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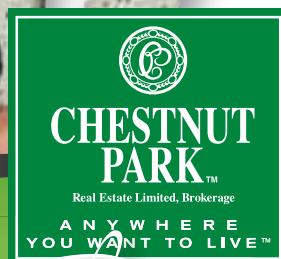
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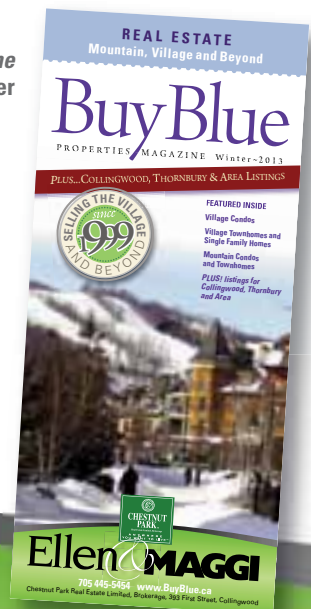
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# mountain life

EAST

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PUBLISHED BY MOUNTAIN LIFE MEDIA INC.

Copyright ©2013. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is prohibited. Publications Mail Agreement Number 42005545. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: Mountain Life Magazine, Box 586, Thornbury, ON, N0H 2P0 Tel: 705.441.6334 FAX: 519.922.3099 To send feedback or for contributor's guidelines email ned@mountainlifemag.ca.

Mountain Life Georgian Bay is published every December, March, June and September by Mountain Life Publishing Inc. Views expressed herein are those of the author exclusively. To learn more about Mountain Life, visit Mountainlifemag.ca. To distribute Mountain Life in your store please call 705 441 6334.

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## BAD TRIP

The trip was jinxed with mishaps from the start. The airline lost my bike on the way, for starters. I'd come to Accra, Ghana to do some bicycle touring, but didn't have a bike. It showed up ten days late.

In northern Ghana, after a puncture-laden ride through the country, I got arrested in Tamale. They busted me fair and square. The officers shouted at me, brandishing their AKs while loading me into the back of a navy blue Land Rover. They threatened me with five to ten years in prison as we drove to the station.

Thankfully I had \$40 US in my pocket. And thankfully, in Ghana at that time, that was enough to buy my freedom. Otherwise I might still be there.

In Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso I spent three days in a concrete box of a hotel room, sweating, vomiting and losing control of my bowels, before finally mustering the energy to get to a hospital. The place was filthy and discouraging: random goats roamed through the open-air waiting room and getting a blood test was a risky game

of clean-needle roulette. The blood smear results came back positive: malaria. The disease left me with a lethargy that lasted for weeks and relapsed multiple times.

I spent Christmas Eve in a brothel in Mopti, Mali because there was nowhere else to stay. The place was filthy, even by

*A dwarf stole my camera bag while I was shaking hands with Ali Farka Touré.*

third-poorest-county-in-the-world standards, and the sexual advances from half-naked, toothless and sweaty prostitutes still haunt my dreams.

Christmas Day I boarded the 40-foot-long *Petit Baba*, a pinasse heading up the Niger River. Forty-six other passengers boarded that same day, along with all their baggage and a ton of goods bound for Timbuktu. The massive diesel engine roared out fumes for the next 40 hours, the boat never stopping. I was one of the lucky ones with a meal plan: dirty,

undercooked rice that tasted like muddy brown river water and fish that wasn't quite cooked through, every meal for two days.

On New Year's in Timbuktu, a dwarf stole my camera bag while I was shaking hands with Ali Farka Touré. I had 24 rolls of exposed film in the bag. Everyone in town knew who stole my stuff, but no one, not even the police, were ready to do anything about it.

And finally, when I'd had enough of this silly adventure, and wanted to book my flight home, I learned the airline I flew in with, Bulgaria Airlines, had gone out of business three weeks earlier. My ticket was useless.

But you know what's crazy? I'd do it all again in a second. It will always qualify as one of my worst trips ever, but it was also one of the greatest adventures of my life. ■

– Colin Field, Editor at Large





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## DISCOVER

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Ian McIntosh at Island Lake Catskiing. MIKE MCPHEE PHOTO.



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Marc Landry's shot from ML "50 Classics", Fall 2012.



The controversial Duncan Lake map from ML Winter 2012.

## CLASSIC SHOT

Dear Editor,  
Your magazine 50 Classics is super. I'm a weekender here now on 50 acres just west of Ravenna. A keen road biker. I'm up here this "shoulder" weekend. The way the weather was going I could have had a last ride or first cross country ski. Turned out to be neither but a great November weekend nonetheless.

So to my surprise there I was on the left side of the great photo by Marc Landry on p. 32, in the Holstein cow jersey.

I would love to get a print, how do I go about that?

Will look great on a wall of the farmhouse.

Best,  
Gordon F. Willcocks

## KARST LIMITED?

Dear Editor:  
Your response to Vojka Glazar's question [see ML Spring 2012, p.20] whether the photo in "Karst Unlimited" see ML Winter 2012, p. 20), was an abstract one, or whether it had been taken from an actual hydrological/karst study for the area, avoided his rather straight-forward question, but gave me the impetus to finally

comment on your original Winter 2012 article.

While the creation of the image published by you in ML Winter 2012 may have been imaginative, it was anything but extremely scientific, as stated in your response. The photo was not based on any hydrologic or karst study of which I am aware, i.e. the local karst is not unlimited (as suggested by your original title), and is in fact only developed to a minor degree, consisting largely of erosion fissures and sinkholes in the underlying dolostone. The Duncan Lake area is not known to be underlain by large caves and caverns, as implied by your photo, nor am I aware of any evidence that Duncan Lake drains underground into the Beaver Valley, as claimed in your original article.

An aspect of your published photo, that some of your readers may find entertaining, is that if the photo is turned upside down, then the phantom underground caverns between Duncan Lake and the Beaver Valley show up, to my aged eyes at least, to be numerous large and impressive depressions. Like your published photo, an optical trick, but one that could be used by the unscrupulous to demonstrate a completely different, but again false, topography for the area.

If *Mountain Life* is to remain the high quality magazine that we, your readers, look forward to bringing home each season, then I urge you to maintain a higher journalistic and photographic (yes, and even scientific) standard than was shown in both your original article and in your response to Vojka Glazar. As in advertising, truth and accuracy in the press and in media like *Mountain Life*, really does matter.

Yours sincerely,  
Peter von Bitter Ph.D  
(Geology)  
Beaver Valley

Dear Dr. von Bitter,  
Thank you for your comment. Duncan's karst features may not be literally "unlimited" but by that title I meant to suggest that karst (and specifically the way water runs through it) is not "limited" by property boundaries. Our mapmaker, Aaron Roininen, uses data from the Ministry of Natural Resources. So the map on p. 20 of the issue is not an artist's rendering, but uses GPS and other data provided by the government.

If the photo of the map creates a false impression, this was not deliberate. The photographer Colin Field simply put a piece of glass atop the map and sprinkled water on it.

This was meant as a visual commentary to suggest that the water of Duncan Lake has ramifications beyond its boundaries because it's an aquifer – a fact backed up in the article by Hydrologist Dr. Brian Luinstra.

I must counter your claim made here – "...nor am I aware of any evidence that Duncan Lake drains underground into the Beaver Valley, as claimed in your original article" – for I made no such argument. I wrote generally about karst: "In karst, water moves underground into far-reaching conduits, affecting the greater water supply significantly." Then I quoted a resident of the Duncan Lake area who said: "Duncan Lake does not exist in isolation...It is actually the headwaters of Mitchell's Creek, which eventually flows into the Beaver River." This can be verified by checking a topographical map.

I'm confident that "Karst Unlimited" does not misrepresent the facts. We're not trying to trick or scare anyone, though the threat of unchecked, large-scale development in a karst region designated by the Niagara Escarpment Commission as a Development Control Area should scare all of us.

–Ned Morgan





## 2012/2013 EVENTS

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World Snowboard Day Park Party

### January 19

Roxy Ride Day

### January 19

Salomon 'Don't Get Lost'

Snowshoe Raid

### January 26

Billabong Flaunt It

### February 1-2

FIS World Cup Snowboardcross

### February 6, 13, 20, 27

Badlands Park Series

### February 9

Volcom Stone Peanut

Butter & Rail Jam

### February 21-23

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### March 2

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### March 30

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# POWDER PILGRIMS

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Text by Colin Field & Photos by Kari Medig



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**T**he instant we land in Tel Aviv, we grab a rental car and head to the Golan Heights. If we hurry, we'll get some turns in by day's end. Yep, I said turns. As in ski turns. In Israel.

