

MADE In...

La Girafe Bleue

CUSTOM MADE UNDERGARMENTS USING UPCYCLED MATERIALS

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

BONAVENTURE: - Joële Yoja's story regarding her moment of inspiration is pretty amusing. "I hated his underwear," she says of her boyfriend. "He had ratty old underwear, some pairs that dated back to his high school years so I decided to try my hand at making him some new pairs for Christmas."

She goes on to explain that she fashioned a pattern from a pair of his underwear that she did like and that fit him well, and repurposed the fabric from some old t-shirts.

The result? "It was a total disaster," says Joële. "They were too small, so then I modified them a bit. After that, I took a pair of my own underwear and I fashioned a pattern for those."

Joële explains that she has always been the artistic type and had tried her hand at papier mâché mobiles, jewelry and several other things, but as she explains, she had never really settled on one type of creation. With the undergarments however, she felt a different kind of commitment.

or even the stitch rate was all new to her. She has chosen to tackle this newest creative challenge head on, as she explains, "to see where it will take me."

When asked "why underwear," her answer is well thought out and is tied to her personal values. "There is so much good clothing that gets thrown away. There is so much that even when I asked thrift stores to set aside some inventory for me, they simply didn't have enough space."

While Joële Yoja uses eco-friendly, recycled, or repurposed fabric – a more accurate term for giving new life to an old item – she does incorporate new materials as well. "All of the elastic is new, some of the knits as well as the cotton used on the gusset linings are made from new fabric," says Yoja.

She also points out that this was a venture she could tackle on her own without much investment. To date, Joële has financed her entire operation without the support of outside help or loans.

Using repurposed fabric cuts her costs and smaller pieces of clothing meant that everything would be easier to transport and to ship. She still makes regular trips to thrift shops seeking out t-



Photos: W. Dawson

La Girafe Bleue owner and designer Joële Yoja displays some of her creations.



She began doing research into fabric types and sewed different models. When she ran into difficulty she would make modifications and try different approaches. Despite having started sewing at the age of seven, becoming familiar with the different materials she was using in her products as well as determining what type of needle to use

shirts made of the material that she prefers – bright colours and patterns made up of a cotton and lycra mix, or, better yet, a jersey knit. She explains that these fabrics stand up to hundreds of trips through the washer and dryer.

La Girafe Bleue was almost an immediate success. Only a few weeks after launching her website and so-

cial media profiles, Joële was contacted by Radio-Canada for a report. It was then, she says, that she realized she really had something interesting to offer.

Having officially launched her products in January of 2015, Yoja has shipped her products all over the world: the U.S., Singapore, Norway, France and Australia as well as Quebec and the rest of Canada. Joële values her clients tremendously and says that they have provided her with invaluable feedback that has helped her improve her products.

Despite maintaining a job and caring for two young daughters, Joële is the only employee in her company and yet still finds time to make as many as 60 pairs of underwear per week. In addition to a variety of styles of underwear, La Girafe Bleue also offers three different styles of bras and bralettes as well as nursing bras. She also makes lingerie sets and sum-

mer cotton hats. All of the colourful and unique items are of her own design and all are made from recycled fabrics.

Joële Yoja has plans for an expansion project that would include a boutique where made-to-measure underwear could be provided within hours of a fitting. For the time being, she is simply too busy to commit to preparing a business plan and securing the necessary partners.

Joële is very active on social media and attributes her quick success to the use of the mediums. "As far as I am concerned, the sooner entrepreneurs understand the importance of social media the better."

La Girafe Bleue's products range in price from \$20 to \$90 and more. Joële can create customized orders or you can purchase products from her inventory through her

website, her Etsy Store or her facebook page. If you would like to meet this energetic and dynamic young woman in person, you will be able to find her at the *Etsy Fait au Québec* event to be held on September 24 and 25 in Maria where she will be happy to greet you in English or in French!

For more information you can consult her website at lagirafebleue.ca, www.etsy.com (search for lagirafebleue) or search for La Girafe Bleue on facebook.

**Local &
LOVING
IT!**

MADE In...

Ferme du Ruisseau Vert BLENDED TEAS AND BREWERS' HOPS

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

MARIA - Sarah Auger and Sébastien Cyr are coming off a pretty busy week having just completed their seasonal harvest as well as having organized their own event called *Festi'Récolte* which was held in conjunction with Québec's annual Journée portes ouvertes de l'UPA.

The Ferme du Ruisseau Vert was the host of the open house event that took place on September 11, 2016. Those that came by to visit that day were treated to information sessions regarding the "how-to" of hop harvesting as well as a mini farmers' market, lessons in beer brewing, samplings of Gaspesian food products and more.

Nestled on a small parcel of magnificent ancestral lands belonging to the Cyr family in Maria, the Ferme du Ruisseau Vert's hop farm is easily spotted from the road. Hops are harvested from beautifully coloured green perennial vines that grow high along trellises or poles that reach for the sky. Some varieties grow as high as 25 feet. The delicate and pinecone-like flower that the vines produce are the fruit of the vine.

Agriculture, particularly specialized agriculture such as hop production, was completely unknown territory for both Auger and Cyr who are biologists by trade. The decision to grow hops was one

made by Sébastien prior to the couple's settling in the region in 2010. Cyr's interest in hops was based on his own experience brewing small batches of craft, or homemade, beer.

This year, the Ferme du Ruisseau Vert harvested one tonne of fresh hops from 1600 vines on ¾ of a hectare of land, their most fruitful harvest to date and over four times what they produced last year. The yield surpassed their expectations and as Sarah Auger states, the improvement in their plants' production could be attributable to a couple of factors.

"It could be the addition of a new irrigation system or because we removed some vines that were suffering problems with mildew. Their removal had a positive effect on the production of the neighbouring

beer making. The hops requirements in a beer recipe are four times higher when using fresh versus dried hops. Le Naufrageur incorporates the products from Ferme du Ruisseau Vert into a series of harvest beers named after the farms location, Le P'tit Rang and Le P'tit Rang Est. This year's surprise increase in yield, however, has allowed Le Naufrageur to incorporate fresh hops into some of their other brews as well.

The remaining twenty-five percent of the hops produced on the farm are reserved for small batches of hops for home brewers as well as Sarah's line of herbal teas, bath salts and handmade soaps. Hops, in addition to their valuable contribution to beer, are considered a medicinal plant and contain



Ferme du Ruisseau Vert offers a variety of herbal teas, bath salts and soaps derived from hops.

vines," she explains.

Seventy-five percent of the farm's production gets shipped 15 minutes up the road to Le Naufrageur microbrewery based in Carleton. Fresh hops are something of a luxury in

properties that can help treat anxiety, restlessness and insomnia. Sarah also makes custom handsewn pillows from upcycled materials that contain buckwheat and hops, which is a popular folk remedy for sleeplessness.

Sarah Auger researched the many medicinal properties of hops and began blending teas using a variety of natural products. Today, from a wild and beautiful flower garden in her front yard, Sarah harvests the other organic elements that she incorporates into her herbal teas such as flowers or berries. If she does not grow the ingredients herself, she sources them from other local organic growers. Lavender is from a neighbouring producer in Maria.

All of Sarah Auger's prod-



Photos: W. Dawson

While most hops harvesting is done manually, the farm recently integrated a more mechanical approach. Here Sebastien Cyr feeds the vines into a machine that separates the hops flowers from the vine.

ucts are available in her store front at the farm during the spring and summer season and during the fall and winter months she participates in different markets in the region such as La Virée held in Carleton over Thanksgiving weekend or the Salon de Noël held in Maria, which takes place in November.

As is the case with many young entrepreneurs, La Ferme du Ruisseau Vert is active on social media. The farm's products, including hops for craft beer brewing, can be purchased online from their website or through Sarah's Etsy store. Their products range in price from \$10 to \$120 and include great gift ideas like a 'Tea Club' where subscriptions can be purchased for 3, 6 or 12 month deliveries. Recipients receive a new blended herbal tea every month (enough for about 15 cups of tea) as well as an additional small gift such as a sampling of bath salts or soaps.

Sarah Auger says she likes the idea of the 'Tea Club' "With everything being so virtual now, we have forgotten how nice it is to receive mail or packages. It is a reminder every month that someone is thinking of you or even an opportunity to offer a little gift to yourself, which is

just as important."

Sarah Auger and Sebastien Cyr will remain busy throughout the winter. They are currently working towards their organic certification, and with the expectation of tripling their harvest over the next three years, they continue to work towards finding new distribution points for their products. She now works full time for Le Ferme du Ruisseau Vert, while he divides his time between the farm and another construction business that he owns. They are also the parents of two young children.

For now, the tall trellises which only a few days ago were heavy with vines and hops, sit empty against the backdrop of Maria's mountains at La Ferme du Ruisseau Vert.

For more information about



Sarah Auger shows a hops vine ready for harvest.



the farm, for seasonal tours, or to order any of their products, you can visit their bilingual website at www.fermeduruisseauvert.com, www.etsy.com (search for fermeruisseauvert) or search for Ferme du Ruisseau Vert on facebook.

MADE In...

Varech Phare Est HAND HARVESTED WILD SEAWEED

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

CAP-AU-RENARD: - Should you find yourself travelling the North Gaspé coastline in Cap-au-Renard this fall, keep an eye out for Stéphane Albert. He will be hard to miss. He will be the guy in the bright red wool hat, waist deep in the fall tides.

Stéphane Albert was already interested and proficient in wild foraging before he discovered seaweed. Interested in a variety of wild food, he considered the possibility of harvesting seaweed when he noticed the vast amounts available while fishing.

A native of Moncton, New Brunswick, Stéphane began to study seaweed, its properties and the methods used for harvesting. He visited a number of harvesters including some in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and was apprenticed under Larch Hanson, a seaweed harvester from Maine who has been practicing his craft for over 40 years.

