

NOTL

A GUIDE FOR DISTINGUISHED EXPLORERS

WINTER 2019/2020



WHERE TO EAT

Explore a menu of NOTL's restaurants and check out our 2019/2020 winter picks.

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WINTER ACTIVITIES

The Christmas parade to New Year's Eve at the clock tower, find the best things to do and see.

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A SWEET DRINK

Across the globe people regard icewine as a delicacy. Find out about that sweet drink.

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NOTL: A GUIDE FOR DISTINGUISHED EXPLORERS

BRINGING OUT THE SWEETNESS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Niagara-on-the-Lake is a special place in the winter season. The streets are filled with lights, bouquets, wreaths and cheer. A wide variety of winter events offer places for the distinguished explorer to settle in and warm up, or to walk around and enjoy the season. There's the Candlelight Stroll, which brings out thousands of people to watch live caroling groups and choirs. There's the Icewine Festival, which showcases a mix of Niagara's "sweet drink" and gourmet food from area chefs. There's the Shaw Festival winter film series, offering a cozy batch of films to help liven the holiday spirit. There's no shortage of musical shows around, and an all-year Christmas store that will bring you right into the festive season. Whatever you're looking for, you'll surely find it in the quaint, quiet back-country of NOTL.

It's a traveller's dream to walk down main street while Christmas carols are playing. The music is synced up so no matter where you walk, the song continues.

A ride on a horse-drawn carriage is a fun, romantic way to bring winter travelling to a whole new level.

And, if you're a little more adventurous, our local parks offer great winter trekking, spots to toboggan, or have a warm winter picnic with hot chocolate.

Of course, icewine is something you'll want to get your hands on. The sweet wine is made from grapes that have frozen on the vine and are harvested in freezing conditions to enhance their delectable sweetness.

In unison, the winter season and the cold seem to bring out the sweetness in more than just the grapes. NOTL is somewhere you want to kick back, get a room and spend a few days in a winter wonderland.

And here you are ...



Photo Illustration by **LUKE ARCHIBALD**

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Find out why it's important to us to put this edition out.

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SEASONALLY SCRUMPTIOUS

Whether it's gourmet dining or a warm meal at a local pub, NOTL is one of the best places to have a meal, paired with a glass of wine.

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THE CANDLELIGHT STROLL

Every December thousands of people gather downtown on Queen Street for a festive celebration of Christmas carols and candlelight.

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THE CHRISTMAS PARADE

Santa comes to town every year for the best Christmas parade in Niagara. Don't forget to bring your letters to Santa!

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The big man's favourite events for the season.

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Some of the best pubs to visit in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

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ICEWINE FESTIVAL

Each year people flock to Queen Street to get a taste of NOTL icewine.

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THAT SWEET DRINK

In sub-zero temperatures, winemakers across NOTL are out picking grapes to make one of Canada's premium exports.

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NIAGARA'S HISTORY UNVEILED

Learn about the day the historic Honeymoon Bridge connecting Canada and the U.S. fell into the Niagara River due to a massive ice floe.

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WINTER WALKABOUT

Take a walking tour through historic Old Town with our writers.

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HOLIDAY CONTEST!



Be the first to find all **eight** hidden reindeer icons throughout this magazine and we'll include you in the next edition!

Just email us the correct page numbers along with a picture of yourself holding the magazine to editor@niagaranow.com



A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Winter is here. And we couldn't be more excited about it.

Now, you might think we're crazy. Some people see the season as cold, wet and dark. But if you look around, it's not hard to lift the veil.

We see the brightness of Christmas lights. We feel the warmth of holiday spirits. We sit back and enjoy a dry cider or glass of wine, and we know — there's no better time to let all of your worries fall into the background;

to put your feet up in front of a hot fireplace and sip a mug of warm cocoa; or to cuddle up in a blanket with a loved one.

As a born and raised NOTLer, I've watched people flock to sing songs along Queen Street during the Candlelight Stroll. I've seen the families skating at the outdoor rink at Fort George. I've witnessed the magic this little town inspires.

With this special Winter Edition, we welcome you and invite you to

experience what we're so fortunate to take for granted.

This is our home. But it's not just ours. We invite you to take part in Niagara-on-the-Lake the best way, like you live here.

There's no reason to be a Scrooge about it, because Niagara-on-the-Lake is simply one of the finest places on the planet to immerse yourself in the winter season.

R. Hasley

EDITOR IN CHIEF

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The Lake Report and NOTL: A Guide for Distinguished Explorers are also supported by a long list of community writers, photographers, historians and all-around great people. A huge thanks to all who have helped us along the way. And an equally enormous thanks to our advertisers. Without you, we wouldn't be able to put out this wonderful free guide to our town.

Victoria Gilbert

Gilbert is a wine culture writer for The Lake Report.



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FOOD

OUR TOP WINTER PICKS

We visited a number of restaurants to find our top picks of the season.

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COOKING WITH COLLIN

A super-sweet recipe for seasonal icewine peaches

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PICTURED:

Backhouse | Fried egg white mousse | trout caviar | confit yolk



NOTL WINTER MENU 2019/2020

All items served with a side of local.

Canada doesn't really have a "national dish," unless you count poutine and maple syrup. Luckily, cultures from around the world are represented in Niagara-on-the-Lake cuisine. It's more the Canadian way.

Here are some of the best choices Niagara-on-the-Lake has to offer:

ITALIAN

Twisted Vine (new in 2019)
Grill on King
The Old Winery Restaurant
Pie'za Pizzeria
Garage Pizza
Italian Pizza & Subs

MEDITERRANEAN

Orzo Restaurant
Fornos
Old Firehall

ASIAN

Chili Jiao (new in 2018)
Ginger Restaurant
Niagara's Finest Thai
Masaki Sushi

CANADIAN/FUSION

Epicurean Bistro
The Golf Club
Corks Winebar & Eatery
Backhouse
Benchmark Restaurant at Niagara College
Garrison House
LIV Restaurant
Treadwell
Queenston Heights Restaurant
Zees Grill
Bricks and Barley (new in 2019)
Shaw Cafe & Wine Bar
Bistro Six-One

WINERY RESTAURANTS

Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery
Kitchen 76 at Two Sisters Vineyards
The Winery Restaurant at Peller Estates
The Farmhouse Cafe at Caroline Cellars Winery
Trius Winery Restaurant
OLiV Tapas Bar & Restaurant at Strawn Winery

HOMESTYLE (AND EASY ON THE WALLET)

Silk's Country Kitchen
Sono's Cafe
Stage Coach Family Restaurant
Fornos Restaurant
Sunset Grill

HOTEL & RESORT KITCHENS

Churchill Lounge at the The Prince of Wales
Noble at The Prince of Wales
The Drawing Room at the Prince of Wales
Restaurant at the The Oban Inn
Riverbend Inn Restaurant
Vintages Wine Bar & Lounge at the Pillar & Post
Bacchus Lounge & Patio at Queen's Landing
Tiara Restaurant at Queen's Landing
Cannery Restaurant at Pillar & Post
Hob Nob Restaurant at the Charles Inn
Play Bar & Grill at White Oaks Resort & Spa

WHERE THE LOCALS GO

SupperMarket on Wednesday evenings
Royal Canadian Legion for fish and chips on Thursday
\$5 burgers on Wednesday at the Prince of Wales
Wednesday \$0.50 wings at Sandtrap Pub & Grill
All you can eat mussels on Tuesday at Vintages Wine Bar & Lounge at the Pillar & Post
Sushi Sundays at Exchange Brewery

PUBFARE

The Irish Harp Pub
Sandtrap Pub & Grill
The Olde Angel Inn
Butler's Bar & Grill

BAKERIES, QUICK STOPS & SANDWICH SHOPS

Harvest Barn
Budapest Bakery (new in 2019)
Hendriks Valu-mart
NOTL Home Bakery
Teenie Panini (new in 2019)
Tide & Vine
McFarland House Tea Room
MJ's Own Munchies
Willow Cakes & Pastries
Sweet & Swirls Cafe
Nina Gelateria & Pastry Shop
Old Town Goodies
Treadwell Bakery



Looking for something warm and filling? Try the lobster spaghetti at The Oban Inn. Read all about the Oban and Chef Jesse Prior on Page 12.

Backhouse offers a unique food experience to all who step through the door. This celeriac served in a local walnut with a fresh beet is just one example of the kinds of tastings you'll get to experience. Read all about it on Page 10.





PICTURED: Bracirole di Cinghiale | Pistachio crusted wild boar chop, heirloom whole beans, with Pingue Pancetta and roasted cipollini onions

KITCHEN76 AT TWO SISTERS



BY RICHARD HARLEY

Driving up to Two Sisters Winery, you can't help but feel like you've stepped out of Niagara-on-the-Lake and into the heart of Rome, as the stone villa-style building peeks above the manicured treeline, inviting you toward some of the finest wines and food pairings in the country. We're talking about the place Kawhi Leonard went for a victory meal after winning the NBA championship with the Raptors this year.

So it's safe to say you can expect top-notch service, food and wine. Our experience was not a let down. In the warmly lit dining room, you get the feeling you're in for something special. And you *are*.

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Christine Mast
Kitchen76 @ Two Sisters Winery

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

With a new, seasonal menu for this winter, chef Christine Mast provides a diverse range of options that showcase local produce and bring the season alive on your palate. For our meal, we had a mix of appetizers, entrees and desserts to get as much of the experience as possible. Starting out, you realize Mast has left nothing to be desired when it comes to Italian food.

The pasta is homemade – everything except the spaghetti, which practically nobody makes anymore. The pizza is wood-fired and the meals, while traditional, come with fusion twists that are sure to have you talking about the food for weeks to come.

For example, instead of a classic pork chop with beans and cabbage, Kitchen76 offers a buttery bone-in wild bore chop with locally sourced field-dried beans, and delicately roasted brussel sprouts and roasted nuts.

Roasted nuts are a big compliment to the dishes for the season. To see what we mean, try the seasonal beet salad. It comes with red and yellow beets, locally-sourced, with citrus, goat cheese and roasted pistachios. A hearty winter salad to warm your bones.

Other items are truly classic, such as the cacio pepe — a homemade pasta dish that literally translates to cheese and pepper. And that’s about all that comes with it — which is how you want it. The mafaldine pasta noodles are made with duck eggs, providing an extra richness. Chef Mast says much of her inspiration for handmade meals with fresh ingredients comes from her mother, who is from Calabria. She even sources many ingredients from Calabria, such as the olives used to accent the roasted artichoke appetizer.

With great food options, and the dining room fireplace glowing in the background, you’re comfortable to stick around and try a variety of menu items. And you should. We recommend the beet salad, elk tartare, the bore chop and the seasonal risotto. Each meal will give you a true taste of the season, while leaving you satisfied with the amount of food on the plate.

Kitchen76 is also unique in that most of the wines are made in-house as well, as a crucial part of the estate winery. As with most great meals, it wouldn’t be the same without trying some of the recommended wine pairings.

Kitchen76 at Two Sisters is located at 240 John St. East. Dinner reservations can be made at www.twosistersvineyards.com/Kitchen-76, or by calling the winery at 905-468-0592.

PICTURED:

Risotta Con Zucca

Aged caranoli rice risotto with squash agrodolce, robiola cheese, pumpkin puree, and seared scallops



PICTURED: Root Cellar Squash Puree
Prosciutto | creme franche



BACKHOUSE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BY RICHARD HARLEY

When searching for a fine dining experience in Niagara-on-the-Lake, a restaurant located inside a strip mall might not be your first go-to.

You might assume it won't have the right ambience and couldn't possibly be compared to a restaurant in a fancy building. But you'd be entirely wrong when it comes to Backhouse.

When you step inside, you're immediately plugged into a chic, hip spot that's reminiscent of high-end spots in downtown Toronto. You can tell right away this isn't going to be your typical meal, and before you

know it, you're immersed in a deep food adventure, from which you won't be returning for at least a couple of hours.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Chef Ryan Crawford
Backhouse Restaurant



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Backhouse isn't somewhere you want to go without the time to appreciate the intricacies and attention to detail put into just about everything.

Upon entering, often times you'll be greeted by head chef and owner Ryan Crawford himself. He'll likely be wearing his homemade apron, crafted from his own leather hides. If you're a bit early, you'll be offered a seat at the restaurant's elegant and diverse cocktail bar.

