

A world of things happening in Ottawa

By Sharon Blomfield
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

OTTAWA — Colorful and dynamic with a hip youthful vibe, Ottawa is finding its way onto the agendas of the world's travelers. Among them this summer here in Ontario will be the planet's most famous newlyweds — yes, Kate and Wills — on a post-honeymoon trek. Canada's beautiful capital city, an hour's flight from Boston, makes a great weekend getaway.

STAY: Ottawa is compact, with most of its attractions clustered within walking distance of Parliament Hill, making the downtown the best spot to stay. Taxis and buses can take you farther afield.

Beside the Parliament Buildings in the center of town is the **Fairmont Château Laurier**, the city's turreted grande dame. Its luxurious rooms include some that overlook the Ottawa River and Quebec's green Gatineau Hills beyond. Reasonably priced apartment hotels like the **Albert at Bay Suites Hotel** abound in central Ottawa. Some even include full kitchens and are a great choice for families and for longer stays. Ottawa's small inns offer character and charm. Try **McGee's Inn**, one of Canada's top bed-and-breakfasts, near the Byward Market district, or **Ambiance B&B** closer to Parliament. Characters of another sort inhabited the old city prison, now the **Ottawa Jail Hostel** where guests enjoy shared and private cells, the warden's quarters, or traditional hostel rooms. And for post-touring R&R there is the appropriately dubbed **Mugshots** bar. Be forewarned, though, that wisps of disgruntled previous residents have been sensed hanging about late at night.

EAT: Ottawans love to eat out and, with embassies from every corner of the world, they have long had a choice of ethnic cuisines. In the past several years, the dining scene has exploded with another phenomenon, young chefs who have opened restaurants. This new generation of foodies can be spotted at the market sniffing basil and pinching tomatoes, or at Savour Ottawa networking events tête-à-tête with equally passionate local farmers poring over designer vegetables in the latest seed catalog. These chefs are an inventive, fun-loving lot who view their competitors as comrades and diners as part of the action. Their food is superb but less fussy (read: less expensive) than the fine dining of old and no one cares how much you have dressed up.

Among the standouts are **Play Food & Wine**, **Wellington Gastropub**, **Murray Street**, **Atelier**, and, for a touch of Paris, **Bistro St. Jacques** across the river in Que-



OTTAWA TOURISM; THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA (BELOW LEFT)

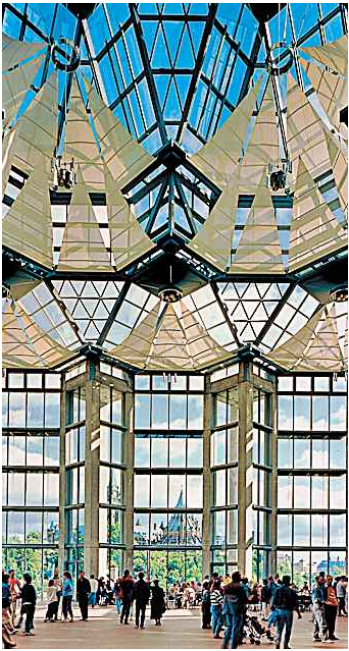
The Rideau Canal bisects Ottawa, with pleasure boats traffic in summer and skaters in winter. The Byward Market is always bustling, with a busy farmers' market at its center, and the National Gallery of Canada is an architectural attraction, too.

bec. Another favorite is **DiVino Wine Studio** in Preston Street's Little Italy and its Chef's Table where patrons sip on lesser-known Italian vintages while they chat with its owner, sommelier, and Rome native Antonio Mauriello, and with his staff in the open kitchen as they prepare sharing plates the likes of olives all'ascolana and spinach gnocchi as light as a down pillow.

DO: No Ottawa day begins properly without a stop at the Byward Market bakery, **Moulin de Provence**, for a café au lait and one of its endless baguettes and brioches, croissants, and quiches. It was here that President Obama breezed in unannounced on his first Ottawa visit for a pair of maple-leaf-shaped treats — now "Obama cookies" — for daughters Sasha and Malia.

The Byward Market district is Ottawa's liveliest and hums with energy all day and long into the night. At its heart is a farmers' market whose overstuffed flower stalls and colorful arrays of fruits and veggies spill onto surrounding streets in warmer months. It's four blocks square and filled with independent shops and cafes, galleries, pubs, and restaurant patios one after the other. Check out **Lafreniere & Pai Gallery** for fine jewelry, ceramics, and glass by Canadian artists, **Workshop Studio & Boutique** for funky handmade gifts, or for artisanal cheeses from Quebec and beyond, **The House of Cheese**.

Shopping finds farther afield include the **White Monkey** on



Gladstone for retro furniture and accessories, **Mags & Fags** on Elgin with 4,000 magazine titles and Cuban cigars, and **The Candy Store** on Richmond, a candy lover's fairland with shelves upon shelves of glass jars filled with a rainbow of sweets.

