MEDIA REPORT

WINTERLICIOUS PRESS JUNKET

Feb. 17, 2011

The following press junket collates media coverage for Winterlicious. The report is complied of coverage from Dec. 14 to Feb. 16.

There has been substantial positive reception from bloggers and other social media conversations online. These conversations on social media applications are intangibly important as bloggers and tweeters have strong followings, making them important influencers. Overall, the media coverage of Winterlicious has been incredibly positive. Many online mentions have sparked conversations among “foodies” and occasional diners, producing curiosity about Winterlicious and the desire to explore Toronto’s restaurants.  
  
The press junket highlights 42 important media mentions within all forms of traditional media. As noted later in the report, the blog/ online publication coverage was very extensive, reaching 393 online mentions of Winterlicious. However, for the scope of this report not all of the blog posts are recorded. You will also find attached at the bottom of the report snippets of published articles, Twitter and Facebook statuses outlining the strengths and positive reception of Winterlicious.

As of Feb. 16, 2011 there were 14 print media articles on Winterlicious via Canada Newstand

**PRINT COVERAGE**

1. **National Post** – Brittany Mahaney, article, Dec. 29, 2010, “Time to chew the fat.”
2. **Canadian Living** – Katherine Flemming, article, Feb. 2011,

"WINTERLICIOUS!”

1. **National Post** – Melissa Leong, article, Jan. 15, 2011 “In case of winter attack; Follow these 5 steps.”
2. **The Globe and Mail** – Brad Wheeler, article, Jan. 22, “THE WEEK IN EVENTS.”
3. **Toronto Star** – Sarah Barmak, article, Jan. 23, “FAST FORWARD; The week ahead.”
4. **Toronto Star** – Brendan Kennedy, article, Jan. 28, “Prix fixe not just for Winterlicious.”
5. **Toronto Star** – Vinay Menon, article, Jan. 28, “Little epicurean’s delight.”
6. **The Globe and Mail** – Brad Wheeler, article, Jan. 29, “THE WEEK IN EVENTS.”

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| 1. **Canada NewsWire -** Anon. article, Jan. 25, "A fresh crop of student chefs compete in Winterlicious showdown at Mildred's Temple Kitchen. " |

1. **Toronto Star** – Dana Flavelle, article, Feb. 1, “Alert! Here’s the deal with Facebook; its new app tells mobile phone users of special discounts in the area.”
2. **National Post** – Gina Mallet, Feb. 5, “Deal or no deal?”
3. **Toronto Star** – Leanne Delap, article, Feb. 9, “’Haute stoner’ dining scene; How else to explain a bacon-cheese-egg burger served on a donught or foie gras frites.”

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| 1. **Canada NewsWire –** Anon, article,Feb. 10, "Lauren Van Dixhoorn from Niagara College crowned Rising Chef at Florida citrus showdown. " |

**ONLINE PUBLICATIONS/ BLOGS**

As of Feb. 16, 2011 there were 393 online publication/blog mentions documented across Google Alerts and Ice Rocket

