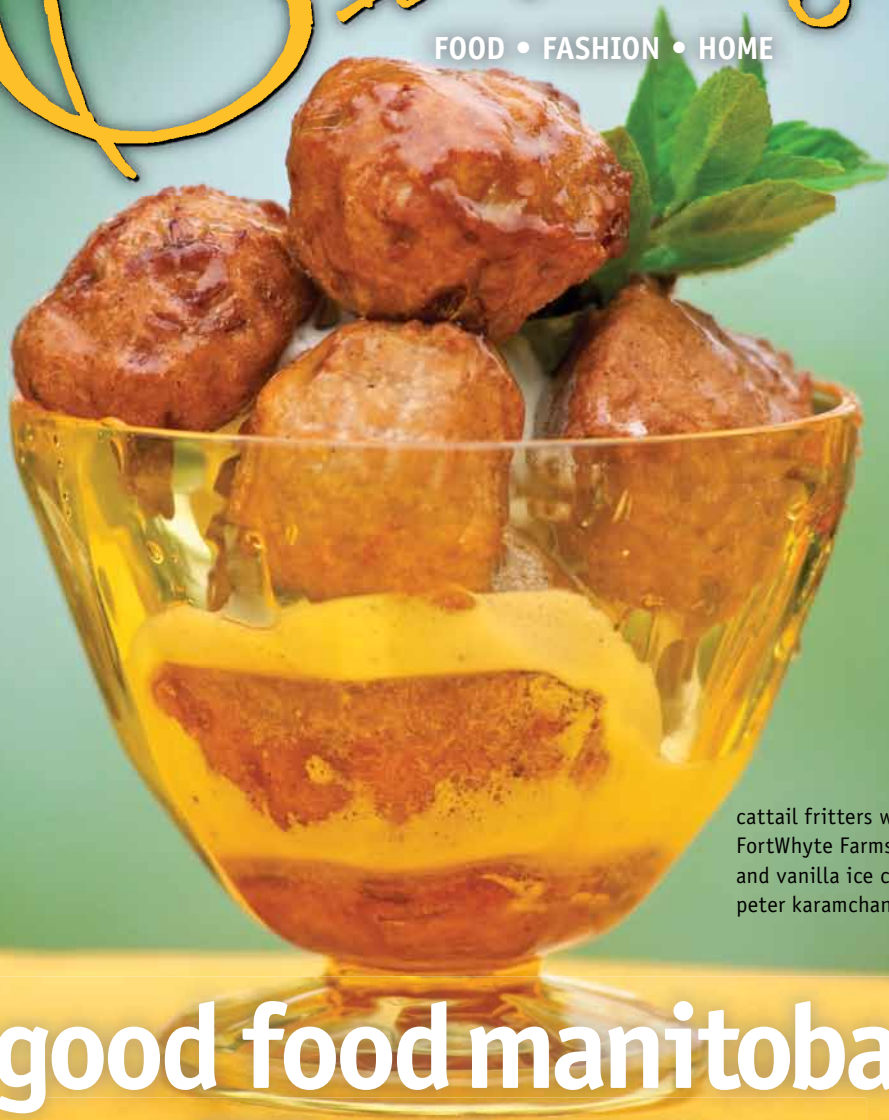


two thousand nine
august/september

CIAO!

FOOD • FASHION • HOME

PM #40010531



cattail fritters with
FortWhyte Farms honey
and vanilla ice cream: chef
peter karamchand

good food manitoba

2009 award winners

dive into barbeque • top tables

in the **kitchen**



back to nature



restaurant of the year:
buffalo stone café

Ciao! magazine's annual awards for producer, retailer and restaurant of the year celebrate regional ingredients



by Nisha Tuli

Here is a home where buffalo still roam. Every spring, cinnamon-coloured calves emerge from the safety of their mothers' wombs, blinking into the bright sunlight of FortWhyte Alive. Not far away, the sound of the highway buzzes quietly in the background. This juxtaposition is at the heart of the FortWhyte philosophy, one that seeks to preserve the connection between man and nature.

Located just minutes from the traffic of Kenaston and McGillivray, this 600-acre swath of land embodies an ecosystem that represents Manitoba's distinct geography—it is both alive with beauty and provides food in abundance. The lake teems with fish ready to be hooked; the forest floor bristles with mushrooms prized by foragers; the wetlands sway with cattails moving side by side in the wind; and the vast prairie provides a bounty of fruits, vegetables and livestock.



