

# REDISCOVER 'OTTAWA'

AS CANADA THROWS ITSELF A YEAR-LONG BIRTHDAY  
CELEBRATION, A VISIT TO OTTAWA SHOWS OUR  
NATIONAL CAPITAL HAS EVOLVED INTO A CITY  
OF UNEXPECTED DELIGHTS



KARAN SMITH

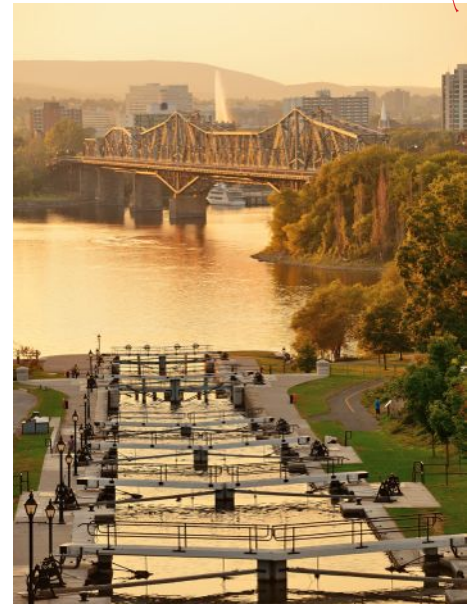
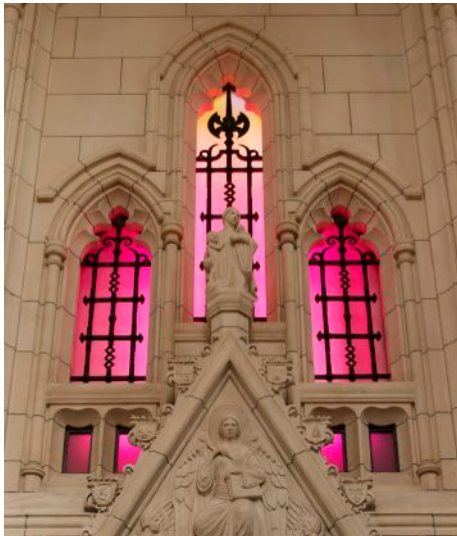
Summer along  
the beautiful  
Ottawa River

**WWW**

Go to [caamagazine.ca](http://caamagazine.ca) to  
learn about great places  
to celebrate Canada Day  
across the country



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This page, clockwise from top left: the Peace Tower's Memorial Chamber; Inuit carving (A.D. 1250–1300) at the Canadian Museum of History; the locks of the Rideau Canal; handmade wares at Maker House Co.; local suds from Bicycle Craft Brewery; a fresh approach at the Byward Market; artfully plated prawns at Riviera; looking up in the National Gallery of Canada; a patriotic display at the Parliament Buildings



# Walking into Riviera, with its grand art deco interiors, black telephone by the front door and host standing sentry, feels a bit like stepping back in time.

Which is strange because the restaurant, a stone's throw from Parliament, represents so much of where Ottawa is heading.

I join a friend at the brass-topped bar, which stretches the length of the former bank building. The clink of silverware, horns of soul music and conversation between young friends and old couples drift up and fade into the height of the 50-foot ceilings. In contrast, the kitchen staff surrounding chef Jordan Holley behind the bar are quiet but in constant motion: nestling a hillock of chips over beef tartare, slicing iceberg lettuce for the Nordic shrimp salad, tending hanger steak on the grill. Down the line, mixologist Stephen Flood, wearing an apron decorated with silver crowns, makes classics and new creations for his loyal followers.