* 27 via Google Alerts
* 366 via Ice Rocket

1. **Where.ca** – blog post, Jan. 18, “Hot Dining: Winterlicious Deal.”
2. **Blogspot** – “Politics, musings, thoughts,” blog post, Jan. 22, “Winterlicious in Toronto.”
3. **Blogto.com** – Laurence MacSween, blog post, Jan. 23, “Where to eat local at Winterlicious.”
4. **Torontolife.com** – Renee Suen, article, Jan. 26, “Alternalicious: a roundup of this year’s Winterlicious rebels.”
5. **Torontoist.com** – Steve Fisher, article, Jan. 28, “Urban Planner: January 28, 2011.”
6. **Wordpress** – “I live Toronto,” blog post, Jan. 28, “It’s that time of year again – winterlicious is back”
7. **CityNews.com** – article, Jan. 28, “Winterlicious kicks off.”
8. **Blogspot** – “Turing houses into homes,” blog post, Jan. 19, “Toronto: Winterlicious 2011 starts January 28th .”
9. **Blogspot** – “Jen is eating”, blog post, Jan. 30, “WINTERLICIOUS: great braised rabbit at globe bistro.”
10. **Onthesnow.com** - Pat Kavanaugh, blog post, Jan. 31, “Travel News: VIA Rail is easy way to enjoy winter sports in Canada.”
11. **Nowtoronto.com** – article, Feb. 3, “Festivals this week.”
12. **Torontolife.com** – Scott MacDonald, blog post, Feb. 3, “The fate of legendary table 26 and other tales from Canoe’s reopening.”
13. **Torontolife.com** – article, Feb. 3, “The Weekender: Winterlicious, Barrymore and six other can’t-miss events.”
14. **Torontoist.com** – Allison MacDonald, article, Feb. 3, “Winterlicious adventures for foodies and newbies.”
15. **Tasteto.com** – Sheryl Kirby, blog post, Feb. 4, “The Dining Room.”
16. **NationalPost.com** – Aaron Lynett, blog post, Feb. 4 “Restaurant review: winterlicious at frank and senses.”
17. **Tasteto.com** – Sheryl Kirby, blog post, Feb. 8, “Getting all medieval on your ‘licious.”
18. **Thestar.com** – Leanne Delap, article, Feb. 9, “Late night cuisine for stoners latest Toronto trend?”
19. **Tasteto.com** – Sheryl Kirby, blog post, Feb. 14, “A La Carte.”

**RADIO COVERAGE**

As of Feb. 16, Winterlicious was mentioned by three different radio stations.   
  
33. **104.5 CHUM FM –** Kym Geddes, Jan. 26  
Winterlicious 2011 By Kym Geddes  
It's that time of the year again, time to shake off the cold winter blues and treat yourself to a nice dinner out. The City of Toronto's popular Winterlicous restaurant campaign runs from January 28th to February 10th. Dozens of restaurants offer reduced pricing on lunch and dinner menus. This year 6 new restaurants have been added

34. **CBC Radio Toronto –** Jan. 28, “Eat, Walk and See”

### Toronto's favourite winter gastronomic celebration again offers TWO popular programs for you to savour. Discover new favourite restaurants by sampling mouth watering three-course prix fixe menus at 150 of Toronto's top restaurants. Food gurus will want to explore the culinary event series of 14 unique foodie experiences featuring diverse cuisine and notable chefs.

<http://www.cbc.ca/metromorning/columnists/whatson/2011/01/28/winterlicious-jan-28-to-feb/>

35. **680news** – Jan. 29, “Winterlicious Kick Off.”

TORONTO, Ont. - Chase those winter blues away and indulge in some culinary delights. For the next two weeks, you will be able sample the finest food in Toronto for a price that's even finer.

Winterlicious is underway from now until February 10. You are now able to grab lunch or dinner at 150 of the best restaurants in Toronto with prices starting as low as $15.

<http://www.680news.com/news/local/article/174614--winterlicious-kicks-off-friday>

**TELEVISION COVERAGE**

36. **CP24**  **-** Breakfast Television, Jan. 27, “Nalini is at Vittorios for the start of Winterlicious.”

37. **CityTV** – Feb. 1, “Cooking with Wine: Julia Child Comes to Winterlicious with Bonnie Stern.”  
  
38. **CityTV** – Jan. 21, “Winterlicious Preview.”  
  
39. **CityTV** – Jan. 28, “Winterlicious Kicks Off.”

**SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE**

40**. Winter/Summerlicious Facebook Fan page**  
 1,658 people like the Fan Page

41. **Winterlicious 2011 Toronto! Facebook Group**

24 members  
  
42. **Winter/Summerlicious Twitter Account: @LiciousTO** Stats: 499 Tweets, 1,573 Account Followers

# SOCIAL MEDIA STATUES A search of SocialMention.com returned the following Winterlicious social media results. Twitter Conversations “Delicious lunch at #Atomic today. #Winterlicious is such a great deal.” [twitter.com/Bill\_Miranda/statuses/37960331900887040](http://twitter.com/Bill_Miranda/statuses/37960331900887040) “RT @DineTO: #Winterlicious reservations start today! What are your top 3 #restaurants you want to explore #toronto?” [twitter.com/Mt\_Pleasant\_BIA/statuses/27014783173660672](http://twitter.com/Mt_Pleasant_BIA/statuses/27014783173660672) Facebook Conversations “Winterlicious was delicious! 2 fine dining restaurants in 1 week for pre-valentines. Small portions but worth eating.” [www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=529770845&v=wall&story\_fbid=176190352426083](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=529770845&v=wall&story_fbid=176190352426083) “Danforth Dining in Lolita’s Lush, wine food and good friends, thanks for the fabulous winterlicious festival again this year.” <http://www.facebook.com/people/Debra-Archer/745070201>

