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THE SAD STATE OF OUR ROADS



IT'S HARD TO SAY EXACTLY WHAT'S BEEN DONE TO THE ROAD NETWORK. TWO STUDIES, PREPARED BY THE SAME GOVERNMENT MINISTRY, WIDELY CONTRADICT EACH OTHER.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Lachance', written over a light blue background.

Richard Lachance
President and CEO

It's back-to-school time and everyone's on the move. But the orange cones are still all over the place throughout Quebec, especially in the Montreal area. And so the question we as road users and taxpayers must ask ourselves is: Are the cones here to stay? The answer seems to be both yes and no – to judge from two Transports Québec studies on the state of our road network. Worrisome, isn't it?

But let's step back for a moment. In October 2007, we felt there was a genuine impetus to improve our road network following the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Collapse of the Concorde Overpass. The Quebec government announced an \$11.6-billion fund, spread over four years (an average of \$2.9-billion per year) and a 15-year plan to modernize the road network (through 2022), with the goal of refurbishing 83 percent of roads and 80 percent of other structures (like bridges and overpasses).

Ten years later, what's been accomplished?

More than \$28 billion* – amounting to some \$2.8 billion per year – has been invested in our roads over the past decade. And yet it's hard to say exactly what's been done to the road network. Two studies, prepared by the same government ministry, widely contradict

each other. The Quebec Infrastructure Plan (dated March 2017) indicates that 53 percent of Quebec roads are in good condition while the Annual Management Plan (dated October 2016) says that figure is 80 percent.

So which study should we rely on to assess the actual state of our road network: the Quebec Infrastructure Plan, which uses four indicators to “better reflect the state of infrastructure with necessary repairs,” or the Annual Management Plan, which factors in only one of those indicators – namely, the Roughness Index – meant for measuring “the ride comfort experienced by vehicle occupants”?

For three years now, our annual Worst Roads campaign has invited road users to report roads or stretches of road that are in bad shape. In yet another telltale sign of the network's general condition, judging from user comments, we're still far off the mark!

Where will we actually be at the end of this 15-year road-improvement plan? By 2022, will we have met the goal of repairing 83 percent of our roads and 80 percent of the structures? It's almost impossible to answer the question based on the data currently available. What a shame!

This past year alone, motorists shelled out over \$4 billion in taxes and fees, largely for road maintenance and improvement. That's a lot of money, so much so that all users – pedestrians, cyclists, motorists or truckers – have every right to expect a safe and sound road network.

Above and beyond measurement tools, it's a matter of safety and economic vitality.

*Accumulated road investments from 2008 to 2017 (excluding development). Since 2013, road investments have been made public every two years.

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© JEAN-FRANÇOIS LEBLANC

THE CONTAGIOUS LAUGHTER OF HEALING SPIRITS

An encounter with the Kallawayas, those fascinating medicine men whose fame dates as far back as the ancient Inca Empire.

BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS LEBLANC

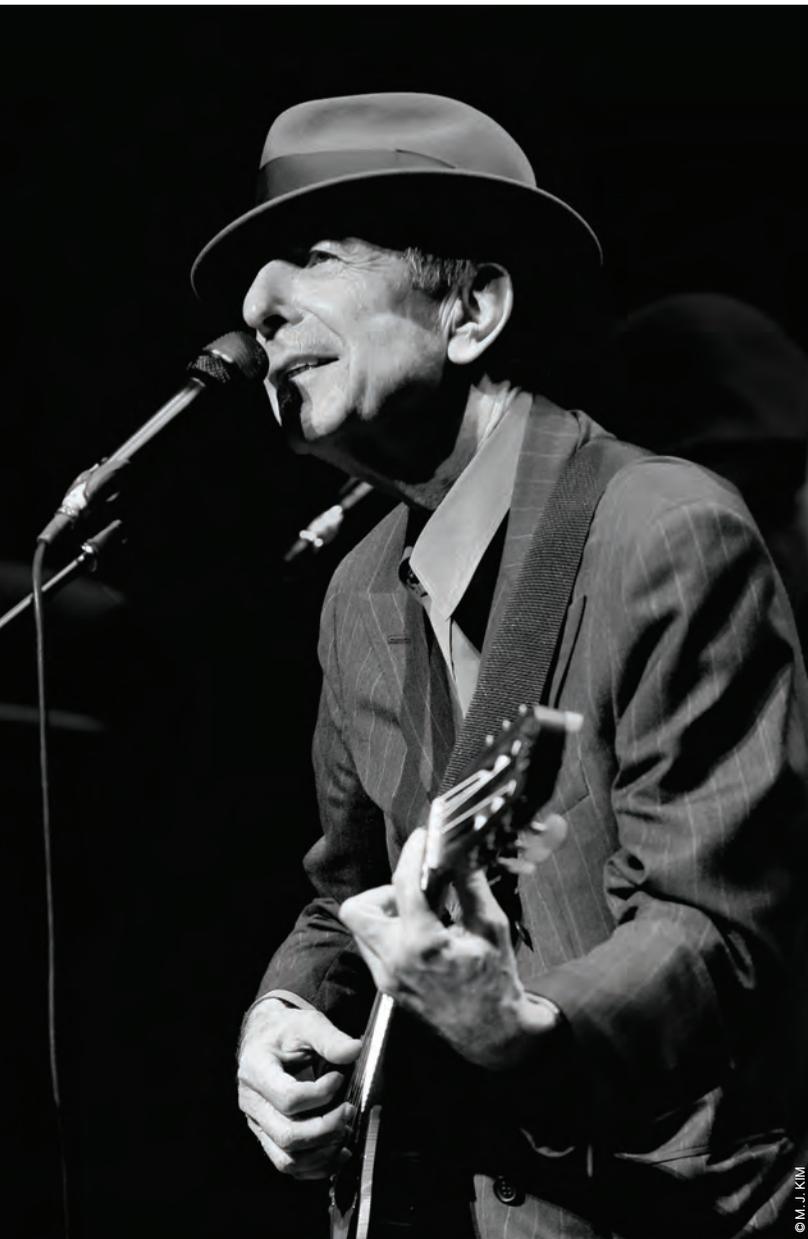
/// **Bolivia** ///

Perched atop a narrow ridge 3,800 metres above the valley floor, in the shadow of the snow-capped Andean cordillera, the small village of Curva clings to the mountainside amid breathtaking surroundings. This land is considered the heart of centuries-old Kallawayas culture. The Kallawayas themselves hail from the Lake Titicaca region, itself a sacred site for the Inca civilization. Few visitors venture this far – Curva is at least eight hours' drive from the city of La Paz.

For centuries, the Kallawayas have wandered through mountains, valleys and tropical forests, taking their healing practices to those in need. These itinerant healers practise an art that combines religious beliefs and an intimate knowledge of nature. Their pharmacopoeia is today recognized by UNESCO as one of the richest in the world.

We were staying with Miguel Tejerina, whose healing powers were

inherited from his father. Miguel understands the use and efficacy of more than 800 therapeutic plants. The village is nestled below a sacred peak or *achachila* (mountain spirit). We were granted the privilege of attending a ceremony there, celebrated in communion with the *Pachamama* (Mother Earth), venerated for millennia by Andean communities. When later we returned to the Tejerina household, I took this photo of Felicidad, the family matriarch, and her sister, grateful for Achachila's benevolent spirit that had conferred such happiness and contagious, wild laughter on us all.



© M.J. KIM

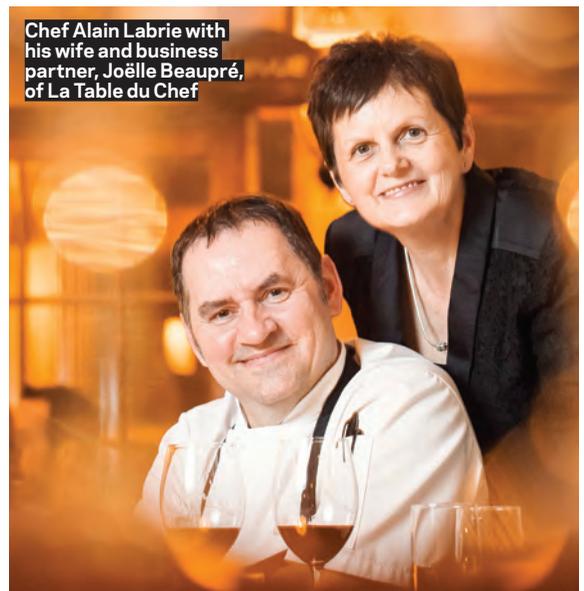
Leonard Cohen at the MAC

Poet, novelist and singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen epitomizes the spirit of Montreal. His haunting lyrics and music touched and defined generations around the world. This fall, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MAC) will pay homage to this creative giant with an intimate exhibition called "Leonard Cohen – a Crack in Everything." International and local artists – Jean Leloup, Ariane Moffatt and Moby, among others – will present works directly inspired by this poet's universe.

► From November 9, 2017 to April 9, 2018.

Sherbrooke sets the table

This year's "Sherbrooke Met La Table" festival will run from October 19 through 29. For 10 days some 20 establishments, including La Table du Chef, Auguste, Pizzicato, Da Toni, DT Bistro and Da Leonardo, will offer three-course table d'hôte menus for \$15 to \$20 at lunch and \$25 to \$35 in the evening.



Chef Alain Labrie with his wife and business partner, Joëlle Beaupré, of La Table du Chef

© LA TABLE DU CHEF



Auguste Restaurant

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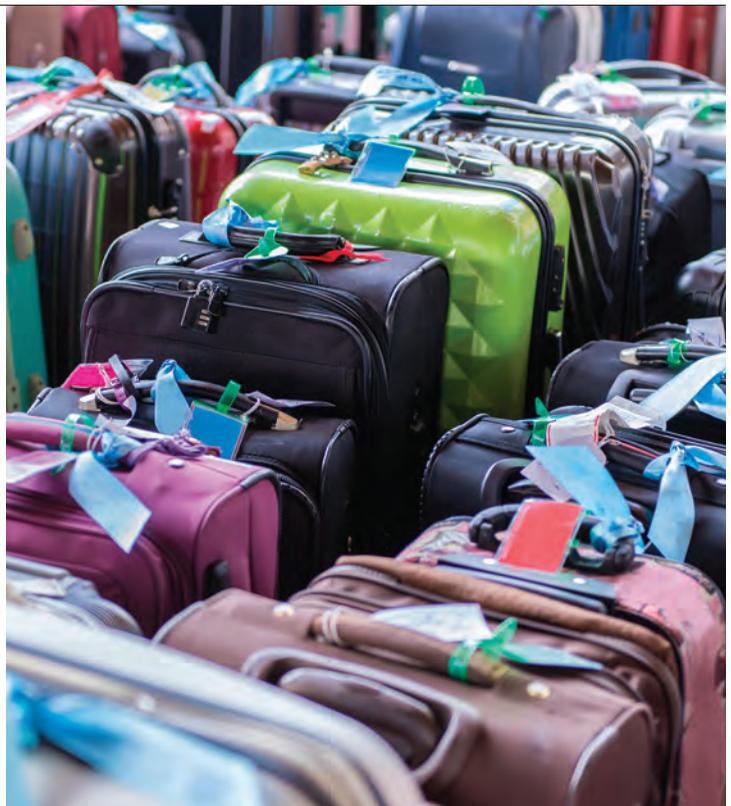
RAM

*Based on Automotive News Full-size Pickup segmentation. ^Based on the past 6 years of registration. †Longevity based on IHS Automotive: Polk Canadian Vehicles In Operation data as of July 1, 2016, for model years 1988-2016 for the entire Ram large pickup segment compared to all competitive large pickups that have been on the road since 1988.