One of the bartenders will tell you a bit about the menu drinks, which are made with local, seasonal ingredients, and prepared with the utmost attention to detail.

As with any serious bar, the glasses are chilled, the simple syrups are made in-house, and the glasses are beautifully garnished, creating an eye-appeal that's as good as the drink itself. A fair warning: these are some strong drinks, so be wary of staying too long before dinner — and don't worry, you'll have the chance to return after the meal.

After being lubricated, you're taken to either the dining room or chef's table, which both offer the same intricate menu items — either a tasting menu or a la carte choices. During our trip, we enjoyed the tasting menu with wine pairings.

As far as seating goes, the chef's table is where you want to be if you're a foodie. Here you can watch the cooks prepare each meal with care, get a warm glow from the wood-fire stove, and have the cooks themselves explain some of the dishes. It's a comfortable setup, not too busy, and is certainly more immersive than a dining room table seat.

Before you begin, you'll be given a gift-wrapped satchel of golden utensils to keep by your side, and told that you're to use "whatever piece feels right for you." Soon you realize that's

part of the magic — there are no rules here, besides that things should be comfortable.

One of the knowledgeable servers, some of whom are qualified sommeliers, can provide a bit of background and history to the wines you're drinking. And with a local selection of wines, that's important.

You'll learn about the different winemakers, even a bit about the process and styles behind the wines. You won't, however, be told too much about how the wines taste.

As server Nick notes, wine can be subjective, so telling people what they're supposed to taste might make them feel as if they're not drinking it right. That's a big no for Nick, confirming that this place is not about posh. It's about feeling good.

When you get your meal, you can immediately tell Backhouse doesn't shy away from presentation, or care. Everything is unique, has a seasonal or local theme, and many of the ingredients come right from Chef Crawford's local garden.

Each meal is crafted to show off something special, whether it's one of three locally-sourced butters, or a sourdough starter that's been kept alive for so long it's got its own name (Roxanne).

To top off the uniqueness of the dishes, each one is presented in a fashion that's worthy of taking a few pictures for the social cloud. The only problem is, because tasting menus offer small portions, you might desire more of everything.

Some of the favourites from our menu were: The egg mousse, the duck liver "timbit," the warm seasonal soup, and a pawpaw fruit ice cream for dessert.

All in all, Backhouse offers a truly unique food experience unlike anything else you'll find in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Backhouse is at 242 Mary St. and reservations can be made at www.backhouse.xyz or by calling 289-272-1242.

PICTURED:

Leaf it to Ashley
Autumn greens | radish
fermented bean | mustard



PICTURED:

Seared Ahi Tuna, micro greens salad, mango & passionfruit puree, piri piri sauce

OBAN INN



BY RICHARD HARLEY

The Oban Inn has been a staple for fine dining in Niagara-on-the-Lake longer than most people have lived in town.

Stepping inside immediately gives you a feeling that the building has a history, and it does. The restaurant has attracted foodies and famous patrons for years. Prepare yourself for a dining experience that takes you a step back in time.

The whole building has a classy, elegant, almost royal feel to it, but the warm smiles of staff and the casual dress code is mild and mellow at the same time. Even on a Saturday, the dining room has a quiet, relaxed feeling. It's done purposely, and it offers a mellow, classic fine-dining experience.

Offering a diverse, yet bare bones seasonal menu, head chef Jesse Prior manages the feat of keeping the options new and inspired, while retaining the undertones of a traditional first-class meal.

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Chef Jesse Prior
The Oban Inn Restaurant



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

A seared tuna is livened with a dusting of coriander and cumin, and paired with piri piri to give it a flavourful kick, while a side of lettuce greens and fennel cuts the intensity, and rounds out the dish. Pair it with a Rielsing/Gewurztraminer by Bachelder, and your mouth is ringing with new flavours that complement each other with a fantastic balance.

Each dish boasts its own uniqueness, with wine pairings that truly accent the meal.

The wine pairings are unique, with some meant to complement the meal, and others chosen to be a sharp contrast. Try a peppery Pinot Noir with your creamy lobster pasta, rather than the classic white wine that might typically be paired with cream and seafood.

This tactic of playing with flavour combinations is tough to get right, and the Oban doesn't just pull it off, it makes it shine. As server Mark says, sometimes a pairing is about blending flavours, while other times a sharp contrast can be the perfect match. A

theme emerges, as you realize the food is about a balance of strong ingredients paired correctly.

The portions are large here, so you won't leave hungry. But if you can, we recommend trying a diverse sampling. You can't go wrong with the seasonal cauliflower and asiago soup.

And if you're looking for something a little meatier, the beef tenderloin will melt in your mouth. Cooked to a perfect medium-rare, and served with crispy fingerlings, roasted brussel sprouts, lamb au jus and paired with a Big Head red, the Oban turns a time-honoured poor-man's meal into a high-end delight.

The Oban is at 160 Front St., near the mouth of the Niagara River. Reservations can be made at www.oban.com, or by calling 905-468-2165.

PICTURED:

7oz Beef Tenderloin, roasted
brussel sprouts, crispy fingerling
potatoes, demi-glace



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ICEWINE PEACHES

RECIPE BY CHEF COLLIN GOODINE

Icewine is a beautiful, sweet, fruity and viscous wine that is a much-sought-after acquired taste. In Niagara, we are very fortunate to be surrounded by so many amazing wineries that produce a wide variety of complex icewines, so much so that some even have an ice room dedicated to their bounty. This simple recipe combines a prized Niagara-grown fruit with the nectar of icewine. The crispy brule that is formed on the peach after braising, with the intense sweetness followed by the bitter chocolate, is classic. Enjoy.

INGREDIENTS

6 Niagara peaches

2 cups water

1 cup white sugar

1 tsp vanilla

1/2 bottle (about 100 ml) of Vidal ice wine

Dark chocolate for shaving

PREPARATION

Wash and cut all the peaches in half, removing pit. Set peaches aside on a plate. (Try to buy freestone peaches in season.)

In a small, thick-bottomed pot, bring the water and sugar (simple syrup) to a boil. Add the vanilla and turn the mixture down to a simmer for about 5 minutes.

In a casserole dish, or any oven-safe dish with 1- to 2-inch sides, place a piece of parchment paper. Lay the peaches cut-side down onto the paper. Try to use a dish that allows little space around the peaches. A small, 8-inch square dish works well.

Pour the hot liquid over the peaches.

Place the peaches into a hot oven at 400F, for about 20 minutes or until the peaches are a little soft and the skin starts to pull away from the fruit.

Take the peaches out and the skin should pull right off. Allow the peaches to cool. If the skin did not pull

right off, once they are cool enough to handle, peel the skin off with the help of a paring knife.

Remove from the pan and cool until ready to serve.

To serve:

In a cast iron pan on medium to low heat, add the icewine and allow to simmer.

Place the peaches in face down and continue to simmer until the icewine starts to reduce a little and look more like a thick syrup.

While the icewine is reducing, use a spoon to baste the peaches with the icewine, trying to cover the back sides of the peaches. Once the icewine is almost reduced, remove the peaches and place onto a plate.

Spoon the icewine reduction over the peaches and grate your favourite dark chocolate over top.

If preferred, you also can add whipping cream, sweet mascarpone or even ricotta.




Be sure to check out our weekly "Cooking with Collin" feature in each edition of The Lake Report!



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MEET THE MONGER: XAVIER ALLARD

Having grown up on a farm, Allard is passionate about knowing where his products come from, and the process behind how they're made. He loves customer service, knows many customers by name, and is always looking to partner with local businesses.

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ADVENTURE

CANDLE LIGHT STROLL

People from all across the region and beyond come out for the spectacular annual Candlelight Stroll.

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DEC' THE HOUSE

Some Niagara-on-the-Lake residents go all out when it comes to decorating the house. Find some spots to see.

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SANTA CLAUS PARADE

It's often called the best Santa Claus parade in Ontario. Some say it's better than Toronto.

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New Year IN Notl

BY **RICHARD HARLEY**

As the clock counts down to midnight on New Year's Eve, people from all over Niagara-on-the-Lake head to the clock tower cenotaph to count down, sip champagne and connect with friends and loved ones.


When the bell rings, the street is typically filled with people. Those who know NOTL know it's the place to be — like a smaller, quainter version of Times Square.

If you're in town for the new year, make it your resolution to stop by and see the countdown. Afterward, head over to one of the local pubs nearby and enjoy a few drinks, or find a coffee shop to sip a warm latte.

On New Year's Day, celebrate with the town at the annual levee at Navy Hall, from 3 to 4 p.m.

The event will offer free refreshments and will be capped off with an official toast at 4 p.m., followed by the cannon salute by the Fort George Artillery and a musical performance by the Fort George Fife and Drum Corps.

For more information, contact the Friends of Fort George at 905-468-6621.



Rick Meleon celebrates the New Year at the Navy Hall levee in 2019.

NOTL's Candlelight Stroll

A magical walk through the streets of Historic Old Town

BY **DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA**

For the 30th year in a row, the quaint Old Town area of Niagara-on-the-Lake will be lit up for one of the most anticipated events of the year – the Candlelight Stroll.

Thousands of visitors, residents and carolers will fill the streets for NOTL's unofficial kickoff of the Christmas season, beginning at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 6.

The ceremony starts at the Historic Niagara District Court House at 26 Queen St. with candle lighting and carols sung by the Salvation Army.

The guided stroll will be led by two horse-drawn Sentineal carriages, from NOTL's Sentineal Carriages. As participants wind through the streets of Old Town, they can stop and listen to 13 groups of carolers, bands and seasonal entertainers along the route.

Strollers can buy candles for a good cause, priced at one for \$3 or two for \$5. Candles can be purchased inside the Visitors Centre and at candle stalls along Queen Street.

It's a tradition that all the money raised will support a local child in need or a worthy

community project.

This year, the chamber will donate money to a farmworker Delroy Castella, who has worked in NOTL for 35 years and suffered a stroke this summer. Raised money will help Castella in his recovery and rehabilitation, said Nicole Cripps, the chamber's events co-ordinator.

The chamber will also be giving \$1,000 to the Farmworkers Christmas Gifts fund to help to buy welcome kits and reflective safety vests for migrant workers.

Last year, donations went toward installing Buddy Benches at four local schools: Crossroads and St. Davids public schools, Royal Oak Community School and St. Michael Catholic Elementary School.

When children at school feel lonely or need company, they can sit on the bench in their school yard, and other students will know that child needs comfort.

This year's performers include the Grace United Church choir, Royal Oak Community School students and Jubal Cottage School. And the Bethany Bell Ringers will be performing

at the corner of Gate and Queen streets.

One of the longtime performers, the Rondeau Brass Quintet, can be found on Johnson Street. At the corner of King and Prideaux streets, strollers will meet a men's barbershop chorus called A Cappella Niagara.

People travel from all over the province and from across the border to attend the stroll, says Andorlie Hillstrom, artistic director of the Yellow Door Theatre Project, which has performed at the event in the past.

"It has that small-town, charming feel to it. It's lovely," Hillstrom says. "It's like going back into time."

Members of the Grace United Church choir have been performing at the stroll for more than 20 years and they always dress up as classic carolers wearing long red coats and tall hats.

"Having people watch us and sing along, and some of them stay for a long time, then you know they're enjoying it," says Esther Giesbrecht, music director at the church.

"Especially children, it's exciting for them. It's special," adds Barbara North.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27



*Fa-lala-lala
lala-la-lah!*

For the last several years, members of Evergreen Choir have also joined in to perform on the steps of Grace United.

“It has that small-town, charming feel to it. It’s lovely.”

The stroll also supports Newark Neighbours, the only thrift store and food bank in town. Newark also provides Christmas hampers to needy families in the area. Strollers are encouraged to bring non-perishable donations and drop them off at

candle stall locations or at Fort George. The stalls will be located in front of Hatley, LCBO, Just Christmas, Ten Thousand Villages, Wine Country Vintners, the Stage Coach Family Restaurant and Versions store. Parking will be available at Fort George, which can be accessed from the Niagara Parkway at 51 Queen’s Parade. A complimentary shuttle is scheduled to run starting from 4:30 from Fort George to the Court House. It is also a short walk from the fort.



