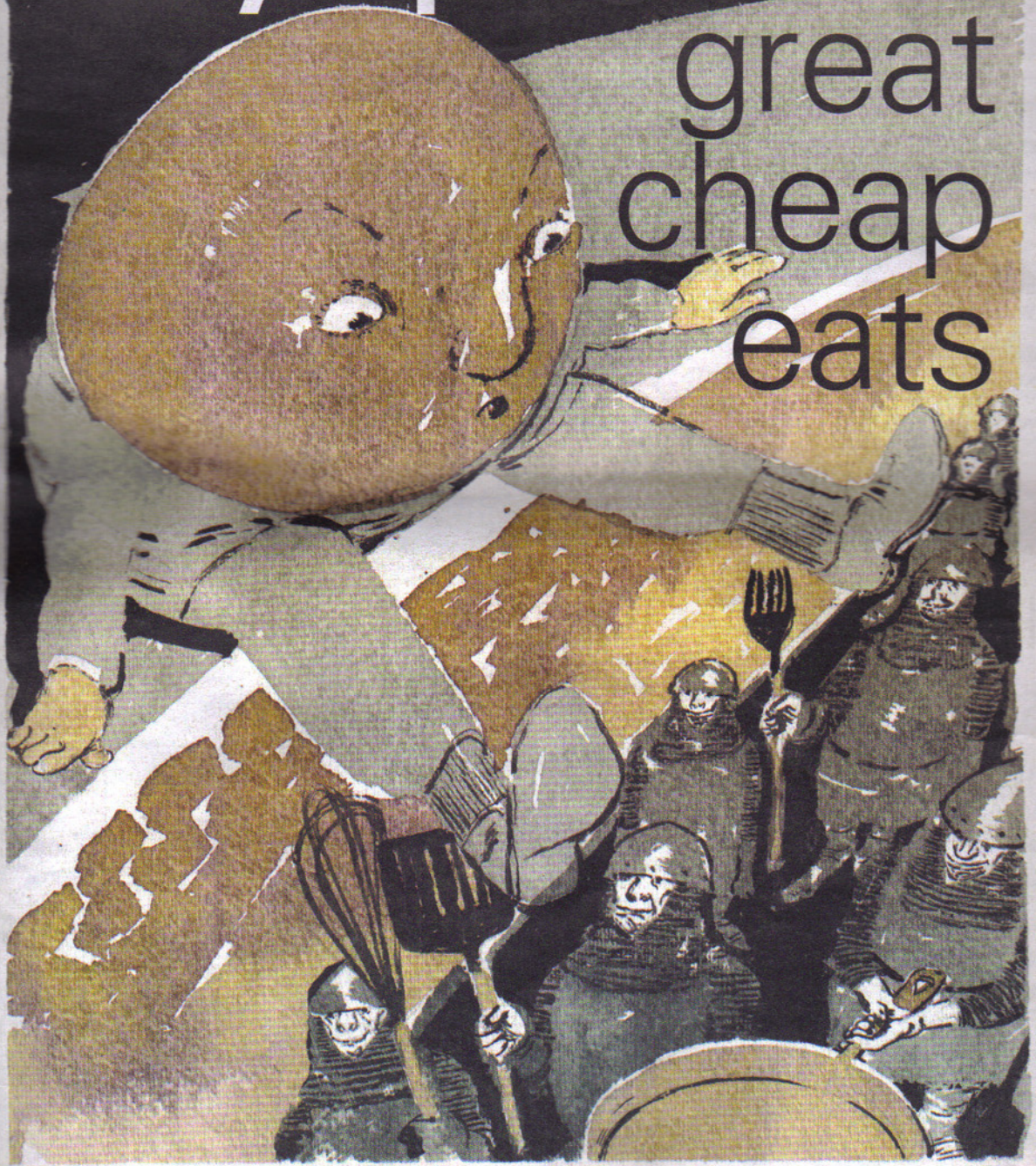


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JANUARY FEBRUARY 2010

What's on **YOUR** wish list for Calgary's food scene in 2010?

