

Summer in a City VII



*Summer is more than a season;
it's a state of mind – a time to get in the car and travel.*

Jeff



2026: FROM NIAGARA TO NIAGARA

April 30 – May 1: Niagara Falls	1
May 17: Holland Marsh Wineries.....	5
June 28 – July 1: Fern Resort.....	6
July 24 – 25: St. Jacobs.....	8
July 30: Niagara-on-the-Lake	12
August 17 – 21: Las Vegas.....	14
October 2 – 4: Niagara Falls.....	16

Welcome Back

*It has been seven years since I published my last “**Summer in a City**” compilation book. Although I hadn’t planned on creating another in this series, after seven getaways this year, I decided a physical book was warranted.*

This edition differs from the last one I created in 2019 in that it is primarily text-oriented, featuring a few photos to add some colour.

Additionally, this book is different from the previous six in the series because I produced it in Microsoft Word and printed it at Staples. Since Blurb discontinued its BookSmart program, I needed to find an alternative. I had previously used Word to prepare a book about my adventures at Fern Resort, and I was thrilled with how it turned out. So, I decided to use the same method for this book.

While my trips to Fern Resort and Las Vegas were part of my 2026 travels, I chose not to include the full journals of those adventures in this edition, as they have already been featured in other books. Instead, I have included summaries of those adventures.

Jeff Rosen

© 2026 by Jeff Rosen, the author of this book.
The author retains exclusive copyright
for all contributions to this work.

APRIL 30 — MAY 1: NIAGARA FALLS



After a long and crappy winter, both weather- and health-wise, the time has finally come for our first getaway of 2026. I call it a getaway, rather than a vacation, since this one is just an overnight. It returns us to one of our favourite spots in Ontario – Niagara Falls.

This should be quite an interesting trip. Just like we did 10 years ago, we are visiting this tourist hotspot to see a show – comedian Brad Garrett. While Lisa has never seen him perform, I have had the pleasure of seeing him during my many visits to Las Vegas. I've been to his comedy club seven times since 2014; some years he has hosted the show, while other times he has been absent. Still, every performance has been fantastic. However, I see that I've gone off topic. I

didn't think I would get a chance to see him or visit his club this year, since I decided to take a break from Las Vegas. However, when they announced his show last October, I thought it would be a worthwhile excursion. So, here we are, ready for a new adventure. Will my decision be the right one? I guess you'll have to follow along and see for yourself!

Thursday, April 30

10:10 a.m.

We're off on our first road trip of 2026. Let the good times roll (*especially since I got new tires last week!*).

11:37 a.m.

Stopping at Chapters in St. Catharines, as usual.

12:00 p.m.

Well, that was a waste of time. Seems the gift card I was going to use has to be set up first using your cellphone, and that takes about 10 minutes to register. Oh well, I really didn't want the book I was going to buy. We are heading to Tim Hortons for lunch now.

12:26 p.m.

That was just OK, nothing special. Lisa and I shared a flatbread pizza. It was edible, but I would not order it again. We are heading out of St. Catharines now, on our way to Konzelmann Estate Winery in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

12:48 p.m.

We're here in beautiful NOTL. What a great drive. We headed south to Lakeshore from St. Catharines, all the way to the vineyard.

1:12 p.m.

Now that was a successful stop. We purchased eight bottles of wine, including two for Jordana. This place is so nice. Interestingly, it was not as busy this year as it was in past visits, and the tasting bar was closed. I guess it's very early in the season and a weekday. Still, when Lisa wanted to try a new wine, they were more than accommodating and did not charge her for that.

2:20 p.m.

We've checked into the Wyndham Grand Hotel, room 1406. I called the hotel yesterday to find out what street the registration entrance was on. You see, while the hotel's address is on Fallsview, the registration entrance is off Stanley. We found it no problem and got an accessible parking spot right beside the entrance. A staff member on duty guided us to the registration desk and explained that we could leave the car in place during our stay, as we had a handicapped permit. While we arrived before the official 4:00 p.m. check-in time, the person on duty found a room for us and explained the hotel.



Now we are checked in and have our room. So, what's next? Who knows?

