

Photo: Jody Nelson

Once Upon A Restaurant

by **STEPHANIE JOHNSTONE-LAURETTE** /// EAC Staff

Everyone has a favourite restaurant, but what about a favorite food experience?

Although Cape Breton is known for its seafood chowder and a healthy love of pork pies, there's a growing desire for something different. So, what makes dinner evolve from ordinary to extraordinary? A few things to consider: the setting, the source of the food, and unique culinary themes. Cape Breton has some gems for food experiences. Here is just one example of an eatery and a farm that collectively provide some flavourful moments you won't forget.

"Feasting" and "frolicking" are some of the playful words that entice folks down the backroads of Middle River to the rustic home of George Smith and Cora-Lee Eisses-Smith, owners of the Dancing River Sprite. The Dancing River Sprite is a unique eatery hosted in its owner's farmhouse since 2006. Once a month, Eisses-Smith and Smith open their doors to a diverse group of foodies and neophytes alike who gather to share grub along a lengthy communal table. Each month offers new literary works to which the food provided is linked: a classic novel, a play, or something textually juicy you may have once read. Smith, a trained chef, offers a detailed account of each of the six courses along with eclectic stories of his own history and how it may (or may not) relate to each portion of your evening. Eisses-Smith, with a theatrical background and a wealth of knowledge in literary classics, dresses as one of the book's main characters to narrate a section, delivering a summary of the novel in six segments, or one for each course. Amidst this exceptional food experience there is also time to get to know your fellow foodies.

"With these feasts we are able to combine our passions and share them with a beautifully broad spectrum of people. We have met so many wonderful people over the years!" says Eisses-Smith.

Another detail making this a unique evening is knowledge of where your meal comes from. Unlike many restaurants, the Dancing River Sprite provides details of food sourcing for each of its courses. Smith and Eisses-Smith acquire some of their ingredients from their gardens, others through wildcrafting and from local farms.



"We have met so many wonderful people over the years!"

TAKE ACTION

For more details on the upcoming dining delights at the Dancing River Sprite you can reach out to Cora-Lee via email at ceisses@ns.sympatico.ca to book your space at the table.

You can find LocalMotive Farms at the Baddeck Farmers Market, Wednesdays 11am-2pm, starting mid-June.

One of the farm suppliers for the Dancing River Sprite is only a few kilometres down the road. LocalMotive Farm, located on Hunters Mountain along the Cabot Trail, is owned and farmed by Jody Nelson, who is also the EAC Community Food Coordinator for Cape Breton. She specializes in colourful, interesting produce that is sold at the Baddeck Farmers Market and to area restaurants. LocalMotive Farm has been supplying Dancing River Sprite for a number of years, providing delicious, fresh produce with a quality and whimsy to match that of the restaurant.

"George and Cora-Lee love my weird and wonderful vegetables," shares Nelson. "They are first in line for my rainbow of cherry tomatoes or my fairy tale eggplants!"

Knowing where their food has come from allows Eisses-Smith and Smith to provide a history of each meal—to share its story. Supporting local food initiatives like this can lead to a sensational culinary experience.

So where will you decide to feast and frolic next?

Stephanie Johnstone-Laurette is the Youth Active Transportation Coordinator for Eastern NS with the Ecology Action Centre and she's willing to bike and walk that extra mile to experience great food in Cape Breton!

The Seasonal Gourmet

by **STEPHANIE OGILVIE** /// EAC Volunteer

Tomato Chilli Jam

INGREDIENTS

- 3 Garlic Cloves
- 4 Red Chillies, seeds removed
- 2 oz. Ginger Peeled & Grated
- 1 bunch Cilantro Picked and Chopped
- 1 Onion, finely chopped
- 3 oz. Brown Sugar
- 4 oz. Olive oil
- 8 Plum Tomatoes
- 1 Tbs. Fish Sauce
- 1 Lime, Juiced
- Salt & Pepper to taste
- 2lb. Mussels cleaned
- ½ Cup. White Wine

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Chop garlic and chillies together. Place in food processor with ginger and cilantro. Pulse until a paste has formed
- 2 Heat a medium saucepan over medium high heat. Add 2oz. olive oil and spice paste until warmed and fragrant, about 3 minutes. Add the onions and sugar cooking slowly. Chop tomatoes and add to the mixture continuing to stir and let reduce.
- 3 Add fish sauce to pan and cook mixture for 20-25 minutes until the puree is syrupy and most of the liquid has reduced. Add the lime juice and season well with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and let cool.
- 4 In a large heavy bottom pan heat 2oz. olive oil over medium-low. Add cleaned mussels to pan, turn heat on medium-high, add white wine and desired amount of tomato chilli jam (½ Cup. suggested). Cover pan and allow mussels to cook.
- 5 When mussels have all opened remove the pan from the heat. Be sure to taste the broth and check for seasoning and it's ready to serve! Enjoy!



Stephanie Ogilvie has been the head chef at Brooklyn Warehouse for the past four years. The daily changing menu at Brooklyn Warehouse has given Stephanie the platform to explore and celebrate the abundance of local, sustainable fare in an elegant and imaginative way to represent Nova Scotian Cuisine.

First Impressions Last Forever...

Halcraft Printers Inc.®

www.halcraftprinters.com

We are FSC® Certified

60 Years of Quality, Full Colour Printing & Binding

902 453 4511

2688 Robie Street - Halifax - N.S. B3K 4N8 - sales@halprint.com
www.halcraftprinters.com

FSC
www.fsc.org
FSC® C016290
The mark of responsible forestry

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

Leave a gift to the EAC in your will to ensure a healthy future for generations to come. Please call us at 902-442-0300 or email us at ryan@ecologyaction.ca



"As long time proud supporters with passionate concerns for the environment, it was easy for us to decide to leave a gift to the EAC in our wills. We have long respected the work EAC does for the environment and know that its strong voice must continue into the future." - Karen Hollett & Fred Harrington