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Dr. Craig Crippen discusses NEW Non-Surgical Face Lift

The 3D's of the Aging Process

Deterioration - Fine lines, wrinkles, skin texture change

Descent - Droopiness or skin sagging

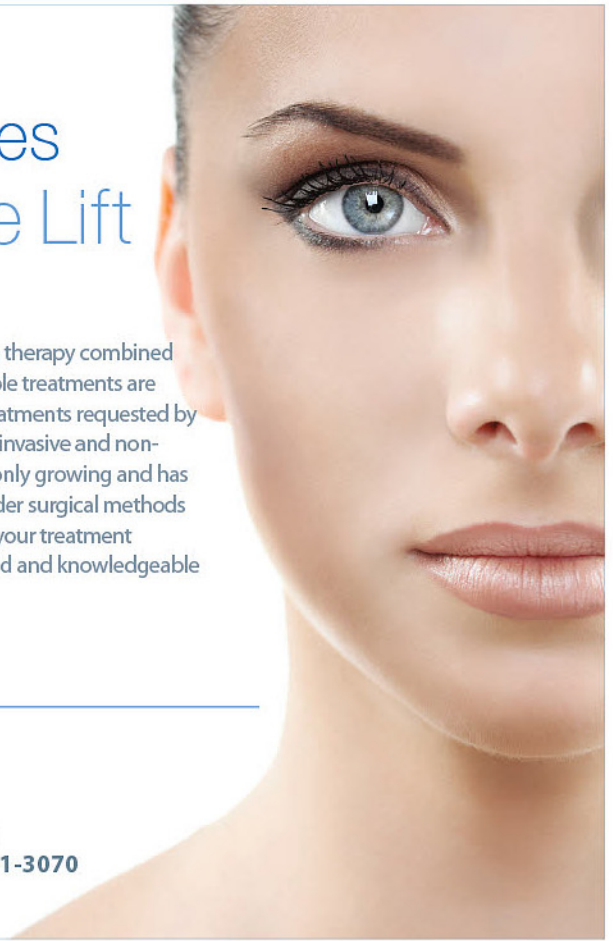
Deflation - Loss of facial volume

It is now possible to treat these three dimensions of aging with non-surgical methods that leaves patients skin rejuvenated and maintains an all-natural look. I tell patients to think of this as turning back the clock on your skin a number of years gently and without the need for going

"under the knife." Laser skin therapy combined with no-downtime injectable treatments are now the most common treatments requested by patients. This trend of non-invasive and non-surgical skin treatments is only growing and has already overtaken those older surgical methods by a large margin. Discuss your treatment options with an experienced and knowledgeable physician skin expert.



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What is happening?

■ What happens to us when we witness disaster? What is happening to each of us when we read about disaster relief concerts, peruse the pictures or watch the footage? What is happening to you right now as you read this column?

The Japanese words for 'happening' are "totsuzen no dekgigoto." In English, "to come to pass by chance; occur without apparent reason."

Natural disasters like the tsunami that struck Japan March 11, 2011 happen without any apparent rhyme or reason. Bewildered, we seek out one another for comfort, compassion and caring. The Artists For Japan Disaster Relief Concert just happened to germinate from an idea to become an evening of community to remember.

As one who shared the stage, I can honestly say that these three columns of glossy paper and ink cannot accurately describe the absolutely amazing night of May 2, 2011. It was election night, Canadians were still voting and playoff hockey was 'game on,' yet 400 people gathered at the Kelowna Community Theatre to raise money for the Japanese earthquake victims.

Kelowna and Kasugai, Japan have been sister cities since 1981, fostering a number of cultural exchanges and business ventures.

PHOTO BY YVONNE TURGEON

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This time—thanks to the idea of Ken and Yoshiko Fix and the talents of many Kelowna's artists—the cultural exchange raised over \$20,000 for the Red Cross.

To donate to Japan relief, visit www.redcross.ca or call 1.800.418.1111.

John Paul Byrne
publisher

paul@okanaganlife.com

for comments or suggestions

Right top photo:

Performers together at the end of the event.

Following photos: Raymer Elementary Students,

Ryan Donn, Jambalaya, Yamabiko Taiko

Drummers and Chloe, Kyle and Company





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events



OSOYOOS CELEBRITY WINE FESTIVAL

Osoyoos: June 9-12, 2011

A weekend of fun where festival-goers can rub shoulders with celebrities from the film and television industry while enjoying the region's best food, wine and entertainment. Hosted by Jason Priestly and Chad Oakes. Canada's most watched entertainment news program, *ET Canada*, will be on site to capture the fun. Proceeds from this year's event go to the United Way of the Central and South Okanagan/Similkameen. For tickets and more info visit www.osoyooscelebritywinefestival.com.



KELOWNA FALCONS BASEBALL

Kelowna: June 10, 2011

This wood-bat team fills its roster with some of North America's most promising collegiate sluggers. These base stealers entertain ball supporters June, July and August in historic Elks Stadium, on Recreation Avenue. Throughout the game fans have chances to win prizes and compete in contests. Season's tickets and 10-game punch cards are on sale now by calling 250.763.4100. Get individual tickets at the gate. For game schedule visit www.kelownafalcons.com.



ANTIQUES FAIR IN WINE COUNTRY

West Kelowna: June 11-12, 2011

Calling all collectors, treasure hunters and bargain shoppers. This is the show to check out if you're into anything from antique goods to retro designs. You'll find furniture, objects d'art, jewelry, toys and more. Bring in your treasures and heirlooms and get them appraised by Peter Blundell (fee \$12 per item). Place: Mount Boucherie Recreation Centre. Time: Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more info visit www.antiquesbydesignshows.com.

MORE CHOICE HAPPENINGS

CARAVAN FARMERS' MARKET

Armstrong: May 8 - Oct. 9, 2011

Spend leisurely Sundays with family and friends at the farm. Check out the wagon rides, local produce, handmade goods, food and drink. Market runs every Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Caravan Farm Theatre, 4886 Salmon River Rd. For more info or vendor inquires call 1.866.546.8533. And don't miss this summer's production of Shakespeare's most beloved comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Caravan style July 19 to August 21. Get show tickets by phoning 250.549.7469 or online www.ticket seller.ca.

PREVALENT MATERIAL

Vernon: May 26 - July 28, 2011

The Vernon Public Art Gallery annually hosts the UBC Okanagan bachelor of fine art graduating exhibition. This group of emerging artists' work references tendencies, concepts and strategies in contemporary art making. *Prevalent Material* showcases new and vibrant talent practicing in a range of media including painting, installation and photography. Opening reception May 26, 6-8 p.m. For more info visit www.vernonpublicartgallery.com.

TRIPTYCH

Penticton: June 17-26, 2011

The Shatford Centre presents this valley-wide exhibition featuring artists from the North Okanagan, Central Okanagan and South Okanagan-Similkameen chapters of the Federation of Canadian Artists. The artists work in a variety of media including acrylic, watercolour, oil, encaustic and mixed media. Opening reception June 17, 7-9 p.m. For more info visit www.shatfordcentre.com.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST ELVIS FESTIVAL

Penticton: June 24-26, 2011

The King is alive and sounding his best in Penticton. Professional and amateur Elvis impersonators compete so see who is best in the show. Along with judged performances, the festival dishes up other renowned tribute artists. On Sunday, enjoy a morning gospel show. Get festival tickets by phoning 1.877.763.2849 or in person at the South Okanagan Events Centre or Penticton Visitor Centre. For more info visit www.pentictonelvisfestival.com.



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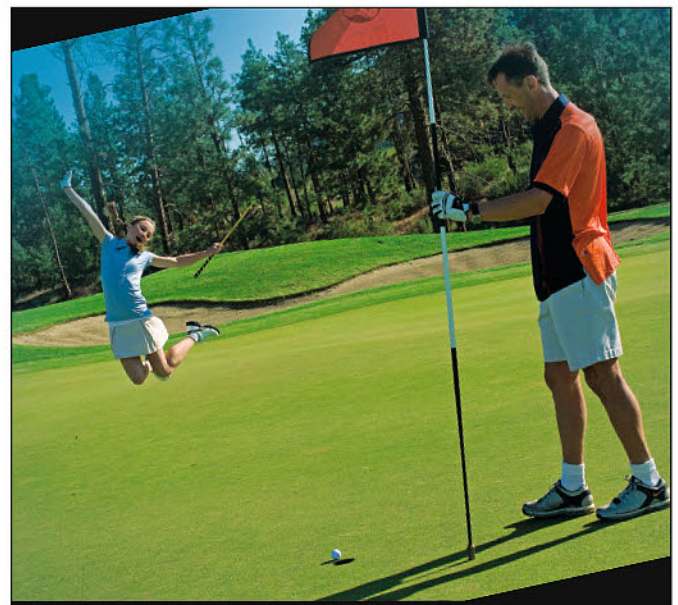
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MARCH FOR PARKS

Hike to raise money for trail building in West Kelowna

■ It's time to dust off your hikers and join the Gellatly Bay Trails and Parks Society for the 14th annual March for Parks, Sunday May 29.

This year's event gives participants a choice of three trails depending on their energy level. Powers Creek Trail—the toughie—is a 9.6 km walk, mostly downhill, led by Don Guild from the Central Okanagan Naturalist Club. Trekkers are sure to see wildflowers on this one (allow three to four hours). A little less taxing but for fit walkers, Glen Canyon offers a 6.5 km loop that involves some stair climbing (allow two to two-and-a-half hours). The third option is a stroll along Gellatly Bay (allow one to one-and-a-half hours). All participants should bring water and wear hiking boots or shoes—no sandals.

Last year about 125 people showed their support and raised \$3,500. With these funds and corporate and

public sponsors the society was able to contribute \$20,000 to the corridor improvement project along Gellatly Bay between the Cove Lakeside Resort and Powers Creek Bridge.

The proceeds from this year's walk will go towards the planned loop trail from Cindy Road to Old Okanagan Road, which is awaiting final provincial approval. When finished you'll be able to walk from the Johnson-Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre to the lake without getting into a vehicle.

The ultimate goal of the society is to build a path along the waterfront from Kelowna's William R. Bennett Bridge to Peachland.

Pick up a pledge form today at the UPS Store in West Kelowna or online at www.districtofwestkelowna.ca. Registration opens at 8 a.m. on May 29 at the Gellatly Nut Farm on Whitworth Road, West Kelowna. Hikes start at 9 a.m. For more info on the hikes contact John Reddick at 250.768.4350.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



BABY'S TENDER SKIN

Don't worry, Mom

■ Baby's unique skin can be affected by a variety of conditions that may or may not need treatment. The most common treatable conditions include eczema, impetigo, viral and parasitic infections, birthmarks and seborrheic dermatitis.

Eczema is a genetically inherited condition that makes the skin more prone to dryness and subsequent inflammation. Improved hydration with moisturizing lotion is the key to managing this problem.

Impetigo is a bacterial infection that commonly produces what looks like "honey crusts" over the infected area. Doctors most frequently treat this problem with a topical cream or antibiotics taken by mouth.

Viral and parasitic infections are also very common in little ones and can range from the herpes simplex virus to scabies. Each one of these infections is unique and your doctor will use different strategies based on the specifics of the child's condition.

