**Making a Meal of It — 102: Buying & Selling**

TRANSCRIPT

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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:11,200

Welcome to Making a Meal of It, the podcast for eaters of all appetites who want to reimagine

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00:00:11,200 --> 00:00:16,800

and reinvigorate their relationships with food, food culture, and food systems.

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00:00:16,800 --> 00:00:22,520

I'm David Szanto and today's show focuses on buying and selling both food and wine,

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00:00:22,520 --> 00:00:26,680

including the ways in which trust is built up between buyers and sellers and the ways

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00:00:26,680 --> 00:00:32,680

that that trust, and communication, and simple human exchange, keep our commercial transactions

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00:00:32,680 --> 00:00:34,720

from becoming solely transactional.

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00:00:34,720 --> 00:01:01,120

First, though, a couple of sounds to listen to.

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00:01:01,120 --> 00:01:04,440

Both of those sounds are probably pretty familiar to most of us.

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00:01:04,440 --> 00:01:09,220

The first one is from a self-serve supermarket checkout scanner, the kind that are increasingly

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00:01:09,220 --> 00:01:11,620

appearing in large grocery stores.

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00:01:11,620 --> 00:01:15,800

Statistically speaking, they apparently don't really speed up the checkout process, but

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00:01:15,800 --> 00:01:20,520

we shoppers seem to like them, as do the folks who design our retail experiences.

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00:01:20,520 --> 00:01:26,240

For the consumer, self-checkout suggests a kind of autonomy and control, and a sense,

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00:01:26,240 --> 00:01:29,960

even if it's not true, that we're just not wasting our time in a lineup.

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00:01:29,960 --> 00:01:34,040

For some people, it's also a way to really just to avoid human interaction, like with

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00:01:34,040 --> 00:01:35,960

the checkout person.

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00:01:35,960 --> 00:01:42,000

That's both a symptom of and a driver of the ways in which the gamification and the roboticization

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00:01:42,000 --> 00:01:47,080

of everyday life is creating bigger and bigger social gaps and disconnects between people.

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00:01:47,080 --> 00:01:51,720

Despite knowing that, though, I kind of also enjoy using the self-checkout myself, and

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00:01:51,720 --> 00:01:57,320

I think it's because I always wanted a toy cash register as a kid, and that was partly

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00:01:57,320 --> 00:02:02,440

because I loved the manual dexterity and the memory skills that I saw the grocery store

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00:02:02,440 --> 00:02:03,440

clerks have.

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00:02:03,440 --> 00:02:07,040

It was just so cool, and I wanted to be as smart and cool as them.

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00:02:07,040 --> 00:02:11,360

So operating a cash register, or today a self-checkout machine, kind of gives me that feeling.

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00:02:11,360 --> 00:02:16,160

But even that's kind of weird, because now, as an adult, it also drives me further away

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00:02:16,160 --> 00:02:19,480

from watching those checkout people do their thing so well.

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00:02:19,480 --> 00:02:24,320

And making the contradiction even stranger, I really love those daily, small, and caring

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00:02:24,320 --> 00:02:27,840

interactions that I have with other people, whether it's at a shop or at the gym or in

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00:02:27,840 --> 00:02:28,840

the street.

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00:02:28,840 --> 00:02:32,700

It just feels so basic to being human.

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00:02:32,700 --> 00:02:38,320

That second sound was, as you probably guessed, wine pouring from a bottle into a glass.

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00:02:38,320 --> 00:02:43,240

The glug glug glug of liquid flowing out and air flowing back up the neck of the bottle

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00:02:43,240 --> 00:02:44,760

is so distinctive.

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00:02:44,760 --> 00:02:50,560

But more figuratively, it's the sound of another impending sensory experience, of the

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00:02:50,560 --> 00:02:56,620

tastes and smells and textures of a nice Xenomavro or Gruner Veltiner rolling around on your

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00:02:56,620 --> 00:02:58,380

tongue and palate.

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00:02:58,380 --> 00:03:02,960

If you listen again, though, you'll also hear another part of that sound, the glass filling

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00:03:02,960 --> 00:03:10,200

up, and it creates a subtle kind of change in pitch as the airspace inside shrinks.

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00:03:10,200 --> 00:03:14,200

Generally speaking, we use our eyes to determine the level of the liquid in a vessel and to

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00:03:14,200 --> 00:03:16,000

keep it from spilling over.

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00:03:16,000 --> 00:03:19,800

But that pitch change is also how we recognize that the glass is filling up.

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00:03:19,800 --> 00:03:25,560

It's a backup or complementary sensory experience that very subtly tells us when to stop the

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00:03:25,560 --> 00:03:26,560

flow.

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00:03:26,560 --> 00:03:31,680

Both of those sounds are examples of feedback.

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00:03:31,680 --> 00:03:34,960

Feedback is how we know that something we did actually had an effect.

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00:03:34,960 --> 00:03:38,960

The beeps of the supermarket scanner tell you that the product was recognized and that

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00:03:38,960 --> 00:03:39,960

it's been added to the bill.

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00:03:39,960 --> 00:03:42,720

And the same thing for the pitch change when you're filling up the glass.

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00:03:42,720 --> 00:03:47,240

And yeah, I'm seeing the level of liquid in the glass is also a form of feedback, but

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00:03:47,240 --> 00:03:50,760

the sound element kind of reinforces the visual.

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00:03:50,760 --> 00:03:54,360

More generally, if you were, say, filling up a bucket with a hose and not paying much

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00:03:54,360 --> 00:03:57,640

attention, then the changing pitch from the bucket would be a pretty good indicator of

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00:03:57,640 --> 00:04:00,400

when to twist close the valve.

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00:04:00,400 --> 00:04:03,480

Feedback of various sorts is one of the main themes of this episode.

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00:04:03,480 --> 00:04:07,560

I'll come back to it at the end of the show because it ties a lot of things together and

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00:04:07,560 --> 00:04:11,560

it might be one of the more subtle parts of food culture that we should be paying more

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00:04:11,560 --> 00:04:16,120

attention to.

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00:04:16,120 --> 00:04:21,120

Kicking things off today, I visit the historic Jean Talon Market here in Montreal and talk

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00:04:21,120 --> 00:04:24,160

with the Director General of the Montreal Public Markets.

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00:04:24,160 --> 00:04:28,680

And I'm off to a wine bar, actually what we call a buvette here in Quebec, one that doubles

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00:04:28,680 --> 00:04:31,960

as a design studio during most days of the week.

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00:04:31,960 --> 00:04:36,880

And during the stick this in your mouth segment, Maxime and I taste a few cheeses, both highly

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00:04:36,880 --> 00:04:38,520

processed and less so.

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00:04:38,520 --> 00:04:53,840

And closing things off as usual is the Making a Meal of It food questionnaire.

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00:04:53,840 --> 00:04:58,040

My first guest is Nicolas Fabien-Ouellet, the Director General of the Montreal Public

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00:04:58,040 --> 00:04:59,040

Markets.

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00:04:59,040 --> 00:05:03,520

Nicolas and I met many years ago at a food studies conference in California and he was

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00:05:03,520 --> 00:05:08,300

presenting some of his master's degree work there on food identity and food systems.

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00:05:08,300 --> 00:05:12,720

Since then, he's been building innovative programs into the public markets of Montreal,

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00:05:12,720 --> 00:05:17,220

making them stronger, more resilient and more adaptive to the needs of both consumers and

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00:05:17,220 --> 00:05:20,160

food producers who meet up there seven days a week.

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00:05:20,160 --> 00:05:22,480

Nicolas, thank you so much for being part of the show.

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00:05:22,480 --> 00:05:25,320

It's so great to be back to the Gentaille Markets.

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00:05:25,320 --> 00:05:27,080

It's been a while since I've been here.

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00:05:27,080 --> 00:05:30,520

I have unfortunately moved out of the neighborhoods and I'm a bit lazy.

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00:05:30,520 --> 00:05:34,880

So like a lot of people, I don't make the effort to come out and do my market shopping

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00:05:34,880 --> 00:05:36,560

as often as I should.

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00:05:36,560 --> 00:05:40,720

I think the markets here really, really hold a special place for Montrealers.

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00:05:40,720 --> 00:05:42,760

What do you think that is?

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00:05:42,760 --> 00:05:48,600

Well the first thing I think is not only Gentaille Market that we like, we like the network

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00:05:48,600 --> 00:05:51,320

of markets that we're lucky to have in Montreal.