Just over a month ago we learned you could ski in Israel. And now, after 13 hours of flying, fresh tracks are a few short hours away.

Heading north from Tel Aviv, following Highway 6, the urban sprawl of Israel's biggest city slowly gives way to beautiful countryside. Road signs direct us to legendary towns like Nazareth and Tiberias. We are in a land of biblical history, but we aren't following the busloads of religious pilgrims; we're heading for snow.

And there's snow in the Golan Heights.

As we pass the Sea of Galilee and head up the twisting road to Mount Hermon, the storm clouds look promising. It's raining in the Upper Galilee, but on top of the 2224-metre Mount Hermon, it's sure to be snowing. Have the stars aligned perfectly for a powder-filled tour of Israel's only ski resort? Nope. They haven't. A military roadblock is barring the entrance to Mount Hermon – unlike at home, where snowstorms are a good thing, in Israel, snowstorms shut the road down. No one has snow tires in Israel, so no one can actually get up there. And we'll miss all the fresh snow because it will take a week before the road is once again passable.

A week later, after tours of all the usuals (Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, Masada and the West Bank) we head back to Mount Hermon. Eight thousand other people choose to do the exact same thing. A hundred loaded buses chug up the winding road that switches back and forth from the lush green of the Golan Heights to the snowy peak of Hermon.

---

**They descend upon the lift lines, magic carpet and toboggan runs in jeans and track pants, ecstatic at something we as Canadians take for granted.**

---

We pass Druze villages and barbed wire fences with signs that warn: "DANGER! MINES." And when we finally arrive, the parking lot is chaotic. Orthodox Jews, modern Muslims and everyone in between fall out of the buses, yelling, laughing and marveling at the snow. Most of them have never seen snow before. They descend upon the lift lines, magic carpet and toboggan runs in jeans and track pants, ecstatic at something we as Canadians take for granted.

As we get our rental skis (165cm, 2008 Salomon Scramblers) the rental guy asks, "Do you know how to play ski?" before deciding how tight to make my bindings. We head up the two-person Doppelmeier chairlift and from the top we can see Lebanon, the Sea of Galilee and Syria. It's a beautiful day: five degrees, bluebird sky and conditions reminiscent of Canadian spring skiing. We do a couple of high traverses to get away from the dangerously out-of-control locals, and discover the brownish snow, tinted with sand, is slightly lighter



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photo by: Sean Hannah



Look out below!

than the corn snow of home, and a joy to ski. We schuss our way past cliffs and under chairlifts, getting fresh tracks over and over again. The chairlift riders overhead hoot and holler at our skills and for an instant I feel like a professional skier carving dangerous lines that no one thought possible. I'm not. I'm just one of the best skiers on the hill. Which isn't saying much.

Mount Hermon began operating in 1971. With 440 metres of vertical drop there are five two-person chairlifts, a couple of t-bars and a magic carpet. There are 1250 acres of terrain, 45 kilometres of piste, a mountain coaster and tobogganing hills. Hermon isn't blessed with bottomless powder, but the skiing is really fun.

Riding up the chair with local university student Annette Schwarz, she tells me she hasn't skied in four years, but she loves it.

"When I finish university I will go to Bulgaria," she tells me. "My parents go, it's very nice. Here it is very small. And the same run over and over. It's very boring."

I let lie the myth that all of Canada looks like British Columbia and don't tell her my local Ontario hill is smaller with less terrain.

But you don't need to ski at Mount Hermon to be entertained. The people-watching is limitless, and flabbergasting. Men with shopping bags tied around their shoes slide around the parking lot, young Hasidic Jews with curly sideburns fumble awkwardly on skis, Muslim teenagers throw snowballs at one another, sun-wrinkled Tel Avivians enjoy the rays and yarmulke-clad teenagers strap on snowboards.

It's impossible to take it all in. I sit on the chalet's patio with a tall can of Carlsberg amid constant outbursts of laughter and shouting. Within half-an-hour, I witness two ambulances arrive

and take people away. I watch a boy clock his sister in the head with a basketball-sized snowball and another woman on skis careen out of control through the sea of humanity before crashing into the patio railing. She's okay, and laughing. Then her friend walks up to her, carrying her own skis awkwardly before accidentally dropping them on top of her crumpled friend.

The bottom of the mountain feels like the most dangerous place in Israel as I constantly look over my shoulder for runaway snowboards, erratically carried ski poles or out-of-control skiers. As the lifts shut down at four o'clock, everyone loads back into the buses for the slow ride home. We join them and head back to Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv.

There are attractions in Israel beyond the streets of Nazareth, the biblical relics of Jerusalem, or the holy sites of Galilee. Its compact geography allows us to go from mountain biking in the desert, to paddleboarding in the Mediterranean, to skiing in just two days. The seven-hour drive from one end of the country to the other takes you from snow-capped mountains to deserts, with everything else in between.

And while Israel continues to make the headlines, conflict for this country is nothing new. The reports have never stopped busload after busload of international religious groups from making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Israelis are not huddled in bunkers, dressed in bulletproof vests or preparing for Armageddon. They are getting on with their lives.

The potential for outdoor adventure in Israel is endless. The trail systems in Israel are experiencing more use than ever before. And that's because the hiking and biking is world class. The skiing? Not so much. But Mount Hermon is worth a look anyway. ■



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Schralping the Sous-Bois. PHOTO COURTESY MONT SUTTON.

# TOUT SUR LE SKI

*Mont Sutton's yesteryear vibe is powder-heavy and distraction-light*

By Ned Morgan

Deep in Quebec's Eastern Townships (Cantons de l'est), Mont Sutton towers over a rolling landscape known for its Érablière – maple syrup operations announced by highway signs with a frequency that suggests the stuff is a serious way of life hereabouts. (There's even maple syrup booze – a whiskey-based concoction called Sortilege.) Apart from syrup, skiing is the major preoccupation of the small town of Sutton, a kilometre down from the base of the mountain and a serene place full of Queen Anne

architecture, low-key restaurants, shops and B&Bs. The resort and the town evoke a time before mega-resorts. You'll find no Starbucks, no over-priced shops, and no McMansion developments here. Mont Sutton's main lodge did not even have a proper bar until a few years ago because the owners did not want the resort overtaken by partiers. Much of the heavily forested massif surrounding the resort is protected inside the Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes, to enhance the distraction-free environment.

At Sutton, it's all about the skiing.

The resort's owners and operators, the Boulanger family, began a dairy farming operation near the base of the mountain in the 1940s and during the long winter downtime, the Boulanger *fiils* skied the backcountry off the north face. Beginning in the mid-'50s, the family began skiing at Stowe, Vermont; seeing how a resort could thrive in similar terrain, Réal Boulanger began to consider the possibility on the mighty slopes above the dairy farm. In 1959, the Boulangers bought the land and left logging rights to the former owner. Extensive glading and tree preservation



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Perfect poudre. PHOTO COURTESY MONT SUTTON.

tree preservation was always part of the design, however; the first glades, or sous-bois (“under trees”) were just west of Chair IV and remain today. At 45 percent of the resort’s 230 acres of skiable terrain, glades are central to Sutton culture. The mature mixed forest is spaced out just right and the terrain nicely featured with natural moguls, and difficulty levels ranging from easy to double-black. With over 200 junctions into the piste, you can vary your route again and again (and again). Sutton even offers lessons on how to ski the glades. And they plant up to a thousand trees a year to maintain the general tree cover and augment the glades and tree-skiing areas. (Tree-skiing, more challenging than the glades, happens mainly on the mountain’s double-diamond back side – an ungroomed in-bounds backcountry pow paradise – and in the steep, gulp-inducing spruce mazes of triple-diamond Bou-Bou and Entonnoir.)

Need more proof that Sutton is all about the skiing? They offer a free Am-

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When I ask guide Louise Boulé about the best day of skiing she’s ever had at Sutton she replies: “Every day is the best day – until the next day.”

