MENU

CANADA'S FOODSERVICE MAGAZINE

For Afrim Pristine, **cheese** puts life into perspective

Getting in on the **meal kit** craze

Montreal's **Maison Publique** hosts Scotch Surf & Turf

Little Victories in third wave **coffee**



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Harvest season is always a great time for celebrating our country's distinct and diverse culinary culture. That's why Restaurants Canada is proud to be participating in Food Day Canada on Aug. 4. Started in 2003 by Anita Stewart, an educator and writer who has been advocating on behalf of Canadian cuisine for decades, this day of action is an annual opportunity to put Canada on the menu.

This of course includes raising a glass to Canadian wine makers and growers.

In this issue we speak to Janet Dorozynski, a Global Affairs trade commissioner for wine, beer and spirits, who helps export-ready brands take their business beyond Canada's borders. While she is mostly focused on promoting our industry abroad, she says she'd also like to see more Canadian products listed on menus here at home.

Wine accounts for 42% of all alcohol consumed in Canadian restaurants, which leaves plenty of room for domestic labels.

And as we hear from David Stansfield, Corporate Sommelier with Earls Kitchen + Bar, what you choose to put on your wine list impacts how your guests experience your brand. So you might be sending the wrong message if you're leaving Canada out.

With all the uncertainty surrounding international trade relations, this is an especially important time to support Canadian products. On our end, Restaurants Canada continues to advocate for less restrictions on interprovincial trade, working closely with government stakeholders and industry leaders to achieve greater freedom in the market, better prices for consumers, and a more equitable system for foodservice operators.

Another way we're supporting our industry is by partnering with organizations who share our determination to help businesses of all sizes achieve long-term sustainability. Through a new partner benefits program with Silver Chef, Restaurants Canada's members will now be able to finance equipment without any outlay of their own capital, giving them the flexibility to invest in purchases as simple as a single espresso machine, or larger procurements, such as a custom designed cooking system.

Research is also an important ingredient for the future success of Canada's foodservice sector. Restaurants Canada applauds the recent investment of up to $8.4 million from the federal government, and the additional industry contributions of up to $3.7 million, toward the development of a national research cluster devoted to advancing the Canadian grape and wine industry.

Every harvest we reap what we sow.

The more we support each other, the more we'll have to celebrate year after year.

Cheers to the continued health of our industry.

Santé!



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Shanna Munro
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July/August 2018
Volume 3 Number 4

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

Join The Foodservice Energy Challenge

Together we will be rolling out the Foodservice Energy Challenge where foodservice operators can sign up to take advantage of money-saving energy tips, incentives and rebates. A select group of foodservice operators interested in upgrading their business to be more energy efficient will be invited to participate in the Challenge.

To find out more visit restaurantscanada.org/energychallenge.

Those who sign up have a chance of winning energy efficient appliances such as this TRUE refrigerator valued at approximately $6,400 CAD.



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MENU is published six times per year by Restaurants Canada

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HST Registration No. #
106866460 RT0001

Subscription price:
CANADIAN PRICE: $75 per year: most single issues $18.95.

Publication Mail Agreement
No. 400009977
ISSN 2371-4883

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Stemless toasting flutes rimmed with fresh lemon juice and sugar. This summery sweet Prosecco, lemon and lavender cocktail is garnished with local lavender.

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17 WINE!

At MENU magazine we get out and about to connect with you! If you have an event that you would like us to attend, please let us know at members@restaurantscanada.org.

Olds College embraces the future with launch of Smart Farm. Stuart Cullum, President of Olds College and Catalina Oitzl, current Olds College Student plant a soil and crop evaluation sensor into the Olds College Smart Farm in Olds, AB. (CNW Group/Olds College)





Wild wine selections grace the bar at the inaugural Wild Things Festival in Toronto on June 9, 2018. The festival was focused on wild-fermented beer, cider and wine!



A&W Food Services of Canada Inc. and the MS Society of Canada are teaming up with soccer superstar Christine Sinclair, two-time Olympic bronze medalist and Canadian women's national soccer team captain, for the 10th annual Burgers to Beat MS campaign to take on multiple sclerosis (MS). Burgers to Beat MS kicks off Monday, July 9 and runs until Thursday, August 16.

EVENTS

JULY

JUL 27-29	Foodtruck Wars Street Festival Saskatoon, SK
JUL 27-29	Harold's Fish Festival Toronto, ON

AUGUST

AUG 1-5	Tyne Valley Oyster Festival Tyne Valley, PEI
AUG 1-5	Festival du Bleuet Dolbeau-Mistassini, QC
AUG 2-5	Festival du Cochon Sainte-Perpétue, QC
AUG 3-5	Mary's Harbour Crab Festival Mary's Harbour, NFLD
AUG 3-12	Montreal Italian Week Montreal, QC
AUG 3-6	Saskatoon Ribfest Saskatoon, SK
AUG 3-6	Toronto Food Truck Festival Toronto, ON
AUG 4-11	Chocolate Fest St. Stephen, NB
AUG 4-6	Fairy Berry Festival Bon Accord, AB
AUG 4	Food Day Canada Nationwide
AUG 8-12	Penticton Peach Festival Penticton, BC
AUG 9-12	Digby Scallop Days Digby, NS
AUG 9-12	JerkFest Toronto, ON
AUG 9-12	Taste of Calgary Calgary, AB
AUG 10-12	Alliston Potato Festival Alliston, ON
AUG 10-12	Brigus Blueberry Festival Brigus, NL
AUG 10-11	Halifax Seaport Beerfest Halifax, NS
AUG 10-12	Kleefeld Honey Festival Kleefeld, MB
AUG 10-12	Winkler Harvest Festival Winkler, MB
AUG 10-12	Taste of the Danforth Toronto, ON
AUG 11	Okanagan Wine Summer Festival Okanagan Valley, BC
AUG 11-12	Perth Garlic Festival Perth, ON
AUG 11-12	Toronto Vegandale Food and Drink Festival Toronto, ON
AUG 11-12	Sweetery Toronto Food Festival Toronto, ON
AUG 12	Okanagan Feast of Fields Kelowna, BC
AUG 17-18	Carrot Fest Bradford, ON
AUG 17-19	Foire Gourmande Ville-Marie, QC
AUG 17-SEP 1	Wild Blueberry Harvest Festival Throughout Nova Scotia
AUG 17-18	Winnipeg BBQ & Blues Festival Winnipeg, MB
AUG 18	Taste of Maple Creek Maple Creek, SK
AUG 23-25	Festival de la Poutine Drummondville, QC
AUG 24-26	Corn and Apple Festival Morden, MB
AUG 25-26	South Cariboo Garlic Festival Lac La Hache, BC
AUG 26	Vancouver Island Feast of Fields North Saanich, BC

SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER

SEPT 1	Cheese and Meat Festival Vancouver, BC
SEPT 8	Fort Langley Food Truck Festival Fort Langley, BC
SEPT 9	Vancouver Feast of Fields Vancouver, BC
SEPT 11-16	Whistler Village Beer Festival Whistler, BC
SEPT 13-16	PEI Shellfish Festival Charlottetown, PEI
SEPT 16	Toronto Garlic Festival Toronto, ON
SEPT 18-20	Future Festival Toronto, ON
SEPT 22	Maple Ridge Food Truck Festival Maple Ridge, BC
SEPT 27-OCT 7	Okanagan Wine Falls Festival Okanagan Valley, BC
OCT 13	Canadian Hospitality Foundation Annual Scholarship Gala Toronto, ON
OCT 30-31	Indigenous Tourism National Conference Saskatoon, SK
NOV 3-10	Terroir Tuscany Castello Di Potentino, Italy

*Visit **MenuMag.ca** to submit your industry event listing.*

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[1] Nielsen MarketTrack Latest 52 weeks Period ending Aug 19 2017

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SCOTCH SURF + TURF

CELEBRATING LAMB AND SEAFOOD FROM ACROSS THE POND AT MONTREAL'S MAISON PUBLIQUE

BY MALLORY FRAYN



In the food industry, "local" is the fad du jour. Sourcing products from as close to home as possible is consistently viewed as the superior alternative to importing goods from kilometres away. Reduced carbon footprints, fostering connections with local producers to create close-knit food communities, and ultimately, offering the freshest flavours to guests, are all part of the argument for why local is better. While all of these hold true, the locavore mentality also begs the question as to what role globalization plays in a world that is ever-connected. Is it so bad to ship in products from overseas that are unavailable or superior to that on home soil? Or is the future moving towards cooking within a 100-kilometre radius of one's locale?

Under this premise, a Scotch surf and turf event in Montreal might sound like an odd combination. However, when you combine a chef who has a background cooking in the UK, along with a team of individuals that are incredibly passionate about their country's products, it makes for one successful evening. Here's why.

The evening was put on by Seafood Scotland and Quality Meat Scotland, in collaboration with Montreal's Chef Derek Dammann at his restaurant, Maison Publique. Having worked for many years with Jamie Oliver in London, Chef







MALLORY FRAYN BIO

As a food writer and PhD candidate in clinical psychology, Mallory Frayn thinks about food a lot. Whether she's promoting intuitive eating through groups, or debunking diet culture in her writing, her mandate is to help people develop healthier relationships with food. She regularly contributes to publications like Eat North (eatnorth.com) and Eater Montreal (montreal.eater.com), and also has her own site, Because I Like Chocolate (becauseilikechocolate.com). Follow her on social media @cuzilikechoclat.

Dammann's ties to across the pond made him a fitting host for the evening.

"It's nice to break it up for everyone from time to time. We are no stranger to events; they go very smoothly. Once the menu is done we are pretty much set. We know exact portions, it's not like a regular service," Dammann explains.

Geographically, let's look at logistics. The distance from Montreal to Edinburgh, Scotland is 4,858 kilometres. To travel from Montreal, all the way across the country to Victoria, is almost 5,000 kilometres. Canadian products are regularly promoted from coast to coast, but depending on where in the country you're located, looking across the ocean is often a closer alternative. Scotland and Quebec are closer than one would think, especially given that they're only separated by the Atlantic Ocean.

The evening opened with cocktails, as all great events should. The drinks featured both gin and vodka from Scotland's Arbikie Highland Estate distillery, and were a take on the Tom Collins and classic martini, respectively. Refreshing and simple, they were an excellent opener to set the stage for what was to come.

It's no secret that Scotland produces world-renowned lamb, but the availability of this product in Quebec and Canada at large has been limited until late due to import restrictions. As a result of lifted red meat import regulations, haggis, one of Scotland's most well-known dishes, will now be exported to Canada after a 50 year hiatus. The dish, which is comprised of a variety of sheep offal, is nothing to fear if chef Derek Dammann's rendition is any indication. Tucking Macsween haggis into a cup of bib lettuce topped with aioli and crispy shallots is a surefire way to ensure that it will go down easy.

From Matane shrimp to snow crab, Quebec is home to some incredible fish and shellfish, but Scotland has no shortage either. With 1,200 kilometres of coastline and 60 different species of seafood harvested, there's plenty of reason for chefs to import fish and shellfish from this region. This is especially the case when it's good enough to serve on its own, with minimal accoutrements. Chef Dammann took his cues from the "less is more" playbook throughout the dinner, but especially with his seafood dishes, which helped them to stay true to the integrity of the product he was showcasing.

His scallop crudo, topped with a mix of Mara seaweed, sesame seeds and salt, provided both texture and umami, not unlike a Scottish take on the Japanese condiment, furikake. The subsequent dish featured thin, delicate slices of smoked salmon garnished with dollops of herbaceous ravigote, a French pistou of sorts with herbs, shallots and capers. But there's no doubt that the showstopper of the evening food-wise was the impressive platter of Scottish langoustines. Somewhat of a cross between shrimp and lobster, they were served simply with lemon wedges and sides of aioli for dipping.

Throughout the dinner, every dish was served family style, a smart choice for a large event in a small venue. Minimizing the plating time helped to ensure that the hot food stayed hot, and cold food stayed cold, not to mention that sharing food makes for a much more social dining experience with friends new and old. At our table, this facilitated ongoing discussion about local versus global over the course of the night. While we all agreed that local is ideal, it was hard to argue that globalization is such a bad thing as we tucked into delicious platters of seafood, lamb, cheese and more.

As with most things in life, it's never black and white. When chefs like Derek Dammann strike a balance between local products, while still celebrating incredible imports, it creates an important opportunity for people from near and far to connect over food. At its core, that's what dining is all about. M



LITTLE VICTORIES COFFEE

★ ★ ★

BY WILL DIXON





Photos: Just Pixl for Tourism Ottawa

The third wave coffee generation is brewing in our country's capital as two friends are refining the craft of brewing and roasting.

Andrew Bassett and Jeremie Thompson are the owners and founders of Little Victories Coffee (LVC), a venture that was started in May of 2016. Bassett was a barista for six years before running LVC. He worked with Thompson, a roaster and fellow coffee aficionado, in Canada for years before Bassett made a move to Melbourne, Australia to hone his craft. During his time there, Bassett learned more about his profession and realized that Canada was lagging behind.

"I wanted to bring my experiences back home," says Bassett. He rang Thompson and by the second day Bassett was on Canadian soil again, the two were already making business plans. "We want[ed] to put Ottawa on the map...We're not really business guys, but we're coffee guys," he says. "Nobody has spent as much time focusing on coffee like we do."

Before they had a product to sell, the pair were already turning heads and achieving little victories. Taking first place in a latte art smackdown, Bassett says he and Thompson had baristas, brewers and roasters already interested in them. "They told us they wanted to know as soon as we had a product ready," says Bassett. "I'm starting to really think, 'oh, this is possible!'"

Once they decided on their product offerings, Little Victories started focusing and refining what they wanted to bring to the breakfast table.

"We really focus on an interesting, sweet, not bitter coffee," says Bassett. His coffees are meant to be more palatable to more people. Showcasing the many varieties, flavours and levels of coffee, which really, is what the third wave of coffee is all about. Instead of being a general food item, third wave coffee makers want to express the many differences and intimate details there are between beans.

They want us to recognize coffee the way we look at wine. But it's more than that; it's about improving every step of the process, from forming specialized partnerships with farms to importing and buying coffee differently.

