Sandwich for All Seasons
Andrew Pyper’s WQW faves

‘The New Passing of the Joint’
Geddy Lee on wine

Cheap Brunch Dates

Coq and Roll
Mark Thuet flies solo

Get Organic
A new reason not to eat crap

Coffee Bean Throwdown
4 contenders > 1 winner
“Traditional, hands-on family winery with a talented winemaker. One of Niagara’s best for sure.”

Bill Munnely, Billy’s Best Bottles

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COFFEE IS THE MOST-HEAVILY SPRAYED FOOD CROP IN THE WORLD. KINDA LEAVES A BITTER TASTE IN YOUR MOUTH, DOESN’T IT?

If you think pesticides are bad, wait ’til you hear our next nasty stat: coffee production is the number two cause of rain forest destruction. So how, in clear conscience, can you keep drinking joe? Easy. Think 100% organic Cuban coffee. In Cuba, not only is the entire island pesticide-free, but coffee trees are grown only under the canopy of other trees—and never at the expense of rain forest. To find out where to buy Cuban coffee, call the Merchants of Green Coffee at 416.778.6600 or visit Cubanocoffee.com

Don’t miss the Cuban Coffee Party April 9th! Details at Cubanocoffee.com
Can you name the best meal you ever had? The best wine? The best cheese? I hope not, because food shouldn’t be measured in absolute terms. Oh, sure, there can be healthy competition — who makes the best coffee or icewine — but we mustn’t get carried away with superlatives and ego. It’s been said that the cynic knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. How sad to be cynical about something as lovely as food.

A friend once told me he didn’t like pasta. But on a holiday in Italy, he fell in love with it. “Turns out I just didn’t like shitty pasta,” he said. City Bites doesn’t like shitty pasta either. So we’ll highlight the great food emporia of Toronto and recognize the people who are creating superior products, from farmer to restaurateur. We won’t be puffy and self-congratulatory. We’ve got lip, but we will wield our acid tongue for good, not evil.

Why a food magazine? The idea sprung up as we stood in front of a giant smoker at the Calgary Stampede last summer. My partners — two guys who run the Parkdale Liberty newspaper — and I did some research. That is, we hunkered down at the pub and kicked around some ideas. What the hell, let’s take a shot.

We’d do a magazine about food and drink in Toronto. We’d focus on the downtown core. We’d impose our warped sense of humour. We’d never use the term “foodies.” (On page 28, novelist Andrew Pyper sums up the problem with “foodies” nicely.) We’d run articles by great writers. Some amazing people have come on board and offered support. I know why: food makes people feel good. Food can be artful, evocative, inspiring. This we sometimes forget, wrapped up in the day-to-day speed of life and a crappy takeout salad. Let’s discuss it over a glass of wine.

— Dick Snyder

Andrew Pyper offers the goods at Bar One.

Dessert

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FreshBites

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Cover photo: Finn O’Hara

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You can also reach us at 416-415-5000, ext. 3333, or citylife@gbrownc.on.ca

George Brown
The Toronto City College

Dick Snyder
Coq of the Walk
Mark Thuet flexes muscle on King West
By Dick Snyder
Is he a bad boy or isn’t he? Does anyone really care? The famous and famously infamous Mark Thuet — depending on what articles you read, see for yourself on his website — finally opened his own joint in March along King Street West’s burgeoning restaurant row. A Valentine’s Day invite-only preview allowed a select few to taste his debut fare ($140 for seven courses, paired with wines).

Each course was a delight, a towering trio of fennel-sauced seafood a highlight. Thuet’s wife and business partner, Biana Zorich, paired each course with inspired wine choices that leaned to Alsace, California and Italy. And she maintained a steady eye on the service, which was jovial yet letter-perfect.

Perhaps the real point of the exercise was to give the Opening Soon TV crew something to shoot, given that the real “big day” — delayed by the usual license hassles, as well as a new city bylaw banning any new bars or restaurants in the area — was still weeks away. (If the show’s report on the Drake’s opening last year is any indication, this episode will feature a similar, shall we say, bending of the timeline for dramatic purposes.)

The big and beautiful room is dressed in dark wood and accented in cream linens. Perhaps the real point of the exercise was to give the TV crew something to shoot, given that the real “big day” — delayed by the usual license hassles, as well as a new city bylaw banning any new bars or restaurants in the area — was still weeks away. (If the show’s report on the Drake’s opening last year is any indication, this episode will feature a similar, shall we say, bending of the timeline for dramatic purposes.)

The city’s exotic cheese pioneer Fatos Pristine brings the full weight of his family-run Cheese Boutique to the posh surrounds of Truffles in the Four Seasons. Dinner will run Cheese Boutique to the posh surrounds of Truffles in the Four Seasons. Dinner will run Cheese Boutique to the posh surrounds of Truffles in the Four Seasons. Dinner will run Cheese Boutique to the posh surrounds of Truffles in the Four Seasons. Dinner will run Cheese Boutique to the posh surrounds of Truffles in the Four Seasons.

April 12
Canadian Premium and Rare Reds with Guest Speaker Derek Barnett
The Toronto Vintners Club hosts a Canadian wine smackdown, with Ontario versus B.C. in a lesson hosted by Derek Barnett, former Southbrook winemaker who now plies his trade at Lailey Vineyards. Premium wines, rare finds and award winners will provide ample fodder for discussion. What? An $80 Canadian wine? Taste and learn. Full list of wines at the website. Arrive promptly at 6:15. 548 members; 56 guests. The Ontario Club, Fifth Floor, Commerce Court South, 416-209-1467, torontovintners.org.

April 13
California Wine Fair
A big event for big wines — 100 of the state’s best producers come to pour and batter about 400 wines at this annual event presented by the United States Consul General and the Wine Institute of California. Silent Auction to benefit Arts Etobicoke. $50. Royal York Hotel, 100 Front St. W., 905-338-8932, calwine@sympatico.ca.

April 18
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April 28
Truffles & Cheese Boutique Wine Dinner
The city’s exotic cheese pioneer Fatos Pristine brings the full weight of his family-run Cheese Boutique to the posh surrounds of Truffles in the Four Seasons. Dinner will focus on old-world cheeses paired with appropriate regional wines. Cocktails at 6:30; dinner at 7. $145, plus tax and tip. Four Seasons Hotel, 700 Bloor St. W., 416-928-8932, calwine@sympatico.ca.