---

bassador service, where anyone can ski with one of Sutton’s famed orange-jacketed expert guides who depart from the base of Chairlift II twice a day. Longtime guide Louise Boulé will often start new clients in the mellow glades around Chair II and if things get hairy she can always exit halfway down (via one of those 200-plus junctions). She speaks of the terrain variety with a sense of pride and wonder, even after 40 years of skiing here. Though a keen cyclist in the hills around Sutton in the green season, I get the sense that Boulé feels most at home when the snow flies. When I ask her about the best day of skiing she’s ever had at Sutton she

replies: “Every day is the best day – until the next day.” 🍷

## DIY

Sutton makes a lot of sense for March–Breaking Ontarians – the Quebec and US breaks are already over so you can ski crowd-free, and the mountain boasts a large and lively Zone Famille. [montsutton.com](http://montsutton.com). We stayed at Les Caprices de Victoria B&B ([capricesdevictoria.qc.ca](http://capricesdevictoria.qc.ca)) and dined at Auberge des Appalaches ([auberge-appalaches.com](http://auberge-appalaches.com)). Check [gb.mountainlifemag.ca](http://gb.mountainlifemag.ca) for the Auberge des Appalaches genuine Quebecois maple syrup pie recipe.



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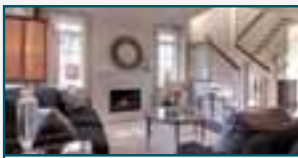


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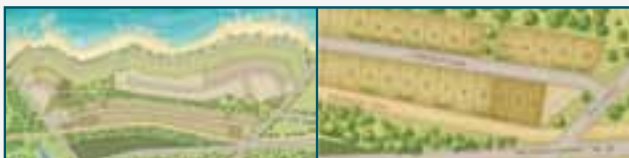
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# JAY PEAK *REVISITED*

*Why Vermonters are friendly and relaxed*

By Colin Field



Because they get to make sluff like this. JAY PEAK PHOTO.



The first time I visited Jay Peak I was under ten. I barely remember it. Now, over 20 years later, and visiting with a son of my own, a lot has changed. One of the best changes is the newly added Porter Airlines flight from Toronto to Burlington. That 7-10 hour drive is knocked down to a 50-minute flight. Too easy.

With a rental car, the short drive to Jay is a breeze and when we check into the newly constructed Jay Hotel our accommodations are awesome: giant, luxurious, with a full kitchen and views of the mountain. You know when the Tram is opening because you can see people lining up.

On top of all that, the Pumphouse, a 5-million-dollar, 50,000-square-foot waterpark connected to the hotel, makes entertaining kids of all ages easy.

Seriously, all ages: The Flowrider is a standing wave that can keep the raddest of dads stoked. Plus, there's a bar in the Pumphouse and somehow you can walk around the entire waterpark with a plastic cup full of beer in your hand. God bless Vermont.

So how is the skiing?

Well the Tram gets you to the top of the 4,000-foot Jay Peak and on a powder day it's buzzing with energy. From there it's pretty open. The trees would be the obvious attraction for the freeskier: Jay has more glades than most of the eastern resorts combined. They drop steeply and impressively through birch and pine forests, challenging the best skiers with incredibly fun skiing. For the touring type, the Big Jay Backcountry drops off the backside into some of the best terrain the east has to offer. And with four terrain parks, even the park rats will be happy.

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There's a bar in the Pumphouse and somehow you can walk around the entire waterpark with a plastic cup full of beer in your hand. God bless Vermont.

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After dropping the kid off at Jay's daycare, we quickly meet some locals on the Tram and it isn't long before they invite us to duck a rope and ski out some knee-deep pow. There's no secrecy behind it; they're open and willing to share. I hate to generalize, but my encounters with Vermonters proved them to be friendly and relaxed.

Simply put, Vermont rules. If green cards weren't so difficult to get, there are only two states I'd ever consider moving to and Vermont is one of them. It doesn't feel like the US. Somehow, it feels like Canada. And as the bumper sticker "keep the US out of VT" suggests, I think that's a compliment many Vermonters would be proud of.

It'll be way less than 20 years before I visit again. ■

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Top: Because they get to make pow turns like this. JAY PEAK PHOTO.  
Middle: Because they have this new kick-ass waterpark. COLIN FIELD PHOTO.  
Bottom: Because they ski face-shots like this. JAY PEAK PHOTO.

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Above: GLEN HARRIS PHOTO. MAPS BY AARON ROININEN.

## DUNCAN CREVICE CAVES TRAVERSE (#51)

This dramatic trail penetrates the heart of the region's back-country. Snowshoeing here makes you feel like an explorer in a wild new world and you're only about 20 minutes off Highway 26. We suggest an in-and-out traverse tracing the high ridge that overlooks the Kolapore Uplands. The ridge itself is honey-combed with one of the most extensive crevice cave systems in Ontario, which we don't recommend exploring in winter. Stay safe and stay on the path, sticking to the white blazes of the main Bruce Trail for the whole traverse. You leave the parking lot on the 9th Sideroad and head south and slowly ascend until the trail hugs the ridgeline. The trees open up in several places; at roughly the midway point you'll see the crags of mighty Metcalfe Rock in the distance. We suggest you 'shoe to the Pinnacle Rock lookout and turn around.



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COLIN FIELD PHOTO.


## MARGARET PAULL LOOP (#51)

Margaret Paull was a noted book-cover artist at Toronto's Collins publishing house in the '40s and '50s and a dedicated Bruce Trail volunteer and donor in her later years. The land around this side trail was purchased when the Trail's Land Acquisition Program started up in the 1980s.

Where the 18th Sideroad peters out past the last farmhouse, park and access the white-blazed main trail; it's not far before you'll follow the blazes south (left). The trail continues through fields and hardwood forest and winds along a ravine-edge above a stream (the headwaters of Indian Creek). Along here you'll see a rare mini "flowerpot" formed by ancient wave action on the long-vanished glacial lakeshore. When the trail descends into the ravine, follow the blue-blazed Margaret Paull Side Trail to the right. Stay on this blue trail and follow it back to your car.



## SLIGO SIDE TRAIL LOOP (#52)

This loop includes extensive wetlands and a variety of mature tree plantations. Start at the designated Bruce Trail parking lot on Sideroad 16 beside a field just before the road dead-ends (note the sweeping view of the Beaver Valley below to the east). Walk back along the road and turn right, following the white blazes of the main trail. When you come to the sign for Sligo Side Trail, turn left, following the blue blazes. Here the trail takes you through the Beaverdale Forest Area – a maze of old spruce and pine plantations, hardwood meadows, and old logging roads, with several beaver ponds along the way. The gentle slope and thick tree cover make for easy and sheltered 'shoeing. Eventually you will meet the road you drove in on; turn left and follow it back to your car. 

### DIY

Most outdoor sporting goods shops sell or rent snowshoes. We recommend you layer your clothing – you'll work hard when snowshoeing and you'll sweat. Merino wool or synthetic wicking baselayers, a fleece mid-layer, and a venting shell would be a good combo. And you'll need high-cut, thick-insulated winter boots to strap your snowshoes on.





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*Someday they will know what I mean.* Tom Thomson



