

MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

This past Saturday we had an amazing hot, sunny day for our second annual Family Day at the Farmers' Market. The many family-friendly activities brought out lots of families wanting to participate in the fun.

Everyone reported that they enjoyed the variety of games and activities we offered and it was a most enjoyable day for all. Even yours truly got in on the fun and had her photo taken with the albino Burmese python draped around her shoulders.

Now I'd like you to meet the two talented people behind Speakeasy Fine Foods.

Sarah Wilcox is the chef and her partner, Chad, is a sommelier. Sarah's culinary career began almost by accident. While studying Food Styling at George Brown, her summer job was serving at a golf course. One day the chef didn't arrive and they asked for a volunteer to go into the kitchen.

That then led to a job as cook at Milestones, then several years with the Oliver and Bonacini group, leaving them a few months ago as the sous chef of their 5-star restaurant, Auberge du Pommier.

While working with the O & B group, Sarah worked in several of their restaurants, giving her experience with a variety of food styles. Several months on exchange at a Relais & Chateaux Hotel in France further honed her skills.

One of her career highlights was winning an Iron Chef competition in Toronto three years ago.

Currently, Sarah is on contract to the food and beverage department at the Granite Club. Her ambition is to open a restaurant with Chad in the Aurora area. Speakeasy Fine Foods is their way of introducing themselves to the area with a booth at the Aurora Farmers' Market where they offer hand-made hot sauces and mustards, artisan sodas, freezies, fresh pasta and local, artisanal cheese. Chad says that he first discovered how food and drink partnered early when he noticed how milk and cookies tasted great, but milk and pizza didn't work so well. Now as a 20 year veteran of the business, Chad has worked at some of Toronto's finest dining establishments, from steak houses to the Platinum Club at the Air Canada Centre. Currently he works at Auberge du Pommier.

Chad has been fortunate to study under all three of Canada's Master Sommeliers, which inspired further study of wines of the world. He received his Sommelier certification from the Canadian Association of Professional Sommeliers as well as the Court of Master Sommeliers in 2011. He works with wine and food daily and has a true passion for service and hospitality.

Chad moved to Newmarket with his wife four years ago in order to be closer to family as his wife was expecting their baby boy. He has witnessed a dramatic change in dining culture north of the city. His dream is to establish a new, fun dining concept in the Aurora/Newmarket area with his business partner, Sarah. Visit them at their booth in the park to sample their tasty creations and discuss their exciting plans.

The vendors at the Farmers' Market are very concerned about the health of our long time vendor, Joe, of Toscana's Bakery. Recently, Joe suffered a serious stroke and is recovering in hospital. We all send our best wishes and positive vibes for his recovery. During his illness, the bakery booth will continue to be at the market and you can direct your well wishes or cards to them.

Our next Special Event is Seniors' day on August 1st, when the Aurora Seniors' Association will present several forms of entertainment on the bandshell.

See you at the Market!