



# 2020 Annual Report

SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

PREPARED BY THE CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE



KAWARTHA LAKES



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## Message from the Board of Directors

I have had the pleasure to serve as Chair of the Board for the Culinary Tourism Alliance for three terms and truly enjoy working with the CTA team, showcasing the best of Ontario's food and drink experiences. It goes without saying this year has had its challenges but I'm proud to share that despite a difficult global economy, the CTA has persevered and pivoted through demonstrated creativity in facing the ever-changing culinary tourism landscape.

In early 2020, we continued to see increased awareness for our Feast On certified restaurants and Preferred Purveyors many who were showcased in the 2019 World's 50 Best Explores Ontario program, which had a reach of over 13 million consumers.

For the past 14 years, we've brought the world's leading innovators in the food, tourism and hospitality space together to share ideas, make connections and create change, first with our Ontario Culinary Tourism Summits and then at the Terroir Symposium which we have been managing since 2018. This was our first year taking a dynamic program virtual – working with partners, sponsors and the support of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, over 40 thought-leaders presented at September's Symposium. We had over 380 delegates registered!





As Ontario was focusing on managing the crisis, we advocated on behalf of the culinary tourism industry and created a recovery program called the Great Taste of Ontario which has received support from the Federal government through funding from TIAO, and provincial support from Destination Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs. With nearly 100 destinations participating and thousands of businesses being showcased, the program which will go through to the end of 2021, considers the seasonality of culinary tourism offerings, and the appetite with which consumers feel safe to get out and explore.

We've provided consulting expertise to a number of Ontario's regions this year from Temiskaming to Brampton, and have also worked to develop food tourism-focused strategies and plans for Saskatchewan and Alberta – leveraging the experience of the CTA team beyond our border.

I am excited and hopeful for the future of the Culinary Tourism Alliance, and for our many partners, as we continue to advocate, develop creative programming and build strategic alliances as we continue to ensure culinary tourism is a meaningful and sustainable contributor to local economies in destinations worldwide.

**WARMEST REGARDS,**

**AMANDA VIRTANEN**  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD  
CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE



**HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS**





## Message from the President + CEO

2020 kicked off splendidly! Planning was well underway for the 14th Terroir Symposium including the first-ever Canadian Taste of Terroir Event we were hosting in Berlin, Germany as part of ITB Berlin. We had a full slate of workshops to deliver in partnership with TIAC for their Elevating Canadian Experiences National Program. Our Feast On program was seeing incremental growth. Membership was on track. Our Board and staff had reaffirmed our Vision and updated our Mission and Mandate slightly to express our international reach. It was looking like the best year yet in the CTA's 14 year history!

February 28th came and our trip to Berlin was officially canceled - I wasn't going to risk the safety of our staff and stakeholders to travel. By March 16th I informed our team they were to work from home for the foreseeable future. Terroir was postponed from May to September with the hopes that it was far enough away to ensure we could come together safely in the fall.

And then, reality set in. This was not going to be weeks. This was going to be months and more likely, years. The tourism and hospitality sectors were going to be the worst-hit. The first to close and the last to reopen. I spent endless hours on Zoom calls advocating on several of Minister MacLeod's Advisory Panels and contributing to the Toronto Region Board of Trade Tourism & Travel Sector Group.



YORK, DURHAM, HEADWATERS





With our lease at Evergreen Brick Works up at the end of July we decided not to renew, keeping staff safe at home despite our natural desire to come together. Our office was packed up and currently resides in my crawl space.

We started thinking about what tomorrow would look like. We saw Ontarians' interest and demand for local food increase. We knew there'd need to be a plan to move Ontarians around the province when it was safe to do so again and with that, we created an Advisory Panel with representatives from across the province and developed what is today the "Great Taste of Ontario".