2:50 p.m.

Hi, it's me again (*like who else would it be?*). I just wanted to check in and let you know that it's R&R time, so leave us be!

4:00 p.m.

We're going downstairs to check out the hotel. The room is nice but a bit on the smaller side. I would not want to stay here for an extended stay.

5:00 p.m.

We're back after gambling and, unfortunately, we lost. I spent \$25, and Lisa gave up \$20. Now we are going to change for the evening. I have to say, though, it's amazing how quickly I get bored with gambling. Yes, you know I love going to Las Vegas. However, there is so much more to do there than just gambling.



5:25 p.m.

We're dressed and ready for our first (*and last*) evening here. We might as well head downstairs for dinner at The Keg. I have to add that it is fantastic that we don't have to go outside (*where it is cold and rainy*) and therefore don't need our jackets.

11:30 p.m.

Well, that's it for our evening out in Niagara Falls. Our evening started with dinner at The Keg. Before we ordered anything, we mentioned to our server that the music was too loud. She said she would see what she could do. A few minutes later, the volume was reduced throughout the restaurant.

As for the important stuff, though, both food and service were exemplary. Lisa mentioned to our server that we were celebrating our anniversary, and we got a complimentary dessert. After dinner, we walked outside, across the street to the theatre. Now, you would think that after all these years, they would have improved the seating at the Avalon Theatre in Fallsview Casino. Sadly, nothing has changed. There is little space between rows, so if one person wants to leave, the entire row has to get up and move to the aisle. Be careful, though, as the seats are not anchored to the floor. Fortunately, the show was great. Brad Garrett is just as good in Niagara Falls as he is in Las Vegas. We had great seats, row 4, so the view was awesome. Garrett was the host and entertained the audience between his guests, which included Dave Burleigh and Andy Pitz. Personally, I enjoyed Burleigh more than Pitz, especially his impersonations of American political leaders. It's funny, though; usually I visit Garrett's comedy club in Las Vegas every year. This year, when I am staying away from the gambling mecca, I got to see him right here in Ontario.

After the show, we went to Lucky's Restaurant & Bar, hoping to listen to some live music and have a drink. We were escorted to a table, where we waited to be served. Unfortunately, our server chose to tend to a table of four who came in after us. So, we got up, left and went to the casino. The first thing we did was to sign up for players' cards, which came loaded with \$25 cash. I quickly lost it on a Little Shop of Horrors slot machine. However, Lisa played a smaller amount and won \$25. We cashed out and came back to the room. It's too bad the way it ended, as it would have been nice to enjoy some live music and a beverage in a lounge after the show.

So, that ends our day in Niagara Falls. Let's hope we have a good rest tonight. However, the bed is a bit too high off the ground and very hard. Fingers crossed.

Good night.

Friday, May 1

9:01 a.m.

Good morning. I was up earlier (*writing reviews*), but I went back to bed and actually fell asleep. The bed really was too hard. Now it's time to actually rise and shine (*well, maybe rise*).

9:25 a.m.

OK, we're both ready and heading downstairs to IHOP for breakfast.

10:15 a.m.

Now, that was a great breakfast. Everything came out fast and hot. We are going to finish packing and will head out soon. It's been a fun stay. Talk to you before we get going. For now, it's so long from room 1406.

10:34 a.m.

That's it! We're mobile again. So long, Niagara Falls!

11:00 a.m.

We've arrived! No, we are not home yet. I don't drive that fast. We're at the Upper Canada Cheese Company in Jordan.



11:10 a.m.

We got what we wanted, which included cheese, of course, and mustard. We are now departing for Calamus Estate Winery.

11:17 a.m.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, we have arrived.

11:30 a.m.

We came, we saw, we sampled, and, of course, we bought. Unfortunately, they didn't have everything on our list. We're off now, heading to Forty Creek Distillery for our first visit there.

12:00 p.m.

We have just arrived at Forty Creek Distillery.

12:18 p.m.

We got to sample a flight of four (*two for Lisa, two for me*), and we then purchased four bottles. That's everything on our agenda. GPS is now set for Thornhill, so let's get going!

