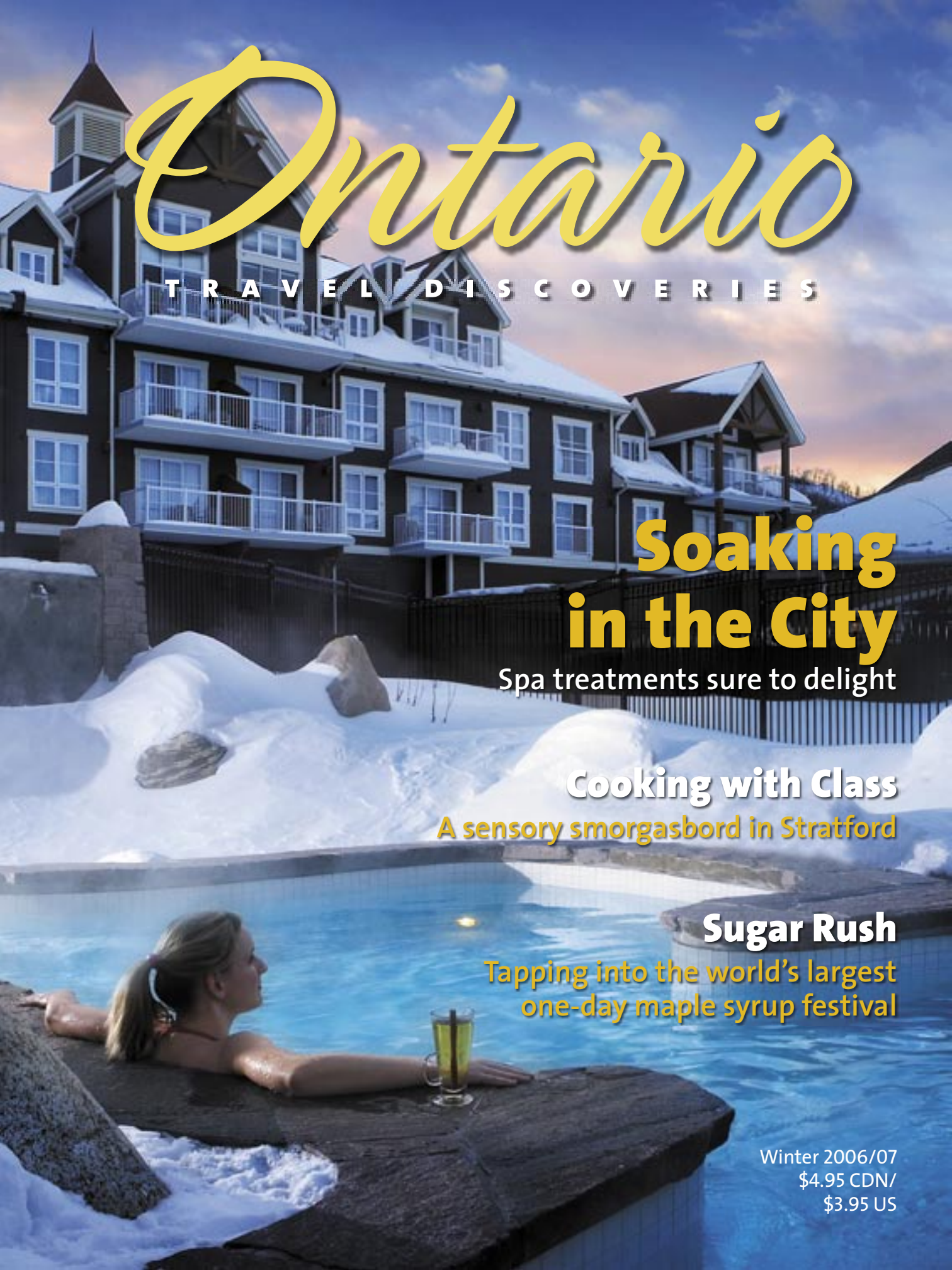


A woman with blonde hair tied back is relaxing in a hot tub, leaning on a dark stone ledge. A glass of yellow drink with a straw sits on the ledge next to her. In the background, a large, multi-story resort building with white balconies and a snow-covered roof stands against a twilight sky. The word "Ontario" is written in a large, yellow, cursive font across the top of the image.

Ontario

T R A V E L D I S C O V E R I E S

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Cooking with Class

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one-day maple syrup festival

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\$3.95 US

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- | | | | |
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| •Belleville (2) | •Kingston (2) | •Oshawa/Whitby | •Toronto (7) |
| •Bracebridge | •Kirkland Lake | •Ottawa (4) | •Toronto/Brampton |
| •Brantford | •Kitchener | •Ottawa/Arnprior | •Toronto/Markham |
| •Brockville (2) | •Leamington | •Ottawa/Kanata | •Toronto/Mississauga (4) |
| •Burlington | •London (4) | •Ottawa/Smiths Falls | •Toronto/North York |
| •Cambridge | •Midland | •Owen Sound | •Toronto/Oakville |
| •Chatham | •New Liskeard | •Parry Sound (2) | •Toronto/Pickering |
| •Cobourg | •Newmarket | •Pembroke | •Toronto/Scarborough |
| •Cornwall | •Niagara Falls (4) | •Peterborough (2) | •Trenton |
| •Dryden | •Niagara Falls/Fort Erie | •Port Hope | •Waterloo |
| •Gananoque | •Niagara Falls/
St. Catharines (2) | •Sault Ste. Marie (3) | •Windsor (5) |
| •Guelph | •Niagara Falls/Welland | •Simcoe | •Woodstock |
| •Hamilton | •North Bay (3) | •Sturgeon Falls | |
| •Huntsville | •Orillia (3) | •Sudbury (3) | |
| •Kapuskasing | | •Thunder Bay | |

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choicehotelsontario.ca



Algonquin Provincial Park

**a warm
welcome to winter**

Roaring fireplaces. Woolen toques. Hot chocolate. And cosy fleece blankets. In some ways, the things most often associated with winter will warm the cockles of your heart more than summer ever could! Add a special someone, a little love and you're in for another spectacular season.

Adore your body by soaking in the relaxation and rejuvenation powers found in a spa. Soothe aching muscles with massages. Then pamper yourself with facials and water therapy. Just lay back...breathe...and relax.

For a more hands-on approach to love, whip up something special in a gourmet kitchen. Learn the fine art of preparing piping hot winter comfort dishes in true Ontario style with the help of an executive chef.

By March, once New Year's resolutions are thrown out the window, stir up your obsession with sweets by sampling sap at a sugar bush.

And if you're a parent (or have a partner with youthful tendencies) show them you care by visiting a kid-friendly attraction while they're chilling out on their winter break.

In short, there's a whole lot to love about Ontario this winter. Couples especially, but kids are going to like it too. Enjoy this issue's suggestions and warm up with *Ontario*. You're in for a great time.

It's easy to begin planning your winter getaway in Ontario.
Visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO.



Toronto's WINTERCITY Festival

CELEBRATE COOL IN THE CREATIVE CITY

TORONTO'S ABLAZE WITH WINTER ACTIVITIES

Indoors and outdoors, the action in Toronto heats up as the temperature drops. Indulge in WinterCity, from January 26 to February 8. At Nathan Phillips Square, experience free open-air performances by edgy Canadian musicians and internationally acclaimed theatrical troupes. Escape indoors with the unique Warm Up series, offering backstage tours and kid-friendly acrobatic shows — plus sizzling culinary demonstrations.

SAVOUR THE FLAVOURS OF WINTERLICIOUS

During Winterlicious, 130 of Toronto's finest restaurants offer special prix fixe menus for lunch or dinner. Sample the diversity of Toronto through these superlative restaurants at a delicious price from January 26 to February 8. Also on the Winterlicious menu are champagne brunches, high tea, and themed tasting events.

CONNECT WITH YOUR INNER ATHLETE

For sports buffs, winter in Toronto is

best enjoyed from ring-side seats at the palatial Air Canada Centre, cheering on a favourite Leafs, Raptors or Rock player. The Hockey Hall of Fame dazzles with hockey memorabilia, mind-boggling trivia and challenging interactive games. Or, tear around the indoor track in a gokart at NASCAR SpeedPark, located at Vaughan Mills.

CURTAINS RISE ON INSPIRED PERFORMANCES

The winter stage is a busy one in Toronto, from the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People to the new Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. And over at the Toronto Zoo, the animals put on quite a show frolicking in the snow. Whether it's a virtuoso pianist or a magical children's story, the images and music will remain with you long after the show is over.

This winter, bundle up and indulge in the creative city. To book a getaway, visit www.torontotourism.com.



COOL GOINGS-ON HEAT UP WINTER
Marvel Super Heroes
Until March 25
Ontario Science Centre

Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance
January 4-5
Hummingbird Centre

Metro Home Show 2007
January 18-21
Metro Toronto Convention Centre

WinterCity
January 26-February 8
Nathan Phillips Square

Winterlicious
January 26-February 8
Various restaurants

Danny, King of the Basement
February 4-25
Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People

Alvin Ailey's American Dance Theatre
February 16-17
Hummingbird Centre

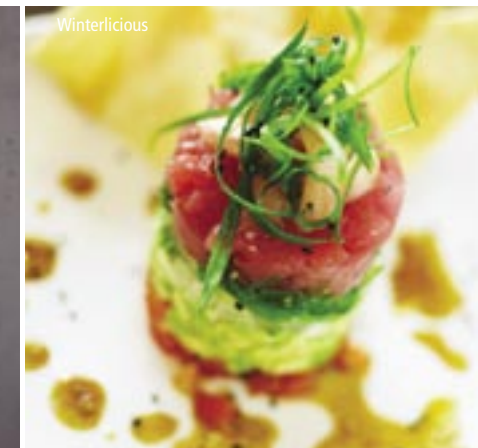
Canadian International Auto Show
February 17-25
Metro Toronto Convention Centre

Outdoor Adventure Show
February 23-25
International Centre

Toronto
unlimited
www.torontotourism.com



Ice Gallery by Paintings Below Zero



Winterlicious



Outdoor Spectacle Show

JANUARY 26 - FEBRUARY 8, 2007

The award-winning WinterCity festival offers a 14-day, city-wide celebration of Toronto's delicious culinary experiences, unique free entertainment, spectacle shows, world class attractions and a showcase of its vibrant arts scene.

