

Escarpment Views

A man dressed in a full white winter suit, including a hat and gloves, is riding a unicycle on a paved street. He is juggling three clubs: one blue and white, one yellow and white, and one red and white. The background shows a residential street with snow-covered lawns, a white picket fence, and houses. A 'No Parking' sign and a 'P' parking sign are visible on the left. The overall scene is a winter-themed performance in a neighborhood.

WINTER 2009

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Escarpment Views

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PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS

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View From the Editor's Desk: Preparing for a Good Winter

Firewood has been gathered in. We hope it's enough to last through March. We had a chainsaw and beer party, which had a handful of friends cutting and splitting logs and stacking firewood in a rather precarious pile. The consumption of beer was postponed until all sharp and dangerous equipment was stored away.

Then everyone came into the house for pre-supper snacks, roasted vegetables, hot bread and soft cheeses, and beer or soft drinks followed by pecan pie and hot tea. Three visiting dogs joined mine in milling around quietly and happily, energy having been spent freely outside. It's lovely to gather around a fire, warming up with hot food and drink after spending the afternoon outdoors.

"A cutting bee is definitely the way to go," observed Nancy, one of the guest helpers, so there may be more chainsaw parties in my future.

People helping each other. Honest hard work. Relaxing and celebrating with food and drink. These seem to be themes for this time of year, and for this issue.

Helping. Working. Relaxing.

We celebrate the tradition of the United Way's Christmas house tours that raise money in many communities to support social agencies. A tremendous amount of volunteer effort goes into making these tours the successes that we present for you in this issue.

Many businesses, large and small, are facing budgetary squeezes. To achieve success and remain viable, their owners and employees put in hours, even years of dedicated work. Chris Mills of Fort Erie met and photographed John Picard and his father Jim, for a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the harvest of local peanuts and their transformation into delectable treats. The Picards' hard work and astute efforts make a great Canadian success story.

For relaxing and celebrating this winter, consider taking part in the Niagara Icewine Festival. Enjoy the fruits of local wineries' labour by going to one of the events of the two-week festival. We present some of the pleasures enjoyed at last January's Icewine Festival in Jordan Village.

Our food columnist Misty Ingraham takes a break from cooking to explore some of Niagara's wines. She is struck by the many differences available within this relatively new wine-producing region of the world.

Resilience

"Resilience" is another word that comes to mind at this time. Certainly, budgets may be tight for some enterprises, and some people are out of work, while H1N1 fears may keep some people from mingling extensively in public. Yet we all must have faith in the future and in our ability to return to easier times.

The best current example of this has to be Chapman's of Markdale. After a fire destroyed their ice cream factory, owners David and Penny Chapman told employees that not only will they rebuild the factory in Markdale, they will continue to pay their employees for up to a year, and to take care of them even after that. The community has responded with offers of help and declarations of remaining loyal to Chapman's products. At *Escarpment Views*, we feel that we're part of Chapman's wider community as well. We admire their resilience and determination to rebuild, and we wish them well with their "Project Phoenix," and a return to the market with a greater presence as a great local food producer.

So with winter heading our way, we plan ahead, decorating for Christmas, getting together at New Year's, touring Niagara for icewine, planning a treat for Valentine's Day, and hoping that our woodpile will take us warmly through to spring. And if inspiration is needed to get cosy for the weather ahead, see Nathan Hiller's beautiful photo in our centre spread.

Gloria

Gloria Hildebrandt, Editor

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For exact locations see www.picardspeanuts.ca

Views From Our Readers

Here is a selection of photos, notes and letters that we've received from our readers. Please keep sending them to editor@EscarpmentViews.ca.



A view from above Webster's Falls in Dundas Valley. PHOTO BY CHRIS HAMILTON

Just wanted to let you know that I received my first issue yesterday and I AM IMPRESSED... haven't finished all the articles but wanted to say I agree completely with your editorial sentiments re development and the OMB...we're in the midst of a "wind farm" controversy here on the Island which sounds so similar...so hard to fight the "Toronto bureaucrats."

John Savage, Sheguiandah (Manitoulin Island)

It was great to read the article by Trudi Down about Frogpond Farm in your current issue. I'm always glad when organic agriculture (especially viticulture) gets some profile like this. Jens and Heike are important colleagues of ours and we value our relationship. We, too, are a certified organic winery, and we are located in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Our 75-acre vineyard was certified last year, also by Pro-Cert, and subsequently so was the winery. We released our first organic wine (2008 Cabernet Rosé) to excellent consumer and critical results in April of this year. So the "organic winery club" has grown by 100%! Frogpond will always be first, but they are no longer "only." I know that we are eager for the "club" to get much larger, because that will mean that more growers will be giving up synthetic fertilizers and pesticides which will be better for all of us.