IMAGE: Tom Thomson at Lake Scugog, Fall 1910

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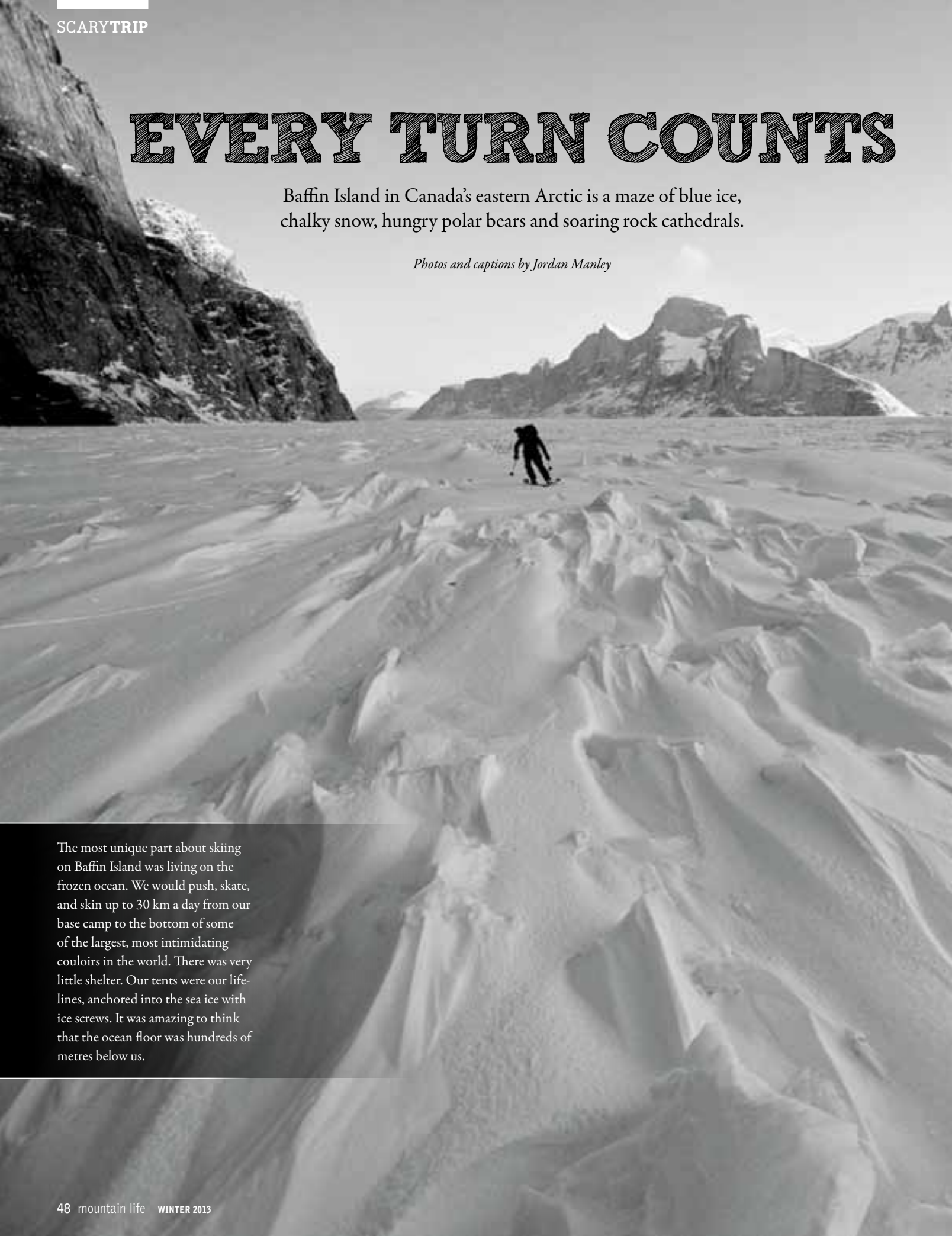
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# EVERY TURN COUNTS

Baffin Island in Canada's eastern Arctic is a maze of blue ice, chalky snow, hungry polar bears and soaring rock cathedrals.

*Photos and captions by Jordan Manley*



The most unique part about skiing on Baffin Island was living on the frozen ocean. We would push, skate, and skin up to 30 km a day from our base camp to the bottom of some of the largest, most intimidating couloirs in the world. There was very little shelter. Our tents were our lifelines, anchored into the sea ice with ice screws. It was amazing to think that the ocean floor was hundreds of metres below us.











*"It's a strange world made of extreme horizontal and vertical planes. Where you find diagonal, you find skiing."*

So states the narrator in the short film Jordan Manley produced about the trip he took to Baffin Island with skiers Chad Sayers, Marcus Waring, Tobin Seagel and Jamie Bond to ski the long, hazardous couloirs around Sam Ford Fjord. Skiing through towering 2-billion-year-old rock hallways – sometimes on only a few inches of snow underlain by blue ice – they had to make every turn count. The nearest rescue helicopter was rumoured to be roughly 3000 km distant, in Halifax.



#### **ABOVE and LEFT**

The gneissic rock in Sam Ford Fjord here is two billion years old. Over the last three million years, it has seen 25 ice ages. Massive ice sheets carved out fjords along ancient fault lines, while the rock fractured in a unique way, producing these gigantic walls, cathedrals, and hallways.

#### **RIGHT**

Our journey to Sam Ford Fjord began and ended with a 130-km ride in a frozen coffin, dragged behind a snowmobile driven by two local Inuit hunters we had hired. Bumping along the sea ice for six hours at  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ , it was a cold that penetrated deeper than we had ever experienced.

As we entered the fjords, we were at once frozen and awestruck in our new surroundings. Arriving at our new camp after our Inuit guides waved goodbye was the remotest I had ever felt. The freezing temperatures and isolation left very little room for error. All our equipment had to function properly in order to keep us alive. Life became as simple as functioning stoves and the cover of tents and sleeping bags. The possibility of a rescue would have been a matter of days, not hours.





---

### TOP

From the moment we arrived on the ice we were always scanning the white horizon for Nanuk. We had been told we would see polar bears and might have to deal with them entering our camp. We set up a perimeter around camp with skis and rope and slept with a shotgun at our feet. Each night, with the sleeping bag drawn tightly around my balaclava'd face, I would hear crunching and hoped it was simply shifting ice, not a polar bear about to poke its nose into our tent. We never did see Nanuk, but found tracks in the snow close to our tents, left when we were out skiing.

### LEFT

Some of the couloirs were almost 4000 feet long; massive spaces that were always bigger and longer once we entered them. With each step into the chalky snowpack, you become more committed. As the consequences grow, each step requires more concentration.

### FAR LEFT

We found some lake-ice en route to one of the couloirs. There was very little snowpack there and a lot of wind, so the ice was swept clean.

### BOTTOM

The couloirs were long, but we could move up them relatively quickly. With each step through chalky snow, a squeaky sound echoed off the walls.

---





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#### ABOVE

An erratic boulder in a terminal moraine; in the distance stands the Walker Citadel. At over 4000 feet, it is one of the tallest cliffs on the planet. In the adjacent bay, it would cast its massive afternoon shadow over our camp.

#### LEFT

Chad Sayers frostbit his toes within days of arriving and had to spend five days in camp, alone. We left him the gun in case he encountered an unwanted visitor. I'm not sure what we would have done had we run into one.

---





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Photo by: Mark Walker



Photo by: John Evelyn

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# TRAVELLING WITH PURPOSE



Kinu Primary School, rural Uganda.  
The Canadian volunteer team  
visited the school to assess the  
impacts of its new water system.  
EMILY WORTS PHOTO.





## A trip you'll never experience at the All-Inclusive

By Emily Worts

Recently I found myself boarding a plane, to a city I had just located on a map, with a yellow fever vaccine coursing through my bloodstream, a backpack full of DEET and no guidebook. I was travelling with Tin Roof Global, my husband's foundation which provides and protects water, as a journalist offering to help tell the "Tin Roof Story."

There is no shortage of opportunity to travel while taking advantage of your skill-set as a volunteer. Voluntourism is a growing market and one that many Canadian charities capitalize on, not only to bring in much-needed funds but also to help spread the gospel. Voluntourism reconnects travellers with purpose and introduces them to reciprocal relationships based on teaching and learning and giving and receiving while embedding the traveller into the fabric of the host community.

Arriving in Entebbe, Uganda, I traded pre-conceived ideas of African travel (picture white safari tents and elephants grazing at my back door) for a cinder-block hotel, reminiscent of communist-inspired architecture. But this is what I got in return.

### UGANDA: DAY ONE

There is no time to rest. After my first sleep and first meal in Uganda our team is loaded into our grand, if dated, blue Isuzu 4x4. We are traveling with Canada Africa Schools Partnership (CASP), a Ugandan-run organization working with Tin Roof to build much-needed wells and water tanks for rural schools. Along with four CASP members, my husband John Millar, and Tin Roof board member and Pretty River Valley resident Leah Hagreen, I will spend a week assessing Tin Roof's impacts on schools across the Ugandan countryside.

We fill up at the local gas station (where our 4x4 is rocked, back and forth, by three large men to ensure our tank is filled to overflowing), and set out on a road that *might* pass for a hiking trail in Canada. Crumbling pavement means treacherous curbs and bottomless pot holes. Our driver, Jackson, knows these roads well and we crawl slowly towards Jinja, the source of the Nile River, dodging oncoming cars, trucks, bikes, pedestrians and animals.

