

# A place for reviving (or arousing) romance

## Serenity prevails at other Niagara

By Carolyn DeMarco  
staff writer

Niagara-on-the-Lake is not a destination to waste on children. Leave them home for a few days with the sifter, Popcicles and money for greasy fast food.

This clean and serene Ontario town is for hand-holding couples — a perfect spot for R & R, reviving (or rousing) the romance.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is on the shore of Lake Ontario where the Niagara River ends — a five-hour drive from Detroit and just up the river 20 miles from wonderfully tacky Niagara Falls (the Canadian side).

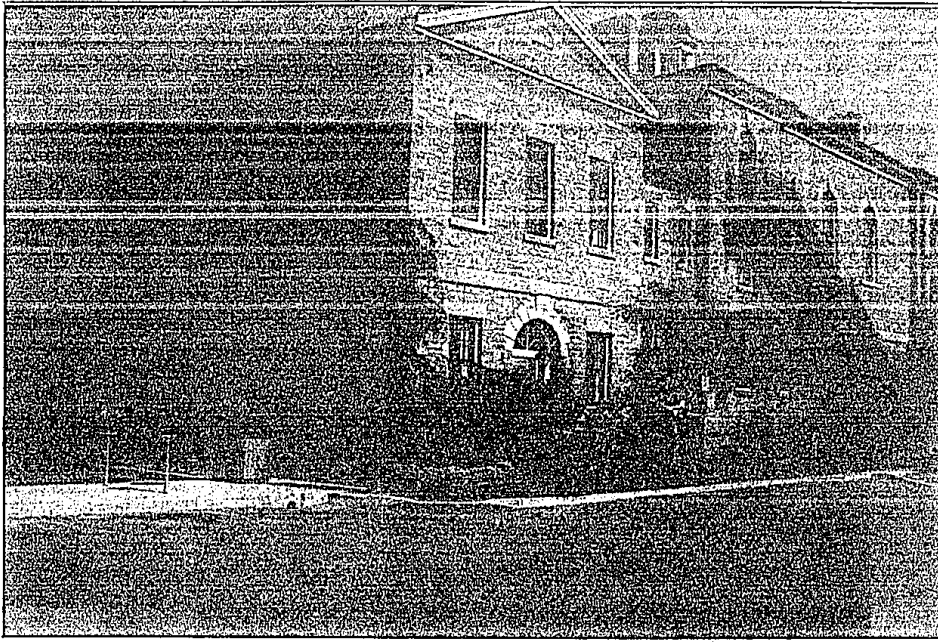
Niagara-on-the-Lake town fathers call it the loveliest town in Ontario and it's hard to argue the point. The small, historic town has faithfully preserved the 18th century architecture and much of the leisurely ambience that goes with it.

Most visitors come for the Shaw Festival, a showcase for the plays of George Bernard Shaw and his contemporaries. Professional theater is offered Tuesdays through Sundays from late April until Oct. 15 on three small stages — the Festival, Court House, and Royal George theaters. For ticket information call (416) 468-2172.

Staying overnight in town can be both frustrating and rewarding since there are no Holiday Inns or other hotel chains.

There are several small and often historic inns, including the Pillar and Post, Prince of Wales Hotel, Moffatt Inn, Ohan Inn and Harbour Inn. Presently, the smallest has nine rooms, and the largest has just over 100 rooms, but a new hotel, Queen's Landing, is in the construction stage.

SUMMER weekends are often booked, warn Chamber of Commerce representatives, but they'll be happy to check out availability



The court-house in Niagara-on-the-Lake is the site for staging Shaw plays during the town's annual Shaw Festival.

and make reservations for the dozen inns or the more than 55 licensed bed and breakfast guest homes for a \$4 fee. The chamber of commerce can be reached by telephone at (416) 468-4263 or in person at 163 King Street 9 a.m.-7 p.m. weekdays, 1 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturdays or 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Sundays.

Pack your walking shoes. Once you find a parking spot, you'll want to keep it. Anyway, a stroll down Queen Street is a must. Queen Street shops offer, for instance, books, art, Christmas handicrafts, Scottish clothing, china, collectibles and antiques.

If you prefer to avoid the commercial areas, you can walk

through the downtown area neighborhoods just to view the old-fashioned flower gardens.

On a recent walk, we found the Niagara Lawn Bowling Club's Saturday morning competition, a backyard gallery of sculpture created by Karoly Veres, a used book sale at the public library, the Apothecary Museum (erected in 1860) and the Fire Museum.

Other Niagara-on-the-Lake attractions are within walking distance of the town's center clock tower. For a walking guide stop by the chamber of commerce office. A few suggestions:

- A Niagara River cruise aboard The Senator. Sightseeing,

pre-theater dinner and champagne brunch cruises are available.

- Fort George, built by the British in 1797. Officers quarters, barracks and other areas are open for touring from May to October.

- Simcoe Park, with its formal gardens, wading pool, bandshell and park benches for people-watching.

FOR A SMALL town, dining is varied, but as is the case in Canada since exchange rates have become less favorable to Yanks, expensive for the value received. The Buttery on Queen Street of-

fers a Henry VIII Feast, a medieval feast served by costumed "merry-makers."

Pillar and Post Inn and Prince of Wales Hotel both serve brunches, lunches, afternoon teas and pre-performance dinners. After-theater dining, however, is almost non-existent.

The chamber of commerce offers no recommendations, but does list all restaurants and displays most of their menus.

Outside the small town of Niagara-on-the-Lake itself are a number of other attractions, still in keeping with the romantic mood. Many are on Niagara Parkway along the Niagara Riv-

er, Ontario's beautiful and unusual park and highway combined. Try these spots:

- Queenston Heights Park and Brock's Monument, an expansive, treed park with tennis courts, walking tours and a wonderful restaurant overlooking a gorge.

