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Attempts at being a vegetarian

One day in the mid 1970's, whilst living in Somerset West and working in Cape Town, I was confronted by a sight that was to radically change my perceptions of eating meat and set into motion my once brief foray into a vegetarian lifestyle. There, in front of me stopped at the lights, was a cattle liner waiting for the lights to change and make a turn into the abattoir on the other side of the road.

Up and until then I had never given the process much thought. As a small boy we used to go to the butcher shop where the floors were covered in saw dust and various pieces of animals were hung from large meat hooks. There were even the heads of sheep and goats in piles on the floor. Everything fortunately was dead and it felt perfectly normal to see the butcher carve off a piece of meat of the remnants of a side of beef and pass it through the band saw, wrap it in butchers paper, weigh it, take a pencil from behind his ear, write the name of the cut and the price and hand it to you together with a bone for the dog.

As I grew up the corner grocery store, butcher, baker and pharmacist became one store and the marketing strategy changed overnight. There was no contact with your baker who knew it was good business to hand your kids a couple of cookies. The butcher chose your favourite cuts with pride and remembered the name of your dog. When you bought fresh vegetables, and the scale was employed, your produce man always added a little extra to bring it over the one pound mark and only charged you for a pound. Sure the shopping was in different stores in separate locations but you had contact with real humans who made it their business to get to know you and your needs.

Those were the days before factory farming, hormones and antibiotics in meat. Chicken was considered a luxury dinner and I remember when my parents were quite indignant when they presumed the restaurant had served them rabbit instead of chicken.

Then one day it all changed. The super convenience store, spawned in the US through their food

revolution of the fifties and sixties, had arrived in South Africa and all those little personal stores shut their doors for good and became history. We now had the monolith and our only contact with humans was the cashier who knew diddly squat about what she was ringing into her till and did not really care even to this day.

The sight of those wide eyed terrified cattle bawling as they caught wind of the abattoir and instinctively knew their destination and fate really hit home. What in essence to me was the most galling fact, was that there was little or absolutely no connection between this real palpable situation and the steak packaged in white polystyrene and neatly laid out in a cooler, weighed and priced ready for your discerning selection. Even for those of us who have experienced the real butcher shop, the supermarket's sterile presentation of meat had desensitized us to the fact that this had been cut from a carcass and that carcass had been a live animal. For those of us who are fifty years and younger and have never seen a side of beef hanging from a metal hook how much more difficult is it to make this connection each time we select a piece of meat.

Now I am not, and never will be, someone who condemns the eating of flesh. What is really pathetic is our voluntary detachment from living hoof to supermarket commodity. Nine out of ten people have no idea whether it came from the front or the back end of the animal and don't care. So if we don't care, or in some cases refuse to acknowledge the process then we are not morally responsible for any part of the process that delivers the meat to the superstore. That gives the industry carte blanche to do what they want to maximize their profits.

After having pondered this whole moral dilemma I accepted the fact that I still wished to eat meat but bear the responsibility of killing it myself. I made my pitch to Sue and advocated that from hence forth we would only eat the flesh of animals that we had slaughtered and that process was to be done as

humanely as possible with many benedictions to the soul of the creature that would become our food. Sue pondered this for a while and with exasperating feminine logic asked how we were going to slaughter a steer on our half acre of suburban property, hang it to age and where were we to find enough freezer space. In South Africa there were only municipal abattoirs and they did not offer the personalized service of cut, wrap and freeze.

So beef was off the menu. Pigs and sheep, though smaller and more manageable, seemed to pose the same problem. We lived in a very posh suburb where the smallest plot was half an acre and the local residents would certainly not be impressed by a "Do it yourself slaughter operation" being conducted in the immediate vicinity no matter how convincing the argument for ethical meat. So pigs, sheep and goats were off the menu.

That left chicken. It was agreed that animal protein of some sort was necessary and there was just so much fish you could eat. We could buy live chickens from one of the local farms, load them into the trunk of the car and without attracting any untoward attention from the neighbours, drive into our garage, close the door and with many prayers humanely dispatch chickens. This seemed to be the most appropriate and sensible way.