Seborrheic dermatitis is a skin eruption that normally occurs in the first few weeks of a baby's life. You will most likely notice it on the face, scalp and skin creases. Since the child isn't bothered by the condition and it's likely to go away on its own in a few months, treatment generally focuses on keeping the skin well hydrated—more of that moisturizing lotion. —Dr. Craig Crippen

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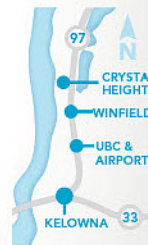
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SIT LONG, TALK MUCH

For creative stimulation, sometimes all you need is two bucks and a comfy chair

■ It's Thursday at 5 p.m. You're walking through downtown Kelowna, about to cross the street. As you step off the sidewalk, you notice the timer that tells you how many seconds you have left and realize you're almost out ...5...4...3... you break into a jog and pass a guy rocking out in his Ford F150 who revs the engine at you to hurry up. You stop and lock eyes, holding your ground a second as the timer runs out. "Pedestrians have the right of way," you mouth to him, through tight lips and an Eastwood glare. He can't read lips but thinks you said something about his hair, so he lurches forward, just an inch, and smiles as you throw your arms up and scream like a toddler, dashing off the street and ducking for cover in Mosaic Books. As you peep out to make sure he's gone, you can't help but wonder if this run-in was a cry for some much needed stimulation in your life.

Well, it just so happens that nearby

there is a very bohemian restaurant which is filling up, right now, on an unassuming weekday evening, with some of the Okanagan's best and brightest minds. The group hosting tonight's reoccurring event is the Okanagan Institute, a collective of creative professionals who, among other things, get together and talk about really cool stuff. And you're invited to join in. Flip a toonie in the basket at the door and for the next hour or two you can get in on some interesting, inspiring and creative conversations.

I walk in at 5:05. It's evident that, as well as popular, this group is punctual. I take one of the last seats and try not to disturb Karen Close, one of the co-facilitators, as she intros tonight's theme. It's about the healing power of story and she starts by sharing one of her own. Within minutes she has the room in the city of San Miguel de Allende, a Mexican mecca for culture. There, she formed a friendship that

fuelled a book, now published and held softly in her hands, fanning her through the warm memories. I order tea and catch smiles across a room of avid listeners, people who have come out to be told stories, to witness healing, to have a drink and be entertained the old fashioned way.

The group meets across the Okanagan and covers all sorts of topics, from publishing to sustainability, from calligraphy to collaborative intelligence. Speakers are brought in to share their experiences and thoughts, and although the topics are deep, the evening is light. It's about conversation and exchange, not lectured learning.

After Karen, an 80-year-old storyteller shares her memories of performing plays with Robertson Davies. He's one of my favourite Canadian authors, so I perk up with excitement to meet someone who knew him first hand. I consider asking her to sign my notebook.

Cathryn Wellner is up next, worldwide storyteller and beloved Okanagan blogger. She pulls out a book she loves and reads touching quotes worth recording. I can't find my pen, so I'm forced to steal a crayon from the kids supply stash near the restaurant menus. It's hard to look like a serious listener when you have to scrawl your notes with a partially chewed piece of purple wax, but I save face by solemnly sipping my tea and furrowing my brows in a way that says, "I hear you Cathryn, never mind my crayon, tell me more."

And she does. As with the other speakers, people listen, laugh, ask questions and applaud. Robert MacDonald, the institute founder, wraps it up with a brief commentary and offers info about upcoming shows. Enchanted by the evening, feeling stimulated and creatively well fed, I mingle with the buzzing crowd and enjoy the social end to the night. It may not be San Miguel, but it's nice to know the Okanagan offers its own valued collection of creative minds. —Gillianne Richards



JAVA STORY NO JIVE

Lessons in global giving from unlikely source

■ Shuswap Coffee Company in Salmon Arm looks like any other small business housed in a non-descript industrial mall. But behind their doors is a remarkable story. Seventy-five per cent of the coffee beans they use are grown exclusively by women in the poorest regions of the coffee growing world. But as impoverished as these growers are, they are giving back to women right here in the Valley.

While coffee co-operatives selling their beans at fair trade and organic premiums have improved the wages of participating farmers, women rarely see the benefits. Before 2004, this was the case in a remote area of Peru until a group of women developed a plan to separate their beans and sell them for two cents per pound above the fair trade organic price and the Café Femenino project was born.

Joanne Sargent, one of the original owners of Shuswap Coffee, was invited

to Peru to see where her Café Femenino beans originated and to be part of a documentary called *Strong Coffee: The Story of Café Femenino*. While there, she attended a meeting of women growers in the third year of the program. "I couldn't understand a word, but I knew something was happening here. It was the women having the courage to try and to say, 'We want to do this and we want to have some money so we can make a difference.'"

And what a difference they've made. If anything happens to their husbands, these women now have official title to their land. With the help of non-governmental organizations and the Organic Products Trading Company that brokers their coffee in North America, Australia and the UK, the women have access to low interest loans and guaranteed buyers. Additional education and training is available to all farmers, both

women and men. The growers have put money into children's education, infrastructure, crop diversification and living conditions, benefits for everyone in the community. But the Café Femenino project looks beyond their own families and villages. These women wanted to make sure the sales of their beans would help women in all parts of the world.

Buyers like Shuswap Coffee Company commit twelve-and-a-half cents per pound of Café Femenino beans to a Pay it Forward fund for women's causes. Vernon and District Women's Centre, Shuswap Area Family Emergency Society, Shuswap Hospital, Grandmas for Grandmas (Stephen Lewis Foundation) and the Salvation Army have all benefited from the company's donations over the years. Some of their pay it forward money can also be given to the Café Femenino Foundation, which funds women's projects in nine coffee producing countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition to the donations to which Shuswap Coffee Company commits, current owners, Greg and Tara Shantz also provide specially labelled bags of Café Femenino at wholesale prices to several women's centres. Some centres resell the coffee on location or at special events. Some ask locally owned cafés, retailers and large food chains to sell it on their behalf. These businesses donate their space and services, not profiting from the sales. Four dollars per pound comes back to the organizations to support their work in the community. Centres in Vernon, Kelowna, Grand Forks and Nelson raise funds using Café Femenino.

That the sale of the Peruvian women's coffee beans should assist women as far away as the Okanagan, Shuswap and Kootenays is extraordinary. As Joanne says, "They're the ones that need the help, yet they still thought they could help people around the world." —*Suzanne Harper* www.cafefemenino.com



Backyard hens are family friendly, help with pest control and do their part to put breakfast on the table.

URBAN HENS: FOWL PLAY?

Neighbour's backyard roost no reason to squawk

■ A growing interest in sourcing food locally has led some city dwellers to keep chickens in their own backyards. Vernon recently enacted a bylaw to allow residents to have up to three hens—no boys allowed, as crowing roosters generate the majority of chicken-related complaints—and sets out reasonable expectations for the birds' care. Citizens in other communities are pushing for a similar bylaw revision; the Kelowna Kluckers host a website detailing their ongoing efforts to convince city hall to legalize urban hens. Meanwhile some, like Harry Winslow (not his real name), are applying the practical rules from other jurisdictions in their own backyards.

Harry's birds are ISA Browns, a cross between Rhode Island Reds and Rhode Island Whites known for being good pets. "They're extremely hardy for small boys," says Harry, whose young son assists with their daily care, which includes cuddling. Marmalade and Buck-a-Buck scratch the lawn in search of bugs by day, then roost overnight in a "chicken tractor." This mobile home-made enclosure, shaped much like a

giant Toblerone bar on stilts, must be closed each evening to keep out nocturnal predators; cats sometimes enter the yard in daylight, but Harry says they seem to fear the chickens.

Harry's neighbours seem unruffled by the hens' presence and the woman next door hasn't objected to an occasional visit. "Initially it was a bit of a learning curve in terms of finding out where they could get through the fence," says Harry. (They took the neighbour cookies, and she seemed to feel she was coming out ahead in the deal.) He eventually crawled along their hedged property line with a roll of chicken wire to prevent further breaches.

At first Harry gave his chickens the run of the entire backyard, but they dug up the bedding plants—and it was a big area to keep cleaned up. "They do produce more poop than I had imagined," says Harry, who composts the droppings. Unlike commercial chicken coops, even the roost area doesn't smell.

Heather Allen says in her experience chickens are clean, cheap and quiet. Heather lives on Penticton's West Bench, a less restricted semi-rural area

where she can let her chickens roam freely and although she has even had roosters at times the neighbours have never complained. Her birds provide a community service by ridding the area of pests—one of the reasons Heather decided to get them. "We didn't want to spray for cherry worms," she says; the chickens eat the emerging larvae, along with other bugs. Allen says although bantams are not particularly pet-like, they may be a good choice for city lots as the smaller birds are less destructive when scratching. Their eggs are smaller too, but just as tasty and nutritious.

Harry's ISA Browns are also good layers, each providing an egg for Finn to collect every morning. A few months in, Harry isn't sure where he stands financially. His initial investment included purchasing the hens, plywood, electric water bowls, chicken wire and miscellaneous lumber, and he supplements their diet of bugs and kitchen scraps with feed. In the great scheme of things, though, that's chicken scratch. For his family, keeping hens wasn't really about saving money. "It's been a really fun project." —Dawn Renaud

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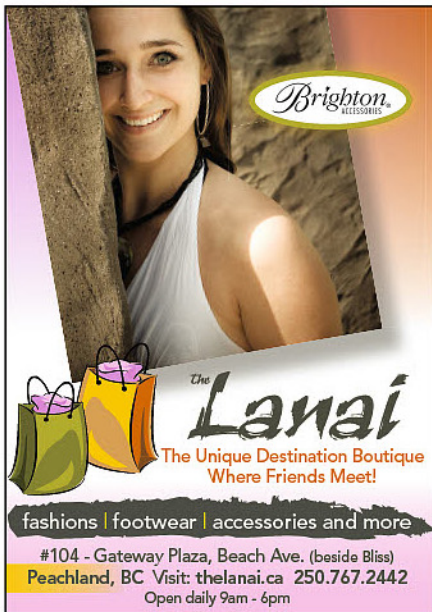

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pulse



"It is incumbent upon us to share what we learn," say Brian Hughes, organizer of the Okanagan's first TEDx.

TED COMES TO THE OKANAGAN

Okanagan College hosts Beyond SustainAbility event

■ Brian Hughes found TED three years ago. "I was smitten," he says. Brian is not alone: TED has millions of passionate fans worldwide.

TED was "born" in 1984 as a conference bringing together people from technology, entertainment and design. The non-profit's tagline is Ideas Worth Spreading, and spread they do—in part because they're so entertaining. Brian got hooked when he started listening to their online recordings, or TED Talks. "These are truly amazing talks," he says. "You can think it's the most uninteresting topic and by the time you listen to it, it just blows your mind." At up to 18 minutes each they're perfect for his morning bicycle commute into Penticton, and the site now offers hundreds of downloadable presentations covering a wide range of subjects.

"It doesn't matter how old you are, what your background is, because

these are high level talks but at the same time they're very understandable," Brian says. "The people who are doing the research and coming up with the ideas are explaining it to you with passion...plus the videos are all online." It's the new phase of education, borrowing from the ancient tradition of gathering around a campfire to share wisdom—and it's becoming just as interactive.

