

Celebrate winter at the Fire and Ice festival at Alton Mill

Rediscover Canadian winter traditions at the eighth annual Fire and Ice festival this weekend (Jan. 21 and 22) at the Alton Mill Arts Centre.

The stage is set for one of the most popular events of the year at the Mill, with loads of activities both indoors and out. Bring skates and enjoy skating and curling on the Millpond rink, try snowshoeing or fat biking with the experts from Caledon Hills Cycling, and for the kids there will be a Super Snow Slide. Watch ice carvers create a crystal sculpture garden, sponsored by Grand Spirits Distillery in the Annex Courtyard during the day. After sundown, witness a spellbinding fire sculpture. Potter Ann Randeraad will demonstrate a raku pottery, firing in her outdoor kiln. Blacksmith George Church will fashion whimsical ironworks in the GeoForge. Have a blast and a great laugh at the interactive photo booth, hand-painted by artist Lynda Clare Grant. Pop your face into the painting and create lasting memories by snapping a picture to share with friends.

All this activity is sure to work up an appetite. Visit food stations to have some barbecued goodies, or mouth-watering maple syrup pops from Love's Sweetness. Buy a bottle or two of wicked hot sauce to take home from the Sauce Shack or warm up with special treats from Gourmandissimo.

Go indoors, where the Alton Mill artists will be offering a variety of interactive workshops and demonstrations. Guests will be offering storytelling.

Workshops will include the Hive's encaustic (beeswax painting) workshop, where people can 'Give it a Whirl?' in Studio 201; CJ Shelton's Story Art 'Tails' of Courage in Studio 206, and paint your own pond hockey player Sunday afternoon with Mark Grice. Did somebody say 'Happy Hour'?

This year, step inside the Fire and Ice Bar, by Grand Spirits Distillery, a themed cocktail lounge celebrating the warmth and sensuality of fire and ice, via cool exotic drinks and hot shots along with local craft beer, wine and ciders, all in an astonishing winter bar setting. There will also be complimentary Fire and Ice-themed body and face painting by artist Wendy Williams inside the lounge.

The Fire and Ice Bar opens Friday night (Jan. 20) at 5 p.m., and will be open both Saturday and Sunday from noon to closing. Also on the main floor, the award-winning Gourmandissimo café will serve a selection of soups, sandwiches, treats and hot drinks. Saturday only, experience a Canadian tradition: outdoor pond hockey. Pre-register to join in, or cheer on the teams playing in the Alton Millpond Hockey Classic fundraiser. Free general skating gets underway later in the afternoon and continues Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Also Sunday, a bona fide pond curling rink will be open.

Saturday evening at dusk, Brian Oates turns up the heat when he ignites a brand new fire sculpture sponsored by Fireball Cinnamon Whisky. The jaw-dropping spectacle of light and unveiling form will dance in the night sky.

End the first day of the Fire and Ice Pond Hockey Classic at the Hot Stove Lounge Pub Night. With the Leafs playing the Senators on the big screen, unwind and enjoy casual food and cash bar. For tickets, contact hockey@altonmill.ca

There will be parking, and a shuttle service from offsite parking lots.

Admission will be pay what you can, but the suggested donation is \$10 for adults or \$25 for families. Activities are subject to change without notice. Weather may impact outdoor programming.

For full details, visit www.altonmill.ca