MEET THE CAROLERS

- GRACE UNITED CHURCH CHOIR
- ROYAL OAK COMMUNITY SCHOOL
- BETHANY BELL RINGERS
- RONDEAU BRASS QUARTET
- A CAPELLA NIAGARA (MEN’S BARBERSHOP)
- & MANY MORE



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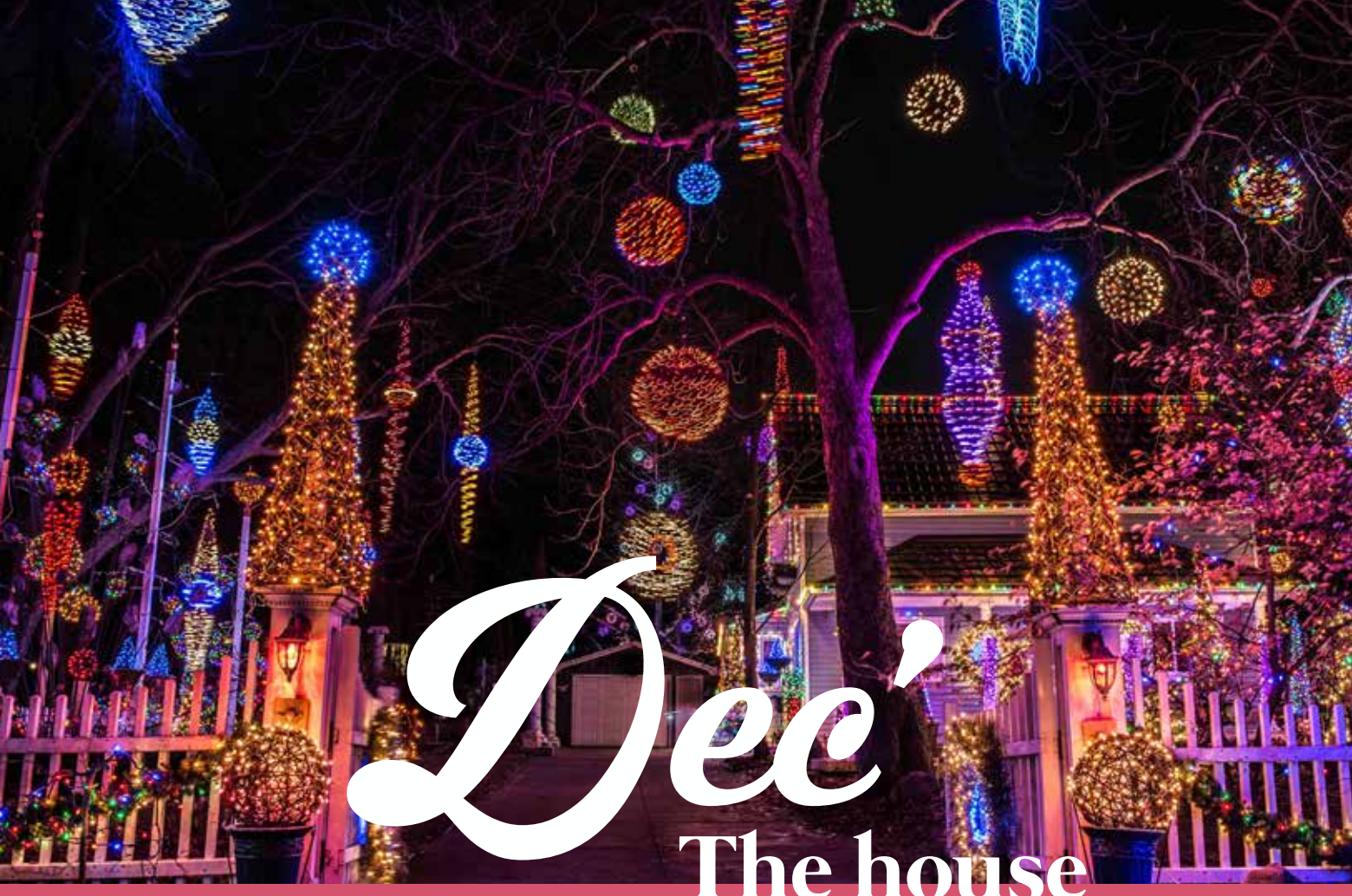
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Dec' The house

It isn't just the Historic Old Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake that offers stunning Christmas attractions, you'll find displays like the one above (1791 York Rd.) sprinkled all over town in the holiday season. Here we've listed a few houses that typically dec-out every year, that are certainly worth driving by for a glimpse.

"I have been decorating like this for 15 years here. Everyone enjoys the decorations ... it makes people happy and it makes me happy. It shows that the Christmas spirit is still around."

Toula Dritsacos at 805 Charlotte St.

Hot spots:

- 1791 York Rd.
- 805 Charlotte St.
- 9 Queenston St.
- 1139 Queenston St.
- 177 King St. (Former Trisha Romance Gallery)
- The Niagara Parkway
- The Village (near Garrison Village Drive)



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The Lake Report

THE COMMUNITY PAPER OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

Niagara-on-the-Lake is a special town — one that deserves a special newspaper. So that's why we created The Lake Report, to bring NOTL the best community newspaper one can find.

In just two short years, The Lake Report has established itself as the most read newspaper in town, dedicated to producing hyperlocal news about our wonderful community.

By bringing you news, views and stories about the people of NOTL, we have become the go-to news source for the residents in town, and a medium where locals can voice their opinions. We're proud that our readers continually tell us we provide a way for them to feel more connected to their neighbours than ever before.

The NOTL community is unique in so many ways. Regular visitors know how welcoming we can be. But beyond that, the sense of small town is truly overwhelming. It's beyond a fleeting, "Hello, how are you."

It has been our honour to serve the community, and receive support and encouragement on a daily basis from

the people we meet.

We have seen first-hand how the paper helps bring in contributions to our local charities, and we are proud to be able to help those organizations spread their messages.

We could go on and on about how proud we are of what we've done, but the most important piece of it all, is the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake. None of this could happen without our readers and advertisers. They are the people who read our paper every week, send us story ideas, photos and feedback. They are the ones who help support our local journalists, and who whole-heartedly encouraged us to go further than we ever expected to take things in our first year.

Ever since our first issue — just 5,000 copies, planned to be monthly — we were asked for more. When we went bi-weekly, people still wanted more.

We intend to keep bringing the best of news, entertainment, community stories and seasonal guides like this to this beautiful, unique and warm community.



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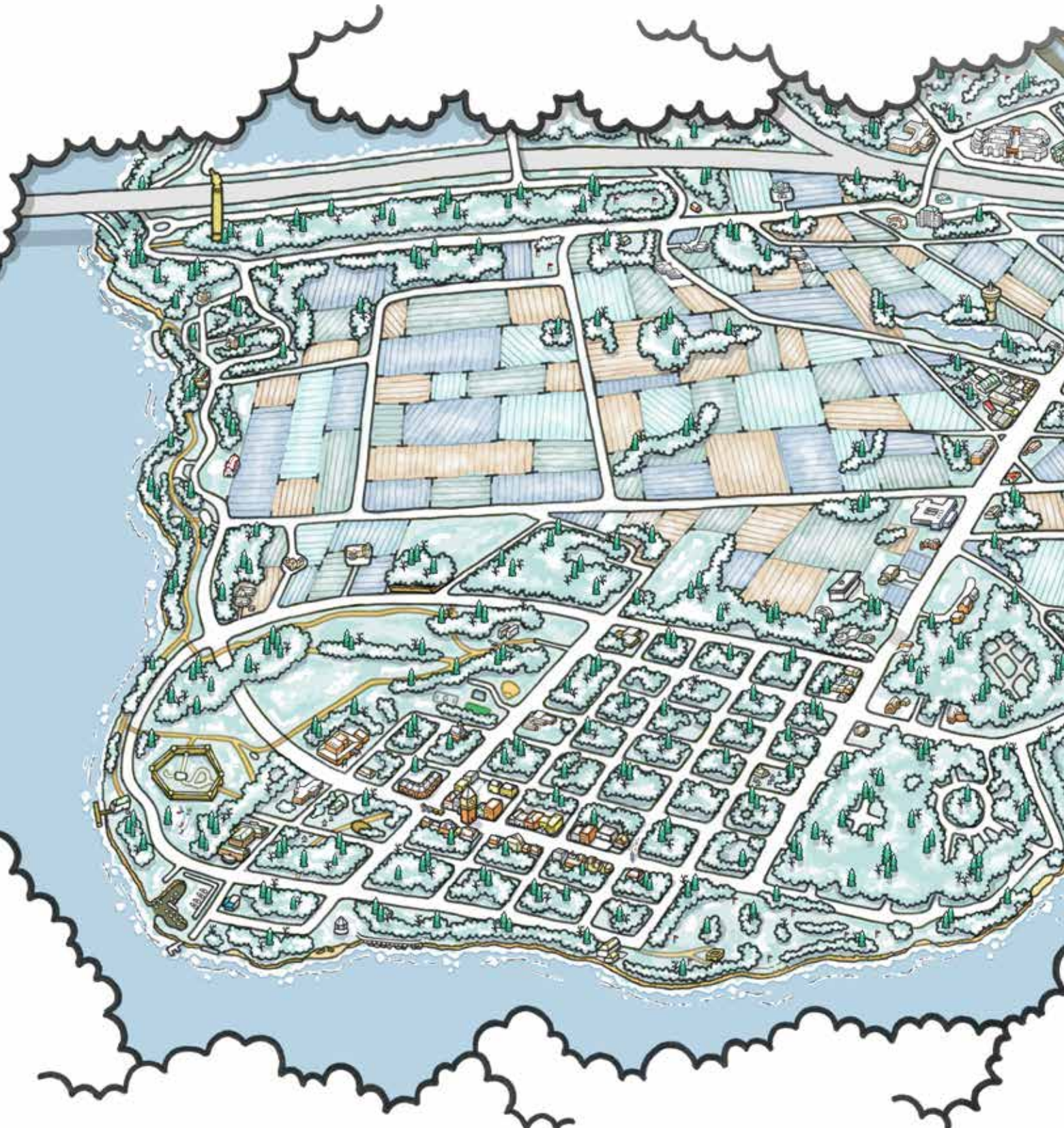
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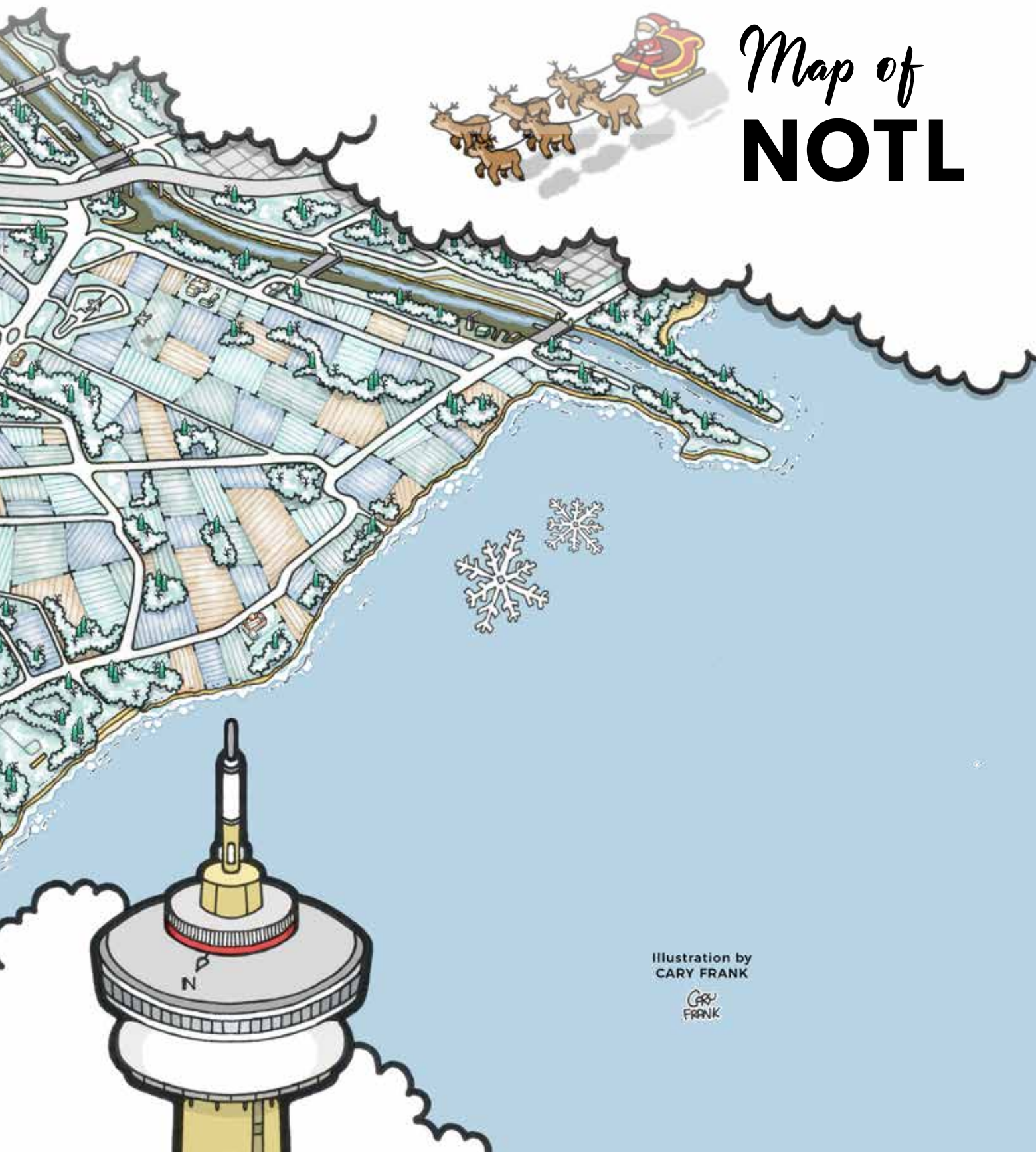
NIAGARANOWMEDIA

