

# Five Worth the Drive: Some special country art galleries

BY KATHARINE FLETCHER, OTTAWA CITIZEN OCTOBER 7, 2013



What could possibly be better than driving through nature's palette of crimson and gold to visit country art galleries where artists' colourful creations await discovery? Here are five worth your drive.

## The Grotto Artworks

**Why it's worth the drive:** The Grotto showcases pottery, jewellery, wood turning, painting and prints. Plus, Merrickville is a picturesque historic village overlooking the Rideau Canal. After browsing, why not explore unique shops; dine at cafés featuring locavore fare such as at Yellow Canoe ([yellowcanoecafe.com](http://yellowcanoecafe.com))?

**Tip:** The 29th annual Merrickville Studio Tour ends Oct. 6. So you can first appreciate artists such as Holly Dean's and Larry Thompson's works here at The Grotto, then meet them in their home studio.

**Where:** 110 Main Street East, Merrickville, Ont.

**Driving time from Ottawa:** 30 minutes

**How to get there:** Take Highway 416 south to Highway 43. Turn west through Kemptville and continue 18 kilometres to Merrickville. Find the gallery on your left before a flashing light, opposite a church.

**When:** Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Check winter dates on website.

**Contacts:** 1-613-269-4302; [thegrottoartworks.com](http://thegrottoartworks.com)

## **Art Brûlant & Impressions Gallery and Roasterie**

**Why it's worth the drive:** This modest gallery primarily showcases Pontiac regional artists. Until Oct. 12, find silk artist Dale Shutt's Sackcloth and Silk exhibition; later, do Christmas shopping at Stocking Stuffers, featuring smaller works of art to fit any budget. Gallery owner Raymond Sander Regier is an artist – and roasts specially selected imported coffee beans. "They're just good beans, with some extra good thrown in!" he says. Sip fabulous java or tea while browsing. Hungry? Visit Café 349 (cafe349.com) for Ruth Hahn's homestyle fare – plus more art.

**Tip:** Until Oct. 6 only, you can also visit the nearby Stone School Gallery in historic Portage-du-Fort to view four textile artists' creations. On Oct 6, enjoy the 2 p.m. artists' talk.

**Where:** Art Brûlant: 305-F rue Main, Shawville; Stone School Gallery: 28, rue Mill St. Portage-du-Fort, Quebec.

**Driving time from Ottawa:** 1.5 hours

**How to get there:** Cross to Quebec via Champlain Bridge. Connect with Highway 148 West to Shawville. Turn right on Centre Street (Highway 303); then right on Main Street, then left into the Valu-Mart parking lot. To your right find Art Brûlant. Use the Quyon Ferry (in season; quyonferry.com) or you can take Highway 417 west to the Storyland exit and cross into Quebec over the Chenaux Dam near Portage-du-Fort to customize your own beautiful circuit drive.

**When:** Tuesday to Friday: 10:00 am – 5:30 pm; Saturday: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm.

**Contacts:** 1-819-503-8004; [artbrulant.wordpress.com](http://artbrulant.wordpress.com); [artpontiac.com/gallery.html](http://artpontiac.com/gallery.html)

## **Galerie Old Chelsea**

**Why it's worth the drive:** Discover 10 Ottawa/Gatineau artists' work. Landscapes here often depict Gatineau Park and the forested hills, lakes and rivers we all so appreciate. Find many mediums and artistic visions – from oils and watercolours to felt art, stained glass, and jewellery. Discover a Special Exhibition area, where visiting artists show their work in exhibits lasting three weeks.

**Tip:** Plan to linger longer downstairs, to enjoy a meal at award-winning Les Fougères restaurant. Interested in wine or microbrewery beer? Ask well-informed servers for distinctive pairings.

**Where:** 783 Route 105, at Les Fougères restaurant, Old Chelsea (Quebec)

**Driving time from Ottawa:** 20 minutes.

**How to get there:** Cross Ottawa River on Macdonald-Cartier Bridge, driving north on Autoroute 5 North. Take exit 13 towards Old Chelsea/Tenaga; turn right onto Scott Road. Turn right onto Route 105, Restaurant Les Fougères is first building on right-hand side. Gallery on second floor.

**When:** Wednesday to Saturday, 11 am to 6 pm; Sunday, 11 am to 5 pm

**Contacts:** (819) 827-4945; [galerieoldchelsea.ca](http://galerieoldchelsea.ca)

## **Valley Artisans' Co-op**

**Why it's worth the drive:** Beautifully lit and designed gallery presents wide variety of paintings, basketry, fibre arts, glasswork, metalwork, photography and more – all created by Ottawa Valley artists/artisans. Because it's a co-op, this gallery is managed by member-artists, so it's intriguing to ask which works have been created by whomever is on-staff when visiting. Always fun to chat with the creator!

**Tip:** Look here for a copy of Grandmothers' Necklace, an anthology where the local contributors wrote stories which honour grandmothers, internationally. Proceeds (\$20) go to the Stephen Lewis Foundation, to fight AIDS and HIV in Africa.

**Where:** 33373 Highway 17 W, Deep River, Ont.

**Driving time from Ottawa:** 2 hours.

**How to get there:** Head west on Highway 417 and continue 193 kilometres to Deep River through rural eastern Ontario, with glimpses of the Ottawa River.

**When:** Open daily 10 am - 5:30 p.m.

**Contacts:** 1-613-584-4483 [valleyartisans.com](http://valleyartisans.com)

## **Bittersweet at Fog Run**

**Why it's worth the drive:** Bittersweet Fine Craft and Art is the studio of artist Richard Gill where you'll discover his clay relief sculptures depicting Ottawa Valley and other landscapes, architecture and flora. As well, his wife Cheryl Babineau represents more than 50 regional and Canadian artists in varied collection of fine craft. Finally, Burnstown is a picturesque Ottawa Valley village in a delightful setting of woodlands and farmlands along the Madawaska River..

**Tip:** Gill's annual fall show continues until October 14, where hours are 11:00 – 5:00 daily. Hungry? Don't miss nearby Blackbird Cafe or Neat Coffee House for homemade food made on the premises from fresh ingredients. Linger longer for live music.

**Where:** 5 Leckie Lane, Burnstown.

**Driving time from Ottawa:** About one hour.

**How to get there:** Highway 17 west to Arnprior; 10 km past Arnprior turn left on Hwy 508 at the sign to Calabogie Ski Area, continue 5 km to a stop sign and flashing light, this is Burnstown. Turn right. Continue 100 metres. Turn left on Leckie Lane after the Post Office. On your left find Fog Run Studio and Bittersweet Gallery.

**When:** May to mid October: Daily 11:00 am to 5:00 pm; mid October to December 31: Wednesday-Sunday 11:00 am to 5:00 pm; Winter: Weekends 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm

**Contacts:** Richard Gill: 1-613-433-9990; Cheryl Babineau 1-613-432-5254; [burnstown.ca/bittersweet/](http://burnstown.ca/bittersweet/)

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