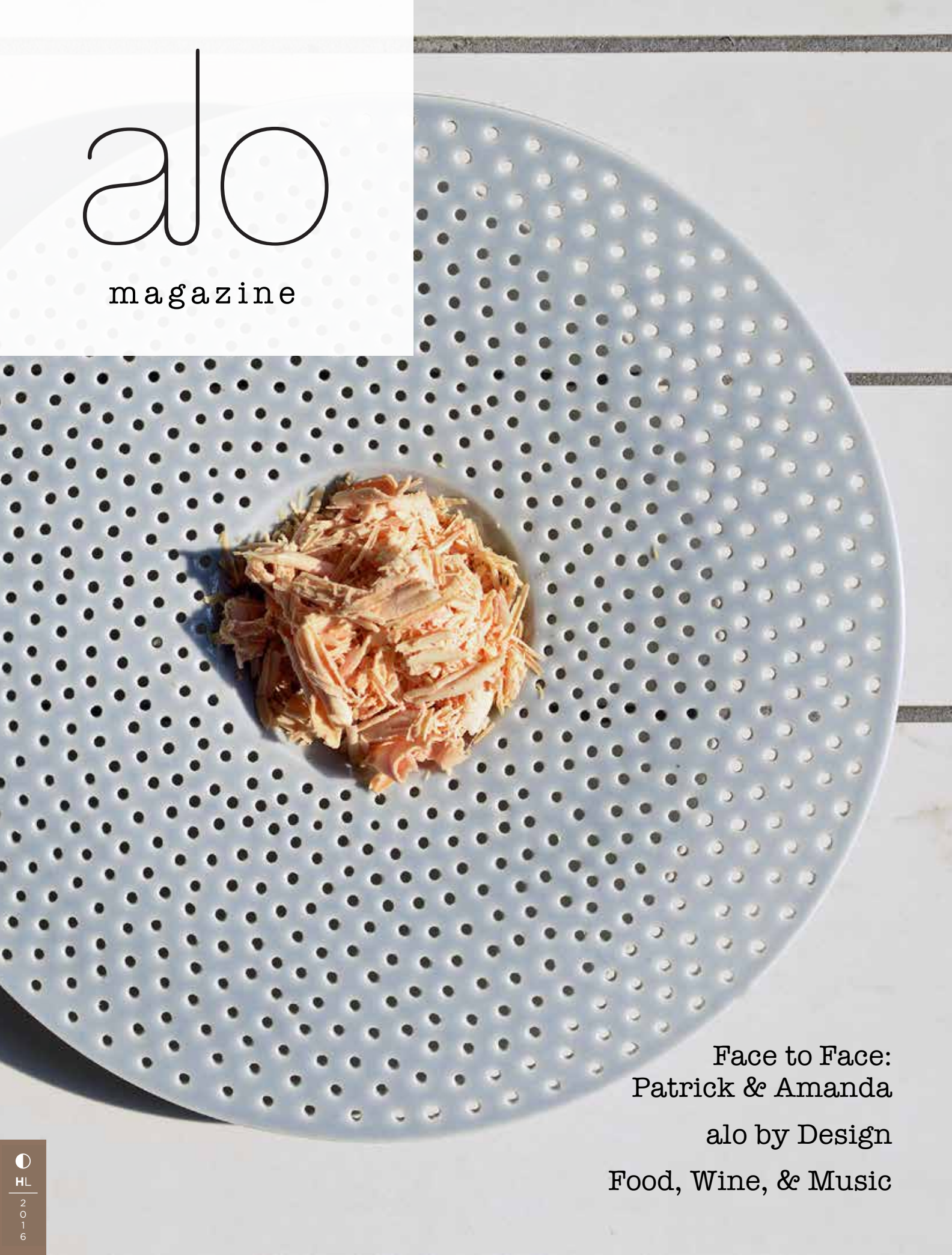


alo

magazine



Face to Face:
Patrick & Amanda

alo by Design

Food, Wine, & Music

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ALO WAS THE TYPE OF RESTAURANT WE BOTH wanted to open. Call it the next stage in our careers if you like, but the idea behind it was something we believed in and just went for. It's definitely more than just a business to us—it's a realization of what attracts us to this industry, the practice of being hospitable. While we strive to create hospitality that is thoughtful, elegant, and sophisticated—with service that is welcoming, energizing, and approachable through a tasting menu format—we also want it to feel as if we are hosting from our homes, because it's that personal to us.