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00:05:51,320 --> 00:05:56,040

And so because of that network, I think we all have some kind of proximity with this

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00:05:56,040 --> 00:05:58,200

type of food offer.

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00:05:58,200 --> 00:06:01,880

That's one of the reasons that we all know them, we all love them.

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00:06:01,880 --> 00:06:04,760

This network of markets has a rich history.

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00:06:04,760 --> 00:06:10,200

It's almost a hundred years old and so many generations have passed through those markets.

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00:06:10,200 --> 00:06:15,800

And so all of the history is one of the reasons that we love the market in addition to the

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00:06:15,800 --> 00:06:16,800

food offer obviously.

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00:06:16,800 --> 00:06:21,440

Yeah, well they're very much implanted in the Montreal sort of psyche.

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00:06:21,440 --> 00:06:24,640

There's always a really strong sense of community I get when I come here.

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00:06:24,640 --> 00:06:30,680

Yeah, without the market, I don't think that Montreal would be a food metropolis.

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00:06:30,680 --> 00:06:34,800

I think Montreal is known for its food, for its restaurants.

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00:06:34,800 --> 00:06:39,440

All the great chefs that we have, they will all tell you that they come to the markets

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00:06:39,440 --> 00:06:40,440

to get inspired.

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00:06:40,440 --> 00:06:44,920

They will also get their produce from the market most of the time.

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00:06:44,920 --> 00:06:52,480

And so if we remove those markets, I think we remove the part of the DNA of food in Montreal.

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00:06:52,480 --> 00:06:57,080

In some ways, I think one of the, you know, the heart of Montreal is really about the

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00:06:57,080 --> 00:06:58,080

market.

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00:06:58,080 --> 00:07:00,980

Yeah, well, and it goes back, it goes back not just a hundred years, but even longer

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00:07:00,980 --> 00:07:06,640

because Montreal as a port city, as an inland port city before the St. Lawrence Seaway anyway,

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00:07:06,640 --> 00:07:11,720

it was the place from which food got imported and exported out of this place we call North

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00:07:11,720 --> 00:07:14,260

America and towards that place called Europe.

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00:07:14,260 --> 00:07:18,340

And that's fascinating, I think, if we look at the history of markets, these used to be

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00:07:18,340 --> 00:07:21,440

the only places where you can sell food.

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00:07:21,440 --> 00:07:25,320

It was regulated because of sanitary issues.

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00:07:25,320 --> 00:07:28,280

You wanted to cut meat and sell meat.

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00:07:28,280 --> 00:07:32,640

It had to be in the market and the market still remains today.

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00:07:32,640 --> 00:07:38,240

Although we saw the development of what we call supermarkets, the markets have survived

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00:07:38,240 --> 00:07:43,240

all these new trends of how we buy and sell food.

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00:07:43,240 --> 00:07:47,960

And still today, they are the heart of the food systems in Montreal and we still love

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00:07:47,960 --> 00:07:48,960

them.

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00:07:48,960 --> 00:07:52,120

How do you think that the markets in Montreal, or what role do they play in that bigger food

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00:07:52,120 --> 00:07:54,440

landscape that also includes supermarkets?

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00:07:54,440 --> 00:08:01,280

For one, these are regional food infrastructure that are essential to short supply chain.

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00:08:01,280 --> 00:08:06,120

These markets are not just about getting the best food to impress your friends.

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00:08:06,120 --> 00:08:11,840

These are crucial for farmers that are in production in or around Montreal that want

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00:08:11,840 --> 00:08:14,320

to sell directly to consumers.

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00:08:14,320 --> 00:08:20,000

And so when we're talking about diversifying our agricultural practices in Quebec, when

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00:08:20,000 --> 00:08:25,640

we're talking about food access, when we're talking about competition in the food world

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00:08:25,640 --> 00:08:31,560

and the retail sector, public markets play a huge role because they are the only ways

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00:08:31,560 --> 00:08:36,640

to get produce in short supply chains to that many consumers at the same time.

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00:08:36,640 --> 00:08:41,160

Yeah, so the supermarkets, because they're operating at such a big scale, have to have

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00:08:41,160 --> 00:08:46,680

big scale suppliers and that excludes an enormous number of the producers who work here in Quebec.

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00:08:46,680 --> 00:08:51,560

And at the same time, it's talking about the need for, if not for sovereignty, a lot more

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00:08:51,560 --> 00:08:53,960

focus on local consumption and local production.

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00:08:53,960 --> 00:08:58,680

If you're always demanding that everyone's producing at this massive scale, it simply

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00:08:58,680 --> 00:08:59,680

can't work.

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00:08:59,680 --> 00:09:00,680

Correct.

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00:09:00,680 --> 00:09:06,120

And so that's one, I think it's left out of the conversation about food sovereignty, food

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00:09:06,120 --> 00:09:12,040

price increase and the diversification of our agricultural sector.

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00:09:12,040 --> 00:09:15,920

Without markets, we won't get those objective completed.

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00:09:15,920 --> 00:09:22,840

That's one way to stabilize food price, diversity of food, food access, but also to help mitigate

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00:09:22,840 --> 00:09:27,160

climate change with all the benefits that local food supply chains bring.

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00:09:27,160 --> 00:09:31,600

The markets are a kind of complex solution, if you will, to a very complex problem or

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00:09:31,600 --> 00:09:33,080

a set of very complex problems.

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00:09:33,080 --> 00:09:37,640

And that's what you get behind your produce that you like to see and interact with the

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00:09:37,640 --> 00:09:38,640

farmers.

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00:09:38,640 --> 00:09:44,840

Well, behind this transaction that you do, you do help a lot about bringing up those

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00:09:44,840 --> 00:09:50,360

localized food systems and supply chains to bring them to scale and preserve them and

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00:09:50,360 --> 00:09:51,360

develop them.

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00:09:51,360 --> 00:09:56,280

There's a lot of mistrust going on with what's happening with food prices in supermarkets.

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00:09:56,280 --> 00:10:02,120

Do you feel like there's more trust here at the markets or is there a similar kind of

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00:10:02,120 --> 00:10:05,640

doubt on the part of the consumers about why things are expensive these days?

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00:10:05,640 --> 00:10:06,640

There's more trust.

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00:10:06,640 --> 00:10:09,320

Now, there's some misunderstanding.

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00:10:09,320 --> 00:10:13,800

As consumers, we often have demands that are not realistic.

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00:10:13,800 --> 00:10:20,320

That said, here, when I talk to producer, they tell me my price of producing food has

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00:10:20,320 --> 00:10:24,680

increased because of gas, because of fertilizer and stuff like that.

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00:10:24,680 --> 00:10:30,160

I'm not going to put all the extra costs on my consumer that I like, because I know they

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00:10:30,160 --> 00:10:33,080

won't be here next year if they do that.

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00:10:33,080 --> 00:10:39,960

So if I need to increase by one dollar, often I will increase by 50 cents to make sure that

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00:10:39,960 --> 00:10:45,240

I retain my consumers and build long-term relationship with them.

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00:10:45,240 --> 00:10:49,560

Yeah, because it is a relationship and the relationship has to... for them to survive,

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00:10:49,560 --> 00:10:53,760

for consumers to continue to eat well and at an affordable price has to be an ongoing

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00:10:53,760 --> 00:10:54,760

relationship.

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00:10:54,760 --> 00:10:57,160

It can't just be transactional like it is in a big store.

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00:10:57,160 --> 00:10:58,160

Exactly.

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00:10:58,160 --> 00:11:02,360

So consumers here, when they come to a market, they have their connection with the vendors

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00:11:02,360 --> 00:11:04,720

and they are able to ask questions.

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00:11:04,720 --> 00:11:11,240

That link of confidence and trustworthiness is obviously what distinguishes a public market

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00:11:11,240 --> 00:11:12,960

from a generic store.

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00:11:12,960 --> 00:11:13,960

Yeah.

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00:11:13,960 --> 00:11:17,320

Well, tell me more about what you mentioned earlier, which is this program that you're

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00:11:17,320 --> 00:11:21,240

starting to give greater access not just to producers, but also to consumers.

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00:11:21,240 --> 00:11:22,240

There are two programs.

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00:11:22,240 --> 00:11:28,000

The first one is Récolte Engagée, which is a program that use unsold produce from vendors

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00:11:28,000 --> 00:11:35,520

at markets to provide them to a local organization that will redistribute to families in need.

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00:11:35,520 --> 00:11:36,520

The other one is Toussaint-Table.

