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TRAVEL DISCOVERIES



Winter warms
the soul

ontariotravel.net/winter

WINTER 2007/08

INN THE PAST • SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP • WE CAPTURE THE CASTLE

WINTER. WHEN IT'S ALL HAPPENING IN TORONTO

Believe it or not, when it's winter in Toronto, the cold is the last thing on our minds. And it's not without good reason. Winter is the perfect time to discover the brighter side of our city. It's when Toronto comes alive and some of the best events of the year take place because, well, some things just seem better in the snow. It's also right in the middle of winter when Toronto celebrates its WinterCity Festival, a two-week citywide celebration of its immense diversity and unlimited culinary choices. The best part is, it also includes the highly anticipated Winterlicious – a mouth-watering festival

of culinary events where you can dine at some of our best restaurants at unbelievable prices. There's even a special "prix fixe" promotion at more than 100 of Toronto's dining establishments, which gives you the opportunity to sample all kinds of cuisine and still stay well within your budget. So when the Cavalcade of Lights begins in Toronto, you'll know it's once again time to visit the city that welcomes everybody with open arms and always hopes you'll stay a little longer.



THERE'S NO SINGLE REASON TO GO OUT THIS WINTER. THERE'RE MANY.

DIRTY DANCING

Oct 31 – June 1
Have the "time of your life" and experience the excitement and passion of the classic story on stage.

CAVALCADE OF LIGHTS

PRESENTED BY SCOTIABANK
Nov 17 – Dec 31
Experience Toronto's citywide holiday lighting celebration.

IRVING BERLIN'S WHITE CHRISTMAS

Nov 20 – Jan 5
Toronto's newest holiday treat is a merry and bright theatrical experience for the entire family.

THE NUTCRACKER

Dec 8 – Dec 30
It's the must-see Christmas ballet now playing at the Opera House in downtown Toronto.

METRO HOME SHOW

Jan 17 – Jan 20
Meet Toronto's leading designers and home experts all under one huge roof.

WINTERCITY FESTIVAL

PRESENTED BY RBC FINANCIAL GROUP
Jan 25 – Feb 7
The award-winning WinterCity Festival offers a 14-day celebration of Toronto's diversity, delicious culinary events and much more.

WINTERLICIOUS

PRESENTED BY AMERICAN EXPRESS®
Jan 25 – Feb 7
Experience a series of mouth-watering culinary events and indulge in great food at great prices.

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW

Feb 15 – Feb 24
Canada's largest automotive show will have over 1,000 new cars and trucks on display.

PLAN YOUR OWN MARCH BREAK

It could be a trip to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), the Ontario Science Centre or the Toronto Zoo. Or even just a downtown walk to take in the sights of the city.



For more information on events around Toronto or information on booking bed and breakfast packages, go to torontotourism.com or call 1-800-499-2514.

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IT'S SNOW WONDER

As white, fluffy flakes wrap a cozy winter blanket around Ontario, those seeking to reconnect with this most celebratory season and the experiences it offers, have much to look forward to.

Choosing exactly which 'snow wonders' you desire for your ultimate family or friend get-together is totally up to you.

Take your first baby steps on a snowboard. Scoop up the hottest winter fashions in bustling urban neighbourhoods. Slip away to a resort and mush down meandering trails in snowy woods. Then ramp up the romance with an enchanting skate on an urban 'skateway' or remote icy pond.

There's so much more to choose from and it's easy to get started – by browsing through these pages, visiting us online or calling our toll-free number. It's no wonder there's no place like this.

ontariotravel.net/winter
1-800-ONTARIO

THIS PAGE: Rideau Canal, Ottawa. PHOTO: Ottawa Tourism.



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departments

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Inn the Past 22

Book a room with a view – and a history – at an Ontario inn, some of which started out as Victorian-era factories and foundries.

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Mmm...what to do with the moppets during March Break? Parents – don't despair – you'll find great kid-friendly ideas here.

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Ontario offers so many ways to reconnect with family and friends this season.

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A reader heads north and shares her special Ontario moments.

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Winter in Ontario sizzles with these extra hot places to visit and things to do.

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Ontario's landscape is festooned with many festivals and events that celebrate the season.

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Wind down this winter. Gather the gals and rejuvenate mind, body and friendship with the 'soul sisters' getaway.

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Ontario Travel Discoveries' much-anticipated word puzzle is back!

COVER PHOTO: The Village at Blue Mountain. PHOTO: Courtesy of Blue Mountain Resorts, © Andrea Hamlin, Sportography.



JAMES WINS THREE AWARDS

Congratulations to **JAMES SMEDLEY** who has won an international award for a story (please see below) that appeared in the winter edition of the 2006-07 *Ontario* magazine. James, a freelance writer and photographer, who makes his home in Wawa, won the award from the Outdoor Writers Association of America, for his story about climbing the Batchawana ice falls with his family. James' story

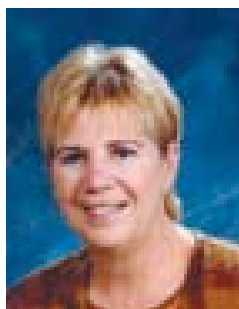
placed first in the magazine category of the Family Participation/Youth Outdoor Education contest. James also won two third place prizes for photography in the OWAA competition. One of the awards was for a photo called 'Algoma Outdoors' in the *Kanawa Magazine*, recognizing "excellence in communicating the value, enjoyment and/or instruction of boating, canoeing and kayaking."

The other award was for his photo

'Canoe on the Beach' in the 2006 *Ontario Parks Guide*. This category recognizes stories and photographs that help promote wilderness lands. You can see James' latest work on page 32.



ABOVE: *Ontario Travel Discoveries*, Winter 2006/07.



The world of travel came early to **ELLE ANDRA-WARNER**. Born in Europe to Estonian parents who were war refugees from the Second World War, she lived in three countries before her sixth birthday, eventually settling with her parents in Thunder Bay. Perhaps that early wanderlust is why she has a particular passion for travel writing and photography. She has travelled the world from the Canadian Arctic and the Caribbean to the medieval streets of Tallinn and sea-kayaking in Cape

Breton, British Columbia and Alberta...but it is Ontario that remains one of her favourite places to explore. See why on pages 16 and 18.

ontario

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EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

For editorial enquiries please contact Nicole Leaper, Publications Manager, OTMPC at (416) 314-7378 or editor@ontariotravel.net

ADVERTISING SALES

Please visit tourismpartners.com (click on partnership opportunities). Or call Nicole Papineau, 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 on the Internet. International visitors can also obtain information on Ontario through 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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www.riverbendinn.ca

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www.waringhouse.com

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Contest winner blogs her northern adventure

Winner of the FUJIFILM Great Ontario Outdoor Adventure of a Lifetime contest, Alena Kerins returned from her summer journey captivated by the beauty and scope of Ontario's north. An avid traveller, Alena also runs a travel blog and documented her excursion. Look for her breathtaking photos and story on followalena.com and check out her YouTube video. And yes, that's a real polar bear in its Northern Ontario habitat.

Our visit to Northern Ontario was an adventure we'll never forget. We scouted for polar bears in Polar Bear Provincial Park with Cree guide Sam Hunter, learned about native Cree culture on Moose Factory Island and experienced life of the early 1900s at the Heritage Village in Cochrane. The only thing that impressed us more than the natural beauty of the province was the endless generosity and kindness of the people who live there.

Alena Kerins, Stamford, Connecticut.

ABOVE: Polar Bear Provincial Park.
RIGHT: Alena Kerins, contest winner/traveller/blogger.
PHOTOS: Willy Salas.

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 Travel Discoveries (OTD)*. Send us a picture that captures the moment and we may include that too.

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

Mail:

Ontario Tourism Marketing
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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 cannot be returned. Thank you in advance for your story and we hope to share your Ontario moments with **OTD** readers soon!



Add some sizzle to the winter season with these extra hot places to visit and things to do. For more great ways to take in the best of the next few months, visit ontariotravel.net/winter or call **1-800-ONTARIO** today!



SHOPPING THE BYWARD MARKET

When in Ottawa, shoppers shop and browsers buy at the ByWard Market. Located downtown in Ottawa's oldest neighbourhood, the area is rich in character and history. From designer boutiques to purveyors of handmade clothing to arts and craft galleries – it's all here. There's even a daily farmers' market! After a day of shopping and sightseeing, break bread at one of the market's hottest new restaurants – Stella Osteria – specializing in modern Italian cuisine.

ByWard Market, Ottawa

byward-market.com

(613) 562-3325

THIS PAGE: ByWard Market. **PHOTO:** Ottawa Tourism



AWARD-WINNING LANGDON HALL

If you're looking for a pampered weekend in the country, then Langdon Hall Country House Hotel & Spa is just the ticket. It's a haven for those seeking to relax and re-energize. Located in Cambridge, it's just an hour outside of Toronto or London (and half an hour from Waterloo). Hike the on-site walking trails and then head inside to indulge in the spa services and some wine tasting. Then pamper your taste buds in Langdon Hall's dining room. It's one of only three Ontario restaurants to win the CAA/AAA Five Diamond Award in 2007, marking the third consecutive year it has won this prestigious honour.

Langdon Hall Country House Hotel & Spa, Cambridge
langdonhall.ca
 (519) 740-2100



ABOVE: Langdon Hall Country House Hotel and Spa.
LEFT: Langdon Hall's full-service day spa.

