

A SPONSORED FEATURE BY MEDIAPLANET

Jamie Kennedy
Celebrity chef on
Canadian cuisine

Eat local
The changing palate
of the province

Ontario cottage country
How to stay safe and
have fun this summer

**MEDIA
PLANET**

June 2013

EXPLORING ONTARIO

Ontario's own Canadian
icon and entrepreneur
Dan Aykroyd celebrates
food and drink

3

EVENTS

TO LOOK FORWARD
TO THIS SUMMER

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THE PEOPLE,
PLACES, AND PALATE
OF OUR PROVINCE**

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CHALLENGES

The places and people of Ontario:
key trends and exciting opportunities

One word sums up the backlash to the Digital Era: Authenticity. While difficult to define, people know authenticity when they see, hear, taste or experience it. It could be the silken ooze of an award-winning butter tart, a heart-piercing aria, a cold pint of craft ale on a hot day, or the swirl of the water around a canoe paddle you made yourself. All of these things are part of Ontario: follow the Buttertart Trail between Arthur and Mount Forest; immerse yourself in the auditory wealth of the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto; make time to discover the craft breweries on your route or go out of your way to discover a winery; carve a canoe paddle at Peterborough's Canoe Museum. Traveling through Ontario is a journey of authentic experiences that are as diverse as Ontarians themselves.

Ontario's food tourism

Lately, Ontario's thirteen tourism regions rely more on food and local producers than ad agencies to lure visitors. Their ingenuity in enticing exploration of highways and byways is evident in the

number of trails associated with food groups and makes a refreshing new trend. Like the Butter Tart Trail, who could not be interested in the Bay of Quinte's Cheese and Ale Trail, the Blue Mountains' Apple Pie Trail, following the Wine Routes through the Niagara, Prince Edward County or North Shore Lake Erie vineyards?

Eat local movement

Taking a page from the Niagara Region's book, advocates of the locavore movement founded the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance after establishing Prince Edward County's Cinderella-like transition from quaint Loyalist towns and farms into a sizzling haven for hipsters foodies. Similarly, Ottawa's spotlight on farm-to-table producers and chefs as well as their decision to profile the Byward Market's comestibles has added some spice to their tourism profile, to the point that President Obama made the Market an unscheduled stop.

All of this tasteful development could not have happened if Toronto's chefs, restaurants, and markets had not championed regional farms, artisanal producers, wineries and craft breweries by prominently featuring their products on the menus of some of the most sophisticated restau-



KINGSTON'S FARMERS' MARKET
Local markets are a great way to enjoy local fare and flair.
PHOTO: ONTARIO TOURISM MARKETING PARTNERSHIP CORPORATION

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- 1 Leave the car at home:** Take Parks Canada's Park Bus to Algonquin, Killarney, the Bruce Peninsula and more; take the GO Train to Niagara and bring your bike; put a kayak aboard your houseboat and follow the Rideau Canal all the way from Kingston to Ottawa; view Niagara Falls from a helicopter or Cambridge from a hot air balloon
- 2 Keep an open mind:** The things you think you know about Ontario will only show what you don't know about Ontario
- 3 Do the math:** There are over 7,000 festivals and events and only 364 days a year. Somewhere in Ontario there's a festival that is meant for you

rants anywhere. The link between sustainability, agriculture, artisanal production and tourism has been a compelling trend in convincing people to explore Ontario. Like they say in Stratford, Ontario: Come for the plays, stay for the food.

Exploring Ontario

One cannot use the words "authentic", "sustainable" and "tourism" without making specific reference to Ontario's North. Regular flights out of Toronto's downtown Billy Bishop Airport make Ontario's North more accessible than ever with regular flights to Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie. From those gateway cities, as well as from Timmins, lies a great frontier stretching up to the polar bears on the shores of Hudson Bay that is as wild and exotic as any safari. It is the land of North America's ancestors and their descendants and it demands a spirit of adventure and respect in equal measure. The freshwater canoeing and kayaking is unparalleled as is the fishing, and of course the fabled shore lunch along the shores of the rivers and lakes that lace the North is a must-do culinary adventure.