Winterlicious, the festival's culinary component, has captured the hearts of customers with fine cuisine and great value at 130 of Toronto's top dining establishments.

WinterCity Getaway Package

Sheraton Centre Toronto welcomes you with a special rate of \$219 CAD per night and the convenience of free parking. Breakfast on the house at Bistro on Two for two people is perfect for huddling around and planning a great day during the WinterCity Festival. Because you don't just stay here. You belong.



Book today at Sheraton.com/centretoronto, or call 1-800-325-3535 for more information.

Forget the weather and join the party in the world's coolest winter city!

PRODUCED BY: **Toronto** Special Events

www.toronto.ca/special_events

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Cover photo: Blue Mountain
Photo: Courtesy of The Westin Trillium House, Blue Mountain



Discover Moments that Matter



Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Barrie
Holiday Inn Barrie Hotel & Conference Centre
Holiday Inn Burlington Hotel & Conference Centre
Holiday Inn Cambridge - Hespeler Galt
Holiday Inn Fort Erie/Niagara Convention Centre
Holiday Inn Guelph
Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Guelph
Holiday Inn Express Hamilton - Stoney Creek
Holiday Inn Kingston - Waterfront
Holiday Inn Kitchener - Waterloo Conf. Ctr.
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites London
Holiday Inn Select Mississauga
Holiday Inn Niagara Falls - By the Falls
Holiday Inn Oakville (Centre)
Holiday Inn Select Hotel & Suites Oakville @ Bronte
Holiday Inn Oshawa
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Ottawa - Downtown
Holiday Inn Select Hotel & Suites Ottawa - Kanata

Holiday Inn Peterborough - Waterfront
Holiday Inn Sarnia
Holiday Inn Sault Ste. Marie Waterfront
Holiday Inn St. Catharines - Niagara
Holiday Inn Express Toronto - Downtown
Holiday Inn Toronto - Midtown
Holiday Inn Express Toronto - Airport Area/Dixie Rd
Holiday Inn Toronto - Airport East
Holiday Inn Express Toronto - East
Holiday Inn Select Toronto - Int'l Airport
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Toronto - Markham
Holiday Inn Toronto - Mississauga
Holiday Inn Express Toronto - North York
Holiday Inn Toronto - On King (Downtown)
Holiday Inn Toronto - West
Holiday Inn Toronto - Yorkdale
Holiday Inn Trenton
Holiday Inn Express Whitby
Holiday Inn Select Windsor (Ambassador Bridge)



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contributors



Founder/editor of www.traveltowellness.com, travel and spa writer **ANNE DIMON** has travelled the world for a variety of newspapers and magazines in Canada, the U.S. the U.K. and Singapore. Spa assignments have found her naked in one of Europe’s traditional spas, up to her earlobes in thick moor mud, floating in a sensory deprivation tank, sweating it out in a Tamazkal, rubbed in curry spices, washed down with cold yogurt and almost drowned in Ayurvedic oils. She always finds time to cover tourism assignments all over Ontario, describing our province to the world. Please see Anne’s spa story on Page 22.

REBECCA DUMAIS began her writing career in 1996. Her freelance work has appeared in several national and regional magazines, including *Real Fishing*, *RV Lifestyle*, *West of the City*, *Niagara Life*, *Good Life*, *up!* and *Pools, Spas & Patios*. Are you interested in learning how to become a gourmet chef in a matter of two days? All it takes is a love of food and a good appetite (both duly noted on Rebecca’s prerequisite list). Please read her Great Escape on Page 57 to find out where chef wannabes go to experience a food-filled weekend of gastronomical proportions.



DARREN HAKKER is a copywriter with FUEL in Toronto. He has been writing for this magazine since its launch three years ago. Even when Darren is not on assignment, he’s always on the lookout for more exciting things to see and do in Ontario. This past winter, Darren visited the 4th Annual Lake Simcoe Wind Sports Festival and tried out his kite-flying skills (please see Page 17). Darren is proud of his home town, Sarnia, and when he’s home he can be seen munching on chip truck fries under the glorious Blue Water Bridge.

LISA DI MINNO is an award-winning art director with FUEL in Toronto. An avid hockey fan, she jumped at the opportunity to attend Kingston’s Feb Fest. You can see her story on Page 44 (and yes, she also designed the layout). Her love of hockey began at an early age when Saturday nights were spent with her dad and younger brother watching *Hockey Night in Canada*. On weekends, Lisa enjoys travelling throughout Ontario, discovering its hidden gems.



Ontario

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ADVERTISING SALES
Please visit www.tourismpartners.com (click on partnership opportunities). Or call Nicole Papineau,
Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation
(OTMPC) – Sales, toll-free 1-888-365-4422 or
(416) 212-1886. E-mail otmp.sales@ontario.ca

ADDITIONAL TRAVEL INFORMATION
For additional travel information on Ontario
please call the following numbers.

FROM TORONTO CALLING AREA:
English: (905) 282-1721 French: (905) 612-8776

**FROM CANADA, CONTINENTAL
U.S.A. AND HAWAII:**
English: 1-800-ONTARIO or 1-800-668-2746
From Canada: French: 1-800-268-3736
Teletypewriter – TTY/Telecommunications Device
for the Deaf (TDD): (905) 612-0870

INTERNATIONAL INQUIRIES
Contact the appropriate Canadian embassy or
overseas consulate for information on Ontario. For
more information, visit [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/world/
embassies/menu-en.asp](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/world/embassies/menu-en.asp) on the Internet. International
visitors can also obtain information on Ontario through
www.ontariotravel.net

♿️ We provide information to assist travellers
with disabilities. Accessibility information is collected
to address a variety of special needs. Please call the
toll-free line and counsellors will assist you with
the details you need to plan and enjoy travel
throughout Ontario.

RENSEIGNEMENTS EN FRANÇAIS
Nous sommes heureux de vous offrir un service
d’information touristique en français. Veuillez composer
le (905) 612-8776 et il nous fera plaisir de vous aider.

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your Ontario



Algonquin Provincial Park

the whiter side of winter

It was truly a pleasure to discover winter through your articles and the magnificent photos that accompanied them. I live in Algeria, where winter is quite different than it is in Ontario. Your magazine gave me the opportunity to discover another side of winter and to read some beautifully written prose about the season.

I would like to congratulate you on this wonderful media resource that enables others to appreciate the beauty of winter, as it unfolds through the pages of *Ontario Travel Discoveries*.

Lyes Allalou, Algeria

Send us your stories

Ontario is bursting with world-class adventures around every corner, wherever you find yourself. If you have had a unique and colourful moment travelling our beautiful province, let us know in 150 words or less and you may see it in an upcoming issue of *Ontario*. Send us a picture that captures the moment and we may include that too.

To submit your ‘moment’ or to offer comments on our magazine, contact us today.

Mail:
Ontario Tourism Marketing
Partnership Corporation
Attention: *Ontario* Editor
10th Floor, Hearst Block, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2E1
Fax:
(416) 314-7563
E-mail:
editor@ontariotravel.net

Please remember to include your name, address and telephone number. Please send all e-mailed attachments in JPEG format. Sorry, mailed photos can not be returned. Thank you in advance for your story and we hope to share your Ontario moments with *Ontario* readers soon!

Toronto



Wondrous winter land

With nature as your audience, the sounds of skates echo off white pines enveloped in a freshly fallen blanket of snow. A moment frozen in time on a pond transformed. Hand in hand, the only thing keeping you from falling. But if you do, nothing soothes like a hot cup of cocoa back at the cottage.

L-R: Collingwood; Toronto; Kingston



Heyden



10 • Ontario



In the great outdoors or the great indoors, memories are waiting to be found in every inch of Ontario. For more on winter, visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO today.

Ontario • 11



warm up to winter!

in York Region

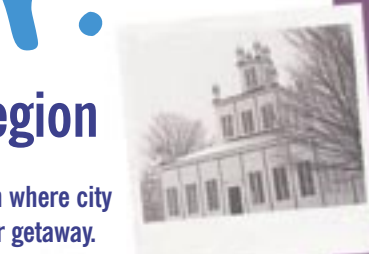
Come experience the warmth and magic of winter in York Region where city sophistication and country charm combine for the perfect winter getaway.

Just a short drive north of downtown Toronto, the options are endless — share a winter festival weekend with friends, enjoy fabulous cuisine at a country house, rejuvenate at a sumptuous spa, explore a forest trail, or simply stroll along quaint, historic streets decked out for the season.

Enjoy a peaceful retreat at a beautifully appointed hotel with an evening of live theatre, ballet, opera or a Christmas concert. Plan a family outdoor adventure in the snow with a hike, outdoor skating, or a festival of lights display.

York Region is home to wonderful museums, galleries, attractions and fabulous shopping. Whether it's a day of Christmas shopping in our mega malls or a carriage ride through a historical village, York Region gives you the chance to indulge and enjoy winter.

Take a break and escape to York Region!



festivals and events

December 1-3
Unionville Olde Tyme Christmas

December 2
A Main Street Christmas in Schomberg

December 15-31
Newmarket Festival of Lights
at Fairy Lake

December 21-24
Live Nativity Pageant in Newmarket

December 29 & 30
The Nutcracker, Markham Theatre

To January 14
Norval Morrisseau: Shaman Artist,
McMichael Canadian Art Collection

To January 14
The Thornhill Circle : J.E.H. MacDonald
and his Associates, Varley Gallery

January 26
The Blind Boys of Alabama,
Markham Theatre

February 24-25
Canadian Ice Fishing Championship

so much to enjoy...

