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Tourism Profile

Sparta Spirit Walks – Revealing the Secrets of Sparta’s Past



The Village of Sparta was established in 1813 by Quaker settlers and is steeped in over 200 years of rich and exciting history. During the 1800s this thriving community was home to several churches, shops of all types, hotels, and dance halls catering to locals as well as Londoners stopping on route to Port Burwell and Port Bruce. A local militia stationed in Sparta and resident participation in the 1837 Rebellion contributed to the village’s exhilarating and sometimes dark history.

Today many of the village’s original buildings remain intact and are used as

shops and homes. These buildings stand as silent observers waiting to reveal the secrets, hauntings, and images from a world long past.

The Sparta Spirit Walk has been a labour of love for Shelley McVittie and Kate Vanner of The Village Collective Gallery. The pair, with the assistance of many renowned psychics, mediums, historians, and villagers did extensive research into the history and spirit activity of the community to create an experience that is both authentic and accurate.

To tell this story, The Village Collective Gallery enlisted the help of local actor, expert storyteller, and history enthusiast Lesley Chapman, President of the Elgin Theatre Guild. Lesley acts as a guide, playing the role of the Lily-Rose Bryce, a fictional Sparta resident who was killed after stepping into the path of a horse and carriage. Rumour has it that her heavy drinking was to blame for this unfortunate incident, but Lily-Rose denies this and has returned from the after life to set the story straight and to tell the secrets of Sparta's past.

This 90 minute tour will transport participants back to the time when tea rooms, boutiques, and art galleries were funeral parlours, dance halls, and butcher's shops. The tour goes into shops and homes in the village's downtown core making Sparta's past come alive with tales of former residents that are so detailed participants will feel that the subjects of these stories are old friends. The tour ends back at The Village Collective Gallery where participants are treated to a cold drink, additional stories of village life,

and a small gift to take home. This gift includes a coupon booklet with discounts, special offers, and free draw entries.

The Village Collective Gallery has also partnered with the Sparta House Tea Room & Restaurant to offer lunch and Spirit Walk packages with special rates for groups of five or more. Those travelling from afar and wishing to stay overnight have the option to include a one-night stay at the Comfort Inn in St. Thomas as part of their package.

The Sparta Spirit Walk runs on Fridays and Saturdays throughout the summer at 1:00 p.m. Tickets are \$22.50 a person and \$11.00 for children. Please visit The Village Collective Gallery [website](#) to make reservations.



Business Resource

Save the Date for Enterprise Elgin

ENTERPRISE ELGIN
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION
MORE THAN \$10,000
IN CASH AND IN-KIND SUPPORT

2016
ENTERPRISE ELGIN
Business Development Competition

ORGANIZED AND SPONSORED
BY COUNTY OF ELGIN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND ELGIN
BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTRE

SAVE THE DATE
08.02.16
Enterprise Elgin Starts

www.progressivebynature.com
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ELGIN
BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTRE
A Community Futures Development Corporation

Save the date because the 2nd Annual Enterprise Elgin Business Development Competition will kick-off on Tuesday August 2, 2016 at the Keystone Complex in Shedden.

Entrepreneurs or existing businesses are encouraged to create a business development plan regarding a new business venture, a new product, or an expansion. This business development plan will then be entered into a competition to win thousands of dollars and in-kind prizes to help the business grow. The contest opens on August 2, 2016 and closes on September 30, 2016. Finalists will then be selected to compete “Dragon’s Den” style at the New Sarum Diner on October 20, 2016 where a grand prize winner will be selected by a panel of judges.

Come at 5:30 p.m. on August 2 to learn about

the competition details, get advice from the 2015 winner Sarah Foshay of Smart Dental Hygiene and other former finalists and, visit the on-site tradeshow featuring Elgin County businesses.

There are still limited spaces available for businesses interested in exhibiting as part of the trade show. Booth space is free to all Ontario Registered Businesses in Elgin County and is a great way to share the story of your business success with an interested audience.

To register for the event or book space at the trade show please call Sharen Symondson at 519-633-7597 ext. 461, email ssymondson@elgincfdc.ca or register [online](http://www.progressivebynature.com).

