



Confident Kitchens

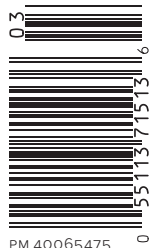
More Than a Dozen of Our Favourite Designs

A stunning Vancouver home that's a study in contrasts, from Measured Architecture



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A photograph of a man with a grey beard and glasses, wearing a dark jacket over a blue shirt, sitting at an outdoor table. He is holding a fork with a small portion of spaghetti and tomato sauce towards the camera. In the background, other people are seated at tables, and warm string lights are visible against a backdrop of trees. The overall atmosphere is warm and inviting.

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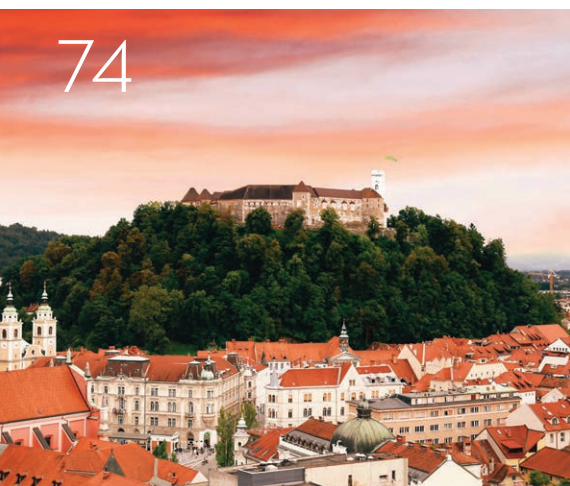
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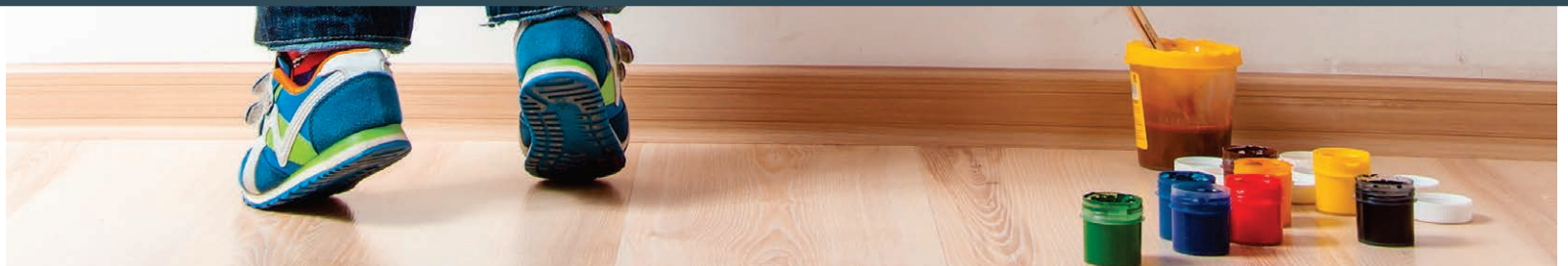
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LET'S TALK ABOUT FOOD



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Julie Van Rosendaal has been contributing recipes and meal-planning ideas to this magazine for many years now. I love that we can drop her a line and say, “We’re thinking something like, ‘upping your game at Christmas brunch,’” and she’ll enthusiastically fire back so many recipes and concepts (she’s not shy on exclamation marks when she thinks of a great new combo) that it’s all I can do to not dedicate every page to her ideas.

You’ll see in this issue that she’s been named to our 2020 Foodies of the Year list (page 57), not for the work she does with us—though I’d celebrate her heaps for that alone if I could—but for a much more personal project that’s created what feels like the start of a movement. For years, she’s been frustrated by the food shaming that seems to come along with the “clean eating” crusade. “The dangerous part of it,” she told me, “is that when you label some foods as clean and virtuous or morally superior, it’s not just the foods themselves but the people eating them. We’re teaching not only kids but also each other to think about food in this way. And it’s really damaging.”

Julie released her bestselling cookbook *Dirty Food* this past fall, and over the holiday season it rose to number two on the Bookmanager National Bestseller List for cookbooks (only Jamie Oliver’s *Ultimate Veg* managed to sneak ahead of her to the top spot). The book isn’t full of junk food—that’s not the message she’s trying to spread—but instead you’ll find recipes she wants us to stop feeling guilty about. It’s gooey, sticky, messy food, and it’s great. “These are the things you tend to share—you don’t make sticky buns for yourself,” she says. “It’s more the experience than just feeding yourself to stay alive.”

Julie’s book goes beyond giving us permission to embrace our love of food: it’s a call to start a conversation about our relationship with what we eat—and that’s a very good thing. I can’t wait to see what she’s got cooking for us in future issues of *WL*.

ANICKA QUIN, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
ANICKA.QUIN@WESTERNLIVING.CA

Q&A

What can’t you live without in your kitchen?



Makito Inomata,
photographer,
“Foodies of the Year”
page 57

Salt! It’s the quintessential ingredient that makes eating food such a delectable experience. Without salt there would be no point in needing our taste buds—no more enjoying porchetta, prime rib, edamame or smash burgers.



Michael Hingston,
writer, “Wait,
Where’s Slovenia
Again?” page 74

I work from home, so in the course of a given weekday I’m probably most thankful for my microwave, for re-heating the same half-drunk cup of coffee 14 times.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Photographer Makito Inomata sets up the perfect shot on site at Vancouver’s Como Taperia, where Foodies of the Year winners Frankie Harrington, Justin Witcher and Shaun Layton sample their own wares. See the story on page 57.

VISIT

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Photo: Denise Lin



Photo: Matt Kennedy





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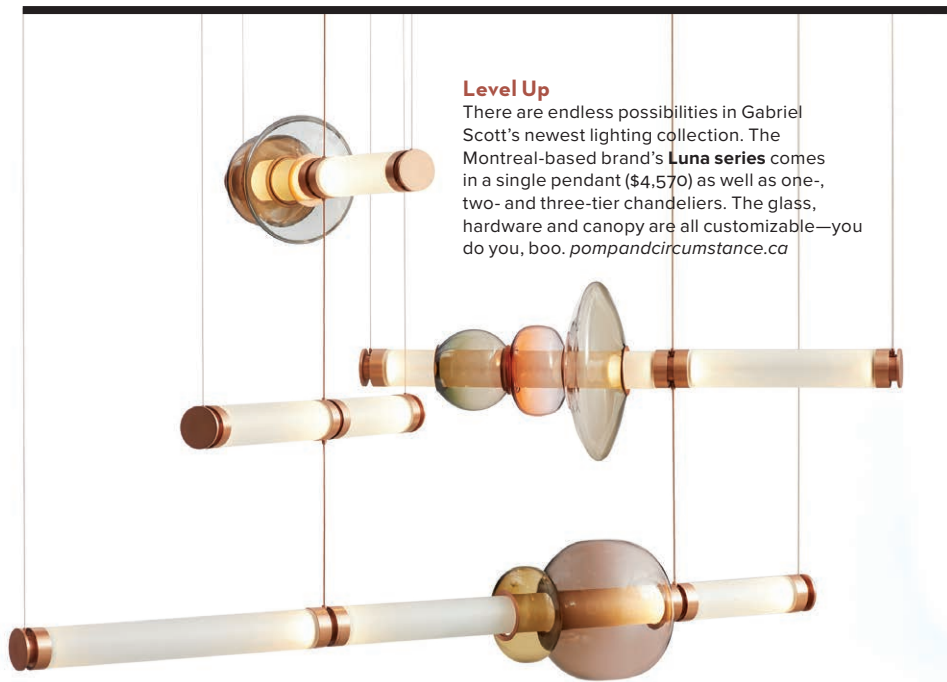
HOMES+DESIGN

NEW & NOTABLE • KITCHENS, KITCHENS, KITCHENS! • MODERN VANCOUVER • & MORE!



Smart Planning

For a modern kitchen design from Vancouver's **Ami McKay** of **Pure Design**, the space needed a lot of storage without feeling cramped with cupboards. Two tones of cabinetry and clever beadboard detailing over the stove keeps the space from feeling overcrowded. Find more kitchen inspiration, starting on page 26.



Level Up

There are endless possibilities in Gabriel Scott's newest lighting collection. The Montreal-based brand's **Luna series** comes in a single pendant (\$4,570) as well as one-, two- and three-tier chandeliers. The glass, hardware and canopy are all customizable—you do you, boo. pompanandcircumstance.ca



NOTEWORTHY

New in stores across the West.

BY ALYSSA HIROSE

Editor's Picks



Montana sofa

from MTH Woodworks, \$6,900.
mthwoodworks.com

Is it too early to call this the greatest collab of 2020? Only time will tell—but this brainchild of MTH Woodworks, Icon Mfg and Aim Design is a definite triple-threat. Neighbours in East Vancouver's Parker Street Studios, Michael Host of MTH and Mark Cocar of Icon teamed up to design the Montana sofa, with Aim Design handling some of the technical specs. With Turkish velvet, down cushions and hidden, customizable leather-lined cedar drawers, it's as beautiful inside as out. Plus, it's got ideal snack storage.