Do Eat Drink
April 8 – 10
Toronto Wine & Cheese Show
An annual extravaganza of food, wine, beer, cheese…. you name it — as long as it can fit in your mouth, it’s there. So yes, there’s a cigar lounge too. Live demonstrations and seminars along with hundreds of food producers, retailers and purveyors make the TWCS worth the trip to the airport. 50+ 50 cents tasting ticket. International Centre, 9600 Airport Road, Mississauga, 416-229-2050, twwineandcheese.com.

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April 29
Ontario Wine Awards Gala Dinner
Ten years running, our own wine guru Tony Aspler has shepherded this judgment of the province’s best wines. The event moves to Niagara-on-the-Lake this year (venue TBA), which bodes well — proximity to the lifeblood of the vines should bring added magic. Ticket prices TBA. tony.aspler@sympatico.ca.

April 30
Ontario Wine Dinner with Konzelman
Chef Tomas Riding of the Sam Jakes Inn teams up with winemaker Hugh Kruzel to present a five-course meal with specially selected Konzelman wines. $75, including gratuities. 118 Main St. E., Merrickville, 800-567-4667, samjakesinn.com.

May 11 – 15
Santé: The Bloor-Yorkville Wine Festival
Big, rich, fabulous, and more than a bit tipsy — the hobs rub shoulders with the nobs at a gazillion events, from gala dinners to seminars for wine eggheads and novices alike. Guest chefs and international winemakers set the scene and the theme: keep an open mind and drink everything in sight. 416-928-3553 ext. 27, www.santewinefestival.net.

May 18
Lesson: Joanne Yolles of Pangea
Toronto’s rock star of pastry — she’s worked magic at Fenton’s, Scaramouche and Pangea on Bay Street — will bestow her expertise on 10 lucky students in a demystifying and tip-laden session. Call now! Wednesday, May 18, 6:15 – 8:45 p.m., $110. Great Cooks and The T Spot, The Bay Queen Street, 176 Yonge St., Lower Level, 416-861-4727, greatcooks.ca.

NewsBites

A tiny new restaurant opening on 504 Adelaide W. at Portland promises “great food in an ugly building,” according to a sign in the window. Eat Me — yes, that’s the name — proffers a full range of cuisine, from breakfast to late-night grub. It’s a construction disaster in there right now, so expect doors to open late spring...

The new vintage of our favourite New Zealand pinot noir will be available in May from Diamond Estates (416-498-4922, diamondwines.com). The Koura Bay Awatere Valley 2003 ($39.95) is subtly rich and elegantly styled in an old world meets new world kind of way; great for food...

Speaking of wine, anecdotal evidence suggests that Sideways — you know, that wine movie — is having a detrimental effect on sales of merlot, the result of the main character’s anti-merlot rant. His rapturous opinion of pinot noir has driven that grape’s U.S. sales up 15 per cent...

Jason Woodside is now part owner of Oyster Boy on Queen West, after putting in eight years as product manager. The deft left-hander took first place at the national oyster shucking competition last year in Tyne Valley, PEI, and placed tenth at the Galway International Oyster Festival in September...

BYO may take awhile to reach critical mass, but it seems to be kick-starting some creative thinking about wine service. Located on Parliament Street beside the Ben Wicks Pub, the new Left Door restaurant (leftdoor.com) sports a card of wines marked up just $10 over LCBO prices. What’s more, with 48 hours notice, they will go out and buy any wine you want, and still only charge the $10 fee...

Here’s a cause we love: Bag-A-Cork, run by the Girl Guides, collects used wine stoppers and recycles them, diverting a portion of the estimated 100 million corks that hit Ontario landfills each year. The Guides place collection bins at wine-oriented businesses such as the LCBO, Inniskillin, Jackson-Triggs, Ruth’s Chris, the CVA, Il Mulino, Oso, Crush and George. A full list of partners can be found at bag-a-cork.org...

Leading the pro-carb back-backlash is a little virtual outfit called Zivot’s Good Carbs, run by entrepreneurial all-natural-muffin man David Zivot. He’s testing interest in his product by offering four muffins (and these are big muffins) for a mere $3 delivery charge. The delivery zone is south of Queen from Dufferin to Parliament. If all goes well, he plans to open a retail store. Place your order at zivotsgoodcarbs.com.

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City Bites
Tasting Throwdown

City Bites’ blind evaluation of beans — three locally roasted and one imported ringer — is the first of an ongoing series of taste-offs

By Tom Gierasimczuk

The Test Market
A trifecta of coffee hounds who stopped drinking Tim Horton’s right around the same time they ditched the Wild Cat for micro brews; equal parts coffee-deprived (it was, after all, almost three hours since we woke), hung over (it was, after all, Saturday morning); and curious (the beans were unmarked, labeled only with a cryptic number 1 through 4).

The Evaluation
Although borrowing heavily from cribbed wine terminology (mostly Paul Giannati’s), some adjectives appeared unforced — as if the java-soaked palate took over the vocal chords and articulated what a cloudy head could not.

1. The beans were medium, regularly roasted and quite dry. The first sip was lightly woody, with a subtle lingering bitterness. It was a mid-bodied, bright number with very little aftertaste. There were no overpowering flavours and its slight tanginess was almost palate-cleansing. Its balance was enjoyable sip after sip, even to those who subject their coffee to milk and sweeteners.

2. The beans were noticeably oily. This was likely a Full City roast. The initial sip tasted of caramel and slight chocolate accents… definitely full-bodied taste with a heavy viscosity that enveloped the tongue. The fragrant aroma hinted at the sweet, warm characteristics of the bean.

3. The beans were very oily — probably a French roast. Once ground, the coffee filled the room with a pungent scent reminiscent of a Bastille Café. The first sip was a divine assault of chocolate, nuts and a mellowed complexity that refused to finish. This full-bodied masterpiece had one lactose-dependent tester offering the contents of his wallet for some steamed whole milk.

4. A Full City roast with an exceptionally smooth and balanced flavour. The mellowed acidity kept it from rolling over with subsequent sips. An incredibly balanced, almost Bordeaux-like subtlety.

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The winner is…

City Bites

And the winner is…

Coffee
Perhaps its pungent slap was just what the lingering Red Bull and Vodka ordered, but this coffee grabs the palate and refuses to let go. To drink this harshed is to disrespect the artist roaster — and your digestive track.

Drink & Shut Up
The essential lessons of bartending can never be taught in school

By Tanya Cole

The strangest drink I was ever asked to make was a scotch and milk. I sent the not-so-swift waitress back to the table three times to check the order. Turned out it was for a 70-year-old alcoholic with an ulcer.