ON THE 12 TREES OF CHRISTMAS...

Get into the holiday mood early with a trip to the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art.

Every year the museum kicks off the season with their First Light: Twelve Trees of Christmas display. It's a really spectacular show year after year which sees Toronto personalities and groups each decorate a Christmas tree, display it and then sell it at a fundraiser.

If you are looking for something elegant, traditional, clever, or just plain fun, you'll see it at the Gardiner. Most of the trees will be decked in lights. All will be colourful.

The Christmas trees are placed throughout the museum so that you can also see the ceramic artefacts that make the Gardiner a treasure. The trees delight young and old and help renew the Christmas spirit. The Twelve Trees of Christmas is a delightful and successful way to get the season's celebrations into full swing.

Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art, Toronto
 November 13 – December 10
gardinermuseum.on.ca
 (416) 586-8080



Elf Capades Tree by Robert Tanz. PHOTO: Courtesy of Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art



APRÈS-SKI WITH A TWIST

After a day on the slopes at Blue Mountain, unwind at the new Twist Martini & Wine Lounge. It's a twist on the typical martini bar with a rustic-chic ambience that blends the flavours of city and country. Sidle up to the designer martini and wine bar for your favourite beverages and tapas from around the world.

Twist Martini & Wine Lounge, Blue Mountain
bluemountain.ca
 (705) 445-5000



DECONSTRUCTED CAESAR SALAD

- 1 slice prosciutto
- 30 mL (2 tbsp) shredded Parmesan
- 1 long slice of English cucumber
- 375 mL (1 ½ cups) romaine lettuce (per serving)
- 3 sliced palm hearts for garnish

Dressing:

- 250 mL (1 cup) mayonnaise
 - 3 cloves of garlic, roasted
 - 15 mL (1 tbsp) capers
 - 15 mL (1 tbsp) Dijon mustard
 - 5 mL (1 tsp) finely shredded shallots
 - Half of a lemon, juiced
 - Salt and pepper to taste
- Combine all ingredients for dressing in food processor.

On a parchment-lined baking tray place sliced prosciutto on one half of tray. Place shredded Parmesan on the other half in rectangular strips and bake at 200°C (400°F) for 4–6 min. or until cheese is melted and golden brown around the edges. Let cool completely.

With a mandolin, slice an English cucumber lengthwise. Toss romaine hearts with dressing, then stuff into cucumber. Top salad with prosciutto and Parmesan cheese. Decorate front of salad with sliced hearts of palm.

Ingredients used in this recipe are Ontario grown.

A TASTE OF THE GOOD LIFE

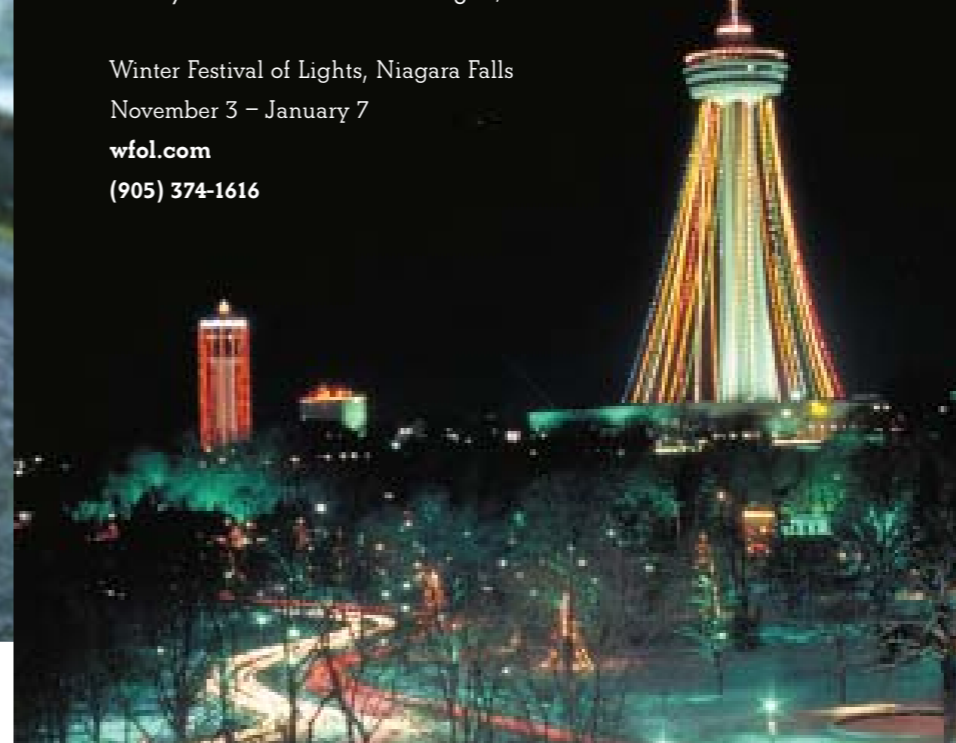
Trinity House Inn, in the heart of the 1000 Islands, is the kind of place that you fall in love with and never want to leave. Each of the rooms is named after one of the 1000 Islands. And for something just a little different – how about asking for the suite that is in the old limestone jail next door, now a part of Trinity House Inn. And did we mention the fine dining? Check out the Caesar salad recipe for just a taste of what's on the menu.

Trinity House Inn, Gananoque
trinityinn.com
 1-800-265-4871

NIAGARA TURNS ON THE LIGHTS

This winter marks the 25th anniversary of Niagara Fall's Winter Festival of Lights. In celebration of this special milestone, the festival will bring back its displays of nearly 3 million sparkling lights and 120 animated displays. Highlights include 22 firework displays, the world's largest illuminated Canadian-American flag and Disney displays. The festival will also kick-start the holiday season with an angelic nativity scene and the world's largest, illuminated menorah.

Winter Festival of Lights, Niagara Falls
 November 3 – January 7
wfol.com
 (905) 374-1616



A GREEN WINTER

Golfers rejoice! 4 Seasons Country Club in Claremont has solved the biggest dilemma of our time: where to golf during the off-season. From December to March, you can 'Winter Golf' its nine holes and savour a free hot drink when you're done. Call for golf conditions before you leave.

4 Seasons Country Club, Claremont
2golf.ca
 1-877-406-8583

LEFT: Niagara Falls. BELOW: Cedarena in 1935. PHOTO: Town of Markham.

FROZEN IN TIME

Take a trip back in time on Markham's old-fashioned ice rink – Cedarena. Before the days of indoor rinks and Zambonis, people made natural skating rinks by flooding a surface outdoors – which is exactly how Cedarena works. Every night the rink is scraped off by hand, lightly flooded, and left to freeze into a perfectly smooth sheet of ice for the next day's skate. Share this nostalgic experience with family and friends while enjoying the tunes from the 40s and 50s.

Cedarena, Markham
tourismmarkham.ca
 (905) 294-0038



ABOVE: Deconstructed Caesar salad. PHOTO: timpix.com.



PHOTO: Rob Stimpson.

NATURE'S LASER LIGHT SHOW

— BY ELLE ANDRA-WARNER

Magical, mysterious, hauntingly beautiful. The Northern Lights (aurora borealis) are a cosmic blend of science, myth and spectral dazzle.

Watching this light show in a northern wilderness setting adds a raw, intimate quality to the experience. For years, aurora watchers have been coming to remote but accessible Moose Factory, near James Bay. They stay at the award-winning Cree Village Ecolodge (designed and operated by the MoCreebec people). And when the lights appear, staff gladly notify the guests, who can then watch from their in-room window as the Northern Lights dance over the historic Moose River.

Some continue their aurora quest by taking expeditions offered by Moose Cree Outdoor Discoveries and Adventures. Guests are taken up the frozen Moose River to remote outdoor locales for the perfect view of the night sky. During the day,

guides take adventure-seekers on various activities from trap-line tours to snowshoe/ski expeditions, all with an emphasis on culture. At night, after a hearty traditional Cree supper and some storytelling, the Lights give their magnificent show.

— Elle Andra-Warner is a freelance journalist and photographer, based in Thunder Bay, with a special interest in travel and historical writing.

Cree Village Ecolodge
creevillage.com
 1-888-CREEWAY

Aurora Chasers
aurorachasers.com

HAPPY ZOO YEAR!



Do you have some little party animals at home? Take them to the zoo! Join in on the 5th Annual New Year's Eve Family Countdown at the Toronto Zoo, on the evening of December 31st at 6 p.m. This family-focused event includes music, entertainment, animal fun and more. Better yet, the countdown takes place at 9 p.m. so kids can ring in the New Year early. Get your advance tickets and get ready for some monkeying around.

New Year's Eve Family Countdown,
 Toronto

December 31

torontozoo.com

(416) 392-5929



CH-CH-CHEERS!

If you've never experienced the joy of Icewine, then plan to visit the Niagara Icewine Festival this January. It's a chance to sample and sip one of Ontario's most cherished taste experiences. The Niagara area is transformed into a winter wonderland waiting to welcome you with gala evenings, ornate ice bars and winter tours along Niagara's celebrated wine route.

Niagara Icewine Festival, Niagara
 January 18–27
niagaraicewinefestival.com

LEFT: Reindeer at the Toronto Zoo. PHOTO: Ken Ardill.
 RIGHT: Niagara-on-the-Lake.



