MENU

CANADA'S FOODSERVICE MAGAZINE

RC Show
Restaurants Canada

IT'S TIME TO LEVEL UP

SLAY THE BUFFET

ADAM MOCO (AKA MISS MOÇO) on how Drag Brunch can rescue restaurant weekends and on hosting **BREAKFAST WITH CHAMPIONS** at **RC Show 2024**

THE COLUMN:
CHEF WALLACE WONG on Stirring Souls and motivating teams

Journey through the Looking Glass with
and/ore restaurant

Featured at the RC Pop Up Experience at RC Show 2024

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The voice of foodservice | La voix des services alimentaires

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-AT-LARGE

It's time to LEVEL UP.

Welcome to MENU magazine's RC Show 2024 issue, your essential guide to Canada's Leading Hospitality and Foodservice Event. Packed with exciting Show preview pages, this edition is designed to help you connect, learn, grow, and take your business to new heights. The Restaurants Canada team has put together an incredible roster of speakers, panels, competitions, F&B brands, pavilions and special events to help the industry embrace the ideas, insights, tools and connections it needs to profit and thrive.

This issue features the perspectives of a selection of the people who will take to the stages at RC Show 2024. Inside, Chef and Guinness World Record Holder Wallace Wong offers valuable insights on the importance of seeing your staff as individuals, providing you with innovative strategies to motivate and inspire your team for a thriving workplace. Discover how Toronto's and/ore restaurant is making waves with its distinct culture of collaboration and creativity, as the leadership team shares their early success, which could suggest a growing appetite for genuine expression in restaurant experience design.

Hear from Adam Moco, aka Miss Moço, Toronto's drag brunch Queen (and host of Breakfast with Champions), as he shares strategies to help operators rejuvenate slow periods with "eatertainment" and crafting memorable moments for guests. Go in deep with Robin Goodfellow, the brains behind the bar and VELA, in an intriguing dialogue about crafting the unexpected and what's ahead for Toronto's dynamic bar and restaurant landscape. Then read the wonderful interview with Chef Jenni Lessard of Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations on genuine Indigenous food experiences and ingredients.

Expert tax lawyer James Rhodes offers some promising news that can help operators address the sleeping liabilities in gratuity management, a significant challenge in the hospitality sector, and Jim Taylor offers operators a strategic approach to taking care of people without sacrificing profit.

The theme for this issue of MENU is Future + Forward. As you flip through these pages, I hope the people, ideas and stories fuel your inspiration and journey to elevate your business. RC Show isn't just a conference or a tradeshow—it's a catalyst for a prosperous and innovative future for the industry we love.

I hope to see you there!





Kelly Higginson
President & CEO

Spring 2024
Volume 9 Number 2

Restaurants Canada
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MENU is published four 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. 40009977
ISSN 2371-4883

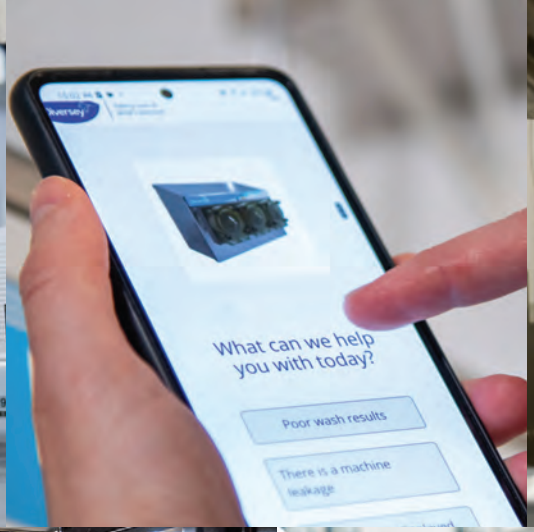
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THE PASS

RC Show
Restaurants Canada
Conference & Trade Expo
LEVEL UP
April 8-10, 2024
Enercare Centre | Toronto

Join the industry at RC Show 2024, Canada's largest foodservice and hospitality event, where innovation meets inspiration! Experience the latest trends, cutting-edge technology and mouth-watering culinary creations that are shaping the future of our industry. Network with industry leaders, attend insightful workshops, and discover new products that will elevate your business to new heights. RC Show 2024 is the must-attend event to ignite your passion and drive success in the ever-evolving world of foodservice and hospitality. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with your community and LEVEL UP your business!

RC Pop Up Experience at RC Show 2024

LEVEL UP with the exclusive, in-Show RC Pop Up Experience featuring a **custom-created tasting menu of dishes inspired by Canada** and brought to life and to your table by **Executive Chef Missy Hui and the and/ore restaurant team**. This is a unique and unforgettable RC Show experience you won't want to miss.

Modern Canadian Chef's Picnic with paired cocktails, full table service
Reserve tables for 2 – 6 people | $15/per person (all-inclusive dining fee)*

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**Tickets are priced at $15 per person, inclusive of all taxes and fees. All proceeds after taxes and fees will be donated to the Canadian Hospitality Foundation (CHF). Reserve your spot today and support a great cause!*



Breakfast With Champions

April 10 | 7-10 AM | Liberty Grand | Exhibition Place

Breakfast With Champions is RC Show's top-rated morning event where hospitality leaders gather to learn data-driven insights from industry research companies, gain exclusive knowledge from innovators and get inspired by world-class speakers like this year's keynote, **Gabriel Stulman**.

Table of 8: $1,225* + HST | Single Ticket: $175* + HST

**Ticket price includes an elevated breakfast and free parking.*



Industry Night Out

April 9 | 8 PM-1 AM | VELA Toronto | 90 Portland Street, Toronto

Join us for the most sought-after industry event of the year: Industry Night Out. This upscale celebration is hosted at a special Tuesday-night opening of **VELA**, home of incredible bites from **Chef Marvin Palomo** and superior cocktails by **Robin Goodfellow**.

Advance tickets: $69* +HST

**Ticket price includes welcome cocktail and passed canapes.*

Restaurants Canada members attend RC Show FREE. Register and purchase your event tickets at:

INTRODUCING RESTAURANTS CANADA'S BUYER'S GUIDE

This special flip issue of MENU magazine introduces **Canada's Restaurant Buyer's Guide**, your one-stop shop for connecting with Restaurants Canada partners and leading foodservice suppliers. This valuable resource is designed to help operators unlock value and grow their businesses by providing easy access to a comprehensive network of industry-leading partners and suppliers. Don't miss out on this opportunity to elevate your operations and explore the potential for success in the dynamic world of foodservice.





MENU UNPLUGGED PODCAST

Brought to you by: Restaurants Canada & Sysco Canada
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March 15 | Breaking Bread with Anna Pham on Women's Impact in Hospitality

In this enlightening episode features Anna Pham, Restaurants Canada's director of content and programming and a formidable presence in the Canadian food service industry. Anna shares her hospitality journey, deeply interwoven with her Vietnamese heritage and the entrepreneurial spirit passed down from her grandparents and parents.

Be sure to follow so you never miss an episode. Available on YouTube, Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Google podcasts.

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Be our guest! They're rolling out the red carpet for Restaurants Canada Chain & Multi-unit members with a free pass to the event.* Secure your spot by registering with the code **MENU24P**, while tickets last.

Visit murtecsummit.com/canada/begin to register today.

**MURTEC Executive Summit Canada 2024 registration is open exclusively to qualified restaurant operators and/or hospitality operators (full-service, QSR, or fast-casual restaurants; foodservice operators & management companies; virtual restaurant brands; casinos, cruise lines, event venues and hotels).*

Technology Solution / Service Providers are eligible to attend MURTEC Executive Summit Canada 2024 through event sponsorship.

Registrations will be reviewed and are subject to approval.





STIRRING SOULS:

THE ART OF MOTIVATING STAFF AND INSPIRING EXCELLENCE

A genuinely motivated staff is the backbone of a successful restaurant, offering stability and efficiency in an environment where every team member's contribution is crucial. Chef Wallace Wong believes that by empowering and recognizing employees, restaurateurs can foster a dedicated workforce that elevates the dining experience, encourages loyalty and drives the industry forward. Due to the yawning labour gap, this has never been so important.

THE COLUMN:
BY CHEF WALLACE WONG

Leadership in the culinary world is often seen through the lens of hierarchy, with a focus on titles and positions from the executive chef down to the busboy. However, the essence of leadership in this industry, especially in restaurants, lies in the ability to rally a team towards a common goal; to create a cohesive unit that performs something magical together. This is crucial in an industry as challenging and cutthroat as ours, where margins are low, and success is hard-earned.

The COVID-19 pandemic taught us a lot about the resilience our field demands. It highlighted the importance of people and teams in navigating such tough times. Leadership is not just about holding a title; it's about motivating and guiding your team, ensuring they feel valued and understand that they are doing, and that it's about more than just cooking or serving. They are, in a way, like superheroes, enduring extreme conditions, handling dangerous equipment, and creating experiences and building memories that evoke deep emotions in people.

The current labour shortage in our industry is a complex issue. We can't solely blame the industry or the people who choose not to work in it. With the plethora of choices available today, it's understandable why someone might opt for a different path. That's why it's imperative that leaders find ways to make teams feel appreciated and inspired to be part of something bigger than just their daily tasks.

THE TRUE MEANING OF "MOTIVATION"

Motivating oneself is a personal journey, but igniting that spark in someone else is where the true art of leadership begins. Motivation thrives when it's about more than just necessity, and all about provoking genuine desire. In the restaurant world, where the pressure is incessant, finding that trigger for each individual is key. Monetary incentives have their place, but often it's the personal touches that resonate more deeply.

Photo courtesy of Josh Tenn-Yuk



Photo courtesy of ElFilmslike

I worked in a restaurant where motivation was crafted not just through paychecks, but through challenges and exclusive, but low-cost rewards. Picture standing for hours in a kitchen, immersed in a series of fast-paced, mundane tasks. There's extreme cold, heat, whirring Vitamix machines. Our manager challenged us, offering us a case of an exclusive, house-brewed beer to whomever could get their work done fastest. It cost the restaurant nothing, but completly transformed the vibe and our attitude. This game not only infused fun into the routine but also catered to the interests of chefs who longed to taste and experiment.

Motivation is multifaceted, a kind of love language. While financial bonuses are important and appreciated, people also find profound satisfaction in heartfelt praise. It's the understanding that every person has a different 'why'; a unique driving force. It's not about sticking to a one-size-fits-all solution, it's about really seeing people and tailoring incentives to who they are and what they care about. The rub is that this takes effort and time, commodities that can be in scarce supply in a busy and demanding kitchen.

It's easy to get caught up in the relentless pace of a chef's life, where more is accomplished in just three hours than many achieve in a full day. With such intensity, the focus can often shift to simply getting through the checklist—prepping the menu, managing inventories, planning events. It can be tempting to overlook the softer side of leadership; the personal connections, the life goals, the small talks about pets and dreams.

> "Motivation is multifaceted, a kind of love language. While financial bonuses are important and appreciated, people also find profound satisfaction in heartfelt praise."

I recognize that elevating motivation above the day-to-day grind is not straightforward. It's a challenge, especially when the culinary industry (and many others) traditionally looks to quick fixes like putting a name on a jacket or handing out an end-of-year bonus. Yet, there's a wave of change, with restaurants now experimenting with four-day work weeks, allowing for a life beyond the kitchen walls—three full days for staff to indulge in personal passions, to recharge fully and to simply live.

This paradigm shift in work-life balance could well be the kind of motivation that redefines our industry, nurturing not just the skills of our teams but their spirits too. Because when the white coats come off, our chefs, cooks and staff are individuals with dreams and aspirations that extend far beyond the kitchen's heat and hustle.

Ultimately, leadership in the culinary world is about balancing the execution of everyday tasks with creating an environment where every day is an opportunity for someone to have the best time of their life. It's about instilling the belief that if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life.

Tailoring opportunities for each person that intersect with their personality may not feel like a priority, but if you're always focused on putting out the little, day-to-day fires, overlooking the needs of your team can create bigger fires in the long run. And you can't address those larger issues without your team. No matter what, people are the food industry's greatest asset, and protecting that asset is central to running a successful operation.

I think that structure and and the system we all work within has flaws. It's "just kind of been this way" for so many years—look at the success of *The Bear*. Chefs and cooks are actually getting PTSD from that show and don't want to watch it, and people are making memes and talking online about how their industry friends don't want to watch it because it's too real.

The pressures of cooking - the adrenaline the endorphins—if you love it, you love it. It's a thrill and a rush. I'm currently doing my own thing, and I miss that, but I don't miss many of the other things around that. Now, as a creator, when I go out to a restaurant opening or go out to eat, I try to showcase and share as much as I can of that place and of the people who produce that experience. I may not even know the chef, but I'll find their Instagram and tag them because I know they're in the back killing it and may never get the recognition they need and deserve.

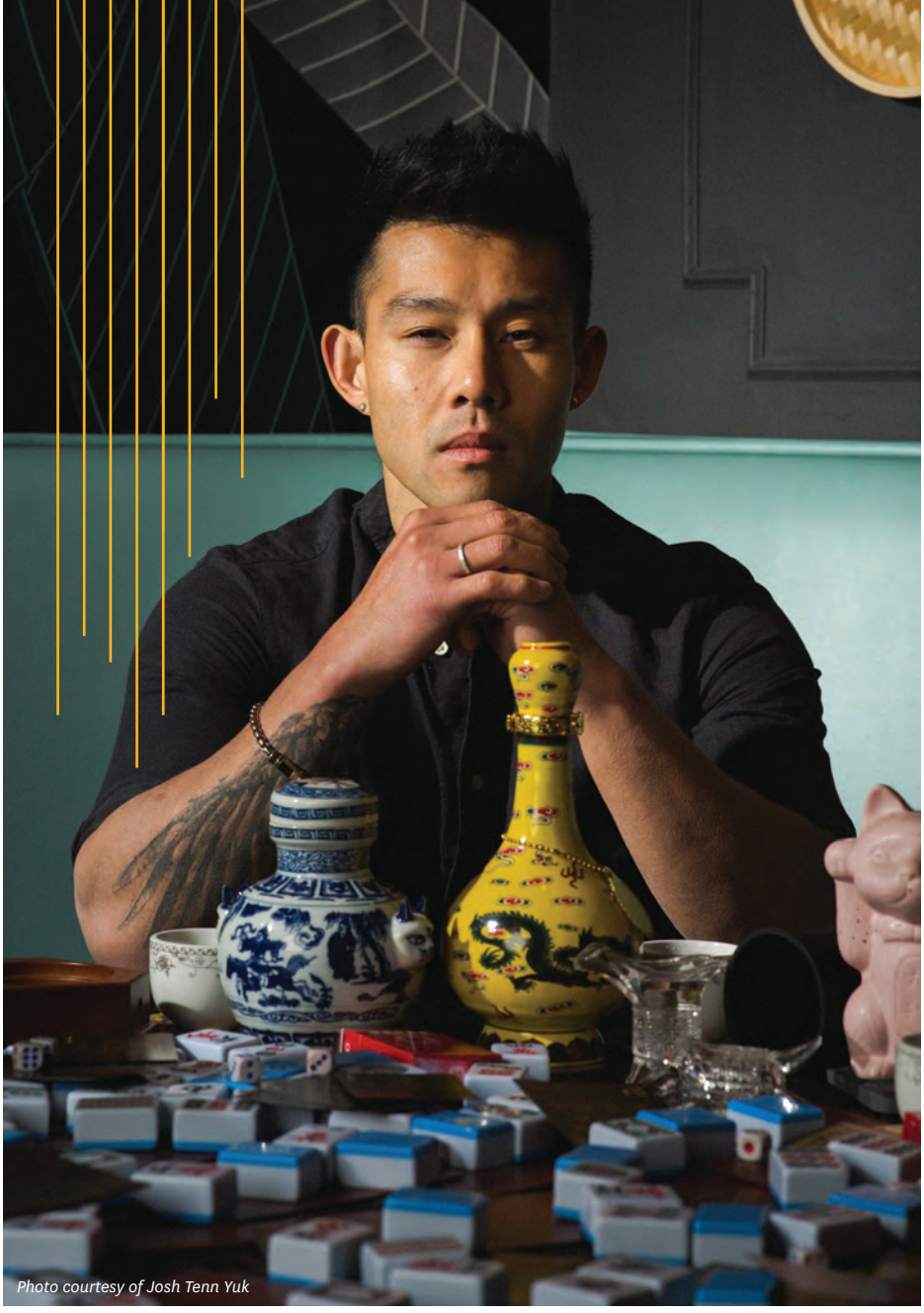


Photo courtesy of Josh Tenn Yuk

> I think that structure and system we all work within has deep flaws. It's "just kind of been this way" for so many years—look at the success of *The Bear*. Chefs and cooks are actually getting PTSD from that show..."

Everybody wants to be wanted. Everybody wants to be valued. Everybody wants to be loved and showcased right? No matter who you are as a person. Even if you're the most introverted person, you crave that.

When I used to work on the line, my motivation was, "How can I get the rest of my team to feel more lively? I made a miso pasta one time and, instead of writing "Miso Pasta" on the bags, I wrote "Miso (Hungry)". When the chef came in he said, "What the f***? Wallace—you're such a loser," and he laughed. It's the little things we all do that make it better. I think sometimes the industry is looking for huge solutions, which make it a huge task and then it only happens once a year. But, imagine your significant other only said, "I love you" once a year?

It's a misconception that motivation requires grand gestures. Sometimes, the most profound shifts come from simple, creative acts that break the monotony and ease pressure. The industry seems to think we need to develop huge programs to inspire people, but the truth is, daily 'I love yous' mean more than grandiose annual gestures. It's why initiatives like weekly basketball games or social initiatives are so impactful; they foster community and promote wellbeing, not just in theory, but in practice.

The true power of motivation lies in personal touches—gifting a pair of coveted shoes or tickets to a game can mean more than a hefty bonus. These acts show that we see our people, understand them, and appreciate their efforts. And in an industry where our job is to bring joy to others, we must not forget the happiness of our own teams.

The irony is that we work in an industry based on making people happy, but we often don't know how to do the same for our own.

ON SETTING GOALS AND PLANTING SEEDS

For me, it's always been about setting goals. I got motivated during my battle with cancer. Grasping the concept of 'no tomorrow' triggers a profound shift in perspective—one that I share often, hoping others learn from my experience without having to go through it themselves. Knowing the fragility of life motivates me to embrace each day fully and, while I'm not saying that my life is always filled with sunshine and rainbows, I do ask myself, "If today were my last, would this bump or hurdle really matter? Like, if I'm going to die tomorrow, do I really want to waste 30 minutes being upset when I could have spent it outside or having a drink with a friend? It's all about very small things. I think that's my biggest motivation and why I feel like I'm invincible—I can do anything in the world because I've learned the value of life.

For example, when I started building my career as a creator, I wanted to understand what the greater foodservice industry was doing. I went to RC Show as an exhibitor and a volunteer. I met a lot of people and had some great conversations for a couple of years until,



Photo courtesy of ElFilmslike

once *Six Pack Chef* took off, I was offered the opportunity to participate in a panel discussion on entrepreneurship in the industry. This year, I'm on the Culinary Stage doing a knife skills masterclass. It's all about having goals and patience. I just plant the seeds, and plant them in very purposeful, meaningful ways, with people you can connect with and build a long-term relationship.

That awareness fuels me, maintaining my gratitude even on the toughest days. It keeps me grounded and hopeful. When asked how I am, I can truly say I'm doing better than most, and yet, there's always room to be better. That is the essence of my drive and I think leaders should approach their life and business the same way. This is your chosen profession. Wouldn't you want to run your establishment every day as if it was your last, putting out your absolute best service and having the best imaginable time doing it?

That should be like the motivation for every day because everybody wins. Your customer has the ultimate experience, so they spend more and tip better, then they tell everyone they know about your place. Your front of house team is not fielding complaints because your back of house is cooking like it's the last day of their life and they're making everything beautiful and perfect and having a great time.

> "I got motivated during my battle with cancer. Grasping the concept of 'no tomorrow' triggers a profound shift in perspective—one that I share often, hoping others learn from my experience without having to go through it themselves."

When we all think differently, we flourish. We build an environment where people feel that if they weren't going to be on this earth tomorrow, they'd be happy because they're doing what they love with people they care about.

Work should (and can) feel like you're on a great date. The one where you wish you didn't have to go home, and you find every single excuse to stay and prolong that experience.

About Wallace Wong

Chef Wallace Wong, also known as the Six Pack Chef, is a professional chef, fitness athlete, TV personality, entrepreneur and Guinness World Record holder. He has worked in prestigious restaurants worldwide, including Langdon Hall, NOMA, Alinea, and Momofuku Shoto. Wallace is recognized from TV shows like *Fridge Wars*, *Top Chef Canada*, *Chopped Canada*, and *Bake it Possible*. Labeled clinically obese as a child, Wallace transformed himself into an international fitness competitor, and has competed on bodybuilding stages like the Arnold Amateur. As a cancer survivor, Wallace is passionate about living life to the fullest and shares his expertise in food, health and fitness through his TikTok and Instagram platforms, with viral content, a "What's Cooking" IGTV series and a G.O.A.T. MasterClass.

sixpackchef.com
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RC Show
Restaurants Canada

Don't miss **Chef Wallace Wong's Knife Skills Masterclass**, **Tuesday, April 9th** on the Culinary Stage at RC Show.

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Unveiling the Optimal Productivity Zone:

A recipe to protect both profit and people in restaurants.

BY JIM TAYLOR, FOUNDER & CEO, BENCHMARK SIXTY RESTAURANT SERVICES, PODCAST HOST, AND CANADIAN AMBASSADOR, THE BURNT CHEF PROJECT



In the bustling world of restaurant business, where success hinges on a delicate balance of efficiency, customer satisfaction and staff well-being, we focus on a concept known as the Optimal Productivity Zone (OPZ).

At Benchmark Sixty Restaurant Services, we truly see this metric emerging as a silver bullet for the industry, as this elusive zone represents the perfect equilibrium where productivity and workload converge to ensure maximum output without sacrificing quality or team morale.

At the heart of the OPZ lies the seamless coordination of various factors, with efficient staff management serving as a cornerstone. By utilizing simple data analytics, restaurant operators can optimize shifts based on peak hours

and customer traffic, protecting employee workload to reduce burnout and lower turnover, while maintaining productivity levels. This not only ensures a smoother and more consistent workflow but also fosters a positive work environment, leading to higher retention rates and ultimately, financial savings for the restaurant.

Investing in employee training and skills development is paramount to achieving the OPZ. Well-trained staff members exhibit increased confidence and competence in their roles, resulting in fewer errors and delays in service. Continuous training enables employees to adapt to evolving customer demands and industry trends, thereby enhancing overall restaurant productivity and profitability. All this can be monitored, along with the progression of them. Simply put, just as a restaurant is a combination of hundreds of moving pieces, targets should never remain static.

The layout and design of the restaurant space also play a pivotal role in determining productivity levels. A well-organized layout minimizes congestion and streamlines workflow, leading to faster service and heightened customer satisfaction. Ergonomically designed kitchen spaces further enhance staff productivity by reducing fatigue and optimizing efficiency. Even within the same concept, with identical pricing and wage structures, no two restaurants will have the same OPZ as it is based on individual determining factors such as employee skill level, average guest spend, and of course—productivity levels.

However, achieving the "OPZ" requires more than just technological advancements or ergonomic designs. It demands a strategic approach that encompasses concept clarity, measurement and data compartmentalization. By understanding the unique characteristics of their business, measuring productivity levels and analyzing data insights, restaurant operators can pinpoint their OPZ and implement targeted strategies to consistently operate within it.

The easiest way to begin measuring and identifying the OPZ is by calculating "covers per labour hour" (CPLH). This metric offers invaluable insights into the efficiency of operations, unveiling areas of financial opportunity while indicating whether the team is being stretched too thin. Rather than solely focusing on financial figures, CPLH allows operators to assess how effectively their team accomplishes the business's goals without undue strain. It serves as a tangible measure of productivity, offering a starting point for strategic decision-making and optimization efforts aimed at achieving the coveted OPZ.

The pursuit of the Optimal Productivity Zone is essential for restaurant operators looking to thrive in today's competitive landscape. By embracing a strategic approach and leveraging technology, training, and data-driven insights, restaurants can unlock their full potential and achieve lasting success in the industry.



BENCHMARK SIXTY

About Jim Taylor

Over the last 20+ years, Jim has helped to fuel the growth of a leading national restaurant brand, as well as consulted with hundreds of other restaurants to navigate the ever-changing restaurant industry. As the Founder and CEO of Benchmark Sixty Restaurant Services, Jim has worked alongside small, medium and large restaurant companies in North America and the UK to help them understand how new concepts like compartmentalized business productivity and employee workload are both measured and leveraged to improve the hospitality industry. His encouragement for leaders to "see things differently" has been instrumental in the strategy and execution of several successful businesses and was recently named to Vancouver, British Columbia's top 100 business innovators of 2022.

Everything comes back to people for Jim, and he believes that our industry needs to stick together to survive. Through his work with strategic partners, as well as a growing team of consultants, his goal is to make the restaurant industry a strongly desired place for people to continue to find both their first job and their dream job. Jim is confident that there is a new way forward for the industry and is on a mission to improve the career experience for the next generation of hospitality professionals. He believes that there are more simple ways to look at the business model and that by looking through a new lens, industry leaders will be able to more easily attract and retain people, while also making the financial side of the business less stressful.

