



Elgin County
Progressive by Nature

E-NEWSLETTER • JUNE 2017

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Tourism Profile

Art Among The Vines



sway to the sounds of live musical entertainment, and pick out a special piece of art for your home.

The event runs from 11a.m. to 5p.m. For more information and a list of participating artists visit www.offthewallartshow.com.

The Off the Wall...and Off of the Vine Art Show will return to Elgin County on Sunday June 16, 2017.

Now in its third year, the show is hosted by the Association of Port Stanley Artists and will be held at Quai Du Vin Estate Winery on Fruit Ridge Line. Perched atop the rolling hills of the Sparta Moraine, the winery provides a stunning location for this annual event that showcases some of the finest artists and artisans in southern Ontario.

Spend a tranquil afternoon strolling through the vineyard with a glass of your favourite Quai Du Vin wine in hand,



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Common Ground Farm-Fresh Food for all Four Seasons



Have you ever been disappointed with the quality of produce available on supermarket shelves during winter months? Vegetables grown elsewhere and shipped long distances to Canada lose their freshness and lack flavour when compared with their locally grown counterparts. This winter Common Ground Farm is making the dream of having fresh local produce available all year long a reality with the introduction of its winter CSA subscription.

CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture, a membership program where customers receive weekly shares of the harvest from Common Ground Farm. Each week customers pick up their CSA box filled with fresh in-season vegetables at either the Horton Farmers' Market in St. Thomas, the Western Fair Farmers' Market in London, or directly at Common Ground Farm. The farm has traditionally

offered CSA programs in the spring, summer, and fall but this year, it will begin to offer bi-weekly CSA boxes in the winter as well.

With ample cold storage and four hoop houses, the farm is now able to offer customers a variety of fresh locally grown vegetables even during the frigid Canadian winter. These hoop houses allow Common Ground Farm to start crops earlier in the spring and grow later into the fall. The recent addition of cold storage will allow the farm to store certain vegetables for much longer than in previous years.

Common Ground Farm is able to grow a little bit of a lot of different types of vegetables because it sells its products directly to customers through the CSA program and at local farmers' markets.



Beginning in the spring customers can enjoy asparagus, rhubarb, mixed greens, spinach, and several types of vegetables such as carrots that have been kept in cold storage from the last season. From June to October, potatoes, carrots, zucchini, peppers, tomatoes, beans, broccoli, radishes, onions, peas, cucumbers, and fresh herbs also become available. From Thanksgiving to Christmas is when the largest amount of vegetables is available with the addition of sweet potatoes, squash, and pumpkins. In addition to the wide variety of vegetables it produces, Common Ground Farm also raises pastured pork and has a flock of egg laying chickens. These products can be purchased by visiting the farm.

Owner Chris Devries wasn't always a farmer. He grew up in the country but his family didn't farm. He had an established career in engineering but began to dabble in gardening on the side. He enjoyed this hobby so much that he decided to start his own farm. It was a gradual process of learning how to make his operation into a successful business but now four years later he is working to create a meaningful connection between customers and the farm. "When customers come to the farm to pick up their CSA boxes, they see the land where their food

is grown, they see the people growing their food, and they see the practices we use. This creates a greater connection than if they were just picking something up off the shelf at the supermarket," says Chris.

The 40 acre property is tucked away on a winding road in the Elgin County countryside, just south of St. Thomas. The fertile soils of southwestern Ontario and the moderating temperatures of nearby Lake Erie combine to make this location ideal for producing a variety of fresh local vegetables and herbs. Everything on the farm is grown organically. This means that no chemicals or pesticides are sprayed on produce and that no chemical fertilizers are used. Instead Common Ground Farm uses composted manure and covering cropping to control weeds and enrich the soil. Cover cropping is a process by which cover crops such as clover and grains are grown not for harvest but to break the cycle of weeds and pests. These crops are tilled back into the soil the following year providing it with much needed nutrients.

For more information about Common Ground Farm or to inquire about joining the CSA visit www.commongroundfarm.ca/.

Wine Not Cork It - Why Not Make it Yourself?