While we are Ontario's second organic winery after Frogpond, we are Canada's first (and currently only) biodynamic winery.

Biodynamics takes organics to a whole new level, and honours the vineyard as a self-sustaining, living system. And to add to our "serious

green cred," our building is also certified LEED Gold.

Elena Galey-Pride,
Southbrook Vineyards,
Niagara-on-the-Lake



The red male cardinal in an old cedar on Manitoulin Island gives Christmas colours in nature. PHOTO BY JOHN SAVAGE



Photographed by Bruce Fielding from a chairlift at Osler Bluffs overlooking Georgian Bay near Collingwood.

Trudi Down's reply:

I'm glad that you saw the article in *Escarpment Views*, and I appreciate receiving your comments and learning about Southbrook Vineyards. It's great to learn that there is more than one organic winery in the province. I did of course try to research and verify that Frogpond was the only certified organic winery in Ontario as is claimed, and all sources (via the Internet) seemed to confirm this. It is also interesting to learn that you are a certified biodynamic winery.

Thanks for taking the time to contact me. I do appreciate it.

Trudi Down

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Beet the Winter Blahs!

Events Along the Rock

Here are just some of the events that have been happening near the Escarpment lately. To invite us to your event, email editor@EscarpmentViews.ca. Photos by Mike Davis unless noted otherwise.

An outdoor Spiritual Spa Day was held on Aug. 15 in Ballinafad. One of the women offering services was Joanne Williams, right, a medium and divine energy worker.



In September, a partnership of environmental organizations kicked off Burlington BlueCreeks Project to improve water quality and habitat around Grindstone Creek. From left: Bay Area Restoration Council president Debra McBride; City of Burlington councillor Ward 1 Rick Craven; Burlington Community Foundation chair Rick Burgess; Royal Botanical Gardens chair Kathy Graham; Conservation Halton chair Brian Penman; Burlington Community Foundation vice-chair Sharon Gilmour; City of Burlington councillor Ward 2 Peter Thoem; Burlington M.P. Mike Wallace; Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program Watershed stewardship manager Sheila O'Neal; Royal Botanical Gardens acting head of conservation, Tys Theysmeyer. Photo by Conservation Halton.



Halton-Peel Communications Association took part in a Halton-wide Chamber of Commerce networking event hosted by Halton Region Business Development Centre on Aug. 12.



Richard A. Posa, who creates furniture and sculpture from salvaged logs, was part of the Milton Area Studio Tour Oct. 3 & 4.



Great Big Sea, shown performing, joined David Suzuki at Sarah Harmer's Sept. 27 fundraising event on Mount Nemo for Protecting Escarpment Rural Lands.

Coming Events	Dec. 1	Dec. 4 & 5	Dec. 5	Dec. 12	Dec. 13	Dec. 17	Dec. 18, 19, 20	Jan. 15-31	Jan. 22-23	Jan. 28-31	Feb. 2-7	Feb. 21-27
	Light Up the Hills	A Candlelight Christmas	Reading of A Christmas Carol	Village Square 3rd Annual Gingerbread Village	Egg Nog Jog	Amy Sky, Marc Jordon, Dan Hill concert	Christmas Concert	Niagara Icewine Festival	Winterfest	Guelph Organic Conference	Warton Willie Festival	Freedom to Read Week
	Georgetown LightUpTheHills.com	Georgetown Choral Society	Literacy North Halton	Burlington burlingtondowntown.ca	Georgetown Runners	Guelph riverrun.ca	Georgetown Bach Chorale	icewinefestival.com	saublebeach.com	guelphorganicconf.ca	warton-willie.org	freedomtoread.ca

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54th Annual Warton Willie Festival
Starting February 2nd 2010

Opening Ceremony on Feb. 2nd begins at 7:30am
Events all week long!

Come have a Willie fun time with us at Bluewater Park!

Keep checking the website for Festival updates!
www.warton-willie.org
*Events are Subject to Change

Take A Look

The Priority Boxes



How the postal carrier left the box.

Visual artist Franck de Las Mercedes of New Jersey will mail you an abstract work of art, for free.

The empty painted boxes are labelled with messages like "Handle With Care: FRAGILE: Contains Freedom" and have been sent around the world since 2006. More than 6,500 boxes have been delivered so far. They are sent for free to anyone who asks for one, to demonstrate that freedom, peace or justice should be a priority and that art can be accessible to all.