So welcome to this first issue of alo, where you will learn about how the restaurant came to be, the amazing staff who work here, and the behind-the-scenes mechanisms that brought this space to life. We were honoured to host Chef Daniel Burns from Brooklyn's Luksus at a very special dinner, part of the Michelin on the Road series, and we share photos in the following pages.

It is a privilege for us to serve you at alo—from the moment you step off the elevator, at our bar, and at our table. The menu you leave with is more than just a reminder of your visit. It's our way of saying thank you for allowing us to guide your evening's experience.

—Patrick Kriss & Amanda Bradley



MEANT TO BE

In conversation with Chef Patrick Kriss and GM Amanda Bradley



They met virtually online and clicked in person over coffee at a diner. Today, Chef Patrick Kriss and General Manager Amanda Bradley run their very own highly acclaimed restaurant in an unlikely location.

How did you meet?

Patrick Kriss: I wanted to open a restaurant and knew I needed to first find a general manager. I started asking around and connected with Amanda online. We had coffee and spoke on the phone a few times. I distinctly remember one conversation, right before the holidays: As we hung up, she wished me a merry Christmas, and I knew at that moment we would open up a restaurant together.

Amanda Bradley: It's true—he courted me through LinkedIn! Our initial conversations were more general, about hospitality overall. It was a gut feeling as far as making that real connection. And that has been how we decide on most things since.

Why did you think you meshed so well?

AB: Patrick has a strong work ethic and creative mind. He might be reserved socially, but he is very observant, which is why no detail is ever missed. I am typically practical but also maintain a strong drive with strong principles in mind, like Patrick.

PK: We are fairly similar, although she will talk more and write things down. I tend to be a little more spontaneous! When I have my head and my heart set on something, I don't let it go. We share a common drive.

The location is admittedly off the beaten path. Did you think it was risky?

PK: Yes, the location is a little crazy. But since the concept of a tasting-only menu was already going to be different from what Toronto was used to, I wanted someplace a little more obscure. I always believed in this space, like I did the concept. I never second-guessed that.

AB: We were initially worried about the elevator, but it ended up creating a great sense of mystery. The natural light and all the windows really added to the ambiance. When you are up there, it doesn't feel as if you're at one of the busiest street corners in the city.

How did you assemble your team?

PK: We both decided to bring in some of our own people. For example, I always knew who I wanted for my two sous-chefs. The rest was about hiring on personality.

AB: We have the same perspective on hiring. The CV might get you in the door, but then it's all based on conversation and a gut feeling about those intangible qualities. Like Patrick said, it's about personality. I can teach you steps of service and how to clear a table, but I can't show you how to have a winning personality.

You have some amazing talent in the restaurant. How do you foster that?

AB: We are lucky to have hired the right people—a team of humble, talented, and mature individuals. That makes all the difference. Everyone shares the same ideas about hospitality, and we operate from a position of creating an honest, respectful, and comfortable working environment.

PK: Amanda and I are always here for our staff. We never leave! And if I'm not physically in the kitchen, I am still present if someone needs something from me.

Do you think alo filled a void in the Toronto landscape?

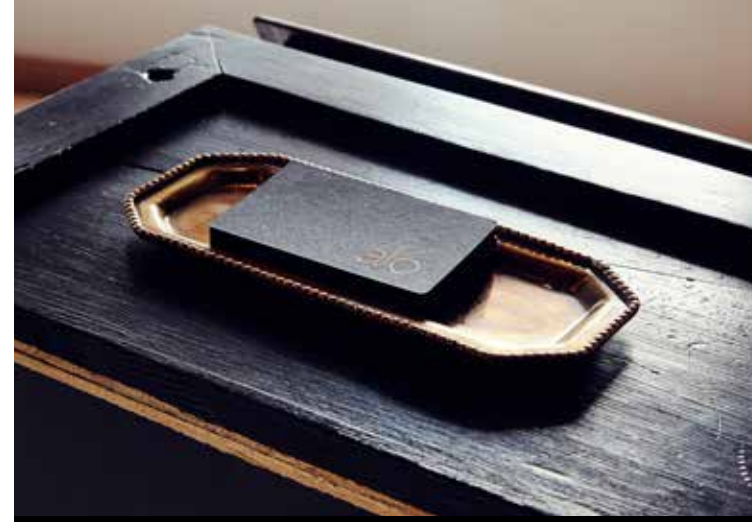
PK: It wasn't about filling a void as much as it was about doing what I believed in and how I personally like to dine.

