



OKANAGAN VALLEY
BRITISH COLUMBIA

2007/2008

OKANAGAN Life

RELOCATION

and REAL ESTATE GUIDE

- OSOYOOS
- OLIVER
- PENTICTON
- NARAMATA
- SUMMERLAND
- PEACHLAND
- WESTSIDE
- KELOWNA
- LAKE COUNTRY
- VERNON
- ARMSTRONG

PLUS *places near and in between*



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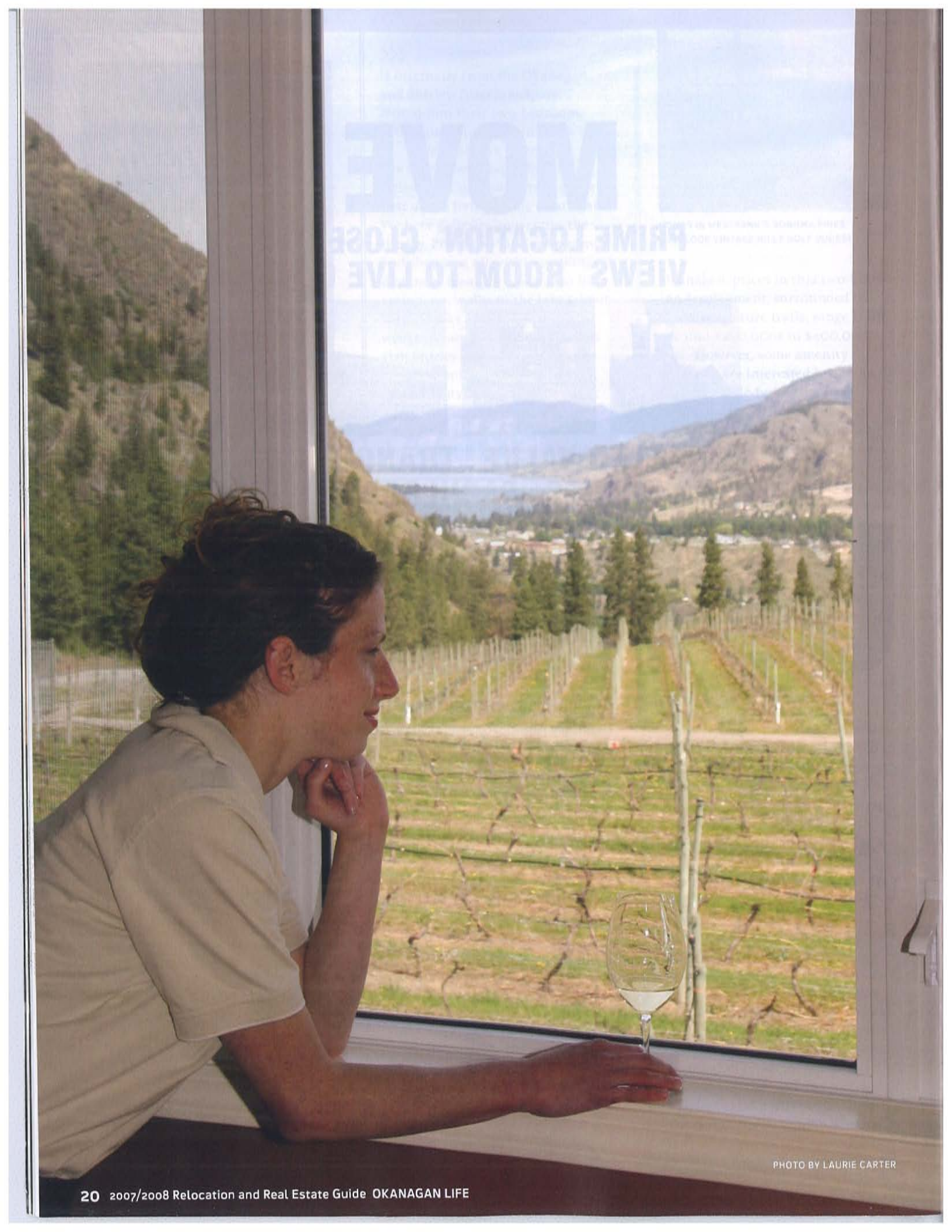
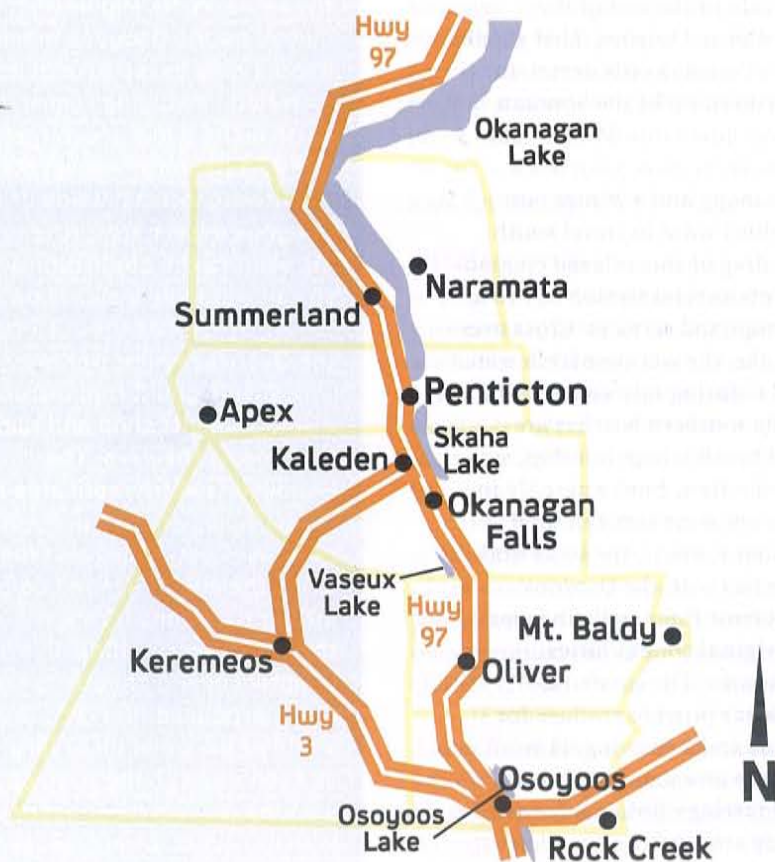


