

## Dining in the Kawarthas

*by Chef Brian Henry*

The Kawartha's deliver world-class cultural and leisure experiences year round while preserving the integrity of its natural environment. Season after season the Kawartha Region has been entertaining it's visitors with its waterways, fall colors, and hiking trails.

Culinary tourism is an emerging new trend in the Kawartha's. Culinary tourism is directly related to agri-tourism, which can include visits to orchards; pick your own farms, vineyards and a variety of producers raising animals.

The primary focus of culinary tourism rests on prepared rather than raw foodstuffs. These foods can be found in restaurants, farmer's markets and roadside produce stands or at farm gate purveyors. The cuisine of the Kawartha's is promoted by its numerous food producers, chefs, and retailers through a field to the plate initiative known as Kawartha Choice Farm Fresh.

Foodies in search of great food and intimate experiences will find many an unexpected pleasure in many places. The Good Food Guide is a map that is produced by Kawartha Choice Farm Fresh. This map is designed to help foodies find their way through the country roads to the farms and chefs working to make locally produced foodstuffs available to the consumer directly from the farms themselves.

Farm gate sales are abundantly available throughout this region that showcase beef, pork and produce in great abundance.

The Kawartha's are also home to farms that produce elk, honey, and rainbow trout. We have a winery, shiitake mushrooms and Canada's oldest bison farm along with too many other choices to list.

When shopping and dining in the Kawartha's you will find products and menu items highlighted by the Kawartha Choice logo. This logo is a symbol of quality produced local products that are either for sale or used as ingredients on menus.

The Kawartha Choice mission has been to create a marketing network designed to assist local producers, food service outlets and retailers with the tools necessary for branding our local products with the Kawartha Choice Farm Fresh logo. By promoting our logo the local consumer market has come to know this symbol as a symbol of quality and more so integrity.

Many people are concerned that the recent shift in consumers shopping habits to resource their food locally is a passing fad. Fads come and go. Trends require a shift in thinking. When a shift like this is so great that our global community as a whole invents a new language to associate with the trend we begin hearing and using new words. Words like, carbon footprint, food miles, and the 100- mile meal.

Ironically the New Oxford American Dictionary has chosen 2007's word of the year to be LOCAVORE... one who eats locally.

Festivals that celebrate the harvest go year round in the Kawartha's. From maple syrup in early spring, to the pumpkins of late fall, every season has chefs and foodies celebrating life amidst a setting filled with windswept pines and granite outcroppings.

As chairman of Kawartha Choice Farm Fresh, on behalf of the Kawarthas, I invite you to come reap the benefits of our bounty. This September Kawartha Choice Farm Fresh and the Kawartha Culinary Association is bringing local producers and chefs together to celebrate the "Taste of the Kawartha's". This week long celebration will showcase restaurants, resorts and chefs who are teaming up with local farms to prepare gastronomical creations that are truly indigenous of the Kawarthas.



CHEF BRIAN HENRY