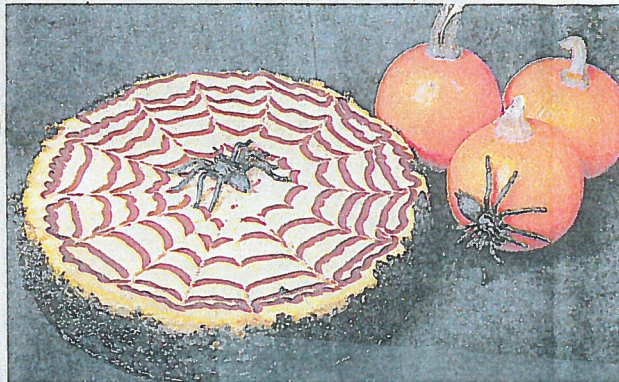


SPOOKY SWEETS

Here's a perfect treat for Halloween **D4**



BELMONT'S BLENDS

Eatery has many tastes **D3**



Oliver Truesdale-Jutras and Phoebe Oviedo, with a lamb dish and Moroccan curios representing their travels. **JEAN LEVAC/OTTAWA CITIZEN**

HAVE APRON, WILL TRAVEL

Ottawa chefs' Stovetrotter project blends wanderlust, cooking

**JOHANNA READ**  
OTTAWA CITIZEN

Earlier this year, in the northeastern Moroccan city of Fez, I complimented the two chefs in the tiny kitchen of Restaurant Numéro 7. "That's the most beautiful asparagus I've ever seen."

Phoebe Oviedo looked up from poaching bright orange peaches and smiled. Oliver Truesdale-Jutras told me about the asparagus he found at a market stall in the medina. After three words, I interrupted him.

"Are you from Ottawa?!"  
The owner of Restaurant Numéro 7 had mentioned that his new chefs were Canadians like me. After living in the capital for 20 years, I was able to recognize an Ottawa accent anywhere, including in the most unexpected of places, such as this kitchen, which I visited in April.

Truesdale-Jutras and Oviedo are back in Ottawa now, but only for a matter of days, as they get ready to launch their new culinary project that is both local and global. They call it Stovetrotter, as in stovetrotter.ca, the website that went live just this week.

The name stands for a series of special dinners that take will place

in culinary hot spots around the world.

"We want to work with local farmers, artisans and businesses to create a comprehensive meal that really couldn't be made anywhere but there, or anytime but then," says Truesdale-Jutras.

"Between some of the nicest kitchens in the world, people's backyards and random makeshift fire pits, we realized that cooking is something that keeps us connected to the world at large and brings us a lot of joy. The idea kind of spitballed from there," Truesdale-Jutras says. "Instead of us travelling around the globe cooking for our passion, we could also do it as a business at the same time, and hopefully get the same joy and the same connection."

"We are looking at Stovetrotter as a way to stimulate the conversation on food internationally, but be based in Ottawa. I don't think we will end up being away from Ottawa for more than three months of the year, but you never know, something big can always come up."

Their first Stovetrotter event will be near where I discovered them in Fez, but this time in the red city of Marrakech, in early November. France is next, with a date-to-be-announced gig in Paris.

As far-flung as Oviedo, 28, and Truesdale-Jutras, 27, will be, they will retain a deep connection to Ottawa. Most recently and before their time in Morocco, they were cooking at North & Navy, which opened in February in Centretown.

Truesdale-Jutras started young, washing dishes at age 12 for his father's Culinary Conspiracy catering company. He trained in Vancouver before moving home

*We want to work with local farmers, artisans and businesses to create a comprehensive meal that really couldn't be made anywhere but there.*

to Ottawa. Oviedo arrived in Ottawa from the Philippines with her food-focused family when she was 14. Her culinary education was at Algonquin College.

The two met while working at the now closed Domus Café in the ByWard Market.

"I was really sad to see Domus go," Truesdale-Jutras says. "I used to stay up at night in Australia and design menus for that place when I had absolutely no reason to."

Both were very influenced by Domus owner John Taylor, a pioneering supporter of the local food movement in Ottawa, and his approach to seasonality.

They honed their skills in some of Ottawa's top kitchens — Restaurant E18hteen, the Westin, the Rideau Club and Navarra. But before too long, wanderlust kicked in.

"To be honest about leaving Ottawa, we both wanted to get experience in some more modern, food-focused kitchens, of which there are fairly few in Ottawa of the standard we wanted to get involved in," Truesdale-Jutras says. "We left Ottawa to get worldwide culinary experience, and we still learn something new every single time we travel."

SEE STOVETROTTER ON **D2**

FOUND

Infused maple syrups

**LAURA ROBIN**  
OTTAWA CITIZEN

**What:** Pure Infused Canadian Maple Syrup, from a farm in Nova Scotia and in such flavours as cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves; or ginger and apple-cider vinegar; or vanilla, cinnamon and star anise.

**Why:** Kind of like the infused oils and vinegars now found at several local shops, these syrups take an already delicious product and give it extra zing, making them clever shortcuts to great flavour. The Chipotle & Lemongrass maple syrup, for example, has an exotic spiciness that sneaks up on you with a jolt of heat: it could make grilled salmon or chicken fabulous.

The Lavender & Chai infused syrup, on the other hand, could easily elevate desserts such as panna cotta or vanilla ice cream. Others would be great in salad dressings or on fancy pancakes.

