

THE BUFFALO NEWS

One-Tank Trip/Toronto

Three Toronto events spark spring fever

By MARIA CERAULO
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TORONTO - Spring is on its way and there's no better proof than the world-class home, garden and culinary events that are just 90 minutes away. Here is a trio of Toronto happenings which are good reason to get out of the house and head north in March and April.

In bloom

Where can you find 30 landscaped gardens nearby in full bloom in March? - at "Canada Blooms."

The largest home and garden show in Canada, the annual event has been hailed by the New York Times as the third largest show of its kind in North America. Filling four floors of the enormous Metro Toronto Convention Center, beginning Wednesday through next Sunday, it also features a dazzling collection of 600 flower show entries and displays from more than 200 retailers offering the latest in gardening supplies and gadgets.

A feast for the mind as well as the eyes, "Canada Blooms" offers more than 400 hours of free lectures, including advice on creating Japanese and English country gardens, gardening basics and container gardening.

"Gardeners of all levels will find a topic for them," explains Columba Fuller, "Canada Blooms" artistic director. Top Canadian and international gardening authors will include Ken Druse, whose lecture topics

include "Passion for Gardening." His book of the same title won the American Horticultural Society's Book of the Year award in 2004.

Several new landscapes have been added for 2005, including some smaller townhouse gardens using unusual materials and a dream wedding garden. A tea terrace will offer high tea daily, accompanied by live piano music. This year, there is even a Canine Country Cottage Garden, notes Fuller, which is a doggie village complete with pet-size houses surrounded by a white picket fence.

Janet Fowler of Buffalo, a certified master gardener by Cornell Cooperative Extension whose home garden has been on the Buffalo Garden Walk, says she gets inspiration from visiting the show.

"Sometimes it gets you thinking of spring and gardens which is motivational when there is snow still around," Fowler explains. "And there are new plants which you may not be aware of or you see arrangements with various colors displayed together."

"Canada Blooms" is a non-profit event managed by the Garden Club of Toronto and Landscape Ontario, and is organized by more than 1,300 volunteers. Proceeds are used to support community horticulture projects.

One of a kind

Looking to spruce up your wardrobe or home for spring? Try a unique find from the 27th season of the "One of a Kind Spring Show and Sale." The work of more than 450 Canadian artisans will be displayed during the event, running from March 24-28 in the National Trade Centre (Exhibition Place).

"We travel across Canada on an ongoing basis seeking out new and exciting exhibitors and ideas for the show," says Patti Stewart, the show's director. "Glass artists, wood artists, fashion and jewelry designers, visual artists

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and food artisans-we find the best that Canada has to offer."

The show is juried, she notes, and all applications are carefully reviewed for criteria including uniqueness of product and quality of merchandise.

Some of the "must sees" for 2005 include Toronto visual artist Joanna Bell who combines the detail of a photograph with the intensity of paint pigment to produce a vivid, three-dimensional work of art, and Andy Donald of Dundas, Ont., who re-works found wood (barn planks, beams, rafters, etc) into rustic yet refined cabinets, cupboards and other home furnishings.

New for this year is a "One of a Kind Fashion District" where more than 30 up-and-coming designers display hip and trendy clothing not typically found at a craft show. Displayers include Orange Sky, a women's line of golf wear created, says Stewart, by a woman frustrated that she couldn't find fashionable women's golf clothing.

There is complimentary day care for children between the ages of 2 and 8, while the Loomis Art School offers children ages 8 and over supervised art classes, such as painting or drawing.

Master chefs

Dream of coming home and having a dinner made for you? Then you might be weak at the knees at the thought of a whole weekend of culinary lectures and meals prepared by world renowned chefs in a Toronto getaway sponsored by Bon Appetit magazine during the Master Chefs Series.

Featured chefs include Sherry Yard, the executive pastry chef at Wolfgang Puck's Spago restaurant in Beverly Hills; Joey Altman, soon to be the newest celebrity chef to join the Food Network and current host of "Bay Cafe" in San Francisco; Tyler Florence, Tyler's Ultimate on the

Food Network and Trish Magwood, founder of the innovative Dish Cooking Studio.

The four, along with chefs and contributing editors of Bon Appetit, will cook on four alternate weekends from April 1-23 in various city hotels as part of Toronto's first Master Chef Series. "Behind the scenes" live cooking demonstrations, tastings and insider's tips are all part of the fun. There will also be time set aside each weekend to enjoy the city. Each weekend ends with a champagne Sunday brunch.

If you go

(All prices are in Canadian)

"Canada Blooms"

Wednesday through next Sunday in the Metro Toronto Convention Center (MTCC), South Building, 222 Bremner Blvd.

Hours: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. next Sunday. Admission: \$18 adults, \$15 students or seniors.

Afternoon Tea (includes show admission): \$40. Seatings are at 2:30 and 4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 2:30 p.m. Sunday (reservations needed).

Info: (416) 447-8655 or www.canadablooms.com

Hotel partners: Holiday Inn on King, (\$119 rate). Call (800) 263-6364.

Renaissance Toronto Hotel at SkyDome (\$149 rate). Call (800) 237-1512.

Intercontinental Toronto Centre, (\$189 rate). Call (416) 597-1400.

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"One of a Kind Spring Show & Sale"

March 24-28 in the National Trade Centre (Exhibition Place)

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. March 24; 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. March 25; 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. March 26; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. March 27; and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. March 28.

Admission: \$8 adults advance online; \$10 adults, \$6.50 seniors/youths (ages 13-17); free for ages 12 and under, at the door.

Info: (416) 960-3680 or www.oneofakindshow.com

Price: Packages start at \$254 per person, based on double occupancy, includes two nights accommodations (guests may stay at non-host hotels), select gourmet meals, demonstrations and seminars.

Info: (866) 8GET2TO or www.get2toronto.com

Maria Ceraulo

"Master Chef Series"

Participating chefs, editors and hotels:

- April 1-3 in the Sutton Place Hotel.

Guests: Joey Altman, host of Bay Cafe, and soon to be on Food Network; Dorie Greenspan, columnist, Bon Appetit.

- April 8-10 in Le Royal Meridien, King Edward Hotel

Guests: Sherry Yard, executive pastry chef at Wolfgang Puck's Spago restaurant in Beverly Hills; Dede Wilson, contributing editor, Bon Appetit.

- April 15-17 in Renaissance Toronto Airport

Guests: Tyler Florence, host of Tyler's Ultimate; Jeanne Thiel Kelley, contributing editor, Bon Appetit.

- April 22-24 in the Delta Toronto East

Guests: Trish Magwood, Dish Cooking School; Robert Cacciola, executive chef, Bon Appetit

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