"Fair trade organic is very marketable," says Bassett. "But just because there's a label, it doesn't mean it's better." Many farms are unable to meet the requirements to purchase specific farming supplies or are otherwise unable to meet the specific standards for the fair trade organic seal. But that doesn't mean their crops aren't as good.

Bassett has travelled to different regions to meet with coffee farmers personally, and he's currently partnered with two, stating "we're hoping to source more though." He has taken special care to research and source his product and is attempting to truly support the source of LVC's product. As nice as the label of fair trade organic is, and it has its place in the market as a whole, Bassett and his team are building a more authentic relationship with these farmers than some other companies.

Until they can do business differently down the road, LVC is working with import agencies, which are great for Bassett, if they're transparent enough. Right now LVC is partnered with over 40 businesses in the Ottawa area and beyond.

Locations in Toronto and Montreal are enjoying distinct flavours from these seasoned coffee veterans. "The plan is to expand by wholesale and then retail," says Bassett. The LVC online store hosts and sells a catalogue of

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

everything the coffee aficionado might need. From kettles and brew stands to coffees and teas, Bassett and Thompson have also refined their product offerings.

"We work really hard to have a high-quality product," says Bassett. His dream is to be recognized as one of the biggest third wave coffee companies. Bassett wants nothing more than for Little Victories to appear in the same sentences as Intelligentsia or Blue Bottle Coffee. "My staff can tell you everything about everything we sell."

Having a small but robust selection of products with a small team, resolute about what they do, has been a successful model for LVC. With public cupping events and by hosting their own latte art contests, Little Victories has inspired a loyal and growing following. "We're really focusing on the coffee community here in Ottawa," says Bassett, which is a challenge since he considers Ottawa not to be a major coffee-driven city.

Crawling through their Facebook feed, you can see their accomplishments over these last few years. From opening their first café to their second, expanding their lines of coffee and coffee makers and even a small line of branded merchandise. And all these little victories have added up to some big success!

LVCOFFEE.CA

★ ★ ★

Key features of the third wave of coffee: Increasing coffee quality, more direct trade, a greater emphasis on sustainability, lighter roast profiles, innovative brew methods—these are all intrinsic to third wave coffee.

Source: perfectdailygrind.com.



Photo: Just Pixl for Tourism Ottawa



Consumption of espresso in Canada has increased by 10% in the past 5 years. [1]
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AN OVERNIGHT SENSATION 10 YEARS IN THE MAKING

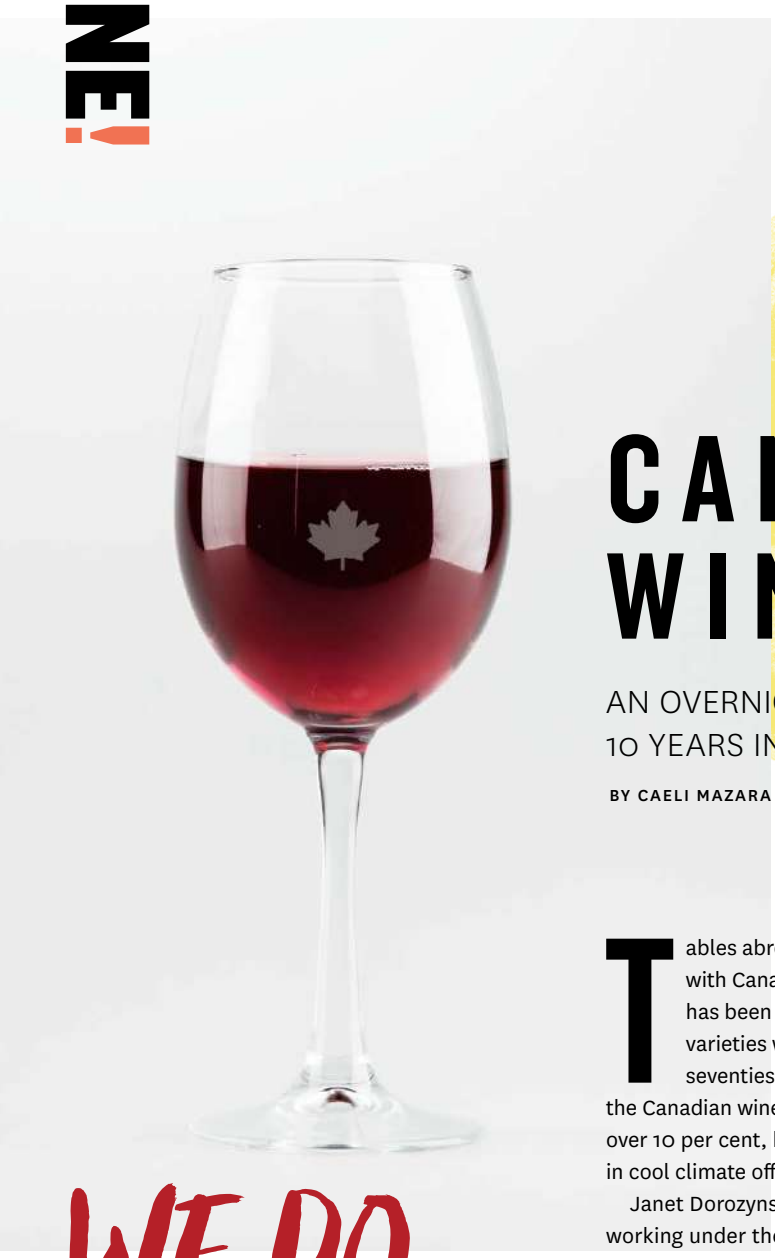
MAP: THE WINE REGIONS OF CANADA

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CANADIAN WINE

AN OVERNIGHT SENSATION 10 YEARS IN THE MAKING

BY CAELI MAZARA

WE DO A LOT OF THINGS WELL

Tables abroad are increasingly being set with Canadian wines, in an industry that has been growing since European grape varieties were first planted here in the seventies. In the last five years alone, the Canadian wine industry has expanded by over 10 per cent, bolstered by a growing interest in cool climate offerings.

Janet Dorozynski is a trade commissioner working under the Global Affairs umbrella with wine, beer and spirits producers. Her role allows her to support companies that feel export-ready, guiding them when it comes to the ins and outs of exportation, establishing their brands abroad and finding their niche. She also promotes education around Canadian wines through the Canadian Wine Initiative, with such activities as tastings and classes at embassies and consulates abroad, to showcase the quality products on offer.

"Canada is not a huge volume wine producer, so we're very focused on targeting trade to help us get our message across," says Dorozynski. "It may or may not surprise you, but there are still a lot of people within the trade, and consumers, who don't even know that Canada makes wine. If they do know, they often know about our icewine."

Icewine, a variety produced using grapes that have frozen naturally on the vine, accounts for 55 per cent of Canadian wine's total export value. It was introduced by an Okanagan vineyard in 1978 and began winning awards at prestigious wine events in the eighties. Beyond icewine, says Dorozynski, Canada is producing reds, whites, rosés and sparkling wines. She says she can see the effects of her department's efforts in the world's response to these products.

"We started working on a number of initiatives about 10 years ago, focusing on Chicago, the UK market, and markets in China and Hong Kong," she says. "We had our annual tasting at Canada House in London for the sixth time since 2010, and someone said to me, 'Canada is an overnight sensation!' My response was, 'Yes—we're an overnight sensation that's been 10 years in the making.'"

Canada's largest export markets are China, the United States, Taiwan, South Korea and the UK.

"We're getting a lot of traction," says Dorozynski. "These things take time, to build a reputation. We're still kind of landing on our feet in terms of what we're doing. There's a lot of experimentation."

Dorozynski acknowledges that icewine may be what we're known for, but there is so much more on offer. The industry defies pigeonholing.

"Canada makes some amazing chardonnay, riesling, cabernet franc, pinot noir, Gamay,"

she says. “Our growing areas span the whole width of the continent—all the way from the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island to the Gaspereau Valley in Nova Scotia, and many places in between—so it’s hard to say there’s one product that we’re identified by, and I don’t think the industry even wants to be identified by one thing. We grow a lot of different things, and we do a lot of things well.”

Traditionally, Canada’s two big growing regions have been Ontario (at about 17,000 grape-bearing acres) and British Columbia (at just over 10,000 grape-bearing acres), with Quebec and Nova Scotia growing as producers, especially of sparkling wines.

“If you look at not only grape-based wines but fruit-based wines, there are wines made in every province in Canada,” says Dorozynski.

With the appeal of cool climate wines and sparkling wines, Canada, the world’s 39th largest exporter of wine, is poised to continue to expand.

“Most Canadian wineries are small- and medium-sized enterprises,” says Dorozynski. “Most start by selling in the domestic market, either direct from their cellar door to restaurants, or with distributors who sell to restaurants and liquor boards across Canada. The thing about exporting wine, beer or spirits, compared to other food or agricultural products, is that it’s more heavily regulated than any other product out there. Interestingly enough, Canada doesn’t impose many regulations on exporting wine; most of the regulatory challenges the winery experiences are on the part of the markets they’re exporting into.”

It helps when these markets are eager to bring in the product in question. Dorozynski keeps her eye on international interest to spot emerging trends.

“If you look at what writers are writing about and what trade buyers are wanting to buy, cool climate wines and sparkling wines are hot,” she says. “Rosé is a growing trend in the wine industry, globally and among consumers. These are all sorts of lighter styles of wine. They usually have less oak, less alcohol, less extraction.”

These lighter wines, Dorozynski explains, tend to be more food-friendly, allowing consumers to enjoy wine alongside a meal.

“These are the kinds of wines that are very easy to pair with all types of dishes, all types of international cuisine,” she says.

Dorozynski encourages the celebration of Canadian wines domestically as well, both to support the industry and to take advantage of a great local product. The first thing a Canadian restaurant can do to support Canadian wineries? List Canadian products on the menu.

“As a consumer and diner outside my job, I still go to lots of restaurants across Canada that have no Canadian wine or hardly any,” says Dorozynski. “Putting Canadian wine on your menu is the best way of supporting the industry. There are a range of options available, either through liquor boards or through consignment and private ordering, that I think restaurants could be taking advantage of.”

She also encourages a dialogue between wineries and local restaurants: “Work with wineries to do things like winemakers’ dinners. Get wineries involved in staff training at restaurants so that servers and sommeliers can really get behind the product and tell the stories. It’s a great way of showcasing not only our food but our wine. It’s all part of the food ecosystem that we want to celebrate and promote.”

Canada is gearing up to host the International Cool Climate Wine Symposium in 2020. The event will be hosted out of Brock University, located in the heart of the Niagara growing region in Ontario.

“It’s going to be a very exciting thing for Canadian wine and the industry,” says Dorozynski. “I think it’s going to bring attention from buyers and sommeliers, as well as academics and researchers who look at cool climate growing regions and the challenges of producing cool climate wines.”

Like Canada at large, the strength of the Canadian wine industry lies in its diversity and an entrepreneurial spirit that drives experimentation and growth. Dorozynski, among other experts and consumers, can look forward to watching how the industry continues to unfold. M

Sources: winebc.com, wgao.ca, canadianvintners.com.



JANET DOROZYNSKI

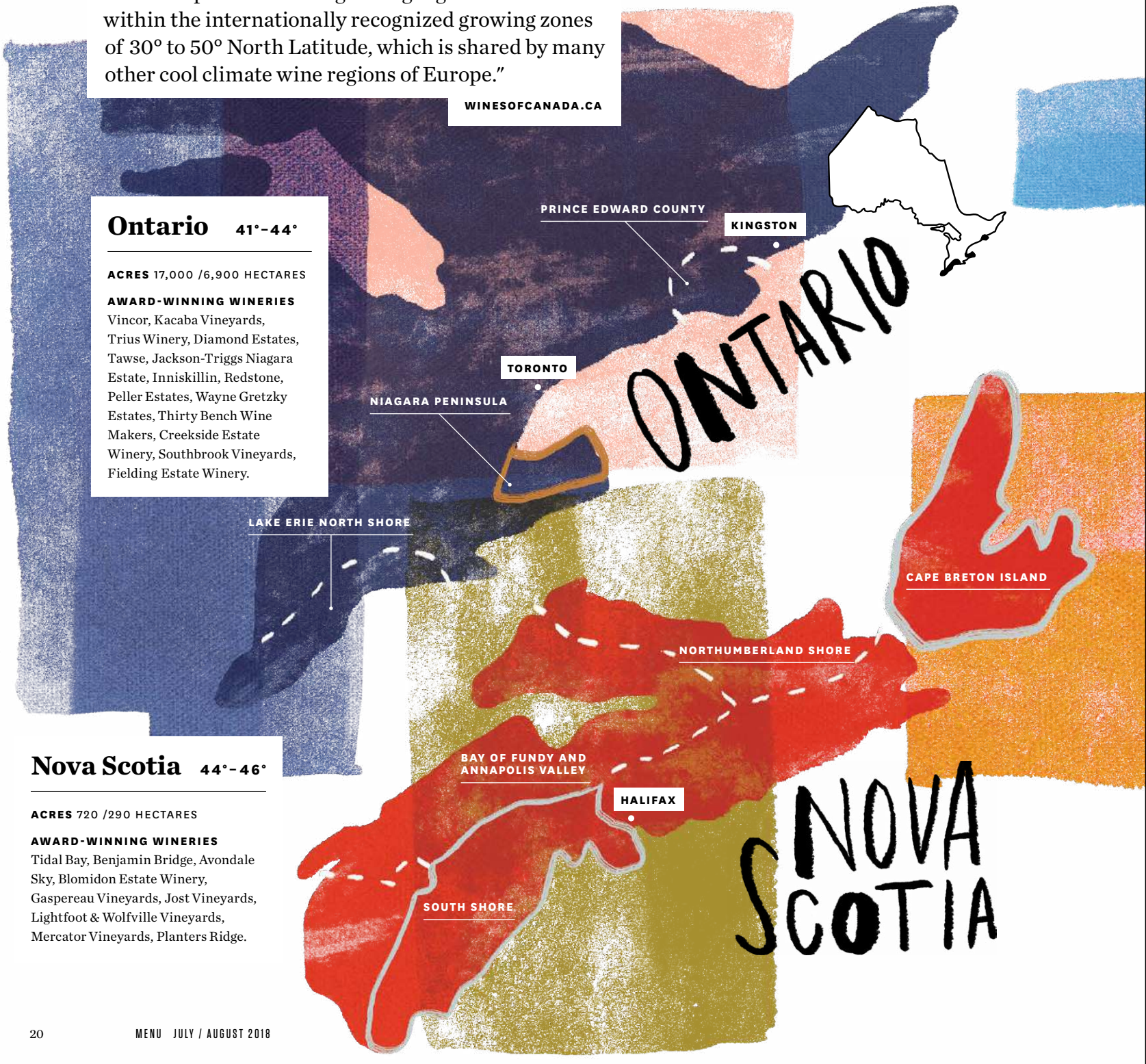


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The Wine Regions of Canada

"Canada's premium wine growing regions are situated within the internationally recognized growing zones of 30° to 50° North Latitude, which is shared by many other cool climate wine regions of Europe."

