

Chefs Clamour for Farm Fresh Ingredients  
By Andrew Brown  
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“Look at all these fresh beets and berries! They are amazing,” beams Chef Jean-Claude Chartrand of L’Orée du Bois in Chelsea as he unloads huge baskets of produce from the farmers’ market. Chartrand’s passion for fresh, local, ingredients come from working in his mother’s garden as a child. The garden was a necessity more than a relaxing pastime. In order to provide enough food for their family of ten, every morsel was precious. Any food that wasn’t used during the season was carefully preserved.

At L’Orée du Bois, Chartrand uses the same philosophy from those formative years. “Nothing is wasted,” he exclaims. “I’m just wondering what’s going to happen with the next generation - with kids that think everything comes in a package at the supermarket. They don’t work in the garden or visit a farm. When you teach a child how to grow vegetables, it stays for life.”

Chartrand tends to an herb garden behind the restaurant much like that of his childhood. “We have a use for every herb. When it’s harvest time, we transform everything.” In addition to his garden and farmers’ markets, ingredients are brought in from local producers such as chicken from Ferme Aux Saveurs des Monts in Val-des-Monts and wild mushrooms from Champignon Le Corpin in Farrellton. “We have to go out and get it. It’s small producers - you buy a bit and then it’s gone,” says Chartrand.

In order to cope with limited supply, Chefs Patrick Kostiw and Romaine Riva of the Wakefield Mill like to incorporate local ingredients into their specials when they become available. “When something comes in we may only have up to four days to use it. But we gladly take the opportunity to use those ingredients when they become available,” says Kostiw. Wakefield Mill offers many dishes using regional ingredients including bison from Ranch Panoramique in Wakefield, cranberries from Vallée des Canneberges in Venosta, as well wines and ciders from Quebec.

“The use of regional ingredients is an integral part of what we try to do every day here,” says Katrina Moy, manager of Les Fougères in Chelsea. “We are so fortunate to have this wealth on our doorstep.

Chef James West of Bistro Rutherford also saw the wealth of local farm fresh ingredients and wanted to incorporate them into affordable, family friendly food. “Right from the start we decided we wanted to use as many local ingredients as we could,” says West who wears his local suppliers as a badge of honour. Their names are etched with chalk on the walls.

“All of the beef we use is McMillan Farms Black Angus from Farrellton. The buns are from Pipolinka Bakery in Wakefield,” says West. “All of our sauces are made from scratch on site. For example, we use local honey from Berg en Dal in Alcove in our

honey garlic wings.” For West, it has become a winning strategy. As he supports the community, they in turn embrace Bistro Rutherford.