Where lost luggage goes to die – or maybe not

While the situation has improved over the years, no less than 23.1 million pieces of luggage were either lost or misplaced temporarily in 2015, which translates into 6.5 bags per 1,000 passengers. Most airlines regard any bags as definitely lost after a period of 21 days. Air Canada, for example, might find a bag but it might not have an ID tag. In that case, Air Canada agents will go through it in an attempt to identify the owner. If the search fails, the bag will be sent to SITA World Tracer, an international luggage-tracking service used by more than 400 companies.

Depending on the country and airline, the contents of the bags are donated to a charity organization, destroyed or sold. Many U.S. companies sell the lost bags to Unclaimed Baggage Center, a gigantic store that, for over 40 years, has specialized in buying and selling unclaimed luggage. So if you have lost your bag, its contents may very well end up in Scottsboro, Alabama! This supermarket of found objects receives 7,000 lost items daily. In other words, everything's on offer here: not just electronic devices, jewellery or clothing but also objects as rare as they are astonishing, like a spaceship camera, medieval armour or a whole zebra pelt!



TIPS TO PREVENT LOSING YOUR LUGGAGE

- ▶ Remove old airline tags.
- ▶ Identify your bag inside and out with multiple name tags – or your business card.
- ▶ If at all possible, use a carry-on as opposed to checking your luggage.
- ▶ Take a non-stop flight if available.
- ▶ Avoid arriving at the airport at the last minute.

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In the *Avatar* universe

Using the hit movie *Avatar* as its inspiration, Disney has put its exceptional expertise into recreating a fabulous multisensory universe, down to the minutest detail.

Remember being transported into another world when you saw the 3-D movie *Avatar*? Well, *Pandora – The World of Avatar*, which opened last May in Disney’s Animal Kingdom Theme Park, will once again immerse you in that otherworldly setting – only this time you’re taking part in all of it!

SEE ▶ The moment you enter Pandora, you’ll be treated to an eyeful: floating mountains, exotic creatures and bioluminescent flora. Pandora’s plants and trees are especially striking at night, when the forest comes alive with light.

TOUCH ▶ Many of the plants in Pandora illuminate when they are touched, encouraging you to explore not only with your eyes, but your fingertips as well.

HEAR ▶ The theme park resonates with the sounds of creatures and wildlife populating the planet. Depending on the time of day or night, you’ll hear the rush of a river running, drumbeats, the rousing, expressive voice of a female shaman, etc. The staff and entertainers in the park have learned to speak Na’vi and play their roles to perfection.

SMELL ▶ The fragrance of flowers, the smell of dust disturbed by the hooves of a virtual herd, all combine to heighten the sense of reality created by this imaginary world.

TASTE ▶ Inspired by nature’s bounty, the Satu’li Canteen’s menu features a host of flavourful and healthy fare: fresh vegetables, grilled meats and sustainably sourced fish. Or stop by the Pongu Pongu lounge and try its “bioluminescent” frozen cocktails and an exclusive Pandora sweet snack.

RIDE ▶ “*Avatar Flight of Passage* is, far and away, the most spectacular ride at Disney’s World, period,” says Angelina Miconiatis, Senior Director,



CAA-Quebec Travel. “It puts you on a winged mountain banshee and launches you on an exhilarating journey over the *Avatar* world. You can feel the banshee breathing beneath you as you soar through the enchanted forest and glide over floating mountains. You’ll feel the wind on your face and be sprayed with mist as you approach waterfalls and oceans. What was a rite of passage in James Cameron’s movie has been turned into a multisensory experience for visitors eager for the ultimate adventure – an encounter with Pandora’s most feared predator: the Great Leonopteryx. Simply amazing!”

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DUBLIN

Mike Finn hails from County Cork. The IT consultant moved to Dublin more than a decade ago and shares his favourite haunts with us.

BY JOSÉE LARIVÉE

We are in Dublin: Let's start with the green. One of the city's most unexpected attractions is Phoenix Park, a huge stretch of green space about three kilometres from the city centre. "Let's get a DART (Dublin Area Rapid Transit) back to Connolly Train Station and jump on a high-speed LUAS tram to Phoenix," says Finn. "Tourists love to go there to look at the wild deer but don't be disappointed if you don't see any today – Phoenix Park is much too big (twice the size of New York's Central Park). There's also a zoo on the grounds, not to mention several lovely cafés."

"You can walk back to the city centre along the river Liffey. It's a pleasant stroll and takes only about 30 minutes. Or you can hop back on the tram and get off at Middle Abbey Street. By then it's probably time for a drink! So head out for the Library Bar, hidden away upstairs in the Central Hotel on Exchequer Street. It's a charming spot and you'll never find it unless you know it's there. After the obligatory pint of Guinness, head next door to Fallon & Byrne for grub. The basement is great for wine and cheese. The ground floor houses a café/supermarket serving very affordable and tasty fare. Upstairs is reserved for fine dining."

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"And if you still have enough energy left to hit the tiles, there are the pubs and bars, more than you can shake a stick at. Just pick one. Try it, and if it's not to your liking... move on to the next! This is Dublin after all."

Looking for a spot for an Irish brunch the next day? "Go to San Lorenzo's, on South Great George's Street downtown. Everything there tastes good. If you're feeling adventurous, try the Coco Pops Crunchy French Toast. And if you have cash to splash, go for the Eggs Royale – it's topped with Baeri Imperial caviar. They also serve a mean Bloody Mary in case you overdid the Guinness the night before!"



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WHERE NATURE
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This “land of fire and ice” is singularly stunning, wild, with an end-of-the-world feel to it. But it’s also home to a vibrant, cool, truly unique urban culture.

BY ASHLYN GEORGE

The name Iceland immediately conjures up images of imposing icebergs, gigantic glaciers and ancient Viking history. But there’s more to this icy icon than meets the eye. Here, you’ll also find gleaming modern architecture, a vibrant music scene and more craft beer than you can shake an icicle at.

The rolling hills, craggy cliffsides and thundering waterfalls are made for outdoor adventure. Throw in some quirky delicacies, eclectic city culture and legendary history and you have the recipe for a truly cool journey.

City lights

Reykjavik is the obvious place to start. Slightly more than a third of Iceland’s citizens live in its capital city, but that’s only 120,000 people. The city is small enough to discover on foot, but big enough to offer a variety of activities, restaurants and attractions.

Make your first stop one of several *Bæjarins Beztu Pylsur* stands (literally translated: “town’s best hot dogs”) to eat like a local on the go. Icelanders love their *pylsur*, steamed hot dogs made of lamb mixed with beef and pork. It’s common to see long queues in front of the stands during the lunch hour. Order *einameðöllu* or “one with everything,” including condiments of ketchup, sweet mustard and remoulade, plus raw and crispy fried onions.

While you enjoy your savoury treat, stretch your legs with a wander along the waterfront. Near the old harbour is the city’s crown jewel, the geometric



Harpa Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre. Designed in collaboration with renowned Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson and inspired by the Icelandic landscape, Harpa’s exterior is composed of glass panels in multiple sizes and colours to reflect and scatter light; the hall glitters in both the morning and evening sun. Head back in the evening to watch some of Iceland’s top musical talents perform.



Strokkur geyser

Other must-see stops are Reykjavik's 30-plus museums, covering everything from contemporary art and photography to the island's history and environment. Iceland's "Land of Fire and Ice" moniker derives from its famous glaciers and volcanoes, so a visit to Volcano House is a must. The museum offers insights into the formation of volcanoes, a documentary on famous eruptions and a mineral exhibition.

Move into the modern era with a stop at Reykjavik's skyline dominating Hallgrímskirkja Lutheran church. Designed by architect Guðjón Samúelsson, the concrete edifice is inspired by the rectangular basalt column lava flows found in several areas of the country. For a small fee you can climb to the top of the church's observation tower and get a 360-degree view of Reykjavik's brightly coloured houses, harbour and the mountains beyond.

Getting hungry? Reykjavik's many top-notch restaurants cater to every taste, though ambitious eaters will want to try some of the country's unusual delicacies, such as pickled ram's testicles and boiled



Thingvellir National Park

sheep's head. For those with an especially adventurous palate, try *hákarl* — fermented shark. A three- to four-month fermentation process allows the meat to decay and cure, removing its toxic concentration of urea; the meat retains a very sharp and tangy ammonia taste. Wash it down with a shot of *brennivín*, Iceland's signature clear, unsweetened schnapps. But one Icelandic specialty will be a big hit with everyone. It's called *skyr*, a cross between yogurt and white cheese. This delicious skimmed-milk-based product is said to have been introduced in Iceland by the Vikings more than 1000 years ago. It can be eaten alone, with cream and brown sugar, or with fresh fruit. It's also an excellent ingredient for pies, cakes and smoothies. Irresistible and ultra-healthy, the Icelandic *skyr* is ready to overtake Greek yogurt in popularity.

When it comes to liquor, Icelanders are passionate about their local beer. The country now has many craft breweries and bars that serve everything from the always popular Gull lager to darker beers like Viking and Gæðingur stouts.

Rural routes

It's easy to sightsee from Reykjavik. Choose from dozens of excursions to countryside glaciers, lava fields and northern lights viewing spots. Combine history and geology on a day trip along The Golden Circle. It's one of Iceland's most popular sightseeing routes and a great way to explore the country. Thingvellir National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of the circuit's primary attractions. Like all parks in Iceland, admission is free.

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**This offer cannot be combined with any other offer or promotion. The 25% discount is applied to the less expensive pair when the first one is a prescription pair. Not applicable on Oakley products. Michel Laurendeau, optician.

Thingvellir is home to Thingvallavatn, the largest natural lake in Iceland, along which lies Silfra, the Mid-Atlantic Ridge rift. Here, the North American and Eurasian continental plates are slowly ripping away from each other at a rate of about two centimetres a year. Adventure seekers can get seriously up close to the ridge by snorkelling or scuba diving between the divide. Don't worry about the water's frigid temperature: You'll wear a dry suit with rubber seals to prevent water from entering around the neck and wrists. Visibility in the lake is often more than 100 metres, making it easy to see the rift's dramatic lava and rock gorges. It's definitely worth the cold plunge to enjoy this truly unique experience.

Make your way to the Althing, Iceland's original parliament. The structure dates back to 930 AD and several important historical events have taken place here, including the adoption of Christianity around AD 1000 and the founding of the Modern Icelandic Republic in 1944.

Leaving the national park, continue east toward Geysir and Strokkur geothermal area, Iceland's most famous hot-springspouts. The word "geyser" actually derives its name from Iceland's great Geysir – though ironically, this one now seldom erupts. Strokkur, however, erupts every 10 to 15 minutes; you won't have to wait long to see its 100°C water shoot up 25 metres in the air. For more fantastic water views, continue east to Gullfoss, one of Iceland's most photographed waterfalls due to its stunning two-tiered 32-metre drop.

After completing the Golden Circle route, spend the night in Vik, a town on Iceland's southern coast. It's a popular destination for exploring Reynisfjara, a black sand beach with three sea stacks visible from shore. According to Icelandic legend, the stacks – named Skessudrangur, Langhamar and Landdrangur – were once two trolls towing a three-sailed ship back to shore. Before they could reach safety within Reynisfjall mountain, the sun turned the trolls and ship to stone.

Also found along the beach are the basalt columns that inspired Reykjavik's Hallgrímskirkja church. They form an impressive step pyramid up the cliff face. Be careful of the waves near the cliffs: They're forceful and can knock you off your feet – there have been several fatal accidents here.



Put on a watertight suit before diving into the frigid, crystal-clear waters of Silfra Cathedral, a section of the very deep fissure of the same name in Lake Thingvallavatn.



▲ Luxuriating in the warm waters of the Blue Lagoon geothermal spa in Grindavik, a popular destination for tourists and locals.

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Mount Kirkjufell rises on a peninsula in western Iceland, surrounded by waterfalls.



Spectacular aurora borealis

After taking your time to explore and enjoy the unique setting of Jökulsárlón, it's time to start the return journey to Reykjavik – about 4.5 hours by car. Consider staying outside the city for an opportunity to see the northern lights. Although winter is the best time to view the aurora borealis, Iceland's high-arctic latitude makes it a great year-round spot to witness the pulsing and shifting greens, reds and whites in night skies.