ONTARIO TOURISM

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**WE RECOMMEND**

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Ontario wine industry

Donald Ziraldo on the history and future of Ontario wine

**MEDIA
PLANET**

EXPLORING ONTARIO
FIRST EDITION, JUNE 2013

**Experience your food
from field to fork**

Agriculture, aquaculture and viticulture are the roots of all our edible experiences. **p. 5**

Green Ontario

A place of beauty and character that is close to all of our hearts **p. 11**

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NEWS

The changing palate of our province

Exploring an evolving culinary landscape

Ontario's culinary landscape was once dominated by a French method of cooking, but as people travel and experience the world their pallets are expanding and getting tired of the same ol' thing.

The relationship between food and culture is extraordinary. It allows people to learn more about each other and plays an influential role in the multiculturalism of our nation. As new Canadians arrive on our doorstep and introduce us to foods from around the world, a fascination



SPICES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD
The horizons of Ontario's chefs are expanding as new influences weave their way through our culinary fabric.
PHOTO: ONTARIO TOURISM MARKETING PARTNERSHIP CORPORATION

with international cuisine has replaced most traditional styles of cooking. "People are always looking for something different. Food is one of the best ways to be introduced to culture," says Samuel Glass, Chef & Professor, Centennial College, School of Hospitality, Tourism & Culture.

Supporting a growing economy

Many large scale grocery stores and ethnic grocers across the country supply locally grown ethno-vegetables in order to meet the growing demand. "It's an interesting challenge because people come with their home country prefer-

ences. What we need to do is meet their expectations," says Dr. Jim Brandle, CEO of Vineland Research and Innovation Centre Inc. which fosters the growth of many crops in anticipation and in reaction to the shift in the population. Products which were considered exotic a decade ago are now readily available for purchase. "Instead of cabbage, turnips and potatoes, it's all about okra, yard long beans and long Asian eggplants," declares Brandle. For many ethnic communities developing in Ontario, it's like having a piece of home here in Canada meanwhile individuals from surrounding neighborhoods also have the pleasure of experi-

encing a new homegrown taste.

Satisfy your taste buds

"I like strong, bold flavors," states Glass who has travelled to India. "Keep in mind that you have to be willing to go into the experience with an open mind. Don't turn your nose up because you might be surprised at what you like," Glass says. There's an increasing interest in foods from Peru, Korea, East Asia, Thai, Vietnam and Singapore. Canadians have become curious, adventurous and are much more aware of the flavourful treats life has to offer.

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INSPIRATION

Pioneering Ontario's wine industry



Granted the first license to grow grapes in Ontario since prohibition in 1929, Donald Ziraldo shares his thoughts on the future of wine in our province

Q: You have been described as one of the founders of the Canadian wine industry; tell us about your history with wine in our province.

A: I was in the nursery business in Niagara growing and grafting European *Vitis vinifera* vines. An Austrian, Karl Kaiser came to purchase some European grape vines, we struck up a conversation about making quality premium wines in Niagara. We subsequently received the first winery license since prohibition in 1975.

Q: The Niagara Region is one of our most acclaimed wine growing regions, what is so unique about wine growing in that region?

A: The acclaim came from Icewine. The unique combination of hot summers and cold winters created a unique climate condition to vinify icewine every year. The micro climate created by the Niagara Escarpment and the moderating effect of Lake Ontario is ideal for cool

climate viticulture. Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling for example

Q: How do Canadian wines compare to those of other countries?

A: The Germans established Icewine in the 1700's, they do not make it every year and use primarily Riesling. In Niagara we started in 1984 and have made Icewine every year. Canadian wines could be described as cool climate wines and reflect the terroir of the region they are grown in. Each

Q: You have been called the pioneer of ice wine – what contributed to your success with Ice wine and what attracted you to ice wine?

A: Ice and Canada are synonymous. The consumer easily understands that Canada can make Icewine. "Of course" they say ...the land of skiing, Wayne Gretzky, ice hockey, Inuit's. So there is a philological advantage. The success was in Karl making the highest quality icewine and creating a luxury global brand. I spent years flying

around the world pouring icewine to wine aficionados, sommeliers, retailers, etc. Once they tasted it the rest was rather easy. We also spent a lot of time on the packaging to reflect a high quality image for the brand.

Q: How important is wine pairing with the food we eat?

A: I come from Italian heritage, Friuli, north of Venice where wine is food. Wine is always enjoyed with friends and family generally over a meal. In Europe each region has its own wine evolution with the food of the regions. In my book *Icewine; Extreme Winemaking* there are

"In Canada we are fortunate to be able to experiment and experience different food pairings"

20 recipes for pairing icewine and food. My favorite is Icewine on French toast.