AB: I do also think we offer a product that is a little bit different than everyone else—not just in terms of food and drink, but a complete experience, from the moment the guest walks in.

Favourite spot in the restaurant?

AB: Table 4 is where I like to sit and work, right in the sun with the bustle of the street below. When service begins, it's the best seat in the house.

PK: It's right in the corner. It's as close as you get to a VIP table!



alo by Design

When Chef Patrick Kriss first approached Sara Parisotto and Hamid Samad at Commute Design about designing a restaurant space on the third floor of a building on the cusp of Chinatown, they were eager and ready for the challenge ahead. And the result was beyond their expectations.

Sara placed the bar in several locations on paper until it just clicked after one of their meetings. "I sketched it in the middle, and Patrick just looked at the floor plan and said, 'Perfect.' That's where it stayed."



THERE WAS A LOT for Sara Parisotto and Hamid Samad to be excited about: an edgy neighbourhood dotted with tattoo parlours; a slow, noisy elevator ride to the third floor that increased the suspense, and a room steeped in history (one of its incarnations was a speakeasy). “It’s unusual to go vertical,” admits Hamid, “but we loved the self-confidence Patrick conveyed in that decision. The real attraction for us was the challenge of separating the street-level experience from alo’s for the guest.”

The elevator could have been a hurdle, but in some ways, it was just right for a leap of faith. “We left it nondescript on purpose, so as to not give it all away,” explains Sara. “For the first-time guest, who has an expectation of a certain level of service, you get this highly effective contrast of space as the doors open up.”

As one can imagine, Patrick and Amanda came prepared with a specific vision. “They certainly didn’t need our consultation on how to program their restaurant, given their experience,” says Sara, chuckling. In fact, Patrick didn’t reveal his menu concept until the restaurant opened, even to them. “Most clients like to share their ideas, but for Patrick it was sacred, and we respected that. What was more important was to make sure the chairs were comfortable for the guests.” If they wondered whether Patrick could actually cook—“We never tasted any of his cooking at all throughout the process!”—they did not doubt his attention to detail.

“They brought to the table a really well-defined flow, and it was our job to translate that into the ultimate customer experience,” says Hamid. “It was just a >>



matter of logistics.” Or was it? “We went through considerable changes from the first floor plan,” Sara remembers clearly. While most restaurateurs add seats, they were blown away by how Patrick chiseled away at the number. Both he and Amanda were so comfortable with the level of service they needed to provide, they concentrated their efforts on personal space and comfort instead. “They both sat on a lot of chairs,” points out Hamid. “We calculated the depth of the seat and how many hours you could sit comfortably in each, until at last, we had a Goldilocks moment!”

Even something as seemingly mundane as walking to the washroom required a tremendous amount of thought. “We couldn’t change where the washrooms would be, but we didn’t want guests to have to walk through the bar area, where people are sitting and chatting, just to reach them either. It didn’t feel right,” says Sara. Instead, they created a space behind the bar to allow for that traffic. “It still gives you the visual of the artistry taking place at the bar and the atmosphere, plus the ability to parade a little, without the congestion.”

Both Sara and Hamid agree that while Patrick and Amanda stuck to their guns on specific service needs, they were given carte blanche to go with that they thought was right for the space aesthetically. “We appreciate the level of trust they placed in us.” It allowed them to customize certain treatments, like the hand-dyed, printed, and stitched curtains that hang in the dining room and the wallpaper that adorns the area around the bar. “We had this turn-of-the-century oriental tray in ebony, with crackled gold foiling and mother-of-pearl inlay,” says Sara. “It was worn well with age, and we decided to have it represent that sense of artistry that alo captures by offering a bespoke and tailored experience to their

guests.” Commute Design took a high-res photo of it, made a few changes, and created custom wallpaper. After the wallpaper was applied, certain areas on the birds, insects, and leaves were highlighted with gold leaf. “This is a good example of how we placed unique elements in the space, because there is no other alo,” explains Hamid. “We were all on the same wavelength to ensure that the alo guest isn’t going to bump into those certain elegant touches anywhere else.”

Sara and Hamid concede that while they understood that alo would be something very special, it wasn’t until the day it opened that they fully realized how special. “I remember the first time I walked in, where everyone was in the whites and the kitchen was functioning, and it was actually quite shocking,” says Sara. “It was so beautiful and quiet, like a surgery room, where everyone is communicating with their minds or a simple nod. It was amazing to see so many people in one small space with such purpose and focus.”