WINESOFCANADA.CA



Ontario 41°–44°

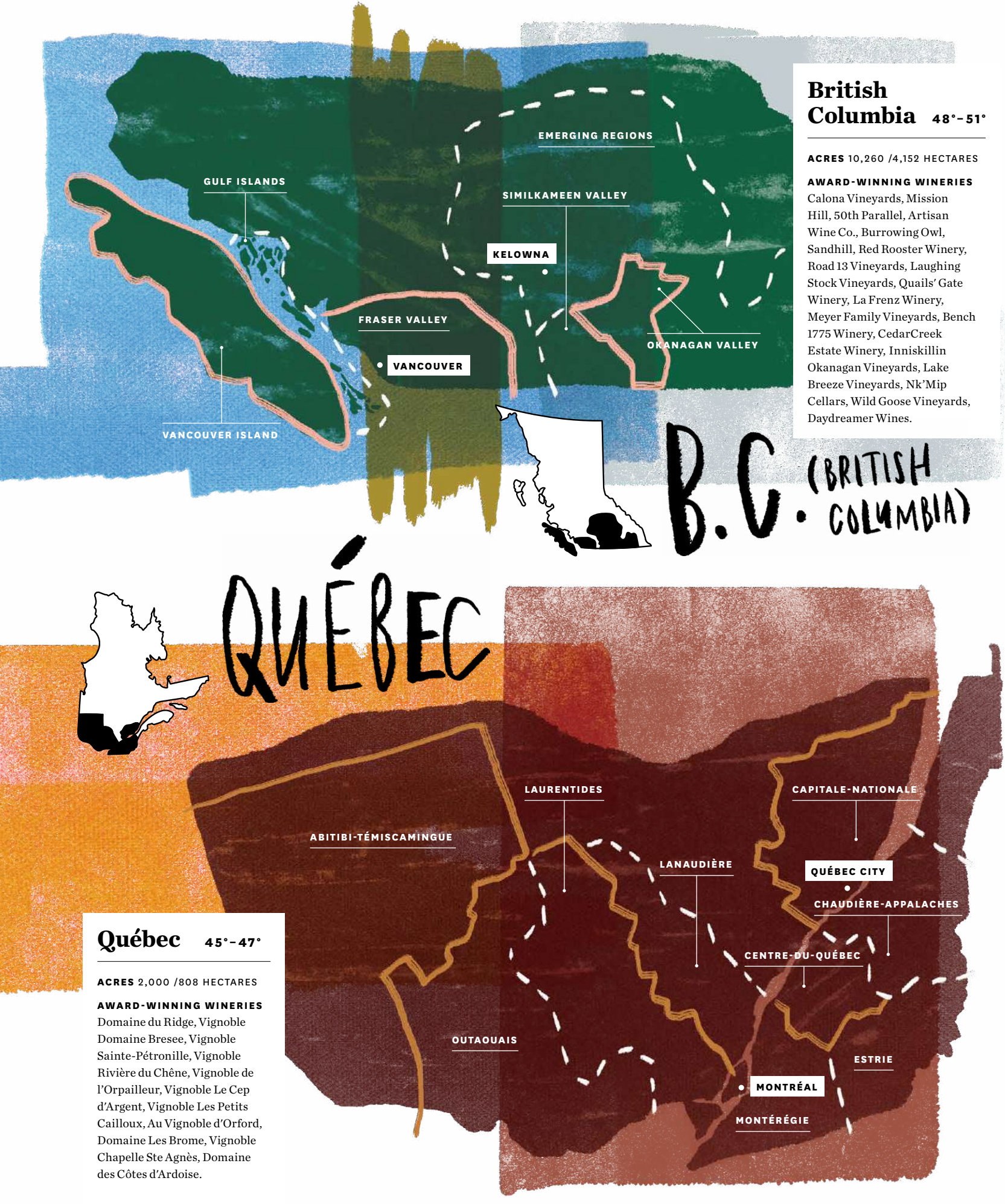
ACRES 17,000 /6,900 HECTARES

AWARD-WINNING WINERIES
Vincor, Kacaba Vineyards, Trius Winery, Diamond Estates, Tawse, Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate, Inniskillin, Redstone, Peller Estates, Wayne Gretzky Estates, Thirty Bench Wine Makers, Creekside Estate Winery, Southbrook Vineyards, Fielding Estate Winery.

Nova Scotia 44°–46°

ACRES 720 /290 HECTARES

AWARD-WINNING WINERIES
Tidal Bay, Benjamin Bridge, Avondale Sky, Blomidon Estate Winery, Gaspereau Vineyards, Jost Vineyards, Lightfoot & Wolfville Vineyards, Mercator Vineyards, Planters Ridge.



British Columbia 48°–51°

ACRES 10,260 /4,152 HECTARES

AWARD-WINNING WINERIES
Calona Vineyards, Mission Hill, 50th Parallel, Artisan Wine Co., Burrowing Owl, Sandhill, Red Rooster Winery, Road 13 Vineyards, Laughing Stock Vineyards, Quails' Gate Winery, La Frenz Winery, Meyer Family Vineyards, Bench 1775 Winery, CedarCreek Estate Winery, Inniskillin Okanagan Vineyards, Lake Breeze Vineyards, Nk'Mip Cellars, Wild Goose Vineyards, Daydreamer Wines.

Québec 45°–47°

ACRES 2,000 /808 HECTARES

AWARD-WINNING WINERIES
Domaine du Ridge, Vignoble Domaine Bresee, Vignoble Sainte-Pétronille, Vignoble Rivière du Chêne, Vignoble de l'Orpailleur, Vignoble Le Cep d'Argent, Vignoble Les Petits Cailloux, Au Vignoble d'Orford, Domaine Les Brome, Vignoble Chapelle Ste Agnès, Domaine des Côtes d'Ardoise.



BOTTLES & PROMISES

BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL WINE PROGRAM MEANS KEEPING IT REAL

BY DAVID STANSFIELD,
CORPORATE SOMMELIER, EARLS KITCHEN + BAR



DAVID STANSFIELD

I wrote my first wine list for as much beer as I could drink. It was a great deal, and good beer too.

The list was for the Alibi Room, the mecca for craft beer in Western Canada. One afternoon at the bar, the owner, Nigel Springthorpe, let me know about his challenges with wine reps. A stream of vaguely similar, unnervingly chipper men and women poured into his restaurant trailing black roller bags crammed full of bottles and promises.

Each rep told him they had wines he needed. A killer little red, white, rosé from California, Italy, Canada that over-delivers. Not that points matter, but this wine got 89, 90, 91 points from Decanter, Parker, Schreiner.

While Nigel knew as much as anyone in the province about local beer, he felt lost in wine. He'd built an uncompromising craft beer program by being proactive but didn't know where to begin with wine. I can help, I said, I'm a sommelier. A few beers later we struck a deal; one wine program for all the beer.

This should be easy, I thought, I'm an expert. It wasn't. There are thousands of wines available in Canada, where do you begin? What wines make sense for a craft beer house? How do I find them?

Fourteen years later, the answers to those questions continue to guide my work as the Corporate Sommelier for all of Earls Kitchen + Bar's North American locations. They can be distilled into four pillars.



PICK WINES THAT GO WITH THE RESTAURANT

1. HAVE A VISION

A clearly communicated vision about a wine program helps hone in on a set of wines from which to choose and communicates a sense of purpose and curation to guests.

Restaurateurs generally lead with concerns about which wines pair with their food. I suggest starting more broadly by deciding which wines go with the restaurant's overall brand and experience.

For Cuchillo, a hip restaurant offering Latin cuisine from local ingredients in Vancouver's Railtown neighbourhood, we chose a list that offered the same. It comprised a by-the-glass selection of up-and-coming local wines complemented by a premium bottle selection of Latin American and Spanish wines with a preference for the esoteric, organic and biodynamic.

2. CREATE AN OUTLINE

Next, rather than jump into selecting specific wines, write an outline of how the menu should look. Decide how many wines will be offered by the glass and bottle as well as from which varieties and regions and at what price points. From there, it's a process of filling in the blanks.

At Earls, I offer different wines at different locations depending on the province, city or even neighbourhood. There's no corporate list. I keep it consistent, and my work manageable, by following the same basic outline at each location.

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

Photos: Courtesy of Earls



3.
ASSIGN A ROLE

Every wine on the menu has a job to do, and no two wines share that job. Some wines make money. Others give credibility or communicate passion. Some wines give people what they want, while others challenge them to try new things. Each fills a role, even if that role is as simple as being a pinot gris by the glass at a reasonable price.

Assigning roles to each wine, then not doubling them up, makes the wine list an opening rather than an obstacle to sales. If you have two wines of the same variety, offer different price points or regions. Points of differentiation present clear choices and avoid cannibalizing sales.

The days of the giant wine book are fading. A successful contemporary wine menu is concise rather than comprehensive.

Photos: Courtesy of Earls



THE DAYS OF THE GIANT WINE BOOK ARE FADING

4.
DRINK A LOT

Drink all the time and encourage your staff to do the same. Well, sort of. Taste may be a more appropriate term here.

With your wine menu's vision, outline and roles in mind, tasting at festivals or with reps becomes a process of determining if and how a wine fits on your list, and not just a simple question of preference.

Moreover, once the menu is created, tasting with staff is the best way to communicate a wine's attributes and why it's perfect for your restaurant and guests. It's also kind of the point. M



BUSINESS, BUBBLES & MODERN ELEGANCE

LESSONS IN DIPLOMACY FROM CANADIAN FOODSERVICE

BY STACEY NEWMAN

With the seeming disintegration of NAFTA talks and a newly launched trade war with the United States; talks of tariffs and organizations removing themselves from international governing bodies; whether we're looking to domestic policy or international programs such as BREXIT and CETA—trade disputes are occupying headlines. But, dear politicians of the world... please, listen up. Canadian foodservice has been building successful, symbiotic trade relationships for decades during which restaurateurs, distributors and foodies alike have cultivated global relationships and stimulated fair trade practices that transcend borders.

Luckily, we also live in an era of unprecedented sharing and access to information. Consumers today are driven by values, appetites for good food, wine and positive change. Storytelling drives human beings. We all want to know where our food and beverages come from. We want not only to observe but to figure into the stories of those who make our food and drink. Indeed, world leaders might look to foodservice for lessons in humanity, in international trade relations and diplomacy.

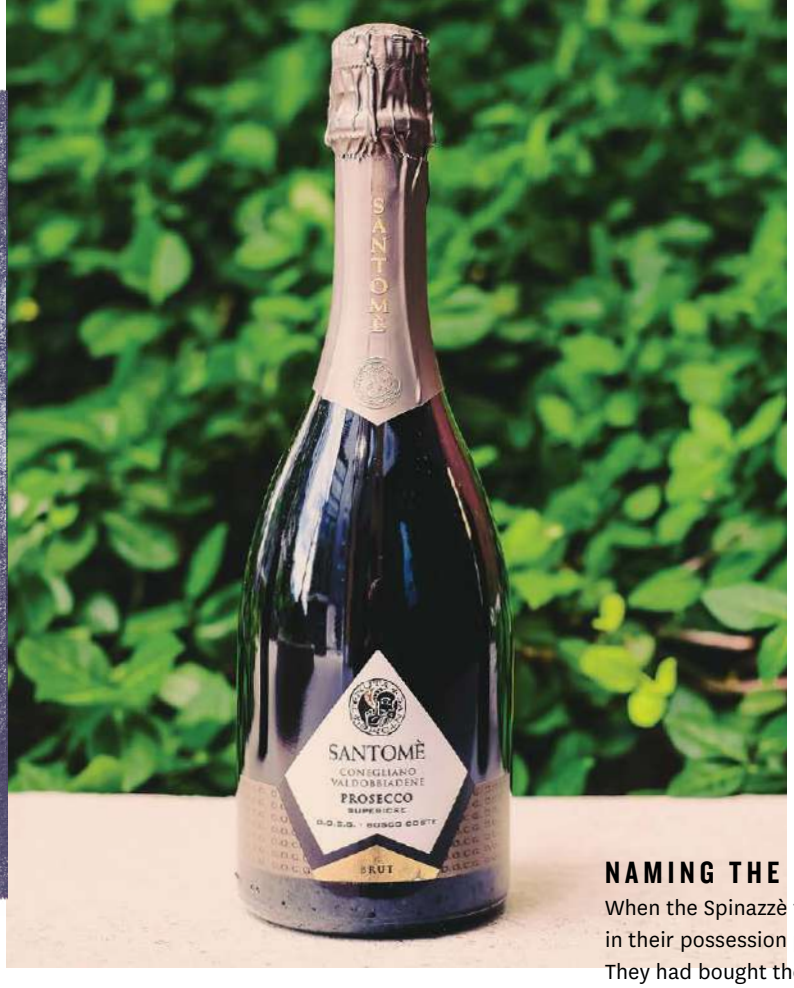
THE STORY OF AN ITALIAN PROSECCO MAKER

The word Prosecco indicates a specific wine of controlled origin and subject to rigid rules. The Prosecco DOC identifies the production from a vast area including nine Italian provinces (Treviso, Belluno, Gorizia, Padova, Pordenone, Trieste, Udine, Vicenza and Venezia), which are all part of the Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia regions of Italy.