Q: How do you recommend a novice would choose a good affordable wine? How much depends on personal taste?

A: The best way to choose a wine is to visit a winery whether in Niagara, Napa or Burgundy, especially if you are able to speak to the winemaker. Otherwise speak to a Sommelier who can suggest a wine for you, particularly if you are at a restaurant. It all depends on personal taste. The wine you like is the best wine. However you should reference wine writers in order to get valuable information about the wines but remember they each have their own personal taste.

Q: You were granted the first license to grow wine within Ontario since prohibition in 1929, how has the industry evolved since then?

A: The growers grow primarily *Vitis vinifera* such as Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc, Riesling and specific wine styles are beginning to evolve. There are also technologies such as "appassimento" which is a traditional technique used to dry grapes and give more concentration to red wines, especially in cooler wine growing regions like the Veneto in Italy and Niagara. Additionally the Riesling Conference and the International Chardonnay Conference are bringing global focus to our wine region. We have two institutions of higher learning, Cool Climate and Oenology Institute at Brock University and the Canadian Wine and Food Institute at Niagara College.

Q: What do you see for the future of Ontario wine?

A: Wineries will specialize and each will become well known for something they do very well. New wine regions will continue to expand and improve such as Prince Edward County. Tourism with a local focus will become more main stream and people from around the world will be coming to wine regions in Canada not only for the wines but for the unique culinary experience that is becoming very popular as more and more restaurants focus on Canadian cuisine.



CANADIAN ICEWINE AFICIONADO
Donald Ziraldo in his vineyard in the Niagara Region.
PHOTO: VICTORIA GILBERT

INSIGHT

Experience your food from field to fork

Agricultural, aquaculture and viticulture are the roots of all our edible experiences. Whether you're sampling charcuterie by candlelight or sipping crisp, cool chardonnay beneath the low hanging fruit of a Niagara orchard—you should be thanking a farmer.

Thanks to food-loving adventurers, in 2009 72 percent of agri-tourism farms reported an increase in visitors over the last two years.

Explore the province

More and more, people are traveling to the rural parts of our province to experience their food from the source, and with good reason. Visiting a farm, vineyard or artisan lets you experience your food first hand. From farm stays to field picnics, farms are quickly becoming destinations for those looking to reconnect with the natural environment and their foodways.

Agritourism

In Ontario, we have no shortage of agri-tour-

ism experiences. You can pick apples along The Apple Pie Trail, sip wine in sun-soaked vineyards in The County, or pick your own asparagus steps from the city in Halton.

Culinary partnership

It's not just eaters making the trek; everyday more chefs are reconnecting with their food in the field. They are working with farmers to grow specialty products like heirloom greens year round for their kitchens. Some are even growing their own food on rooftops and in alleys with help from their farming friends. Partnerships are being strengthened through field dinners and festivals like Savour Durham, The Taste-Real Field Dinner in Guelph-Wellington and Savour Simcoe.

Food by the numbers

These type of experiences are good for our economy. Every \$1 of farm income generates an additional \$2.40 spent in the local agricultural economy. Need more numbers? \$10 a week on local food has a \$2.4

billion dollar impact in our local economy a year.

So how can you get involved in the field to fork revolution? Roll up your sleeves and get picking! Visit a pick-your-own farm, choose restaurants that use local food and support food festivals like Savour Stratford and TASTE! Community Grown—to name a few. Can't get out to a farm? Don't despair, shop at your local farmers markets and cook at home with farm fresh Ontario products!



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BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
Research local regions for a unique dining experience.
PHOTO: ONTARIO CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE



360 Restaurant is one of Toronto's finest dining destinations, located atop Toronto's most famous landmark, the CN Tower. Featuring spectacular 360-degree views of the city and an inventive, locally sourced, seasonal menu, 360 Restaurant is an inspiring gastronomic experience in an unsurpassed setting. 360 Restaurant boasts an extensive array of wines from 14 countries, with over 550 labels from its innovative cellar in the sky.