1:32 p.m.

That's it! We're home. Of course, before arriving here, we stopped at Bagel Nash to pick up some lunch. First order of business is to eat, and then I'm going to Food Basics to pick up orange juice for Lisa. Then, well, there is nothing after that. Niagara Falls 2026 is over. Until our next outing, so long!



MAY 17: HOLLAND MARSH WINERIES

I realize it may be quite unusual to write a narrative – an introduction – for a day outing, but since it's the first long weekend of the summer travel season and our first Victoria Day outing without Jordana, I felt a brief introduction was in order.

There was no rush to get up today, Sunday, May 17. Once we were up and about, I walked over to Bagel Nash and bought a few bagels (*as well as my personal favourites*). We eventually headed out, travelling north on Highway 400 to Keele Street and Holland Marsh Wineries. There, we explored the offerings, tried a few red and white wines, and left with five bottles to add to our collection.

Our journey continued as we made a stop at Indigo in Newmarket before heading back down Yonge Street. We paused for lunch at Harvey's and then continued our trip. Finally, we found ourselves south of Highway 407. Instead of heading east toward home, we decided to go to Dollarama in Promenade Mall. After a successful stop there, we made our way home.

Overall, it was a fun outing that we both enjoyed.



JUNE 28 — JULY 1: FERN RESORT

*To provide a complete overview of the **Summer of 2026**, I decided to include a summary of our visit to Fern Resort, which is explored in detail in **Fern Resort Journals**.*

This journal chronicles our four-day return visit to Fern Resort, a place filled with more than 25 years of family memories. This was our third visit since the pandemic and another stay for us in the Edgewater Cottages. From the outset, the trip mixed nostalgia with the hope of simply relaxing and enjoying the present.

After lunch in Orillia and a brief stop at Casino Rama, we arrived at Fern and settled into Cottage 303. Our first day brought some disappointments, including the cancellation of the wine and cocktail programs, a crowded pool area, an average dinner, and a ski show hampered by a broken PA system. Still, a beautiful lakeside sunset provided a memorable ending.

The following days improved considerably. Our vacation settled into a comfortable rhythm of morning walks, swimming, reading, bingo, archery, good meals, evening entertainment, and time relaxing by the pool. A sunset cruise on our final evening was delayed, causing us to miss much of the circus show, but the trip nevertheless ended on a positive note.

On Canada Day, we enjoyed one last morning before packing up and heading home, where an unexpected air-conditioning failure awaited us.

The postscript captures the journal's central theme: nostalgia can make the past seem better than it really was. I ultimately realized that neither past nor present is perfect, and happiness comes from appreciating small moments—the sun, water, a beautiful sunset, and time with someone special.

Whether we return to Fern remains undecided, but the trip ended with a simple message:
Enjoy life as it is happening.





JULY 24 — 25: ST. JACOBS

After our successful getaway to Niagara Falls at the end of April, I decided we should plan another outing this summer. But where should we go? I considered Stratford, but the cost of staying overnight has skyrocketed in recent years. We also thought about Niagara-on-the-Lake before I started exploring other options—communities in southern Ontario where we could catch a show. Eventually, I found St. Jacobs and the show we chose for this trip. While the theatre is about a 90-minute drive from Thornhill, we agreed that there was no rush to get home. So, we looked into places to stay near the theatre. We discovered that not only were there several hotels nearby, but they were all reasonably priced. That's how we decided on St. Jacobs and "Return to Grace." What will this getaway be like? Like all our adventures, you'll just have to follow along to find out. See you soon!

Friday, July 24

9:00 a.m.

Yes, you read that right; it is actually this early. The car is packed, and we're ready to go (*and no, there is no jet plane here*). Very shortly, we're going to close up the house and head out on another adventure. See you later.

10:22 a.m.

Would you believe we just pulled up at the Courtyard Marriott, St. Jacobs? Well, we did.

11:20 a.m.

Since we couldn't check in yet, we are just relaxing in the lobby. After we got here, we went for a walk and found Jack's Family Restaurant and the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse, located beside the hotel and the farmers' market.



12:47 p.m.