Stéphane Albert had worked on a number of organic farms, including the area of La Martre, where he had made friends and fallen in love with the land. Four years ago, at the age of 24, he felt the calling of the salt water and he and his girlfriend, Marie-Anne Dubé, left Montreal and settled in a part of La Martre, Cap-au-Renard, where together they started Varech Phare Est.

Stéphane harvests seaweed

from early May until mid to late October. His busiest season is from May to the end of June. He explains, "That is when the seaweed that I harvest the most is at its prime. Seaweed starts to really grow right before the leaves come out on the trees."

Because the crop is harvested by hand, he works at low tide, "I need the bigger tides that come with the full moon or the new moon. Those tides give me access to types of seaweed that are usually totally submerged in water."

Dressed in a wetsuit and his trademark red hat and using a serrated knife, Stéphane cuts seaweed from its holdfast, the anchor of the plant, along its stipe, the "stem" of the seaweed. He collects the seaweed in a floating basket that he fashioned himself from an inner tube that he keeps tied to his belt.

He explains that the seaweed plants are cut selectively, using the same philosophy that is used in silviculture practices. He explains that the canopy of the plants should be maintained. Put into terms that are better understood for most, "you want to make sure that the foliage remains lush, that you don't cut so much that you can see the bottom of the ocean. Basically, you avoid clear cutting. If you do so, you are not only ruining the seaweed, but you are ruining the biodiversity of the ocean's environment."

Seaweed growth slows down a bit in July, so Stéphane has a bit of a break, and then come August, harvesting is back in full swing. In the final

months of his harvest, Stéphane does not go out quite as often. "The fall is when I harvest Atlantic nori and it is a small plant so the process is very labour intensive."

Once Stéphane Albert has completed his harvest, he transfers the seaweed into mesh bags and transports the harvest to a dryer that he made. It measures 12 by 24 feet. This part, he explains, is far more time consuming than the harvest.

"For every hour's worth of harvest, there are two hours needed for drying." Each piece of seaweed is hung by hand and inspected for residual matter such as shells or starfish or any other anomaly.

The dried seaweed is double bagged and is stored in large boxes until it is ready for individualized packaging. He explains that the shelf life of his products is very long, "Any food that can be dried will keep, but if you add salt to it, it can keep for a really, really long time." For every 10 kg of fresh seaweed, 1 kg of dried product is produced.

Seaweed is not a common food, but Stéphane Albert knows who his clients are. "There are basically three types of clients. A lot of people that buy seaweed are curious. They buy a bag to try it out and they can end up adopting it as a food that they use. Then there are those that buy for health reasons – seaweed is very high in vitamins and minerals, antioxidants and iodine. Then there are the 'foodies,' those that follow the latest food trends."

How to use seaweed is a little challenging, Stéphane explains. "You have to break it down for every type of seaweed. Each type is like a different kind of vegetable so you use them in different ways. They have their own textures, their own personalities, their own aromas."

The packaging of Varech Phare Est's products provides recipes and preparation ideas on the back. "An easy way to



Photos: Marie-Annie Dubé

Wearing his trademark red wool hat, Stéphane Albert can be seen harvesting along the coastline from May through October.

start trying seaweed is to include it in any dishes that use a lot of liquid like soups or stews. The powdered seaweed is a great way to season seafood dishes. Seaweed also goes really well with tomatoes or used in tomato sauce. One of our favorite ways to use it is in an Asian styled vinaigrette that uses Atlantic Wakame. We rehydrate it and chop it up

with tamari, maple syrup, vinegar and a bit of hot sauce

and some sesame oil. It really highlights the bright colours in food so it's great if you use it with carrots or raspberries. We also use it in a creamy dressing using yogurt - it goes great with cucumbers."

He will likely hire someone to help him with next year's harvest but expanding the sale of his product is not a personal priority right now. At 28, Stéphane Albert is still in growth mode, but teaching people about the virtues of seaweed is what really interests him.

"I would like to educate people about seaweed, do a hands-on seaweed tour, talk about the health benefits, and raise awareness about the importance of seaweed in the biodiversity of the ocean. The

anthropological side of seaweed is really interesting – the history. But the biggest part would be the cooking aspect, how to use it, how to cook with it."

The products of Varech Phare Est are available in 36 different boutiques including L'Integrale in New Richmond and Maison Pur Thé in Pabos. They also sell their products at a variety of markets throughout the summer and participate in the Expo Manger Santé shows that takes place in both Quebec City and Montreal.

"That is where we make about 25% of our annual sales, so those are big events for us." Products start at about \$8.50 and go up to about \$35 for 500 grams. Stéphane Albert and Marie-Anne Dubé eat about 2.5 kgs of dried seaweed per year, so as he explains, "Even though the price seems a bit high, you could eat seaweed every day of the year and it would cost you only about \$200 for a highly nutritious vegetable."

You can meet Stéphane Albert and Marie-Anne Dubé in person at the public market at the *Festival La Virée* held during Thanksgiving weekend in Carleton-sur-Mer. He should be pretty easy to spot. He will be the guy in the bright red wool hat.

For more information about the products available from Varech Phare Est or to order, you can visit varechphareest.com or search for Varech Phare Est on facebook.



The volume of the seaweed greatly diminishes after it begins to dry. For every 10 kg of fresh seaweed, 1 kg of dry seaweed is produced.

MADE In...

Frëtt Design ORIGINAL FASHIONS FOR WOMEN AND MEN

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

CAPLAN: - In the summer of 2005, one year before Michelle Secours settled in Caplan, she found herself walking on the beach right in front of where her workshop and boutique are currently located.

"I saw the building which had nothing in it at the time and I thought to myself that it would be a great location for a workshop. A year later, I found myself setting up shop there, so life is pretty well planned," she says.

Michelle Secours had enjoyed a few visits to the region, in particular to the town of Caplan and had fallen in love with the area. On a whim, she decided to relocate to the Gaspésie. "I loved the nature side of the lifestyle here. I couldn't believe that you could drink water right from a river. I didn't even think that existed anymore. And the people; the people were a real draw to the region. They are all so kind."

She remains inspired by the nature of her surroundings in her craft. As she ex-



Photo: Courtesy of Michelle Secours

Michelle Secours fell in love with Caplan, where she settled in 2006.

plains the natural transitions in the hues of the landscape, the skies and the water contribute to her inspiration when designing the styles, movement and colours of her clothes. There are, in the design of clothing, she says "thousands of possibilities."

The name of her company, FRÉTT, is based on the word used in Quebec slang to refer to very, very cold temperatures. At the beginning of her career in the late 90s, Michelle would only produce one fall and winter line annu-

ally. She liked to incorporate bright colours and fur into wool fabrics that she wove herself using merino and alpaca threads.

FRÉTT Design pieces are known for being convertible. Many of the designs can be worn in a variety of different ways, such as a blouse or shawl, or even as different pieces altogether – where a top can convert to a skirt!

Today Michelle Secours designs clothing for all four seasons and has added organic linens and cottons to her designs. In 2007, she decided to try her hand at some simple styles for men and in 2015, FRÉTT Design also incorporated a plus-size line for women.

Michelle Secours' business savvy and the popularity of her creations have allowed her business to expand significantly since 2006. FRÉTT Design currently employs over 10 people on a full-time basis. In addition to her boutique/workshop located in Caplan, there is a second FRÉTT Design boutique located in Montreal and Michelle's products are sold in 18 other clothing boutiques throughout the province.

The best way to discover FRÉTT Design's product line is with a personal visit to the store. Michelle is often on hand and will be happy to help you discover the right piece of clothing for you or

can help you pick out the perfect gift. There is a vast price range in the products available at FRÉTT Design where items can be purchased for as little as \$40 or for several hundred dollars.

FRÉTT Design is very active on social media and regularly updates its Facebook page and website page with inviting sales and promotions for those that chose to make their purchases online. For more information, visit www.frettdesign.ca or search for FRÉTT Design on facebook.

Launch of AMERIQ-MAQ

On October 2, at Duthie Point in New Richmond, Michelle Secours and her FRÉTT Design team



Photo: W. Dawson

Ameriq-Maq is a line of clothing inspired by indigenous culture. Jeannette Martin models one of the new designs.

launched their autumn-winter line for 2016/2017. The series called Ameriq-Maq was inspired by the Gaspé Peninsula's indigenous communities and provided Michelle with an opportunity to marry culture and fabrics.

The collection was unveiled during a fashion show that was organized with the help of the region's Mi'gmaq communities. The fashion show featured a presentation of the new designs peppered with traditional songs and

dances performed by members of both Gesgapegiag and Listiguj.

As Michelle stated to the approximate 300 people in attendance, "the influence of the Mi'gmaq culture in this collection is sometimes subtle, sometimes symbolic, sometimes altered by my own vision, my own education but always with respect and without pretension."

Fall and winter will be brightened by the colour combinations used in FRÉTT Design's latest collection – once again inspired by her surroundings Michelle has included tones inspired by the soil and clay, bright gemstone blues and greens as well as influences of the sky and the snow.

Those in attendance were excited by what they saw. Madeline Germain, from Listiguj, who came to watch her niece, Mary Joe Issac, one of the show's models, said "I loved it. I really loved it. I wasn't expecting that. I wasn't expecting so much Native influence." "It was amazing," added Dora Martin, also from Listiguj.

Asked how she was feeling after the show, Michelle Secours offered her thoughts, "I think it was good. I am really happy with the turnout. I am hoping that people were able to understand another level of clothing design, that they can appreciate the creative side, the inspiration side."

Those interested in discovering this creative and locally inspired line of clothing will be able to find almost all items on display at the show at the FRÉTT Design boutique in Caplan.



Photo: W. Dawson

FRÉTT Design launched their new Fall / Winter line at Duthie Point on October 2.



MADE In...

Classy Glass Studios STAINED GLASS, BEACH GLASS AND FUSED GLASS CREATIONS

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

DOUGLASTOWN: - Tucked away a little distance off of Trachy Street right across from Douglastown's Community Center is where you will find Classy Glass Studios, Nancy Wright-Clapson's glass studio and boutique.