William Spinazzè is one of the owners of the Santomè Winery in Italy. Santomè is family-run and intergenerational. Beginning with his grandfather, Antonio, a vineyard expert and grape enthusiast, in the 1970s, Spinazzè's father Armando then took over and grew Santomè by purchasing and equipping additional hectares of fertile land and incorporating innovative engineering practices to support Santomè's lands. The winery today is run by William Spinazzè's brother Alan who is a trained winemaker and William who is an accountant by trade. The winery is considered a model operation, particularly because of its modern vineyards with a dense plant system, its strict grape selection and its use of innovative vinification systems. The wine farm also relies on the advice and proven experience of the winemaker, Marzio Pol.

Santomè's story is a celebration of local food, sustainability and international collaboration. Through dedicated wine consigners like Tre Amici in Ontario, Santomè exports 85 per cent of its product to Canada. The Italian winery's operations span 75 hectares with the capacity to produce 800,000 bottles but Santomè is only operating at half capacity thus far, with lots of room for growth. Santomè makes its wines with only the grapes grown in its vineyards. Says Spinazzè, in Treviso where Santomè is located, "the weather is perfect." They have a good summer that ripens grapes well, with more aromas. The soil is clay and limestone, and they promote local native grapes—varietals such as raboso and tocai.

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APPETITES FOR GOOD FOOD, WINE & POSITIVE CHANGE

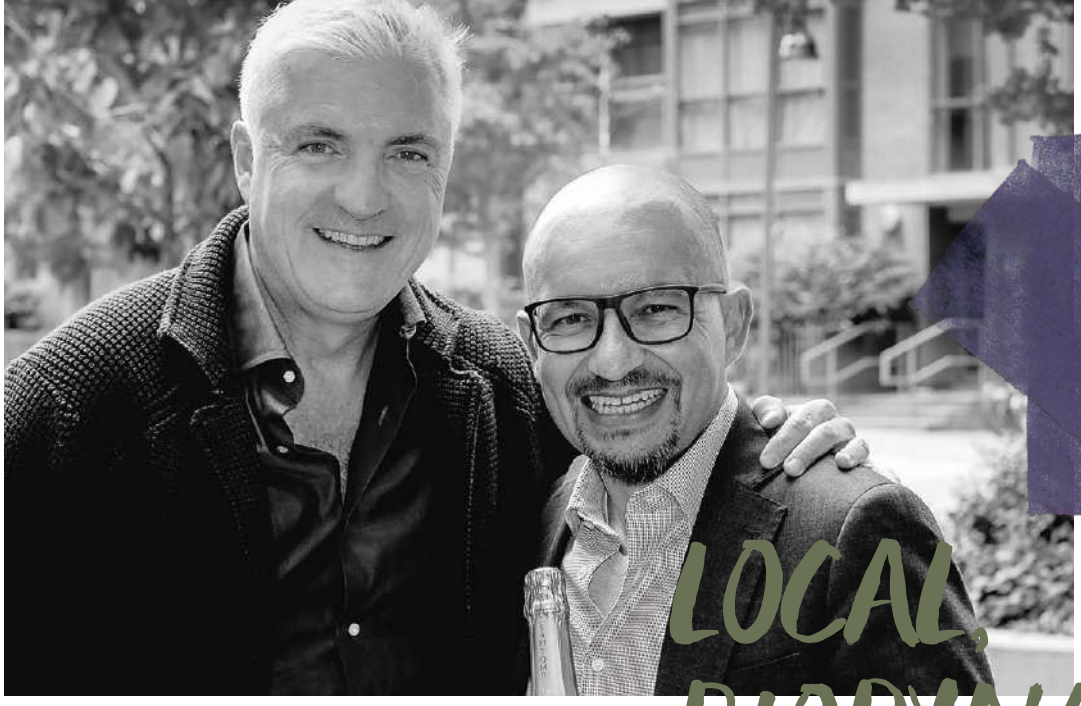
NAMING THE BUSINESS

When the Spinazzè family bought the land, they had in their possession papers and facts about its history. They had bought the last piece of land in Roncade (a municipality in Treviso). It was a farm with 6,000 cherry trees and a cottage (that was renovated and incorporated into what is now the Santomè offices).

There was a priest named Father Gino who had been born in the cottage. Father Gino regularly visited his family in Treviso (he has lived in Brazil running a house for impoverished kids from local favelas for almost 40 years). He calls this home for kids Treviso village.) On one of his visits home, Father Gino met the Spinazzè family and was interested that they had purchased the land where he was born.

Father Gino formed an immediate connection with the Spinazzè family and told them the story of the lands they had purchased. So, says Spinazzè, "We asked him if he would help us name our winery." In 1999, Father Gino responded to this request with a fax, which the Spinazzès have kept. Father Gino told them the real name for their winery should be Santomè (St. Thomas in Portuguese). Father Gino wrote that "people come, touch, believe, how God is in the wine that came from our land." In Italy, St. Thomas has two symbols rooted in Catholicism—an outstretched finger symbolizing doubt and the hand in the shape of a carpenter's square symbolizing measurement. Therefore, St. Thomas is the patron saint of architects and engineers in Italy. Santomè's architect created their logo with this in mind.

TENUTASANTOME.COM



GERARD POWER OF ONTARIO'S TRE AMICI WITH WILLIAM SPINAZZÈ OF THE SANTOMÈ WINERY IN ITALY

LOCAL, BIODYNAMIC, ARTISANAL, & SMALL BATCH

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

"Our partners choose us, visit [and are] proud to visit a family-oriented winery," says Spinazzè.

Passion, diplomacy and the building of international trade relationships are the building blocks for the international trade relationship between Santomè and its Ontario consignment partner, Tre Amici. Tre Amici Imports is a small family-run LCBO wine consignment company with 23 employees. Consignment is a system that is unique to Ontario, permitting licensed agents to store and distribute wine, spirits and beer to customers including restaurants. Gerard Power is the director at Tre Amici. He runs sales and marketing; his wife handles administration, and his oldest daughter helps in all areas. The company has a 10-person sales team.

Santomè has 15 wines, and Tre Amici represents them all. Power visits Santomè once a year as part of this successful partnership, and Spinazzè, in turn, visits Canada once or twice a year to spend time in the Canadian market, visiting establishments that include Santomè in their wine programs—restaurants, bars, hotels and tourism operations. Over the years, Power has built up a lot of space in the LCBO consignment warehouse, and he then builds international bridges to ensure that Canadian restaurateurs have access to some of the best wines in the world and at home. He likes to focus on family producers, with some larger scale producers.

Tre Amici supports local artisanal wines, to offer unique wine program selections according to your brand values, tastes and your guests' and/or sommelier's preferences. For example, customers look for Santomè wines because all the grapes come from the same geographical region with single grape production. Blending uses a lot of chemicals to stabilize the reactions, and single production means fewer stabilizers are needed. This results in healthier composition, fewer sulphites and better taste. Typically, in vinification, grapes are bought from different regions, even within the same country. But when blended and the wine ferments, everything ferments at different times and temperature. This creates volatile fermentation requiring the addition of chemicals to stabilize. Santomè doesn't have to do this.

Tre Amici Imports is Santomè's voice in Ontario, but Power speaks again to the symbiosis that must exist, from winemaker all the way to restaurateur. "When we have producers here, we take them to staff training. We create connections between restaurants and winemakers. Storytelling is very important, and William is one of our best partners," says Power.

This applies to all artisanal wine producers, those whose brands can make or break a wine program. Especially today, with a focus on local, biodynamic, artisanal and small batch—consumers want to be able to find these wines and winemakers want to build relationships with consumers through their restaurant

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

partners. Now, bringing in wines from other provinces continues to be a major challenge in Canada.

According to Beppi Crosariol for *The Globe and Mail* in 2013, "It has been eight months since Ottawa decriminalized direct-to-consumer wine sales across provincial lines. That enlightened amendment to an outdated law, unanimously approved in the House of Commons, was designed to free up access to small-lot Canadian wines, many of which are not carried in liquor stores across the country. But this is Canada, where it takes more than an act of Parliament or the will of the people to break the shackles of almighty liquor boards." Not much has changed in five years. The waters around interprovincial trade are still murky at best; this hurts Canadian wineries and the restaurants that want to carry them most. M

YOU CAN'T JUST MAKE A PRODUCT & CALL IT 'PROSECCO'



PROSECCO:

GET WITH THE PROGRAM

Prosecco is a serious and sustainable wine. It is also super fashionable on menus for good reason—it is perhaps the friendliest-yet-sophisticated bubbly out there.

PROSECCO IS ACCESSIBLE

From Prosecco gummies by Squish candies (made with innovative ingredients like Okanagan Valley's Winecrush), to artisanal meat products like Prosecco Chorizo, to pruning the vines and cutting the branches into small pieces, drying them and using these to pack wooden gift boxes—Prosecco is all around.

COMPARING PROSECCO WITH CHAMPAGNE

Champagne comes from the Champagne region of France, is fuller bodied and usually more expensive. Prosecco meets the needs of everyday customers without compromising on quality. Prosecco is ideal for incorporation in cocktails because of its light, complementary notes, body and bubbles.

PROSECCO IS THE EPITOME OF MODERN ELEGANCE

Prosecco is light, it has broad drinkability; Prosecco is ideal for breakfast/brunch programs with its low alcohol around 11 per cent and its manageable price point.

Restaurateurs and bar owners should ensure that staff are trained to differentiate between Champagnes, sparkling wines and Prosecco. Prosecco is lovely and simple on its own but made even more special as the star ingredient in cocktails and spritzers. A sprig of lavender and a lemon wedge, sage and fresh berries; Prosecco is friendly with most food and beverage pairings. Spinazzè tells us about his mother cooking risotto with Prosecco, saying the risotto takes the bubbles well and holds the delicate flavour of the Prosecco.

Prosecco also features prominently in ice creams and gelato. Says Spinazzè, "Prosecco can be substituted in any recipe that calls for white wine."

What's next in Prosecco? Spinazzè says that rosés will feature significantly in the near future, with emphasis on the terroir of regions. Santomè is developing their rosés using its main Prosecco grapes plus pinot grigio and pinot noir. "The whole Prosecco consortium is thinking about this," says Spinazzè. Adding that the Prosecco maker must prepare DOC classification to make this work. "You can't just make a product and call it 'Prosecco,'" he says.

ARTISANAL WINES MAKE A WINE PROGRAM RICHER, MORE INTERESTING & MORE PROFITABLE



GROWTH IN CONSIGNMENT BUSINESS IS RESTAURANT-DRIVEN

"When not talking about large brands, it's very hard to break in for smaller producers," says Gerard Power of Tre Amici Imports. Restaurants can build a wine consignment program around featuring different wines than retail offerings. Chains are starting to think this way too. Tre Amici creates exclusive programs for Ontario restaurants and manages wine programs for them. Restaurateurs need only contact a consigner or go directly to winemakers in their respective provinces. Seeking out artisanal wines, whether domestic or international, makes a wine program richer, more interesting and more profitable.

Of Tre Amici's consultation, says Power, "Tre Amici goes in every quarter, manages the business and applies skills and training to restaurants. We don't sell wine, we sell partnerships," says Power. "But we do sell a lot of wine!" He adds.

Power wants to see changes to the way wine is sold across the country. "As Canadians, we are constitutionally bound and allowed to have interprovincial trade, yet this doesn't trump local liquor laws...The Canadian market is archaic when it comes to the limitations of interprovincial trading."





NATALIE MACLEAN

FAST CANADIAN WINE FACTS (AND SHE TELLS US WHAT'S MOST PRESSING IN WINE TODAY)

FAST FACTS

1. The Canadian wine industry contributes $9 billion to Canada's economy.
2. The Ontario wine and grape industry generates approximately $4.4 billion in economic impact, British Columbia $2.8 billion, Quebec $1.1 billion and $218 million in Nova Scotia. An additional $482 million is generated elsewhere in Canada.
3. Canada is the only wine-producing country in the world that doesn't allow its citizens to order wine for direct delivery to their homes from any winery in the country.
4. For every $1 spent on Canadian wine, $3.42 is generated in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
5. There are now over 700 wineries in Canada, with acreage of over 31,100 acres.
6. In 2015, there were approximately 180 wineries in Ontario that sold almost 100 million bottles of Ontario wine.
7. Ontario produces 90 per cent of Canadian wine, BC just under 10 per cent with Nova Scotia and Quebec producing the balance of grape-based wine.
8. Biggest changes are represented in the constant growth of the wine industry in both quality and quantity (new wineries).
9. Wine at the table: Wine is the only product that might be placed on a restaurant table in its original packaging. Wine is a high-value add to your menu. Guests want to know the story behind the wine, there is so much economic benefit.

Natalie MacLean is the editor of Canada's largest wine review web site. The published author and television personality publishes hundreds of wine reviews every week for more than 265,585 subscribers.

"We are the only country in the world that doesn't allow direct for order. If restaurant owners were allowed to order from any province, it would be a boon. This is the most important issue facing Canadian restaurant owners and hospitality," says MacLean. She feels strongly that this issue is hurting Canadian foodservice. "It's crazy that you can purchase a handgun and ship it anywhere in Canada, but not our own wine."

MacLean is advocating with the Canadian Vintners Association for people to get behind its Free My Grapes campaign. "We have artisanal wineries that are fantastic in Canada [that] could never fill the liquor board orders for distribution," says MacLean. She says restaurants would love to have the ability to represent artisanal wines from across the country but those smaller wineries could never reach the volumes needed to get into provincial licensing organizations.

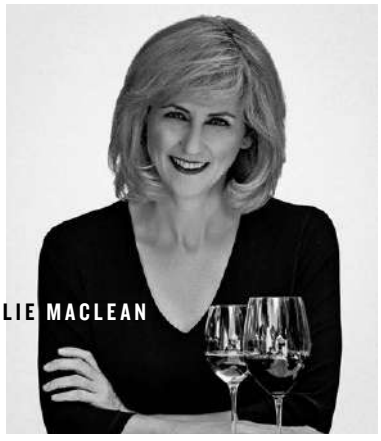
"Wine positions Canada as a leader in food and wine, especially when we promote our own industry."