Icelandic icons

Before you say *þess* (goodbye) to the countryside, pick up some authentic souvenirs. Try a *lopapeysa*, Iceland's ever-popular hand-knit sweaters. The cozy pullovers and cardigans are made using *lopi* yarn, crafted from the fleece of Icelandic sheep. For real local flavour, pick up a bottle of *pylsusinnep*, a hot dog topping that's more than mere mustard. The sweet, brown condiment perfectly accents the wiener's mix of lamb, beef and pork. To buy, just look for the bottle with a dancing hot dog.

Save the best for last: On your way back to Reykjavik, soak away travel stress in the silica-rich waters of the Blue Lagoon. Since 1976, the geothermal spa has been a popular soaking spot for tourists and locals alike. The unique water and silica mud are said to have therapeutic benefits for a variety of ailments. And at 8,700 square metres, with a volume of nine million litres, it's one of the largest medicinal spas in the world. The lagoon recently expanded to offer a silica mud bar and an enhanced quiet area.

A getaway loaded with lagoons, glaciers and geysers is a rich reminder of Iceland's dramatic landscape and legendary history. But it's truly just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to this icy-cool country.

► Featured in the magazine's digital version: Don't miss our *skyr* crème brûlée recipe, a cooking video from the *explore* series.



CRUISE TO ICELAND WITH CAA-QUEBEC TRAVEL

North Sea - Ireland and Iceland Ahoy!

(May 7 to 20, 2018)

North Sea - Carved by the Ocean (May 22 to June 8, 2018)

Sand and sky

About 200 kilometres east along Highway 1 is the Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon. Here, icebergs calve off of the receding Breiðamerkurjökull glacier and crash into the water at its base. Some icebergs spend up to five years floating in the 250-metre-deep lake before moving on – via a short river – and slowly drifting out to the Atlantic Ocean. On the beach, the diamond-like icebergs sun themselves on the black sand, rolling in and out with tidal waves. There are hour-long boat tours that cruise the lagoon and offer a close-up look at the frozen milky-white and light blue formations. (The colouring depends on the amount of compressed air bubbles within the ice and the refraction of light on their surface.)

❓ PRACTICAL INFORMATION

HOW TO GET THERE ▶ Low-cost WOW Air offers direct flights Montreal-Reykjavik. And through WOW Stopover, you can do it in conjunction with another European country. For example, you can fly to Amsterdam or London via Reykjavik, and stop for a few days in Iceland at no extra cost.

WHEN TO GO ▶ **October-April:** Low season, short days, long nights, best for Northern Lights viewing. **June-August:** High season, endless daylight, festivals.

May and September: Shoulder season, bright days, fewer visitors, lower prices.

WEATHER ▶ Iceland is not that cold, even in winter. Temperatures in Reykjavik average 0°C in January and 11°C in July but can climb to 20°C. Remember that the weather is unpredictable and can change quickly, and be prepared for sunshine, rain, sleet and snow throughout the same day.

MONEY AND PRICES ▶ Iceland *króna* (ISK)
1 CAD = about 80 ISK

Costs of living are high in Iceland, especially in the capital. A beer costs about ISK1,000 and a Big Mac combo close to ISK1,600. Lunch in an inexpensive restaurant will set you back about ISK2,000, and dinner in a swanky establishment can easily climb to ISK12,000. Hotels are expensive and not thick on the ground, especially outside Reykjavik. It's best to book ahead or go for a guesthouse or hostel.

A MAGIC WORD ▶ *Takk* means "Thanks."

LOCAL TIP ▶ Look for community "hot pots" — natural hot springs that are used as public hot tubs. There are several in Reykjavik.

Hallgrímskirkja church
in Reykjavik



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Travel Insurance

EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS

TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

SMARTPHONE VERSUS CAMERA

The quality of smartphone photos continues to improve. So, is it still worth travelling with a big camera and a cumbersome telephoto lens? Here's a brief comparison between a DSLR camera, the Canon EOS Rebel T6i, and the iPhone 7 Plus.



CANON EOS REBEL T6i

PRICE ▶ Approximately \$800 (with 18-55 mm IS STM lens kit)*

IMAGE QUALITY/FEATURES ▶ CMOS (APS-C) sensor, 24 megapixel, fast and high-quality DIGIC-6 image processor, 1080p HD video recording, speedy focus

PORTABILITY ▶ 131.9 mm (5.20 in) x 100.9 mm (3.98 in) x 77.8 mm (3.09 in), 520 g (18.35 oz)

SCREEN ▶ ACL, 7.7 cm (3 in) diagonally, Vari-Angle

STORAGE ▶ Expandable memory cards

SHARE ▶ Built-in Wi-Fi and NFC (near-field communication) for wireless transfer of images and movies to a smartphone

ACCESSORIES ▶ Complete range of quality lenses (telephoto, macro, etc.) and flashes, tripods, remote shutters, and more

SUMMARY

PROS ▶ Affordable price, superior image quality, depth of field, choice of quality lenses, Vari-Angle touch screen and optical viewfinder (small but useful in the sun while saving battery – the screen consumes a lot of energy)

CONS ▶ More unwieldy than a smartphone, image quality diminishes in poor light



APPLE IPHONE 7 PLUS

PRICE ▶ \$1,049*

IMAGE QUALITY/FEATURES ▶

12-megapixel camera, wide-angle lens (f/1.8 aperture), telephoto lens (f/2.8), 2X optical zoom, 4K video recording, optical image stabilizer, autofocus, True Tone quad LED flash

PORTABILITY ▶ 7.3-mm thick (0.29 in), 188 grams (6.63 oz)

SCREEN ▶ Retina HD, 13.97-cm (5.5-in) diagonally

STORAGE ▶ Internal and non-expandable

SHARE ▶ Permits the editing and sharing of images instantly with integrated cellular and Wi-Fi connectivity

ACCESSORIES ▶ Add-on lenses available (macro, wide-angle), handles and tripods, remote shutter, external flash

SUMMARY

PROS ▶ Minimal size and weight, very easy to use, high-resolution images

CONS ▶ No control over depth of field, battery life longer than that of iPhone 6, but still limited

* Approximate starting price at press time.

PROMOTIONS

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Book by September 30, 2017, with a deposit of only \$100 and benefit from:

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For longer stay packages in Portugal or Spain:

- ✓ A \$50 future travel voucher¹
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Travel

EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS

Valid on new individual bookings of Transat South & Florida packages of a minimum seven-night stay, for travel between December 15, 2017, and April 30, 2018, and between November 1, 2017, and April 30, 2018, for Europe. Not applicable to groups, flights or à la carte accommodations, and also to cruises and guided tours to Europe. These promotions are subject to change without notice. Subject to availability at the time of booking. For complete terms and conditions, please visit caaquebec.com. 1. A non-transferable future travel voucher of \$50 per adult and \$25 per child will be issued and must be redeemed by October 31, 2019. 2. The 30% discount on seat selection is valid only with the purchase of a package and applies to standard seats only, book by October 31, 2017. Not applicable to seat selection made on the carrier's website. 3. If your package becomes available at a lower price than the one paid, the difference will be refunded in cash (up to \$400 per adult and \$200 per child). 4. Not applicable to seat selection made on the air carrier's website. Exceptions may apply to some room categories. 5. Clients can change their original travel dates only once, and travel must be completed by October 31, 2018. Certain exclusions apply. If the price on the new travel dates is higher, the client must pay the difference. No refund will be given should the price on the new travel dates be lower than the initial price. 6. One free access per booking number.

CAA-Quebec travel is a Quebec permit holder.

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It's the only credit card that lets you earn CAA Dollars on every purchase you make. Ask for the new CAA Rewards[®] Mastercard[®] credit card today! If you already own the card with our previous partner, make sure you replace it today!²

See the new card's advantages as well as related details and conditions at CAAQUEBEC.COM/NBC.

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² Subject to credit approval by National Bank.

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*Total amount: \$102.33 (including taxes). **Adding another member to your account costs 50% of the price of the CAA Classic membership. An additional member is a person aged 14 or over living at the same address as the primary member, or a child of the primary member living at a different address if he or she is aged 24 or under and is a full-time student.

The enrolment application must be submitted by a member in good standing, and only they can request CAA Dollars. The amounts shown are effective until December 31, 2017. This offer cannot be combined with any other. See the Member's Handbook and Discounts and Privileges Guide for complete descriptions of services, discounts, products, benefits and rules related to CAA-Quebec membership, or visit caaquebec.com.



EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS



Police officer Jonathan Bélisle, Michèle Debroux (Assistant Director, CAA-Quebec road-safety programs, communications and public affairs), Raphaël Lapierre (School Safety Patroller of the Year), Annie Lamothe (head of the school safety patrol at École St-André).

Saluting our school safety patrollers

Back-to-school season is a fitting time to give a big shout out of thanks to the 5,000 young patrollers who, throughout the previous school year, dutifully watched over the safety of their classmates.

Special congratulations go to 2016-2017 Patroller of the Year Raphaël Lapierre of École St-André in Acton Vale. Raphaël's constant diligence, ability to command respect, and exemplary safety-consciousness were distinguishing factors.

Last June, patrollers from 23 schools saw their efforts rewarded. Those living in the Quebec City region were treated to a Quebec Capitales baseball game and their Montreal-area counterparts enjoyed a fun-filled day at La Ronde – leaving indelible memories with these laudable young people.

CAA-Quebec takes great pride in its school safety patrollers. They carry out their duties confidently, promoting road-safety awareness and safe behaviour in the schoolyard, on the school bus and on the streets.

CAA-Quebec makes the honour roll

The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) – and, by extension, CAA-Quebec – received quite a pat on the back last spring. It was named the most trusted travel brand and the second-most trusted brand overall in the 2017 Gustavson Brand Trust Index (GBTI).

The GBTI measures the opinions of Canadian consumers in 294 companies. Criteria include brand performance, social equity, trust and advocacy – all values which are embraced by CAA-Quebec. Interestingly, the business model of the top three brands – Mountain Equipment Co-op, CAA and Costco – is membership-based, suggesting that Canadians are enthusiastic about, and find value in, consumer clubs and co-operatives.

Health and Wellness Award

CAA-Quebec's Organizational Development Team was the proud recipient of the Santé et mieux-être (Health and Wellness) award, given by the Ordre des conseillers en ressources humaines agréés du Québec during its first HR gala.

A whole range of activities have been organized to allow CAA-Quebec

employees to take an active role in looking after themselves, including conferences and workshops on stress management, relaxation techniques, yoga, fitness, power walking, nutrition and healthy cooking.

That's our way of contributing to the well-being of our raw material – our employees!



CAA-Quebec's Virage Santé Committee (from left): Marie-Josée Boucher (Boisbriand Travel Centre), Isabelle Michaud CRHA (former Senior Consultant, Organizational Development), Guylène Nadeau (Telemarketing), Philippe Lahaie (Web Business Analyst), Véronique Laniel (HR Technician).

