



## KINGSBRAE ARMS

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### N.B. chef piques palates with a local flare

BY JENNIFER MALO  
Telegraph-Journal

ST. ANDREWS - How about slow roasted Muscovy duck topped in a five-spice grapefruit glaze for dinner with a soybean fritter and gooseberry compote on the side?

And that's just the first course.

New Brunswick chef Randy Akey's menus make the mouth water just reading them, let alone when the finished dish is placed before a guest at the Kingsbrae Arms. Something must be right about the menu because the ten-suite hotel was recognized by the travel publication, Fodor's, as one of the 20 best hotels in the world for 2004.

The celebrated chef prides himself on his Maritime heritage and the food of the region because, after all, he spent his whole life here.

Growing up in a farm in Point de Bute, Mr. Akey spent a lot his childhood in the garden and in the kitchen. When he was six, he went around on Christmas eve checking on his rabbit snares before opening presents, because rabbit was to be the featured dish on the holiday table.



(Chuck Brown / Telegraph-Journal)  
Chef Randy Akey turns local meats and produce into fine culinary creations at the Kingsbrae Arms in St. Andrews.

"I grew up on a farm where we had all kinds of animals. I've been in cooking all my life. We smoked fish in the backyard, grew our own garden, butchered our own animals," he said. "It's a very kind of Maritime background I grew up with."

In high school he picked home economics over shop class, and realizing his love of cooking, he signed up for a course in Moncton after graduation.

"Then I came to St. Andrews and I took two more years of accommodation food and beverage services here at the (community) college."

Mr. Akey worked at the lavish Algonquin hotel as a banquet chef for nine years before moving to Saint John for a job at the Parker House Inn.

Then last May, Mr. Akey returned to St. Andrews to take over the kitchen at the world renown Kingsbrae Arms.

"The way it was done before was really homey, it was good food but . . . it wasn't to the fine-dining style. So what I did when I came in, I changed over a lot of things and started implementing my style into things with the Maritime flair and getting ahold of stuff locally, right off the boats and last year I grew my own lettuces, herbs," he said. "I go with everything that I can."

He uses as much local fare as possible to treat international guests to Canadian cuisine, which means a lot of seafood, but also bison and caribou shipped in from Quebec.

His creation of traditional Maritime dishes attracted the tastebuds of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa last March for their showcase on the Atlantic Scene.

They requested a few recipes from Mr. Akey and four other chefs from the region to complete their East Coast culture festival.

"It was a great honour to represent the Maritimes," said Mr. Akey.

He'd also like to represent the region, and the country, on another showcase of fine-dining cooking: The Iron Chef show that runs on the Food Network. Each episode revolves around a master Japanese chef - the Iron Chef - who competes against challengers from around the world.

"I'd love to go on the Iron Chef show. I'd do it for a joke," said Mr. Akey.

With his talent for the art of cuisine, it's a wonder that Mr. Akey hasn't been lured to travel to Europe where fine dining is taught in exclusive schools.

But this native Maritimer said he has no desire to leave New Brunswick and hopes to make an impact here, where fine dining is more rare.

"I like to change people's minds on fine dining," he said. "There's nothing I won't do . . . I have a big passion for it. I'm like a kid in a candy store."