We've imagined NOTL from a new angle.

Our map looks southeast toward Niagara-on-the-Lake so you can get a better view than ever. Although the map is not to scale, it is a (fairly!) accurate representation of many of the major routes in town.



The Lake Report



Map of **NOTL**

Illustration by
CARY FRANK

CARY
FRANK

'Tis the Season - TO BE JOLLY -



Be jolly at our authentic Christmas village, at our Santa Claus Parade, at the Shaw Festival, at our Candlelight Stroll, the Icewine Festival, or at our many seasonal events, wineries, art galleries, parks and historic landmarks.

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THE Santa Claus

PARADE

2019

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BY **DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA**

You better watch out: the annual Christmas Parade is coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake on Saturday, Dec. 14. The parade starts at Memorial Park on King Street at 11 a.m.

With about 100 entries and six or more bands, the parade will proceed to Castlereagh Street, turn left to Wellington Street and on to Byron-Prideaux Street, turn left to Simcoe Street, Queen Street, and will end at the corner of King and Johnson streets.

For spectators waiting on Queen Street, the parade should arrive there by about 11:30 a.m.

“It’s the best Santa Claus Christmas parade in Ontario,” says the town’s community engagement co-ordinator, Lauren Kruitbosch. Many participating area businesses and organizations, such as Simpson’s Pharmacy and the NOTL Historical Society, have

interesting floats, said Kevin Turcotte, the town’s manager of parks and recreation.

Other participants, like the Burlington Teen Tour Band, have a reputation of putting on great shows, Turcotte said.

Brock University and area elementary schools also have great floats that showcase community spirit, he said.

And, of course, no parade is complete without the man of the hour: Santa Claus who will make an appearance at the end.

This year, the Town of NOTL decided there will be no judging of floats. “We didn’t feel the need for judging. Everybody gets recognized,” Turcotte said. “We thought this would be better participatory rather than a competition.”

Members of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124 will be parade marshals, leading the procession in a horse-drawn carriage provided by Sentineal Carriages.

Each year, the Christmas Parade committee chooses an organization or individual to lead the parade based on their achievements or major milestones.

In previous years, NOTL Rotary Club, the town’s Communities in Bloom committee and volunteer firefighters – to name a few – were among the honorary parade marshals.

“The Legion has always been a great supporter of the parade so we thought it was something that was appropriate and they accepted it, so it was great,” Turcotte said.

You can support the parade financially by purchasing Christmas buttons, which can be found at Valu-mart stores, the NOTL Community Centre and other locations throughout town.



LETTERS FOR SANTA?

Be sure to bring your letters for Santa to the Christmas Parade on Dec. 14, 2019.
— Don’t forget to address it to HOH OH!





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FOR CHRISTMAS' SAKE, **KAREN**

A HOLIDAY SHORT WRITTEN BY PAUL MASSON

A Visit to Grandma at Christmas

"We are visiting Grandma tomorrow, Karen, so I want you to do a little preparation to avoid the mishaps that occurred last year. You wore your goth costume, with the black eye shadow and your hair spiked using gel. It was embarrassing when your grandmother didn't recognize you and had to ask me who you were. It's Christmas, so wear a proper skirt and blouse."

"Yes, Mom." Karen yawned.

"And another thing, try to kiss her on her cheek gently this time. At the last visit, you scrunched up your mouth in disgust and closed your eyes so you missed her face entirely, hitting the side of her shoulder instead. Don't forget that her bones are fragile, not to mention the trauma resulting from being assaulted while lying in bed.

You remember that she started hyperventilating and that the nurse had to give her a sedative to calm her down."

"It wasn't my fault! She moved!"

"Also, try to make polite conversation. When she asks you what you are doing in school, the proper answer is not 'whatever I can get away with.' Instead, mention a few of the things that were

assigned in class. What would be nice to make up for last year would be for you to bring her a small present. Some perfume or note paper would be nice. Or even some fragrant soap, but do not suggest to her that she needs it. Your comments about her body odour were not appreciated."

"All right Mom, I'll find something."

The drive to the nursing home is uneventful, and they pull into the visitors' parking lot after an hour's ride. While her father signs them in, Karen looks at the bulletin board of the daily activities, thinking that she would rather die than be locked up in a place like this.

Grandma is dozing in her bed when they enter her room but wakes up as soon as she hears their voices.

"Grandma, I have a present for you! Shall I open it?" The small package was gift-wrapped at the store and has a pink bow.

"That's very nice, hand soap with lilac scent—my favourite fragrance. Thank you, Karen, that's very thoughtful of you."

Her assignment completed, Karen lapses into a near coma, going over in her mind what she will do on the weekend. She is revived by her mother's sharp tone:

"Karen, your grandmother asked you what you were doing in school."

"Er, I wrote an essay on the ancient Greeks for history

class, and I demonstrated the exothermic oxidation of magnesium in chemistry class."

Karen's mother smothers a guffaw. Ignoring her, Grandma looks impressed.

"That's very nice, Karen—I didn't know you even took those subjects" she says with a twinkle in her eye.

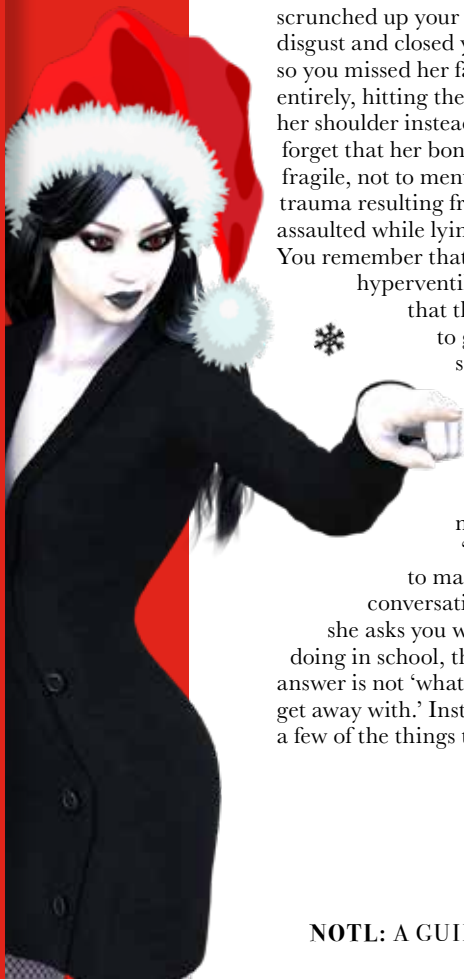
The conversation turns to other topics and Karen tunes out. After an hour or so, they get up to go. Her parents don't force Karen to kiss her grandmother goodbye this time so as to avoid any unpleasantness.

After they have gone, Grandma sits back in bed and muses about Karen. "I was wild too, when I was young. It's funny how old age catches up with you, though. Life is like a journey up a great river. You start off successfully swimming upstream, but after a while, you get tired of fighting, and finally you just let the current take you. It's a good thing the young don't understand this or they might decide not to make the journey. I admire Karen's pluck. She'll settle down eventually."

Later, at home, Karen thinks about the visit to Grandma. "It didn't go too badly after all; those school projects I made up were awesome! Of course Mom wasn't fooled, but Gran got a charge out of it.

Hmm, did she guess that it was all a joke? I wonder what she was up to when she was young.

Maybe next time I'll ask her.





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SHAW FESTIVAL

Artistic Director's Message

It's a nice problem to have: how to improve on last season?

After the success of last season, we are riding high at The Shaw. So now we have to try to do even better. We've shown that we can do great musicals? Then let's do two of them. Gypsy and Assassins are two of the peaks of American Musical Theatre, mixing great drama and great tunes to create something really special. We've shown that we are masters of comedy? Then let's do one of the best, Charley's Aunt. And we've shown that we can do justice to the genius of Bernard Shaw, so let's put his most popular play, The Devil's Disciple, on the Festival stage.

Every show in the season will feature audience favourites, new and old: Sherlock Holmes and The Raven's Curse is a good example, reuniting the team who brought you the witty and delightful The Hound of the Baskervilles. That show's director, Craig Hall, will not be the only one trying to top a big hit: Selma Dimitrijevic directed The Baroness and the Pig for us and returns to tackle Eugene O'Neill's erotic classic, Desire Under the Elms; Philip Akin, whose "Master Harold" ...and The Boys is still being talked about, will bring a lost gem back to the light in Alice Childress's wonderful Trouble in Mind; and the greatest of all Irish plays, J.M. Synge's The Playboy of the Western World, will be directed by one Jackie Maxwell.

I'm directing Charley's Aunt and the lunchtime one-act, Virginia Woolf's delightful Flush: the love story of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, seen through the eyes of her cocker spaniel. The Royal George will also be home to Narnia, as we present our family show, Prince Caspian, in which Lucy and the other Pevensie children meet some remarkable creatures and talking trees.

Our special, all-day, stay-for-lunch-in-the-middle, event this year is Mahabharata, a feast for all the senses from Ravi Jain and Why Not Theatre. Some of the greatest and most thrilling stories ever told, presented with the wit, charm and theatrical flair for which he is becoming widely renowned. I can't wait for this one.

Oh – and you know how you wished you could see Me and My Girl again? Well, you can: it's our holiday treat for Christmas 2020, along with A Christmas Carol. Don't leave it too late to book.

See you soon!

Tim Carroll

WINTER FILM SERIES

FILM SERIES: BLINDED BY THE LIGHT

Jan. 4, 2020 | 3 p.m. | Festival Theatre | \$12

In England in 1987, a teenager learns to live his life, understand his family and find his own voice through the music of American rock star Bruce Springsteen.

FILM SERIES: WILD ROSE

Jan. 11, 2020 | 3 p.m. | Festival Theatre | \$12

Wild Rose tells the complicated story of Rose-Lynn, a woman on a quest to become a country music star, while also grappling with the responsibilities of being recently released from prison and a young mother.

FILM SERIES: WOMAN AT WAR

Jan. 18, 2020 | 3 p.m. | Festival Theatre | \$12

Halla, a woman in her forties, declares war on the local aluminum industry to prevent it from disfiguring her country. But her activism may threaten a long-held hope of hers. Subtitled.