Sue inquired where to find chickens from a local friend who had eight children and was definitely into all sorts of schemes that would cut costs and put food on the table. The name of a farmer was obtained and arrangements made for me to collect ten chickens on Saturday morning.

The fateful Saturday arrived. I knew that this was going to be one of those tasks that I was going to dread doing so I had a plan "B". Violet our African maid would be my chief assistant.

Now Violet was not your run-of-the-mill African house-maid. She moonlighted as the local witch doctor and was regarded with trepidation and awe by the local African domestics. Violet was always analyzing situations that had a connection to the spiritual world. Everything had an omen attached to it and she was forever exorcising spirits that we were oblivious of, but to Violet posed a substantial threat. The least troublesome spirits could be dispatched with a few hearty sneezes. More obstinate ones needed a large pinch of snuff and had to be swept out with a cow tail whisk accompanied by the muttering of incantations. If there was indeed a heavy duty troublesome supernatural being then she would burn strange herbs and hang an assortment of strange objects in strategic locations.

I felt certain that Violet would be a wonderful and most useful accomplice as every African woman from a tender young age knew how to kill, draw and pluck a chicken. I thought it appropriate not to divulge plan "B" with Sue as I felt it would show a weakness in my commitment. So it was with this

assurance that I went to the farm to get my chickens. I felt a massive pang of guilt as I watched the process of the poor chooks being grabbed, their legs tied and unceremoniously tossed into the trunk of my car. Those mournful long drawn out squawks had a profound affect and I knew that I could not proceed without plan "B". It was a forty-five minute drive each way and when I got home it was late in the morning.

I parked the car in the garage and went to get Violet. I can still remember Sue's exact words. "Violet? It's her weekend off. She left about two hours ago." You know that farmer gave me the weirdest look when I drove back to his farm and told him he could have his chickens back and keep the money.

And so I failed the test and accepted the fact that I was a wimp. The diet would now be without red meat and consist of fish and vegetables. Once in a while, if we went out we ate red meat and secretly hoped when being entertained by our friends that it would have forgotten any mention of vegetarianism. We managed this diet for about two years until we arrived in Canada.

Living in Alberta in the late Seventies it was not easy to subsist on a vegetarian fish diet and so we started eating red meat only to discover that, unlike South Africa, most of the red meat was finished off in feedlots where they were subjected to two different set of antibiotics. One to lower the bacteria living in the gastrointestinal track that competed for the nutrition processed by the rumen and the second dose was to stave off diseases caused by living in unsanitary conditions. To add insult to injury they implanted hormones behind the ears to stimulate growth knowing full well that these had the potential to affect our children. Most farmers, aware of what the beef industry was up to fed their families beef raised clean on their farms.

That was probably the primary reason for buying the farm. We raised our family on lamb free of antibiotics and hormones and compassionately raise and managed to the end of their lives. As soon as a food product becomes an industry every available means is employed to maximize profits sacrificing ethics, quality and distorting medical research at the expense of the consumers health. Unlike the Europeans who voice their objections to GMO's, hormones and antibiotics we sublimely accept with hardly a whimper.





Valentine Erotic Gourmet Evening

Adults Only

Friday, February 11 &

Saturday, February 12

Dinner starts promptly @ 7 pm

\$160/couple or \$90 single

(GST & service included)

Once again by popular request we having our special Valentine's Dinner menu where the food is daringly arranged and selected for it's aphrodisiacal properties. If you are sensitive to amorous issues this is not for you.

Reservations absolutely essential – this is a ticketed evening.

Warm Intimate Atmosphere

8 to 9 Gourmet Courses

Flowers on the Tables

Lamb or Beef as Entrée

(selection must be made two days prior to event)

Plate Service

Soft Sexy Music

...and a Night to Remember

Please arrive between 6pm and 6.30pm

Because of the complexity of the meal we cannot substitute dishes



RETURNS MAY 14!

SOUTH AFRICAN BARBEQUES

Our South African Barbeques have become very popular and some Saturdays have already been booked for private functions. Reservations are essential. Arrive at 6pm, enjoy our pre-dinner snacks and a refreshing drink on the patio whilst enjoying a spectacular view of the Rocky Mountains. The fare consists of Sirloin steak, lamb ribs, Tandoori chicken and Boerewors (a special South African sausage), sometimes a shell fish or seafood dish and accompanied by salads, various hot dishes, freshly cooked corn bread and traditional South African desserts. (Menu subject to change.)