RC Show Restaurants Canada

Catch Jim Taylor at Tuesday's **Financial Planning & Funding** and Wednesday's **The Mental Health Landscape in Entrepreneurship sessions** live at RC Show 2024 in **Studio Ex**.

These valuable sessions are part of the **Blueprints for New Business series** presented by Interac to support entrepreneurs succeed in the foodservice space.

Register now:

Slay the Buffet

MENU IN CONVERSATION WITH:

Adam Moco (aka Miss Moço) on the growing allure of Drag Brunch and the ins and outs of putting eatertainment on the menu.



Photo courtesy of Jamo Best

In the tapestry of performing arts, drag stands out as a vibrant thread, weaving together humour, fashion and political commentary. It has evolved from ancient roots into a multifaceted art form that celebrates gender fluidity and self-expression, gaining visibility, momentum and popularity with television shows like RuPaul's Drag Race.

No longer confined to theatres, screens and nightclubs, drag has been popping up in broad daylight with a side of bacon to rescue the wilting weekend brunch service. As restaurants grapple with fluctuating attendance, operators are looking for new ways to spice up their offerings and attract new audiences. For a growing number of these, drag brunches and other forms of "eatertainment" are successfully pairing the excitement of performance with the pleasure of dining to deliver an unforgettable and profitable experience.

MENU caught up with Adam Moco, the drag performer otherwise known as Miss Moço, Toronto's Drag Brunch Queen, to talk about what he's learned from restaurants and what drag has to offer hospitality.

MM Have you ever worked in hospitality? We heard a rumour that you used to operate a café...

Adam Moco: *I grew up in Cambridge, Ontario, and my first hospitality gig was none other than McDonald's and, like everything I do in life, I kind of just always want to get to the next level. I started in prep in McDonald's, and I was like, "Okay, well, I want to be at front cash, which will then get me onto the drive thru and so on. I just I wanted to know how to do everything in the space to understand how it how it worked."*

I was 16 years old, so I don't know why I wanted to do that but fast-forward to me now, and I get it. It's just my personality. I want to be the one who's managing things and on top of everything.

I ended up opening Miss Pippa's at College and Dufferin, a café/bar/flower/gift shop—it's kind of a mix of everything. It was the brainchild of my now ex-husband, but I took on the role of opening it and getting all the necessary pieces in place, which is not as easy as one would think. I took on dealing with the city, getting permits, fire, health, and the liquor board. By the time I left, we were operating as a kind of casual bar that had gifts and a bunch of things. I feel like these days, people want to be able to have access to everything all at once.

MM It's no secret that time spent in early hospitality roles is so foundational for many people in terms of getting your head organized and ready for work. How did that translate into your own experience opening your concept?

AM: I think it taught me a lot about who I am as a person and how I work. I learned that I'm best suited to dipping into multiple things, which is why I went the artist-entrepreneur route in my life as opposed to the nine to five.

Restaurants may be open for very specific hours, but the things you put into it make it feel totally not nine-to-five because you're dealing with so many different things and I just kind of thrive in those environments. I was 16 and wanted to get out of Cambridge and go to college and live my life, but did it shape me a little bit? Probably. Actually, there's one thing from that experience I've always held on to. In the back during prep there was a screen that had all the orders coming in, and it used a 24-hour clock. I had to learn how to read the 24-hour clock on that thing and since then I've always gone by the 24-hour clock. When I moved to Europe, that's what they do, so it was just one of those weird little things that has helped me along in my life.

MM I understand you're also a photographer.

AM: *Photography was my first career. I graduated in 2010 and went into it full-time until at the end of 2015, just before New Year's I moved to Portugal. I had been shooting for Holt Renfew for about four years and they were switching up to become salary-based whereas I wanted to stay artist-based. I took that as a sign to do what I always wanted to do and moved to Portugal to take a break and work on my art. Drag was part of that and it took over my life.*

When I moved back in 2018, the two careers had swapped. Photography took the back seat and drag took the front seat. For the past almost nine years, drag has been my main gig.

MM What initially attracted you to drag? As an art form before it was a business.

AM: *One of the first shows I saw was in Miami. It was a drag brunch, and seeing the restaurant with the entertainment mixed together to create this incredible atmosphere stuck with me. I was already living a world where I was not following gender norms. I eased my way into it when, in 2015, someone asked me if I wanted to pose for a poster wearing a wig for an event. I said, "Sure. Can I perform?" I just plopped myself on a stage and I was kind of just born that night.*

When I returned to Toronto in 2018, I based my entire career on drag brunch, and I'm known as the Drag Brunch Queen. When people saw how successful my drag brunches became, they wanted me for theirs, which is a challenge. These two worlds that didn't really exist in the city have really exploded into so many restaurants having drag brunches.

> *"I was like, "Okay, well, I want to be at front cash, which will then get me onto the drive thru and so on. I just I wanted to know how to do everything in the space to understand how it how it worked."*



MM Would you do a second Drag Brunch? What would an optimal restaurant to host the event look like?

AM: *I did actually do a second, monthly Drag Brunch at Soho House, which is a member's club, so there was no competition there.*

I've done quite a few drag brunches in my career now. There are so many pieces involved to consider. There's the entertainment itself, and the entertainer also needs to know how to work a space that's not a standalone stage. You're working the room, you're working people individually and you're also keeping an eye on servers coming through with plates of food and making sure you're not running into them.

The key is that people want to come, they want to sit down, enjoy a show, eat and drink as if they were just going out for a regular meal, but with this added extra layer of entertainment. That excitement, in turn, makes guests want to purchase more, which benefits the restaurant. We're two teams working together. I'm working for people to book and come to this drag brunch, and making sure the quality of the entertainment benefits the restaurant's profits.

MM What kind of space is most appropriate for a drag brunch or similar interactive event and what opportunity or dimension does it add?

AM: *If you compare a restaurant to a venue space where there's just a stage that's four feet higher than everyone in the crowd, there's a disconnect between the artist and the audience. In a restaurant, the audience is physically on the same level.*

At my Brunch, I go to every table and say hi, welcome people and find out if they're celebrating a specific occasion to build those connections with the audience. I think this is a huge reason I've been doing this for so long and why people keep coming back. People feel like they are a part of the show as opposed to just watching it happen.

When it comes to the food... food is such a comfort to begin with. To sit and feel comfortable with your plate of food and your drinks and then to have entertainment that is acknowledging you at the same time makes it a safe, comfortable space for people. That's what makes them want to come back or tell a friend.

I do have regulars, but there's weeks in between. I normally ask who's a first timer at Drag Brunch at The Drake Hotel and it's usually at least 90 per cent of the room with their hands up. That makes me really excited to know that it's reaching a broader audience and that means people are going to be more willing to spend money because they're not coming every week. We love a regular, but we don't want anyone thinking, "Okay, I was here just last week, so I'm not going to go too wild." We want to be reaching audiences we haven't been before and just keep capturing that every single week. So that's what I've been trying to do and it's working. Don't ask me how, but it just works.

MM So, what you're essentially saying is that the special occasion aspect of the entertainment has a direct effect on cheque size because guests have different motivations for showing up and possibly different expectations. With such established success, do you consider The Drake your local?

AM: *Yeah, I also started my Drag Brunch at the Gladstone Hotel in 2018. So that was November 2018. I was there until the pandemic hit, and then we were off while it was purchased and renovated. By the time they were ready to open, I got on Canada's Drag Race, and was leaving for about a month and a half, so I couldn't start back up. I came back in May of 2022 and started with The Drake, and I don't see an end in sight. It's my primary gig. We all love a little bit of routine, and mine is my Drag Brunch every Saturday no matter what. It gives me something to look forward to each week.*

MM Drag is a lot, from a performance perspective. How challenging is it to put on that level of performance weekly?

AM: *I do take it very seriously, to the point where Friday nights I'm in bed 10-10:30 and up at six or six-thirty on Saturday mornings. If there is a gig on a Friday, it has to really be worth it for me to only get three or four hours of sleep.*

The preparation isn't just getting ready that morning, it's packing what I want to wear for Brunch the night before. I make sure I'm keeping things different. I had someone come to Brunch this past weekend and it was her third time. In my Brunch, I have three different outfits for the different sets I do, so that means she has seen me in nine different outfits. She said there were no repeats, and to me that was wild because there's often times I love a look so much I will wear it a few times—just because I'm really into it.

Hearing that reminds me of why I put so much effort into preparation, figuring out which wig, which outfit, which shoes to really pull it all together and waking up so early to really enjoy the process. I don't ever want to see it as "Ugh...not again", because doing your makeup is not the most exciting thing, especially so early on a Saturday. I make sure I put my heart and soul into it because I love it so much.

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> *Throwing a drag queen in the middle of a restaurant, especially if that's never happened there before, can be jarring. You have to be really mindful of how it's curated, from menu to space to how it's advertised."*

MM You studied fashion, did you not? Do you design any of your outfits?

AM: *I did Fashion Business at George Brown College. The funny thing is that I know how to sew, but I got on Drag Race and almost went home because of the sewing challenge. I made an outfit recently because I didn't have anything I wanted. I was doing an Emo brunch, so I made this plaid bodysuit with a sort of skirt situation.*

I plan to do more sewing and design now that I have a studio and more space, but primarily I have someone who makes my things.

But… again, like that time at McDonald's, I had someone walk me through how to style my own wigs so I can do that myself. I want to start making a few of my own staple pieces – just easy, grab-and-go outfits – I always want to learn how to do it all.

MM What can restaurant operators who are planning to host a drag brunch or similar event do to ensure success and make sure everyone has a great time?

AM: *The space should be inviting, the menu has to be exciting. Whether it's a deal or a special menu that complements the event—for example, one of the drinks at The Drake's Drag Brunch has my name in it—or they use drag puns; people find that level of theme and detail exciting. That little bit of extra makes a real difference and makes it all make sense.*

Throwing a drag queen in the middle of restaurant, especially if that's never happened there before, can be jarring. You have to be really mindful of how it's curated, from menu to space to how it's advertised. It really has to make sense and shouldn't look like it came from left field.

MM What can restaurant operators learn from the success of Drag Brunch, and how to approach selecting entertainment or other programming?

AM: *Community building is key. Going into the community to connect with people is the biggest thing. By engaging the community, you're already pretty much guaranteed to bring some numbers in, especially those people who may be possibly looking for a space to perform. Starting there—especially if you don't know who to approach—and finding out what's happening in the community, what's worked for others and what hasn't, and what others are already doing is a great place to start. Maybe it's just a musician with an acoustic guitar—how simple is that? It's all about just trying to find that other angle.*

If you hire talent from the community, you're halfway there, because those are the people you want to come to your place.

The other thing to consider is that, when places do try something new and especially when drag is involved, there can be pushback from other community members who think, "It's disgusting!" "Drag queens are grooming the children!" It can be shocking how quickly people who were eager to bring this into their space throw it out because they're scared by that.

I find generally the ones who throw it out as quick as they brought it in are not really here for those artists to begin with. They're just thinking about the money. So, if that's your route, you're not going to create the long lasting, community based event you're looking for. You need to go into it with the mindset that there could be pushback, especially with drag, so you need to know that going in and be prepared to stand by the people you've hired and want to support . You need to commit to making sure they know they will be safe working in your space. That is so important.

MM Drag is an art form first, so hosting drag events is effectively a way to support art and performance within the community. Of course, not everyone sees it that way. What has your experience been like with operators who may have had negative feedback?

AM: *I've been really lucky to not experience it first-hand, too much. I did do a Drag Brunch in Winnipeg and, a couple of weeks before I was going down, there was a drag queen story time at a public library that had a major protest outside. So going in I understood that it could happen, but I thought it would be fine. And up until the end, it was.*

The venue had a kind of little event space I was performing in, and the rest of the restaurant was outside that area. They didn't close us in, so people who were not involved in the Drag Brunch could still see in. When I'd finished the brunch, as I always do, I let everyone know that I was hanging around for a bit in case they wanted to snap some photos just outside the event space at the entrance to the main restaurant. Look, the light from the windows was coming in and I'm a drag queen so I want the good light on my face.

The manager came up to me and said, "Hey, do you mind just staying in here on the stage? There are children out there."

I was just floored.



Photo courtesy of Jamo Best

"I find generally the ones who throw it out as quick as they brought it in are not really here for those artists to begin with. They're just thinking about the money. So, if that's your route, you're not going to create the long lasting, community based event you're looking for."

What interested you about the opportunity to host Breakfast With Champions next month?

AM: *I'm honoured to be hosting Breakfast with Champions. As someone who has been part of the hospitality world for so many years, I understand how much hard work goes into this industry and I'm so pleased to be celebrating and bringing some spice to this event. Also, I'm a brunch queen, my face is painted for daytime!*

What's next in the development of your business? Are you thinking about consulting and growing your concept and sharing your experience?

AM: *It's an important space that isn't occupied. When I moved back to the city I didn't want to fight other queens for the night gigs. I wanted to put myself out there and try something new. I make my own events and do my own thing, but this event was one of the ones that really worked for me.*

That's funny you bring that up because that just seems to be something that has entered into my life without me even thinking about it.

I'm currently coaching someone in their world specifically to help their on-stage presence and the idea of consulting is a world that is opening up to me and that I'm considering more and more as a secondary business. I'm already doing so many things, but it's another avenue for me to find work and explore my art and what I do.

I'm definitely interested in these things, but I'm not sure how it will look. Everyone is so different when it comes to this sort of thing that you have to just kind of craft as you go.

It doesn't matter. I like talking to people. Send me an email, DM me or come and say hello at RC Show.



About Adam Moco /Miss Moço

Adam Moco, is a drag artist, performer and photographer. He is known as Toronto's Drag Brunch Drag Queen, Miss Moço, and also starred on season 3 of Canada's Drag Race. Moco currently resides in Toronto, Canada.

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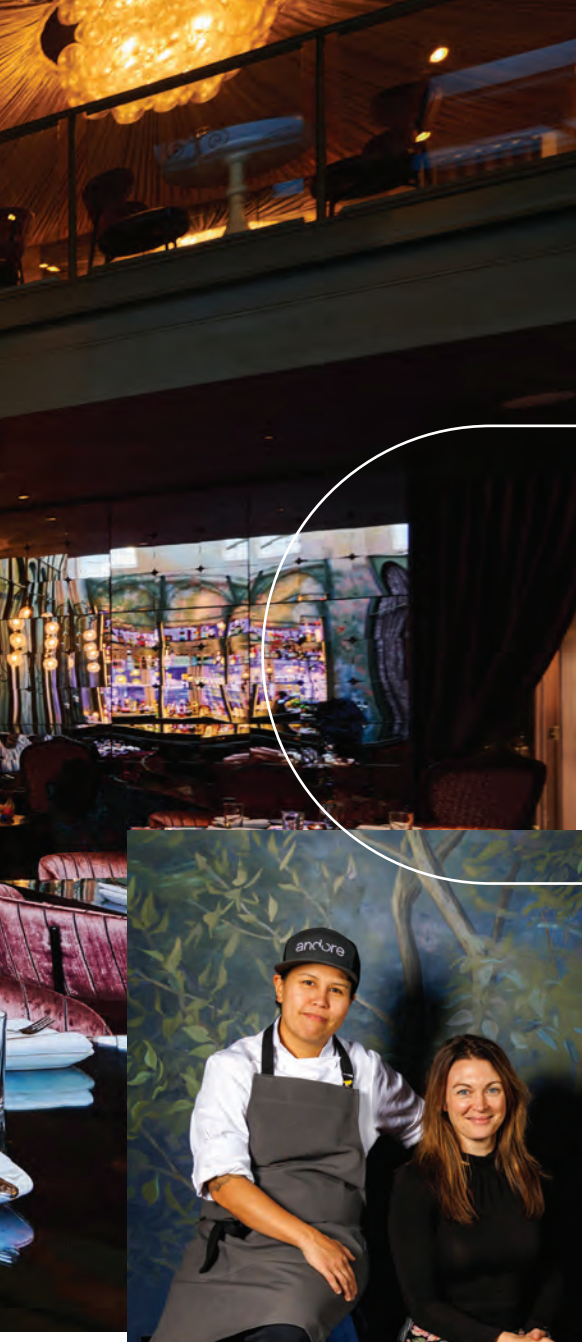
Photo courtesy of Ryan Nangreaves

and/ore

A Hospitality Dream that Plays with Reality

On Queen Street West in Toronto lies and/ore, a magical restaurant that knows how to make an entrance. You may never have seen anything quite like it, but the and/ore experience comes together seamlessly—as if guided by foresight or grand design—with a confidence that suggests its visionaries not only know what they are doing, but what the industry needs.

Stepping inside and/ore is a little like falling through the looking glass. The main floor and mezzanine — collectively known as “Above Ground”— invite guests to be their most playful selves. Dominated by a hand-painted, two storey mural by artists Tisha Myles and Jack Phelps of New Love Collective, the whimsical Rococo-inspired backdrop reaches from forest floor to sky, providing the perfect set piece for Executive Chef’s Missy Hui’s picnic experience of shared plates and snacks





and/ore team (from left to right): Missy Hui, Jaimie Donovan, Abby Rubiales, Kailey DeRubeis

created to surface and spin the diverse flavours and textures of modern Canadian cuisine. The menu and environment invite guests to step away from the street and into a kind of liminal space where champagne or a selection from Abigail Rubiales' perfectly paired and distinctive cocktail menu is not only recommended, but "just the thing."

As surprising as and/ore's Above Ground space is, it's only part of the restaurant's cabinet of surprises. There is also Below Ground, a cave-inspired dining room, where adventurous guests descend for an intimate and enigmatic dining experience. Here, Chef Missy presents a culinary exploration in harmony with the season and accentuated with assertive and distinctive wines and classic cocktails.

At the helm of this enchanting operation are four partners: Executive Chef Missy Hui, Business Operations Manager Kailey DeRubeis, General Manager Abigail (Abby) Rubiales, and an Australian expat mining engineer, Jaimie Donovan, who put the team together with nothing but a dream and some enviable Internet sleuthing skills. "I had left a career and was looking for something new and creative and ultimately landed on hospitality because it merged a lot of passions and things I wanted to do," Jaimie recalls. "I found there are so few female owners and executive chefs in the space. I started cold calling people—which was admittedly odd, as I have no background in hospitality—and I first got to Kailey, who agreed to meet with me and then to keep in touch. Finding a chef with the experience and talent to make the idea come to life was key. After lots of calls I finally met Missy for coffee, and we "dated" for about a year. I sort of stalked Missy until she realized this was the job of her dreams."

The team refers to this period as "stalking and talking followed by dating and waiting", but with four strong, unique and established personalities and professions, they recognized that the partnership would be complex. "We were getting to know each other," Missy acknowledges. "You have to know you can work together, be a team and disagree, yet still be able to move forward. Jaimie's not in hospitality, but we're slowly getting her there. Some of us have worked together before, but some of us have not, so it was really important to make sure the partnership was going to be successful with the financial, client and public-facing pressures that would come."

There is risk in the hospitality business, and the and/ore team went into it with their eyes open. "I had been well-warned, and it was interesting when I was talking to people, they fell into two clear groups," Jaimie recalls. "Roughly half the people I called were extremely optimistic and enthusiastic about the hospitality industry, and genuinely believed everyone should get into it. The other half said, "Never do it. You'll lose all your money." There was no grey area. So, I went with the optimists."

AN EXPERIENCE AND MENU THAT FAVOURS PERSONALITY OVER "PERSONALIZATION"

and/ore's food program is what Missy calls "modern Canadian", centred around her own experience. "I am a modern Canadian," she asserts. I am half Chinese. My mom is English-Irish. I grew up in Hamilton in a predominantly Italian neighborhood. We were the only non-Italians in the whole neighborhood. I spent a lot of my career in Italian food, yet I'm French trained. So, I don't like the word "fusion". I like the term "modern Canadian"

> “I saw the space as it was coming together with the clouds on the mezzanine and I wanted to do something airy, fluffy, fun and visual. I developed the Cotton Candy Old Fashioned... and people lost their minds. I guess I’ll be spinning cotton candy forever. I’m now the hardest-working carny in North America.”
>
> *– Abby Rubiales*

because that’s my lived experience. My food is a representation of myself, but also my staff as they contribute a great deal to its creation. I hope that by the end of our first year everyone on my team sees themselves somewhere in the menu, and it’s already happening.”

The team attributes much of the design to Jaimie, who has since earned the nickname, “Smallwares”. She shares that the intent was to create a space that transports people from their day-to-day to a fanciful, eclectic environment they can lose themselves in. “The Above Ground, or top floor, was inspired by the idea of a stumbling upon an old greenhouse in a whimsical forest. The Below Ground is a descent, which was a little bit self-indulgent as it speaks to my background in mining. I love working underground, so the cave makes me happy. They completely contrast each other. The top is ornate and visually overwhelming, and the basement is simple and clean.”

Guests who don’t know what they’re walking into are blown away, and those who have done a little research find the experience of actually being in the space transformational. “We love the way Missy has presented the food in the different spaces. The top is centred around picnic-inspired sharing dishes that speak to the garden theme, but downstairs is Missy’s best work. It’s high-end, beautiful food, and to be eating it in a basement is the definition of unexpected.

Kailey feels that one of the biggest compliments is when they have a guest who has dined both Above and Below Ground and gush about both experiences. “I think we’ve done a really great job differentiating the spaces and making them both feel just as special.” Missy calls this “equal and opposite”, noting that a lot of their discussions on menu and pricing aimed to ensure that people would find value in both spaces, understanding them as distinct experiences that defy comparison. The chambered and womb-like sensory deprivation of the Below Ground dining room (which guests access via elevator) blocks out the distraction and distortion of the outside world, creating an intimacy and focus on the tasting menu itself.

For the bar, Abby wanted to design a cocktail program that didn’t play into smoke, mirrors or gimmickry. “I wanted to complement and not overpower the food. The challenge was that, with so many flavours, spices and elements in the menu, I wanted something palate-cleansing and approachable that was at once familiar and unfamiliar. We arrived at a split offering of classics and signatures, really diving into the name “and/ore”.”

Each outstanding classic cocktail has a Wonderland-style alternative universe twin, so as Abby puts it, “If you like a Cosmo, here is a Cosmo. Or, you can do something really interesting and have one that’s white and glittery and maybe has a different citrus. Some people really lean into it and go through the whole catalogue, but if you like what you like, I respect that. It is funny though to see people who normally stick to their standards really lean into what we’re offering and enjoy it. While I was developing the menu, I saw the space as it was coming together with the clouds on the mezzanine and I wanted to something airy, fluffy, fun and visual. I developed the Cotton Candy Old Fashioned... and people lost their minds.



Photo courtesy of Ryan Nangreaves



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I guess I'll be spinning cotton candy forever. I'm now the hardest-working carny in North America."

FRIENDSHIP, RESPECT AND A SHARED VISION OF CULTURE

Shared values and a common vision for the culture were as central to the business plan as the partnership complement, the menus, the venue and the design. "There's a shared respect for what each of us brings to the table," says Jaimie. "Our different backgrounds are important in making each other think about why we're doing what we're doing. I have asked some "dumb questions", but at least they get asked so we can think about why we're doing something the way we're doing it, instead of just doing what everyone else in the industry does. I'm not saying every question sparks a revolution, but they all receive a thoughtful, respectful response."

The leadership team jointly manage the space, while each has her own discreet area of responsibility. Missy of course runs food but is also in charge of health and safety. In addition to her core responsibilities, Kailey has become the defacto HR department (something she disputes). Abby runs bar, but also oversees and/ore's staff-directed tip pilot. "We check in with each other and really try and manage as a team," Missy explains. "Our teams also self-direct and try and manage as teams."

"With four partners, you're obviously working with four personalities," Kailey shares. "We're all very different. We share similar values, ethos and approach to leadership including how we want to be represented, both from a personal standpoint and how we want to be represented as a brand and a restaurant. We have a lot of debates, but they're so healthy and communicative. We actually don't often all agree right away, so there's value in having four different personalities because we can focus on our areas of the business. I look at a cocktail recipe, and I don't really know what's going on, but I don't have to because Abby's brain works so fast and she's behind every amazing idea that's come out of the bar along with its beautiful staff. I think we complement each other really well."

Missy agrees, pointing out that they're sitting on a banquette (which they now call "the bench") Jaimie swore she'd never have in the restaurant. "That's when we really knew that this was going to work and that this was magic," Missy says. "Literally, we all have different perspectives, and we rarely agree 100% on anything, but we still manage to be highly productive. That's how we knew this was going to work. I'm not afraid to say, "This is a horrible idea," or "I hate this," and they're not afraid to tell me "Too bad. You're being stupid." There's confidence and there's friendship and there's no hurt feelings, just progress."

Each team member has in turn recruited their own teams, applying the same personal and professional values filter to each selection. "Shared values and culture really does start at the top," Missy says. "It was important to us that people like the people they work with and feel good going to work every day. That they feel there's opportunity for professional development, and that it's about more than whether you're going to be 10 minutes late for work. We've been very, very lucky. Not only in the reception we've had so far, but in the people we've managed to convince to join us before any of this was anything. "Recruit" is really the wrong word. We really just put our vision for the culture into the universe and waited to see what would happen. My sous team is new to me. They're phenomenal and we're really aligned. The way we work together as partners has really trickled down into our teams. We are collectively building this brand, and everyone is emotionally invested in it."