“You never know who’s going to walk through your door as a client,” Hamid adds thoughtfully. “Patrick and Amanda definitely took alo to the next level.”

COOKING WITH JERUSALEM ARTICHOKEs

Despite its misleading name—they are neither from Jerusalem nor related to artichokes—Jerusalem artichokes are gaining in popularity. Also called sunchokes or earth apples, these root vegetables are a Native American species from the sunflower family. Here, Chef Patrick Kriss offers his thoughts on how to best prepare them.

“Jerusalem artichokes are delicious and very versatile vegetables. From a room-temperature salad to roasted with meat, they work in many situations. You can even pickle them. Just don’t eat them raw, as they will bother your stomach.”

ON THE SIDE: Best roasted in a cast iron pan. Cut in half and lay cut-side down. They get crispy on the outside and tender in the middle.

DRESSED UP: Add black truffles to a Jerusalem artichoke salad to take it up a notch.

SOUP’S ON: Roast skin on and then purée. Add salt, pepper, vinegar, a dash of nutmeg, and a little maple syrup.



FROM THE SOURCE 100KM FOODS

100km Foods has supplied a lot with local food since the restaurant first opened. Based on a delivery service model that links local purveyors with the right customers, it is the brainchild of Paul Sawtell and Grace Mandarano. During an extensive backpacking excursion together through Asia, they got a real sense of eating not only locally but also the right ingredients by visiting markets and enjoying native cuisine. They returned home in late 2007 and attended discussions on the local politics of food, where they quickly realized the challenges that farmers and chefs have in connecting. 100km Foods offers a viable solution. Grace Mandarano explains the process.

Social Responsibility

Both my parents came from farming families in Southern Italy. That connection to food was undeniable, and yet within one short generation, all but lost. Our goal is to reestablish that much-needed connection to food—where it comes from and how it is grown. We work with farms that vary in size, production methods, and products, but the majority is family run with a focus on sustainable agricultural practices. We vet them for unique products, geographical accessibility—since we pick up directly from them—wholesale readiness, and the ability to supply

reliable and consistent volumes in product. Since we pick up product about four times a week from most of the farms, we have been able to develop close, personal relationships with our growers.

Just-in-Time Model

We do not inventory perishable produce. When the chefs at a place place their orders, the product is still in the ground. Orders are compiled and sent to farms daily. The farmers harvest according to our needs, and our refrigerated trucks pick up that fresh produce the very same day. Our evening packing crew then picks and packs the orders so that the trucks can deliver to a lot the following morning, just 24 hours from harvest.

Our Farmers

We source these from two small organic farms: Vicki’s Veggies and Zephyr Organics. Tim and Vicki from Vicki’s Veggies have become famous in Ontario for their heirloom products, for their incredible attention to detail, and for harvesting, grading, and packing only the most exceptional products for their restaurant customers. Zephyr Organics has been growing organically for almost 30 years and were far ahead of the curve for sustainable and innovative organic growing practices.

Sunchoke Tips

This late-fall root vegetable looks similar to raw ginger root. When shopping, look for firm tubers with unblemished skin. Store them in the crisper, and wrap paper towels around them to draw moisture away.

Sunchokes, Swiss Chard, Toasted Hazelnuts, Grapes, Parmigiano-Reggiano

SERVES 4

75g grapeseed oil

500g washed sunchokes, halved and dried on a towel

Salt and pepper to taste

75g unsalted butter

150g Swiss chard leaves, washed and cut into small pieces

100g green seedless grapes

15g sherry vinegar

75g olive oil

10 tarragon leaves, chopped

15g whole-grain mustard

50g shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano

50g toasted hazelnuts

METHOD

Preheat your oven to 375°F. In a hot pan, add the grapeseed oil to cover the bottom of the pan and carefully place the sunchokes cut-side down in the pan. Season with salt and pepper. Once golden brown, place the pan in the oven. Check for tenderness around 15 minutes of cooking using a paring knife. If there is no resistance, they are cooked.

Drain the oil from the pan and add butter. Once melted, toss the sunchokes in the butter and then add the Swiss chard, continuing to toss to wilt the greens. Be gentle to avoid breaking up the sunchokes. Add the grapes and set the pan to the side.

Combine sherry vinegar, olive oil, tarragon, and whole-grain mustard. Whisk together and pour over the warm salad. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper.