We're back from Jack's, where we had a nice lunch. Now sitting around the hotel lobby and will go over to the theatre shortly for the 2 p.m. show.

1:07 p.m.

We're in the theatre lobby now, but it's too early to get to our seats.

4:10 p.m.

Good afternoon. Well, the show is done, and we've checked into the Courtyard Marriott, room 113. It's a nice, spacious room, although a bit chilly as the air conditioning has been running all

day. I have already turned it off and might actually turn the heat on. (*I actually did just that!*)

Now back to the theatre. Return to Grace, playing at St. Jacobs Country Playhouse, was a musical tribute to Elvis Presley and the music he played throughout his career. We both enjoyed it and rated it 7/10. I think most of the audience probably rated it even higher, given their ages. Of course, most of the audience was older than us and grew up on the music of "The King."

So, what's next on our agenda? Right now, we are going for some R&R. Given that we have been on the go since early morning, we both need it.



6:25 p.m.

What have we been up to since we last spoke? Exactly what I mentioned earlier: sleeping and reading the newspaper. Now, we're up and heading over to Jack's for dinner. See you later.



7:50 p.m.

We're back. We both enjoyed delicious dinners. However, like all restaurants, servings are much too large, and I left food on my plate. I guess that means no dessert for me.

After we got back, we called Oakville and shared our day with our favourite daughter (yes, *I know she is the only one!*).

10:03 p.m.

We're back. Wait, I already said that. Wait, where did you go in the first place? I guess I should have mentioned earlier, so I'll fill you in now. After we got back, Lisa eventually went

down to the lobby to read. She has done this so many times over the years. At 9:00 p.m., I went to the lobby to meet up with her, and we went to the lounge to enjoy some nightcaps — a great way to wind down the day.

So, that's it for Friday. Take care, and we'll talk again tomorrow.

Saturday, July 25

8:36 a.m.

Good morning. We both slept great last night. Must be all the fresh air. As you can tell, we both slept in this morning. Now we're up and getting ready for another fun-filled day.

9:18 a.m.

Ready to leave room 113, load the car and go for breakfast. Again, we are headed to Jack's, which means we will have had breakfast, lunch and dinner at this family restaurant.





10:15 a.m.

We've finished breakfast now, another fantastic meal. I wish we had such a place in our area. Food and service are fantastic. We're walking over to the market now.

11:34 a.m.

That's it, we're done. The St. Jacobs Farmers' Market was a lot of fun. We're glad we started early, as it is getting very crowded and very hot (*28 degrees*). We bought a bunch of things, including magnets, BBQ sauce, strawberries, strawberry jam (*sugarless!*) and fresh-squeezed orange juice (*delicious!*). We're back at the car now and ready to head out. So long, St. Jacobs. It was a short and fun getaway.

12:06 p.m.

We are stopping for lunch at ONroute Cambridge. Traffic was slow on Highway 401 getting here.

12:33 p.m.

Lunch is done. While the restaurant was busy, there were a lot of empty tables, so I guess people were buying meals to go. We both enjoyed Tim Hortons. Now it's time to get back on the highway.

1:55 p.m.

We are home; the trip is officially over. After we got back on the highway, traffic was bumper-to-bumper from the lunch stop to the Highway 407 exit. There are so many people on the road these days. It takes a lot of fun out of these day trips.

JULY 30: NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

Thursday, July 30 – HAPPY 66TH BIRTHDAY, LISA/MOM!

Is it really another birthday, and are we going away again? The answer to both these questions (*and I'm sure many others*) is a resounding yes! Less than a week after returning from our last getaway, we're headed out again, this time to one of our favourite places – Niagara-on-the-Lake. Unlike last week, this trip includes one more person, an RECE from Oakville who is thrilled to have found a new job in her field. Of course, that has nothing to do with today's adventure, but I thought I would throw it in for the historical record. With that all said and done, time to get this show on the road. After all, the wine bottles are not just going to magically appear in the car by themselves!

8:52 a.m.

Good morning, we are dressed and in the car.

9:50 a.m.

Traffic is moving great today, and the weather is beautiful. What more could you ask for?