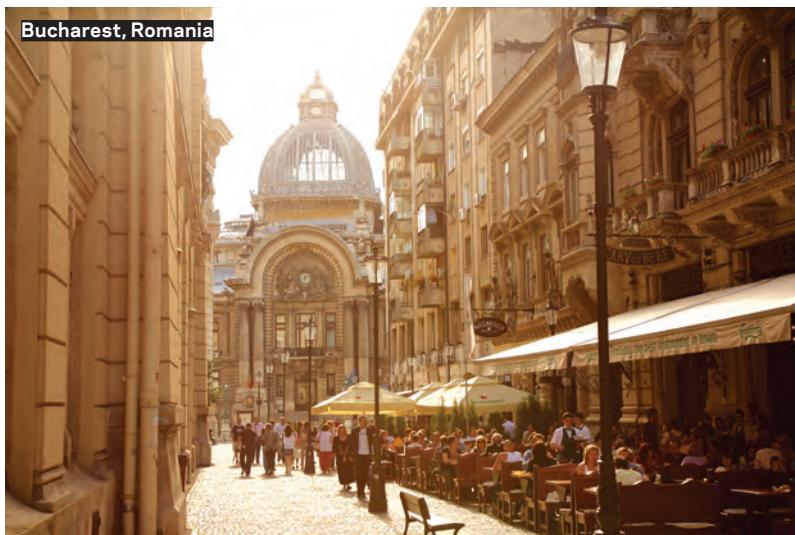
CAA-QUEBEC TRAVEL /
Discover the world
with *explore*

Keep an eye out for the new issue of *explore* which will be arriving mid-September to our 14 Travel Centres and at CAAQUEBEC.COM. The 2017 *explore monde* brochure will tempt you to want to pack up and fly away. If this is the case, our experienced travel consultants are available to assist you prior to and during your trip so that you can travel with peace of mind.

New destinations are offered in the 2017 issue: Romania and Bulgaria, or a Myanmar-Thailand combo to name but a few. You can also sail on one of the many featured cruises: Discover Scandinavia and Russia, the romantic Mediterranean, the wine routes of the U.S. West Coast or the exotic charm of Papua-New Guinea. Looking for a different way to explore Andalusia? Try our land-river cruise package from Madrid to Malaga. The choice is almost endless. And don't forget, no need to be a member to travel with us, but our loyalty program is exclusive to members.

A number of these destinations will be featured during our travel conferences this fall. Consult the full schedule and sign up at VOYAGE.CAAQUEBEC.COM.

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PASSENGER BILL OF RIGHTS / A step in the right direction

Canadian airline passengers may soon expect better protection of their rights, according to the initial details of a bill tabled last spring by federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau. Much remains to be done, however, before the bill's planned adoption next year.

As previously noted by our president (*Touring*, Spring 2016, p. 4), it's high time such a charter is adopted, providing clear rules and protocols. Modelled after those already enforced in the United States and Europe, it is a document that all carriers operating in Canada will be required to honour. And CAA-Quebec has invested time and effort in advocating better oversight of this booming sector of industry.

Besides detailing the procedures to follow and the compensation payable to passengers affected by problematic situations (boarding denial, delayed or cancelled flights, lost or damaged luggage), the proposed charter will also eliminate the extra fees charged to guarantee that children are seated with their parents.

On behalf of its members and travel customers, CAA-Quebec will continue to follow this issue closely until the charter's details – designed to improve and clarify the rules of Canadian air travel – are finally spelled out.



SPRING FLOODS IN QUEBEC / CAA-Quebec was on hand

Given the magnitude of last spring's flooding situation, CAA-Quebec decided to extend its residential-expert services to all flood victims, members and non-members alike. The decision was made at a time when such services were urgently needed. Our oft-repeated motto – helping people first and foremost – has never been so true.

Our Residential Advisory Team provided useful information about cleanup and rebuilding. And the CAA-Quebec Network of Approved Residential Suppliers stood ready to respond quickly to all requirements and requests.

And a donation to the Red Cross

CAA-Quebec made a Red Cross contribution of \$8,355, a portion of which was donated by our own employees. We thank them for their generosity and for the pride they took in helping out.

CAA-QUEBEC MAGAZINE /
Readership rising

According to Vividata, which measures Canadian print and digital media audiences, *CAA-Quebec Magazine* has enjoyed a dramatic rise in readership – 60 percent in just the past year.

From the end of 2015 to the end of 2016, *CAA-Quebec Magazine*, formerly known as *Touring*, added 475,000 readers to its roster, for a grand total of 1,266,000. The gain, the second largest among Canada’s French-language magazines, is strongest in the 24-to-35 age group at 58 percent.

Download the app

The magazine now offers a tablet version with expanded content. If you haven’t already, be sure to download the app from the App Store or on Google Play and enjoy *CAA-Quebec Magazine* wherever you happen to be.



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Travel

EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS

CAA-Quebec Travel is a Quebec permit-holder

MEMBER TESTIMONIAL

It's all covered, even in the States!

Paul Polidori never experienced car problems in his life - until, that is, a front tire blew on a busy U.S. highway last spring. The senior was relieved to have kept his CAA-Quebec membership card active all these years!

Returning from their annual Florida vacation, the Polidoris were driving contentedly along Interstate 81-N in Pennsylvania when it happened. "We didn't just have a flat," he recalls. "There was almost no rubber left on the wheel." However, he did manage to ease his Grand Caravan onto the side of road.

"I was so stressed out that my first instinct was to call 9-1-1," Polidori says. "I told the policeman I had my CAA-Quebec card. He thought it was only valid in Canada. Still, he noted down my membership number anyway and called AAA. A tow truck pulled up 30 minutes later."

"The patroller told us to get into the truck and leave everything else to him." As soon as the vehicle was secured on the truck's platform, they drove to the nearest garage in Hazleton, PA. Unfortunately, the garage didn't stock the kind of winter tire that the car required. "Since we often encounter icy roads and snowstorms on the way home from Florida, I had decided to play it safe and travel with winter tires, even though I know they'll wear out faster," adds Polidori. The mechanic finally managed to find a tire that was similar enough to Polidori's other three tires to guarantee a safe journey home. "I was back on the road only two hours after the call to AAA. That was amazing."



©STÉPHANIE MALTAIS

At the time of writing, Paul Polidori hasn't quite made up his mind about returning to Florida this winter. This former bike racer is still fond of his sport - and he knows that he can count on CAA-Quebec Bike Assistance if one of his bicycle tires should also get a flat.

TELL US YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH CAA-QUEBEC.

► Does your no-stress card give you a boost? Email your story to CAAQUEBECMAGAZINE@CAAQUEBEC.COM. It could appear in the next "Member Testimonial" column and earn you 100 CAA Dollars.

Your children are better protected thanks to your CAA-Quebec card

Do your teenagers ride around on bikes or scooters? Do your young-adult children attend university? If so, you might feel better if they were additional members of CAA-Quebec. They would enjoy the same security and protection as you, if something unexpected happens to them on the road.

This is good news! Your children can now become CAA-Quebec members beginning at age 14 and remain so (if they are full-time students*) until age 24, even if they no longer live under your roof.

And anyone else living at your address – your spouse, all adult children, any friends or relatives – are also eligible for additional membership.

Savings for all

By having their own member cards, your kids are entitled to numerous discounts: at movie theatres and amusement parks, and in many stores – such as Joe Fresh and La Source – and restaurants like La Cage-Brasserie Sportive, to name just a few. You can even save on the cost of insuring their scooters with CAA-Quebec.

We've loosened the rules because we listened to your concerns. The reason why? We protect people... not cars!

*Details at caaquebec.com



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DID YOU KNOW?

It pays to show your CAA-Quebec member card when you have your vehicle serviced – whether for a tire change, car maintenance or repairs – at participating approved garages. You'll get 3-percent cash back in CAA-Dollars (and even 4 percent, if you pay with your National Bank CAA Rewards® Mastercard® credit card).

▶ Visit CAAQUEBEC.COM for more details.



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JOEFRESH.COM/CAA

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LUNETTERIE NEW LOOK ▶ Get a 2% rebate in CAA Dollars and up to 25% off regularly priced prescription eyeglasses.

LAURIER QUÉBEC ▶ Enjoy 10% off at participating stores and boutiques. You can also get an entry ballot for the *Shopping at Laurier Québec could send you travelling!* contest, worth \$1,500.

RW&CO ▶ Get 15% off the last posted price of in-store items.

▶ For full details regarding our Privileges Program partners and offers, visit CAAQUEBEC.COM.



HOME GUIDES: UPGRADED AND EASIER TO CONSULT

Over the past year, our Residential Advisory Services team has reviewed both the contents and layouts of several guides.

A number of our titles – including *The Homeowner's Handbook*, *Re-Shingling Your Roof*, *Seasonal Maintenance Checklists*, and *Property Inventory Guide* – have gone digital. Result: Consultation is faster and easier for time-pressed users, while those with more time and specific interests can benefit from in-depth information, practical advice and helpful tips.

Scoop! ▶ *The Healthy Home Handbook* is next in line for an upgrade. Visit CAAQUEBEC.COM to discover, or rediscover, it today.

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QUESTION / My sister's house was flooded last spring. What could I have done if that had happened to me? - M. ROY, QUÉBEC

ANSWER / There are measures you can take to prepare for a flood and to help reduce damage. Here are the steps to follow.

Prevention

If you live in a flood-prone area and know that the nearby river has reached a critical level, seal all basement windows and ground-level doors. Elevate furniture, electrical appliances and all toxic substances. Install a sump pump that will activate on contact with floodwaters. Also, sandbags and a generator may come in handy.

After a flood

If the water doesn't recede by itself, pump it out as soon as you can. Contact your insurer at the first sign of a flood and take pictures before, during and after the disaster. This will facilitate and expedite your claim. Remove all damaged items and discard whatever cannot be decontaminated, since river floodwater can be as toxic as sewer backups. Have a professional inspect your electrical, heating, air-conditioning and ventilation installations.

Drying out

Time is of the essence. You have about 48 hours before mould sets in. Wear protec-

tive clothing during the cleanup operation, discard wet replaceable items, and install fans and dehumidifiers. Even if there hasn't been a lot of water present, remove baseboard heaters, cut out damaged drywall and use a pump-vacuum cleaner to dry any carpeting and vinyl flooring.

Cleanup and disinfection

Generally speaking, anything made of porous materials – like soundproofing tiles, drywall, insulation – should be disposed of. Wood and inorganic materials – concrete, plastics, polystyrene, ceramics (except if installed on plywood) – are salvageable, but they must first be disinfected with specialized solvents or bleached water.

Reconstruction

Consider using inorganic construction materials like metal studs, ceramics set on concrete, plastic foams, and so on. And if you require assistance, consult the CAA-Quebec Network of Approved Residential Suppliers. Members can also call on CAA-Quebec Residential Advisory Services.

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NEXT QUESTION:

What's your most beautiful vacation memory? It could be a long-ago childhood memory or one from the summer just ended.

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NOTE: CAA-Quebec reserves the right to edit and condense the responses chosen in order to meet CAA-Quebec Magazine criteria. Thank you for your understanding.



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Renting out your home CARRIES A FEW RISKS

If you plan to sublet your property while travelling, proceed with caution.

BY JACQUELINE SIMONEAU

Airbnb-style rentals sound so appealing but it's important to keep in mind that, since 2015, all short-term rentals (those fewer than 31 days) are governed by the Act respecting tourist accommodation establishments. This law obliges the homeowner/renter to hold a classification certificate issued by the Corporation de l'industrie touristique du Québec. Non-compliance will result in fines. Also, be sure that your city bylaws and, if you live in a condo, the declaration of co-property, permit this type of rental.

If you're considering leasing out your home long-term, don't just assume that you will be able to reclaim your home immediately upon your return. If you plan to be away for six months, for example, you cannot use a standard lease that states you must notify the tenant in writing six months before the lease expires or else the lease is automatically renewed.

Beware of inconveniences

Renting to strangers has its downside. Horror stories certainly occur of owners/renters sustaining property damage – dirty premises, broken appliances, theft, excessive comings, goings and noise that disturb the neighbours... In short, what sort of tenant will you be dealing with? To be on the safe side, ask for references and check your prospective tenant's credit

rating. Have a trusted friend or relative keep an eye on the property. And don't forget to put your valuables away in a safe place. In case of damage, while you'll have the law on your side, you must be able to prove that the tenant was at fault, which is not always as simple as it sounds.

Contact your insurer

Under Article 2466 of the Quebec Civil Code, you must notify your insurer of any new situation that could alter the risks stipulated in the policy, including renting your property to strangers. If you fail to notify your insurer, it could refuse to indemnify a claim on the basis that it was only informed about the rental after the fact. The same precaution applies to house swaps.