FILM SERIES: ROCKETMAN

Jan. 25, 2020 | 3 p.m. | Festival Theatre | \$12

An epic musical fantasy about the incredible human story of Elton John's breakthrough years. The film follows the fantastical journey of transformation from shy piano prodigy Reginald Dwight into international superstar Elton John.

FILM SERIES: THE BIGGEST LITTLE FARM

Feb. 1, 2020 | 3 p.m. | Festival Theatre | \$12

A testament to the immense complexity of nature, The Biggest Little Farm follows two dreamers and a dog on an odyssey to bring harmony to both their lives and the land.

FILM SERIES: THE GRIZZLIES

Feb. 8, 2020 | 3 p.m. | Festival Theatre | \$12

Inuit youth in a small community gain a powerful sense of pride through the sport of lacrosse, in this true-story account of tenacity, renewal, and inspiring resilience.

FILM SERIES: JOJO RABBIT (TBC)

Feb. 15, 2020 | 3 p.m. | Festival Theatre | \$12

A World War II satire that follows a German boy whose world view is turned upside down when he discovers his mother (Scarlett Johansson) is hiding a Jewish girl in their attic. Aided by his idiotic imaginary friend, Adolf Hitler (Taika Waititi), Jojo must confront his blind nationalism.

FILM SERIES: ONCE UPON A TIME IN ... HOLLYWOOD

Feb. 22, 2020 | 3 p.m. | Festival Theatre | \$12

A faded television actor (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his stunt double (Brad Pitt) strive to achieve fame and success in the film industry during the final years of Hollywood's Golden Age in 1969 Los Angeles.

REGULAR SHOWS

A Christmas Carol
By Charles Dickens
Royal George Theatre
Nov. 13 - Dec. 22

Holiday Inn
By Irving Berlin
Festival Theatre
Nov. 16 - Dec. 22



Niagara Historical

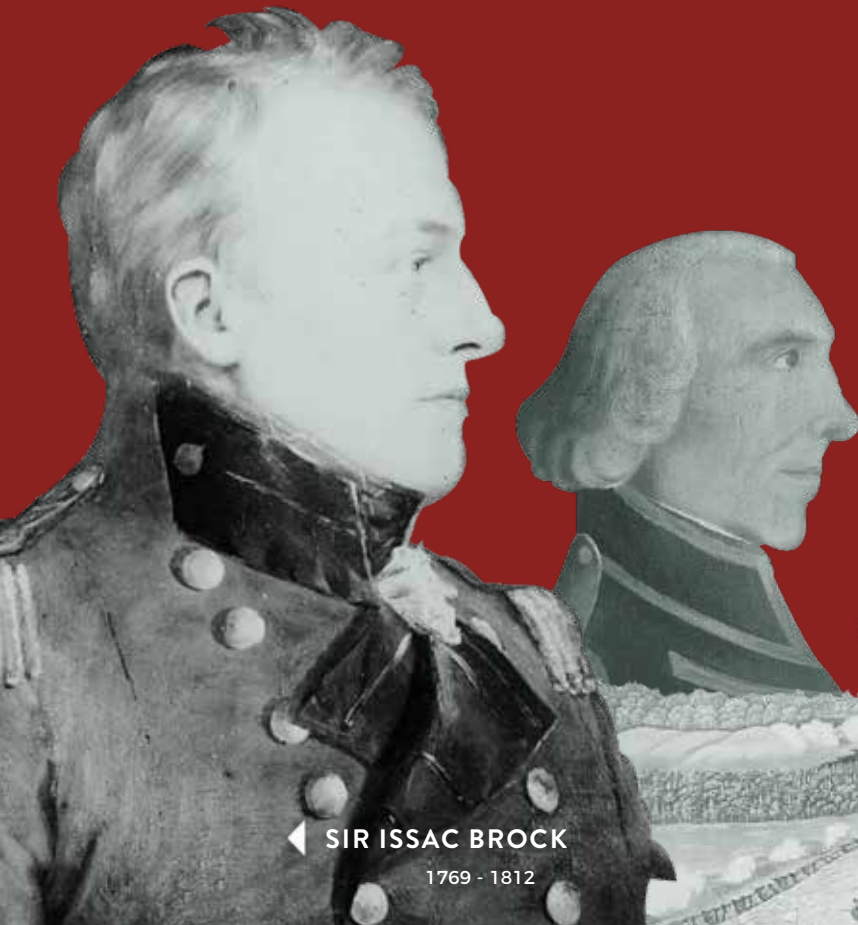
SOCIETY  MUSEUM

For more than thirty years Janet Carnochan, a native of Stamford, Ontario, taught elementary and secondary school at Niagara-on-the-Lake, but she made her greatest contribution to the community as a historian rather than as an educator. A distinguished historical preservationist, Carnochan was one of the founding members, and first president of the Niagara Historical Society, 1895-1925. She laboured tirelessly to safeguard and promote the rich heritage of Niagara. She wrote and edited numerous historical works including *The History of Niagara* and successfully campaigned for the construction of Memorial Hall, the first building erected for the purpose of a museum in Ontario.



JANET CARNOCHAN ▶

1839 - 1926



◀ **SIR ISSAC BROCK**

1769 - 1812

◀ **COL. JOHN BUTLER**

1728 - 1796

The Niagara Historical Society was established in 1895, and in 1907 opened Ontario's first purpose-built museum where it still stands today.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is dedicated to the preservation of the unique history of NOTL and engages the community and its visitors through exhibitions, publications, programming and special events. The museum accommodates more than 50,000 artifacts and archives, including some of the most important examples of early Canadian history in the province.

Stop by the museum gift shop, it's a great place to find something unique and contains many local history publications, reproductions and heritage gifts.

Make sure to visit to learn about the unique history of this special town — Niagara-on-the-Lake.





- LET'S GO -

Tobogganing

BY BRITTANY CARTER

Whether you're lugging your sled to Old Town to zip down the small hills at Simcoe Park on Picton Street, or you're braving the elements to slide down the hill near Fort George, tobogganing will always remain one of the most anticipated winter activities for kids of all ages. In true Canadian fashion, when the cold weather dictates it, dress in your warmest winter attire, grab your toque, prepare your toboggan and head out for

an afternoon of whipping down local hills. And if you're hill-bound this winter – just remember to keep safety in mind. Wherever you decide to slide around town, steer clear of hills running down into roads and be well aware of your surroundings before rocketing down those hills: use a sled you can steer, avoid sledding on crowded slopes and stick to daylight hours.

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SANTA'S OFFICIAL NICE-TO-DO LIST

BY TIM TAYLOR

Every year, I watch Niagara-on-the-Lake get all gussied up in its best bib and tucker to celebrate all the things that make the holiday season so special. The lights twinkle, the snow-laden trees glimmer and the carols waft along the avenues. Throughout December, the good citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake will see me popping up in all sorts of places. I really shouldn't be so frivolous. After all, there's a lot of serious present-making and trip-planning to do. But that's why my team of elves is so special. Sadly, I don't have time to attend all the town's holiday celebrations. But I've prepared a Nice-To-Do List (there really isn't a Naughty-To-Do List) and checked it twice:

The lights are twinkling now, and the carols are wafting already, but the season truly starts with the **30th Annual Candlelight Stroll**, which will wind through the streets of Old Town on Dec. 6, with choirs on street corners leading the voices of thousands of merrymakers. Please bring non-perishable food items to fill the larder for Newark Neighbours, a wonderful community food bank and thrift store. (Call 905-468-1950)

That same weekend, wander some more at the **21st Annual Rotary House Tour**, Dec. 6 and 7. You'll drool over six beautiful locations seasonally decorated by professional designers. The tour also includes the 225-year-old St. Andrew's Church, three wineries offering complimentary wine tastings, and special luncheon offerings. (Go to www.niagaraonthelakerotary.ca.)

Artful Treasures is also held in conjunction with the Rotary House Tour (Dec. 6-7) at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, www.niagarapumphouse.ca. The show is the perfect place to find unique objects crafted by local artisans.

Dec. 13 and 14 are tremendously busy. **The Fort George Garrison Christmas** starts the weekend, running both days, and includes activities, crafts and games, hot beverages and treats, even musket demonstrations. (Call 905-468-6614.)

On Saturday the 14th, line the streets to watch the **Santa Claus Parade**, one of the largest and finest Christmas parades in all of Ontario. More than 100 entries will fill the town with laughter, music and marching. Once again, please bring non-perishable food items for collection and watch for the Out of the Cold float collecting hat and scarf donations.

Once again, throughout December, the Shaw Festival has the footlights up on two seasonal productions: **A Christmas Carol** and **Holiday Inn**, two classic festive season productions. (Go to www.shawfest.com.)

Family fun in the holiday season almost always includes skating on an outdoor rink. Sometimes the weather doesn't help, but I'm confident this year we'll all be out and about on the blades. Both the **Vintage Inns rink at Fort George** (call 905-468-1362) and the **Gretzky Estates Winery** ice surface (call 1-844-643-7799) hope to be open soon.

For those of us that have been around here a long time, the season also brings back memories of the aroma of chestnuts roasting and Greaves preserves a-boiling. But nothing stirs the familiar wonder of the season more than music. This year will be no exception.

First on the calendar is **Music Niagara's A Swingin' Christmas**, presented by the ever-popular Toronto All-Star Big Band, Dec. 8. (Call 905-468-5566.) The next day, Dec. 9, **The Edison Singers** perform **In a Bleak Midwinter** in the Court House Theatre, a rousing choral concert that will make you smile (and sing). See www.theedisonsingers.com. On the 14th, Michael Tansley brings the **Newark Singers** to St. Mark's Church at 7 p.m. (Call 905-468-3123.)

There are dozens of ways to contribute to the many worthwhile causes in the community at this time of year. One that caught my attention (because I'm going to be there) is the **Santa Breakfast at the Epicurean Restaurant**, on Sunday morning, Dec. 8. Come for breakfast with Santa. Proceeds will be directed to the great work of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service. (Call 905-468-3408.)

So, have fun. Get to sleep early on Christmas Eve. And, remember, I like chocolate chip cookies.



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SIX PLACES TO WARM UP

Whether warming up with a quick drink amid scenic strolls through town or planning a festive night out during the holiday season, Niagara-on-the-Lake has an abundance of cozy hideaways for dinner, drinks and entertainment.



1) THE OLDE ANGEL INN

Often the talk of the town, the Olde Angel Inn at 224 Regent St. is open every day except Christmas. The “haunted” pub features live music, cozy fireplaces, old world décor and, of course, the resident ghost Captain Swayze. Five guestrooms available for rental allow guests to test their nerve for chance ghost encounters. While steeped in local history and lore, the pub offers a modern night out with live music and a lively atmosphere.



2) BRICKS AND BARLEY

Bricks and Barley, at 1573 Four Mile Creek Rd. in Virgil, is one of NOTL’s newest restaurants. It’s a warm haven on a cold night. With live music, wood-fired pizza and an open-concept dining room, the pub has a welcoming and casual atmosphere. The establishment’s opening was the shared dream of three families, the Spiones, Eymanns and Frendos, to create a central community restaurant offering a menu of locally sourced ingredients, and beer and wine from local breweries and wineries.



3) BUTLER’S BAR AND GRILL

One of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s family watering holes, Butler’s Bar & Grill at 284 Mary St. is a casual sports bar located just a few blocks from Old Town. Open year-round, the eatery serves pizza and wings to hungry tourists and locals – for both dine-in or delivery.



4) THE IRISH HARP PUB

Arguably the best spot for an Irish stout in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Irish Harp Pub sits just off the main strip downtown at 245 King St. Serving authentic, homestyle Irish fare, the extensive menu offers selections to warm you up heartily. Above the bar are three guest rooms furnished with handcrafted pieces imported from Ireland. Stay for dinner and drinks or stay the night.



5) SANDTRAP PUB AND GRILL

The Sandtrap at 358 Mary St. aims to “keep it local” by sourcing produce, wine and beer from local suppliers whenever possible. The local hangout is open seven days a week from 11:30 a.m. to 2 a.m. for food, drinks and friendly conversation. A mix of locals and visitors to Niagara-on-the-Lake will be found huddled around tables to share pizza and wings, and jugs of one of the 18 beers on tap.