—ALYSSA HIROSE, Assistant Editor



For more editors' picks visit
westernliving.ca



Raise and Fold

The **Icaro folding dining table** (\$1,995) designed by Nils Frederking is a tubular transformer: the woodgrain-topped table seats six but stows away at only three inches deep. resourcefurniture.com



Brass Tacks

Sit pretty on the **Ring stool** (price upon request) in antique brass or polished chrome, part of Calgary designer James McIntyre's new eponymous collection. jamesmcintyreinteriordesign.com



Read the Womb

It makes sense that Knoll's **Womb chair** (from \$4,850) has a maternal instinct—the design has been comforting weary backs for more than 60 years. Now it's available with an 18k-gold-plated polished frame finish and in a variety of upholsteries, from rich Classic Boucle to speckled Melange. informinteriors.com

THE ITALIAN SENSE OF BEAUTY



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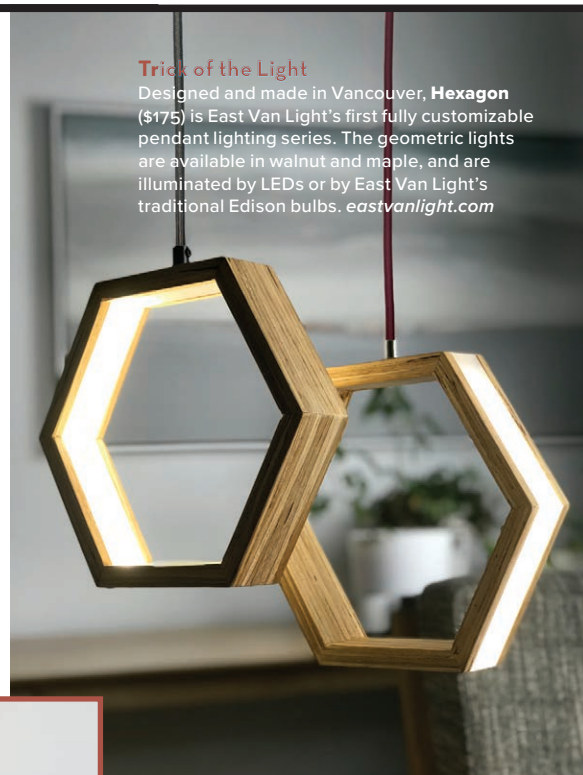
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Throwback Thursday

Press rewind with the **Origami desk** by Ethnicraft (\$2,379). Crafted in solid European white oak, this '60s-inspired design is nostalgia meets new. fullhousemodern.com



Trick of the Light

Designed and made in Vancouver, **Hexagon** (\$175) is East Van Light's first fully customizable pendant lighting series. The geometric lights are available in walnut and maple, and are illuminated by LEDs or by East Van Light's traditional Edison bulbs. eastvanlight.com

Easy Being Green

Vancouver-based brand Edits is green in more ways than one—"Circus" is the first collection. The trio of sustainably produced chairs includes the **Soft chair** (\$780), a relaxed seat upholstered in Kvadrat "Skye" wool fabric from Denmark. editsdesign.com



Casa La Vista

Designed in Vancouver, the **Casa blanket** (\$425) from Minca is knit with extra-fine merino wool from Australia; the fibres are 100-percent biodegradable and 100-percent luxurious. thisisminca.com



Sound Mind

Tech accessory designers Native Union and audio experts La Boite Concept collaborated on the **PR/01** (\$1,099)—an understated home speaker with warm acoustics and a concealed drawer for unsightly wires. livingspace.com





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BY ELIA ESSEN



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Stepping into this 1,200-square-foot sanctuary—part rustic-chic gift shop, part screen-printing workshop—offers a little bit of everything. Find adorable zero-waste products, handmade jewellery from B.C. artists and a weekly flower delivery service here. Their workshop, tucked away behind a Dutch door, produces custom screen-printing, as well as their own brand, Locomotive Clothing and Supply. The wildly popular Community Pennant collection will make you want to sport Mission pride whether you're a local or not. presslandgeneral.ca

VANCOUVER

Poliform

Poliform's new Vancouver flagship store feels more like a modernist dream home than a showroom—its sleek Mad Queen armchair is giving us serious chair envy. Launched in late 2019, the 5,000-square-foot, two-storey store features floor-to-ceiling windows to allow the contemporary collection of elegant neutrals to be viewed awash in natural light. poliformvancouver.com





VANCOUVER

COS

At 9,000 square feet, the new Collection of Style on Robson Street in Vancouver is the largest in Canada, and its stunning floating staircase and arched windows make perusing menswear, womenswear and kidswear a photo-worthy outing. The H&M offshoot specializes in modern takes on wardrobe classics, like neutral shirts and sweaters in trendy, boxy shapes. Plus, by spring 2020, COS's entire line will be made from sustainably sourced cotton, so you can feel better about your brand-new summer look. cosstores.com

VICTORIA

Max Furniture

It's not tough to see why Max Furniture has charmed its way into the hearts of shoppers all over the province since its opening in 2008. This no-frills family-owned and operated store sticks to what it's good at—an impressive selection of sleek Canadian-made classics and made-to-order furniture. Their new space will triple the store's size, so expect more of what you love, plus additional accessories and lighting. And lots more stools—they have the largest supply on the Island. maxfurniture.ca



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HIDDEN ASSETS

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1 High and Mighty

Gaggenau's newly launched **200 series ceiling ventilation** (from \$2,600) has quietly bold variations—free-hanging, downdraft—that are more akin to art installation than vent hood. gaggenau.com

2 Straight Flush

Lose the hardware for a flush installation, all-glass, sleek, streamlined look—along with interactive LCD screens—in Monogram's new **Minimalist collection** (from \$6,449). monogram.ca

3 Centre Piece

Sizzle like a pro with the new Wolf **48-inch gas rangetop with wok burner** (from \$8,199), the latest addition to the iconic red-button no-nonsense brand. trailappliances.com

4 Tailored Fit

The German-engineered Bosch **300 series dishwasher** in simple white (\$1,049) relinquishes look-at-me stainless steel, barely makes a sound and effectively disappears into existing cabinetry—the strong and silent type. trailappliances.com

5 Small Package

Ikea's **portable induction cooktop, Tillreda** (\$69), is mini, muscly and on the move. Set it up in a small space, use it as an extra cooking station for a big party or carry it back and forth to the cabin. ikea.ca

6 Master Class

The redesigned **Masterpiece collection** by Thermador (from \$2,969) fits seamlessly into cabinetry and features glass doors and control panels, diamond-bevelled edges and flush installation. coastappliances.com



DESIGNER'S PICK

Diana Tidswell

Café range (\$4,899). cafeappliances.com



GILDED BEAUTY

"My current appliance crush has to be the Café line of appliances in matte white with the brushed bronze hardware. This particular model [the 30-inch, slide-in, front control induction and convection double oven range] is absolutely stunning—and currently has me swooning as we're using it in an upcoming kitchen renovation. The matte white is such a fun, fresh finish for a modern kitchen, and the warmth of the bronze is a beautiful contrast. Who knew appliances could be so beautiful?"

DIANA TIDSWELL, CO-FOUNDER, KRESSWELL INTERIORS, EDMONTON, KRESSWELLINTERIORS.COM



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Risky Textiles

NICOLE JANG,
Founder, See You Soon Studio

Itching for more creative freedom, Nicole Jang took a gamble last summer by leaving her job as a product prototype designer at Vancouver's Herschel Supply Company to start her own textile-based design atelier, See You Soon Studio. "I love the possibility of fabric and the process of creating something tangible," explains the Emily Carr University grad, "and the puzzle-like aspect of creating a pattern and breaking down the steps."

At See You Soon, Jang crafts quilted wall hangings and zippered pouches using natural fibres like cotton and linen. Inspired by animation, film and the playful illustrations in children's books, the pieces feature colourful, at times abstract-like patterns that Jang dreams up in her

Riley Park apartment. "I've spent a defining portion of my life either working with children or in a bookstore," she says. "This has helped inform my love of narrative, and my leanings toward vibrant hues."

Cartoonish shapes resembling feathers and leaves decorate one set of pointed banners, for example, while another series of wall hangings—aptly named *Another Planet*—is influenced by the futuristic red- and blue-dominated palettes of science-fiction films like *Total Recall* and *Blade Runner 2049*. "For those wall hangings, I was trying to home in on this idea of daydreaming and wanting to be in another space," notes Jang.

—Jusneel Mahal

Not Your Grandma's

"I like how the craft of quilting can have so many applications beyond just what we traditionally assume it to be," says Jang. Her quilted wall hangings and zippered pouches prove there's a world beyond blankets.



Scrappy Strategy

Making different sizes of textile pieces allows Jang to use as much of the fabric as possible—scraps from one creation can be used in another instead of being thrown away.



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THE KITCHEN RULES



Janis Nicolay



It's where the party always starts and ends. Where the family spends its quality time over a meal together. Where we'll catch up with a friend over a glass of wine at the counter. And we're not afraid to say it: the kitchen is our favourite room in the house. Here, top designers share their best tips for creating a dream space to call your own.

by THE EDITORS

LOSE THE UPPER CABINETS

A lack of upper cabinets in this Whistler kitchen by Vancouver's **Project 22 Design** emphasized the airy, open-concept space. It also left little room for storage. Principal designer **Denise Ashmore** balanced this with an entire wall of integrated Gaggenau appliances and storage. "It's super functional as a pantry and for dish storage," she says, "and allows us to be more artful with the open shelves."