Festival of Lights

Old Tyme Christmas

Winter Carnivals

Dog Sled Races

Toronto Zoo

Trail Walks | Snowshoeing

Ontario Science Centre | Art Galleries

Live Theatre | Maple Syrup Festivals

McMichael Canadian Art Collection

Kortright Centre for Conservation

March Break Fun

... and so much more!



in the know

The new Ontario is happening!

There are thousands of new, cool and fun things happening in Ontario. To know what some of them are, read the next few pages. You can get all the details by visiting www.ontariotravel.net/winter or by calling 1-800-ONTARIO today.





The Westin Trillium House Blue Mountain lobby

What's new at Blue?

ACCOMMODATION

The Westin Trillium House Blue Mountain has two new additions. Besides trendy suites, 'heavenly beds' and legendary Westin service, they now have a 24-hour workout room powered by Reebok Gym. And the resort's other big feature is the latest addition to Peter Oliver and Michael Bonacini's portfolio, the Oliver & Bonacini café.grill. Here, you'll get the comfort, quality and service of their highly successful Toronto eateries, with the scenery of a mountain resort.

Blue Mountain
www.bluemountain.ca
 (705) 445-0231

The Westin Trillium House
 Blue Mountain
www.westinbluemountain.com
 (705) 443-8080

Oliver & Bonacini café.grill
www.oliverbonacini.com
 (705) 444-8680

The WestinWORKOUT® powered by Reebok Gym



Photo: The Westin Trillium House

EVENT



Are you sweet on Icewine?

If you're a big supporter of sweet drinks, you've got to sample one of Ontario's favourites: Icewine. Attend the Niagara Icewine Festival where you can sample this delicious Ontario beverage from a huge bar made of ice and tour more than 40 wineries in the region. For something more intimate try the festival's Icewine-themed gala dinner. Cap it off by donning boots and romping through a snow-blanketed vineyard, picking frozen, sugar-concentrated grapes along the way.

12th Annual Niagara Icewine Festival
 January 19–28
www.niagarawinefestival.com
 (905) 688-0212

THE ARTS



Photo: Miller Hare, © ROM 2006. All rights reserved

Nighttime birds-eye view of the new Michael Lee-Chin Crystal at the Royal Ontario Museum

A ROM with a view

Approaching completion in 2007, the Royal Ontario Museum's spectacular addition will house six new galleries: Dinosaurs; Early Mammals; Africa, Pacifica and the Americas; West and South Asia; Textiles; and Contemporary Culture. The buzz surrounding the museum's audacious design hasn't quieted. But one thing is crystal-clear, the aluminum-clad Michael Lee-Chin Crystal – all 16,165 square metres (174,000 square feet) of it – will be a major attraction for years to come. For the scoop on when each gallery opens, go online or call the ROM.

Royal Ontario Museum
www.rom.on.ca
 (416) 586-8000



Photo: Peter Stevens

ATTRACTION

Celebrate Christmas like it's 1855

Here are a couple of ways to celebrate the season. Watch the Charles Dickens timeless tale, **A Christmas Carol**, come to life at Fort William Historical Park in Thunder Bay. Or you can make the trip to Hamilton for the Christmas Evening Tour of Dundurn Castle. Here, you'll start with a little carolling, followed by holiday treats, hot apple cider and an extended tour through this historic 40-room mansion.

Fort William Historical Park
www.fwhp.ca
(807) 473-2344

Dundurn Castle National Historic Site of Canada
www.myhamilton.ca
(905) 546-2872

L: Setting up for a feast at Dundurn Castle

Winter Wheat wonderland

It's like a dream. A whimsical, winter wonderland tucked within the quiet back roads of Southwestern Ontario. It's Winter Wheat – a folk art oasis brought to you by wife and husband team Lucy Ogletree and Mike Roberts. From the tranquil folk art store to the lovely garden paths (even in winter), visiting is a wonderful way to release your inner love for folk.

Winter Wheat, Sparta
www.winter-wheat.com
1-877-869-7773



Photo: Stephanie Barlow

Winter Wheat store

STYLE



EVENT

Gone with the wind

– By Darren Hakker

On Lake Simcoe, not far from a 'city' of ice fishing huts, Grant Fitz, coordinator of the Lake Simcoe Wind Sports Festival, greets spectators and participants on the second day of the event. There's solid ice, a dose of snow and a steady breeze – perfect conditions for snowkiting.

You read right, snowkiting – that's what the festival's all about. Think of it as skiing or snowboarding on a large, flat, snowy surface, but instead of relying on gravity to get your butt in gear, participants hook up to a large kite and use wind power.

As Grant and I chat, watching snowkiters 'taking off,' I sense that he really loves this sport – he doesn't charge participants nor spectators, always makes sure that riders are safe and is willing to show beginners the 'ins and outs' of this growing sport. That sentiment, I realize, is shared by everyone here.

I am having a blast just watching and talking with riders, but if you're interested, it's also an easy sport to learn. Most beginners can handle the kite in a couple hours and after a few lessons they can usually master the skis or snowboard too. What's more, there are no hills and no lift fees, making the thrills last longer than any other winter sport. You could literally keep going for hours out here.

See what the sport's all about at the festival. But first, a bit of great Grant advice – “wear warm clothes.”

– *Darren Hakker is a writer with FUEL. His work appears regularly in this magazine.*

5th Annual Lake Simcoe Wind Sports Festival, Keswick
March 3–4
www.canadianwindrider.com/events
(416) 497-WIND



Wind is the key ingredient at the Lake Simcoe Wind Sports Festival

FOOD

Score one for Ontario



Phil and 'the cup,' Hockey Hall of Fame

There’s only one place where you can take shots on Eddie Belfour and stop shots from Wayne Gretzky. No, it’s not an NHL arena. These computer-simulated games are at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto. When you get home, Phil Pritchard, the Hockey Hall of Fame’s Vice-President, Curator and ‘Keeper of the Cup’, suggests you take a shot at whipping up this delicious treat that should ‘score’ with the family.

Score Bars

- 40 unsalted soda crackers
- 250 mL (1 cup) butter
- 250 mL (1 cup) brown sugar
- 350 g chocolate chips

Line a 10-inch x 15-inch cookie sheet with foil. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread out soda crackers evenly on foil until the foil is covered. Melt butter and brown sugar and bring to boil for three minutes, stirring constantly. Pour evenly over soda crackers. Place in oven for seven minutes. Remove from oven and melt chocolate chips over top, spreading evenly. Freeze for 45 minutes. Break into pieces and savour every morsel.

Hockey Hall of Fame, Toronto
www.hhof.com
(416) 360-7765



Photo: Port Hope Tourism

Shopping along Ontario's best preserved 19th century streetscape in Port Hope

Port Hope’s quarter-mile of holiday style

Daughters. Sons. Sisters. Brothers. Aunts. Uncles. Friends. It doesn’t matter who you’re buying for this holiday season, if you’re looking for one place to find something really cool for any of them, make a trip to Port Hope. About an hour east of Toronto, it’s one of the prettiest (and most colourful) towns in Ontario, with trendy shops, antique boutiques and, essential to any small town, a chocolate shop. Scoop up hip jewellery, designer furniture and chic clothes. You can even find 19th century trinkets, antique furnishings and vintage attire.

Port Hope
www.porthope.ca
1-888-PORT-HOPE

EVENT

Factory film fest five

The annual Weeneebeg Aboriginal Film and Video Festival, now in its fifth year in Moose Factory, has premieres and movie stars, but there are differences from other film festivals – all seats are free and opening night has a free feast featuring moose, goose and bear. More than 20 Aboriginal films are shown as part of the festival. Aboriginal stars, including Nathaniel Arcand, Dakota House and Glen Gould, are always part of the festivities. Local Crees, Shirley Cheechoo and Paul M. Rickard, are both well known as filmmakers around the world and have shown their films at the festival. Besides the screenings, all the film stars and filmmakers are featured in free seminars about the films and/or the film industry.

Weeneebeg Aboriginal Film and Video Festival
March 7–10
www.weeneebeg.ca
(705) 658-6987

Moose Factory



EVENT

Rockettes science

For the first time ever, the world-famous Rockettes are coming to Canada to perform the **Radio City Christmas Spectacular**. These high-kicking performers will be dazzling audiences at Toronto’s Hummingbird Centre for the Performing Arts during the holiday season. Even Santa is making a special appearance! This show will be hot – book your tickets now.

Radio City Christmas Spectacular
The Hummingbird Centre for the Performing Arts, Toronto
November 14 – December 31
www.hummingbirdcentre.com
(416) 872-2262



Photo: Radio City Christmas Spectacular

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For more information, please call 1-888-FALLSVU or visit fallsviewcasinoresort.com

Know your limit, play within it! The Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline 1-888-230-3505.

Must be at least 19 years of age to enter the casino. ©2005 Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort.

event full



Photo: Toronto Special Events

FOOD! GLORIOUS FOOD!

Foodies Paradise

You could talk about the flavours, awards, scenery, home-grown quality, etc., etc., but a simple “mmm” can show your appreciation for fine Ontario cuisine. Get your taste of Ontario at Toronto's Winterlicious – the urban food festival with prix fixe pricing at more than 100 restaurants across town. Courses vary from \$15 to \$30. The festival runs from January 26–February 8.