10:18 a.m.

We have arrived. Now you are thinking that we're ready to start drinking so early in the day. Well, hardly. Actually, we have arrived at Chapters in St. Catharines. I probably won't find anything, but it never hurts to look. Also note that David called (*on Jordana's cellphone*) to wish Lisa a happy birthday.

10:32 a.m.

Lisa and Jordana got back to the car from Dollarama, having purchased some spoons. How do I know this, you are probably wondering. Jordana kept a good journal record.

10:35 a.m.

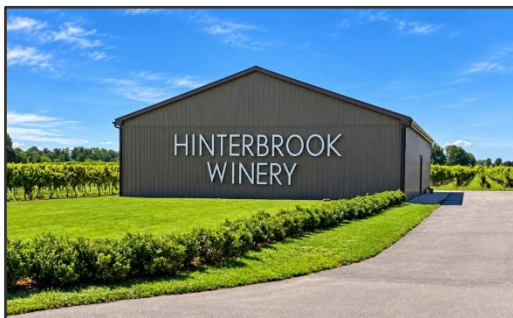
I'm back now. The book I wanted to buy won't be released until August 4. Now heading south on Geneva to Lakeshore and Konzelmann Estate Winery.

10:53 a.m.

We have arrived; let the purchasing begin.

11:09 a.m.

Now, that didn't take long, did it? I guess it's because we knew what we wanted to buy and didn't have to taste anything. Less fun that way, but it saved in time (*and money*). We purchased seven bottles, five for us, two for Jordana. Staff were helpful and friendly, especially when we were looking for a white wine to serve at our dinner party next week. Now we're heading down the road to Hinterbrook.



11:12 a.m.

That was fast. Just a hop, skip and jump, and we are here, at Hinterbrook. Note, though, the car did not actually hop, skip or jump.

11:20 a.m.

Leaving Hinterbrook. Staff were not as helpful, and we found the "cute" names they put on wine bottles actually a bit annoying. We bought four bottles, including two for Jordana. Since we had an early breakfast, we're now going for lunch.

11:28 a.m.

We're still in Niagara-on-the-Lake, going to have lunch at Subway.

11:53 a.m.

Subway is always good, and we all enjoyed our sandwiches. Now we're going to let the car have lunch (*fill up with gas*) and proceed to Upper Canada Cheese Company. What else to report? Oh yes, Jordana treated us to lunch.

12:36 p.m.

We have arrived at Upper Canada Cheese Company. That was one strange ride, though. I followed the GPS (*big mistake*), and it took us back to St. Catharines. Then it suggested routing through local streets. I ignored all the helpful advice and got back on the QEW. At that point, the GPS self-corrected and pointed me in the right direction.



12:40 p.m.

Now that was a quick stop. Of course, I knew what I wanted. I purchased two blocks of cheese, and now we're heading to Calamus.

12:51 p.m.

We're here now, our final stop for wine on this beautiful day.

1:15 p.m.

Wow, we did very well here, both for Jordana and ourselves. We also did a lot of sampling of the different wines. All were very good, and the staff person on duty was very helpful. Unfortunately, they didn't have a few of our favourites, but we made up for that by trying a few new wines. Enough of this, though; time to leave Jordan Station and head to Forty Creek Distillery.

1:37 p.m.

We're here, in case you were wondering.

1:47 p.m.

Another short stop, but we knew what we wanted and decided against sampling the product. After Calamus, we both had enough to drink. Time to set the GPS for Home.

2:55 p.m.

That's it, our birthday outing is over as we just pulled into the driveway. Seems like a lot of Lisa's birthdays are celebrated while on vacation or day trips.

POSTSCRIPT:

We got home, took the liquor into the house, and all lay down for naps. A few hours later we changed and went to The Keg for dinner. Food and service were fantastic, as usual. That's it for this journal, no philosophical insights. Then again, we only went away for about seven hours.