Launching this fall, with over 90 destination marketing organizations, regional tourism organizations, sector groups, and marketing boards plus investment from the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) through the federal government, Destination Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs - the "Great Taste of Ontario" will not only motivate Ontarians to fall back in love with Ontario, but it will also educate them about what's in season, how they can connect through a taste of place, where they can Feast On(r) and who is offering service following the highest standards of safety protocols. It's hyper-local. It's paying forward support to charities doing amazing work in food access, food security, and food justice as part of the gamification component of the program. It's connecting farmers with chefs. It's highlighting the culinary diversity of Ontario including businesses from the culinary tourism value chain that are BIPOC, Indigenous and LGBTQ owned.

We managed to pull off the first-ever virtual Terroir Symposium - 3 days of dynamic programming with over 40 presenters delivering everything from talks to butchery and cooking demonstrations and more. I am so proud of our team for making the best out of a difficult situation and truly delivering a world-class event!



**SIMCOE COUNTY**



Our development team pivoted from in-person workshop delivery to creating dynamic on-line programs that have already seen sessions take place in Manitoba, Atlantic Canada, and the Yukon with more to come across the country over the next six months.

We are doing our best to recover right. We are looking inward on our D&I actions and taking steps to create a strategy that will ensure all of our actions both internally and externally support diversity and inclusion. We are aligning our efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals. We are trying to be the change we want to see in this world and I am so proud of my colleagues and volunteer Board Members for all that they have contributed to making the CTA what it is today.

We are so thankful for our members, clients, partners, and various supporters who continue to motivate us to do more and do better. Chaos is the time to create and innovate - we've all been disrupted this year. Rather than settle back into "normal" we are committed at the Culinary Tourism Alliance to be part of a recovery that ensures sustainable communities for the future.

**SAFE TRAVELS,**

**REBECCA MACKENZIE**  
PRESIDENT + CEO  
CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE



**WINE COUNTRY ONTARIO**

# Meet the Culinary Tourism Alliance



**REBECCA MACKENZIE**  
PRESIDENT + CEO



**MARTIN LACELLE**  
SENIOR DESTINATION  
DEVELOPER



**CAMILO MONTOYA-GUERRERA**  
RESEARCH  
+ EVALUATION OFFICER



**TREVOR JONAS BENSON**  
VP, DESTINATION  
DEVELOPMENT



**LANDON LOGIE**  
EVENT MANAGER



**CAROLINE MORROW**  
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICER



**AGATHA PODGORSKI**  
DIRECTOR,  
COMMUNICATIONS



**VALERIE KEAST**  
PROGRAM  
MANAGER



**JAMES ARTEAGA**  
RESEARCH + ENGAGEMENT  
COORDINATOR

**3 NEW TEAM MEMBERS ARE JOINING US IN OCTOBER 2020:**

**DINUSHA PRASAD**  
COMMUNICATIONS  
COORDINATOR

**ZOË GALANIS**  
ENGAGEMENT  
COORDINATOR

**JOHN KEANE**  
CERTIFICATION  
ANALYST



**ROBERT ELLIOT**  
COMMUNICATIONS  
COORDINATOR



# 2019-2020 Board of Directors

**AMANDA VIRTANEN**

Director of Tourism, County of Haliburton

**LYNN SULLIVAN**

Co-Owner, Rosehall Run Winery

**KELLY O'BRIEN**

General Manager, Durham College

**STEVEN HELLMANN**

Founder, Foodies on Foot

**NICK SUTCLIFFE**

Co-Owner, Pommies Cider

**BALLU THAKUR**

Professor, George Brown College

**LYNNETTE BAIN**

Vice President of Tourism Programs & Development,  
Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island

