

Trip 3 – Episode #1: Go East Young Van
(You should've seen Jim cringe when I showed him that one!)

When Jim and I got Charles just over a year ago in Victoria, our “plan” was to drive from coast to coast. Unfortunately, a certain turn of events outside Swift Current changed those plans, and instead, we just went home to Toronto.



So, our next “plan” was to continue travelling east this summer. We’re hoping this one ends more successfully than the one last summer did.

And with that goal in mind, we set out on Wednesday morning (not quite bright and early) and pointed our trusty RV toward St. John’s.



Our first stop was at Smiths Falls, because it has the word “falls” in its name. And true to their name, they actually have something akin to a waterfall.



It was close enough for us, but our expectation is that we'll see many more waterfalls on this trip, most of which will be even more thrilling.

But anytime we're near water, we're happy, and it was a beautiful summer's day in Smiths Falls.





After enjoying the sights there, we got back on the road and drove to our first overnight destination.



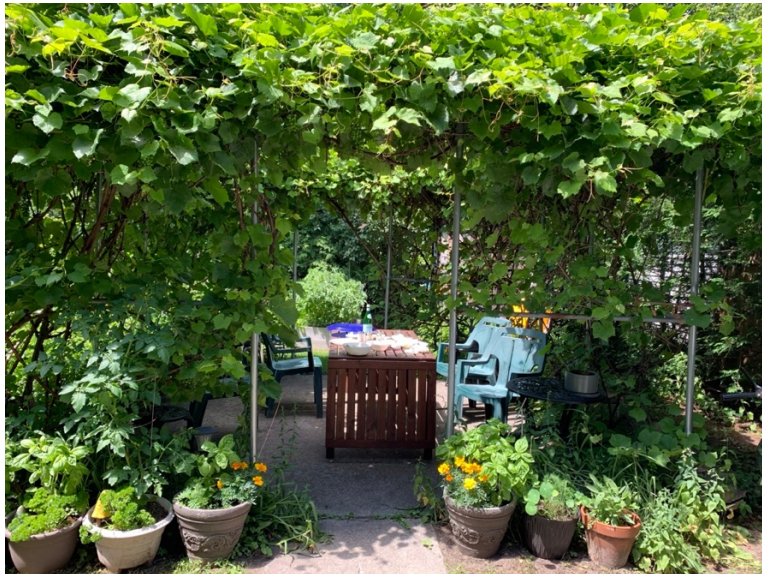
We found a nice campground just 15 minutes out of town, Wesley Clover Park, where Charles fit in quite comfortably.



And so did we.



We had decided to spend the next day enjoying Ottawa, and we started off (again, not quite bright and early) visiting my good friend Patrick in his lovely back garden for a tasty lunch and a much-needed catch-up.



After our happy reunion, we left Patrick and went off to explore Our Nation's Capital.

I've always felt that Ottawa is a beautiful city ... in the summer ... unless you enjoy skating to work 6 months of the year, which I don't. But when the temperature rises and the ice on the Rideau thaws and everything turns green, it's a great place to be. We were fortunate to be there on a perfect, warm, sunny day.





The idea that one could moor one's boat so close to Parliament Hill amazes me. (No such luck for RVs sadly).

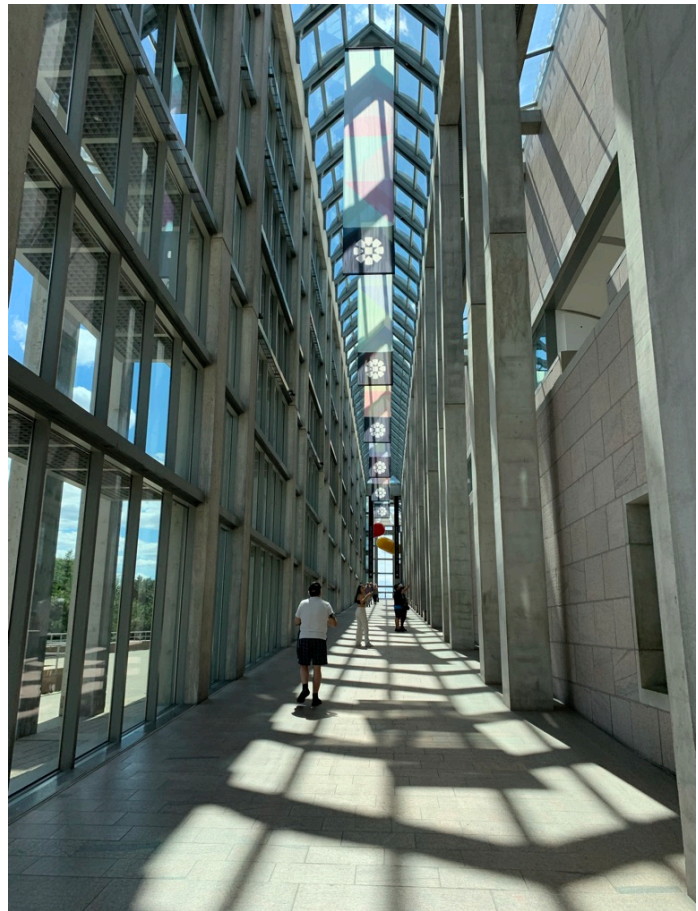


Our main goal for the afternoon was to go to the National Gallery. What a tonic it was!