WHAT'S HOT

THUNDER BAY'S QUAIN T COUNTRY SHOP

— BY ELLE ANDRA-WARNER

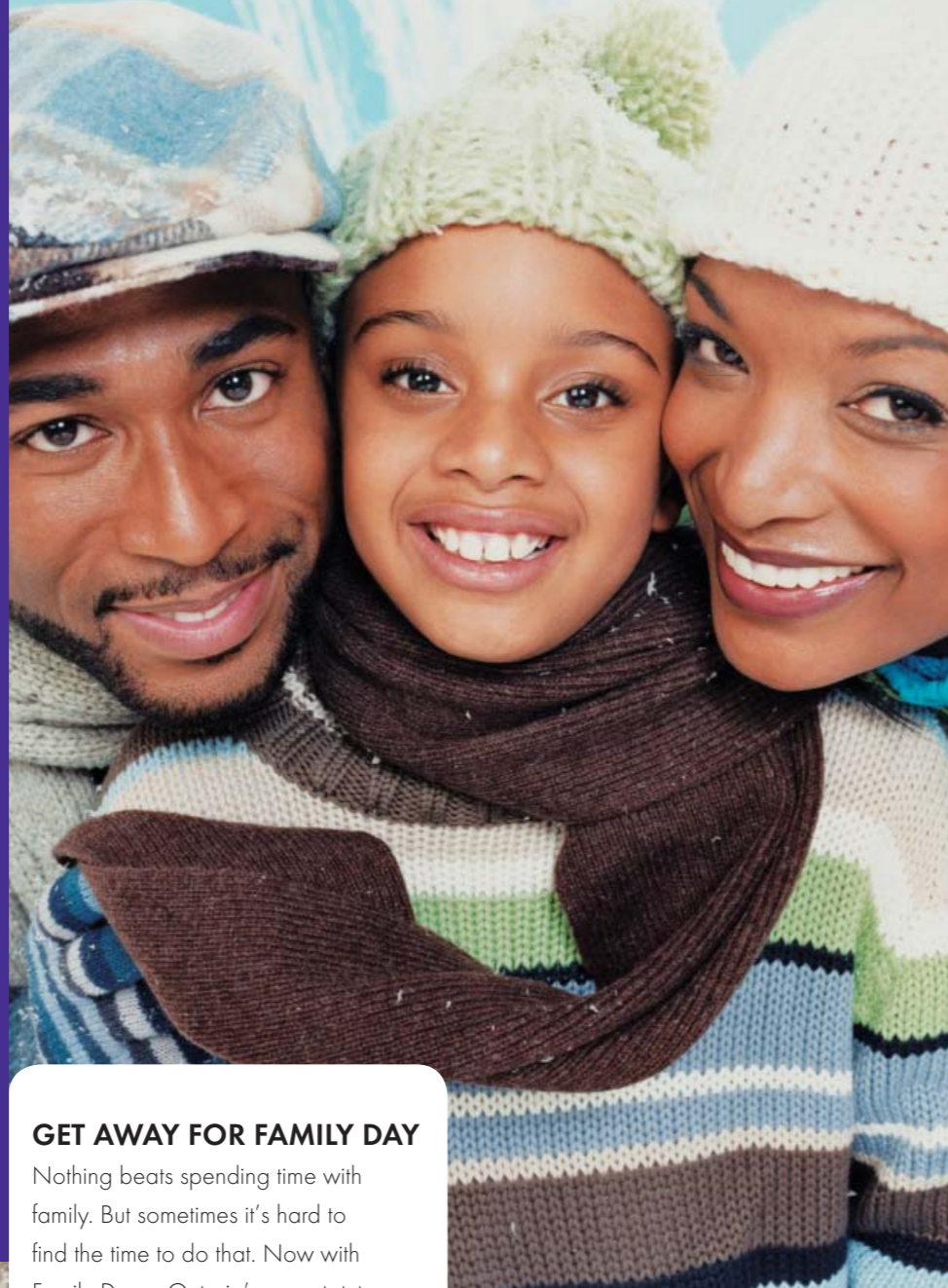
A wonderful funky ambience greets visitors to the quaint country shop, 'Twas the Month Before Christmas, in Thunder Bay. Homespun treasures — from enchantingly quirky to primitive rustic — spill out of every nook and cranny. Upstairs is the birch-bark-lined Enchanted Realm, a whimsical world of elves, fairies and Christmas pixies, all hand-sculpted by the shop's owner, artisan Leslie Bailey. Located in the city's historic downtown, this little shop delivers a unique shopping experience.

— Elle Andra-Warner is a freelance journalist and photographer, based in Thunder Bay, with a special interest in travel and historical writing.

'Twas the Month Before Christmas, Thunder Bay

creativeconceptsbyleslie.com

(807) 622-9627



GET AWAY FOR FAMILY DAY

Nothing beats spending time with family. But sometimes it's hard to find the time to do that. Now with Family Day — Ontario's new statutory holiday — it's a little easier. Mark your calendar for Monday, February 18, as a day to spend some quality time with your family. And what better way than to enjoy some of Ontario's favourite attractions? Round up the kids and take in an exhibit at one of Ontario's great museums. Or make a long weekend of it and get away to a ski hill or a winter resort for some cool outdoor fun, like snowtubing! Take the time to celebrate Family Day in Ontario together.

Go online today and plan your Family Day activities. Check out ontariotravel.net/winter for all kinds of fun ideas.

LEFT: Unique character sculpts by Leslie Bailey. PHOTO: Elle Andra-Warner.



NIAGARA  FALLS
ONE WONDER AFTER ANOTHER
NIAGARA FALLS TOURISM

One attraction after another



Winter Festival of Lights
Nov 3 - Jan 7, 2008
Rediscover Us!

Watch before you come! Get a sneak preview of things to do, where to stay, where to eat, where to shop and more on FallsTV.ca



Plan your visit with even more fun and detailed information at NiagaraFallsTourism.com

EVENT FULL

Events that entertain. Book your seats and tickets now to get as close as possible to the non-stop action at Ontario's festivals and events this winter!

CONNECT

NOVEMBER

- Winter Festival of Lights**
Niagara Falls, November 3 – January 7
- First Light: 12 Trees of Christmas**
Toronto, November 13 – December 10
- Irving Berlin's White Christmas**
Toronto, November 20 – January 5
- One of a Kind Show and Sale**
Toronto, November 22 – December 2
- Christmas in Cambridge**
Cambridge, November 30 – January 5

DECEMBER

- Winter Community Event**
Etobicoke, December 1
- Winter Kidzfest**
Toronto, December 1, 2
- Simcoe Christmas Panorama**
Simcoe, December 1 – January 6
- Country Christmas 2007**
Kitchener, December 2, 9, 16, 23
- Follies Christmas Show 2007**
Hamilton, December 5-7
- Christkindl Market**
Kitchener, December 5-9
- Christmas Lights Across Canada 2007**
Ottawa, December 6 – January 6
- Toronto Motorcycle Show 2007**
Toronto, December 7-9

Ottawa International Hockey Festival – Bell Capital Cup

- Ottawa, December 28 – January 1
- Barrie's Downtown Countdown**
Barrie, December 31
- Canada's New Year's Eve Bash**
Toronto, December 31
- New Year's Eve 2007**
Brampton, December 31
- Oshawa Celebrates 2008**
Oshawa, December 31
- Toronto Zoo's Annual New Year's Family Countdown**
Toronto, December 31

JANUARY

- Wing Fest**
Lindsay, January 8-26
- Niagara Icewine Festival**
St. Catharines, January 18-27
- Hamilton Winterfest 2008**
Hamilton, January 19 – February 3
- WinterCity**
Toronto, January 25 – February 7
- Color, Ritmo & Tradicon '08: A Showcase of Contemporary Latin American Art & Performance**
London, January 31 – February 7

FEBRUARY

- Warton Willie Festival 2008**
Warton, February 1-3
- Ontario Winter Carnival Bon Soo 2008**
Sault Ste. Marie, February 1-10
- Winterlude**
Ottawa, Weekends February 1-17
- Barrie Winterfest & Festival of Ice**
Barrie, February 2, 3
- WingDingInChing 2008**
Brampton, February 3
- Love Winter**
Toronto, February 9
- Winterfest**
Vaughan, February 10
- Barry's Bay Timberfest 2008**
Barry's Bay, February 14-17
- Dorset Snowball Winter Carnival**
Dorset, February 15, 16
- Canadian Ice Fishing Championship 2008**
Sutton, February 23, 24

MARCH

- Bronte Creek's Annual Maple Syrup Festival**
Oakville, March 1, 2, 8-16, 22, 23, 29, 30
- Canadian Music Week**
Toronto, March 5-8

ABOVE: Sampling maple syrup in Nepean.