This is a wonderful way of entertaining guests especially those from out of province.

\$40 per person

(does not include service or GST)

SEAFOOD EVENING

Saturday April 9

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



Carousel Productions

presents

by popular request

The Night That Paddy Murphy Died

Due to popular demand this INTERACTIVE DINNER THEATRE experience is back! The mayhem begins when Paddy's pals decide to steal him in his coffin and bring him to his favourite watering hole to say their proper goodbyes. You are invited to this Irish/Newfie funeral wake as friends and family gather to pay their respects to the dearly departed. Enjoy a fun-filled evening complete with traditional Irish food, toe-tapping live Celtic music and great comedy.

Saturday March 19

Arrive no later than 6pm.

Entertainment starts at 6.30

Cost per person is \$65 and includes service and GST on meal & entertainment.

TICKET PURCHASE
ESSENTIAL

Visit www.pasu.com or
call for more information.



Mother's Day

\$28.95

Saturday & Sunday Buffets

May 7 & 8

Remember to reserve ahead!



SWEETHEART SALE

With the exception of consignment merchandise

BUY ONE
and get the second
of equal or lesser value at
HALF PRICE

Applies to all merchandise
without a sale price on it.

20th Jan to 20th Feb



Come visit PaSu Farm Boutique
for great deals!

Restaurant News

During the week

We are open Tuesdays to Saturdays for lunch and afternoon tea. The grill is on from 12 to 2. From 2 to 3 we serve light lunches and afternoon tea. Reservations recommended.

On Sunday

We will serve our Carvery Buffet or Plate Service if there are fewer than 15 reservations. Seating from 12 to 1. Sunday afternoon from 2 to 4 we serve tea, coffee and dessert.

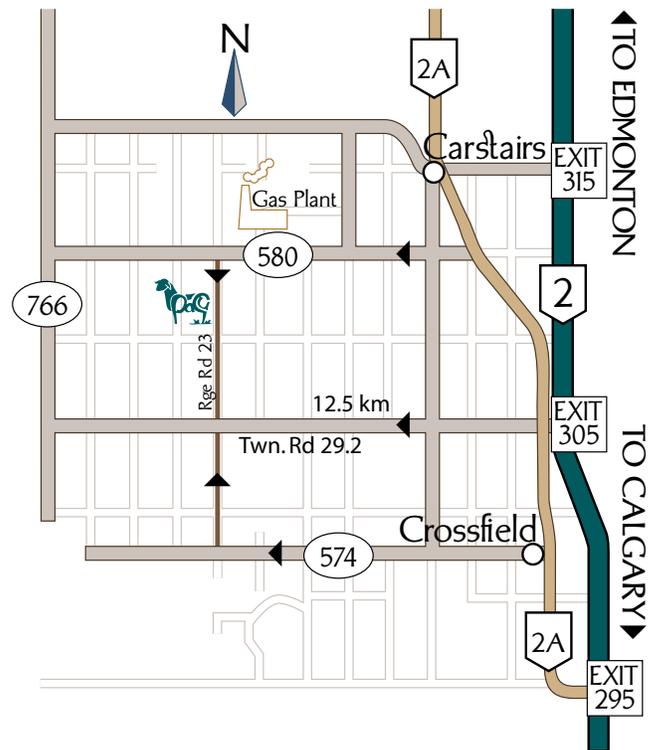
PLEASE REMEMBER

That we book up very quickly for:

Easter April 24th Price \$28.95/person
Mothers Day & Fathers Day Price \$28.95/person

Reservations are essential for the Restaurant on Sundays and for special events, and are also recommended during the week.

Never been to PaSu Farm? Need directions?



Keep our map handy for your next trip down QE2.
We're easy to find, and would enjoy seeing you here!

Get Ready for Garden Season...

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

Please phone ahead to make sure that we have it ready bagged.

Saskatoon plants

\$10.00 for 6 shoots or \$4.00 per potted plant.

Available in May.

Phone first and place order.