- Winery tours and tastings at one of the dozen or more wineries in the grapevine and orchard region. Again the chamber of commerce can supply the map.

- The Spanish Aero Car, a 10-minute cable car ride across the Niagara River at the Whirlpool Rapids, 250 feet up.

# If you enjoy stories, visit national fest

By By Iris Sanderson Jones  
contributing travel editor

Q: I've been to several story-telling events in the Midwest and now I want to go to the national festival in Tennessee. Can you tell me when and where it is and whether it's worth the trip?

A: There's a lot of tall tales about there.

Ray Hicks, a Tennessee mountain man who has been there since the first festival 17 years ago, will tell you about the day, as a child, when he stuffed his britches in the crack of a log cabin and the cow ate them.

Ephat Mujuru of Zimbabwe will tell you the traditional stories of Africa in both English and his native Shona.

Kathryn Wyndam of Alabama will scare the wits out of you with her "crazy ghost" stories told around a bonfire on a dark and windy night.

They are just three of the many storytellers who will delight you at the 17th annual National Storytelling Festival Oct. 6-8 in Jonesborough, which is in the Smoky Mountains on the eastern edge of Tennessee.

It is definitely worth the trip for anybody who has fallen in love with the storytelling movement in America.

People all over the world have told stories to one another for thousands of years, to pass on family history and to entertain one another. It was a regular nightly pastime in the mountains of Kentucky and Tennessee, where there was nothing much else to do and it was too far from what we laughingly call "civilization" for other distractions.

All this storytelling might have disappeared, if a teacher, called Jimmy Neal Smith, and his stu-

dents had not listened to a tall tale on the radio one day in 1970. They decided to preserve the tradition.

Their first festival consisted of 65 folding chairs set up on the street of Jonesborough next to the Mail Pouch sign, with a hay wagon on a stage. Now it is a national event with storytellers from around the world telling tales in large tents erected at several sites in the small mountain town.

RAY HICKS and Doc McConnell were lured out of the hills for that first festival.

"I told stories all my life, before electricity and radios came into the mountain villages just 60 miles from Jonesborough," Doc McConnell told me when I first met him there in 1984. "We would be sitting on the porch and one of us would say 'Grandma,' tell us about when you first came to the creek."

"I was just a little old girl when I got there," Grandma would say and there she'd go, telling a story. Uncle Jeff would tell a tale about the Army. Daddy would spin that old yarn about the blind horse. Grandpa would tell about Wicked John and the Devil. "There were no burnt stories," we call them "bait stories" and booger stories, how you spelled it depended on which holler you were out of. Jack and the Beanstalk is a typical Jack tale, a dimwitted Jack who trades a cow for three beans and ends up with a pot of gold."

You will find more than a dozen featured storytellers at this year's festival. You can meet them at a pre-festival event 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 5, at the Visitors Center. Register ahead for that event, which costs \$70 and is limited to 250 people.



Well-known storyteller Ray Hicks entertains visitors at the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tenn.

A ghost story concert will include chilling tales of the supernatural around a campfire Oct. 7 in Mill Spring Park. They used to hold that event in the old town cemetery, but I guess it got too big for the site. Fee is \$4.

A polypour of storytellers, representing 10 major regions of the U.S., will perform in the Exchange Place, where amateurs have traditionally been encouraged to sign up and do a little storytelling themselves.

THE FESTIVAL itself opens at 2 p.m. Friday, Oct. 6, and closes at 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 8. Fees are \$30 for Friday, \$40 for Saturday and Sunday, \$35 for Saturday only, \$15 for Sunday only, or \$50 for the whole weekend. You can just show up, but there

# Club keeps chef stocked with 'art'

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care of keeping the crayons razor sharp.

Patrons clamored for membership. In less than three weeks, the 170 slots in the vault were filled, and membership was closed.

Number one, fittingly, went to the patron whose crayons started it all — Peggy Daltch, Vogue's Detroit business manager. Number 170 was claimed by Ford Motor Co.'s CEO Harold Poling, who had his secretary call and reserve his spot in the vault.

Anyone wanting to join now has to wait for a member to die or get transferred.

AS FOR THE art... we're not talking stick figures here. Oh, sure, there's the odd game of tic-tac-toe. But talented members include nationally recognized artist Richard Kozlow and some remarkable artwork have been produced and left behind.

Chef Farnie has used some to decorate his home and those that pay tribute to the waiters and waitresses are first displayed then given to the person honored.

A tongue-in-cheek list of complaints, labeled "Why We Don't Like

Les Auteurs," includes "night manager Steve has garlic breath," "Chef Farnie should wear tighter pants," and "not open for breakfast."

Many of the objects d'art, providing they are not gravy- or wine-stained, are being rolled up and put aside. When a sufficient number of masterpieces has been collected, a members-only art show is planned. Champagne and hors d'oeuvres will be served and a good time will be had by all.

Can a friend use the crayons? "Only if the member calls up and approves," Farnie said.

"What happens in the case of a divorce?"

"Don't mention it. The last thing I need is to get involved in a custody suit over a box of crayons."

And in a tribute to *liberte, egalite and fraternite*, Farnie inaugurated the French Chapter of the Crayola Club July 8, when he and members of his staff presented a Michigan luncheon to 200 guests at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Paris.

And, you may wonder, who was minding the store. Les Auteurs was closed during the 11-day trip. Quelle sacrifice!



STEVE CANTRELL/Staff photographer

Caricatures, doodles and anatomical drawings are some of the work left behind by members of the Crayola Club.