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EXPERT INSIGHT

Celebrity chef Jamie Kennedy on the landscape of Canadian cuisine

Member of the Order of Canada and the inaugural Governor General's Award in Celebration of the Nation's Table, celebrity chef Jamie Kennedy on the landscape of Canadian cuisine

Q: Tell us why you decided to pursue a career in the culinary arts?

A: There were two things — as a youth, I was drawn toward photography and cooking, and I looked for jobs in both fields. The first one I got was in the culinary field, and I haven't looked back.

Q: Did you have a mentor?

A: The first mentor is probably Auguste Escoffier, then the next one

would be Ulrich Herzig. He was my main chef during my apprenticeship at the Windsor Arms. He was classically trained, and he had papers in both cooking and butchery, so it was a great opportunity to learn both cooking and butchery; I didn't realize at the time how lucky I was to have this training. This included Charcuterie; pâtés, terrines, etc.

Q: Why are you so passionate about the local food movement?



THE BEST OF CANADIAN CUISINE
Local goods are the best starting point for a tasty treat.

A: Because it represents excellence. Even though I'd been trained by the best Toronto had to offer in the kitchen, the ingredients were often not excellent. That was just the accepted status quo. We had successfully cut ourselves off from the local food chain, in favour of supporting industrial agriculture south of the border. The quality was mediocre at best. When we discovered local flavours at random places, like around the family table, tasting those things (e.g. fruit from a farmer's market) was a revelation. To that end, Michael Städtlander and I founded Knives and Forks in 1989, an alliance of environmentally conscious chefs and farmers in Toronto and the surrounding area.

Q: Who has inspired you along the way with your cooking?

A: Michael Städtlander and any of the nouvelle cuisine chefs in France, spanning the late 70's right through the 80's. People like Alain Chapel, Jean and Perre Troisgros, Michel Couvreur, Paul Bocuse.

Q: How do you define Canadian cuisine?

A: To me it's no longer about try-



LOCAL FLAVOURS DEFINE CANADA'S CULINARY FUTURE
Jamie Kennedy pushes gastronomic excellence by understanding Canada's regional offerings. PHOTOS: JO DICKINS

ing to look at things that are internationally symbolic of Canada, things like maple syrup, or trying to define a national Canadian cuisine. True Canadian gastronomy is found in the regions, and is represented by its regional and ethnic diversity. That is what should be celebrated.

Q: Any words of inspiration for a person pursuing a culinary career?

A: Unlike many of the established European countries, Canada

still represents the opportunity to express yourself in a viable economic platform, because we are not so tradition-bound. It's easier to push the envelope and think outside the box.

Q: What do you see for the future of the Canadian culinary landscape?

A: Further exploration and celebration of our regional diversity.

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Dan Aykroyd on food and beverage in our province

After an illustrious career in film, Dan Aykroyd now turns his sights to food and beverage

Q: You are a seasoned Hollywood actor that we know and love — how did you get your start in the food and beverage industry?

A: It all started when I wanted to bring tequila Patrón to Canada. It was becoming very popular in the US but we just could not get it anywhere in Canada! That's when I became involved with a Canadian agent, they agreed to import it for us, and before long invested in a Niagara winery and we agreed that maybe I should also begin producing some signature lines, so I did!

Over the course of my career, I have put some good visuals in people's eyes and some good sounds in their ears. Now with my vodka and my wines I get to actually place something on people's tongues. I've done a whole assault on all of your senses.

Q: You are a man of the world — but you opted to keep your roots in Canada. What keeps you coming back to your home and native land?

A: To me Canada has a very strong geographical, emotional and social attraction. As a young boy I watched my father P.H. Aykroyd, University of Toronto graduate, civil engineer, construct a 50 mile long network of scenic roads across a breadth of the Canadian Shield. Part of my childhood was

spent sitting on Cat D-12's in the middle of primordial forests atop a granite mountain. What most appeals to me about my native country is the generally tolerant understanding which its people have for each other's divergent lifestyles, beliefs, cultures and traditions. Canada legalized at the federal level recognition of same sex marriages with all rights and benefits for couples several years ago. I'm proud of that.

Q: Wine growing is a passion throughout the world. Why choose the Niagara Region?

A: Niagara is a climbing the crest of a powerful wave in its overall production and quality and variety of competitive vintages. The lake-shore reserve reds are impressive with body and not overly fruitful in flavour. The latter challenge is one Niagara producers have been addressing for years and now carrying on in the spirit of legends like John Marynissen they have got this figured out. For grapes that are 60 to 70 years old, the Niagara story worldwide is a tremendous accomplishment for everyone in the industry there.