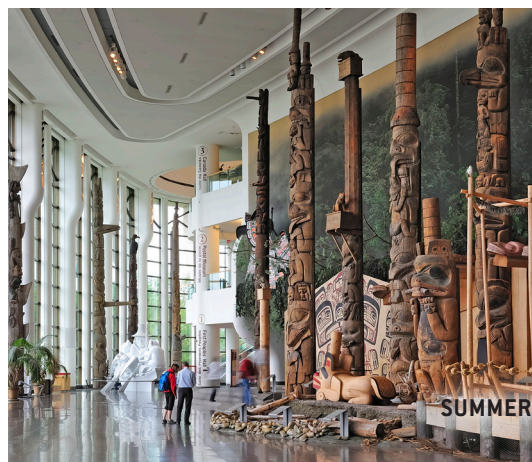
"I think Ottawa has often been overlooked, but it's been percolating," says chef Matthew Carmichael, who opened Riviera with Holley in their third culinary collaboration. "We're developing a humble confidence with what we're doing. We've got people coming into this space saying, 'I can't believe this is Ottawa.' But this is Ottawa now."

Outside Riviera, there's construction everywhere. Many of these projects are multi-million-dollar investments timed with the 150th birthday of the Dominion of Canada. Before the country blows out the candles, the National Gallery of Canada will open its new Canadian and Indigenous Galleries, the National Arts Centre will unveil a dramatic glass exterior and the Canadian Museum of History will launch a new chapter for the history books. Marquee hotels, including the Andaz and Le Germain brands, have also arrived.

Meanwhile, inside studios, shops and kombucha kitchens, a creative class has been embracing its lumber-town roots and shaping the city as much as its civil servants and transitory politicians. At Flapjack's Canadian Diner in Little Italy, you can cut into a towering Lumberjack breakfast in an Instagram-ready ambience. In Hintonburg, you can shop for YOW throw pillows or fire-roasted lime shave soap at Maker House Co., a treasure trove of handicrafts. On any given night, you can hear a local band or join an all-vinyl dance party at Chinatown's Bar Robo. In short, there's a lot more to do than visit the Peace Tower and stop to smell the tulips.

**This page, below:**  
**Brew Donkey**  
**Tours taps into the**  
**craft-beer trend;**  
**opposite page,**  
**clockwise from top**  
**left: cocktail prep at**  
**Riviera; two per cent**  
**of proceeds from all**  
**purchases at Maker**  
**House Co. go toward**  
**community projects;**  
**Victoire boutique**  
**proudly puts**  
**an emphasis on**  
**Canadian designers;**  
**co-owner Kevin**  
**Mathieson at**  
**Art-Is-In Bakery;**  
**strolling through**  
**the impressive**  
**Grand Hall of the**  
**Canadian Museum**  
**of History**





**CASE IN POINT:** the capital's burgeoning craft-beer scene. I'm on a yellow school bus winding through Ottawa's east end, past townhouses and strip malls. The tour, run by Brew Donkey, lets you sample the city's spread-out drink scene, and today's stops include Bicycle Craft Brewery, Dominion City Brewing and North of 7 Distillery.

"I worked for the federal government and I just always had a passion for craft beer. We really wanted to share our passion with everybody else," says Laura Behzadi, explaining how she and her husband, Fariborz, quit their jobs and started Bicycle Craft.

Gathering in front of the shop around a farm table, we sip the refreshing Sir John A Pale Ale and Velocipede IPA, the brewery's flagship, a well-balanced IPA with citrus notes. Behzadi then takes us into the back, pointing out the hand-canning machine and a bag of oranges she will zest later for a seasonal ale. As with many of Ottawa's brewers, the focus is on local ingredients. Bicycle Craft even brews their earthy City Hops Harvest Ale using fresh hops grown in a downtown backyard.



**WHILE THESE BREWERIES** are the capital's calling card now, they're a far cry from the muddy streets and whisky houses that shaped the city once known as Bytown.

To get a sense of that past, I head to the Canadian Museum of History on the banks of the Ottawa River in Gatineau, Que.