**Where:** The Cuckoo's Nest, 291 Richmond Rd.

**How much:** \$16.99 for 200-mL bottles, \$29.95 for 375 mL and \$29.95 for a pack of five 50-mL sample bottles.

**When:** The shop started carrying them just a few weeks ago.

**Taste them:** Samples of the syrup will be available for tasting at a customer appreciation night at the shop Tuesday, Nov. 3, from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**Recipes:** Find recipes for everything from the Valliere's Sin cocktail to Roasted Root Vegetables with Maple Syrup Infused with Cinnamon, Nutmeg and Cloves at [pureinfused-maple.ca](http://pureinfused-maple.ca).



**DARREN BROWN/OTTAWA CITIZEN**

# Cross-culinary exchange a boon to chefs

STOVETROTTER FROM D1

He made stops in San Francisco, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam before he and Oviedo touched down in Australia.

"The buzz around Australian cuisine has been growing internationally for years and we felt it was time to go see what the fuss is about," Truesdale-Jutras says.

He began working at the celebrated restaurant Quay, while Oviedo went to the similarly acclaimed Rockpool. "We essentially went

were invited back as the fifth headliners at Numéro 7 last spring. It was the ideal place to master every aspect of running a restaurant — experience that is difficult to get, especially for young chefs without the capital to open their own space. If you can run a restaurant in the challenging medina of Fez, you can run a restaurant anywhere, including pop-up Stovetrotter dinners.

Founded in the ninth century, Fez's medina is largely unchanged since its heyday in the 13th and 14th centuries. The markets burst with local products, but it is easy to get lost in the medina's labyrinth of 9,000 narrow laneways and even narrower alleys. The largest car-free urban area in the world is inside the medina's walls, and that meant that deliveries to Numéro 7 were not by modern truck but by old-school donkey or mule.

Medina residents are very connected to what they eat and where it comes from. They shop for food every day and cook the slow way. Most still bake in communal ovens. Restaurant Numéro 7's small kitchen had its own oven, though the galley would be considered under-equipped by Canadian standards.

But Morocco's incredible ingredients made up for the challenges, and Oviedo and Truesdale-Jutras did not shy away from the difficult.

"Ingredients are definitely the most exciting thing for us," said Oviedo when I dined at Restaurant Numéro 7. "We keep finding new stuff daily. There are four types of fennel here, three categories of oranges, and more varieties of dates than you can imagine.

"Even more interesting are products like smen, a fermented butter that can be aged up to three years and takes on a quality like Parmesan."

It wasn't always easy to secure these ingredients, but Fez's close-knit expats helped each other. Vincent Bonnin, the French chef at Dar Roumana — another not-to-be-missed medina restaurant — helped Oviedo and Truesdale-Jutras find the best products, best prices and trustworthy suppliers.

Wherever Oviedo and Truesdale-Jutras are in the world, infusing a little Canada into their menus will be important.

In Muslim Morocco, a big challenge was trying to replace bacon in a country where pork is unlawful. They perfected the smokiness and texture using duck and lamb.

During my visit I tasted their Moroccan-spiced Montreal-style



Phoebe Oviedo and Oliver Truesdale-Jutras at Restaurant Numéro 7 in Fez, Morocco. PHOTOS: JOHANNA READ

beef ribs — an homage to one of their favourite cities.

Over the five-course meal, I excitedly described Canadian cuisine to my fellow Moroccan and expat diners.

Post-Stovetrotter, the couple could well bring the sum of their

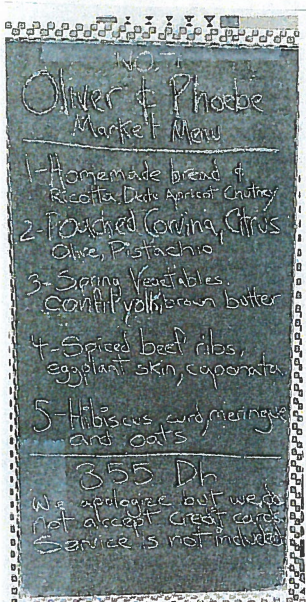
experiences to a restaurant of their own in Ottawa.

"We have a restaurant concept to work with, but it won't be easy to get set up, so we are taking our time to really get down to the nuts and bolts of it," Truesdale-Jutras says.

"Stovetrotter is definitely leading

to a bigger project that is a brick-and-mortar restaurant, it's really just a question of the timeline we have.

"In the coming years, we will definitely have our own place in Ottawa, and it isn't going to be like anything that came before it."



Chefs blend Moroccan ingredients and their own culinary philosophy.

to two of the best, most intense, kitchens in the city and started grinding." After working in several more Sydney restaurants, the couple went to Japan — "essentially food heaven," Truesdale-Jutras says — and spent time cooking in a countryside inn.

In 2014, they joined Quay's head sous chef as the second chefs-in-residence at Restaurant Numéro 7, which may be the only restaurant of its kind in the world. Chefs on sabbatical take over the space for a residency of one to four months and are encouraged to interpret Moroccan ingredients through their own culinary philosophy. The cross-cultural and cross-culinary exchange and the opportunity to work closely with the local food community were perfect for Oviedo and Truesdale-Jutras.

Oviedo and Truesdale-Jutras