From a distance the house looks as if it is made from gingerbread and when the door is opened by the small and dynamic ball of energy that is Nancy Wright-Clapson, you are immediately swept up by her vitality and her charm.

Nancy Wright-Clapson's workshop and boutique are located in a house that has been in her family for 6 generations and at its present location since 1882.

Nancy's trade quite literally fell into her lap when in 2002, while staying with her companion in Iowa and sifting through the mail in her lap, she came upon a flyer for adult education courses in stained glass. An artist of many mediums throughout her life, she had always been interested in

the idea of working with stained glass but had not been able to find courses in the region that were offered in English. The courses offered while visiting the USA gave her the opportunity to explore her interest and she has been working with that medium full time ever since. Six teachers later, Nancy says that she is still learning, although she is now a teacher in the art of glass herself.

The conversation quickly turns to beach glass. As is the case with most Gaspésians, Nancy is a beachcomber of the beach glass variety. She explains that good beach glass must be "ripe", and that if she finds a piece that isn't quite up to snuff, she is quick to toss it back into the waters to let Mother Nature work her magic. She even feeds "the gods" at the end of the tourist season by smashing up bottles and throwing the pieces to the sea, in hopes of having them returned to her later on, worn with the toss of the saltwater waves against the sand and the rocks of the shoreline.

Her beach glass creations are only about a third of what she does. Most of her lamps and panels are created in the traditional way. The difference

when only using beach glass is the freedom of creating free-style, with no particular design in mind. Often times she will incorporate both beach and stained glass together within one piece with decorative soldering for added texture. She collects all the beach glass pieces herself and claims that there are only five beaches that she visits, although in the interview, she sheepishly refused to name her preferred spot.

Each glass piece that Nancy works with must be foiled before it is soldered to another piece. This is a process that requires each piece be wrapped in a metal ribbon, creating a framework for the pieces to be soldered together. She explains that she likes to work with texture, the more the better, and so in addition to stained glass, broken plates, beach glass and shells, she also makes her own fused beads in the kiln.

To make a small lamp shade, Nancy Wright-Clapson says she needs about three days, but that does not take into account the many hours put into collecting the glass or foiling each piece.

In 2006, Nancy Wright-Clapson decided to share her passion and began offering



Nancy Wright-Clapson shows off some of her sea glass collection.

courses in glass work. She prefers working with smaller groups, of four or six students, and courses are usually offered from May until August. Those that think they might be interested can take a three-hour introductory course or can purchase a block of 18 hours for more intensive training. The cost of taking the introductory course includes all materials required for the course. For the 18-hour block, students are required to purchase their own tools and materials.

The boutique at Classy Glass Studios is filled with a variety of beautiful items, however, lamps and wild and delightful glass kaleidoscopes are her "big thing" as she puts it. Each lamp has its own character and the hand-held kaleidoscopes, marble scopes and wand scopes are so magical that they will manage to bring out the kid in everyone. They are also her favorite type of creation "I am hopelessly hooked," she says.

For now, Classy Glass Studios is wrapping up the 2016 summer season and soon Nancy Wright-Clapson will be closing up both her house and her boutique and will be head-

ing to Iowa where she spends the winter months with her companion. This is when she works on creations for next year's sale as well as on commission pieces. She is also invited to compose tutorials for industry magazines on some of her creations and methods.

At Classy Glass Studios you can find pieces that sell for as little as \$7 or spend as much as several hundred dollars on a customized piece. Other than at her boutique, Nancy Wright-Clapson's creations can be found at the *Centre culturel in l'Anse au Griffon* or at *le Café des Couleurs in Barachois*. You can also find more information about Nancy and her creations or enquire about her courses by contacting her through her personal facebook page.

Stepping away from the house and boutique, what looked like gingerbread from a distance is now defined as walls bearing a collection of intricately cut and designed shingles, filled with hidden symbols and shapes that are only limited by the whimsy of their designer. "Let me show you my workshop!", she says. Clearly Nancy Wright-Clapson is not quite done creating yet!



Photos: W. Dawson

Some of the examples of Nancy's work at her Classy Glass Boutique in Douglastown.

MADE In...

Tipsy Canoe Designs

Original and custom
painted canoe paddles

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

CASCAPEDIA-ST. JULES - "I've been fishing with my dad for as long as I can remember, but every time I step in the canoe, I almost fall on my face. Every canoe I step into is a tipsy canoe," and so was born the inspiration for Caitlin Barter's company name.

Raised in Cascapedia, Caitlin studied at Bishop's University to become a teacher. She recently returned to the region after spending a year teaching in a Cree community in Northern Quebec. When she is not creating her custom painted paddles, she teaches English language arts and art at New Richmond High School.

Caitlin Barter has been painting since the age of 12. As an art teacher, she encourages her students to use different mediums and in her own venture to explore alternative mediums, she decided to paint a canoe paddle. Describing herself as "horribly nostalgic", Caitlin chose to paint a paddle that had once belonged to her grandfather.

Her father, Joe Barter, sanded down and stained the old paddle and Caitlin added her custom geometrical and colourful design. "I thought it was a really cool way to keep a little memento, a little piece of him, but to vamp it up in a striking and different way. For me, it was a really nice balance of old and new, traditional and modern," she explains.

Soon, Caitlin Barter found herself painting some paddles for her friends when her father showed off the concept to the manager of Camp Brulé, where both Caitlin's father and mother, Sue, work. The manager commissioned Caitlin to do some pieces to help commemorate the record catches at the Camp replacing the long standing tradition of using a wooden salmon cut-out to do the same. Shortly thereafter, Caitlin set up shop and Tipsy Canoe Designs was officially born.

When asked about what inspires her designs, Caitlin's answer is testament to her Gaspesian upbringing. "I like to say that my inspiration for anything I create is the forest and waves. I think it all comes back to growing up here on the coast with all the strong images of the mountains, forests,



Tipsy Canoe Designs paddles are as functional as they are beautiful and can make a great original gift for the outdoors man or woman.

rivers, and the bay. I want my paddles to resonate with the imagery of the coast."

While Caitlin Barter's creations are truly beautiful and worthy of a spot on the wall, they are also entirely practical. Caitlin says, "I really like the idea of creating something that's versatile - a product that looks kick-ass on the wall, but something you can also bring along with you in the canoe."

Caitlin's father Joe is an active participant in Caitlin's creative process. As she does not yet have an official paddle supplier, Caitlin relies on her father to supply, sand and stain the paddle in preparation for application of the paint design. Caitlin then selects a colour scheme and then she "sees where it takes me.". Once the design is taped off, she will apply four or five coats of paint and after touching it up, will set the painted design with several coats of varnish. Each paddle requires 8 to 10 hours of work to complete.

Tipsy Canoe Designs bright and playful paddles are for everyone but will likely appeal to a younger and less conventional crowd. Having grown

up in a sport fishing environment, Caitlin Barter observes "a lot of people associate canoeing and fishing with your stereotypical old guy, but these paddles are showing people that it's for the young and the young at heart. There's a new wave of young people fishing and spending time in the outdoors, and I think these paddles are representative of that."

To date, Caitlin has produced a dozen custom paddles and currently has four more in production. She looks forward to seeing her business grow with continued custom orders and is hoping to add commercial points of sale in the near future.

Tipsy Canoe Designs currently offers paddles in the \$150 to \$200 range. To see examples of Caitlin Barter's work or to reach her to place an order for your own custom designed paddle, visit her Etsy store or her Instagram page.

For more information: www.etsy.com (search for tipsycanoedesigns) Instagram (tipsycanoedesigns)



"Every canoe is a tipsy canoe." claims Caitlin Barter, hence the name of her company.

MADE In...

Carleton-sur-Mer Heimä – Organic artisanal cosmetics and scents

Wendy Dawson

CARLETON - Sarah Lacroix and Karine Savard have been dear friends for fifteen years and have shared a variety of interests. Both in their mid-thirties, the women describe themselves as “hyper-creative” and last November decided to embark on a project together that would allow them to use their respective strengths.

Sarah Lacroix, already busy juggling a variety of jobs in accounting, waitressing and photography, had for a time been exploring aromatherapy and medicinal plants but was never quite sure what to do with the harvest from her annual garden. It is then that Karine and Sarah decided to try their hand at the creation of solid perfumes.

Using the internet, they were able to access a variety of processes and recipes that helped them put all of those garden flowers and herbs to good use. They extracted essential oils from the harvest and were able to produce their first solid perfumes. A quick trial launch of their perfumes on social media created a flurry

of interest which motivated them further.

As a person suffering from eczema, Sarah Lacroix understood that there would indeed be an interest in additional cosmetic products fabricated using an organic approach and so they continued their research. Through trial and error (and with the participation of Sarah’s boyfriend, Mathieu Piché Larocque) Heimä has become a product line that also offers lip balms, soaps, hair oils and beard oils for men.

While the essential oils that are sourced for Heimä’s products come from Sarah’s garden and the surrounding forest which provides a variety of resins, the majority of the products used as a “base” for the product line, such as coco butter, shea butter and argan oil, are sourced from Coop Coco in Montreal. That company specializes in supplies for hand-made and organic cosmetics.

The product line carries a variety of mystical names born of Sarah and Karine’s mutual love of mythology and theological creatures – with a little word play included. Their Behemoth soap uses bergamot oil

while their Leviathan soap (custom made for the Carleton boutique Le Bar Rayé) has the design of a wave. There is also Windego, a soap scented with forest resins and named for an Algonquin legend forest spirit. “We are always giving a little subtle wink to a mythological legend,” says Sarah.

The packaging of the Heimä products is out of the ordinary and is another element born of a mutual passion of the two friends. While the design concepts come almost exclusively from Karine Savard, who is an assistant director of visual presentation for Joe Fresh, they are inspired by the women’s mutual love of Iceland and all things Icelandic.

Sarah Lacroix has travelled there on two occasions and Karine Savard for her part has been there three times, but they were both inspired by the minimalism and avant-garde “feel” of design in that country as well as the rawness and colours of the surrounding landscape. In fact, the company name, Heimä, means “home” in Icelandic.