**CHEF PETER KARAMCHAND'S
FORTWHYTE-INSPIRED MENU:**

- Sweet potato soup with ginger and lime
- Almond chicken pasta
- Bison tenderloin with mini-Yorkshire pudding
- Cattail fritters





Wilma Wiens (second from left), Dan Wiens (bottom), Wiens Shared Farm

producer of the year: wiens shared farm

Dan and Wilma Wiens launched their community shared agriculture (CSA) farm in 1992 as a way to reconnect farmers and consumers. In fact, Wiens Shared Farm was the first of its kind in western Canada and one of the first in the country. Today, the CSA movement has grown to include more than 400 farms in Canada and another 2,000 in the United States.

The idea came in the winter of 1991, when Dan and Wilma regularly met with a group interested in developing a farming system that respects the environment, economy and people. Out of these discussions, the Wiens decided to sell “shares” in their farm, located just south of Winnipeg in St. Germain South.

For \$400, sharers receive a box each week filled with fresh local produce. Dan Wiens says share price is not based on grocery store prices, but one that is fair to the consumer and farmer. The eight-acre organic garden produces fruit, vegetables and herbs including: dill, cilantro, basil, kale, lettuce, corn, carrots, raspberries and apples. Boxes are delivered from June to September to a set pick-up point in the city where consumers can talk to Wiens. As a result, sharers have a vested interest in the risks and rewards of farming. Wiens also encourages them to visit the farm and help out. It’s this commitment to shortening the food chain that earned Wiens Shared Farm this year’s Good Food Manitoba Award for Producer of the Year.

The Wiens’ farm has generated a lot of buzz in the academic community. Last year, university professors from Japan visited to learn how CSAs started. Also, around 6-10 apprentices line up to work each growing season. Some of these students end up around the world setting up shared farms.

There are currently 36 shareholders, including members who have participated from the beginning. Wiens says sharers love the freshness, the personal connection with the producer and the idea of eating in-season versus on-demand. Despite the growing popularity of CSAs, the family prefers to keep their operation small. “What we would like to see is other farms doing it,” says Wiens. “We don’t always feel bigger is better.”

in the kitchen

These gifts of the land come together at FortWhyte’s Buffalo Stone Café. For its commitment to preserving our province’s natural environment and the harvest it provides, Buffalo Stone Café has earned this year’s Good Food Manitoba Award for Restaurant of the Year.

When Chef Peter Karamchand arrived at the small cafe nine years ago, he saw an opportunity. Influenced by his surroundings, Chef Peter transformed the restaurant into a showcase of FortWhyte’s natural abundance.

He added made-from-scratch soups and fresh salads to the menu, along with a culinary point of view that believes a good soup can’t be made in five minutes. Taking pride in each stage, he talks about sweating onions, layering flavour and slow simmering. Chef Peter’s dedication to incorporating fresh, local ingredients paid off and, today, a trip to FortWhyte Alive isn’t complete without stopping in for a bison sandwich and wild rice soup.

The *Ciao!* team arrives at FortWhyte on a perfect summer day. School children shout to one another as they explore the forest and catch glimpses of furry friends in gopher town. Freedom 55ers sit on the deck surrounded by a glassy lake sipping coffee and savouring the fresh air. On the weekend, families will spill out of cars ready to paddle a canoe or practice the science of orienteering.

Chef Peter tells us it was the natural setting, especially the fishing, that drew him to FortWhyte. He laments he’s so busy this summer, he hasn’t had time to cast his line yet.

Sweet Potato Soup with Ginger and Lime

Bringing in touches from his native Guyana, Chef Peter allows the zing of lime and ginger to pop against the delicate flavour of sweet potato. The long, slow simmer heightens the complexity of this dish.

INGREDIENTS

4 large yams, peeled and cubed
8 cups vegetable stock
2 carrots, chopped
6 limes, juiced plus zest of 2 limes
2 celery stalks, chopped
1 medium onion, diced
1 tsp thyme
1 bunch cilantro, chopped
1 Tbsp grated ginger
1/4 cup heavy cream
salt and pepper

METHOD

1. In a large pot, combine yams, stock, carrots, celery, lime and onion. On medium heat, bring to a slow boil and simmer for 1 hr.
2. Add thyme, ginger and cilantro.
3. In a blender, purée soup.
4. Return to pot and stir in cream. Season with salt and pepper.

Yield 6-8 servings





Almond Chicken Pasta

This fragrant pasta dish makes for a light summer entrée served cold. Chef Peter uses locally produced Nature's Pasta and combines it with the sweet crunch of almonds, asparagus and red pepper.

INGREDIENTS

1 tsp butter
2 Tbsp canola oil
3 5 oz chicken breasts, diced into 1/4" chunks
1 red pepper, thinly sliced
1 lb asparagus, chopped
1/2 lb angel hair pasta
1 cup frozen peas
3 cups vegetable stock
1/4 cup white wine
1/4 cup toasted almonds
1 cup chopped fresh or frozen spinach

pinch saffron threads
salt and pepper

METHOD

1. In a sauté pan, heat oil and butter. Season chicken with salt and pepper and brown in pan for 5 mins.
2. Deglaze pan with wine and cook for 3-4 mins.
3. Add spinach and peas and cook

for 1 min. Set aside.