We stop for lunch in a small village restaurant called the Country Club (not what you're thinking). The Ugandan President's representative for the region joins us as we dig into matoke (mashed plantain), ground nut paste (similar to peanut sauce), rice, steamed garlic greens and fish broth. We discuss local and Canadian politics and talk of Tin Roof's plans. Then we head for Kinu for our first school visit. We turn off the "main"

*The girls, with batik scarves tied around their waists to accentuate their hips, gyrate and dance with their hands waving in the air. It is contagious and within seconds I am dancing too.*

road and head for the village. It is the children dressed in purple uniforms I see first. It is hard to hold back tears as hundreds of ecstatic faces engulf our car and beautiful voices welcome us with song. I step out into a world of handshakes and hugs, of smiles like I've never seen and warmth so intense there is absolutely nowhere else on the planet I'd rather be.

The girls, with batik scarves tied around their waists to accentuate their hips, gyrate and dance with their hands waving in the air. It is contagious and within seconds I am dancing too. A handful of boys lead us with their drums to the shade of an ancient mango tree. A traditional dance is performed in honour of the transformation of the school since their water tank arrived. We are given a quick tour of the one-storey brick school complete with tin roof, glassless windows, two classrooms, an office (which also holds the school's food supplies – evidenced by the hill of corn kernels in the corner), and a tiny library where most of the books are handmade by teachers using clippings from the national English newspaper.

The whole school, with over 700 students, is the size of three or four Canadian classrooms.

The school sits on 52 acres and we tour its extensive gardens. With water from the 20,000-litre rain tank, built by Tin Roof, the school is able to grow crops ensuring each student one hot meal a day.



Above: Volunteer Leah Hagreen, Chair of Tin Roof Global, surrounded by dancing children in appreciation of the water system installed at the school. Below: Tin Roof founder and Executive Director, John Millar (left) with Kinu principal, Mogerre Nathan. EMILY WORTS PHOTOS.

We make the trek down to the community water hole that used to serve as the sole source of water in the area. It is a grey, rancid-looking pond the community shares with wild and domestic animals. The school's principal, teachers and students take turns sharing stories with us. Students now spend minutes, instead of hours, fetching water each day which means more time in class. Their new water source significantly reduces water-borne illness and helps irrigate crops for food, which means less time sick and hungry and more time spent in class. Shockingly, I hear stories of many early pregnancies resulting from the sexual assault of girls along remote water trails. With a supervised, central water source fewer girls drop out of school to care for their babies and a cruel cycle of poverty is finally being broken. Now that Kinu's main water source is easily accessible there is much to celebrate and the dancing begins again.

Five hours behind schedule we set off down a walking path in our 4x4 to visit a family whose children attend Kinu School. The sun is setting and despite the fact the family has been waiting all day we are greeted with more smiles and hugs. Outside their compound of circular mud and grass homes they have hung a tarp and put out chairs to receive us. They present John with a blanket made from bark and offer us sugarcane and jackfruit. We speak through a translator and I jot down notes. We still have one more stop and the night is growing dark. As we climb back into the 4x4 we are handed six sticks of sugarcane, a huge jackfruit, a plate of dried sweet potato, two baskets of ground nuts and a squawking chicken. We pack everything into our trunk and I will help prepare this food, under the guidance of new friends, for our farewell feast on our last night in Uganda.

We have been travelling for over 12 hours but there is still



one more stop to make. The entire extended family (well over 30 people) of CASP director Lyagoba Moses has gathered to welcome us to the Kamuli District. A flashlight is brought out (there is no electricity) and pointed directly at the Tin Roof team as we sit down, in a place of honour, before the crowd. We indulge in toasted groundnuts, a freshly slaughtered chicken and eat matoke with our hands.

I am in awe of what I have experienced today. I visited villages that aren't only off the beaten track but barely on a track, ate food that hasn't been doctored to suit my Western tastebuds, shared meals with government officials, young children and elders, learned of edible and medicinal plants while walking through the arid countryside, and danced, laughed and smiled until it hurt. This is a snapshot of just one day. There are many more to come. ■



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For any of you who have experienced a massage therapy treatment this should bring back memories of your last session. This a time to yourself where you truly relax and have your tight muscles worked out. If you have never had the opportunity to experience a massage before, you will acknowledge the same thing other new clients do... "What was I waiting for". Whether you get a relaxation or therapeutic or sports massage you will feel reduced muscle stiffness and general tension release. Many experts believe that a large number of the illness in today's world is related to stress. Although many of us have commitments that keep us busy and fuel a stress we still need to take time for ourselves. A massage therapy treatment begins a cycle of stress reduction. The treatment actually releases tension in your muscles that can be related to a repetitive lifestyle or career. Both the physical effects and memory of your "time away from it all" will linger for the days or weeks to come. This serves as a reminder to take a deep breath every so often to focus on relaxing your muscles and to notice how this positively affects your mood. And how ongoing, regular massage treatments complimented with other therapies such as hydro therapy is also beneficial. So, what are YOU waiting for?

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# YURTIN' FOR CERTAIN

*The yurt trip brings 360 degrees of warmth to winter camping*



COLIN FIELD PHOTO.

By Allison Kennedy Davies

When the snow blankets our area, many of us pack away our tents and sleeping bags until the spring thaw. Sleeping outside during the winter months is a frosty thought but with the recent popularity of yurts in Ontario, your camping dreams can stay alive.

What the heck is a yurt, you ask? Good question. Yurts are heavy-duty semi-permanent tent-like structures that originated in central Asia. They are usually round with a cone-type roof covered in canvas or heavy fabric. Yurts are an ideal winter camping option as they generally have heat, flooring, furniture and often electricity.

---

**When temperatures dip below freezing, there's no shame in being a glamper.**

---

Sound just a shade too close to glamping for you? Yurts definitely alleviate some of the hardships and organizational challenges of camping, but when temperatures dip below freezing, there's no shame in being a glamper. It's a practical option for the family who wants to walk out their yurt door to cross-country skiing and snowshoeing trails.

We live in a yurt-rich environment here. If you're looking to plan a weekend getaway, you can choose from several Ontario Provincial Parks within a reasonable drive. Winter-ready yurts are located at McGregor Point Provincial Park (12) near Port Elgin, Killarney Provincial Park (6) and the legendary Algonquin Provincial Park (7), Bon Echo Provincial Park (6) in the Kawartha Lakes area, and Pinery Provincial Park (12) near Grand Bend.

McGregor Point has 12 year-round yurts on site. Each yurt can sleep up to six people and is equipped with two sets of bunk beds, a table and six chairs, electric heat, lighting and an outdoor propane barbecue. A heated comfort station with washrooms and showers is just a short walk away. Weekend reservations require a minimum two-night stay, with a one-night minimum from Sunday to Thursday year-round. A one-night stay will cost you \$97.18 including taxes.

McGregor Point is an appealing winter destination. An ice-skating loop winds through a summer camping section of the park. There are also groomed cross-country ski trails nearby and you can bring your snowshoes and break trail along the Lake Huron shoreline.

## DIY

If you're packing for a winter yurt excursion, you will need: Sleeping bags, a cook stove, pots and pans, dishes and utensils, a pot for heating water, drinking water, dishpan, a waste water container, flashlight, lantern, matches, food, drinking water and a 15-amp extension cord. Be sure to pack plenty of cold weather gear and your skates, snowshoes or skis. Extra supplies are always a good idea in case local roads happen to be closed after your stay. A toboggan is also handy for lugging supplies in, although this is supplied at some Ontario parks.

Why not make this the winter you spend New Year's Eve under the stars? Just be sure to call ahead at 1-888-ONT-PARK for reservations as Ontario yurts fill up quickly. ■

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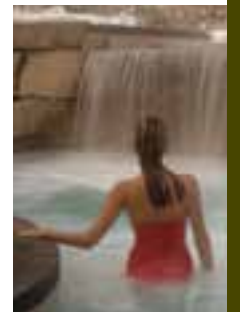
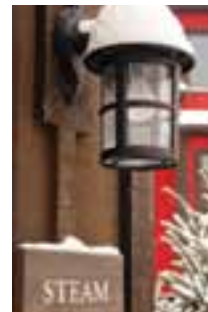
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# DETOXPEDITION

*The post-holiday trip to the detox spa doesn't have to be painful*

**By Melanie Chambers**

Kale smoothies, herbal laxatives and colonics – be honest, the word “detox” sounds shocking. But – hooray! – spas that specialize in ridding the body of toxins are not the militant no-fun-no-food types; in fact, these holistic wellness spas aren't trying to tear you apart, they're trying to put you back together.



## *Grail Springs, Bancroft, Ontario*

Burnout is a common theme for guests visiting Grail Springs. Set in the forest near Bancroft, Ontario on Chalice Lake, the surroundings are just as redemptive as the therapies. “We’re not a spa so much as a wellness centre that deals with holistic health,” says founder and owner Madeleine Marentette.