People embedded in the city's food culture speak up about the future.

By Karen Anderson

Calgary has an interesting and evolving food scene. We are known throughout Canada for Rocky Mountain Regional Cuisine, and with visible minorities comprising a large chunk of our population, we have many diverse ethnic offerings as well. Our chapter of Slow Food International is the largest and most active in Canada. The local movement is not a hip trend but a commitment to sustainability that is gaining momentum. Where will that momentum take us?

We asked people who are intimately connected to the food scene – chefs, wine importers, farmers, educators, travel writers, bloggers, cookbook authors, retailers and people involved in charities – what was at the top of their wish lists for 2010.

Marcello Di Cintio is an award-winning travel writer. He has an original voice and a long list of wishes that include the need for a "third-wave" coffeehouse in Kensington, decent beer on tap at the Kensington Pub and getting Dwayne and Alberta Ennest to reopen their restaurant Piato across the street from his house. His deepest wish is for "...an authentic Bengali restaurant. Bengali food is my favourite of the Indian cuisines. I would also love to find a true Kashmiri restaurant. Not just a restaurant called Kashmir, but one that actually serves meat-laden Kashmiri wazwaan cuisine, particularly rista and gushtaba, the world's most interesting meatballs."

Another well-travelled Calgarian, **Nicole Kammerer** of Nicole Gourmet Catering, has cooked her way across Europe and Canada and was Mercato's original chef. With Portuguese and Chinese parents, she is versatility personified in the kitchen. What does she wish for? Simplicity. Kammerer believes that "Calgary would benefit from more brasserie/bistro eateries with casual atmospheres, small wine lists and daily specials without the big price tags. Simple, local, well-prepared food is all we need."

Tony and Penny Marshall, of Highwood Crossing Farm, said that on a recent organic farm tour of Cuba, "we saw how growing and preserving food for families equates to being a modern-day pioneer. Our wish is for an increase in urban agriculture. We'd encourage people to grow veggies on their decks, in their back yards or at a local community garden plot. If you feel like farming in the city, check out SPIN – Small Plot Intensive Farming – at www.spinfarming.com. Be a pioneer!"

While the next pollster didn't feel you have to grow your own food, she does wish Calgarians would support local food producers. **Connie O'Connor** of Canadian Rocky Mountain Resorts owns resorts, restaurants, a wine store, a bakery and the new CRMR at Home. She also owns a ranch that supplies the other operations. "Increased demand will strengthen the local market resulting in consistent availability of locally grown and produced products. If existing producers are successful, new entrepreneurs will join their ranks and we'll have more selection. It all adds up to a better culinary experience."

Slow Food Calgary president, **Bob Whitworth** is a chef and local food advocate. Hobsbawn-Smith is quite specific: "I hope that everyone spends at least one-quarter of their food budget on locally-made, Alberta-raised food this year. I would like everyone in Alberta to stand up for their local farm and think about the importance of farms to our well being. Just one more thing – I'd like a centrally located, year-round truck market that gives Alberta farmers and curators an affordable venue for their goods."

Bob Whitworth, owner of Simple Pies and manager of the new Westside Farmer's Market in Calgary's West Springs neighbourhood, is doing something about that. With the uncertainty surrounding the Calgary Farmers' Market, he has revamped the former Sweetgrass Market and hopes to attract farmers with trucks and tables year-round. It is his wish to make this market for West Springs what the Calgary Farmers' Market is for central Calgary.

One of the city's key supporters of farmers is chef **Wade Sirois**, co-owner of Infuse Catering and Forage: Farm to Fork Foods to Go. Sirois has attended Slow Food's Terra Madre conference in Italy and has seen what is possible when food is central to a country's culture. He says, "On the top of my wish list is that farmers, producers, organizations, and government will work towards a long-term sustainable vision for local agriculture that more closely connects the rural and urban areas of Calgary. It won't be easy, but we'll all benefit."

Kris Vester, farmer and owner of Blue Mountain Biodynamic farms, says, "The health, vibrancy and sustainability of food production, distribution and consumption is what we need to focus on."