WINTER EVENTS LISTING

December

Unionville Olde Tyme Christmas
Unionville, December 1–3

Christmas Carols on Ice
Petawawa, December 3

Christkindl Market
Kitchener, December 6–10

Christmas Lights Across Canada
Ottawa, December 7–January 8

John R. Park Homestead & Conservation Area Candlelight Christmas
Kingsville, December 17

Bell Capitol Cup
Ottawa, December 28–January 1

First Night Family Party!
Haileybury, December 31

Rockin' at the Clock
Kingston, December 31

Barrie's Downtown Countdown
Barrie, December 31–January 1

New Year's Eve 2006
Brampton, December 31–January 1

January

Brighton Winterfest
Brighton, January 19–28

Cabin Fever 2007
Petawawa, January 19–28

Niagara Icewine Festival 2007
Niagara Region, January 19–28

Moonlight Snowshoe Hike
Milton, January 20

IMAX Festival
Sudbury, January 20

Tim Horton's Georgian Cup
Owen Sound, January 20–21

WinterCity
Toronto, January 26–February 8

Wing Fest
Lindsay, January 27

Frosty Fling Winter Carnival
Lanark, January 27, 28

Winter Carnival
Burlington, January 27–February 4

February

Snowfest 2007
Temiskaming Shores, February 2–4

Ontario Winter Carnival Bon Soo
Sault Ste. Marie, February 2–11

Winterlude 2007
Ottawa, February 2–18

Winterfest 2007
Barrie, February 3, 4

Barry's Bay Timberfest 2007
Barry's Bay, February 15–18

Sportsfest 2007
Port Colborne, February 15–18

59th Annual Winterama
Penetanguishene, February 16–18

Canadian Ice Fishing Championship
Lake Simcoe, February 24, 25

March

Cuvee En Route
Niagara Region, March 2–4

Annual Celebration of Black History
Chatham, March 4

Maple Syrup Festival
Oakville, March 4–24

Canadian Music Week
Toronto, March 7–10

Irish Festival
Ottawa, March 8–17

March Break Mania
Art Gallery of Hamilton, March 9–16

KEDT/CTV Ice Fishing Derby
Kapuskasing, March 10

It's a Family Affair, March Break at Dundurn Castle
Hamilton, March 10–18

Sweetwater Celebration
Milton, March 11

The Around the Bay Road Race
Hamilton, March 25

Food for thought



L-R: Westfield Heritage Village. Photos: John Overmeyer

MOVEABLE FEAST

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Moveable Feast

Rockton, December 2, 9, 16

www.westfieldheritage.ca

1-800-883-0104

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February 17, 18

www.rbg.ca

(905) 527-1158

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– By Anne Dimon

Photo: Brad Delgarno

Body Blitz's warm sea salt pool, Toronto

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ENJOYING THE INNER SANCTUM

One of several newcomers is AxiSpa in Yorkville. Signature massages are 60 or 90-minute journeys created by the Italian-based spa line [comfort zone]. Therapist Lorraine Hamilton escorts me into what she calls the “inner sanctum” – an intimate and stylish conclave of five treatment rooms. Lorraine quickly assesses my ‘traps’ and ‘latts’ are crying out and decides what this body needs is a combo of Swedish and Mediterranean treatments – Swedish to work out muscle stiffness and Mediterranean to relax and reenergize a body flagging from the mental and physical exertion of my recent move into a new house.

The Mediterranean technique’s long, smooth strokes resemble a caress of energetic waves while a curled fist moves in rhythmic motion back and forth over the bottom of the foot in the pattern of a frothing wave. Lorraine’s impromptu combination of Mediterranean and Swedish is potent. It’s one of the most therapeutic massages this body has enjoyed over the years.

AxiSpa, Toronto



Photo: Courtesy of AxiSpa



Photo: Roswell Anderson



Photo: Roswell Anderson

L-R: Turkish bath, co-ed steam room and Zebra wood staircase, Hammam Spa, Toronto

‘WOW’ FACTOR

Further south in the progressive King Street West district, the first new spa in Toronto to rival the Hyatt Plaza Hotel’s Stillwater Spa for first impression ‘wow’ factor is the Hammam Spa. From street level I descend via a zebra wood staircase that seems to float over an Oriental-style pond. Every element of décor that helps create this ultra-cool (underground-level) space is candy for the design-lover’s discerning eye.

The nucleus of the spa is a large, jet-black hammam. For those self-conscious souls concerned that the traditional steam room is co-ed, nudity is not allowed plus the steam inside the hammam, (thick as mushroom soup) reduces every towel-clad body to nothing more than a barely perceptible blob of white. One of the signature Hammam Spa treatments is the 60-minute Indian Aromasoul also created by [comfort zone]. Following 15 minutes in the hammam to relax body and mind, and open pores, the treatment combines long soothing strokes one moment and tapotement (light, fast finger-tapping as if someone is practicing an up-tempo tune on a make-shift piano) the next. This yin and yang effect helps the body achieve an overall balance and harmony. The stimulation of marma points (the body’s energy points) concludes the treatment after which, this body, now totally relaxed and reenergized, relishes in the afterglow of the Tea Lounge over a demi-tasse of tea-de-jour.

BASIC BODY BAKE

In the same King Street West neighbourhood, the for-women-only Body Blitz Spa is another contemporary take on a traditional ritual. In this newly spiffed-up former warehouse, Asian scrubs meet the European bathing concept. The idea is to go from hot to cold: first I sweat off the toxins in the steam room, take a dip in an ice cold pool, then off to the sauna for more sweating until I finish the Therapeutic Water Circuit. The piece-de-résistance is the mega saltwater heated pool with 30 jets. There’s also a hot green tea pool and rain showers. From a menu of treatments featuring massages, body muds and scrubs, I go for the Basic Body Bake. It begins with an exfoliation and



Photo: Brad Delgarno

LOUNGE CHAIRS BY THE **WARM SEA SALT** AND **HOT GREEN TEA** POOLS MAKE A DAY AT BODY BLITZ A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE.

Using body wash and unique Body Blitz scrub mitt, the skin is cleansed, exfoliated and stimulated before applying body scrubs or muds



Photo: Brad Delgarno

ONE OF THE NEW CORNERSTONES OF THE ELIZABETH MILAN SPA IS A **THEMED BODY TREATMENT** CALLED CHOCOLATE BODY INDULGENCE.

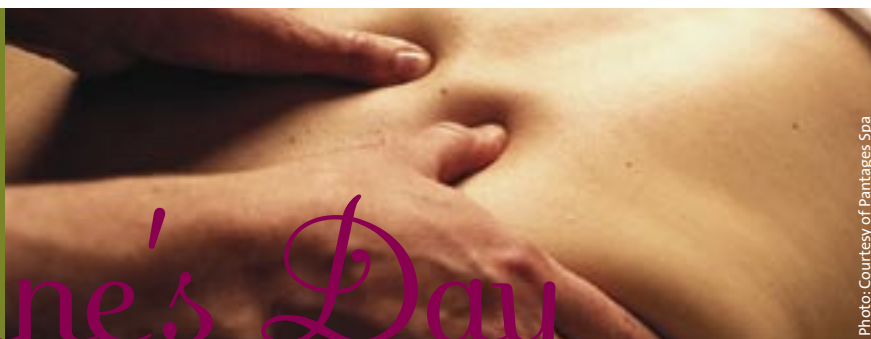


Elizabeth Milan Spa, Royal York Hotel, Toronto

body wash, an application of your choice of therapeutic body mud that bakes under infra-red lights, followed by another body wash and an application of moisturizer. At the hands of my therapist I'm feeling very nurtured. On the way out, a shot of Nutrimoor elixir, a blend of ginseng, licorice root, alfalfa, juniper and a handful of other healthy ingredients, is the perfect way to top off my afternoon of Blitz.

At the other end of the Toronto spa scene, one of the grand ladies is the Elizabeth Milan Spa in the Royal York Hotel (so convenient if people want a spa experience with overnight accommodation). Along with themed body treatments such as the popular Chocolate Body Indulgence, anti-aging facials are one of the new cornerstones of this downtown spa. One of the most popular is the two-hour Hydradermie Lift from

SPICE UP Valentine's Day



Pantages Spa, Toronto

- Elizabeth Milan Spa has a 60-minute chocolate massage for two.
www.elizabethmilanspa.com
- Pantages Suites Hotel & Spa offers a romantic package including one night's accommodation in a one-bedroom suite, chocolate-dipped strawberries, rose petals at turn-down, a bottle of sparkling or non-alcoholic wine and a couple's massage.
www.pantageshotel.com
- The sweet treat for couples at the Stillwater Spa is the massage room for two with an oversize

- whirlpool, fireplace, shower and two massage beds.
www.parktoronto.hyatt.com
- Hammam Spa has a package for two including a hammam steam, a body scrub, massage and box of chocolate truffles in your own private spa suite.
www.hammamspa.ca
- AxiSpa offers specialty couples packages including massages or facials in the couples suite plus lunch, manicures and pedicures.
www.axispa.ca
- In one of The Elmwood's new couples treatment room a two-

- some can each enjoy a 50-minute or 75-minute Swedish massage.
www.elmwoodspa.com
- Valentine's Day gift packages at Body Blitz Spa include treatments plus gift-wrapped retail products and special girls-only spa packages designed for mother/daughters or groups of girlfriends.
www.bodyblitzspa.com

For more information on Valentine's Day spa packages please visit www.premierspasofontario.com

SMOKING O'YARRARANG IN A **TRADITIONAL CULLAMON** GIVES THIS TREATMENT AN AUTHENTICITY THAT EMBRACES WITH A SENSE OF PEACE AND WELL-BEING.



Photo: Li'Tya, 2004

Paris-based Guinot. It involves hydration, drainage to reduce puffiness and lifting with the use of an electric current that helps products penetrate deeper into the skin and stimulate the muscles. Think of it as a 20-minute workout for the face. Give it the mirror test and it also lifts the spirits. It works for me!

ABORIGINAL RITUALS

Another seasoned spa is the Elmwood. Heading towards its 25th anniversary, the city's landmark spa is celebrating with a complete body makeover including a new reception area, new men's and ladies' change rooms, three suites and an all-over enhanced décor. One of the spas newest menu features is Li'Tya, a unique line of spa products and associated Aboriginal rituals from Australia. Based on therapeutic energy work, Li'Tya offers a variety of body treatments including the Mikiri facial. A ritual foot bath kicks off this singular facial which is closer to a whole body treatment than the traditional facial that includes those nasty extractions. The pleasing aromas of such native essential oils as aniseed myrtle and desert lime, and the ritual of smoking o'yarrarang (a native herb) in a traditional cullamon (an Aboriginal vessel carved from a tree) gives this treatment an authenticity that embraces with a sense of peace and well-being. I loved it.