With an emphasis on “cleanse” rather than “detox”, the Grail’s meals are between 1,200 and 1,800 calories a day of clean food, herbal teas, snacks, and elixirs; however, to reap the full benefits, lay off the Cheetos a week before. The site details how to prepare: “no one goes hungry and we don’t punish people.”

Besides eating correctly, options include various massage, meditation and life coaching to help cleanse your priorities; or, a real cleanse: colonics

is a therapy whereby your colon is washed out; not only will you feel lighter, many report increased energy. Or, if you’re dealing with fears, a horse whisperer, or equine therapist, can help clear emotional roadblocks.

*To reap the full benefits, lay off the Cheetos a week before.*

“The whole secret is to get individuals to reconnect with their bodies,” says Marentette. “Once they relax and are away from their controlled environment, they remember who they are and what they wanted out of life.”



## Golden Door, Escondido, California

When it opened its doors in 1958, Golden Door Spa – about an hour's drive northeast of San Diego – was ahead of its time marrying mind, body and spirit spa packages.

With a ratio of 4:1 guests to staff, seven fitness studios, 32 kilometres of hiking trails, daily massage, organic food grown on site and a selection of their own body products, this is the original wellness spa that set the standard.

The most popular option is a Sunday-to-Sunday program where guests are able to leave the stress and become immersed in the program.

"Guests may select a program emphasis to guide their class and activity choices," says spokesperson Kate McCoy. "Personalized programs can range from high-intensity workouts to pure relaxation and introspection."

And forget kale and spinach smoothies; instead, envision pinto bean tostada stack with avocado salsa, followed by fudge brownie with chocolate sauce and raspberry coulis.

Guests, typically 55-plus, also have a variety of active-aging options: Neurobics for brain agility, skin care that focuses on improving hydration and elasticity, and stress reduction. No deprivation here: only a chance to exchange some bad habits for good ones.




## Mii amo, Sedona, Arizona

Perched in the Red Rocks wilderness of the Boynton Canyon, Mii Amo – the name means roughly "to further one's journey" in Yuman dialect – encourages its guests to feel *at one* with the landscape.

Their restorative building design, by the architects of the Guggenheim Museum in Berlin, includes bamboo floors, natural stone, and Native American Anasazi-inspired colour palettes and motifs, including a large cave-like meditation space dubbed the Crystal Grotto. Here the sun shines through an opening in the roof onto (surprise!) a crystal perched atop a fountain of running water in the centre of the room.

Some guests may want to begin a new exercise and nutrition regime, while others facing a new stage of life might want something deeper. Treatments are referred to as "Journeys". One of the Journeys, Spiritual Exploration, involves such curious activities as "integrative breathing, a walk to the ruins, crystal facial, psychic massage, and dream wisdom."

The menu is definitely not sparse, and coffee isn't banned. The food is described as "intelligent eating"; the majority of produce is from the chef's organic garden, and the menus include grilled chicken, pad Thai and other crowd-pleasers. When guests leave, to ensure they stay on track long after the massage oil has dried, they take home a copy of *A Journey of Taste*, a collection of the spa's 60 most popular recipes. 

## DIY

[goldendoor.com](http://goldendoor.com)

[miiamo.com](http://miiamo.com)

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# THE UNCONDO

*These modern cabins update the idea of chalet for an alternative, low-cost weekend retreat*

By Tamara Dawkins

Many of us associate the word “chalet” with an image from the past – a ‘60s A-frame Tyrolean style might come to mind. A recent trend, however, is redefining the chalet or weekend home with simple, modern forms. Form and Forest is a Canadian company that sells architectural plans for what it calls “modern cabins.” The Pioneer model (pictured) is 1740 square feet, with two bedrooms, two lofts and a living room with 180 degrees of floor-to-ceiling glass. Form and Forest co-owner Ryan Jordan approaches modern cabin living with a respect for natural landscapes and a background in industrial design (he graduated from Toronto’s OCAD).

As Jordan explains, “Industrial design is design for mass production. The aesthetic end of that is to design pleasing objects. Architecture is typically customized – a client hires an architect, it’s a one-on-one exchange, and a one-off custom product. I wanted to bring an industrial design approach to architecture. Our plans are meant to be mass-produced.” Although Jordan served as Design Director for the cabin plans FF currently offers, he commissioned Vancouver’s Darcy Jones Design to flesh them out and put them on paper.

So far the plans have been built in Scotland, New Mexico, Alaska, Saskatchewan, BC, and elsewhere. The Pioneer stands in the forest near Golden, BC and serves as a model home, which Jordan also rents out as a holiday cabin, often





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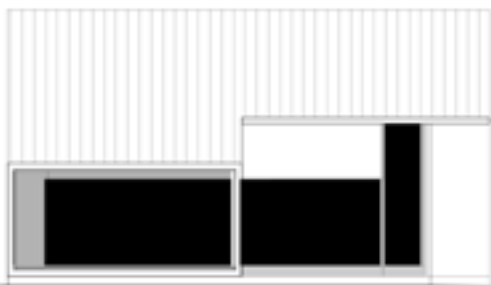
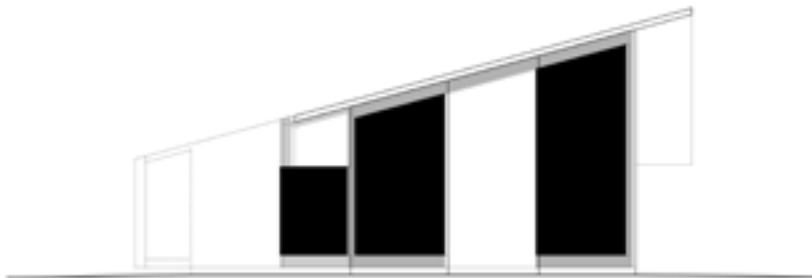
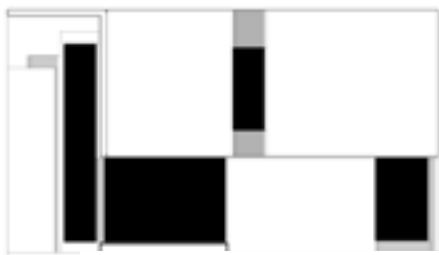
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Photos courtesy of Altius Architecture Inc.



to those interested in building one of the plans. "The settings themselves influence the designs," says Jordan. "We're designing them to go into lakeside locations or in wilderness retreats. They become part of a landscape. They don't dominate their site. They have a sense of belonging there."

**"I wanted to bring an industrial design approach to architecture."**

Architect Gordon Stone of Collingwood-based design-build firm Stone Custom Homes sees this style as complementary to his own and may build an FF plan this year. "It's a good alternative to a condo, and it offers more glass for views," says Stone. "Everyone comes up here for the environment and they want to be part of the outdoors." He points out that simple plans like The Pioneer cut down on wasted space in the interior, and will fit on smaller lots. "We're getting a lot of call for that," he adds; "people are saying they don't want 3000 square feet." Stone





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believes that modern architecture, with its emphasis on frugality and clean lines, is more accepted now. "More clients are after a clean look, no unnecessary detail or ornamentation, not the gingerbread or the timber-frame which is fine but has been done so many times."

Unlike in a subdivision, where homes are built with little understanding about what's around them, these plans can be easily tweaked to fit any lot, to optimize available light, or allow passive cooling by placing windows for prevailing winds inside.

"[Form and Forest plans] are all squares and rectangles, and that helps to keep the price down for clients," Stone says. "All the space gets used efficiently. These plans have very nice massing. One


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## The settings themselves influence the designs.

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of the things you study as an architect is massing of forms – what is pleasing to the eye and what isn't."

Stone adds: "Everything's been done before. In architecture school they tell you there's nothing new out there. You're just taking what's been done before and improving on it."

The cabin in the woods has finally been improved. 