As to whites, Niagara Chardonnays have competed and won in contests against the finest heavy weight French, Italian, and California brands. I'd put the Dan Aykroyd Fumè Blanc up against any white, anywhere worldwide with grilled swordfish.

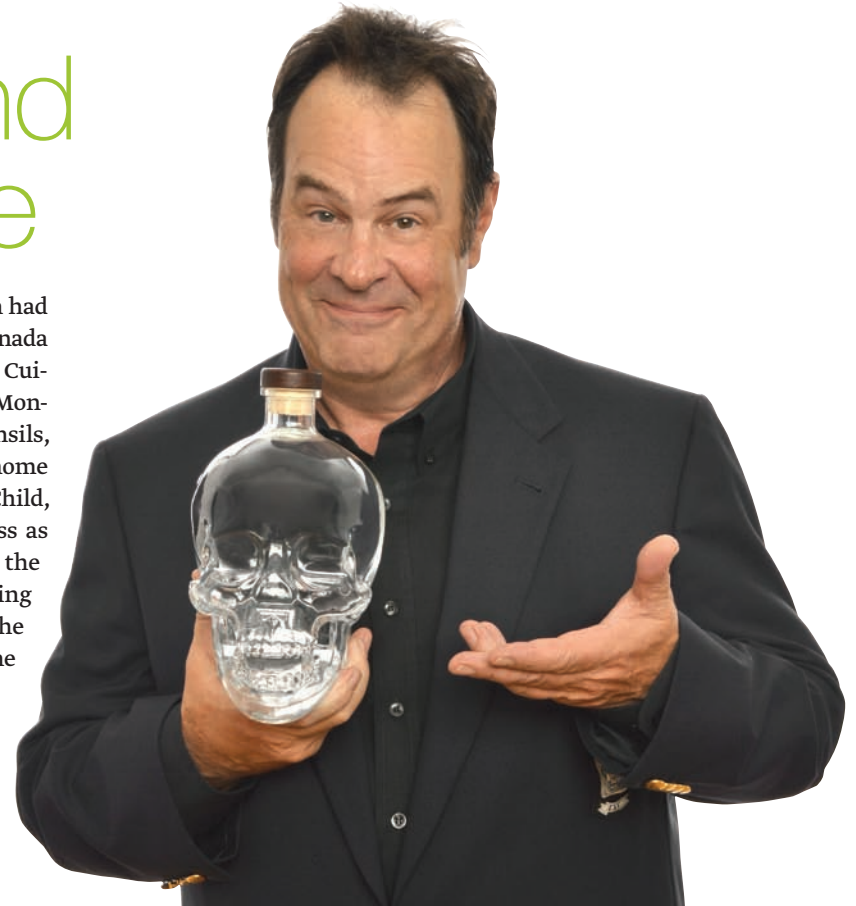
Q: Who over the course of your life has influenced you within the Canadian food and beverage industry?

A: My aunt Helene Gougeon had the great reputation across Canada as the proprietress of 'La Belle Cuisine' a culinary boutique in Montreal with all the latest utensils, appliances and books for the home chef. As an acolyte to Julia Child, Helene achieved great success as a radio host for CJAB and as the authoress of several bestselling Canadian cuisine standards. She first showed me how to use the Bass-O-Matic.

Q: You are also passionate about the production of vodka. What made you want to get involved in spirits?

A: My circle of drinking friends were unhappy with the way many vodkas taste and feel. We dislike the perfume smell upon opening many bottles and the feeling they leave on your tongue and in your mouth from all the added oils and additives. Many people mistakenly think that because vodka is clear that it must automatically be also pure, but that isn't the case with many vodkas out there today. With Crystal Head, we wanted to unmask the alcohol and focus on its purity. We decided to strip out the chemical additives commonly used in vodka production. When I make a martini, I don't want one that has an additive in it. I want to start with a clean slate, a virgin canvas. So we decided to go the other way, and remove all of the oils. It's completely additive-free and pure.

Q: Tell us more about the unique aspects of the production of Crystal Head Vodka?



CRYSTAL CLEAR VISION

The legend of the Crystal Heads is now in Ontario thanks to Dan Aykroyd.