With only two sales points in Carleton-sur-Mer and their Etsy store, Sarah and Karine were caught a little off guard by their success this past summer and found that their products were flying off the shelves more quickly than they could turn them out.

As Sarah Lacroix explains, soaps can take as much as six weeks to cure, so it is easy to run short on those products. They have, however, spent the last several months preparing for the Christmas season and will be launching some new products over the coming weeks.

Karine Savard and Sarah Lacroix intend to continue to develop additional cosmetic products that will likely integrate some of Mathieu Piché Larocque’s home grown hops or beeswax from his own hives. They would also like to add a bit of variety to their product line that would include some hand-made scarves and arm warmers that Karine currently makes, a line of stuffed animals, also made by Karine and some of Sarah’s photography.



Photo: Sarah Lacroix

Hair serum brings shine to the hair, tames frizz and repairs split ends.

Their more immediate plans for Heimä include building a workshop and production facility. They have committed to the company but also to growing at a pace that suits them and their already busy lives. For their part, Sarah and her boyfriend Mathieu will be launching an important personal project in 2017 as they welcome their first baby.

Heimä products range in price from \$5 to \$20 and can

be found at Le Bar Rayé in Carleton-sur-Mer or at l’Auberge du Marchand in Maria. Their products can also be found in the Mont St. Joseph gift shop in the summer months or at all times from their Etsy store. People can check in regularly for updates on new products.

For more information: www.etsy.com (search for Heimäromatique), facebook (Heimä).

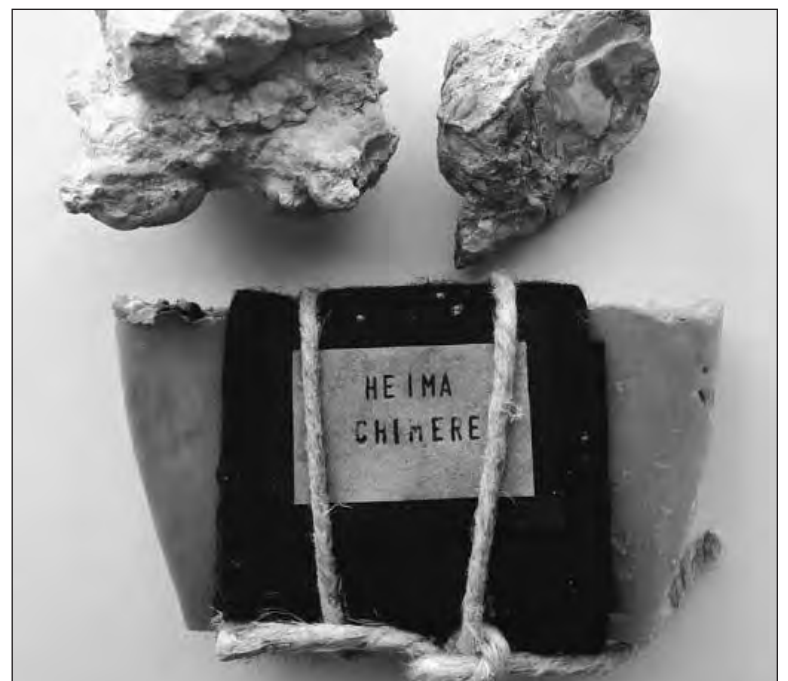


Photo: Sarah Lacroix

Soaps are made using bases of coco butter, shea butter and other organic oils.



Photo: Mila Poirier

Sarah Lacroix and Karine Savard are the creative women behind Heimä cosmetics.

MADE In...

La Ruelle UPCYCLED FURS

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

SAINT-SIMEON - Established in St. Simeon since 2013, Serge Boulanger is only half joking when he says he has almost 100 years of experience as a furrier. His father, who was a furrier before him worked in the industry for 53 years. Serge, who himself has been practicing the art since the age of 20, is moving into his 60th year.

When asked if he sees himself slowing down anytime soon, he quickly points out, "I'm only starting to get good at this, I couldn't possibly stop now," and he smiles.

La Ruelle, a business operated by Serge Boulanger and his spouse Marie-Josée Dugas, is a one of a kind operation. There is no other such business in the entire province and Serge thinks that there is nothing of the sort offered anywhere else in Canada. He aptly points out

On the back of the pelts are a series of markings and measurements that hold the promise of a new design. New design, because Serge does not work with new pelts but rather upcycles the pelts from old fur coats.

"I wanted to work with recycled furs from the very beginning. My father tried to discourage me, telling me that I wouldn't make any money that way, but I loved the challenge of working with old furs. I am certain," he continues, "that there are as many fur coats in Quebec as there are houses. Just think of your own story. Think of your mother, or your grandmother or your aunt."

He pulls out a classic style black lamb's wool coat, "Your grandmother may have had this," he says and then pulls out a brand-new lamb's wool coat intercut with bright red fox fur and shaped in a much more current style, "But you can have this." The two coats are wildly different in design.

Serge Boulanger explains



Photos: W. Dawson

Serge Boulanger.

ishing on the coats, including the lining or adding buttons or clasps so that he can free up some time to work on additional designs.

The clients visiting La Ruelle are welcome to come to his workshop and boutique to see and purchase items that he has on the rack. His productions are not limited to fur coats. Serge also makes hats, mittens, scarves, throws, pillows, teddy bears, muffs. He loves finding new and creative ways to use furs, and as he says, a fur coat is not everyone's cup of tea.

For those that are interested in finding a new use for an old fur, the process is a little different. Furs are brought into La Ruelle and evaluated – for possibility, not for value. Serge likes to meet with his clients to determine what their fashion style is and what the purpose of the fur will be. Is it a coat that will be worn every day? Is it something that will be saved for special occasions? He will offer potential clients examples of his previous work, or draw out a new design to help a client's idea come to life.

From there Serge Boulanger will make a pattern and will cut up the old coat and retrofit with

additional furs when necessary. In addition to the furs that people bring in, Serge receives several donated furs every year. He only occasionally purchases new pelts for inclusion in a design.

Clients can expect to wait several months for some designs. He is only now in the month of October finishing items that he started in early spring. The number will vary based on the type of designs he works on, but he will complete on average 150 coats per year.

If a coat is not exactly what you are looking for, Serge's creative boundaries are wide. He shows off a pillow that was made from one of his client's grandmother's furs. He explains, "She wanted a keepsake and for her the fur coat had always been a part of her grandmother. There is a lot of emotion tied to fur."

His inventory as well as his pieces waiting to be picked up are a testament to his varied clientele. From very muted and conventional coats to wildly elaborate haute couture items, Serge Boulanger clearly has a gift for understanding his clients' tastes.

Every year since it has

opened, La Ruelle has participated in a spring fashion show in Carleton. This is when Serge can really let his creativity fly. In his showroom in preparation for next year's show is a complex, long and streamlined coat made up of hundreds and hundreds of fur patches.

"I don't want to give too much away, but that model will be on stilts." The expected height of the model quickly becomes evident when noting that the staff that will be used by the model for the occasion is over 6 feet high.

While brand new fur coats can set a client back on average anywhere from \$15,000 to \$30,000 (and more), a custom upcycled design by Serge Boulanger will range from \$1,500 to \$? (the possibilities are endless!). Currently, the items in his shop range from \$80 for a pair of mittens to \$2,800 for a shaved mink.

Whether you are shopping for a new fur or not, La Ruelle is most certainly worth a visit. Serge Boulanger and Marie-Josée Dugas are as warm and welcoming as the fur that surrounds them.

For more information:
www.laruelle.ca or
www.facook.com/laruellefourrure.



La Ruelle classic mink and bag.

that despite its importance in our collective history, fur no longer holds the importance that it once did in our society and there are only five true furriers left in the province of Quebec. He fears it will become a lost art and thus, a lost part of our heritage.

Serge Boulanger's workshop table is filled with furs of a variety of colours and tex-

that traditional furriers would make a coat with the participation of at least four or five other individuals including a designer, a pattern maker and a seamstress. Some furriers had people whose sole job was to water pelts. In Serge's case, he handles all aspects of confection, from the first to the final step. Recently, he has hired someone to help him do the fin-

MADE *in...*

Faite Icitte

HANDMADE ITEMS CREATED, CONFECTED AND PRINTED 'ICITTE'

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

PERCÉ: - Véronique Lambert, is a prize winning graphic designer who has practiced her trade since 1996. In 2007, after her return to the region, she began creating, sewing and printing her *Faite Icitte* products. The term *Faite Icitte* is a tribute to the Québécois colloquialism meaning "Made Here".

Her inspiration for the name of her product line was born of her four-year stay in Switzerland. Many with whom she worked and socialized found the differences between Québécois French and Swiss French amusing, and she felt the same. Despite speaking the same language, she felt that at times the conversations she was having required subtitles and she decided then that one day, she would use those lan-

uct line included t-shirts and bags emblazoned with the *Faite Icitte* moto - 'Mon t-shirt est faite icitte,' 'Mon sac est faite icitte,' however before long Véronique Lambert's products also became influenced by local history and culture. Véronique Lambert began to tag her creations with Quebec's official "Je me souviens" motto and developed aprons adorned with a recipe for Quebec's unofficial dish, the poutine. Later, a line for babies entitled "Je suis faite icitte" (I was made here) was also added. This past summer she developed a product line called *L'isle Percée* written in old French which is a series of nautically styled bags whose name was inspired by the historical story of the Percé region. In all, her product line includes a dozen different products and models.

Originally sold exclusively at the two *Macareux* gift boutiques in Percé, the product line proved to be very popular, especially with European tourists



Purple "faite icitte" (made here) set.

Photo: courtesy of Véronique Lambert



Photo: courtesy of Véronique Lambert

Apron with poutine recipe on it.

guage differences in a creative project.

When she decided to start her product line, the importance of locally sourced materials and resources were a priority for her. She found the "Made in China" concept pervasive and it is then that *Faite Icitte* was born.