The boxes are conceptual art that move the exhibition space into the worldwide environment. By having the art outside of the box, everyone from the postal carriers to the viewers, becomes part of the work.

After you receive a box, the artist would like a photo of how you use or respond to it. For more information, see fdlmstudio.com/PriorityBoxes.

FUMI Purse Hook

A new purse hook called FUMI, short for "fashionable, unique, multi-purpose, innovation," performs three functions: an arm bracelet, purse accessory and most cleverly, a hook to rest on a table top and hold a purse off the floor. It does not work for very long-handled shoulder bags, however.

The Canadian Gift and Tableware Association recognized the FUMI as one of their top 10 products for 2009. Made of 100 per cent recycled metals and rubber backing, it costs \$24.95 U.S. and is available in some stores and at www.theFUMI.com.



Worth the Visit: Foodstuffs OF GEORGETOWN

Vital Statistics

Owner/manager: Marcia Dye

Store opened: 1982

Size: around 2,000 sq. ft. including an upstairs cooking studio

Employees: 10

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Marcia shows a colourful safety knife.



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The extra mile: "We have a product selection that anticipates & responds to our customers' wants & needs. Whether people are searching for an obscure ingredient, a comfort food or something as fundamental as 'Anything I can eat? Look at this list of things I can't have!' . . . we try our very best to have a selection that answers a lot of needs. We literally 'walk' people through the store to find what they're looking for."

Why it's worth the visit: "It's a really good place to spend a little time. People feel good here and if they don't find what they're looking for, chances are they'll find something even better!"



Marcia among some of her loyal employees.

Snack Heaven: 150 Varieties of Picard's Local Products



John Picard in front of one of the eight exclusive stores.



John and his sister René with some of their 150 products.



Founder Jim Picard and his three-year-old Shepherd-mix constant companion Speedy II.

Text & photographs by Chris Mills

John Picard comes from fine Irish stock, with a dash of Dutch and Sommes French for the namesake. He could be a linebacker or a mountain man, although he could also be an international diplomat, which is what he'd considered when he studied economics at The University of Western Ontario, in London.



The combine and hopper collect the dug-up peanut plants.



Digging up the plants during harvesting.



Gathering the exposed peanut clusters.



Transferring cleaned peanuts.

Instead, he creates confectionery of unspeakable palatability and delectable taste for the family's business, Picard's Peanuts, out of Waterford, Ontario. Distributed through eight exclusive stores throughout southern Ontario, the products come from his father's peanut farm and his own Picard's Food processing operation.

It's a long way from the lone tobacco farmer who replanted his fields in corn and beans before re-plowing it all for Valencia peanuts more than three decades ago.

Peanut Farmer and Founder

That's when father Jim Picard, 72, founder, farm operator and owner of the stores that bear his name rolled the dice. So why peanuts?

"Stupidity," says Jim with a laugh. "We asked all the right questions." He sits in his van with Speedy II, his three-year-old German shepherd mixed breed, as he watches the combines collect the season's final harvest in October.

150 Varieties of Picard's Local Products

"Is the climate conducive to peanuts? They said yes. Is the soil right for peanuts? They said yes. How much can we get per acre? They said 2,000 pounds. What they didn't tell us is that that figure isn't necessarily consistent. Only after we lost a significant portion of the harvest to frost did we ask them why they hadn't told us about that. They said, 'Because it didn't correlate.'"

He laughs and shakes his head at the years spent struggling as yields declined, prices for peanuts dropped, and interest rates skyrocketed. In order to survive, he opened the Windham store in 1980 where much of the stock sold as bird food.

building on the main drag in Waterford, wearing clean denims and the most chocolate-covered smock in town.

"As you can see, I'm a hands-on kind of guy," he says by way of introduction. "I have to be here constantly because chocolate is very unforgiving. If something breaks down, it solidifies pretty quickly, so I have to be on top of it constantly. I go through about a dozen (of these smocks) a day."

John, now 48, and the father of three, graduated just in time for the killing frost of 1983.

"Following the first few years of horticultural mayhem," he says without rancour, "it took us from 1979 to 1991 to realize we had to

found we were at the bottom of the line whereby we couldn't get reliable service. So in 1992, we learned to depend on ourselves."

John incorporated Picard's Foods and moved into 5,000 square feet of local warehouse. Machinery they needed didn't exist, so John took whatever the market offered and modified it to his needs. In fact, just about every piece of equipment for their confectionery processing has been personally manufactured or modified.