4. In sauté pan, cook pepper and asparagus. Set aside.

5. In a pot of boiling vegetable stock, cook pasta with saffron.

6. Combine all ingredients and sprinkle with almonds. Season to taste.

Yield 6 servings

Bison Tenderloin with Mini-Yorkshire Pudding

This clever presentation combines the elements of a traditional roast dinner. Chef Peter uses honey produced by FortWhyte Farms. Pick up Prairie Lane Saskatoon Berry Topping from specialty food shops or the FortWhyte Alive gift shop. Bison tenderloin can be ordered from Toledo Foods, 2430 McGillivray Boulevard, 487-3340.

INGREDIENTS

1 bison tenderloin
1 bunch beets
1 cup flour
3/4 cup milk
2 eggs
3/4 cup pan drippings
pinch thyme and tarragon
1 jar Prairie Lane Saskatoon Berry Topping
salt and pepper
FortWhyte Farms honey
olive oil

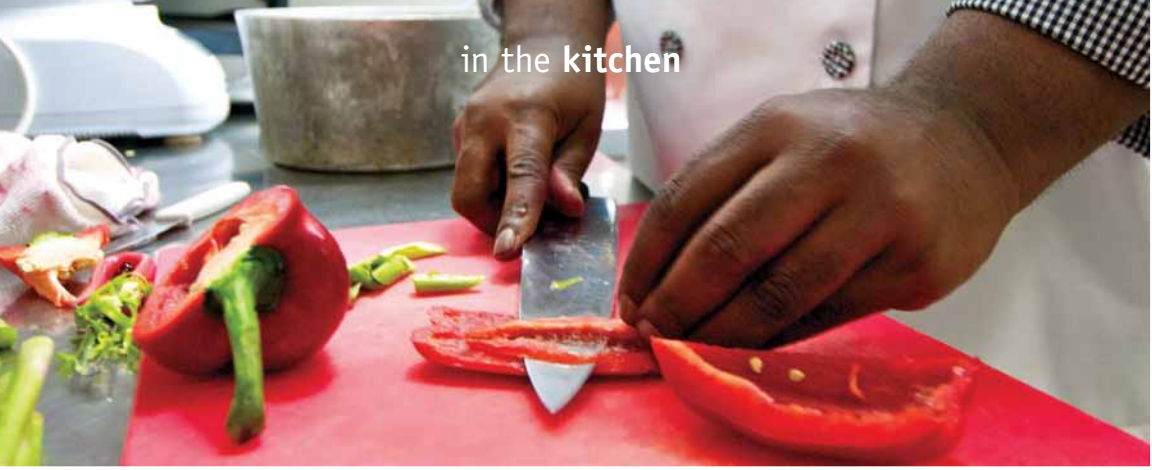
METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Season bison with salt and pepper and place in oven. Roast to desired doneness. Collect 3/4 cup pan drippings and set aside.
3. Toss beets in olive oil, honey, salt and pepper. Roast until tender.
4. In a bowl, combine flour, 1/2 tsp salt and herbs.
5. In a bowl, whisk eggs and milk until foamy. Stir in dry ingredients.
6. Pour some of the drippings into

each cup of a mini muffin tin. Put in the oven for 10 mins.
7. Remove tin from oven and pour in batter filling cups halfway. Return to oven and bake for 15-18 mins.
8. Serve with Saskatoon berry topping.

Yield 6 servings





As a popular spot for weddings, banquets and corporate functions, hands in his kitchen are never idle.

Born in Guyana, the jovial chef moved to Canada when he was 12 years old. He never had a particular penchant for cooking, and thus, Chef Peter became a professional by accident. His first kitchen job as a dishwasher at the age of 16, was to help support his family, which included his mother, brother and three sisters. “I gave my mom my pay cheque, and she gave me \$20. Everyone contributed.”

He eventually worked his way up to peeling

FortWhyte’s marshes. An edible wilds tour where novice foragers head into the forest to learn about its plants and berries inspired this quirky dessert. The tour concludes with a tasting of the cattail confection, a treat so intriguing we had to put on our cover.

FortWhyte’s good food mantra is also being used to foster community development. Through programming at FortWhyte Farms, high school students from Winnipeg’s inner city help run all aspects of the farm, including learning animal husbandry and beekeeping. By making the link

This 600-acre swath of land embodies an ecosystem that represents Manitoba’s distinct geography.

potatoes, but an unfortunate ketchup fight in the kitchen landed him in hot water. “I was terrified of going home to tell my mother I’d been fired,” he recalls with a chuckle. “I had to run from her for a week!”