In the beginning, the prod-

and Quebecers. "French speaking Europeans love the product line - particularly to offer as souvenirs or gifts. Quebecers love the products because they highlight expressions and ideas that belong exclusively to them," says Ms. Lambert.

For the moment, Véronique is dealing with some of the

challenges that have been born of her success. She has received requests to supply stores in Quebec City, Drummondville and Montreal among others. At the outset, *Faite Icitte* products were being produced in small, handcrafted batches, however the demand for her products has forced her to consider a more commercial expansion - a concept which is difficult considering what her original intention was. "I used to use recycled materials that were locally sourced from Grande Rivière, however that company has since closed. Considering my message, I cannot begin to print designs with a commercial printer on a Fruit of the Loom t-shirt made in the U.S.A.," explains Véronique. She is on her way to finalizing a deal with Arseno, a printing group out of Matane that will be able to provide Quebec made t-shirts adorned with Véronique's graphic designs. Other materials such as the aprons and pillow covers will continue to be made by hand in Percé.

Véronique Lambert, who also owns and operates 40 Degrès - Graphiste, publicité et design in Percé, uses her down time to



Photo: courtesy of François Spénard

Nautical bags.

develop new products for her *Faite Icitte* line. She leads a busy life running both businesses and being mother to a young toddler but as she says, "I am so fortunate to be able to live in this region, raise my family here and make a living doing things that I am passionate about."

Faite Icitte products range in price from \$20 to \$50 and can be found at both *Macareux* boutiques in

Percé in the summer months. Over the winter, you can order from both the Facebook page and the website where Véronique will quickly respond to your enquiries and messages. All items ordered are shipped by Canada Post. Don't forget to check-in in the Spring of 2017 to see what else was "*Faite Icitte*" over the winter months.

For more information:
 • www.faitEICITTE.net
 • Facebook (Créations *Faite Icitte*)



MADE In...

Gaspé Fly Co HIGH QUALITY FLIES AND FISHING SUPPLIES

Wendy Dawson

CASCAPEDIA - David Bishop sure knows his flies, and just about every other thing there is to know about fishing. Born in New York City and raised in Connecticut by his American father and his Gaspesian born mother, David Bishop spent every summer of his young life “*au bord de la mer*,” in Maria, the hometown of his mother Monique Cyr.

After university and into his 26th year, Bishop put his energy and interest into the skiing industry. Acting as a tech rep to a series of athletes, teams and events, David felt a need to make a change of geography or simply a change. “The ski circuit,” he explains, “is a very fast paced life.”

While lying in his empty room surrounded by his packed belongings, he saw upon the wall the one thing that remained, a map of the Gaspé. “There was that map and on it my three churches (the Petite Cascapedia, the Grande Cascapedia and the Bonaventure Rivers), and that was that,” is how David explains the inspiration of his relocation back to the Gaspé region, to the summers of his youth.

David learned to tie flies when he was nine or ten years old. “My father thought it would be something that we could do together,” he explains. Sport fishing was a big part of his younger years and



Photos: Gaspé Fly Co

The Gaspé Fly Co manufactures and distributes some of the best quality flies available in Canada.

his summers on the Coast.

Upon his return in 1990, David Bishop quickly went to work setting up a guide company and a bed and breakfast, which was set up by 1991. As he explains, there were already guides working on the rivers but there were no real guiding companies nor was there any standardization or commercial authorization in play to control the rivers and fishing zones.

“I was on the cutting edge of that movement, and that movement,” he explains, “has made the whole industry incredibly valuable.” After the establishment of the initial guiding company, David Bishop started one of the first local outfitters.

As a fishing guide, David Bishop continued to make flies for himself and his

clients, however demand was high so in 2012, he and two of his friends, a father and son team from Blainville, Michel Tremblay and Jean François Tremblay officially launched the Gaspé Fly Co. The goal of the company was to offer well tied, quality flies to a growing number of clients from Quebec, Ontario and the Maritimes.

Fast forward to today and what was once a modest basement operation a few short years ago has boomed into one of the largest fly and fly distribution companies in Canada, offering products in over 140 stores including large well-known chains popular with fishing aficionados like Cabela’s and Bass Pro Shops.

Despite no longer being a small one man shop, Gaspé Fly still offers its own series of flies, however now they are made in Thailand and Cambo-

dia under the supervision and tutelage of David Bishop who works with local manufactur-

“Gaspé Fly is morphing,” explains Bishop. “There is a positive new energy being poured into the sport fishing industry and we will be a part of that.”

Working with a variety of industry partners, Gaspé Fly Co has supported a series of events that are looking to raise awareness about fishing as well as celebrate the sport. Most recently, Gaspé Fly launched and hosted Bar Fest in Carleton this past summer, an event that highlighted the region’s new love affair with sea bass fishing.

“Now is the time to celebrate the new and exciting resurgence of interest in fly fishing, especially among the younger generation and with



David Bishop with his son Dylan Bishop show off a proud catch.

ers to help ensure that Gaspé Fly is still providing one of the highest end products on the market.

In addition to their own product line, Gaspé Fly Co. also carries and distributes a variety of other flies and products from other high end suppliers such as MFC and Shadow Flies. “With this collection of products,” says Mr. Bishop, “we are providing some of the best products and accessories in the world.”

Gaspé Fly Co., having well established itself as an entity in the sport fishing industry is now looking to the next phase of its development and that includes a grand scope that steps well outside the production and distribution of flies.

women. I would like to see Gaspé Fly there as an educator and as a mentor in that future,” states David with an animated tone.

If you are interested in purchasing flies, supplies and apparel from Gaspé Fly Co., you can find their products at Sexton and Sexton in Cascapedia, Rheal Pitre in New Richmond or Depanneur Central in Gaspé. Flies range between \$1.95 and \$5.50.

If you want to know more about Gaspé Fly Co, you can visit their website at gaspely.com or their facebook page.

If you want to strike up a conversation with David Bishop, you can find him at church.



Gaspé Fly also has a line of clothing apparel that features their logo.

MADE In...

Baie des Saveurs ORGANIC AND LOCAL FOOD DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

Wendy Dawson

CAPLAN - Ah the New Year, the time when our minds are filled with resolutions and our roads are paved with good intentions. Let's face it, even though your body is almost entirely made up of turkey, grandma's sweets and 5 o'clock cocktails at this point, all is not lost. Eating well, locally and organically is an easy and attainable New Year's resolution and it is just a few clicks away.

In 1998, part time farmers Luc Potvin and Éric Giguère of Maria's Jardins Viridis were looking for a way to sell the many onions and carrots that they produced over the growing season. It was a laborious and manual affair, and all potential clients had to be reached by telephone every three weeks and confirmed orders would then be picked up by interested clients.

Known at the time as Réseau bio, the initiative grew to include other producers who were seeking a direct sale to their clients over the fall and winter months and soon Baie des Saveurs was born.

Baie des Saveurs is a website driven platform that allows local Gaspesians access to a variety of local Gaspesian foods. Four different producers, Jardins Viridis, Végéterre, La cigale et la fourmi and Le Jardin du village have compiled a variety of vegetables and products to suit every-

one's tastes. From cheeses, red cabbage and squash to prepared foods such as soup, muffins and garlic pesto, there is something to complete your pantry.

The concept is relatively simple. For a one time annual membership fee of \$7 (included in the total of your first order), interested clients visit the easy to navigate website and select the items that they want to pick up from one of six pick-up spots on a bi-weekly basis. Pick up locations are situated in Carleton, Maria, New Richmond, Caplan, Bonaventure and Paspébiac – Caplan and Paspébiac having been added to accommodate the continued expansion of the Baie des Saveurs client base. From the first week of November until the first week of May, those that have registered on the site receive email reminders of order dates as well as reminders of pick-up dates.

During the fall and winter of 2015/2016, there were over 300 members that placed at least one order during the distribution network's operation. The number of members continues to grow steadily - an average of 10% per year.

Étienne Goyer, co-owner of Jardin du Village with his partner Sonia Boissonneault, sold about 15% of their annual production through the network last year but expects that amount to double to 30% this year.

"The client base is ex-



Photo: W. Dawson

Étienne Goyer from Jardin du Village at the public market held in Gaspé during the visit by the Queen Mary in October 2016.

tremely diversified," he explains. "We have all age ranges, young families and the elderly, we have professionals and blue collar workers. However I would guess that over half of our clients are neo-Gaspesians. Part of our reflection as a group is how to get more local Gaspesians as clients."

Some of the items available to consumers are not necessarily found on everyone's grocery list. Dikon radishes, Jerusalem artichokes and Saskatoon berries might not be common to everyone and the suppliers of the Baie des Saveurs network recognize that.

It is, in part, what motivated an event held in Maria this past November by Baie des Saveurs, which allowed those who were interested to come and visit the producers as well as discover the products that are sold through the network. The culmination of the event was a huge communal meal where over 100 participants savoured delicious

and locally grown foods. The popularity of that event means that there might be another on the horizon for next year.

For his part, Étienne Goyer loves the opportunity that being a supplier for the network provides him. "I really like the whole system. That I actually

see and meet the client who eats what I grow has created a very strong feeling for me and also provides me with an important social network. It is a positive experience to meet new people, to learn about their families, that they learn about mine. I am very grateful for that experience."

When asked about the importance of buying locally, Étienne Goyer waxes poetic and political, "There is a really good vibe among our customer base. This is a real

collective movement about a better and more resilient food system. Buying locally is a positive and solidary gesture."

Price points for the products on the Baie des Saveurs website are similar to those of organic and prepared foods at the grocery store. For more information about Baie des Saveurs, how to register and where pick-up points are located, you can visit both their facebook page and their website at baiedessaveurs.com.

If you are not entirely comfortable with the idea of using the website, someone from the group will be happy to assist you in either English or French, "We value our customer base tremendously and we are willing to dedicate some time to helping them get on board," says Étienne.

Baie des Saveurs is a perfect opportunity for your 2017 to include healthy, organic and local foods.