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00:11:36,520 --> 00:11:43,520

Toussaint-Table, I do believe strongly in this potential to scale up that type of program

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00:11:43,520 --> 00:11:49,800

and it's based surrounding increasing purchasing powers of low-income families.

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00:11:49,800 --> 00:11:55,960

What we did as a first project with Desjardins, which is a financial institution in Quebec,

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00:11:55,960 --> 00:12:03,360

Desjardins bought us 50,000 of value of gift certificates that are in place in Montreal's

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00:12:03,360 --> 00:12:04,360

public market.

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00:12:04,360 --> 00:12:08,080

We printed those $50,000 in gift certificate.

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00:12:08,080 --> 00:12:13,520

We provided them to a local organization and this organization, instead of giving food

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00:12:13,520 --> 00:12:19,560

to the household in need, they gave those gift certificate for Montreal's public market.

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00:12:19,560 --> 00:12:23,760

It's all about purchasing powers, dignity, freedom of choice.

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00:12:23,760 --> 00:12:30,320

So not only do we tackle hunger, but we help stimulate the local food system.

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00:12:30,320 --> 00:12:32,480

I'm a strong believer of this type of program.

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00:12:32,480 --> 00:12:37,320

I was inspired during my master thesis by this type of program that exists in the US.

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00:12:37,320 --> 00:12:39,900

So I brought back this idea here.

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00:12:39,900 --> 00:12:44,720

We did a first round with Desjardins and I'm working on scaling that up with other financial

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00:12:44,720 --> 00:12:50,520

partners to bring it to scale, so to all other public markets in Montreal.

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00:12:50,520 --> 00:12:54,580

So I'd like to take a look around the market if you don't mind and I'd love to have you

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00:12:54,580 --> 00:12:57,600

show me some of your favorite spots or some of the parts of the market that you find most

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00:12:57,600 --> 00:12:58,600

interesting.

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00:12:58,600 --> 00:12:59,600

So we go out and take a look.

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00:12:59,600 --> 00:13:00,600

For sure.

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00:13:00,600 --> 00:13:11,840

Right now it's harvest time, so it's autumn and we have a lot of vegetables and fruits

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00:13:11,840 --> 00:13:14,080

to buy right now.

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00:13:14,080 --> 00:13:18,440

It's my favorite time of year here because everything looks just so plentiful and there's

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00:13:18,440 --> 00:13:20,200

so much product from Quebec.

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00:13:20,200 --> 00:13:27,120

I'm seeing right now cranberries and peppers and aubergine and pumpkins en masse and all

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00:13:27,120 --> 00:13:28,920

sorts of other beautiful things.

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00:13:28,920 --> 00:13:31,280

Cabbage, the potatoes are looking gorgeous, the garlic.

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00:13:31,280 --> 00:13:36,040

What's your favorite thing to see at this time of year at the market?

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00:13:36,040 --> 00:13:37,380

Well it's just the variety.

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00:13:37,380 --> 00:13:44,400

You can get pretty much everything from berries to root vegetables and right now we still

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00:13:44,400 --> 00:13:53,160

have about a hundred producer vendors on site and so it's an exciting time of the year to

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00:13:53,160 --> 00:13:59,680

come and experience what is it to shop and to buy and to exchange with vendors at a public

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00:13:59,680 --> 00:14:00,680

market.

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00:14:00,680 --> 00:14:04,680

Yeah and to really feel the sense of Quebec's food identity all around us.

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00:14:04,680 --> 00:14:06,120

For sure.

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00:14:06,120 --> 00:14:13,640

Here is the second alley that we have and at the end of this alley it's a special program

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00:14:13,640 --> 00:14:17,820

that we've put together in the last few years.

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00:14:17,820 --> 00:14:25,480

We provide the stall and the farmer doesn't have to build anything and it's a new program.

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00:14:25,480 --> 00:14:29,400

It was a demand for farmers that wanted to come at Jean-Trois market not for seven days

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00:14:29,400 --> 00:14:36,720

a week but just for one day and so that's one way that we've welcomed about 26 new food

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00:14:36,720 --> 00:14:39,780

businesses and food producers in the past year.

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00:14:39,780 --> 00:14:44,760

Right now you can see we have Laferme La Forchette.

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00:14:44,760 --> 00:14:46,640

He's here with his truck.

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00:14:46,640 --> 00:14:52,520

He's just unloading his beets and root vegetables that he still have and he put them on the

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00:14:52,520 --> 00:14:54,440

stall that we provide.

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00:14:54,440 --> 00:15:00,360

He doesn't have to have like a pop-up tent or a table to carry.

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00:15:00,360 --> 00:15:06,640

You can only focus on producing the best fruit and vegetables and get them here, put them

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00:15:06,640 --> 00:15:09,480

on the table and so we can just buy them.

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00:15:09,480 --> 00:15:16,560

With this program what we did is that we just simplified what it is to sell in public markets

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00:15:16,560 --> 00:15:23,800

and we have a lot of positive feedback about this and this is one way to help the next

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00:15:23,800 --> 00:15:29,440

generation to not only sell in public market but also get into production.

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00:15:29,440 --> 00:15:35,000

I've noticed that there are a lot of subtle but very striking changes.

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00:15:35,000 --> 00:15:38,360

There's different signage that feels a little bit fresher, a little bit younger.

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00:15:38,360 --> 00:15:41,760

It seems like you've been doing a lot of work to make the whole aesthetic experience

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00:15:41,760 --> 00:15:44,560

of being here even more attractive.

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00:15:44,560 --> 00:15:51,600

I'll show you a new thing that we've put up for the signage like how you advertise your

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00:15:51,600 --> 00:15:54,400

price and where the food comes from, which farms.

226

00:15:54,400 --> 00:15:56,720

I'll show you something new over there.

227

00:15:56,720 --> 00:16:00,800

So let's take another small walk to see the other alleys.

228

00:16:00,800 --> 00:16:03,100

Great, let's go.

229

00:16:03,100 --> 00:16:09,240

So as you told me there's this new voluntary program for showing the provenance of different

230

00:16:09,240 --> 00:16:13,440

foods and the producers are provided with these stickers or these labels so they can

231

00:16:13,440 --> 00:16:17,680

show exactly where their food is coming from, if it is in Quebec or not.

232

00:16:17,680 --> 00:16:24,000

Right and this new way to advertise where the food comes from and the price, they all

233

00:16:24,000 --> 00:16:28,440

respect the Quebec law about saying where the food comes from.

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00:16:28,440 --> 00:16:34,160

For example, the law says if you produce a lettuce, well we produce a lettuce in Quebec

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00:16:34,160 --> 00:16:38,800

but in the United States they do too and we cannot know for sure if it's a Quebec produce

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00:16:38,800 --> 00:16:39,800

or not.

237

00:16:39,800 --> 00:16:47,040

And so we came up with that new way to advertise and so it's voluntary and we have the blue

238

00:16:47,040 --> 00:16:53,640

color that says this is from Quebec, the green color that says this is from my farm and we

239

00:16:53,640 --> 00:17:01,320

have also the red color that is produced from Canada outside Quebec and we have the gray

240

00:17:01,320 --> 00:17:07,480

one which is import produce like the lime that we can see over there.

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00:17:07,480 --> 00:17:12,920

Yeah and this is a wonderful way to show the different provenances but it's also in some

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00:17:12,920 --> 00:17:17,360

ways a kind of consumer education move because if you go into a supermarket for example the

243

00:17:17,360 --> 00:17:20,040

food is as we classically say food from nowhere.

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00:17:20,040 --> 00:17:23,800

It's food from a generic place, sometimes they have a place of origin, often fruits

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00:17:23,800 --> 00:17:29,480

and vegetables have stickers on them, it's not always confident that those stickers are

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00:17:29,480 --> 00:17:33,720

telling the truth but here there's a sense of okay that's very local, that's quite local,

247

00:17:33,720 --> 00:17:37,880

there's a bit local and there's not so local and that's something that I think many food

248

00:17:37,880 --> 00:17:42,880

buyers don't tend to think about habitually when they go grocery shopping.

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00:17:42,880 --> 00:17:49,100

It's the good old fashioned technique of communication and trust which is absent in so many places

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00:17:49,100 --> 00:17:51,760

in so many parts of our world these days particularly in food.

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00:17:51,760 --> 00:17:56,400

Whereas in markets, public markets, farmers markets, this is one of the reasons why we

252

00:17:56,400 --> 00:17:59,780

go there and why we like them.