I’ve had a zillion and one customers order a shot of Cuervo Gold with a slice of lemon and a salt shaker. Only one dumped the contents of the shaker on the bar, cut it into lines with a credit card and smothered the salt up his nose. Shot back the tequila and squeezed the lemon in his eye. It’s called a Suicide Shot.

I’ve made a Slow Comfortable Screw Up Against the Wall for a guy I could have sworn was just bring an asshole. I’ve had a gaggle of giggling girls order a round of Red Headed Sluts and a group of jocks order frothy shooters that taste like bubble gum. I’ve watched customers poke into their freshly drained pint glasses, at the bar, and then ask for a shot of peppermint schnapps to freshen up. I’ve served a well-poured Guinness with a shot of grenadine and been paid fifty bucks to spit into a thirty dollar shot of scotch and watch the guy down it in one.

I’ve worked in this industry for more than 15 years and I am reluctant to say there isn’t much I haven’t done to butcher spirits in the name of customer satisfaction. And of course be rewarded with a generous tip.

Inevitably a customer blasted with arrogance will stroll into the bar hoping to stump me with some obscure drink that he probably invented in the wee hours from the dregs of his parent’s liquor cabinet. Or he just saw Cocktail and thinks he’s clever. Good bartenders — ones who’ve been in the biz for years — don’t give a shit about these jackasses. If you can muster up some contorted cocktail that we’ve never heard of and would never drink, good on ya. We’re just pouring the booze, not inventing it.

The problems arise when some showboater orders a Frozen Purple Parrot’s Nest during a slamming busy night and then brings on the attitude. I have been in this industry far too long for this. My memory is full of cocktail and shooter recipes whose nuances change from bar to bar, and whose appropriate glassware depends on the speed of the dishwasher. If you can tell me what’s in a Frozen Purple Parrot’s Nest before the guy standing behind you can perform the international hand signal for a bottle of beer, then you’ll get your cocktail. Otherwise step aside. I’ve got real customers to serve — the ones who won’t be spewing purple fluid out of there noses at 1:15.

In a different time, a drink order that stumped me made me feel inferior. These maintenance drinks. I’m okay with not knowing all there is to know about blended and shaken and strained and sugared and frozen and layered and frothy, pretty, sparkly drinks. And under no circumstances will you catch me tossing bottles behind my back and juggling shakers to the whoops and yells of idiot yahoos.

I will be more than happy to serve you a scotch and milk or a Red Headed Slut, but if you ask me how we make our twisted Mud Slides I’m gonna tell ya it’s a secret recipe that tastes uncannily like a rye and coke. And if that’s not to your liking, may I suggest the ever popular Suicide Shot. Happy drinking.

Tanya Cole tends bar in order to travel. She is currently somewhere in Asia, looking for an Internet café. 
Hole-in-the-Wall Chic

Sweaty Betty’s takes the ‘dive’ up a notch

By Leanne Delap

When the notoriously grubby bathrooms at the Gladstone were replaced last year with fancy porcelain stylings, the relentless pace of gentrification in the city’s west end could not be denied. Not only has the formerly grotty neighbourhood between the mental hospital and Dufferin been transformed by galleries large and small, but there are now velvet ropes at the Drake where once only crack-addled prostitutes dared to tread.

So the backlash had to come. Both locals and destination drinkers were donning Gucci to go to the Beaconsfield. Whither the slacker? Well, the Communist’s Daughter, at the godforsaken corner of Dundas and Ossington, has been doing land-office business at its Sally Ann-chic crokinole tables for a couple of years. Then came the Press Club, another beer, rail Scotch and gin joint even deeper into the Dundas desert at Euclid.

But it was with the arrival of Sweaty Betty’s at Ossington and Queen last November that the new hole-in-the-wall trend really took hold. Selena Cristo (former owner of Luft Gallery in the same space at 13 Ossington) and boyfriend Pol Williams (the guy who did Hive magazine) leased a building near the frantic smokers who chat furtively in the bus shelter at the corner.

From their residence upstairs, they set about building a bar they themselves would like to hang in. A rich coat of orangey-red paint, some elbow grease and ingenuity, and bang, a very cozy bar was born.

The logo is an intricate, gothy heart tattoo in an eagle’s clutches; tattoo art is the main decoration in the front room. A jukebox plays loud and unusual tunes, and most action centres around the bar itself. The couches and lamps are all trrouves from Selena’s hometown of Sudbury — where she says the Goodwills have not been raided for the best stuff.

I would recommend a real martini here: this is a hair-on-your-chest booze place, not some fancy cosmo castle. They do a nice absinthe ritual, and offer good whiskeys and sakes without pretense. They really mean it when they say Cheez Whiz, Nutella and Marmite sandwiches. Open nights, as well as weekend afternoons, which is a great idea — much better than a movie theatre to lose track of time and place.

Sweaty Betty’s, 13 Ossington Ave., 416-535-6861, sweatybettysbar.com

Smell the Love

From across the room, cheese beckons

By Andrew Hilton

I’ve always been curious about cheese — from a distance. Like a casual crush, I hadn’t really gotten to know cheese well. Attracted to its sophistication and complexity, I was limited to glances from across the room.

My wife saw the crush for what it was. This past Christmas she introduced me to someone who would facilitate an intimate meeting. I had been gifted an Andy Shay cheese box. When the box was placed in my lap — and I sensed the unmistakable barnyard pong — I realized cheese and I were going to get it on.

Shay’s boxes reflect a devotion to hooking people up with quality curd. His monthly delivery — couriered in a Styrofoam box — contains tips on tasting and storage, and a description and history of each cheese. Like a skilled matchmaker, he picks promising specimens, introduces them to his customer, and then helps break the ice.

The box contained a soft cow’s milk cheese, Prince de Jura, that tasted of the mountain grass the cows eat. A St. Marcellin was so creamy, it seemed easier to scoop it out with a finger. Tomme de Haut-Richelieu, a nutty Quebec goat’s milk cheese, will haunt me for years.

I ordered another box right away. February’s came featuring a washed-rind cheeses — strong-smelling, but delicate. Paradiso, a lovely sheep’s milk produced in Millbank, Ont., had a creamy, almost fluffy texture that encouraged obsessive consumption. Tomme de Grosse-Ile, an unpasteurized cheese from Quebec, was washed with local cider and had a lip-smacking, round barnyardy taste.