WHAT MACLEAN WANTS TO SEE IN YOUR WINE PROGRAM

Lots of diversity, especially by the glass. It is a serious investment for a restaurant owner to make but one that serves customers well, offering diversity of taste and wines they can't buy in the liquor store. This opens up a whole sensory experience.

Promoting hyper-local, it is legal within the province to buy and ship within the province. "In Ontario and BC there are lots of choices, but I get lots of emails from people in Ontario who want to taste BC wines and vice versa."

$9 BILLION CONTRIBUTION TO CANADA'S ECONOMY



NATALIE MACLEAN

Hear it through the grapevine; stay in the loop, know what's happening at nataliemaclean.com

The Canadian Vintners Association is leading the campaign to encourage interprovincial trade ministers to make direct-to-home delivery legal, as the federal government has already passed legislation to do so. Today is the 6th year anniversary of Bill C-311. You can add your voice to this important campaign at actnow.freemygrapes.ca.



FROM RESTAURANTS CANADA

THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION TO UPHOLD INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE BARRIERS

"While we respect the Court's ruling, we believe it represents a missed opportunity for Canadians who resoundingly prefer a diverse array of options when dining out," said Lauren van den Berg, Restaurants Canada's National Vice President, Government Affairs. "It is unfortunate that these provincial restrictions on interprovincial trade have been upheld at the expense of the customer."

The case involved Gerard Comeau, a private citizen who stood up to the New Brunswick government after officials stopped him at the border and seized the beer he'd bought legally in Quebec. The New Brunswick Court of Appeal subsequently ruled that laws restricting the transport and sale of alcohol across provincial lines were unconstitutional, but the top court in the land disagreed. Comeau's defence centred on section 121 of the Constitution Act, which states products from any province "shall…be admitted free into each of the other provinces."

But unfortunately, the Supreme Court disagreed, ruling that section 121 does not impose absolute free trade across Canada. "At a time when our country is focusing on major international trade deals, we should also be promoting interprovincial trade at home, which would benefit all Canadians," continued van den Berg.

Archaic interprovincial trade barriers such as these affect a range of industries, and Restaurants Canada will continue to work closely with government stakeholders and industry leaders to ensure greater freedom in the market, better prices for consumers and a more equitable system for foodservice operators.

For more information about this and other governmental relations questions, please go to restaurantscanada.org.



RESTAURANTS NOT ONLY FEED US, THEY SHAPE OUR FOOD PREFERENCES

MICHAEL VON MASSOW:
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, FOOD ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

ALFONS WEERSINK:
PROFESSOR, DEPT OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

BRUCE GREGORY MCADAMS:
PROFESSOR IN HOSPITALITY, FOOD AND TOURISM, UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Restaurants are playing an increasingly important role in the food culture of North Americans.

In the United States, food prepared outside the home represents more than 50 per cent of the food dollar, or more than US$800 billion a year.

Canadians spend $80 billion annually in restaurants, spending almost 30 per cent of their food dollars in restaurants. They also buy a lot of prepared food for consumption at home.

But the rate of growth in restaurant spending is greater than it is for stores. This spending has an impact on the food market in a variety of ways. Most importantly, however, restaurants are changing how we think about food and what we choose to eat.

Restaurants make choices for consumers. They choose menu items and they decide how to prepare those items.

Grocery stores want to give consumers as much choice and variety as possible, but this causes issues for restaurants.

In a grocery store, for example, there may be many choices of eggs (white, brown, different sizes, organic, high Omega-3, free-run, free-range and cage-free), breakfast sausages (beef, pork, turkey, enhanced-animal welfare, reduced antibiotic use, low sodium, mild or spicy) and English muffins (regular, whole wheat, multigrain, gluten-free and low sodium).

By comparison, in most restaurants you only have one or two options for a breakfast sandwich—likely with or without the sausage. Not only do restaurants make the choices for us, they communicate the value of those choices and can raise awareness of issues.

Nonetheless, it was quick-service restaurants like McDonald's and Tim Hortons that drove animal welfare discussions with respect to layer hens and eggs. This may, to a degree, have been driven by activist pressure, but was not due to consumer demands.

FAST-FOOD RESTAURANTS HAVE HELPED AFFECT CHANGE

Large restaurant chains drive significant volumes of business. Their demands can drive changes in how food is produced by creating the critical mass of demand to justify those changes.

Restaurants also have a better opportunity to communicate their choices to consumers than retailers do. In a full-service restaurant, the server can describe important attributes of the dishes on offer; furthermore, a limited menu provides the opportunity to highlight those special qualities.

Chain restaurants, particularly fast-food outlets, advertise and differentiate on those attributes and raise them in the consciousness of Canadians (for example, A&W and its commitment to antibiotic-free meats). Through this communication, restaurants are not only attracting new customers, they're having an impact on the choices people make when they grocery shop too.

Like food retail, restaurants are low-margin businesses. Rising costs in food, labour and rent are forcing restaurants to look for cost savings in different areas. This has driven a shift, first to lesser cuts of meat (the biggest expense for most restaurants) and smaller portions, and now often to alternate sources of protein.

This helps to drive changing perceptions of plant-based proteins and even insect proteins.

The lines between food retail and restaurants are increasingly being blurred, which extends the influence of the "restaurant experience."

Canadians spend $80 billion annually in restaurants, spending almost 30 per cent of their food dollars in restaurants. They also buy a lot of prepared food for consumption at home.

FOOD KITS GAINING POPULARITY

Retailers and online services are increasingly offering meal kits that come completely portioned and ready to prepare. These allow consumers to have the comfort and convenience of eating at home while also enjoying a more sophisticated meal experience.

These kits usually come with premium attributes (for example, ingredients with enhanced welfare and sustainable production attributes) that also increase awareness. Some food retailers are even opening restaurants (often termed grocerants) to offer more options for customers.

Restaurant food delivery is also becoming more common. Uber Eats, SkipTheDishes and other services offer delivery from a much broader range of choices than the traditional pizza and Chinese food.

This has not been without its hiccups. Some food doesn't travel well, and using a third-party delivery service eliminates the restaurant's control over quality and, therefore, the complete consumer experience.

Retail food delivery or order pickup is also becoming more common. We heard a lot about Amazon's entry into the market and the acquisition of Whole Foods but there are other well-established players around, and new ones entering the market too.

Grocery delivery is difficult, particularly in the early days as routing and timing are complicated. This has lead more companies to follow the "click-and-collect" model where consumers order online and pick up their groceries at the store themselves. This also allows consumers to buy some of the fresh produce separately.

The desire for variety and convenience is increasing the role that restaurants are playing in our food experience. More importantly, though, restaurants are also playing an increasing role in how we think about food.

Restaurants, in fact, matter more than ever. M

This article first appeared in theconversation.com.







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Partstown

Everything you need to know about fresh produce and E. COLI

BY JEFFREY M. FARBER

PROFESSOR OF FOOD SAFETY,

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

While the recent outbreak of E. coli infections linked to romaine lettuce has been declared over, Canadian public health officials are still working to determine the cause of the contamination.

Several people in the U.S. and eastern Canada were sickened after eating romaine, with two reported deaths.

I am a food safety expert. Here's what consumers need to know about E. coli and produce:

WHY PRODUCE AND WHY E. COLI?

E. coli are bacteria that live naturally in the intestines of cattle, poultry and other animals. For the most part, they co-exist with these animals, and hence they don't become sick.

Most of the E. coli strains associated with humans are harmless, and, in fact, are an important part of a healthy human intestinal tract. However, some E. coli strains are pathogenic, meaning they can cause human illness. Pathogenic E. coli that can cause diarrhea can be transmitted through contaminated water or food, or through contact with animals or people.

HOW DOES PRODUCE BECOME CONTAMINATED?

There are many different ways that produce can become contaminated. Firstly, in the farmer's field, it can become contaminated with pathogenic E. coli through direct contact with animal feces.

For example, wild animals, like feral pigs and deer rummaging through farm fields, have previously been found to be linked to cases of illness due to spinach and strawberries, respectively.

In fact, any time produce in the field makes contact with animal feces, it could lead to the contamination of that produce with a pathogen. Contaminated irrigation water, bird feces or improperly composted manure are other potential sources of pathogenic bacteria.

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 36



Once produce is sent from the farmers' fields to processing plants, there are other potential sources of microbial contamination, including the water used to wash the produce and the equipment used to cut up the leafy greens. Further along the food chain, at the retail store, if the produce is not bagged, there is also the chance for cross-contamination in the store from raw foods—for example, from cutting boards and counters that have been in contact with raw meat, and which haven't been properly disinfected between uses.

MORE PRODUCE-RELATED OUTBREAKS NOW?

It appears that there are now more cases of illness due to produce. There are a few reasons for this.

Firstly, there has been a large increase in the sale of bagged greens and salad kits as consumers are making an effort to try to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Secondly, we're getting much better at detecting and stopping food-borne outbreaks in their tracks due to a new molecular typing technique referred to as whole genome sequencing (WGS), which is a much more sensitive typing method than ones public health officials have been using.

WGS identifies pathogens isolated from food or environmental samples. These can then be compared to clinical samples isolated from patients.

The technology has proven to be extremely valuable in making a link between a food-borne illness and a contaminated food. Previously, outbreaks caused by contaminated produce were either missed, or a food product could not be linked to illnesses because of the poor sensitivity of the typing method. Thanks to WGS, those links are now more quickly identified and tied to a specific fruit or vegetable.

TRACE AN OUTBREAK BACK TO A CERTAIN FARM

In some cases, it may be straightforward to trace a contaminated produce item back to a certain field or farm. However, in other cases, because of the complex distribution systems, there may be a co-mingling of products from many different farms going into one central farm distribution centre, which then ships products to Canada.

This can make it extremely difficult to trace a product back to its source.

A lot of progress, however, has been made toward the ambitious goal of being able to quickly trace contaminated produce back to its field of origin. One example of this is the Produce Traceability Initiative, an organization sponsored by North American produce associations that helps the industry track fruits and vegetables.

WHY NO ROMAINE RECALL?

In the most recent outbreak, there was epidemiological evidence collected initially that found an association between the human cases and the consumption of romaine lettuce.

However, in spite of all the evidence that was gathered during the outbreak in Canada, no common supplier, distributor or retailer of romaine lettuce was identified as a possible source of the outbreak.

In fact, people reported eating romaine lettuce at home, restaurants, fast-food chains and from prepared salads bought at grocery stores, further complicating the picture.

In addition, all test samples of romaine lettuce in question were negative.

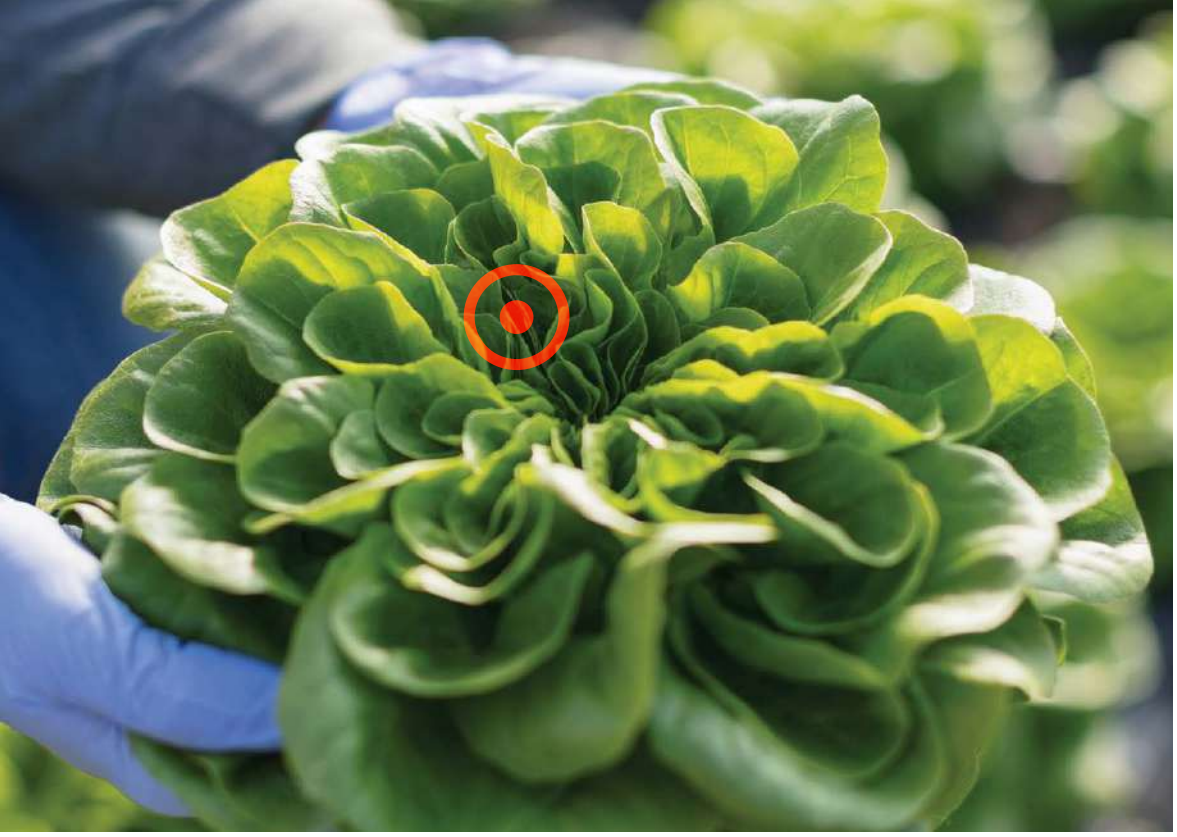
It therefore becomes difficult for regulatory agencies to do a recall when they can't pinpoint the actual origin of the product. Further complicating the issue is lettuce's relatively short shelf life. In most cases much of the product that caused the illnesses has already been consumed or spoiled, and so isn't available for tracing information or microbiological analysis.

