

road trip

STORY: GINA BEARNE

This month's road trip comes to us from a new resident to the Beach area. For our Green issue, we thought it would be fun to get a newcomer's perspective about this place we call home.



ENJOYING THE INTER-GALACTIC SHIFT

"Your pilot on this Air Transat today flight is Captain Picard..." Embarking on the ultimate 'road trip' to the future, we couldn't help but smile! Emigrating from the UK to Canada, one might assume that things would be pretty similar. In reality, there is something of an inter-galactic shift; everything is subtly changed. From not knowing where to buy a kettle, to the nuances of social interaction, the internal signposting unconsciously constructed over a lifetime is no longer accurate.

We began to dream our journey more than ten years ago. Finally, last October, we left our home of fifteen years near Swindon, 70 miles west of London. A few hours later, a glimpse of the CN tower from the tarmac at Lester Pearson signaled the start of our new life. We are often asked 'why Canada?' I'm surprised how few Canadians seem aware of how highly their country rates in quality of life surveys. With vibrant cities and 'the best back yard in the world', why would we not choose Canada? And Canada's commitment to diversity and community also resonates with us.

It should be no surprise that the Beach captivated us. Even arriving as visitors in June, we felt we had come home. There's just something about the neighbourhood; the glimpses of the lake (always, to me, 'the shining waters'); the leafy streets and heritage homes; the 'buzz' of Queen and the laid-back feel of the Boardwalk; the sense of community

and identity. A village at the heart of a city, here you can have the best of both worlds! Our first day as Canadian residents was unforgettable. At 7.34 a.m. we stood on Balmy Beach, pinching ourselves, watching the dawn paint downtown Toronto gold. Later, basking in unseasonably intense sunshine, we relished Sunday Brunch on Quigley's patio.

We continue to pinch ourselves; grabbing muffins and coffee from the Remarkable Bean before heading for Niagara in our new Subaru through the glory of late fall; the twitch of the big, fuzzy shape of a raccoon curled in the window above the back door; descending the icing-sugar dusted ravine to skate on the natural rink at Glen Stewart park; our first movie at the Fox, rediscovering a sense the personal so absent from homogenized, glossy multi-screens.

Road trips reconnect us to wonder, enabling us to inhabit the moment. Four months in, with all that the Beach, Toronto, Ontario and Canada have to offer, this trip's only just begun!

AUTHOR,
GINA
AND HER
HUSBAND,
PAUL AT
THE BEACH
SHORTLY
AFTER
ARRIVING
FROM
ENGLAND