Place the salad in your serving dish and garnish with Parmigiano-Reggiano and toasted hazelnuts.





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PEARL MORISSETTE WINES: THE ULTIMATE SAUCE IN A DISH

THE VINES AT PEARL MORISSETTE that fall under the Twenty Mile Bench VQA shiver in the wind, anticipating winter. The harvest is over and the fruit—"the DNA of the wine," as François Morissette calls it—is now secured in the winery, where François can focus on moulding its drinkability and ability to pair with food.

It's a classic approach that suits this winemaker, who did eight vintages in Burgundy as part of his training. "Wine in Europe was traditionally made to consume with food. If you opened a bottle, it was because there was food in front of you," he explains, adding with a wry smile: "The idea of Instagramming a glass of wine for the wine's sake is a new endeavor." He doesn't mind ascribing to this food-friendly philosophy, because he feels that it takes wine off its pedestal, bringing it down to its original intent, which is to complement good food. "It becomes that extra element that uplifts the dish and brings it into another dimension after the chef has completed his mission. Call it the ultimate sauce in a dish." Good news for restaurants like alo that take their wine pairings as seriously as their food.

The wines at Pearl Morissette are produced in an oxidative style, which is the way wine used to be made, before people knew about yeasts and bacteria in wine and before they had the means to protect it from the negative effects of oxygen. But François is more interested in its positive effects—in particular, the development of umami as



a savory taste sensation in the wine. "Today, most wines are made in a protective way to encourage more front-of-mouth aromatics. I care more about the mid-palate and the finish, the lingering of the wine."

He encourages oxidation as soon as possible by not adding sulphur to his wine press. He also uses an extreme amount of quality and usable lees, often recycling them from one year to the next. "Lees are the by-product of dead yeast cells and skin debris due to the pressing. They inform the wine aromatically, structurally, and texturally." François lets the wine age on primary lees, and "we never touch them." His goal is to develop enough elements in the wine to allow it to age: "I am a believer in old wines. Besides sugar and acid, you have a whole range of aromatics as well as texture, structure, astringency, and umami to consider, not to mention their relationship

with each other in the wine." It's that ultimate harmony that makes a wine drinkable, and he feels it can take years to get there.

There is no recipe for each wine. What he does to a tank from one year to the next can change dramatically. "We adapt to what the harvest gives us, to the conditions of fermentation, and to what happens in aging," he admits. There is a lot of experimentation and benchmarking. He uses a lot of "pots and pans," such as concrete eggs from California, clay amphora from Georgia, and 60-year old foudres from Alsace. "It's good to have several vessels at our disposal; they all serve a purpose, but they do not create the wine," he adds quickly. "They only help us focus on what we want to achieve." And in François' book, that is a wine that ages well.

In his estimation, many of the wines on the market today are too young, but he acknowledges that producers ultimately have a product to sell. "We have the dual challenge of making them approachable in their youth and yet agreeable, so that when you pair them with food, the wine does not disappear, but retains its personality while yielding to the dish." With several examples of Pearl Morissette wines on alo's wine list and pairing menu, it seems as if François has reached his goal. But he shrugs it off. Like any good craftsman, fiercely proud and yet humbled by what nature provides him, he knows he is only as good as the grapes he gets and his innate ability to ensure that the right amount of science informs his decisions. Before long, buds will form on the dormant branches of his vines, and François will begin his search again for the ultimate sauce.

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE: DECODING THE ALO WINE LIST



ON THE TABLE SITS a bottle of Domaine Huet 'Clos du Bourg' Demi-Sec 2014 from Vouvray in the Loire Valley. It still has to be entered into alo's system and added to the wine list, but Head Sommelier Christopher Sealy greets it like an old friend. He brought in from this benchmark producer back vintages of some of the greatest French chenin blancs at past places he has worked, and he remembers them fondly. He points out that this grape from this region was one of the first "eureka" moments he had with white wine. "My palate was still new, and here was this dry yet sweet, mineral yet fruity, earthy and fresh wine. It was sexy. It was chenin blanc." He credits the region for being the first to "catapult me into a world of fresh, mineral, and food-friendly wines."