AUGUST 17 — 21: LAS VEGAS

*To provide a complete overview of the **Summer of 2026**, I decided to include a summary of my visit to Las Vegas.*

Las Vegas 2026 chronicles my 11th solo trip to Las Vegas, a journey that almost never happened. After my 2025 visit, I had seriously considered putting my annual Vegas trips on hold. As 2026 progressed, however, I reconsidered and decided to return, hoping that new experiences would make this trip different.

My five-day vacation began with a hectic trip through Pearson Airport before an uneventful flight and arrival at the Horseshoe Las Vegas. My first evening set a positive tone with dinner at Bubba Gump, a highly enjoyable show at Brad Garrett's Comedy Club, some gambling, and plenty of walking despite temperatures near 40°C.

Over the next several days, I combined familiar Vegas traditions with new experiences. I spent time swimming and reading at the Horseshoe pool, explored Fremont Street, gambled and placed baseball bets, enjoyed several restaurants, took photographs along the Strip, and attended another comedy show. A major highlight was **Interstellar Arc at AREA15**, an immersive virtual-reality adventure I describe as “mind-blowing.”

Another important experience was a small-group tour featuring the Welcome to Las Vegas sign, Seven Magic Mountains, Lake Mead, Hoover Dam, Boulder City, and bighorn sheep at Hemenway Park. Rather than trying to recreate my earlier visit to Hoover Dam, I approached the experience on my own terms.

After a final day of swimming, photography, shopping, and an excellent dinner at Ramsay's Kitchen, I packed for home. Despite an unpleasant taxi experience on departure, my return flight went smoothly, and I received a warm welcome from Lisa and Jordana upon arriving home.

The postscript reveals the trip's larger meaning. Unlike in 2025, I returned home enthusiastic about Las Vegas. My central realization was to live in the present rather than allowing memories of the past to overshadow current experiences. Life changes, the future is unpredictable, and absolute declarations about what comes next can be premature. **Consequently, Las Vegas 2027 remains a possibility.**





Seven Magic Mountains

OCTOBER 2 — 4: NIAGARA FALLS

Here we are, heading back to Niagara Falls, where we started our travel season in the spring. After that excursion, we thought our visits to the Niagara region were over this year. At that point, we turned our attention to planning a much larger getaway to a farther-away destination. When we realized that a flying adventure wasn't in the cards for us this year, we started exploring other options and discovered a tribute to Billy Joel scheduled for Saturday. With our Friday evening free, we decided to add a second show to this trip. All in all, this promises to be an "interesting" adventure, as Lisa likes to say. Whether it turns out to be true, only time will tell.

So, please fasten your seatbelts and join us as we embark on Niagara Falls 2026, Part 2.

Friday, October 2

10:45 a.m.

I know it's a slightly later departure than usual, but we're not on a schedule. So, who cares when we leave? Anyway, we're off. Talk to you later.

12:06 p.m.

Our first stop on this excursion is familiar to those who follow my journals. We've just arrived at Chapters in St. Catharines, always a good place to stop for a break. Despite reports of gloom and doom in the economy, traffic on the QEW was quite heavy today. So obviously people are travelling.

12:51 p.m.

I know that was a long stop. No, we didn't buy anything at the bookstore or Dollarama. Instead, we went to Sunset Grill for lunch. I know we've been there in the past and walked out. This time, service was marginally better. Now we're off to Konzelmann Estate Winery.

1:13 p.m.

We have arrived at the vineyard for our third visit this year. That has to be a record for us.



1:25 p.m.

In the end, we purchased six bottles, including a Merlot, which we have never tried, and a bottle for Jordana.

2:06 p.m.

We have arrived at Fallsview Casino Resort, parking in Level 5C. Funny story, we pull into the garage, and I'm saying the place is so dark. Lisa says to me, "Take off your sunglasses!" Live and learn.

3:45 p.m.

Finally, we're in our room, 2017. When we arrived, we tried to check in. However, the agent at the front desk told us our room on the 22nd floor was not ready and to come back later. So we walked around and went to the casino. I was thrilled to find the slot machine game "Little Shop of Horrors," the same one I enjoyed at Horseshoe, Las Vegas. Well, obviously this machine was no shop of horrors, as I won \$74.05 on a \$20 bet.