Warkworth Maple Syrup Festival

- Warkworth, March 8, 9
- March Break at the CN Tower 2008**
Toronto, March 8-16
- Purple Woods Maple Syrup Festival**
Oshawa, March 8-16
- Waterfowl Weekends at Presqu'ile Provincial Park**
Brighton, March 8-16
- Canada Blooms**
Toronto, March 12-16
- abc Toronto International Choral Festival 2008**
Toronto, March 27-30
- Maple In The County 2008**
Bloomfield, March 29, 30

Quartier Vanier SugarFest

- Hamilton, March 29 – April 6
- Around the Bay 30K Road Race**
Hamilton, March 30
- Maple Fest at App's Mill Nature Centre**
Brantford, March 30



ontariotravel.net/winter



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- Burlington-Hotel & Conference Center ★
- Cambridge-Hespeler Galt ★
- Collingwood - Blue Mountain ▲
- Fort Erie/Niagara Convention Centre ★
- Guelph ★
- Guelph ▲
- Hamilton-Stoney Creek ●

- Kingston-Waterfront ★
- Kitchener-Waterloo Conf. Ctr. ★
- London ▼
- Mississauga ■
- Oakville (Centre) ★
- Oakville @ Bronte +
- Ottawa-Downtown ▼
- Ottawa-Kanata +

- Peterborough-Waterfront ★
- Sarnia ★
- Sault Ste. Marie-Waterfront ★
- St. Catharines-Niagara ★
- Sudbury ★
- Toronto - Downtown ●
- Toronto - Midtown ★
- Toronto-Airport Area/Dixie Rd ●

- Toronto-Airport East ★
- Toronto-East ●
- Toronto-Int'l Airport ■
- Toronto-Mississauga ★
- Toronto-North York ●
- Toronto-On King (Downtown) ★
- Toronto-West ★
- Toronto-Yorkdale ★
- Whitby ●



Kids Eat and Stay Free*

★ denotes Holiday Inn® hotels. ▼ denotes Holiday Inn® Hotel & Suites hotels. ■ denotes Holiday Inn Select® hotels. + denotes Holiday Inn Select® Hotel & Suites hotels. ● denotes Holiday Inn Express® hotels. ▲ denotes Holiday Inn Express® Hotel & Suites hotels. *Kids Eat & Stay Free is available at Holiday Inn® and Holiday Inn Select® hotels in Canada and U.S. and is available for kids 12 and under dining in the hotel's restaurant from the Kid's menu and when accompanied by a parent dining from a regular menu, for registered guests only. Limit 4 children per dining family. Not available for room service or room rates negotiated for groups of 10 or more, travel industry rates or employee rates. Children 19 and under stay free when sharing room with parent or guardian. Rollaway bed charges may apply. This is a partial list of Ontario hotels. For a complete list of Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express hotels in Ontario please visit ontarioholidayinn.ca. You must be a Priority Club member with a preferred alliance in order to collect miles. You must be a Canadian AIR MILES® Rewards member with a preferred alliance to the AIR MILES® Rewards Program in order to collect AIR MILES® reward miles. For a list of participating airlines, further offer details and Priority Club terms and conditions, visit www.priorityclub.com or call 1-888-211-9874. ®Aeroplan is a Registered Trademark of Air Canada LP. ®Trademarks of AIR MILES® International Trading B.V. used under license by Loyalty Management Group Canada Inc. and InterContinental Hotels Group. ©2007 InterContinental Hotels Group. Most hotels are independently owned and/or operated. 2007PROVGUIDE

inn THE past



WHEN CENTURY-OLD HISTORIES combine with contemporary accommodations, you know you're in for a unique overnight experience. Some of Ontario's inns were constructed more than 100 years ago as factories and foundries – now reborn as tranquil retreats boasting modern amenities and luxurious guestrooms. We've highlighted a trio of inviting inns that beautifully combine past and present.

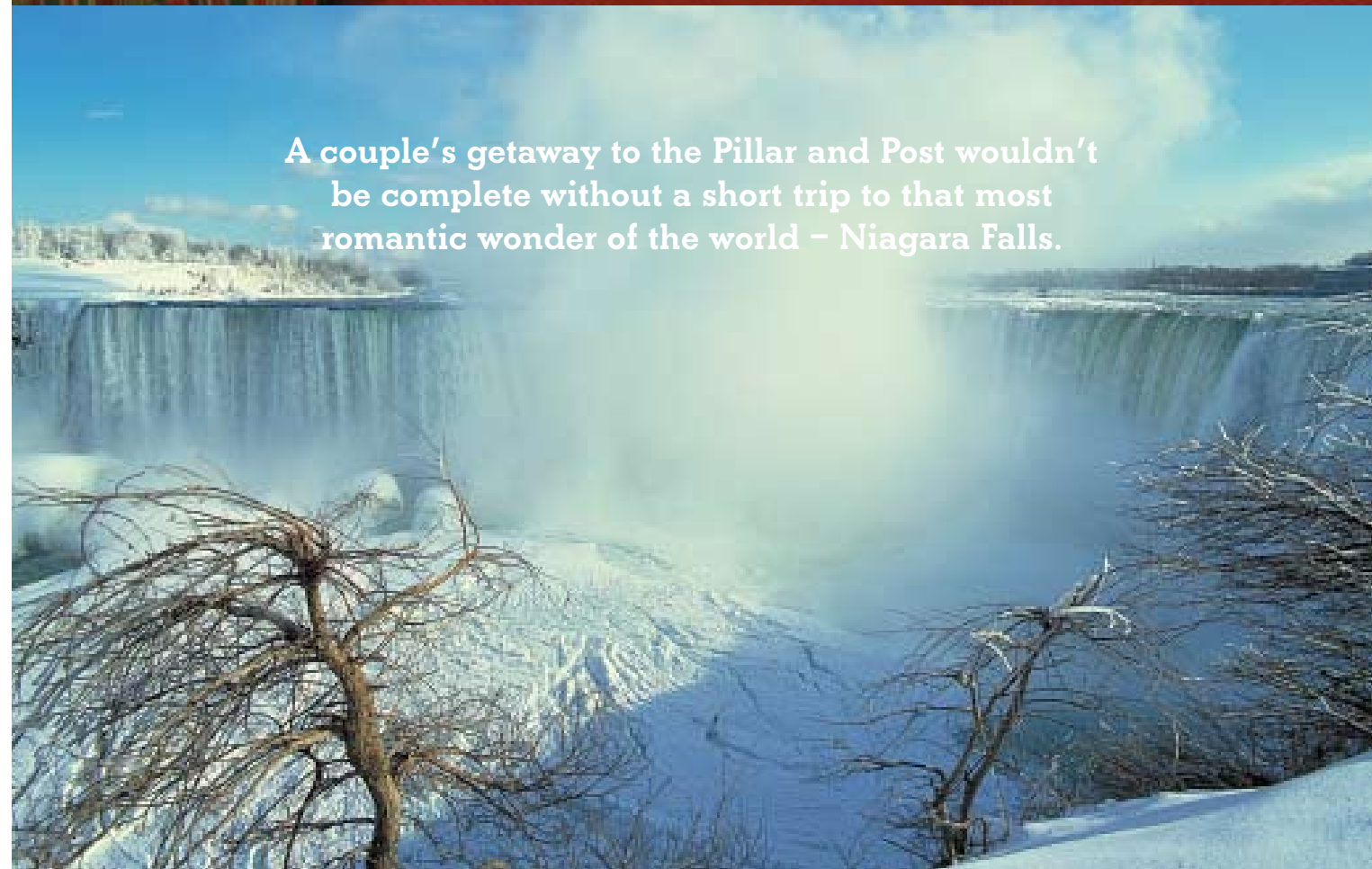
PILLAR AND POST

Originally built as a fruit-canning factory in 1895, the Pillar and Post in Niagara-on-the-Lake has grown into one of the Niagara region's most sought-after accommodations. More than 120 rooms elegantly designed with fireplaces, four-poster beds and whirlpool tubs have contributed to it being voted as the 'Number One Country Inn in Canada' and listed on the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List in 2007. The historic atmosphere surrounds you wherever you look, from the brick walls to the terra cotta tile floors to the exposed posts and beams.

Even the dining room, appropriately named Cannery and Carriages, has the look and feel of authentic Victorian living, where Executive Chef Randy Dupuis honours the area's past and present with a menu inspired by local ingredients.

Guests of the Pillar and Post may choose to complete their stay with an hour or two of indulgence at the 1,208 sq m (13,000 sq. ft.) 100 Fountain Spa.

THIS PAGE: Pillar and Post. **PHOTO:** Pillar and Post, Vintage Hotels, Niagara-on-the-Lake. **RIGHT PAGE, TOP-BOTTOM:** Premium guestroom, Pillar and Post; Niagara Falls.



A couple's getaway to the Pillar and Post wouldn't be complete without a short trip to that most romantic wonder of the world – Niagara Falls.

IDLEWYLD INN

Hidden in a quiet London neighbourhood, Idlewyld Inn's true destiny is finally being realized. Built in 1878, the Victorian inn has a storied past that can't be compared to any others in Southwestern Ontario – it was Charles Hyman's private home. Who was Charles Hyman? Besides being a successful businessman, he was the Mayor of London, one of Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier's cabinet ministers, captain of Canada's cricket team and seven-time tennis champion. Add the fact that this man single-handedly introduced the game of bridge to Canada, and you will appreciate the dynamic history surrounding your stay at Idlewyld.

Today, after months of renovations, the inn boasts 23 romantic guest rooms and suites, each decorated with period furnishings, complemented by the luxuries guests crave: from hand-carved woodwork and authentic antiques to double Jacuzzi tubs and handmade chocolate truffles.