The team approached employee onboarding with a simple, compelling principle: "We can train you and we can teach you, but we can't teach you to care." Hiring happened through wide-ranging conversations, designed to get to know potential employees, several of whom have no previous hospitality experience. The sense was that if people cared and wanted to learn, they were an ideal fit with the restaurant and its leadership.

"Our staff see the respect and how we interact with each other, especially during service," Kailey points out. "We try and embody what we want to see in our staff. We met a lot of people, and we're so lucky to have the staff we have. We're just a few months in and we're already seeing some beautiful friendships evolving in the space among staff. It feels like we really got that part right."

The amount of internal employee referrals within such a short timeline gives testimony to that idea. "It's a real endorsement when somebody on our staff actively brings in someone they know," says Missy. "Our culture is building just based on the expansion of our



Photo courtesy of Ryan Nangreaves

The and/ore team picks their favourite food and drink.

Missy: Sous Chef Ted's Hamachi Crudo and, on the tasting menu, Sous Chef Milo's maitake dish. They're stunning, and I don't want to eat my own food. I'm sorry Abby's a carny now, but I'd order the Old Fashioned. It's a perfect, excellent cocktail.

Abby: I would have 44 of Missy's deviled eggs. I don't even need a beverage.

Kailey: I agree with Abby, but I'd push it to 50 and add our signature Negroni. Abby's take on a Negroni was one of the most surprising, beautiful cocktails I've had in a long time.

Jaimie: The chicken liver pate and any glass of champagne recommended by Krysta Oben, our collaborator at Grape Witches.

> All we ever wanted was for us and our team was to be able to show up as our genuine selves, and then translate that to the guests."
>
> *- Kailey DeRubeis*

own internal network. People recognize that this is a nice place to work, and our staff has done a great job in bringing that feeling to the guest. We get great reviews about the food and the interiors, but we get a lot about the staff and how kind and warm they are. There's something to be said for that, because it's very genuine."

"All we ever wanted was for us and our team was to be able to show up as our genuine selves," Kailey says. "And then translate that to the guests."

A CONCEPT BUILT ON BELONGING

A large part of what makes and/ore so special is that it's the successful child of conscious compromise; an unapologetically out-of-the-box, yet utterly harmonized amalgamation of its founders' unique visions.

Beyond food, drink and design, the crucial, intangible element of success that truly sets a restaurant apart is the sense of belonging. More than just a place to be to drink and dine, great operators understand that they are crafting an experience, a memory, a moment where every patron feels like a part of a larger story. This feeling of inclusivity and warmth transforms a meal into a memory and makes guests yearn to return that truly elevates a restaurant from good to unforgettable.

This isn't lost on the co-founders, but it's also a natural extension of the people they are as opposed to a strategy. "I think we do a great job of offering such a diverse set of elements that we naturally attract a lot of different kinds of people who really want to be a part of the experience. Sure, some people just want to come and take a photo of the cave but, more often than not, we get guests who are really engaged and love our story, want to understand more and ask questions about the mural, the space and the fabrics. For us, that's really cool. We love people who are just as excited as we are to be in the space."

The sense of immersion and commitment across the restaurant team is measured in their perception of the passage of time, Abby notes. "We're all putting in 12 million hours a day and late in the evening Kailey and I are always in the office and we ask ourselves, "Wow, where did today go...what happened?" I feel silly saying it. It's not a normal workday. I don't feel taxed or over-exerted because we generally have a good time. The music's great, the food's wonderful and people are having a good time—all the components really play into each other and create this exceptional environment where you don't feel like you're at work."

Missy agrees. "We're working very hard, but how many people get the opportunity to open a restaurant? We're building a restaurant to be a business, but once we realized we're also really building a restaurant for ourselves,



Photo courtesy of Ryan Nangreaves

> Aesthetically, it's very nuanced and stunning and we've worked with some amazing artists, but we built this on a feeling. That comes through because we're all living small portions of each other's hospitality dreams."
>
> *– Missy Hui*

it took on a life of its own. We treat it like our own space, and it's very freeing to know that, if you want to cook a certain dish or do a cocktail special or have your family in, that works. Jaimie wanted a specific feeling when you come to the restaurant, and we've done that. Aesthetically, it's very nuanced and stunning and we've worked with some amazing artists, but we built this on a feeling. That comes through because we're all living small portions of each other's hospitality dreams."

AGAINST THE ODDS AND AGAINST THE GRAIN

The and/ore team always believed they were going to be successful based on confidence in the business design and having the right people, place and menu, but the timeline surprised them all. Missy is frank: "We've blown it out of the water. Once we invited everyone we knew and then saw other people start to come who no one on the team had a connection with, we knew we'd exceeded our expectations. There are so many talented people in hospitality—front of house, back of house—you can do everything right and still not be successful. It's a finicky field. For us to be sitting here having this conversation and for things to be going this way and our staff to be who they are… All of it is surreal and it feels like a dream."

With more than half of Canadian restaurants operating at a loss or barely breaking even, some would say such an ambitious (even audacious), high-level concept should not have worked. "We didn't intend to be this ambitious," Kailey says, "but then we built a cave in the basement. If people only understood the amount of planning, work and HVAC we put in… We didn't know if people would love it or hate it, but it turns out they love it."

The team is acutely aware that maintaining their success will be the real test, and the hardest part, with the longest stretch of road out in front. "It's also still incredibly risky," Jaimie acknowledges. "For someone outside the industry, it was scary as hell. We are offering something unique and special, but the key is the belonging part, because the real test is if people keep coming back."

As a commercial "product", and/ore is almost a dare to the foodservice market itself, which is currently betting high on low-cost, high-volume operations. They've been smart with their menu pricing, delivering high-quality items while keeping affordability and accessibility top of mind. They've also been extremely shrewd and intentional, offering the right thing, at the right time for what people actually need. Something real.

"We're hospitality people through and through," says Missy. "This is our career, our livelihood, and probably all we've ever known and wanted. and/ore is a platform for us to be creatively fulfilled, but at the end of the day, we're having a good time. I don't know how else to put it. I wish we could say some of it is more intentional, but a lot of it is the magic of hospitality that made us all fall in love with it. It just feels like a gift."

THE RC POP UP EXPERIENCE FEATURING and/ore

Executive Chef Missy Hui and the talented and/ore team will host a pop-up at the RC Show. This special presentation features a culinary experience inspired by one of their most popular offerings—the Chef's Picnic. This mini version includes some of the team's favourite items, showcasing ingredients from the RC Pop Up Experience sponsors.

Inspired by and/ore restaurant's signature palette and featuring original artwork by artist Tisha Myles and Jack Phelps of New Love Collective, the RC Pop Up Experience features a visually stunning setup that will immerse guests in an atmosphere of creativity and innovation.

The dishes served in the reservation-only dining room are a testament to and/ore's talent for reimagining traditional flavours, with each plate artfully presented to showcase a harmonious blend of colours and textures.

LEVEL UP with the exclusive in-show RC Pop Up Experience featuring Chef Missy Hui and the and/ore restaurant team with RESY.

• Chef's Picnic with paired cocktails • full table service • Reserve tables for 2 – 6 people | $15/per person (all-inclusive dining fee)*

Tables are limited. Book now with RESY.

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RC Show Restaurants Canada

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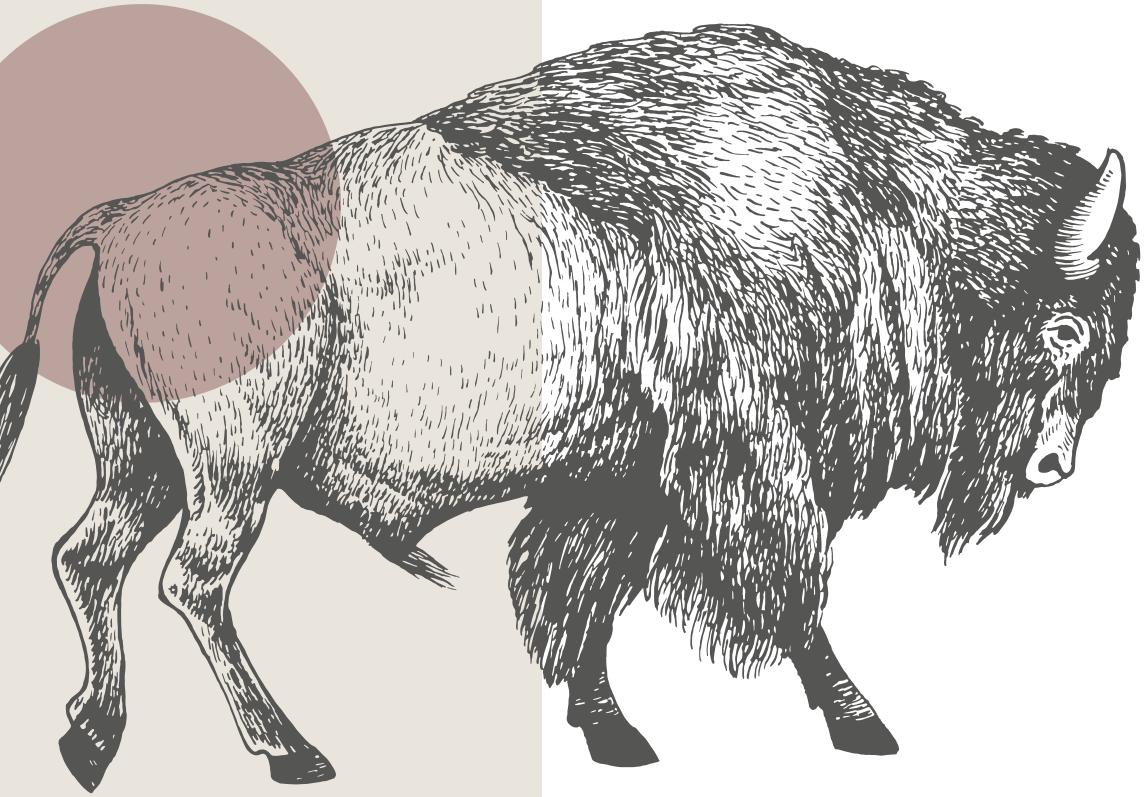




Meet us at the RC Show to discover new products, market trends and culinary inspiration.

April 8-10, 2024
Enercare Centre, Toronto
Booth 2641

gastronomia.ca



From Ignored to Adored:

Canada's original cuisine is trending, and Indigenous chefs are ready to teach, share and help the rest of us understand a different approach to food.

MENU in conversation with Chef Jenni Lessard, Interim Executive Director of Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations (ICAN).

Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations (ICAN) is a groundbreaking initiative that brings to the forefront the rich and diverse culinary heritage of Indigenous peoples across North America. This visionary organization is dedicated to preserving and promoting Indigenous food traditions, ingredients, and cooking techniques, while fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Indigenous cultures.

At the heart of ICAN's mission is the celebration of the interconnectedness of food, culture, and the environment. The organization collaborates with Indigenous chefs, farmers, and food producers to showcase flavours and culinary practices passed down through generations. Through events, educational programs, and partnerships, ICAN aims to create a platform for Indigenous voices in the culinary world, highlighting the importance of sustainability, food sovereignty, and cultural preservation.

Under the dynamic leadership of ICAN's Board of Directors and Interim Executive Director, Chef Jenni Lessard, the organization has embarked on a mission to connect, influence, and share community through genuine Indigenous food experiences. As Restaurants Canada looks forward to the first Indigenous Pavilion at RC Show 2024, it's clear that ICAN is set to make a profound impact.

MENU shares a discussion on the vibrant world of Indigenous cuisine and traditional ingredients with Chef Jenni Lessard.

MM How has Indigenous culinary and F&B innovation evolved over recent years?

Jenni Lessard: *Over the past decade, Indigenous cuisine has finally been given a seat at the table. First Nations, Inuit and Métis chefs are being widely sought out for their skills and knowledge. Instead of restaurants and venues just adding dried cranberries or squash to the menu, they are reaching out to include our voices to help tell an honest and delicious food story.*

Indigenous cuisine isn't homogenous. Each community has their own specialties and methods of harvesting, processing and preserving foods that can result in a transformative dining experience in a restaurant setting or out on the land.

Our chefs and restaurateurs are also creating their own culinary experiences. Inez Cook's Salmon N' Bannock in Vancouver, which just won the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada's first-ever Indigenous Culinary award, is an example of this. The front and back of house teams are Indigenous people who are sharing their culture with guests while reconnecting with it themselves.

MM What is a "genuine Indigenous food experience"? How does Indigenous culinary differ from other cuisines?

JL: *A genuine Indigenous food experience isn't just a collection of ingredients or a "theme". When we share our recipes and menus, we are sharing a part of us and our living history. While this is also true for other cuisines and cultures, the treatment of Indigenous people in Canada makes the preservation and presentation of our authentic food ways critically important.*

In Indigenous tourism there is a saying, "Nothing about us, without us." That refers to the practice of non-Indigenous operators profiting from showing guests our cultures, without actively involving us in the process. To do the same thing with our cuisine amounts to another form of theft and appropriation.

This is a large part of why addressing food sovereignty issues, mentoring youth and growing our network of chefs and cooks across the country are ICAN's top priorities.

MM There's been a lot of buzz about the Indigenous Pavilion at this year's RC Show. What should Show attendees expect to experience and what do you hope they'll learn or take away?

JL: *Indigenous Culinary has been part of RC Show in the past, through panels and the culinary competition, but the addition of the first ever Indigenous Pavilion allows not only chefs and cooks to be showcased, but also the food and beverage producers who are championing Indigenous ingredients, stories and flavours. I hope Show attendees ask questions, share dialogue and come away with perhaps a different perception of how Indigenous foods can look and taste!*



Bison tenderloin and chanterelle mushrooms seasoned with sweet gale and yarrow, served atop wild harvested nettle and Sunchoke velouté and smoked bison broth. Main course at the Han Wi Dinner at Wanuskewin Heritage Park.

MM Speaking of which, we've heard whispers about ICAN's special bison dishes being featured in the RC Pop Up Experience and Breakfast With Champions. What led to the decision to showcase bison?

JL: *Our protein sponsor this year is the Canadian Bison Association. The menu items that ICAN has created for the various food activations at the show all feature this culturally significant meat. For First Nations and Métis groups across the Plains, bison once provided almost everything we needed to survive and thrive, from tools to clothing to food.*

Many of our wild harvested, traditional foods—like moose, caribou, beaver, muskrat, duck and rabbit—are considered illegal to serve outside our communities. When we hold events for the public, such as our Taste of Turtle Island, we either have to use farmed versions of these proteins, which of course taste different from those harvested on our lands and often come from outside the country. This makes it difficult for us to accurately showcase the foods of our Nations.

Bison, however, can help us tell a part of our food story in a genuine way. I didn't grow up eating bison, as I was raised in Northern Saskatchewan, but when I cook, serve and eat it now, I feel a deep connection to my Métis roots on the Plains.

RC Show Restaurants Canada

Visit the **Indigenous Pavilion at RC Show** to taste and engage with **Indigenous-owned F&B brands**, and head to the **Speaker Stage on Monday, April 8 at 2:30 for the Indigenous Traditions, Tastes and Today** panel discussion.

Be sure to visit the **RC Show Pop Up Experience**, where **ICAN's passed bison dish** will be featured daily. Get your tickets to Wednesday morning's top-rated leadership event, **Breakfast With Champions**,to add **ICAN's Bison, Wild Rice and Dried Saskatoon Berry Patty to your plate!**

Register now:

ALMA SNACK BAR & GROCERY:

Fresh, local ingredients and great partnerships.

Proprietors: Rob & Nicole McKim | Rogersville, New Brunswick







In the quaint town of Rogersville, New Brunswick, a culinary renaissance is unfolding within the walls of the town's historic and charming brick post office and credit union: Alma Snackbar & Grocery, the gastronomic brainchild of a classically trained Italian Red Seal Chef, Robert McKim, and his entrepreneurial partner, Nicole McKim.

The husband-and-wife duo recently traded the pulsating rush of downtown Toronto for the Maritime charm of Rogersville in pursuit of a dream and the embrace of a more sustainable lifestyle. "I was kind of getting to my wit's end," Chef Rob admits, reflecting on the urban grind. "And I think it was just one day that was the straw that broke the camel's back. I knew I was done working for other people, and I knew we could make a run of it." And so they did.

Rogersville is a small town with a "*Schitt's Creek vibe*" and an Acadian beat, and Alma Snackbar & Grocery is a local oasis where the McKims are not just serving meals; they are crafting a narrative of taste, texture and community. Theiris a pantry thoughtfully curated with the finest flours, like their signature Acadian loaf made with flour from the Speerville Flour Mill, the richest oils, the most aromatic marinades – a treasure trove for the discerning palate. The menu is a testament to their ethos, a seasonal offering of local and fine sourced ingredients, freshly baked breads, bronze die extruded pastas, and wood-fired pizzas.

In weaving this rich and ambitious tapestry, the partners' relationship with Groupex has played a pivotal role. "Being able to source certain specialty products that are very readily available in Ontario… my GFS and Groupex representatives have been super helpful with that," Rob explains. He appreciates more than just the products; it's the network and support that Groupex offers that has become invaluable. "With Alma, I get to start everything from scratch," Rob says, "and I am grateful to be able to pull from a network and depend on local knowledge. Groupex has helped us with their vast network and in helping me find hidden gems," Rob states, underlining the importance of this partnership in sourcing high-quality ingredients that define the restaurant's offerings.





Rob also notes that he was "spoiled in Ontario" by his local knowledge and the ease of sourcing specialty product, and that Kelly MacNeil, his rep at Groupex, has really helped with that. "I don't really have a network here yet," Rob shares. "There's Brio which is a special Italian soda my GFS and Groupex reps have helped me access. I always find that the best way to learn is constantly asking questions and really doing the research and Kelly has been nothing but supportive and helpful from the very beginning—it's kind of like a cool teaching moment."

Amidst the success and the bustling kitchen, Rob's focus remains steadfast on quality over quantity, and relationships over transactions. "I've never really been driven by money. I've been driven by quality," he asserts. It's this ethos that has endeared Alma Snackbar & Grocery to its patrons, from the teenagers learning the subtle art of pasta making to the regulars who drive from Moncton and Miramichi to taste the difference fresh, local, and passionately crafted food can make.

The shift to Rogersville has been one of exploration and discovery, and with Groupex's support, Alma Snackbar & Grocery has been able to maintain the high standard of quality the visionaries behind the business have set for themselves. This partnership has allowed them to focus on what truly matters: the food, the people, and the story they tell together. Whether it's sourcing the finest ingredients or hosting a bustling private dining event, Alma Snackbar & Grocery is a culinary beacon offering artisanal Italian cuisine with the heart of a diner, inviting all to experience the joy of fresh, Maritime-style dining in a place where everyone is made to feel at home.

RC Show Restaurants Canada

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TIPPING THE $CALES:

A tax compliant solution to restaurant gratuity management has arrived.



The search for a compliant solution to Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) standards for restaurant gratuity management has ended with the arrival of Atlas Direct Tips.

In the bustling world of Canadian restaurants, operators face a hidden financial peril that often goes unnoticed: the tax implications of gratuities. As patrons generously tip their servers, these gestures of appreciation for employees can translate into a tax liability for the employer. Not knowing the rules can cost business owners thousands of dollars they cannot afford.

As seen in recent court cases involving the handling and management of gratuities, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) casts a watchful eye on tips, with two key classifications: "Direct Tips" which are exempt from CPP and EI, or "Controlled Tips" which are **NOT** exempt from CPP and EI.

A Direct Tip system simply proves that tips were voluntarily paid from the customers to employees, that these tips were put in the control of the employees at the end of each shift, and that the employees were in charge of the division model. In essence, the employer has not exercised any control or direction over the pooling and distribution of the tips.

If the employer is not able to prove they exercised no control or direction over the tips, such as having autogratuities (i.e. 18 per cent gratuity on tables of 6+), or the employer holds on to the tips after the shift, or if the employer is the one who divides and distributes the tips, then these are considered Controlled Tips, which makes them subject to CPP and EI to which both the employer and employee must contribute (a total of 7.5 per cent each). If an employer is not able to prove that their tip model was Direct, they will be held responsible for CPP contributions and EI premiums on the tip amounts for both portions (total of 15.22 per cent). **This is over $30,000 of penalties per every $1M of sales for potentially every year under audit**.

James Rhodes, Principal of Taxation Lawyers, is a seasoned tax expert with extensive experience in guiding hospitality businesses through the intricacies of tipping legislation. A trusted advisor to Restaurants Canada, James Rhodes authored the Association's tipping toolkit and has taken an active role in counseling restaurant owners on the treacherous waters of tax compliance regarding gratuities and helping them sidestep the legal pitfalls that lurk beneath the surface.

He has long believed that while there have been a few solutions that have come close, none have cleanly stepped over the 100 per cent threshold in meeting the CRA's definition of automated direct tips, until a recent breakthrough by the tech company, Atlas. To achieve this level of certainty, gratuities (including those collected via digital payments, which are the overwhelming majority) must be entirely managed by the employees themselves and must be paid out within the same work shift in which they are earned.

The restaurant industry recently caught a break, with the release of a new product from Atlas, a restaurant management system technology company that has launched Atlas Direct Tips, an automated and CRA-compliant gratuity and division system that deposits tips directly into employee bank accounts. "I believe it's time to fly," James confirms. "Atlas is 100 per cent safe because it works on a system that ensures that tip amounts are put in the control of employees at the end of their shift. By getting their tips on time, they're meeting CRA's test, which is a really high test. CRA has said they want the employee to get all the gratuities by the end of the shift, and that's great if you have one employee, but what happens when you have teams of employees, and some leave early and some of those teams aren't in control of a read? I see restaurants with bartenders where they'll have one till open, but the other bartenders go home early. The last bartender is the one that closes and figures out the gratuity. How do you meet CRA's threshold when the reality of the situation is extremely complex? How do you meet that test? Atlas Direct Tips meets that test by

> We're thrilled that Atlas has met CRA's threshold and is available to Restaurants Canada members at a special rate and to all Canadian foodservice operators. This has been a long time coming, and it's a huge benefit to the industry."
>
> – Kelly Higginson, Restaurants Canada President & CEO

managing the essential timelines for money movement. So, no matter what, those employees have received their gratuities on time."

The Atlas algorithm calculates the value of tips expected using historical data and manages the complexity of money movement, ensuring the business is always putting the tips in control of the employees at the correct time. Once those calculations are automatically done based on the tipping model selected by employees, Atlas transfers the tips directly into employee bank accounts. The prepayment concept Atlas uses allows restaurants to estimate the value of tips they expect staff to receive based on historical data for that day or shift. The company then pays the anticipated amount to Atlas, which effectively holds those funds in trust until the end of the shift, when the employee entitlements can be calculated. Once those calculations are automatically done based on the restaurant's tipping model, Atlas transfers the tips directly into employee bank accounts.

"Atlas is actually acting on behalf of the employee gratuity committee," James points out. "To satisfy the CRA requirements, the employee gratuity committee acts on behalf of the employees, dividing and distributing the funds based on a fair and transparent model. Atlas helps employees and employers manage all of this, including all transactions to deposit tips directly into the bank account of employees based on any tip division model."

Beyond meeting CRA compliance terms, Atlas also ensures compliance with what each of the provinces are asking of restaurants. "Due to my work on Ontario Ministry of Labour issues," James adds, "Atlas is already ahead of what the Province of Ontario is expected to legislate for restaurants and tip pools in the upcoming year."

Atlas delivers the flexibility needed to integrate the full range of employee tip committee-managed models, which can be incredibly diverse, to calculate the correct tip amounts. This is, in part, a result of the work James has done in creating highly specific and detailed tip models on spreadsheets for his clients and the insights the Atlas team gained from his experience and used to develop the technology. "It's the most flexible program out there to be able to figure out gratuity distribution as decided and managed by the employees electronically. It effectively automates that spreadsheet so, when the gratuities come in, it's like those gumball machines. The tips work their way down through the digital version of the spreadsheet to figure out each employee's entitlement. And then it pushes that money out to their individual bank accounts."

The advent of Atlas is a double-edged sword for James, who has spent so much of his time on this issue on behalf of his industry clients. "I just really believe in it," he states. "I really like the leadership team and I know they're going to make a difference when it gets out into the wider market. The weird thing is that it's the destruction of my business. I was just joking with them that restaurants really don't call me anymore. One of the services I routinely provided was creating a spreadsheet for employee gratuity committees and now Atlas does it automatically. So, I dinosaured myself, I think."

Restaurants Canada has been actively looking for ways to bring in the right experts and the right tools to not only address this pernicious issue, but with an eye on finding a solution that is not only compliant, but simple to use. "Restaurants Canada has long recognized the serious risk to restaurant operators related to gratuity management," confirms Kelly Higginson, Restaurants Canada President and CEO. "We have been closely monitoring the market and keeping this issue a top priority, seeking out partners with the experience and capacity to solve this sleeping liability for our overburdened industry. We're thrilled that Atlas has met CRA's threshold and is available to Restaurants Canada members at a special rate and to all Canadian foodservice operators. This has been a long time coming, and it's a huge benefit to the industry."



