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LIVING

Tales from the fried side

BY FRED SIMPSON
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In the cloak-and-dagger world of dessert cuisine, what follows is a tale of exploding deep-fried Mars Bars, racy ice cream and, yea verily, deep-fried dill pickles.

As Charles Dickens might say, it was the best of times and the worst of times.

The tale begins.

You may or may not have noticed the tight security in place around a local tavern the last few weeks.

Some shadowy figures in aprons were seen furtively scurrying into the pub and thence into the kitchen of the King John Arms in Richmond Hill.

One aged viewer, permanently parked at the bar, looked on curiously.

It reminded him of the secrecy surrounding the Manhattan Project in the early 1940s that ultimately spawned the atom bomb.

He even envisioned a Dr. Frankenstein-like scenario that would result in a monster lurching from the inner sanctums of the kitchen in a cloud of steam.

On yet another occasion, the same reveller happened to be sojourning at the same bar when he thought he heard a muffled explosion from within the confines of the kitchen.

Dark deeds must surely be at hand, but still no explanation was immediately forthcoming.

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It was days after that King Henry Arms owner Allan Cockburn emerged from the kitchen with a triumphant smile.

"I believe we're are pretty close to getting it right," he said.

He explained he and his cook had, for several days, been pouring over perfecting the latest addition to his dessert menu, deep-fried Mars Bars.

"The trick," he said almost apologetically, "is not to leave the chocolate bar and batter in the fryer too long or it may explode."

However, he denied any knowledge of such an explosion having taken place.

In the last few weeks, Cockburn and his cook, Trevor McKenzie, have been studiously honing their skills on dozens of Mars Bars.

"One day, it would come out right, then the other day, not so good," said Cockburn. "The last few have been very close to what we want."

So saying, he produced a plate with a freshly deep-fat-fried Mars Bar, warmly wrapped in a golden crispy of batter.



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

King Henry's Arms owner Allan Cockburn (right) along with chef Trevor McKenzie believe they have perfected their recipe for deep fried Mars Bars.

A scattering of strawberries circled the Mars Bar. The trick, he said, to deep-frying a Mars Bar is not "to leave the chocolate bar in the fryer for more than three and a half minutes".

He refused to divulge any further information, except to say the batter was much sweeter than a fish batter.

"I think it is time to unveil it to the public," continued Cockburn.

He later explained he had come up with his Mars Bar flight-of-confectionary after reading about it in Toronto newspapers that said the deep-fried dessert dish is popular in Europe.

"I decided to give it a shot here because I think

dessert lovers will find it very interesting," said Cockburn.

"It's a very tasty dish and they are the latest fad of the moment and we wanted to be first with it."

Cockburn stresses no sacrifice has been too much for either himself or his staff in making the Mars Bar treat a reality.

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