**“MATCHING,
FOR ME PERSONALLY,
IS THE DEATH OF
GOOD DESIGN.”**

A MODERN BACKSPLASH IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA

“Without the black backsplash, it would look like a totally different kitchen,” admits **Ben Leavitt**, creative director at **PlaidFox Studio**. The chevroned black subway tiles from Ames Tile and Stone bring in a modernist touch to an otherwise farmhouse kitchen: the perfect mix for a homeowner with modern-leaning personal taste who also wanted to complement the farm-country neighbourhood around his home in Langley, B.C. A mix of flat-panel white cabinets and knotty warm oak cabinetry pop against the wall-to-wall backsplash, while industrial-style lights from Visual Comfort bridge the aesthetic gap. “Contrast is so important to create something interesting,” says Leavitt. “Matching, for me personally, is the death of good design.”



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“BAR STOOLS THAT GO AROUND OR PARTIALLY AROUND AN ISLAND ARE REALLY GREAT FOR BOTH FUNCTIONALITY AND CONVERSATION.”

MAKE YOUR ISLAND A PLACE FOR CONVERSATION

You’d never know this North Vancouver duplex was once a prime example of ’70s-era style: dark brown and woodsy. Despite a modest budget—the homeowner was a young realtor who planned to flip the home in a few years—designer **Gillian Segal** took the kitchen to its bright and modern current look with a number of clever updates. Durable laminate vinyl was a more budget-friendly option for most of the cabinets, along with some metal framing to provide contrast. Fluted glass doors give an airiness to the space while being more forgiving—no need to stress about a perfectly organized set of dishware. And rather than creating an eating nook, Segal expanded the central island to have two-sided seating. “It’s something I feel strongly about in projects,” says Segal. “You’d never sit in a row of four people. Bar stools that go around or partially around an island are really great for both functionality and conversation.”

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CREATE DISTINCT SPACES WITHIN AN OPEN PLAN

Just because a home is open concept, don't give up on having distinct rooms within the space. Designers **Alykhan Velji** and **Alison Connor** of **Alykhan Velji Design** created this dynamic kitchen and dining area for homeowners who loved to entertain: white cabinetry lines the kitchen area, which transitions to a charcoal grey bar in the adjoining dining space. "It creates ample storage, but also creates a delineation between the dining room and kitchen," notes Velji. "If we'd kept it white, it would read more like a casual eating nook." Tying it all together, the range hood over the stove is clad in dark grey shiplap, picking up the same tones that are on the bar, and matte black accents feature throughout—on the faucet, drawer pulls and the lighting fixtures above the island. It all sets the stage for those bold turquoise tiles from DalTile on the backsplash. "The clients really wanted the kitchen to make an impact," says Velji. "It's the first thing people see as they walk in the room."



Joel Klassen



Flexible Design

McKay's team added beams above the eating nook (below) that's in a separate corner of the kitchen, and modified the original design to bring in floor-to-ceiling windows. Vintage-style lighting from Portland's Schoolhouse Electric contributes to the cozy, casual vibe. The playroom (bottom) is opposite the kitchen, equipped with a mini teepee for the two toddlers of the house and a glass wall to keep the small space feeling open—and visible to parents prepping meals while the kids play. Once the girls are grown, the space can easily convert to a home office.



HIDE CABINETS IN PLAIN SIGHT

"It all started with that hood fan," says designer **Ami McKay of Pure Design**. The custom, beadboard-clad design was painted a moody blue (Benjamin Moore's Evening Dove) and extended beyond the fan itself to create more opportunities for disguised storage—the beadboard hides the seams of the cabinetry, creating the illusion that it's all one piece of wood. The rest of the millwork was intentionally warm, earthy and naturally woodsy in tone, to contrast with the wood-look tile floor—the latter chosen both for its beauty and for its durability. "The family has two huge labs, and so everything needed to be dog- and kid-proof," explains McKay.



Back in Black

The dining room table (left) is from Industry West, and features brass accents and a finish of shou sugi ban—the Japanese technique of charring and wire-brushing wood to preserve it, giving it a rich, charcoal surface that highlights the wood grain.





A WHITE-ON-WHITE KITCHEN CAN BE MORE THAN ONE WHITE

The colour palette of this classic white kitchen from the team at **Kelly Deck Design** is more complex than it initially looks. Its Northern-Europe-meets-Hamp-tons vibe features timeless white Shaker cabinets, beadboard detailing on the hood fan and island and sturdy quartz counters paired with finely machined black metal drawer pulls. But there's also a play of cool and warm white shades throughout the space: the handmade Shingles tiles from Walker Zanger have a creamy white finish; the quartz counter on the island is a cool grey, with a warmer white on the perimeter; and while the cabinets lean on the cooler, crisp white side of the spectrum, the white oak flooring throughout is warm. "It's all quite deliberate," says designer Kelly Deck. "Layers of crisp white next to warm whites gives an all-white concept a lot more depth."

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DON'T BE AFRAID OF FINGERPRINTS

"For the last 15 years in Calgary we've had a big push for modern houses, especially for younger people," says designer **Paul Lavoie** of **Paul Lavoie Interior Design**. But not for these homeowners. "He told us, 'We want our children to be raised in a house that's much more fairy-tale tradition, embedded with history.'" Lavoie and senior designer Julie Lanctot set to work to create an "Alice in Wonderland-ish" space that's gilded with polished chrome, crystal chandeliers and, most strikingly, antiqued mirror fronts over the refrigerators. "It's hard to ask somebody, when they have young kids, to go for mirrors in a kitchen," says Lavoie. "Plain mirror would be a problem for fingerprints, but because it's antique, it's forgiving—and it has a luminescent quality to it."





BALANCE OUT THE BLACK

Dark hues and black kitchens are trending right now, but proceed with caution, warns **Space Harmony's Negar Reihani**. "You need to be really careful how much of it you use and how you use it," says the interior designer. In this recent Vancouver renovation, Reihani practices what she preaches, demonstrating the fine art of balancing darkness and light to create a vibe that's impactful without feeling heavy. Here, she plays the floor-to-ceiling cabinetry off of light oak flooring, then breaks up an otherwise imposing wall of millwork with pretty reeded glass (which adds a subtle hit of sparkle, too).



MAKE YOUR WISH LIST, CHECK IT TWICE

Sometimes, you need to experience what you *don't* like to know what you *do* like—and the Smith family collected plenty of preferences over the years. “We moved probably 20 different times when I was growing up because of my dad’s job,” says interior designer **Tori Palynchuk**, who designed her parents a new home in Kelowna—with the help of project managers **Fawdry Homes**—where they could finally settle down for a while. (“I expect to be here until I’m 100 years old,” laughs mom Susan Smith.)

The result of all those years of noting inconveniences and less-than-stellar functionality in the temporary homes they lived in allowed them to put together a wish list for a dream kitchen with a perfect flow for a family that loves to cook together. Palynchuk spread out the prepping and cooking stations, installed oversized pantry cabinets with convenient slide-out drawers, added a six-burner gas range with tools within reach (there’s lots of open storage for everyday items) and placed the faucet right at her mom’s arm length for easy access with no back strain. “You just instinctively go to the right place to pull out exactly what you need,” says Smith. “I come in here and I don’t see anything I need to fix. It makes me so, so happy.”





Jon Adrian


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A NEUTRAL PALETTE CAN STILL BE EDGY

Karin Bohn, creative director of **House of Bohn**, knew that she didn't want an all-white kitchen when she renovated her own North Vancouver townhouse. "I wanted it to feel casual North Vancouver, but also a little bit glam," she says. She made the bold choice of installing matte black cabinets, which she balanced with rustic elements like a white oak floor, walnut island countertop and distressed stained-oak ceiling beams. The result is a striking space that walks the line between dramatic and down-to-earth. "It's still a neutral palette, but fresh and edgy at the same time," says Bohn.





THINK OUTSIDE THE BACKSPLASH

This West Vancouver project was function-focused, so natural materials and neutral hues ruled the reno. Even the ceramic tile backsplash—usually a go-to spot for graphics—was selected to tie in to the cabinetry. **Nyla Free**, owner and principal designer of **Nyla Free Designs**, instead took the interest to the island: porcelain tiles from Saltillo in Calgary provide a flash of pattern in an otherwise subdued space. “This was an idea that was unexpected; it brought in the graphic element but still within a palette that was very simple,” says Free. *ILL*



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View Inside

Because of the slope of the property, both the street entrance and the lower level at the back—where the kitchen and living space is—are on grade. The home is designed to take advantage of “junk” space in the walls: the homeowner sits in an elevated play space (opposite).





PIXEL PERFECT

A Vancouver home by
Measured Architecture is a
gorgeous study of materials,
from its confetti-like exterior to
its boldly beautiful interiors.

by **ANICKA QUIN** // photographs by **EMA PETER**





Pattern Play

On the left side of the exterior, the team installed conventional western red cedar that would be left to silver over time. On the right, stained yellow cedar shingles create a pixelated pattern that was laid-out in a 10-by-10-foot pattern.



don't get it," said one passerby back in 2018 as he walked past this home in its near-completion stage and checked out the boldly colourful shingles installed in their angled, pixel-like pattern

on the home's exterior. The general contractor started to explain the vision—a study in contrasts, the layers that start outside and make their way inward, the exploration of materiality that's in everything from the design of the cabinet pulls to the precise patterning of those shingles. "Oh no, you don't understand," said the man, smiling. "I don't *want* to get it."

Designed by the team at Measured Architecture led by Clinton Cuddington (and now completed and happily occupied by a family of four), it's a home meant to challenge the everyday ideas of what a house is supposed

to look like in this east side neighbourhood of Vancouver—but it's also meant to delight, to surprise, to be a welcome and neighbourly addition to these streets, just as its owners hoped it would be. The double pitched roof on the building: that's classic East Van. The pixelated front? That's less so: at least not yet. But it's meant to push the local narrative a few inches. "The most important thing is that the clients wanted and had the courage to do something interesting," says Cuddington. "They wanted to play with a multitude of materials and colours, but they did not want it to be perceived as the mothership landing." It should be fresh and interesting—but not alien.