PHOTO BY LAURIE CARTER

HAWTHORNE MOUNTAIN VINEYARDS
IS THE HIGHEST ELEVATION
WINERY IN THE OKANAGAN

the South Okanagan

Orchards, vineyards and warm desert air — this might just be the place to set up your new lair



Ecosystems rare and precious, lifestyles relaxed and tuned to nature — the South Okanagan is unique in all of Canada. The Sonoran Desert reaches its northern extremity at McIntyre Bluff between Oliver and Okanagan Falls. In this warmest, driest region of the Okanagan spring blossoms herald a growing season that starts weeks earlier and lasts later than just about anywhere else in the country. Long summer days with very little rain concentrate sunlight at the time when plants need it most. And while the land is parched, it's also immensely fertile.

Just add water and presto... orchards, vineyards and vegetable patches of stunning abundance. These days, rustic roadside fruit stands share the landscape with a crop of wineries and tasting rooms in every style from log cabin to chic chateau, old mill to adobe nouveau. And to complement the fast developing wine tourism industry, new eateries and lodgings are sprouting up throughout the region.

But wine is just the latest phase of a deep and rich cultural heritage celebrated at sites like the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre, the S.S. Sicamous, the KVR Steam Train and galleries and museums from Osoyoos to Summerland.

Old and new easily coexist in towns that retain a strong community feel. Although there's a growing trend toward southwest style, the region displays plenty of architectural variety with traditional frame farmhouses, original arts and crafts homes, English Tudors and simple ranchers.

The mix of climate and geography that began drawing settlement millennia ago has also attracted generations of vacationers to peach and beach country. Tourism has evolved, but water sports, golf, hiking, cycling and fishing continue to lure visitors during the warm months while winter resorts at Apex and Mount Baldy extend the fun to all four seasons. The South Okanagan invites people to play and stay. —Laurie Carter



CROSSROADS OF THE SOUTH OKANAGAN, OSOYOOS STRADDLES THE HIGHWAY BETWEEN ALBERTA AND THE COAST AND SERVES AS A GATEWAY TO BC FROM THE STATES

SOUTHWEST STYLE LOOKS RIGHT AT HOME IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE OF THIS DESERT COMMUNITY

SPRING BLOSSOMS PERFUME THE ORCHARDS WITH THE PROMISE OF LUSH FRUIT TO COME

OSOYOOS

Named "Prettiest Little Town," this desert gem boasts the warmest lake, lowest rainfall and highest temperatures in Canada

No matter what the temperature in the rest of the Okanagan, it's going to be hotter in Osoyoos. That should come as no surprise, since it's Canada's only desert. In fact, this arid zone is the northern tip of the Sonoran Desert that extends all the way down into Mexico. The hot, dry summers and mild winters make Osoyoos a warm weather playground to many and a winter nesting spot for snowbirds who don't want to travel south.