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00:17:59,780 --> 00:18:04,600

So one thing that I personally love about markets is that they are dynamic, they change

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00:18:04,600 --> 00:18:08,960

throughout the year and throughout the season and so right now we're in October so it's

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00:18:08,960 --> 00:18:17,120

full of vegetables and fruit but if you come in May and even in April you'll get flowers,

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00:18:17,120 --> 00:18:22,920

you'll get seedlings for your gardening and this side of the market is full with flowers

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00:18:22,920 --> 00:18:28,840

and plants and producers that are not there at this time of the year in October but they

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00:18:28,840 --> 00:18:31,240

have been there at the beginning of the season.

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00:18:31,240 --> 00:18:36,940

And so it's dynamic, it changes not only in terms of produce, of product but also in terms

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00:18:36,940 --> 00:18:43,520

of farmers and vendors that are on the market and so you have to come often to really understand

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00:18:43,520 --> 00:18:47,520

the whole market experience.

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00:18:47,520 --> 00:18:52,040

It is as you say it's dynamic, it changes throughout the year just like food changes

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00:18:52,040 --> 00:18:56,920

throughout the year but we don't see that in supermarkets, we see the same stuff over

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00:18:56,920 --> 00:19:00,560

and over again and here what we're seeing is a kind of representation of the natural

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00:19:00,560 --> 00:19:05,960

world changing around us or the farmed world changing around us and then coming into the

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00:19:05,960 --> 00:19:08,760

market and manifesting itself.

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00:19:08,760 --> 00:19:16,960

This is the whole thing about market is you have to come often to understand these ways

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00:19:16,960 --> 00:19:22,800

of getting the best product that you want or that special price or that quantity of

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00:19:22,800 --> 00:19:27,640

product that you need so you really have to come often to understand your market and get

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00:19:27,640 --> 00:19:28,640

the most out of it.

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00:19:28,640 --> 00:19:32,640

Yeah in many ways what you're saying is this is a relationship as much as it is a food

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00:19:32,640 --> 00:19:33,640

selling location.

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00:19:33,640 --> 00:19:41,000

Correct and that relationship to really have it like to make the most out of it you have

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00:19:41,000 --> 00:19:47,920

to talk to your vendor and you'll find your vendors, your farmer that you prefer, they

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00:19:47,920 --> 00:19:53,880

will give you tips, they will tell you like come in three days I'll get this new variety

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00:19:53,880 --> 00:19:59,120

and be there at this time because it won't last long and you'll be able to get it, show

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00:19:59,120 --> 00:20:11,440

it to your friends and have really that whole experience about market.

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00:20:11,440 --> 00:20:15,200

And don't forget to check out our show notes for details about Nicolas' background and

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00:20:15,200 --> 00:20:20,840

research as well as the history of the public markets in Montreal.

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00:20:20,840 --> 00:20:26,440

Up next is Tania Perreault, co-owner and operator with her partner Mélisande Lefebvre of L'aPéro

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00:20:26,440 --> 00:20:28,120

Buvette.

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00:20:28,120 --> 00:20:31,720

As a wine bar on Thursday and Friday nights and a commercial design studio during the

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00:20:31,720 --> 00:20:37,240

rest of the time, L'aPéro has created a kind of sustainable ecosystem of commerce.

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00:20:37,240 --> 00:20:41,400

One business balances the other while the owners get to share their deep and abiding

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00:20:41,400 --> 00:20:44,920

love of natural wines without burning themselves out.

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00:20:44,920 --> 00:20:49,520

So thank you very much Tania for accepting to participate in this podcast.

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00:20:49,520 --> 00:20:51,520

I'm fascinated by your company.

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00:20:51,520 --> 00:20:58,640

Yes, in fact, L'aPéro Buvette was designed for a project where I was looking for a space

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00:20:58,640 --> 00:21:00,920

to create my design office.

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00:21:00,920 --> 00:21:08,880

So it's been more than 13 years that I design, design commercial spaces, restaurants, bars,

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00:21:08,880 --> 00:21:12,920

cafes, yoga centers for the customers.

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00:21:12,920 --> 00:21:20,640

And I had to find an office, I didn't know where to do it, in a studio, in a tower or

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00:21:20,640 --> 00:21:21,640

a pignon on fire.

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00:21:21,640 --> 00:21:26,240

And I decided to do it in a place where it inspires me the most.

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00:21:26,240 --> 00:21:32,360

That is to say, I like to bring my laptop to restaurants and cafes to inspire me of

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00:21:32,360 --> 00:21:33,360

space.

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00:21:33,360 --> 00:21:41,040

So I decided to create my office in a project that would be proper for me in a bar, a small

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00:21:41,040 --> 00:21:42,040

buvette, why not.

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00:21:42,040 --> 00:21:45,040

So that's how it was born.

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00:21:45,040 --> 00:21:50,000

It's fascinating, it's really a very comfortable space, nice, it's really, well, obviously

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00:21:50,000 --> 00:21:51,000

it's a well-designed year.

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00:21:51,000 --> 00:21:57,400

But for our English-speaking listeners, can you explain the concept of a buvette?

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00:21:57,400 --> 00:22:07,040

Funny word, actually, to describe a small space where we share wine with the people

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00:22:07,040 --> 00:22:08,040

in the neighborhood.

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00:22:08,040 --> 00:22:09,520

That's how I describe it.

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00:22:09,520 --> 00:22:14,400

It's really a buvette for me, it's not a bar because here we don't serve cocktails.

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00:22:14,400 --> 00:22:20,800

It's really a passion, a sharing of everything that is like wine, having an aperitif in a

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00:22:20,800 --> 00:22:21,800

convivial place.

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00:22:21,800 --> 00:22:28,240

I'm not at all a sommelier, I'm just fascinated by wine since I was very young.

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00:22:28,240 --> 00:22:31,240

My father did it with the little dung.

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00:22:31,240 --> 00:22:36,640

He didn't crush the grapes with his toes, but he still made me taste his creations.

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00:22:36,640 --> 00:22:42,440

And Mel, my partner with whom I have the project of the buvette, she used to drink a lot of

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00:22:42,440 --> 00:22:48,040

beer and she developed an intolerance, among other things, to sulfites.

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00:22:48,040 --> 00:22:53,240

But she liked the taste of beer, the taste of wheat, the taste of natural, and she liked

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00:22:53,240 --> 00:22:55,800

wine, but it created a lot of nausea.

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00:22:55,800 --> 00:23:02,040

So she discovered that there were natural wines, and she was really interested in this whole

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00:23:02,040 --> 00:23:03,040

universe.

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00:23:03,040 --> 00:23:09,040

She created an obsession, a passion, and that's why here we mainly have natural wines,

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00:23:09,040 --> 00:23:13,720

private imports, exclusive things that we can't find anywhere else.

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00:23:13,720 --> 00:23:20,960

The first time I came here, I was amazed by the selection, the variety, because it's

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00:23:20,960 --> 00:23:24,040

really an exceptional range of natural wines.

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00:23:24,040 --> 00:23:29,240

And since we know that all kinds of people who enter this field are not really experts

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00:23:29,240 --> 00:23:34,440

in the production of natural wines, but these are the products that are of exceptional quality.

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00:23:34,440 --> 00:23:39,120

Oh yes, but it's really all the work I give to Mel.

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00:23:39,120 --> 00:23:44,960

We have Lebanese, Japanese, Slovenian wines, etc.

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00:23:44,960 --> 00:23:51,680

It comes out completely from the standard that we recognize by the French and the Italians.

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00:23:51,680 --> 00:23:57,160

We explore different flavors, different vines, precisely.

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00:23:57,160 --> 00:24:02,360

So yes, these are products that are not necessarily found elsewhere, but it is also a concept

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00:24:02,360 --> 00:24:04,520

that is not really found elsewhere.

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00:24:04,520 --> 00:24:11,120

I don't know many places where there is a mix of a public space and a private space.

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00:24:11,120 --> 00:24:15,960

It's a design studio, but it's also a business, a wine bar.

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00:24:15,960 --> 00:24:20,080

And it's a business model that is also quite innovative.

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00:24:20,080 --> 00:24:22,760

For me at least, it's something really new.

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00:24:22,760 --> 00:24:30,200

Is it always a challenge to find this right tension between profitability for the owners

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00:24:30,200 --> 00:24:35,720

and profitability for the customers, especially in the context of alcohol consumption,

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00:24:35,720 --> 00:24:40,440

where there is a lot of money to buy a bottle that comes from elsewhere?