PHOTO: HO YIN SIU

A: We designed a skull-shaped bottle from Bruni glass based on the legend of the 13 Crystal Heads. We wanted something crystal clear to reflect all the best attributes of the spirit we wanted to make. Now, our vodka is made from Canadian grown peaches and cream corn, distilled 4 times, cut with glacial pool water from Newfoundland and unencumbered by additives commonly used to smoothen and sweeten other brands. To further refine its quality to the fullest, the vodka is then filtered 7 times - 3 through 500-million year-old crystals known as Herkimer diamonds. Herkimer diamonds are highly sought for their Metaphysical properties. They are the most valuable and clearest of all quartz and are found in very few places in the world.

Q: What do you see for the future of the Canadian wine and spirits industry?

A: Luxury brands are experiencing a revival. As the economy further strengthens and consumer confidence grows, luxury brands and Crystal head in particular, are poised for explosive growth. We also think that once the luxury market does return to its glory we will also see a consumer that is more knowledgeable about the brands they drink, eat, and wear. That is a good thing for us in particular as we truly have a great story, great product and great image. Luxury brands that don't have those things will have a harder time this time around.

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INSIGHT



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NEIGHBOURHOOD, ON
THE SHORES OF LAKE
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Ontario cottage country

Summertime is the best time of the year: Time to catch some sun. Time to relax with nature. Time to get creative. Time to get together with family.

One of the time-honored secrets for how to do those things best is — you didn't know? — the cottage.

People all over Ontario are packing up their cars and sneaking up the highway to some secret nature hideaway, a cottage on the sandy shore of some Ontario lake. Believe it or not, Ontario has thousands of lakes that come alive in the spring-summer-fall, mild for swimming and diving, lively for boating and water-skiing. These lakes provide the cool breezes to counteract summer's heat. The lakes also provide natural transporta-

tion routes by boat to cottages across the lake, local towns, and village ice cream stands.

Cottage life

For most, the cottage vision is snoozing with a book on the chaise-lounge; or spending the morning/evening fishing for trout; or baking cookies with the kids; or singing around a bonfire — you get the picture!

For the youth, there are rock concerts in town — Kee to Bala is famous for its entertainment — and lots of other things to see and do. And of course for those glued to



PHOTO: SALUS MARINE

their phones, not to worry, many cottages have wireless internet, cellphone coverage, etc.

Cottage rentals are especially popular for multi-generational families. A large modern lakeside cottage can easily accommodate the grandparents, parents and kids, plus a couple of the kids' friends. Or perhaps several couples want a week of down time together.

By the numbers

Cottages generally are stand-alone waterfront homes, a decent distance from neighboring cottages. Waterfronts can vary: Some have sandy beaches with gradual entry for small children, while some have a long dock for jumping off.



WALKING, SKIING, BIKING, HORSEBACK RIDING AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLE RIDERS

Travel to Eastern Ontario to enjoy the trails, stay overnight, the weekend or better yet, plan your next vacation.

PHOTO: EASTERN ONTARIO TRAILS ALLIANCE

The cottages can range in levels of comfort. Naturally \$5000 can get you a pretty sophisticated mansion by the sea, but \$750 can get you a week in a basic cottage — fridge, stove,

2- 3 bedrooms, a bathroom. For \$1200 to \$2000 per week, a roomy 4-5 bedroom cottage with all the amenities including dishwasher, canoe, rowboat, barbeque, can be had.

Most cottage vacationers go onto the internet to search for their ideal holiday place. With so many lake cottages in Ontario, by using Google search terms like Ontario cottage rentals, it's easy to explore thousands of web sites offering information. Non-novices have learned to start their search early, to have greater choice, as the cottage rentals are booking up earlier every year.



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Please visit our website to find a store near you and watch the video of our vest in the pool

www.salusmarine.com

Start cottage safety on day 1 this year

After the winter we just had, cottage season can't come fast enough. But whether escaping to cottages, cabins or trailers Canadians are being urged by fire safety officials to start the season by taking stock of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and other safety equipment.



"To enjoy true peace of mind in your piece of heaven you need to know that your family and guests are safe," says Carol Heller, home safety expert at Kidde Canada, the country's leading manufacturer of smoke and CO alarms. "Safety needs to start on Day 1 so you can enjoy an incident-free vacation."

