



ontario

## CHEF PRODIGY

LUKE HAYES-ALEXANDER

THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY FOODIES VISIT ONTARIO'S PRINCE Edward County, including the fantastic artisanal cheesemakers and wineries. But probably the most surprising one is 19-year-old Luke Hayes-Alexander, who's been chef of his own restaurant, Luke's Gastronomy, for four years. Hayes-Alexander spent much of his childhood in the tiny restaurant in Kingston, named after him by his chef father when he was an infant. At age 12, he butchered a pig on his own; by 15, he'd taken over the kitchen. Today he conjures up dishes as disparate as an avant-garde scallop mousse pressed between cocoa cookies and an Apicius Composition—sausages with squash and wine honey—based on first-century Roman foods. His cooking is mature beyond his years. 264 Princess St., Kingston; 613-531-7745 or [lukesgastronomy.com](http://lukesgastronomy.com). —Charles Foran

*“One night, I used a blowtorch to bend metal spoons into different shapes. I love the contrast of the shiny cup with the dark, twisted handle and the white plate.”*

## JOURNAL

**THE BROKEN POT**

*The personal tale of a classic French-Canadian dish, fèves au lard.*

BY CHARLES FORAN

MY MOTHER SOAKED THE NAVY BEANS overnight, then mixed in molasses, brown sugar and salt pork. The cooking took all day, the house overwhelmed by the fragrance and heat. It was July, not the usual season for baked beans. But she was preparing a backyard dinner for her husband's office colleagues. She was telling big-city Toronto about her small-town French-Canadian identity, using food.

I was 12, and aware that my mother spoke French in the town where she grew up and English in our suburb. Also, that her people ate *tourtières* (meat pies) and *fèves au lard* (baked beans) instead of the roast beef and ham of Toronto. Country foods, I supposed, tasty and filling. Even the glazed clay pot she used for the beans, once her mother's, spoke of who she was, deep down. She was no less proud of the pot.

Is that why I asked to carry it out to the picnic table? To show solidarity, in case the guests found her offerings too rustic? I was that kind of son: attentive, wanting to please. Down the porch steps I went, the bean pot pinched between oven mitts. Maybe I looked up to see who was admiring my gesture. Maybe I looked to see if she was pleased with her boy.

Tripping, I flew face first onto the cement landing, and the pot smashed to bits. So much blew up then and there, a little for me, a lot for my mother. Her face showed it, when I could bear to look.

My father had suggested she cook a roast beef as well, perhaps to hedge his bet about the beans. She served it instead, chewy and dull.

Charles Foran writes nonfiction and novels, including *Carolan's Farewell* and *House on Fire*. He lives in Peterborough, Ontario.