Along with the downloadable talks, TED "hosts" live events, called TED^xs, on every continent. Brian is helping to organize the Okanagan's first: a conference of speakers on June 25 at the Penticton campus of Okanagan College, on the theme Beyond SustainAbility (www.tedxokanagancollege.com). "This is so important," he says. As more people agree that the earth is in trouble, some say we have to stop the economy dead—which may not be possible. "What we're trying to show

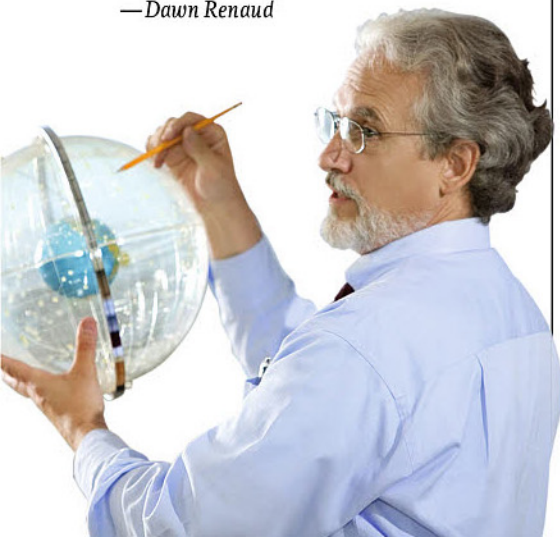
here is that it's not necessary."

The theme fits perfectly with the college's new Centre of Excellence. "We're winning awards all around the world with this building," says Brian, but while it is carbon neutral, that's almost obsolete now. "We have to be thinking about buildings that are regenerative, that create more energy than they use, that offer something to the world." Leading edge thinkers are right under our noses. Most of the day-long event's lineup of high level speakers are local.

Audience members are selected for their ability to foster further discussion or action in their own communities. Although limited to an audience of 100 for their first go, it's not uncommon for a TED event to bring in hundreds more. "Every day there are three TED^xs going on somewhere in the world," says Brian. "Now there are organizations that go from one to another...even groups that are riding bicycles between the TED^x events." It's a new form of tourism: brain spa.

Beyond SustainAbility will be web-cast live, so others can tune in locally and around the world. Brian hopes some of the talks will eventually be posted online at TED.com. "That's huge," he says. "It transforms people's careers." Still, TED's not about ego or talking heads—it's about what we can accomplish if we share our ideas, inspire people a world away and build momentum toward a solution. "We don't have to be in Vancouver; we don't have to be in Toronto. We can change the world from Penticton."

—Dawn Renaud



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2011 Best RESTAURANTS





Editors' Choice Awards
Next page

Readers' Choice Awards
Page 30

Contributions by
Laurie Carter and Karen Slivar

Results of your vote!

Opening spread (cw): Herb crusted rack of lamb Hooded Merganser (Penticton);
dessert Bouchons Bistro (Kelowna); pizza Kettle Valley Station Pub (Penticton); savory
bites Crush Bistro (Vernon); specialty coffee Lake Country Coffee House (Lake Country).





Best Indian Experience

Dawett
1435 Ellis St., Kelowna
250.717.1668

For years our readers have hailed Dawett as a top pick for Indian food and I have to agree, although my reasoning may be different. While this classy eatery is renowned for its tandoor cooking style, I rarely get past my old standbys. Heading the list is butter chicken (I know, stoke up your taste buds, girl!). But I can't help it—tender chicken chunks with a thick, creamy tomato sauce that absolutely demands a second order of naan to sweep every vestige of sauce from the plate (and serving dish). And let me wax poetic about the naan itself, baked fresh on the hot walls of the tandoor clay oven. Another must is aloo gobi, which I have to order as “the one with the potatoes and cauliflower” because of my mental block about the name. My man is big into lamb, so the vindaloo always finds a spot on our table after we've polished off the curried mussel starters. No tandoori, but what a meal. —Laurie Carter

Best Taste of City Life

The Bohemian Café
524 Bernard Ave., Kelowna
250.862.3517

The first time I walked into the Bohemian Café, I thought, wow, I'm back on College Street in Toronto. Vibrant red walls liberally sprinkled with celeb posters, pressed tin wainscoting and an assortment of mismatched furniture both antique and modern, strongly support the name Bohemian, although everybody just calls it the Boh. Open only for breakfast and lunch, Wednesday through Sunday, this is the spot for a walloping great Saturday morning omelette (I'm partial to the Mexican). If you're dropping in for lunch, bring a serious appetite for fresh cut sandwiches with homemade ingredients. I never make it past the chicken breast with pesto, although I'm told the mango chutney turkey salad is over the top good and you have to order a side of broccoli salad—the only way this veg should be consumed. On the lighter side there's quiche, homemade soup and salad along with daily specials. —Laurie Carter



Best Memories of France

Bouchons Bistro
 105-1180 Sunset Dr., Kelowna
 250.763.6595

Bouchons instantly transports me to memories of a little bistro in the Latin Quarter. White linen, stained glass and brass rails, the cabaret sounds of Ertha Kit and a cocktail menu with kir royale and Campari and soda. Richard Toussaint and Martine Lef'bvre alternate evenings, personally welcoming guests. If you're looking to satisfy your longing for bouillabaisse or cassoulet, this is the place, although I enjoy the adventure of the weekly chef's table menu that offers two choices for each of three courses for a very reasonable set price. My taste buds remember baked pear and blue cheese tartlet, and duck breast paired with wines drawn from among the 170-label French and Okanagan dominated peek-in wine cellar. Extra treats include a paper cone of crisply perfect pommes frites to share and perhaps a little refresher like pepper/blackberry granular sorbet. Creme caramel for dessert. Sigh. —Laurie Carter





Best Place for a Break

Lake Country Coffee House
10356 Bottom Wood Lake Rd.
250.766.9006

One afternoon while driving around Winfield I noticed a sign on the highway for Lake Country Coffee House and decided a cup of tea would hit the spot. From the number of cars in the parking lot it looked like a few others had the same idea. Walking inside was like slipping on a comfy sweater. Barnboard, bookshelves, artwork and an assortment of tables and chairs filled the space. The snaking overhead rail gives away the building's former life as a butcher shop. My break morphed into an early dinner. I sipped on a Glasgow fog (Earl Grey latte with a shot of vanilla syrup) and devoured a homemade ginger snap while I waited for my sun-dried tomato panini. The wait was worth it. It came out hot with ooey gooey brie cheese. The next day I was back with hubby in tow. I highly recommend the ginger peanut soup, a slice of plum cake (meal size) and a health bar for the road. —Karen Slivar

Best Wine Time

The Rotten Grape
231 Bernard Ave., Kelowna
250.717.8466

I get a kick out of the irreverent name and I think this tiny, stylish emporium is the ideal place to meet over a glass of wine and reconnect with friends. It's also my go-to spot for a taste of the grape and a bite to put me in the perfect mental state for an evening with the symphony. We tend to settle at a bistro table although it's also fun to hold up the bar and make new friends as we watch Rita pour. With technology (way over my head) to preserve the wine while they dole out single servings, this is a great spot to get acquainted with some 200 wines. I usually try the three-wine flights to make head-to-head comparisons. But you can just go for the gusto and order a full glass of your fave. The nibbles are terrific. I'm in a rut with the candied nuts and meze trio. Bigger bites include soups, salads, thin-crust pizzas, flatbreads, Oceanwise seafood and land fare. Open evenings from Tuesday to Saturday. —Laurie Carter





Best Ethnic Food Experience

Soban Korean Bistro
530 Bernard Ave., Kelowna
778.478.9638

A treasure waiting to be discovered: kimchi, jopchae, b-bop, jakshik. This was our first experience eating Korean food. Unfamiliar with the dishes we opted for a dinner combination to get the full experience. We started the meal with kimchi—a traditional Korean dish of raw, highly spiced, pickle cabbage. This one left our taste buds tingling. Next up was jopchae, a dish made from stir-fried sweet potato noodles tossed with vegetables. Normally, we don't eat highly spicy food so we found this dish to be quite hot. Not Thai hot, but certainly hotter than we are used to. We both enjoyed the b-bop (short for bibimbop) a traditional rice dish made with vegetables, egg, choice of protein and dressing. After eating a spicy meal hubby decided to play it safe and ordered the coconut ice cream for dessert. That left me with the jakshik and sujongkwa (sweet rice cake and infused drink). It was the perfect ending to an enjoyable meal. —Karen Slivar

Best Late Night Dinner

Sukho Thai
104 3466 Carrington Rd., Westbank
250.768.7500

It was late when I popped my head into Sukho after a late night meeting to see if I could still order some takeout. "Yes of course," said the young man standing at the till. He handed me a menu. I squinted my eyes in the dim light trying to read the menu. I'd left my readers at home and could only make out the main sections: salad, seafood, stir-fry, curry, noodles and rice. I asked him what veggie options they had for a salad, curry and noodle dish. Spicy Thai salad with tiger prawns. Yes. Mixed vegetables sautéed in a yellow curry with coconut milk. Oh, yes please. Quick fried vermicelli sautéed with fresh vegetables and house gravy sauce. You bet. While I waited I was offered tea or a cold drink. "You phone if anything is wrong with your order," said the owner as he handed over my goodie bag. From the delicious aromas I couldn't imagine there being a problem. We dug in and had a second helping. —Karen Slivar



THE ROTTEN GRAPE AND SOBAN KOREAN BISTRO PHOTOS BY LYDIA ROSS

Best Excuse to Skip Dinner

Wild Apple Restaurant & Lounge
3762 Lakeshore Rd., Kelowna
250.860.4488

A Christmas party found us at Manteo Resort for dinner. The dessert table caught my eye as soon as we walked in the room. My hubby gave me a dirty look when I suggested we eat dessert first. Instead, I dutifully waited for our table's turn at the buffet and was pleasantly surprised at the selection of veggie options. The stuffing was a work of magic. Perfectly cubed pieces of bread, pecan halves and cranberries rolled into a log. Baked. Sliced. Just waiting for a lick of gravy. I helped myself to three pieces and when I finished my plate I went back for more. I hadn't forgotten about dessert, I'd passed by the table four times and counting. Dinner finished, I jumped out of my seat and over to the dessert table before my hubby could stop me. Creme brulee, fancy cake and biscotti. Divine. OK, when hubby wasn't lookin' I snuck another biscotti, candied nuts... but I figured I'd dance it all off later that evening. —Karen Slivar



Best Bite Sized Menu

Crush Bistro
3024 30th Ave., Vernon
250.549.4438

We visited shortly after the place opened last spring. This wine-savvy bistro seats about 40 people around a mix of bar height and traditional dining tables. The red walls and large works of art give the place a modern metropolitan feel. The dishes are plated pieces of perfection. Delicious bites from a seasonal menu. On this occasion red beets with bocconcini, citrus fruit fillets, crushed roasted coriander seed and a pear-guava-tangerine dressing. A refreshing mix of flavours. Florentine flatbread—fresh spinach, caramelized red onion, mushroom, artichoke, roasted pepper, goat cheese and Austrian pumpkin seed oil. This is why the hubby and I try new places. And from the sea—chunky lobster chili rolled inside a spinach lasagna noodle with shaved Parmesan and Pinot Gris cheese sauce. Pair these creations with some of the Okanagan's boutique wines and we've got ourselves a winner. —Karen Slivar



