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La Machine hopes to captivate audiences with its ambulatory urban theatre on the streets of downtown Ottawa.

Summer in Ottawa for Canada's 150th

What not to miss...

BY DAWN MATHESON

If you are among the masses heading to Ottawa this summer for what's being called "Canada's Biggest Party Ever," there are a few attractions you just won't want to miss.

Our family goes every summer to visit my partner's French-Canadian mom, who lives a few blocks from the ByWard Market neighbourhood. The open-air market provides enough entertainment (and cheese!) in itself to fill our few vacation days, but with Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson promising a "once in a generation" experience for Canada's 150th — expecting to draw some 10 million tourists by year's end — we thought we had better do some early planning.

"Big, bold, immersive and transformative" is how Ottawa is marketing the many

festivities planned throughout the year, far surpassing the customary fireworks and fanfare showcasing Parliament Hill every July 1. (But, if that's your predilection, book your accommodation early. In anticipation of the throngs of tourists looking for beds, the city has even opened up parking lots, arenas and parks for camping and RVing.)

For our family, I'm hoping to miss a bit of the mayhem by heading to Ottawa in late August, when there should still be lots of party-going, but hopefully fewer party-goers.

Here is what we intend to hit. (Check out ottawa2017.ca for a full list of activities.)

ByWard Market is more than buskers, beer patios and Brie this summer. Forty-one pop-up stages mounted inside shipping containers will offer special exhibits, such as culinary demonstrations and performances

that showcase different provinces and territories. "Inspiration Village" will be installed on York Street until Sept. 4 and its activities are free.

The Canadian War Museum (warmuseum.ca) was last on my list for our family visit last year, but turned out to be the most affecting destination for all of us.

It wasn't just the full theatre of war in the "Experiences" galleries — interactive, digitally animated rooms with flashes and booms of artillery amidst real military artifacts — nor was it the smaller personal reflective spaces, the staged living rooms of families listening to the news on sofas in the 1940s, the piles of real soldiers' letters we sat and read, and some 330 original works of art on display.

It was the man who approached my

THEY COME FROM ALL OVER.
MANY FROM OUR OWN BACKYARD,
SOME FROM ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE POND.

SOME ARE SHORT,
SOME ARE TALLER,
SOME ARE THINNER,
SOME ARE NOT.
SOME ARE OLDER,
SOME ARE A LITTLE WORSE FOR WEAR.

THEY COME IN A VARIETY OF SHAPES AND SIZES,
AND DIFFERENT COLORS.

THEY ALL HAVE THEIR OWN STORY...
WHERE THEY'VE BEEN, HOW THEY GOT THERE.

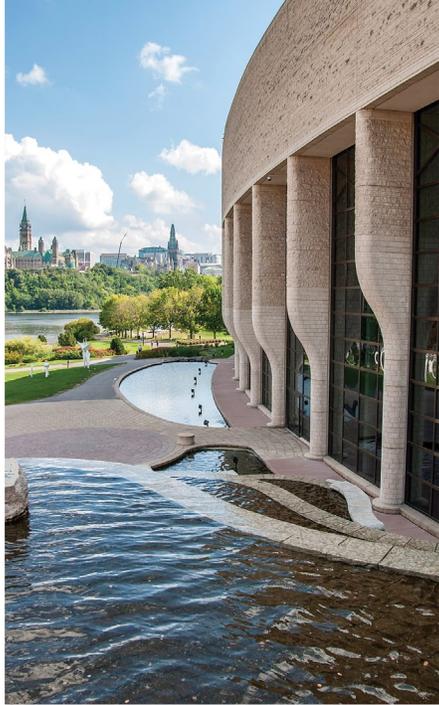
DESPITE ALL THE DIFFERENCES...WE KNOW...

**IT'S WHAT'S ON THE
INSIDE THAT COUNTS.**

WITH ALL OF THEIR UNIQUE TRAITS, AND DISTINCTIVE HISTORY, THEY HAVE FOUND A HOME WITH US. (AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING)

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PHOTOGRAPHY • OTTAWA TOURISM

Canadian Museum of History

12-year-old son when he was nose-to-glass over a display case of old guns.

The tall elderly man in a blue blazer, shoulders stooped, no doubt from the weight of all the dangling medals pinned to his chest, was one of about 65 “voluntary interpreters” with personal war experience who wander around interacting with museum visitors. These interpreters bring to life the things in the glass cases as well as telling stories of their own. My son, for example, learned the Lee-Enfield No. 4 was a gun used in Korea and in the Second World War.

For Canada’s 150th year, the War Museum is marking the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge with a diverse range of exhibitions and programs, and we won’t miss it.

Others may prefer the partner museum just across the Ottawa River in Gatineau: The Canadian Museum of History (historymuseum.ca). Formerly the Canadian Museum of Civilization – it was renamed and rebranded in 2013 – it is one of the most visited museums in Canada. When our kids were younger, not much could beat the children’s section and its interactive world expo.

The special exhibit this summer is called “Hockey,” and, for some, you can’t get much more Canadian than a puck and a stick. Expect a glimpse of Maurice “The Rocket” Richard’s famous sweater.

The museum is also redesigning its Canada Hall for a grand opening on Canada Day. Closed since Sept. 1, 2014, some had criticized the museum for mainly focusing on the arrival of Europeans in the 11th century and onwards. The new hall will span two floors and will cover 13,000 years of Canadian history, from the earliest Indigenous People to the 21st century.

The National Gallery of Canada (gallery.ca) is following suit with revisions of its own: the new Canadian and Indigenous Galleries. Curators have rethought how to present Canadian art and culture, interweaving Aboriginal and Inuit work. Our Masterpieces, Our Stories will feature close to 1,000 works of Canadian art – all under one roof.

The Canadian Museum of Nature (nature.ca) is opening a new permanent gallery space called the Canada Goose Arctic Gallery. It’s a region in Canada my children and I are unlikely to visit in person, but this exposition promises an immersive experience with the North’s unique landscape, its plants and animals, and the voices of the people who live there.

In the spirit of flashmobs, Ignite 150 presents a series of what’s being called “17 epic stunts and happenings that will turbocharge every corner of the capital in 2017.” Key elements of the programming will be revealed a few days before each event via the Ottawa 2017 app.

It’s hard to imagine what Ignite 150 will come up with to match the monsters from *La Machine*, on loan from France: a giant, fire-breathing dragon and a huge mechanical spider will roam the streets of downtown Ottawa from July 27 to 30. With a cost of \$3 million, this will mark the first time the fire-breathing and water-spraying creatures invade North America.

Perhaps the event most anticipated by my teen is *Kontinuum*, a free interactive sound and light fantasy voyage, 350 metres underground to Lyon Street Station, a stop on Ottawa’s unfinished light rail transit tunnel. Montreal- and Ottawa-based creators Moment Factory open *Kontinuum* to the public until mid-September. 

Where to Get It

A guide to some of the products and services featured in this issue.

COVER AND STYLE FEATURES

Styling and Photography: Alisha Townsend is with **Fresh Studios**, freshstudios.ca; 905-515-5259

Model’s Hair and Makeup: Sarah Davidson of **beauty by Sarah D**; beautybysarahd.com; info@beautybysarahd.com; 519-504-8298

Location: Arrow Lofts on Benton Street in Kitchener; info@arrowlofts.com; 519-954-3859

Cover

• Blouse available at **Classique Boutique**, 35 Ainslie St. N., Cambridge; 519-622-5527; classiqueboutique.ca

Style pages 56-71

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