Near the market is the magnificent **National Gallery of Canada**, where art lovers flock to its extensive collections of Inuit art, photography, Group of Seven paintings, and blockbuster exhibitions. This year features "Caravaggio and His Followers in Rome," the first Canadian showing of works by the influential Italian Baroque painter (June 17-Sept. 11). Next year van Gogh comes to the gallery.

Though Ottawa dresses in its



finest flowers and greenery for summer, this is an outdoors city in all seasons. The **Rideau Canal**, which bisects the city, is prime strolling territory, a popular pleasure boat route and, when winter descends, the world's longest skating rink. Here you can take cruises, rent bikes, skates, and sleighs. Along the canal, the newly-opened **Ottawa Convention Centre** with its sinuous glass exterior adds a note of bling to the skyline.

Museum hounds revel in the capital's wealth of **national museums**. The Aviation & Space Museum. The Mint. The RCMP Musical Ride stables. The Canadian War Museum. The Museum of Nature. The Museum of Civilization. The Science & Technology Museum. Several host children's weekend sleepovers so parents can indulge in more adult pursuits.

Night life in Ottawa revolves

around live music in its pubs, a casual scene that attracts all ages. Some of the best are **The Irish Village** in the Byward, **The Rainbow** where Blues Brother and Ottawa native Dan Aykroyd sometimes drops by, the candlelit cellar **Vineyards Wine Bar Bistro** with cover-free jazz on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, and **Zaphod Beeblebrox** where the Rolling Stones filmed their "Streets of Love" video.

The Gothic-style **Parliament Buildings**, Canada's seat of government, dominate Ottawa's downtown, their slender Peace Tower a firm exclamation mark on the city. There are free guided tours daily and outside on the Hill — the country's front lawn. Summer brings the 10 a.m. Changing of the Guards and a free sound-and-light show every evening at dusk.

Summer, too, is festival season with at least one every week-

If you go . . .

- Where to stay**
McGee's Inn
185 Daly Ave.
800-262-4337
www.mcgeesinn.com
Rooms from \$124.
Albert at Bay Suite Hotel
435 Albert St.
800-267-6644
www.albertatbay.com
Rooms from \$135.
Fairmont Château Laurier
1 Rideau St.
866-540-4410
www.fairmont.com/laurier
Rooms from approximately \$272.
Where to eat
Play Food & Wine
1 York St.
1-613-667-9207
www.playfood.ca
"2 Plates for \$20" (\$21 US) at lunch time.
Wellington Gastropub
1325 Wellington St. West
1-613-729-1315
www.wellingtongastropub.com
Lunch from \$13.70, dinner from \$19.
DiVino Wine Studio
225 Preston St.
1-613-221-9760
www.divinowinestudio.com
Appetizers from \$9.50, pasta tasting platter \$27.

end. This month Ottawa becomes a Netherlands on the Rideau as the glorious **Tulip Festival** bursts forth in parks, on lawns, and beside roadways all over the city. There's the Dragonboat festival, Bluesfest, the Ottawa Jazz Festival, the International Children's Festival, writers' festivals, dance festivals, art festivals, a chicken and rib cookoff — the list is endless.

This year, **Westfest** features a special day of Inuit performances that range from throat singers to pop (June 11).

The hottest party date is always July 1, when Canadians and visitors from all over don the colors of the Maple Leaf flag and flock to Parliament Hill for concerts, frivolity, and fireworks to celebrate **Canada Day**, the country's birthday. Sometimes royals come, too. Last year it was Queen Elizabeth. This year her grandson and his new bride, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, will attend. Just one bit of wardrobe advice for them — and for you. Wear red on that day and you, too, will be hailed as family.

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Destinations

NIGHT LIFE

Summer sounds set the stage

JUNE 7-12
MANCHESTER, Tenn.
Bonnaroo: Thankfully this one-time jam band fest has lost much of its patchouli-soaked roots in favor of a more diverse group of musicians. So diverse, in fact, that it's one of the few gatherings where you can find Loretta Lynn and Eminem on the same bill. This year's Bonnaroo also has Grammy winners Arcade Fire, along with Mumford & Sons, the Strokes, Lil Wayne, Girl Talk, Florence + the Machine, and Scissor Sisters. Sadly, Bonnaroo is still clinging to some of its hippie-esque origins with appearances by the String Cheese Incident and Dr. John. Tickets for the festival are selling briskly, but there are a few tickets left for \$249.50. The price covers all days of the festival, plus parking and camping. www.bonnaroo.com

JUNE 1-30
NEW YORK
Blue Note Jazz Festival: In honor of its 30th anniversary, the legendary Blue Note Jazz Club kicks off its own festival with a whopping 30 days of shows. Most take place at the club, and a handful take place at other venues throughout the city. The club also will host an outdoor show at Central Park's Summerstage. Acts performing throughout the festival include Dave Brubeck, Nancy Wilson, Madeleine Peyroux, Chris Botti, Manhattan



Girl Talk performing in 2009 at Bonnaroo in Manchester, Tenn.

