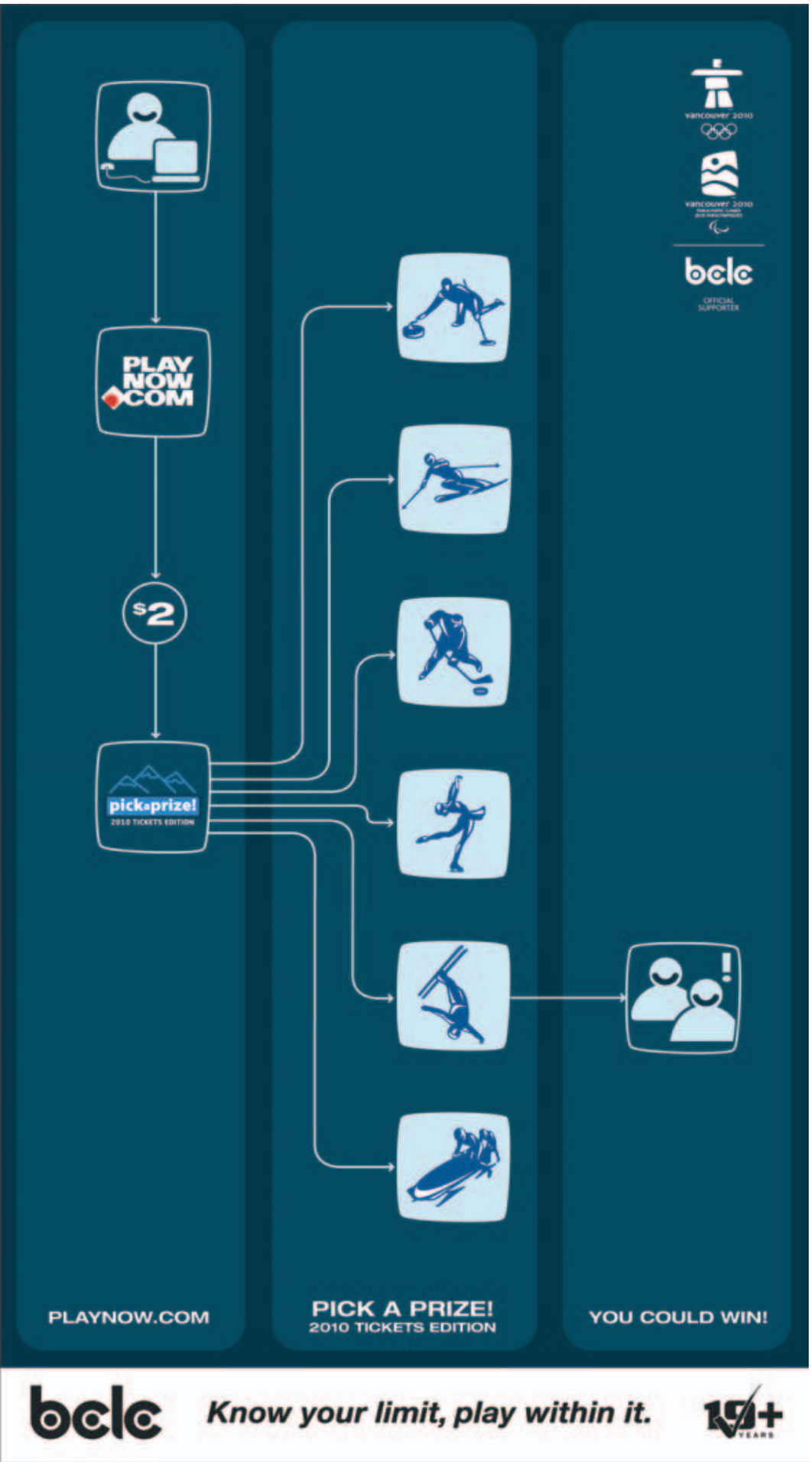

France's fine beer rivals its fine wine

COLIN JACK – France is best known for its wine but there is a great history of beer production throughout the country.

Three French beers available in B.C. have unique packaging, ideal for every occasion.

BORIS ALSATIAN BEER
5.5%, $9.25/6-250 ml bottles

Boris Beer is brewed in Alsace and comes in mini-bottles perfect for people who want smaller portions. In the glass the beer is light and golden with a flavour that is crisp and refreshing on the tongue.

FISCHER TRADITION
6%, $5.97/1-650 ml bottle

Fischer is sold in single bottles with unique swing tops. Fischer Brewery boasts an integrated malt house meaning the grains used are malted (kiln-dried) on site. It is complex with distinctive fruity esters.

KRONENBOURG 1664
5%, $11.70/6-330 ml bottles

Kronenbourg is France's best selling beer and is named after the year the brewery was founded. Kronenbourg has a slight citrus note in the aroma and a seductive, but bitter finish.

Quest for créme brulée

Episode 1 - Sugar on top, party underneath

This week, as we transition from one celebrated food to another, you can't deny the global appeal of crème brulée – one of the world's most popular and versatile dessert dishes. So popular, that throughout Vancouver's restaurant scene, you can find a myriad of flavours ranging from brulées filled with mundane vanilla custard to magnificent chocolates, green teas and even lavender.

A créme brulée can be more than just custard sitting in a bowl topped with a layer of hard caramelized sugar. Ideally, the sugary top has to have just been caramelized – so it's warm to the touch, and it can't be too thick otherwise you can't break it with your spoon. It is gratifying to simply chip away and consume the crust but really, the prize is still what's beyond the wall. Think back 20 years to when you saw the Berlin Wall fall. Some of you were probably thinking to yourself, man that's a wild party. Well, in the same bent, what's beyond the sugar wall is almost always a party.

Take Glowbal Restaurant's rendition of créme brulée or the Créme Brulée Shooter: hand-crafted in small batches by Glowbal's skilled kitchen staff, the Créme Brulée Shooter possesses all the characteristics of a great brulée – a freshly-toasted caramelized sugar cover hides something similar to a china white shooter. Crack the sugary top and what's underneath is a great start to the créme brulée quest.

RAJ TANEJA IS PART TECHNOLOGIST, PART ENTREPRENEUR, PART SOCIAL MEDIA THOUGHT LEADER AND PART FOODIE. HE RUNS URBANMIXER.COM, PUBLISHES A MISCELLANY OF HIS MUSINGS AT RAJ.JP AND CAN BE FOUND ON TWITTER WITH THE USERNAME 'TINHEAD.'

New Teahouse menu

The Teahouse in Stanley Park unveiled its new menu created under the watchful eye of Chef Francois Gagnon yesterday. Guests can expect a distinct, classic bistro feel with dishes such as cassoulet, roasted sablefish and steak and frites. "I wanted to build a menu that was primarily bistro," Gagnon said. "One which would allow traditional dishes to stand out and let the ingredients speak for the for themselves."

AIDS benefit on plate

A number of Vancouver restaurants are taking part in the 4th Annual AIDS Benedict fundraiser on Nov. 28 and Nov. 29. Anyone who has brunch at a participating restaurant will help raise funds for ongoing education and awareness programs. Participating restaurants include Deacon's Corner, Elixir Bar & Restaurant, Twisted Fork and Subeez. For more information visit www.youthco.org.

- 24 HOURS NEWS SERVICES