**BILL GREGORASH**

Confederation College





## The Year In Review

**45**

Members  
in good standing

**87**

Destinations onboarded  
for Great Taste of Ontario

**151**

Feast On Certified  
Restaurants

**29**

Feast On Certified  
Purveyors

**7**

Consulting Projects  
Done

**3**

Ontario Culinary Tourism  
Awards given

**408**

Terroir delegates  
logged on

**1**

Innovative organization  
wide pivot



# 2019 Membership Report

## Current Members

Apple Pie Trail  
Black Chamber of Commerce **NEW!**  
Buttertart Tour (RTO8)  
Canadian Food & Wine Institute  
Centennial College  
Central Counties Tourism (RTO6)  
City of Brampton  
City of Cornwall  
County of Oxford  
County of Simcoe  
County of Wellington  
Dairy Farmers of Ontario  
Destination Northern Ontario (RTO 13)  
Destination Toronto (RTO 5)  
Durham Region Tourism  
Festivals & Events Ontario  
George Brown College  
Grey County  
Haliburton Highlands  
Indigenous Tourism Ontario **NEW!**  
Kawartha Lakes  
Kawartha Northumberland (RTO 8)  
Lanark County Tourism  
LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce **NEW!**  
Loyalist College  
Niagara Grape and Wine Festivals  
Niagara Parks Commission  
Ontario Craft Brewers  
Ontario Highlands (RTO11)  
Ottawa Tourism (RTO 10)  
Ottawa Valley Tourism **NEW!**  
Peterborough & The Kawarthas  
Resorts of Ontario  
SEO **NEW!**  
South Eastern Ontario (RTO 9)  
St. Lawrence College  
Steven Hellman  
Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry  
Tourism Burlington  
Tourism London  
Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island  
Town of Bracebridge  
VQA Wines of Ontario  
Waterloo Region  
Winery & Growers Alliance of Ontario







GREY COUNTY

# 2019 Membership Report

SEPTEMBER 1, 2019 - SEPTEMBER, 1 2020

16

Member-only  
Newsletters Sent

107

Member stories  
shared

11

Member regions  
visited

3

Ontario Culinary Tourism  
Awards Distributed

## The New-ish OntarioCulinary.com

This year, we re-launched OntarioCulinary.com as a fully redesigned consumer facing website designed to showcase to first and foremost showcase our member destinations.

We added more information, featured destination guides more prominently and added more ways for members to advertise their offerings. The response has been over-whelmingly positive.

Organizational information can now be found at [culinarytourismalliance.com](http://culinarytourismalliance.com)



# FEAST ON®

FEAST ON is a certification program that recognizes restaurants committed to sourcing and celebrating Ontario food & drink.

Certification and renewals were paused from March - August 2020 due to COVID-19 closures, as a result, much of our data has not changed since 2019.

## CERTIFIED RESTAURANTS by REGION

- 9 in SOUTHWEST ONTARIO
- 14 in NIAGARA CANADA
- 6 in HAMILTON, HALTON & BRANT
- 20 in HURON, PERTH, WATERLOO & WELLINGTON
- 35 in GREATER TORONTO AREA
- 10 in YORK, DURHAM & HEADWATERS
- 7 in GREY, BRUCE, SIMCOE
- 8 in KAWARTHAS NORTHUMBERLAND
- 18 in SOUTH EASTERN ONTARIO
- 2 in OTTAWA & COUNTRYSIDE
- 9 in ONTARIO HIGHLANDS & OTTAWA VALLEY
- 6 in ALGONQUIN ALMAGUIN & MUSKOKA
- 7 in NORTHERN ONTARIO