### “Tucked away on the Danforth strip is one of the city’s best-kept secrets. Visiting celebrities have been known to enjoy a quiet evening of dining either indoors or… [www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=745070201&v=wall&story\_fbid=189937671026742](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=745070201&v=wall&story_fbid=189937671026742)

**ARTICLES**  
  
20. **CityNews.com** – article, Jan. 28, “Winterlicious kicks off.”  
  
**Winterlicious Kicks off**2011/01/28 CityNews.ca Staff

For the next two weeks, food-lovers in the city will have the chance to sample some of Toronto’s best cuisine at bargain prices.  
  
The annual prix-fixe festival [Winterlicious](http://www.toronto.ca/special_events/winterlicious/2011/index.htm" \t "_blank) kicked off Friday at 150 restaurants ranging from casual ([Canyon Creek Chophouse](http://wx.toronto.ca/inter/se/restaurants.nsf/Winterlicious/92D0421DB350D120852574DC006FFEF6?OpenDocument" \t "_blank)) to fine dining ([Auberge du Pommier](http://wx.toronto.ca/inter/se/restaurants.nsf/Winterlicious/4D9496879172B8B4852570030071441D?OpenDocument" \t "_blank)).  
  
“We know from survey that over 75 per cent of Winterlicious diners are actually new customers to those restaurants,” Coun. Michael Thompson said. “We also understand that 95 per cent of those customers have indicated that they will return to that restaurant again.”  
  
Last year’s event pumped more than $10 million into Toronto's economy during what is traditionally the slowest time of year for restaurants. This year, it’s expected to generate more than $12 million.  
  
The three-course meals cost between $15 and $25 for lunch, and between $25 and $45 for dinner.  
  
To check out the menus and other culinary activities, visit the [Winterlicious website](http://www.toronto.ca/special_events/winterlicious/2011/index.htm" \t "_blank).

# 27. Torontoist.com – article, Feb. 3, “Winterlicious adventures for foodies and newbies.” Winterlicious Adventures for Foodies and Newbies Allison MacDonald – Guest Contributor

*Calphalon's Moroccan Inspired Slow Roasted Chicken.*

Winterlicious—it is back. New this year, in addition to the [special menu](http://wx.toronto.ca/inter/se/restaurants.nsf/Winterlicious?Openform) fare, are [several new culinary events](http://wx.toronto.ca/inter/se/restaurants.nsf/CulinaryEvents?Openform)meant to give us the chance to get more creative with our dining.

And so, of course, we had to check some of them out.

## [Calphalon Culinary Centre: Winterlicious Class](http://wx.toronto.ca/inter/se/restaurants.nsf/CEvents/0C428618C39EA5DD852577EE00517564?OpenDocument)

Walking into the Calphalon Culinary Centre on the first night of Winterlicious, the air was rife with anticipation...especially from us, since we didn’t really know what to expect. Would we be cooking? Cooking and eating? Just eating? The invitation stated the class's title and type as "Winterlicious" and "Demo," respectively.

Greeted by the warm staff, we were shown around the three-level building. The bright yet cozy modern set-up, located at King Street and Spadina Avenue, houses a cooking classroom, a retail centre, and a private dining room equipped with a set up worthy of an Iron Chef team.

We took our seats at candlelit tables, which lent a convivial atmosphere to the rows of tables and made us feel like we were anywhere but a classroom. Nevertheless, a class we were, and a diverse one at that: a group of girlfriends who became progressively louder and more enthusiastic as the night (and the wine) wore on, mother-and-daughter duos, couples both young and old, and colleagues from neighbouring offices enjoying the start of the weekend.

The menu, designed by executive chef Susie Reading, was inspired by warmer climates and included items such as Chana Masala soup and Moroccan Inspired Slow Roasted Chicken, as well as somewhat less appetizing fare (see: dessert poutine).