Shift House, as Cuddington came to call it, was so named for its modern take on the classic Vancouver Special design. The property descends 10 feet from street side to backyard: from the front door, there's a "main level pod" of home office and a guest room. The sleeping quarters are



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Study in Contrasts

"If you're going to use a material that is mundane, or builderly," says architect Clinton Cuddington, "you need something special flanking it." Throughout the home, coarse materials such as rotary-cut plywood and nail-laminated timber pair with hand-finished tile and artisan lighting.



Peek Perfection

A felt-lined opening connects both kids' rooms, creating a sense of play between the spaces.



up from that, along with a roof deck for hanging laundry and catching afternoon sun. And a full storey below that entranceway is the main living space: the kitchen and living area, both on-grade thanks to the sloped property. “You are able to get these incredible ceiling heights you wouldn’t typically get at a basement level,” says Cuddington.

The layout also flips the main orientation from front to back—the main living spaces look out onto the shingled, similarly pixelated exterior of a laneway home. “The rear is the new front, with the laneway and the house,” says Cuddington. “It’s much like you would see in Mexico, with an internal courtyard. All the facades are about the internal workings of the home, rather than what presents to the street.”

The playful exterior that stops people on the street is a teaser of what’s to come inside. Materials reign, and the coarse, unrefined and builderly is as celebrated as the elevated and refined. Throughout, both the homeowners and the team at Measured were keen to use rotary-cut plywood, a low-grade material for millwork that would typically be found in substrate floors or in a more practical setting like a garage. “It was exciting to take a low-brow material and elevate it, the adjacency of low with high,” says Cuddington. He points to the Vancouver Art Gallery’s *Cabin Fever* exhibit of a few years ago, where Carrara marble was set on a step within a concrete surround, as inspiration to introduce low-brow materials detailed in a considered way. (In fact, Cuddington hired the same millworkers



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Family Rooms

The master bedroom and bath (right) are on the top floor, and the latter again plays with a contrast in materials: plywood millwork paired with a more delicate penny tile on the walls. Below, the home office doubles as a guest room, thanks to a Murphy bed.



from the show to execute the design here.

“We knew they knew how to coax these materials that are not traditionally used in millworking,” he says.)

“If you’re going to use a material that is mundane, or builderly,” says Cuddington, “you need something special flanking it. It elevates one and diminishes the other, which is really important. Nothing reads as overly precious.” In the kitchen, for example, handmade tiles from Fireclay pair with both plywood cabinetry and exposed 2-by-6 nail-laminated timber. Ceramic sconces and pendant lighting made in collaboration with local artist Heather Dahl bring in the handmade, softening the more functional materials that make up the space.

The playful design translates into literal spaces for play, too. On the upper level, there is an opening in the walls for the kids to jump through, from one bedroom to the next. Another space requires a ladder to pop up to a meshed-in play area that peeks over the entranceway. Each “hole” is lined with soft felt for durability (and to prevent any knocked-out teeth, jokes Cuddington).

There’s a kind of magic that happens when client and architect are speaking the same language, as they did in this home. “The owners had the courage to make a family home for them, rather than for a perceived buyer,” says Cuddington. It’s a home that causes passersby to puzzle a little, but be satisfied with the questions it leaves them with—and that hopefully inspires more designers and owners to be courageous in future builds, too. *ML*





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THE WINE PICK • FOODIES OF THE YEAR • SLOVENIA CALLING

RECIPE

Culinary Crush

Cedar and Salt is less of a cook-book and more of a love letter to Vancouver Island. And flipping through its pages (divvied up into chapters honouring forest, farm, field and sea), it's easy to see why authors D.L. Acken and Emily Lycopolus are crushing. This is a place where heritage red fife wheat sprouts in the central island, olive trees grow in the Cowichan Valley and prawns, salmon and crabs practically leap from **water** to plate along the **coast—and** dishes like this gorgeous **radish** and sprout salad **are but** one of the duo's attempts to celebrate the bounty **of their** home region. Turn **the page** for the recipe.



RECIPE

Radish and Sprout Salad with Grilled Lemon Vinaigrette

EXCERPTED FROM *CEDAR AND SALT*
BY D.L. ACKEN AND EMILY LYCOPOLUS

Salad

6 to 8 assorted radishes,
washed well and trimmed
1 cup micro sprouts,
such as broccoli or pea
Ground black pepper

Vinaigrette

2 lemons, cut in half lengthwise
2 tbsp plus 2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tsp honey
Fine sea salt

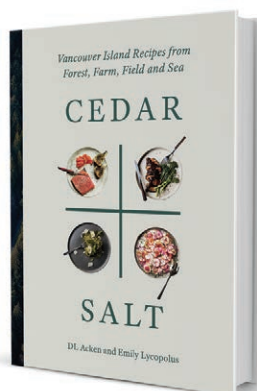
Using a mandoline, slice the radishes very, very thin. They should be almost transparent. Cover with plastic wrap in the fridge for up to 3 to 4 hours if you're not serving them immediately.

To make the vinaigrette, you can either use a barbecue grill, a cast iron grill pan or the broil setting on your oven. Brush the cut sides of the lemons with the 2 tsp of oil and grill or broil, cut side up, for 3 to 5 minutes, or until they're slightly charred. Remove from the heat and let cool completely.

Squeeze the juice from the cooled lemons into a mason jar, add the remaining 2 tbsp oil, the Dijon and honey. Put the lid on the jar and shake well to combine. Season to taste with salt.

When you're ready to serve, scatter the sliced radishes onto a serving platter. Sprinkle the sprouts on top and drizzle with the vinaigrette. Season with pepper to taste. This is best eaten the day you make it. The vinaigrette will keep in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days. Serves 8.

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BITES

Food news to chew on.

EVENTS

THE CURRY CUP

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DISHWARE

Spoon Fed

Vancouver start-up Fable started off with plates and bowls but one cannot eat by dish alone: enter a new line of cutlery, including these handsome duo-tone **Herdmar serving spoons** (\$60), made ethically by Portuguese artisans, like the rest of the collection. Tasty stuff. \$36, fablehome.co



EDMONTON'S INTERNATIONAL BEERFEST

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Raise a glass to the 100-plus exhibitors on tap: there are breweries, of course, but expect distilleries, a local makers' market and food vendors, too—plus roving circus performers, natch. internationalbeerfest.com



NEAL MCLENNAN'S WINE PICK

The World's Most Criminally Underappreciated Grape

Hang out with sommeliers long enough and they'll eventually expound on the need for acidity in wine to help it pair with food. But there are legions of drinkers who don't want their wines sharp, or even crisp. So what if I told you there's a grape that frequently presents as round and lush, but secretly carries a strain of acidity that makes it genius with food? Well, meet **chenin blanc**, the wonder of the Loire and the backbone of South Africa. With such credentials you'd think it would be sweeping the New World, but you'd be wrong. In fact, in the Okanagan, only two main producers make it—but they both knock it out of the park. The first is **Quails' Gate**, whose chenin has been a mainstay of best-buy lists for years (its price has crept up to \$24 but it's still a smoking deal). It's a balanced take on the grape—not lush nor biting, but with gentle quince and lemon notes. A step up is **Road 13's** cult fave **Sparkling Chenin** (\$40), the OG of Canadian chenin—their vines were planted in 1968—and, while the acidity is more front and centre, you'll be too charmed by the notes of crisp pear drizzled with honey to notice. *///*





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foodies of the year

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Q&A

What's your most memorable meal?

My mother's braised rabbit with red cabbage.

What's a kitchen hack more people should know about?

I fold my quiche mixture with my hands. I don't use a whisk. Same with chocolate mousse. Why? Because I don't disturb the egg whites as much and the result is a much fluffier product.



Chef and co-owner Cyrilles Koppert may have closed Manor Bistro last year, but opening Partake, the cozy rustic French brasserie he runs with partner Lisa Dungale, seems to have been the goal all along. "I wanted a smaller place, more reminiscent of the kind of restaurants I ate at where I come from," explains the Dutch-born Koppert, who followed his brother to Edmonton in 1989.

At Partake, Koppert does French his way, crafting comforting French classics with local ingredients: the menu features a mix of traditional favourites, like French onion soup and classic beef tartare, as well as a few dishes

THE FRANCOPHILE

CYRILLES KOPPERT

Chef/Owner, Partake, Edmonton

with a twist, such as the "Banh Moi" tartine, a creamy chicken liver mousse on crusty baguette topped with ham, kimchi and soy-sesame dressing. "To stay current, I like to mix it up, trying out recipes from Morocco, Tunisia or Vietnam," explains the seasoned chef. "They may seem unlikely choices on my menu, but they all have one thing in common: a French heritage." Handsomely decorated with pressed-tin ceilings, terracotta walls and a welcoming bar, Partake is just what the chef ordered. Apparently *enRoute*

magazine liked it too, naming it one of the best new restaurants of 2019. *Felicitations.*—Karen Ashbee

THE UNDERDOGS

WARREN BARR & LILY VERNEY-DOWNEY

Owners, Pluvio, Ucluelet, B.C.

Imagine living in a small town on Vancouver Island, with a wild, dramatic setting facing the Pacific, where neighbours know each other by name and there's seemingly endless bounty for anyone who loves food. "Oh, I love Tofino," people say. That's what it means to be from Ucluelet, that less-heralded but just as stunning spot on the *other* side of Long Beach.