THE DEVONSHIRE INN ON THE LAKE

Established as a foundry in the 1870s, The Devonshire Inn on the Lake in Wellington has been transformed into a luxurious waterfront inn – pampering Prince Edward County's discerning visitors with charming rooms and culinary delights.

Located in the quaint village of Wellington, The Devonshire serves as the perfect home base from which to explore the charms of the County (as the



RIGHT: Idlewyld Inn dining PHOTO: Brian Hillier.

locals call it). A cozy roaring fire awaits those who spend their day out antiquing, cross-country skiing or exploring local vineyards. An intimate dining room features a five-course menu that offers food and drink that is locally grown and fermented. It also offers a breathtaking view of Lake Ontario.

Eight elegant rooms serve as intimate retreats where the sounds of waves are always close by. Comfort is the focus here, where guests can even make arrangements with the Indulgences Day Spa to have treatments right in their rooms.

INN CONCLUSION

These three charming inns with three colourful histories are but a sample of the historic inns that await you in Ontario. There's a multitude to choose from throughout the province, each with a host of welcoming packages to match. **OTD**



BE A SUITE HEART!

This February 14, do up a different kind of Valentine's Day and reserve a suite at one of Ontario's exceptional inns. Romance your sweetie with a Valentine's Day package that includes one or two nights in beautifully appointed accommodations with gourmet meals included. Go online to find out more.

Ontario's Finest Inns
ontariosfinestinns.com
1-800-340-INNS (4667)

CONNECT

Pillar and Post
vintage-hotels.com
1-888-669-5566

Idlewyld Inn
idlewyldinn.com
1-877-435-3466

The Devonshire Inn on the Lake
devonshire-inn.com
1-800-544-9937

ontariotravel.net/winter

SHOP

'til you drop

— BY BARB & RON KROLL

OUR SHOPPING LIST IS LONG: CHRISTMAS, WEDDING, HOSTESS

and birthday gifts for adults and children. Where can we shop stress-free for unique gifts that will make the recipients say: "Wow!"?

This year we decide to seek out treasures hidden in Ontario's museums, art galleries and science centres. In Toronto, we find three specialty shops within a five-minute walk of each other.

Shoe-themed gifts fill The Bata Shoe Museum's entranceway shop. For a fashion-loving friend, we select a multicoloured silk scarf, adorned with images of shoes from the museum's collections. We spot a shoe-shaped stainless steel cake server, with a





magnetic rhinestone 'heel' that can be detached for washing. Packaged with a home-baked cake, it will be a novel hostess gift for an upcoming party.

Next stop: The Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art. We leave our bulky winter wear at the free coat check beside the bright, airy and modern shop in the lobby. Pastel and boldly coloured glass and ceramics, displayed on white shelves like contemporary art, draw us in like magnets. We resist the urge to buy some of the decorative plates, trays, mugs and bowls for ourselves before finishing our gift list.

The diversity of handcrafted work by Ontario artists impresses us. We check one Christmas gift off our list when we spot a floral glazed stoneware teapot, by Scott Barnim, from Dundas. "Scott's work is very popular," says assistant shop manager, April Walsh, as she hands us his biography. "Our customers like to read about the artist's education, work experience and exhibitions."

We admire the creations of Toronto-based Karin Pavey, a master of glazing, who's an instructor at the museum. Our eyes then zero in on an exquisite red and turquoise vase by Kleinburg artist, Kayo O'Young. It's a one-of-a-kind wedding gift for the couple on our list.

Across the road, we complete our shopping spree at the Royal Ontario



THIS PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM: Unique gifts for shoe lovers at The Bata Shoe Museum. **PHOTO:** Barb and Ron Kroll; Glazed teapot by Scott Barnim, Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art gift shop. **PHOTO:** Barb and Ron Kroll. **RIGHT PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM:** Roman helmet at the ROM Museum Store. **PHOTO:** Barb and Ron Kroll. Browsing the ROM Museum Store. **PHOTO:** ©Royal Ontario Museum, 2007. All rights reserved.

Museum. Located on the main floor of its glittering new addition, the Michael Lee-Chin Crystal, the ROM Museum Store is a spacious treasure house of unique international gifts. Each display's theme corresponds to a ROM gallery: tribal masks and decorated gourds from Africa. Kimonos from Japan. And cracked-open geodes with purple amethyst crystals.

A shiny helmet, with a brilliant red fringe, dominates the Roman gifts. At the Egyptian display, a clerk opens a small, carved sarcophagus, revealing a wooden mummy, partially wrapped in gauze.

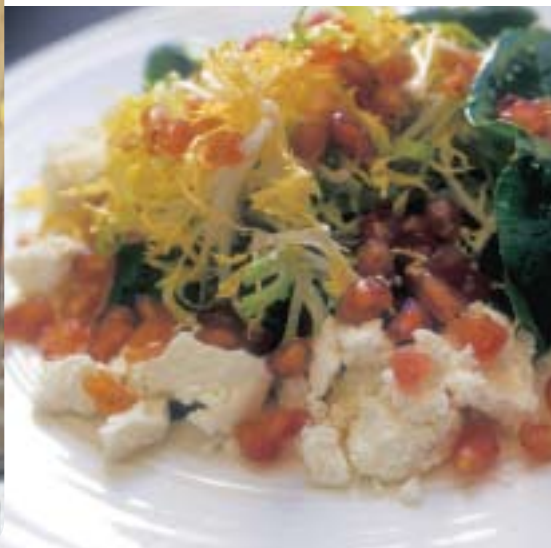
Finally, we spot the perfect gift for the coin-collecting brother on our list. The Dirty Old Coins kit contains 10 authentic ancient coins, at least 1,000 years old, with a brush, magnifier, storage cases and instructions for restoration, identification and valuation.

An entire store devoted to children's gifts, the ROM Kids Store, is opening winter 2007/08. For now, a selection of ROM Kids Store merchandise is in the ROM Museum Store. A large green iridescent bug in a frame? A stuffed mammoth toy with curled tusks? A plush Atlantic puffin that





THIS PAGE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Shopping for fun, educational gifts at the ROM. **PHOTO:** Barb and Ron Kroll; Goat cheese and frisée salad with pomegranate vinaigrette, Jamie Kennedy at the Gardiner restaurant. **PHOTO:** Barb and Ron Kroll.



squawks when you squeeze it? Our heads spin with choices for the four-year-old boy on our list.

As we flit like butterflies, from books to toys, we see a little girl studying a replica dinosaur. A young boy runs to the dinosaur display, grabs a triceratops in one hand and a brachiosaurus in the other. "Roar!" he growls, confronting the extinct reptiles in an imaginary dino-battle. Decision made. Our nephew will love the replica allosaurus.

Nearby, something for our nature-loving niece catches our eyes – six French-milled soaps, resembling pale blue, brown-speckled robin's eggs, nested in a box.

One of the advantages of shopping in museums and galleries is that many boast cafés and restaurants. Our lunch at Jamie Kennedy's Gardiner Museum restaurant begins with a healthy goat cheese and frisée salad, sprinkled with ruby pomegranate seed vinaigrette. Marinated salmon, with roasted red pepper vinaigrette, is a tasty and artistically arranged entrée. We split an order of JK's famously delicious Yukon gold fries with lemon mayonnaise and talk about our unique gift finds.

Another bonus? After our shopping is finished, we take a leisurely stroll through the exhibit galleries. It's our reward for a job well done. **OTD**

– Barb and Ron Kroll are travel writers whose stories and photographs appear in major publications throughout the world and on their trip-planning website krolltravel.com

CONNECT

The Bata Shoe Museum
batashoemuseum.ca
 (416) 979-7799

The Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art
gardinermuseum.on.ca
 (416) 586-8080

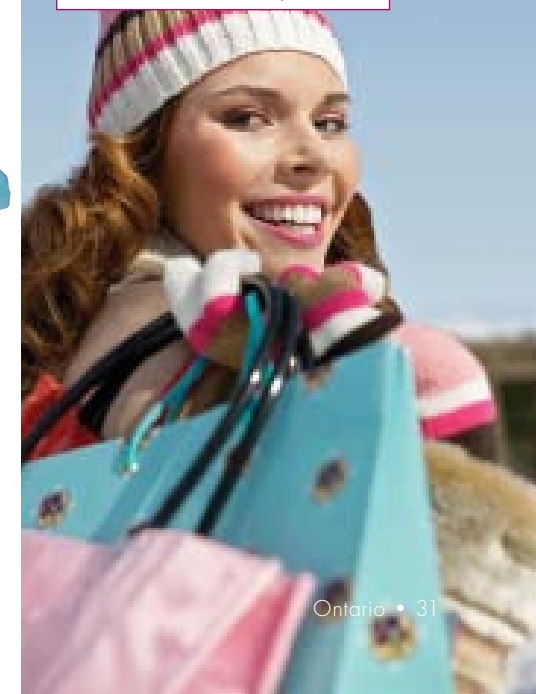
Royal Ontario Museum
rom.on.ca
 (416) 586-8000

Ontario Museum Association
museumsontario.com
 1-866-662-8672

Ontario Association of Art Galleries
oaag.org
 (416) 598-0714

Voyageur Heritage Network (Northern Ontario museums)
visitamuseum.com
 (705) 594-1579

ontariotravel.net/winter



GET MORE!
 OTD also suggests:

Finding That Perfect Present Outside Toronto

According to the Ontario Museum Association, our province has more than 600 museums, art galleries and cultural institutions. Most have gift shops. Their themes are as diverse as the interests and ages of the people on your shopping list: archaeology, aviation, history, canoes, hockey, minerals, ships, railroads and wildlife, to name just a few.