Photo: facebook

Harvesting potatoes.

MADE In...

Le Rucher des Framboisiers ORGANIC HONEY

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

MARIA – It is said that honey is as old as history itself. Rock paintings found in Spain dating back some 8000 years show evidence of beehives and honey being harvested.

John Forest's own history as an apiarist remains just as impressive. 2017 marks his 40th year as a beekeeper. In 1977, John Forest built his house upon his property in Maria where his venture began with three simple hives. There were ten other beekeepers of importance at that time in and around the region, however John Forest and Le Rucher des Framboisiers (The Raspberry Aviary) is the last business standing in the region and he now manages 715 hives annually.

The hives are distributed

his hives can vary from year to year and the variables are many. The bees' survival rate over the winter months as well as the quality and number of crops that the bees collect pollen from will affect the volume of production, however his 715 hives will still generate annually anywhere from 60,000 and 80,000 pounds of honey.

This honey is transformed into as many as 20 different products including a honey wine that is sold exclusively from his farm location, but that he hopes to see on the SAQ shelves soon due to recent changes in alcohol classifications in Quebec.

Thirty to forty percent of Le Rucher des Framboisiers products are sold right here on the Gaspé Peninsula and the rest is sold through a variety of stores in the Montreal region. In addition to the honey and wine, John Forest also harvests about 100 pounds of bee pollen annually. This product is taken orally and



Photos: courtesy of J. Forest

Here John Forest can be seen working with one of his hives.

12 full time employees during the harvest season.

Everything that John Forest knows about bee keeping, he learned on his own. Self-taught over the years, John Forest's knowledge has come from his own research, trial and error as well as sharing and exchanging with other bee keepers all over the world.

He has acquired so much knowledge that he recently authored his own book entitled 'Sauvons les abeilles, L'apiculture au nord du 48e parallèle' (Let's save the bees, Bee keeping North of the 48th parallel), a book that focuses on the preservation of the species.

He explains that there is a resurgent interest in bees in the region. "I think people understand the value of bees now. Especially those that keep fruit trees or have small farms."

John Forest can help accompany those who wish to explore bee keeping as he sells bee hives, frames as well as bees themselves (including a queen of course), products that are available from the beginning of June. First year hives, he explains, can generate as much as 20 or 30 pounds of honey and larger established hives can provide the amateur apiculturist with as much as 100 pounds of honey



John Forest and his employees harvest hives every two weeks during the season for honey, pollen and wax.

per year. The secret, explains John, is the wintering of the hives and the preservation and survival of the bees over the winter months so that the colony and the queen can grow.

Accessibility to the products of Le Rucher des Framboisiers is not a problem as his products can be found on the shelf of almost every local grocer and in every grocery chain around the Gaspé Peninsula. He also operates a store from his home during the winter months where everyone is welcome to come and purchase his products.

During the spring and summer months however, a stop at the site where he built his house forty years ago is worth the visit as the site is now known as Le petit Jardin de l'abeille (the little bee garden) where you can find over 200 types of perennial flowers and 150 fruit and nut trees. You can also visit the store and the extraction room from June 25 to September 10, seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For additional information about John Forest, Le Rucher des Framboisiers or Le petit Jardin de l'abeille you can visit Le petit Jardin de l'abeille website at <http://www.jardindelabeille.com>



Products from Le Rucher des Framboisiers can be found on the shelves of every grocer on the Gaspé Peninsula.

in a variety of different beeyards located between Nouvelle through to Shigawake. Once the hives are set up in fields of wildflowers or in cultivated farmers' fields, they will remain there 12 months of the year. Each hive location is visited 14 times, about twice a week, over the season which runs from June until August.

The volume of honey harvested by John Forest from

considered something of a superfood among its users with a variety of benefits.

Le Rucher also collects anywhere from 600 to 1000 pounds of beeswax per year which Mr. Forest sells for use in cosmetics and he also collects an additional coveted by-product called propolis, or bee glue, which is known for its antibiotic properties. To assist him in his business, Le Rucher des Framboisiers has



MADE In...

Ferme Le Caprivore GOAT MEAT, SAUSAGES, TERRINES AND SOAPS

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

BONAVENTURE: – This is a modern day story about a boy, a girl, a dream and....an ad on Kijiji. The beginnings of Ferme Le Caprivore were in fact a happy accident.

Farm owners Vincent-Olivier Bastien and Éliane Gélinas-Frenette had recently graduated from the Adventure Tourism program at the Gaspé Cegep. The one thing that they were both certain of was that they wanted to work for themselves, to develop a business or a concept that would allow them to remain self-employed. They didn't really have a plan in place or even really an idea, but an ad on Kijiji advertising goats for sale in Caplan changed all of that.

Ferme Natibo, familiar to many Gaspeians and makers

and their product line of cuts of goat meat and seasoned goat meat sausages. Their endeavor was risky considering their limited knowledge, not only of goats, but of agricultural in general. They learned as they went along with the great support of local farmers who were happy to support a young couple launching themselves in the farming industry.

The bulk of their kids still come from the Natibo farm in Caplan and others from the Savonnerie du Village in Escuminac.

Ferme Caprivore receives the male kids from those farms when they are still bottle fed and will raise them until they reach anywhere from 9 to 14 months and are ready for transformation.

The number of male animals born on those farms has a direct effect on the size of the herd at the Ferme Caprivore so they have started breeding and kidding their own goats so that their supply is not entirely reliant on the



Photo: Marie Noelle Bourque

Vincent-Olivier Bastien and Éliane Gélinas-Frenette are the owners and operators of Ferme Caprivore located in Bonaventure, Québec.

the world, including Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean, foodies are only just beginning to consider the epicurean delight as part of a regular diet.

At least that is what the owners of Ferme le Caprivore are betting on and it is what consumer trends are demonstrating. Canada is now one of the top 10 importers of goat meat in the world. Ferme Caprivore's own sales tell the same tale as they regularly sell out of their products before the next batch of goats is ready for abattage (slaughter).

Vincent-Olivier explains that while first time buyers are curious, they become regular buyers before long. "The meat has a mild and pleasant flavor. Many expect the meat to taste like lamb, but it really has a taste of its own."

Ninety percent of their sales are made through local public markets over the spring, summer and autumn months and the rest of their products are sold through their store located at their farm.

In an effort to remain sustainable and use as much of the animal and the by-product as possible, Vincent-Olivier and Éliane also make soaps from recipes borrowed from their respective grandmothers. The



Photo: facebook

Ferme Caprivore offers a variety of meats, sausages, terrines and soaps. They hope to add more items to their product line this year.

ancestral recipes allowed them to develop body soaps, laundry soap and "savon du pays", a traditional soap used in stain removal.

This year, they hope to add goat bacon, terrines and oil to their product line, but their hands will be a little full this winter having welcomed a "kid" of their own this past November, a daughter, that they hope will grow up happily on a family farm.

Vincent-Olivier Bastien and Éliane Gélinas-Frenette

are pleased to receive visitors and groups at the farm to help raise an interest in goat farming and their product line – a perfect day trip for daycares and classroom visits.

Their farm store front is open three days a week from the spring until the autumn, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is always best to call ahead of time in the winter months to ensure that they have inventory on hand. Those interested in learning more about this farm operation or would like to organize a visit can call or visit the Ferme Caprivore on facebook.



Photo: facebook

In addition to goat meat products, Ferme Caprivore sells a variety of soaps made using old family recipes.

of Natibo cheeses, had placed an ad advertising their male kid goats for sale. A few days later, Vincent-Olivier and Éliane were the proud owners of 10 baby goats and around their small herd, they built the framework for their business idea. "We built a business around an opportunity," explains Vincent-Olivier.

That was in the spring of 2014 and by early 2015 they officially launched their farm

production of outside suppliers. They currently have a herd of 80 goats but hope to bring that number up to 150 in 2017 and eventually up to 200.

Goat cheese and goat's milk, along with goat's milk cosmetic products are no stranger to most, however goat meat does not make its way onto many tables in North America. Despite being a staple in many diets around



MADE In...

Ferme La Défriche

GARLIC, GARLIC SALT, GARLIC PESTO AND GARLIC TINCTURE

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

SAINT-GODEFROI: – It is safe to say that Saint-Godefroi has become something of a haven for young couples and families seeking to find an alternative lifestyle, one that encourages the simplicity and self-sufficiency of a different era.

Josée Marsollier and Marc-André Longpré, after having met on a farm in Montreal and after doing some travelling, decided to settle in Saint-Godefroi, an area with which they had become familiar because of other friends that had established themselves there. “I am pretty sure that we would not have settled here if it weren’t for them,” says Josée.

They are among a group of young people in the village that are helping re-develop agriculture - once the lifeblood of the town, but a lifestyle choice that has fallen out of favour, as is the case in many rural towns in



Photo: courtesy of Josée Marsollier

Josée Marsollier and Marc-André Longpré settled in St. Godefroi three years ago with dreams of a simpler life.



Quebec. Josée was no stranger to farm life. She was raised on a dairy farm. Marc-André for his part however, was attracted to the lifestyle, the idea of living off the land and the autonomy

that choice can provide. They purchased a 25 acre farm and with the help of pigs and goats and a lot of elbow grease cleared about 0.3 of a hectare to be used for a garlic plantation. The exercise was a challenge and hence the inspiration for the name of their farm, La Défriche (the Clearing).

Josée Marsollier was already an avid gardener and

knew that there was a certain facility that came with planting and harvesting garlic. For one, it only required one plantation per year and one annual harvest and the crop has no particular storage requirement. In addition to the ease of managing the crop, Josée felt strongly about the medicinal benefits of the plant. She explains, “It is a plant that I have been using medicinally for a long time so it was an interesting opportunity to try and use all of the parts of the plant.”

Quick research shows that holistically, garlic is used for its antibiotic, anti-bacterial and antifungal properties and is also known as a long-term remedy for cardiovascular problems as using it helps reduce excessive cholesterol levels and helps to lower blood pressure. As a quick preventive for winter colds, 10 drops of tincture in a glass of water a couple of times a day, and you can increase your chances of remaining healthy all winter long.