Yes, Toronto's spa scene is anything but 'wet behind the ears.' The spa facilities and treatments are as good and varied as anywhere. ❄️

— Anne Dimon is a Toronto freelance travel journalist who has developed a reputation for writing about spa experiences all over the world.

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www.vintage-hotels.com
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For more spa ideas visit
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or call 1-800-ONTARIO.

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children's play

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make a date



Rideau Canal, Ottawa

Meet the canal locales

‘Tradition-making’ is happening daily on and along the 202-km (125-mi.) Rideau Canal – it’s celebrating its 175th year in 2007. Come winter, when temperatures dip, the canal becomes the world’s largest maintained skating rink, starting just south of Dows Lake in Ottawa and running north for 7.8 km (4.9 mi.) to the copper-clad buildings of Parliament Hill. That’s just one great way to celebrate the Rideau’s big bash. Family events are popping up along its banks throughout 2007: Merrickville has a Snowflake Festival happening on February 10 with an indoor children’s carnival and outdoor bowling, and the Delta Maple Syrup Festival has all-you-can-eat pancake meals on April 21 and 22.

Rideau Canal
www.rideau175.org
1-888-773-8888

Photo: George Pimentel



Kids + waterslides = big smiles at Great Wolf Lodge

Take a dip this winter

How about a visit to the bright lights of Niagara Falls? What was once the ‘Honeymoon Capital of the World’ is now one of the planet’s greatest entertainment capitals. The only problem is there’s so much to include so we’ll mention a couple that your kids are guaranteed to love – Great Wolf Lodge and the Winter Festival of Lights (see page 34). Whether they are Sleeping Beauties or Prince Charmings, they’ll act a little out of character upon sight of the colossal log-sided Great Wolf Lodge. This place is like the third little pig’s sturdy home that the two others envied – story time every night, picture-taking with furry mascots, a chance to sleep in the den of the big, bad wolf (without the wolf, of course) and one of North America’s largest water parks with 13 waterslides and four pools. If you’re thinking of creating the ultimate family tradition, this place is a howl away from home.

Great Wolf Lodge
niagara.greatwolf lodge.com
1-800-605-WOLF

Photo: Laura Bombier

2

Ski spree

There’s another spectacle your kids won’t soon forget – night skiing at Hidden Valley Highlands Ski Area. We wouldn’t call this an educational experience, but it’s ‘sweet’ as the kids say, and makes for great stories at school. Bundle up your bundles of joy and let the lights of three runs and a snowboarding terrain park guide the way until 10 p.m. Hang out on the slope with them (don’t ever mention that you’re having ‘quality time’), then savour a piping cup o’ hot chocolate in the chalet – a perfect family tradition in the making.

Hidden Valley Highlands Ski Area
www.skihiddenvalley.on.ca
1-800-398-9555

Night skiing at Hidden Valley Highlands Ski Area



make a date



Photo: Harry Foster, Canadian War Museum

All-out war museum

A refreshing walk from the Rideau Canal in Ottawa is the new Canadian War Museum. This is the ultimate experience for kids old enough to understand it. What is it all about? There are 13,000 authentic war memories waiting to be uncovered. The great way they've designed the new war museum is that you don't have to be a Major-General to get it. It's open to all age levels and special attention is given to kids who want to figure out what their grandparents – and perhaps even parents – did in the armed forces. Maybe ask 'dad' or 'grandpa' to join your little ones on this interactive learning adventure.

Canadian War Museum
www.warmuseum.ca
 1-800-555-5621

Ottawa

White snow, bright show

You don't need to travel to Florida to meet the stars of Disney or go on a wilderness excursion to see Canadian wildlife, thanks to Niagara Falls' Winter Festival of Lights. Here, eyes will widen when more than 100 animated, brightly-lit displays illuminate the Niagara Parkway – where Snow White feels right at home. Even the thundering falls get their colour on for the festivities!

Winter Festival of Lights
 November 4 – January 8
www.wfol.com
 1-800-563-2557



Photo: Winter Festival of Lights

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make a date



Photo: Echo Valley Observatory

Star light, star bright

Don't just tell your kids to reach for the stars. *Really* reach for the stars. At Huntsville's Delta Grandview Resort, you can do just that. They have the Echo Valley Observatory. On the slightly technical side, its telescope is an equatorial-mounted 16-inch LX 200 Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope. On the kid-friendly side, it's a really cool way to find out that those glittering dots in the night sky are more than just dots — they're planets, stars, nebulae and even galaxies waiting to be explored.

Delta Grandview Resort's
Echo Valley Observatory
www.naturetrails.ca
(705) 789-1871 ext. 3478

Delta Grandview Resort naturalist Robin Tapley seeing what's 'up'

The sky's the limit

For an hour a week for five weeks, kids aged two to five can hang out at the Canada Aviation Museum in Ottawa for the high-flying excitement of airplane-themed crafts and games. 'Sky Stuff' begins January. Register online or call.

Canada Aviation Museum
www.aviation.technomuses.ca
(613) 993-4264

'Sky Stuff' brings out big smiles



Photo: Canada Aviation Museum

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A photograph of three young women standing in a forest with bare trees and a ground covered in fallen leaves. They are all smiling and licking maple syrup from their fingers. A large blue bucket is visible in the lower left foreground.

sugar rush

— By Sue Lebrecht

Once upon a time, long before this country was called Canada, an Indian, showing off his hunting skills to his bride, shot an arrow at a rabbit. He missed and the arrow stuck in a tree.

Festival of the Maples

Another large sweet event, the annual Festival of the Maples, takes place in Lanark County, the Maple Syrup Capital of Ontario. A day of non-stop festivity, it features stage and street entertainment of live music and dancers, along with clowns, magicians and comedians. Of course, there are also traditional pancake breakfasts and a long line of food, crafts and artisan vendors.

Festival of the Maples
April 28
www.perthchamber.com
(613) 267-3200

Festival of the Maples, Perth



Photo: Bryan Cronk



L-R: Elmira Maple Syrup Festival

He quickly launched another arrow and this one hit home. “Cook this,” he said to his bride, handing her the rabbit, “I’ll get more.”

The bride, looking for water in which to boil the rabbit, noticed a clear liquid seeping out of the tree where the first arrow hit. It tasted like sweet water, so she used it. The longer she boiled the rabbit, the thicker and sweeter the liquid became.

This is one of the myths about how maple syrup was discovered.

Today the world’s largest one-day maple syrup festival takes place in a tiny Mennonite community, Elmira. With plates of pancakes doused in syrup we’re on the sidewalk of Main Street in the entrance nook of a closed antique shop, standing, eating, watching, utterly astounded.

As far as I can see, throngs of people pack vendor tents. Food is foremost among the offerings. My eyes are drawn to sticky, gooey things like apple fritters, cinnamon rolls and German potato pancakes. I even spy chocolate-covered marshmallows and deep-fried Mars bars. Everything goes with maple syrup. Good morning, hello breakfast!

My boyfriend and I finish our plates and drop back into the flow for another sugar rush. More than anything, this festival seems to provide licence to be a glutton for a day – and we intend to fully indulge.

Sweet smells fill the air, as does the plume of smoke from all the barbecues. We stop around a large cauldron of boiling sap to watch the art of taffy-making. Inside the toy show I’m captivated by all the farm-related items.

To top off the day we take a ride on a school bus to a sugar bush where a tractor-drawn wagon brings us into the woods. And there it is, dripping from the maple trees into shiny buckets, the sweet, natural liquid – nature’s nectar – sap.

Inside a wooden shed – better known as a sugar shack – a wood-fired evaporator is doing its thing, boiling the sap, slowly transforming the clear liquid into maple syrup. It takes 40 buckets of sap to make one bucket of maple syrup. There are no additives and no preservatives in this traditional form of maple syrup-making. It’s pure, sweet, delicious and brings the best out of pancakes and waffles. ❄️

– Sue Lebrecht is an adventure travel writer whose work appears in many leading newspapers and magazines.