Take Ottawa, for example. Kids love the items (many under \$5) in Ottawa's Canadian Museum of Nature Boutique. Besides rubber dinosaurs and genuine fossils, it sells a large selection of nature and geology books, covering topics from bats to porcupines.

If there's a history buff on your shopping list, visit the Diefenbunker: Canada's Cold War Museum in Carp, just west of Ottawa. Its Diefemporium, open after tours and on request, sells original dosimeters produced for the military during the 1960s. The hand-held, round and tube-shaped green, gold, yellow and black radiation detectors sell for \$9.99. For children, the shop sells spy toys.

In Sudbury, Whizards Gift Shop at Science North sells cool science toys like gyroscopes and magnetic levitating globes. Multi-hued plush giant microbes, depicting maladies from ulcers to the flu, make fun

get-well gifts. The Big Nickel Boutique, at Dynamic Earth, sells cracked-open geodes, agate slab wind chimes and Canadian gems, rocks and minerals for budding geologists.

Both shops sell Inukshuks, chipped in Northern Ontario from blocks of solid glass and then stacked into Inukshuk shapes. Distinctively different, they will be sold during the 2010 Winter Olympics as souvenirs of Canada.



RIGHT: Hand-chipped glass Inukshuk. **PHOTO:** Barb and Ron Kroll.

on a snowshoeing adventure

warmth comes quickly

— BY JAMES SMEDLEY

EVEN UNDER THE BRIGHT AFTERNOON SUN, A LAYER OF

fleece and a windbreaker seem a little light for the sharp temperatures hovering over the thick mantle of freshly fallen snow, but I know from experience that warmth comes quickly. I'm following my wife Francine, a snowshoeing powerhouse, as she pads through a foot of fresh powder. Francine waits where the trail emerges from a stand of snow-laden spruce overlooking the icy flow of the Old Woman River. With the bright sun and the warmth of exertion, we unzip our nylon shells, look over the river valley toward Lake Superior and listen to the laughter of our two daughters. They're racing up the now-packed trail to join us at a place

THIS PAGE: Francine is dwarfed by a steep pine-capped hillside, characteristic of the shoreline enveloping many Northern Ontario lakes.



ABOVE: Francine snowshoes through deep powder overlooking Wawa Lake.

that only snowshoes, wilderness and the crisp winter stillness can deliver.

We're near the town of Wawa where an average annual snowfall of more than 3 m (10 ft.) merges with vast tracts of wilderness to provide endless destinations for novice snowshoers. Francine snowshoes just about every day, skirting the bluffs overlooking Wawa, along the wetland corridors and hillside trails of Mr. Vallee Park, across the expanse of eight-kilometre-long Wawa Lake or up countless meandering trails

literally on the town's doorstep. I join her with the girls on weekends for longer excursions, where the first challenge is deciding where to go.

The summer hiking trails of Lake Superior Provincial Park are a natural choice for snowshoeing. They lead along a jagged coastline, glistening with ice or down into sculpted granite river valleys that few ever witness in winter. Today we're on the Nokomis Trail, a 5 km (3.1 mi.) loop to a series of mountaintop vistas, where we'll join towering

windswept red pine overlooking Lake Superior's Old Woman Bay. We're at the base of the bluff and step aside for Islay, 11, and Lillian, 9, to break trail. Their initial enthusiasm is soon tempered by deep snow but Islay and Lillian forge ahead taking turns high-stepping through the knee-deep powder. It's this silent foundation of snow that on past trips has brought us close to rabbits, moose, fox, lynx and even wolves. The only animals today are squirrels and a few grouse but even the girls admit that the view of the

bay from the granite ridge is worth the effort.

They've been snowshoeing since they could walk. Narrow lightweight aluminum frames with dependable bindings make today's snowshoes less cumbersome than those of the past, especially for youngsters. Even so, the last bit of trail-breaking is left to mom and dad. Our entire party sinks gratefully into our seats when we reach the car. Churning bellies on the drive home help us decide that four hours on the trail is a great excuse

to go out for dinner. Soon our feet are propped up next to the licking flames of a giant stone fireplace. There's hot chocolate all around and a hearty meal on the way. Warmth, weariness and the promise of satisfaction again bring us to a place that can only be reached by snowshoe. **OTD**

— James Smedley is a freelance writer/photographer who loves the outdoors. He is Travel Editor for Ontario Out of Doors magazine. He lives in Wawa. Photography by James Smedley.

CONNECT

Local outfitters can help you plan your snowshoeing expedition. Visit Ontario Outdoors for more information.

ontariotravel.net/outdoors
1-800-ONTARIO

Ontario Parks
ontarioparks.com
1-888-ONT-PARK

ontariotravel.net/winter

GET MORE!
OTD also suggests:



ABOVE: Loaded and ready for an overnighter in the depths of Lake Superior Provincial Park.

WINTER CAMPING, OR NOT

Those who want to experience the hard edge of winter solitude can opt to camp within the snow-shrouded wilderness. Spending a comfortable night in the winter woods is about as cool as it gets for outdoor adventurers. Construct a shelter of snow or clear away the powder and pitch a tent. The success of either option requires skill and experience matched with the right equipment and provisions.

For those who appreciate a softer edge to the outdoor experience, Wawa has a wide range of accommodations to provide a warming buffer between days on the trail. Prepare your own food at a fireplace-equipped housekeeping log chalet or base yourself out of a hotel and sample the local restaurants. Another option is to stay at one of several year-round lodges. A few in the region offer loaner snowshoes, but it's a good idea to bring your own equipment. Your lodge hosts or the staff at the Wawa Travel Information Centre can suggest local trails that make it easy for you to plan your own self-guided adventure.

Wawa, Ontario
wawa.cc/Tourism.aspx
1-800-367-9292 ext. 260



School's out.
Ontario's in...
for
March Break.

Turn the page
and discover **10**
fantastic March
Break family
adventures!

the naturalist



4

Bronte Creek Provincial Park: For a sweet taste of tradition visit the Maple Syrup Festival, running every day during March Break at Bronte Creek. Take guided history tours through the forest, visit the animal farm, or see syrup-making demonstrations in the Candy Shanty. Then sample some traditional maple sweets or feast on pancakes – with maple syrup of course.

Bronte Creek Provincial Park
OntarioParks.com
 (905) 827-6911

1

Science North/Dynamic Earth: Soak up their free time at the *WaterWorks: Soak up the Science* exhibit at Science North. 'Wet' their appetite for learning with this huge interactive exhibit featuring everything and anything to do with water. Then provide them with some 'hands-on' learning at the Mineral Wall at Dynamic Earth. This exhibit gives kids a chance to touch and identify various rocks and minerals.



2

Ontario Science Centre: It's a busy time of year at the Ontario Science Centre. From daily demonstrations and amazing exhibits to its huge IMAX® movie theatre, find educational fun at every turn. Take advantage of extended hours and special events this March Break.



3

Canada Science and Technology Museum: Those burgeoning scientists, astronauts and engineers won't want to miss these Hands-On Science and Technology camps at Ottawa's Canada Science and Technology Museum. This action-filled week is an easy way to get them enthused about science. Spaces are limited, so book them in early.

Science North/Dynamic Earth
sciencenorth.on.ca
dynamicearth.ca
 1-800-461-4898

Ontario Science Centre
ontariosciencecentre.ca
 1-888-696-1110

Canada Science and Technology Museum
sciencetech.technomuses.ca
 1-866-442-4416

the scientist

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE: Children touch the Mineral Wall at Dynamic Earth. **PHOTO:** Science North; Bronte Creek Maple Syrup Festival. **PHOTO:** BronteCreek.org; Interacting with the brightly coloured sound room. **PHOTO:** The Ontario Science Centre. **RIGHT PAGE, TOP-BOTTOM:** Faith McMillan; Kids enjoy a LKTYP workshop activity conducted by Allen MacInnis. **PHOTO:** Ted Simonett.

5



Stage West Theatre: Watch them learn to love the spotlight at this theatre day camp in Mississauga. Stage West Theatre's 'Be a Pop Star Idol' camp gives those drama kings and queens a taste of all the performing arts. Kids learn acting, singing, dancing, wardrobe and makeup, and even tips for successful auditions. Faith McMillan, a Canadian idol finalist herself in 2003, instructs this year's singing section.

6



Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People (LKTYP): Take the little 'uns to see their favourite stories brought to life on the stage. Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People's world premier of *Love you Forever...and more Munsch* is sure to thrill the four to eight-year-old crowd. There are lots of family workshops during March Break as well, so check out what's on this year.

7



Famous People Players: A Toronto classic now known the world over, Famous People Players black light stage shows are a surefire hit with kids. These unique productions are performed by a troop of developmentally challenged actors using brightly coloured life-size figures to tell a story in black light. There are always extra performances added during March Break so take the kids to some terrific theatre.