"Canadian history is such a big topic. Where do you begin?" says David Morrison, director of research and content for the Canadian History Hall at the museum. ▸



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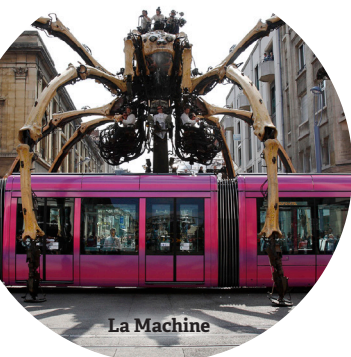


Food for thought  
at the popular  
Art-Is-In Bakery



**Passport  
2017**

Download the Passport 2017 app to keep up with events and attractions marking Canada's 150th anniversary. Check it daily for stories that tap into our national identity, along with recommendations for fun things happening across the country. [passport2017.ca](http://passport2017.ca)



La Machine

## COME CELEBRATE

Tulips and fireworks, yes, but a fire-breathing dragon? Yoga on a barge? To mark the sesquicentennial, a year-long schedule of special events is underway in the National Capital Region.

### IGNITE 150

**WHAT** Events will appear across the capital, with the only tipoff coming from app alerts and social media. Expect the unexpected, but hints so far involve yoga on a barge and modern dance in a fountain. Download the app (called Ottawa 2017) for details.

**WHEN** Year-round

**HOW MUCH** Free/ticketed

### MOSAÏCANADA

**WHAT** Dozens of living sculptures will take the shape of things like galloping horses, a grand piano and Mother Earth's giant head with flowing hair in this garden-gone-wild at Jacques-Cartier Park in Gatineau, Que.

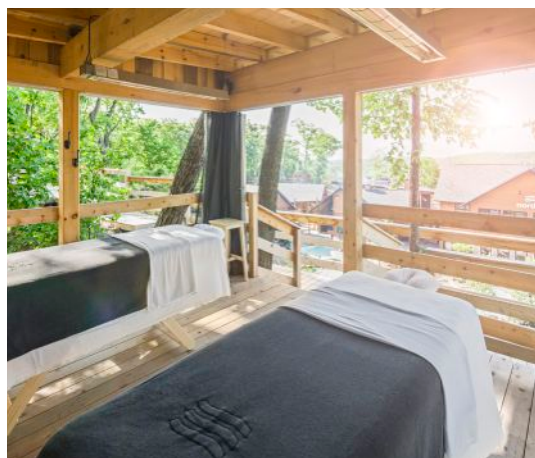
**WHEN** July 1 to Oct. 15

**HOW MUCH** Free





**Top to bottom:** Parliament Hill is an enduring gathering place for both Canada Day celebrations and hanging out on a lazy afternoon; outdoor massage tables are just one of the perks at Nordik Spa-Nature



I'm getting a sneak peek before the July 1 opening of the \$30-million, down-to-the-timbers revamp of the 40,000-square-foot space. Gone is the old Canada Hall, with its reconstructed streetscapes and chronological constraints. In its place are individual voices, multiple viewpoints, and the curves and openness architect Douglas Cardinal always envisioned. Looking at events from an indigenous perspective was especially important; the only reference in the previous iteration was a picture of Louis Riel.

Walking across carpet still protected by plastic, we stop at the spot where an exhibit on a man known as Nuvumiutag will be, thanks to a partnership with the community of Arctic Bay on Baffin Island. Human remains dating back 800 years, facial reconstruction techniques and 3-D scans were employed to bring the Inuit man and his story to life. "We want to get beyond archaeology and stone tools," says Morrison. "We want to show actual people."



**OTTAWA'S CULTURAL** institutions are always a draw, but the city is also a gateway to less erudite options. The proximity to Quebec—including its expansive Gatineau Park—is one of the city's pluses. And one spot in particular that draws locals the short distance across provincial lines is the Nordik Spa-Nature in Chelsea, Que.

Stress seems to dissipate as I climb the stone steps one afternoon. Inside, white-bathrobe-clad patrons trek between hot and cold pools. And there's so much choice: will it be the eucalyptus steam sauna? The hot pool with the waterfall? At one infinity pool that overlooks the valley, tuqued guests are shoulder deep in the water, sipping pints of beer.

I decide on the Källa experience first, a low-lit, underground saltwater pool. Slipping an inflated pillow under my head, I sink into the water and let the experience take me away. ▷

## INTERPROVINCIAL PICNIC

**WHAT** Tickets sold out months ago, but there will be some available with hotel packages if you want to dine alfresco on the Alexandra Bridge, which links Ontario and Quebec and will be carpeted in fresh grass for the event.