There are, of course, consequences with this level of intimacy. A Munster stunk up the kitchen with an eye-watering odour reminiscent of cat piss. But once I put it in my mouth, the pee was replaced by a silken dairy bitterness. Andy Shay has changed my life. My veins now flow with unpasteurized milk and my fridge smells like a barn. I have been well and truly hooked up.

Contact Shay Cheese at shay@interlog.com or call 647-274-5629.

Contact Shay Cheese at shay@interlog.com or call 647-274-5629.
Cheap and Over Easy
Four neighbourhood hangouts for a comfy brunch

By Angela Lawrence

In my world, Sunday just wouldn’t be Sunday without brunch with my best friends at a comfy restaurant that dishes out tasty wake-me-up fare. I love my Sunday brunch ritual so much that driving clear across the city is not out of the question. I now have favourite spots based on occasion (impress an out-of-town guest: Xacutti or the AGO’s Agora) and timing (Bonjour Brioche only after the noon-to-2 p.m. rush). However, the following are some of my go-early, wear-anything places. What they share is affordable, good food ($7 to $15, meal and coffee) and service, and something extra-special that makes them stand out.

The first time I visited Edward Levesque’s Kitchen (1290 Queen St. E., 416-465-4600) in burgeoning Leslieville, I wasn’t very impressed. Recently, I gave it another go, and thank god I did! It’s now my brunch spot du jour. Perhaps it’s the mix of young urbans, the backdrop of eclectic tunes (from Earth, Wind & Fire to Everything but the Girl), or the cheeky expanded menu that quietly notes, “Political, religious and cellphone discourse is discouraged.” Brunch leans to frittatas and perfect omelettes, such as my favourite, filled with sun-dried tomatoes and whipped herbed ricotta.

Down the road, the back patio at Verveine (1097 Queen St. E., 416-405-9906) is like a secret outdoor room, the perfect spot to while away a summer Sunday. Inside, large booths make for cozy dining, sleet, snow, rain or shine. This casually elegant restaurant offers delicious brunch specials and a menu that includes a refined lumberjack breakfast (if there is such a thing) with your choice of herbed farmer’s sausage or steak.

When I’m feeling a little bohemian, I head to Mitzi’s (100 Sorauren Ave., 416-588-1234) in Parkdale. Tucked at the corner of two residential streets, this place is small; the restaurant’s kitchen and dining areas are separated by a slim counter. This makes for great people watching and an easy atmosphere. I usually go for the scramble special, delivered with sliced fresh fruit and hearty whole-grain toast. When I throw carb caution to the wind, the eye-popping fruity pancakes or French toast specials fit the bill.

New to the scene, Morning Glory Café (457 King St. E., 416-703-4728) is located on a quiet strip of King East in Corktown. What makes this cheerful sliver of a restaurant — only 16 seats! — special is a short menu of cheap breakfast dishes ($4 to $8 for eggs, French toast, etc.) and lunches of sandwiches, salads and the like. The food is focused and the ingredients are fresh, with slow-tended soups and stews. I ordered the omelette of the day — a fantastic mix of brie and pear teamed with a potato rosti and bread baked fresh — boosted by a small pot of homemade aioli ketchup — dee-lish.

Eat Ontario

Touring for Food
Symposium examines culinary tourism in Ontario

By Samantha Maxwell

The Canadian Institute of Advanced Culinary Arts recently hosted a three-day Culinary Tourism Symposium — the first of its kind in Ontario — to stimulate discussion and plan the future of food tourism in the province.

Delegates came from all across Canada, including Sinclair Philip, who owns the Sooke Harbour House, a gourmet restaurant and inn on Vancouver Island renowned for using local ingredients. Chef Michael Stadtländer, who apprenticed at Sooke, made the trek from his Eigensinn Farm in Singhampton. There were also food producers, farmers, distributors and people from government and the hospitality industry.

“Culinary tourism is growing globally,” said Bill Allen, Ontario’s deputy minister of tourism and recreation. “It’s the experience people are looking for.”

Food activist and gastronomer Anita Stewart opened a roundtable with people in every facet of food production and tourism. “Gastronomy puts food and food products into the greater context of society,” she said. “In the contemporary world, good eating cannot be dismissed as trivial.”

Stewart pointed out that Ontario has 17,000 licensed restaurants, 120 farmers’ markets — and that the food industry has a $3.8 billion economic impact. In lively debate, a central question emerged: How can we put more Ontario-grown and processed foods on Ontario menus? “We must put learning about local, good food on the school curriculum from kindergarten on,” Stadtländer said, to applause from the audience.

culinarytourism.ca
Local Asparagus

By Trish Kalcius

I once dressed up as an asparagus for Halloween. It was during high school and I didn’t know that I was committing a seasonal faux pas. I would be the only Ontario-bred asparagus standing tall in late October.

Now I know that late spring is when local asparagus is plentiful and at its finest. Those slim green fellas gathered in tidy bunches at the neighbourhood grocer beg to be brought home. Ontario-grown is the way to go, for freshness and flavour. (Besides, why would you want to eat something that has more air miles than you do? Just think how you’d feel after a plane ride from Chile — tired, pale, dehydrated, fibrous....)

Steamed with a little butter and lemon juice, or blanched then tossed on the barbeque for a quick hit of grilled flavour, asparagus is quick and easy to prepare. A new favourite — with traditional roots — is baked lasagna with asparagus and pesto, which I found in (Iron Chef) Mario Batali’s Simple Italian Food.

Asparagus is a tactile vegetable. Snapping off the ends — to eliminate the lower woody bits — is surprisingly fulfilling. Don’t discount it as a crudités either. It makes an elegant dipper next to the common carrot. Would you be surprised to learn that asparagus is a member of the lily family? Now that’s good pedigree.

Timing: Look for Ontario-grown asparagus from mid-April to late-June.
Price: $1.99 – $2.79 per bunch.
Tip: Wrap trimmed spears in a damp paper towel, place in a paper bag and they will keep for up to three days in the fridge.

On Roots and Grapes

Chef Eric Madden has helmed the kitchen in many Toronto establishments over the years, and is now lost somewhere in the 705 region. He has been known to spit roast a whole pig on occasion for a friend’s wedding, and is always willing to dispense sage advice on the art of eating and drinking.