6) CLUB 55

Club 55 is a new, 19-plus bar located just on the outskirts of town at 3 Niagara Stone Rd., not far from the Outlet Collection at Niagara mall. The venue features live music at least five days a week, with rental space available for special occasions and private functions. The menu boasts traditional bar food, with some twists, and specials each day of the week. It’s a lively atmosphere to warm up on a cold night.



THE ICEWINE FESTIVAL

Every year people flock to the historic Old Town of NOTL to sip icewine, try gourmet foods and take in ice sculptures.

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THAT SWEET DRINK

All around the globe, people seek the sweet drink made from grapes harvested in sub-zero temperatures.

PAGE 52





winter

IN WINE COUNTRY

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ONCE A YEAR, IN A WINTRY WONDERLAND...

THE *Ice Wine* FESTIVAL

BY ANDREW NIVEN

For two weekends this January, the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Partnership of Niagara, Signature Kitchens and the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake will transform historic Queen Street into an Icewine Village complete with ice sculptures, unique entertainment, warm tents and, of course, icewine.

“The Icewine Festival gives our chefs an opportunity to showcase both seasonal and icewine-inspired culinary delights,” says Chris Smythe, executive chef at the Prince of Wales.

“We are very fortunate in Niagara-on-the-Lake to have access to an abundance of fresh local produce, world-class wineries and renowned restaurants.”

Kicking off the festival’s 25th year in the Grand Hall at the historic Court House is the Sparkle and Ice Gala on Friday, Jan. 17.

It’s a celebration of local icewine makers sharing their favourite VQA wines alongside icewine-inspired dishes by Signature Kitchen Chefs. The evening begins with a welcome icewine cocktail and concludes with a

celebratory outdoor fireworks show.

“Winter is a unique and magical time to discover Niagara’s wine country and showcase one of our most cherished products, icewine,” said Eduardo Lafforgue, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce.

The most iconic aspect of the Niagara-on-the-Lake festival is the Icewine Village on historic Queen Street, featuring extraordinary icewines from over 25 local wineries and culinary creations from the Signature Kitchens of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Guests are invited to visit the Icewine Village over the two weekends (Jan. 18, 19 and 25, 26) and revel in all things icewine.

The Icewine Cocktail Competition also returns for its 12th year from 9 to 11 p.m. on Jan. 18, offering signature icewine cocktails for guests to taste as the judges mull over which drink will win top honours.

A new twist on the popular White on Ice Dinner is the introduction of a progressive-style dinner Friday, Jan. 24.

Beginning with a welcome reception in the Grand Ballroom of the Court House, attendees will be transported in small groups to three different restaurants for their next three courses, complete with perfectly-paired wines.

The groups then convene back on Queen Street in the Icewine Village for the grand finale of dessert and an icewine toast under the stars. Tickets to this culinary adventure are \$150 and limited to 135 guests.

But the festivities don’t stop there, says community organizer Nicole Cripps.

“There will be lots to do, including side trips to the local wineries and visiting the welcoming Queen Street shops,” she says. “Plus, the Icebreakers Comedy Festival from Thursday to Saturday evening will be a lot of laughs featuring local talent from the region.”

For detailed information on events or to purchase tickets call Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake at 905-468-1950 or visit niagaraonthelake.com.

Fire and Ice at Fort George National Historic Site

Step straight from the picturesque Victorian town of Niagara-on-the-Lake into the War of 1812 at Fort George, a military post that defended Upper Canada against American attacks. During the winter months passionate staff welcome you every weekend, and offer a menu of exciting presentations that bring the drama of the war to life. Enhance your visit by bringing a pair of skates to the nearby Vintage-Parks Canada Ice Rink which operates daily.

December 14-15

Garrison Christmas

Experience Christmas traditions from the early 19th century, including crafts, activities and games for the whole family!

January 4

Regency Skating Party

Come dressed to impress and skate back in time with this Regency themed Skating Party. Enjoy special activities inside Fort George and on the rink. Wear your regency best for a chance to win prizes!

January 1

New Year's Day Levee at Navy Hall

Start the year off with a bang! Enjoy cannon firing, toasts, and music by the Fife and Drum Corp.





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Explore, experience and discover why Two Sisters Vineyards has been decorated with the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence consistently since 2016.

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Award

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From January-April, visit us for Wine Wednesdays and enjoy special pricing on select wines. Thursdays, we're also hosting exclusive cooking classes with our Executive Chef, Christine Mast; spots are limited and must be reserved in advance – please call to inquire.





THAT SWEET DRINK

BY VICTORIA GILBERT

On the lips, the wine is as sweet as a first kiss and long after swallowed, it lingers deep in the mouth and delights the senses. It's no wonder the Canadian wine icon, icewine, has captivated the taste buds of people around the globe.

"Icewine is the easiest thing on earth to sell," says Greg Berti, vice-president of global markets, industry relations and business development at Andrew Peller Limited in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Berti has spent two decades talking to people outside Canada about icewine.

"It's so delightful. When you taste it, it's such a beautiful, rich flavour. You swallow it and before you know it, it's dry on the palate and you're ready for another taste. We sell thousands of bottles of icewine a day."

Canada exported \$22.4 million worth of icewine in 2018, according to the Canadian Vintners Association, which

accounts for more than half of all Canadian wine sold outside the country.

Ontario alone accounted for \$18.6 million of that total.

Around the world, Canadian icewine is renowned.

In Japan, icewine is regarded as "a treasure of wine," says Yoshihiro Matsuda, wine importer for Eleven International Co. Ltd. out of Japan.

"And they really enjoy it as a drinking sweet, versus eating sweet like chocolate — that's the reason why we sell a lot at Valentine's Day."

Matsuda has seen a surge in icewine sales in major Japanese cities like Tokyo and Osaka over the past 20 years.

"When I travelled the first time to Japan, they looked at me (like) 'icewine, Canada? You make wine in Canada?'" recounts Klaus Reif, president and CEO of Reif Estate Winery in NOTL.

He said it was a tough go for the

first few years trying to expand the market globally.

"I went over six or seven times to Japan, and by my third visit, I got into a high-end grocery store and all-of-a-sudden it kind of turned around ... You said 'icewine' and they said 'O' Canada!'"

Reif Estates now ships 500 cases a year to Japan, about 20 per cent of all icewine sales to the country, which is the fourth largest purchaser of Canadian icewine.

A 375 ml bottle of Reif icewine sells for around \$100 Canadian in Japan, double the \$50 Canadian to purchase it directly from the Reif winery or the LCBO.

"Japanese people want to have a luxury item and quite of bit of those items are actually given as gifts," says Reif. "It's less consumed for themselves. It is a brand name, it's a high-end product."

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Photo by Joseph Chan

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The United States is the second largest buyer of Canadian icewine, spending close to \$8 million on the sweet drink in 2018.

Not far from the famed Rose Bowl Stadium in Pasadena, Calif., wine director Frédéric Hémon of Alexander’s Steakhouse has informed and voracious L.A. wine-seekers to entice, and Canadian icewine does the trick.

“I purposely offer icewine to my guests in a 50 ml bottle,” Hémon says. “Since it is expensive (\$24 U.S. per glass), there is no wrong pour from the staff. It (comes in) pretty packaging and the freshness is always there.”

He says his guests enjoy the sweet wines throughout the meal, with dessert or by itself at the end.

Bringing Canadian icewines to the U.S. market has not come easily, says Paul Bosc, president and CEO of Château des Charmes winery in NOTL. It was earned by many visits by Canadian icewine producers, often standing out on a Costco floor, handing out samples and explaining what icewine is.

“First time I ever went to California to try to sell wine was in 1982. I was 21 years of age,” says Bosc. “I’ve learned a lot over a very long period of time and when it comes up in discussion people say, ‘Oh that’s a selling refrigerator to Eskimos story. Why would a Canadian wine producer go to California to try to sell wine?’ ”

But contrary to what many might think, Bosc says the best places to export wine is where there is a “deep appreciation of wine.”

“California has a population greater than Canada, with a per capita consumption of wine triple Canada’s. It is a vast, vast market for wine. They make a lot of it, they appreciate it a lot.”

Château des Charmes produces about 10,000 cases of icewine annually, in 375 ml and 200 ml bottles. More than half of the wine produced is either exported or enters duty-free stores.

“We’re in California for the same reason our wines are in France,” Bosc says. “They make a ton of wine in France, they appreciate wine but they don’t make icewine, so that’s sort of the magic equation.”

The United Kingdom has also shown interest in Canadian icewine, with sales to the U.K. doubling from 2017 to 2018.

At the elegant and airy Tamarind in Mayfair, London, diners at the Michelin-star Indian restaurant often follow their curry with a quaff of Canadian icewine.

“Any decent sized wine list (300-plus bins) in London, England, will have a Canadian icewine on it,” says Andres Ituarte, head sommelier of the Tamarind Collection of restaurants.

Ituarte asserts Canadian icewines are at an all-time high in terms of quality. “Canada is a place that invokes

positive thoughts and trying an icewine from Canada for the first time is usually met with curiosity and then, when tasted, joy. They are so seductive and pure in flavour, it’s hard to find someone who doesn’t like it.”

The United Kingdom is the fifth-largest market for Canadian icewine, according to Berti, who says the people there are the “world’s most curious consumers.”

“These London somms, they’ve seen everything, they’ve tasted everything, they can go anywhere in the world at a moment’s notice,” says Berti. “Last year 25 somms from the U.K. came here. I heard one say, ‘I don’t want to go to Burgundy. I want to come here, there’s something cool in Niagara-on-the-Lake.’”

All around the world, icewine seekers share in the expectation this Canadian luxury product will not only taste delightful but the packaging itself will impress.

“One thing is when you sell wines in Japan you have to produce the best quality and the perfect packaging. Anything below standard will not be able to be sold there,” says Reif.

“If you have a little scratch on the label, it’s not sellable. It’s got to be perfect. Every bottle is in a special bag, so it doesn’t get damaged during transportation. I always say, ‘If you sell icewine and meet the quality standards of Japanese people, you can sell anywhere in the world.’”

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Be sure to check up on our features: “Wine Country” & “It’s A Wine Thang” weekly in The Lake Report!



THAT SWEET DRINK



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

Stiff boxes with strong Canadian references, such as the red maple leaf, and clear bottles are the best way to entice the consumer to try icewine, Bosc says.

“The French say, ‘pas de maquillage,’ she doesn’t need make-up, she’s so pretty, she doesn’t need to mask herself.”

Bosc says the sweet drink is known as liquid gold. And making it requires precious care. Canada being the world’s largest consistent producer of icewine, quality standards are strict and must be met to be classified as icewine.

The Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) has set the minimum temperature to pick and press icewine grapes at -8C, although many producers choose to pick at colder temperatures to achieve a higher sugar (brix) content and greater complexity, sacrificing yield for quality.

“(When you pick at -8C) the juice just runs like crazy; you get thousands of litres,” says Reif, who won’t pick his 15 acres of icewine grape varieties until the temperature drops to a bone chilling -11C.

“Once you go to -11C it’s just a different game. It makes a huge difference in the quality of the product — and yes, I know I’m going to gain 20 per cent in quality and lose 50 per cent in quantity, but I’m OK with it. At the end of the day, it’s my name on the label. It’s not a fantasy name, it’s my bloody name on the label, so I have to stand behind it, you know?” Reif says with passion.

Bosc says at Château des Charmes they pick between -12C and -15C.

“I do believe it is the most extreme form of winemaking, but in that extremity is honour. We’ve earned it to produce that for you. This did not come easily at all.”

Icewine is picked by hand by the smaller producers, often in the dead of night when temperatures drop, but larger producers like Peller Estates largely pick by modern mechanical means, which are gentle and fast.

“To fill that bottle it takes the juice of 355 berries,”

says Berti. “It’s not just rare, but it’s so concentrated on your palate.”

Icewine was originally created in Franconia, Germany, in 1794 but in recent years the Germans and the Austrians have been struggling to continue production due to changing temperatures in regions that were historically colder.

“The icewine market is changing in the world and it has to do with global warming,” says Reif. “Traditionally there were three countries in the world which were icewine producers: Austria, Germany and Canada. But the temperatures are too warm in Europe to make icewine.”