Note also that some insurers will decline to cover short-term rentals while others will accept but with conditions. For example, the insurer may increase the premium or add exclusions (water damage, for example) to the policy.

► Our thanks go to Suzanne Michaud, CAA-Quebec Vice-President - Insurance; Denis Miron, spokesman for Régie du logement; and Me Claude Savoie, real-estate attorney, for their assistance.



CLOSING UP THE COTTAGE

FOR WINTER

For most of us, it signals the end of vacation season. Here's a checklist of chores to do so everyone goes home with peace of mind knowing there'll be no unpleasant surprises come spring. / BY CHANTAL LAPOINTE

Readying your three-season cottage for winter is a chore often reserved for a late fall weekend, although many families make it a Thanksgiving-weekend tradition. The process is simple enough: Just turn off the water, electricity and heating, explains Michel Blain of CAA-Quebec Residential Advisory Services. "Make sure you've got the right tools and materials," he adds. Here's how to proceed:

- ▶ Wash and store all outdoor amenities – rowboat, canoe, pedal boat, toys, bikes, barbecue, garden furniture and tools.
 - ▶ Check the roof and clear out the gutters.
 - ▶ Inspect the building and block all openings to keep out rodents. Inspect the screen of the chimney cap.
 - ▶ Be sure there's enough caulking on the window frames.
 - ▶ Empty the pantry.
 - ▶ Take away all alcohol bottles and guns. Don't leave any valuables behind.
 - ▶ Empty, defrost and clean the fridge. Leave the door ajar by wedging an object between the door and the frame.
 - ▶ Wash all bed linens, putting them away in a dry place, like a plastic container or a cedar chest.
- ▶ You can leave a little heat on, say, at 8°C. This minimal temperature will keep the pipes from freezing and prevent mould and dry rot. If you have pipes located inside cupboards (in the kitchen or bathroom, for example), leave their doors open to let in some heat.
 - ▶ If you leave the heat and therefore the electricity on, be sure to unplug all the small appliances.
 - ▶ Shut off the water main and the power to the artesian-well pump.
 - ▶ Drain every water line in the cottage by opening all the taps and valves. Empty the hot water tank after you shut off the electricity. Flush the toilet to drain the toilet tank.
 - ▶ Make sure the washing machine, the dishwasher and their pipes are all drained and empty.
 - ▶ Pour about two cups of anti-freeze in traps that can't be drained – under sinks, bathtub, shower, toilet tanks, washtubs and dishwasher.
 - ▶ Leave curtains slightly open so that potential thieves will see that there's nothing inside worth stealing.
 - ▶ Lock the doors.
 - ▶ If possible, ask a trusted neighbour who lives in the area year-round to look in at the cottage from time to time. Leave him or her a key and your phone number.
 - ▶ If necessary, arrange for roof-snow removal.

Wild animal insurance?

In the spring a few years ago, Jean-Rock Gaudreault had an unpleasant surprise: He found that his cottage – located north of Lac-Saint-Jean and used only in the summer – had been totally vandalized... by bears! “A window was broken, cupboards ripped out, tins of food opened. There was molasses and flour all over the cottage. It was horrible,” Gaudreault recalls. In the case of an isolated cottage, is it possible to purchase wild-animal insurance? “No, it’s not usually offered,” says Suzanne Michaux, CAA-Quebec Vice-President – Insurance. “Coverage is rather limited for seasonal homes. Damage or loss resulting from theft or vandalism is not usually covered (nor is vandalism caused by bears). Owners can, however, generally get insurance for fire, water and wind damage. But this protection is limited and doesn’t cover gradual deterioration caused by ants or rodents, for example.”

► In the spring, before opening up the cottage, be sure to view this CAA-Quebec vignette: CAAQUEBEC.COM/EN.



Damage or loss resulting from theft or vandalism is not usually covered (nor is damage caused by bears).

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STÜV 30 COMPACT MODEL - ©MAXIME GAGNÉ

HEATING WITH WOOD HIGH EFFICIENCY

Modern stoves and fireplaces are usually more expensive than traditional wood burners, but they come with loads of advantages. / BY JACQUELINE SIMONEAU

In recent years, municipalities across Quebec have issued new directives regarding the use of wood stoves and fireplaces. The reason? Wood smoke emissions are one of the main causes of winter air pollution and smog, and their fine toxic particles can penetrate deep into lung tissue, causing serious breathing problems.

The city of Montreal, for example, has decreed that by October 1, 2018, those who want to continue heating with wood must use stoves that are certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA) and will emit no more than 2.5 grams of fine particles per hour (g/h). There is one exception: Appliances that do not conform can still be used during power outages lasting more than three hours. But because bylaws vary from one municipality to another, it's important to check with your own.

For those planning to replace their appliances, high-efficiency models are particularly advantageous. Here's why.

MORE ECOLOGICAL ▶ Older wood-burning stoves produce between 70 and 100 g/h. High-efficiency models, all EPA-certified, reduce emissions by almost 90 percent, according to the Association des professionnels du chauffage (APC). While current EPA standards are set at 4.5 g/h or less, most models found on the market today have an emission rate of 2.5 g/h, exactly as mandated by Montreal. All certified models come with a label showing the rates of emission (g/h) and efficiency (%). The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) also issues certifications for wood-burning stoves and fireplaces.

MORE HEAT WITH LESS WOOD ▶ High-efficiency systems generate more heat with 33 percent less wood than a conventional fireplace or stove.

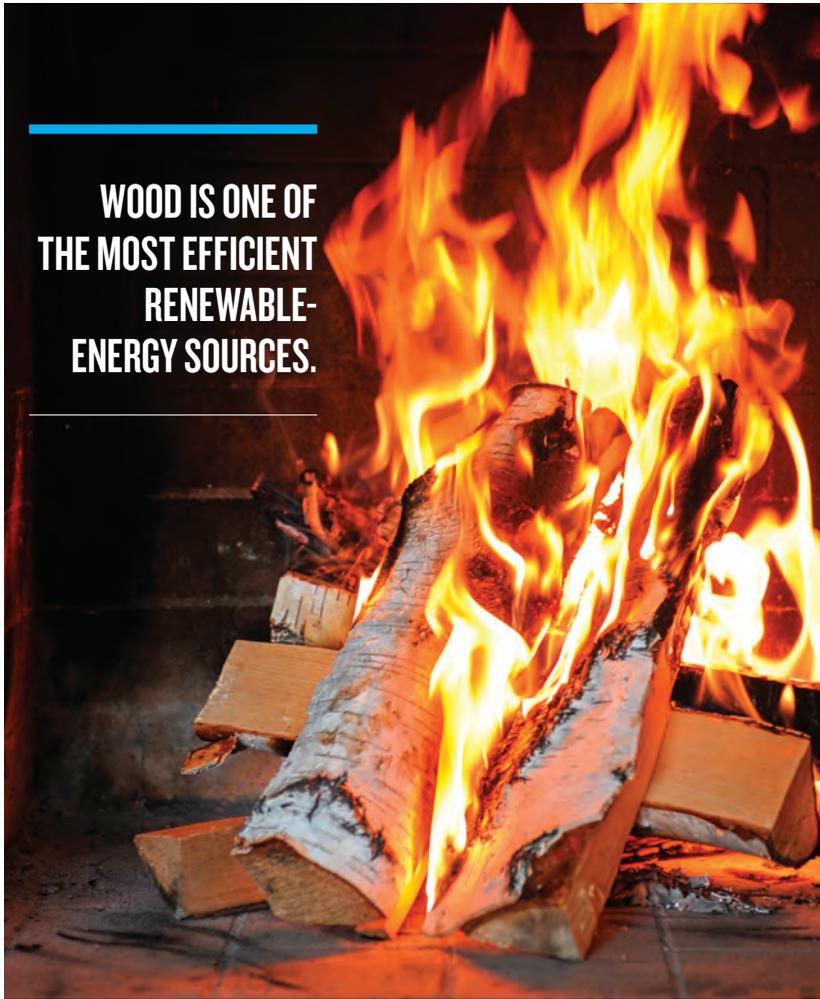
LESS SMOKE AND EMISSIONS ▶ These appliances feature an insulated firebox that keeps temperatures high and a secondary combustion zone where pollutants are burned almost completely.

SAFER ▶ Because pollutants are burned in the combustion chamber, there's less creosote buildup in the chimney and less risk of a chimney fire.

BUT MORE EXPENSIVE ▶ Evidently, this type of technology has a cost. An EPA-certified appliance costs between \$1,300 and \$5,000 depending on BTU capacity, plus installation.

That being said, a high-efficiency model generating the most BTUs is not necessarily the most effective. In fact, it's the space to be heated that counts. An EPA-certified model must preferably function at 70 percent of its efficiency to offer optimal results. If the model is too powerful, it will not perform at full capacity, potentially resulting in poor combustion and creosote buildup.

▶ Our thanks go to Lyne Brunelle, account manager at Boutique L'Attisée, and Michel Blain of CAA-Quebec Residential Advisory Services, for their assistance.



WOOD IS ONE OF THE MOST EFFICIENT RENEWABLE-ENERGY SOURCES.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT FUEL ▶ While choosing the best appliance is important, it's equally important to use the proper fuel and follow sensible heating practices.

Good logs are a must in order to optimize combustion, reduce smoke and pollutants, and facilitate a rapid and even spreading of heat. Always use dry, hard wood like maple, cherry or beech.

Building smaller fires with crackling flames and ensuring that enough airflow reaches the burning logs maximizes combustion.



FLIPPING REAL ESTATE

5 TIPS TO MAKE IT WORTHWHILE

House flipping - which involves buying then quickly renovating and selling a property for profit - is very popular. It seems straightforward enough... at least as presented on TV. But it's best not to plunge in unprepared. / BY JACQUELINE SIMONEAU

01 Find the right house to flip

Avoid the beginner's trap of searching popular real-estate websites for a bargain-priced property. That's the mistake made by hundreds of potential investors. Instead, look for that rare gem yourself by checking out up-and-coming neighbourhoods that hold special appeal for prospective buyers. Zero in on private ads - negotiations could be easier without the pressure from other buyers.

Obviously, the lower the purchase price, the bigger the profit margin. But beware of unrealistic listing prices: Too good a deal can mean major repairs ahead or hidden flaws. Instead, simply check that the asking price is below market value so you'll be able to make a profit.

02 Gather a team

The secret to maximizing profit is to keep costs down by doing as much of the work as you can handle by yourself; for example, painting or replacing the flooring, mouldings and countertop in the kitchen. But leave all major repairs – like structural work, plumbing, wiring and gas-line installation – to licensed professionals. If you're an aspiring handyman, it's wise not to attempt the more complex stuff without engaging an experienced team (architect, general contractor, and so on) who can help bring the project to a successful conclusion. Be sure to book them well ahead of time.

First things first, once you've located a promising property, have it professionally inspected and appraised. A thorough pre-purchase inspection will reveal any major problems – they're not always visible at first glance – that could shred your renovation budget and diminish the profit margin, not to mention that in the event of unresolved problems or hidden flaws, your prospective buyer can turn the tables on you. A chartered appraiser will let you know what kind of renovation will be required. He or she can also confirm the property's value in its current condition and appraise its market value after its renovation. This information will come in handy when it's time to draw up a budget and negotiate with your bank.

03 Make the right improvements

Meticulous planning is the watchword. Carefully factor in all costs and expenses, including permits and taxes. Check with your municipality that your planned renovations are allowed. And look into government and municipal financial assistance for home improvements.