Download Restaurants Canada's Tip and Gratuity Compliance Guide for Canadian Restaurateurs, authored by James Rhodes of Taxation Lawyers at:

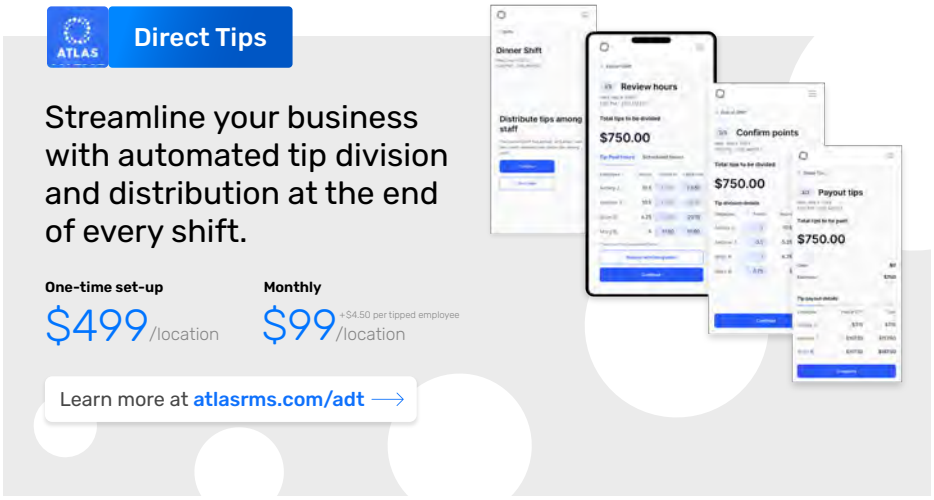
Restaurants Canada Webinar On Demand

Watch: **Rules for Tips & Grats: What employees and employers must know** to learn more about Atlas Direct Tips and how it can automate tip division, distribution and compliance with James Rhodes, Principal, Taxation Lawyers, Afshin Mousavian, CEO and Co-Founder of Atlas and Turi Mercuri President and Co-Founder, Atlas.

A CRA-compliant, automated gratuity management system.

ATLAS

Atlas Direct Tips: The Smart System for Streamlined, Secure, Direct Tipping




Afshin Mousavian


Turi Mercuri

Atlas is a Toronto-based restaurant technology company that has recently launched Atlas Direct Tips (ADT), a revolutionary digital platform designed to bring the CRA-compliant direct tipping model within reach.
By seamlessly integrating with existing point-of-sale systems, this platform offers a direct, transparent, and efficient way for customers to tip their servers, ensuring that hard-earned gratuities go straight into the pockets of those who deserve them.

For restaurants, Atlas Direct Tips is more than just a compliant tipping solution; it's a tool for empowerment and growth. It fosters a positive and transparent tipping culture, which in turn boosts staff morale and motivation. Happy employees lead to better customer service, which ultimately translates into increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, ADT's analytics provide valuable insights into tipping patterns and staff performance, enabling restaurant owners to make informed decisions that drive business success.

Spearheaded by Afshin Mousavian and Turi Mercuri along with advisory support from James Rhodes, leading tax lawyer and gratuity compliance expert, this groundbreaking platform is redefining how gratuities are managed, distributed, and secured in accordance with the stringent standards of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

"At the heart of Atlas is the recognition that cash is no longer king," says Mousavian, Atlas CEO and co-founder with a notable tenure at a number of Canadian technology companies including Shopify. He, along with Atlas President Turi Mercuri, with his robust 30 years in the hospitality industry, have engineered a system that seamlessly navigates the complexities of digital tip management.

The Atlas mechanism is both elegant and efficient: the system calculates the gratuity amounts and manages the movement of funds between employer and employees, ensuring that the funds are put in the possession of the employees at the end of the shifts, and deposited into their bank accounts based on the frequency selected. "This all got very complicated when cards replaced cash," Mousavian reflects, "and we found a way for businesses to grab this money and bring it out of their possession to give it to the employees in line with CRA direct tipping requirements."

Atlas' sophistication lies in its adherence to both CRA and provincial employment standards mandates. "You can't mess with people's money," asserts Mousavian, underlining the trust that Atlas has instilled among its users. The system's architecture ensures tip division models are set up and managed by employees, which is part of the requirements for Direct Tips set out by the CRA.

Moreover, the CRA insists on prompt payment of tips, a principle that Atlas upholds by placing gratuities in the possession of employees at the end of each shift, thus satisfying the demand for immediacy. In addition to federal compliance, Atlas also meets the upcoming proposed Ontario legislation as it allows employees to select their preferred bank account for deposits as well as transparent details of the tip division model.

Mousavian and Mercuri's vision extends beyond mere compliance; it's a fusion of technology and human-centric service. "Atlas mandates that employees select the account they would like to use to receive the deposited funds, and we move the money directly from the employer into their bank," Mercuri adds, heralding a new era of transparency and control for hospitality workers.

With robust encryption and a proprietary algorithm that oversees transactions within

Atlas Benefits:

Atlas Direct Tips has a one-time setup fee of $500, which covers a seamless transition as well as 2 hours of training. The monthly fee is based on $99 + $4.50 per employee, for all the automation, reporting and transactions.

Restaurants Canada members receive a discounted rate. Contact for more details.

- Canadian technology that seamlessly integrates with your POS, scheduling and restaurant management systems.
- No long-term contracts – cancel with 30 days' notice.
- CRA-compliant, direct tipping solution that removes a potential $30,000 liability per million dollars of sales.
- Restaurants using ADT report seeing savings in time and money in less than 30 days.
- Save on transaction fees paid for electronic tips. Atlas will save you an average of $3K per $1M in credit card fees paid for electronic tips (subject to provincial laws).

the Canadian banking system, Atlas not only complies with but sets new benchmarks for security in financial operations. It's this dedication to safety, compliance, and employee autonomy that makes Atlas not just a tool but a transformational force in the hospitality industry, primed for the digital age.

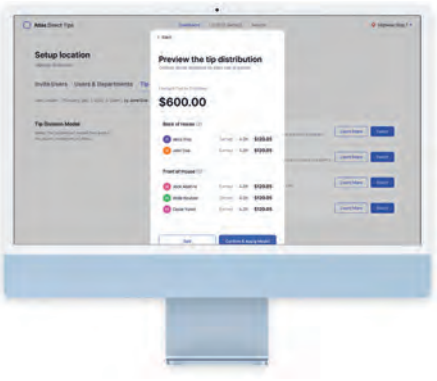
In a world where digital convenience is king, ADT bridges the gap between technology and personal service, ensuring that the human touch in hospitality is not lost but enhanced, a concept that's important to the co-founders, who are deeply gratified by the industry's reponse so far. "It's been really awesome. One of our mandates as a company and part of our vision is 'reimagine hospitality', but together with the industry. In July 2023, we signed up with multiple Ontario restaurants and we brought about 40 locations on board that to be part of ADT early access. We worked with them to define the user flows and we're committed to continuing to do that. The response has been really positive from employees too. They're loving that they get transparent reporting and their money directly deposited into their bank account. They don't have to go to work to get an envelope then have to have their tips rounded down because they didn't have enough change. So there are a lot of benefits for everyone."

"It's a breath of fresh air to not have to calculate gratuities at the end of the night. Knowing that tips are calculated correctly and deposited on time - amazing. Our team is excited to see earnings, and to get deposits regularly. Turi has been so helpful in helping us understand the rules and regulations of gratuities, we are so glad to operate using Atlas."

- Abby Rubiales - General Manager - and/ore

"Atlas have been amazing partners in the huge transition over to Direct Tips! They listened to every detail of our operations in order to fully customise the process and staff experience. We are so grateful to be working with them!"

- Julie G - Owner Operator - I DEAL COFFEE



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Restaurants Canada

The voice of foodservice | La voix des services alimentaires

RC Show

Restaurants Canada

Learn more about Atlas at: atlasrms.com

Attend their session on **April 8 at 2:15 pm in StudioEx: Direct Tips vs Controlled Tips - Learn The Difference & Save $$!**

Get tickets now:



THE CONVERSATION

Celebrated bartender and restaurateur Robin Goodfellow on human behaviour, Prochaska's Stages of Change and his journey so far

Robin Goodfellow is the mastermind behind VELA, a bar restaurant at King and Portland in Toronto renowned for its unique fusion of bygone hospitality and modern sustainability. As the innovative founder of Little Bones Beverage and the visionary behind the celebrated Bar Raval, Pretty Ugly, and Harry's Burgers, Goodfellow has etched his signature precision and creativity across Toronto's nightlife with iconic establishments such as Paradise Theatre, Osteria Rialto, The Biltmore, Sara, Buena Copa, and beyond.

His journey has taken him across North America and Europe, where he has honed his craft alongside the most esteemed leaders in the beverage industry. Known for his deliciously bold creations, Goodfellow is a maestro of taste who is just as passionate about shifting industry paradigms, enhancing operational efficiency, and elevating the overall standards of the beverage and hospitality sectors.

At the heart of VELA is a commitment to a holistic approach to sustainability that transcends the environmental aspect to encompass financial, ecological, emotional, and psychological well-being for both staff and patrons. In a world hungry for authentic connection and balance, VELA isn't just a destination; it's a movement, redefining the essence of hospitality with every glass raised and every plate served.

VELA reinvents American classics with a nod to the opulent hotel dining of yesteryear, offering dishes like a plant-based wedge salad and inventive twists on pasta and steak. The curated beverage selection features a wine list that spans champagne, skin-contact varietals, and local Ontario vintages. But Robin Goodfellow's bar is where his creative cocktail assortment ranging from sparkling concoctions, vacation-inspired spirits, movie-themed mixes, and alcohol-free options, introduce guests to the flavours and precision that elevate bartending skill to an artform.

MM Was hospitality a career choice for you or a series of happy accidents?

Robin Goodfellow: *Actually, I never wanted to be a bartender. I was studying kinesiology at University of Toronto and was pretty sure I wanted to be a chiropractor and then, after first year, I knew I didn't want to do that. I didn't really know what I wanted to do, but I knew I loved health. Eventually I got into a more macro-level health, thinking about how to make certain populations healthier by messaging or policy and that led to my Master's degree where I got really good at changing macro-level behaviours and won a national undergraduate research award. That's what slung me into grad school and I spent many years figuring out how to change mob mentalities for the better— like trying to get people to quit smoking or to eat better or exercise. Getting people to eat and drink cool s*** is way easier.*

*I was bartending during school to make money, and after grad school was done. I was like, "F*** this. F*** academia." I decided to go back into bartending and hospitality, and it turned out my training at U of T made it pretty easy to run bars, manage humans, see gaps and trends and change people's eating and drinking behaviours. So, I became a bartender and then I became a better bartender until I became a manager. I saved my money and got really diligent and focused on applying my academic background to bars.*

MM You were advancing your career, but approaching it a little like a human behaviour study?

RG: *I guess so? I formed a committee of people I felt I needed to learn from, and to understand what I needed to learn and experiment with, and what people really wanted at different times. It concluded with me being part of the opening of Ursa on Queen Street, which is a very cutting-edge restaurant. It's very elegant and fancy and, as that experiment went on and we started to slow down at Ursa, and I understood that people needed to have a good time, to eat and drink nice food, but not necessarily at so expensive a place. That's when I started looking for a snack bar and we created Bar Raval. I thought it would be a little café in the day and cocktails and dinner at night—a snack bar—but it became much more than that.*



"I don't understand demographics the way most people like to understand them, like asking: Who's your target audience and so on? My mind immediately goes to a circle."

I don't understand demographics the way most people like to understand them, like asking: Who's your target audience and so on? My mind immediately goes to a circle.

MM It sounds a little like you've leaned into Prochaska's Six Stages of Change...

RG: *Oh man, don't reveal my secrets. I teach that to some of my managers but yeah, the stages of change is key to my success. I want to know where people are on the "level of acceptance". Do they want to eat nice food or are they good with fast food? Do they want to be shown cool stuff and are they at the action stage or are they pre-contemplation? That's how I figure it out and that's why the places I've made have been so successful. I've been very fortunate. I don't see a 30-year-old versus a 60-year-old as a monolith, I see them at stages of acceptance.*

MM That's really weird, yet strangely applicable.

RG: *Bartending was always my passion and fun, but I've always been kind of an octopus —I always added in way more tasks and interests. Design became a passion after I started having the luxury and the privilege of getting to design spaces and bars. That's just been the icing on the cake.*

Also, sometimes the stages of change can be a negative thing. I don't do JOEY and I'm not Oliver and Bonacini. It may help them to focus on demographics because they deal with such high scale and volume they want those statistics. Personally, I believe everyone is just a few good experiences away from a boozy, stirred weird Mezcal drink with frankincense and leather in it, as opposed to, "I just want a Cosmo." That's my weakness and my strength. I think I'm meant to do small, unique experiences that change people's way of viewing the world, whether it's just how they eat or whether it's how they view sustainability or equity. I like to open up the minds of people who are willing, but I'm not as good at giving the mass public what they expect.

MM So, you could say you're almost a kind of an experiential therapist, moving people away from the familiar and into openness and discovery. There's a trust and understanding of the intended purpose or philosophy of the experience that allows you to move people gradually along a well-plotted and planned trajectory based on the individual?

RG: *Exactly. I see that I see the standard deviation curve as more of a slide or a roller coaster. I can definitely understand that a lot of people see that as fixed and view humans as stats or line items, but I see it more like you take that curve, you put a little seat on it, and someone's going to slide from wanting an Old Fashioned to being ready to explore what's on the other end of the scale. They'll be open to trying something very experimental. I can't stop seeing it as a sliding scale and believing an experience can change human behaviour. A lot of people in this industry would argue that success comes from giving people what they want, but I lack that.*

MM Audiences are more fickle than ever, and it's arguable that, due to the influence of social media, demographics are becoming less relevant than psychographics. What are you seeing? Is the reliance on trend-chasing or seeking out the common denominator in an audience a race to the bottom for this industry?

RG: *Well, yeah. As an academic, with social media and what I like to call the "plagiarism machine" TikTok, it's tough to understand what's happening because we were told not to cheat and copy or at least give credit where credit's due because we all stand on the shoulders of giants.*

This psychographic scale you're talking about means that operators have to understand as they grow their business that other people can just take your stuff and regurgitate it too. What does that leave you with? You're not on people's minds anymore. And, if you look to the success of others to build your place, you just did the same thing everyone else did. It's taken me years to explain this approach to not only my managers but my business partners. This thinking goes deep into some unwritten stuff that guides a lot of my success. It's very fun to talk about.

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MM Can you share the evolution of your concepts that led to VELA? What did you learn along the way that brought you to this moment?

RG: *That's a long story, but I'll give it a shot. Ursa was a cutting-edge restaurant—fully foraged, fully sustainable and way ahead of its time. We were all like 29 or 30 but I started as just a bartender and became bar manager, then GM, and then partner. It's kind of a history of Toronto and I think it's kind of where the city is going again: Ursa was so good, and we won Best New Restaurant and came second on the 2012 en route list. Edulis was number one and they came in that afternoon while we were prepping to apologize. Ursa was just so cutting edge it was assumed that it was the next big thing and then, two years later, had just finished an 11-course tasting menu experience on New Year's Eve. I looked in the books at the next day and we were slow every day until Valentine's Day. I realized that we were an occasion restaurant. That was a problem.*

I think people need to be able to eat foraged, sustainable food. We had a farm in Meaford, we grew all our own herbs, everything was Scandinavian, minimal, molecular—this is 2012-13. This was way ahead of its time.

We always joked that it was two years too soon for everyone. We wouldn't serve "vegan food," but we'd serve vegetables as the feature and people wouldn't get it. So I said we needed to start selling more affordable food, but with the same philosophy and same ambience to open it up to a wider market, but my partners didn't want to sell appetizers for less than $20, which is hilarious now because everything's over $20. They didn't want to do what I felt was important for Toronto, so I started looking for a cocktail bar-snack bar. My buddy Mike Webster was working at Bar Isabel, and we were very close, so I joined forces with Mike and Grant van Gameren to open Bar Raval. We got a location in 2014 and opened nine months later.

We all knew Toronto needed something that was open all the time and good all the time. We thought it would be a café in the day and cocktails and snacks at night. When we opened, I knew I'd been right. People wanted to go out and spend to their means and interest—it could be $8 to $80 or $300. We were having people spend $300 on tinned seafood, standing without reservation. Because we had the three of us, we had the confidence to spend all that money on mahogany and the beautiful design. When we opened Raval on Valentine's Day 2015, I had $27 dollars in my bank account. We basically put everything we had into that place because we believed Torontonians want to eat and drink this way, and that they'll come multiple times a day. It was a home run. We got paid back in six months, even though we took a ginormous risk.

But then, I started looking for a cocktail bar because Raval was not the cocktail bar we had imagined. Mike and I are bartenders, and we needed a bar where drinks are the focus. Raval was becoming a restaurant and a full venue and its whole own thing that to this day is very unique in Canada.

Mike and I decided to do a dive bar and Grant felt obliged to be a part of that. I found a location in Parkdale, and we opened Pretty Ugly about a year later. It was different. I wanted to build a bar that functioned like a Lamborghini, with a dive bar in front. While we were building Pretty Ugly, Harry's fell into our lap. We were supposed to open Harry's in April 2016 and just have a quick turnaround and Pretty Ugly was supposed to be September, but we ended up opening both the same week.

So, I was 31 when I opened my second and third establishment in the same week. We had Raval, which was super busy all the time. We had Pretty Ugly which was also very busy, but more late night, and we had Harry's, which is a great family spot.

MM That's incredibly intense. Was it all you'd hoped it would be?

RG: *We were off to the races for sure, but while bartending was still fun, that's when life started to get a little more difficult. We had some partner frustrations and some changes, and I started to notice how restaurants were starting to become very successful in the King and Portland Street neighbourhood.*

One of my oldest friends is a very successful businessperson and an amazing CEO. We always wanted to open a hotel together, so we thought we'd go larger. Small spots are great, but when small entrepreneurs are presented with a real estate option, we never considered buying the building, we never tried to negotiate rent, and we never analyzed the rent compared to the market on a city scale. Whereas if you go to like a big location, like VELA's, you have commercial landlords, and the rent is relative to the last deal they signed. So, I started to notice at Raval, we were overpaying per square foot because the independent landlord asks for an amount and we just work it into the business plan—how many cocktails do we need to sell on a Friday? How many seats and what's the guest check out we need to survive? You never think, "I shouldn't be paying $160 a square foot" at College and Palmerston or Queen and Dufferin because King and Portland, the most population-dense or high-traffic area is only $78 a square foot. So, I thought, "That's why bigger restaurants don't have the talent that all these West End places have. I think they're just getting over that investment hump".

I had all these small spots, so I thought: "let's go high-quality with a unique style of service and let's change the game at King and Portland," but we were missing one thing: Amanda Bradley. Coming out of Alo having recently had a child, she was ready to own. Raval was named best bar in Canada pretty consistently and Alo had been best restaurant in Canada, so I thought it would be a great combo for the best operator in restaurants in Canada to meet to do something with the best bar operator in Canada.

We took the lease in December 2018, started building early 2019 and were ready to open May 2020, when the pandemic hit. I got

"I wanted to build a bar that functioned like a Lamborghini, with a dive bar in front."

> "I'm concerned that everything is looking the f****** same, which means there's going to be a big shift."

absolutely decimated. I no longer own Bar Raval, and Pretty Ugly got shut down two or so months after the first lockdown because our landlord rushed to the bank with post-dated checks. I entered two lawsuits immediately and VELA was delayed until we finally got to open July 2021 when it was patio-only. We built this beautiful, enormous restaurant that was meant to be a modern-day Copacabana. We were shut down for 20 months and didn't get to bring people inside until October 2021. We had plastic barriers everywhere and we couldn't even play live music unless we built this huge contraption—it was just punch after punch.

We dealt with all of that and when VELA opened up completely, it utterly slammed.

MM There's been a lot of change in the market and in general drinking habits, in part due to the pandemic, but also as part of a longer-term trend. What do you think a bar should be now to really satisfy the need for discovery and connection?

***RG:** Well, I mean Christine Sismondo's books and concept of the "third space" are fundamental—you had your home, you had your office or work, and you had your bar. I think after the first lockdown people really missed that third space, but what's happening now is a little bit different.*

The role bars play in people's lives I think is the same, but I would argue they're more important than ever. Now you'll see cafés being busy all day with people working in them because couples are working from home and people need to find new workspaces, but they still prefer that to the office. It's kind of funny to see the importance of the third space change and adapt to what's happening now. People go out a lot less than they used to before the pandemic.

The statistics Restaurants Canada gives us are actually quite helpful, like after the summer of 2022 to hear that restaurants across the country were doing 45 per cent of their sales and capacity compared to 2019. That made me feel better, because it meant that 55 per cent of people were still hiding. Even last year it was 60 per cent of sales compared to 2019, so we're not back. I wasn't against the lockdowns; I was against how they were done. Hospitality was far worse off than most every other sector and while, we did get bailouts, I think we're still missing two to three to ten bailouts.

*So, I believe the culture of bars and cafes and third spaces is higher than it ever was, but people in this city and province are not going out because we're getting crushed. I do know people still want us to open these bars. They still want us to create these experiences and they want us to exist, and they want art and culture and fun in their life. They just can't afford it. So, they don't want us to go anywhere, but they're waiting for the return of affordability across every aspect of their lives. I think the lack of people drinking or going to restaurants isn't because we're not wanted or not significant as far as culture and community as we were, I think it's because we're in a really s***** place.*

MM One of the by-products of lockdowns that society hasn't found a way to address, or even really talk about, is the loneliness epidemic. Do you think this is an opportunity to remember and refine what a bar is meant to be to people? What shifts are you seeing in terms of what people want?

***RG:** People want comfort. They're ordering their comfort drinks and are less willing to veer off and take risks. They're also more concerned with their dishes and trusting chefs less than they used to. They are going to the restaurants they know and trust and eating more basic dishes. There's less adventure happening. That's just my experience. If you go to a higher end restaurant, you've already signed up for an adventure or a tasting menu and that's part of the experience.*

At VELA, people want us to give them what they already want. They want their dirty martini with very specific amounts of olive brine. They want their Margherita skinny with a very specific amount of spiciness. That was never a thing. I never made an espresso martini with vodka once at Bar Raval, people just opened themselves up to the place and experience.

People seem to want their experience to be the same everywhere. Not 100 per cent of the time, but maybe 80 per cent, when it used to be just 10 per cent of the guests wanted the spaghetti or a vodka soda without even looking at the menu. I'm not sure that's a problem; I think it's making us more focused rather on the pedestal food and drink. It's more focused on the experience and the service and the hospitality, which is great.

If it's true that people just want quality and comfort, they would be going to the higher quality places and just ordering the cheaper things. What's actually happening now is people are going to cheap places where the food and drink quality are not part of the concept, it's volume. They're going to places where prices are low. We've noticed at VELA that when we raise our prices because the ingredients are more expensive, people order the less expensive stuff. So, we're trying to create an experience inside VELA that's a bit more casual, which is funny because that was always our goal. We always wanted to be fun casual with great music and high volume.

MM Where do you see the industry going holistically?

RG:** I'm concerned that everything is looking the f*** same, which means there's going to be a big shift. I mean if every bar and restaurant is going to eventually offer the same thing because people just want to go to the closest places to their home and have a TikTok experience, we're going to need a bit of a cleanse. This is an important aspect of how people are interacting with restaurants. I'm not the type to blame people for their lack of adventure, I'm more interested in accepting this as a reality and finding the solution. I definitely don't want to see cookie-cutter restaurants. I would like to believe that what I do for a living still exists.*

If you look at some of the top bars in the world now, back bars are disappearing because

everything's becoming batched. I'm proud of my huge back bar at VELA. People can come in for their classic cocktail and say, "Oh, I'll have it with that weird thing I've never had or seen," or "Can you make me something with that bottle?"

That is becoming its own experience at a bar where people are open to learning new things, but, like I said before, with TikTok and Instagram, the phone eats and drinks first.

So, all these drinks—the minimal drinks, the milk punches, the clarified punches, the low double Old Fashioned with a clear cube and some minimal garnish—are very fast, easy drinks to make. They're pre-batched and save a lot of work ahead of time and as long as it tastes like some kind of food or flavour, people are fine. But as purists, we believe cocktails are supposed to showcase a spirit. Even with low alcohol if you're using sherry or vermouth, you're not trying to hide the vermouth. Some people will say, "Oh this drink tastes so good, I can barely taste any alcohol." Or when they say a drink is smooth, they mean it's weak enough for them to crush it and get drunk. We don't make cocktails to get people drunk; we make them to have a nice experience.

I just got home from New York yesterday and there are now bartenders who are no longer even interacting with the guests at the bar. I've seen it in London too. The guests, for the most part, don't seem to be offended by this and that's a problem to me. But when you talk about loneliness, who wants to sit at a bar and watch two people make a bunch of drinks for everyone else sitting around you or in the restaurant with no interaction?

I was at one of the top five bars in the world recently, and it was so boring to be there. The drinks were really cool, but they were super gimmicky and like going to a drink-making factory. If that's what becomes popular and cool, I think it will be temporary because I don't think people go to a third space to be lonely or to be isolated. So, these bars may succeed in this little bubble of time where people have forgotten how to talk to each other and are scared to interact with a bartender, but it will be temporary.

It's such a weird thing to say, but some of these new bars haven't been designed to cope with people engaging and speaking, but there are also bars like dive bars where it's business as usual and you actually get to talk to the bartender and there's great conversation going on. So there may be a short-term emergence of these "lonely bars", where people are just there for the cool cocktail, but places where you can interact with other people, have fun, meet strangers in a safe way and forget how much money you spent on each cocktail are waiting and will really thrive.