Last year, Josée Marsollier and Marc-André Longpré planted 350 kilograms of garlic and harvested a yield that was about 3 times that amount. In a good year, that is what can be expected of a harvest. They hope to bring their garlic production up to 2100 kg per year which will require preparing an area for a 700kg plantation.

From their harvest, La Défriche produce a variety of products including whole garlic, garlic pesto, garlic salt and a tincture made from apple cider vinegar and garlic. They enjoyed a very successful year, most of their products having been sold through Baie des Saveurs, local markets and local small specialty stores.

This year, La Défriche will be diversifying their operation by adding a selection of vegetables to their production that will include onions, butternut squash and cab-

bage. In the future they hope to add more ready made products such as spaghetti sauces to their production. As is the case with many young Gaspesian families, Marc-André is currently working in Northern Alberta and will return by the end of March. However, with the expansion of their operation,



Photo: courtesy of José Marsollier

Garlic only requires one planting and provides one harvest per year. In a good season, yields will be three times the original crop.

Josée Marsollier and Marc-André Longpré hope to be able to live off the fruits of their labour all year long.

For more information about La Défriche, their products and how to access them, interested folks can order them through Baie des Saveurs or visit the website for La Défriche (which is still under construction) at www.ladefriche.ca. Josée will be happy to serve you in both English and in French.



Photo: W. Dawson

La Défriche uses all parts of the garlic plant to produce a variety of products.

MADE In...

Fumoir Cascapedia Smoke House

ARTISANALLY SMOKED FISH AND MEATS

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: – Tucked behind a family home on Gallagher Street in Cascapedia-St-Jules is a building with a steady stream of smoke coming from the chimney. It is Saturday, and inside Anne-Marie Trépanier is spending her day slicing and packing smoked salmon.

After a full week of teaching at Wejgwapniag School in Gesgapegiag, she fills the remainder of her week with hours at the smoke house. Despite her full weeks, she exudes energy, is quick to offer a smile and has a cheery disposition.

“This is a tradition that has been passed down. My husband Jerry (Legouffe) is a third generation fishing guide. His grandfather was a guide, his father was a guide, he started guiding at 15 and my son Jordan is now a guide. It used to be that your fishing guide was also the one that was responsible for smoking your fish and he (Jerry) learned how to smoke at the same camp where his grandfather was a guide and where his father was a guide. The recipe that Jerry uses is the recipe of the Cascapedia River – all the smokehouses up and down the river use the same recipe,” she says.

Anne goes on to explain that the recipe, while not a



Photos: W. Dawson

Anne carefully slices salmon fillets on a slicer modified by her husband Jerry.

trade secret, is however entirely dependent on the weather. “It’s a dry brine,” she holds up a bag showing a beige granular mixture. “It’s made up of brown sugar and salt. If it is cold out like right now, there is more sugar in the mix. If it is hotter like in the summer months, then there is more salt in the brine. The fish will stay in the dry brine for about 24 hours depending on the size of the filet.”

Anne opens up the one of the many rooms in the building, this one housing a rack of fish waiting to be smoked. “You want to make sure that the filets are dry to the touch,

so they feel like leather. If there is any liquid then it’s not ready for smoking.” After this drying phase is complete, the filets will be transferred to the smoke room portion of the building. On this day, the racks in that room include salmon bites and bacon. “Smoking takes two weeks,” explains Anne “and that is why we can never earn a living off of this operation commercially. The turnover time is too long. When we do ham or bacon, that is done using a wet brine or a salt brine and that can take as long as a month.”

Outside, housed in its own building is a wood stove that is fed hardwood wood chips picked up in St. Quentin, New Brunswick. The stove is fed the wood chips throughout the day, and the smoke is funneled through the smoke room and escapes through a chimney at the top. “There is no electricity used in our process at all, the woodstove can continue to operate even if there is a power failure and we can continue to smoke salmon. We do it really traditionally.”

When Anne Trépanier and her husband Jerry Legouffe chose to develop the smoke house in the late 90s, the traditional approach was not an easy sell to the many governing bodies that oversaw food transformation activities.

They were faced with a series of challenges and had to make many modifications and investments to meet the strict food production guidelines. There was one thing however that they were unwilling to waiver on, and that was the smoke process. “They didn’t want smoke escaping from a chimney into the environment, but that was the way it had been done forever. So, a few officials in white suits were on the roof analyzing the escaping smoke, but we finally got permission.”

Preserving the knowledge of the Cascapedia smoke tradition was important to Anne and Jerry, but so was providing opportunity for their own children, Jessica and Jordan.

“We wanted to give them something that would provide them with a work opportunity either in the summer or when they came home from school. They have both worked in the smokehouse extensively at different times but have had little jobs since they were 7 or 8. When we started, guichet payment didn’t exist and Jessica was just little and would call credit card companies to get authorizations.” She speaks proudly of her children’s involvement and their contributions over the years.

Anne explains that while Fumoir Cascapedia Smoke-

house is a family business, it also extends beyond that. They have since 1999, had as many as 10 different employees.

Anne Trépanier demonstrates the final step in the smoked salmon preparation as she sprays the fillets with a mixture of syrup and brandy. “We use locally made syrup, made by some of our relatives and the syrup is boiled to a temperature specific for use in our smoking process.” After that, it’s off to the slicer, a machine modified by Jerry to better accommodate the fillets for fine slicing.

Fumoir Cascapedia Smokehouse has products available all over the region and the province as they are distributed through a variety of wholesalers. In addition to smoked salmon, they have smoked trout, bacon, dips, salmon bites, smoked herring and mackerel to name but a few products. Perhaps the best place to pick up their products however, is at the smoke house itself, located at 70 Gallagher Road behind the family home in St. Jules where you will be greeted with a smile. There on the walls you will find the long and rich story of a family, and a business, steeped in tradition.

Fumoir Cascapedia Smokehouse is open 7 days a week, 365 days a year until 5 p.m.



Fumoir Cascapedia Smokehouse products can be found in many locations. Come check out the great variety at their smokehouse store.



Photos on the store wall tell the tale of many traditions in the area of Cascapedia-St. Jules.

MADE In...

La Boulangerie du gars du coin

FRESH BREADS AND BAKED GOODS

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

NEW RICHMOND: – It is 7:30 a.m. Saturday morning and Jean-François Henry is finishing up his shift at the bakery. He has been working since about 11 p.m. the night before, and there is only the bread table left to clean. The air is warm and heavy with the smells of fresh bread and yeast – easily one of the most comforting aromas known to man.

For her part, Marina Desaulniers, Jean-François' business partner and girlfriend is just starting her day, preparing for Saturday, one of the bakeries' busiest days of the week. When asked when they see each other, Marina simply responds, "On our days off." Days off are few and far between for the young couple, but with the support of a handful of part-time and seasonal employees, they have built themselves a fine little establishment.

Jean-François Henry and Marina Desaulniers met in Quebec City in February of 2014. It was not long before he shared with her that a return to

the Gaspé Coast was in the cards for him.

As a result she had to make fast work of getting to know the region in order to decide if it could also be a part of her future. Over the course of a year and many back and forth visits, she came to love what the Gaspésie had to offer. "I found what I needed," she explains.

A graduate of political science, Jean-François had a dream of starting a business in his hometown, one that would allow him to work for himself and give him enough freedom to enjoy the things he loves about living in the region like skiing and kayaking.

He felt that there was a need for a local bakery in New Richmond and

so at the end of the summer of 2014, he returned to Quebec City to study baking and by May of 2015, he was back to stay. By July of that same year la Boulangerie du gars du coin was open for business. The name of the bakery is a play on words that kills two birds with one stone. For one, the bakery is located on the corner (du coin) of Perron and Cyr in New Richmond, but the colloquial expression (gars du coin) makes reference to Jean-François being a guy "from these parts".

The bakery currently pro-



Photos: W. Dawson

Jean-François Henry and Marina Desaulniers are the young couple behind New Richmond's newest bakery La boulangerie du gars du coin.

vides a dozen different products, breads of all types, bagels, turnovers, croissants, muffins and more. Marina also prepares a daily luncheon special that includes a homemade soup with a choice of one of two varieties of sandwiches, "Always a vegetarian option," she explains. "There are a lot of vegetarians around here!"

Marina is also responsible for preparing the muffins, which are low fat and low sugar options. "We have a client base that is concerned with their sugar intake and they

have expressed that, and have also explained that they don't have a lot of dessert options." So, Marina is now looking into adding more low sugar recipes to the menu.

These winter months when their business is frequented by local clientele is the quiet time leading up to the summer months which Marina describes quite simply as "apocalyptic". "We have two bakers working two full time shifts because we simply don't have the ovens to supply the demand," she explains.

In addition to making products available at their store, the bakery also supplies the Taylor Point campground in New Richmond, the local markets and Marina herself delivers freshly baked products to other campgrounds in both Cascapédia and Caplan. She says that door to door with fresh bread is a pretty easy sell.

When asked about future projects for the bakery, Marina explains that she would like to see their bakery as a distribution point for good quality, regionally sourced and milled flours.

"I was really surprised at how many people still make their own bread here. It would be great for them to have access to different types of flour." She also explains that

there is a real interest in the production of pastries, "But that, of course, means either more courses or expertise. I will probably start with pies. At Christmas, we made cookies using old family recipes. That was fun. – I have joined the Cercles des fermières in New Richmond. I think it is important to learn traditional skills and recipes."

For now, they continue to build up their local business and clients. They currently provide freshly baked products to the Richmond Manor and would love the opportunity to supply other such businesses in New Richmond. At their store, they are seeing clients more regularly that chose to visit the bakery as part of their regular stops.

Marina makes no secret of the fact that there is a small niche of clients that they would like to see more of in their shop. "People our age," she explains, "just don't make the detour as part of their shopping habits and we would love to see that part of our client base grow."