Stage West Theatre
stagewest.com
 1-800-668-9887

LKTYP
lktyp.ca
 (416) 363-5131

Famous People Players
fpp.org
 1-888-453-3385

the artist

8

The Briars: Known best for its fabulous golf and country estate, for March Break The Briars offers two rooms for the price of one in the Bourchier Wing when you bring the family. It's sugaring off time in March, so wagon rides into the sugarbush are a must-do, and you can bet there'll be maple syrup on the menu.

9

Hockley Valley Resort: If you ski and board, good for you. If you don't but wish you did, Hockley Valley has a special March Break learn-to-ski-or-snowboard package with lessons for four straight days and lift tickets. Imagine, out of school, but still learning.

10

Deerhurst Resort: A sweet time is had by all as the family heads to the sugar bush at Deerhurst Resort. Mom's time is made even sweeter by a maple body scrub spa treatment.

The Briars, Jackson's Point
briars.ca
 1-800-465-2376

Hockley Valley Resort, Orangeville
hockley.com
 (416) 363-5490

Deerhurst Resort, Huntsville
deerhurstresort.com
 1-800-461-4393

CONNECT

Resorts of Ontario
resortsofontario.com
 1-800-363-7227

ontariotravel.net/winter



Trailblazers

IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU GOT TO KNOW ONTARIO'S PRIZED GREENBELT, and there's no better way to explore it than by cross-country skiing. Plan a day or two on the trails and give it a whirl this winter! It's a wonderful outdoor workout that will keep your heart pumping and your cheeks rosy.

Albion Hills, located 8 km (5 mi.) north of Bolton, has 26 km (16 mi.) of groomed trails, plus rental equipment for all skill levels. Tobogganing, snowshoeing and ice skating are also available at Albion, making it a winter activity destination to suit every member of the family.

Wanted

A little instruction can go a long way so head over to Highlands Nordic Cross-Country Skiing in Duntroon and take advantage of their special beginner package. For \$35, you'll take a half-hour lesson and learn the ins and outs of falling and rising safely, skiing on flats, and skiing both uphill and downhill like a pro. A half-day on the trails and equipment rentals are included in the package. For those looking for an extra challenge, skate skiing and snowshoeing are also on the menu of activities available at Highlands, which offers on-site equipment rentals for these activities, as well.

Already own cross-country skis? A great option for more seasoned cross-country skiers is the Kortright Centre for Conservation in Woodbridge. Tackle 16 km (10 mi.) of traditional, non-groomed ski trails. Then after a session of gliding over trails, reward yourself with a hot bowl of one of the Kortright Centre Café's homemade soups or their famous chickpea samosas. Dogs are welcome at Kortright as long as they are leashed and remain outdoors, so you can keep four-legged family members happy, too. **OTD**



The Greenbelt is a permanently protected region that follows the Bruce Trail from Niagara to Tobermory, and around the Golden Horseshoe to Rice Lake. It's a rich mosaic of forests, farms, vineyards, waterways, parks and wetlands created to protect the fragile ecosystems it contains. But at the same time, it encourages 'leave no trace' principles while hiking, cycling, rock climbing, wildlife viewing and camping.

CONNECT

For more great ways to discover Ontario's Greenbelt, simply visit gov.on.ca/tourism and click on Greenbelt or call **1-800-ONTARIO**.

Albion Hills
Cross Country, Caledon
trca.on.ca
(905) 880-4855

Highlands Nordic Cross-Country Skiing, Duntroon
highlandsnordic.on.ca
1-800-263-5017

Kortright Centre for Conservation, Woodbridge
trca.on.ca
(416) 667-6295

ontariotravel.net/winter

Some like it hot:

The Scandinavian method of 'taking the waters' comes to Ontario

— BY ANNE DIMON

YOU'RE SITTING IN A BUBBLING outdoor hot tub, face towards the heavens, eyes closed, feeling a whisper of wind brush across your cheek. You feel the body and mind slowly begin to unwind. You're totally immersed in the moment. At the point at which most people would say, "Ahhh, this is the life," you're hopping out of the hot tub and into ice cold water. Before your teeth even have a chance to chatter, you're back out making a dash for the warm comfort of a relaxation solarium. Wrapped in a cozy robe, you relax and bring your body temperature back to normal. Then you repeat — three to five times for maximum benefit. It's like a day at the spa — it's just not your average spa.

The adults-only Le Scandinave Spa™ Blue Mountain — the first of its kind in Ontario — is a health and wellness haven in a setting embraced by acres of forest. A collection of wooden buildings, heated concrete floors and pathways, a massive granite-faced fireplace and antiques complemented with modern works by local artisans combine to create a welcoming environment that looks and feels more like a ski lodge than a spa.

Instead of a variety of spa treatments, the focus here is on the water circuit.

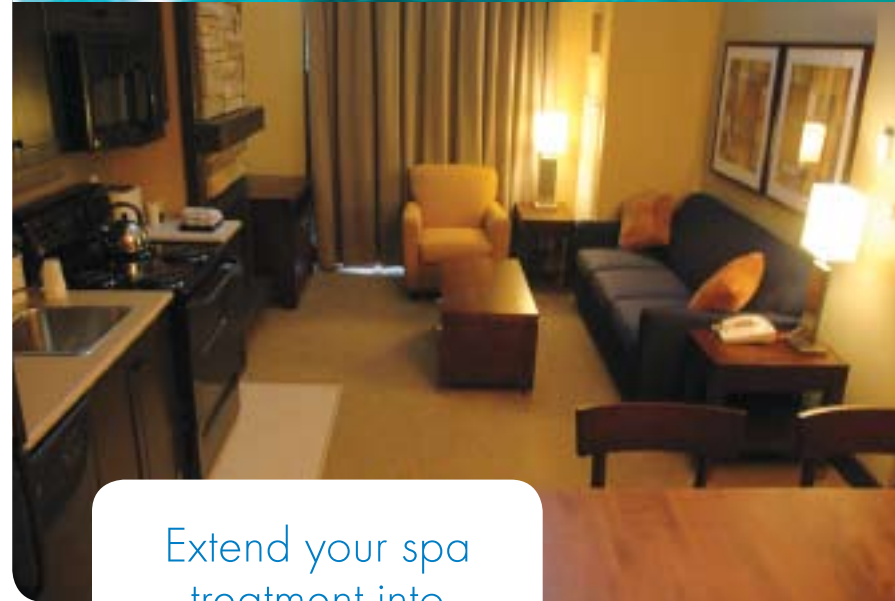
Surrounded by a gorgeous winterscape, the scenery at Le Scandinave Spa™ Blue Mountain can be as therapeutic as the treatments.

LEFT: Scandinavian Baths at dusk, Le Scandinave Spa.
PHOTO: Robert Burcher.

Following the suggested sequence for maximum therapeutic benefit takes you from a hot environment – you can choose from three hot pools, the Finnish cedar sauna or the eucalyptus-scented Norwegian steam room – to cold plunge pools or waterfalls, then to one of three relaxation buildings. The heart rate is raised when you go from hot to cold, then 15 to 20 minutes of relaxation brings your heart rate back to resting rate. When that’s done, it’s time to run the circuit another three to five times. Each experience is so unique that every cycle can be a bit different.

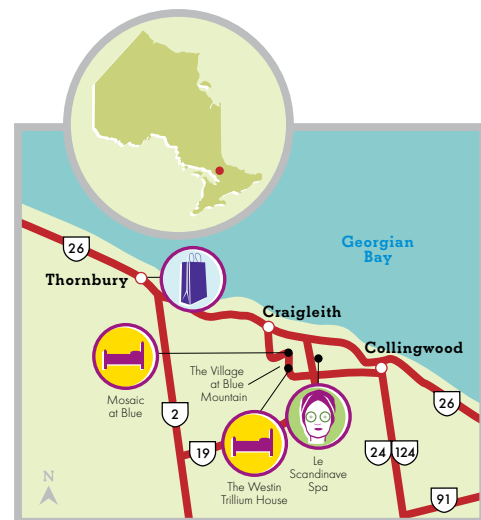
A minimum of two hours is recommended for a visit and for maximum relaxation you can extend your visit to the better part of a day. Bring reading material, order a tasty lunch from the in-house bistro, grab a nap in the quiet room, book a 60- or 90-minute massage, or simply take the time to soak up the sounds and sights of nature. Running hot and cold has its rewards. **OTD**

– Anne Dimon is a spa and wellness travel writer and founder/editor of traveltowellness.com



Extend your spa treatment into an overnight getaway at Mosaic, Blue Mountain’s newest property.

THIS PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM: Le Scandinave’s thermal waterfall. **PHOTO:** Robert Burcher; Mosaic guestroom. **PHOTO:** Courtesy of Blue Mountain Resorts Ltd. **RIGHT PAGE, BOTTOM:** Exterior of the Westin Trillium House. **PHOTO:** The Westin Trillium House, Blue Mountain.



A LITTLE RETAIL THERAPY

The waterfront town of Thornbury, one of several small towns that make up the community of The Blue Mountains, is the place to go to soak up a little retail therapy. Check out Furbelow’s and Tigs for upscale women’s fashions, Studio 16 for jewellery and giftware, and The Blue Water Gallery for works by local artists. When you find that shopping has stirred the appetite, Largo offers fish specialties and a great view of the harbour. You’ll find more boutique shopping in the Village at Blue where shops such as Sugar Shack Gift & Pantry feature items for the home, and Echo Trends offers gifts and accessories for yourself. Of course, there are also several fab shops selling sporty fashions to keep a body toasty warm while strolling this pretty little village.