While we ate, Chef Susie and her team trained and entertained the crowd—who, it was clear, ranged from novice cooks to chefs in the making. Diners were encouraged to learn while they ate, and even the well-seasoned cooks in the crowd had a few “aha” moments, as Chef Susie taught us how to sharpen a knife properly (without losing any appendages), how to dice an onion evenly, and the basics of cooking in an organized fashion.

When we asked the two couples sitting behind us how they were enjoying themselves, they intimated that the food was not the best they'd ever had, but hesitated to be overly critical. Our opinion? If you're expecting a five-star meal, this is not the place to go; there are other restaurants participating in Winterlicious that offer this kind of experience. The food was simple and decent, the recipes designed to be easily recreated at home. But most notably, what was lacking in culinary excellence was made up for in the fun of the overall dining experience.

## [The Dining Room at Campbell House Museum](http://wx.toronto.ca/inter/se/restaurants.nsf/CEvents/867B1B696BED3C8F852577ED0068B109?OpenDocument)

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Dinner and a show. Sounds pretty basic, right? Until you find out the meal is being served in the basement of a nineteenth-century home, replete with open fireplace, original brick flooring, and enough dank chill to necessitate a roaring fire. And the show is performed in the upstairs ballroom of said nineteenth-century home, to an intimate crowd of forty, the action centred around an antique dining-room table.

We were swept up by the charm and whimsy of the Campbell House Museum. The Dining Room, this year’s Winterlicious event and a pre-cursor to the upcoming daily lunches to be held at the house, is a partnership between museum curator Liz Driver, executive chef Margaret MacKay, and David Vallee, proprietor of [Hearth & Garden](http://www.davidvallee.ca/), a food and event concept at Campbell House.

As the guests wandered about the main floor waiting to be seated in what used to be the kitchen of the historic house, surrounded by antique pieces, plush, worn furniture, and candlelit walls,it wasn't hard to imagine being a part of the original surroundings.

The menu—inspired by staples and favourites from the 1930s, '40s, and '50s—included contemporary twists on such classics as BBQ beef shortribs, cream of tomato soup, meatloaf, and Nanaimo bars. The nostalgia was inescapable. While the food erred more on the side of home-made than gourmet, the flavours were traditional and simple. Would we go again? Well, no. But if you're content to eat jacked-up grilled cheese and a well-made meatloaf, the value of dinner and a show is worth the cost, just once.   
  
We and our now-stuffed co-diners—a mix of couples both young and old (but mostly the latter), mothers and daughters, and groups of girlfriends—were ushered from the basement kitchen to the second-floor ballroom-cum-dining room, where there were just enough chairs to accomodate us.

Enter the actors. They too took us back in time, with the Dora Award–winning The Dining Room. Performed by Down n’ Out Productions and directed by Jonathan Geenen, the play casts a close eye on the dining table as the centre of family life in a bygone era. While the dining experience set the stage for the evening, the play was funny, witty, surprising, with nary a dull moment: a high-note ending to a night of Winterlicious escapism.

31. **Thestar.com** – Leanne Delap, article, Feb. 9, “Late night cuisine for stoners latest Toronto trend?”  
  
Round about 2:30 a.m. every night, the Counter at the[Thompson hotel](http://www.thompsonhotels.com/hotels/toronto/thompson-toronto" \t "_blank)gets slammed, the kitchen pumping out carbs by the yard to staunch the yawning munchie hole of the last-call crew. Miles of mac-and-cheese and pails of poutine join what has become the culinary trend of the year: Not late-night food, not comfort food, but what’s being hailed as “haute stoner” cuisine.

Toronto, it seems, is sawash in overkill food that only a buzz could justify: Hot dogs loaded with hickory sticks, a burger served on a doughnut, foie gras frites.

Last year’s New York Times story about this ooey-gooey trend implied the chefs behind it were lit-up while doing their late-night experimentation, which was backed up by the bragging of American bad-boy chef and author Anthony Bourdain. His 2000 Kitchen Confidential memoir dwells on the effects of illegal drugs, notably in cocaine-fuelled open kitchens. In the Timesstory, he focuses on the gentler, present popularity of weed — getting baked while baking — in professional kitchens. Bourdain blows hard, claiming that “everybody is doing it.”