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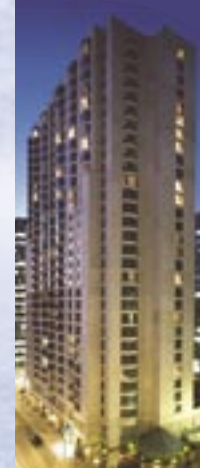
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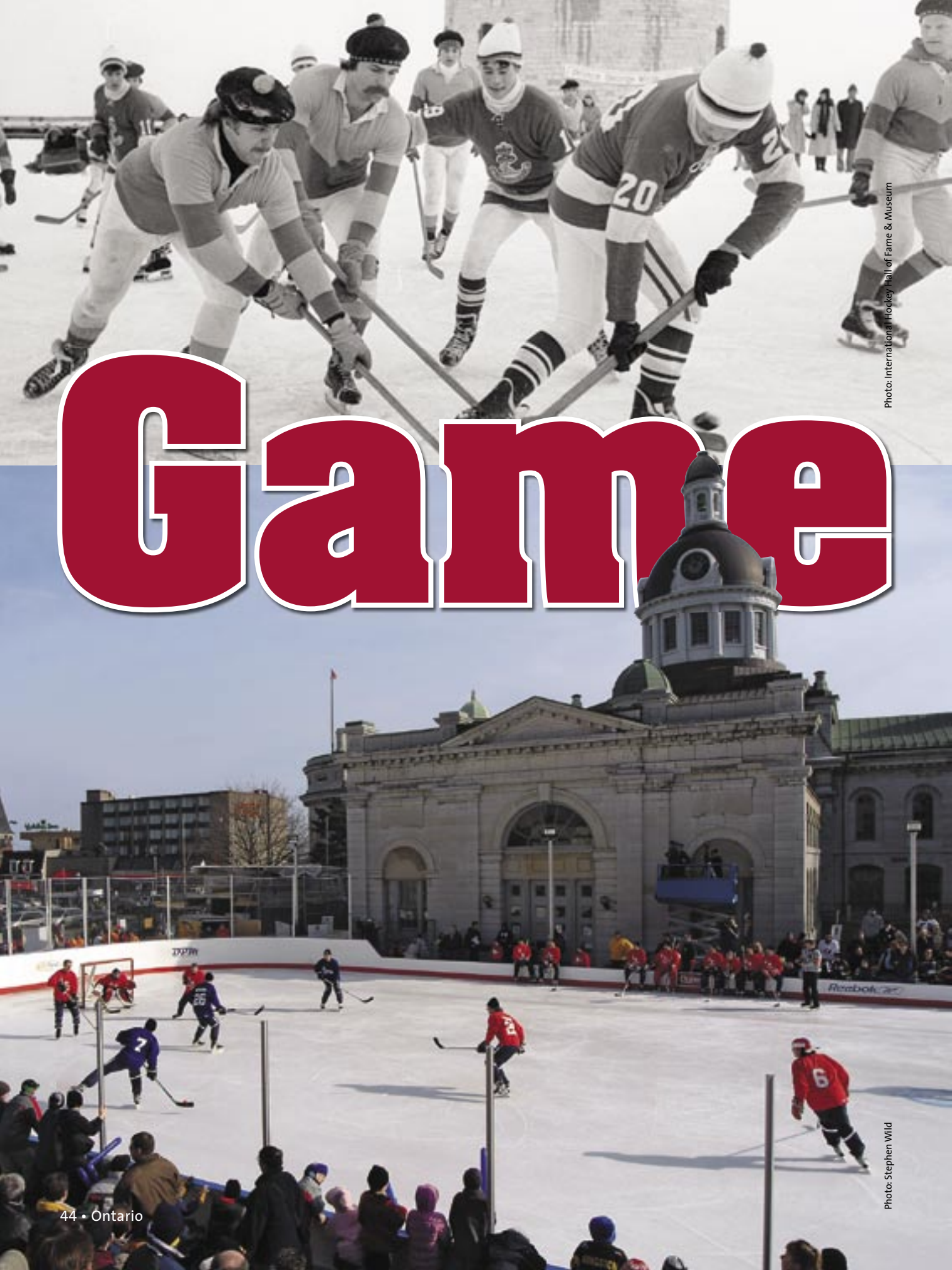


Photo: International Hockey Hall of Fame & Museum

Photo: Stephen Wild

The call went something like this, “Hey honey, how would you like to play hockey this weekend with Kirk Muller and Doug Gilmour?” The response, “Are you kidding me?”

The chance to hit the ice with future Hall of Famers doesn’t come along often, so when I told my fiancé, Rui, he would be doing just that, my weekend warrior was ecstatic.

When Muller, proud Kingston native and retired NHL player started planning the ‘Classic’ he was coach of Queen’s University hockey team and envisioned an event that would be as successful as the outdoor 2003 Edmonton Heritage Classic, in which he participated. He realized Kingston was the perfect city to host a first-class event.

“It has such great restaurants, nightlife

said about playing hockey outdoors.

Along with his pal Doug Gilmour, they worked hard to recruit former NHL players and a few hockey-loving celebrities to spend the weekend in Kingston. Wendel Clark, Paul Coffey, Marty McSorley, Bob Probert, Gord Sinclair (of Tragically Hip fame) and Jason Priestley (yes, that Jason Priestley!), to name a few, all jumped at the chance to put on a show and raise money for the Boys and Girls Club.

The ‘Classic’ is the feature attraction of Feb Fest, Kingston’s annual four-day winter festival. The festival’s other events include Olympic medallist Lloyd Eisler’s figure skating extravaganza; an awesome ski and snowboard demonstration and competition called Rail Jam; and the annual historic hockey series, a game between rivals Queen’s University and Royal Military College which dates back to 1886. There’s also an outdoor concert, public skating, horse-drawn wagon rides, ice sculptures, and City Hall tours. But the buzz around town was definitely the ‘Classic.’

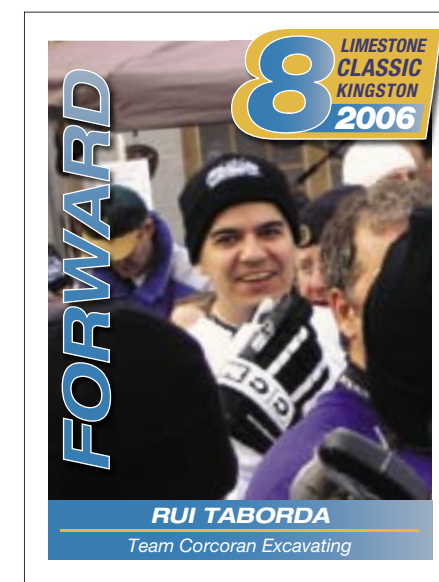
The tournament started bright and early Saturday morning, on the ice

On!

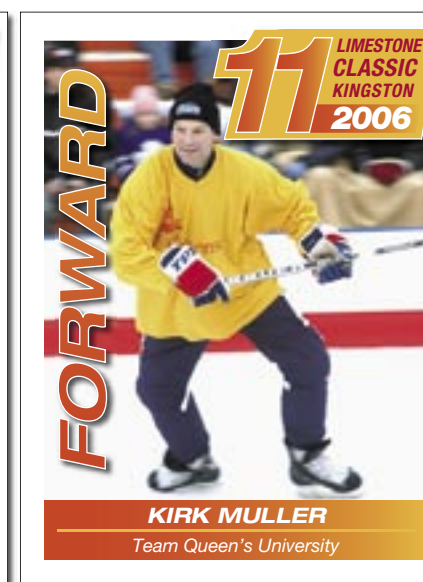
– By Lisa Di Minno

We were going to Kingston to participate in the Limestone Classic, a 4-on-4 shinny hockey tournament hosted by Kirk Muller and Doug Gilmour.

and history,” he said. With that, he enlisted the help of the community and started planning the Limestone Classic. It is such a “Canadian thing to do,” Kirk

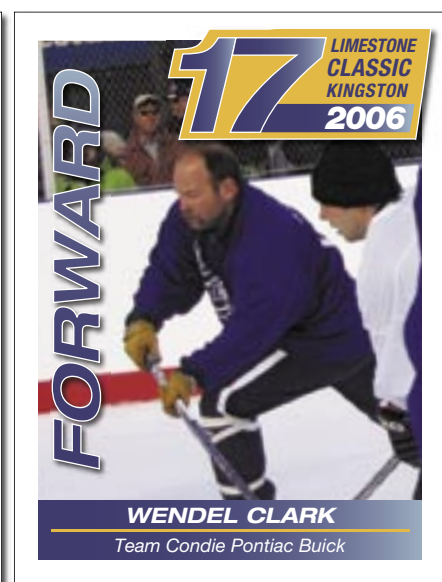


RUI TABORDA
Team Corcoran Excavating



KIRK MULLER
Team Queen's University

Photo: Stephen Wild



WENDEL CLARK
Team Condie Pontiac Buick

Left page top to bottom: 1974 Historic Hockey Series, Kingston Harbour; A view from the stands at the 2nd annual Limestone Classic

rink in historic Market Square. The atmosphere inside the makeshift locker room at the Prince George Hotel, across the street from the rink, was just as exciting as it was in the stands. Ten teams, each comprising two NHL greats and 10 thrilled recreational players were vying for the John Counter Cup.

I went to see how Rui was doing before his first game. “This is crazy. I can’t believe I’m actually going to do this,” he said, as the captain of his team, Paul Coffey, walked past him. “My first game is against Wendel Clark,” his childhood hockey hero.

“Don’t worry. You’ll be fine,” I said while crossing my fingers in my pocket.

Outside I went, to watch the opening ceremonies from the stands. Kingston’s Town Crier proclaimed, “Game On!” and Mayor Harvey Rosen dropped the puck for our hosts, Kirk and Doug. With that, the first two teams were playing their first 20-minute game of three, for the day.

Rui’s team was up next. I gave him the thumbs-up as he waited with the rest of his teammates to hit the ice.

Shift one. Shift two. Shift three. Rui is finally on. He looks a little nervous. Then it happens, Wendel Clark is breaking down the right side. Rui looks behind him, but no one is there except his goalie. He races towards Clark with the biggest smile on his face. Somehow he managed to get the puck off him.

As they leave the ice, I approach

Rui. He smiles and says,

“This is one of the best days of my life!”

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Rui. He smiles and says,

“This is one of the best days of my life!”



Photo: Stephen Wild

One of the many ice sculptures in downtown Kingston

The first game is over and so is the nervousness. The rest of the day is filled with slapstick memories.

Kirk’s event is a huge success, even though at the end of the day, it’s Doug’s team that reigns victorious. For Kirk, he is pleased with the community effort, singling out the mayor, sponsors and volunteers for helping to make it such a great day. ❄️

— Lisa Di Minno is an award-winning art director with FUEL and a big hockey fan.

AROUND TOWN

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The beautiful Stone Room at the Frontenac Club Inn



Photo: Sobule Design

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Chill Out!

A Flurry of Activity in Kingston

Winter already. Hard to believe. Each year I diligently try to round up the family and often force them outside kicking and screaming, only to get some fresh air in their lungs and some silence in my ears. We've got our kids involved in lots of organized sports and activities in the winter, but to escape the big city and do something different in the cold of the winter, seems a more daunting task each year.

My husband and I talk about getting better in planning winter excursions, much like we do in the summer. But winter is another story. I organize layers of clothing, extra hats and mitts, check the weather report and try to get the entire family excited about a winter weekend away. My reward is usually, "Dowe really have to do this?"