This year, Reif Estates will supply the icewine to first-class passengers on Lufthansa Airlines, because, according to Reif, there simply isn’t enough icewine in Germany to supply the country’s flagship airline. “This is the first time a non-German icewine is going to be on Lufthansa,” he says.

While Ontario wineries are increasing their international icewine sales year by year, Canadians themselves are drinking more icewine. Trends around making icewine cocktails or serving icewine at the end of celebratory meals as part of a Canadian tradition are taking hold.

“A lot of young couples are leaving the winery with icewine in their bags,” says Berti. “I see a bright future because young people are into it.”

To be Canadian is to know cold and if that cold, which licks at our faces and penetrates our lives for a minimum of four months every year, can lead to such an elegant and beautiful wine, it’s worth the numb extremities and the extra layers of clothing, Bosc believes.

“You’ve got to be a breed apart. You’ve got to be different,” Bosc says enthusiastically. “A lot of people will not do this. We choose to do it. It’s really, really hard. We make icewine not because it’s easy, but because it’s hard.”




A SERIES OF STORIES ABOUT NIAGARA'S HISTORY

Find more articles about Niagara-on-the-Lake history at www.niagaranow.com, and weekly in The Lake Report

From the mid 1950s to the early 1960s, Queen's Royal Park was our outdoor skating rink. The Niagara firefighters flooded the rink late at night and used a tractor to clear off snow. In the evening we skated under the lights with the rink packed with kids.

Exploring Photos with Jim Smith, exclusive to The Lake Report



1938 collapse of Honeymoon Bridge

NIAGARA'S HISTORY UNVEILED

A SERIES OF
STORIES
ABOUT
NIAGARA'S
HISTORY

THE COLLAPSE OF THE HONEYMOON BRIDGE

BY DENISE ASCENZO

The temperatures have dropped to below seasonal, the winds are blowing and the snow is falling. With Arctic blasts of icy air and a polar vortex descending, the familiar chill in our bones announces, “Winter has arrived.”

Niagara Falls – the Horseshoe Falls – and the Niagara River never freeze over. Lake Erie does, which has caused some major ice jams that have been noted through a century and a half of recording weather conditions in this region.

The first recorded ice jam was on March 29, 1848.

Southwest winds blowing across Lake Erie pushed thousands of tons of ice floes into the mouth of the Niagara River, creating an ice dam. For the next three days, Niagara Falls slowed to a trickle.

Locals awakened on the 29th of March to a deafening silence, the roar of the water had stopped. The residents of many towns, on both sides of the river, thought it was the beginning of the end. On March 30, special church services were held to pray for deliverance of this horrible evil

that was descending upon them.

Many of the mills along the river ground to a halt. Thomas Clark Street, who owned the Bridgewater Mills (near Navy Island), was awakened by employees at 5 a.m., exclaiming there was no water in the mill race (the trough that moves the water through to the great mill wheels).

Tourist season was over, however local papers reported that on the morning of March 31 more than 5,000 people from both Canada and the United States came to see what had happened.

As the Niagara River dried up below the falls, people scrambled to the river bed to collect souvenirs that had been hidden for hundreds of years. Artifacts from the War of 1812 such as bayonets, muskets and tomahawks were found.

Fish floundered in the little trickles of water while turtles tried to find winter shelter elsewhere.

People walked, rode horses and even rode in carriages along the river bed. This was a historical event that has never been repeated. It was even noted

that a squad of the U.S. Army Cavalry provided a military exhibition with their horses on the river bed.

While the mills were temporarily shut down, the owners of the Maid of the Mist (the historic river boat rides that started in 1848) kept their employees busy working. The workers at the company went down into the river bed and used dynamite to blow up huge boulders that had been a navigational hazard to their boats.

Then, through the night of March 31, when the temperature rose to 16C, the winds blowing over Lake Erie shifted. Loud, deep rumblings were heard coming from the mouth of the river.

The ice dam was breaking up. A surge of water finally broke through the ice and once more water cascaded over the falls and through the canyons of the Niagara River.

In later years, massive ice chunks were seen flowing down the river and over the falls. These chunks and the mist from the water itself created ice bridges beneath



1938 collapse of Honeymoon Bridge

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 56

the falls. Water was still flowing under the ice but not on top.

In the winter of 1912, an ice bridge connected Canada and the United States. People from both sides of the river took advantage of this unique bridge, venturing onto the ice formations for impromptu parties. It was not the safest or smartest adventure, however, and on Feb. 4, 1912, the ice bridge broke apart and three people died.

In January 1938, ice once more filled the gorge below the falls. By Jan. 27 the buildup of ice was so great that it completely dislodged the Upper Steel Arch Bridge (Honeymoon Bridge). The bridge remained on the ice for the next three months until the spring thaw helped it to sink to the bottom of the river.

Many people here in this town will remember the ice jam of 1955, when catastrophic damage occurred. This ice jam has been recorded as one of the worst, with massive ice floes coming down the river, destroying commercial docks, homes, churches, yachts in the marinas and all storage facilities on both sides of the river from Queenston/Lewiston, right through to Youngstown on the U.S. side, and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The tourists came out once again by the thousands to see this massive ice dam. The Ontario Provincial Police called in reinforcements just to keep people from walking out onto the ice. On the American side, the Niagara

County sheriff's office brought in extra officers to also handle the rush of curious gawkers.

There was talk of bombing or using dynamite to blow the ice jam apart, but it was considered useless. The ice jam grew to 30 to 40 feet thick. Even if depth charges were used, it was estimated that \$1 million in damage would be sustained and the ice would still be there.

Colonel L. Olmstead of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Buffalo, in conjunction with Canadian engineers, came to the conclusion that nothing could be done to alleviate the ice jam. Only warmer weather would fix the problem.

The George Cowie family was greatly imperilled by the ice jam. Their home was near the Queenston docks and Cowie, a crane operator, saw his 60-foot crane, standing 15 feet above the ground, disappear under 45 feet of ice.

Cowie was shocked to see how quickly the water was rising along the river. At first it was just puddles on the floor of his family home and then the family was standing in a foot of water.

As Mrs. Cowie scrambled about to save whatever she could, there was a loud bang and a rush of water burst past the house, lifting it off of its foundations. The Cowie family made a run for their car. They backed up the drive at a great speed all the while watching their home disappear into the dark, icy waters of the Niagara River.

The last great ice jam was in January of 1963, which threatened both the American and Canadian hydro generating stations.

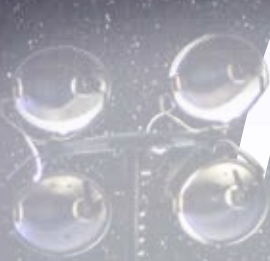
Icebreakers from Canada and the United States were used to break up the ice. At times both countries, jointly blasted the ice that was blocking the river. A 40-tonne icebreaker actually got stuck on one of the ice floes and a crane was used to lift it off. The ice breaker was loaded onto a flatbed truck and reinstalled downstream to battle the ice at the stations' intake system.

By 1964, it was decided to put a "boom" at the mouth of the Niagara River. Twenty-two spans of floating timbers were installed onto steel pontoons anchored in Erie's lake bed.

These booms have stopped the flow of ice into the river and over the falls, minimizing the management of ice jams. Each year the booms are installed by Dec. 15 or earlier should Lake Erie's temperature drop to 4C. The booms are removed by April 1, unless there is an area of ice greater than 402 square kilometres on Lake Erie.

The earliest date for removal was Feb. 8, 2012, while the latest date of removal was May 3, 1971. In the spring of 2019, some of the ice booms broke loose and at least one made its way over the falls and into Lake Ontario.

But the severe ice jams of the past are now over.



Music

- FOR THE WINTER

MUSIC NIAGARA

Dec. 8. at 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - A Swingin' Christmas: The Toronto All-Star Big Band | St. Mark's Church

BRAVO NIAGARA!

Feb. 14 at 8 p.m. - Kurt Elling | Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre

THE OLD WINOS AT THE OLD WINERY RESTAURANT - FRIDAY NIGHTS

- Dec. 6 at 9 p.m. with Djino Lefrancois and Dave Tufford
- Dec. 13 at 9 p.m. with Eric Mahar
- Dec. 20 at 9 p.m. with Laurel Minnes and Taylor Hulley
- Dec. 27 at 9 p.m. with Katherine Wheatley
- Jan. 3 at 9 p.m. with Kim and Frank Koren
- Jan. 10 at 9 p.m. with Chris Staig and Shelley Coopersmith
- Jan. 17 at 9 p.m. Steve Goldberger and the Gentle Spirits
- Jan. 24 at 9 p.m. with Patsy and the Muscle
- Feb. 7 at 9 p.m. with Laurel Minnes and Taylor Hulley
- Feb. 14 at 9 p.m. with Shane and Stacey Guse of Western Swing Authority
- Feb. 21 at 9 p.m. with Andy Griffiths and Andrew Aldridge

NIAGARA RHYTHM SECTION AT THE OLD WINERY RESTAURANT | SATURDAY NIGHTS

- Dec. 7 at 9:30 p.m. with Paul Martin and Rayburn Blake
- Dec. 14 at 9:30 p.m. with Eric Mahar
- Dec. 21 at 9:30 p.m. with Carlos Del Junco
- Dec. 28 at 9:30 p.m. (Solo night)
- Jan. 4 at 9:30 p.m. with Wendell Ferguson
- Jan. 11 at 9:30 p.m. with Chuck Jackson and Pat Carey
- Jan. 18 at 9:30 p.m. with John Dickie and Ray Harrison
- Jan. 25 at 9:30 p.m. with Sean Pinchin
- Feb. 1 at 9:30 p.m. with Serena Pryne and Nick Lesyk
- Feb. 22 at 9:30 p.m. Annual Mardi Gras Celebration with Lance Anderson
- Feb. 29 at 9:30 p.m. with David Johannesson

NIAGARA SYMPHONY - ALL SHOWS AT FIRSTONTARIO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

- Dec. 7 at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 8 at 2:30 p.m. | Pops! 2: A Symphonic Bon-bon - The Nutcracker in Concert
- Jan. 19 at 2:30 p.m. | Masterworks 3: Triumph of Destiny
- Feb. 2 at 2:30 p.m. | Masterworks 4: Simply Irresistible
- Feb. 15 at 7:30 p.m. and Feb. 16 at 2:30 p.m. | Pops! 3: Music of the Knights
- Feb. 28 at 7:30 p.m. | Symphonically Hip - Niagara Symphony Orchestra & The Strictly Hip
- March 15 at 2:30 p.m. | Masterworks 5: Undaunted

SILVERSMITH BREWERY

- Dec. 5 at 7 p.m. - Celtic Cross live at the church
- Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. - Tin Roof live at the church
- Dec. 19 at 7 p.m. - Mark and Stacey live at the church

OAST HOUSE BREWERS

- Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. - Laurel and Hulley
- Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. - Dan Serre
- Dec. 20 at 7 p.m. - DRFTR
- Dec. 23 at 5 p.m. - Holiday Hoedown
- Dec. 27 at 7 p.m. - Tin Roof
- Jan. 3 at 7 p.m. - Paul Gigliotti
- Jan. 17 at 7 p.m. - The World's Largest Guitar Player



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Quietly tucked away in a small, uptown NOTL strip mall is one of Toronto Life Magazine's top 10 out of town restaurants. The glow of the wood-fired grill & aroma of the brick oven lets guests know that they're not just out for dinner but rather embarking on a culinary journey of somewhereness - continuously evolving tasting menus inspired by our farm, served alongside a Wine Spectator awarded wine list.

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242 MARY STREET | NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, CANADA



Winter

WALKABOUT

BY **DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA & DENISE ASCENZO**

As one of the most historic towns in Canada, Niagara-on-the-Lake has plenty of hidden stories to tell.

Whether you're in town for a special event, for Christmas shopping or for a getaway from big city hustle, consider taking a casual self-guided walkabout around the Old Town to learn about some of the historic places and buildings in town.

You can start the tour at Customs House, at 126 Queen St. If you look up, you'll see a British Coat of Arms that reads "Dieu et Mon Droit" over the door. The coat of arms has been there for over a century, however, the one you see is a replica, which was installed in the 1980s during restoration works.

If you're in a mood for a snack, treat yourself to something sweet at the Niagara Home Bakery.