Best New Find in the North

PeakFine @ Sparkling Hill Resort
888 Sparkling Place, Vernon
250.275.1556

This was the surprise of the year for me. I'm not sure what I expected in the way of food service when the hubby and I set up our staycation at Sparkling Hill, but I'm here to say that our dining experience at the hands of chef Ross Derrick far exceeded expectations. Mornings, when the Euro-inspired buffet is laid out, the dining space in PeakFine restaurant is dominated by nature with views overlooking Okanagan Lake from Terrace Mountain to Okanagan Landing. Even the trance-inducing Swarovski crystal chandelier can't compete. But at night when the window wall is dark, attention refocuses on the crystal, the unique fire and ice room divider and the parade of locally sourced, seasonal fare emanating from Ross's kitchen. True to the European term "piekfein" from which the restaurant takes its name, the food is absolutely "top notch." —Laurie Carter



Best Naan Bread

The Curry Pot
3007 30th Ave., Vernon
250.545.9195

Always in the mood for Indian cuisine, the Curry Pot got our vote for a dinner for four. The menu is jam-packed with our favourite dishes like fish jalfrazie (bite sized pieces of fish sautéed with spices, tomato, onion and green pepper), tandoori chicken, paneer (homemade curd cheese), spiced lentils in tomato sauce, and roasted eggplant with onion and tomato. The paneer tikka dinner sparked my interest and came with naan bread, salad, basmati rice, butter sauce and raita. My companions ordered the beef tikki dinner, lamb biryani and saag paneer. All dishes are spiced to order from mild to extra hot. But it was the naan that stole our hearts. The Curry Pot elevates naan from humble to extraordinary with its stuffed variations: coconut topped with honey; cashew and raisin topped with honey. Baskets of naan covered our table. Warm, soft and chewy with a nutty, sweet flavour. Simply brilliant. —Karen Stivar





Best Reincarnation

The Firehall Bistro
34881 97th St., Oliver
250.498.4867

Cruising into Oliver late last summer after a mind-blowing visit to the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory, we were thinking, sandwich, and wondering where to stop. Imagine our joy when we realized that the lights were on in the old fire hall. Following a painful (for us) hiatus, food service has returned to this stylish historic property. That day the misters were working so hard around the shaded patio tables that it looked foggy outside. Water drops cascaded off the umbrellas and the roll-up fire engine doors were securely closed. We opted for air-conditioned comfort inside. The VQA wine shop was no more, but that expansive bar remains and the interior is still yummy with squash-coloured walls and cherry-stained tables. Chef Bill Reid has laid on something of a road house menu (and I say this with love) with lots of appies, burgers, triple-A steaks, sandwiches, pastas and a few more sophisticated entrées. —Laurie Carter

Best Dining on Stilts

The Hooded Merganser
21 Lakeshore Dr. W., Penticton
250.487.4663

Cross the bridge to the elegant modern structure that reminds me of a wave cresting on the beach and enter a skylit, airy space with year-round view all the way to Peachland and a sunny summer patio, seriously, how much great can one restaurant claim? Well, there's more. The Hooded Merganser (named for the bird that flew into the under-construction building during name selection) at the Penticton Lakeside Resort serves breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. You can start the day with eggs benny or a zesty frittata. At lunch the lengthy appie list includes my personal favourite roasted squash and creme fraiche soup while the menu carries on with a variety of salads, pastas, burgers, steaks and seafood plus some tempting woks and rice bowls. Take in an unforgettable sunset over Glenlivet marinated beef carpaccio, osso bucco or pan seared snapper and cap the experience with a sinful chocolate pecan brownie. —Laurie Carter



Best Twist on Pub Fare

Kettle Valley Station Pub
1070 Eckhardt Ave. W., Penticton
250.493.3388

I love pub food—especially burgers—so it's no big surprise that I was drawn to the Kettle Valley Station. Walking in, I saw what I expected, a big space with lots of room to cobble tables together for a gang of friends, strategically placed big screen TVs for watching the big game (pick your sport) and set-ups for trivia and Texas hold 'em. There's a cozy fireplace in winter, a sunny patio in summer and a big bar that runs four seasons with a tasty range of specialty beers, ales and lagers plus a surprisingly complete wine list. The menu is vintage pub. It's huge—always a problem for me. Everything looks so good: wings, ribs, salads, sandwiches, pizzas. All that you'd expect—except the new take on my old favourite. I mean, what can you do to update a burger? Well, at the Kettle Valley, you can turn it into a thinini. Same great meat, new skinny bun. And how about those braised bison Yorkshires. Definitely some surprises at this pub. —Laurie Carter

Best New Look on the Lake

Local Lounge • Grille
12817 Lakeshore Dr. S., Summerland
250.494.8855

Wow— can we say makeover. A fan of the location of the former Shaughnessy's on the lakeshore in Summerland, I was knocked out one windy March day when I dropped into the Local for lunch. Sleek modern styling in black and white and shades of gray extends to the stainless-steel-look menu covers and the gray stamped concrete of the expansive patio. Even with the overhead heaters, I wasn't prepared to rush the season out there. Instead we opted for a window seat by one of the fireplaces and watched a couple of coots bobbing and diving in the lee of the docks. As the name suggest, executive chef Paul Cecconi is all about locally sourced food and wine. My spaghetti puttanesca sported a tangy tomato relish with capers, two big grilled scallops and a pair of spicy prawns. The lamb rigatoni across the table was elevated to a new level with a stellar mint pesto and the apple ring dipped in donut dough and deep fried...well. —Laurie Carter





2011 Best RESTAURANTS readers' choice

Note: These results were tabulated from official ballots that were at least 50 per cent complete when submitted to us. There is neither editorial nor advertising influence on these results.

Unless otherwise stated:

Central = Kelowna North = Vernon South = Penticton





Best of the Best

Central

- 1 Ricardo's Mediterranean Kitchen
- 2 RauDZ Regional Table
- 3 Bouchons Bistro

North

- 1 Bamboo Beach Fusion Grille
- 2 The Phoenix Steakhouse
- 3 Tita's Italian Bistro

South

- 1 Bogner's of Penticton
- 2 La Casa Ouzeria
- 3 Hooded Merganser

Best Chef

Central

- 1 Rod Butters – RauDZ Regional Table
- 2 Dominique Couton – Bouchons Bistro
- 3 Ricardo Scebba – Ricardo's Mediterranean Kitchen

North

- 1 Yuki Takeuchi – Bamboo Beach Fusion Grille
- 2 Neil Todd – The Brown Derby Café (Armstrong)
- 3 Ross Derrick – PeakFine at Sparkling Hill

South

- 1 Claudio Valentini – Valentini's Cafe
- 2 Roger Gillispie – Victoria Road Bistro (Summerland)
- 3 Darin Paterson – Bogner's of Penticton

Best Caterer

Central

- 1 Bohemian Café
- 2 Guisachan House
- 3 The Chef in Stead

North

- 1 Gumtree Catering
- 2 The Other Company (Armstrong)
- 3 Big Steve's Catering

South

- 1 Joy Road Catering
- 2 Valentini's Cafe
- 3 Good Omens (Summerland)

Best Decor / Ambiance / Atmosphere

Central

- 1 Joey's Global Grille
- 2 RauDZ Regional Table
- 3 Chop Steakhouse & Bar

North

- 1 The Phoenix Steakhouse
- 2 BX Creek Bar & Grille
- 3 Intermezzo

South

- 1 Bogner's of Penticton
- 2 Dream Café

- 3 Amante Bistro
- 3 La Casa Ouzeria

Best Restaurant with a View

Central

- 1 Grapevine Restaurant (Lake Country)
- 2 Old Vines Restaurant (West Kelowna)
- 2 Sunset Organic Bistro

North

- 3 Earl's Restaurant

South

- 3 Wild Apple Restaurant & Lounge
- North**
- 1 Alexander's Beach Pub
- 2 PeakFine at Sparkling Hill
- 3 The Brown Derby Café (Armstrong)

South

- 1 Hooded Merganser
- 2 Lost Moose Lodge
- 3 The Patio at Nk'Mip (Osoyoos)
- 3 Salty's Beach House

Best Romantic Dining

Central

- 1 La Bussola
- 2 Ricardo's Mediterranean Kitchen
- 3 Eldorado Dining Room
- 3 The Yellowhouse

North

- 1 The Phoenix Steakhouse
- 2 Ora Restaurant
- 3 Tita's Italian Bistro

South

- 1 Amante Bistro
- 2 La Casa Ouzeria
- 2 Zia's Stonehouse Restaurant (Summerland)
- 3 Dream Café
- 3 Villa Rosa Ristorante Italiano

Best Patio Dining

Central

- 1 Grapevine Restaurant (Lake Country)
- 2 Eldorado Dining Room
- 3 Old Vines Restaurant (West Kelowna)

North

- 1 Alexander's Beach Pub
- 2 The Brown Derby Café (Armstrong)
- 3 Predator Ridge

South

- 1 Hooded Merganser
- 2 Earl's Restaurant
- 3 Bufflehead Pasta & Tapas Room

Best Place for a Dinner Date

Central

- 1 RauDZ Regional Table
- 2 Earl's Restaurant
- 2 Joey's Global Grille
- 3 La Bussola

North

- 1 Checkers Bar & Grille
- 2 The Phoenix Steakhouse
- 3 Tita's Italian Bistro

South

- 1 Amante Bistro
- 2 Villa Rosa Ristorante Italiano
- 3 China Palace

Best Service

Central

- 1 RauDZ Regional Table
- 2 The Fixx
- 3 Earl's Restaurant

North

- 1 Italian Kitchen
- 2 Eclectic Med
- 3 Hungry Jack's (Enderby)

South

- 1 Theo's Restaurant
- 2 Cozy Bay Seafood Café (Summerland)
- 3 La Casa Ouzeria

Best Local Red Wine

Central

- 1 Pinot Noir – Quails Gate
- 2 Merlot – Mission Hill
- 3 Merlot – Ex Nihilo

South

- 1 Cabernet Franc – Burrowing Owl
- 1 Cabernet Franc – Hester Creek
- 2 Merlot – Le Frenz
- 3 Meritage – Red Rooster

Best Local White Wine

Central

- 1 Riesling – Ex Nihilo
- 2 Reserve Chardonnay – Quails Gate
- 3 Pinot Gris – Gray Monk

South

- 1 Sauvignon Blanc – Le Frenz
- 2 Chardonnay – SeeYa Later Ranch
- 2 Chardonnay – Nk'Mip Cellars
- 3 Pinot Blanc – Lake Breeze
- 3 Pinot Gris – Wild Goose

Best Wine List

Central

- 1 Waterfront Restaurant & Wine Bar
- 2 La Bussola
- 3 Bouchons Bistro
- 3 Cabana Bar & Grille
- 3 The Vintage Room

North

- 2 Bamboo Beach Fusion Grille
- 3 Eclectic Med
- 3 PeakFine at Sparkling Hill

South

- 1 Cobblestone (Naramata)

OPENING PAGE (CW): LOCAL LOUNGE BISTRO AND FIREHALL BISTRO (DANIEL HAYDUK); BOHEMIAN CAFE, LAKE COUNTRY COFFEE HOUSE AND WILD APPLE RESTAURANT (LYDIA ROSS); LOCAL LOUNGE BISTRO (DANIEL HAYDUK). THIS PAGE PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

readers' choice

- 2 Local Lounge & Grille (Summerland)
- 3 Passa Tempo (Osoyoos)