But being the underdog has its advantages. Take Warren Barr and Lily Verney-Downey, for example. The two met while working at Tofino's legendary Wickaninnish Inn, where he cooked, and she cooked before moving to the hotel side. In Tofino, a Shangri-La of sky-high rents and zero vacancy, an attempt to go out on their own would have been... tricky. But head 40 kilometres down Highway 4, and the arrival of a young, talented duo like this sets the stage for a serious coup.

The result is Pluvio, the restaurant (Barr's domain) and small inn (Verney-Downey's stomping ground) that has helped put Ukee on the foodie map. Pluvio is that rare spot these days: a restaurant not devised and polished by consultants and market researchers, but instead an honest-to-goodness labour of love by two people passionate about hospitality. It's that small-town spot we all dream about—locals and tourists dining unpretentiously on high-end fare—but rarely find in the sea of Boston Pizzas that seems to hold sway in most small centres. But not here: on the west coast of the Island, it may not be long before it's the Tofitians who have to explain that their town is the one located on the *other* side of Long Beach.—Neal McLennan



Q&A

What are your desert island kitchen gadgets?

A good knife (Warren has had his main knife for 19 years), a cake tester (to check the cooking temperature of meat, et cetera) and the perfect spoon (there is such a thing, ask any chef!)

What's always in your fridge?

Mayonnaise and too many condiments from around the world that we have smuggled back in our suitcase.

What's your favourite unusual food and drink pairing?

Tequila with dessert: a really good-quality aged tequila (such as Herradura Ultra or Clase Azul) with a sweet, caramelized dessert.

SMOKED CORNED BEACH OYSTERS

FROM PLUVIO RESTAURANT

CORNING SPICE

1 tbsp plus 1 tsp coriander seed, toasted
1 tbsp plus 1 tsp mustard seed, toasted
4 bay leaves
½ tsp chili flakes
½ tsp peppercorns, toasted
1 tsp allspice

OYSTERS

8 large beach oysters
2 tbsp kosher or sea salt
2 tbsp brown sugar
Zest of 1 lemon
1 inch piece of ginger, peeled and grated



Smoked Corned Oysters

Grind all spices into a powder and set aside. (This will give you more spice than you need for this recipe, but it will keep for another use.)

Preheat oven to 400°F. Wash and scrub oysters under cold running water, then check that they are in good shape. (They should all be closed firmly and smell of the ocean, not low tide.)

Place oysters on a tray and bake for 5 to 10 minutes: a couple of them should pop open at this point. Let oysters cool down for a couple of minutes, then shuck them into some cold, lightly salted water. (If you like, save the bottom, cup-shaped shell for serving, but make sure to scrub inside and out, boil for 30 minutes with baking soda, and wash again.) Give oysters a rinse in the salted water to remove any bits of debris, sand or shell. Remove from water and dry on some paper towel.

Combine salt, brown sugar, lemon zest and ginger by rubbing them all together (this is the cure for your oysters). Sprinkle some of the cure onto a plate, lay oysters on top and cover with the remaining cure. Leave oysters to cure in fridge for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, rinse oysters thoroughly under cold running water. Dry on some paper towel.

Prepare your smoker. Crust oysters on one side with corning spice, then lay oysters on a bit of oiled parchment paper on your smoking tray. Smoke for 1 hour at a low heat (they should be firm when they come out of the smoker). Grill before serving. Oysters will keep in the fridge for up to three days. Serves 4.



Q&A

What's your favourite unusual food and drink pairing?

Red wine and Hawkins Cheezies.

What's your biggest restaurant pet peeve?

Really loud—or worse, really bad—music. You should be able to have a conversation with others at the table without losing your voice. A really good playlist has inspired me to linger longer, and a bad one makes me want to rush out the door.

Her first cookbook, *One Smart Cookie*, was self-published and stored in her parents' garage—10,000 copies in all.

Twenty years, four publishers and 10 more cookbooks later, Julie Van Rosendaal has become a household name both in the West and across Canada, penning columns in newspapers and magazines like this one and greeting listeners on *Calgary Eyeopener*, CBC Radio's morning show. It's all very on-point for a woman whose childhood dream was to become the food editor of *Canadian Living*.

But her latest venture, *Dirty Food*, feels different. In some ways it's her most personal cookbook, and it just might be the catalyst to something much bigger. Just over a year ago, she tweeted a picture of Gwyneth Paltrow's latest celebration of so-called "clean eating," *The Clean Plate*. "I tweeted: We need to start a 'dirty food movement,'" explains Van Rosendaal, "and I got thousands of likes and retweets, with people saying, 'Sign me up!'"

THE CATALYST

JULIE VAN ROSENDAAL

Author of *Dirty Food*, Calgary

Van Rosendaal started to think about what that would look like—a mindset where so-called "clean eating" doesn't hold the power that it does. "We're living in a world where more people than ever are coming up with these parameters about the way we eat," she says. "But when it comes to 'clean eating,' it doesn't mean anything—it's a marketing term. Yes, it's whole ingredients and cooking from scratch, but that's 90 percent of cookbooks that are on the shelf."

When something is labelled as clean, says Van Rosendaal, it becomes virtually or morally superior—and not just the foods themselves but also the people who eat them. She figured it was time to get rid of some food shaming. *Dirty Food* celebrates the gooey, the messy, the sticky: food that's meant to be shared and celebrated, like sloppy joes, sticky buns and mud pies. "A lot are just physically messy," she laughs. "People need permission to be ok with that."

—Anicka Quin

THE PLANT PIONEERS

BRIAN & CHRISTINA SKINNER

Chefs and owners, Frankie We Salute You, Kelowna

Back in 2013, it seemed like Brian Skinner had achieved practically every measure of success a young chef could dream of. A restaurant to call his own: a 48-seat, woodsy ode to modern dining called the Acorn. A line out the door every night at said restaurant. A Gold Medal Plates championship title to hang on the wall you-know-where. And he'd done it all with what, at the time, was a shocking twist: he was (gasp!) vegetarian.

In 2020, even your aunt is calling herself “plant-forward,” but just a few years ago dining in the vegetarian and vegan world was considered synonymous with hippie food. Skinner, with his Michelin-level experience (including a stint at Noma), was revolutionary in his approach to all things veg: cook them so that omnivores will give a damn, too. That meant eschewing Tofurky dogs for more sophisticated fare that elevated humble, too-oft maligned vegetables to gourmet levels—think zucchini tagliatelle with cured mushrooms, or preserved lemon and artichoke paté. And in rolled the praise, the awards, the double-takes from meat lovers over platters of beer-battered haloumi.

The ensuing plant-based-dining revolution in Vancouver owes some serious thanks to Skinner's pioneering—now, just down the street from Acorn, which Skinner sold in 2014, you'll find the meat-free Chickpea, Meet on Main, and the Arbor, each one jam-packed every Friday night. But conquering the coast wasn't the end of his culinary march: this past fall, the Pied Piper of Plant-Based Dining, along with business-savvy wife Christina Skinner, took on a new challenge. The pair moved to the Okanagan and converted an old VW dealership into the hottest, just-so-happens-to-be-vegetarian-est dinner destination in Kelowna.

While the Acorn aimed for high-end West Coast modern fare, the Skinners' Frankie We Salute You! (an homage to their respective grandfathers, a famous Canadian botanist and an avid gardener, each named Frank) offers clever but unfussy plant-based interpretations on more casual dishes, with the help of local, seasonal ingredients sourced right from Okanagan farm country. The carrot popcorn and chickpea fries are downright addictive; bulgogi-style mushrooms over crispy rice or grilled avocados tossed in Thai cashew dressing with spicy pickled onions are eat-'til-you're-too-full good. It's a new city, a new audience of potential skeptics, but it seems the Skinners can't help but be plant-based pioneers wherever they go: in a minimalist-cool room in an unassuming strip mall, it looks like they're once again persuading even staunch carnivores to pop in and stay awhile. —*Stacey McLachlan*

Darren Hull



Q&A

What's your most memorable meal?

We were lost in Venice and starving, and Christina spotted a very large and proud-looking chef standing outside a pizzeria in a small alley smoking a cigarette. He looked like he knew a thing or two about life, so we decided to eat there. Before we even sat in our seats, he had Prosecco on the table. The pizza was heavenly. Crispy and fresh and unbelievably flavourful. One was zucchini blossom, and the other was wild porcini. It's amazing how just three simple ingredients can create heaven.

Favourite place to snag a seat in a restaurant?

Near the kitchen. It's always fun to watch the madness go down!



BUTTERNUT SQUASH HUMMUS

FROM FRANKIE, WE SALUTE YOU!

- ¼ medium butternut squash
- 1 medium carrot
- 1 540-mL can chickpeas
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- Zest of ½ lemon (use a microplane)
- 1 clove garlic, grated (use a microplane)
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp good-quality tahini (think Persian market)
- ¼ cup vegetable oil (avocado, grapeseed or similar)
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Peel and dice squash and carrots. Place in a pot with water and simmer over medium heat for 20 to 30 minutes, until very soft. (If vegetables aren't soft, the hummus will be chunky, and no one likes chunky hummus.)

Blend cooked squash and carrots with remaining ingredients until smooth. Then, keep blending it. The trick to good hummus is getting it velvety smooth!

Refrigerate before eating. Eat with Belgian endive leaves, sliced raw fennel, heirloom carrots or grilled sourdough bread. Or with a spoon—no judgement.



Laksa, We Salute You!