It's important to obtain a realistic estimate of the renovation costs and the resale value. Inexperienced investors often decide to go for costly renovations, thinking they can get more money for the house. That's a big mistake! In fact, the resale value is dictated by the current sale prices of houses in the same neighbourhood. For example, there's no point investing more than \$50,000 in a high-end kitchen and then setting the resale price at \$350,000 when other houses in the neighbourhood are valued at \$250,000. A tip would be to choose materials that will match those used in properties similar to your own in the area. Instead of rebuilding a kitchen, opt for a makeover. New faucets, cupboard doors, handles and wall colours are often enough to give a new look to an out-of-date kitchen.



Plan all stages of renovation and factor in all costs and expenses, including permits and taxes.

04 Organize your financing

In addition to a mortgage, you'll probably need a home-renovation loan to pay for the necessary refurbishments as well as the inevitable unexpected expenses. Who knows what's hidden behind the walls?

Keep related fees in mind like taxes, dumpster rental and real-estate commissions if you use an agent. Also, remember that if the house has no immediate takers, your mortgage payments and home-maintenance costs will continue. All of this cuts into any potential profits.

One way to maximize profit is to live in the house while renovations are in progress. In this way, you won't have to take out a second mortgage and, as the house is your principal residence, you'll be entitled to a capital gain if you've lived in it for at least one year. The drawback is you must put up with all the inconveniences: dust, noise, mess, workers coming and going. And beware of the tax office. If, as owner-occupant, you flip houses nearly every year, any profits you make may be considered as taxable business income. A tax expert can help you avoid unpleasant surprises and even save substantial amounts in the process.



A COMMON MISTAKE IS TO GO FOR COSTLY RENOVATIONS THINKING YOU CAN GET MORE MONEY FOR THE HOUSE.

05 Buy adequate insurance

Before purchasing the property, and whether you plan to live there or not, contact your insurer and make sure the property is insured the minute you take possession. Inform your insurer of the extent of the renovations as well as any planned additions. The insurer may, for example, advise you to have the wood-burning stove and fireplace inspected to ensure conformity with the latest standards, or suggest you install foundation drains if none exist. Note also that any water damage or other gradual damage you may discover in the course of renovations will not be covered by your home insurance policy. So ask your insurer about the conditions, exclusions and limitations that may apply during the renovations.

And while you're at it, check your liability coverage, especially if friends or relatives plan to help out. As a general rule, non-professional helpers who sustain injuries during home renovations are covered by your policy... provided they can prove there was negligence on your part!

Some jobs – like plumbing, electrical or gas-line installations – must be performed by licensed professionals to ensure conformity. If not, your insurer may refuse to cover the cost of any damage sustained.

If you work with a contractor, he must hold appropriate licenses issued by the Régie du bâtiment du Québec (RBQ), obtain the necessary permits and offer a guarantee for the work done. Moreover, he and his subcontractors must have adequate professional liability insurance. Ask to see licenses, permits and copies of the insurance policies. In case of injury or property damage, it's his insurer who will indemnify you.

Your insurer must also be informed if the house will be unoccupied during and after the renovations.

► Our thanks go to **Élaine St-Denis**, chartered real-estate appraiser and president of Bourassa Jodoin Inc., and **Suzanne Michaud**, CAA-Quebec Vice-President - Insurance, for their assistance.

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ELECTRIC VEHICLES / Wireless charging stations

Wireless, or inductive, charging is about to enter the automotive world. Soon you'll be able to top up your electric car just the way you charge a mobile device – without needing to plug it in first.

In recent months, automakers like Audi and Volvo have introduced pilot projects ranging from wireless charging points to induction highways. And Toyota R&D scientists are even proposing a tire that will be able to transmit power, generated by tracks on an electrified roadway, to the battery of a running vehicle.

But how realistic are all these propositions? “Perhaps not induction highways – they'd be too costly to build,” says Sylvain Légaré, automotive industry analyst with CAA-Quebec. “But home or roadside wireless stations are viable solutions. They'd make charging much easier and simpler.”

Target date: 2020

All you need to do for your car to start charging is park it over an induction pad, which uses the same technology as a cooktop. No more wrestling with plugs, which drivers don't always bother to do – but definitely should – when they step out of their cars.

There's no question that the technology needs fine-tuning. Wireless charging is a notoriously long process, even for a smartphone. So imagine how much time it would take for a car! At present, the Qualcomm charger Halo will supply 80 percent of its charge to a car like the Chevrolet Volt in barely 30 minutes. The goal is to make this wireless charging readily accessible by 2020. “And it will improve,” Légaré states confidently. “Right now, the technology is still in its infancy.”

STANDARD TIME RETURNS / Does that mean more accidents?

With the clocks returning to Standard Time again this November, will we see a rise in car accidents? The answer appears to be yes. We asked the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) to compare the number of traffic accidents causing injury during the two 30-day periods immediately before and after the time change. Statistics available from 2010 to 2015 indicate a 6-percent increase. And, if you consider only the so-called crucial period (i.e., between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. when most accidents are likely to occur), the figure becomes a whopping 24 percent!

Sleep deficit is well known to be a factor as far as increased accident risk is concerned, as the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety demonstrated in its study conducted last December. But this finding makes the increase in car accidents during the fall after the clocks change – when we gain an hour of sleep – all the more surprising. Conversely, the SAAQ notes an 11.8-percent decrease in the number of accidents causing injury in the 30 days following the switch to Daylight Saving Time, when we actually lose an hour's sleep.

“Other factors, like weather conditions, may explain these numbers,” says SAAQ spokeswoman Audrey Chaput. In fact, CAA-Quebec Foundation Director Marco Harrison points out that the return to Standard Time (which this year will begin at 2 a.m. on November 5) is often accompanied by snowstorms at a time when winter tires are not yet mandated.

Still, the fact remains that suddenly drivers must contend with reduced visibility at day's end. Tired and in a hurry to pick up the kids or groceries as they head home, they fail to make the necessary adjustments when faced with increasing darkness – yet another factor that adds to all the other causes of accidents.



PLATOONING /

The fine art of “smart” trucking



Last fall, PMG Technologies, Transport Canada’s Motor Vehicle Test Centre in Blainville, carried out tests for a truck-platooning study conducted by National Research Council Canada (NRC) and California Path, a research and development program at the University of California-Berkeley. The goal of the test was to determine the fuel savings achieved by “tri-platooning” (three trucks closely following one another) at a highway speed. The tri-platooning was done with a 17-metre, or a 0.6-second, space between each truck as they travelled at 105 km/h – that’s three times closer than the normal distance observed by truckers.

At the heart of the project is the Cooperative Truck Platooning System (CTPS), an emerging technology that

combines cruise control, automatic braking and other existing safety warning features with wireless V2V (vehicle-to-vehicle) communication. These combined features enable a number of trucks to travel close together in a cohesive convoy while reducing aerodynamic drag and, thus, improving fuel efficiency.

Thus equipped, the tested truck convoy saw their fuel consumption reduced by 14.2 percent. “That’s major,” says NRC Group Leader Brian McAuliffe. The savings can ultimately match the cost of the truck itself. And if all trucks travel in platoons, greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by nine metric megatons per year – the equivalent of removing 10 percent of the 22 million passenger cars that now occupy Canadian roads.

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ROAD-CONGESTION STUDY

CANADA'S WORST TRAFFIC BOTTLENECKS

Until now, the majority of road-congestion studies in North America have maintained that traffic bottlenecks in Canadian urban centres caused the greatest waste of time and money. The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) decided to look into the perennial problem once and for all.

BY NADINE FILION

In the end, comparison seems to provide some reassurance. The study *Grinding to a Halt: Evaluating Canada's Worst Bottlenecks*, conducted by the Ottawa-based firm CPCS on behalf of CAA, shows that Canadian cities do not, in fact, top the list of North American cities with the worst traffic congestion.

Grinding to a Halt focuses strictly on highway bottlenecks, leaving out local roads, highway access roads and ramps. Congestion is measured by using the Maximum Throughput Speed (MTS) – as opposed to the Free-Flow Speed (FFS) – as the reference point against which actual travel speeds are compared. Free-Flow Speed is the legal maximum speed that a motorist can travel when there is no traffic. Lower than FFS, MTS refers to the so-called optimal vehicle volume flow; in other words, the speed that allows the largest volume of motorists to use a highway at any given time.

Exceptionally, the study takes not just vehicle speed but also volume – the number of cars that pass through a segment of road – into account, says Vijay Gill, the study's author and CPCS Assistant Vice-President for North America.

As a result, *Grinding to a Halt* sheds a different light on Canada's worst traffic-jam areas. If the findings appear more conservative than others so far, they are disconcerting nonetheless. After all, the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) estimates that recurring traffic bottlenecks account for 40 percent of vehicle hours of delay, far ahead of transitory events like collisions (25 percent) and construction work (10 percent).

The surprise here is that among Canada's top 20 saturation points (causing more than 50,000 hours of delay per year), you don't necessarily find the stretches of road that logic dictates should be there.

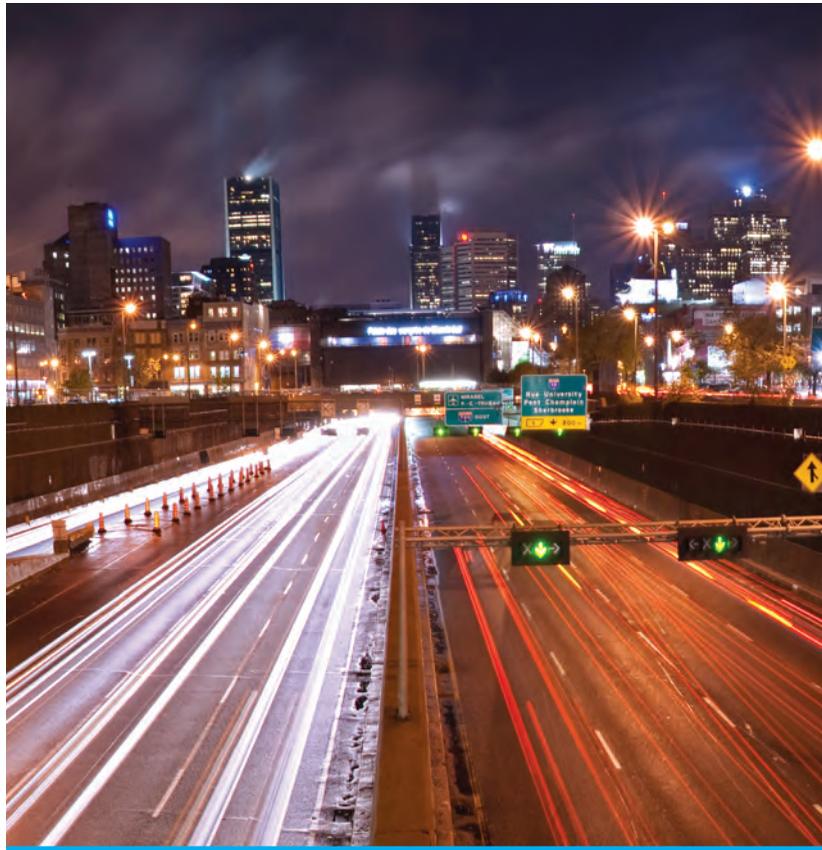
Quebec's offending highways

Montreal motorists have every reason to believe that the worst traffic congestion occurs on Autoroutes 10, 13, 15 (Laurentian Autoroute), 20 and 25, all of which are heavily used by commuters each weekday – morning and evening. And those highways certainly have their place on the “personal frustration index,” says CAA spokesman Ian Jack. But rather than dwell on individual experiences, the CAA study targets the areas where mobility – or more appropriately immobility – affects the highest number of motorists.

CPCS researchers naturally also expected to see those bridges spanning the St. Lawrence and Rivière des Prairies onto the Island of Montreal on that list of Canada's 20 most severe bottlenecks. But that definitely failed to be the case.

When it comes to vehicle speed and volume (180 million speed observations over 15,000 highway segments overall), Gill points out that those highway areas average more vehicles at any time of the day than the following five worst bottlenecks, all located on the island of Montreal itself.