Just as I was ready to throw in the snowsuit, I joined in on a conversation about weekend retreat ideas after last week's yoga class, and much to my surprise, heard some great things about Kingston. My friend was regaling us with their experiences at Kingston's annual Feb Fest event in the heart of their downtown area. They actually met a couple of NHL players and skated with the family to music on the new outdoor rink located behind Canada's first capital City Hall. She said she could literally throw a toque and hit at least 4 restaurants surrounding the rink, with many more within a block's walk. She said the atmosphere downtown was very warm and friendly. They stayed overnight at a luxurious hotel with all the amenities they needed and found a major shopping mall a 5-minute drive away. The hotel desk

clerk informed them of a nearby conservation area that had pristine cross country trails, so they rented skis right at the site and skimmed through the evergreens and gently rolling hills for the afternoon. Everything they wanted to do was no more than a 15 minute drive, which is great if you're trailing around kids. She recommended I visit the visitkingston.ca web site to learn more. Kingston is launching a new event for the month of December called Candy Cane Lane – it's a winter lights walking tour through Kingston's historic district, highlighting a Victorian Skating Party on the Market Square rink and a weekend with Charles Dickens featuring "A Christmas Carol". The event is set back in time with period costumes carollers and street vendors. There's also a winter lights walking tour through Kingston's Historic Inns district. Countless numbers of unique boutiques are scattered throughout the downtown core. Many of the hotels have great whirlpool suites, pools, restaurants – and some with efficiency units too! Sounds like my friend's convinced me to take another run at a family winter getaway. Kingston sounds safe, fun, affordable and close. It's something new... and it's something we're going to do this winter!

Feb Fest

February 8-11, 2007



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Doug Gilmour



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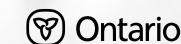
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great escapes

FAMILY N-ICE TIME

— By James Smedley

Long rippling tendrils of ice flow from a pine-capped cliff face 40 metres (131 feet) above to flare into a broad ice wall. Icicles appearing as fangs in a growling mouth pierce a gaping hole in this frozen waterfall. “That’s the ice cave,” says 49-year-old ice climbing pioneer Shaun Parent.

Ready to climb: the gang reaches the base of the ice fall



Photo: James Smedley

Islay Smedley attached by rope to guide Shaun Parent as she ascends into a corner of the ice cave

As foreboding as it looks, my daughters Islay 10, and Lillian 8, scramble through the yawning orifice and into a long, narrow passage squeezed between a curtain of ice and the undercut granite at the cliff’s base.

Navigating the ice cave is a great warm-up for climbing the ice wall and with crampon-equipped feet and a pointy ice axe in each hand, Shaun shows us how to adhere to the wall like a spider.

Like any caring parent I let the children go first. Islay chooses the vertical wall and Lillian a steeply angled ice slope. Each is attached to Shaun by a rope fed through a secure anchor atop the cliff. With each step away from level ground Shaun tightens the rope.

My tension as a spectator is punctuated when the girls lose grip of the wall and call “falling” before dangling from the rope.

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The double chair whisks snowboarders and skiers to the top of the mountain



Photo: James Smedley

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Francine Dubreuil navigating the deep powder of Lake Superior Provincial Park



Photo: James Smedley

great escapes



But anxiety is eclipsed by pride as Lillian slowly but surely reaches the top of her climb and Islay kicks and pulls her way up the vertical icefall. My appreciation for their tenacity only grows as I start kicking crampons and swinging axes into the vertical wall.

I make it just past my daughter then decide that dad has proven himself. We all rappel down beaming smiles as bright as the glistening icefalls of Batchawana. ❄️

— James Smedley is a freelance writer/photographer who loves the outdoors. He is Backroads columnist and Field Editor for Ontario Out of Doors magazine. He lives in Wawa.

Bon Soo a Top Carnival

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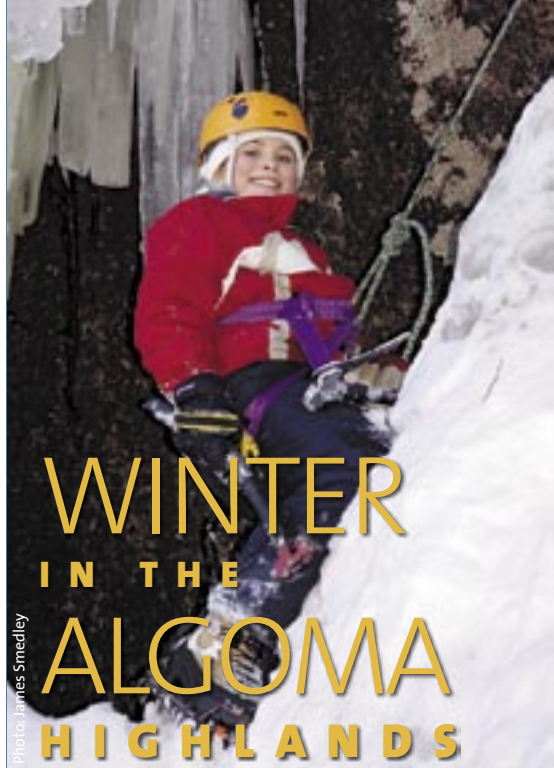


Photo: James Smedley

WINTER IN THE ALGOMA HIGHLANDS

Islay Smedley beams after conquering the ice

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Today, when my daughter sees that sign, I can feel her excitement. I'm reminded of those great family holidays.

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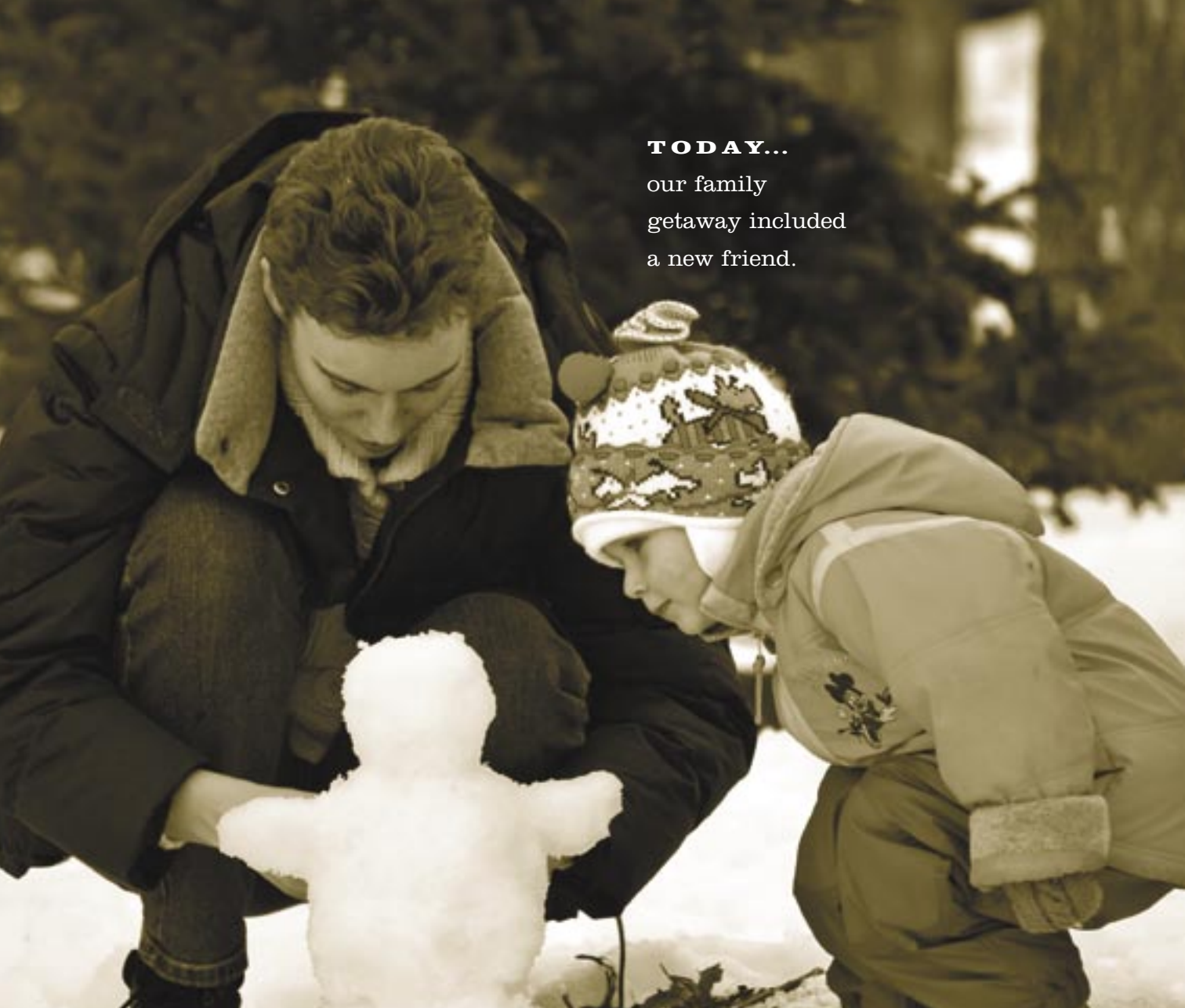
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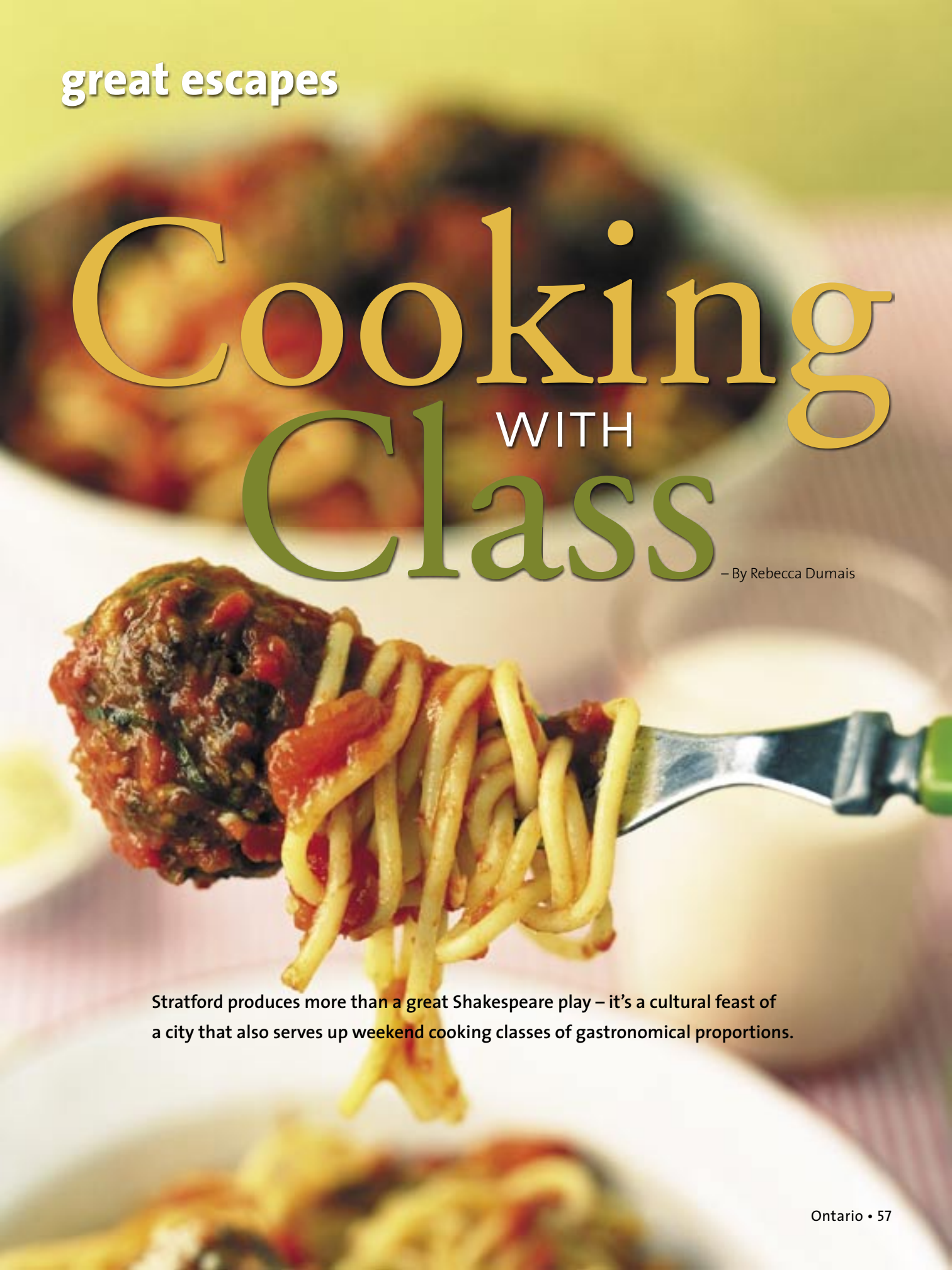
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great escapes