The decision to serve this particular bottle at alo has less to do about the past and everything to do with respect for the progression and precision of the food that it accompanies: "Domaine

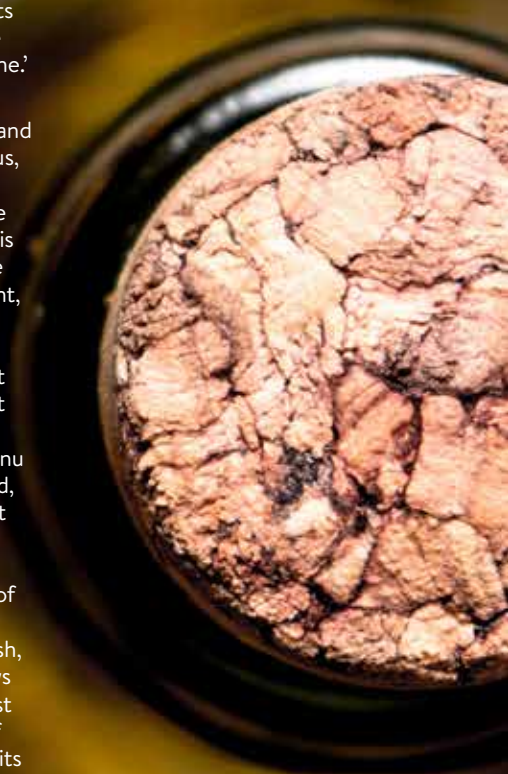
Huet is not so much a perfect version as much as a complete version of a chenin blanc. It's entirely flexible with the food we serve, and at this point with its age, it creates a new harmony with some of our stews or main courses that are fish or protein based. It can also be drunk without food." He describes this particular bottle as "a nectar that combines elements of ripe honeyed pear, stone fruit, and floral aroma that then replicate themselves onto the palate with the added combination of subtle mineral and earth tones."

There are actually two wine programs in play at alo: a selection set aside specifically for pairings indicated on that evening's tasting menu (and chef's counter tasting menu) and a wine list comprising 60 to 70 labels from which the guests at the table can select. The lists are fluid, as Sealy explains: "Wines get introduced to the wine menu and then reappear based on a season or pairing option." At any one time, he says he is sitting on four to five wines that are "sleeping," just waiting for the right moment when they will fit in. He catalogues each one in his mind like a composer, waiting for the opportune time to allow them to sing in perfect harmony with the food.

Sealy says that wines come to his attention in a few ways. Through his travels to wine regions, which he does two to three times a year, he has the opportunity to explore and understand some wines more fully. "At the same time, as I dine in those regions, I store

cues from wine pairings and regional specialties in my memory and in my journal. So as Chef Kriss creates a new dish, it might trigger a memory of taste that informs that pairing. We look for wines as companions at the table—sometimes quiet or full of character, ones that behave like an added ingredient to the meal to elevate or support what is happening on the table." And he eagerly awaits the time when a dish will be 'engineered to awaken a wine.'

It's an interesting list that Sealy describes as "serious and playful at times, adventurous, informative, and well travelled." Some regions are familiar, others are not. He is careful to explain that while alo is a fine-dining restaurant, due to the nature of their cuisine and use of various flavours you won't find a list of "the big A-list wines," but rather a well-thought-out "greatest hits of tasting menu wine pairings" that are listed, for the most part, by weight and energy—meaning, grouped by bottles that "get the job done in terms of acidity, aromatics, and how it works with a particular dish, regardless of price." It allows Sealy to take a guest not just to the bottom or the top of the red or white list, but to its core—"where, because we have used these wines before as pairings, I am certain something will work and give our guests the sort of experience they are looking for without being too explicit."





DESIGNING THE DETAILS

THE SOUND OF ALO

HOW MANY TIMES have you been in a restaurant trying to enjoy your meal while straining to have a conversation with the person across from you? You might blame it on the music being too loud, the clamour of an open kitchen, or the din of noisy neighbours. In any case, it wears on you—and it definitely influences your decision to come back. We go to restaurants seeking pleasure and hospitality. But how hospitable is it to be bombarded with noise levels that make conversations or enjoying music damn near futile?

The most distinguished restaurants always say they pride themselves on perfection, that they are paying attention to the smallest details of the diner's experience. Unfortunately, far too many restaurateurs and architects turn a blind eye—

or better yet, a deaf ear—to a detail that is as large and obvious as they come.

Architects are judged predominantly on how they design our visual realm, so it's only natural that is where their focus resides. Anything that complicates that affair runs the risk of coming up against some kind of resistance, or at the very least dispassion. Utility forsaken for simplicity and beauty—stylish yet poorly designed shoes that cause blisters by the end of the day.