To see what is on the daily menu for la Boulangerie du gars du coin, you can visit their facebook page. Better yet, just make a stop at the shop on the corner and let the smell of fresh bread take you away.



After receiving a bachelors in political science, Jean-François Henry returned to school to learn the trade of baker.

MADE In...

Herboristerie Écho-Santé

HERBALIST, NATURAL AND ALTERNATIVE REMEDIES AND CONSULTATIONS

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

BONAVENTURE: – Anyone who is familiar with local markets and artisan events on the Gaspé Coast has surely met up with Hélène Bourassa once or twice. She is a staple on that circuit and participates in over 25 events a year. Her regular presence allows her customers to seek her out and stock up on the many remedies that she has been preparing for over twenty years now.

Hélène Bourassa was born in Jonquières but her love affair with the Gaspésie began as a young girl, when she used to accompany her father on fishing trips to the region.

Thirty years ago, upon graduating from CEGEP, she and her boyfriend from that time decided, at Hélène's suggestion, to explore the career opportunities that might be available to them in the Gaspé region. Mere weeks after their arrival, they were both employed with the *Centre de Réadaptation* in Bonaventure as specialized educators. During her time there, Hélène worked with many people from the English community throughout her territory which covered New Carlisle to Port Daniel.

Hélène became interested in herbalism in the early 80s. Herbalism is a traditional art



Photos: W. Dawson

Hélène Bourassa is a staple of local market places and participates in over 20 events per year.

that uses a combination of plants, flowers, mosses and other natural ingredients in the formation of natural medicines. It is not until the mid 90s however that she decided to pursue her interests more seriously.

Over three years, Hélène studied the science of traditional and natural medicines and in 1996 became an accredited herbalist and therapist.

In 1995 Hélène Bourassa launched Herboristerie Écho-Santé Bonaventure. She prepared her first garden of medicinal plants in 1997 which would be the initial stepping stone in building up her dispensary. "I harvest from

my garden, but I also harvest from the woods and other natural environments. Every season has something to offer, Winter, just as in Spring," she explains.

Hélène's primary goal as an herbalist has been to make natural medicines readily available to the masses. "There is a revived interest in medicines of this kind but the concept is far from new. Natural medicines have been used through all of time and in all cultures. There was a time when there was a herbalist in every village. Many conventional and every day medicines such as aspirin were derived from natural sources."

In addition to the fabrication of her products, Hélène Bourassa has, over the years, offered a variety of workshops and training sessions to different groups seeking expertise and knowledge in the harvesting, preparation, use and application of natural remedies. "I like to focus on the health of the family," she explains.

While some might be wary of incorporating natural medicines in their day-to-day, it is important to underline that it remains an industry that is taken very seriously. "I am continuously upgrading. I take new courses or exchange best practices with others," explains Hélène. She is also the regional representative for the

Guilde des herboristes du Québec. "We are very fortunate to have this organization in Québec. The group meets regularly and helps valorize and promote herbal medicines but also serves as a consultation group to others like (the Natural and Non-prescription Health Products Directorate) of Health Canada." This division of Health Canada authorizes products that have been issued for sale as natural products.

In her workshop, Hélène dries, prepares and transforms a wide selection of plants into a variety of products that include creams, oils, tinctures, herbal teas and salts. Those that are curious about how to use these products or hesitant about introducing them into their everyday can consult with her. "There is a medical use for so many wonderful plants,

sonal tragedy 16 months ago, Hélène saw her home in Thivierge burn to the ground and she lost everything. "They say it was an electrical fire. It was so difficult. Every time I saw someone I would have to re-visit that event, people were sympathetic, but I just couldn't talk about it anymore. I needed the time provided in the last year to collect myself and gain my strength back. That situation exhausted me."

With time, the support of the community and friends as well as the use of natural medicines, Hélène rose from the ashes and found her way back. "I was very fortunate because my workshop remained untouched as it was separate from the house, but that is where I have always lived, my clients continue to seek me out there. I thought I would rebuild again

Local is the Way to Go!



The products harvested for use in Écho-Santé's products come from Hélène's garden as well as the nature that surrounds her.

dandelion, lavender, lilies. Plants that feed cells and help build and re-build the bodies many compositions. Linseed and seaweed. There are so many possibilities."

February is usually a big production month for Hélène as she prepares for her busy market season, and this year is no different although she will be returning to her sales circuit after a sporadic presence over the past year. Struck by per-

in another year, but I hope to start building a new home this year."

Despite her recent challenges, Hélène Bourassa still has a ready smile and remains dedicated to making natural medicines available to the everyone. You will be able to visit and consult with Hélène and purchase her products at the *Salon des Artisans Créateurs* in Bonaventure scheduled for the end of April.



Herborist Écho-Santé offers a variety of products derive from natural ingredients such as tinctures, lotions, oils, bath salts and creams.

MADE In...

La Fabrique Pasta Loca ARTISANAL, GOURMET PASTA

Wendy Dawson

The Made in ... series profiles locally created products available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

CHANDLER – Pascale Alain is full of energy. She speaks with a fast pace and her ideas quickly flow from one subject to another. “I’m speaking too quickly aren’t I? I always speak too quickly,” she says. Her vigor has been an important contributor to her success. In a few short months, she has managed to become an important (and delicious) player in the local food industry.

Contrary to her regular “pace”, her inspiration for her business came to her slowly, over the years that she spent working with GIMxport, the local initiative that helps local Gaspesian businesses with their commercialization and development.

While working with the organization, Pascale Alain had the opportunity to accompany and support local businesses with their marketing and export efforts and she became interested in starting a business of her own. With the experience that she acquired as an advisor at GIMxport, Pascale understood before getting involved in entrepreneurship exactly what the challenges would be looking ahead.

She left GIMxport, and the region in 2015, with two ideas in mind, the first was pursuing her masters in business administration and the second was starting a food business.

After having worked in so many facets of the fishing industry with GIMxport, she was struck by the fact that there were no pasta products that specialized in fish and seafood and so she knew there was likely a need and an interest.

More importantly for her was, would the fabrication of fresh pasta be of interest to her? And so she found herself off to Northern Italy to pursue professional training in hand-made pasta making.

“The experience completely solidified my interest and I knew that I could bring this traditional Italian skill home with me and mix it with the flavours of the Gaspésie.” After shopping for a ravioli machine while in Italy, she made her way home at the end of 2016 to pursue her ambition.

La Fabrique Pasta Loca is entirely owned and operated by Pascale. The *École des pêches et de l’aquaculture du Québec* located in Grande Rivière acts as a business incubator and allows Pascale to rent the equipment and space that she needs to produce her homemade, gourmet ravioli.

While Pascale considers herself well surrounded by a



Photos: Jacques Morin

Pascale Allain has developed products that can be found in specialty shops and high-end restaurants throughout the region and the province.

solid group of supporters and a mentor, she still oversees each and every area of responsibility on her own with the help of one full-time and one part-time employee.

It is a wide and varied set of tasks that includes pasta production, production of the ravioli fillings, negotiations with suppliers, packaging, accounting, market development and communications and promotion.

When asked if she has any down time or outside interests, she explains that at this stage in her business development, she does not have time for much else. “But I did go smelt fishing this winter!” she sneaks in the statement, as much as she surely had to sneak in the time to go. “I went with another small business owner. Someone who works as much as I do and who pointed out that once in a while, we have to do something other than work.”

In December of 2016 she officially launched her products. So far, she has produced three types of ravioli, Atlantic salmon and lime, lobster with cognac flambé and crab with Pernod.

Despite the recent launch of her products, she is already well established in a number of specialty stores throughout the region as well as 15 different restaurants and is already sending her products to Quebec

City and Montreal. Other regional restaurants are planning on adding her products to their menu.

“The salmon comes from New Brunswick because I simply don’t have the option of purchasing it locally, but everything else that I use is local and Gaspesian. It is my intention to always seek out and promote the use of local ingredients first. I am fully aware of the importance of buying locally and I understand the direct impact that local consumption has on the development and success of local businesses.”

Pascale Alain has no lack of projects and plans for the future of her products and her business. “My biggest goal for the future is to have my own facility. The opportunity at the school has been great, but before long I will have my own building. I also intend on developing seasonal products, perhaps just specialty items for restaurants or items that are available for a short time. I also hope to acquire my federal permit that will allow me to export my products,” she explains that the market potential is huge.

“To my knowledge there are only two other producers of

seafood pasta products, one in Maine and one in California. I have already received requests from Toronto, so I know that with a little effort, I could find buyers for my products, especially restaurants. They love the fact that in just five minutes, they can have a quality pasta product ready for the plate.”

In the shorter term, Pascale explains that her website and a way to communicate the service of her products will be the priority. “Several people have voiced their questions regarding what type of sauce should be used with my pasta products and I would love to put some recipes up on my website or include recipes on my packaging. For the time being though, my clients have been sharing recipes and ideas on my Facebook page which I think is just great.”

The price point for Pasta Loca’s products is a little high when compared to ‘traditionally packaged’ supermarket pasta. Her products start at about \$30 for 2 pounds of pasta. “The clients that buy my products are looking for the kind of high quality ingredients that are used in my pasta. There are no fillers or by-products. This is not the kind of product that you sit down and stuff yourself with. It is the kind of product that you savour and enjoy. Not only are the products hand made, but the ingredients that I use like lobster, crab and Atlantic salmon are high priced ingredients.”

Should you happen to run into Pascale, she probably won’t have a lot of time to chat – she is still pursuing her MBA on a part time basis and taking

over the culinary world one ravioli at a time! You will however be able to find Pascale’s Pasta Loca products at a

variety of specialty locations from Carleton to Gaspé, including La Mie Véritable, Raymer, Vert Pistache, Alexina and Le Marché des Saveurs. You can also find shared recipe ideas on her La Fabrique Pasta Loca facebook page.



Photo: Steven Melanson Photographie

The Atlantic salmon and lime ravioli can be served with a variety of sauces. Clients share their ideas and inspirations on Pasta Loca’s facebook page.