Cooking WITH Class

– By Rebecca Dumais



Stratford produces more than a great Shakespeare play – it's a cultural feast of a city that also serves up weekend cooking classes of gastronomical proportions.

great escapes



Chef-instructor Bryan Steele prepares poached pear on a sea of Bavarian creme with an almond tuile

The act of cooking becomes an art when you learn from culinary masters at The Old Prune and Trattoria Fabrizio, full-scale restaurants that function as gourmet cooking schools in the winter.

At The Old Prune, mix a dash of humour with a dose of relaxed instruction while you create delicacies like roasted squash soup with chickpea

‘fries,’ warm skate salad with preserved lemon-tomato butter, vanilla charlotte and tropical fruit sauce in the restaurant’s kitchen. Class is dismissed after savouring your creations paired with fine wine, recommended by Chef-instructor, Bryan Steele.

The atmosphere at Trattoria Fabrizio’s ristorante and school “is like being in



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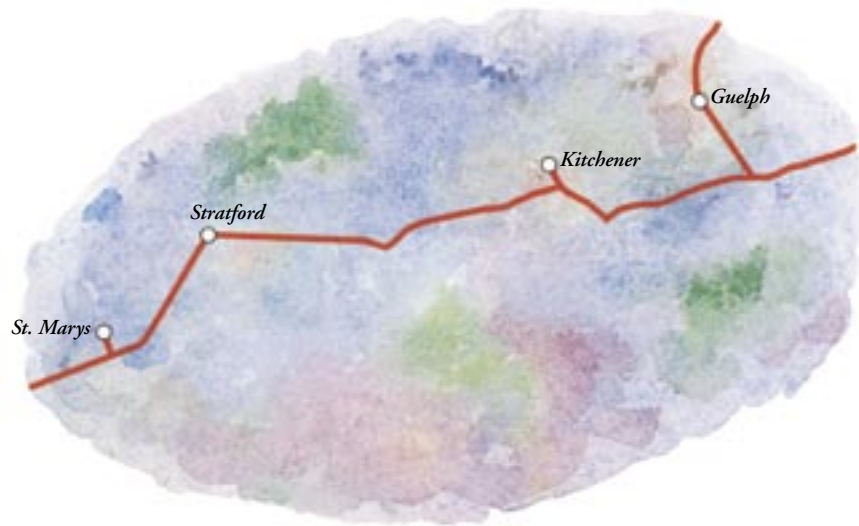
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your nonna's kitchen – very Italian,” says Teresa Fabrizio. Hugs and kisses included. It feels like being part of the family while making (and eating) fragrant Calabrese meatballs and piping hot Italian fritters served with chocolate sauce. The menu is authentic and simply delicious.

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– Rebecca Dumais is a freelance writer whose work appears in regional and national magazines.



Trattoria Fabrizio, Stratford

Photo: Rebecca Dumais



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AN owl prowl ON THE GREENBELT IS A HOOT

— By Darren Hakker

We're completely silent. Not a peep from anyone in the group – not even the kids. This I find really odd, considering that there are more than 40 of us – many of them kids – and it's 8 p.m. in the Ganaraska Forest, in the eastern part of Ontario's Greenbelt. The Greenbelt is a large swath of forests and fields stretching from Niagara to the Bruce Peninsula to Rice Lake, protecting fragile ecosystems from urban sprawl. And it's here, just 20 minutes outside of Port Hope, we come together for one reason: to prowl for owls.

Standing in a semicircle around Ryan Goodall, the Outdoor Education Instructor, we look to the trees as he slowly lifts the megaphone to his tape recorder and hits 'play'.

The sound of the recorded owl "hoo, hoo-hoo, hoo, hoo"-ing, will hopefully draw out some of the many others here in the Ganaraska Forest, Ryan whispers to us.

The adventure actually began about half-an-hour earlier with Ryan giving us all a quick presentation on the area's owls, including an introductory lesson to their

sounds and what they look like. Shortly after, we began prowling.

He stops the recording after a couple of minutes. We're surrounded by almost complete darkness, the only light is coming from the faint moonbeams breaking through the trees. Moments of complete silence pass with no luck in spotting our feathery friends. We move down another trail. Again nothing. This repeats itself a few times before we heard something from above – the unmistakable sound of owls! We savour the sound until the forest falls silent

again. Then we all cup our hands and do an owl call simultaneously, hoping they'll respond to that. But it was not to be – the owls didn't want to come out tonight.

To me, hearing them in the trees and experiencing a prowl was well worth it. I keep my flashlight firmly in hand as we return to the Ganaraska Forest Centre for piping hot mugs of hot chocolate, and a chance to dissect owl pellets. I consider myself a veteran owl prowler, and look forward to returning next year. ❄️

— Darren Hakker is a writer with *FUEL*. His work appears regularly in this magazine.

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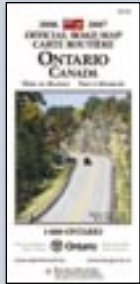
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did you know?

life is all fun and games in Ontario

Some readers have been saying that the *Ontario* trivia is way too easy. So for all those who want a little more challenge, this edition is for you. The correct answers can be found at the bottom of the page – if you need them.



1

This popular Christmas hymn was originally penned as *Jesous Ahathonhia* in 1643 by Jean de Brébeuf while he lived among the Wendat people around Southern Georgian Bay.

- a) Carol for the Child Manitou
- b) The Huron Carol
- c) Huronia Carol

This Ontario-born hockey player was so great, he was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame on the day he retired.

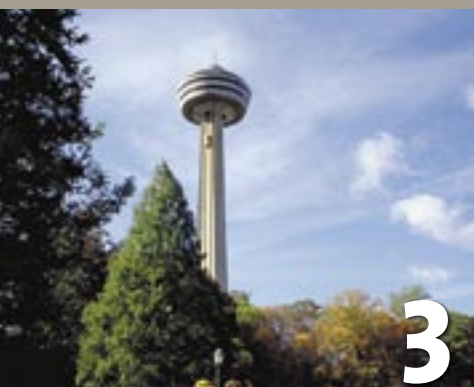
- a) Aubrey Victor ‘Dit’ Clapper, born in Newmarket
- b) Sidney ‘Syl’ Apps, born in Paris
- c) Wayne Gretzky – ‘The Great One’, born in Brantford
- d) Doug ‘Killer’ Gilmour, born in Kingston
- e) Conn Smythe, born in Toronto



2

This much-photographed tower has a revolving dining room, an observation deck and stretches far into the sky, reaching 160 m (520 ft.).

- a) CN Tower, Toronto
- b) Skylon Tower, Niagara Falls
- c) Dorset Scenic Lookout Tower
- d) Peace Tower, Ottawa



3

Here’s an easier one: what’s the largest city in Ontario – by area?

- a) Toronto
- b) Timmins
- c) Greater Sudbury
- d) Ottawa
- e) None of the above



4

Is that sweat forming on your brow? Well, pat yourself on your back, you should get this one right. Which of the following winter sports would you like to try most this year?

- a) Skiing
- b) Snowboarding
- c) Skijoring
- d) Ice fishing
- e) Ice skating
- f) Après skiing (it’s a sport to some people)



5



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ANSWERS: 1. b) The Huron Carol 2. a) Aubrey Victor ‘Dit’ Clapper, Newmarket 3. b) Skylon Tower, Niagara Falls 4. c) Greater Sudbury 5. Whatever you choose is right – they’re all possible in Ontario.

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