Business Profile

The Sweet Spot in Port Burwell - A Foodie Fantasy



After his retirement, Serge Pieters and his wife Margot moved from the bustling urban sprawl of Milton to the quiet hamlet of Vienna. They purchased a project house and spent a year completely redoing every aspect of the home and property. After some time in the area Serge came to appreciate the beautiful beach in nearby Port Burwell and began to see great potential in the community.

The couple purchased 29 Robinson Street in downtown Port Burwell and began the rigorous process of restoring the building. At first, they weren't exactly sure what they were going to do with the building but they recognized it was a great location. Revitalizing the building proved to be a monumental task requiring the replacement of walls, electrical work, and insulation – all work that was done using skilled, local contractors. A new addition to the building's façade was a plaque presented by Bird Studies Canada in recognition of the owner's work to save the building's non-functioning chimney, which is home to endangered Chimney Swifts.

"The building was in such a state that it would have been easier to tear it down," said Serge. "But the hundred year old oak floors made it worth saving."

The result of this renovation is a beautifully restored building with solid oak floors, big bright windows, and a 1920s vibe. Serge and Margot then embarked on a period of extensive market research to determine what kind of business would be successful at the store's location. One morning around 2:00 a.m. inspiration hit Margot who woke Serge to suggest that the pair open a chocolate shop. Unbeknownst to Margot, Serge had been born above his grandmother's chocolate shop in Ghent, Belgium. He immediately took to the idea and The Sweet Spot was born as a tribute to his heritage. Four years later the pair hasn't looked back.



The Sweet Spot is an artisan shop specializing in unique and delectable culinary items. Serge and Margot source most of their products from local producers and small companies. They place great importance on offering products of superior quality to their customers. The store is a “Foodie” fantasy with artisan cheeses, fresh baked desserts, Belgian chocolates, Turkish Delight, jams, jellies, preserves, specialty salad dressings, artisan ice cream toppings, handmade fudge, and customer favourite – chocolate covered pizza. This delightful indulgence comes by the slice and is topped not with meat or cheese, but with Belgian chocolate, cookie crumbs, and bits of candy bars. In addition to these tasty treats, The Sweet Spot also takes custom orders for gift baskets that are perfect for every holiday occasion.

Serge has high praises for his new community where he sees a renaissance of sorts occurring.

“We drove down here one day by mistake and we never left,” laughs Serge. “Port Burwell is a community with tremendous potential. We already have a beautiful public beach, a nearby provincial park, a thriving community theatre, and a supportive business community and it is only going to get better from here!”

The Sweet Spot is open weekends from Easter to the end of June. The store then opens 7 days a week, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, and 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday from July to Labour Day. After Labour Day, the store will be open Friday-Sunday only until Thanksgiving weekend. For more information call 519-403-8838 or email thesweetspot.in.pb@gmail.com.



...mid-Summer Magic...

Off The Wall!