They now employ 12 to 15 local residents in a 22,000 square foot facility. That's in addition to cash register operators and gift basket assemblers in the stores, plus the seasonal workers on the

pounds a day. From here we move on to dry roasted almonds, which are brought in special with a touch darker roast for more flavour. By then it's mid-October and gift preparation and assembly begins. We spray our Ontario peanuts and then move on to specialty applications like chocolate-covered chipnuts, blueberries and coffee beans for added assortment. Mid-October means it's time to start running the moulding plant which produces our Caramel Barns, chocolate fudge buttercreams and Swiss style truffles. In early November we produce fresh caramel pecan clusters for our daily production. This takes us into mid-December. In total we produce over 50,000 gift boxes and



John rolls out a cart of roasted peanuts.



Shannon prepares chocolate treats for packaging.



Marion operates the chocolate-coating machinery.

The Next Generation

Meanwhile, teenaged John began university to escape the farm-life cycle. Only after four years of business and economics did he encounter a different calling, that of the family business that needed him.

Today John strides into the office of a flat-roofed non-descript

get into the value-added side of the business in order to survive. We just had to slug it out with no inventory, high debt and no sales. That's when we realized we had to begin creating unique products other than just peanuts. In the beginning, we hauled our peanuts into Toronto for processing, but

farm where Jim cultivates 100 acres in rotation on 225 acres of Ontario's finest fox-coarse sands.

150 Varieties

"Following Labour Day," says John, "we begin to spray milk chocolate. First up is our raisin run where we are able to spray at a thousand

several thousand wicker gift items."

The handful of products originally sold through the Windham store 18 years ago has now grown to more than 150 varieties.

It's an Ontario, if not a Canadian, success story since very few companies take a product that involves seeding, cultivating, har-



John with chocolate bark.

vesting, processing, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, marketing and retail.

"People think we're a big company," says Jim, who pioneered the first commercial shelling plant in Canada behind the store, "but we're just a small family business that works hard."

John concurs. Only about 60,000 pounds of almost a million pounds of peanuts produced are shelled and graded. The rest go through their processing plant, along with some imported specialties like extra large cashews, mammoth pecans, and Extra Fancy Virginia and Spanish nuts for variety.

In fact, the variety is almost mind-boggling. Consider 15 types of peanut brittle; add chocolate variations and plain, honeyed or praline. But that doesn't include varieties of Swiss, dark or white chocolate, non-sugar added, beer nuts, chipnuts, redskins, honey nuggets, pecan clusters, and caramel twists.

Mix in 15 varieties of flavoured nuts like dill and Cajun, chili and hot habanero. Every year, John adds about six new products and drops a few that don't work.

"You can never sit on what you have," he says. "You're always trying to improve and that takes a lot of hard work. I always bite off more than I can chew, but you come to accept that it may be three, four years before something works. The creative processes are my passion. I love to create a new product or machine. It may be my failing (to do it myself), but if I abandoned that aspect of myself, it'd be a loss to the business."

And for the Picard family these days, business is just nuts. Oh, sorry.

Chris Mills is a writer/photographer whose article wasn't influenced by sugar-free Swiss-chocolate covered pecans and praline clusters whatsoever. He shares his life with his wife, son, two dogs and a bunny in Fort Erie.

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“Under the Weather,” Grange Sideroad north of Inglewood in Caledon
Photograph by Nathan Hiller

All Dressed For Christmas

One of the joys of Christmas is decorating our homes. Cherished family ornaments and mementoes are taken out of storage, fresh flowers and greens are bought or gathered from our properties, new pieces are introduced.

We love to see how other people transform their spaces for the holidays. We also love to get ideas that we can use in our own homes. Tours of houses decorated for Christmas are popular fundraisers for the United Way in many communities. These tours involve a tremendous amount of work from organizers, homeowners and families, decorators, florists and many other volunteers, all striving to provide a wonderful experience for visitors.

Milton and Halton Hills held tours last year, and *Escarpment Views* was invited to take a look. Here are some of the highlights.



Welcoming winter warmth! This generous porch at the Garrard home is dressed to welcome guests to linger. The warmth of the plaid blanket invites a snuggle.



Whether a town house or a country house like the Speck home shown here, every home can be beautifully dressed for Christmas. Big or small, every house and property has its own charm which can be enhanced by thoughtful decorating. A light touch can sometimes produce the most beautiful effect. A lovely house surrounded by a blanket of snow and framed by a forest needs only some winter greens to welcome the festive season.



The O'Malley's outdoor covered porch is inviting even on the coldest day, with a wood fire burning in the massive stone fireplace. Decorating outdoor spaces as beautifully as indoors provides lovely views that lure guests outside.

