

front up

*"Wine is sunlight,
held together by water."*

—Galileo Galilei

Saskatchewan Uncorked

ONE DOESN'T OFTEN ASSOCIATE prairie grassland with lush vineyards, or prairie dwellers with wine connoisseurs, yet our province boasts not only two unique wineries but also Canada's largest private wine, spirits and beer retailer. Willow Park Wines & Spirits in Regina stocks thousands of products, including many rare and award-winning libations, and offers a variety of tasting opportunities. "Customers can explore the world one sip at a time and enjoy a variety of superb vintages in a fun, informative, snob-free zone," says manager Graham Jordan. • The sipping continues at the wineries. Saskatchewan vino, made from the freshest fruits and berries, gives the venerable grape a run for its juice (only two local reds are crafted from grapes – see below). Not only a fragrant thirst-quencher on sultry evenings, prairie wine also perks up punch and adds panache to recipes. The Living Sky Winery in Saskatoon, one of the few artisan wineries in Western Canada, released its first run of high-quality Juliet cherry, raspberry, strawberry and rhubarb wines in July. And the Cypress Hills Vineyard and Winery in Maple Creek offers six fruit wines, plus two made from red wine grapes, that can be sampled alongside a bistro-style lunch on the site's patio. Work it off with a stroll through the vineyards and winemaking area.

WINERY ROW
Rhubarb (above), as well as cherries, raspberries and strawberries, go into Living Sky Winery vino (left inset).



i 306-585-1661, willowparkwines.com (call ahead for tasting schedule and tickets); 306-290-1693, livingskywinery.com (tastings and tours by appointment); 306-662-4100, cypresshillswinery.com

The Stork's New Landing Pad



MOMS-TO-BE ACROSS southern Saskatchewan will soon be welcoming their babies into the world at a new facility in Regina. Slated to open this fall, the Rawlco Centre for Mother Baby Care at the General Hospital is expected to be one of Canada's leading maternal centres. The facility's family-focused design means more and larger private rooms (with bathrooms and bathtubs) than those in the hospital's former labour and

delivery unit. And its new and enhanced medical equipment includes radiant warmers – special beds that keep babies warm, provide them with oxygen and make for quick transport to the NICU if necessary. The project was kick-started by a lead donation from Gordon and Doug Rawlinson (owners of Rawlco Radio), through the Hospitals of Regina Foundation.

i hrf.sk.ca/Page.aspx?pid=296

How to Shop for a Travel Bag

LOOKING FOR LUGGAGE that can take the predictable knocks of airline travel? Ed Johnson, SouthWest Airlines damaged-bag specialist for a decade, offers these tips:

- **Don't bet on a hard shell** Good, soft-sided bags endure abuse better than cheap hard-sided ones.
- **Avoid dainty quilted bags** The toughest fabrics are ballistic nylon, invented for flak jackets, and Cordura, a nylon used in motorcycle duds.
- **Choose recessed wheels** The exposed, rotating "spinners" that let bags roll in any direction can snap off easily.
- **Look for a grip that hides** A locking handle or a grip that's covered by a zippered flap stays safely in place.
- **Favour clean lines** Pockets, metal emblems and strap handles can snag on conveyor belts and luggage carts.
- **Get real** Your bags bulge? Overstuffing stresses zippers and seams, setting the stage for mishaps. Ensure you have a big enough bag.

Courtesy Christopher Hall and AAA's VIA Magazine



Organic crop research thrives at Saskatchewan's U of S Kernen Research Farm.

Green Fare Flair

DO YOU RECALL the farm-fresh flavour of homegrown food in Granny's kitchen: sun-ripened veggies, succulent wild berries and pasture-raised poultry and beef? It wasn't called organic then, but a desire among Canadians to return to that wholesome diet – free of artificial additives, synthetic chemicals, pharmaceuticals and other agro-tech modifications – has recently given a boost to Saskatchewan's organic farming industry, making our province the largest producer of organic products in Canada. Good timing too: organic food sales in Canadian supermarkets have grown by as much as 28 per cent annually in the past few years. Most Saskatchewan organic farms grow wheat, flax, oats, lentils, peas, barley and wild rice, but rounding out the bounty are approximately 100 organic livestock ranches, a dozen organic vegetable growers and three organic orchards.

 saskorganic.com, organicfarmdirectory.ca, cog.ca

First Comes Love . . .



WHAT STARTED as a 37-second video captured on a whim with a pocket camera and posted to the Internet is now a website of more than 250 videos on communities across the province. Called Small Town Saskatchewan: Videos from the Heartland, the ever-expanding site is Don Wilson's pride

and joy. "I'm smitten by the charms of small towns," says Wilson, who holds an undergraduate degree in history. "Each one is unique, with pioneer buildings contemplating a bygone era and present-day ventures reflecting the province's entrepreneurial spirit, such as the alpaca hair weavery in Herbert or the organic abattoir in Tugaska." • In 2006, during the Great Annual Saskatchewan Pedal (GASP), Wilson cycled through the village of Love. Inspired by its claim to fame (thousands of cards are sent to the village each year to be stamped with its Love postmark), he made his first recording and uploaded it to YouTube. The next year, he GASPed again, digitally recording numerous communities, which now appear on his website. • Wilson believes that many people share his fondness for small-town charm. "I'm poignantly aware that some of the places I visit are dying – some are ghosts now. The archivist in me wants to preserve these images for posterity."  stsk.ca

