

Packed house out for launch of 2017 Real Headwaters campaign

By Bill Rea

There was lots of good food and drink at Caledon Ski Club recently, along with a great deal of enthusiasm.

The occasion was the launch of the 2017 Real Headwaters campaign: 150 Realsons. It also coincided with the release of the 2017 Headwaters Four-Season Visitors' Guide in the Globe and Mail. The party was aimed at providing a chance to tell guests about the dozens of people, places, experiences and treasures that make Headwaters where Ontario gets real.

Close to 200 people from all across the province came to join in the celebration. Dignitaries representing all levels of government were there, as well as tourism industry stakeholders and partners from across Headwaters. Several Headwaters establishments were represented and offering some of their best culinary creations. There was also music from Larry Kurtz and Bruce Ley from the award-winning Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival.

Highlighting the campaign launch was a Headwaters 150 Realsons video that began with the CBC's '150 Facts About Canada in 150 Seconds' (hosted by CBC Arts host Amanda Parris), followed by a fast-paced, entertaining video, '150 Realsons To Visit Headwaters This Year.'

'We had a really good year at Headwaters,' declared Michele Harris, executive director of Headwaters Tourism. She pointed out a large number of awards came the way of the organization.

She also stressed it's the commitment of people and businesses within Headwaters' borders who really deserved recognition, because they make it happen.

Gracing the cover of this year's Guide is Orangeville comedian, Michael McCreary. McCreary was unable to attend the event (he was in Whitehorse, as part of his 2017 North American comedy tour), but joined guests via video as he opened a package from Headwaters revealing that he was the one who 'made the cover.'

Jim Diorio of Touchwood Design of East Garafraxa, which created the Guide, explained the goal behind this year's Guide was to make it fresh, timely and relevant.

Each year, Headwaters introduces the 'faces and finds' for the upcoming season and this year, 19 new faces joined the list, and 25 new finds were highlighted as part of the campaign. These people and products are the 'real' Headwaters deal and showcase the events, happenings and experiences that make a visit to the region essential.

The 2017 line-up of 'faces of Headwaters' include Aimee Alabaster of Alabaster Acres; Karen Campbell of Everdale; Carl Cosack of Rawhide Adventures and Peace Valley Ranch; Dorothee Cosack, artist and rancher; Frank Greló of Greló Farms; Nicole Judge and Thomas Wilson of Spirit Tree Estate Cidery; Laura Levitt of Deja Vu Design; Benn and Sophie MacDonald of Far Shot Recreation; Michelle Marino of Drake Apothecary in Bolton; Sharon and Ross Martin of Mono Nordic Ski Club; McCreary; Nat McHaffie of the Great War Flying Museum; Beckie Morris of Theatre Orangeville; Al Pace of Farmhouse Pottery Gallery and Café; Adam and Sean Ruppel of Chico and Superfly Racing; Noni Thomas of LP Stage Productions; Caledon author Ken Weber; Keith Winterbottom of Citrus City Tattoo; and Peter Wolter of Being There Audio.

While Headwaters Tourism has highlighted more than 150 Realsons that make the region special, the campaign will be turning it over to visitors and residents over the remainder of the year to tell their Realsons. The Headwaters team will be at events over the summer, and will be asking people to share their messages, photos and videos directly, since there really is no better time than 2017, during the celebration of Canada's 150th anniversary.

Headwaters Tourism produced 80,000 copies of the Guide, and they will be available at locations throughout the Headwaters region. Principal photography in the Guide was by Caledon's James MacDonald.

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There was lots of great food to sample at Headwaters Tourism's campaign launch. Carolyn Doukas, Nelson Singh and Thomas Wilson of Spirit Tree Estate Cidery were serving some of their ice-cider pat  on Caledon sourdough.



Larry Kurtz and Bruce Ley provided the entertainment at the launch.



Michele Harris, executive director of Headwaters Tourism, said the organization was coming off a 'really good year.'



Jim Diorio of Touchwood Design gave the audience their first look at the cover of the 2017 Headwaters Four-Season Visitors' Guide.



Melinda and Pat McArthur of Heatherlea Farm Shoppe were offering French-Canadian Tourti re.