THE DUMPLING DARLINGS

TARN & TOOM
TAYANUNTH

Owners, Dumpling Drop, Victoria

It's becoming a typical sight in Victoria: packs of strangers standing around a parking lot, bracing against the wind and rain, waiting anxiously for take-out orders of Tarn Tayanunth's dumplings. It would have to be an unusually ugly day for them to not sell out within the hour.

Dumpling Drop, for those living outside of Victoria, is easily the hottest food craze to hit B.C.'s capital city. For nearly a year, Tarn (pictured here) and her mother Toom have been hand-making Chinese-style dumplings—filled with pork belly, kimchi, duck and chive that Tarn sources locally—and selling them online and at weekly pop-ups around town.

Thailand-born Tarn, who grew up in Victoria, isn't a trained chef, but managed restaurants for years. When her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's last summer, Tarn quit her job to spend more time with her. "The doctor said there's no cure for Alzheimer's; the only thing you can do is to keep her happy and keep her busy. I'm an Asian only child; the only thing that keeps her happy is me," she says with a laugh. They started making dumplings together—lots of dumplings. A friend suggested Tarn sell them online, another friend offered to design a logo, another made her a website, and Dumpling Drop was born. A local restaurant even gives her kitchen space for free.

"It's kind of a dark story, but maybe something good has come out of it," she says. Dumpling Drop helps support her mother financially, and others too: Tarn has collaborated with 49 Below Ice Cream to donate meals to Our Place, and offers dumpling workshops for kids with disabilities—just a few opportunities she's thankful for. "But that's Victoria. It's such a community."

"The funny thing is, every week my mom forgets why we're making so many dumplings. She says to me, 'Don't eat them all, you're going to get so chubby!'" laughs Tarn. "'You think I eat thousands of dumplings a week?' It's pretty cute."—*Julia Dilworth*

Q&A

Favourite cookbook?

Lucky Peach's 101 Easy Asian Recipes. I usually don't follow recipes to a T, but I take inspiration from my cookbook collection and I use this one the most.

Most underrated ingredient?

Water chestnut. Texture is sometimes not considered to be as important as flavour, but it can really make or break a dish. Water chestnut really adds a nice texture, especially to my meat-filled dumplings.

Most overrated ingredient?

Kale. Unpopular opinion on the West Coast: it doesn't have to go in everything.



Lillie Louise Major

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Q&A

Most underrated varieties of wine?

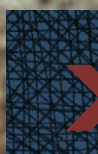
Chenin blanc and primitivo.

What's your favourite unusual food and wine pairing?

Xiao long bao and amontillado sherry.

Hangover cure?

Bed, tea, Netflix...
Please send noodles.



See it, like it, want it, work it—that's the Shiva Reddy way. The executive wine director of Osteria Savio Volpe actually grew up in an traditional Indian alcohol-free home, but she enrolled herself in the Wine and Spirit Education Trust immediately after meeting her first sommelier. "He was charming, impeccably dressed and could romance any wine," remembers Reddy. He was also a man, which seemed to be the norm as Reddy entered the world of wine pros at top kitchens around the city (first helping out with wine classes at the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts, then working at Hawksworth, Juniper, Royal Dinette, Boulevard Kitchen and Oyster Bar, and Como Taperia). Despite her speedy climb through the ranks, the hospitality industry's lack of diversity was a constant challenge. "I felt like I wasn't good enough because everybody else looked so different from me, especially in wine," says Reddy.

Even after taking over the wine programs at the Savio Volpe Group

THE SPACEMAKER

SHIVA REDDY

Executive Wine Director,
Savio Volpe Group, Vancouver

(which includes Osteria Savio Volpe, Pepino's Spaghetti House, Caffè La Tana), Reddy still felt out of place at industry events—and, for a while, stopped attending them altogether. "But last year, I realized I was the only one getting hurt by not participating," says Reddy. She made the decision to not only claim her own space, but also to create space for other women of colour in hospitality. Outside of her restaurants, Reddy works

as a panellist and mentor for Empower Her (an organization aimed at connecting female-identifying hospitality leaders). Through this group, she comes face-to-face with young women of colour who are just starting in the industry, sharing with them both her knowledge and her own story. Inside of her restaurants, she makes the often-intimidating world of fine dining more accessible by providing honest, down-to-earth service—serving up sauvignon while wearing sneakers. "When people come into my restaurants, I want them to feel as if I'm welcoming them into my home," says Reddy.—Alyssa Hirose



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Q&A

Most underrated type of beer?

Lost among the hype are good lagers and pilsners. This is changing, but nothing beats a well-made pilsner—you really have nothing to hide behind when you brew one.

Most overrated type of beer?

Hazy IPAs. Love 'em, but we are tired of them.

FUNK SOUL BREWERS**DARREN & JODY HOLLETT**

Brewers, House of Funk Brewing, North Vancouver

A couple of major things happened during the three years that Darren Hollett worked as a sales coordinator for Whistler Brewing Company.

First, it sparked a new career interest in Hollett, who hadn't worked in beer before. After WBC, he became involved in the production side of the industry for outlets like Mission Springs Brewing Company, North Vancouver's Hearthstone Brewery and Port Coquitlam-based Taylight Brewing.

Oh, and he met his future wife, Jody, at one of Whistler Brewing's Christmas parties.

Starting their own brewery became the pair's collective mission, and after Darren left Hearthstone in 2017, they began the work to launch one in North Vancouver. Of course, life and permits got in the way, as they often do. By the time House of Funk finally opened in May of last year, it entered an overly crowded North Van beer scene. Thankfully, Darren and Jody had a few ideas to help them stand out from the crowd.

"Over the course of the years, we've had many fun business plans and ideas for breweries, but I've been a big fan of wild beers and sours and barrel-aged beers for quite some time," Darren says. "I thought there was a spot in the market in B.C., because while there is Field House and Strange Fellows and Four Winds, we were excited to do something concentrating solely on funky, wild beers."

While Darren dreamed up and tested those concoctions, Jody took on the role of taproom manager, hiring and training all front-of-house staff.

So far, at least, their efforts have paid off. The tasting room is constantly packed with people clamouring for smoothie sours and smoked wheat ales, and House of Funk was the darling of last summer's Vancouver Craft Beer Week. The beers aren't suited to all palates, but that's where the proliferation of breweries in North Vancouver has worked in House of Funk's favour.

"Our beers might not be in everyone's wheelhouse, but that's the beauty of the location we're in," says Hollett. "They can go down the street and go to Beere Brewing; they make great IPAs. And there are other breweries opening up soon that can fill those different niches. If each one is a niche market and if we have people hopping around to try each niche, then that's good.—Nathan Caddell

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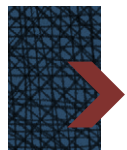
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THE GRINDERS

SHIRA MCDERMOTT
& JANNA BISHOP

Co-founders, Flourist, Vancouver



There's transparency in business. And then there's what Flourist co-founders Shira McDermott and Janna Bishop do: source grains in such a radical, cards-on-the-table way that they literally put a face—via quirky line-drawing portraits on their website—to each farmer's name.

There are backgrounders, too (naturally). Jamie Draves (Iron Springs, Alberta) grows his 80 acres of golden quinoa with a co-op. Marc Loiselle (Vonda, Saskatchewan) runs a red fife farm that's been in the family more than 113 years. It's downright intimate—not exactly what you would expect from a flour supplier. But it's Bishop and McDermott's way of reintroducing Canadian grains into our culinary community. While Canada has long been a world leader in producing safe, quality grain crops, the majority of that product actually winds up exported to international markets. With Flourist, Bishop and McDermott work to keep our grains closer to home, selling their stone-milled-to-order flours from 100-percent traceable sources (you can thank Lorne Muller of Swan River Valley for that einkorn). The result is a collection of ultra-nutritious, richly textured and flavoured artisanal flours that so impress pro cooks and home chefs that they barely even blink at a price tag four times that of your standard-issue Robin Hood. “Look at how the coffee industry evolved, moving from pre-ground, preserved coffee with no trace origins to celebrating individual bean varieties and looking to experience a product in its best possible format,” says McDermott. “We want to change the way people see fresh flour.”

And now, after a few years of supplying the restaurant business (and a rebrand from Grain to Flourist), the duo has taken the plunge to IRL retail, gleefully collapsing their supply chain even further. They shipped an Austrian flour mill across the Atlantic to be the crown jewel of their new East Van



Flour Power
McDermott (left) and Bishop bring flour to the people with their East Vancouver shop and cafe.

Q&A

Guilty pleasure snack?

SM: Melted cheese on any kind of bread. Sometimes with ketchup.

What's your favourite unusual food and drink pairing?

JB: I like drinking coffee with spicy food. I can't explain it, but I like it a lot.

storefront, the latter designed by restaurant-industry darlings Ste. Marie. Here, the shelves are lined with brown bags of freshly ground flour for the aspiring home baker to peruse, but if you can't wait to turn sifted red spring wheat into your own homemade loaf, you can grab a latte and fresh fruit galette right there—perhaps even if gluten has given you trouble in the past. “We get feedback every day that gives us goosebumps,” says

McDermott. “When someone tells you they can eat bread again after avoiding wheat for 10 years because our flour gives them no symptoms, it's so gratifying.”

They're supporting Canadian family farms; you're getting a banger of a whole-wheat flour for your muffins. It's radical, yes, but it's also win-win. In honour of the duo's community building, we'd like to propose a toast: sourdough, of course.—Stacey McLachlan

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The Spain Game

Harrington (left), Witcher (centre) and Layton have achieved the impressive feat of making tapas cool again.