# 151

ACTIVELY CERTIFIED  
RESTAURANTS

CERTIFIED RESTAURANTS  
REPORTED APPROXIMATELY

# \$30,000,000

IN ONTARIO FOOD  
PURCHASES IN 2019

# 54%

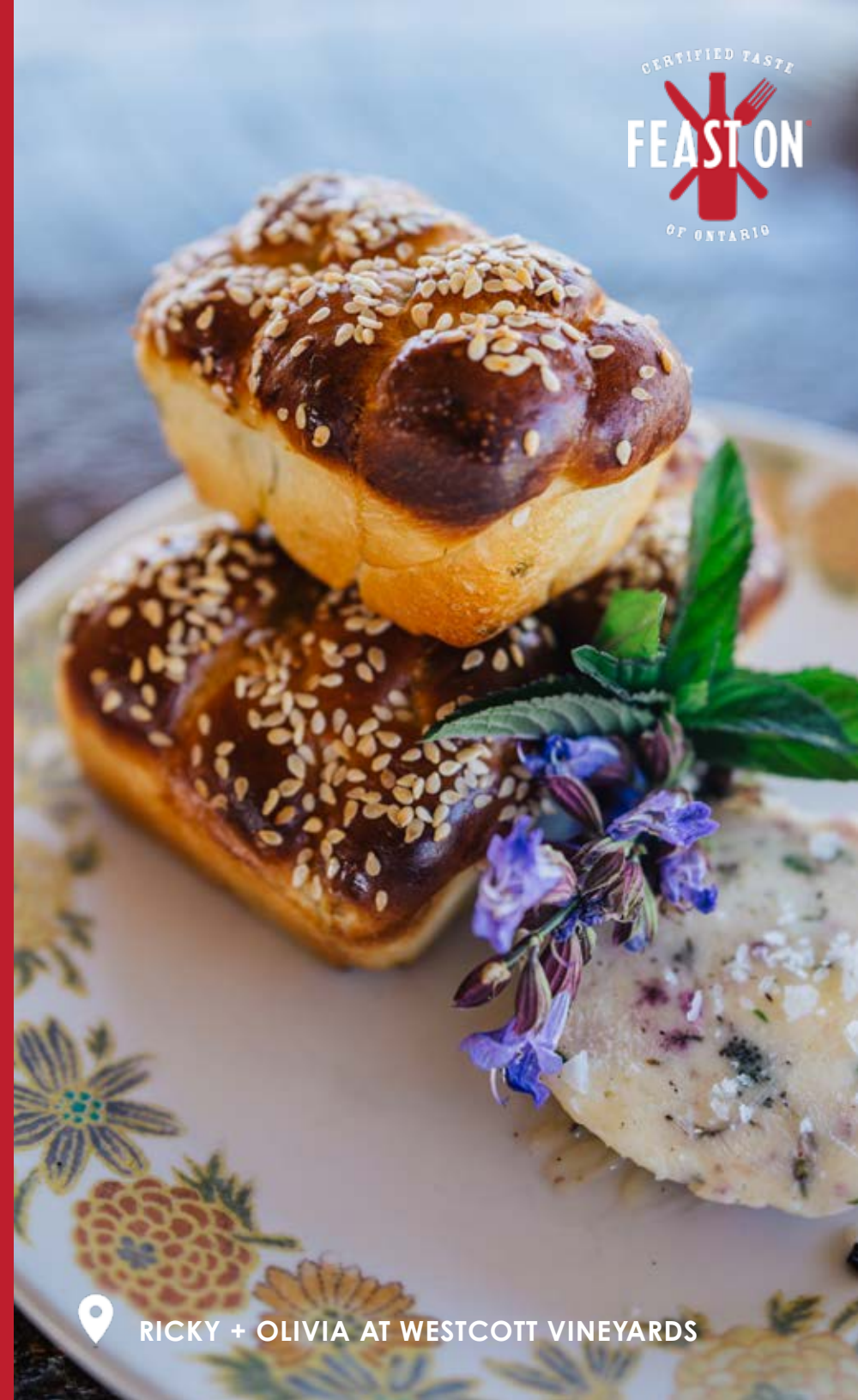
AVERAGE ONTARIO FOOD  
ON A FEAST ON MENU

# \$193,000

AVERAGE ANNUAL  
SPEND ON LOCAL FOOD

# 0.0%

GROWTH IN AVERAGE ONTARIO FOOD  
PROCUREMENT REPORTED OVER 2018





# FEAST ON® Purveyors + Program Partners

 ONTARIO HONEY CREATIONS

100KM FOODS INC.  
APPLEFLATS  
ARTISAN FARMS  
AVLING BREWERY  
BEAU'S ALL NATURAL BREWING CO.  
DAIRY DISTILLERY  
DARK HORSE ESTATE WINERY  
FAUXMAGERIE ZENGARRY  
FLANAGAN FOODSERVICE INC.  
GORDON FOOD SERVICE  
JEWELS UNDER THE KILT  
KENDAL HILLS FARM  
KING COLE DUCKS  
MURRAY'S FARM  
ONTARIEAU

