

Guests attending the Feast arrive at 4 p.m. and sip innovative cocktails infused with fresh herbs and fruit before starting a farm tour led by Smith himself or one of his farmers. The farm stroll acts as a segue that allows us to appreciate the upcoming Feast. As Smith says, "We are first and foremost farmers and we invite you to an edible discovery."

As she points out the herb, flower and vegetable gardens, Steph, our farm guide, informs us that lovage flowers can be used to make liquors and their stalks add flavour to Bloody Caesars. Sweet cilantro flowers make a delicious dessert garnish, while their roots can be roasted for stocks and curries. Who knew? Beyond the Inn's buzzwords, "farm, flavour, feast", Steph says, "We also get excited about the 'F' word – forage." Indeed, you might find some weeds, such as wood sorrel in your salad, or sea asparagus, foraged from the beach, in your chowder. New this year is a mushroom patch. The farm also raises chickens for eggs and Berkshire pigs that Steph proclaims are the happiest and best-fed pigs on PEI... until one bad day.

As we conclude our farm tour around 5 p.m., the pony-tailed, bearded Smith greets us and leads us to the Fire Garden for oyster hour and more appetizers that can be washed down with Old World Normandy-style cider, cocktails, wine or the Feast's version of the Bloody Caesar.



"PEI has 60 kinds of oysters," says Smith as he invites us to a "tour d'oyster." We start with Savage Blondes that Smith and his competent shuckers open at lightning speed. Next come Pickle Points, Daisy Bays and Sand Dunes. Smith encourages us to try them all; there is no limit.

"Last night we shucked 690 oysters, a new record," he boasts, adding that the key is to keep the bivalves cold and that's why they are topped with house-made frozen Bloody Mary ice. It's a combo made in heaven. Also on the happy hour menu the night I visit are roasted oysters, bluefin tuna skewers with a mustard/maple glaze, smoked salmon, and tacos with an array of hot sauces made from the farm's many varieties of chili peppers. At the Fire Garden, the food is cooked with wood, fire and smoke in ways the fire marshal would not allow indoors. I am a self-confessed oyster aficionado and it was tempting to over-indulge, but the main event was yet to come.



Before heading to the dining room Smith leads us back to the main lawn where we gather around the flagpole and admire the views of Bay Fortune. Smith sabers a bottle of the bubbles from Benjamin Bridge winery in Nova Scotia and then teaches one of the guests the art of sabrage. This theatrical technique for opening a champagne bottle with a saber (a large kitchen knife will suffice), is used for ceremonial occasions and was popular in France with Napoleon's army. The wielder slides the saber along the body seam of the bottle to the lip to break the top of the neck away, leaving the neck of the bottle open and ready to pour. Flutes are distributed and Smith toasts this special evening and the bounty of the land and sea.

The multi-course Feast begins at 6 p.m. in the dining room where we sit at communal wooden tables in front of the Inn's 25-foot hearth. Smith and his fire brigade use every form of live-fire cooking known to man, including a smokehouse, open hearth, grill, rotisserie, plancha and oven. No dials, no switches – just old-school cooking.

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