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00:24:40,440 --> 00:24:46,200

The fact of sharing space with a design office, which is a company in itself,

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00:24:46,200 --> 00:24:52,920

and the bar that is open only two nights, it allows us to offer customers

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00:24:52,920 --> 00:24:57,800

more affordable products and wines because we don't have the financial stress

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00:24:57,800 --> 00:25:00,200

to be very profitable.

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00:25:00,200 --> 00:25:06,920

So we really want to create a space where people come to discover,

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00:25:06,920 --> 00:25:13,240

exchange as much the passion of design, because it's an inspiring place,

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00:25:13,240 --> 00:25:19,000

than the passion for wine with the people of the neighborhood.

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00:25:19,000 --> 00:25:23,880

We don't do a lot of promotion, we don't want it to become too voluminous

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00:25:23,880 --> 00:25:25,720

or inaccessible either.

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00:25:25,720 --> 00:25:30,600

We don't want to go into a too high price scale to make more profit.

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00:25:30,600 --> 00:25:36,760

Our business model is really like we want to make people discover as much as possible

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00:25:36,760 --> 00:25:38,040

for less.

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00:25:38,040 --> 00:25:43,560

So it's a kind of ecosystem or ecology that you created between the bar,

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00:25:43,560 --> 00:25:51,800

the design studio, the community, and also everything that is business and marketing

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00:25:51,800 --> 00:25:56,520

in the world of restoration, of supply, of supply and demand.

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00:25:56,520 --> 00:25:57,400

Exactly.

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00:25:57,400 --> 00:26:03,880

So it's really delicate, but even that, I imagine it's more stable than the other restaurants,

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00:26:03,880 --> 00:26:10,360

the other bars, and I imagine maybe it's also a kind of model for the other companies

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00:26:10,360 --> 00:26:11,080

that want to...

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00:26:11,080 --> 00:26:11,880

Exactly.

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00:26:11,880 --> 00:26:16,840

There is one of the biggest challenges also in the world of restoration, and I'm arguing

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00:26:16,840 --> 00:26:21,560

a lot with my clients because I'm doing several restaurants for other clients,

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00:26:21,560 --> 00:26:29,960

and it's still the staff, the team, to find their staff, both managers, divers,

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00:26:29,960 --> 00:26:33,080

chefs, assistants, servers.

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00:26:33,080 --> 00:26:39,080

More and more people are doing less manual work, they're more behind the computer

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00:26:39,080 --> 00:26:40,440

in marketing.

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00:26:40,440 --> 00:26:44,840

There are other ways to do your career than to go into restoration.

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00:26:44,840 --> 00:26:50,920

So I think that our model, a small surface where it's just me and Mel,

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00:26:50,920 --> 00:26:58,200

we're both owners, there's no management of staff, so there's better control too,

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00:26:58,200 --> 00:27:02,120

as much on the service we give people.

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00:27:02,120 --> 00:27:06,280

We often find ourselves, sometimes we go for a coffee, we get sick of serving.

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00:27:06,280 --> 00:27:11,960

Our customer experience remains marked, after, on this institution, when in fact,

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00:27:11,960 --> 00:27:15,640

it's not the institution that's the problem, but it's the staff.

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00:27:15,640 --> 00:27:19,240

So it's a big challenge for a restaurant owner, anyway.

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00:27:19,240 --> 00:27:24,760

And if there's never a question of service, change in quality of service,

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00:27:24,760 --> 00:27:28,600

it's just a conversation, it's not a long process to format in the other places.

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00:27:28,600 --> 00:27:30,120

No, no, no, that's it.

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00:27:30,120 --> 00:27:34,040

Is the fact that space serves as an office during most of the week,

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00:27:34,040 --> 00:27:41,400

and as a nightclub on Saturdays, does it change your spatial and social relationships here?

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00:27:41,400 --> 00:27:46,280

Do you have your own relationship with space here?

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00:27:46,280 --> 00:27:54,760

When I invite my customers to the space, they're immediately charmed or reassured,

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00:27:54,760 --> 00:28:00,040

like, OK, well, yes, she does design for us, but she's able to do it for herself.

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00:28:00,040 --> 00:28:04,200

And it's like a showroom too, we have a maternity hospital in the back,

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00:28:04,200 --> 00:28:08,840

we can offer a glass of wine, it's still practical, at some levels.

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00:28:08,840 --> 00:28:17,320

And the neighborhood bar, what I really like is, we created it,

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00:28:17,320 --> 00:28:19,720

not just for us, but for the people around us.

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00:28:19,720 --> 00:28:24,440

So we like this relationship of trust between our customers,

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00:28:24,440 --> 00:28:28,440

it's really a meeting place, like, of several environments,

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00:28:28,440 --> 00:28:31,560

both in design and in any field.

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00:28:31,560 --> 00:28:34,520

The link between the two is interesting.

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00:28:34,520 --> 00:28:39,880

The hardest part, I would say, is to stop my design work,

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00:28:39,880 --> 00:28:45,240

sometimes three or four hours to change clothes, change costumes.

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00:28:45,240 --> 00:28:50,120

Is it also a change in the way you think and react to the world?

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00:28:50,120 --> 00:28:55,000

Because serving people at a bar is different than talking to your design clients.

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00:28:55,000 --> 00:28:55,800

Yes, yes.

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00:28:55,800 --> 00:28:59,960

But during my design studies, I was still in the service,

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00:28:59,960 --> 00:29:03,720

so it's really something that I have in my heart and in my blood.

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00:29:03,720 --> 00:29:10,680

I love being surrounded by people and making them an unforgettable experience in service.

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00:29:10,680 --> 00:29:15,400

It's not just, I come to bring you your meal, your glass of wine,

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00:29:15,400 --> 00:29:19,560

I'm interested, we chat, we explain, we explore.

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00:29:19,560 --> 00:29:24,840

And then people come back, so we recognize them, we recognize them by their names.

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00:29:24,840 --> 00:29:30,520

So we really create a sense of belonging, it's a place of meeting,

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00:29:30,520 --> 00:29:33,880

a little homie, if we can say, it's like inviting people to our place.

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00:29:36,200 --> 00:29:41,080

So you talked a little bit about the passion, the love you share for wine, you and Mélisande.

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00:29:41,080 --> 00:29:44,600

Are you also discovering other loves in wine?

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00:29:44,600 --> 00:29:50,200

Are there regions or species that you want to explore more?

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00:29:50,200 --> 00:29:51,080

Constantly.

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00:29:51,080 --> 00:30:00,280

I think the goal of opening the bar was to not be limited by what we can have

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00:30:00,280 --> 00:30:04,440

in the institutions, more like the government, if we can say.

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00:30:04,440 --> 00:30:10,040

And then our goal is to also visit vineyards and to discover by ourselves,

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00:30:10,040 --> 00:30:18,840

different regions that produce this type of wine to maybe ask the agencies to import them.

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00:30:18,840 --> 00:30:23,000

It's really a real passion of wine.

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00:30:23,000 --> 00:30:27,480

It's a way of discovering all that exists in the world that is a little less known.

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00:30:27,480 --> 00:30:28,520

Yeah, exactly.

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00:30:28,520 --> 00:30:33,240

Cool, cool. What are your thoughts about the future of wine consumption versus, for example,

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00:30:33,240 --> 00:30:40,200

cocktails, beers, new non-alcoholic cocktails, all that?

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00:30:40,200 --> 00:30:47,720

I think cocktails are interesting, but it's certainly longer to do.

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00:30:47,720 --> 00:30:50,840

It requires more ingredients, it's more research.

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00:30:50,840 --> 00:30:57,160

We met a client who came here and she tried to find innovative ways to create a cocktail,

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00:30:57,160 --> 00:31:00,600

let's say, with a taste of tomato, but that was green.

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00:31:00,600 --> 00:31:04,360

And it's like, OK, we're going to different worlds, but it's true,

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00:31:04,360 --> 00:31:08,920

people are looking for experiences, both in terms of wine.

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00:31:08,920 --> 00:31:15,560

We know French, Italians, Americans, Californians, we recognize their

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00:31:15,560 --> 00:31:22,920

taste buds, but with wine, what's also fun with cocktails is that we can explore

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00:31:22,920 --> 00:31:28,760

different flavors. There are wines that are more based on gasoline,

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00:31:28,760 --> 00:31:34,360

that will cost yeast, raspberry, cranberry, pomegranate.

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00:31:34,360 --> 00:31:38,040

We explore wine as much as we explore cocktails.