Follow these summer safety steps

Opening day, check the age of your smoke and CO alarms. Immediately replace any smoke alarm over 10 years old and any CO alarm over seven years old... whether plug in, hardwired or battery powered.

■ Next, make sure there is at least one working smoke alarm on every storey and outside sleeping areas. In Ontario, this is the law!

■ If you have a fireplace, woodstove, garage or carport or attached boathouse,

or any other gas, oil or propane-fueled devices, install at least one CSA-approved carbon monoxide alarm outside sleeping areas.

■ Once alarms are in the right places, check their batteries. The cold can deplete batteries over the winter, so make sure every alarm has fresh power.

■ Turn your attention outside. Make sure all vents, ductwork and exhaust fans are free of debris. And, depending upon your watercraft size and local regulations, you may need a fire extinguisher and CO alarm onboard. Know what's required.

■ Lastly, it is extremely important — especially for renters — to know a cottage's exact address and fire emergency numbers. Some cellphone calls to 911 from rural areas can't be pinpointed. So make sure you can give full address information to emergency operators.

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INSIGHT

Safe and sound, at the cottage

The cottage way of life is part of what makes Ontario special. We are blessed with clean waters and thousands of acres of forest filled with wildlife, all within driving distance of our day jobs.



SO, WHERE ARE YOU ON THE COTTAGE SPECTRUM?



VETERAN



ROOKIE



INTERESTED
OBSERVER

Whether you're an old-hand at cottage country living, or planning your first visit north of the city, a little preparation can go a long way toward ensuring a great—and safe—visit to the lake.

If you own a cottage

■ Cottagers are a “self-serve” community. Rural folks must remain vigilant about risk, and be prepared at the cottage, just like at home.

■ Take steps to reduce the risk of fire, inside and out, and to protect your property and your family in case of a fire emergency.

■ **Inside:** Check smoke alarms now, because batteries that have over-wintered may have lost effectiveness. If you have gas, propane or wood heating systems or appliances you also need a carbon monoxide (CO) monitor. Remember: smoke and CO alarms do not last forever — replace old units without delay.

■ **Outside:** Don't stack wood along exterior walls! Keep wood piles at least 10 metres away from the cottage. Clear your roof and rain gutters of overhanging vegetation that could spread fire. Thin out foliage around your building and enclose the space under the deck, where “fuel” can accumulate.

Compost or chip rather than burn forest debris, and strictly follow fire bans and burning restrictions.

■ Get together with neighbours and take a course about cardiac safety. Know the signs of stroke, and basic CPR. Consider sharing the cost of an AED (automated external defibrillator) for your lake community.

■ Take advantage of recent developments in cottage country Internet service across Ontario that make it possible to extend your stay, plan to move full-time to the cottage, or monitor your security system from a distance. Wireless, broadband and satellite access options have expanded, due to regional economic development projects.

■ Carry appropriate insurance. Spring flooding in parts of cottage country this year has reminded everyone to ask about specific coverage levels and make adjustments if needed!

■ Join your local lake association. If there is none in your area, become a FOCA supporter to stay in-the-know on issues that matter to waterfront property owners, from septic systems to taxation to invasive species.

If you're thinking about buying a cottage

■ Try a test drive by renting one, first. Work with a reputable cottage rental company who will match you to the right location. Do you want the convenience of a large marina? A quiet canoe lake? A cottage close to a bustling community market? Trout fishing? Be a responsible renter by asking lots of questions before you commit, to ensure you're getting a good fit for everyone involved.

■ Ready to buy? Ask your realtor questions about recent high/low water levels. In some areas, trending dry conditions have left docks stranded by late summer. Flood-



Terry Rees
Executive Director, FOCA



SUNRISE IN COTTAGE COUNTRY
The tranquility of experiencing a sunrise in cottage country is second to none. PHOTO: ONTARIO TOURISM MARKETING PARTNERSHIP CORPORATION

ing has been serious this spring in other regions, and dramatic weather events are on the rise in this climate. Also ask about the age and maintenance record of the septic system, any development plans in the area, and whether there's already a lake association you can connect with if you have more questions.

■ Once you buy, put your name on some important e-mail lists:

Your local municipality for taxation updates, bylaw info, planning notices and emergency warning; Your county health unit for beach testing results and public health notices; Your local lake association (it will cost you less than a tank of gas to join, and will endear you to your new neighbours).

