 per cent increase in ad recall.

OpenTable, based in San Francisco, used ads in Instagram Stories to help drive online reservations at their restaurants. They were able to reach over 1.5 million people and the campaign delivered one of the best ROIs in their history, producing more bookings at a lower per head cost.

Marne Lavine understands that succeeding on Instagram and other social media isn't about direct selling, it's a community.

"It's how you are in your community and where you live—you wouldn't go to your neighbour's house just when you need something. You become friends with your neighbours, you interact with them, and get to know each other. Then, when you need something, you have the relationship that has been built up. I would say I think about the Instagram community a lot like that too."

WHY INSTAGRAM IS THE COMPLETE RESTAURANT PROMOTION PACKAGE

Don't underestimate the power of social media. Whether you have a small restaurant or a chain of outlets across Canada, making the most of all the assets at your disposal is vital. Call-to-Action buttons in particular are improving bookings for many businesses across a variety

MARNE LEVINE'S 5 TOP TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING ON INSTAGRAM

1. Make sure your restaurant business adopts an Instagram business profile.
2. Keep focused on mobile as this is the way the vast majority of people will access information about your restaurant. That business profile also gives you some valuable insights. You should learn to understand and use these to improve your engagement on Instagram.
3. Take the time to experiment and use the tools that are on offer. For instance, try Instagram's polling tool to do a little market research and really find out what is going to influence users. Don't think a particular tool doesn't apply to you just because you don't know how to use it. You can always learn.

of sectors, including hospitality.

This has changed the way we do business. In the past, where some restaurants tried to ban smartphones from the dining table, they now actively encourage guests to snap away and take videos.

Guest-generated reviews (or user-generated content (UGC)) is a marketing powerhouse, but negative UGC can also do the exact opposite. In any case, it may not have the slick, professionally produced quality of a formal restaurant marketing campaign, but positive UGC resonates far more with today's consumers. If your restaurant is confident in its brand and the quality of food you produce, embracing Instagram and making use of its growing number of tools and UGC is vital.



RESTAURANTS CANADA'S KARTIKEY BHARGAVA WITH INSTAGRAM COO, MARNE LEVINE

In July this year, Instagram launched IGTV that allows you to post videos longer than the usual 60 seconds (in some cases up to an hour). It's primarily focused on mobile viewing as you might expect, but the possibilities are obvious. It's also a sign that Instagram's tool set for businesses is continually being updated.

"We know that people are really interested in entrepreneurial type of stories, and stories about the world of food. What a great and perfect opportunity for somebody like that. It's [IGTV] in its early days. We're excited by what we're seeing and the way people are using it," says Levine.

What this means is that restaurants need to be able to respond and evolve to new additions and changes in the social media landscape. That's going to be the really big challenge for small and medium size outfits over the next few years. M

#FOODSTYLIST

4 Take advantage of Instagram's ad facility. It's a powerful marketing tool that can get your message in front of the right people at the right time and boost restaurant bookings.

5 Don't see yourself as a separate entity. You're part of a community and you should be building long-term relationships rather than outright selling all the time. This is not easy for some business owners who are always thinking about the bottom line—but it works if you can get it right.



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LACTANTIA.CA



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WTF HOW TO MAX OUT UNDERUSED EQUIPMENT

By Greg Boyer
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING, MCCAIN FOODSERVICE

When was the last time you looked around your kitchen and focused only on the equipment—how frequently it is used, at what times of day and whether you are using all your equipment as efficiently as possible to share the load during peak service?

Or, maybe you're considering changing your apps and sides but don't know what to offer because your deep fryer is already working overtime.

Using your equipment to its full capacity can help to ensure you're operating efficiently. And, since it can be difficult—and costly—to change equipment, consider how you can make use of what you've got by changing up your menu or your ingredients.

At McCain Foodservice we regularly work with our customers to identify potential opportunities where product can help them in maximizing the utilization of their equipment.