To me, a bar is still a sacred place where you can have good conversation, see good design, be a part of a community and have new experiences and try interesting flavours. That's why I created the placebo/non-alcoholic thing at Pretty Ugly in 2017. I wanted people who didn't drink to come to the bar and understand it wasn't about getting drunk or even about food.

MM So, what is most important to you now in terms of menu design?

***RG:** Restaurant specificity. I don't want to like go into an Italian restaurant and see a bunch of French cocktails or funny names. Pretty Ugly was its own thing; it was just a bar, so we had whimsical and hilarious names for menu items, and it suited the place. But I couldn't make the same drinks at Pretty Ugly as I would at Raval. At Raval, the rule was at least one ingredient had to be sherry or vermouth, but at Pretty Ugly, I could use frankincense and all kinds of weird ingredients like cut grass because it didn't subscribe to any specific universe. So, menu development needs to be specific because, while no one cares about your drink name anymore, I want to know I'm going to experience something that speaks to the space and speaks to the concept. That's very important to me.*

"like I said before, with TikTok and Instagram, the phone eats and drinks first."





"menu development needs to be specific because, while no one cares about your drink name anymore, I want to know I'm going to experience something that speaks to the space and speaks to the concept."

MM So, what's next for you?

RG: *I miss my small spots, so I'm opening a bar with one of the most famous and decorated bartenders in the world, but I'm not ready to say her name. I think it's going be great for Canada and for me because I've been on hold for a bit. I had a baby, but mainly I have been waiting for the right time. It's going to be one of the best bars in the world. We're pulling out all the stops and opening this summer. It needs to be worthy of me and worthy of her, and a lot of people are very excited.*

MM Wow....so it's pretty much top secret at this point.

RG: *It's top secret but I can tell you it will be a high-volume cocktail bar with a bit of a 90s grunge feel, because that's my favourite way of life.*

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RADICAL BAKEOLOGY.

Fungi, flour and local flavours inspire the menu and business evolution at a Timmins bakery and restaurant.



Brianna Humphrey, owner of Radical Gardens bakery and restaurant in Timmins has just finished a batch of Old Fashioned-inspired cupcakes, made with honey and whiskey and a cherry filling, then smoked and topped with Grand Marnier buttercream. With 12 years as an organic mushroom farmer, and nine years evolving as a restaurateur, and chef and operator of one of the largest food trucks in the province, she has earned a unique and multi-faceted perspective on the food system in Ontario's north.

"I run a farm-to-table restaurant—the first of its kind in northeastern Ontario," Brianna says. "We started out as a farm, and I bought this building because, to be honest, I needed a big fridge. I had no intentions of cooking—I went to art school, actually—but somebody convinced me to cook, and it snowballed out of control. Now I'm a Red Seal Chef with a full-service bakery that does specialty cakes."

Brianna's cakes are a little punk-rock and often favour a bold, Betsey-Johnson-style colour palette, and all are delicious and resolutely local, which is a difficult balance to maintain given the relative scarcity of local producers and distributers in the region. Her food, bakes and confections are constantly evolving based in part on her artistic whim, but also on seasonal availability and the ever-rising price of ingredients that has recently forced her to plan her food program from a spreadsheet.

Regardless of the pressures she has faced, Brianna is committed to running businesses that align with her ethics and standards. Radical Gardens has been open for nine years, through rain and shine. The staff are well paid, and the food is incredible and made with local ingredients. "I like to know where my food comes from. I want good quality food, and if I'm going out to eat, I want something I can't make at home. In turn, I produce high-quality product for the restaurants that use my mushrooms, but currently, there are just a few other local restaurants making farm-to-table food in the area: Sparks Pizza, Aline's Tea Shop and Ciao Sandwich Co."





> I LIKE TO KNOW WHERE MY FOOD COMES FROM. I WANT GOOD QUALITY FOOD, AND IF I'M GOING OUT TO EAT, I WANT SOMETHING I CAN'T MAKE AT HOME.



Brianna is working with various other northern producers, including a family-run farm producing pasture-raised bison, Bison du Nord, to help new local producers understand and meet the quality, pricing and distribution needs of local foodservice and restaurant clients. "When I call up established suppliers like Bison du Nord, they know what I'm looking for. They know I want consistency. They know that I need my order every Tuesday. We need to promote local food and if we don't promote our Northern Boreal Greenbelt, then no one will. Up here, we're known for our mineral resources, but not our food, yet we have such a wonderful bounty and a very interesting flavour profile because we're in the Greater Cochrane Clay Belt. Our meat tastes different, our produce tastes different—everything tastes different because it's living and growing in the thickest, coldest, tightest clay belt and, because everything has to fight so hard to live, it produces carrots with a sugar content so high they taste like candy. It deserves to be promoted and it deserves to be made into food that shines."

With the region seeing growth in agricultural production, and ever-rising food costs, food waste and unsustainable consumer buying habits are another front in Brianna's fight for community and common sense. "People think it's okay to buy avocados in January and expect them to be ripe. Or that off-season berries look or taste bad. They're not in season. Not here and not anywhere. Everything gets picked raw and unripe, then it's gassed and packed in a truck to ripen as it jiggles along the way. Just last night I was thinking about having an "Uglies Farmers Market" to sell off discount food and 'ugly' produce. As a farmer, I know I'm going to have B, C and D-grade product and none of that goes to market. But I want to buy all the ugly stuff. That's my bread and butter. That's what I want to buy."

Radical Gardens is only now looking at renovating to reopen their dining room, which was taken over by the pandemic-era pivot to delivery and takeout. Yet, as tough as the past few years have been, Brianna is not standing in place. She continues to create and innovate, riffing on new ideas, or entirely new

and whimsical commercial projects to add to her growing portfolio. “We’ve been raising and breeding peacocks,” she says. “I’ve been working on an Angry Bird Sanctuary Airbnb thing I want to do.”

Regardless of where her entrepreneurial muse takes her, local food and community will remain central to her vision. “The food and flavours our boreal forest produces is 100% worth the time and effort, and the blood, sweat and tears I’ve put into it. I just need more people hopping on the bandwagon with me.”

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Samir Zabaneh, CEO, TouchBistro

TouchBistro was born from a simple question posed to founder Alex Barrotti during a casual dinner about a common issue faced by owners of busy restaurants everywhere: "Can you help me find a piece of technology that will make it easier and faster for my servers to take and place orders?" TouchBistro, a Canadian restaurant technology company, has since evolved into a leading cloud-based, all-in-one POS and restaurant management system that powers almost 30,000 restaurants around the world. Samir Zabaneh, TouchBistro Chair and CEO details how this common operational pain point shared by a friend touched off a journey of innovation. "Alex was inspired by the operational challenges faced by a friend who owned a busy restaurant. The need for a mobile, easy-to-use technology led to the development of TouchBistro, an app that would have all of the features and functionality restaurateurs need, housed on an iPad—a mobile and intuitive device that any server, manager, or owner could use."

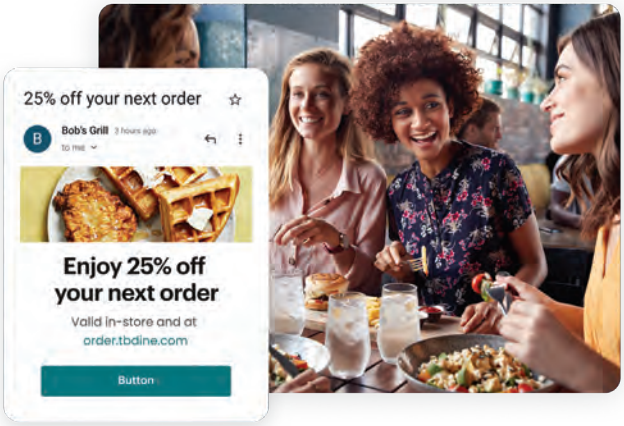
EVOLUTION & MILESTONES

Since its launch in 2011, TouchBistro has remained committed to simplifying restaurant operations with cutting-edge technology. "Since our inception, we have continued to evolve alongside the industry. We build today what restaurant operators will need tomorrow," says Zabeneh. "Today, TouchBistro is a cloud-based POS and restaurant management system that provides the most essential front of house, back of house, and guest engagement solutions on one easy-to-use platform. TouchBistro continues to evolve, developing even better solutions to help support the passion and success of restaurateurs across North America and beyond."

TouchBistro's journey is marked by continuous growth and adaptation. From expanding its product set to acquiring a premium reservations management platform, TouchBistro has consistently stayed ahead of industry needs. "We introduced a commission-free online ordering platform during COVID, acquired a best-in-class loyalty solution, and doubled down on our back-of-house technology," Zabaneh highlights. With a recent CAD $150 million growth financing, TouchBistro is poised for further innovation.

STAYING AHEAD IN A DYNAMIC INDUSTRY

In the restaurant industry today, balancing labour and costs, and keeping customers coming back are among the toughest challenges faced, Zabeneh notes. "As Restaurants Canada recently reported, half of restaurants are still operating at a loss or barely breaking even. Automation can help alleviate the burden of time-consuming tasks like inventory management, invoicing and staff scheduling, giving operators hours of their day back. Our cloud first technology makes this even more flexible and, to make day-to-day operations easier for existing staff and help our customers reduce turnover rates. Last year, we introduced a comprehensive suite of back of house and back-office solutions that seamlessly integrate with our full ecosystem to help restaurants improve profitability and "do more with less." We're excited to share more developments in this area in 2024."





TouchBistro Benefits:

Restaurants Canada members receive exclusive access to three free months of TouchBistro POS licensing. Terms and conditions apply.

- All in one, cloud-based POS and restaurant management system
- Designed to increase sales, deliver a stand-out guest experience and save operators time and money
- Front of House, Back of House and Guest Engagement solutions
- Used across all restaurant segments from independents to regional chains
- Canadian born and based company

Discover more Restaurants Canada Member Benefits at:

www.restaurantscanada.org/community/benefits/

Zabeneh also points out the challenges of a tightening, increasingly competitive restaurant market. "With consumer spending declining, it's more important than ever for operators to turn first time customers into regulars. We continue to invest in our suite of guest engagement technology to provide operators with the solutions they need to tap into customers' behaviours, and tailor their service and offerings accordingly to retain their business."

TouchBistro's success is rooted in its customer-first philosophy. "We start with our customer's point of view in everything we do," says Zabeneh. "Our personalized approach ensures a great fit between our offerings and the business needs of our clients. With human-guided onboarding, proactive communications and round-the-clock support, TouchBistro prioritizes customer satisfaction at every step."

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF DINING

As technology continues to redefine the restaurant industry, TouchBistro is at the forefront of this transformation. "We anticipate that technology will continue to advance to enhance the guest experience and create more operational efficiencies. Our goal is to help restaurateurs delight their guests and grow their businesses," Zabaneh shares. With exciting developments on the horizon, TouchBistro is committed to becoming a 360° partner for operators, making daily operations seamless and impactful.

TouchBistro's journey from a simple idea to a leading restaurant management system is a testament to its dedication to the Canadian restaurant community. With a focus on innovation, customer satisfaction, and addressing industry challenges, TouchBistro is set to continue its remarkable journey, shaping the future of dining one restaurant at a time.

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RC Show
Restaurants Canada

Visit **TouchBistro (booth #1241)** at RC Show 2024 to see their solutions in action.

Register now:

THE MARKETPLACE

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Re.Source offers a line of disposable products designed to share your sustainability story with end consumers—using a one-of-a-kind, icon and colour-coded system to clearly communicate which products can be recycled, composted or reused.

Visit gfs.ca to learn more

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Custom Sauces for Foodservice & Retail

Giraffe Foods is an industry leader in co-developing and manufacturing custom sauces for foodservice and retail. Whether you want to improve back-of-house efficiency, or launch your sauces in stores, they work with you through every step to create your perfect custom flavour solution in a sauce, dressing, dip, marinade or drizzle.

From ideation to formulation and commercialization, Giraffe fine-tunes along the way to ensure you meet the highest standards for regulatory and nutritional compliance and lock in critical certifications. When you partner with Giraffe, they share a common goal: to deliver an incredible culinary experience to your customers.

SafeCheck® Foodservice Essentials Training Bundle

Restaurants Canada Exclusive Bundle Pricing

This 4 Course Bundled offering saves you $33 when compared to our Everyday Low Prices. When compared to other industry offerings, savings exceed $200. The bundle includes SafeCheck® Advanced Canadian Food Safety Certification, WHMIS 2015 with GHS, Respectful Workplace Training, and Food Allergen Awareness Training for restaurant workers, retail staff or catering professionals. This online training course bundle is an effective way to gain valuable certifications without the restriction of attending an in-class seminar; an ideal strategy for those with a busy schedule. See why SafeCheck® is the choice of most of Canada's top foodservice brands today.





Galbani Professionale Premio Pizza Mozzarella: The New Gold Standard.

Known for delivering a delectable journey from start to finish every time it's used. This creamy, buttery Pizza Mozzarella is prized amongst award-winning chefs for its rich flavour. Part of the Galbani Professionale portfolio, Premio is a 26% Pizza Mozzarella that comes in a 2.3 kg block.

The Premio experience includes ample free oil for an indulgent experience, remarkable blister coverage and uniformity, exceptional cheese coverage, rich, buttery, creamy flavour profile and unparalleled melting. Let Italy's #1 cheese brand help you bring out the best in your signature pizzas and Italian dishes.

Learn more at: galbanipropremio.ca/en

Part of the Galbani Professionale Family within Lactalis Canada Foodservice

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Top your pies. Pack your tables.

HORMEL® ROSA GRANDE™ Cup & Char Pepperoni offers picture-perfect signature curls and charred edges that provide a look that gets posted, shared and loved. It not only looks great on a pizza, it also delivers a distinct flavour and crunch for patrons. Thanks to the power of social media, this is a topping that can help increase sales and attract more repeat customers. Try this new spin on a classic topping that consumers have come to know and love.

To learn more, please visit:
https://www.hormelinternationalfoodservice.com/ca/product/hormel-rosa-grande-sliced-pepperoni-1-10lb/



UFROST



Level Up your beverage game!

Ufrost, the innovative Canadian company that invented the microwave of cold, is about to revolutionize gastronomy and mixology worldwide. Capable of freezing any liquid (including alcohol) in 60 seconds, Ufrost is launching two new cold-powered creative tools: Ufrost PRO and Ufrost COOK. Designed for hotels, restaurants and bars, Ufrost products make it easy and profitable to create "WOW" by enhancing the culinary and mixology experience and creating unprecedented bursts of flavour.

Contact us to find out how Ufrost can transform your business with flash freezing:
Julien Michalk, President | info@ufrost.com | 514-703-6473



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RC Show
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Conference & Trade Expo
LEVEL UP
April 8-10, 2024
Enercare Centre | Toronto

SHOW GUIDE

APRIL 8 • 10AM - 5PM | APRIL 9 • 10AM - 5PM | APRIL 10 • 10AM - 4PM

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Photo of Wallace Wong courtesy of Josh Tenn-Yuk

LEVEL UP

WELCOME TO RC SHOW 2024

Welcome to RC Show 2024! Restaurants Canada is absolutely thrilled to extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to each and every one of you. This year's Show promises to be an extraordinary celebration of innovation, passion and the boundless potential within our beloved foodservice industry.

This year's theme, "LEVEL UP," is a call to action for every professional, business and emerging entrepreneur in our vibrant industry. Our top-notch program this year is designed to address the challenges and opportunities in our industry, providing you with the tools and insights to thrive in an ever-evolving industry landscape. RC Show is your gateway to unparalleled growth, inspiration, and profitability. It's a chance to forge meaningful connections, absorb groundbreaking ideas, and ignite a new chapter of success and profitability in your journey.

Restaurants Canada takes immense pride in hosting and curating RC Show. It is a labour of love and a reflection of our passion for and commitment to the success and growth of Canadian foodservice. This year is particularly special as we begin to celebrate the 80th anniversary of Restaurants Canada. We warmly invite you to visit the Restaurants Canada booth (#2001), a hub of celebration and connection. Engage with our regional Vice-Presidents, meet our dedicated staff, learn more about the many advocacy issues we are championing, and the valuable benefits and cost-saving programs that come with being part of our vibrant member community.





Kelly Higginson
President & CEO

We are also incredibly proud to announce some outstanding "firsts" at this year's RC Show:

The All-Women CEO Panel: Be inspired by the trailblazing women leading our industry forward with their wisdom and vision.

The Black Experience Pavilion: Celebrate the rich contributions and unique perspectives of Black entrepreneurs and professionals within the foodservice sector.

The Indigenous Pavilion: Immerse yourself in the deep culinary traditions and a select range of Indigenous-owned brands.

These initiatives are a testament to Restaurants Canada's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and the power of bringing varied voices to the table.

RC Show is more than just an event; it's a chance to reignite the passion, entrepreneurship, and hospitality that initially drew us all to this incredible industry. Let's take this time to reconnect, share our stories, and rekindle the fire that fuels our collective dreams.

Our deepest gratitude goes out to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and partners, whose passion and tireless efforts have made the RC Show a beacon for the foodservice community. Their enthusiasm and unwavering commitment are the heartbeat of this event and what makes RC Show a truly special gathering place for our industry.

Thank you for attending RC Show 2024. Your support is invaluable, not only to the success of this event and to the work that Restaurants Canada does on behalf of Canadian foodservice, but to the unity and strength of the industry as a whole.

Together, let's LEVEL UP and shape a powerful, profitable future for our industry.

Restaurants Canada

The voice of foodservice | La voix des services alimentaires

Restaurants Canada is proud to welcome you to **RC Show 2024: Level Up**. This is our chance to come together to learn, connect and celebrate the best of Canadian hospitality and foodservice.

JOIN US:
Learn about Restaurants Canada Member Benefits including industry advocacy efforts and updates, exclusive member benefits and cost-savings programs, industry events and education and leading industry research, data and insights.

ENGAGE WITH US:
Capture your #RCShow experience in front of the Restaurants Canada photo wall and share your Show and event highlights.

VISIT US: Booth #2001

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April 8 – 10, 2024

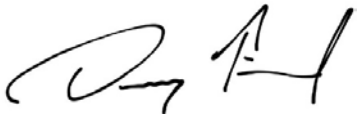
A MESSAGE FROM PREMIER DOUG FORD

Welcome to the RC Show 2024, Canada's leading hospitality and foodservice expo.

Thank you to Restaurants Canada for putting together this ultimate celebration of food and beverage and for supporting excellence in the food service and hospitality industry. In the spirit of this year's theme, Level Up, this is a great opportunity for restaurant industry professionals to learn how to bring their game to the next level — boost efficiency, improve service, elevate customer experiences, and embrace innovation and inspiration.

As we work together to foster a vibrant and resilient economy, our food service and hospitality industry will be a key driver in building a strong Ontario, now and for the future.

Best wishes for a successful event.



Doug Ford
Premier

RC Show

Restaurants Canada

RC SHOW 2024:

IT'S TIME TO LEVEL UP

This year's RC Show is a gathering place for those looking to increase profitability, forge meaningful connections and gain invaluable insights into the ever-evolving world of foodservice and hospitality.

Diving into the latest trends, tools, and technologies, RC Show 2024 is your gateway to leveling up your skills, while harnessing the trends and insights you need to move forward. Join the industry in the heart of Toronto to network with sector pioneers and disruptors, explore innovative solutions, and uncover strategies that will propel your endeavours to new heights. Whether you're aiming to refine your craft, enhance your business or simply immerse yourself in the passion of the culinary or beverage arts, RC Show 2024 promises an enriching experience filled with opportunities, information and brands ready to help transform your vision into reality and take your business to the next level!





Download the **NEW RC Show Mobile App** now to LEVEL UP your RC Show experience by creating a custom schedule.

Download on the App Store

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3
ACTION-PACKED DAYS OF INSPIRATION & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

4
HOSPITALITY WEEK NETWORKING EVENTS

6
STAGES FEATURING INDUSTRY EXPERTS, KEYNOTES & SHOWDOWNS

7
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8
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RESTAURANTS CANADA IS PROUD TO BRING YOU RC SHOW 2024!

Start your RC Show experience with us.

Join us at the **Restaurants Canada booth (#2001)** as we celebrate **80 incredible years as the Voice of Foodservice**. This is your chance to **meet our dedicated regional Vice-Presidents** and the **passionate team from our Toronto head office**. Dive into the heart of the industry and **discover the myriad of resources, benefits, and cost-saving programs available exclusively to our members**. Enhance your business strategy with a **free 15-minute consultation from a Circana consumer insights expert**. Relax and network with industry peers in the **Pepsico Members Lounge**, and don't forget to **download the RC Show App for your chance to win one of five $100 AMEX gift cards**. Make the most of this opportunity to connect, learn, and grow with Restaurants Canada in the heart of foodservice innovation!

MEET YOUR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEAM



MAXIMILIEN ROY
Vice-President,
Federal & Québec



MARK VON SCHELLWITZ
Vice-President,
Western Canada



KRIS BARNIER
Vice-President,
Central Canada



JORDI MORGAN
Vice-President,
Atlantic Canada

Government Advocacy
With full-time lobbyists in every region of the country working with all levels of government, Restaurants Canada helps shape policy, informs members on emerging issues that impact business and ensures the voice of foodservice is heard.

Research & Resources
Membership helps operators astay informed on the latest trends and issues rooted in data and provides access to frequently updated research and analytics from the annual Foodservice Facts to industry reports and webinars.

Networking
Each year Restaurants Canada brings together over 20,000 attendees at the annual RC Show to connect, do business and network at RC Hospitality events including Opening Night, Industry Night Out, Top to Top and Breakfast With Champions events.

Cost-Savings Programs
Members can take advantage of exclusive benefits designed to save time and money in all aspects of their operations from credit card transactions, employee retention to training with access to Groupex, the largest foodservice buying group in Canada, that brings the purchasing power of chains to the independent operator.

MENU BITE RC insider

Visit Groupex Canada **at booth #2201** at RC Show 2024 to learn how they can save you time and money with their rebate programs.



PEPSICO MEMBERS LOUNGE

The Pepsico Members Lounge in the **Restaurants Canada booth (#2001)** is an exclusive networking hub and place to connect. As a proud corporate sponsor of Restaurants Canada, **PepsiCo** will showcase their latest products, innovations and snacks & refreshments for members.

RESTAURANTS CANADA MEMBER PROGRAMS & PREFERRED PARTNER OFFERS

Explore Restaurants Canada's preferred partners and learn more about the latest and greatest exclusive offers. The Restaurants Canada team will be on hand to answer your questions and get you connected with these exclusive cost-saving programs and member benefits.

MEMBER BENEFITS:

groupex canada · CHASE · Diversey · American Express · SilverChef · The Fifteen Group Hospitality Consulting Agency · ATLAS · FiELD AGENT · notch · SafeCheck Food Safety · TouchBistro · SHOP · THE JDB GROUP

CIRCANA CORNER

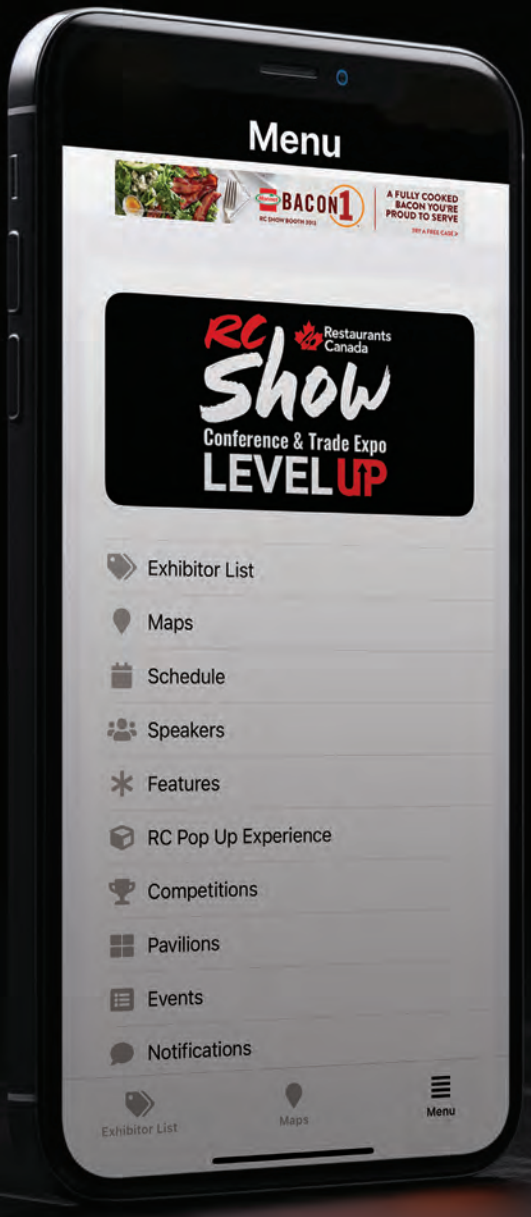
Come meet with Circana Foodservice Industry Analyst, Vince Sgabellone for a one-on-one consultation in the Restaurants Canada Booth (#2001)!Bring your burning business questions to your complimentary, 15-minute consult. Vince will provide a live review of the latest consumer trends shaping the foodservice industry today and what it might mean for your business. What are the emerging menu categories? How will shifting demographics impact future consumption? And what about the economic conditions? No question is too big or too small.Please contact Vince directly to book your 15 minutes, quoting Circana Corner in the subject line for a quick response, at: **vince.sgabellone@circana.com**.