If you're new to cottage country

■ Be aware that sound travels strongly over water. That “private chat” on the dock at 2:00am is actually amplified to everyone around the lake. Don't be surprised when the neighbours crank up the power tools at the crack of dawn, in retaliation...

■ Do some online research before you go. Check for weather bulletins from Environment Canada, and flood watches from local Conservation Authorities. Take seriously all fire bans, and obey the fire index signs along roadways. (Even if it's the long weekend and you were really excited to have fireworks or roasted marshmallows!)

■ Wear a lifejacket or PFD at all times on the water. Consider having children keep them on, even when playing at the dock or near water. In Canada, drowning remains the top cause of accidental death of kids from age one to four.

■ By law, all boaters need proof of operator competency. If you will be driving a boat or PWC, get a Pleasure Craft Operator Card before you arrive at the cottage.

Whew. The hard work is done. Now you can sit back and enjoy the sunset in your Muskoka chair... Oh! Did you remember to pack bug spray?

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NEWS

Ontario: a place of beauty and character that is close to all of our hearts

Ontario is one of the most picturesque places in Canada, and, for that fact, the world. The way that it manages to combine the fast-pace of city life with the serenity of the country makes it the most visited province in the country. But, the unique characteristics of Ontario's natural landscape need to be cared for.

There needs to be an awareness that industry, government, and everyday Ontarian must work together to safeguard the province's landscape for future generations.

"Our lakes and rivers, and other water systems of Ontario, play an important role in distinguishing our province globally," said Geoff Cape, Founder and Executive Director at Evergreen Brick Works. "Water is such an important feature in daily life, but it's also a great venue for canoe trips, family adventures, and the wilder-

ness trips that many Canadians are immediately drawn to."

Protecting and celebrating

Governmental policy is key in protecting Ontario's natural assets. Yet, it's also in the hands of citizens to stand up and celebrate the characteristics that make the province so beautiful and unique. "Whether it's the ravine system in Toronto, or the lakes and rivers that define so many of our summer holidays, we need to recognize and celebrate these things," said Cape.

The self-identity of Ontarians is intrinsically linked to the province's natural characteristics, so it's in everyone's best interests to adopt sustainable and environmentally friendly behaviours.

"So many corners of the world are looking to express their identity, whether it's London, New York or Paris; they often use cultural or economic markers to define themselves," said Cape. "We have the luxury of these natural

assets to help position our identity. We need to just understand how connected to our self identity these things are."

Caring for Ontario's natural assets also has economical implications. The Ministry of Natural Resources estimates that ecosystems services for southern Ontario have a yearly value of \$84 billion.

"Our future economic success will largely depend on how we manage our natural resources and assets; how we protect them, celebrate them and periodically use them to support our economic system," said Cape. "Our economic story line is hinged on the stewardship and good long term management of these natural assets."

Forest restoration

With a land area that's equivalent to the size of Italy, Germany and the Netherlands combined, Ontario's forests have a huge role to play in maintaining the province's breathtaking natural landscape.



EXPLORATION IN ONTARIO

The beauty of Ontario's forests is cherished amongst its citizens.

PHOTO: ONTARIO TOURISM MARKETING PARTNERSHIP CORPORATION

Of course, forests are not just treasured for their rugged aesthetics; they are imperative in ensuring that Ontario's eco-system stays healthy and balanced.

"It's been identified that in order to ensure a sustainable natural environment for the future, you need at least 30 percent natural forest cover," explained Robert Keen, CEO of Tree Ontario. "Right now we have areas in southern Ontario that are as low as 5 percent cover, and it's been calculated that we need to plant a billion trees in southern Ontario to achieve that 30 percent."

Economic incentives

Partnerships are in place to make this tree planting happen. Positive steps are being made through a combination of corporate sponsor-

ships, government support and collaborative on-the-ground planting partners, and economic incentive programs aimed at landowners - who have private control of 95 percent of southern Ontario.

"Trees Ontario administers the government of Ontario's '50 million Tree Program,' which provides landowners with excellent economic incentives to plant trees," said Keen. "In addition, Ontario's Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MIFTIP) encourages landowners to keep their forested land as forest, through good stewardship and fair taxation. Both of these incentives are focused on ensuring a healthy, natural landscape for future generations.

JOE ROSENGARTEN

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