



January 2009 • Volume 43 | P.O. Box 656, Carstairs, Alberta T0M 0N0 | Phone 403-337-2800 | Fax 403-337-2418 | Email pat@pasu.com | www.pasu.com

Food for Thought.

Some of us eat to lie whilst others live to eat.

Some of us are born hedonists, others aspire to be hedonists and some of us never get it. All play an important yet different role in society.

“Nothing would be more tiresome than eating or drinking if God had not made them a pleasure as well as a necessity.” Voltaire. A magnificent quote from a remarkable genius of the pen who lived in the eighteenth century. He would have been aghast if he lived in the present day and witnessed the North American attitudes toward the purchasing, preparation and eating of food. His quote might have been, “It appears that nothing is more tiresome than the preparation of food and drink. It should be done with the least effort and both the preparation and consumption should take as little time as possible.”

Well, fortunately there are foodies.

Some of us are born foodies, others have an epiphany and become foodies, and alas, some of us will never get it. These poor souls, of the last group, wonder down the aisles of their grocery store seeking out generic items and loading their carts with every conceivable prepared food from frozen to ‘just add water, stir and pop in the microwave for two minutes’. Most of them rest both elbows on their shopping cart handles, stick out their large bottoms and push their carts as they seek to fill their faces with all the free samples they can get.

Have you ever noticed, that in their desperation to get these morsels of food, they will leave their cart in the middle of the aisle, holding up traffic in all directions? Their carts are filled with either yellow-packaged items or with boxes sporting beautiful pictures of mouth-watering meals that will never taste or look like that. In most cases, the packaging costs more than the ingredients. Meals at their home must be predictably boring and probably the antiquated notion of sitting around a table and enjoying a repast with friends and family rarely happens.

Not everybody has the budget to spend money on what they would prefer to eat. However, if we ignored all those gaudily packaged prepared meals and shopped in the produce department, we would be able to afford little luxuries to enhance our meals. And finally on this

subject I prefer natural real food and shun products like margarine as I trust cows more than I do chemists.

I was born a foodie and had the genetic advantage of having two parents who were similarly inclined and therefore fueled my passion for adventure in the culinary arts. They were from the Island of Mauritius where food-ascetics were deeply distrusted. Indeed, to discuss the condition of your liver with lively enthusiasm, while devouring with gusto, rich buttery dishes accompanied with a favourite bottle of wine, was considered an acceptable topic at the dinner table.

When I say lively, I mean just that. A Mauritian meal, even a simple one of curry, rice, lentils, pumpkin shoots braised with onions, fresh tomato chutney, nan bread and accompanied by a selection of homemade pickles and aschar is a noisy affair and to the uninitiated it can be quite intimidating. Everyone talks and gesticulates with their hands at the same time. It’s an art. You have to learn to converse and listen simultaneously while respecting the rule of eating with your mouth closed. That’s when you wildly gesticulate with your arms, shake or nod your head and occasionally thump the table to express your approval or disapproval of the topic.

Amid all this chaos there are some very strict protocols. The period when the food is being placed on your plate requires that you should be totally focused on the meal at this sacred moment. Your eyes should initially widen and glisten as you take in the colours and the form of the food. Then as the first vapours reach your flared nostrils, you close your eyes, breath in deeply, sigh or make a “mmm” sound before turning to the provider of the meal and generously complimenting them on the delicious spread.

If it is a formal dinner, then it is polite to eat at least two or three mouthfuls observing the tradition of praising the meal and its creator. It is considered polite to smack your lips together and make other flattering non-verbal sounds.

A long time ago when I was courting Sue, I was invited to have my first meal at her parents’ house. Sue’s Dad was English and her mother Canadian English. I was warned that the meal was always served precisely at six forty-five and to be there at least fifteen minutes before to enjoy

sherry, cheese and biscuits in the drawing room. Having arrived on time and the sherry reception completed, we made our way to the dining room where we ate the meal in dignified semi-silence. Polite questions would be asked and replied to with unemotional answers. The meal was excellent for English cuisine, comprising of roast leg of lamb, boiled vegetables, roasted potatoes and a dessert. The demeanor of the whole affair would have been in excellent taste were we celebrating the demise of a close relative or friend. I think that the English approach food with the same passion as they do romance.

My earliest recollections are all food related. I remember the first time I ate a mushroom. I must have been seven years old. My father had brought a plate of wild mushrooms for my mother to taste. Being curious I asked to try them. As I slowly chewed the noble wild Makoi mushroom I had my first food orgasm. I had reached the place where food ceased to be something that just tasted good, indifferent or bad. This was my epiphany. I had recognized that there was depth, nuances and even a cerebral joy in the aromas, flavours and textures of food.