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— BY NEIL BEAUDRY

I'VE ALWAYS LOVED TRAINS.

And been intrigued by castles. So a weekend jaunt to Ottawa by rail was a spectacular escape for me.

My affection for trains comes honestly. I grew up at the end of the great passenger train era when, everyday, the majestic, silvery Canadian train glided into my hometown and then cruised on to Vancouver. So when I planned to visit Ottawa recently, I relished the idea of a VIA rail journey to the timeless Fairmont Château Laurier, and a chance to experience two all-time Canadian traditions: the train and the magnificent train hotel.

In VIA 1 class, everyone is in a lively mood. It's the sheer joy of train travel itself – with wide comfy seats in a well-appointed car. The windows are huge – perfect for viewing the passing postcard-pretty views. Regional cuisine is on the menu; I choose the French crêpes topped with peaches and cherries, served with maple syrup. Decadent. Hot chocolate, hot towels and impeccable service complete the picture. Yes, life on the train is good.

I arrive in Ottawa and check in at the legendary Fairmont Château Laurier, celebrating its 95th anniversary. For three days it will be my abode...my sanctuary...my castle! Built in 1912, in the French Renaissance style, the Château – Ottawa's most prominent luxury hotel – is one of Canada's grand railroad hotels. A magnet for royalty and celebrities alike,

RIGHT: Fairmont Château Laurier. **PHOTO:** Courtesy of Fairmont Château Laurier.

GREAT ESCAPES

it rises like a stately stone fortress, beside the scenic Rideau Canal.

The architecture is stunning inside and out, making just strolling around a treat.

Many upper floor rooms offer impressive views of the gothic, fairy-tale spires and towers of nearby Parliament Hill. Backing onto the 175-year-old Rideau Canal, the Château is easily within walking distance of the ByWard market and the Rideau Shopping Centre. Also nearby is a rich array of arts and cultural venues such as the National Arts Centre and the Currency Museum.

But I have the days ahead to explore museums and galleries. Tonight it's an evening of festivities at an extraordinary bistro recommended by the Fairmont Gold Concierge.

The next few days satisfy my explorer's instincts. Among the many highlights of my Ottawa wanderings is a visit to the National Gallery of Canada. The country's finest art museum is really a work of art itself with its lustrous Great Hall and interior gardens and courtyards. Taking advantage of its location just



minutes from ByWard Market, I eat a late lunch in a café with artwork on the walls and lots of conversations to listen in on. Then I enjoy the hustle and bustle of the historic market with a lazy walkabout that leads me to a tasty BeaverTail.

Another favourite of mine is the Canadian War Museum. You don't have to be a student of history to appreciate the human stories behind Canada's roles in war and peacekeeping. I found the time I spent in the Regeneration Hall was both poignant and inspiring, and a real

testament to the thoughtful design of the museum.

One of the beautiful things about Ottawa is how it celebrates the joys of winter. That joy reaches its pinnacle during Winterlude, the capital city's annual winter festival. The Rideau Canal Skateway is the jewel of Winterlude attractions – at 7.8 kilometres (4.9 miles) long, it's the world's largest skating rink. I laced up (don't worry, if you forget your skates, the Château will help you find some to rent) and warmed my soul with

THE 25-YEAR GUEST: YOUSUF KARSH

Room 358, or the Karsh suite, at the Fairmont Château Laurier is a tribute to Yousuf Karsh, one of the most famous and accomplished portrait photographers of all time. His work attracted the attention of many celebrities, but his place in history was sealed in 1941 when Winston Churchill came to Ottawa and was photographed by Karsh. The Churchill portrait is one of the most widely reproduced images in the history of photography. Now hanging in the reading lounge, off the main lobby, the Churchill portrait is one of seven signed prints left as a parting gift when Karsh and his wife Estrellita moved out after having lived in the same rooms for 18 years (1980–1998).

RIGHT: Yousuf Karsh, Winston Churchill (1874–1965).
PHOTO: ©National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, gift of the artist, Ottawa, 1989.



a glide down the long ribbon of frosted glass. Skating the entire length of the canal is no easy feat.

On the way back, exhausted, I rounded the last big bend and found new strength at the powerful sight of the sparkling, enormous Château in the distance. I climbed back up the slope leading to the hotel after a spectacular day. "Welcome back home, Mr. Beaudry," are the perfect words to hear from the Concierge after spending three busy days, stimulating mind, body and soul. A warm drink at Zoe's Lounge, a charming restaurant within the Château, was a nice way to cap off a spirited skate in the invigorating evening air. **OTD**

– Born and raised in the Ottawa Valley, Neil Beaudry is an avid traveller who visits Ottawa as often as possible.

BELOW: Winterlude, ice sculptures

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The official opening of the Château Laurier was delayed due to the loss of Grand Trunk Railway president Charles Melville Hays in the Titanic disaster. When his death was confirmed, all plans were cancelled. The hotel opened without ceremony on June 12, 1912. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Canada's first French-Canadian prime minister, after whom the hotel was named, simply signed the register as the first guest.

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ABOVE: Celebrate friendship at the spa. PHOTO: The Briars Resort & Spa.

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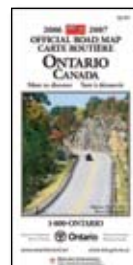
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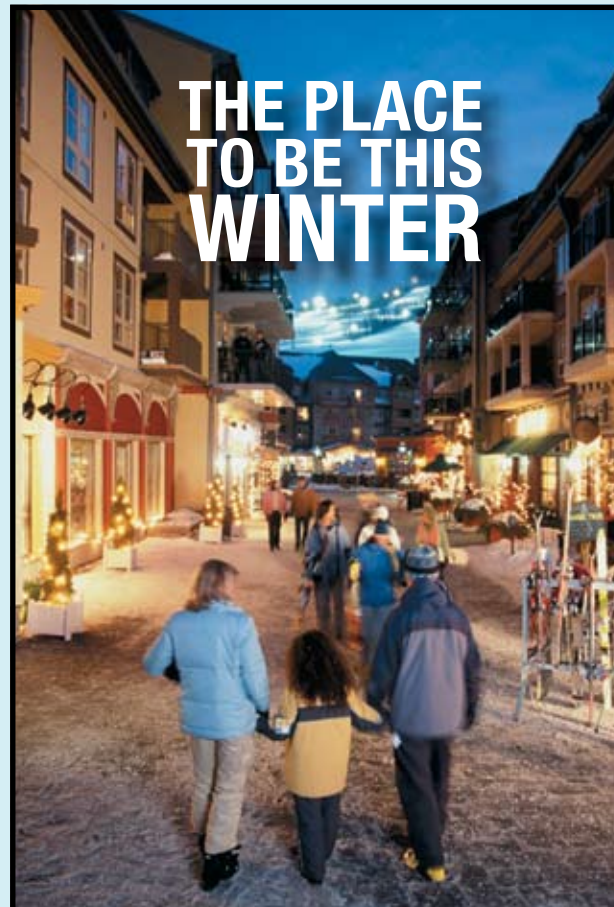
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Core hours of operation: daily all year long from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed on Christmas and New Year's Day. During the peak season from May to August, most centres have extended hours from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Check the hours of operation before you leave by calling the centre directly, by visiting ontariotravel.net or by calling **1-800-ONTARIO**.



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400 Central Ave. P9A 1X8
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Fax: (807) 274-7870

Niagara Falls (\$)
Rainbow Bridge
5355 Stanley Ave. L2E 7C2
Tel: (905) 358-3221
Fax: (905) 358-6441

St. Catharines (\$)
Westbound QEW at east end of
Garden City Skyway
RR 4, Niagara-on-the-Lake L0S 1J0
Tel: (905) 684-6354
Fax: (905) 684-3634

Sarnia (\$)
Blue Water Bridge
1455 Venetian Blvd. N7T 7W7
Tel: (519) 344-7403
Fax: (519) 332-4576

Sault Ste. Marie (\$)
Sault Ste. Marie International Bridge
261 Queen St. West P6A 1A3
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Fax: (705) 945-6943

Toronto Atrium On Bay (\$)
Location:
20 Dundas Street West M5G 2C2
Mailing address:
Atrium on Bay, PO Box 162
595 Bay Street, Toronto M5G 2C2
Tel: (416) 314-5900
Fax: (416) 314-5901

Windsor Huron (\$)
Ambassador Bridge
1235 Huron Church Rd. N9C 2K6
Tel: (519) 973-1310
Fax: (519) 973-1313

Windsor Park (\$)
Detroit/Windsor Tunnel
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Tel: (519) 973-1338
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Fax: (705) 725-7285

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RR 1, Lansdowne K0E 1L0
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Fax: (613) 659-2102

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Keewatin POX 1C0
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Fax: (613) 347-3435

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7671 Hwy. 61
Neebing P7L 0A2
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Fax: (807) 964-2029

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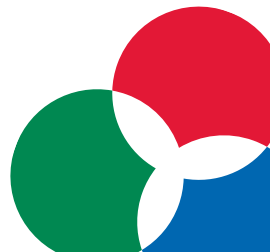
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			O			N		W
	W	N			K		L	
E		F		K				A
		A	E		N			S
S			A	L		K	E	

Lake Superior Provincial Park.

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