Beets
Roasting is the way to go. Boiling dilutes the beet in ’em. Spray a roasting pan with Pam (the kitchen slut) or rub with veg oil, the juice that leaks out is deadly to clean! Wash and do not cut the beets at all. Place washed beets in sprayed pan and roast at 350°F covered with foil. Golf balls take about an hour and 45 minutes. Check by sticking a toothpick in the biggest one. Beets are weird and there is no exact time to them being done. Sort of like Jerusalem artichokes. Peel them as soon as your hands will permit. Hands are not pretty after this. This job in a restaurant kitchen is usually delegated to someone that has a potential romantic liaison later that evening. If you are serving them cold, dress them while still warm. They drink in the dressing. Plain high-fat yoghurt works very well, as does rice vinegar and a neutral oil-like grape seed. Crumbled Bleu d’Avegnier or Fourme d’Ambert can be added when cold. Magic. Served hot, I like them with horseradish or fresh ginger and orange.

Burgundy
Good Burgundy is for me the ultimate. Once you have drunk a good Chambertin, La Tache or even a simple good Bourgogne Rouge from a decent maker like Rion, Aussie shiraz tastes like the fucking prune juice it is. Yellowtail can suck my dick. Overripe high-alcohol gunk with all the subtlety and nuance of a tarantula on an angel food cake. Best mixed with 7-Up and lemons or served as gluewein out of Dixie Cups where the outdoor activity takes precedence over the quality of the victual.

Timing: May 19.
Geddy Lee leads me down a spiral staircase leading under the kitchen of his downtown Toronto home. At the bottom there's a heavy wooden door and stone threshold, looking very much like a wine cellar should. I follow him inside and scan dozens of well-ordered vertical shelves that house his wines, mostly red, from the Rhone, Bordeaux and especially Burgundy.

“I'm a real Burgundy nut,” he offers enthusiastically. In my mind, Geddy Lee is the exact opposite of the stereotypical uptight wine geek. Touring became tourism.

“Isn’t it a wine cellar that Rocks!” By Greg Bolton

By any standard, it’s an impressive cellar, but it’s not the main attraction. “I built this one thinking it was bigger than I’d ever need, but...” His voice trails off as he chuckles sheepishly and walks down the hall. Arriving at another door — identical to the first — he takes out a key, opens the door and flips a switch. I emit a low whistle. “I’ve gotten a bit out of control,” he admits. A self-described obsessive, Lee resisted serious wine collecting for many years, fearing it might distract from his other commitments — “like my other obsessive hobbies,” he jokes — but about 15 years ago, he became intrigued by the more obscure wines in his collection, at that time about a hundred bottles or so. He hit the books, researching specific vintages and broadening his general knowledge. “You cannot read about wine for too long without getting thirsty,” he says. “So I started tasting these wines and cracking bottles that had been sitting in my cellar for all these years. And I just got hooked.”

“A wine cellar that Rocks!”

Established a far more civilized habit. “At a certain point,” Lee explains over a mug of coffee in his living room, “we were on the road all the time, and it was quite common for us to receive gifts from promoters.” Guitarist Alex Lifeson, Lee’s band-mate and lifelong friend, was by that time an avid wine collector, so when promoters asked about their backstage requirements, Lee says, “we would ask for wine.” Before long, Lee and Lifeson made wine appreciation part of their touring ritual, hunting for restaurants and wine stores became a way to explore new cities. Touring became tourism.

“I built this one thinking it was bigger than I’d ever need, but... I’ve gotten a bit out of control.”

He estimates his current collection — the size of which he’s “too embarrassed to admit” — is 50 per cent French, rounded out with German and Northern Italian selections. “And of course, Champagne,” he adds. Given the sheer size of his collection, I wonder aloud how he keeps track of the wines that are at their peak and ready to drink. “All in my head,” he says. “I used to keep an inventory on my computer, but I never used it.”

On his own or with his family, Lee takes regular trips to France and Italy, and participates in wine events across North America and abroad, sharing bottles with wine luminaries like Jancis Robinson, Michael Broadbent and Hugh Johnson.

Lee considers himself “fortunate” to be invited to such events, but the reputation he enjoys for his palate suggests he’s not out of place there: recently, he was asked to join the expert panel assembled by wine guru Mark Oldman for his award-winning and approachable guide, Oldman’s Guide to Outsmarting Wine.

“Can’t read about wine for too long without getting thirsty.”

On the home front, Lee thinks Toronto shows steady improvements a food and wine destination, boasting stellar chefs and deep, innovative cellars. As a collector who often dines out, he’s delighted with the new Ontario law allowing customers to bring their own wines, and he’s confident we’ll see more restaurants participate in future, especially at the higher end. A veteran of BYOW restaurants in other cities, he outlines the etiquette: call ahead to ensure the wine you bring is not on the restaurant’s list; be sure to order something from the house — bubbles to start, perhaps, or a Sauternes with dessert; finally, since the waiter’s not getting a cut of that ’85 Haut-Brion you finally decided to pop, tip well.

Dining out

The BYOW development aside, Lee fears that the ONGO’s monopoly on the industry hampers Toronto’s ability to grow as a serious wine town. “I don’t know why we

Lees’s cellar mixes heavily to France, with nods to Germany and Northern Italy.

with dessert; finally, since the waiter’s not getting a cut of that ’85 Haut-Brion you finally decided to pop, tip well. The BYOW development aside, Lee fears that the ONGO’s monopoly on the industry hampers Toronto’s ability to grow as a serious wine town. “I don’t know why we

See Geddy’s wine cellar page 13
Every Hipster Needs a Good Butcher

A little shop opens on a trendy strip, serving up organic food and traditional dishes. The cool kids seem to like it

By Harry Otis Parsons

The day finally arrived, as it does for most small businesses that are just starting out, several months late. But anticipation really does what the appetite for success, as Mario Fiorucci and Tara Longo discovered when they finally threw open the door of their year-in-the-making venture just a few weeks ago.

On their first day, they almost sold out of their artfully butchered, pristinely aged organic meat. The locals, who had watched in anticipation for the brown paper to come off the front windows, poured in right up until 7 p.m. closing time. Like kids in a candy store, they snatched up organic breads, cheeses, meats and prepared salads and stews. Dazed, a little surprised, but delighted, the two co-owners flitted about the store as customers oooed and ahhed. The Healthy Butcher hit a bull’s eye.

“We’re all about the cutting-edge chefs and the old-world cooks,” says Fiorucci, pointing out the glass-doored freezers stocked with frozen cannelloni, meat pies and burgers. He hired a hotshot young chef, Pedro dos Santos, schooled in the kitchens at Latitude and The Fifth. Dos Santos was let loose with a plan. It’s a “build-it-and-the-hipsters-will-come” kind of thing, but with the sound ingredients. People come home after a busy day at work and they don’t want to cook, but they want great food. That was us!”