Fortunately, there was no shortage of good, home cooked meals and exotic dinner parties. My parents were not wealthy and had to adhere to their budgets. My Mother, however, never compromised on food and would draw my attention to our neighbours and acquaintances whose dinner table lacked the quality and substance of our table.

On occasions, when they were formally entertaining, I would watch in fascination as my mother would prepare the meal. To this day I can still remember her recipe for preparing spiny lobster by flaming them in brandy and serving them with a rich sauce that comprised of butter, caramelized onions, garlic, tomatoes, thyme and held together with the rich flavours of the brandy, served on a bed of basmati rice.

I can also remember the day my father saw a neighbour cut down a palm tree and asked him if he could have the top part. He stripped the outer leaves away and revealed the heart, which is white, crisp and absolutely delicious when made into a salad or steamed and preserved.

Food that you have grown yourself or harvested from its natural surroundings has an added value that no bought food can replace or even come close to. It's all in the anticipation and adventure of tracking down and obtaining your gastronomic goal.

We used to take a cabin on the sea shore and go hunting crabs on the beach at night with a flashlight. It was hilarious fun for the kids and adults as we chased the little crustaceans, threw a towel on them and scooped them into a bucket. As they were small, averaging about two inches on the carapace, they would be cooked and crushed for their juice which would be added to a sauce made of tomato, onion, spices, herbs and sherry and brandy. This was served on a bed of rice with hot fried croutons.

By the time I was 10 years old I was learning recipes and entering the Kloof Women's Institute cooking competition and winning. I did it for the prize money and not the glory.

Fine Dining Saturday Evenings

April 4 & 18 ➦ May 2 & 23

Please note an important change to Fine Dining.

We serve the following 7 courses:

☞ Starter ☞

☞ Salad or Seafood ☞

☞ Soup ☞

☞ Sorbet ☞

☞ Main ☞

(Choice of beef, lamb, fish or vegetarian)

Accompanied with vegetables in season

☞ Dessert ☞

☞ Tea or Coffee ☞

Cocktails from 5.30 pm. Dinner at 6.30 pm

Reservations are essential.

\$70.00 per person

www.pasu.com

RESTAURANT NEWS

During the week

We are open Tuesdays to Saturdays for lunch and afternoon tea.

On Sunday

We will serve our Carvery Buffet or Plate Service

if there are fewer than 15 reservations.

PLEASE REMEMBER

We book up very quickly for

Easter, Mother's Day & Father's Day

Also

Remember that **reservations are essential** for the Restaurant and recommended during the week.

AFRICAN EVENING

WITH
YOUSSOU SECK
AND HIS BAND

This is Youssou's second performance with PaSu and he truly rocks. A talented artist that gives more than his best. To complement this evening we will be putting on our now-famous

AFRICAN FEAST

SATURDAY APRIL 25

Cocktails from 6.00 pm • Dinner served at 7.15 pm

This is a pre-booked ticketed event

Tickets \$78 per person

includes meal, entertainment, service and GST

My father wanted me to enter law school. My mother wanted me to be a priest and I wanted to be a professional hedonist, but reluctantly settled for a degree in commerce. Years later, when we had settled in Canada and had moved onto the farm, I found myself, for the first time, without a job. Sue worked at the pharmacy and brought home the paycheque. I stayed and farmed the sheep and cooked the meals. Philip, who was our youngest had a difficult time adjusting to the new cuisine. It certainly was more adventuresome, spicy and the carrots were not blackened. To this day he still has difficulty eating cooked carrots unless they are black.

In 1992 we built the existing restaurant. Our first venture into prepared meals for the public was frustrating, exasperating and absurd, as we had no previous experience. The misadventures we had with cooks and chefs that passed through our kitchen could have filled a whole volume.

There was Nappy (short for Napoleon), the autocratic midget cook that stood on a milk crate to prep at the kitchen table and was afflicted with spotty tyrannical fits.

Sometime later there was Yvette, a lady chef from Quebec who stayed in our cottage and was doing quite well until she met a wandering fiddler. I gather she must have been celibate for sometime before she arrived on the farm because she bedded him one Sunday night and did not come up for air for two days. The adventure had taken its toll as she collapsed after two hours into her shift and had to take 48 hours to recuperate. Two weeks later she absconded with the fiddler, never to be seen again.

Duffy followed Yvette. He was a blue seal chef from Nova Scotia who was always busy doing nothing. After two weeks he staged a spectacular fall and went on disability.

