

What's Cooking?

A chronicle of my adventures and misadventures in cooking school in Vancouver.



Sunday, July 4, 2010

Circle Farm Tours

On Friday, I went with two of my classmates on the circle farm tour. This is a self-guided tour of local farms that spans about six different towns.

Peter, from Australia, Rhea, from the Philippines, and I set out at 8:30 in the morning for our first destination: Langley. I wasn't expecting much from this small town as I thought it would be a lot like a suburb, but it was a really nice town that was not too small townish.

There were tons of beautiful farms surrounding it, and it is close to the American border, which is also a plus. Since we got there a little early, we decided to stop at A Bread Affair, which has been voted as having BC's best bread. All the bread is hand-made, natural, and uses natural leaveners. I bought a cranberry-semolina loaf that was incredible and highly addictive. Luckily for me, I also found out that they sell the bread at the local farmer's market as well.

After stopping at the bakery, we headed out for our first destination, which was a winery. We did not purposely plan for our first stop of the morning to be a wine tasting, but we wanted the meat stop to be the last one for food-safety reasons, so that's just how the cookie crumbled.

I bought two very nice sweet white wines that were varieties I had never heard of before. One is called bacchus, and the other one is called siegerrebe. I'm saving them to drink under the hot August sun on the deck of my parents place in Pine Lake.





After Langley, we went to Abbotsford. Although it is apparently the murder capital of BC

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because of gangs, it didn't appear to be any different from any other small town that I have ever been to before. We went to Maan farms and U-picked strawberries. This is something that I've always thought would be fun, but it wasn't really. It's backbreaking work - and dirty too. We picked 6 pounds between the three of us and headed off. Actually, it was a pretty good deal because they were on sale for 99 cents a pound and tasted pretty sweet.



I had wanted to go to Anita's Organic Grain and Flour Mill in Chilliwack next, but we were running behind schedule, so we decided to skip it since you can buy those products in any major store in town. So next was to Agassiz and a hazelnut farm. Apparently, the citrus-flavoured hazelnuts and the hazelnut butter were awesome, but I couldn't taste anything because of my allergies. Stupid allergies!



Next, we went to The Farm House Natural Cheeses, which was the place that inspired the whole trip in the first place. We had a tasting of cheeses from this goat farm in class, and they were so good, that we wanted to go to the farm and buy some of the cheese for ourselves. I fell in love with the fresh chevre, which is an unripe, creamy, mild-tasting goat's cheese that is similar to ricotta.





We also stopped at Limbert Mountain Farm, which was Peter's favourite place on the trip. We found out that he actually has a diploma in horticulture! At the farm, they grow all sorts of interesting herbs such as Moroccan mint (which makes a great tea) and pineapple sage. They also have a little shop and a kitchen where they serve tea and lunch on Saturday and Sunday. It was picturesque and idyllic, and I think we all had fantasies of owning a place like that one day...



We stopped in Mission, which was the town where they filmed the 100-Mile Diet documentary that was on the Food Network. Here, we stopped at the most famous Canadian farm of all - Tim Horton's! Upon entering the establishment, I immediately entered the women's washroom and encountered local wildlife - a drunk MAN who was stumbling out of

a stall after urinating all over the seat and floor. Fun stuff!

Our last stop was Hopcott Premium Meats in Pitt Meadows. We were pretty disappointed in this stop, since you didn't even get to see the farm, it was just a sales centre for their meats. I did manage to buy a 28-day dry aged steak to try, though. If you read my post on steaks, you will know that 28-day dry-aged is the best aging process that you can buy. I cooked it up last night with a wild mushroom and rainbow chard argue, and it was pretty good.

We finally arrived home around 6:30, tired but content after a great day of exploring the country-side with our taste buds.

Posted by Shannon at 4:02 PM



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