Now, we don’t want to imply that Toronto’s creative toques are taking anything at all. Or that their clientele is anything more than lightly tippled at any time. Fact is, it’s not hard to connect the dots between the late-night clientele at the Counter and the emergence of its brunch burger, a bacon-cheese-egg burger served on a doughnut instead of a bun.

Richard Snyder, editor-in-chief of Toronto’s CityBites magazine, says jokingly: “Of course I think all the poutine and burrito and late-night shawarma and sandwich places are all there to serve the stoned snacker. I mean, it seemed to me that Shanghai Cowgirl’s complete M.O. was to do the comfort/late munchy snack thing when it opened, what, eight years ago? And there was very little like it on Queen West. Now, The Counter should do the upmarket version of that.”

Robert Mills, the new British-import chef at the Counter, won’t say that his menu caters to stoners specifically. But he can attest to the fact that “late at night, people are much less careful about calories. They are also less fussy about where they sit. The servers keep losing their customers as tables float around chatting to each other. We send out an awful lot of mac-and-cheese, and it is a large portion with a damn lot of cheese and pancetta.”

Diners floating around? Heaps of cheese? Irrepressible chattiness? You do the math.

Down the street at [The Ballroom](http://www.theballroom.ca/" \t "_blank), a bowling alley at the site of the old pickup palace Montana’s on Richmond St., Tawfik Shehata (the former chef/owner of Vertical) has added a haute twist to the locally sourced “classic” menu.

The concept draws heavily on New York’s Brooklyn Bowl, where the food — handled by the celebrated Blue Ribbon restaurant chain — is also the focus. “This is the food you want to eat late at night, just done way better,” says Shehata. “Buttermilk fried chicken made from naturally and locally raised heritage birds, mini pogos from Buddha Dog, gastro pub food, satisfying food.”

Both cooks and customers are having more fun again, says Canada’s own bad-boy chef, Marc Thuet, who is currently starring in the second season of Conviction Kitchen, where he is surrounded by even badder boys (a group of ex-cons).

“The bonus from this last recession is that chefs have less their noses in the air,” the expat Frenchman says. “Music is louder in restaurants now. The young generation is more fun and less formal.”

Thuet is celebrating this at his fleet of[fine food shops](http://www.thuet.ca/" \t "_blank)around town with “all parts of the pig, Berkshires, Yorkshires. And goat, in pies and stews. Sausages. Game. Elk stew. People want heavy food. I’m looking at beaver.”

Frontier stoner food, anyone?

Says Snyder: “Looking back on my formative years, you had TV commercials to drive your munchie mind wild — Kraft Dinner, Big Macs, etc. — but now it’s tweets coming right from chef himself!”

To wit, a recent tweet from Grant van Gameren, the chef at[The Black Hoof](http://theblackhoof.com/" \t "_blank)on Dundas St. W., that surely drove a buzzed foodie to distraction: “New foie dish pastry cream salted caramel sauce hazelnuts sticky toffee blood cake French toast.”

The rich combinations and permutations of the haute stoner trend are also influenced by the movement to exotic ingredients, such as the more unusual cuts of meat that are The Black Hoof’s stock and trade. Says van Gameren, “Chefs get frustrated when they can’t jump outside of the beef tenderloin box. Experimentation is a necessity when you start with variety meats — the safest dish on our menu is a tongue sandwich.”

The general atmosphere of looser inhibitions in this city has lead to innovation behind the stove finding fresh appreciation at the table. During the late seating at[Trevor Kitchen and Bar](http://www.trevorkitchenandbar.com/" \t "_blank)last Friday night, deep in the weeds of [Winterlicious](http://www.toronto.com/winterlicious" \t "_blank), a table of four receive their order of pork belly simultaneously.

British tourist Ross Tremain, resplendent in a pink shirt (and huge smile), grunts loudly at his beast of a plate. “This is dream stoner food, all smoky and fatty happiness. Oy, man, I could eat all four of these if you’d all just kindly turn your backs for a second.”

After all, isn’t being stoned just a state of mind — and an eager gullet?