Furthermore, regulatory agencies don't want to issue a recall too quickly because of public pressure.

For example, in the late 1990s, a big food-borne outbreak occurred due a protozoan parasite called Cyclospora,



While the recent outbreak of E. coli infections linked to romaine lettuce has been declared over, Canadian public health officials are still working to determine the cause of the contamination.



and the outbreak was quickly blamed on Californian strawberries.

However, the outbreak was later linked to Guatemalan raspberries. The mistake caused the California strawberry industry millions of dollars.

DID CANADIAN HEALTH OFFICIALS DO THE RIGHT THING?

On Dec. 11, 2017, officials at the Public Health Agency of Canada said that they were investigating the outbreak of E. coli 0157 linked to the consumption of romaine lettuce, which was occurring in three provinces.

On Dec. 14, the notice was updated to include two additional provinces, Ontario and Nova Scotia, which had reported illnesses linked to the outbreak, bringing the total number of cases to 30 cases, including one death.

On Dec. 21, the notice was updated to include 10 additional cases (a total of 40 cases) and advised consumers in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador that they should consider consuming other types of lettuce instead of romaine until more was known about the outbreak and the cause of contamination.

Furthermore, on Dec. 28, the notice was again updated to include one additional case, and stated that there is still an ongoing risk of E. coli infections associated with the consumption of romaine lettuce in Canada's eastern provinces.

Finally, on Jan. 10 of this year, federal officials put out a notice stating that the outbreak appeared to be over and that the overall risk to Canadians had returned to low. At this point, they were no longer advising individuals in affected provinces to avoid romaine lettuce.

Thus, consumers in Canada's eastern provinces were told for about 20 days not to eat romaine, and it took about 10 days from the start of the outbreak until they were told this.

IS THIS A REASONABLE TIME PERIOD? SHOULD THERE HAVE BEEN A RECALL OF ROMAINE LETTUCE IN THE AFFECTED PROVINCES?

I think so.

Some stores pulled romaine lettuce and others kept it on the shelves, confusing the consumer.

This outbreak in particular would benefit from a post-mortem analysis to see what, if anything, could have been done better and what consumers truly understood in light of all the warnings and social media chatter.

SHOULD CONSUMERS WASH THEIR PRE-WASHED BAGS OF PRODUCE?

Consumers do not need to wash their packaged triple-washed bags of leafy greens, and can actually make things worse if they do, as during the course of washing, they can cross-contaminate the product.

If consumers feel better doing the extra wash, they should use safe-handling practices to avoid any cross-contamination. Start with hand-washing for 20 seconds with warm water and soap before and after handling the product.

Then it's critical that consumers wash their cutting boards before using (of course as well as dishes, salad spinners, utensils, and countertops) to avoid cross-contamination between, for example, raw meats and ready-to-eat leafy greens. Plastic cutting boards can be placed in the dishwasher to be disinfected.

When you're washing your cutting board by hand, you should first rinse off any visible debris and then scrub the cutting board with soap and water. Finally, you should be sanitizing the cutting board.

Bagged leafy greens should of course also be refrigerated, and consumers should consume the product before its best-before date.

REDUCING CONSUMER RISK

Firstly, consumers should buy their produce from reputable retail operations. When shopping, keep your fruits and vegetables separated from raw meat, poultry and fish to prevent cross-contamination

At home, store your fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator in a produce drawer separate from the raw meat, poultry or fish. Follow the aforementioned washing techniques.

Wash your hands with hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling fresh fruits and vegetables, and wash them well under running water (do not use soap or chemicals), including those that come from farmers' markets, roadside stands or your home garden. M

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Can Restaurant Owners Beat Meal Kits (and Amazon) at their Own Game?

BY ELAINE POFELDT



Photos: Andrew Reiner

Leanne Valenti, a chef in Austin, Texas, discovered she was onto something when she began selling hand-crafted, gourmet Japanese meals packaged in attractive bento boxes at her three-year old business, Bento Picnic. Outside of corporate clients seeking healthy lunches, local residents started placing orders as well, treating the bento boxes almost like a meal kit they didn't have to cook.

"People stop by and pick up meals for the week," says Valenti. Her business is doing so well she's grown it to five employees and plans to open a storefront this coming year.

Valenti is among a number of restaurant industry pros who are offering a unique take on the meal kit. They are targeting customers who want to eat fresh healthy fare that is a big step above standard takeout—but does not require the prep work that a subscription from a service like Blue Apron, HelloFresh or Plated would require.

For local restaurants, taking on the meal kit players is both an offensive and defensive move. Some in the industry have warned that meal kit delivery services pose an existential threat to traditional restaurants, stealing both customers who choose to stay at home and even staff during a nationwide chef shortage. But restaurants who decide to beat meal kit delivery services at their own game face bigger players with plenty of resources, as companies like Amazon (fresh off a major merger with Whole Foods) attempt to compete with the likes of Blue Apron, and others such as Walmart, Kroger and more step up.

Dana Zukofsky, director of the restaurants practice at BDO, the accounting firm and consultancy, says that she's seeing the trend taking shape among higher-end restaurants that are looking to stay relevant and tailor their offerings to local events and attractions. In the Los Angeles area, for instance, Zukofsky has noticed many restaurants will now offer a prepared meal in a bag or box to symphony fans.

"You can take it to the Hollywood Bowl—which is a little bit different type of a meal kit," Zukofsky says. "What differentiates such meal kits from takeout is there is no expectation you will bring it home, set the table and eat it there. It's being packaged so you can take it and eat it right away. If I get Chinese food to go from the Chinese restaurant, I use my own plates, dishes fork and knife. A lot of these kits are coming with everything." For the most part, these restaurants don't offer traditional takeout—which is why this new option is so attractive to them. "It's adding a different revenue stream to an existing restaurant," she says.

It is possible the trend, while still small, could pick up steam. A recent survey by TD Bank of general managers, owners and franchisees in the restaurant industry found that a small but notable portion of respondents are planning to invest in efforts to deliver on convenience, mobile ordering and other consumer-driven trends.

Among respondents, 31 percent of women indicated they planned to add or expand delivery service or partner with an online service such as Grubhub or Seamless, versus 23 percent of male owners.

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 40



"Food at home is the biggest challenge to the restaurant industry."

MARK WASILEFSKY
HEAD OF THE RESTAURANT FRANCHISE GROUP AT TD BANK

Forty-five percent of women and 38 percent of men said they were likely to add clean, organic or specialty foods to their menu in short term.

Meal kits are part of this activity. Mark Wasilefsky, head of the restaurant franchise financing group at TD Bank, says he has noticed more large franchisors experimenting in this area. One driver is the demand by younger customers. "Millennials are all about experience," says Wasilefsky. "They are looking for this. They are also looking for convenience."

However, restaurants that are experimenting with the trend have to be mindful of the fact that they are Davids in a world of Goliaths. The competition in the meal kit space is fierce: Amazon sells its own meal kits, Walmart just added meal kits made by companies such as Takeout Kit and Home Chef to its website, Kroger is expanding the number of stores where it sells its Prep+Pared Meal Kits, Publix sells its Aprons brand of meal kits, and the grocery chain Albertsons acquired Plated this past fall.

"The meal kit business is really hot right now," notes Hilton Davis, founder of Diet-to-Go, a healthy meal company that delivers ready-to-eat meals and has locations in Northern Virginia and Los Angeles and about $15 million in annual revenue. "It is going to get so fragmented each one won't have a big market share."

Davis has noted his sales slowing because of the competition from all sides. He started it as a restaurant and turned it into a meal delivery business in 1991.

To stand out, many restaurants are offering a type of meal kit customers won't get at the supermarket. "In some beach communities, some of the finer restaurants are doing beach lunches—a picnic basket packed with fried chicken and some sides," Zukofsky says. "It's not always something they would sell in the restaurant."

Sometimes, restaurants find this lets them pull in a broader clientele who might not splurge for an elaborate sit-down meal. "You might get an opportunity to taste a great Michelin chef's meal but the fried chicken version instead of the six-course tasting menu version," says Zukofsky. "I think it's given a chance for some of these kitchens to be a little more fun and creative with what they are doing."

Restaurants, especially smaller ones, need to tackle the logistics, too—which can be more difficult than for service or supermarket that already has bulk food on hand. "It's difficult to assign a dollar amount to meal kits because it depends



Photos: Andrew Reiner

on the type of restaurant, what their offering is and a number of other factors unique to each business. If you're a high-end restaurant selling baskets for the beach with a lower-end food product, you'll need to order the new food products and the packaging to put it in—two new costs. However, if your restaurant is just making existing menu options to go, all you'll need is the takeout packaging," says Zukofsky. "If it's done well, there are several benefits. You'll be giving your kitchen team some creative freedom to make a to-go meal that will travel well and keep customers happy. The potential added costs are small—in many cases all you'll be paying for is the extra packaging. This could be a new revenue stream, encouraging diners to buy your food at times they otherwise might not have."

"It could work for them but it's completely different from making foods," says Davis. "They'd have to get all the ingredients together—and a recipe—and sell that to the consumer."

Then there's the technology involved in deliveries, which can be challenging to perfect, notes Wasilefsky. "It's not easy," he says.

And even the Goliaths in the space are having trouble making the model work financially. Many people don't want to spend money on meal kits. "Food at home is the biggest challenge to the restaurant industry," says Wasilefsky.

Even well-funded Blue Apron has struggled to hold onto members, and recently replaced its CEO.

"I have created a spreadsheet that shows how many companies that got VC money that have closed, and others that are struggling," says Davis.

Such realities have caused Adam Romo, CEO of Eatzi's Market & Bakery—which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and has six locations in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area—to opt out of the meal kit trend. He doesn't think there are enough customers to sustain the meal kits market. "Most of the population is moving away from that," Romo says. "They're either going to cook or not."

That could be bad news for traditional meal-kit providers. Then again, it may work out well for restaurants that have put their own spin on the meal kit trend by catering to those who want high-quality, freshly made meals in a box—but don't want to pick up a skillet.

This article was originally published at Upserve Restaurant Insider, upserve.com.



BAR CONNECT

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JELLYFISH

OLDER THAN DINOSAURS & EDIBLE

BY CAELI MAZARA



Chances are, you haven't prepared a jellyfish steak today or tossed a jellyfish salad, but jellyfish could be in Canada's—and the world's—culinary future. Enjoyed in parts of Asia for centuries, jellyfish are now being fished the world over. Canada experimented with two jellyfish fisheries: one on the west coast in the 1980s and one on the east coast in the 2000s. Both ultimately closed because the main species of jellyfish in Canadian waters are moon jellyfish, a species that is not widely sought after for eating. The United States has had success in jellyfishing in recent years, especially with cannonball jellies, shipping most of its catch to Asian markets, where jellyfish are regularly eaten in salads, soups and even burgers.

Lucas Brotz, a marine biologist at the University of British Columbia, brought the focus of his studies to jellyfish when his supervisor—renowned marine biologist Daniel Pauly—encouraged him to look into whether jellyfish populations are increasing worldwide. It's a question that is stumping jellyfish scientists.

"Jellyfish populations are definitely changing, and most places where their populations are changing, they're increasing," says Brotz. "In many cases, it seems to be because of human impact on the ocean: invasive species, global warming, pollution, coastal development and overfishing—those things combined can create conditions that are less favourable to fish and more favourable to jellyfish."

With an abundance of jellyfish and a dearth of overfished stocks, eating this "celery of the sea" seems like it could be a good solution—or at least, it might take advantage of an otherwise problematic situation.

Jellyfish are mostly water and collagen. Jellyfish contain zero fat and are very high in protein, so it's no surprise that they are sometimes marketed as a diet food in Asia. The meat is crunchy and quite tasteless, absorbing the flavours of its environment.

Currently, one of the biggest barriers to jellyfish consumption is the processing method. Jellyfish are very delicate, and cannot be frozen like other meats. Instead, the jellies are preserved using a salt and alum solution, and this process leaves behind traces of aluminum.

"I've had jellyfish prepared by gourmet chefs, and jellyfish straight out of the package," says Brotz. "The best jellyfish I've tasted wasn't processed using the traditional method. It was a fresh product and tasted a bit like an oyster. If more food processing techniques are developed by food scientists and chefs, I think that could open up future consumption."

One such technique that seems promising is supercooling, whereby the jellyfish is rapidly frozen at very low temperatures. This kind of freezing seems not to degrade the meat and is free of worrying toxins like aluminum.

In Denmark, one company is experimenting with jellyfish dried into chips.

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 45

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JELLYFISH



> IT'S A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: 'THIS IS FOOD, AND THIS IS NOT FOOD.' OUR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT FOOD IS RUNS QUITE DEEP WITHIN US, AND CHANGING THOSE IDEAS IS HARD.

This could be a good introductory product for western diners who get squeamish at the very thought of a jellyfish salad.

"I feel that people put jellyfish in the category of edible insects," says Brotz. "What's interesting about that comparison is that insects are sustainable, high in protein, and they're eaten in many countries of the world and have been for thousands of years. The same is true for jellyfish. It's a cultural perspective: 'This is food, and this is not food.' Our understanding of what food is runs quite deep within us, and changing those ideas is hard."

While jellyfish consumption could be a culinary boon, both for nutritional benefits and abundance, Brotz stresses that we should not ignore the problems at the root of shifting jellyfish populations.

"We want to conserve our stocks, and we have to be very careful of how we develop our food systems in the marine world," he says. "Marine food webs are very complex."

Trading off jellyfish for traditionally-consumed seafood does not address the fact that our oceans are facing a crisis. Figuring out how jellyfish work into this equation has not been easy.

"The more I study jellyfish, the more questions arise," says Brotz.

More research is needed, and jellyfish are getting attention like never before. This is a species on the cutting edge of scientific and culinary innovation. When jellyfish burgers will start appearing on Canadian menus is yet to be seen. M



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6 Features Every Successful Restaurant Website Should Have

BY KARTIKEY BHARGAVA

While the quality of food and service, ambience and location of your restaurant are all important, so too is your website. Guests today will search online to find somewhere to eat, especially if they are tourists visiting your area.

