

ST. JACOBS COUNTRY

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Cultivating Tourism in St. Jacobs Country

By Joanne Rennie

St. Jacobs Country is located in a fertile agricultural area of Southwestern Ontario just over an hour west of Toronto. Along with abundant crops, a rich cultural heritage and a thriving tourism industry grow here, permitting visitors an encounter with something uncommon in today’s fast-paced world — horse and buggy traffic!

Nestled close to Kitchener-Waterloo and Stratford, St. Jacobs is home to a religious sect called the “Old Order Mennonites.” Unconcerned with the price of a gallon of gas, these gentle, quiet people go about their lives observing traditions that shun fashion and modern conveniences like cars and electricity. A drive along the rural routes

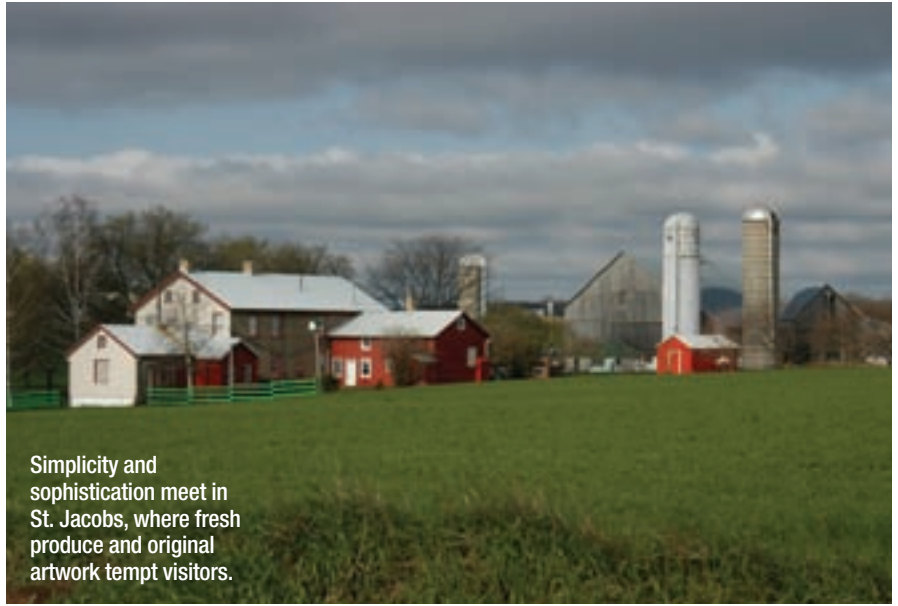
of Waterloo County will take your clients by “Old Order” farms where life goes on much as it has for the past 100 years. Signs at the end of lanes invite visitors to purchase brown eggs, fresh vegetables, maple syrup, summer sausage and handmade quilts — products of these industrious households. Often, the treats and treasures from the farm will be offered for sale from the back of a buggy at the St. Jacobs Farmers’ Market.

St. Jacobs Farmers’ Market is a hub of activity for the farming community. More than 500 vendors participate in a neighbourly style of commerce that attracts rural and city folk alike. Indoor and outdoor booths sell everything imaginable. There is often

live musical entertainment and special events are planned throughout the year. (*Thursday and Saturday all year, from 7 am to 3:30 pm; Tuesday Summer Market, June 19 to August 28, 2007, from 8 am to 3 pm; Sunday Market, March 11 to December 30, 2007, from 10 am to 4 pm.*)

Your clients might also want to experience a horse-drawn trolley tour to a Mennonite farm (*available from the log cabin area on Market Days, except Sunday, April to October*).

Next door to the market is the St. Jacobs Outlet Mall — the first mall of its kind in Canada and a wonderful place to find even more bargains! (*Open daily, weeknights until 9 pm.*)



Simplicity and sophistication meet in St. Jacobs, where fresh produce and original artwork tempt visitors.



The Village of St. Jacobs peacefully co-exists with the rural simplicity of the Old Order Mennonites. A study in contrast, the village maintains much of its charming nostalgic character but has become renowned as a shopper's paradise for its fashionable boutiques, galleries, antique shops and working craft studios. At noon and at 6 pm, the Village carillons toll. A stroll along King Street will encourage visits to the broom maker in the old blacksmith's shop and the chocolate shop where your clients can see the candy maker practise his craft. The Mill, a local heritage landmark, is now home to four levels of fascinating shops and exhibits like the Model Train Exhibit, The Maple Syrup Museum and Quilt Gallery. Coming soon to The Mill: the *History of Electricity Exhibit*, and the *History of Home Hardware* (this hardware success story started in St. Jacobs). Visitors can further satisfy their curiosity for the Old Order Mennonite lifestyle by visiting the newly refurbished "Telling The Mennonite Story" at the Visitor Centre next to the Post Office in the

village. This facility provides a multi-media presentation and informative exhibits explaining the history, religion and culture of the Mennonite people.

When your clients have worked up an appetite, they can indulge themselves at one of the fine local dining establishments conveniently located in the heart of the village. Benjamin's Restaurant & Inn is a refurbished stagecoach inn that has served guests at this location for over 150 years. Contemporary cuisine and a relaxed atmosphere make it a favourite stop in the village. The Stone Crock Restaurant specializes in buffet dining and has a hearty à la carte menu, too. Remind your clients to be sure to save some room for a slice of their famous pie or an apple dumpling!

If they are too full to eat another bite, they can take home local taste treats from the Stone Crock Bakery and Stone Crock Meats & Cheese.

Professional theatre, music performances and special events occur in St. Jacobs Country and surrounding area year 'round.

Be sure to mark St. Jacobs Quilt Shows on the calendar. Held annually during the last week of May, these four great shows are part of the Waterloo County International Quilt Festival.

Visitors should plan for more than a day! Best Western St. Jacobs Country Inn and Destination Inn are conveniently located close to St. Jacobs Country attractions and offer special getaway packages, as does Benjamin's Restaurant & Inn, in the village. A wide variety of bed and breakfast accommodations are also available in the village of St. Jacobs and surrounding area.

St. Jacobs Country is an uncommon place. From the rattle of buggy wheels to the whistle of a model steam train, there will be many moments to cherish that will not soon be forgotten. 🍁

For Information
www.stjacobs.com