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00:31:38,040 --> 00:31:44,680

Yeah, and I think that in your wines, in natural wines, but also the wines you have here,

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00:31:44,680 --> 00:31:51,800

they are a bit like cocktails at times, because cocktails are basically a balanced mixture.

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00:31:51,800 --> 00:31:57,960

Do you think people respond to natural wines in the same way as they respond to new cocktails

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00:31:57,960 --> 00:31:59,400

that are offered on several levels?

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00:31:59,400 --> 00:32:03,160

Absolutely. There are people who don't like wine, who have an apprehension,

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00:32:03,160 --> 00:32:09,160

who say, I don't like white wine because it tastes like that, I don't like red wine because it's bitter.

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00:32:09,160 --> 00:32:16,360

But they like cocktails, so sometimes we have wines with green, where we will feel more the tropical side,

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00:32:16,360 --> 00:32:24,280

less fruity with the bitterness of a beer. There are even wines that evolve as well,

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00:32:24,280 --> 00:32:30,440

that at the opening there are certain aromas, and the more you drink the bottle, the more the wine

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00:32:30,440 --> 00:32:36,520

has breathed, it has taken oxygen, and it develops other things too. So all that is really

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00:32:36,520 --> 00:32:40,200

part of an experience in wine.

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00:32:40,200 --> 00:32:45,080

One of the things I admire a lot about your menu is the categories of wines.

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00:32:45,080 --> 00:32:49,080

There are wines that are more funky, there are wines that are non-generated.

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00:32:49,080 --> 00:32:55,800

Do you think you participate in the evolution of the language that describes wine?

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00:32:55,800 --> 00:33:03,640

Yes, exactly. The fact that we are not similar to each other, that we are just passionate about wine.

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00:33:03,640 --> 00:33:11,640

We don't have the right words to form the wine, so we describe the wine really as we feel it.

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00:33:11,640 --> 00:33:21,480

We also love when people share how they see the wine, what they feel, what they taste,

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00:33:21,480 --> 00:33:29,400

where it will go in their mouth. It's really a natural exchange of the expression of the wine we drink.

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00:33:29,400 --> 00:33:37,320

Yes, and I think it adds a lot to the femininity, the simplicity presented by the glass.

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00:33:37,320 --> 00:33:44,840

Thank you very much for having me talk to you about this wonderful, fascinating and very comforting subject.

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00:33:44,840 --> 00:34:08,840

It's a pleasure.

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00:34:15,000 --> 00:34:18,280

So welcome back to Stick This in Your Mouth with my partner Maxime.

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00:34:18,280 --> 00:34:18,920

Hi Maxime.

447

00:34:18,920 --> 00:34:20,280

Hello. How are you today?

448

00:34:20,280 --> 00:34:21,960

I'm fine, how are you?

449

00:34:21,960 --> 00:34:24,680

Are you looking forward to eating more disgusting things?

450

00:34:24,680 --> 00:34:25,720

Not really.

451

00:34:25,720 --> 00:34:27,480

Yes, but I'm grateful that you're doing it anyway.

452

00:34:27,480 --> 00:34:34,440

Okay, so last week it was all about the terrors of bananas, and you survived.

453

00:34:34,440 --> 00:34:35,320

I did.

454

00:34:35,320 --> 00:34:39,480

Do you have any reflections on eating a banana that you'd like to share with the audience?

455

00:34:39,480 --> 00:34:46,040

It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be, but it's not enough for me to eat bananas again.

456

00:34:46,040 --> 00:34:50,040

But does it open you up to the idea that some things are not as bad as you think they might be?

457

00:34:50,040 --> 00:34:50,760

Of course.

458

00:34:50,760 --> 00:34:55,640

All right, so this week when we're looking at cheese, to quote Wallace and Gromit,

459

00:34:55,640 --> 00:34:57,800

how do you feel about cheese?

460

00:34:57,800 --> 00:35:04,200

Not well. I really don't like cheese. Why don't you like cheese?

461

00:35:04,200 --> 00:35:06,360

Once again, it's all about texture.

462

00:35:06,360 --> 00:35:09,880

Okay, so chewy gummy.

463

00:35:09,880 --> 00:35:15,400

Chewy gummy or somewhat rubbery or springy or any kind of...

464

00:35:15,400 --> 00:35:16,760

Dances in your mouth.

465

00:35:16,760 --> 00:35:25,320

And also, certain more pronounced cheese have a taste that I'm not fond of, like any kind of

466

00:35:25,320 --> 00:35:26,840

Roquefort or Bleu.

467

00:35:26,840 --> 00:35:30,200

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So what is it about the taste that you don't like?

468

00:35:30,200 --> 00:35:36,600

Excellent question. I'm not sure I have... it's just not my favorite taste.

469

00:35:36,600 --> 00:35:37,800

No, but it's hard to...

470

00:35:37,800 --> 00:35:38,600

It's hard to...

471

00:35:38,600 --> 00:35:41,000

You're like, you gross, get it away from me.

472

00:35:41,000 --> 00:35:46,520

Yes, you gross, get it away from me. But also smelly cheeses, because I associate the smell

473

00:35:46,520 --> 00:35:49,000

with the taste, even though sometimes it doesn't.

474

00:35:49,800 --> 00:35:54,760

Taste is what goes on on our tongue and smells what goes on in our nose and flavors what we

475

00:35:54,760 --> 00:36:00,360

experience when we actually eat. And a lot of people find the flavors of the aromas of

476

00:36:00,360 --> 00:36:03,720

blue cheese smells like feet. Is it something else?

477

00:36:03,720 --> 00:36:05,160

No, it's not feet.

478

00:36:06,280 --> 00:36:09,000

And you're not into eating feet? Come on.

479

00:36:09,960 --> 00:36:13,480

Okay, so grilled cheese, croque monsieur, yes.

480

00:36:13,480 --> 00:36:13,960

Fondue?

481

00:36:15,720 --> 00:36:19,560

Yes, I've had fondue, but like a little bit.

482

00:36:19,560 --> 00:36:21,720

All right, so we've got some cheeses on the table.

483

00:36:21,720 --> 00:36:23,560

Yes, a little too much for my taste.

484

00:36:23,560 --> 00:36:25,640

So what are you seeing on the board right now?

485

00:36:25,640 --> 00:36:33,480

I'm seeing blue cheese. I'm seeing some kind of processed cheese. I'm seeing some kind of

486

00:36:33,480 --> 00:36:38,200

Parmesan and the other one I cannot identify. Oh, it's Boursin.

487

00:36:38,200 --> 00:36:39,480

It's your favorite.

488

00:36:39,480 --> 00:36:40,920

Boursin, I love!

489

00:36:43,160 --> 00:36:44,520

Because it's not really cheese.

490

00:36:45,240 --> 00:36:46,760

Well, I don't know what it is.

491

00:36:46,760 --> 00:36:51,400

This blue cheese is actually a Campasola, which I discovered in the 1980s. I thought it was the

492

00:36:51,400 --> 00:36:56,120

most miraculous thing that had ever been created. Some weird hybrid of Camembert and Gorgonzola,

493

00:36:56,120 --> 00:37:01,000

and it is a wonderful cheese. So I'm going to make you look at it and maybe try tasting some of it.

494

00:37:01,000 --> 00:37:04,760

We'll see. And then yeah, the other one's a Parmesan for the, well, it's not Parmesan

495

00:37:04,760 --> 00:37:09,320

because it's made in Estonia, but at our local cheese shop. We're gonna try that and see what

496

00:37:09,320 --> 00:37:11,240

happens. What does it smell like to you?

497

00:37:11,240 --> 00:37:17,400

It reminds me of Parmesan, but also something like a cheddar.

498

00:37:17,400 --> 00:37:17,900

Yeah.

499

00:37:19,320 --> 00:37:23,880

It's vaguely reminiscent of Parmesan, like a real.

500

00:37:23,880 --> 00:37:24,380

Yeah.

501

00:37:25,160 --> 00:37:31,480

The Parmesan thing is kind of an exception for me. Like I would have, like, I would shave

502

00:37:31,480 --> 00:37:39,720

some of it on a salad and eat that and be okay with it and being perfect. And then I would

503

00:37:39,720 --> 00:37:45,560

be okay with it and being perfectly fine. But this is, has a very different texture than other

504

00:37:45,560 --> 00:37:53,400

cheeses is that it's, it's, it's, it's relatively dry. It crumbles easily. It's not springy in the

505

00:37:53,400 --> 00:38:02,040

mouth. It's tasty, but it's mildly tasty. It's not like a super strong smell and it doesn't smell like

506

00:38:02,040 --> 00:38:02,540

feet.