ONTARIO HONEY CREATIONS  
PENOKEAN HILLS FARM  
PERTH PORK PRODUCTS LTD.  
PETIT BRULE PRODUCTS  
PLUCK TEA INC.  
PRISTINE GOURMET  
ROOTHAM GOURMET PRESERVES  
T & K FERRI ORCHARDS  
THORNBURY VILLAGE  
THORNLOE CHEESE  
TOP SHELF DISTILLERS  
UPPER CANADA CHEESE COMPANY  
VG MEATS  
WESTCOTT VINEYARDS

FOODLAND ONTARIO  
DAIRY FARMERS OF ONTARIO  
BEEF FARMERS OF ONTARIO  
ONTARIO PORK  
ONTARIO INDEPENDENT MEAT PROCESSORS  
ONTARIO TURKEY  
ONTARIO VEAL

We launched a series of videos explaining the benefits of the program featuring our partners.

**WATCH THEM AT**  
[CulinaryTourismAlliance.com](https://www.CulinaryTourismAlliance.com)



# Consulting + Destination Development Services

The Culinary Tourism Alliance works with communities to grow food tourism by leveraging the history, heritage, and culture behind the food and drink that makes each destination unique.

Our food tourism focus includes agritourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, rural tourism and sustainable tourism.

Community engagement is central to all of our projects. Meeting growers, producers, chefs, business owners, economic developers, destination marketers, and everyone in between is the most rewarding part of our work. We strive to always be inclusive and look through a culturally-sensitive lens.

This year, we streamlined our services into two categories:

**DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT** which includes Landscape assessment, Strategy development, Product development, Implementation planning & support, Identification and consultation, Presentation and facilitation, as well as Mobilization

**PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT** which includes Monitoring & Evaluations, Product and experience assessment, Evaluation, System development,



OTTAWA





 **SEAFOOD TASTING, SCOTLAND**

# Projects Completed

**SEPTEMBER 2019**

**TOURISM SASKATOON AND THE SASKATOON FOOD COUNCIL**  
FOOD TOURISM POSITIONING & DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

We helped to organize and facilitate a one-day food tourism visioning and development meeting. Through a highly participatory meeting, we gathered the food tourism community to think collectively about their food tourism identity and supported the group with conceptualizing a potential food tourism product to develop and market as part of Saskatoon's food tourism offer.

**OCTOBER 2019**

**HURON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ONTARIO**  
CULINARY TOURISM READINESS INITIATIVE

We helped to build up food tourism capacity among small- and medium-sized businesses in the area. Our consulting team provided development guidance and business-specific support for businesses in the county through culinary tourism self-assessment, secondary research, and business-specific project plans and guidance. Findings from the process were used to identify potential gaps in perception around culinary tourism readiness as well as opportunities to make changes that may benefit the businesses and overall food tourism landscape of the area.



**NOVEMBER 2019**

**LETCWORTH GATEWAY VILLAGES, NEW YORK**  
COMMUNITY FOOD TOURISM RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT

We have helped LGV to successfully secure funding from the USDA, and are working to provide food- and agri-tourism with a tool for local economic development. This project involves the development of a white paper on food tourism development in rural areas, a community food tourism assessment, the design of a food tourism learning journey, and the development of technical assistance tools and resources.

**NOVEMBER 2019**

**ACADIAN PENINSULA TOURISM**

FOOD TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:  
SCOPING AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

We are scoping and implementing the planning for a new food tourism product in the region. An Acadian Food Trail was identified as having the highest potential. A version of the Acadian Food Trail will pilot in 2020 and then evolve for an official launch in 2021.