Q&A

Most underrated ingredient?

FH: Olives, of course.

What's your go-to breakfast?

JW: Chickpeas and eggs! So many ways I've prepared this in the last year, and all so different. One day it's Spanish, the next it's North African. Versatile is the mighty chickpea!

What's your favourite unusual food and drink pairing?

SL: Basque cider and fried chicken.

THE STAND-UP GUYS

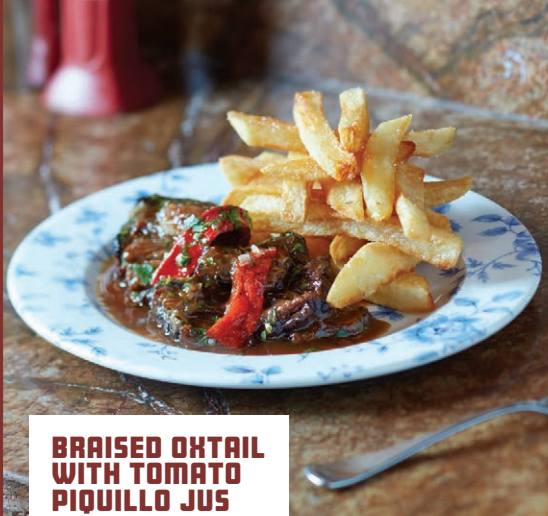
FRANKIE HARRINGTON, JUSTIN WITCHER & SHAUN LAYTON

Co-Owners, Como Taperia, Vancouver

Great decisions always seem easy in retrospect. Serve high-end seafood in tins? Of course, people will love it. Encourage your customers to stand up while eating? Why not. Sherry on tap? A can't-miss proposition—you should do vermouth too! Use the much-maligned word “tapas”? Perfect! People have super short memories.

The reality is that, in the hands of a lesser team, any of the above deviations from the norm could have been the kiss of death for a new room. But as channelled through the passion of Justin Witcher, Frankie Harrington and Shaun Layton, the result is Como Taperia, the buzziest, busiest, all-around-most-fun spot in Vancouver.

The relaxed, convivial atmosphere Como exudes has very little to do with chance and quite a lot to do with the buckets of experience each team member brings to the operation. Layton is one of Vancouver's most lauded bartenders, with stops at L'Abattoir, Juniper and Toronto's George; Harrington co-founded the perpetually popular sandwich spot Meat and Bread, and Witcher cooked at the ultra-high-end Clayoquot Wilderness Resort near Tofino. Together they help foster a vibe that honours the classic tapas bars of Madrid and Barcelona that they so love, with a dose of West Coast casual, all while still offering an old-school level of service (one of them is invariably working the door and welcoming guests to the packed room every night). They've been rewarded with near-constant lineups from devoted fans, along with plenty of accolades (they were *enRoute*'s number two restaurant in Canada last year), but for this trio the real prize is that they finally have a place to go in their home city that's like the ones they visit when travelling—all they had to do was build it.—Neal McLennan



BRAISED OXTAIL WITH TOMATO PIQUILLO JUS

FROM COMO TAPERIA

2 Roma tomatoes
2 cloves garlic
2lbs oxtail (ask your butcher to cut into 2-inch pieces)
Salt and pepper to taste
1 large onion, peeled and rough-cut into large pieces
1 carrot, peeled and rough-cut into large pieces
1 stick celery, cut into large pieces
1 fennel top, cut into large pieces
2/3 cup dry red wine
1/3 cup Palo Cortado sherry
4 sprigs thyme
1 bay leaf
1 cinnamon stick
2 allspice berries
Chicken stock to cover bones (preferably homemade; if not, use the less salty kind)
5 tinned piquillo peppers, sliced into triangles
Sherry vinegar to taste
Big pinch of chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
Extra-virgin olive oil, for finishing
Handful of crispy French fries (preferably homemade)

Pre-heat oven to 350°F. (At the restaurant, this recipe is cooked low and slow at 230°F for 8 or 9 hours; this is a quicker home version that can be adjusted accordingly.) Blitz the Roma tomatoes and garlic together in a food processor and set aside.

Heat large Dutch oven or large heavy-bottom oven-safe pot with a little vegetable oil. Season oxtail with a little kosher salt and freshly cracked pepper. When oil is smoking hot, gently place oxtail in pan, turning to get all sides evenly deep browned. Remove meat and set aside.

Add onion, carrot, celery and fennel to hot pan. Caramelize on high heat for about 4 minutes (it's all right if some of the pieces burn). Don't move the vegetables too much or they won't colour.

Deglaze pan with wine and sherry, then reduce by one-third. Add back oxtail, along with thyme, bay, cinnamon and allspice, and cover with chicken stock. Bring to a boil, then cover with a tight-fitting lid or foil. Place in oven and bake for 2½ hours, or until soft and coming away from the bone.

Remove from oven and let rest for at least 30 minutes or up to 2 hours to reabsorb liquid. Take oxtail out and gently remove bones, then set meat aside. Strain off stock from vegetables, then add blitzed tomato/garlic pulp and reduce mixture to a sauce consistency. Depending on how much sauce there is, you may want to put some aside. Re-add the oxtail to the sauce, along with the piquillo peppers, then season with sherry vinegar and salt and pepper to taste. Adjust consistency to your liking... thin and smooth or rich and sticky. Finish with parsley and extra-virgin olive oil. Serve with French fries and enjoy with a glass of manzanilla or Palo Cortado sherry.



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THE PLANNER

KARRI SCHUERMANS

Owner, Chambar, and Board Member,
Vancouver Economic Commission

Karri Schuermans runs Vancouver's much-loved Chambar restaurant and helped create lineups-out-the-door at that restaurant, as well as at Café Medina and the Dirty Apron cooking school—but her focus on serving up local food may have an impact beyond the crowded sidewalk outside her rooms. As a restaurateur, Schuermans recognizes the importance of growing food close to home, and how political changes can threaten our local agriculture (she says, for example, that many of our greenhouses in the Agricultural Land Reserve [ALR] are abandoning fruit and veggie production in favour of growing cannabis). An imported tomato doesn't support local farms or benefit our local economy, and it has a much larger eco-footprint than anything grown in our 'hood.

Schuermans has been on the Vancouver Economic Commission board since 2016, and her passion for protecting local food systems sparked her determination to lead a transition in B.C.'s Lower Mainland to a low-carbon economy. "In doing so, we are choosing the economy *and* the environment," says Schuermans. This year, she is spearheading a collaborative initiative with the end goal of reducing our carbon emissions—and making sure agriculture doesn't get forgotten in the process. The initiative will lead to a master plan; the plan will lead to infrastructure in the Lower Mainland that better supports newer, greener technology like electric cars (and protects the environment, and our local food systems, in the process). Though her collaborative initiative is complex, having accessible, sustainable food is at the root of her work. "Finding local food was getting harder and harder, and that was what attracted me to doing this," says Schuermans.—*Alyssa Hirose*

Q&A

Favourite cookbook?

Jerusalem by Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi: it's an authentic collection of recipes that reflects Jerusalem's melting pot of Muslim, Jewish, Arab, Christian and Armenian communities.

What's always in your fridge?

Dark chocolate, calamansi vinegar, preserved lemons, cheese, lots of butter... and Vegemite. *///*



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WAIT, WHERE'S SLOVENIA AGAIN?

A family travelogue in four acts.

by MICHAEL HINGSTON



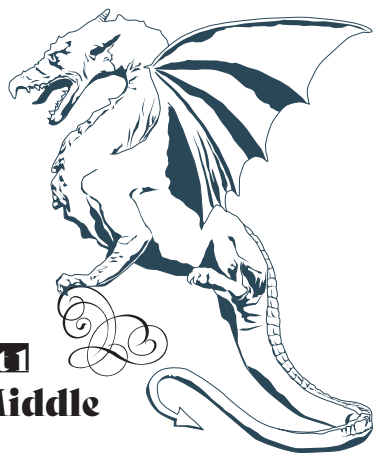
Crown Jewel

Lake Bled with the Church of the Mother of God is Slovenia's most famous site.



Why Slovenia?"

It's a question my partner Kate and I must've heard a dozen times in the lead-up to our vacation. Our short answer was: "Croatia, but cheaper." Yet, that's not fair. The truth is, Slovenia might be one of Central Europe's best-kept secrets, a little-thought-of country that boasts many of the same glories usually associated with its more-famous neighbours, like Italy or Austria. Think: multiple ranges of Alps, vast underground cave networks, endless forests (more than 60 percent of the country is treed) and, down in the southwest, even a bit of Adriatic coastline. Plus, it's quieter and, yes, less expensive than those other countries, and compact enough that everything can be seen on a few day trips from Ljubljana, its stunning, old-world capital city. Want proof? Here are four regional Slovenian highlights that my own family (including two kids, aged eight and 12) was able to tick off on a single tank of gas.