Best Winery Restaurant

Central

- 1 Old Vines Restaurant (West Kelowna)
- 2 Grapevine Restaurant (Lake Country)
- 3 Sunset Organic Bistro

South

- 1 The Patio at Lake Breeze (Naramata)
- 2 Hillside Estate Winery & Bistro
- 3 The Sonora Room (Oliver)

Best Breakfast

Central

- 1 The Jammery (Lake Country)
- 2 De Dutch Pannekoek House
- 3 White Spot

North

- 1 Friesen's Countrytyme Gardens
- 2 The Brown Derby Café (Armstrong)
- 3 Denny's

- 3 Waddy's

South

- 1 Valentini's Cafe
- 2 Denny's
- 3 County Café (Summerland)
- 3 Over Easy

Best Sunday Brunch

Central

- 1 Eldorado Dining Room
- 2 The Grand Bay Cafe
- 3 The Vintage Room

North

- 1 Friesen's Countrytyme Gardens
- 2 Ora Restaurant
- 3 Sevens Bar & Grille

South

- 1 Dream Café
- 2 Pasta Factory
- 3 Hooded Merganser

Best Lunch Spot

Central

- 1 The Yellowhouse
- 2 Le Plateau Bistro
- 3 Kelsey's
- 3 White Spot

North

- 1 Crush Bistro
- 1 The Grey Dog Café
- 2 Checkers Bar & Grille
- 3 Little Tex Restaurant

South

- 1 Pasta Factory
- 2 Amante Bistro
- 3 Wheatgrass Cafe

Best Buffet

Central

- 1 Ruby Family Restaurant
- 2 Winfield Chinese Restaurant (Lake Country)
- 3 Mama Panda's

North

- 1 Royal Garden Restaurant
- 2 Sevens Bar & Grille
- 3 Friesen's Countrytyme Gardens

South

- 1 Oliver Gardens (Oliver)
- 2 China Palace

Best Casual Restaurant / Bistro

Central

- 1 Minstrel Café
- 2 Le Plateau Bistro
- 3 Blind Angler Grille (Peachland)

North

- 1 Crush Bistro
- 2 Mahoroba
- 3 Little Tex

South

- 1 The Bench Market
- 2 Good Omens (Summerland)
- 3 Sage and Vines Bistro

Best Family Restaurant

Central

- 1 Boston Pizza
- 2 White Spot
- 3 Red Robin

North

- 1 Denny's
- 2 Boston Pizza
- 3 K.T.'s Heritage Restaurant

South

- 1 Boston Pizza
- 2 Firehall Bistro (Oliver)
- 3 Over Easy

Best Takeout

Central

- 1 Bordello's
- 2 Wok Out
- 3 Jimmy Ho's

North

- 1 The Rice Box
- 2 3208 Restaurant
- 3 Apple Lane

South

- 1 Oliver Gardens (Oliver)
- 2 Chinese Laundry
- 3 Isshin Sushi Bar

Best Late Night Bite after 10PM

Central

- 1 Boston Pizza

- 2 Doc Willoughby's Pub
- 2 Kelly O'Bryan's
- 3 Cabana Bar & Grille

North

- 1 Boston Pizza
- 2 Kelly O'Bryan's
- 3 Checkers Bar & Grille

South

- 1 Denny's
- 2 Barley Mill Brew Pub & Bistro
- 3 Elite Restaurant

Best Sports Bar

Central

- 1 Sturgeon Hall
- 2 Dakota's Sports Bar & Grille
- 2 Tonics Pub
- 3 Dave's Sports Bar

North

- 1 Roster Sports Club
- 2 Kal Sports Bar
- 3 Monashee's Bar & Grille

South

- 1 Best Damn Sports Bar
- 2 Boston Pizza
- 3 Barley Mill Brew Pub & Bistro

Best Pub

Central

- 1 Pheasant & Quail Pub
- 2 Doc Willoughby's
- 3 Brandt's Creek
- 3 Friends Neighbourhood Pub

North

- 1 Sir Winston's
- 2 Squires Four Public House
- 3 Checkers Bar & Grille

South

- 1 Barley Mill Brew Pub & Bistro
- 2 Kettle Valley Station Pub
- 3 Copper Mug

Best Asian Fusion

Central

- 1 Boa-Thong Thai Restaurant
- 2 Mon-Thong Thai Restaurant
- 3 Mekong Restaurant

North

- 1 Bamboo Beach Fusion Grille
- 2 Boa-Thong Thai Restaurant
- 3 Edo Japan

South

- 1 Iyara Thai Restaurant
- 2 Lee's Overseas Delights
- 3 Oliver Gardens (Oliver)



Best European
Central

- 1 Bouchons Bistro
- 2 Gasthaus on the Lake (Peachland)
- 3 Ricardo's Mediterranean Kitchen

North

- 1 Eclectic Med
- 2 Hubert's Restaurant (Lumby)
- 2 Intermezzo
- 3 Royal Knight

South

- 1 Bogner's of Penticton
- 2 Il Vecchio Delicatessen
- 3 Passa Tempo (Osoyoos)

Best Greek

Central

- 1 Yamas Taverna
- 2 Olympia Greek Taverna
- 3 Greek House Restaurant (Lake Country)

North

- 1 Dorian's Taverna
- 2 Niko's Taverna
- 3 Papa's Greek Restaurant (Armstrong)

South

- 1 Theo's Restaurant
- 2 Zia's Stonehouse Restaurant (Summerland)
- 3 Mykonos Pizza & Spaghetti House

Best Indian

Central

- 1 Dawett
- 2 Poppadoms
- 3 Da Tandoor

North

- 1 New Delhi
- 2 The Curry Pot
- 3 The Palace

South

- 1 Best of India (Oliver)
- 2 Navratan
- 3 Haveli

Best Italian

Central

- 1 Mamma Rosa
- 2 La Bussola

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3 La Cucina Pasteria
(West Kelowna)

North

1 Italian Kitchen
2 Tita's Italian Bistro
3 Intermezzo

South

1 Villa Rosa Ristorante Italiano
2 La Casa Ouzeria
3 Campo Marina (Osoyoos)

Best Japanese

Central

1 Momo Sushi
2 Maui Sushi-Izakaya
3 Ozeki

North

1 Mahoroba
1 J-Don Japanese Donburi
2 Temptasian
3 Bento Sushi

South

1 Ginza Sushi
2 Isshin Sushi Bar
3 Tokyo Japanese Restaurant

Best Mexican/ Southwest Cuisine

Central

1 Hector's Casa
2 Fernando's Taqueria
3 DJ's Mexican Restaurant

North

1 Little Tex
2 Los Huesos (Enderby)
3 Lorenzo's Cafe

South

1 Vallarta Grille
2 Taco Time
3 Shades on Main

Best Appies / Tapas

Central

1 Waterfront Restaurant
& Wine Bar
2 Rotten Grape
3 Cactus Club Cafe

North

1 Bamboo Beach Fusion Grille
2 Crush Bistro
3 Monashee's Bar & Grille
3 Squires Four Public House

South

1 Buffleheads Tapas Room
1 The Vanilla Pod
(Summerland)
2 La Casa Ouzeria
3 Local Lounge & Grille
3 Villa Rosa Ristorante Italiano

Best Burger

Central

1 Gorgeous George's
2 White Spot
3 Earl's Restaurant

North

1 Kal Sports Bar
2 Earl's Restaurant
3 Hungry Jack's (Enderby)

South

1 Burger 55
2 Earl's Restaurant
3 Salty's Beach House

Best Fish & Chips

Central

1 Shady Rest
2 Hooked on Seafood
3 Joey's Only Seafood

North

1 C-Lovers
2 Joey's Only Seafood
3 Fisherman Direct Seafood (Enderby)

South

1 Joey's Only Seafood
2 Cozy Bay Seafood Cafe
(Summerland)
3 Buy the Sea

Best French Fries

Central

1 Bunkhouse Bar & Grille
2 New York Fries
3 Gorgeous George's

North

1 McDonald's
2 Squires Four
Public House
3 Wendy's

South

1 Jeffers Fryzz
2 Earl's Restaurant
3 Cozy Bay Seafood Cafe
(Summerland)

Best Pizza

Central

1 Bordello's
2 Boston Pizza
3 East Side Mario's

North

1 Jim's Place
2 Boston Pizza
2 Margherita Pizza
3 JJ's Pizza Plus (Enderby)

South

1 Boston Pizza
2 Mykonos
3 Pizza 97 (Osoyoos)

Best Salad

Central

1 Joey's Global Grille
2 Il Mercato (West Kelowna)
3 Wild Apple Restaurant & Lounge

North

1 Bamboo Beach Fusion Grille
2 The Brown Derby Café (Armstrong)
3 Little Tex Restaurant

South

1 Earl's Restaurant
2 Hooded Merganser
3 Valentini's Cafe

Best Sandwich / Wrap / Panini

Central

1 Okanagan Street Food
2 Bike Shop Café
2 L'Isola Bella Bistro (Lake Country)
2 Wrap Zone
3 The Bread Company

North

1 Wrap Zone
2 Subway
3 Helmut's Sausage Kitchen

South

1 Cantaloupe Annie's (Oliver)
2 Valentini's Cafe
3 Good Omens (Summerland)

Best Seafood

Central

1 Christopher's Steak & Seafood
2 Codfather's Seafood Market
3 The Keg Steakhouse

North

1 Eclectic Med
2 Joey's Only Seafood
3 C-Lovers

South

1 Salty's Beach House
2 Cozy Bay Seafood Café
(Summerland)
3 Isshin Sushi Bar
3 Joey's Only Seafood

Best Soup

Central

1 Bike Shop Café
2 Mad Mango
3 Woodfire Bakery



North

- 1 Crush Bistro
- 2 Cracked Pot
- 3 Pho Fusion
- 3 Sprouted Fig

South

- 1 Valentini's Cafe
- 2 Good Omens (Summerland)
- 3 Medici's Gelateria (Oliver)
- 3 Wheatgrass Cafe

Best Coffee House

Central

- 1 Blenz Coffee
- 2 Starbuck's
- 3 Bean Scene
- 3 Lake Country Coffee House (Lake Country)

North

- 1 Bean Scene
- 2 Bean to Cup
- 3 Talkin' Donkey

South

- 1 Bellevue Café
- 2 Cantaloupe Annie's (Oliver)
- 3 Good Omens (Summerland)

Best Place for a Cup of Tea

Central

- 1 Marmalade Cat Café
- 2 Blenz Coffee
- 3 Bean Scene
- 3 ChaiBaba

North

- 1 Bean Scene
- 2 Tea Desire
- 3 Hungry Jack's (Enderby)

South

- 1 Time for Tea
- 2 Tea & Weaves
- 3 Cantaloupe Annie's (Oliver)

Best Cocktails

Central

- 1 Joey's Global Grille
- 2 Ricardo's Mediterranean Kitchen
- 3 Cabana Bar & Grille
- 3 Rose's Waterfront Pub

North

- 1 Checkers Bar & Grille
- 2 The Phoenix Steakhouse
- 3 Alexander's Beach Pub
- 3 Monashee's Bar & Grille

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

BLENZ COFFEE® the Reader's Choice

BLENZ COFFEE is proud to be a finalist for the sixth year running in the Okanagan Life reader's choice award. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers and voters for recognizing BLENZ COFFEE as an outstanding performer in our category and we would like to offer a sincere thank you to all our customers and supporters for voting us your favourite coffee shop for six years straight.