Such behaviour is something The Playlist Co. wants to end in the hospitality industry. By their definition, not doing so is simply inhospitable. They work with restaurants like alo to implement acoustics, sound systems, and music programming cohesively and purposefully. They firmly believe that the beauty of a high-quality

sound experience far outweighs any additional consideration required to create interior designs that are essentially comfortable. Architects can, without a doubt, design visually striking interiors that sound great. Knowing how to and, more important, caring to do so are the main impediments.

Dali Bikich, managing director at The Playlist Co., points out that Chef Patrick Kriss approached him at the ideal point in alo's evolution—the very beginning. "If you want to create a space that offers high-quality sound and music entertainment, it's paramount that you think about it at the beginning of the design process. That way we can work in tandem with the architects to inspire and assist them to create a physical design that has the ability to exhaust noise out of the space. Not doing so is like installing an oven without an exhaust hood—you're just asking for trouble."

"Noise from the open-concept kitchen adjacent to the dining room at alo was our main concern," reflects Dali. To counter that, The Playlist Co. installed custom-built acoustic panels around the

walls of alo's dining room: compressed fiberglass covered by a wooden frame and high-quality white fabric stretched over top. "The panels absorb all the noisy sound reflections and keep the space from becoming an echo chamber, where guests can't even talk to one another, never mind enjoy the music programming we create to set a particular tone and give the space some soul," explains Dali.

With the sound environment in the process of construction, The Playlist Co. turned their attention to soundtrack design. "I had a desire for our music to create a space where people would feel comfortable letting their hair down, and something that would reference my taste for classic rock, hip-hop, and R&B. The music program was also supposed to be a little brash and urban to counteract the assumed formality of such a fine-dining experience and reflect the restaurant's immediate surroundings," says Patrick.

"It's this sort of attention to detail that really sets Patrick and alo apart," concludes Dali. "Before anything was even close to being designed and alo was just a stripped-down empty box, Patrick had us come into the space and hear his vision of how he wanted his restaurant to feel. By focusing on the overall feel of the dining concept and realizing that sound is a big part of that equation, Patrick is one of the most sophisticated restaurateurs we've come across."

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CREATIVE IMITATION BEHIND THE BAR

IS ORIGINALITY OVERRATED?

Bar Manager John Bunner swirls a glass half-full of a tortoise-shell sherry—his weakness—and contemplates the question. Truth be told, he's already given it a lot of thought, because he was once a philosophy major at the University of Toronto. Along the way, he bartended at some of the city's best spots, including the Toronto Temperance Society and Byblos, before landing at alo, where he runs the bar program.

Bunner acknowledges the pressure on cocktail bartenders to be creators: "to put forth original and distinctive

work." He has plenty of examples: "Cocktail competitions often require contestants to submit novel recipes; drink menus are expected to include, or entirely consist of, cocktails unique to the house; guests ask for bartenders for their 'signature drinks.' What's insisted on, in short, is something distinctive of the drink maker. Something original."

It's by no means a recent phenomenon, he continues. "The fact that cocktail makers have long been allowed to affix proper names to their recipes testifies to this." Back in the day, we got the classy Whiskey Cocktail and Gin Smash, as

Tilting at Windmills

- 1 oz Tanqueray Gin
- 1 oz Bols Genever
- ¾ oz Seville orange syrup
- 1 fresh lemon juice
- 1 egg white
- Ground coriander

Put all ingredients except the coriander in a shaker. Shake without ice, and then shake with ice. Strain into a cocktail glass and sprinkle ground coriander on top.



opposed to more recent times, where names like the Paper Plane and Last Word are indicative of little else than the creator's right to name them so. Much like, Bunner points out, parents name their children and writers their books and poems.

He cites this pressure as a romantic one—"one that values the distinctive genius of the cocktail maker." But he remarks that as a 19th-century movement, Romanticism was actually preceded by a much longer-lived notion that imitation—either of nature or other works of art—was the foundation of artistic creativity. "And it is in this classical, imitative approach to creativity that we regard ourselves as operating behind the bar at alo."

Case in point, "Tilting at Windmills." "This uses the traditional gin sour template, but mimics the flavour profile of Belgian wheat beer by using malty genever, bitter orange peel syrup, and floating ground coriander. It's a house drink, but one that is patterned on something else." Creative indeed; imitation, yes—but perhaps there is a sliver of Romanticism in the process, to which Bunner prefers to turn a blind eye. Not so much in the glass as in the originality of his spin on it.

