

A tour of the Old



The street that hustles and bustles around the clock.

Edmonton . . .

Garlictown. Gateway to the North. A city known for a hockey team, a football team, and a mall. The most northern major city on the continent. The boiler room of Canada.

Hmmm.

Not a very flattering list of epithets, right? But in a way, it is fortunate that our city is like that. For while remaining, at heart, a frontier university town with a cold winter, Edmonton has allowed many odd, unusual, or unexpected places to exist within its boundaries.

So now that we're stuck in November, with winter already here but hot yet at its coldest, let's take a tour of Edmonton. We'll explore some of its more esoteric locations. A word of warning, though: in our case, if it's in, it's out. The whole purpose of our tour is to avoid the yuppie joints where the men sport slicked back flattops, the women sport shoulder pads Hector Pothier would have been proud of, and everyone sits back and remarks how unfortunate it is they can't be in Miami hobnobbing with Don Johnson.

And so, on a mythical sunny, chilly, invigorating winter afternoon, we begin our tour by driving south from the University along Saskatchewan Drive. We turn onto Keillor Road, and head down into the river valley.

Aren't you tired of all the usual boring postcard shots of the Muttart Conservatory superimposed on a background view of Edmonton's downtown? Our first destination is a slightly less common urban landscape. Stop the car at a roadside turn-off and look around. Hard to

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La Sceppa's Restaurant and Trattoria

believe we left the University only five minutes ago, isn't it? But that's one of the joys of Edmonton. For a city of half a million people, it has some of the most unique metropolitan scenes anywhere.

It's an old point. But the river valley is really by far the best feature Edmonton has. Summer or winter, it's the one place in the city where we can escape the typical drabness and monotonicity of North American architecture so prevalent here. Any time of the year, the best thing to do for anyone who feels that the rat race is getting them down is to take a two or three hour hike by the North Saskatchewan.

But enough philosophizing. We hop back into the car and continue our tour by turning north onto the Whitemud Freeway, crossing the river, and turning off at 149th Street. As we come to the McKinnon Ravine, we reach . . . Ravine Drive.

What makes this street so unusual? For one thing, much of it does

not exist. While it may appear to be a normal road east of 142nd Street, it begins to disappear toward the west. Many houses which are supposedly located on Ravine Drive can only be reached by a back alley. The absence of any street signs west of 143rd Street can cause many problems for someone searching for a Ravine Drive address, and even more problems for some of its residents. On our tour, we find what remains of Ravine Drive at 145th Street: a mere trail, unmarked, and almost unknown, except to those familiar with the neighborhood.

Our next stop is the site of some extraordinary architecture. It is Coronation Park, situated in the several blocks away from Ravine Drive on 142nd Street. It is here that we find the Edmonton Space Sciences Centre, which attracts thousands of visitors every year. An even more interesting architectural design is situated just east: the Coronation swimming pool, with its sloping roof and walls, made almost entirely of



Old Riverdale