By Gloria Hildebrandt
Photos by Mike Davis

"Christmas at the Manor" was the name of the United Way of Halton Hills' 2008 tour. The O'Malley home near Limehouse was built in traditional manorial splendour, and although it has centuries-old appeal, it was actually completed in 2002. The Grand Room with its curving staircase is the centre of the house, capable of comfortably holding many holiday revellers.



LEFT: Adult elegance is created by a black, white and gold theme that perfectly blends masculinity and femininity. This room in the McCaig home could host parties from Christmas Eve to New Year's Eve.

Dare to be different. Non-traditional colours still evoke the warm richness of the festive season in this beautiful room in the Magnotich home.

All Dressed For Christmas



- ❶ Even the smallest space, like this passage beside the Jenson home, can give big pleasure when carefully decorated to delight.
- ❷ Simple traditions still provide great beauty when the house has good proportions, as does the McConnell house. Green cedars and red pointsettias play up dark leather and red cushions.
- ❸ Ah, perfect luxury. What better way to relax after a hectic day of holiday preparations than to soak in this generous tub in the O'Malley home, surrounded by both Christmas charm and views of Escarpment countryside?



Inspirational Ideas



We love these clever ideas from our talented and creative local decorators. Borrow some of them or let them inspire you for your holiday parties.

- ❶ Evoke the magic of the natural world by letting a toy fawn bed down on real aromatic cedar boughs.
- ❷ This inviting bar tray works from Christmas (have you been naughty or nice?) through New Year's Eve.
- ❸ The Candy Bar: delight the child in everyone by offering a self-serve buffet of sweets in oversized martini glasses.
- ❹ Huge red bows make any chair look flirty, feminine, festive and fun!
- ❺ Silent night. A small pillow bearing the word "Peace" brings Christmas quiet to this restful bedroom in the O'Malley home.



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Santa's workshop can be set up anywhere with the addition of toys and important lists.



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		Bergsma’s Home Decor (Mangotich)
		Kerklaan Interiors (McConnell)
		A Country Mile (Garrard)
	Florals	Muir Interiors (Speck)
		Milton Greenhouses Flower and Gift Shop (Jenson)
		...I Do Flowers & Decor (McCaig)
		Lux Living (Mangotich)
		Grower Direct Fresh Cut Flowers Milton (McConnell)
	Exteriors	A Country Mile (Garrard)
		Maranatha Log House (Speck)
		Jade Gardens and Greenhouses (Jenson)
		Canadian Tire (McCaig)
Terra Greenhouses (Mangotich)		
Halton Hills Tour Decorators	Interiors	Crawfords Garden Centre (McConnell)
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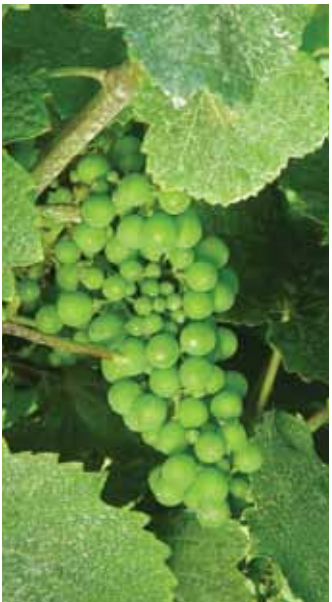
Misty's View of Niagara Wines: Delicious Surprises

notes for me. I made some sheets with the vintner's description of the wine at the top and asked my guests if they agreed. Other sheets asked for descriptive adjectives and a rating scale of approval.

What we all noticed during this luncheon and wine tasting was how unique wines can be within the same *cepage* or grape variety and how so very different

Although I'm not a sommelier or a vintner, I am a true *amateur* of wine, in the French sense of the word, an ardent enthusiast of good wine. I have become star-struck by Niagara winemakers and their passion for accessing the subtle features of the *terroir*, or the total environment of soil, topography and climate that gives wine a distinctive taste. Small parcels of land are producing outstanding *crus*, or grades of wines, with distinctive character and aging potential. These visionaries have transformed the Beamsville bench into a well-travelled wine route that winds from vineyard to vineyard along the Escarpment. Just follow the grape signs and you will encounter unique tasting rooms, staffed with knowledgeable, product experts, as well as boutiques and wine cafés.

I took a road trip to several wineries this summer. Since I was also hosting a big lunch party, I thought it would be clever to get my guests to complete tasting



within plots of land located in adjacent or nearby acres.

During a trip to the Beaujolais hills over 20 years ago, my chef husband and I purchased cases of wine from a father and son in Chinon. Their plots were literally next door to one another, but their wines were markedly different based on the differences in the land and of course, how they raised

(*elever*) their grapes and made their wines. *Elevation*, as the best vintners know, is where the true art of wine making comes into play!