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readers' choice

South

- 1 Barking Parrot
- 2 Blue Mule
- 3 Salty's Beach House

Best Steak

Central

- 1 Ricardo's Mediterranean Kitchen
- 2 The Keg Steakhouse
- 3 Chop Steakhouse & Bar
- 3 Ric's Grille
- 3 19 Okanagan Bar & Grill (West Kelowna)

North

- 1 The Phoenix Steakhouse
- 2 Bamboo Beach Fusion Grille
- 3 Earl's Restaurant

South

- 1 Black Iron Grille
- 2 Diamond Steak & Seafood House (Osoyoos)
- 3 Cobblestone (Naramata)

Best Vegetarian

Central

- 1 Dawett
- 2 Wild Apple Restaurant & Lounge
- 3 Poppadoms Taste India

North

- 1 Checkers Bar & Grille
- 1 Intermezzo
- 2 Crush Bistro
- 3 Hungry Jack's (Enderby)
- 3 New Delhi

South

- 1 Dream Café
- 2 Lee's Overseas Delights
- 3 Zia's Stonehouse Restaurant (Summerland)

Best Veggie Burger

Central

- 1 Cactus Club Café
- 2 Milestone's Restaurant
- 3 Gorgeous George's

North

- 1 Intermezzo
- 2 Hungry Jack's (Enderby)
- 3 Little Tex Restaurant

South

- 1 Burger 55
- 2 Best Damn Sports Bar
- 3 Cobblestone (Naramata)

Best Dessert

Central

- 1 Bouchons Bistro

- 2 Bliss Bakery (Peachland)

- 3 RauDZ Regional Table

North

- 1 Sweet Caroline's Bakery
- 2 Chickie Cupcakes
- 3 Dairy Queen

South

- 1 Zia's Stonehouse Restaurant (Summerland)
- 2 Wouda's Bakery
- 3 Amante Bistro

Best Ice Cream / Gelato / Frozen Yogurt

Central

- 1 Marble Slab Creamery
- 1 Moo-Lix Ice Cream
- 2 Annegret's Chocolates
- 3 Sweet Cravings

North

- 1 Marble Slab Creamery
- 2 Cold Stone Creamery
- 3 Dairy Queen

South

- 1 Tickleberry's (Okanagan Falls)
- 2 Medici's Gelateria (Oliver)
- 3 Osoyoos Gelato (Osoyoos)

Best Bakery

Central

- 1 Fezziwig's Artisan Bakery
- 2 The Bread Company
- 3 Tripke Bakery
- 3 COBS Bakery

North

- 1 Sweet Caroline's Bakery
- 2 Country Bakery (Armstrong)
- 3 COBS Bread

South

- 1 Oliver Bakery (Oliver)
- 1 Wouda's Bakery
- 2 Just Pies
- 3 Cake Box (Summerland)

Best Place to Buy Fruits & Veggies

Central

- 1 Quality Greens
- 2 Choices Market
- 3 Paul's Produce

North

- 1 Quality Greens
- 2 Farmers' Market
- 3 Askew's Foods (Armstrong)
- 3 Swan Lake Nursery

South

- 1 Roots and Fruits (Kaleden)
- 2 Quality Greens
- 3 Bears Fruit Stand (Keremeos)

Best Specialty Meat Shop

Central

- 1 T-Bones Fresh Meat Market
- 2 Illichmann's Meats
- 3 Johnny's Fresh Meat & Deli (Peachland)

North

- 1 Vernon Butcher Shop
- 2 Helmut's Sausage Kitchen
- 3 Grillers Meats

South

- 1 Tony's Meats & Deli
- 2 Paradise Meats (Summerland)

Best Natural / Health Food Store

Central

- 1 Nature's Fare Market
- 2 Choices Market
- 3 Natural Resources

North

- 1 Nature's Fare Market
- 2 Simply Delicious
- 3 Anna's Vitamins Plus

South

- 1 Whole Foods Market
- 2 RowanBerry Health Products (Oliver)
- 3 Vitamin King

Best Shuswap Eatery

- 1 Billabong Pub (Sorrento)

- 1 Table 24 Restaurant (Salmon Arm)
- 2 Moose Mulligan's (Sicamous)
- 3 Home Restaurant (Salmon Arm) ■



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Open rain or shine, Valley farmers' markets are growing to meet the demand of Okanaganites looking for local, farm fresh produce from fruits and veggies, to artisan cheeses and breads and more



FARMERS' market

Story and photos
by Bruce Kemp

When I first moved to Kelowna I didn't see any people I knew on the street and not being a mall-ee, there was only so long I could sit in a restaurant on a Saturday morning before waitresses started giving me the "move-along" look. Ditto for coffee shops. Then one Saturday the boss and I went winging down Springfield behind the Orchard Park Mall and I almost snapped my neck checking out the encampment of multi-coloured tents and trucks. I recognized it right away and it was like coming home.

The size of the Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market amazed me. Compared to the city's population base, the market is huge with more than 350 day and seasonal vendors offering their produce and wares. At the height of the season as many as 6,000 shoppers and tourists will flood the temporary laneways on a Saturday morning.

Among those shopping is Waterfront Restaurant and Winebar's executive chef and sommelier, Mark Filatow. The three-time gold medal-winner (most recently the 2010 *Vancouver Magazine's* Food Awards for Best Okanagan Restaurant) uses as much locally grown produce in his menus as he can. He believes that "what's picked

today, tastes better today." On its website, the Waterfront lists a number of suppliers that market shoppers will recognize. Among them, John and Lois Cox, owners of Sweet Life Farms.

John is probably the most highly recognizable denizen of the market. He's the guy in the big, white cowboy hat selling potatoes. Every week, he drives down from Westwold with a two-ton truck loaded with up to a dozen different kinds of spuds. There are redskins, Yukon golds and potatoes that are purple through-and-through. Root vegetables are a specialty of his 50-acre farm.

John's produce is in demand at the market and for restaurant kitchens. Several wineries and golf courses are now courting him so they too can include Sweet Life taters on their menus.

Clients get territorial over John's potatoes. "A couple of years ago, I had a crop failure and the customers wouldn't believe me when I limited them to only one bag per customer to make sure there was enough just to go around... You know you can promise those chefs the world, but in the end you've got to deliver." And that's what he's been doing since his early college days.

John grew up in Oregon and attended college in California in the 1960s

Valley Markets

Armstrong Farmers' Market

IPE Grounds
3371 Pleasant Valley Road
April 24 – October 30
Saturday 8 a.m. – noon
54 vendors: 16 sell farm product

Vernon Farmers' Market

Wesbild Centre Parking Lot
3445 43rd Avenue
April 23 – October 29
Monday and Thursday
8 a.m. – noon
125 vendors: more than 60 sell farm product
Buskers and special events on Mondays of long weekends

Vernon Friday Night Farmers' Market

Village Green Mall
4900 27th Street
May to Thanksgiving
Friday 3 – 7 p.m.
40 vendors: more than 22 sell farm product

Lake Country Farmers' Market

Swalwell Park
10090 Bottom Wood Lake Road
June 1 – September 30
Friday 3 – 7 p.m.
14 vendors: 5 sell farm product
New fast-food concession on-site

Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market

Corner of Dilworth and Springfield roads, behind Orchard Park Mall
April through October
Wednesday and Saturday
8 a.m. – 1 p.m.
165 vendors: more than 70 sell farm product
Buskers and prepared food concessions

Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Evening Market

Corner of Dilworth and Springfield roads, behind Orchard Park Mall
June through Labour Day
Thursday 3 – 7 p.m.
60 vendors: 25 sell farm product



Naramata Community Market

Wharf Park, Naramata
June through mid-September
Wednesday 3:30 – 6:30 p.m.
30 vendors: 10 sell food product

Oliver Country Market A'Fair

North End of Lion's Park, Hwy 97
June to October
Saturday 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
18 vendors

Penticton Farmers' Market

100 block of Main Street
May through October
Saturday 8:30 a.m. – noon
67 vendors: 57 sell farm product
Buskers

Osoyoos Market On Main

Town Square, Main Street
Victoria Day to Labour Day
Saturday 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
20 vendors: 10 sell farm product



where he got into the early farm-to-table movement. What he saw then is the same thing he is seeing here in the Okanagan in the new millennium. Farmers were getting pushed off their land in favour of residential real estate development.

The solution in California was to offer the remaining local farmers more opportunity. "We set up markets all around town so a farmer could come down with a three-ton truck instead of a two-ton and sell produce at four different market locations making the trip profitable," says John. "That's going to have to be the thinking soon in Kelowna. We could set up four markets in the greater Kelowna area—one in Rutland, one in the Mission, one on the Westside and the original one here in Kelowna. That way the farmer could make a good profit."

It was a hard slog during the first years of the market. John and Lois first set up their stand when it moved to the parking lot of the Orchard Park Mall, 18 years ago. Then the biggest challenges were the Russian and Ukrainian ladies who were among the market's first clients.

"There weren't many producers here. There was Mikey from up on the bench and a few others. We used to get these little old Ukrainian and Russian ladies come by asking how much you were selling for. When I told them 25 cents a pound they would offer me a nickel a pound and tell me how bad my potatoes were and really beat me up. Times have changed."

John is one of the market's biggest supporters. "I think the Kelowna market is the biggest in BC and the most diverse. Pretty soon Orchard Park is going to be too small and we'll have to move. It would be nice to have a permanent space like they do in Kansas City (Missouri) or the new one in Halifax."

The Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market really is getting big. According to manager, Bob Callioux, new vendors must now go through an approval jury comprised of himself and three board members to be accepted as seasonal vendors.

But farmers get top priority. "Every farmer that calls and qualifies gets right into the market," he says. This way the market can keep the mix of producers, concessionaires and crafts people working in favour of food producers.

If any philosophy drives the market and the delicate



Opening page: Markets like the Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market make it possible to build relationships with the people who grow your food.

Left page: Open year round, Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market.

This page: Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market is a great spot to grab breakfast or lunch.



“The first thing they (new Canadians) look for is a market like ours. So this is helping to change the face of the market.”

balancing act of vendors, it is the idea of fresh food produced locally. According to Bob, this isn't an easy sell to North Americans (although they are coming to realize how appealing an ideal it can be), but it is the way many new Canadians grew up shopping and prefer to continue because they are used to it.

“The first thing they (new Canadians) look for is a market like ours. So this is helping to change the face of the market. We have more new ethnic vendors selling East Indian foods, German meats and breads; Ukrainian perogies, Chinese and other Asian vegetables.”

Last year, for the first time, one

farmer began selling live turkeys in the fall for Thanksgiving and Christmas delivery. You can't actually put a leash on your bird and walk away with it, but there is a floor model to inspect and the farmer will deliver a fresh, oven-ready gobbler to you a few weeks after taking your order.

Quality standards at the market are a top priority. A market on Saltspring Island received some bad press when the health board told them they could no longer sell homemade jams and preserves. But Bob says this isn't a problem here in Kelowna because of strict adherence to health regula-

tions. “Everything is inspected except prepared or cooked meats. We don't have any fresh meat vendors here (all the meat offered for sale is frozen) and preserves are closely looked at.”