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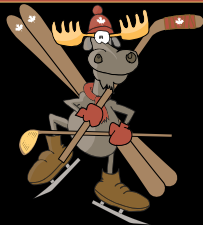






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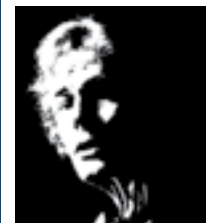
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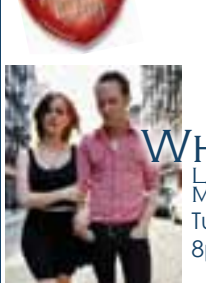


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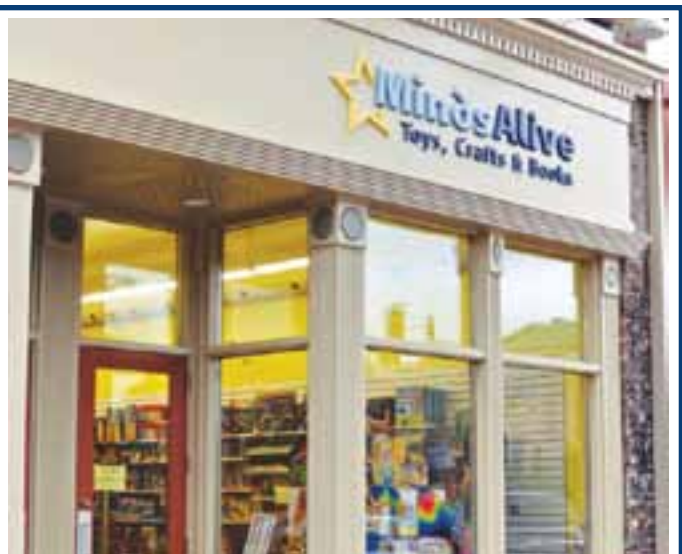


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# HOT POT

*Take a trip back to savory '70s après*

By Ester O' Neill

At first glance pet rocks, freestyle skiing and a fondness for cheese fondue seem to have absolutely nothing in common. But look a little closer, and truth is revealed. These are all products of the glorious '70s.

The sport of skiing and ski culture experienced a bit of a heyday in the '70s. Ski technology was on the rise, ski fashion peaked – I mean stretchy pants and puffy, bold colour-blocked jackets with white piping and giant pompoms – and freestyle skiing was born. As we embraced skiing and all that went with it, cheese fondue became an ultimate après indulgence. Seriously, what better way to end a rad day of hot-dogging or ripping endless lines of moguls than with fondue!

With its culinary origins in Switzerland, home of the Alps and the best skiing in the universe, cheese fondue symbolized the

chic coolness of the sport and the culture. Plus, it offered an excuse to eat ridiculous amounts of melty cheese, crusty bread and fancy-name liqueurs like Kirsch. And for anyone fortunate enough to wed in this decade, a fondue pot or two was guaranteed to grace the gifts table.

While many of the varied and somewhat ridiculous trends of the '70s didn't last, some of the better ones did. We've ditched pet rocks for iPods, but ski technology is constantly improving, as is the fashion. And fortunately, the joys of cheese fondue remain, as timeless as the Swiss Alps themselves.

Traditionally fondue is made with two or three types of Swiss-style firm cheeses, such as Comte, Emmentaler, Gruyère or Appenzeller, a generous glug of white wine and a dash of Kirsch – an unaged brandy made from cherries. These Swiss-style cheeses all share a sweetness,



Fondudes.

nuttiness and richness which is balanced by the dryness of the alcohol. Plus, they melt to smooth, stretchy perfection, ideal for dipping.

But there is more than one way to make a cheese fondue. According to Kelly Siskind of Dags & Willow Fine Cheese and Gourmet Shop in Collingwood, Ontario, fondue is really just "alcohol and cheese melted together in goodness," and





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encourages fondue lovers “to play with flavours as long as the texture is conducive to melting.” For good melting cheeses, Siskind suggests middle-of-the-road textures, such as semi-soft to firm Gouda and Cheddar. Non-cow milk cheeses are worth investigating too: Kaamps Classic is a sweet goat’s milk cheese fantastic in fondue while Etorki, a rustic sheep’s milk cheese, is another favourable option. Hard cheeses, like Parmesan, don’t melt smoothly and the soft Brie or Camembert on the opposite end of the spectrum become rubbery and stretchy when melted.

For the alcohol, sub in beer for wine, brandy or sherry for the Kirsch; again, anything goes. And finally, have fun with the dippers. Traditionally, cubes of crusty French loaf are used to dip in the cheese but try walnut bread, rye sourdough or your favourite gluten-free option. Lightly steamed broccoli, roasted mushrooms, red pepper or cipollini onions are also tasty dippers.

**Traditionally, fondue is made with two or three types of Swiss-style firm cheeses, a generous glug of white wine and a dash of Kirsch**



Whether making fondue at home or at the chalet, Siskind offers a few tips to consider.

- Be sure to cube or shred your cheese for smooth, even melting.
- Add it in small handfuls, stirring constantly, and only adding more when the first batch is completely melted.
- Be patient: slow and steady over a medium heat is the way to go.

And if you just don’t feel like making it yourself, give the folks at Dags & Willow a call and they’ll whip you up a batch of

their own fondue so all you have to do is pick it up, heat it up and enjoy. 🍷

Check [gb.mountainlifemag.ca](http://gb.mountainlifemag.ca) for a beer fondue recipe.

For all your cheese and gourmet needs, hit up Dags & Willow, 60 Pine Street, Collingwood, Ontario.

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## Traditional Cheese Fondue Recipe

**Serves 2 as a main or 4 as an appetizer**

- 1 clove garlic
- 1 cups dry white wine
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 200g Gruyere-style cheese, such as Comte or Beaufort, shredded or cubed
- 200g Emmental cheese, shredded or cubed
- 3 tbsp flour, or cornstarch
- 2 tbsp liqueur, such as Kirsch, brandy or sherry
- Pinch each of nutmeg and paprika

Cut the clove of garlic in half and rub the inside of the fondue pot with cut side.

Pour in the wine. When hot, not boiling, stir in the lemon juice.

Dredge the cheeses in the flour and add, by handfuls, to the wine. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon and wait for each portion to melt before adding the next.

Bring to a simmer, stirring constantly. Add the liqueur. Stir in the nutmeg and paprika – be careful not to add too much paprika as it will turn the fondue red.

Serve with cubes of crusty bread and enjoy!

**Tip:** Kelly Siskind suggests cutting up the loaf of crusty French bread in the morning so that it is dried out and crispy on the edges by the time you’re eating the fondue. The crispy edges give the cheese something to hold on to.

*–Recipe courtesy of Dags & Willow*



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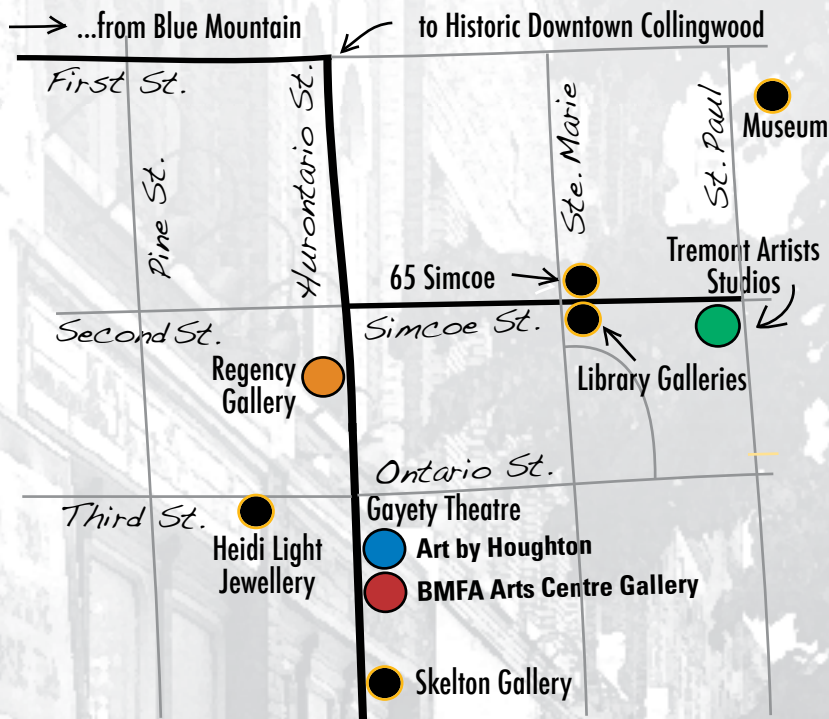
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Each bracelet offers different survival needs, but all are made from 550-test paracord 8 - 12 feet in length. Use them to fix gear or for any situation you need to get out of in a hurry. Flint-and-knife and other bracelets available. \$9.99 and up.