We eventually returned to the hotel desk, only to find that our room was still not ready, so they gave us this room, plus a goodie bag of cookies and jam. Going to relax now.

5:40 p.m.

We've changed and are heading out for the evening.

11:40 p.m.

What a fascinating evening. We went to The Keg for dinner as planned. The place was packed. Unfortunately, I had to send my dinner back as it was not hot enough. Our server said it would take 20 minutes to prepare a new lamb shank meal, but that problem was fairly quickly rectified, and I got a new dinner about 10 minutes later. Afterwards, we walked to Yuk Yuk's. Before the show started, the "background" music was deafening (*Lisa had to cover her ears*).

Finally returning to the room, we were amazed to see the lights on the Falls.

Well, that's it for our first day here. It's been a long and busy one. Before I go, though, I have to say that I am constantly in awe of the majesty of Niagara Falls.

Good night.

Saturday, October 3

8:48 a.m.

Good morning. So nice to sleep in. Lisa is having a shower now. No idea what's on the agenda this morning.

9:30 a.m.

We're finally ready and are heading down for breakfast.

10:30 a.m.

We're back from Lucky's in Fallsview Galleria. Breakfast was delicious. Soon we'll finish packing our things and check out. No idea what will come after, but that's half the fun of this trip.

10:45 a.m.

That's it. We're out of here. Journal is going mobile.

12:30 p.m.

Greetings, I'm completely mobile now, meaning I'm creating this entry on my phone. After we last talked, we loaded the car and then checked out. The casino was next on our agenda. I lost my first \$20 and then turned my next \$20 into \$90.39. Lisa lost \$20, so overall we came out ahead. After cashing in my casino winnings, we went for a walk along the upper boardwalk before returning to the hotel.

Lisa is now back in the casino, and I'm relaxing in the hotel lobby.

That's all for now.



1:45 p.m.

Back again. We went to Vittorio's Express in Fallsview's food hall for lunch, and we're now back in the hotel lobby. I really miss having a place to relax.

The doors open for the show at 2:00 p.m.

We will talk later.

4:37 p.m.

The Billy Joel Legacy Tribute show is over. We will catch up later.



4:49 p.m.

Greetings from the Courtyard Marriott, room 206—sorry, I mean 904. When we got here, we were surprised to learn that they were going to upgrade us to the Presidential Suite (*I don't think that Donald stayed there*). We accepted and took the luggage cart up only to discover that the room overlooked the hotel's air conditioning unit.

We immediately knew that this was not going to be our room this evening. So, we took our stuff back to the front desk and explained our situation. The person at the front desk said, "No problem," and moved us to the ninth floor. The room has a great view, a king-size bed, a whirlpool tub, and a sofa. In my opinion, it is a much nicer room than we had last night. It is certainly larger.

Now, as far as the show went, we both loved it, rating it 10/10. The show was not just Billy Joel's music but a video montage of his life and times. Of course, the music was fantastic.

After the show ended, we slowly made our way back to the car and left the Fallsview area. No idea about dinner plans yet. You will know when we know, of course.

6:30 p.m.

Heading out for the evening. See you later.

8:45 p.m.

We're back from dinner. Chuck's Roadhouse was very busy, very noisy, but the food was delicious. I know that just last night we were winding down at Yuk Yuk's, but today has been a much longer and busier day.

One of the elevators that was broken earlier is now working (*I reported the malfunction when we checked in*). So, until tomorrow, I bid you a good evening.

10:00 p.m.

I guess I signed off too soon. It seems we are going downstairs for dessert.

10:37 p.m.

Now I can honestly say that I am signing off for the evening. Good night.

Sunday, October 4

9:06 a.m.

Good morning. Would you believe we just got up? No rushing around on this trip. Lisa is showering now, and I think we are going to Denny's for breakfast. After that, well, stay with us to find out!

9:47 a.m.

We're ready to move out. See you after breakfast.

10:50 a.m.

Breakfast was delicious. There was just one small problem, as Lisa's scrambled eggs were not hot. Our server was great, though. Instead of taking away the entire plate, she simply brought a fresh plate of hot eggs. This way Lisa was able to enjoy the rest of her breakfast.