ABOUT CIRCANA:

Circana transforms complexity into clarity. We're the leading advisor on the complexities of consumer behavior. Our unparalleled technology and complete view of the consumer inspire our clients to take action and unlock business growth.

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RESTAURANTS CANADA BOOTH #2001

Visit the Restaurants Canada booth to learn how you can optimize your membership and share your voice.

LEVEL UP

EVENTS





PRESENTED BY

Restaurants Canada

WITH SUPPORT FROM

OPENING NIGHT RECEPTION

APRIL 8 | 5-8 PM | HERITAGE COURT | ENERCARE CENTRE

COMPLIMENTARY ADMISSION FOR RC SHOW TICKET HOLDERS – PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED

As the RC Show floor closes for the evening on day one, the party's just getting started in Heritage Court! Celebrate Canada's largest hospitality expo at an extraordinary networking event with music, exciting activations, and incredible delicious bites and libations.

Free for all RC Show attendees, exhibitors and partners, Opening Night Reception spotlights a collaborative menu by leading brands and some of Toronto's hottest food trucks. Meet up with old colleagues or make new connections as you mingle with the best and brightest in the industry.

HIGHLIGHTS

Enjoy delectable bites curated from some of the best brands in foodservice, including the innovative Re.Source line from Gordon Food Service! Be sure to stop by booth 1919 conveniently located near the entrance!

Swing by the Schneiders Big Dog Days food truck tailgate experience to savour their stadium hot dog, play cornhole,and batter up to win daily prizes! When you visit, enter to win two Toronto Blue Jays tickets to a Loonie Dogs Nightpresented by Schneiders (Game Date: April 30).

WELCOME COCKTAIL PRESENTED BY

TORONTO'S FINEST FOOD TRUCKS

The Arepa Republic
Venezuelan Street Food

Funnel Cake Dream
Premium Funnel Cakes

Pizza Italia
Authentic Pizza

Century Delight
Elevated International Street Food

6 Spice Rack
Elevated International Street Food

Ape Canada
Custom Ape Builds

The AMEX Food Truck
Elevated International Street Food

Nabulu Coffee
Premium Coffee Drinks

Pancho's Bakery
Traditional Churros

Tropical South
Island Flavours with Cuban Soul

Nani's Gelato
Authentic Gelato with a Twist

Rainhard Brewing Co.
Premium Microbrewery

What A Jerk!
Jamaican Street Food

Coffee Brake
Premium Coffee & Sweets

Mustache Burger
Premium Burgers

Cookies By Gia
Premium Cookies

Conestoga Eggs
Local Ontario Eggs

CCHAC SUMMIT

APRIL 8 | 11 AM-3 PM | SALON 103 | ENERCARE CENTRE

The Chinese Cuisine & Hospitality Association of Canada (CCHAC) gathers at RC Show to share analysis, insights and evidence-based forecasts from the Chinese Canadian food sector.

Thought leaders come together at this important annual event to discuss new trends, noteworthy challenges, and in-depth solutions capped off with the CCHAC leadership awards ceremony, which honours Asian restaurateurs and businesses for their community development and contribution achievements.



TOP TO TOP

APRIL 9 | 4-6 PM | RC POP UP EXPERIENCE | ENERCARE CENTRE, HALL A
BY INVITATION ONLY

Restaurants Canada's premier networking reception brings senior industry leaders together to connect, share insights and foster the collaborations that propel the Canadian restaurant industry forward.

Set against the dynamic backdrop of the RC Pop Up Experience, this exclusive, private event offers a unique platform for top executives to engage in meaningful conversations, forge strategic partnerships and explore innovative solutions that will drive the sector forward.

Join us for an elevated presentation of the RC Pop Up Experience celebrating the best of Québec food and drink, featuring **Executive Chef Missy Hui and the and/ore restaurant team**. Visit **Chef Sébastien Rémillard's** front-of-house activation serving a signature Québec dish and explore the sumptuous fish bar, cheese and poutine stations and exceptional and extensive dessert station. Sip on libations from the **signature cocktail menu and taste delicious canapés inspired by Québec spirits and food partners**.

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WITH SUPPORT FROM

INDUSTRY NIGHT OUT

APRIL 9 | 8 PM-1 AM
VELA TORONTO | 90 PORTLAND STREET, TORONTO | ADVANCE TICKETS: $69 +HST

Join us for the most sought-after industry event of the year: Industry Night Out.

This upscale celebration is hosted at a special Tuesday-night opening of **VELA**, home of incredible bites from **Chef Marvin Palomo** and superior cocktails by **Robin Goodfellow**. At VELA, classics are reinvented for modern tastes in a spirit of abundance, joy and distinction.

Each ticket includes a complimentary original, one-night-only **alcoholic or non-alcoholic cocktail experience featuring fine syrups from Giffard** and a delectable selection of **passed canapés** from VELA's exclusive catering menu with an elevated and imaginative dessert experience.

Dance to **beats from VELA's house DJ** and share highlights from your evening at the **VELA photo booth**. Request your **exclusive Industry Night Out bottle service experience** on site.

PRESENTED BY

WITH SUPPORT FROM



BREAKFAST WITH CHAMPIONS

APRIL 10 | 7-10 AM | LIBERTY GRAND | EXHIBITION PLACE

HOSTED BY MISS MOÇO

INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: ANISHINAABE TRADITIONAL GRANDMOTHER KIM WHEATLEY, ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE KEEPER

SINGLE TICKET: $175 + HST | TABLE OF 8: $1,225 + HST





Breakfast With Champions is Restaurants Canada's top-rated, inspirational morning leadership event where world-class speakers serve up in-depth industry research and food for thought over a memorable Breakfast that kicks off with **Miss Moço**, and an elevated non-alcoholic mimosa with fresh juice and elderflower syrup from **Giffard**.

Get deliciously caffeinated in style at **two Nespresso bars** and sample **fresh Aloha Tropical**, **Honeydew Avocado and Lemon**, **and Chia Cherry Berry Smoothies** or visit the **Build Your Own Yogurt Parfait station** from **Dairy Farmers of Canada**. Head to the elevated hot breakfast stations to load your plate with luxurious morning fare like classic bacon, eggs and potato hash, or try the exquisite **Oeufs Cocotte station** featuring luxury dip-dip eggs with Knorr Hollandaise and thinly-sliced sourdough. Be sure to get in line for the exceptional **Bison, Wild Rice and Dried Saskatoon Berry Patty by Chef Jenni Lessard of Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations (ICAN)**. The Dual Protein Waffle Pancake Station serves up sweet and savoury waffles made with protein pancake mix from Quaker, with your choice of a chicken waffle with tamarind and pasilla chile maple syrup featuring **Club House for Chef's Tamarind and Pasilla Chile Seasoning** and **Wabanaki Maple Syrup** or a sweet waffle loaded with whipped cream, maple syrup and **pineapples and peaches** from **Dole**. At your table, you'll find incredible goodie plates featuring **creative bites crafted from Quaker's signature Muffin Dough**.

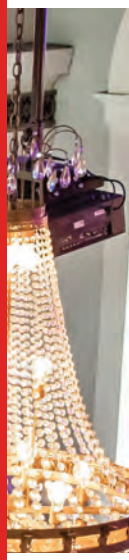
Breakfast With Champions opens with remarks from **Kelly Higginson, Restaurants Canada's President and CEO**, followed by an **Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Ceremony by Anishinaabe Traditional Grandmother Kim Wheatley, Ancestral Knowledge Keeper**. Host **Miss Moço, Queen of The Drake's popular Drag Brunch**, will take guests through a journey of inspiration as speakers and panelists share hard-earned advice, business strategy and empirical research along with their stories of innovation and success. Hear from Chef **Bashir Munye**, whose talk, **Decolonizing the Table**, reflects on the social and economic impact of colonization in the hospitality industry. Gain insights with a presentation from **Environics Analytics**, **Data-Driven Growth Strategies: Capturing Opportunities and Driving Demand in Canadian Foodservice**. Learn how to scale hospitality brands through **Global Expansion** as **Technomic** presents compelling data on launching Canadian brands on the global stage, followed by a moderated discussion with two seasoned panelists who will share their experience in bringing Canadian brands to global markets or in introducing their offerings to Canada.

Chef Jenni Lessard, Interim Executive Director of **Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations (ICAN)**, was the first female and Métis Executive Chef at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, a world renowned Indigenous Interpretive Centre, where she's still involved as the culinary consultant and chef for the **Han Wi Moon Dinner series**.

Wanuskewin Heritage Park is a celebrated cultural and historical site dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Indigenous culture, particularly that of the Northern Plains peoples. This park is set on a landscape steeped in archaeological significance, with traces of human activity dating back over 6,000 years.

The **bison**, once a central element of the Indigenous cultures and ecosystems of the Northern Plains, were reintroduced to Wanuskewin in 2019 after being absent from the area for more than a century. This repatriation initiative not only represents a step towards ecological restoration but also holds profound cultural and spiritual significance for the Indigenous communities associated with the park. The return of the bison is seen as a symbol of reconciliation and renewal, reinforcing the park's commitment to honouring and revitalizing Indigenous traditions and knowledge.

The park's efforts to foster understanding and appreciation for Indigenous cultures have earned it recognition as a candidate for UNESCO World Heritage status.





Lean in for a **fireside chat on inspiring your team, the importance of advocating for the industry, and what it takes to be a successful operator in 2024** with the legendary **Gabriel Stulman, Founder and CEO of Happy Cooking Hospitality**. Gabriel shares notes from his lived journey of growth, development and transformation, with hospitality at the heart of every choice he made along the way. Celebrate extraordinary vision and leadership, unparalleled skill and heights of service as we honour the **Restaurants Canada's Awards of Excellence** 2024 winners.

Be sure to visit the **Starbucks Grab-and-Go wall of RTD Frappuccinos** and pick up your **Too Good To Go Surprise Bag** on your way out!

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WITH SUPPORT FROM

RESTAURANTS CANADA AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Restaurants Canada Awards of Excellence celebrate professionals who embody the best of our industry through their extraordinary vision, leadership and skill, and their unwavering spirit. The Awards are not only a celebration of extraordinary achievement - they are also a milestone that marks the industry's progress and keeps us moving forward, together.

Celebrate the announcement of the recipients of the 2024 Restaurants Canada Awards of Excellence and watch the recipients take the stage to receive top industry honours at Breakfast With Champions.



LEADERSHIP AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

PRESENTED BY:

CULINARY AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

PRESENTED BY:

EMERGING LEADER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

PRESENTED BY:

LEGACY AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

PRESENTED BY:

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD OF RECOGNITION

PRESENTED BY:

RC SHOW EXHIBITOR BOOTH AWARDS & RESTAURANTS CANADA INNOVATION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

APRIL 10 | 2:30-4 PM | SPEAKER STAGE | HERITAGE COURT | ENERCARE CENTRE

Join the celebration as Restaurants Canada honours the innovators whose products and services advance and enhance our industry, recognizing their unique andimportant offerings.

The Exhibitor BoothAwards presentation is followed by the RC Show closing ceremony, led by **Anishinaabe Traditional Grandmother, Kim Wheatley**.

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BAR & BEVERAGE PAVILION

Always exciting, the Bar & Beverage Pavilion has everything you need to LEVEL UP your service game. Brand ambassadors share the versatility and diversity of their products, while seasoned mixologists demonstrate their skills and secrets.

Boost your business with the help of knowledgeable wine experts. Explore the many low-and-no options and learn the best strategies to build a healthy bar culture for your staff and guests.

Enjoy canapés, cocktail and mocktail libations in the pavilion and at the Bar Stage presented by Giffard and Dole.

PRESENTED BY

MOLSON COORS beverage company

WITH SUPPORT FROM

MADRÍ EXCEPCIONAL EL ALMA DE MADRID

Heineken 0.0

HOP VALLEY Brewing Co.



LEVEL UP PAVILIONS

HIGHLIGHTS

Watch as top bar professionals team up to LEVEL UP the art of hospitality at the **Beyond The Rail cocktail competition** on Monday, April 8 from 3-5:00 PM on the Bar & Beverage Stage.

For hands-on bar and beverage check out the **Workshop Stage** to find practical sessions that will elevate your style. Register in advance for wine, sake and spirit tastings, cheese and whiskey, mocktail and port pairings and more.

EXHIBITORS

American Beverage Marketers
Anhydra - Dehydrated Fruits
Athletic Brewing Company
Aztec Design and Display
Bacardi Canada Inc.
Backroad Coffee Roasters
Beam Suntory
Beer Gas Systems Inc.
Best of UK Pavilion
C.W. Shasky & Associates Ltd.
Carlsberg, Kronenbourg 1664, Somersby, Garage
CHOYA Umeshu Co., Ltd.
Clearsips Ltd.
Conexxus Canada
Copper Rose Distillers Inc.
Diageo
DistillX Beverages
Fentimans
Fever Tree
Friendlier
Frozen in Time Ltd. & Ironberry Inc.
GotSkill?
Gutsy Carbonated Fermented Drinks Inc.
Happy Dad Hard Seltzer
Harmon's Non-Alc Craft Brewing
Labatt Breweries of Canada
LCBO Commercial Services
Specialty Service
Local Spirit Distilling Co.
Matt & Steve's
Mercury Publications - Bar & Beverage Magazine
Molson Coors Beverage Company
Monsieur Cocktail - NOA
Partake Brewing
RISE Kombucha Inc.
Sapsucker
Simcoe Gases Inc.
Simgo Limited
Smart Serve Ontario
St. Regis Wines
SupraCut Systems International Inc.
The Great Gentleman
Tito's Handmade Vodka
Tractor Beverage

ONTARIO CRAFT PAVILION

LAKE OF BAYS BREWING CO.

DRINK ON APPLES

OCB

WINE SHOWCASE

BREAKTHRU BEVERAGE CANADA

Scarpetta

DARK HORSE

THE BLACK EXPERIENCE PAVILION

PRESENTED BY

Kraft Heinz | The Re-Seasoning Coalition | foodpreneur lab

Connect with Black food entrepreneurs and suppliers in the first-ever Black Experience Pavilion! Discover the exciting variety of ideas, products and tastes on offer from Black-owned farmers and F&B innovators and entrepreneurs. Learn how to level-up your DEIA initiatives and explore how Black foodservice champions are changing the game.

HIGHLIGHTS

Don't miss **interactive demos/hosted discussions** in the **Demo Kitchen**:

April 8

Regional Flavours: Chilis and Hot Sauces (11 AM), Re-Imagining: Charcuterie Boards from the Black Diaspora (12 PM), Innovations in Health: Sea Moss & Juicing (1 PM), Re-Imagining: Fast Food (2 PM), Regional Flavour Series: Jollof Rice (3 PM)

April 9

We Did That: Black Entrepreneurship in Food & Hospitality
2:45 PM | StudioEx:
Back by popular demand for a second year, this intimate panel aims to help Black business owners (including CPG developers, restaurant owners, food influencers, and caterers) understand the secrets of successful entrepreneurship and how to thrive in the foodservice and hospitality industry despite the systemic barriers that abound. This engaging and honest conversation will serve as an opportunity for Black and racialized entrepreneurs to get advice from industry peers in a safe space. Allies and accomplices are welcome.

April 10

Re-Imagining: Breakfast (11 AM), Regional Flavours Series: Plantain (12 PM), Re-Imagining: Milk & Cookies from the Black Diaspora (1 PM), Regional Flavours Series: Chin Chin (2 PM), Black Food History: The Jamaican Patty (3 PM)

EXHIBITORS

The Re-Seasoning Coalition & Foodpreneur Lab
A Cookie Called Quest
Dodo Food
House of Tigernut
SIIKA Foods
HealX Foods
Nah Joke
One More Cocoa
Patreats
Vanilla & Spice
Eight50 Coffee

DESIGN PAVILION

Expand the possibilities of your space and explore the impact of design thinking and decor in the Design Pavilion.

PRESENTED BY

YELLOWBIRD DESIGN STUDIO

WITH SUPPORT FROM

Kwik Signs | caesarstone | Contract Supply Corp.

EXHIBITORS

Contract Supply
FCSI Canadian Chapter
Johnson Controls-ANSUL
Kwik Signs
Norstar Industries
Silikal America
Spirit Wares
Titan Construction & Contracting

DESIGN DAY

April 10

Visit the RC Pop Up Experience to see how Yellowbird Design Studio and supporting sponsors collaborated to bring the commercial and interior design vision behind and/ore restaurant to life.

10:30-11:15 AM | Culinary Stage | Creating Ergonomic and Productive Kitchens: Presented by Garland Canada

11:45-12:30 PM | Learning Lounge | The "Instagrammable" Restaurant Design: Presented by Yellowbird Design Studio

12:45-1:45 | StudioEx | The International Restaurant Design Panel: Presented by NEWH

2-3:30 PM | Design Networking Event: Gather in the RC Pop Up Experience for a special networking event for designers, fabricators,suppliers and buyers.

DISCOVER THE SOUL OF MADRID



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CELEBRATE RESPONSIBLY

*MUST BE LEGAL DRINKING AGE.

COFFEE, TEA & SWEETS PAVILION



Upgrade your sips and snacks at the Coffee, Tea & Sweets Pavilion. Enhance both your palate and your profits with exciting confectionary options. Taste exquisite teas and try the finest new beans and blends. Join the excitement of three thrilling coffee competitions on the Coffee Competition Stage and take home new skills to LEVEL UP your coffee skills and impress your guests.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Clean, filtered water solutions not only for businesses but for our exhibitors on the show floor is brought to you by **In-Store Water Systems** at booth #2255.

Lactalis Canada continues to show the industry its support by providing milk to all show floor exhibitors and feature areas.

Zuccarini Barista Workshops | Booth #1834
Daily in the Zuccarini Barista Workshop area.

Latte Art Fundamentals | Daily at 12 PM & 2 PM: Join master baristas for this hands-on workshop on the how-tos of pouring latte art.

April 8: Barocco Coffee Roasters

April 9: Propeller Coffee Roasters

April 10: Patera Caffé

Café Craft | Daily at 1 PM: A comprehensive workshop breaking down the fundamentals of setting up a successful cafe, presented by a professional barista café owner.

What is PureBrew? | Daily at 3 PM: Learn about the latest in PureBrew technology from Victoria Arduino – a new coffee extraction method that allows users to brew high-quality, aromatic filter coffee on a traditional espresso machine. PureBrew technology's unique brew parameters allow you to experience a new type of filter coffee unlike any other. It's not quite French-press, and it's not pour-over - it's something all its own. Set your own unique brewing parameters and explore a new dimension in taste.

Catch the **Coffee Research Panel on Wednesday at 10:30 on the Bar & Beverage Stage**, presented by the Coffee Association of Canada.

Partners BUNN, Dairy Farmers of Canada, Ghiradelli, Pacific Foods Canada and Giffard offer up a curated **Coffee and Tea experience** in the **RC Pop Up Experience** and **VIP and Exhibitor Lounges**.

Each day, the Canadian chapter of the Specialty Coffee Association and RC Show 2024 will host a unique showdown on the **Coffee Competition Stage**:

Monday, April 8
Latte Art Championship
10 AM-5 PM
Coffee Competition Stage

Tuesday, April 9
Cezve/Ibrik Competition
10 AM-5 PM
Coffee Competition Stage

Wednesday, April 10
Coffee in Good Spirits Competition
10 AM-4 PM
Coffee Competition Stage





PRESENTED BY

EXHIBITORS

1883 Syrups Gerhards
3M Canada - Foodservice Water Filtration
ABS Advanced Brewing Systems
Alfa Cappuccino Imports Inc.
Arc Cardinal
Bellucci
Brokerhouse Distributors Inc.
BUNN
Circles and Squares Bakery
Elite Sweets
Eurodib
Firs Tea Ltd / Oumtea
Heartland Food Products Group/SPLENDA
IDrinkCoffee.com
King's Pastry
KioCafé
Mike's Hot Honey
Morala Trading Inc.
Nestle SA Nespresso Canada
One Shot Canada & Pudgyboy's Mini Donut
Papaji Foods
Quality Coffee Systems Corp.
Specialty Beverage Solutions (SBS)
Supramatic Inc.
Tea Squared
The Cheesecake Factory Bakery
Umbria Coffee Roasters Canada & Rishi Tea
Wow! Factor Desserts
Zuccarini Importing Co. Ltd.



ECO PAVILION

Environmental responsibility is crucial to the foodservice sector. At the Eco Pavilion, you can meet the creators, producers and suppliers who can help you save energy, money and time. Explore the newest waste reduction solutions and learn from the innovators currently building a more sustainable world.

HIGHLIGHTS

Wednesday, April 10

Visit **LEAF** at Booth #518 to learn how they perform independent third-party evaluations and deliver educational programs that **recognize and empower restaurants committed to operating in an environmentally sustainable manner. LEAF Certification** offers accreditation to restaurants demonstrating efforts in environmental and sustainable foodservice practices. To earn Leaf Certification, restaurants participate in an on-site review by a LEAF Accredited Consultant and meet minimum requirements in **ten areas of sustainability** measures including: food purchasing and menu items, supplies, energy use and performance, water use and conservation, building and location, furnishing and decorative items, chemicals, waste reduction and management, employee wellbeing, social engagement and additional policy, and training, education and innovation.

Breakfast With Champions | 7-10 AM | Liberty Grand | Exhibition Place:

The first **Environmental Stewardship Award of Recognition**, presented by Too Good To Go, will honour a pioneering Canadian company for their leadership and commitment to initiatives that aim to significantly reduce the environmental footprint of the foodservice industry during the **Restaurants Canada Awards of Excellence ceremony at Breakfast With Champions. Get your tickets before it's sold out!**

Responsible Sourcing & the Challenges We'll Tackle | 11:30 AM | Culinary Stage:

Presented by **High Liner Foodservice**: Responsible sourcing is the core of an ethical kitchen. When you understand supply chain provenance, you can build sustainability into your operations from the ground up, which is good for people, the planet, and profit too. Moderator Margot Swindall, Director Business, **Technomic**.

Beyond the Menu | 12:00 PM | Speaker Stage:

Senior leaders and experts discuss the business case for integrating ESG principles and the positive impact on brand reputation and share practical strategies for implementing sustainable practices in foodservice operations.

Visit **Too Good To Go at Booth #521** to find out how your business can start profiting from selling surplus food! Too Good To Go is a social impact company that connects users with partner stores to rescue unsold food and prevent it from going to waste. With 90 million registered users and 214,000 active partners in 17 countries across Europe and North America, Too Good To Go is the world's number one marketplace for surplus food.

Maple Leaf aspires to be the most sustainable protein company on earth. That's why, in 2019, they became the first major carbon neutral food company. **Visit Maple Leaf Think Foodservice at Booth #3121** to learn more about their sustainability commitments.

PRESENTED BY

LEAF

Maple Leaf Think FOODSERVICE

Too Good To Go

EXHIBITORS

Biopapro Private Limited
Canplas
Carry Well Packaging
City of Toronto
Crossville Tile
Culinary Id Bands
Daltile Canada
Discus Supply Co.
Eco Gate Ltd.
Enbridge Gas
Enercare Commercial Service
FOG Tank Canada Inc.
Gallimore Products Inc.
Greenovation - Eco dinnerware
Haines, Jones & Cadbury Corporation (HJC Corp.)
Intellinox Technologies Inc.
Justeco Canada Corp.
KGB Decor Inc.
KOOL-2-FAST/The FOON
Meyking Enterprise Inc.
OasisMade
Ocean Wise
Onsite Upholstery Pros
Origin Sustainables
Parts Town Canada
Reliance Commercial Solutions
Rheem Canada Ltd.
Rinnai Canada
Roslin Enterprises Inc.
Special Event Sales
Too Good To Go
Woodable
World Centric
Zurn Elkay

PREMIA™



COFFEE EXCELLENCE CONSUMERS CRAVE

The new Premia by BUNN is a high-performance brewer that automatically grinds, brews and manages freshness for optimal coffee availability during peak times while reducing waste during slower dayparts.

This next evolution of equipment delivers hot & iced coffee with a drip-style flavor profile, no crema, excellent cup clarity and instant dispense for fast speed of service for your customers!

See more at the 2024 RC Show Booth #1627

Learn more at bunn.com/premia

BUNN®

TECH PAVILION

Explore innovative ways to boost your productivity in the Tech Pavilion. Streamline your space with energy-efficient equipment and simplify checkout with advanced fintech solutions. Test progressive new approaches to prep and sanitization. Discover how automated guest service, reservation and staffing platforms can free up valuable time, so you can get back to providing top-notch hospitality.

PRESENTED BY TouchBistro

HIGHLIGHTS

Test **Foodback's comprehensive guest feedback platform** live by providing feedback on all RC Show stages as well as StudioEx,and the Learning Lounge for a **chance to win daily prizes!**

Take advantage of the **Blueprints for New Business Series presented by Interac** taking place over all three days in StudioEx.

April 8

Are Restaurants Ready to Put Value on the Menu? | 1:45 PM | The Learning Lounge:
Join TouchBistro's session to find out what the latest data tellsus about Canadian dining habits and how restaurants can use those insights toput value on the menu in 2024.

April 9

Technology is Sexy but Customer Experience is King | 10:45 AM | The Learning Lounge:
This session will give a health check on customer experience across different restaurant formats and dayparts and tips on keeping your finger on the pulse of Customer Experience on whether you have one location or hundreds.