Transfer, and Bobby McFerrin. There are also rock and pop musicians crashing the party, including Chaka Khan, Duncan Sheik, and Brian Wilson, who will be reinterpreting the music of Gershwin. www.bluenotejazzfestival.com

JUNE 16-18
BARCELONA
Sonar Festival: For a weekend, the city trades its Catalan accent for a more global lexicon. This festival is a massive — and unlikely — collection of internation-

al artists converging on the seaside city. This year's groups and DJs include M.I.A., the Human League, Underworld, Aphex Twin, Four Tet, Annie, and Janelle Monae. The shows take place throughout the city. 2011.sonar.es

JULY 8-10
COUNTY KILDARE, Ireland
Oxygen Festival: Ireland's largest music festival sports some of the biggest names, including Foo Fighters, the Black Eyed Peas, Coldplay, Arctic Monkeys,

Swedish House Mafia, Slash, and Brandon Flowers. Even with its massive crowds, the festival at Punchestown Racecourse can claim to be one of the greenest. With heavy use of energy efficient lighting and generators, and strong promotion of recycling and biking, the gathering leaves a petite carbon footprint. www.oxygen.ie

PLAN AHEAD
JULY 15-17
CHICAGO
Pitchfork Music Festival: Summer music festivals can be an unending string of exhausting 12-hour days, packed with more shows than you could possibly attend. The Pitchfork Music Festival at Union Park feels less like a marathon and more like a leisurely weekend of intriguing shows without the fatigue. This year's festival includes sets from Animal Collective, Fleet Foxes, TV on the Radio, Cut Copy, Guided by Voices, James Blake, Deerhunter, and tUnE-yArDs. Tickets for the weekend package are sold out, but tickets for individual days are still available for \$45. www.pitchforkmusicfestival.com
CHRISTOPHER MUTHER

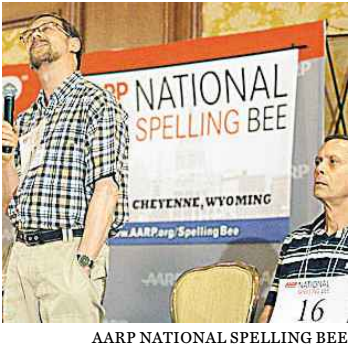
Events are sometimes canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; check online. Christopher Muther can be reached at muther@globe.com.

Currents

How do you spell 'senior'?

Minds meet in Cheyenne, Wyo., on June 17-18 for the annual AARP National Spelling Bee. The event, open to anyone 50 and older, attracts people nationwide who compete for gifts and prizes worth up to \$5,000. Attend a free "pre-bee" workshop, "Gray Matters: Training the Grownup Brain," which features interactive sessions that explain the impact of diet, fitness, and relationships on brain health. Visit Western-themed art galleries, the award-winning Laramie County Library, and museums that showcase the history of this rodeo and railroad capital. Registration \$40 in advance, \$50 at the door. Contact Wyoming's AARP office for a two-day schedule, sample word lists, contest details, and official rules. 866-663-3290, www.aarp.org/spellingbee

Get points while you sleep
This summer, members of InterContinental Hotels' Priority Club Rewards program can earn double points or double miles for their stay at any Candlewood Suites or Staybridge Suites hotel worldwide, or for their second stay at any InterContinental Hotel, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Hotel Indigo, Holiday Inn, or Holiday Inn Express through Aug. 15. Put your extra points or miles toward meals, accommodations, flights, gas, and other travel costs. Sign up for the free rewards program online. 888-211-9874, www.priorityclub.com/earndouble



Contestants in last year's AARP National Spelling Bee in Cheyenne, Wyo.

Truly monumental tour
Adventurer and bestselling author Robert Edsel, who wrote "The Monuments Men" (Center Street, 2009), leads a 10-day trip this fall for the National World War II Museum retracing searches by "scholar soldiers" who saved artworks and cultural treasures from destruction by the Nazis in the war's final months. The In the Footsteps of the Monuments Men Tour departs from Paris Sept. 16 and includes visits to the Louvre, Hitler's Eagle's Nest Retreat in Berchtesgaden, Germany, and the salt mines of Altaussee, Austria, where thousands of artworks were recovered. Rate: \$14,999 per person, based on double occupancy, includes travel from Paris to the tour's final destination in Munich, accommodations, and meals. 877-813-3329, www.nationalww2museum.org/travel
KARI BODNARCHUK