**JANUARY 2020**

**NORTHUMBERLAND TOURISM, ONTARIO**

FOOD TOURISM ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNITY  
MOBILIZATION

Towards harnessing the growth potential that food tourism can bring to the area, NT has engaged the Culinary Tourism Alliance to perform a food tourism landscape assessment. As part of the process, CTA will be working to both engage industry and support the mobilization of key food tourism stakeholders around the collaborative development of food tourism in Northumberland County.

**MARCH 2020**

**PRESCOTT-RUSSELL, ONTARIO**

AGRITOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

We helped develop an agritourism route for the region. The project leveraged the opportunity of agritourism by connecting producers, artisanal processors, farm-to-table restaurants, markets and other local food and drink businesses in an agritourism route to pilot in 2020. The project also included a forum on agritourism that brought together local agritourism business.

**MARCH 2020**

**CITY OF BRAMPTON, ONTARIO**

FOOD TOURISM STRATEGY - PHASE II

CTA has been engaged to research into emerging food tourism trends, conduct a review of municipal markets and corporate events, and position the destination. Research will inform recommendations on developing markets and events, leveraging Brampton's food story, and setting realistic goals and objectives for a new City of Brampton Culinary Committee.

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

**CITY OF TEMISKAMING SHORES**

LAKE TEMISKAMING TOUR CAPACITY BUILDING  
& PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The Culinary Tourism Alliance, has been engaged to enhance the Lake Temiskaming Tour by supporting the development of new or expanded food tourism experiences. This work builds on a project from 2017, in which the food tourism community identified enhancing the Lake Temiskaming Tour through food and drink as the tourism development opportunity with the highest potential.





# Project Spotlight

**ON-GOING UNTIL MARCH 2021**

**TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF CANADA  
BUILDING CANADIAN EXPERIENCES  
AND THE VISITOR ECONOMY: CULINARY TOURISM**

CTA is working with the Tourism Industry Association of Canada on a national project to strengthen the culinary tourism capacity of the country's tourism industry and develop culinary tourism strategies for four destinations. This project involves working in every province and territory across the country, including the delivery of 48 capacity building workshops on various themes relevant to industry in each location. The culinary tourism strategy processes that will be designed as part of this work will be piloted and evaluated so that findings can be used to develop a strategic tool of national guidelines for culinary tourism development in rural and remote destinations.



**Elevating  
Canadian  
Experiences™**

powered by TIAC  AITC



# On-Going Projects

## **City of Temiskaming Shores**

Capacity building and product development

## **City of Temiskaming Shores**

Development of brand standards for partners

## **Tourism Industry Association of Canada**

Capacity-building and strategy development (x4)

## **County of Prince Edward**

Development strategy support

## **Indigenous Tourism Ontario**

Southern Ontario strategy development

## **Tourism Saskatoon**

Experience and social enterprise development

## **Peterborough & the Kawarthas**

Development strategy and action plan support

## **Leduc County**

Agritourism development strategy

## **City of Brampton**

Tourism strategy support







**TERR**  **IR**

**THE POWER  
OF PARTNERSHIP  
SEPTEMBER 13 - 15  
2020 TORONTO**

## 2020 Virtual Terroir Symposium

For the past 14 years, Terroir has brought the world's leading innovators in the food, tourism and hospitality space together to share ideas, make connections and create change at the Terroir Symposium.

This year, with the help of our partners, speakers and program committee, the 2020 Terroir Symposium officially went virtual on September 13th - 15th, 2020.