Located at 66 Queen St., the bakery offers a wide range of British-inspired treats like Empire cookies, Eccles Cakes, Cornish pastries and traditional meat pies. Many items for sale in the store are imported from England.

The building, constructed by Mr. and Mrs. James (Jim) Swift around 1875, first started as an ice cream parlour.

Since the Swifts, there have been a number of owners. One of them was James MacPhee, who built a wood-burning stone oven in the back of the kitchen, and turned the ice cream place into a bakery.

The window casements are original and the display shelves in the front windows date back to MacPhee's ownership.

At one point, the building was boarded up, but it reopened as a bakery in the late 1930s.

One of the long-standing business owners was the Albrechtson family who ran the business for more than 50 years and sold famous Long Johns doughnuts.

When the family was told that the fryer, which they used

for making Long Johns, was no longer safe to use, they decided to stop the production of doughnuts. After a notice was put in the newspaper informing residents about the last day Long Johns would be on sale, residents lined up outside the bakery to buy one last Long John.

As you head out from the bakery, you will notice one of the famous NOTL landmarks towering over the street – the Clock Tower.

Designed by Toronto architect Charles Wilmot, the 42-foot tall clock tower, which is also the NOTL cenotaph, was unveiled in 1922. There are 10 names from the First World War and 18 names from the Second World War on the cenotaph. There has never been a bell in the tower but it once housed the town's fire alarm.

NOTL is the only town in Canada with a cenotaph in the middle of the main street, as most cenotaphs are in parks off a main thoroughfare or in front of government offices.

Turn onto Regent Street, and on the corner of Regent and Johnson streets you will find the Voices of Freedom Park.

The park, which opened in November 2018, was designed to celebrate Niagara-on-the-Lake's black history and tell the stories of people of African descent who lived and worked in NOTL.

There's also a free self-guided walking tour app, complementing the park, which lets users learn more about the town's black history. The app is called BaladoDiscovery Tours Guides which can be downloaded on the App Store or Google Play.

Return to Queen Street and on your right, you will see one of the most impressive buildings on Queen Street – The Court House.

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Built in 1847, the Classical Revival structure was designed by architect William Thomas. Some of his other works include Grace United Church and Brock's Monument in NOTL, St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica, St. Lawrence Hall and the Don Jail in Toronto.

The Court House included courtrooms, prisoner cells, a market hall and a speaker's balcony. When by the mid-1850s, the county seat was moved to St. Catharines, the building sat empty for many years.

It is now owned by the Town of NOTL and houses offices for Parks Canada, the NOTL Chamber of Commerce and the Grand Ballroom which is used for receptions, conferences and for theatrical productions.

As you go past the LCBO, consider this interesting fact about the store. During the War of 1812, the American forces occupied the town from May of 1813 to December of 1813. Upon their retreat they burned the town to the ground. The first building to be built on Queen Street after the fire was a stationery store by William Duff Miller. A second storey was added to the building in 1855.

By 1928, the Liquor Control Board of Ontario bought the building and opened the town's first liquor store, which was renovated in 1973. One can only imagine how Miller, a staunch Presbyterian, would react to liquor being sold in his store!

Right next to the LCBO is The Owl and Pussycat store. Look up and notice the pineapple mounted on the front of the building.

The pineapple is a symbol of friendship and hospitality that was once used to welcome people into your home. Later it signified that the building was an establishment for food and lodging. Signs like these were often used to assist people who could not read to know what was being offered inside the building.

Another interesting feature is the muntins, which are thin vertical or horizontal bars between panels of glass. They can be made from wood or metal. The ones on the Owl and Pussycat are wooden and if you look closely you will see there are pineapples carved into the muntins at the top of all six frames.

Before you cross the intersection, leading toward the Prince of Wales Hotel, pay close attention to the street sign and notice how the name of Queen Street changes to Picton Street. The reason for that? Because "No street shall cross the King."

At the corner of King and Picton streets is the Prince of Wales

Hotel, which has had a varied and colourful history.

Built in 1881, it was bought and renamed the Niagara House by P.J. O'Neil. The current name of the hotel, Prince of Wales, appeared after the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York, who were later crowned King George V and Queen Mary.

What started as a simple hotel with rooms renting for \$6 per night, turned into a hotel with "working girls" during the Depression era and eventually became the grand hotel you see today.

In 1998, Si Wai Lai's family purchased the hotel and renovated it. Walk inside the lobby and you will see wood inlay floors, plaster sculpted ceilings, a 10,000-piece stained glass wall, an ivory carving from China made in the 1600s and the walls that were authentically finished in the Victorian era Lincrusta method.

Down Picton Street, turn left to cross the intersection toward St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church.

The first church was built in 1834 to meet the demand of the Irish Catholics who, after fleeing the Great Potato Famine in Ireland, needed a place of worship.

An addition to the church was built in the 1960s. As you walk down Wellington Street, past the graveyard, you will notice a huge area behind the church that looks unused. This is the paupers' grave, a place for the burial of unknown or indigent people. It is unknown how many people are buried there, but it is known that two criminals, who were hung, are resting in this section.

When you turn left to Byron Street, you will see a military gravesite for Polish soldiers who died from influenza while training at Niagara Camp from 1917 to 1919. Twenty-four Poles and a priest are buried at the site, which is a focus of an annual pilgrimage in June for members of the Polish communities from the United States and Canada. If you step inside the enclosed cemetery, you're considered to be on Polish soil, as Canada ceded the land to Poland after the First World War.

Down the street, on your right, you will find one of the prettiest churches in NOTL – St. Mark's Anglican Church.

One interesting fact: the graveyard, which was a general gravesite for all denominations, was in use before the church was built. Beside the church sits Addison Hall, built in 1866. It was used as a Sunday school, a meeting room and a library. The library has some of the oldest books in the province, with one book dating back to 1548. The parsonage is next to Addison Hall.

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Prince Of Wales Hotel, Niagara-on-the-Lake





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When you arrive at King Street, notice how the name of Byron Street has changed to Prideaux Street, because of that regal rule: “No street shall cross the King.”

Turn left, walk down the street a bit and you will see a beautiful Victorian house on the right side of King Street. It has quite a story behind it.

The house was built in 1880 by Samuel Rowley, a glass manufacturer from Philadelphia for his wife Fanny. She was a granddaughter of William Riley, an escaped slave from Virginia who arrived in NOTL in 1802.

Fanny met Rowley when she was working in a local barbershop. Their marriage raised the eyebrows of many people but it was nothing compared to when it was revealed that Rowley was already married and had a family back in Philadelphia. Being a philanderer might have been acceptable but being a bigamist was a greater sin in Victorian times.

After Fanny was free of her marriage, she sold the house on King Street and moved to the United States.

Feeling tired yet? Take a break in picturesque Simcoe Park at the corner of King and Picton streets. Named after John Graves Simcoe, Upper Canada’s first lieutenant-governor, the park also has a garden tucked within it, with Simcoe’s statue. Featuring a band shell that is used on summer weekends for various performances, the park is also equipped with washrooms, picnic tables, a playground and a wading pool.

Now back to Queen Street.

Right on the corner sits the Niagara Apothecary. The first pharmacist to open the pharmacy was Henry Paffard, who was also the longest-standing lord mayor of the town, serving for 23 years. The last pharmacist, Erland Field, closed the store in 1964. The pharmacy reopened as a museum in 1971 and is now maintained and run by the Ontario College of Pharmacy.

Notice the mortar and pestle over the front door. It is the original from when Paffard owned the building. Another visual symbol to let people who couldn’t read know that this was the place where they could buy medicines.

Next to the Apothecary there is a small building that used to be a Bell Telephone Exchange. When Hugh Baker Jr., a Hamilton businessman, saw Alexander Graham Bell’s phone invention in 1876,

Baker decided to establish his own company. The Hamilton Telephone Company, which later became the Bell Telephone Company of Canada, extended from Hamilton to Wentworth, Halton, Haldimand and Lincoln (NOTL was in Lincoln).

The building has had many uses over the years and is now home to the Exchange Brewery.

As your self-guided tour comes to an end, it may be time for food. You can stop by Corks Wine Bar and Eatery, which has quite a sad story when it was once a private home.

Lloyd and Kate Burn lived in this house built in the 1850s. Kate’s parents died, leaving her to care for her brother Philip who was likely schizophrenic. When Lloyd married Kate, they agreed to let Philip live in the basement of their home.

One day, Philip managed to escape from the basement. In a hurry, he ran up the stairs and collided with his sister Kate, who lost her balance and fell down the basement stairs, breaking her neck.

In his agitated state, Philip felt his sister’s death was Lloyd’s fault so Philip grabbed a kitchen knife, went upstairs and killed Lloyd.

When Philip went back down the basement to help his sister, he realized Kate was dead. In a distraught and panicked state of mind, Philip buried his sister and brother-in-law in the basement. He was found dead by his neighbours two days later. Some say he died from a broken heart.

To this day, people say they hear noises of someone falling down the basement stairs, shadows lurking in hallways, music coming from upstairs, the sounds of furniture moving – and sometimes restaurant staff tripping over unseen obstacles.

There are plenty of historic places and buildings to see in Niagara-on-the-Lake. For more in-depth information and tours, you can visit the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum and Old Town Tours.

From June to September, the NOTL Museum holds guided tours through town starting at 11 a.m. at the gazebo at Queen’s Royal Park on Saturdays and Sundays. The museum can be reached at contact@nhsm.ca or 905-468-3912.

Old Town Tours offers private daily tours. For more information, contact info@oldtowntours.ca or 1-888-492-3532.





IT'S A NORTHERN THING

Ice skating is a perfect fit in a picturesque town like Niagara-on-the-Lake and there's no shortage of locations to lace up those skates in town.

FORT GEORGE

This year Parks Canada is once again partnering with Vintage Hotels to present the Vintage – Parks Canada skating rink, which will be built for the season beside Fort George National Historic Site. Five chillers below the ice keeps the surface frozen up to 15 degrees Celsius. Fire pits, twinkle lights and Parks Canada's Red Chairs transform the space into a winter wonderland. The rink will be open from Dec. 14 until March 22, weather dependent.

ICE RINK HOURS

MONDAY TO THURSDAY: 10 AM - 5 PM.
FRIDAY: 10 AM - 4 PM.

FAMILY AND EVENING SKATE

FRIDAY: 5 PM - 9 PM.
SATURDAY: 10 AM - 1 PM | 2 PM - 5 PM | 6 PM - 9 PM.
SUNDAY: 10 AM - 1 PM | 2 PM - 4 PM.

SPECIAL EVENTS & DATES

DEC. 14: VINTAGE PARKS CANADA - 2020 RINK LAUNCH PARTY
DEC. 14-15: GARRISON CHRISTMAS @ FORT GEORGE
CHRISTMAS EVE: 10 AM - 1 PM | 2 PM - 4 PM.
CHRISTMAS DAY: 10 AM - 3 PM.
BOXING DAY: 11 AM - 4 PM.
NEW YEAR'S EVE: 10 AM - 1 PM | 2 PM - 6 PM.
JAN. 1: 12 PM - 4 PM - NEW YEARS EVE LEVEE AT FORT GEORGE
JAN. 4: REGENCY SKATING PARTY
JAN. 17: PA DAY AT THE RINK
FEB. 14: PA DAY AT THE RINK (DAY) | VINTAGE SKATE AND DATE (EVENING)
FEB. 17: NIAGARA ICE DOGS MEET AND SKATE
MAR. 16-20: MARCH BREAK ACTIVITIES

OTHER RINKS

THE MERIDIAN CREDIT UNION ARENA

The arena in Virgil is the perfect spot for seasonal skating. When the weather isn't quite cold enough for outdoor rinks to freeze, the arena offers public skating from September to April. On Saturdays and Sundays from 1:30 to 3 p.m., the arena opens one of its two rinks for public skating. The arena is also open for public skating at those times on all elementary school PA days and holidays throughout the season. Cancellations can be found online at <https://notl.org/content/arenas>.

WAYNE GRETZKY RINK

In true Canadian fashion, hockey icon Wayne Gretzky's winery on Niagara Stone Road in Virgil features a seasonal ice rink. The rink is open from December and boasts a heated whiskey bar and skate rentals on a first come, first served basis. All ages are welcome.



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