507

00:38:03,080 --> 00:38:06,280

Okay. So that's the Campasola. You don't need to eat it, but, but like, what is, what do you get

508

00:38:06,280 --> 00:38:07,480

when you put it in your fingers?

509

00:38:07,480 --> 00:38:10,120

Oh, it's sticky and gooey and, and, and.

510

00:38:11,240 --> 00:38:14,840

Okay. Hand over the cheese. I'm going to stick it in my mouth. Yum, yum, yum.

511

00:38:16,360 --> 00:38:21,880

Takes me back to my childhood. Okay. So what I really am interested in doing is this experiment

512

00:38:21,880 --> 00:38:29,560

between two highly processed cheeses. One is Boursin, kind of cream cheese with herbs and

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00:38:29,560 --> 00:38:35,320

garlic in it. And the other is this perfectly horrifying looking orange processed cheese.

514

00:38:35,320 --> 00:38:39,240

And it's basically cheese whiz, but it's a Quebec wha version of cheese whiz. And the first time

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00:38:39,240 --> 00:38:43,800

I encountered this, someone said, oh, you've got to try it. It's so good. It's like, yeah, it's cheese

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00:38:43,800 --> 00:38:51,560

whiz. Let's see if I can get this open. Oh, there it is. Ooh, it's got some texture. So we've got two

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00:38:51,560 --> 00:38:59,560

processed cheeses. One delightful Boursin. It's our weekend treat. Yeah. It is very familiar to

518

00:38:59,560 --> 00:39:05,400

me. I've been eating this for a very long time. I discovered this when I moved to Montreal.

519

00:39:06,520 --> 00:39:11,800

I'd rather prefer the Boursin than a regular cream cheese on bagel. That's my personal taste.

520

00:39:11,800 --> 00:39:17,400

Yeah, but later it's, it's a little more arid. And there's some flavoring now. So, and it's a very

521

00:39:17,400 --> 00:39:24,120

interesting and easy to eat kind of cheese. Yum. Yeah. Okay. So try the...

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00:39:24,120 --> 00:39:37,000

That's an awful lot. First of all, the color is really, really not attractive. Any kind, when I

523

00:39:37,000 --> 00:39:43,960

see it, like a really orange cheddar, I just like, it's just not a color that I find attractive. And

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00:39:43,960 --> 00:39:52,520

I am very scared to taste this. After the Boursin, it doesn't taste like anything. Yeah, it tastes

525

00:39:52,520 --> 00:39:57,640

kind of salty and a little bit nothing. It's not even as strong as Cheez Whiz. Cheez Whiz I find

526

00:39:57,640 --> 00:40:05,080

very strong. This is sort of just like, sort of there. That is quintessentially gooey and gummy

527

00:40:05,080 --> 00:40:13,640

and gross. Yeah. Which is all stuff I'm not fond of on top of the orange color. So it's a pass for

528

00:40:13,640 --> 00:40:18,200

me. Not a herd pass, but it's just like not... But it's not, it's so interesting, right? Because

529

00:40:18,200 --> 00:40:23,640

it's basically the same kind of concept as Boursin. It just has a very different look.

530

00:40:23,640 --> 00:40:36,360

It feels slick in the mouth. It feels oily. It feels not the natural state of cheese. Right.

531

00:40:37,640 --> 00:40:43,960

We were always joking about Cheez Whiz, saying that there was more whiz than cheese.

532

00:40:43,960 --> 00:40:49,560

Well, I think this is probably about 98% whiz, but it's Whiz Locale. Yes.

533

00:40:49,560 --> 00:40:51,560

It comes from here. Yay.

534

00:40:54,120 --> 00:40:59,560

All right. Well, I appreciate your time once again and your bravery. Thank you. Merci à toi. Bye.

535

00:41:04,040 --> 00:41:10,360

So what is it about getting feedback from a given situation that's so important? And is the feedback

536

00:41:10,360 --> 00:41:16,360

we get from real live human beings different or more valuable than the feedback we get from machines

537

00:41:16,360 --> 00:41:22,280

or other non-living things? The beep beep beep of a checkout scanner lets us know we've passed the

538

00:41:22,280 --> 00:41:27,160

barcode across the laser beams correctly, as does the appearance of a product name and price on the

539

00:41:27,160 --> 00:41:31,880

checkout screen. The sound of liquid pouring into a glass and the pitch changes we hear tell us we've

540

00:41:31,880 --> 00:41:35,960

aimed correctly and that we'll eventually need to stop tipping the bottle. Feedback from another

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00:41:35,960 --> 00:41:41,160

person though, it does something more subtle, I think. It transcends the simple mechanics of

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00:41:41,160 --> 00:41:47,960

knowing that we've made a gesture. Those verbalizations and eye contact and smiles or even frowns,

543

00:41:47,960 --> 00:41:53,400

all the vibes we get from someone we're interacting with, they build up foundations of trust

544

00:41:53,400 --> 00:42:00,360

relationships. We know that our presence, our words, our emotions and our actions or our gestures have

545

00:42:00,360 --> 00:42:06,360

been sensed and respected and perhaps valued. More importantly, reciprocal feedback gives both the

546

00:42:06,360 --> 00:42:12,840

buyers and sellers of food a sense of complicity, of being in it together, whatever it is, a

547

00:42:12,840 --> 00:42:18,200

relationship, a moment, whatever. And that human trust relationship then extends to the food and

548

00:42:18,200 --> 00:42:22,760

drink we're interacting over. So being in a relationship with people helps us be in better

549

00:42:22,760 --> 00:42:28,440

relationships with our food. For Nicolas Fabien Ouellet at the Montreal Public Markets, the

550

00:42:28,440 --> 00:42:33,720

feedback relationships with his vendors help him support new small-scale farmers. The feedback that

551

00:42:33,720 --> 00:42:38,760

they exchange with shoppers at the market adds value to the food that's being bought and sold.

552

00:42:38,760 --> 00:42:43,800

The signage about food origins tells buyers what to expect and when they crunch into some local

553

00:42:43,800 --> 00:42:48,600

lettuce or eat a freshly steamed québécois fingerling potato, that sensory feedback in

554

00:42:48,600 --> 00:42:53,800

their mouths and stomachs goes back and reinforces the trust that people have for their markets.

555

00:42:53,800 --> 00:43:00,200

Then, for example, over at L'aPéro Buvette, the ways that Tanya and Melissand suggest and share and

556

00:43:00,200 --> 00:43:05,560

describe their wines, they start off a feedback cycle when their customers take the first sip.

557

00:43:05,560 --> 00:43:10,600

The conversations across the bar top that also doubles as a conference table during the day

558

00:43:10,600 --> 00:43:15,480

ground the experience and the visual truths of the space. This is a wine bar conceived around

559

00:43:15,480 --> 00:43:22,600

pleasure and exchange, not just a commerce, not just a business. And then what about Maxim and his

560

00:43:22,600 --> 00:43:28,120

ongoing discomfort with eating cheese, whether it's blue or orange? In his case, the sensory feedback

561

00:43:28,120 --> 00:43:33,160

he gets from solidified dairy tends to reinforce his childhood dislikes. When cheese is

562

00:43:33,160 --> 00:43:39,160

invisibilized, however, in a gratin or a sauce, those cues melt away and maybe a new kind of

563

00:43:39,160 --> 00:43:45,160

taste relationship can enter the scene. Maybe Maxim can learn to trust cheese.

564

00:43:46,760 --> 00:43:51,400

Whatever the case, I think it's worth de-insulating ourselves from feedback,

565

00:43:51,400 --> 00:43:57,400

getting closer to the people and objects that can give it to us. Letting ourselves both receive

566

00:43:57,400 --> 00:44:02,360

and also give feedback directly is a really important part of staying connected, staying well,

567

00:44:02,360 --> 00:44:09,160

most of all staying human. And just for the record, giving a thumbs up or a like on an app isn't

568

00:44:09,160 --> 00:44:11,960

really the feedback I'm talking about. No, but that's me.