Have you ever been invited to a party last minute and found yourself without anything to bring the host? Had unexpected visitors and nothing to serve them? Forgotten a friend's birthday or a special anniversary? A bottle of wine makes a perfect gift for almost any occasion and you will always have something on hand when you make your own batch of homemade wine at Wine Not Cork It, newly opened in downtown Aylmer.

It was love for a hobby that encouraged owner Kat Havlicek to open the business in May of 2017. After casually making her own wines at home for 4 years she had the opportunity to leave her job and start a new adventure in life and she jumped at the chance to make her passion her profession. Kat's days are now spent offering friendly advice while introducing customers to the world of self-brewing.

Making your own wine, cider or beer makes gift giving and hosting a breeze and the best part is the process is so simple. First customers can choose from Wine Not Cork It's large selection of wine kits. Then the customer sprinkles the yeast into the batch and leaves it for 4-6 weeks. During this time Wine

Not Cork It will care for the wine, making sure the batch progresses as it should. When the wine is finally ready, customers come back into the store and use equipment on-site to bottle their own wine. Most kits come with labels but customers can choose to have Wine Not Cork It make them custom labels as well. This comes in handy for wine made for weddings, showers, anniversary parties, and special events.

Wine Not Cork It's wines are cost effective at \$4-5/ per bottle, have lower levels of sulfates (the compound that often causes headaches for wine drinkers), and come in so many varieties that you are sure to find something to your liking. Customers can choose from kits which come in everything from dry whites, to full bodied reds, to sweet fruits. Pinot Grigio, Moscato, Riesling, Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Rockin' Raspberry, Peach Perfection, and Strawberry Sensation are just a few of the options to choose from. The business also carries a variety of beers and ciders perfect for sipping on the patio on a hot summer afternoon.

Learn more about Wine Not Cork It and the varieties of wine available on [Facebook](#).



Elgin County Bucket List



Adventure beckons as the summer of 2017 stretches out before you like a sea of endless possibilities. There is adventure to be found down every windswept country road, on every sandy beach, and on the main streets of each charming Elgin County town and village. There are thrills to be sought, places to be discovered, and memories to be made. To help you make the most of your time this summer, Elgin County has created a summer bucket list detailing a series of Elgin County experiences that shouldn't be missed! Even better we are giving you a chance to win great prizes all summer long. All you have to do is take a photo of one of the Elgin experiences listed below, post it on Instagram and hashtag it #ElginBucketList. Each week a random entry will be selected to win a series of great Elgin prizes. Check out contest details on our [website](#).

Soak up the Sun

Life is truly better at the lake and on a hot summer day there is nothing better than escaping to the beach, dipping your toes in the sand, and cooling off in the water. With 120 km of breathtaking Lake Erie shoreline, Elgin County has lots of opportunities for waterfront fun this summer. Elgin's four portside

villages (Port Burwell, Port Bruce, Port Stanley, and Port Glasgow) offer a diversity of experiences that include everything from bustling beaches to laidback lakeside tranquility. Soak up the sun on one Elgin's pristine sandy beaches, join a rousing game of beach volleyball, paddle out over the gentle waves on a Stand Up Paddleboard, and watch the sun set below the horizon as you are serenaded by the sounds of live music from a nearby beach front patio.



Hike

Elgin is home to over 100km of public trails including lush Carolinian forest paths that are ideal for running and hiking enthusiasts alike. Elgin County trails wind through the countryside along quiet country roads, are located in the County's numerous conservation areas, and connect extensive systems of well-groomed parks. These trails are a great way for individuals of all fitness levels to enjoy the summer weather and experience Elgin County's natural beauty.

Catch a Live Performance

There is nothing quite like a live performance. Elgin's vibrant and thriving arts community engages its audiences and immerses them in the stories it tells. Live entertainment can be enjoyed in Elgin throughout the year in the form of musical and theatrical performances at a variety of quaint, intimate venues. Spend a summer evening taking in a professional theatre performance located in the heart of a picturesque lakeside village, or take in a show performed by equally talented community players in a number of Elgin County communities.



