

Why not explore from an urban base?

By J. M. Greene

One good way to sample the Canadian scene, if you are visiting from overseas, is to take an urban holiday. That way the tourist can have the best of several worlds: getting a taste of the life most Canadians lead, which is urban, while at the same time making excursions into neighbouring country to breathe in the gigantic scenery and open spaces for which this land is famous.

Take **Toronto**. For the serious-minded, there is plenty of scope. The Ontario Science Centre invites visitors to "learn by doing" — to simulate a moon landing, try out mechanical hands, ride a giro platform, examine minerals — and to see machines and scientific instruments in use. Toronto has its own excellent symphony orchestra and choir and is the home of the Canadian Opera Company and National Ballet of Canada. Its modern O'Keefe Centre presents a wide variety of performances ranging from opera and ballet to drama and jazz, while there is also an active "fringe" of small workshop theatres. The rapidly expanding Art Gallery of Ontario has a wide-ranging international collection, including the recent Henry Moore bequest in a sculpture gallery named after him. At Kleinberg, some 25 miles north of Toronto, the McMichael Collection houses 600 paintings by Canada's world-famous Group of Seven.

For a plunge into electrically modern fun, Ontario Place in Toronto can have few rivals. A 96-acre leisure park, it stands on three man-made islands in Lake Ontario. Water, trees and sky form a natural backdrop for contemporaneous glass and steel structures, brightly lit after dark. A domed theatre shows films: Pleasure boats are for hire in the marina. A children's playland includes a foam swamp, an earth box crawl, an interesting two-acre playground (with an orange canopy to go right over it in case of rain) and a three-tiered water play section equipped with water-cannons and other aquatic extravaganzas, ending with a huge, bug-eyed bird that puffs out hot air to dry young visitors on their way out. Marching bands, calypso groups, clowns and Disney-type animal characters jolly up the atmosphere between the boutiques and restaurants and other amusements.

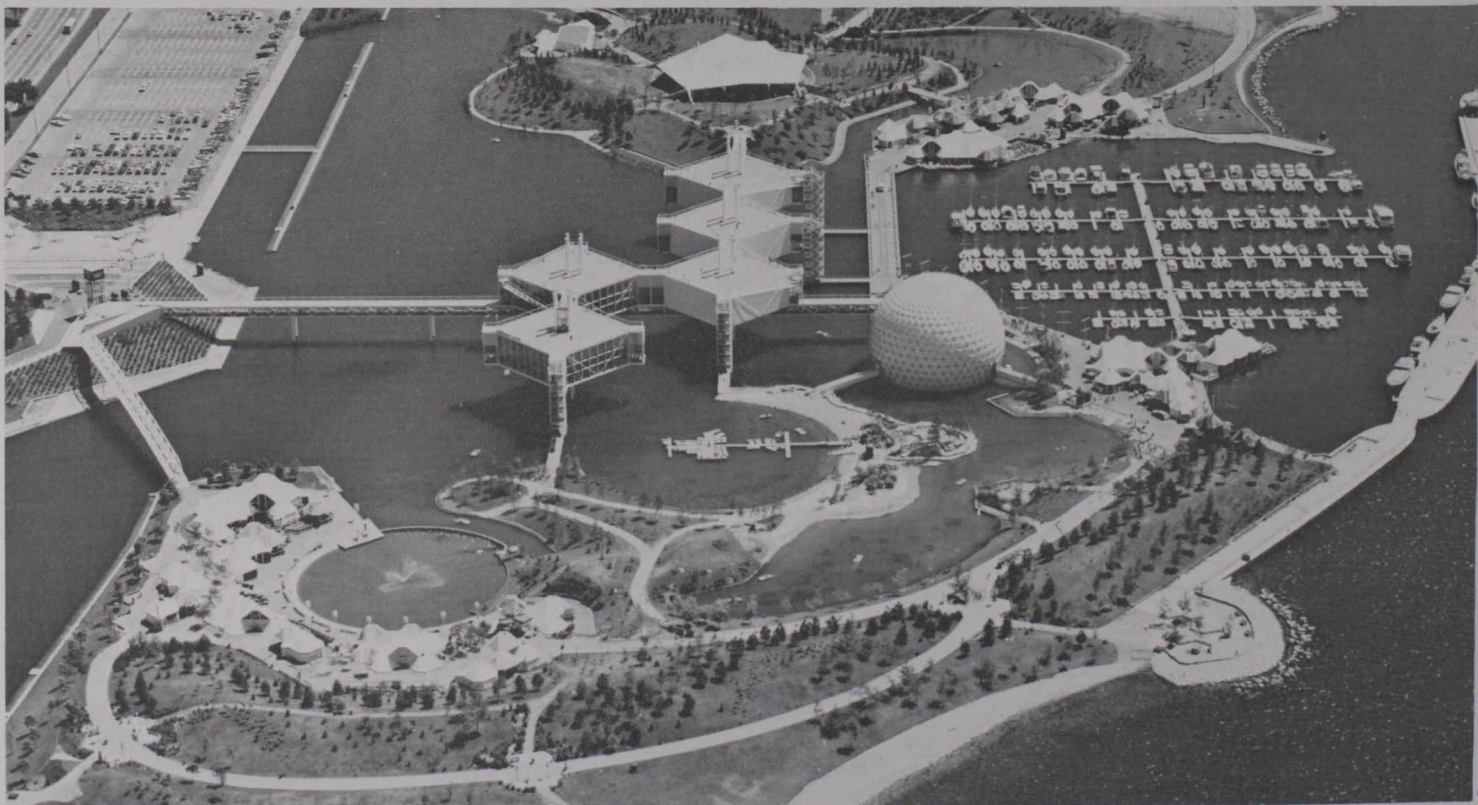
In contrast, get away to the wild and beautiful country along the Bruce Trail (see article on page 2). Or take a boat trip to the 1,000 Islands region in the St. Lawrence seaway: in autumn, the brilliant scarlet and gold foliage of the islands reflected in the very blue water is unforgettable. Something of a quieter age is still to be found in a few villages near and along the north shore of the St. Lawrence, with their inns and country

fairs and boat races. Or it is possible to step right into the past with a visit to Upper Canada Village, where people in period costume follow bygone lifestyles in old buildings which have been assembled in this one place from all round the St. Lawrence area. Likewise at Old Fort Henry, built in 1812, the pageantry of old-time warfare has been revived for sightseers.

Niagara and Stratford

In a day, it is possible to visit Niagara Falls and Niagara on the Lake, where the Shaw Festival is held annually in the summer, and the Shakespearian Festival at Stratford, with its waterside theatre and stage, designed by Tanya Moiseiwitch and Tyrone Guthrie in 1953, a modern adaptation of the Elizabethan stage with balcony, trapdoors, seven acting levels and nine major entrances.

Montreal is another good centre. The second-largest French-speaking city in the world, it has the unique flavour of Canada's French-Canadian culture, with its arts and crafts and folk music. The French influence is felt in the cuisine, and welcome. History and an ultra-modern skyline live side by side: architecturally, Montreal has blossomed since Expo 67



Aerial view of Ontario Place on the lake.