Partner Secrets for Unlocking Delivery Success | 1:30 PM
This dynamic panel discussion features a diverse trio of Skip Partners sharing their experiences and successes, from the peak summer season to challenging Canadian winters. Discover how a partnership with Canada's homegrown delivery network can help you realize your full business potential.

Adding Tech to the Menu: Boosting revenue without burdening the kitchen | 2:30 PM | The Learning Lounge:
In this session Moneris and UEAT will discuss ways to streamline order management and take advantage of multiple mobile ordering solutions without adding increased burden to back-of-house staff.

Building Financial Confidence in Newcomer Entrepreneurs | 3:30 PM | The Learning Lounge:
Join Peter Seney, Lead, Corporate Citizenship & Employer Brand at Interac Corp., and Catherine Wilding, Entrepreneurship Connections Director at ACCES Employment, for a discussion on some of the barriers newcomer entrepreneurs are facing as they enter Canada, and what tools are available to them to build their financial confidence.

EXHIBITORS

ADD Canada Inc.
Agendrix
Ameego
Ann Arbour Consultants Inc.
App8
Armagh POS Solutions
AstroNova, Inc.
AUTEC and Azuma Foods
Avery Dennison Identification Solutions
Best Buy Canada Ltd.
Brand M3dia
Camelot Immigration Services
Canada Employment Forum
Clover
Cluster POS
CPOS
Crewire
CTK Bio
Dell Technologies
dlivrd
DoorDash
Dyne Technologies Inc.
Else Labs
Field Agent Canada
Foodback and Anycard
Gastronomous
Givex
Global Payments
Helios Technology Solutions Inc.
IBC Labels
Impossible Foods
Ink.Thread & Tech Company
Interior Nation
Jolt / Stradica Solutions
Keenon Robotics
Lightspeed Commerce Inc.
Matrix Integrated Solutions
MDMtoGO
Meelsy
MeazureUP
Moneris
MYR POS
Navi Cost Control
Nethris
Notch
Nummax
Octogone
Otter
PAX Technology, Inc.
PayFacto
Paytronix
PrepWizard
Raange Inc.
RX Music
S.P.A.R.C Technologies
See-Through
Shift4
Silverware POS Inc.
SkipTheDishes
Snappy
Square
Squirrel Systems
Stingray Business
Tango
Techryde Inc.
TipOut Canada
Toast
TouchBistro
Uber Eats
Videri
Visual Touch

ONTARIO PAVILION

Ontario is big, bold and beautiful, and so are its flavours and products. Discover the appeal of local, artisanal goods and taste the breadth of what Ontario suppliers have to offer. Shop the latest products, trends and ideas from local food and beverage innovators and learn how to put Ontario on your menu.

HIGHLIGHTS

The **Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs** (OMAFRA) presents a **showcase of the flavours of Ontario** to inspire your senses and add magic to your menu.

Visit **Dairy Farmers of Ontario** (booth #3637) to learn more about Ontario's wide array of high-quality local dairy products and dairy processors including Gunn's Hill, M-C Dairy, Mountainoak, New Galma Creamery, Shaw's Ice Cream, Stonetown Artisan Cheese, and Vodkow. Visit www.new.milk.org/Ontario-Dairy-Guide to download the 2024 Ontario Dairy Guide to discover the full range of local dairy processors and products available.

Sample the delicious, classic taste of high-quality **Shaw's Ice Cream**, using only the best ingredients including 100% Ontario dairy, presented by **Dairy Farmers of Ontario**.

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WITH SUPPORT FROM







OMAFRA

Bae Greens Microgreens & Edible Flowers
Bani Halal Food
Bliss Dough
Bos Smoked Fish Inc.
Cedar Valley Selections
Chef Brandz Inc.
Classic Group of Companies
Dairy Fountain
Del's Pastry LTD.
Dixon's Distilled Spirits Inc.
Esslinger Foods
Genuine Tea
Goldfarm Canada
Grissin Bon Limited
Harvest To Gather
Healtea
Holy Cannoli Toronto
Imago Foods Ltd.
Inca's Gold Organics
Ippolito Fruit and Produce
KabKeb - Kibbeh Creations
London Ice Cream Co./ New Wave Ice Cream
Manic Brews
McAlpine Foods
Middleton's Plant-Based Foods
Mrakovic Fine Foods
Muskoka Brand Gourmet Foods Ltd.
NanaShake
National Gourmet Inc.
Neil's Real Deal
Pluck Tea
Poppa Corn Corp.
Pristine Gourmet
R. Denninger Limited
Real Sweet Bakery
Rude Mama Hot Sauce
School Safe Snack Company
Seed to Sausage
Sol Cuisine
SoSecret Sauce
Spring Creek Quail Farm
St. Brigid's Creamery
TCF
Truffles and Circumstance
World Meats Inc.
Ying Ying Soy Food

EXHIBITORS

Dairy Farmers of Ontario
Ontario East Economic Development Commission
University of Guelph - Co-operative Education

QUÉBEC PAVILION

Tradition and dedication are on display in the Québec Pavilion. Meet artisanal producers and suppliers as you shop and savour the unique appeal of unique food products from la belle province.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Top To Top Reception | April 9 | 4-6 PM | RC Pop Up Experience: Restaurants Canada's premier networking reception brings senior industry leaders together for an **invitation-only event** presented by **Restaurants Canada and Québec**. Guests will enjoy an elevated presentation of the **RC Pop Up Experience** celebrating the best of Québec food and drink, featuring **Executive Chef Missy Hui and the and/ore restaurant team**. **Chef Sébastien Rémillard** will present a signature Québec dish in a front-of-house activation while attendees sip on libations from the **signature cocktail menu inspired by Québec spirits**.

EXHIBITORS

Alambika
Alimentation Dynamic
Bulk By CHO
Delicouki
Dumas Bakery
Evive Smoothie
Grandma Emily
Grizzly
Hafner Canada
Matteo's Coffee Syrups
Oggi Foods Inc.
Salamina
Signé Caméline
Still Good
Tootsi Impex
WOOP4

PRESENTED BY

GROUPE EXPORT
Agroalimentaire • Agri-food

Québec



INDIGENOUS PAVILION

An RC Show first, the Indigenous Pavilion is a celebration of the growth and variety of Indigenous-made and owned food and beverage companies in Canada. This showcase is a vibrant exploration of the distinctive tastes and offerings from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit entrepreneurs, highlighting a rich tapestry of culinary heritage and innovative products from across the nation.

HIGHLIGHTS

Sample a canapé—Smoked Bison and Wild Rice Meatball over Berry and Maple Coulis with Sunflower Shoots and Sumac Salt—by **Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations (ICAN)** in the **RC Pop Up Experience**.

April 8
Indigenous Traditions, Tastes & Today | 2:30 PM
Culinary Stage: Don't miss this captivating session that brings together a diverse panel of Indigenous leaders, chefs, and entrepreneurs.

PRESENTED BY

fac

WITH SUPPORT FROM

INDIGENOUS CULINARY
of Associated Nations

EXHIBITORS

Boreal Heartland
Northfork Bison
Rangeland Bison
NWC Wild Rice Company
Manitoulin Brewing
Agápe Farmgates



CANADA PAVILION

Unlock the power of home-grown at the Canada Pavilion. From coast to coast, Canada's farming, fishing and food suppliers are inventive, environmentally mindful and sought-after around the world. Meet trusted producers and suppliers while indulging in a delectably diverse array of tastes and traditions.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Chicken Farmers of Canada is responsible for ensuring that their 2,800 farmers produce the right amount of fresh, safe, high-quality chicken for Canadians. **Stop by their booth (#2941)** to learn more about Canada's #1 meat protein, talk to a local chicken farmer and spin the Wheel of Chicken!

Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC) is a national organization representing over 1,200 regulated egg farmers. EFC manages egg supply, develops farming standards and promotes eggs to consumers and foodservice in Canada. **Visit their booth #3241**.

Visit **Canada Beef**, the national industry association that promotes beef on behalf of Canadian cattle producers, to learn more about their **resources for foodservice**.

PRESENTED BY

DAIRY FARMERS OF CANADA | LES PRODUCTEURS LAITIERS DU CANADA

Raised by a CANADIAN FARMER | Élevé par un PRODUCTEUR CANADIEN

get cracking.

CANADA BEEF
PREMIUM QUALITY GRAIN-FED CANADIAN BEEF

CANADIAN BISON

EXHIBITORS

Baked2GO
Canada Beef
Canadian Bison Association
Canadian Pork Council
Charlie Khoury
Chicken Farmers of Canada
FCC
Get Cracking
Innovation PEI
King Cole Ducks
Lactalis Canada Foodservice
Ontario Beef
Pantree
Ponder Recruiting
Prairie Berries Inc.
The Earth Group
Two Bears
Unilever Food Solutions
Ontario Beef
Penokean Hills
Parkhill Meats
Wellington County Premium Beef
Norpac Beef
Beverly Creek Farms



WORLD PAVILION

Celebrate our many culinary traditions and expand your understanding of food trends from all around the globe. Widen your reach with an international assortment of food products and suppliers. Meet world-spanning brands and ambassadors and boost your appeal with remarkable new tastes that capture the palates of our diverse and epicurious population.

HIGHLIGHTS

The **Bellavita Expo** brings together **exclusive Italian suppliers and products**.

Engage with the **Italian Trade Commission (ITA)** to learn more about exciting new Italian products and how to source them.

Explore the unique gastronomy of Brazil, derived from European, African and Indigenous Amerindian influences, through their exciting agri-food products at the Apex-Brasil booth.

EXHIBITORS

Apex-Brasil

Canda Six Fortune Enterprise Co. Ltd.

Chinese Cuisine and Hospitality Association of Canada (CCHAC)

Finica Food Specialties Limited

Import Italian - Soavegel

San Pellegrino: Italian Sparkling Water & Beverages

BELLAVITA ITALIAN PAVILION

Bellavita Pizza Academy

Faled Distillerie

Igino Mazzola Spa

Italian Trade Agency

IBERICA EXPO

Adelina RTU Onions

BRAZIL EXHIBITORS

Amazonika Mundi

Bom de Brasa Charcoal & Foods

Cafe Meridiano

Miolo Wine Group

Native - Products from Nature

Petruz Acai

Usina Granelli

Xingu Fruit Polpas de Frutas Industria e Comercio LTDA





PRESENTED BY

BELLAVITA

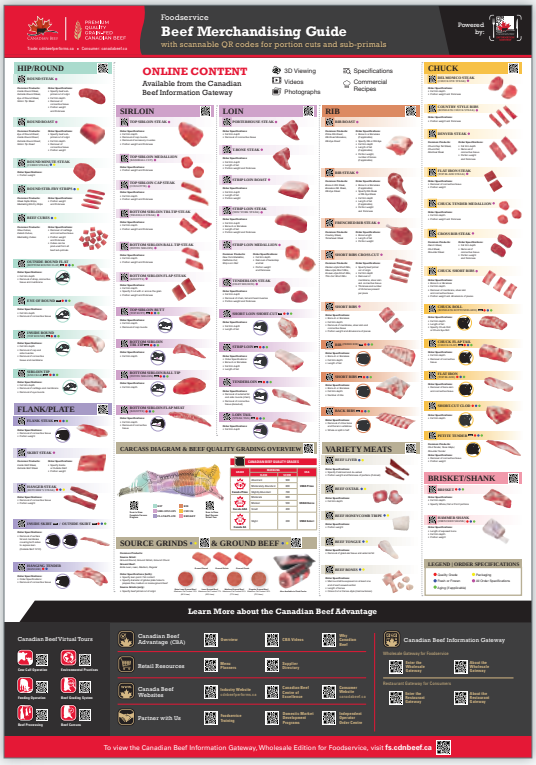
S.PELLEGRII

WITH SUPPORT FROM

ApexBrasil

Chinese Cuisine and Hospitality Association of Canada

NEW FOODSERVICE RESOURCES
from Canada Beef



Foodservice Merchandising Poster

Educate your front and back of house staff about the versatility of Canadian Beef with the new Foodservice Merchandising Poster, powered by the Canadian Beef Information Gateway. Users can scan QR codes to learn how to merchandise each foodservice-specific beef subprimal through videos, photographs, and more. Each subprimal also has product specifications to ensure informed purchasing, and commercial recipes to inspire your team to do more with Canadian Beef. Users can also access information about the Canadian Beef Advantage, including our gate-to-plate virtual tours, enabling further discussions about the unique qualities of Canadian Beef to customers.



Canadian Beef Culinary Planners

Is your foodservice operation seeking inspiration for new menu items that will delight your customers? Canada Beef has developed Culinary Planners, highlighting a multitude of creative dishes for operations of all sizes. These planners can help keep Canadian beef on the menu for different dayparts through Appetizers, Soups and Sandwiches, and Entrees, as well as for Canadians of all ages, from Kids' Menus to Seniors' Menus.

CANADIAN BEEF

To access the above resources, please scan this QR code.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT
for Canada's Farmers and Ranchers



76% OF CANADIANS WANT TO ORDER CANADIAN BEEF*

*Based on a November 2023 survey of 896 Canadians when asked to agree or disagree to the following statement: When purchasing a dish with beef from a restaurant, I prefer to purchase beef from Canada.

Benchmarking the Sustainability of Canadian Beef

15%
Reduction

In Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions intensity since 2014
(on track for 33% reduction by 2030)

1.9
billion

Tonnes total soil organic in land used for beef production

Increased habitat capacity attributed to land used for beef production

Source: National Beef Sustainability Assessment (NBSA) and Strategy Report, as prepared by the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB), accessible at www.crsb.ca/news

LEVEL UP

COMPETITIONS

GARLAND CANADA CULINARY COMPETITION

April 8 (all day) & April 9 (10 AM-3 PM) | Culinary Stage | Enercare Centre
Host: Michelle Jobin & Devan Rajkumar
Esteemed Judges: Chef John Higgins, Chef Amanda Ray, Chef Joseph Shawana

First Place: $5,000 | **Second Place:** $3,000 | **Third Place:** $1,500
Runner Up: $500 | **Fan Favourite:** $500
+ **top-tier culinary gear from sponsors**

Live and in-person once again, the Garland Canada Culinary Competition is a don't-miss display of culinary prowess and personal pizzazz. The **semi-finals will take place on Monday April 8th, and the top four finalists will go head-to-head on Tuesday April 9**.

Presented by Restaurants Canada and Garland Canada, the Garland Canada Culinary competition will see chefs LEVEL UP a classic childhood dish, telling a story through their choice of ingredients and presentation. With mystery black box items to work with, and more than $10,000 in cash and prizes at stake, this contest will highlight the incredible expertise and stylistic flair of Canada's emerging culinary scene.





PRESENTED BY

Restaurants Canada

GARLAND CANADA

WITH SUPPORT FROM

CLUB HOUSE

CANADA BEEF PREMIUM QUALITY GRAIN-FED CANADIAN BEEF

Gordon FOOD SERVICE

DAIRY FARMERS OF CANADA | LES PRODUCTEURS LAITIERS DU CANADA

Chef Works

DICED MADE IN CANADA

BLACK BOX CHALLENGE

CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF BRAND

Galbani Professionale Premio

Tre Stelle

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Download the **NEW RC Show Mobile App** now to LEVEL UP your RC Show experience by creating a custom schedule.







April 9 , 2024 10:30 AM - 2:30 PM

For more information on our equipment and commercial kitchen solutions visit us at www.garlandcanada.ca

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COFFEE COMPETITION

Latte Art, Cezve/Ibrik & Coffee in Good Spirits Championships
April 8-10 | Coffee Competition Stage | Enercare Centre

Competition Coordinator: Josh Hockin

The winner of each competition will go on to represent Canada in their field at the World Championships in Copenhagen.

The Canadian chapter of the **Specialty Coffee Association** and **Restaurants Canada** are hosting three National Coffee Championships, presented by the **Specialty Coffee Association** and **Dairy Farmers of Canada**. Yes, three! Join the fun at the **Coffee Competition Stage** all three days of RC Show. On Monday April 8, participants will demonstrate their precision and artistry in the **Latte Art Championship (10 AM-5 PM)**. Challenged to make perfect pours and designer creations, competitors will vie for the title of Canadian Latte Art Champion.

Witness a brand-new contest on **Tuesday April 9 (10 AM-5 PM):** the **Cezve/Ibrik Championship**. Celebrating the cultural traditions and tastes of Turkish coffee brewed in a cezve (also called an ibrik), participants will infuse their preparations with their own style, finesse and flair.

The **Coffee in Good Spirits Championship** takes over the stage on **Wednesday April 10 (10 AM-4 PM)**. Demonstrating both bean and bar skills, contestants will create matching sets of both hot and cold coffee-and-alcohol drinks. The finalists will produce both classic Irish Coffees and an original drink of their own design.

PRESENTED BY

Specialty Coffee Association

DAIRY FARMERS OF CANADA | LES PRODUCTEURS LAITIERS DU CANADA

WITH SUPPORT FROM

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BEYOND THE RAIL COCKTAIL COMPETITION

April 8 | 3-5 PM | Bar & Beverage Stage | Enercare Centre
Hosted by: Christina Veira & Evelyn Chick
Esteemed Judges: Amber Bruce, Kate Gerwin and Mike McLean
First Place: $3,000
Second Place: $1,500
Third Place: $500
People's Choice: An exclusive gift from Beam Suntory

Canada's top mixologists pair up at the ever popular Beyond the Rail Cocktail competition in a dynamic exhibition of bartending proficiency and panache. The team-based format will see participants raise the bar on technique, innovation and business strategy and savvy.

Each team will present two cocktails based on **Reifel Rye Canadian Whisky**, **Makers Mark Bourbon**, **Basil Hayden Bourbon**, **Northern Keep Vodka**, **Roku Japanese Gin** or **Hornitos Tequila** – but teams won't know their base spirit until mere hours before the competition.

After their base spirit is announced, bartender pairs will source at least one ingredient from the RC Show floor. Then—with just 90 minutes to plan and prep—each team will present two distinct but interconnected cocktails to the judges and audience.

That's right: the audience gets to play, too. Teams will deliver their first craft cocktail to the judges with a display of technique and showmanship. For the second challenge, they'll serve a kegged cocktail with the same flavour profile to the judges and the audience.

RC PIZZA COMPETITION

April 8-9 | Pizza Stage - FAEMA booth #2127 | Enercare Centre
Host: John Gutekanst
Esteemed Judges: Joe Gonzales, Leah Scurto, Alida Solomon, Rocco Agostino and Domenic Primucci

First Place: $3,000, 2 Passes and guaranteed entrance for the International Pizza Challenge at Pizza Expo 2025*, SUNMIX SUN countertop dough mixer + 12-Inch Wa Handle Bread Knife from DICED Knives
Second Place: $1,500 + 10-inch Wa Handle Utility Serrated Knife from Diced Knives
Third Place: $500 + 10-inch Wa Handle Utility Serrated Knife from Diced Knives
Fourth Place: Commercial-Grade & G.I Metal Pizza Tool Kit
+++ top-tier culinary gear from RC Pizza Competition sponsors and inclusion in a feature in MENU magazine

The Restaurants Canada Pizza Competition is back, bigger and better than ever. In this year's new, expanded format, contenders will strive for pizza perfection in two different contests: Traditional style on Monday April 8 and Creative style on Tuesday April 9.

Presenting their skills and pies live before a panel of experienced judges, the competitors will strive to rise to the challenge and take their share of $10,000 in cash and prizes. The winner will also gain entry to the International Pizza Challenge at Pizza Expo 2025 in Las Vegas.*

**Note: Prize does not include flight/travel to or accommodations for Pizza Expo in Las Vegas.*

HIGHLIGHT:

April 10 | 12-12:45 PM | Pizza Stage | Neapolitan-Style Pizza with Ardent Mills: Join us for an interactive demonstration on Neapolian-style pizza with Chef Kirk Borchardt, Senior R&D Chef at Ardent Mills. Learn how a Canadian grown and milled flour ideal for high-temperature ovens can help your pizzeria.



PRESENTED BY

WITH SUPPORT FROM

JOHN BIL OYSTER SHUCKING CONTEST

April 9 | 3:30-5 PM | Bar & Beverage Stage | Enercare Centre
Host: Shucker Paddy (Patrick McMurray)
Judges: James Power, John Petcoff

PRESENTED BY

Following **preliminary rounds at the PEI Pavilion (Booth #2927 and 2935) on Monday April 8th**, the fastest hands in the country will challenge each other for prizes and glory in this amazing demonstration of speed, dexterity and style. With prizes for the top finishers and for cleanest plate, split seconds make a difference.

Spectators can join in the fun too, sampling shucked oysters and learning how place affects taste from Oyster Master Guild Founder Patrick McMurray.

FRIED CHICKEN SANDWICH COMPETITION

April 10 | 2-4 PM | Culinary Stage | Enercare Centre
Host: Marissa Leon-John | **Esteemed Judges:** Imrun Texeira, Suman Ali Sayed & Ryan Hinkson

First Place: $2,000 + 12-inch Wa Handle Bread Knife from DICED Knives
Second Place: $1,000.00 + 10-inch Wa Handle Utility Serrated Knife from DICED Knives
Third Place: $750 + 10-inch Wa Handle Utility Serrated Knife from DICED Knives
Fourth Place: $250

In this brand-new and sizzling hot competition curated by Quell, contestants face off in a savoury showdown to create the most delicious fried chicken sandwich.

Watch on as finalists put their crunch and seasoning to the test for a chance to win $5,000 in cash and prizes.

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Redefine Excellence with the New Galbani Professionale Premio Pizza Mozzarella Block 26%

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2.3 KG BLOCK

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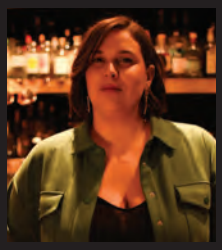
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RC SHOW HOSTS & CURATORS

Meet the **industry leaders** and **notable personalities** behind the legendary stages and competitions.

KATHERINE BOUSHEL | HOST
Bar & Beverage Stage
A global industry competitor with a profound understanding of craft beer and spirits, Kate is the Director of Beverage & Education at Groupe Barroco.





MARISSA LEON-JOHN | HOST
Fried Chicken Sandwich Competition
A self-taught chef and entrepreneur, Marissa is a MasterChef Canada alumnus who strives to promote Black LGBTQ+ culinary excellence.

RICHARD CAZEAU | HOST
Speaker Stage
A writer, producer and dedicated cultural curator, Richard Cazeau is passionate about sharing news and trends.





PATRICK MCMURRAY
"SHUCKER PADDY" | HOST
John Bil Oyster Shucking Competition
The first Canadian to win the World Championships of Oyster Opening and holder of three Guinness World Records for shucking, Patrick is an author, educator and entrepreneur.

EVELYN CHICK | CURATOR
Bar & Beverage Stage
A highly accredited specialist in the world of wine, spirits and the anatomy of all things hospitality, including globally-recognized certifications including WSET Sommelier and Certified Specialist of Spirits, Evelyn is owner of Ahma, Simpl Things and Evelyn Chick Consultancy.





MISS MOÇO | HOST
Breakfast With Champions
The star of season three of Canada's Drag Race, Miss Moço is an entrepreneur, photographer, and host of the weekly Drag Brunch at The Drake Hotel.

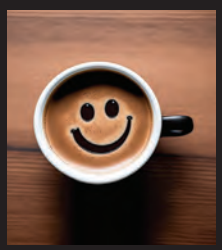
JOHN GUTEKANST | HOST
RC Pizza Competition
Winner of both national and international prizes for pizza excellence, Chef John is the owner and CEO of Avalanche Pizza in Athens, Ohio.





DWANIA PEELE | HOST
StudioEx | Blueprints for New Business
An author, business strategist, entrepreneur and public speaker, Dwania is the owner and executive director of Canadian Small Business Women.

JOSH HOCKIN | COMPETITION COORDINATOR
Coffee Competition Stage
A passionate advocate for competition in Canada's coffee scene, Josh has served as National Coordinator for the Canadian Chapter of the Specialty Coffee Association and as head judge for many prestigious coffee competitions.





CHRISTINA VEIRA | CURATOR
Bar & Beverage Stage
A certified beverage and hospitality expert and educator, Christina is co-owner of Bar Mordecai and founder/owner of STAVE, her school offering beverage certifications, hospitality training and customized tasting experiences.

MICHELLE JOBIN | HOST
Culinary Stage, Garland Canada Culinary Competition
A television personality with decades of broadcast experience, Michelle is a fixture of Toronto's food scene.



LEVEL UP STAGES

SPEAKER STAGE

Heritage Court | Enercare Centre | Hosted by Richard Cazeau

LEVEL UP your approach and strategy at the **RC Show Speaker Stage (now in Heritage Court!)**, where the big conversations and ideas converge. Unlock accumulated wisdom from the industry's thought-leaders, trailblazers and influencers and explore the sector's hottest topics, most challenging concerns and greatest opportunities.

HIGHLIGHTS:

April 8:

Attend the official **RC Show 2024 Opening Ceremony** with an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Ceremony by **Anishinaabe Traditional Grandmother Kim Wheatley, Ancestral Knowledge Keeper**, then jump right in with Restaurants Canada's **State of the Foodservice Nation** address with Chief Economist and Vice-President Research, **Chris Elliott**, for a review of macroeconomic indicators and the opportunities for growth in the whitespace. Hear the story of keynote **Chef Meeru Dhalwala** of Vij's Restaurant and her transformative new venture. Get the latest intel on the enduring appeal of quick service at **QSRs: The Fast and the Favourite**. Explore how **Profit is Possible, Even During Inflation** with consumer data from **Ipsos** and examine the accelerating pace and influence of Indigenous culinary at the **Indigenous Traditions, Tastes and Today** session.