Probably the most colourful of all the chefs was a conceited little sex maniac by the name of Thomas. This little pervert used to terrify the young female staff by graphically explaining in detail every sexual perversion that ever existed and then lean and press into them whilst they were working.

In May 1995 I decided that I could do a hell of a lot better than anyone I had hired to date. My daughter Simone, Michelle and I went into the kitchen and with the exception of Simone we are still there. Harriet Van Horne said, "Cooking is like love. It should be entered into with abandon or not at all." That has certainly epitomized my approach to preparing food. In fact we took it a little further than most culinary establishments would have dared by doing the unexpected.

Five years ago I decided to do an erotic food presentation for Valentine's night. When I explained to Sue what I was going to do, she thought I had lost it and would certainly not follow through with something that would get us into serious trouble, and possibly the restaurant shut down.

Despite Sue's apprehension I went ahead. I researched aphrodisiacal foods, of which there are many listings on the Internet, but could find nothing on erotic foods. So I did my own drawings, experimented with some food materials and came up with an eight-course meal that would have made a porn-queen blush.

Valentine's Erotic Gourmet Evening

(Adults Only)

Once again by popular request we are having **our special Valentine's Dinner menu** where the food is daringly arranged and selected for its aphrodisiacal properties.

If you are sensitive to amorous issues, this is not for you.

Reservations are absolutely essential and this is a ticketed evening.

Warm Intimate Atmosphere

8 to 9 Gourmet Courses

Flowers on the Tables

Lamb or Beef as Entrée

Plate Service

Soft Sexy Music

And a Night to Remember!

Arrive between 6 pm and 6.30 pm

Dinner starts promptly at 7.15 pm

Saturday February 14

\$85.00 per person

(GST & Service included)

Fun Evenings at the Restaurant

CURRY NIGHT

Buffet Style.

Saturday, February 28 • Saturday, March 28

\$45.00 per person

Seafood Night

Saturday, March 14. • \$85.00 per person

South African BBQ

Steak, lamb, chicken, boerewors
and traditional trimmings.

Saturday, May 23 • Saturday, June 20 & 27

\$35.00 per person

The trick now was to get the staff to assemble this rude food. Fortunately they were game and we had a lot of fun. The first course was a true shocker and correct in every anatomical detail. When Sue saw it she had a total conniption. Apparently the majority of the forty diners were some of our most elegant and dignified, mature customers who had loyally supported us for many years.

"What will they think? We are finished. What was I thinking?" And on she ranted. The waitresses were aghast. How could they possibly serve this food?

Well it went out. The kitchen staff waited with baited breath. There was a long silence and suddenly the whole restaurant erupted into whoops of laughter. And who was leading this exuberance of hilarity? Why, the mature seniors, of course!

Since that Valentine's Day we have had customers book six months in advance and some have been to every Valentine's meal since then. It is without doubt one of our most successful menus.

Let me end with a quote by Georges Blanc. "Happy and successful cooking doesn't rely on know-how; it comes from the heart, makes great demands on the palate and needs enthusiasm and a deep love of food to bring it to life."

Meal Orders

Starting in 2009 we will be preparing meals for those of you who want to entertain at home but do not have the time to prep your meals.

This is especially handy for seniors.

Includes frozen soups, curries, pasta sauces, racks, loins and legs of lamb. It is a time-saver and the food is excellent.

Speak to the Restaurant staff about your order.

*Let us host your
Private Function
or Wedding*

Sheep Manure

Dress your spring garden with Sheep Manure, ready for the spring and have a few bags in the potting shed for a great mix with potting soil. Phone first to make sure that bags are available or that there is a tractor operator if you are buying by the truck load.

**Price \$5.00 per bag
6 bags for \$25.00**

SEAFOOD EVENING

March 14

A gourmet 7-course meal including fresh oysters, lobsters, prawns and other succulent seafood delights. Our Seafood is flown in fresh from Granville Island. Therefore this will be a pre-ticketed event which includes

GST and service.

Please make your Reservations now!

\$85.00 per person



COMPLETE STORE SALE

BUY ONE

and get the second of equal or lesser value at

HALF PRICE

(with the exception of consignment merchandise and merchandise already on sale.)

FEBRUARY 1 - 14

Shop Hours:

Tuesday to Saturday: 10 am – 5 pm MST

Sunday 12 pm – 5 pm MST

Closed Mondays

Restaurant Hours:

Tuesday to Sunday: 12 pm – 4 pm MST

Closed Mondays

Saturday Evening Fine Dining

Reservations Essential

Phone Toll Free: 1-800-679-7999