Cheri, Sojourn, Barrie (sojournoutdoors.com 705.739.9694)

#### YARDBOARD

Replicate all your favourite board sports in any location and on any surface, safely. Grooves underneath and a rope handle on top enable wild rides down hills covered in sand or snow. Jeff, Minds Alive, Collingwood (mindsalive.ca 705.445.6222)

#### ROSSIGNOL BC90 NORDIC SKI

A lightweight, metal edge backcountry ski designed for off-trail skiing and exploring without the hassle of climbing skins. The waxless base provides the best compromise between kick and glide in all snow conditions. Todd, Little Ed's Ski & Bike Shop, Collingwood (705.444.5488 littleeds.com)

#### RUDESAK HAVIVA FUR HAT

Rabbit fur toque with suspended pom poms at ear flaps. Elasticized knit: one size fits all. Cathy & Alessia, DeCorso's Fashions, Thornbury (519.599.5315)

#### WINTER LEGGINGS AND TIGHTS

At Echo Trends we offer all different styles of leggings and tights to spice up your winter wardrobe. Brands include Trasparenze, Filodoro, Philippe Matignon. Dana, Echo Trends, Blue Mountain Village (shopdana.ca 705.446.1496)



Wonderful, fully serviced lot #26 in Lora Bay. Upper level views of the Bay, walking distance to The Grill at the club house and first tee. Views of the practice range and the ninth hole Make it happen today! *MLS#20125673*



Do you need your own outdoor Reverie away from all the action of the city? This property has it all, open concept living with over 3600 sq', gourmet kitchen, large entertainment area (for adults and kids) 5 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms 2 efficient fire places, inside entry from the garage. The property has had a huge price reduction Vendor Motivated *MLS# 20125112*



This is a well priced 1st home buyer's condo 15 Watts cres #14. Open concept living/dining room, 3 bedroom 2 bathroom and ensuite Sliding glass door to sundeck and westerly views of the Mountain. This unit has a full unfinished basement for additional stylizing and your own personal touches. You'll be impressed book your appointment today!!! *MLS#20124677*



Just Listed, Water front cottage for \$295k! 17 Cherry street 4 bedroom, detached garage separate sauna overlooking the bay and a bunkie. With the new Clearview/ Collingwood by-pass completed this area is primed for development and at this price it wont last long, don't wait book your appointment today!!!!

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# APRÈS THIS WAY



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#### HATLEY CHRISTMAS APRON

Heavyweight canvas for ultimate splatter protection, with bright screen-print designs and adjustable neck straps. Match it with a Hatley pot holder, oven mitt or tea towel. Chantel, Hatley Scoops, Village at Blue Mountain ([hatleystore.com](http://hatleystore.com)) 705.444.0707

#### PHIL & TEDS ESCAPE BABY CARRIER

This pack is loaded with features to take you from a stroll in the park to a backcountry snowshoe. The padding, breathability and zip-off pack make it comfortable for mom or dad. Larry, Liam & Lauren Baby, Collingwood (705.293.2239 [liamandlauren.ca](http://liamandlauren.ca))

#### ZIGI GRIZZLEEZ BOOTS

ZIGI creates sexy, fashionable shoes at affordable prices. ZIGI stays at the edge of the latest trends and fashions. Janet, Zazzy's, 175 Hurontario Street, Collingwood (705.444.2176)

#### OVATION RHONA COUNTRY BOOT

Oiled leather foot, top cuff, and accent strips offer beautiful contrast to the butter soft suede uppers. The Freudenberg German-made waterproof/breathable membrane assures all-weather comfort that lasts. Kelly and Kim, The Tack Shoppe, Collingwood (705.445.4041 [thetackshoppe.ca](http://thetackshoppe.ca))







#### FOOTBALANCE INSOLE/FOOTBED

This insole for your ski or snowboard boots is custom-made for your stance, alignment and exact foot shape. Have warmer, better performance and less painful days on the hill with the FootBalance system.

Devin, Skiis & Biikes Collingwood (skiisandbiikes.com 705.445.9777)

#### YARNS OF RHICHARD DEVRIEZE

Rhichard Devrieze is a fibre artist and world-renowned creator of hand-dyed yarns. Extensive line of these locally dyed 100% merino yarns available at Grey Heron.

Karen, Grey Heron Natural Designs, Collingwood (705.444.0370 greyherondesigns.com)

#### SIMS X-WEDGE FEATURING E-BOARD TECHNOLOGY

A true-twin, medium-flex, all-mountain shredder. The engineered wedges properly align your lower legs to help you keep fresh so you can ride longer into the day.

Made in Quebec! Jesse, Icarus Skate & Snow, Orangeville (icaruskateandsnow.com 519.938.8985)

#### WINE BARREL PLATTER

These beautiful platters are made from reclaimed Niagara-region wine barrels.

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Reg, Niagara Escarpment Outfitters, Collingwood (escarpmentoutfitters.com 705.293.4000)



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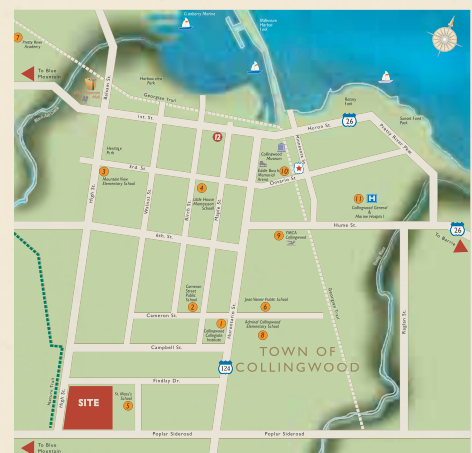


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**Email** info@liamandlauren.ca

**Phone Number** 705 293 2239

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**Website** elephantthoughts.com

**Phone Number** 705 444 2012

**Location** 10138 Hwy 26, across from Hyundai.



"SkiTrader.com is the #1 source for used ski & snowboard equipment. Sell your old winter equipment by posting a free ad. All postings are free. Browse other postings near you and find the best gear for a deal. It's Craigslist, but specifically for ski and snowboard equipment. Check it out today at skitrader.com."

**Website** skitrader.com

**Phone Number** 1 877 352 SKIS

**Location** Online

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**This winter, Mountain Life Magazine and Sun Peaks Resort want you to**

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Contest closes Tuesday, January 31, 2013.



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Photo credit: Adam Stein





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Above: Kyle Easby schralping the schnarb. COLIN FIELD PHOTO. Inset: The enigmatic Enn Poldmaa. GLEN HARRIS PHOTO.

# ONTARIO BACKCOUNTRY?

By Ester O' Neill

Lots of people would say the term "Ontario Backcountry" is an oxymoron. And sure, there are definitely some debatable points for and against that argument.

But let it be resolved that Bellevue Valley Lodge just outside of Sault Ste. Marie, qualifies as genuine Ontario Backcountry. And here's why.

The first reason that comes to mind is Enn Poldmaa. The enigmatic Enn. The guy who has been clearing 2,000 acres of skiable terrain since 1984. The guy who built a large B&B – it sleeps up to 15 – with the wood he cleared from that land. A 60-year-old with crow's feet that suggest a lifetime of laughter. The guy who has created an experience like no other (many have helped and could be named here, but Enn has spearheaded the effort).

The second reason would be the hardwood-filled Algoma Highlands in his

backyard. Lake Superior is just downwind and generates consistent lake-effect snowsqualls, piling over three metres of snow annually on Enn's ski touring paradise. Nearly 20 backcountry runs with big vertical drops are blessed with

backcountry skiing, the sauna completes the experience. Enn couldn't be a proud Estonian without building a sauna to top all saunas; this thing would melt the wax off your skis and cure your day's lactic acid buildup at the same time. Jumping



Lake Superior is just downwind and generates consistent lake-effect snowsqualls, piling over three metres of snow annually on this ski touring paradise.

names like Shaky Jake, Big Music and the 50-degree Pyramid of Denial. All the runs are a short ski-tour away from the back door of Bellevue Valley Lodge and the keen skier can get up to 4500 metres of vertical a day.

And thirdly, while technically not proving Bellevue Valley Lodge is genuine

through the ice on Enn's fishpond is the final kicker to a perfect day of, yes, I'll say it, "Ontario Backcountry."

Let the haters hate. I'm saving my energy for Enn's place. ■

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