Getting your web strategy right is vital if you want to keep customers coming through your doors.

Six of the Most Important Things Your Restaurant Website Should Have

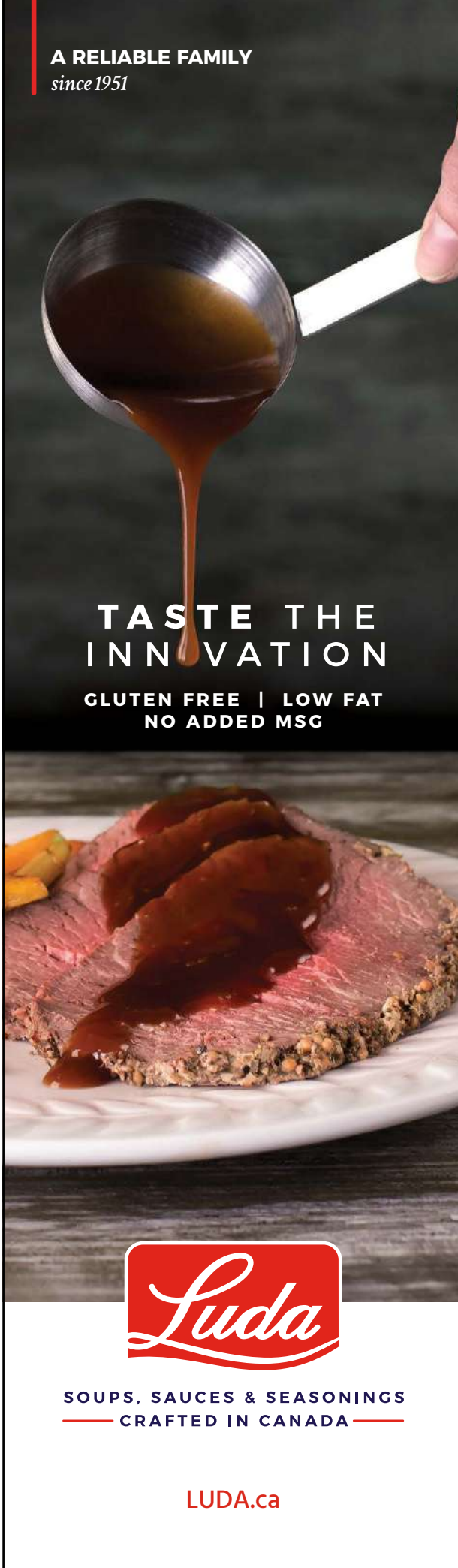
1 A MOBILE-READY DESIGN

The concept of having a mobile-ready design is not new. Since smartphones came to the market, these devices are the tool of choice for many consumers. We can interact with friends and family, download apps, search the internet and view videos online—all while on the move.

According to statistics from mondovo.com, 83 per cent of customers will look up directions and opening hours using mobile phones while 75 per cent check out menu items. Increasingly, customers expect to see seamless integration between technology and their everyday lives. That certainly means your website, in the least, needs to look good on all mobile devices.

"Mobile search and voice search are dramatically altering the way we find a restaurant. Potential guests see your mobile experience as a direct reflection of the experience they will receive at your restaurant. If you cannot win them over on mobile, you will not get the chance to win them over at your table." – Andrew Marsh, Senior Digital Strategist, Search Engine People

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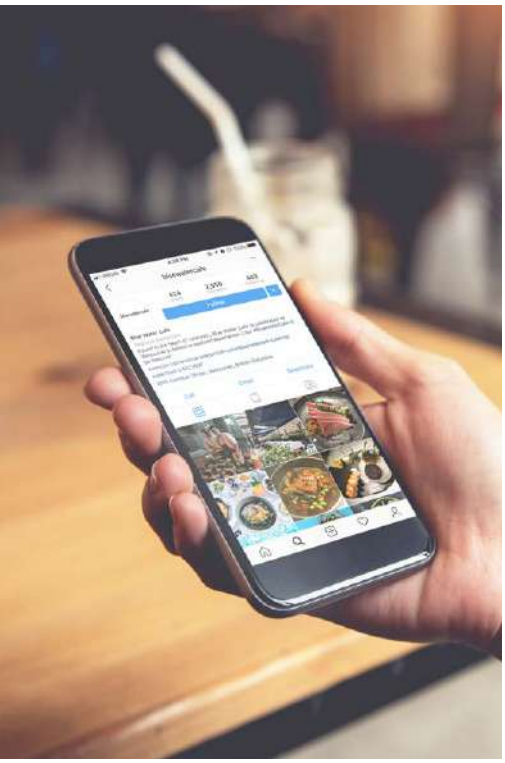
INCLUDING A WEB-BASED MENU

Adding a web-based menu to your restaurant website should be a priority. It means your restaurant has a greater chance of displaying in Internet searches through platforms such as Google. A PDF or image document of your hardcopy menu may have sufficed in the past, but it won't bring you the benefits of one written specifically for the web in HTML. This also gives you the opportunity to provide accurate visual representations of dishes to tempt potential guests. Online menus can also be updated relatively easily to keep your online descriptions current.

3

ACCURATE INFORMATION

Always display the correct information on your site concerning hours of operation, including your location and telephone number. These should be prominently displayed on all pages. You want to make it ultra-easy for potential diners to reach out and contact you or ask a question. Embedding your site in Google Maps is also a good option. It means that diners always have accurate directions to your restaurant whether they are walking or driving.



4 “”

SOCIAL MEDIA, REVIEWS AND TESTIMONIALS

Prove to potential guests that you're a great place to dine. You can do this through a variety of methods including social media, encouraging reviews and posting testimonials on your site.

It's easier than ever to integrate social media sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to your site. Reviews are also a great way to show everyone what real people think about your restaurant and the food.

“The vast majority of visitors are likely to trust an online review as much as they are a recommendation by friends or family.” (Source: A BrightLocal survey.)

Of course, you do need to choose the channel and options that work for your brand and careful monitoring is needed at all times, but linking and aligning these to your restaurant website as much as possible should be a priority.

6 of the Most Important Things Your Restaurant Website Should Have

5

ONLINE RESERVATIONS AND ORDERING

One of the most important innovations in recent years—certainly driven by the smartphone revolution—is the prospect of interacting on the move in real time. Providing the chance to order or reserve a table online not only streamlines your restaurant processes but may well attract new guests at the same time. The software available today is increasingly sophisticated and is proving cost-effective and useful for restaurants in all categories.

6

APPEALING VISUALS

Finally, what really sells your restaurant? Appealing visuals such as photographs of your dishes, the interior of the restaurant and customers having a good time. They are an important way to depict your brand and highlight the ambience people can expect once they are seated at your table. Focus on getting this right for your website. Images that download quickly, look professional and say something about your restaurant can and do make a difference. M



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WINECRUSH.CA

FOR CULINARY STUDENTS & PROFESSIONALS ALIKE



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EXPERIENCE DRIVES BUSINESS

Jeremy Gutsche on what you can do to innovate more regularly and effectively

BY STACEY NEWMAN

You've probably heard of Trend Hunter; 1 in 50 on the planet has been to TrendHunter.com. With 5,000 custom trend projects a year specifically focused on hotel chains and restaurants, and 20,000,000 monthly views overall, Trend Hunter is the world's largest, most popular trend community, leveraging big data, human researchers and AI to identify consumer insights and deep-dive opportunities for the world's most innovative companies.

Trend Hunter research and workshops empower more than 500 brands including Coca-Cola, Adidas, Victoria's Secret, IBM, Cisco, Microsoft and NASA. Its head office is based in Toronto, Canada, and Trend Hunter is fueled by a global network of 200,000 contributors and 3,000,000 fans. Trend Hunter is currently studying more than 350,000 cutting-edge ideas using over 3 billion choices from 150,000,000 people.

JEREMY GUTSCHE

I spoke with the CEO of Trend Hunter, Jeremy Gutsche. Where did Gutsche come from and how did he become one of the world's most sought-after keynote speakers and consultants on helping brands find better ideas, faster? Gutsche gets to the point, no fluff and no magic—hard work, a willingness to learn and being in the right place at the right time and recognizing this. "I ran a business as a student. I learned a lot about finding and harnessing that next level. I wrote *Exploiting Chaos* in 2007—how chaos creates opportunity has become my life's work," says Gutsche.

He is a "chaos guy." His big break was being invited to speak to 500 CEOs at one of the lowest points in business in 2008 and helping them as they tried to save their companies. From these business leaders in the midst of crisis, during an extremely vulnerable period, Gustche says they were also teaching him lessons he could not have learned anywhere else. Lessons about what worked and what didn't work. These projects snowballed; Gutsche worked with about 550 CEOs or leadership teams. He was inspired to think about his purpose—to make change happen when change is hard and to extract better innovation from teams. "Your next level is there, but you can't see it," he says. He states that we are held back from seeing a path forward because of psychological traps and organizational traps. Gutsche adds that "even your own success" is a potential trap, making us complacent and fearful of challenging the status quo.

Trend Hunter's mission is to go over tactics, tools, experiences that will prompt clients to see things in a different light. "I can't give you that idea, but I can help you find it," says Gutsche.

FUTURE FESTIVAL WORLD SUMMIT

Join the world's top innovators to experience the future before it happens.
Trend Hunter's annual Future Festival World Summit (FFWS) is taking place in Toronto this year; supporting the Canadian market by bringing a world-class event along with the brightest minds in innovation to our country. "This is an epic experience for all innovators to prototype their futures," explains Gutsche. The summit brings together global leaders of innovation and entrepreneurs, and this is a conference unlike anything attendees will have experienced before. "I've spoken at 600 events now," says Gutsche. "I've learned about some of the coolest, best, worst things happening at other events."

OPEN YOUR THINKING, EXTRACT BETTER IDEAS AND TAKE ACTION

"If you were to show up and bring a team of people, the first day you would be split apart based on your biggest interest. Whatever you pick, you are now separated with the other 20 [or so] people who are also interested most in that topic."

Unlike other conferences, the festival is a highly choreographed, takeaway-focused immersion. You will have opportunities to participate in completely original experiences; a future party with 50 to 100 winning technologies you have heard of but probably never played with. Technologies like holographs and food and flavour experimentation. Last year Jim Beam made a VR headset and attendees were virtually seated in the Jim Beam most secret cask room while they sipped Jim Beam reserve liquors. This happens all in one super-charged, exciting, inspiration- and innovation-provoking activity day.

FASCINATED & FASCINATING: LEADERS and HANDS-ON LESSONS

Join Starbucks, Netflix, Samsung, Red Bull, Lego and MTV to experience the future. Join some of the most celebrated keynote speakers the world over, i.e., *New York Time*s best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell, former CEO of the *Chicago Tribune* Tony Hunter and Jeremy Gutsche who will be diving into the future of lifestyle food flavour technology and the workplace.

Reconnect with your team on the third day of the summit. Take part in workshops like those used by NASA to prototype the journey to Mars. In the end, you'll have produced five to 10 disruptive ideas you WILL WANT to implement.

JUST FOR FOODSERVICE

According to Gutsche, the drive towards experience has changed what it means to go out to a restaurant. "This is a challenge to larger chains because what's happened is our desire—especially with millennials—has driven us to a different space. A person is not going out for a meal, but an experience." Gutsche suggests that the desire to create a unique experience that keeps people coming back has become a battleground and that "you almost have to be a media company to pull it off."

This idea is part of the inspiration for the Flavour Reversal Trend Safari taking place at the Summit. "We'll discover how local brands are taking traditional foods and turning them on their heads to add a spark of novelty to what was once familiar." This foodservice safari will explore the ins and outs of innovation in concept and production, with the added benefit of being able to sample delicious items from successful innovators.

At the first location—Eva's Original Chimneys—attendees will see how the founder of the business is sharing her love for her home country's food—putting her spin on freshly baked savoury and sweet Chimney Cakes and Cones, a specialty of the brand.

At the second location, visitors will learn about the unique business structure of one of the most distinct Canadian gelato shops—Death in Venice. The store produces a wide range of novelty flavours, offering items like Bourbon & Smoked Chocolate gelato, Pad Thai gelato and Pumpkin Ale gelato. Here we'll also learn how some of the business's costs have become self-sustaining, as the brand houses the production processes of other small businesses in its kitchen. M

97% of attendees rate Future Festival as the 'best innovation conference ever!'

Bring yourself and your team to Future Festival Toronto and take part in these entirely original, hyper-focused learning opportunities for those in the restaurant business with food-focused Trend Safaris, experiences and exercises.

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CHEESE BOUTIQUE

FOR AFRIM PRISTINE, CHEESE PUTS LIFE INTO PERSPECTIVE

By Stacey Newman



I say, with confidence, that most Canadian chefs know of Maître Fromager Afrim Pristine. But Pristine rejects this view. In fact, he immediately sets me straight stating that he is just one person and "nothing without his family, his employees and his customers." He also says that were it not for cheese, he probably wouldn't be here at all. For someone who works so hard, who is continually educating himself and evolving his business (and himself), Pristine wants nothing to do with talking about Afrim Pristine. This community-forward approach to business is integral to his success. Pristine is humble yet opinionated, serious yet dismissive of the notion that the work he does is anything but fun.

Pristine's office is situated in a loft that overlooks the bustling interior of Toronto's beloved Cheese Boutique. He runs the family business today with his brother. His office is furnished with shelves filled with books and paperwork; piles of business stuff. The walls are decorated with framed photographs that imbue the room with a sense of history; portraits of family members, inspiring acquaintances (an autographed photo of the late Anthony Bourdain), university degrees earned by Pristine's parents (his mother studied Latin, his father political science). The frames contain reminders of where he and the family business came from.