Working odd jobs in cafes, Chef Peter eventually found himself working as the fruit and vegetable guru at The Market 520. “I learned all about vegetables there,” he says. “When I started I didn’t even know what a beet was.”

Locally raised beets, bison, wild rice, pasta and sweet potatoes have now become cornerstones of his repertoire both in the restaurant and on the catering menu. However, Chef Peter says he is not a purist when it comes to using regional ingredients. “What happens to the farmer in Africa if we stop buying his sugar?” he asks.

Nevertheless, Chef Peter produces a platter of fritters made from cattails plucked right out of

between good food and hard work, at-risk youths learn leadership skills and build self-esteem.

The farm itself is a model of cradle-to-cradle sustainability where nothing is wasted and everything fulfils a purpose that benefits the land. Pigs and chickens naturally till the soil while rooting for food and their waste provides nutrient-rich fertilizer. The land produces more than 5,000 lbs of vegetables every year, and will also soon be home to 250 apple, plum, pear and cherry trees as well as numerous Saskatoon berry, raspberry and honey berry bushes. These fruit-bearing plants in turn provide sustenance to the farms’ 30 honeybee hives.

By connecting the land, people and food we eat, FortWhyte Alive and the Buffalo Stone Café put us closer to our precious ecology. Through their continued commitment to our environment, they demonstrate the important and fundamental links to a sustainable and fruitful future.

in the kitchen

Cattail Fritters (pictured on cover)

Picked at the beginning of the season, tender cattail stalks are delicately flavoured. These sweet, doughnut-like poppers are truly addictive.

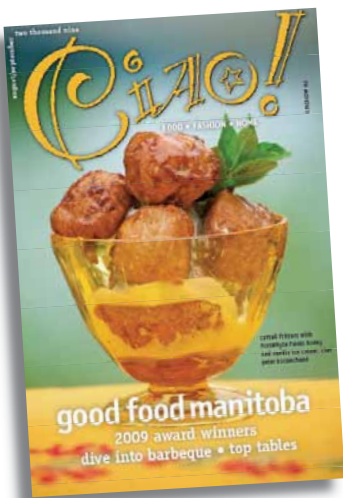
INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup cattails, diced
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 3/4 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 3 Tbsp honey
- pinch nutmeg
- splash vanilla
- canola oil for frying

METHOD

1. In a bowl, combine all ingredients.
2. Drop 1 Tbsp of batter into a large pot filled with oil. Fry fritters until golden about 3-4 mins.
3. Serve with ice cream and drizzle with honey.

Yield 20 fritters



Tony De Luca, De Luca's Specialty Foods

retailer of the year: de luca's specialty foods

When Tony De Luca opened De Luca's Specialty Foods on Portage Avenue in 1968, the store catered to the city's influx of Italian immigrants with a focus on their home country's imports. While it is still well-known for its foreign goods, De Luca has quietly championed the importance of buying local food as well.

In the beginning, De Luca discovered many of his immigrant customers struggled with finding transportation to pick up fresh vegetables and fruits from farms outside Winnipeg. He began scouting nearby farms and eventually opened a produce area in 1978, selling local peppers, tomatoes, broccoli and cauliflower. The section expanded to carry local asparagus from Peak of the Market, basil and shallots from James Valley Colony Farms, tomatoes from Greenland Gardens, along with local blueberries, mushrooms, lettuce and more.

His commitment to sourcing Manitoba products goes further than the produce section. De Luca also sells Trappist cheese made by monks in Holland, Manitoba and goat cheddar, feta, lamb and goat meat from Oak Island Dairy. That same meat is also turned into sausages found in the deli. Local grains are used to make all the breads in the bakery and house-made pastas. The store's own Alba brand of tomato and pesto sauces—used by many restaurants throughout the city—contains the same Manitoba tomatoes and basil found in the produce area. It's this dedication to creating products using local ingredients that earned De Luca's Specialty Foods the Good Food Manitoba Award for Retailer of the Year.

De Luca says incorporating local goods is smart for business. "We've got knowledgeable customers here that appreciate genuine products," he explains. In some cases, customers played a role in suggesting items now carried in the store, like Crampton's blueberry and Saskatoon jams made in Starbuck and royal beans grown in Duck Mountain. With the same passion, De Luca exchanges the knowledge he gained spending time in the kitchen with his grandma while growing up in Calabria, Italy. "Sharing our knowledge with customers is key to success," he says. "There's no bigger satisfaction. We've developed an appreciative audience for that."