A drive down the main drag of this relaxed community takes you through the commercial section of town, with its many restaurants, shops and services. Cross over to the east side of Osoyoos Lake, the warmest fresh water lake in Canada (averaging 24 C during July and August), and you're in holidayland. The southern beaches are lined with campgrounds and hotels where families, some of them second and third generation, come annually to spend their summer holidays enjoying sun and sand.

But Osoyoos isn't all about tourists; the hard-working local residents have close ties with the Osoyoos Indian Band, one of Canada's most financially independent and business savvy aboriginal communities.

Agriculture is big in this area. The surrounding orchards and vegetable farms provide produce for the many roadside fruit stands and a growing number of award-winning vineyards give ample opportunity for local wine tours and tastings. So come for a visit; the welcome mat is ready and waiting. Just don't be surprised if you find it hard to leave. —Rick Cogbill



NOT TO BE MISSED

The **Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre**, now in its second year, is a \$9-million state-of-the-art interpretive centre located on the 200-acre Nk'Mip Resort owned by the Osoyoos Indian Band. Using desert-like building materials, including rammed earth walls and a green roof, this architectural marvel blends sensitively into a hillside of the Osoyoos desert area, offering visitors the opportunity to gain valuable insights on nature as well as the culture of the Okanagan First Nations.

Inside you'll find historical displays, a gift shop and two multimedia theatres. The Pithouse Theatre replicates a winter home and the presentation takes you back to a time when the elders handed down strong traditions through the use of storytelling. In the Chaptik Legend Theatre, a specially produced film recounts a tale of personal discovery as seen through the eyes of a young woman reconnecting with her roots during a summer visit to her grandparent's

LARGE PHOTO BY LAURIE CARTER; OTHERS BY RICK COGBILL



home on the reservation.

Outside, many hands-on exhibits, as well as incredible metal, rock and water sculptures bring local legends to life. A network of self-guided trails runs through 50 acres of the Great Basin Desert. The trails lead to different locations and lookouts including a reconstructed traditional Okanagan village. Of special interest is the ongoing rattlesnake research program, where you'll learn much about the western rattlesnake, its ways and its habitat. —RC



SHOPPING: Many terrific shops line the Osoyoos downtown core, but a great place to start your shopping safari is 8501 Main St., a building that's been "home" to the city's most unusual hardware store since 1942.

Osoyoos Home Hardware was named the Best Hardware Store in Canada by *Hardware Merchandising Magazine*. The large, rambling, multi-level interior holds everything from paint to gourmet foods. But the best part is that the moment you enter the store, you're drawn back to a time when shopping was a social event, not just a necessity. Old newspaper clippings and photos on the walls reflect the early years of Osoyoos. And look for the toy train circling on its suspended track.

DINING: When it comes to dining, Osoyoos offers plenty of choice. The **Campomarina Café and Restaurant** serves a romantic dinner in the ambiance of Southern Europe. Michael and Gemma Oran opened this local favourite in 1994 and it's earned a reputation for elegant cuisine and exemplary service in a warm and relaxed setting. Specialties include certified Angus sirloin beef with mushrooms in a demi-glaze and cedar-planked wild salmon.

For a meal with a view, check out the patio restaurant at **Nk'Mip Cellars** where you can experience the beauty of the orchards, vineyards and desert while you enjoy your food and taste some local wines including Nk'Mip's own premium tier Q squared (verbal shorthand for QWAM QWMT that nobody knows how to pronounce).

