



Tom's Message Board

Food For Thought

A couple of weeks ago, I drove to Amherst to spend the weekend with my daughter Abby for a little 1:1 time with her. As is typical with our family, “food” was a significant part of our weekend. She’s living in an apartment this year so gone is the dining hall meal plan, instead replaced with a kitchen, grocery budget, meal planning (as much a 19 year old is capable of anyway), and actually preparing meals. So we paid our “mandatory” visit to Trader Joe’s to stock up. When we returned to her apartment we baked a pumpkin pie together (her favorite) and rice pudding from scratch while the pie was baking. For dinner we dined at La Piazza Ristorante in Amherst where we shared an appetizer of fresh tomatoes, creamy house-made mozzarella and basil with garlic toast, followed with entrees of potato gnocchi with plum tomato sauce, mozzarella, parmesan and basil for her, and filet of sole with a lemon wine caper sauce and risotto for me. We finished with coffee and espresso then back to her apartment to watch a movie and savor generous slices of the fresh baked pumpkin pie made that afternoon. For Sunday morning we started the day with our traditional breakfast of pancakes, yogurt, and coffee. Finally, we paid a visit to Atkins Farm to pick-our-own apples, but we missed it by a week. However, in stumbling across Atkins Farm we discovered their farm store – a combination of Healthy Living, Trader Joe’s, and Dakin Farms all in one! With their quintessential local country flair, and a-buzz with shoppers, it’s now an official stop on our Amherst visit list.

So, you get the picture... food is a big part of our life! As a family we love to cook and try new things (The Food Network is a favorite), we put care and thought into the foods we buy, we appreciate how food brings people together, and from

a health standpoint, we believe that we are truly what we eat. So it was no big surprise when Abby announced that weekend that she was becoming vegetarian. This semester she’s taking a course in Animal Welfare and during one session the class watched the movie Food, Inc. It left an impression on her that the producer intended... processed foods and “engineered” meats, fish, and vegetables have become the norm... never mind the treatment of these animals. While the up-side of all this is abundant supply and lower prices, the hidden costs are compromises in health and welfare. While not for everybody, I’m proud that Abby is acting on her beliefs and approaching her foods choices thoughtfully. Though I grew up eating fresh, home-cooked healthy foods, I made similar discoveries when I was her age which influenced my eating and cooking forever. More and more we’re buying local meats and veggies, and look for fish that isn’t farm-raised. These choices sometimes cost more, and can be less convenient, but for us the flavor and health benefits are worth it. We feel good supporting local food producers and we enjoy food for the gift that it is.



Bon appetite!

Tom Brassard
President