The two pioneers bought their building on Queen — formerly Don’s Furniture — in June, and gutted it. Renovations continue on three apartments upstairs; Fiorucci and Longo will eventually move into one. Meanwhile, the customers are coming, business is booming, and the hipsters are finally getting what they need.

The Healthy Butcher, 595 Queen St. W., 416-674-2642, thehealthybutcher.com.

Geddy’s wine cellar

Continued from page 17

put up with it,” he mutters. At a mini-mum, Lee suggests opening the market to fine wine aficionados wanting to run small boutiques that wouldn’t represent major competition to the LCBO. “The fine wine end of things isn’t where they’re making their dough. So leave us alone,” he pleads with mock desperation. “Set us free, LCBO!”

Given the opportunity, Lee wouldn’t rule out opening such a boutique himself, or even following in the footsteps of celebrities like Francis Ford Coppola and Greg Norman, who have enjoyed successful second careers as vintners. “Every wine lover dreams about having their own vineyard,” he says, but for now it remains a retirement fantasy. Having broached the topic of future plans, I can’t resist asking him what he’d pull from his cellar that night if it was his last opportunity to uncork a bottle. He wrinkles his nose a bit. “Wine is for enjoying with friends,” he explains, and at his regular gatherings with fellow “wine nuts,” pretty much anything goes.

Having a skilled butcher in the shop means customers can get almost any cut they want; and if he can’t make it happen on the spot, he will find a way to do it next time. For Fiorucci, it’s about giving the customer exactly what he would want if he was on the other side of the counter.

And it’s the reason they opened the shop. “We live in the neighbourhood, and we know it’s growing. People want good quality ingredients. People come home after a busy day at work and they don’t want to cook, but they want great food. That was us!”

The two pioneers bought their building on Queen — formerly Don’s Furniture — in June, and gutted it. Renovations continue on three apartments upstairs; Fiorucci and Longo will eventually move into one. Meanwhile, the customers are coming, business is booming, and the hipsters are finally getting what they need.
The Cult of Curd

As a fetish for cheese sweeps the city, purveyors and educators will happily feed your every fatty indulgence

By Leanne Delap

Courtney Love, the infamous widow and lead singer from the punk band Hole, told Harper’s Bazaar early in her career that cheese is the root of all evil. Evil in a women’s magazine is code for weight gain. Of course, this was about the time Social Services was seizing her infant because she had told Vanity Fair about her heroin use. So one would assume her palate was a little wearied, and that curds would pretty much gross her out anyway.

Cheese does suffer a public-relations problem. Most of North America thinks cheese is actually orange, though mass-produced medium cheddar deserves to be relegated to the household slop bin. So, what do we do with something that is “bad” for us? Why, in the grand tradition of wine, Scotch, cigars, Manolo Blahniks and unprotected sex, there is a fabulous marketing opportunity: create a fetish and a connoisseur class.

Suddenly there is a race to be the first on your block (or in your boardroom) to mine cheese’s deeper veins. “Na-na-na-na-na, my cheese is the stinkiest, rarest, most authentically artisanal, impossible-to-get-your-greedy–little-hands-on wheel!”

Julia Rogers is a cheese expert who is heavily involved in the international and local Slow Food movement. The idea of SF is to rid the world of the fast and the crappy, and teach us to worship pure foods made by growers and craftspeople of integrity and authenticity. Rogers, in her work in cheese retail around town, has observed the broadening of the market for special cheeses made here. Quebec’s raw-milk makers, and Ontario’s goat-cheese makers draw her particular admiration and support. She and partner Tonia Wilson (a chef and sommelier) give classes and throw joint events with producers around town through their company, Cheese Culture (www.cheeseculture.ca). “In the same way that once people were exposed to wine there proved to be a tremendous, er, thirst for information, we are finding the same thing about fine cheeses. We are here to feed that need.”

Andy Shay of the adorably named Shay Cheese is another local stinky cheese proselytizer. He writes for gremolata.com and has recently done a fine job of compiling a cheese tour of Manhattan for the site. If you are hewing closer to home until winter finally clears, you can order a monthly box of Shay’s carefully selected artisanal cheeses online through the Gremolata site.

Perhaps the coolest cheese booster is a guy who goes by the Reality Bites-ish name “The Cheeseman.” He apparently will deliver your order on his bike. He states on his website (cheese-a-la-cart.com) a warm regard for Torontonians’ desire to know more about his cheesy passion: “I have found there exists a desire for knowledge about cheese as well as for cheese itself. Having worked in the restaurant industry for almost nine years I have watched the level of wine knowledge in the general public increase dramatically. I believe a similar rise in interest in cheese is occurring.”

Awesome, dude!

In the brick-and-mortar cheese-marketing area, we have many educated and passionate cheesemongers with walls. One of the early carriage-trade purveyors, All the Best Fine Foods (Julia Rogers cut her cheese teeth there), worked tirelessly to hook us on raw-milk cultures. The small but impeccably maintained cheese case is a treasure. Summerhill Market down the street in Rosedale also has a fine cheese counter, but my vote for best of the city is Cheese Boutique on the Kingsway, where you will find a range to rival even the best restaurants. (On that note, the cheese trolley at The Fifth is easily the best way to finish a gourmet meal, served perfectly every time; there is always a runny Epoisse on hand, to be slurped off your baguette and then sent off to your stomach with a fine belt of aged Porto.)

Among the larger spots, Whole Foods (where Rogers works now), has some yummy picks, plus organic offerings. The Alex Farm chain has appropriately obsessive yet approachable staff. And Panoteria’s has nice, if often pre-portioned and wrapped, curds of requisite high milk, goat, sheep or exotic fat content. No doubt Ms. Love would not approve.

A cheese line, from left: Two goat’s milk cheeses by Chaput (Montreal); Le Petit Basque (France); and Le Gamin (New Brunswick). All from Chris’s Cheesemongers in St. Lawrence Market.
Organics

Share and Share Alike

Make friends with an organic farmer and eat well all summer

By Alo Stone

In the entryway of a home converted from an old drive shed up in Garden Hill there’s a sign that reads “If you ate today, thank a farmer.” Fitting, since the land, backing onto the beautiful Ganaraska Forest an hour outside Toronto, is where Sherry Patterson first got her Chick-a-Biddy Acres farm off the ground (or in the ground, as it were).