- ▶ The 10.6-kilometre stretch of Autoroute 40 West, between Pie-IX Boulevard and Autoroute 520 (rated 3rd on the CPCS top 20 list)
- ▶ The 3.9-kilometre stretch of Autoroute 15 South (Décarie Boulevard), between Autoroute 40 and Côte-Saint-Luc Road (5th)
- ▶ The 2.1-kilometre stretch of Autoroute 25 North, between Souigny Avenue and Beaubien Street East (8th)

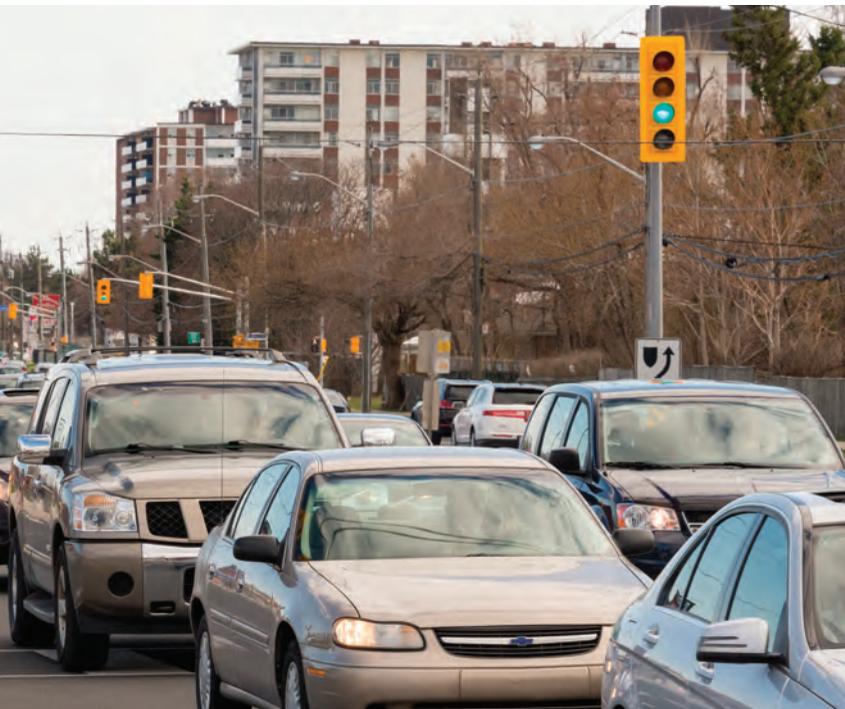


THE FINDINGS ARE SURPRISING: AMONG CANADA'S 20 WORST CHOKEPOINTS (CAUSING MORE THAN 50,000 HOURS OF DELAY), YOU WON'T ALWAYS FIND THOSE SECTIONS THAT LOGIC DICTATES SHOULD BE THERE.

- ▶ Another stretch of Autoroute 40 West, 0.9 kilometres long, between Autoroute 520 and Cavendish Boulevard (14th)
- ▶ The 0.8-kilometre stretch of Autoroute 20, near 1st Avenue in Lachine (16th)

Taken in total, the study shows that these five Montreal bottlenecks are responsible for 3.2 million hours annually in delay, worth about \$75 million in lost time. The 10.6-kilometre stretch on Autoroute 40 alone accounts for two-thirds of those lost hours and more than half the cost of delay.

The environmental cost, too, was examined: “If these logjams were to be addressed, drivers would save almost 7 million litres of fuel per year, avoiding 18,000 tons of emitted CO₂,” the study states.



And the “winners” are ...

That these five top 20 congestion spots are located in Montreal itself – and not on the bridges leading to the city – was a surprise for the researchers. Another surprise was the fact that Toronto has *half* of Canada’s major bottle-necks. “We knew that Toronto and Montreal were going to dominate the list, but we didn’t expect them to grab three-quarters of the positions between themselves,” Gill says.

Quebec City is the only medium-size city to figure on the list, with its less-than-a-kilometre-long segment of Autoroute 73 between Chemin des Quatres-Bourgeois and the Versant-Nord/Chemin Sainte-Foy Road exit ranking 17th. “We were accumulating two weeks’ worth of data for each quarter of 2015,” says Gill, “in order to reflect seasonal variations and roadwork. But this stretch of road seemed to have been under constant repair all year round.” Without that kind of activity, Quebec City might not have made the list.

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Comparison with the worst U.S. bottlenecks

This first-of-its-kind Canadian study was conducted simultaneously with a similar study in the United States, also conducted by CPCS and using the same methodologies. “So for once,” says Gill, “we can compare apples with apples.”

And another surprise awaited the researchers. They realized that, contrary to the conclusions reached by previous studies, congestion on this side of the border wasn't any worse than what was happening in the States.

Topping the list of Canada-United States worst 35 is a 20-kilometre stretch of Interstate 90 north of Chicago, with 17 million hours wasted annually. A succession of Los Angeles highway bottlenecks comes next. Canada's two worst chokepoints, located in Toronto, rank 9th (Highway 401) and 14th (Don Valley Parkway), with



Two of Canada's worst bottlenecks, ranking 9th and 14th on the U.S.-Canada list of offenders, are located in Toronto.

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DID YOU KNOW? ▶ Altogether, Canada's top 20 traffic bottlenecks cause: almost 12 million hours of lost time; an annual cost in delays of \$287 million; some 22.3 million litres of wasted fuel - the equivalent of 446,000 visits to the gas station; almost 60,000 tons of unnecessary CO2 emissions.

results comparable to those of the most serious congestion in New York City (Lincoln Tunnel) and San Francisco (Oakland Bay Bridge). Montreal's nastiest spot - on Autoroute 40 between Pie-IX Boulevard and Autoroute 520 - ranks 18th, with delays comparable to those of the Boston area (ranked 17th). Vancouver, which occupies four of the 20 positions on the Canadian list, is not even ranked here.

The CPCS ranking of Canadian cities differs widely from other existing studies. The annual *Tom-Tom Traffic Index*, for example, places Vancouver 4th, Toronto 8th, Montreal 11th and Ottawa 14th among North America's 15 most congested cities.

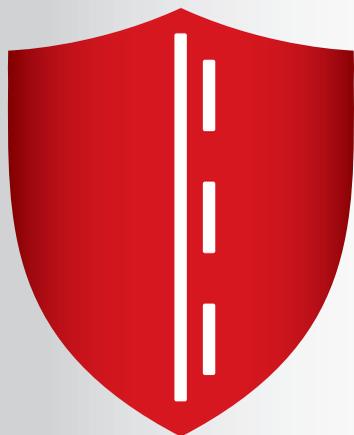
Gill acknowledges the disparities: "Let's not kid ourselves. Congestion is real on the 401, the 40 and the Décarie Expressway alike. But their mid-peak and off-peak periods seem to allow for more fluid traffic flow than their U.S. counterparts."

The next step: Finding solutions

The study is just the first step for CAA. The organization has already commissioned a follow-up report from CPCS in order to work out solutions suitable for each particular bottleneck. "We know there are solutions," says Ian Jack. "The goal is to choose what works best in specific cases."

"We don't need grand gestures," says Sophie Gagnon, CAA-Quebec Vice-President, Communications and Public Affairs. "It's effectiveness that matters. In this way, we can also ensure that public funds are properly spent." Will it be metered-on ramps with stop signs or traffic lights as is the case in Los Angeles, or more carpooling lanes so as to optimize highway capacity? The follow-up study will determine the most effective solutions for each one of Canada's 20 bottlenecks. What exactly will these solutions turn out to be? Stay tuned.

The challenge is to find the most practical solution for each of Canada's 20 problematic spots.



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Two myths about traffic

Does switching lanes get you there faster? Is late merging acceptable?

BY NADINE FILION

When you're caught in a traffic jam, the lane beside you always seems to move faster. But that's just an illusion. Human nature is such that we tend to see more losses than gains. In other words, we notice more cars zooming by than those we actually pass. But how many seconds will we gain by switching back and forth between lanes?

In fact, changing lanes, with all the accident risks the manoeuvre entails, almost never works out. Tom Vanderbilt, author of *Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do (and What It Says About Us)*, reports on a Canadian experiment conducted during traffic jams and involving two drivers: one staying put in his lane, the other switching lanes as often as he can.

Vanderbilt writes, "The chronic lane changer saved a mere four minutes out of an 80-minute ride, which hardly seems worth it. The stress involved in making all those changes probably took more than four minutes off the driver's life." The author compares traffic to an accordion: "As traffic slows in a jam, it compresses; as congestion eases, the accordion 'opens.'" And never in the same manner or at the same time in all lanes. It's not unlike the stock market: You'd have as much luck trying to predict the behaviour of share prices.

One good remedy to endure traffic jams is to drive with a passenger. Time passes more quickly when you have company, that's indisputable. As a bonus, you can use the faster carpool lanes!

Misplaced courtesy

You're driving on a two-lane road and spot a sign announcing a work zone ahead and, with that, a lane closure. Very courteously, you move toward the cor-



rect lane, causing drivers beside and behind you to step on the brakes and slow down long before the point of the merger.

On the other hand, the driver who merges at the last minute allows cars behind and beside him to use both lanes up to the last moment before merging into the single lane. Not only does this late-merge technique cut queues in half, it also improves traffic flow by up to 15 percent, says Vanderbilt.

That being said, even if late merging is not discourteous, alternate merging means that you, too, must yield at the last minute. But don't forget that changing lanes is illegal if the lane line is solid. Non-compliance results in fines ranging from \$200 to \$300 – and three demerit points.



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NEW HEADLIGHTS

NOT SO BRIGHT!

These days, vehicle headlights are equipped with LED projectors that swivel through turns and automatically dim as an oncoming car approaches... both very good features. But do the headlights adequately light up the road?

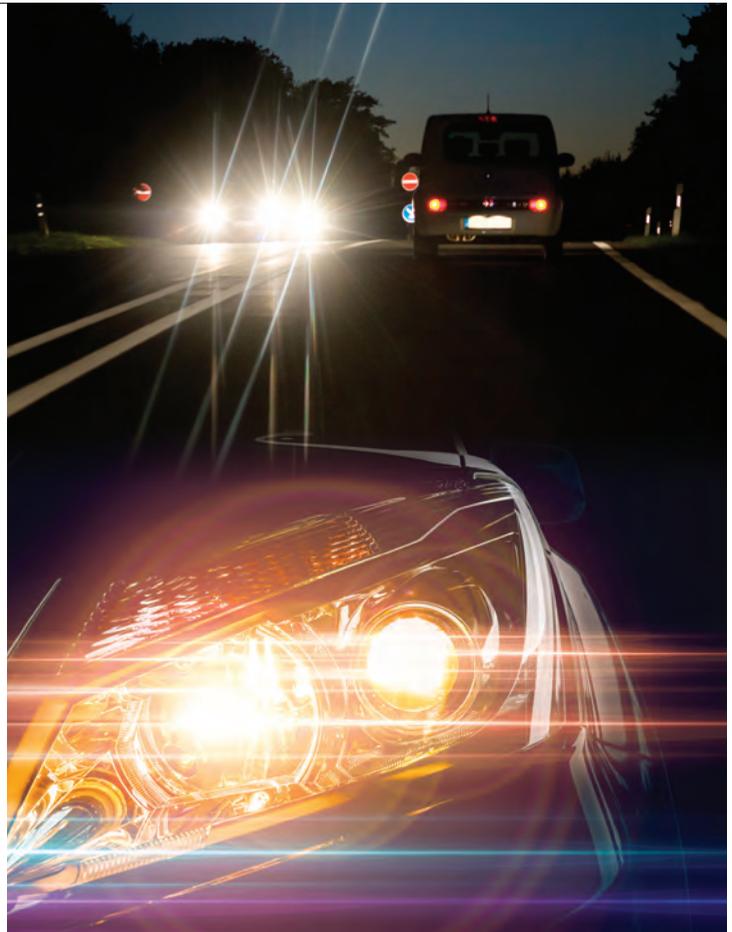
BY NADINE FILION

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) addressed this issue last year, testing headlights on some one hundred vehicles – sedans, SUVs and small pickup trucks. There were four ratings: good, acceptable, marginal and poor.