The whole building is so artfully designed, from the first sighting of it (even if you're an arachnophobe).



And the walk up to the entrance is magnificent.



Once inside, the bright airiness of the space is welcoming, and they've placed gardens and contemplative pools strategically, so you can stop and reflect, before moving to the next gallery. It's smart and gorgeous.





We mostly spent our time in the galleries with the Group of Seven. And why not?





J.M.W. TURNER
 English, 1775–1851
The Red Maple, November 1814
 Oil on canvas
 Painted in J.M.W. Turner's studio in London. The painting is a study of a landscape, showing a river, rocks, and a tree with red leaves. The painting is a study of a landscape, showing a river, rocks, and a tree with red leaves. The painting is a study of a landscape, showing a river, rocks, and a tree with red leaves.



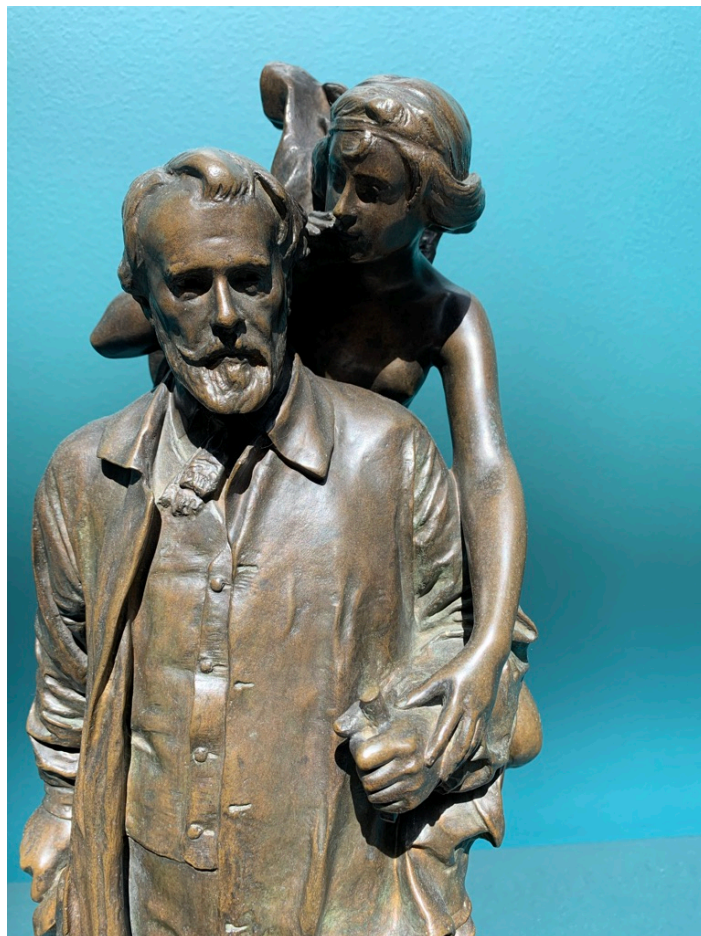




But there were a lot of other wonderful pieces, some new to us and some familiar, which we enjoyed, until our brains couldn't absorb anymore.









One of my favourite moments was watching this young man walk through this gallery, as if he owned it, clutching his stuffy the whole time.



Another really interesting installation was the Janet Cardiff sound sculpture, “Forty-Part Motet” in the Rideau Chapel. Each speaker projects a single singer’s voice, so it feels like you’re in the middle or the choir. I’ve attached a video which gives you a sense of the effect.



Another compelling piece was this “Eunuch Tapestry”. From a distance, you could barely make out anything but dark green and black forms.



But up close, there was so much going on.



It was a wonderful afternoon, and after a bit of a break, we wandered around the market area, which was bustling and colourful and full of interesting people and music, and we had a nice dinner on a patio.







The next morning, we felt duty-bound to visit Parliament Hill. This year, of all years, we wanted to acknowledge that we appreciate a government that looks after its people and believes in individuals' rights, no matter how loud some people honk their horns and hurl obscenities.





Unfortunately, much of Parliament Hill is blocked off because of construction, so we couldn't see my favourite sculpture, the tribute to "The Famous Five", the five prominent Canadian suffragists who advocated for women and children.

But we did get some lovely views of the Ottawa River and Gatineau.



With another nod to the Supreme Court, which still acknowledges the rights of women to make decisions about their own health, we headed out of Ottawa and entered La Belle Province.