If you're after something a little less formal, try **The Ridge Brew House and Restaurant**. The Santa Fe-style building and in-house brewery makes the Ridge one of the most interesting pubs in the South Okanagan. The menu includes steak, ribs, seafood, and wraps, plus your choice of five different quality beers, brewed right on site. —RC

A CENTURY HAS PASSED SINCE THE FIRST COMMERCIAL ORCHARD WAS PLANTED IN OSOYOOS AND THE TRADITION CONTINUES. IN THE DESERT CLIMATE, BLOSSOMS POP AND PRODUCE RIPENS A COUPLE OF WEEKS EARLIER THAN THE REST OF THE VALLEY. THE FRUIT HARVEST STARTS WITH CHERRIES IN LATE JUNE AND CONTINUES THROUGH APRICOTS, PEACHES, PEARS AND PLUMS TO THE END OF APPLE SEASON IN LATE OCTOBER

NK'MIP CELLARS IS NORTH AMERICA'S FIRST ABORIGINAL OWNED AND OPERATED WINERY. FIRST NATIONS TRADITIONS COLOUR THE STYLISH DESIGN OF THE TASTING ROOM AND EXTEND TO THE POPULAR SALMON BARBECUES HELD ON THE WINERY'S PATIO

NK'MIP PHOTOS BY RICK COGBILL



THE OSOYOOS DESERT CENTRE BOARDWALK PROTECTS THE FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT WHILE GIVING VISITORS A CLOSE LOOK AT WHAT MAY BE THE COUNTRY'S MOST ENDANGERED ECOSYSTEM

Favourite things to see & do in Osoyoos

OSOYOOS DESERT CENTRE

As you approach from the north, begin your exploration of this unique area by visiting The Osoyoos Desert Centre. Operated and maintained by the Osoyoos Desert Society, this interactive education and research facility sits on 67 acres of one of North America's most fragile and endangered ecosystems. From May to October, a one-hour guided tour leads you around the kilometre-and-a-half boardwalk trail that winds through arid shrubs and grasses to four interpretive kiosks. It's your opportunity to get down and dirty with the land and discover the active community of insects and animals that are so easy to miss. The boardwalk is wheelchair accessible and safe for strollers. Don't forget your hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and water — it is the desert!

OSOYOOS DESERT MODEL RAILROAD

Whether you've had too much sun and sand, played too much golf or you're just looking for something different to do, a visit to the Osoyoos Desert Model Railroad in the Buena Vista Industrial Park will simply amaze you. Home to the largest Marklin HO train layout in Canada, it's the love and creation of Poul Pedersen and his family. The layout covers 3,000 square feet and continues to grow each year. Recent additions include a zoo, a circus and a roadway system with cars that move under their own power, the first of its kind in North America. But the heart of it all is the trains — 17 of them — computer-controlled and rolling on one-and-a-half kilometres of track. The 900 buildings and 7,000 figures are all hand-painted by wife Ulla and daughter Lotte and the detail is incredible. This is family-

KIDS — AND KIDS AT HEART — ARE SURE TO BE IMPRESSED BY THE OSOYOOS DESERT MODEL RAILROAD

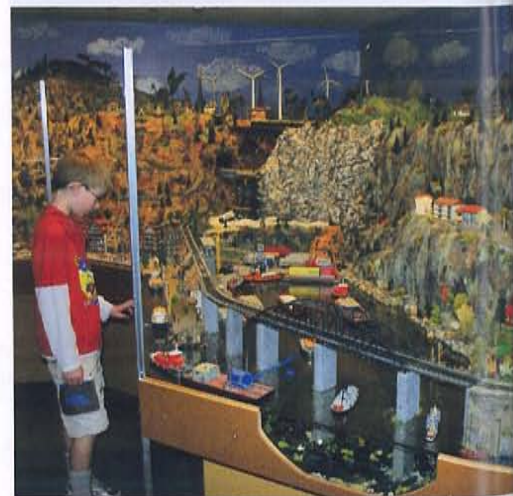
friendly fun. Be prepared to return again and again — there's just too much to take in on a single visit.

RATTLESNAKE CANYON AMUSEMENT PARK

Another family favourite is Rattlesnake Canyon Amusement Park, a small taste of Disneyland in the Okanagan. Located at 5502 Main St., its attractions include minigolf, bumper boats (prepare to get wet), go-carts, rock climbing wall, ice cream and much more. Look for the big windmill and you won't go wrong.