### 70% OF ATTENDEES WERE NEW TO TERROIR

#### Audience

- Chefs
- Marketing Professionals
- Media
- Educators
- Farmers/ Producers
- Consultants
- DMOs
- Project Managers
- Accommodations
- Gardeners
- PR & Events
- Winery/ Brewery / Distillery
- Employees

#### By The Numbers

- 200 Taste of Terroir Boxes Shipped
- 400 pounds of Barilla Pasta received
- 10,100 minutes our APP was open
- 25 Partners
- 408 attendees
- 562 contact shares
- 56 Speakers from...
- 6 Countries
- 200 Bottles of wine shipped from...
- 12 Sustainable Wineries
- 18 pounds of Ontario cheese delivered
- 1 session delayed due to the technical issues



# 2020 Feedback Survey Responses

“really liked the representative of the network eg. agriculture, restaurant, strategist”

“I liked the size of the networking room as it really allowed for each person to speak. Trevor was an amazing moderator and I reached out to the other attendees after the session to continue the conversation.”

“The curation of speakers was thoughtful and balanced. I learned so much! :)”

“Much better than technology used for other Travel conferences and Trade shows.”

“I loved the conversation and thought that the facilitators did a great job. Met some wonderful people.”

“I think moving from a completely physical format to a completely virtual one is an extremely difficult one. I think your team has managed to present the same gravitas and grace as you always have in this online platform. Your team’s efforts and passion shine through! Well done!”

**“It was interesting, fast-moving and informative. The speakers were well prepared and there was a nice mix of content in different formats. Time well spent.”**