569

00:44:15,640 --> 00:44:20,360

We end the show as usual with the Making a Meal of It food questionnaire. As promised,

570

00:44:20,360 --> 00:44:25,240

our responders come from the worlds of art, politics, social change, and science. Eaters,

571

00:44:25,240 --> 00:44:30,600

all of them, but folks who don't necessarily work directly with or in food. Their answers

572

00:44:30,600 --> 00:44:35,320

are intended to prompt you to think about what your own responses might be to the same questions,

573

00:44:35,320 --> 00:44:40,600

a little moment of reflection while digesting the more detailed conversations you've just heard.

574

00:44:42,440 --> 00:44:46,760

This week, our food questionnaire responder is the Honorable Sheila Malcolmson,

575

00:44:46,760 --> 00:44:54,040

a political and social changemaker par excellence. Sheila is a former member of the Canadian Federal

576

00:44:54,040 --> 00:44:58,600

Parliament representing Nanaimo Ladysmith in British Columbia, and she's currently a member

577

00:44:58,600 --> 00:45:03,000

of the Provincial Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, where she serves as Minister of Social

578

00:45:03,000 --> 00:45:07,560

Development and Poverty Reduction after having previously served as Minister of Mental Health

579

00:45:07,560 --> 00:45:12,520

and Addictions. As we recorded her responses to the food questionnaire, she described herself

580

00:45:12,520 --> 00:45:20,600

as feeling determined, playful, and grateful. Sheila, what is your idea of a perfect food?

581

00:45:21,240 --> 00:45:25,640

Pumpkin pie would be my go-to. You can have it for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

582

00:45:26,280 --> 00:45:29,560

Of what food or food context are you afraid or distrustful?

583

00:45:30,120 --> 00:45:34,200

In my occupation, things that spill on your shirt.

584

00:45:35,000 --> 00:45:38,600

What word or concept describes a well-balanced food system?

585

00:45:38,600 --> 00:45:42,520

Local, local, and local.

586

00:45:42,520 --> 00:45:46,840

What word or concept describes why food systems often remain unbalanced?

587

00:45:46,840 --> 00:45:47,880

Inequity.

588

00:45:47,880 --> 00:45:50,440

Which food person do you most admire?

589

00:45:50,440 --> 00:45:55,320

Loaves and Fishes here in Nanaimo, and its Executive Director, Peter Sinclair.

590

00:45:55,320 --> 00:45:57,160

Which food innovation do you try to ignore?

591

00:45:58,760 --> 00:46:03,880

Peeled things that don't need to be peeled, like boiled eggs or bananas.

592

00:46:03,880 --> 00:46:06,920

What is your greatest gastronomic extravagance?

593

00:46:06,920 --> 00:46:08,120

Chocolate cake.

594

00:46:08,120 --> 00:46:09,320

For what do you hunger?

595

00:46:09,320 --> 00:46:11,160

And right now, chocolate cake.

596

00:46:11,160 --> 00:46:13,720

On what occasion do you feign satiety?

597

00:46:13,720 --> 00:46:14,840

Apple crisp.

598

00:46:14,840 --> 00:46:17,640

What do you most dislike about dinner tables?

599

00:46:17,640 --> 00:46:21,000

Flour vases that block the view of my friends.

600

00:46:21,560 --> 00:46:23,880

What is the quality you most like in a fruit?

601

00:46:23,880 --> 00:46:24,920

Juiciness.

602

00:46:24,920 --> 00:46:27,400

What is the quality you most like in a cut of meat?

603

00:46:27,400 --> 00:46:27,900

Thick.

604

00:46:28,360 --> 00:46:30,840

Which condiments do you most overuse?

605

00:46:30,840 --> 00:46:32,760

That would have to be yellow mustard.

606

00:46:32,760 --> 00:46:35,080

What kinds of gardens make you happiest?

607

00:46:35,080 --> 00:46:40,760

Wild looking bountiful flowers with a little kale mixed in.

608

00:46:40,760 --> 00:46:43,480

Which culinary skill would you most like to have?

609

00:46:43,480 --> 00:46:45,480

I'd like to be able to make a soufflé.

610

00:46:45,480 --> 00:46:48,120

If you could change one thing about nutrition, what would it be?

611

00:46:48,840 --> 00:46:53,800

I would pack even more iron content into black licorice.

612

00:46:53,800 --> 00:46:56,440

What do you consider your greatest edible achievement?

613

00:46:56,440 --> 00:46:58,120

Also pumpkin pie.

614

00:46:58,120 --> 00:47:01,880

If you were to die and come back as an edible animal, vegetable, or mineral,

615

00:47:01,880 --> 00:47:03,320

what would you like it to be?

616

00:47:03,320 --> 00:47:06,440

For lack of a better choice, carrot.

617

00:47:06,440 --> 00:47:09,400

Where and or when would you most like to dine?

618

00:47:09,400 --> 00:47:11,720

Always on the beach at sunset.

619

00:47:11,720 --> 00:47:13,960

What is your most treasured kitchen implement?

620

00:47:13,960 --> 00:47:15,320

The cheese peeler.

621

00:47:15,880 --> 00:47:18,680

What is your favourite highly processed food?

622

00:47:18,680 --> 00:47:20,040

Prinkle chips.

623

00:47:20,040 --> 00:47:21,800

What is your favourite aroma?

624

00:47:21,800 --> 00:47:24,200

Chocolate cake while baking.

625

00:47:24,200 --> 00:47:28,200

What spice, kitchen implement, or cookbook do you use most rarely?

626

00:47:28,200 --> 00:47:31,560

Although I grew up with it and I still have it on the shelf,

627

00:47:31,560 --> 00:47:34,280

it would have to be the joy of cooking.

628

00:47:34,280 --> 00:47:36,600

What do you most value in your friends' food?

629

00:47:36,600 --> 00:47:37,720

Abundance.

630

00:47:37,720 --> 00:47:39,560

Who are your favourite food writers?

631

00:47:39,560 --> 00:47:40,600

Holly Hawk.

632

00:47:40,600 --> 00:47:41,720

All their cookbooks.

633

00:47:41,720 --> 00:47:43,640

Who are your favourite food celebrities?

634

00:47:43,640 --> 00:47:48,040

Brenda Gartner, who may not be a celebrity to many people,

635

00:47:48,040 --> 00:47:54,520

but she's a fantastic and generous cook and gets me to her table for most Sunday dinners.

636

00:47:54,520 --> 00:47:56,760

With which cuisine do you most identify?

637

00:47:56,760 --> 00:47:58,280

West Coast fusion.

638

00:47:58,280 --> 00:48:00,120

What is your most powerful sense?

639

00:48:00,120 --> 00:48:01,720

A sense of smell.

640

00:48:01,720 --> 00:48:05,720

What are your favourite agricultural, culinary, or gastronomic words?

641

00:48:05,720 --> 00:48:06,520

Delish.

642

00:48:06,520 --> 00:48:09,240

What would you eat as your second to last meal?

643

00:48:09,240 --> 00:48:11,080

Also pumpkin pie.

644

00:48:11,080 --> 00:48:14,840

What food-related epitaph would you put on your own tombstone?

645

00:48:14,840 --> 00:48:16,200

She had enough.

646

00:48:27,560 --> 00:48:29,320

And that wraps it up for now.

647

00:48:29,320 --> 00:48:32,200

Thank you again to Nicolas Fabien-Ouellet, Tania Perreault,

648

00:48:32,200 --> 00:48:34,360

Maxime Giroux, and Sheila Malcolmson.

649

00:48:34,360 --> 00:48:37,080

To all the people I interact with every day when I go food shopping,

650

00:48:37,080 --> 00:48:39,640

and of course to you for listening today.

651

00:48:39,640 --> 00:48:42,280

For news and updates, check out makingamealofit.com

652

00:48:42,280 --> 00:48:46,360

or follow us at Making A Meal podcast on most social media platforms.

653

00:48:46,360 --> 00:48:48,120

If you have the time, rate and review us.

654

00:48:48,120 --> 00:48:51,560

Your feedback is always welcome, of course.

655

00:48:53,800 --> 00:48:57,960

Next week, we'll be hearing from three people with various progressive perspectives

656

00:48:57,960 --> 00:49:00,520

on both being and eating fat.

657

00:49:00,520 --> 00:49:04,040

From the politics and activism around body positivity and diversity,

658

00:49:04,040 --> 00:49:07,240

to the rather surprising nutritional qualities of pork lard,

659

00:49:07,240 --> 00:49:11,000

we're getting closer to a subject that sometimes seems a little hard to chew on.

660

00:49:11,720 --> 00:49:15,240

In the meantime, as has been said across countless tables,

661

00:49:15,240 --> 00:49:28,520

Kampai and buon appetito!