

Spirit Tree Cidery on PBS tonight

By Nick Fernandes

The Spirit Tree Cidery on Boston Mills Road in Caledon is going to be featured on the PBS show *Off the Beaten Palate* tonight (Thursday).

The show is part of an exploration of the food and farming of Ontario. Spirit Tree is now one of many locations to be covered for the show's Discover Canada theme.

"It's humbling and exciting," commented proprietor Nicole Judge. "(Spirit Tree) hasn't been featured on shows south of the border before, we're being shown alongside higher end places in Niagara."

Judge started out with the ownership of an orchard and farm market with her husband, Thomas Wilson, until they decided to branch out into baking by taking courses at George Brown College and Le Cordon Bleu Chef School in Ottawa, as well as a trip to Paris to learn even more about breadmaking.

They then sought to learn the craft of cider making by travelling to the United Kingdom and taking courses taught by internationally recognized names in cider. They returned to make a living selling the beverage that they love, and buying up a new property on Boston Mills Road.

"We get people who hike, bike and ride horses coming into the cidery," she said, describing the picturesque setting of their establishment and orchard of 2,500 trees, surrounded by acres of Caledon farmland.

Spirit Tree is also home to a plethora of breads, pastries, pizzas and pies made in an in-house bakery with slow fermentation and natural starters using a wood-fired oven that burns throughout the day without the use of gas. All goods are made with local ingredients whenever possible, the proprietors prefer to rely on Peel Region farms, and cook and ferment their products all in-house. *Off the Beaten Palate* is a food and travel show hosted by New Brunswick born journalist Michael-Ann Rowe and broadcasted by PBS. The show features cuisine from cultures all over the world, but Rowe doesn't just cover the food itself. The ingredients and preparation, all the way from the farm to the plate, get a great deal of attention as she attempts to get as close to the real source as she can.

The show will put the spotlight on the agriculture of the Golden Horseshoe and the Niagara Escarpment as a whole, and what goes into the apple's that gives Spirit Tree it's featured Crab Apple, Pub Cider and Ice Wine Cider that will be the subjects of the show alongside one of Spirit Tree's new pizzas.

The show will be broadcast on PBS out of Detroit tonight (Thursday), starting at 7:30 p.m.



Michael-Ann Rowe of *Off the Beaten Palate* and Thomas Wilson of Spirit Tree Cidery. Submitted photo