MICHELIN 'ON THE ROAD'

ON OCTOBER 17TH, Michelin-starred Chef Daniel Burns from Brooklyn's Luksus joined Chef Patrick Kriss in the kitchen for a special dinner as part of the Michelin on the Road series. The evening started with a cocktail reception with passed canapés before guests enjoyed a 10-course tasting menu complete with wine and beer pairings.

"Having the privilege of hosting Daniel Burns at alo only enhanced the honour that accommodated being the first restaurant in the world to host Michelin on the Road," said Amanda Bradley. "Most of our team comprises individuals from Toronto and the surrounding area; many of us grew up alongside Toronto's dining scene and have watched and contributed to its development. To be a part of such a prestigious event and to bring the words 'Toronto' and 'Michelin' together in the same sentence is a proud moment for all of us at alo."

Chef Patrick Kriss concurs: "Welcoming Daniel Burns and his culinary perspective to alo was inspiring to the whole team. The collaborative nature of the event, along with the ability to experience the perspective of another talented chef, made for a truly memorable and successful night!"



CHEF DANIEL BURNS ON MICHELIN, CANADA, & COLLABORATIVE INSPIRATION

Chef Daniel Burns was born in Nova Scotia and graduated with a double degree in philosophy and mathematics only to realise his true love of cooking. He took a leap of faith and got an internship at Heston Blumenthal's restaurant The Fat Duck in England. After that, he moved on to a few other notables: St. John in London, Noma in Copenhagen, and Momofuku in New York. Today, he is the chef-owner of Luksus, a jewel box of a tasting-menu restaurant that has a decidedly Scandinavian flair and can be found inside the beer bar Tørst.

Being part of the very first Michelin on the Road event was an incredible honour. This was a great initiative and will lead to many new and exciting collaborations. It is always a pleasure to bring the philosophy of your restaurant to other cities, and to be able to do it at a Michelin-curated event made it even that more special. Additionally, to be able to return to Canada and cook is always something to cherish!

At this event, we focused on cooking seasonally and locally. I wanted to cook dishes that show the creativity that we display at Luksus. My personal favourite pairing of the evening was the wintergreen ice, chocolate crumble, mushroom meringue, and blackcurrant licorice dessert with the Schneider 'Aventinus Tap 6'. It works really well, because the beer brings out the maltiness in the dish without being sweet.

I thoroughly enjoyed working with the amazing team at alo. Everyone was so friendly, accommodating, and professional. This was truly one of the best collaborative dinners I have ever been a part of!



AROUND TOWN

For everyone on the team, working at alo is about being part of a community. Here we ask the chefs and managers at alo:

What do you do and where do you go when you leave work?



Nick Bentley: Canis Restaurant
“The food is great, and the service is welcoming and unpretentious.”

Matthew Betsch: Bar Raval
“Always busy with a great vibe.”

Kevin Jeung: Spin
“I go there to relax. Always full of industry folk—it’s fun to catch up!”

Zack Barnes: Cold Tea
“A great industry hang.”

Arthur Lui: Congee Wong
“A family staple with great food and familiar faces!”

Quentin Meloff: Pilot Coffee Roasters
“Check out the hidden bar, where they serve a very creative coffee-tasting menu.”

Toni Weber: Pretty Ugly
“Impeccable cocktails in a space that was designed with an eye for details.”

Kevin Zalana: Scarborough Bluffs
“Best place to get away and enjoy an awesome burger at Johnny’s Burgers.”

William Petker: Toronto Island
“With a choice of two beaches, just bring a cooler filled with bottles of rosé.”

Phil Provart: Scarborough Bluffs
“Best place to feel like you are out of the city.”

Tracy Wilson: Peoples Eatery
“Great for late-night food and drinks.”

Tamara Baptiste: Bar Fancy
“They have the best fried chicken ever!!! The bartenders are the sweetest, and the overall atmosphere is really chill.”

Christopher Sealy: Kensington Market
“The perfect place to stroll, shop, eat, and share with my children; memories of being there as a child with my father.”

Vanessa Peprah-Addo: Toronto Raptors Basketball Games at the Air Canada Centre
“It’s always a huge thrill to catch a game there!”

Tomasz Juzyszyn: Don Valley
“I love to ride my mountain bike through their endless maze of single-track dirt trails. An oasis of pure nature right in the middle of downtown Toronto!”

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