The Middle

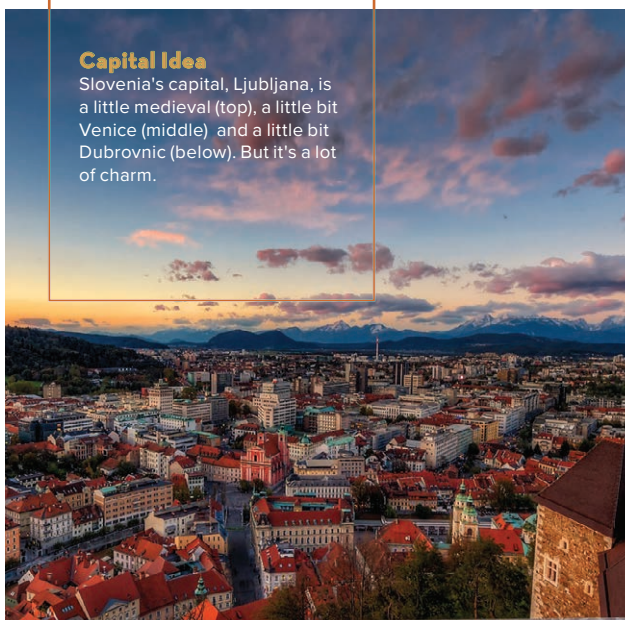
On our first day, we decide to focus on **Ljubljana** and get to know this city a little better. We're staying in an Airbnb in the old quarter, which is already full of history: the neighbourhood sits on top of 2,000-year-old Roman ruins, and some experts trace the city's symbol, the dragon, all the way back to the legend of Jason and the Argonauts. Perched atop a hill in the centre of town, the **Ljubljana Castle** has dragons on it, too: they're carved into each step of the staircase that takes us up to the viewing tower, from which, on a clear day, you can see a full third of the country. But when we pull ourselves away from the view, we find plenty of other things to do here, too, including an OG-style escape room (complete with puzzle game) and an interactive museum of puppetry—an art that has held a key place in Slovenian culture for over a century. My kids prove to be on the fence about puppetry, but they're fervent converts to audio tours, and the castle has a good one—how can you go wrong with secret passageways and open-air prisons?

Back on the ground, we spend the afternoon wandering around downtown Ljubljana, most of which is pedestrian-only. There is no shortage of restaurants and cafés (arising out of a food culture that takes pride in a range of locally made wines, spirits and even tonic water), and the abundance of bridges crisscrossing the Ljubljanica River—one of which has a photogenic dragon statue adorning each corner—makes for a stroll that's easy but full of old-world sights that will stay in our memory for a long time. Distracted by said sights, we find we've wandered just a bit too far—but no problem, we just flag down one of the city's electric-powered Kavalir (“gentle helper”) carts, which seem always on hand to offer a free ride to anywhere in the pedestrian zone.



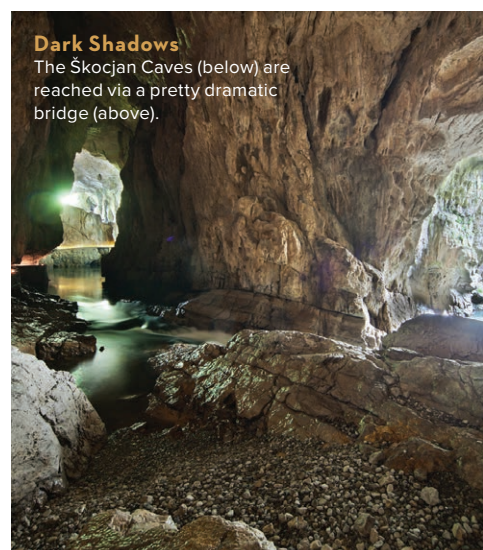
Capital Idea

Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana, is a little medieval (top), a little bit Venice (middle) and a little bit Dubrovnic (below). But it's a lot of charm.



Dark Shadows

The Škocjan Caves (below) are reached via a pretty dramatic bridge (above).





The South

Summertime in Slovenia can get hot. And when the temperature gets too high, there's only one place to go to cool off: the caves.

The country actually has two world-renowned subterranean systems, and we opt for the **Škocjan Caves**, which are a 45-minute drive from the capital and one of only three caves in the world to make the UNESCO World Heritage list. Guided tours leave from the visitors' centre every hour, and they take you into an environment that is truly spectacular: the stalactite-studded chambers we walk through cannot be offered justice through photos (which is handy, because you aren't allowed to take any). If crossing a bridge 50 metres across a chasm above a deep underground river doesn't put your heart in your throat, then seeing the intact original ropeways—and imagining them being used by the 19th-century explorers who made them—will.

Unlike neighbouring Croatia, Slovenia isn't well known for its coastline, but it does have a sliver of access to the Adriatic Sea. Full credit to wife Kate, then, for finding **Moon Bay**, an isolated, crescent-shaped beach near the coastal town of **Piran**. Accessible via an unmarked path cut into the cliffside, the water is clear and cool, and the view is picturesque, with Trieste visible in the distance. Our actual swimming has mixed results (sliced toe, scraped knees), but that's mostly because the beach is rocky and we stubbornly refuse to invest in water shoes.

Like Ljubljana, Piran has wisely sealed itself off from vehicles, and visitors have to park at a nearby parkade, then take a free shuttle into town. Once again, our chill commute pays off as soon as we enter the charmingly labyrinthine alleyways and encounter nothing but fellow foot traffic. I've always been a seafood fan, and maybe it has something to do with the 33-Celsius heat, but at a hole-in-the-wall outdoor restaurant I eat the best damn plate of calamari I've ever had in my life.

Ljubljana Castle: James Reiff Dyer; Ljubljana Town Centre: Andrej Tarflja; View from Ljubljana Castle: Alen Kosmač; Škocjan Caves: Jošt Gantar

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Cliff Hangers

The terraced wonder of Moon Bay (top) gives way to the eclectic energy of the town of Piran (below left).



House, Boat

Bled Castle is Slovenia's oldest, dating to 1004. Visitors wanting to get up close and personal with Lake Bled can rent a local pletna boat to explore in (above right).



Local dessert Kremna rezina.

The North

After seeing the caves and the water, we feel the mountains starting to beckon. Which brings us to the northwest of the country, into the Julian Alps, where we decide to visit what we'd been warned in advance was perhaps the country's single busiest tourist attraction:

Lake Bled.

When it comes to unforgettable sights, Lake Bled has so much to take in that it's almost an embarrassment. The first contender is the water itself, which shimmers like something out of a fairy tale. Then there's the tower of the Church of the Mother of God on the Lake, which sits on a little island in the middle; you can admire it from the shore, or hire a traditional wooden boat called a pletna to take you out so you can ring the church's 16th-century "wishing bell" yourself. And, of course, there's another castle up on the hill. It's all incredibly beautiful, and, even by 10 a.m., incredibly busy. We were warned.

But Bled isn't just famous for its scenery—the region is also known for its "kremna rezina," a double-decker cream cake with thick layers of custard and whipped cream. Variations of the cake have been around for centuries, and while in the 1950s the **Hotel Park** created the version that is now the standard (the hotel still sells as many as 3,000 slices per day), you can get it at almost any bakery in town. Later that night, I dream of trying each and every one.

Slovenian Wine

If the words “Slovenian wine” have you worrying about the enamel on your teeth, you’re not alone. You are, however, out of date. Over the past decade, the winemakers of Slovenia have embraced the gamut of wine trends—particularly biodynamic winemaking and natural wine—and the result has been an explosion of wines that are some of the most exciting in Europe. It shouldn’t come as a huge surprise: Slovenia has been growing wine for millennia, and the westernmost wine area literally touches Italy’s famed Friuli region (home to some of that pinot grigio you love so much), and is a short drive from the vineyards that produce prosecco and amarone. But, unlike those regions, it had to reinvent itself in order to appeal to foreign buyers. So, expect things like wild ferments, grapes you’ve never heard of (like refosco and zelen) and lots of orange wine. Finding a bottle here can be tricky, but this **Giocato Sauvignon Blanc** from the Primorska region is well priced (\$17), and it’s tart and juicy, giving you a small sense of what’s going on.



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Slovenian Pastoral

The Kamnik Savinja Alps offer a throwback to a slower paced way of life. There are almost no crowds and the interaction with the locals is supremely memorable.



Act 4



The North, Redux

Every summer, Slovenia's nomadic herdsmen travel to a plateau in the Kamnik Alps called **Velika Planina**, to move into the single-room wood huts located there while their cattle graze for the season. But the sublime views from the mountaintop have also become a magnet for tourists, and the place now lives in a state of symbiosis: visitors can take a gondola and chairlift up from the nearby town of Kamniška Bistrica and tour the site, while the herdsmen enjoy a direct, rotating audience for their homemade cheese and other wares.

We start off wary of feeling like ogglers or intruders, but it turns out Velika Planina has been developed with an eye toward balance. The distinctive oval-shaped huts are spaced out far enough that tourists and locals don't rub elbows unless they choose to. Meanwhile, my son and I are torn between taking in some of the best mountain views we've ever seen or knocking on the door of the various huts selling cheese and žganci (a traditional Slovenian buckwheat dish served with pork cracklings). Happily, there is time for both.

Velika Planina might not get as much publicity as the Bled region, and—no question—the lake did impress. But I'll be thinking about the wonders of this plateau and the quiet, unique herders' village that sits there for far longer than many of the more famous sites in the country. *ML*



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The Look

ALL NATURAL STYLE

Organic textures pair beautifully with a stunning view.

➤ It's hard to compete with a view. So when the team at Reena Sotropa In House Design Group were tasked with the interior design of a Calgary home extension featuring floor-to-ceiling, west-facing windows, they strove to complement the vistas on the other side of the glass by showcasing natural materials throughout the space. A reclaimed barn door—salvaged by the antique-collecting homeowners—was installed as a partition, while wood, concrete, wool and leather made up the materials palette for the furniture. Despite the soaring ceiling and sweeping views, the warm, natural materials keep the seating area grounded and intimate: a cozy oasis from which to gaze out over the great Alberta plains.



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