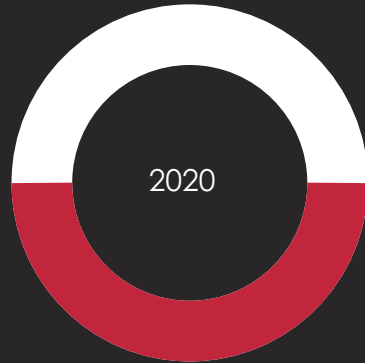


# 2019 Year End Forecasted Financials

## FEAST ON® FUNDING

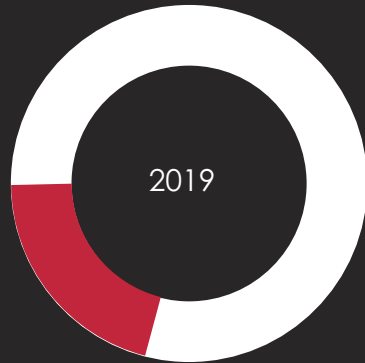
50%  
INDUSTRY  
FUNDING

50%  
GOVERNMENT  
FUNDING



80%  
INDUSTRY  
FUNDING

20%  
GOVERNMENT  
FUNDING



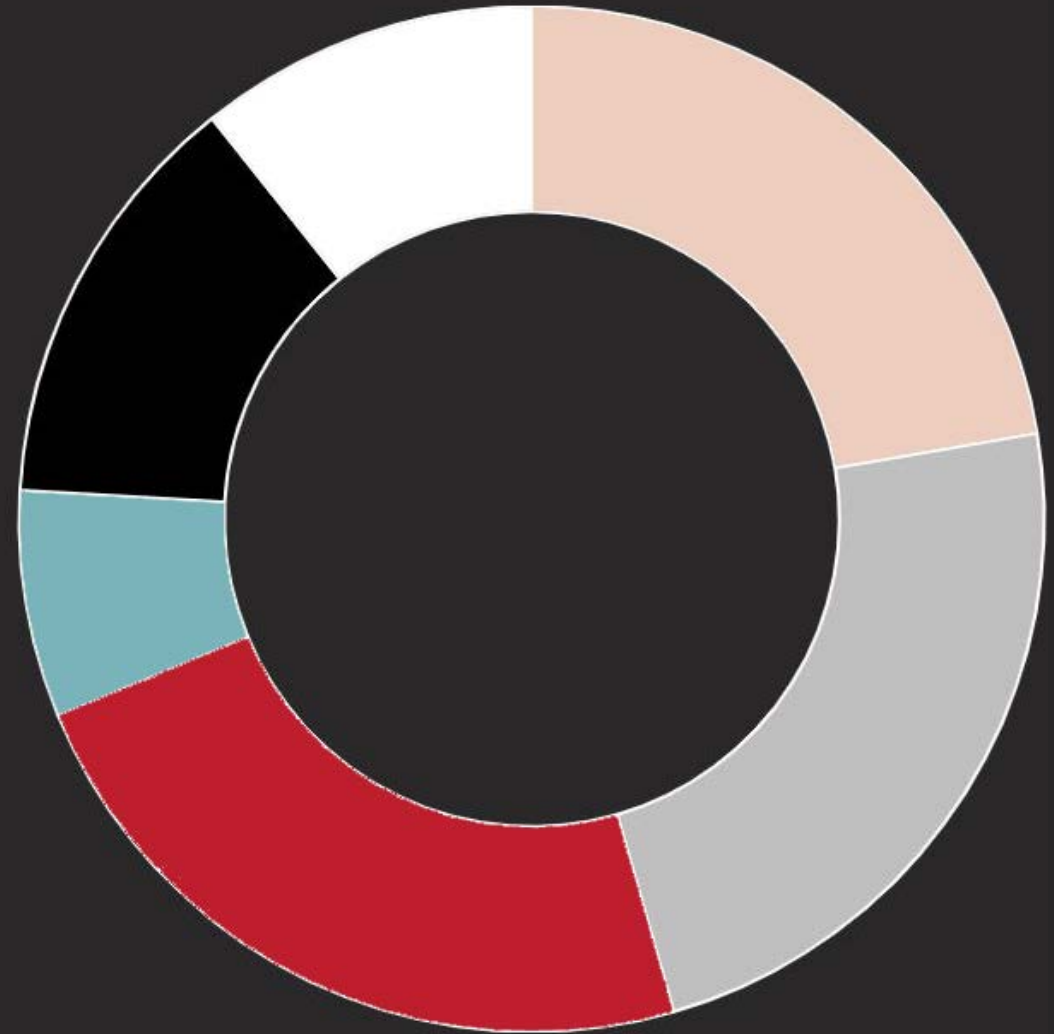
58%  
INDUSTRY  
FUNDING

42%  
GOVERNMENT  
FUNDING



## CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

- Terroir Program
- Consulting Services
- Feast On
- Membership Program
- Marketing Programs
- Government Funding\*



\*Government funding was accessed for the Terroir Symposium, the Feast On program and the World's 50 Best Explores Ontario. Total government funding in relation to overall revenue: 12%





## Looking to the Future: Our Covid-Recovery Program

The Culinary Tourism Covid Recovery program starts with a series of training modules for destinations and businesses to meet visitor expectations in the re-opened tourism space; adhere to safe travel protocols; increase collaboration between the agriculture and hospitality sector; and finally, to appeal to the 'food connected consumer'.

This training will be followed by a strategic, collaborative marketing campaign entitled 'The Great Taste of Ontario'. The Great Taste of Ontario (GTOO) campaign is centered around a collection of hyper-local passports that will inspire Ontario residents to travel around the province. As of September 1, 2020, The Great Taste of Ontario (GTOO) there were +90 partners (including DMOs, RTOs, Sector Organizations, media and charities) participating in the program and +1000 small to medium sized enterprises supported.

The program is designed to push Ontarians to rediscover the province and boost regional economies by increasing localized tourism visitation. It's success is dependent on a unique mix of destination development, market readiness training, procurement tracking and strategic marketing partnerships.

**We can't wait to share the outcomes with you in 2021!**







BRACEBRIDGE



# Cheers!

For more information about the Culinary Tourism Alliance and its various programs and services, contact:

[INFO@CULINARYTOURISMALLIANCE.COM](mailto:INFO@CULINARYTOURISMALLIANCE.COM)

[ONTARIOCULINARY.COM](http://ONTARIOCULINARY.COM)

[CULINARYTOURISMALLIANCE.COM](http://CULINARYTOURISMALLIANCE.COM)

[TERROIRSYMPOSIUM.COM](http://TERROIRSYMPOSIUM.COM)

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