April 9:

Draw inspiration from the experiences of the **CEO panel: Reshaping the Landscape of Food Business**. Learn more about the latest DEI approaches and practices at **Sharing Perspectives and Pushing Progress with DEI**, then delve into the importance of food safety at **Bill Marler's session, Make it Safe, Not Poison**. Hear from top full-service innovators at the **Crafting Unforgettable Full-Service Experiences** panel discussion and learn just how close to the future we are at the **Macro Trends for Foodservice 2030** presentation by **Technomic**.

April 10:

Meet **The Next Generation of Canadian Foodservice** and let an expert panel bring you up to date on how **Beyond the Menu is ESG Integration**. Get the answers you need at the **Will AI Take Over Foodservice?** session with **Circana**. Celebrate the best of RC Show at the **Restaurants Canada Exhibitor Awards** and **Closing Ceremony with Anishinaabe Traditional Grandmother Kim Wheatley, Ancestral Knowledge Keeper**.

Catch all the big names and bigger ideas at the Speaker Stage and unlock your potential!

PRESENTED BY AMERICAN EXPRESS MURTEC MULTI-UNIT RESTAURANT TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE



"Who'sWallace Wong?

AVOID EMBARRASSMENT.

Download the **NEW RC Show Mobile App** now to LEVEL UP your RC Show experience by creating a custom schedule.







CULINARY STAGE

Enercare Centre | Hosted by Michelle Jobin & Devan Rajkumar

The Culinary Stage is where it all heats up, live and in person, with the nation's best and brightest talent, the hottest skills and the operational excellence your foodservice business deserves.

Visit the Indigo Pop Up Bookstore!
Dedicated to making connections and creating experiences, Indigo will be on site at RC Show 2024 to LEVEL UP the love of food, drink and the written word. Visit their pop up bookstore between the Culinary Stage and the RC Pop Up Experience for a delicious, curated selection of books.

April 8:
Day one kicks off with the esteemed **Garland Canada Culinary Competition Semi-Finals**. With a commitment to grow the presence of women and BIPOC culinary experts, this competition showcases the most inventive and skilled emerging chefs from across the country. Enjoy a special session on **Elevating Canadian Beef with Chef Shai-Ann Tyson,** presented by **Canada Beef,** and watch **Chef Eva Chin** create **Low to No-Waste Roast Chicken Congee**, presented by **Chicken Farmers of Canada**, an economical comfort food and one of the chef's personal favourites.

April 9:
Watch the nail-biting (but delicious) **Garland Canada Culinary Competition Finals**, and stay for **From Plates and Glasses to Printed Pages**, where authors share aspects of their hospitality publishing journeys with **Taste Canada**. Learn how to **Sharpen Your Knife Skills with MasterClass G.O.A.T and Guinness World Record holder Chef Wallace Wong**.

April 10:
Learn from top pros how great kitchen design can increase profit at the **Creating Ergonomic and Productive Kitchens**. High Liner Foods and an expert panel explore new opportunities and solutions to improve access to sustainable products at **Responsible Sourcing and the Challenges We'll Tackle**, followed by an exploration of the **Future of Menus with Unilever**. Cap off your day with a no-holds-barred showdown in the all-new **Fried Chicken Sandwich Competition**.

PRESENTED BY

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BAR & BEVERAGE STAGE

Enercare Centre | Hosted by Kate Boushel

Raise a glass to the producers, suppliers and thought leaders of the bar and beverage industry. Here you'll find all the ideas, innovation and inspiration you need from singular stars to industry titans to help you LEVEL UP your bar offering and business.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The new **Level Up Lounge** will offer an extensive variety of games presented by **InStyle Activities** and **Brand M3dia Group**.

Sip, sniff and swirl a variety of wines on display while connecting with wine experts and sommeliers within the **Wine Showcase**.

Sign up for **masterclasses, tasting sessions and pairings** taking place at the **Workshop Stage** including;

- **Mocktails & Cheese** with Dairy Farmers of Canada
- **Sake & The Umami Factor** with authors Nancy Matsumoto and Michael Tremblay

BAR & BEVERAGE STAGE
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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OUR 125-YEAR LEGACY PROPELS US FORWARD.



Our storied legacy means we understand seafood better than anyone. With offerings like Blue Cod — a healthy, low-fat white fish from New Zealand — we can help enhance your menu while also cutting down on labour and costs. Its delicate texture and mild flavour offer a bounty of culinary potential, so you can give customers the choices that delight your customers and fit your budget.

Harness our momentum with flavourful, cost-effective Blue Cod.

BLUE COD

TASTE
Mild flavour and flaky texture, similar to cod/haddock.

VALUE
High-quality species at a reasonable price point.

VARIETY
Allows for a wide variety of cuisines and dishes.



CATCH US AT THE RESTAURANT CANADA SHOW
APRIL 8-10

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April 8:
Don't miss the **Beer Leadership Panel: From Filling Pints to Filling Seats**, then hear how Canadian bar talent is putting **Canada On the Global Stage**. Get schooled on sake at the **Exploring the World of Japanese Craft Sake** session. Watch as first-rate mixologists compete for prizes and acclaim in the **Beyond the Rail Cocktail** competition, an RC Show must-watch.

April 9:
Savour and stir in insights at the **Never Going to Give You Up! Canadians Committed to Coffee** session. Discover the strategy of expansion at the **Scaling of Bar Concepts** panel session and how to build a better bar culture through meaningful **Mentorship in the Bar World**. Immerse yourself in the world of specialty drinks at the **Cold, Hot, Slushed, Boba, Sprinkles and More!** session, and witness a mesmerizing display of precision, speed and finesse as the competitors race against the clock to shuck their way to victory at the **John Bil Oyster Shucking Competition**.

Attend **Industry Night Out**, the most sought-after industry bar event of the year happening **Tuesday April 9, from 8 PM-1 AM at VELA!** Each ticket includes a complimentary welcome beverage, passed canapés and an imaginative dessert experience. **Tickets are $69**. Don't miss your night out and the industry's night to shine!

April 10:
Learn how pairing vinyl with wine or cocktails can increase your bottom line at **Corks and Grooves: The Vinyl Revolution in Bars**, then listen as legendary sommelier, winemaker and designer **André Hueston Mack** gives you the inside track on how wine can enhance your table and your life.

Don't miss **Wine Wednesday at the Workshop Stage**:

- **Sip 'n' Learn: Natural Wines From Northern Italy** with **Simone Cellario**
- **Porto, Chocolate and Cheese** pairings with **Dairy Farmers of Canada**
- **Patio & Picnic Pour Ready** with **Paradise Grapevine**

COFFEE COMPETITION STAGE

Enercare Centre | Coordinated by: Josh Hockin

Ready, set, pour! Marvel at the levels of skill and knowledge on display at the Coffee Competition Stage. This year, Restaurants Canada and the Canadian Chapter of the Specialty Coffee Association are partnering to bring you three exciting events, including a new contest.

In addition to winning the day, the victors of each round will proceed to represent Canada at the World Championship in Copenhagen, Denmark (June 27-29, 2024).

April 8
Latte Art Championship | 10 AM-5 PM | Coffee Competition Stage
Baristas demonstrate their flair for artistic detail and presentation during the **Latte Art Championship**.

April 9
Cezve/Ibrik Competition | 10 AM-5 PM | Coffee Competition Stage
RC Show's first **Cezve/Ibrik Championship** showcases a coffee preparation style popular in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

April 10
Coffee in Good Spirits Competition | 10 AM-4 PM | Coffee Competition Stage
Baristas incorporate bartending skills into their coffee creations at the **Coffee in Good Spirits Championship**.





PRESENTED BY

Specialty Coffee Association

DAIRY FARMERS OF CANADA | LES PRODUCTEURS LAITIERS DU CANADA

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STUDIOEX

Blueprints for New Business Series

Enercare Centre | Hosted by Dwania Peele | April 8-10

A series tailored for both budding entrepreneurs and seasoned restaurateurs looking for a refresher, Blueprints for New Business is designed to provide a roadmap for achieving prosperity in the dynamic and competitive foodservice industry.

Each session provides you with practical strategies, actionable steps and a roadmap to success, empowering you to build and grow a thriving venture. Sessions include:

April 8:
Beyond Brick and Mortar Revenue Streams | Interac

Direct Tips vs Controlled Tips: Learn the Difference and Save $$! | Atlas Direct Tips

A Market Gap is an Opportunity | Interac

We Did That: Black Entrepreneurship in Food & Hospitality
The Re-Seasoning Coalition and Foodpreneur Lab

April 9:
Building with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion | Dr. Leland Harper

Restaurant Business Plan Essentials | The Fifteen Group

No Formal HR Department? Here are the Things You Must Absolutely Ensure! | Val Upfold

Financial Planning, Funding and Saving First | Expert Panel

April 10:
The Mental Health Discussion for Entrepreneurs | Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (WSPS)

Securing Returning Guests | Foodback

International Restaurant Design Panel | NEWH

PRESENTED BY Interac

WORKSHOP STAGE

Enercare Centre

Here you'll find practical, hands-on sessions that will elevate your style. Register in advance for wine, sake and spirit tastings cheese, whiskey, port, mocktail and other food pairings!

HIGHLIGHTS:

Mocktails & Cheese: Explore the delights of pairing cheese with low-and-no alcohol cocktails in this guided tasting from **Dairy Farmers of Canada**.

Sake & the Umami Factor: Please join James Beard Foundation Award winning authors **Nancy Matsumoto and Michael Tremblay** as they explore these aspects in addition to explaining sake basics and sake's superpower: umami.

Exploring Coffee Versatility: A Masterclass: Nespresso Professional's Coffee Ambassador Julien Carbone and Langdon Hall's renowned Chef Jason Bangerter co-host an immersive workshop exploring the world of coffee with different angles and a unique passion for excellence. Discover the full potential of a great coffee experience and elevate the way you position coffee in your establishment.

WINE WEDNESDAY

April 10 at the Workshop Stage

Sip & Learn: Natural Wines from Northern Italy: with **Simone Cellario**

Patio & Picnic Ready: increasing summer wine sales with different wine formats that will cut cost and increase revenue with **Paradise Grapevine**.

Porto, Chocolate & Cheese: Discover the beauty of uncommon pairings with **Dairy Farmers of Canada**.

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LEARNING LOUNGE

PRESENTED BY amazon business

Enercare Centre

Intimate and focused, the Learning Lounge examines specific challenges in the modern foodservice industry. With a focus on marketing, social media and technology, these sessions are designed to give you the tools you need to grow your business. With resources from top experts, get the information and ideas you need to help you progress, and the tips from inventive brands that will inspire you.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Learn about **Leveraging Psychological Safety to Improve Worker Retention** from **Workplace Safety and Prevention Services**.

Join us as **Deloitte** delves into the **transformative power of generative AI** in addressing the skills gap plaguing the **Canadian restaurant sector**.

Level Up by Leveraging Transformative Technology with **Squirrel Systems** and access **Partner Secrets for Unlocking Delivery Service Success** from **Skip The Dishes**.

Learn how to **Add Tech to the Menu and Boost Revenue Without Burdening Your Kitchen** with **Moneris**, and strategies for **Building Financial Confidence in Newcomer Entrepreneurs** with **Interac**.

Download the RC Show App for the latest from the Learning Lounge!

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LEVEL UP

RC POP UP EXPERIENCE

RC POP UP EXPERIENCE

PRESENTED BY AMERICAN EXPRESS | RESY

Reserve your table for the Chef's Picnic Experience

featuring Executive Chef Missy Hui and the and/ore restaurant team

and/ore is an enchanting restaurant nestled in the heart of West Queen West. Offering two unique dining experiences, it celebrates the creativity and diversity of modern Canadian cuisine. The uniquely designed spaces aim to delight and surprise at every turn, whether you prefer an eclectic garden party or an underground tasting menu.

From April 8 to 10, Executive Chef Missy Hui and her talented team will host a pop-up at RC Show. This special presentation features a culinary experience inspired by one of their most popular offerings—the Chef's Picnic. This mini version includes some of the team's favourite items, showcasing ingredients from the RC Pop Up Experience sponsors.

Inspired by and/ore restaurant's signature palette and featuring original artwork by artist Tisha Myles and Jack Phelps of New Love Collective, the RC Pop Up Experience features a visually stunning setup that will immerse guests in an atmosphere of creativity and innovation.



and/ore Above Ground courtesy of Ryan Nangreaves | @good_work

LEVEL UP with the exclusive, in-show RC Pop Up Experience delivered by Executive Chef Missy Hui and and/ore restaurant.

Modern Canadian Chef's Picnic with paired cocktails, full table service
Reserve tables for 2 – 6 people | $15/per person (all-inclusive dining fee)*

This year, RC Show attendees can book an exclusive table seating for an all-inclusive, elevated dining experience by Executive Chef Missy Hui. With a custom-created tasting menu of dishes inspired by Canada and brought to life and to your table by Missy and the and/ore team, this is a unique and unforgettable RC Pop Up Experience you won't want to miss.

Tables are limited. Book now with: RESY

Tickets are priced at $15 per person, inclusive of all taxes and fees.* ***All proceeds after taxes and fees will be donated to the Canadian Hospitality Foundation (CHF).* *Reserve your spot today and support a great cause!*



ALL-DAY CAFÉ

Start your day with a delightful coffee, tea, or refreshment experience at our sophisticated All-Day Café, where elegance meets rejuvenation.

Beverages and small bites selected from ingredients sourced from across the RC Show floor will deliver a "Best of Show" experience. Don't miss passed feature dishes like Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations' incredible Smoked Bison Wild Rice Meatball dish made from Canadian bison, passed to lucky Pop Up patrons once each day of RC Show!

WITH SUPPORT FROM

get cracking. · BEYOND MEAT · QUAKER · GHIRARDELLI · DAIRY FARMERS OF CANADA / LES PRODUCTEURS LAITIERS DU CANADA · LACTALIS FOODSERVICE · Splenda · Pacific BARISTA SERIES · Sienna BAKERY · Doritos · Tea SQUARED

CLUB HOUSE FOR CHEFS TEST KITCHEN

The Club House for Chefs Test Kitchen, at the centre of the RC Pop Up Experience, is designed to deliver catch-as-you-can food and drink experiences featuring pop-up culinary creations featuring the tastes and textures of leading and up-and-coming RC Show brands and ingredients, leveled up with exquisite professional seasoning blends and spices. Catch captivating and delicious demos from Beyond Meat and Premium Foods, & Direct Poultry and Chefs Canada.

PRESENTED BY CLUB HOUSE

WITH SUPPORT FROM BEYOND MEAT · Premium Foods & Direct Poultry

April 9: 10:30 -11 AM & April 10: 2:30-3 PM

Chefs Canada Green presents, an Introduction to culinary and cannabis with Chef Jordan Wagman

POP UP BAR

The Pop Up Bar offers a sample-size cocktail menu, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic, curated by renowned mixologist **Abigail Rubiales from and/ore**. As the main feature, Abigail's creations will be showcased daily, with the added excitement of top talent from the Bar & Beverage stage popping up at the Pop Up Bar.

Takeovers featuring top bar talent from across Canada occur daily, so be sure to return frequently for new and exciting experiences:

April 8

12-2:00 PM | Bar Mordecai (Toronto)
2:30-4:30 PM | Bar Bello (Montreal)

April 9

11-1:00 PM | Happy Accidents (Albuquerque)
1:30-3:30 PM | Clives (Victoria)

April 10

11-1:00 | Keefer Bar (Vancouver)
1:30-3:30 | Pompette (Toronto)



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DONNA ITALIA

Visit the Donna Italia Pizza Station serving up hot and fresh pizza all three days of RC Show!

85% OF CANADIANS KNOW THIS LOGO

DAIRY FARMERS OF CANADA QUALITY MILK®

This logo represents a commitment to **high standards** in Canadian milk production. It stands for the **sustainable practices** that'll help us reach Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It's indicative of the way we **care for our animals** each and every day, and the dedication of Canadian dairy farmers to their communities.



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To add the logo to your products

IMI February 2024

Some brands use 100% Canadian milk, but do not use this certification logo. Contact them for further information

DESIGN INNOVATION

Step into a world of design innovation at our pop-up restaurant, where Yellowbird Design Studio takes the lead in creating a whimsical and dream-like space that embodies the theme of 'Leveling Up.' This concept reflects the idea that growth knows no bounds when we dare to dream big. Drawing inspiration from the immersive design elements of Toronto's and/ore restaurant and the future of hospitality design, the RC Pop Up Experience designer have curated a space that transcends expectations.

Yellowbird Design Studio's transformative design turns walls into canvases for museum-worthy artworks, while custom pieces by and/ore muralists Tisha Myles and Jack Phelps immerse guests in the and/ore experience. The infusion of global influences and eclectic furnishings in the RC Pop Up celebrates diversity and individuality, creating a space that resonates with all who enter.

Collaborating with design partners **Kwik Signs**, **Caesarstone**, **Contract Supply**, **Tarrison**, **Tableware Solutions**, and **Libbey**, Yellowbird Design Studio expands and reimagines new spaces within the pop-up restaurant. Together, they pay homage to and/ore's original placemaking and design, creating a seamless blend of creativity and functionality that invites guests to experience something truly unique.

DESIGN PARTNERS

YELLOWBIRD DESIGN STUDIO

Kwik SIGNS

caesarstone

CONTRACT SUPPLY CORP.

TARRISON

Tableware Solutions ESTABLISHED 2000

LIBBEY

INDIGENOUS PARTNERS

The RC Pop Up Experience is excited to feature unique agricultural and F&B products from Indigenous-owned businesses as well as a special passed dish presented by Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations, "Smoked Bison and Wild Rice Meatball over Berry and Maple Coulis with Sunflower Shoots and Sumac Salt" served daily.

PARTNERS

INDIGENOUS CULINARY of Associated Nations

Boreal Heartland | Northfork Bison

Rangeland Bison | Manitoulin Brewing

Agápe Farms



"Where did I put that brochure?

SAVE THE DATE (AND PAPER).

Download the **NEW RC Show Mobile App** now to LEVEL UP your RC Show experience by creating a custom schedule.

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

RESTAURANT PARTNERS

The RC Pop Up Experience showcases extraordinary products from our restaurant partners, from across Canada and beyond. The exceptional products and ingredients they provide are a testament to the skill and passion of our partners. These exceptional offerings add dimension and possibility to the Pop Up menus and inspire and fuel our guests.



PARTNERS

TECHNOLOGY & EQUIPMENT

The RC Pop Up Experience is not just a hall of unforgettable food and drink, it's a showcase of outstanding kitchen equipment technology and excellence in appliance design. Featuring top-of-the-line kitchen tech from Garland Canada, best-in-class refrigerators from TRUE, custom stainless steel bar equipment from Angelik and innovative professional coffee and tea service equipment from BUNN and Nespresso, you can shop the latest in technology while you dine.



EQUIPMENT PARTNERS

SPECIAL EVENTS

April 8

3-5:00 PM | Feast On Event: Culinary Tourism Alliance is hosting a VIP reception for Feast On certified operators to celebrate their commitment to supporting Ontario growers, producers, VQA wines and craft beer, cider and spirits.

April 9

2-3:00 PM | Women's Leadership Networking Hour: Restaurants Canada x Let's Talk Womxn are co-hosting an exclusive event designed for women owners, executives and entrepreneurs who are passionate about leadership, professional growth, and making a positive impact in their communities.

4-6:00 PM | Top To Top: Restaurants Canada's premier networking reception brings senior industry leaders together for an invitation-only event presented by **Restaurants Canada and Québec**. Guests will enjoy an elevated presentation of the **RC Pop Up Experience** celebrating the best of Québec food and drink, featuring **Executive Chef Missy Hui and the and/ore restaurant team**. **Chef Sébastien Rémillard** will present a signature Québec dish in a front-of-house activation while attendees sip on libations from the **signature cocktail menu inspired by Québec spirits**.

April 10:

2-3:30 PM | Design Networking Event: Gather in the RC Pop Up Experience for a special networking event for designers, fabricators, suppliers and buyers.

THE POSSIBILITIES ARE LIMITLESS

STAY RELEVANT IN TODAY'S WORLD

Single-Use Plastics Ban Solved!
If you're seeking answers or solutions concerning the Single-Use Plastics Ban, look no further. Introducing our innovative Re.Source™ brand disposables, designed to meet your needs. Connect with our team live at our booth now for expert guidance and support.

Solutions Hub by Gordon Food Service®
Meet our team of in-house Culinary and Business Solutions Specialists! They're here to help you find practical solutions to your operational questions from the host stand to the back of house and everywhere in between. Come visit the team to replenish your mind, body and business.

The opportunities are limitless!

Gordon® FOOD SERVICE



Chef Darren Lexa,
Culinary Specialist

LEVEL UP

FEATURES

FOOD TRUCK'N EXPERIENCE

Nothing promises a good time better than a food truck, so we're bringing in as many as we can!

Back for its fifth RC Show rally, The Food Truck'n Experience gathers a **smorgasbord of mobile international cuisines** in one place. Incredibly diverse, these truck operators serve up everything from classic comforts to exciting new tastes and beverage choices with **special RC Show-only menu items inspired by partnerships with top foodservice brands**.

Located in the World Pavilion, the Food Truck'n Experience will also serve the **Opening Night Reception** up in style.

HIGHLIGHTS

Swing by the **Schneiders Big Dog Days food truck tailgate experience** to savour their stadium hot dog, play cornhole, and batter up to win daily prizes! When you visit, **enter to win two Toronto Blue Jays tickets to a Loonie Dogs Night presented by Schneiders** (Game Date: April 30).

Ask about the Schneiders Big Dog Days Summer promotion that your restaurant can participate in from March 28 to September 29. This promotion will help drive traffic and revenue for your restaurant, while increasing your chances of winning the **grand prize valued at $10,000!** Talk to a Maple Leaf Foods Sales Representative to learn more about the promotion and eligibility requirements.

PRESENTED BY

WITH SUPPORT FROM

FOOD TRUCKS

The Arepa Republic
Venezuelan Street Food

Funnel Cake Dream
Premium Funnel Cakes

Pizza Italia
Authentic Pizza

Century Delight
Elevated International Street Food

6 Spice Rack
Elevated International Street Food

Ape Canada
Custom Ape Builds

The AMEX Food Truck
Elevated International Street Food

Nabulu Coffee
Premium Coffee Drinks

Pancho's Bakery
Traditional Churros

Tropical South
Island Flavours with Cuban Soul

Nani's Gelato
Authentic Gelato with a Twist

Rainhard Brewing Co.
Premium Microbrewery

What A Jerk!
Jamaican Street Food

Coffee Brake
Premium Coffee & Sweets

Mustache Burger
Premium Burgers

Cookies By Gia
Premium Cookies

Conestoga Eggs
Local Ontario Eggs



START UP LANE

Meet the best of the brand new!
Discover the newest products and services and connect with recent arrivals on the foodservice scene. Find the most novel items first at the **Start Up Lane**, near the **Canada** and **Ontario** Pavilions.

FEATURING UNIQUE NEW OFFERINGS FROM:

AKUPARA
Crazy D's Sparkling Prebiotic Soda
Ecoideas
Father Sam's Bakery
FIGARVE
Fun Foods Canada
Grand North Bison
Guru Food Products Ltd.
JL Sons Wood Designs
Los Cuernos Adventure Foods
Nomadic Cafe
Plant Up
Pure Botanica Company
Suppli
Teas by Kara

EXHIBITOR LOUNGE

The Exhibitor Lounge is the perfect place for exhibitors to step away from their booth for a quick rest and a snack while you organize your RC Show floor leads!

PRESENTED BY

Technomic. BUNN

VIP LOUNGE

The VIP lounge is an exclusive space where speakers and industry leaders gather to connect and refuel.

PRESENTED BY

PEPSICO foodservice, bubly sparkling water, pepsi ZERO SUGAR, evian, Miss Vickie's

WITH SUPPORT FROM

BUNN, Dairy Farmers of Canada, Lactalis Foodservice, Depuis 1885 Giffard France, Pacific Barista Series, Splenda, Ghirardelli, Perú

GREAT Britain & Northern Ireland, Dirty Devil Vodka, SOTO, Seagram 13, tractor Beverage Co., Madrí Excepcional, Heineken, UFROST

COFFEE & TEA EXPERIENCE

Enjoy a curated Coffee & Tea experience **presented by BUNN, Dairy Farmers of Canada, Lactalis, Giffard, Pacific Barista, Splenda and Ghirardelli** at the Exhibitor Lounge, VIP Lounge and in the All-Day Cafe at the RC Pop Up Experience.

RC SHOW WATER STATIONS

Bring your water bottle and stay hydrated as you explore the RC Show floor!

PRESENTED BY BUNN

Restaurants Canada

The voice of foodservice | La voix des services alimentaires

Restaurants Canada is proud to welcome you to **RC Show 2024: Level Up**. This is our chance to come together to learn, connect and celebrate the best of Canadian hospitality and foodservice.

JOIN US:
Learn about Restaurants Canada Member Benefits including industry advocacy efforts and updates, exclusive member benefits and cost-savings programs, industry events and education and leading industry research, data and insights.

ENGAGE WITH US:
Capture your #RCShow experience in front of the Restaurants Canada photo wall and share your Show and event highlights.

VISIT US: Booth #2001

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