Our Niagara wine makers are educated, savvy, and dedicated to their vines. It is so exciting to see how the fruits of their labours over the last 30 years have turned a geographically exceptional area into a world-class locale for tasting and purchasing wine. A number of today's Niagara vintners have turned former family vineyards into a testing ground for European old vine grapes to be grafted or reborn to create new wines to the region.

Aided by the science of wine, called oenology, these new-age pioneers are achieving miracles on land that has never seen this level of diversified wine production or celebrity. Unlike the arrival of big box stores that dot the roadways everywhere, the Niagara wineries nestle discretely along the wine route.

Situated well back from the road, most wineries offer a long approach to their abodes. Picturesque lanes that traverse acres of vines lead the traveller to a variety of establishments. Some are veritable chateaux, like Peller Estate Wineries, Chateaux des Charmes, Angels Gate Winery and Peninsula Ridge; others feature natural stone masonry from the region, Vineland Estate for example, while others present a farmhouse feeling like Ravine Vineyard or EastDell.

Rustic or grand, these wineries have one thing in common: pride in their wines, integrity in their production and a love and respect for the Niagara Escarpment. That is what is so nice about this variety of product presentation; one can plan for an elegant, country estate experience, complete with superb cuisine by Ontario's best chefs, or a trip down a dusty road to sit in the middle of a vineyard on a porch with vintage country kitchen chairs, and the best wood-oven baked bread in the world! You might even run into someone like celebrity chef Anna Olson, as we did recently.

Here is some advice to begin your wine tasting journey. Start with wineries that excel in your favourite varietal. Red wine can be the brilliant opus of one establishment, and white wine the star of another. I adore Tawse Winery and Malivoire for their old-world style chardonnay, and Thirty Bench winery for its 2007 Red.

Most wineries offer excellent door-to-door, online boutiques that will allow you to purchase cases of your new discoveries. It is exciting to try a new wine and then get it delivered to your home. Let the adventure begin! And know that each year's harvest brings delicious wine surprises from Niagara.

Misty Ingraham and Bill Sharpe of Ancaster own the catering business The Portable Feast at Home.

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Escarpment Views 20 ❄ Winter 2009

❄ Winter 2009 21 Escarpment Views

Embracing Icewine

By Gloria Hildebrandt Photos by Mike Davis



Kelly Nemeth, in the yellow vest, was pleased by the popularity of the 2009 festival.

In the short chilly days of January, a celebration of Niagara's icewine is a heartwarming event. Niagara Region has hosted several icewine festivals in various places over the last 14 years. Cities, towns, villages, individual restaurants, wineries and hotels are again planning to take part, while tour operators can be booked to take you safely around.

This January 16 and 17, Jordan Village will hold their sixth festival, the Twenty Valley Winter Warm Up, to showcase icewine as well as sparkling, late harvest and premium table wines.

Last year, the Twenty Valley Icewine Bar was set up on Main Street of the village. Closed to traffic, it became a pedestrian mall that was free for everyone to enter. People paid for tastings of Vintners Quality Alliance wines, and there were other experiences to enjoy. Estimates are that more than 1,000 people attended, from southwestern Ontario and the GTA, and even some from Texas and California.

The hub of the festival was a magnificent structure entirely built of ice blocks, forming a long wall with a wine shelf and a serving bar. Crowds of people gathered under its tent to sample a wide selection of Niagara wines.

Glass in hand, they wandered down the street enjoying the beautiful decorations, ice sculptures and live entertainment, including the invigorating music of the Jumpin' Jive Band. People rested their glasses on amazing bar tables made of carved ice. Sharing the table gave good opportunities to chat with other festival visitors.

At the side of the street, Catherine Coulter of the business called



Carved ice blocks and pillars formed cool bar tables.



Icewine bottles on ice.



When below-freezing temperatures are great: Catherine Couter of iceculture chips away at another ice sculpture.

Tips for Enjoying Icewine

1. Serve icewine chilled but not cold, in a generous wineglass with perhaps a tapered top to let the aroma and flavours intensify.
2. Icwine goes well at dessert or after dinner, with biscotti, very ripe blue cheeses, and fruit-based desserts.
3. Try icewine before dinner, with salty snacks or hors d'oeuvres. The sweetness softens the salt, and the salt enriches the fruity flavours of the icewine.
4. Try icewine made from red grapes.
5. An opened bottle of icewine should keep for three to five days after opening if the cork is put back in and the bottle is stored in the fridge.
6. Other uses for icewine: use as an ingredient in such cocktails as a martini, cosmopolitan or royale, blend with brandy, use when making jellies, use in some meat recipes, and in a sabayon or custard with fruit.

