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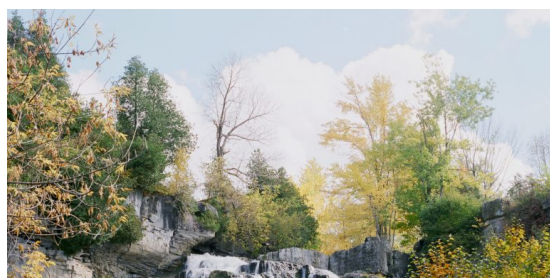
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Canoeing with Salmon on the Sydenham River

February 20, 2018 - by Melody Wren



Canoeing among the spawning salmon on the Sydenham River in Ontario's Grey County was such a special experience, I still think about its magical qualities months later. Fall is a beautiful time to visit the area and hike to some of the ten waterfalls in the area or to canoe amongst the salmon.



We were advised to start our tour at Inglis Falls, as they cascade eighteen-meters into the Sydenham River. Waterfalls are a common theme for tours in the area with sparkling rivers tumbling over the edges of the Niagara Escarpment from Holstein through the Beaver Valley and up to Owen sound.

Owen Sound is one of the few places in Ontario where you can



Inglis Falls, Courtesy of Don Sankey

watch mighty Pacific salmon spawning in a natural habitat. From the fish hatchery at Weavers Creek, a cool spring fed waterway, 2,000 meters of fish spawning channels enable the hatching, growing and release of between 300,000 and 500,000 salmon and trout each year. When they mature, the salmon head from the open waters of Georgian Bay back home to the Sydenham river to spawn.

We paddled through the city under the Tom Thomson Bridge

and the Veteran's Way Bridge before the Mill Dam came into sight. The water was very shallow, as we zig zagged, oohing and ahing, over the swirling enormous salmon. Later we walked along a shallow creek to see them spawning. Witnessing the flurry of activity as the salmon climbed up the water ladders to spawn was mesmerizing. Salmon-watching season depends on the weather, so check with At Last Adventures for the optimal timing.



Spawning Salmon, Courtesy of Owen Sound Tourism

Grey County is an area of many communities valuing heritage, natural beauty, a clean, healthy environment and a rural lifestyle. Even though it is the fourth largest county in Ontario, it doesn't have a high population which adds to the relaxed lifestyle. Spending only two nights in the area, we had to prioritize what we wanted to see and experience because there were so many choices.



Joel Loughead, Cider Maker, Coffin Ridge Winery

Tucked in the countryside, down a pothole filled side road is an unassuming building surrounded by vineyards. Gwen and Neil Lamont had a vision when they bought the property where they found wild grapevines growing. Cold climate grapes are a combination of French varietal and native North American. The hill called Coffin Ridge, which their packaging and unique names of wine and cider for Coffin Ridge Winery reflect. Snowshoe trails and an outside patio keep people coming all year round.

Grey County is known for its apples with 23% of Ontario's apples grown here, so it makes sense that Coffin Ridge makes cider. I had never tasted hard cider before. I found it refreshing, not sweet as anticipated and tasty enough to buy. The tastes of the different products are reminiscent of the apple from which they are made. I particularly liked Forbidden Hopped that had the scent of herbal minty flowers with a puckery tart taste.

With so much to see and do, we left a lot undone, hoping we might have to tuck back into the comfy beds at Cobble Beach Resort another time to get to the other waterfalls, have a chance to look at the many local art studios, and do some more hiking.

USEFUL WEBSITES

- www.coffinridge.ca
- www.greatsalmontour.com
- www.visitgrey.ca
- www.visitgrey.ca/waterfalls

- <http://www.atlastadventures.com>



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