Only 14 of all the tested vehicles received grades of “good,” while four out of 10 vehicles were judged to be “poor.” These 14 are: Chevrolet Volt, Hyundai Elantra, Subaru Impreza, Subaru Legacy, Toyota Prius V, Kia Optima, BMW 2 Series, BMW 5 Series, Genesis G90, Mercedes Benz E-Class, Lincoln Continental, Hyundai Santa Fe, Volvo XC60 and Honda Ridgeline. As the list shows, half of the 14 vehicles rated “good” are priced under \$30,000 while many luxury models were rated “marginal” or even “poor” (Mercedes-Benz C-Class and Cadillac CTS, for example).

Among the tested compact SUVs, four of the highest-rated models (“acceptable”) are in the \$25,000-and-up price range: Ford Escape, Honda CR-V, Hyundai Tucson and Mazda CX-3. At the other end of the spectrum, the Audi Q3 – starting price \$34,600 – was rated “poor.”

Pickup trucks (except for the Honda Ridgeline) scored the lowest ratings. The Chevrolet Colorado



HAVE YOUR BEAMS ADJUSTED ▶ The IIHS tested the headlights as they were received from the automakers. Bear in mind that the tilt of headlights can make a significant difference:

- ▶ one degree too low will reduce visibility by 30 metres, and
- ▶ one degree too high will cast a glare into the eyes of approaching drivers.

By having your mechanic aim and adjust your headlights, you'll substantially improve their performance.

Note also that damaged or dirty headlights can reduce the reaction time by four seconds whenever you drive at 50 kilometres per hour. For more details, read advice column “Worn-out headlights threaten safety” at CAAQUEBEC.COM.

brings up the rear – its halogen low beams illuminate 37.5 metres of road (straightaway, right edge), roughly one-third of the 109-metre distance projected by the LED low beams of the “good”-rated Ridgeline.

These findings are not encouraging, especially when we know, as IIHS senior research engineer Matthew Brumbelow reminds us, that half of all traffic deaths occur at night, dawn or dusk.



▶ See the IIHS test results in our online magazine.



2018 CHEVROLET EQUINOX

PRICE: \$27,145 to \$44,490

PROS: Impressively quiet ride, well-balanced suspension, well-matched 1.5-litre engine and transmission, good price-to-equipment ratio, simple controls.

CONS: Restricted driving position, poor rear headroom, just adequate cargo space, driver-assistance technologies restricted to Premier model, overly light steering.

► "Erase and start over" was no doubt the watchword when Chevrolet began developing the third generation of the Equinox. Less weighty, new platform, different engines, updated styling and technology... a complete transformation for 2018, and not a moment too soon. After eight years with no major changes, the Equinox needed a total makeover to halt the erosion of GM's share of the most competitive segment of the market.

The wait was worthwhile, to say the least. The revamped Equinox is now a top contender instead of a questionable choice. And while it may not be as spacious as the Honda CR-V, as agile as the Mazda CX-5 or as renowned as the Toyota RAV4 for reliability, it matches or even surpasses them in comfort, quiet and overall refinement. However, GM must facilitate access to advanced safety technologies, something that many of its competitors have already understood.

TEST MODEL

ENGINE: 1.5-litre turbo, direct-injection 4-cylinder (170 hp)

TRANSMISSION: 6-speed automatic with manual mode

DRIVETRAIN: All-wheel drive

FUEL ECONOMY, CITY/HIGHWAY COMBINED (MANUFACTURER DATA): 8.9 L/100 km

2017 FORD F-150

PRICE: \$31,799 to \$81,969

PROS: Powerful turbocharged EcoBoost V6 engine, noteworthy 10-speed transmission, quiet ride, excellent crash resistance, very good driving position, impressive Raptor model.

CONS: Suspension firm and sometimes jittery, aluminum body complex to repair, rear half-doors are impractical (extended cab), high price.

► Ford has already announced a partial remake of its F-150 for 2018, which will include the arrival of the first diesel engine in the history of the model. But it didn't wait until next year to launch an extensively revised 3.5-litre EcoBoost V6, a 10-speed (!) automatic transmission and a new edition of the Raptor.

If the F-150 has maintained its position as a hands-down best-seller for so long, it is not just because of buyer habit. No other lineup of full-size pickups offers as many engine choices and innovations in terms of handling, safety and convenience. Despite a rather jittery ride, resisting the appeal of the F-150 can be just as difficult as justifying your purchase. And the only negative about the exceptional Raptor is that its high price will rob many potential buyers of the best F-150 of the lineup.

TEST MODEL

ENGINE: 3.5-litre twin-turbo, direct-injection V6 (375 hp)

TRANSMISSION: 10-speed automatic with manual mode

DRIVETRAIN: All-wheel drive

FUEL ECONOMY, CITY/HIGHWAY COMBINED (NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA): 12.1 L/100 km





2017 HONDA CR-V

PRICE: \$28,415 to \$39,815

PROS: Very spacious cabin, roomy and versatile cargo area, wide access to advanced safety technologies, assertive turbo engine, sure and stable handling, improved sound insulation.

CONS: Unengaging CVT, light steering, frustrating touch screen, too-short front-seat cushions.

► As surely as spring succeeds winter, a new generation of the CR-V has hit the road every five years since its launch in 1997. The fifth and latest iteration arrives sporting new trappings, a redesigned cabin and an all-new, Civic-based platform and turbo engine. True to recent form, Honda has taken advantage of the remake to democratize advanced safety equipment by offering it on nearly all versions.

The CR-V has been one of Canada's best-selling compact SUVs for 20 years. It is easy to predict that it will continue to thrive with this improved new version. Practical, roomy and as fuel-efficient as ever for its size, this sure value from Honda gains precious points in terms of refinement and performance. Now, here's hoping for more logical controls to eliminate a major irritant of the CR-V.

TEST MODEL

ENGINE: 1.5-litre turbo, direct-injection 4-cylinder (190 hp)

TRANSMISSION: Continuously variable transmission

DRIVETRAIN: All-wheel drive

TEST TEMPERATURE: -13°C to 8°C

TESTED FUEL ECONOMY: 9 L/100 km

2017 MAZDA CX-5

PRICE: \$26,795 to \$38,645

PROS: Dynamic handling, balanced ride, improved sound insulation, close to luxurious finish, generally clear controls, pleasant driving position.

CONS: Just adequate power, noisy engine acceleration, certain shortcomings in features, advanced safety equipment still optional.

► Less than five years after it was launched, the CX-5 has undergone several modifications. Nothing revolutionary in terms of mechanics, but a redesigned shape, a new interior and numerous revised details suffice to talk about a major remake. The first, 100-percent Mazda crossover – its predecessor, the Tribute, was a clone of the old Ford Escape – has a fully deserved its “sporty” reputation. Now, let's see if Mazda has successfully positioned it as a high-end model.

The redesigned CX-5 follows the path laid out by its big brother, the CX-9. The designers honed refinement, compromised in the past by an overly high level of interior noise. The stylists designed a sleek cabin, as carefully finished as any entry-level luxury SUV. The engineers preserved the dynamic tunings that make the vehicle so enjoyably agile. Still on our wish list, a more powerful engine, at least as an option, and equipment more on a scale with the competition.

TEST MODEL

ENGINE: 2.5-litre direct-injection 4-cylinder (187 hp)

TRANSMISSION: 6-speed automatic with manual mode

DRIVETRAIN: All-wheel drive

FUEL ECONOMY, CITY/HIGHWAY COMBINED (NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA): 9.2 L/100 km





2017 MERCEDES-BENZ E-CLASS

PRICE (SEDAN): \$63,275 to \$105,175

PROS: Confident performance, exceptional stability, secure handling, premium finish, very comfortable seats, wide choice of configurations.

CONS: Transmission sometimes hesitates, firm suspension, base engine not as refined as a 6-cylinder, certain controls are complex, centre console too wide, numerous and expensive options.

TEST MODEL

ENGINE: 2.0-litre turbo, direct-injection 4-cylinder (241 hp)

TRANSMISSION: 9-speed automatic with manual mode

DRIVETRAIN: All-wheel drive

TEST TEMPERATURE: -10°C to 2°C

TESTED FUEL ECONOMY: 9.4 L/100 km

► The origins of the E-Class trace back nearly 65 years, with a 10th generation arriving for 2017. The new body styling is striking but not as much as the transformed cabin, overflowing with avant-garde technologies. In tune with the times, a turbocharged 4-cylinder replaces the V6 under the hood of the entry-level E 300. The E-Class also proposes a high degree of driver assistance technologies, signalling that the self-driving car is closing in on our streets and boulevards.

Despite its contemporary styling, the new E-Class is not Mercedes-Benz's sexiest car, at least in its sedan version. It embodies instead the traditional values of Germany's oldest automaker: solidity, discrete luxury, serene power. One discordant note: The suspension is a bit stiffer than before, hampering comfort on degraded pavement. Additionally, the many driver assist systems must be taken for just that; this is not a genuine semi-autonomous vehicle.

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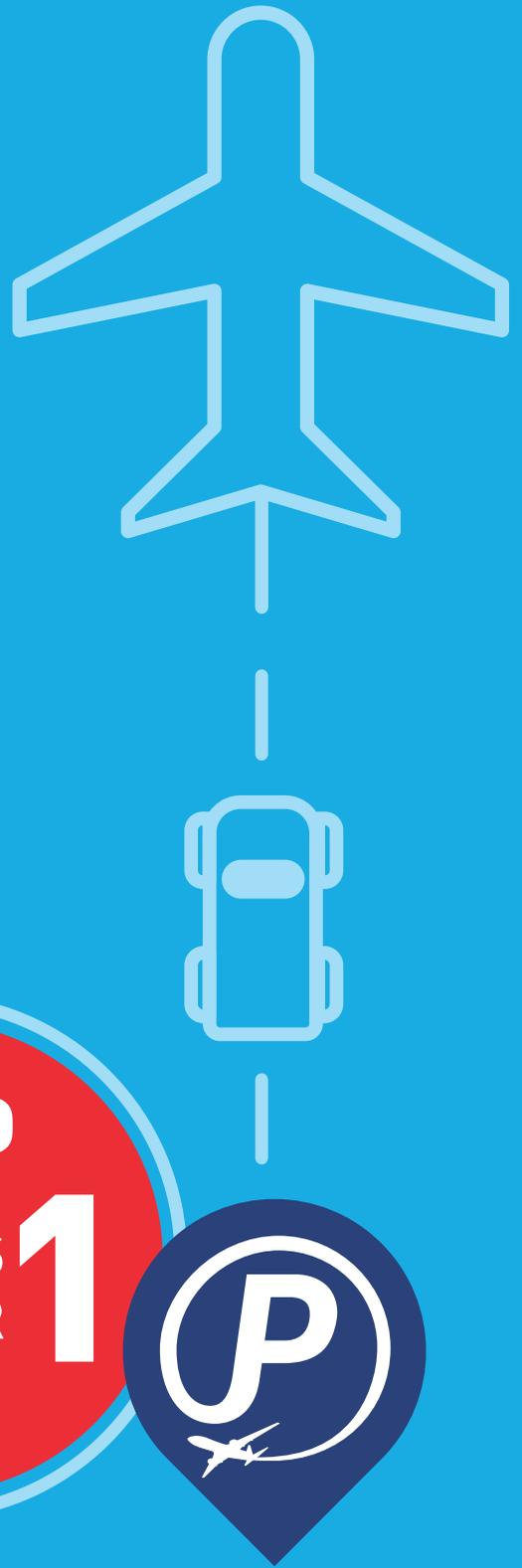
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