Toast the Coast

Pick up a bottle of local wine to pair with your next meal or take a tour at one of Elgin County's two award-winning wineries. Swap secrets with the winemaker, stroll through rolling vineyards, pack a picnic lunch to enjoy with a refreshing glass of wine on the grounds of a winery, or enjoy a concert in an idyllic setting.

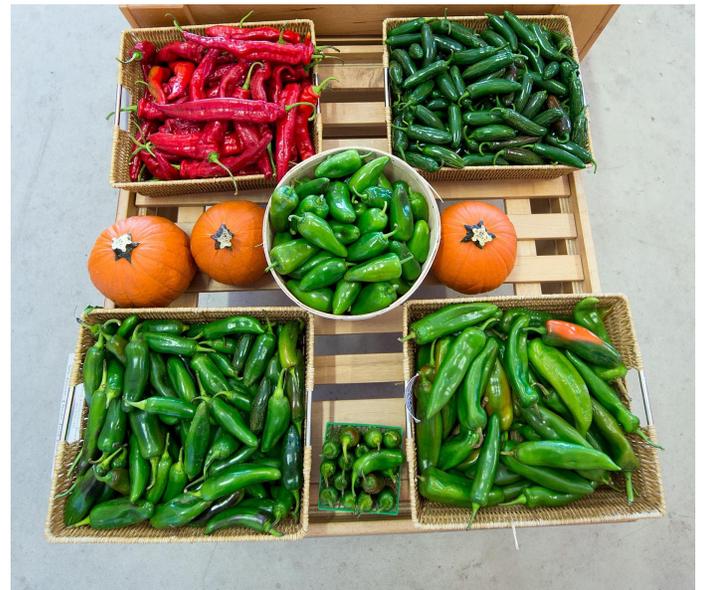


Enjoy an Ice Cream

There is no better treat to enjoy on a blistering summer day than a scoop of cool, sweet ice cream. This quintessential summer delight can be found at old fashioned ice cream parlours, modern eateries, and at the shop around the corner. For a special treat indulge in ice cream made right here in Elgin County with locally sourced fruit and 100% fresh Canadian cream. May the hardest decision you have to make this summer be what flavour to try next!

Pick Your Own

From the earliest strawberries, rhubarb, and asparagus of spring, to the bountiful crops of tomatoes, sweet corn, raspberries, peppers, and melons of summer, to the squashes, pumpkins, and apples of fall, Elgin County is home to a wealth of fresh, locally grown produce. Take a leisurely stroll through one of the area's farmers' markets, buy produce from a road-side stand, or experience a taste of farm life by getting your fruits and vegetables directly from the field at a pick-your-own location.



Feast on Lake Erie Yellow Perch

Settle into one of Elgin County's outdoor patios serving the fresh catch of the day or head to a local fish fry. Try delicious Lake Erie Yellow Perch in a variety of ways – battered, fried, baked, and even on top of nachos. If you prefer to catch your own dinner, the Port Bruce Pier is a particularly good location to sit back, relax and spend the afternoon waiting for a bite.



Attend a Local Event

Elgin County is home to numerous vibrant festivals and events each summer. Celebrate the culture of Elgin's unique residents, experience living history at one of the area's historic re-enactments, ride the midway at a traditional country fair, take in local art at one of the many art exhibitions and annual artist guild shows, or celebrate Elgin's agricultural bounty with festivals dedicated to rhubarb, corn, and watermelons. Enjoy parades, cycling tours, baking competitions, and music festivals all summer long.

Shop

Shopping in Elgin County is an experience unlike that of the big city. Ample parking, minimal traffic, and friendly small business owners provide an experience that is both enjoyable and relaxing. Trendy clothing boutiques, quaint coffee shops, shops filled with carefully curated collections of giftware items, bakeries featuring fresh decadent desserts, and galleries adorned with the works of talented local artists line the streets of Elgin's towns and villages. Venture off the beaten path, down winding country roads to discover boutiques, galleries, and wineries nestled amidst the rolling hills and sprawling fields of the rural Elgin County landscape.