**WHEN** July 2

**HOW MUCH** Prices vary depending on the package

## KONTINUUM

**WHAT** Details about this multimedia experience are few, but we do know it will take place in Lyon Station, one of the new light rail transit (LRT) stations that will open officially in 2018. This production was created by Moment Factory and runs for 10 weeks.

**WHEN** End of June to September

**HOW MUCH** Free

## LA MACHINE

**WHAT** This urban theatre from France makes its North American debut when the company's large-scale machines—a fire-breathing dragon and giant spider—roam the streets of downtown Ottawa.

**WHEN** July 26 to 30

**HOW MUCH** Free

## MAGNIFICENCE OF CHAUDIÈRE FALLS

**WHAT** Held at an important Algonquin site, this show features a light and ambient sound display designed to illuminate the falls and celebrate Canada's indigenous presence.

**WHEN** Late September to early November

**HOW MUCH** Free



This page, clockwise from top left: the light-filled National Gallery of Canada; seasonal produce at ByWard Market; Changing of the Guard on Parliament Hill; Copper Spirits & Sights before opening time



**IT'S NEVER EASY** to leave the Nordik, but there's still one stop on my itinerary: Parliament Hill. The expansive front lawn functions as a

public square of sorts. People gather here for protests, light shows and, in the summer, yoga. Come Canada Day, it will be awash in celebrants dressed in red and white, and this year the experience will be heightened, both on the day and in a year-long calendar of special events.

I start in ByWard Market, crossing the shops and stalls, before wandering down to the Rideau Locks. I then climb back up toward Parliament and the Centennial Flame. Tours of the Parliament buildings are cancelled that day due to maintenance, so exterior selfies will have to suffice.

But another viewpoint awaits: the 16th-floor bar at the Andaz hotel, where I'm spending the night. The Andaz brought a shot of modern luxury to the hotel scene when it opened last fall, and its sky-high bar, Copper Spirits & Sights, has become an Ottawa moment, too.

Exiting the elevator, I follow the copper birds suspended from the ceiling to a seat near the window. From this perch, I can see the Peace Tower, the Ottawa River and the glittering downtown core. It's a new viewpoint on the city—derided as a “glorified timber depot” when it was chosen as the capital—and one that shows Ottawa has long since shaken off its sleepy, second-city status. **CAA**

## WHERE TO EAT IN OTTAWA

The city's dining scene shows no sign of slowing down with new openings and steadfast favourites. Consider these noteworthy picks on your next visit.

### FAIROUZ

Expect an easy atmosphere and upscale Middle Eastern food by Fairouz's young executive chef, Walid El-Tawel. Mains include sumac chicken served with bam dates and chili relish. Pomegranate-molasses-infused drinks and desserts such as Turkish coffee tart maintain the theme.

### COCONUT LAGOON

Chef and owner Joe Thottungal has Ottawa talking about his unique South Indian restaurant, which, while a little out-of-the-way, is worth the Uber. The dinner menu features items such as crispy lentil doughnuts, spicy vegetable uthappam and Kovallam lobster masala.

### FEAST + REVEL

Andaz chef Stephen La Salle finds inspiration in what he calls a new Canadian menu. Think soft bannock, elk ribs and apple feuille cake that combines crunchy almonds and apples with a wave of cream. The menu also crisscrosses the country with dishes such as a bouillabaisse that includes B.C. halibut and P.E.I. mussels.

### CITIZEN

A second restaurant from the creators of Town—a popular Italian-focused eatery located around the corner—Citizen features some of the signature dishes Town is known for, along with snacks and a lineup of bottled beer. Dinner options include lamb lasagna and scallop crudo.

### BAR LAUREL

Named after a tapas street in northern Spain, this is chef Jon Svazas' second restaurant (after Fauna on Bank Street) and pays homage to Basque country with small bites and bigger shareable plates such as sardines served with fire-roasted cherry tomatoes or roasted chicken with creamy polenta and salsa rosa.