Bob also underscores qualifications for use of the organic label. “A farmer has to prove he doesn't use sprays, pesticides or herbicides and that his products meet all the requirements before he can say they're organic.”

Even buskers have to prove they're capable of the job. There's no formal competition for a busking spot, but Bob and other board members visit the different street performers during the day to check out their acts.

A lot of people come to the market just to eat. On Wednesdays office workers from nearby businesses come to enjoy their lunch hour with foods like French crepes that they wouldn't or couldn't make at home. Right now the overall mix of the market's 300 plus vendors is 45 per cent farm products (fruit, veggies, meats, poultry

and cheeses); 30 per cent concessionaire food and 25 per cent artisans.

This makes for an exciting mix. Add the buskers, face painters and balloon artists and you don't just have a market, you have a tourist destination where busloads of camera-toting visitors from Alberta offload to enjoy a Saturday or Wednesday morning.

When I first encountered the Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market, I was like all expats (even in our own country), grasping for something familiar—some kind of comfort food for the homesick soul if you will. I grew up going to the local farmers' market in my hometown and the farmers/vendors were the parents of many of the kids I went to school with. Eventually those kids became the vendors themselves.

That dynamic didn't change much when I moved to the big city. Most people think metropolitan centres are as far from our agricultural roots as you can get, but nothing is further from the truth. Big cities, especially those with rail or marine links, have always had lively boisterous markets selling everything from produce to cheap lingerie. London has Covent Garden, which is still a market as well as a tourist destination. Paris had Les Halles, which was torn down in a fit of urban renewal and condo development much to current chagrin of Parisians. But, Avignon, in the south of France, invested heavily in a new Les Halles and the investment is paying off big time.

Farmers' markets need not be old and venerable. Halifax opened its newest market last August. The Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market gives Nova Scotia farmers an outlet for their wares and it promotes green building at the same time. The market, located right on the waterfront, is powered by wind generators and solar panels, and sports a green roof (planted with indigenous grasses) and a living wall.

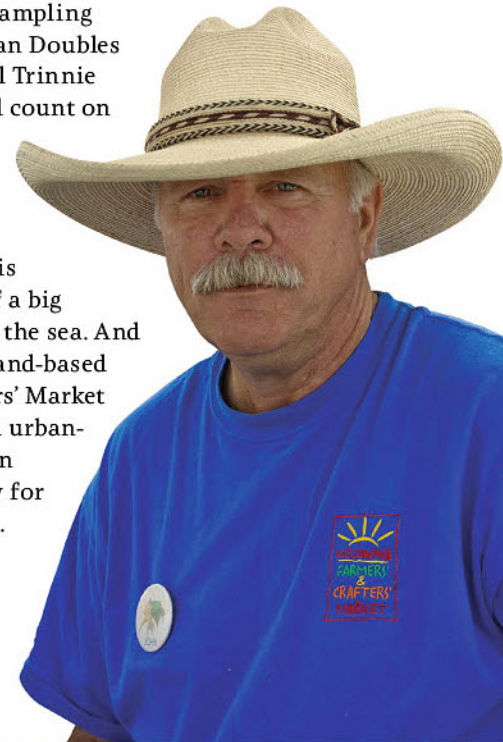
Toronto has two great markets, not counting the Asian markets that have sprung up over the past three decades, but local farmers' markets. The St. Lawrence Market is one of the oldest in the country and features butchers, fish mongers, fresh fruit and veg vendors along with housewares, peameal bacon on a bun and some of the best buskers anywhere. Celtic harpist and singer Loreena McKennitt got her start as a busker knocking out tunes on Saturday mornings in the market hall.

Kensington Market is the city's other market and was my local. I could walk through Kensington sampling everything from exotic cheeses to Trinidadian Doubles (a kind of miniature falafel laced with lethal Trinnie hot sauce). When we expected guests, I could count on the green grocers, bakers and butchers to provide everything our table would need from fresh capon to splendid Gateaux Basques (a sinful, cream-filled pastry).

Vancouver's Public Market is another oasis of rural sensibility thrust into the middle of a big city—this one specializing in fresh fruits of the sea. And every Thursday through the summer, local land-based producers set up the Granville Island Farmers' Market that's been running for two decades. Coastal urbanites can stop by to pick up fresh produce then stroll over to the Public Market Seafood City for king crab or Miyagi oysters on the half shell.

With so many great role models, a cast of characters selling wonderful Okanagan products and an increasingly enthusiastic client base, I'm pretty confident in the future of our own Kelowna market. *OL*

Left page: Grocery shopping the way it was meant to be with live music floating on the breeze at the Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market. Be prepared to get in line with other devotees for one of Silvia Thomas' (A La Crepe) paper thin crepes filled with your choice of filling. **This page:** The guy in the white cowboy hat is John Cox, you'll find him at the Kelowna market selling a dozen different kinds of potatoes that he grows on his farm in Westwold.



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ENTREE HIGHLIGHTS

- AAA Beef Tenderloin roast, potato pancake, lingonberry demi, sweet potato fritz
- Wild Mushroom Ravioli, caramelized chipollini onions, baby carrot, green pea fondue
- Panseared SableFish, smoked bacon, pea shoot salad, sun-dried tomato herb vinaigrette



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MENU HIGHLIGHTS

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- LeftCoast Mussel Pot
- Cherry Spareribs
- Cam's Mixed Grille
- Alabacore Tuna Salad



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Paul Ceconi



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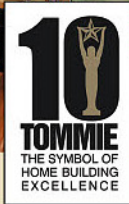
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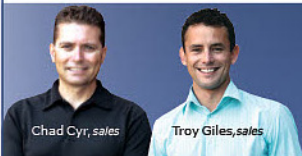


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SHOWCASE

This special advertisers' showcase presents the products and services that went into the home renovation story Mountain make-over featured on page 50 in this issue's Valley Voyer. Included are the general contractor, interior designer, bathroom fixtures, kitchen cabinets, countertops, appliances and furniture. Habitat Interiors helped Dilworth residents love their 1990s era home again. The footprint of the home basically stayed the same but the outdated fixtures and finishes were replaced with a modern aesthetic. www.habitatinteriors.com



PHOTO BY LAURIE CARTER

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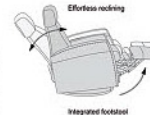
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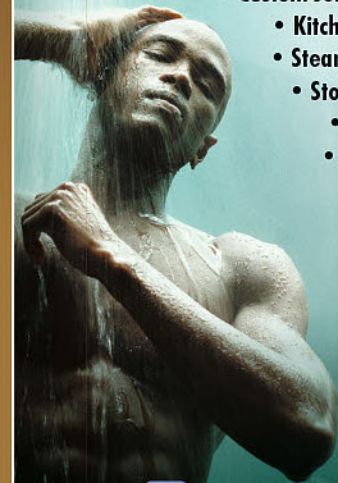
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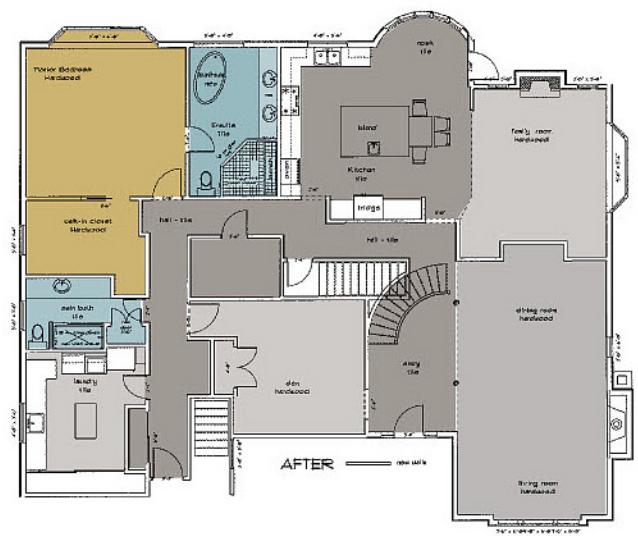


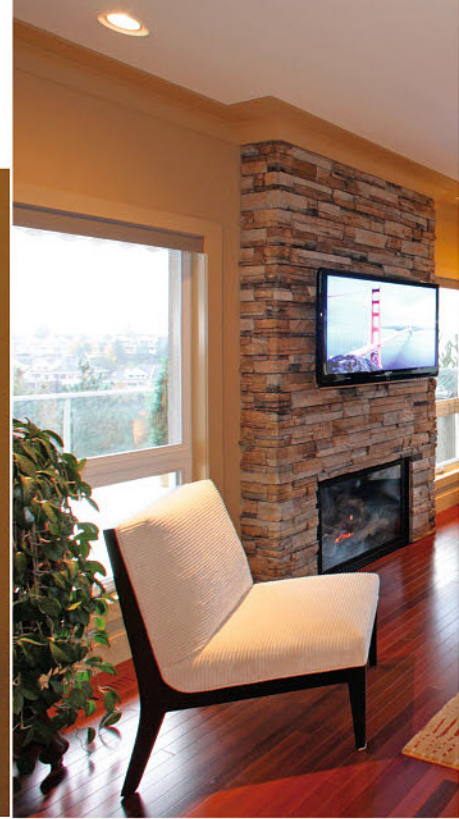
by Laurie Carter

Mountain makeover

Local designer helps Dilworth residents love their home again

- When Al and Jay Cosar went looking for advice on renovating their 5,000 sq. ft. home, Habitat Interiors designers Andrea and Paulette Harte found “good bones” in the 1990s era home. Andrea says all that was needed was to address outdated finishes and deal with the awkward use of space in some areas, although creating a modern aesthetic in a structurally traditional home did pose some challenges. To a large extent, the existing footprint remains unchanged, but new materials and fixtures like the bowl sink and glass shower enclosure in the guest bath (facing page) and the twin sinks and free-standing soaker tub in the master ensuite (next page) transform the spaces from oak dominated traditional to minimalist modern. An imposing three-sided fireplace that trimmed the useable area in the great room has been replaced with a fireplace alcove, creating a riveting focal point, an open living







and dining area and energy efficient gas heat. To make room for Jay's dream of a large kitchen island where people can congregate while she cooks, a poorly located closet was reconfigured to accommodate a bank of sleek cabinets and free up room for the super island. The bow window dining nook offers a great view of the Black Mountain ridge and deer feeding in the backyard, while the adjacent

family room provides another comfortable seating area in the home's major gathering place. Banks of windows, the vaulted great room ceiling and two-storey open foyer create a sense of light and space. As the sun goes down, dramatic fixtures and subtle lighting accents add to the warmth of the earth-tone colour palette. Jay confides that Andrea faced some challenges in this respect as well, since the colours she chose had to complement flooring the couple bought a couple of years previously. Less obvious are the energy efficiency improvements including low voltage lighting, infloor heating, dual flush toilets and energy star appliances. **OL**

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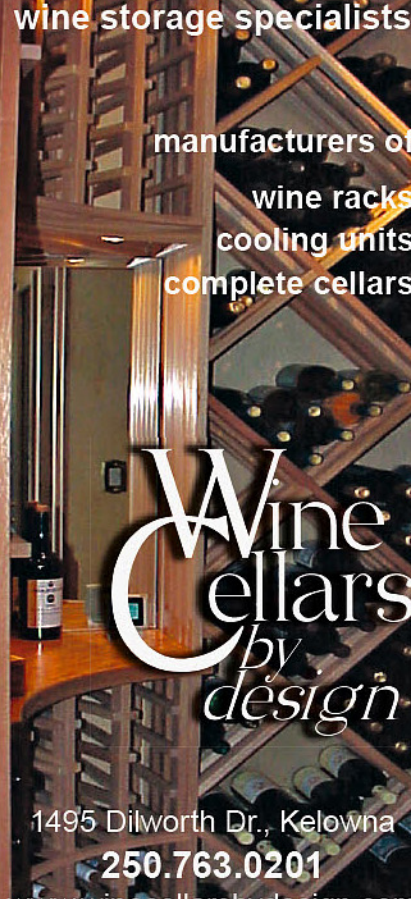
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Putting a new cork in wine bottles

by Michael Botner

The natural choice for a wine closure, innovations in the industry have led to fewer cork-related wine faults and renewed demand

■ The stopper of choice since the 19th century, natural cork fell into dis-favour with many consumers and producers when cork taint reached epidemic proportions in the 1980s and 1990s. Cork taint is primarily caused by an organic compound known as 2,4,6-trichloroanisole (TCA). A contaminant found in cork and in wine processing. Only a tiny amount of TCA will turn a fine bouquet into a wet-dog or wet-cardboard like smell.