...and Off The Vine



QUAI DU VIN WINERY
45811 Fruit Ridge Line, St. Thomas
Free Admission & Parking

JULY 17, 2016
11 am ~ 5 pm

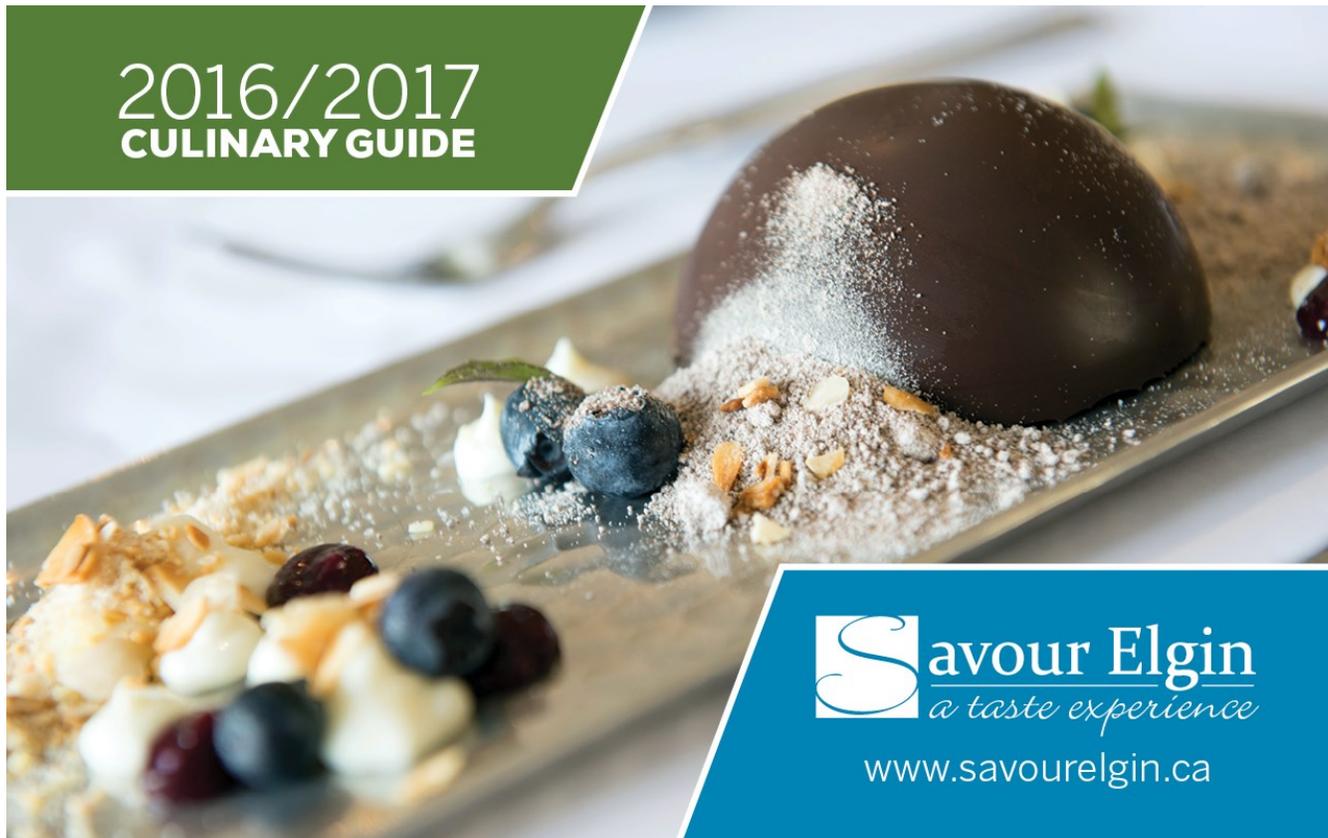


offthewallartshow.com



Tourism Profile

New Members Added to Savour Elgin and the Elgin Arts Trail



The [2016-2017 joint Savour Elgin/ Elgin Arts Trail Guide](#) is now available. This dual-sided guide provides visitors with detailed information about some of the area's most interesting tourist stops.

The [Savour Elgin](#) portion of the guide is a celebration of Elgin County's abundance of delicious local food and drink. The moderating effects of Lake Erie, lots of sunshine, and some of the most fertile soil in the country, create the perfect conditions for growing a diverse variety of fruit and vegetable crops. Local restaurants and wineries use this produce to expertly craft tantalizing meals and wine blends that are unique to Elgin County.

The [Elgin Arts Trail](#) provides visitors with a glimpse into the world of the talented artists who call Elgin County home. Many have described Elgin's stunning landscapes as works of art themselves and as a result creative individuals have been inspired to make this area their home. Follow the trail through charming towns and villages to art galleries, studios, and shops where you are sure to find something to take home.

Both programs are happy to welcome back many great members and to introduce a few new additions for 2016/2017.

Solo on Main

Savour Elgin is excited to add newly opened Solo on Main to its membership. Solo on Main is the newest addition to Port Stanley's blossoming harbour front. Chef Lauren vanDixhoorn and her team serve up a cuisine that is sure to impress! Fresh organic vegetables picked from a local garden, fish caught in nearby Lake Erie, and house made pasta, desserts and ice cream make for selections that are both delicious and visually appealing.



Rush Creek Wines

Savour Elgin welcomes back Rush Creek Wines under the new ownership of Bonnie Preece. Bonnie has worked with winemaker Rob Barr to revamp Rush Creek Wines while keeping many fan favourites that are loved by loyal customers. Bonnie invites visitors to come out and see the new look and feel of the winery complete with an updated front end and sampling area and an array of new products.

The Village Collective

The Elgin Arts Trail is very pleased to add The Village Collective in the charming village of Sparta as a member in 2016/2017. The Village Collective features many eccentric and gifted local artists and artisans. Visitors to the shop will find everything from organic herbs, hand crafted jewellery and clothing, to homemade soaps, and local folk art.