Chick-a-Biddy is a small, organic operation, part of a network of like-minded, food-growing revolutionaries who refer to their farming structure as Community Shared Agriculture (sometimes the S in CSA stands for “supported,” depending on who you talk to). The system links the eater directly with the grower, providing the farmer a living wage and the consumer the freshest possible produce. City folk in downtown Toronto buy a share of the farmer’s crop, and each week from May to October the farmer delivers the picked that-morning bounty, usually to a central drop-off spot in someone’s backyard.

The economics speak for themselves. By pre-selling shares each season, the farmer can calculate exactly how much to grow, and get paid upfront to cover seed and operating costs. Patterson has been planning the new growing season for months. The leeks went in a few weeks ago, followed closely by onions, scallions and parley. Last year, at her two drop-off locations in the west end of the city, shareholders picked up giant heads of romaine, delicate tomatillos and grab-all-you-can fresh herbs (no limit, save for decorum). There’s always a table of free goods — usually herbs and unusual veg — while the rest are portioned out self-serve style. A giant blackboard lists each person’s allotment: a pound of carrots, three heads of lettuce, five heirloom tomatoes. The math can get overwhelming, but no one seems to mind. People meet, chat, trade celeriac for basil, exchange advice on cooking a strange tuber... and then disappear one seems to mind. People meet, chat, trade celeriac for basil, exchange advice on cooking a strange tuber... and then disappear.

Chick-a-Biddy also has free-range chickens, available by special order, and there are often samples of cheese and other goodies like goat’s butter to try, and order for next week. Patterson has been planning the new growing season for months. The leeks went in a few weeks ago, followed closely by onions, scallions and parley. Last year, at her two drop-off locations in the west end of the city, shareholders picked up giant heads of romaine, delicate tomatillos and grab-all-you-can fresh herbs (no limit, save for decorum). There’s always a table of free goods — usually herbs and unusual veg — while the rest are portioned out self-serve style. A giant blackboard lists each person’s allotment: a pound of carrots, three heads of lettuce, five heirloom tomatoes. The math can get overwhelming, but no one seems to mind. People meet, chat, trade celeriac for basil, exchange advice on cooking a strange tuber... and then disappear.

The seasonal helpers bring some needed muscle. “Jesse [one of Chick-a-Biddy’s helpers] came to me through [my partner] Adina. She was treating Jesse’s wife for Chinese medicine and there was farming experience in his background, but he had never done the hands-on work. Last year I had a student with me from April to October and for this season I’m still looking.” And with not much time left. The season has already started. Patterson has set up the CSA system with about 1,000 CSAs in North America.

This is the sixth year of Chick-a-Biddy and I am expecting to make friends with an organic farmer and eat well all summer

“Make friends with an organic farmer and eat well all summer,” she says. “If you’re ready to eat with your conscience, get in touch ASAP, as shares sell out fast: the closer we get to spring. Check out www.planetenfriendly.net/organic for more organic resources and CSAs that operate outside the GTA.”

Chick-a-Biddy

Sherry Patterson delivers to two west end Toronto locations once a week. Chick-a-Biddy shares can also be found at For Life Natural Food in Kensington Market, at the corner of Augusta and Nassau. (Full share, $565; half, $375.) Contact Patterson at 705-896-3165 or try emailing her at chick_a_biddy@hotmail.com. “Keep in mind that busy farmers don’t spend a lot of time on the internet.”

Plan B Organic Farm

Rodrigo and Alvaro Venturelli have been growing on their land since 1998 and deliver to Parkdale and High Park — a quick jaunt from their Hamilton farm. (Full share, $700; half, $400.) Give them a call at 905-659-2572 or email planb@execulink.com.

Thurston Organic Farm

A small-scale operation located in Oxford (Kawartha Lakes), about 120 kilometres north of Toronto, this farm has been certified organic since 2002 and delivers weekly to Toronto. (Family share, $550; single share, $340.) Check out these web-savvy farmers at www.thurstonorganicfarm.com or call 705-793-2372.

Sources

There are only a handful of CSAs that service the GTA. Some, like Chick-a-Biddy, deliver to a central location; others will come right to your door. If you’re ready to eat with your conscience, get in touch ASAP, as shares sell out fast: the closer we get to spring. Check out www.planetenfriendly.net/organic for more organic resources and CSAs that operate outside the GTA.

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Sources
Two for One
Sommelier duo raises the wine bar
By Alan McGinty

Okay, so they’re both named Szabo, and both sommeliers... but that’s where the similarity ends. And they’re not relating to each other. “Szabo in Hungary is like Smith here,” says John Szabo. The other one, Zoltan, is Transylvanian, which sounds scarier than it is.

Their synergies may be unassuming (if you’re from Eastern Europe), but these two young sommeliers recently paired up to form a consulting service aimed at boosting the quality of wine lists and wine service in Toronto. And talk about bringing out the big guns: John is Canada’s first Master Sommelier and Zoltan is going after his Diploma from the Wine & Spirit Education Trust, a path that will eventually lead to the Master designation.

Both are experts on food/wine pairings. Zoltan favours organ-ic or “biodynamic” wine, including unfiltered wines. “I want the winemaker to add as little as possible to my wine. Some winemakers prefer filtered for its clearer, brighter colours, but you lose flavour, some extract and some concentration.”

If nothing else, these guys will knock the image of wine geeks sideways. Zoltan — who is effusively enthusiastic about, well, everything — also promotes the Slow Food movement. “Slow Food doesn’t mean digging out mom’s Crock-Pot and boiling up cheap cuts of meat for 12 hours: it means, says Zoltan, “slowing down your life, taking the time to use fresh foods... I promote market fresh cuisine and avoiding processed foods. I encourage everyone to move towards healthy eating and drinking habits.”

Jackson-Triggs reigns at Cuvée

By Alan McGinty

There are lots of Canadian wine awards, but only one calls itself the industry’s “Oscars.” That’s because the 200 entries at the Cuvée Wine Awards are judged by a panel of peers — the winemakers themselves — in a series of tastings that narrow the field. Winners for 2005 were announced in March at a sold-out gala in Niagara. Tom Seaver of Jackson-Triggs walked away with the most hardware, “good for red grapes. Jackson-Triggs’ sparkling wine win justifies the amount of care and money spent on their stunning ultramodern winery just outside of very traditional Niagara-on-the-Lake. “All the grapes for that sparkling wine came from right around the winery,” said Seaver.