We're back now (*of course*), just to finish packing the rest of our stuff, check out and leave Niagara Falls.



11:05 a.m.

That's it, we're out of here. So long, Courtyard Marriott. Journal is going mobile again. See you later.

11:36 a.m.

First stop on our journey to Thornhill is Upper Canada Cheese Company.

11:42 a.m.

That was a quick stop, but then again, I knew what I wanted. Next up, well, wait and see.

11:52 a.m.

Second stop: Calamus Estate Winery, our third visit here this year.

12:05 p.m.

Another six bottles secured. They actually know us here. Now we're heading back to the highway and...

12:30 p.m.

Third stop: Forty Creek Distillery.

12:46 p.m.

That's it. All planned stops completed. Time to head out to our final destination.

1:34 p.m.

Fourth stop: Is there a fourth stop? Well, not always, but on this trip there is. We have stopped in Oakville to pick up Jordana. We actually decided to do so while on the QEW. Unfortunately, for some reason I could not make a hands-free call, so we continued along the QEW and got off at Bronte. We eventually pulled into a plaza, and I called her. She was delighted to join us.

1:40 p.m.

We are stopping for lunch at Tim Hortons.

2:10 p.m.

Lunch is over. We are leaving Tim's to drop Jordana off at home. Next stop: Thornhill.

2:15 p.m.

Drop-off complete; GPS set for Home (*actually didn't use the GPS, but it sounds good*).

2:58 p.m.

That's it, engine off; we are home. This trip is officially over.



POSTSCRIPT:

Well, that's it. Niagara Falls, Part 2 is officially over. It was a fun, very different getaway from past vacations in the region. For the first time, we stayed in two different hotels and attended two distinct shows. Interestingly, I actually enjoyed Courtyard Marriott more than the Fallsview Hotel. It wasn't just because we didn't have to pay for the second stay or because the room was larger. I just found the staff at the Marriott to be friendlier and genuinely interested in their guests.

Staying at the Fallsview meant more running around too. We had to take an elevator from the parking garage to the casino level, and then a second elevator in the hotel to our room. I was also unimpressed by Fallsview's policy of not providing luggage carts for guests; they allowed only staff to use them, which meant that guests would have to tip for that service.

Now, back to the rooms. We loved the view of the Falls from the Fallsview Hotel. No matter how many times we've visited the area, I never tire of that breathtaking scenery. However, once you stop looking outside, you realize how small the room actually is. I definitely would not want to spend a week in that space. In contrast, the Marriott offered a king-size bed, a whirlpool tub, and a sofa with a footstool that allowed us to put up our feet and relax. While online data indicated that the Fallsview room was actually larger, the Marriott felt more spacious.

Putting that aside, it was a fun trip, staying at two hotels and taking in two shows.

Would we do that again? Only time will tell. In the meantime, that's a wrap for Niagara Falls 2026. See you later.



2026 TRAVEL POSTSCRIPT:

The end of Niagara Falls, Part 2, marks more than the end of one vacation; it signals the end of our family's 2026 vacation season. While it's somewhat disappointing, I must say it was a fantastic year for outings, getaways, and vacations.

Surprisingly, without leaving Ontario, except for my annual trek to Las Vegas, we travelled more and ventured out more often than in previous years. The funny thing is, back in January, I worried that 2026 would turn out to be a dud—a major disappointment when it came to getaways. Indeed, we didn't get back to an all-inclusive resort in some sun-drenched paradise. Instead, we got in the car and enjoyed more road trips.

Was one option better than the other? Who can say? Both experiences are very different. Aside from Las Vegas, I have always enjoyed the spontaneity of getting in the car and heading out on the road. Overall, this style of travel allows for less rigid scheduling.

You might be wondering if this is what the future of travel holds for us in the coming years. Who really knows? The future is and will always remain a mystery, revealing itself only when it becomes the present. Ultimately, all we have is the here and now.

So until we embark on our next adventure, I intend to simply enjoy life as it unfolds.





FALLSVIEW
APPLE ORCHARD
TALK ABOUT THEM APPLES

APPLES