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Happy to share the throne: Ice Queen Kim Cayer lets visitors reign.



Jack Frost, aka Scott Kaija, entertains by cycling and juggling.



Visitors crowd the ice bar for icewine.



Indoors, people enjoyed Niagara cheeses and cheese fudge.



Cheers! Friends enjoying the festival.

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icewine, was hard at work carving another elaborate ice sculpture.

A particularly impressive carving was the throne of the Ice Queen, which tempted several people to try it out and have their photos taken. The Ice Queen herself, portrayed by entertainer Kim Cayer in full costume and make up, generously yielded her throne to young and old, mingling with all the visitors.

Scott Kaija kept warm by portraying an active and talented Jack Frost who rode a unicycle while juggling large pins.

"The icewine festival is a wonderful way to celebrate and embrace our winter season," says Jacqueline Del Col, owner and designer of the clothing boutique Tintern on Main in Jordan. "It gives us all a reason to bundle up and enjoy the snowy outdoors while savouring Niagara's bounty."

The shops along Main St. were open and many people browsed and delighted in the unique of-

ferings. One storefront was used as an information centre and informal warming area, where the Dairy Farmers of Ontario held wine and cheese pairing seminars, various organizations displayed information and Niagara cheeses were given out for free sampling. Cheese fudge was included which, despite seeming unusual, combines the best of both flavours.

"The 2009 Icwine Festival was the best to date," says Kelly Nemeth, owner of Toute Sweet Ice Cream and Chocolate Shop, and past president of Jordan Village Merchants Association. "The addition of decorator Jayme Nesbit's street design combined with the dedication and enthusiasm of Twenty Valley members was a recipe for success. Everyone attending enjoyed fabulous Niagara icewines and culinary treats while being entertained by live music and street performers. I'm looking forward to 2010's Icwine Festival in Jordan Village."

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The Reason for the Season

Cave Spring Cellars of Jordan was one of the wineries offering icewine at the festival. Theirs is made from Riesling grapes grown along the slopes of the Escarpment and the shore of Lake Ontario.

The Pennachetti family that owns the winery describes the harvesting process like this: "These clusters were left to partially raisin on the vine during the late autumn, with a further concentration of sugars and acids occurring when the berries were frozen solid by the onset of winter." They note that the grapes were hand picked on the nights of Jan. 16 and 17, 2006.

Anne Pennachetti explains that they harvest by hand because the frozen grapes are fragile and can be picked more cleanly. There can be too much loss with machine harvesting.

"The best time to start picking is in the middle of the night," she goes on to explain. "You want to keep the grapes frozen while pressing them. As soon as it warms up, the juice becomes less concentrated. Pressing should be finished by sunrise."

A wine reviewer gave this appraisal of the resulting 2006 Riesling Icwine: "Granny Smith apple, spice and zesty tangerine notes are bolstered by crackling acidity in this lively white." This icewine costs \$59.95 and is available only at the winery. Anne warns that they are almost sold out of the '06 and are moving quickly into the '07.

She agrees that icewine should be served in a decent-sized glass. "It's still a wine," she says. "You still want to throw it. The legs on icewine are thick because of all the glycerine. You want to get the whole picture of it."

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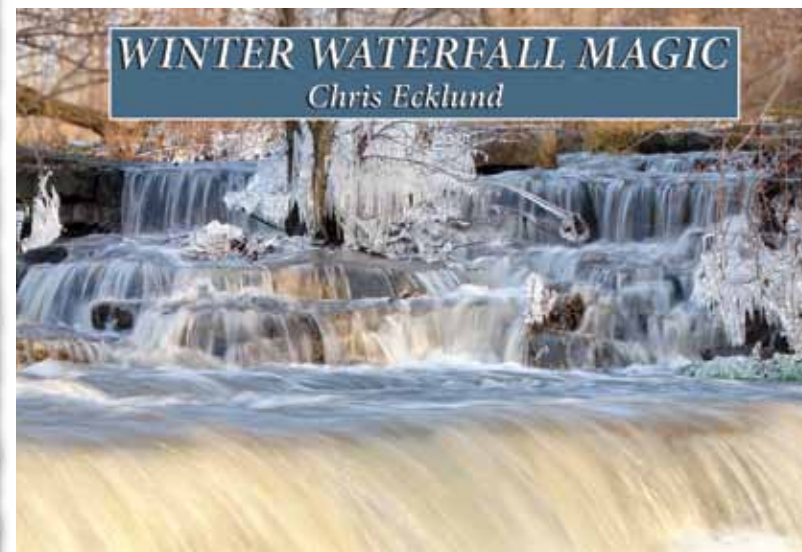
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Book Views: Waterfalls in Winter



Winter Waterfall Magic

By Chris Ecklund

The people who brought us *Hamilton: The City of Waterfalls*, the book that documents their claim that Hamilton is the waterfall capital of the world, have assembled photographs of most of the waterfalls in winter. They show a stronger kind of beauty with cascades of water frozen close to moving water, and tumbled rocks and boulders covered in snow or providing dark contrasts where they are exposed.

