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Edmonton Brings You the "Perfect Date".



EDMONTON, ALBERTA, Jan 19, 2012 (MARKETWIRE via COMTEX) -- Trying to come up with an idea for the perfect date? Maybe you're trying to find the most memorable way to pop the question? Edmonton is a city with plenty of romance in it. For starters, experience the many hiking trails of our sprawling river valley on a beautiful blue sky winter day. Enjoy a meal atop the Crowne Plaza Chateau Lacombe in La Ronde, a slowly-revolving restaurant with stunning vistas of the city. Sit and talk over drinks at the Confederation Lounge in Fairmont Hotel Macdonald.

But there's more. A lot more.

One of the must-see events of an Edmonton winter is the Ice On Whyte Festival, January 12 - 22. Enjoy a leisurely walk amidst the stunning ice sculptures at the Alberta Legislature grounds, commemorating Alberta's 30th Anniversary of relations between sister provinces Alberta, Canada and Heilongjiang, China. Then take an old-fashioned street car ride from the Legislature to the Ice On Whyte festival grounds in Edmonton's historic Old Strathcona area and see the magnificent creations that are part of this International Ice Carving Competition. They're especially great to see at night, when lit by coloured lights.

When you're in Old Strathcona, you'll want to do some exploring... for at least a day or two. This truly "funky" area is known for its one-of-a-kind shops (most of them independently owned). There's great dining too. Spend an evening at Yiannis Taverna for delicious Greek food. Try the moussaka. It's amazing. And if you're just popping in for a drink, check out the Kasbar downstairs from Yiannis. It's like spending a night in Morocco. Other Old Strathcona delicacies are the flat bread pizzas at Packrat Louie or the shrimp cocktail at Murrieta's Bar & Grill.

Old Strathcona is also known for its vibrant and eclectic arts scene. Whether you choose a night of live jazz music at the Yardbird Suite or a night of comedy at the Varscona Theatre (with Theatresports every Friday night at 11), you're bound to have a great date.

If you choose to make it a two-day stay in Old Strathcona, here's how to make it particularly memorable. Get your partner a spa package from Perugia Salon and Spa (or make it something you experience together). Then spend a night at the Mettera Hotel on Whyte, a luxurious boutique hotel where you're bound to feel pampered and special.

Another noteworthy neighbourhood for shopping, sight-seeing, dining and romance is the 124 Street area. With its cobbled sidewalks, decorative streetlights, historic homes, tree-lined boulevards, and the famed Gallery Walk - the first of its kind in Canada, featuring seven galleries within walking distance and some of the best art in the city - it is impossible to describe this area without using words like "distinctive" or "elegant".

The 124 Street offers some great and memorable venues for the kind of conversation that happens on the best of dates - those sorts of splendid conversations you-wish-would-never-end. Enjoy a flavourful gelato at the Buena Vista Gelato Shop or make a night of it with an unforgettable five-course meal at the esteemed Blue Pear restaurant.

No trip to 124 Street is complete without a visit to the Duchess Bakery. There's a good reason why their pastries and treats are so scrumptious. They make all their products from scratch daily. That means no mixes, no preservatives and no shortcuts. All flavours and extras are natural. And they literally go the distance when it comes to ensuring they use only the highest quality ingredients. They specially import their butter and use utterly divine Valrhona chocolate from France.

In downtown Edmonton, there are also plenty of great options for a night of romance. At the Citadel Theatre, there's Blind Date, January 28 - Feb 19. Created by and performed by Rebecca Northan and directed from a critically-acclaimed, sold-out run in New York, Blind Date is a different kind of theatre experience: one actress onstage having a blind date with one lucky man in the audience.

Within walking distance of the Citadel Theatre, there's the Art Gallery of Alberta. Two of its exhibitions will make the perfect backdrop for a beautiful date: Canadian Landscapes from the AGA Collection, 1980 to Present and A Passion for Nature Landscape Painting from 19th Century France, both on now until February 20.

The Art Gallery of Alberta itself is a work of art. Designed by esteemed architect Randal Stout of Los Angeles, it takes inspiration from Edmonton's unique urban grid and its northern environment. (If you have a keen eye, you'll note references to the North Saskatchewan River and the breathtaking Aurora Borealis in this 85,000 square foot building.)

This winter, the "perfect date" awaits you in Edmonton, a city with a lot of options for the romantic at heart.

Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) provides leadership in economic development, markets Edmonton as a must-see destination, manages the Shaw Conference Centre and Edmonton Research Park, and acts as a stakeholder in TEC Edmonton, a joint venture with the University of Alberta. For more information, visit www.edmonton.com Learn more about Edmonton through the stories of people who've experienced it at www.edmontonstories.ca

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