

COUNTRY CROSSROADS

CONNECTING RURAL FAMILIES

Exotic cuisine and fast-water canoeing at Elma-area retreat

Whitmouth-area retreat centre a place to 'disconnect from everyday life,' say owners

By Lorraine Stevenson
CO-OPERATOR STAFF / NEAR ELMA

Shannon Stebelko holds up a tiny jar of homemade jam, freshly made from the blueberries growing in abundance along the Whitmouth River.

It's a take-home reminder of the nature and local culture visitors at Moon Gate Bed & Breakfast have enjoyed.

Stebelko, a Red Seal certified chef and co-owner of The Spicy Radish restaurant in nearby Elma, puts on "culinary adventure" workshops at the resort, instructing guests on how to prepare and enjoy local foods, including wild edibles.

Moon Gate owners Jenny and Michel Dupas quit their jobs four years ago and moved from The Pas after purchasing their riverside rural acreage. It used to be home to an egg-grading station, but the couple had another kind of country business in mind when they began to restore it to create the Moon Gate Bed & Breakfast and Wellness Retreat.

Now, where farmers' eggs were once delivered for washing and grading, tourists arrive for rest and restoration. Both owners have backgrounds in holistic therapy, and say their primary goal was to create a rural retreat where guests could fully engage with the quiet, natural surroundings.

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JENNY DUPAS
co-owner of Moon Gate B & B

"We saw a need for it from our combined experiences with providing holistic services," says Jenny Dupas, a certified reflexologist and specialist in other holistic therapies.

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The airy, cosily decorated five-bedroom B and B also includes the fully equipped kitchen that Stebelko regularly drops by to work in.

Moon Gate now offers a 'Foraging and Fast Water' adventure, a two-day package created in partnership with Stebelko and another local company, Wild Harmony Canoe Adventures.



Jenny and Michel Dupas are the smiling hosts of Moon Gate B & B that offers visitors a one-of-a-kind "culinary adventure" on the banks of the Whitmouth River.



Patricia Ryan and Adrian Storimans are the guides and instructors with Wild Harmony Canoe Adventures, a Seven Sisters Falls-based wilderness canoe adventure company. PHOTOS: LORRAINE STEVENSON

Visitors are welcomed with cups of dandelion root iced tea, enjoy meals that include other wild edibles, learn about food preservation with Stebelko, and take a canoe trip.

"You absolutely need to get out on the river and see what you've been missing," says Adrian Storimans, owner of Wild Harmony.

He started the business after reflecting on how few people

get to enjoy the quintessential Canadian experience.

"I saw a niche there," Storimans said. "The reality is most Canadians don't canoe because they don't have the skills or the comfort level."

Regardless of their canoeing experience, participants in 'Foraging and Fast Water' can enjoy a full three hours guided canoeing on the Whitmouth River with Storimans. The com-

pany also books longer trips on other Manitoba rivers.

Moon Gate is part of a 'Foodie Adventure' network supported by Eastman Tourism and Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and promoting venues in eastern Manitoba that offer Manitobans opportunities vacation in the countryside and learn about local food.

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Chef Shannon Stebelko is the co-owner of The Spicy Radish, a restaurant at nearby Elma, in its second season offering "classic diner food with a fresh flare." Stebelko works with the Dupases to offer their 'Foraging and Fast Water' food and canoe weekend packages.

TO LEARN MORE:

Moon Gate Bed & Breakfast —
www.moongatebedandbreakfast.ca/

The Spicy Radish Cafe —
www.spicyradish.ca

Wild Harmony Canoe Adventures —
www.wildharmony.ca

Next week: Learn to bake at
Thistle Lane Guest House.