Hiking to these falls could be treacherous during icy conditions, but the rewards are a peaceful stillness apart from the sounds of rushing water, the cleanest of fresh air, and of course great photographic opportunities.

The photo of Little Davis Falls by Dan Court captures the depths photographers go to: another photographer lies on his back, boots braced along a fallen tree branch, camera pointing at the foaming water only inches away.

Ecklund Marketing Group, 2009, softcover, \$30.

Lucia's Survival Guide and Cookbook

By Lucille Campilongo

This is a book I wish I had had when I shared my first apartment in university. It lists staple food items and household supplies to keep in stock, what to look for before renting an apartment, how to clean it when you have rented it, and how to wash and iron clothes.

The biggest and most important part of the book is super-easy recipes that look like they produce delicious meals. There's a definite Italian focus to this home cooking, but what's not to like about that? There are plenty of vegetarian options that I mean to try: marinara and putanesca sauces, pasta with browned zucchini, fancy mashed potatoes, breaded cauliflower, and frittata.

This book had its start 29 years ago, when the author's daughter was leaving for a year abroad and the mother realized that she had not taught any basic housekeeping skills. She wrote a how-to notebook that the daughter used and treasured for years. The notebook turned into this survival guide that domestically challenged women and men of any age are sure to find a revelation.

iUniverse, 2009, softcover, \$15.20



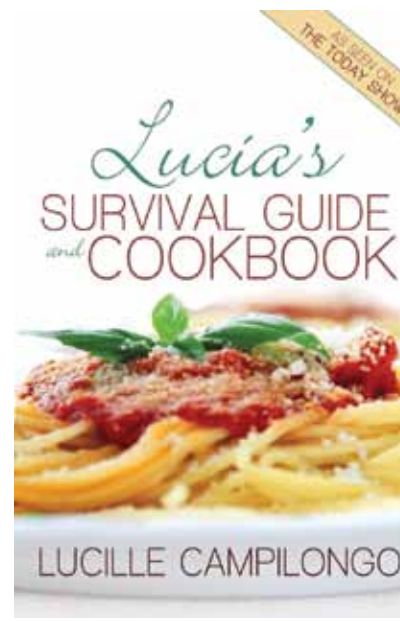
The Day The Falls Stood Still

By Cathy Marie Buchanan

This is a completely engrossing first novel inspired by some true events. A love story set during the First World War, it is also a fascinating introduction to some history of Niagara Falls, including daredevils who shot over them, rescues of some of the thrill seekers, and the controversy over using the falls for hydroelectric power. Historical photos and news items that look like real accounts taken from newspapers add to the authentic feeling of this imagined story.

The author has written an entertaining escape that also delivers intelligent food for thought. Look for this book.

HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.,
2009, softcover, \$22.99.



Great Escapes

By Scott Christianson

These 50 stories of amazing escapes are so suspenseful that they're hard to put down. The historic escapes documented here were from harsh natural conditions, kidnappers, oppressive regimes, prisons, disasters, and scenarios from World War II and more contemporary warfare.

Some escapes are famous: the hiker in Utah who cut off his hand after being trapped by a rock for days; "The Great Escape" from a W.W.II German prisoner-of-war camp, and "the miracle on the Hudson" that saved all air passengers forced to make a crash landing. Other escapes are less well-known: a kayaker who became trapped under water until he was able to break his leg and free himself; a German soldier sent to a Siberian work camp whose escape route back home took him three years; and a man trapped in the rubble of the World Trade Center who dragged another man after him, only to have the rescued man get out of a narrow hole first and walk away without helping the first man.

This is a great book if you need an escape from winter.

Firefly Books, 2009, hardcover, \$35.

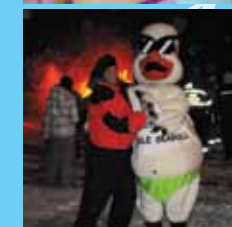
By Gloria Hildebrandt

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