For restaurants, the Szabo & Szabo alliance is a win-win situation. These sommeliers even come with a money-back guarantee. “If you don’t sell more wine after working with us, we will give you your money back,” says Zoltan. Sounds like an offer that can’t be refused.

Dine With Lenko

A select list of restaurants carrying Lenko’s wines (but call ahead to make sure):

- Reds
  - Pangea
  - Canoe
  - Bif’s
  - Ogilve Bay
  - Via Allegro
  - Queen’s Pasta Cafe
- Whites
  - Beaver Cafe
  - Bardi’s Steak House
  - The Hot House Cafe
  - Bardi’s Steak House
  - The Hot House Cafe

For a list of the 2005 releases, and a map, go to daniellenko.com
Washington Invasion

Expect a deluge from our wine-savvy southern friends

By Dick Snyder

There’s much power in Washington these days. Nominally the top-toting Bush and his D.C. strongmen — it’s the invading forces of left-coast leaning Washington State and the winemakers from the regions of Yakima, Walla Walla and Puget Sound that merit attention.

It’s important stuff, this wine, despite the funny sounding names. While not the everyday plonk for the Little Penguin set, these wines are, on the whole, easy to approach, demanding little more than curiosity and an open mind. From quaffable merlots to esoteric and expensive Bordeaux-style blends, Washington is having it both ways. There are approachable wines for the commercial market and idiosyncratic wines for the hedonists.

For Ontarians, the problem right now is finding them. The bigger commercial operations such as Chateau Ste. Michelle, Columbia Crest, Kiona and Hogue are usually present on LCBO and Vintages shelves in limited quantities, but smaller operations are noticeably absent. This could soon change. In a recent visit to Toronto, the Washington Wine Commission put on an impeccably executed tasting for trade and media in an effort to open up palates and wallets.

Spurred by four terrific growing seasons in a row, Washington’s wines are solidifying a profile that is more French than Californian. The state sits atop Oregon, and much of the wine-growing regions fall along the southern extension of BC’s Okanagan Valley.

Washington’s cool climate actually enjoys two more hours of sunlight each day of the growing season than warmer California, arguably bringing fuller ripeness to the grapes. But cooler nights and an earlier fall season temper this effect, so the wines aren’t too fruit-forward or cloyingly sweet. Mineral notes from the sandy and rocky soil come through, adding complexity to the flavours, even among the lower-priced wines.

At the trade tasting of two whites and two reds, the wines asserted a definite Washington style. “The front end is fruity and oaky, but the back has a drier mineral feel that’s more like Bordeaux,” said Wine Access magazine’s David Lawson, who led the tutored tasting session. The state’s wine regions are on a latitude that bisects Burgundy and Bordeaux, but the mineral character is due more to careful crop management and the cooler climate.

Merlot dominates in Washington bottles, but often with small percentages of cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc (even if merlot is the only grape variety identified on the label). Syrah is gaining in popularity, as Washington jumps on the bandwagon for this populist grape.

Smaller quantities of sangiovese, pinot noir, gewurztraminer and pinot gris are also grown.

While it’s far from California’s monstrous output, Washington is officially the second largest wine-grower in the United States. The modern industry goes back to the 1960s, and the first wine grapes were planted by the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1853. Today, expansion continues apace: there are more than 300 wineries in Washington in 2005, compared to 270 last year, and growth will likely continue at about 10 per cent each year. Sooner or later, this stuff is going to hit our shelves in a big way.
Best of the West

Lots of eats and a dog-friendly deli keep Andrew Pyper in the 'hood

Ah, West Queen West — still the outlaw frontier of downtown, even with the street signs sporting a WQW insignia. It may be a quaint and thrilling adventure for the fur-and-Jaguar set, but some people actually live — and eat — here. For instance: renowned, respected and much-loved novelist Andrew Pyper, his wife Heidi Rittenhouse, and their dog Madox. The three are tucked away comfortably on a little street of row houses near Queen and Bathurst. Pyper has spent several summers in the Yukon researching and writing his new novel, *The Wildfire Season* (HarperCollins), due out in late April. That experience makes WQW seem like a walk in the park — with better foraging.

How important is food in your new novel?
The *Wildfire Season* is set in a remote community in the northern Yukon, so of course, moose burgers play an essential role.

Have you ever shot and eaten something? Never. Only things that others have. Lots of moose and, once, bear (it was nasty).

Will you ever set a novel in a diner? Unlikely, though I can write anywhere, including diners.

Do you consider food to be art or simply sustenance? Depends who’s doing the cooking.

Okay, tell us about your neighbourhood. Finish these sentences:

You’re shaking, weak with hunger and need to eat something now. You grab your coat and run to…

Ghandhi Take-out for their awesome butter chicken roti.

You rented *Super Size Me* and polished off a huge… takeout traditional turkey dinner from Shanghai Cowgirl. It was Thanks-giving, and nobody wanted to cook.

It’s after midnight, you’ve been at some glamorous media party thingy all night and they ran out of food. You grab a taxi and head for… the corner store for Miss Vickie’s salt-and-vinegar.

Fill in the blanks: “I actually hate BADLY MADE RISOTTO even more than sun-dried tomatoes.”

When they offer a choice between chocolate cake and the cheese plate, you pick… the cheese plate.

When in the market, but it’s fun watching the hot staff at…

the Beaconsfield.

You let your dog Madox choose the restaurant, he goes straight to…

the Prague Deli. There’s a nice lady there who gives him ham.

There actually is a $5 lunch! It’s at…

Pizzaiolo.

The best deal in the hood is at…

Bar One. The whole menu there is surprisingly affordable.

You really wish there was a place close by serving…

good Thai food (the options on Queen West are dreadful).

For great coffee and a place to read the paper, you hit…

my sofa.

The thing that drives you crazy about “foodies” is… their complete inability to enjoy good crap.

On your strip

Where’s the best:

Pizza Pizzaiolo (for “American” ‘za), and Terroni (for “real” ‘za).

Burger The Paddock (you have to ask for it, because it’s often not on the menu).

Grilled cheese Shanghai Cowgirl.

Haut cuisine Bymark.

Wine list Spoke Club.

Cocktail The Paddock (“great bourbon Manhattan”).

Pinball machine The Done Right Inn.

Jukebox None, sadly. (Check out Sweaty Betty’s on Ossington – editor).

People watching The Drake.

On the Block
Come join us for...

BRUNCH, LUNCH, DINNER, CINQ À SEPT, LATE NIGHT.

133 JOHN ST.
416 595 8201