Take the panini press as an example. That shiny sandwich press may have seemed like a good idea—pressed sandwiches remain extremely popular—but we've seen instances where it may only be used 10 to 15 per cent of the day. For operators, that's revenue opportunity lost.

THAT SCENARIO SERVED AS INSPIRATION FOR OUR TEAM TO LOOK AT PRODUCT INNOVATION IN A WHOLE NEW WTF (WITHOUT THE FRYER) WAY.

With equipment like panini presses, TurboChefs and impingement ovens offering operators quick and easy ways to prepare foods and perhaps supplement existing food and beverage menu options, our product innovation team embarked on product ideation and development that would provide solutions to customers who have invested in these types of equipment.

Through this process, we kept two key things top of mind: food safety and ease of use for operators.

Consider food safety. From a regulatory perspective, it's critical that food is cooked properly and some equipment may not be consistent in terms of heat delivery. The solution? Potentially shifting to frozen products that are Ready To Eat. Because these products, like our Wong Wing appetizers, are already fully cooked at the manufacturer's plant, they just need to be warmed up, resulting in foods that an operator can feel confident about serving regardless of the type of equipment used to heat them up.

Then there is ease of use and speed of service. McCain offers several versatile products that can be baked or pan-fried (as well as deep fried) depending on what works for you and your equipment. Many products are available in a variety of hold times and cook times, like our Potato Bites or Twisted Potatoes, which will allow you to match speed of service while providing excellent value.

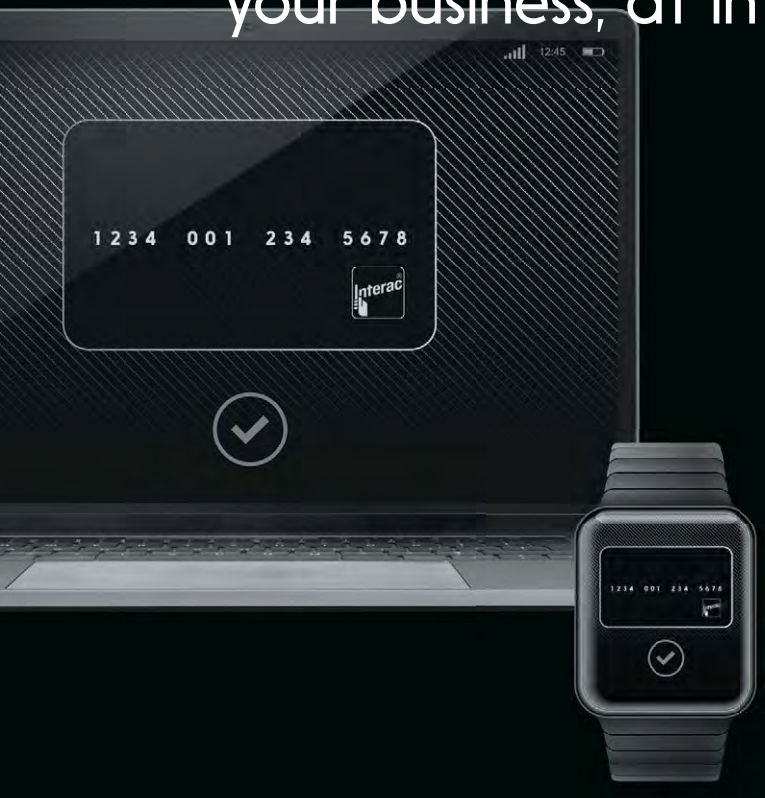
By reducing cook times, your kitchen can provide the same delicious offerings you have now but in much less time. This allows you to serve more customers during busy peak times. It can also mean expanding your food offerings as you can prepare a larger variety of food for your customers even if you don't have the space for a large commercial oven. By reducing cook times and offering a menu with increased variety, you can potentially increase the revenue of your kitchen. M





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