Cheese Boutique (CB) in Toronto's west end turned 48 this year. Pristine's grandfather and father started the business. CB spent 30 years in a smaller shop from 1970 to 2000, when the shop moved to a 10,000-square-foot location and started growing their operations into aging cheese, aging beef, baking and preparing food, offsite catering and wholesale purchasing. Cheese Boutique, today, boasts 500 hotel/restaurant deliveries per week in addition to running the shop, etc. But it's still a family business through and through. "My brother and I are the third generation. My niece and nephew are on the floor and in deliveries, so they are the fourth generations. We also have families within our families, people who have worked with us for decades like Celina, Marta and Sedata, three women who have each worked 30 years plus, helped raise my brother and I and have been integral in our growth of the shop. That's very special to us. I think to our customers as well," says Pristine. He is eager to talk about the contributions of others to the business. Says Pristine, "Mat Sutherland is our executive chef for the last year, but I've known him for 20 years. Mat has really ramped up our prepared food program."

Of CB's success, Pristine says their strength is treating each customer individually to cater to their exact needs. No matter the scale, Pristine says they are very good at delivering what every single customer wants.

So, what is it like being a master purveyor of cheese? The affable affineur says that running his business is interesting because "not much is predictable." It's a challenge to make sure they can do what everyone needs, despite ever-changing variables. "Cheese is easy but making sure the customer has a great experience is very important to us. So is providing a good working environment for staff. I can't do this without my staff."

Pristine likes to have fun. He enjoys honouring his friends when they open a new restaurant. His friends-list of chefs across the globe is impressive. Says Pristine, "We're all in this to-


AFRIM PRISTINE

gether, me and the chefs. We are all trying to do the same thing...make people happy with food. You're not in this industry to be a millionaire. You're in this industry 'cause you love it. And because you want to take care of people. So, I surround myself with those kinds of people."

WHY IS CHEESE A FIXTURE ACROSS ERAS AND CULTURES?

In some places in the world with ancient peoples, cheese has been part of the diet since humans started using milk from animals. Cheesemaking was one of the earliest culinary practices. Cheesemaking in North America is much younger but booming nevertheless. This is in no small part to the work of dairy farmers and the marketing boards like Dairy Farmers of Ontario who proudly tell the stories of their producers, processors and purveyors. This support enables direct connections between farmers and purveyors, farmers and chefs or purveyors and chefs. These meaningful, informative and symbiotic connections are the lifeblood of the booming Canadian dairy industry.

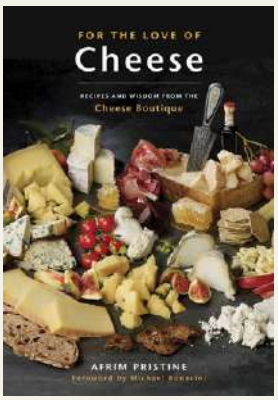
Operators like Pristine are invaluable builders of bridges as cheese has become more important and more prominent in our diets. There's a huge demand for cheese and interest in its origins. What makes a cheese special? Pristine says that he has 500 kinds of cheese in his counter, all made from the same ingredients—milk, a little salt and a bit of bacteria. But why is this Gouda different from that Gouda? As simple as cheese is, it's also complicated. The terroir, the flavour influences, the aging process. "Cheese is a living thing, a living organism. Our job as affineurs, cheesemakers or dairy farmers is to figure out what the best recipe is and how it's going to change when it ages. And all of it is for one reason; to make that customer happy and give that customer a great cheese experience." Pristine's energy fills the room. He talks about his passion for the stories behind the cheeses he sells. "Canada is represented in my counter more than any other country. More than Italy and France combined. Not because we're Canadian, but because Canada has damn good cheese. We take an incredible product from the cheesemaker and give it love and maintenance and space and the room for it to evolve into something spectacular."

To evolve is Pristine's reason for being. He credits his upbringing and his heritage for everything he knows and all that he possesses. He speaks with care and an evident sense of responsibility to the legacy he represents. He emphasizes the gratitude he feels for the gifts bestowed on him by his parents—whom he describes as remarkable, intelligent and loving people. Their story is the stuff of novels. Immigrants who recognized a need in their new community. They brought cosmopolitan cheeses to Toronto and influenced a new generation of chefs and consumers. They saved, sacrificed and built a small empire for the sake of their children. "We always had to work for what they gave us. If I wanted something, I had to earn it," says Pristine. That lesson hit home when he was in university studying history and needed money for textbooks. His mother sent him half the amount he'd requested, and it was then he realized that his parents had to stretch every dollar to make ends meet for their family.

Pristine then tells me that he doesn't like one of the questions I asked. I had requested that he tell me about a "cheese emergency" that he has experienced. He says this question bothered him. "There is no cheese emergency; there is no cheese disaster. Unless a wheel of cheese has fallen on someone and broken their skull... You ran out of buffalo mozzarella; it's alright. There's bigger problems in the world."

Pristine continues by saying that 10 years ago running out of something would have been an emergency for him too. But life experience, travel, seeing people living through real disaster like the hurricane in Puerto Rico, where he has taken part in an annual food festival and seen firsthand the impact of a natural disasters on people—these experiences have changed

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EXCERPT:

FOR THE LOVE OF CHEESE

RECIPES AND WISDOM FROM THE CHEESE BOUTIQUE

CHEESE: CHILI-GOUDA

As featured in the Slam-Dunk Sandwich recipe

Spicy foods and me are like Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant: no matter how many championships we win, we just can't get along. But I do love spicy Dutch gouda cheese, so I've come up with a recipe that will make you think this LA Lakers rivalry never existed. Gouda is such an adaptable cheese and can be found in so many varieties: fenugreek, cumin, caraway, and cloves. For this recipe I'm going to use a chili-infused gouda. It has the perfect amount of heat and is a flavorful kind of hot as opposed to a take-off-the-paint kind of hot. This rich, flavorful sandwich pairs great with a beer or 2 (or 12, I'm not judging).

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DIG IN

For a sneak peek of this recipe and others from *For the Love of Cheese: Recipes and Wisdom from the Cheese Boutique,* please visit menumag.ca.

him. “We all need to grow up or become a little more professional or maybe just be a little more realistic. You see what’s happening in the world today. You have to put things in perspective. When a client comes into Cheese Boutique, I am going to do my part in making people happy, putting a smile on their face. That’s my job. We are suppliers of happiness.”

Pristine says there is enough for everybody. “We’re all trying to do the same thing. We need to work more together. Every one of those cheeses out there, we deal with the man or woman making that cheese and have a dialogue. I am taking what I learned and giving it to the customer. We are all on the same team. It’s not a competition. No one is winning an award. We’re doing this, selling cheese because we love it, we want to honour it and let’s make people happy,” Pristine finishes.

TALK ABOUT CHEESE ON THE MENU

Canadian restaurants need to learn from and work directly with local purveyors of cheese, which is why the partnership between Restaurants Canada and Dairy Farmers of Ontario is so important. In an age where consumers want to know the how, where, what and why of food; cultivating relationships with the makers and sellers of cheese should be part of building an evocative menu. M

Watch for Afrim Pristine’s book release in October 2018. For the Love of Cheese: Recipes and Wisdom from the Cheese Boutique *is filled with Pristine’s stories and recipes celebrating cheese and honouring the history of Cheese Boutique.*

THE MENU
CHEESE “CAKE”



FUOCO A creamy buffalo milk cheese from Quebec. Washed rind, pungent, aromatic and tasty. Decorated with edible flowers.

COMFORT CREAM From Upper Canada Cheese Company comes a camembert-style cheese. A white bloomy rind encases a soft, creamy, golden interior. Aged in-house for 90 days.

HENRY HAS THE BLUES Newest cheese from Cheese Boutique’s exclusive “Henry” line. A big, bold Quebec cow’s milk blue, aged four months. Pair with ice wine.

NIAGARA GOLD Produced in a dairy in Jordan, Ontario, just outside Niagara. Made from the milk of Guernsey cows raised on the farm. Washed in rock salt and water, giving this cheese some bite. Decorated with an edible flower.

GUNN’S HILL 5 BROTHERS Pasteurized cow’s milk cheese from Woodstock, Ontario. Very nutty, sweet and very Swiss style. Decorated with edible flowers and Ontario oregano.

NEVIS Produced at Glengarry Fine Cheese in Lancaster, Ontario exclusively for Cheese Boutique. Very buttery, aged nine months. Try with Riesling. Decorated with Ontario lavender.

MOUNTAINOAK 3 YEAR AGED GOUDA An award-winning Gouda. Made in New Hamburg, Ontario. With a similar texture to Parmigiano and a burst of flavour in every bite. Sure to be a crowd pleaser!

GUNN’S HILL HANDECK A cow’s milk cheese washed in Beau’s lager from Woodstock, Ontario. Aged two years in-house. Decorated with Ontario white cherries and mint.

Bottom layer decorated with Ontario strawberries and imported green grapes.

BUILDING A BETTER BREAD BASKET

ARTISAN BAKING AND ANCIENT GRAINS BRING NEW LIFE TO BREAD SERVICE

Courtesy of Ardent Mills



Photo: Courtesy of Ardent Mills

Despite recent diet trends that call for limiting gluten and carbohydrates, interest in handcrafted, artisan bread remains strong. And along with a renaissance in artisanal baking comes opportunities for restaurants to reinvigorate traditional table bread service. Building a better bread basket is a chance to make an impressive start to a great dining experience while also highlighting how ancient grains can make bread service new again.

ANCIENT GRAINS, MODERN APPEAL

The artisanal bread movement is adding diverse ingredients and styles with growing consumer appeal. Benoit Dussault, national account executive, Ardent Mills, and Karl Etienne, technical solutions analyst, Ardent Mills, have been in the baking industry for decades, and both agree that we are experiencing an exciting time in bread baking.

Over the last few years, demand for ingredients like quinoa, spelt and amaranth has been on the rise. Etienne sees these grains used as ingredients as well as aesthetic additions to bread exteriors. Bakers are wrapping wet dough in flaked barley grains, chia seeds and whole grains to add visual appeal, complex flavour and interesting texture to the exterior of loaves. These added touches of ancient grains are an easy upgrade from the more typical sesame or poppy seeds on breads according to Etienne.

Enrobing dough in seeds and grains is part of the bigger picture of bakers experimenting with ancient grains, heirloom wheats and other value-added ingredients, explains Dussault. As more consumers seek cleaner, simple foods, ancient grains offer a rich history, locality and reference global culinary traditions that many consumers find interesting and reassuring.

TECHNIQUE AND TIME

Traditional techniques have also made a comeback through the artisanal baking renaissance. Etienne and Dussault have seen more focus on prebaking processes, like lightly toasting grains to achieve some subtle roasted and almost nutty flavour profiles. Some bakers soak toasted grains to rehydrate them. Bakers often use the soaking liquid in the dough to retain even more flavour.

Longer fermentation times and overnight ferments are back "in vogue," notes Etienne. The time helps develop the flavour in the crumb and highlights the time and attention that bakers have put into breadmaking.

"These extra steps and ingredients take time, but they show how dedicated bakers are to the patience, crafting and hands-on techniques that great bread requires," says Etienne.

TIPS FOR UPDATING BREAD BASKETS WITH ANCIENT AND HEIRLOOM GRAINS

ADD VALUE: Replace some traditional white flour with heritage wheat like red fife, rye or spelt. Streamline the inclusion process by using tried-and-trusted bread formulations and adding a few high-impact ingredients. Try spelt in a baguette or some peppery amaranth in a traditional quick biscuit. A few distinct additions help to differentiate your bread—and your restaurant.

THINK GLOBALLY: For diners who seek global culinary adventure, grains can deliver. For example, buckwheat is important to traditional savoury Breton crêpes, and teff is central to Ethiopian cuisine. Highlight these backstories in menu copy and when talking with diners.

TRY NEW FORMS OF OLD GRAINS: Ancient grains in newer formats, such as crisps and flakes, create new possibilities in baked goods, transforming grains into something with visual appeal, varied textures and subtle flavour enhancements.

BE INCLUSIVE: Gluten-free bread options are still in demand. Use ingredients like sorghum, amaranth, teff, buckwheat and quinoa to create rustic, gluten-free flatbreads and loaves.

BRING VARIETY TO THE BASKET: Try a few slices of red fife sourdough, a couple of sweet sorghum biscuits and some wedges of quinoa-enhanced flatbread to elevate bread service.

Music Matters

HAMILTON BECOMES FIRST MUNICIPALITY "LICENSED TO PLAY" WITH SOCAN



The City of Hamilton is standing up for fair and legal music licensing for music creators, becoming the first Canadian municipality to receive a special SOCAN Licensed To Play designation after confirming that all of its city-owned recreational facilities are legally licensed by SOCAN to play commercially released music.

"Hamilton is a true playground for music creation, publishing and performance," said Hamilton-based SOCAN member, Max Kerman, of Arkells. "The SOCAN Licensed To Play designation confirms that Hamilton recognizes the hard work of music creators and publishers, and the importance of venues having a music license. To truly celebrate Canadian culture, it's important to honour the livelihood of the thousands of songwriters, composers, music publishers and other musicians living in the area. These administrative steps really add up for someone who works in music."

While Hamilton is home to a diverse community of musicians, it also boasts a growing number of businesses using music as their core offering, or which offer music to improve their business.

Licensed To Play is a long-term program that encourages businesses to show that music is an instrumental aspect of the customer experience and that they stand up for songwriters, screen composers and music publishers who have created the valuable music that enhances their business.

IT'S A FACT: MUSIC ADDS VALUE

Canadians enjoy their food and beverage more with music, making them stay longer and spend more! Researchers asked Canadians how the music being played in an establishment impacted their experience—music has a substantially positive impact on dining.

78%

of Canadians say that ***hearing music in a restaurant*** makes them enjoy their food and drink more and almost three-quarters say it makes them want to stay longer.

84%

of bar, restaurant and retail owners surveyed credit music for helping to create a more ***positive experience***.

75%

of Canadians say they enjoy food and drink more when they hear ***live music*** they like.

34%

of Canadians said that if they knew a restaurant was paying its ***legal and fair license*** for music, it would influence their decision to go there.

>2/3

of business owners say that live music attracts more customers, and more than half agree that live music gives them an ***edge over their competition***.

(Source: Leger, on behalf of SOCAN.)

SOCAN (The Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada) and its more than 150,000 members, and its media partners like Restaurants Canada, thank music-using businesses and encourage restaurants and hospitality partners to continue playing music and to make sure that you are Licensed To Play!



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