Not surprisingly, a myriad of alternatives appeared from airtight metal screw caps, originally used for the most basic wines, to synthetics, which are meant to replicate many of the features of cork but at a lower cost. For a while cork producers, largely based in Portugal, struggled to deal with

the situation. But cork giants like Amorim have taken up the challenge by developing new technologies and improving quality control, yanking the cork industry into the space age.

"We needed a kick in the pants," says Carlos de Jesus, a spokesman for Amorim, producers of three billion cork stoppers a year, nearly a third of the world supply. Their product line ranges from natural corks to technical corks (manufactured corks made from cork granules that are glued together and special granulated corks with natural cork discs bonded to one or both ends that are used for champagne and sparkling wine).

Take away the nuisance of cork taint (now down to about one per cent) and the argument for cork as

an ideal stopper for wine is awfully convincing. Made from the bark of the cork oak, it not only provides a tight seal but also allows wine to age gradually in the bottle.

Sustainability may be the strongest argument in favour of cork. As a renewable resource, cork has a number of environmental benefits. Cork oak forests are found throughout the western Mediterranean basin and North Africa. Not only do these forests absorb large amounts of CO₂ (a greenhouse gas) they also support a remarkable array of flora and fauna. In addition, the highly skilled work of stripping the bark every nine years is the best paid agricultural harvesting job in the world. It seems rumours of cork's demise may be premature. **OL**



HEIDI NOBLE

Co-owner/executive winemaker
JoieFarm

Stirring the pot comes naturally to Heidi Noble. A graduate of the Stratford Chefs School, her career included stints at some of Canada's top restaurants. Looking for a change, Heidi moved out of the kitchen in 2000 and enrolled in a sommelier program. After several visits to the Okanagan with her new beau, Michael Dinn (a sommelier who worked front of house in a number of Vancouver restaurants), she fell in love again with the "sheer beauty and bounty of the region." In short order, they married, went to work for wine import agencies and purchased a five-acre property with an orchard in Naramata. While holding down full-time jobs and commuting to the Okanagan on weekends, they renovated the farm house and opened an epicurean retreat in the summer of 2003. When their dream of launching a state of the art wine and food centre bogged down in red tape, the duo moved to plan B, planting vines and launching a winery in 2004. To train, they mentored at established wineries that agreed to make their first few vintages. Putting their focus exclusively on winemaking, they built their own winery in 2007. With Michael as natural born salesman and logistics expert, and Heidi in charge of winemaking and grape growing and contracting, JoieFarm now produces just under 10,000 cases and can't keep up with demand.

Showcasing wines with cork closures, the tasting notes list name, price, region or country, and aging potential (in years). The five-star rating system stresses value for price.



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Maremma, Tuscany

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Finesse combines with supple fruit, a pleasant tartness and softly textured tannins in this intriguing Italian red. Flavours suggest juicy cherry with nuances of licorice, tobacco leaf and smoke. Partners tomato based pastas, roast pork and grilled Italian sausage. (3 years)



VOLCANIC HILLS 2007 SYRAH

West Kelowna, Okanagan Valley

★★★★ \$27.90

Richly satisfying Syrah shows densely packed sour cherry and blackcurrant fruit, enhanced by notes of gravelly earth, mocha, cedar and mint. Supple tannins add texture and backbone. Pairs with game casserole and other boldly flavoured dishes. (4 years)



TOWNSHIP 7 2009 CHARDONNAY

Penticton, Okanagan Valley

★★★★1/2 \$19.99

Slam dunk Chardonnay scores with elegance, backbone and complexity. Intense nose and creamy palate delivers apricot and pineapple fruit, notes of hazelnut, vanilla and toasty oak, and lovely balance, backed by grippy tannins. Partners grilled salmon. (3 years)



KALALA 2008 MERLOT

West Kelowna, Okanagan Valley

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Mighty Merlot is built for the cellar. Meaty palate features black cherry, raspberry, cocoa, earth, black pepper and smoky oak, followed by puckery tannins and soothing fruit on the finish. If you must, serve with rare beef. (6 years)



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Gouvinhas, Northern Portugal

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Summerland, Okanagan Valley

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Leading lady

To young actor Courtenay Dobbie, Caravan Farm Theatre seemed a mirage: Clydesdale cast-mates and stages sprung from fields for sold-out crowds. But eight years after her first show, she's holding the reins

■ For two months during the summer of 2003, Courtenay Dobbie woke in her nylon yellow tent, her eyes swimming in the blue sky above the screen. Her ears replayed the echo of applause coasting through trees—the 24-year-old was playing the lead in Caravan Farm Theatre's *Joan Henry*—and she smiled as she yawned. Courtenay rose in her pyjamas, unzipped her front door and gazed at the pines blanketing Hullcar Mountain. Inside, she felt a tug that, by August, was too strong to ignore.

Courtenay thought she understood the source of those pangs.

"It was the land and the natural environment. Performing and creating art in that context was really appealing to me as an actor," she says, almost a decade later, sitting inside the theatre company's wooden office.

At Caravan, audiences are entertained under a starlit Armstrong sky in the fields and forests of a farm. The actors eat, sleep and sing here. Though she remembers her canvas-sheltered summers fondly—"It

was very romantic"—Courtenay no longer lives in a tent.

Last September, taking over from Estelle Shook who stepped down after 12 years, she became the company's new artistic director, the most recent in a long line of parts the 32-year-old has played.

Summer after summer, she returned to Caravan. After *Joan Henry*, she took on the role of Roxanne in *Cyrano of the Northwest* in 2004, Cordelia in the 2007 production of *King Lear* and Virtue in 2010's *Everyone*.

Courtenay couldn't get enough of Caravan, its sense of communion with the land and the sense of community it shares with a devoted audience that has been buying tickets for the last 32 years.

"Living in such a way, it was adventurous. And it still is, even now, as the leader of it all," she says.

To her, the adventure stems from working in the outdoors with other professional actors, but also from wedding art and the wild west—erecting a show from ink and hooves.

"You're saying, 'We have these words on a paper and we have these bodies and we have this space and the sky and these trees and the land and a horse, and we're going to make something.'"

Caravan does just that three times a year, with a fall show, a sleigh ride show in the winter and a full-length play or musical in the summer. The farm is always one of the stars.

To Courtenay and many others, these 80 acres are a sacred space. "It's a bit of a holy ground."

Ground that could have been gone.

During that summer of 2003, while Courtenay's intuition whispered, fires that were swallowing the Okanagan nearly licked the farm. *Joan Henry* was halted for five days. When the evacuation ended, everyone, especially the audience, returned. "We just picked right up with the show."

Through the fire's shadow Courtenay saw Caravan's magic, its people, in another light. She also saw the whole picture: the horses' oat buckets, the paint on audience benches, the pie crumbs on actors' dessert ▶



Rise and shine. Stoke the fire in my house. Look out the window and check on the horses. Get dressed for the day and head down the hill to the office.



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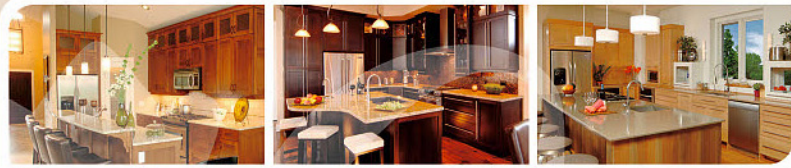
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plates, the sun-stained steps to the designer's loft. Courtenay deciphered her body's hints: direct. Do it all.

After that summer, she would forever crave not only creating on Caravan land, but also digging into every aspect of staging a show. Simply entering the stage, bowing, going home, "That was never enough for me," she says.

After *Joan Henry* and as a recent graduate of Langara College's Studio 58 theatre program, Courtenay went on to star in dozens of Vancouver shows. She also co-wrote a few plays, started a theatre company and began a masters degree in directing at UBC.

Today, as she wades through grant season, paper surrounds her. In addition to finding funding, Courtenay has to juggle a cast-crew team of 50, a farm filled with animals and buildings, and 15,000 audience members a year. "It's just trying to keep all of the balls in the air."

Courtenay says producing on this scale offers rewards that last long after the applause.

"It's a little bit more satisfying. You're helping to create art and act as a facilitator for people, which is a really great feeling."

Glancing at the upcoming *A Midsummer Night's Dream* brochure, Courtenay says she'll add touches to this place in time. She'll bring in new shows, structures and artists, but, she adds, Caravan "is defined by the land that we perform on...that's never going to change." **OL**



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Triptych

June 17 – July 27, 2011

Shatford Centre, 760 Main Street
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www.fca-sos.ca/Triptych 2011

A joint juried exhibition presented by
Federation of Canadian Artists Chapters:
North Okanagan, Central Okanagan
and South Okanagan-Similkameen

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If you are living with illness, distress, or a stressful life situation, or if you want to take better care of yourself, you may want to heed this advice. In the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, we don't just do something... we sit there!

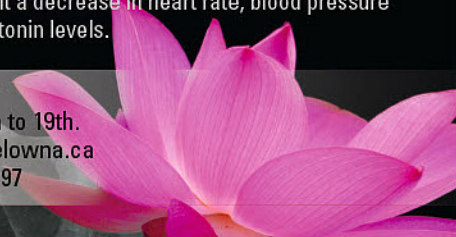
We use sitting meditation, along with guided body scans, gentle yoga, and mindful communication practices to cultivate moment-to-moment awareness of the body, breathing, thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving.

The tools for exploring the body-mind in the MBSR program are both merciful and relentless – through a gentle, open, nonjudgmental approach, participants move deeper and deeper into discovering the wisdom of the body and come close up to their unique individual experiences with discomfort, pain and distress.

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Researchers continue to unveil an abundance of studies demonstrating the benefits of mindfulness practices. Participants in MBSR programs appear to experience changes in regions of the brain associated with improved learning, memory, self-awareness, compassion and introspection. They also demonstrate decreased levels of anxiety and stress. Immune function has been shown to improve, while troublesome symptoms of many chronic illnesses diminish. People who engage regularly with mindfulness practices exhibit a decrease in heart rate, blood pressure and cortisol levels and an increase in serotonin levels.

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