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In Scadding Court, shipping containers redefine canned food



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Photo courtesy Jacqueline Hall.

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Reported by [Mitchell Cushman](#)
Saturday, October 1, 2011

Reported File

Scadding Court Marketplace wants to help Torontonians make a shift: from eating food that arrives in a shipping container, to consuming local fare served out of one.

"I get a lot of questions, I get a lot of puzzlement," says Emily Rzeznicki, a baker for OMG Baked Goodness, one of a dozen or so vendors who have set up shop in the [unique facilities offered by Scadding Court](#). The enticing aromas wafting out of these brightly-painted storage containers have certainly succeeded in pausing foot traffic at Bathurst and Dundas. But as one vendor is quick to point out, "stopping is different than buying."

The Marketplace was dreamed up by the Scadding Court Community Centre to strengthen local economic development, employment opportunities and neighbourhood safety. "We became aware of the existence of

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refurbished shipping containers and the idea of an outdoor marketplace along the outer wall of our facility emerged," explains Jacqueline Hall of the Centre.

Now, on October 1, the Marketplace is launching its first Harvest Festival: a celebration of food grown in the Toronto area. Vendors will be offering special platters at discounted prices, and these deals will be complimented by film screenings, a children's pavilion and a pie-eating contest.

While the Marketplace has existed for over a year, with new containers continually being added, its offbeat premise have so far prompted more stares than sales. The experiment has yet to yield a big windfall for any of its vendors, a group that includes everything from a jerk chicken stand to a creperie, and a seemingly out-of-place phone and internet provider.

There is reason to believe, however, that only a matter of time before the secret of the Marketplace gets out. The stampede success of the new [Toronto Underground Market hosted at the Brickworks](#) has shown just how hungry our city is for novel and affordable food start-ups. And as the [controversy concerning food trucks and food carts in Toronto](#) rages on, Scadding Court's admittedly immobile but flexible container spaces offer a great walk-up culinary alternative.

Scadding Court has had to fight its own uphill battle in terms of regulating the sanitation and safety of these converted container spaces. But thanks to the support of Councillor Adam Vaughan (Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina), these difficulties have been overcome, and vendors are now fully licensed to prepare food on-site. At least, as much as the close confines of the containers will allow.

With this in mind, Ben Szoller of Monforte Dairy is continually experimenting. He grills gourmet cheese sandwiches on-site, made with bread baked fresh from inside the Community Centre, and he has even begun to marinate peaches in his container. Szoller, who lives just around the corner from Scadding Court, is a perfect example of the various ways in which the Marketplace is striving to promote local food:

"I'm representing the family company that's in Stratford, and all the farmers that we're working with, but I'm doing it in my community in Toronto. I've got my head out the door and I'm talking to my neighbours all day."

The Scadding Court Live Local Marketplace "Harvest Festival" runs Saturday October 1, 12:00pm – 7pm.

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