

Hit the Art Trail for a County getaway

STEVE VEALE
Special to Sun Media

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY — The slogan on the T-shirt hanging outside the Bloomfield Bicycle Co. boldly states: "TV SUCKS. Ride your bike."

Considering the reruns and reality shows, who could possibly challenge that statement?

The straight-shooting owners of the Bloomfield Bicycle Co. will cheerfully rent you a bicycle for a leisurely pedal around the byways of Prince Edward County. And what better time to explore than during a long weekend in

October — warm bright days, crisp fall nights and a riot of brilliant colours everywhere.

In the past decade this rural county, a two-hour drive along Hwy. 401 east of Toronto, has blossomed into one of the province's favourite weekend getaways. Prince Edward County has suddenly become known for something other than the Sandbanks — the huge sand dunes at water's edge in a provincial park perfect for day-tripping beach picnics or weekend camping.

The latest addition to the promotion of "The County" (as the locals call it) is the recognition of the creative crafts-

men — artists, painters, potters, weavers, photographers — who have been a mainstay for years. These are people who have chosen to live in this quiet countryside and concentrate on their art; most have home-based studios where they work and display their colourful, eclectic wares.

That quiet life will likely change with the recently released Art Trail pamphlet that highlights the artisans and galleries, studios and shops of the County's creative citizens.

Peta Hall couldn't be more pleased. The Bloomfield-based potter, who displays a dizzying variety of ceram-



DONALD NAUSBAUM

Potter Peta Hall shows off her colourful creations in her Bloomfield studio — one of 22 must-see stops on the Art Trail.

ics from a cozy studio behind her Main St. home, is one of the driving forces behind the Art Trail. The brochure lists 22 "must-see" stops in The County, including such diverse talents as Armstrong Glassworks, Riccaro Jewellery Studio and Gallery, La De Dah Sculpture Gallery and Wel-

lington Pottery.

Originally from Zimbabwe, Hall's work reflects the vibrant colours of Africa combined with the tranquil beauty of her adopted Prince Edward County (just look at the startling blue shutters of her home and her purple and green polka-dot teapots).

"I make pieces to bring sunshine into everyday living," she explains.

The Art Trail compliments the County's Taste Trail aimed at city dwellers who need a rural retreat. Bright signage along the county roads points the way toward artistic and gastronomic pleasures.

Contact Prince Edward County Tourism at 613-393-2796 or pec.travel for more information. For Arts and Taste trails, see arttrail.ca and tastetrail.ca.

The Bloomfield Bicycle Co. is at 225 Main St., Bloomfield; 613-393-1060 or bloomfield-bicycle.ca.

Good bets for accommodations include:

Angeline's Restaurant/Inn/Spa, 433 Main St., Bloomfield; 613-393-3301 or angelines-inn-spa.com.

Claramount Inn and Spa, 97 Bridge St., Picton; 613-476-2709 or claramountinn.com.

The Isaiah Tubbs Inn and Resort on West Lake Rd., Picton; 613-393-2090.

Merrill Inn, 343 Main St. E., Picton; 613-476-7451 or merrillinn.com.

Waring House, Hwy. 33 and County Rd. 1; 613-476-7492 or waringhouse.com.

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