

The latest arts event set for Headwaters: BizBaz

By Tabitha Wells

The Hills of Headwaters are alive with the sounds of more than just music.

The area has become well-known for its rich supply of artists, artisans, performers, cultural backgrounds, equine and more.

Each year, different events draw higher levels of attention to the area, allowing others to experience the immense talents that are splashed across the area like its own colourful painting.

As more awareness, recognition and support are developed throughout the area in arts and culture, so are more events ? each year bringing different experiences to be had.

This year will see the launch of a new, unique event in Caledon called Bizarre Bazaar, or BizBaz for short. Inspired by a similar event that has been running for the past 15 years in Kenya, it will feature more than 80 artisans ? both local and from abroad ? not only showing and selling their work, but providing demonstrations as well.

?Bizarre Bazaar is being positioned as a very unique experience in Caledon,? explained Vandi Hill, one of the two creators of BizBaz.

?It's a place where people can come, they can experience, participate, learn, eat, drink, buy fabulous art from our local artisans and beyond, and have a lot of fun.?

Part of what will make the event so unique is that it's more than a typical vendor or artisan show ? it sets out to become a social gathering place, where it's about experiencing the event together, with friends and family, rather than simply attending a show. Along with the demonstrators and artists, those attending will also have the opportunity to enjoy food from eight different food trucks, different alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, and conversation areas where they can sit and talk and just enjoy the atmosphere.

Hill brought the idea back to Canada with her, after helping for several years artists participating in the Kenya. With more than 30 years experience in marketing, market research and event planning in Canada, the U.K. and across Africa, the project was one she was hoping to undertake.

She was introduced through a mutual contact to Heidi von der Gathen, who became her partner in the formation of an event-planning company Lab, and helped to bring the idea of the bazaar into a reality.

Von der Gathen brought to the table an extensive history in art, including a BFA from the Art Institute of Chicago, experience executing the sales of artwork, organizing exhibitions, and combining their skills helped preparation for the event move forward.

?We were introduced by a third party, and we just gelled,? said von der Gathen.

BizBaz will take place July 25 and 26, on the Osprey Valley Golf course near Alton, spread out across the putting range. Along with the large number of participating artisans, the event will feature local cidery Spirit Tree, with a demonstration of an antique press, Caledon Honey's master beekeeper Peter Dicks presenting hives and bees, archers will be providing archery demonstrations, and much more.

?The Archers of Caledon will be attending in cooperation with the Ontario Archery Association,? said von der Gathen. ?They will be doing one-on-ones with people, so that they have the opportunity to learn from the best and do things in a safe environment. We'll potentially have a gentleman hand-making bows as well.?

She added that with every demonstration and activity they have there, the goal is to be able to tie things back to the arts.

?The artists participating are really important to us, and we're doing our best to be very selective regarding who is in our show, because we're trying to provide the best of the best, and the most unique,? she said.

While there will be significant artists and contributors from the local area, BizBaz will also be drawing from a larger pool of talent as well, to ensure that they are bringing the things that those attending the show won't find anywhere else.

?Art is one of the pillars of BizBaz, and supporting the artists,? said Hill. ?But another major component of the event is learning. We're going to have things like wind, solar and medical marijuana.?

One of the presenters that fall under the learning category will be a group of three men who are working on making a new type of flour, out of crickets. The idea behind it is that the flour will consist of a higher protein and your body will be able to process it better and faster than proteins that would come from beef or other animals.

?There are going to be places that you can ask questions and learn stuff,? said Hill. ?We'll also be looking at cyclists, the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, different groups like that who can come and demonstrate different things.?

The goal of BizBaz is that the show will be able to have a large enough range of activities and interests, that there will be something there for everybody. This way, a family could attend and spend an entire day where the kids and parents could be entertained by things that they find interesting.

'It's really about just having something really unique, where we want people at the end of the day to be able to say 'Wow, it's July, we need to go to Caledon because Bizarre Bazaar is on', explained Hill. 'We want this to be something with longevity, something that can be done on a yearly basis.'

As the event draws closer, the duo will be unveiling more about the event, as well as which artists, organizations and groups they will be featuring. To learn more about Bizarre Bazaar or to inquire about becoming a vendor, visit www.bizbaz.ca:

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Bizarre Bazaar



Vandi Hill and Heidi von der Gathen will be putting together BizBaz in July.