NK'MIP CELLARS

The Okanagan Valley is known for its many fine estate wineries, but Osoyoos has the distinction of being home to Nk'Mip Cellars, (pronounced Ink-a-meep). As North America's first aboriginal owned and operated winery, Nk'Mip is dedicated to crafting premium VQA wines. Located on the east bench overlooking Osoyoos Lake, you'll find not only great wine but stunning views of the valley as you explore the wine shop or enjoy a meal at the patio restaurant. Producing up to 18,000 cases of wine annually, Nk'Mip is still expanding its vineyard each year with new grape varieties. Taking cues from the desert landscape surrounding it, the beautiful architecture of the facility alone is worth the visit. —RC



LARGE PHOTO BY LAURIE CARTER; MODEL RAILWAY PHOTO BY RICK COGBILL

CHOICE EVENTS

CHERRY FIESTA

July 1, 2007

Canada Day in Osoyoos means the Cherry Fiesta! And oh what a cherry it is. Pucker up for the cherry spitting contest. Go for bust at the pie eating contest (cherry, of course). Wash it all down with a brewski in the beer garden. Plan to spend the day, eating pancakes, gawking at the parade and kicking back to listen to live entertainment. Spend some money at the craft fair. It promises to be lots of fun for the whole family. The festivities close off with a sensational fireworks display at dusk. See what everyone is taking about, celebrate Canada's birthday in Osoyoos.

ROMANCING THE DESERT GALA

July 28, 2007

Each year under the summer full moon (or close to it) the Osoyoos Desert Centre is the site of a most magical evening. Stroll along the boardwalk sipping fine BC wines and feasting on local culinary creations. All sorts of critters come alive at night in the desert including pocket gophers, pallid bats, owls, snakes and crickets. Don't miss this special evening fundraiser, tickets sell out quickly every year so call to reserve yours at 495.2470. For more info on the 8th annual Romancing the Desert Gala evening and the Osoyoos Desert Centre visit www.desert.org.

OSOYOOS WINTER CARNIVAL

February 22-24, 2008

What better way to celebrate old man winter than with a carnival. After the sun sets, grab the family and head on over to the beach for the Beach Bonfire and Kids Karnival with games, food and music. In the morning, wake up with a polar bear dip (burr). Afterwards you can warm-up with some wine and food tasting at the Taste of Osoyoos. But save room for dinner. Then dance the night away. Greet Sunday mornin' with a pancake breakfast and when you're done stuffing yourself stick around for some music. To get cool details visit www.osoyooswintercarnival.com.

MEADOWLARK FESTIVAL

May 15-19, 2008

Nature lovers rejoice. Grab your binoculars, camera, plant and bird guides, slip on your hikers and join like-minded individuals in this series of guided tours for birding, wildflowers, canoeing, hiking and riding. What better way to celebrate spring and see some of the Valley's unique wildlife and habitats including one of Canada's most endangered ecosystems. There are more than 100 events taking place at various locations from Penticton down to Osoyoos. Experience, discover and explore the South Okanagan. For tickets and a complete list of things to see and do at the 11th annual Meadowlark Festival, visit www.meadowlarkfestival.bc.ca.

—Karen Silvar



STRATEGICALLY
PLACED PLATFORMS
GIVE BIRDWATCHERS
THE BEST VIEW AT
HAYNES POINT

Nature points for the visual trekker

For a truly unique outdoor experience, reserve a campsite at **Haynes Point**—so busy that visits are limited to seven days per year. Located two kilometres south of Osoyoos, this BC provincial park is named after John Carmichael Haynes, a prominent judge and landowner who settled in Osoyoos in 1866. The 41 gravel campsites are situated on a sand spit that stretches out into Osoyoos Lake. It's not only a popular spot for campers, but for many fascinating creatures including Canada's smallest bird, the calliope hummingbird. A gravel trail near the entrance leads into the nearby marsh area where various viewing platforms provide a commanding view of the marsh and its inhabitants.

Nine kilometres west of Osoyoos on Hwy 3 you'll find Klikuk or **Spotted Lake**, which contains one of the world's highest concentrations of minerals, including Epsom salts, calcium, magnesium and many other trace minerals. For generations Okanagan First Nations used the healing mud and waters to alleviate aches and pains. In summer when the water evaporates the minerals crystallize forming the white-ringed spots. While the lake is on private land, and is therefore not accessible, the view from the highway is truly a sight worth seeing.

Continue on Hwy 3 past Spotted Lake and you'll soon come to the turnoff for the **Mount Kobau Lookout**. The road to the summit is gravel, but cars in good mechanical condition can make the 20-kilometre ascent. Mount Kobau is also a favourite for stargazers, with this year's 24th Annual Star Party running from dusk August 11th until dawn August 19th, 2007. You can find more info at www.mksp.ca. —RC

PHOTO BY LAURIE CARTER