

# Reinventing Carnaval

Leading a grassroots revival, small businesses aim to generate \$46 million for Québec City's economy over next six years

Carnaval de Québec will be heating up even more for revellers who flock to Québec City in February. Since its inception 60 years ago, Carnaval has been a boisterous good-time gold mine for Québec City's tourism industry. Last year, more than half a million visitors attended, injecting \$28 million into the local economy.

Over the years, it has evolved into a family-gear festival confined primarily to the historic Upper Town and the Plains of Abraham, but local businesses and government aim to change that.

"We hope that expanding events will breathe new life into Carnaval, so people can live it up all over the city," says Julie Alice Morasse, project manager with Coopérative de solidarité du Quartier Petit Champlain, which represents 45 businesses in the lower area of the city.

Carnaval Streets is one such business-minded initiative. Eight streets in the city are participating, including 3rd Avenue, St-Joseph Street, rue de Petit-Champlain, rue St-Jean and avenue Cartier. Supported by the city's matching funding of \$10,000 to \$30,000, street business associations are offering a plethora of activities for all age groups — curling and hockey games, zip lining, train rides, a corn roast, a lumberjack demo, an all-night arts event, street theatre and dancing.

The cooperative that Morasse works for has invested \$75,000 of its marketing budget in the Carnaval Streets program this year. Rue Petit-Champlain, known for its independent artists' shops, will feature 27 ice sculptures sponsored by local businesses.

The street will also be honouring Ti-Père, who invented Carnaval's famous high-octane drink, Caribou, and hosted many celebrities — including Pierre Trudeau and Princess Grace of Monaco — in the early years at his epony-



Julie Alice Morasse's business co-operative is part of a plan to expand Carnaval across the city.

mous watering-hole, which will be reopened in his honour.

Morasse's organization aims to attract 30,000 additional visitors and international tourists, as well as local and regional customers. "We'd like to see our members multiply their annual profits by three in 2014 and by four in 2015," says Morasse.

Next year, the plan is to increase the number and size of ice sculptures on the street and enhance them with lighting and animation. Adds Morasse, "Ideally, we would find a big sponsorship partnership who can share our costs and benefit in the publicity."

Meanwhile, Carnaval Duchesses revives a tradition but with a community-engagement twist, wherein seven regions are represented by duchesses who would host pre-Carnaval warm-up events. "I came up with the idea of a 2.6-km maple taffy pull," says Roxane, Duchess of Lévis. "It will be a world record."

Two other new activities are the Snowcross Grand Prix and Battle of the Dukes. At Snow-

cross Grand Prix (Feb. 1–2), 200 snowmobilers will race on a course behind Centre de congrès et d'exposition de Lévis. Up to 6,000 people are expected to line up for the Battle of the Dukes (Feb. 1) and take part in the planet's biggest snowball fight.

Besides the Carnaval organization and the City of Québec, other participants with big plans for the future are the Conférence régionale des élus de la Capitale-Nationale (CRE) and the Centre local de développement (CLD) de Québec.

"As the world's biggest winter carnival, we have to push the limits beyond what has been done so far by organizing grandiose activities that will make Québec City shine internationally," explains Denis Simard, chairman of the board, Carnaval de Québec.

As Jean David, Carnaval's director of business development, sales and marketing, says: "By 2020 we want to generate \$46 million in direct economic spinoffs and attract more than a million visitors."

## MILESTONES

- 1954** Birth of the official Carnaval de Québec and Bonhomme, its snowman mascot.
- 1958** Ice canoe race takes place under the worst conditions in event's history; only 4 of 21 teams finish.
- 1964** Voûtes Chez Ti-Père, home of the Caribou drink, opens on rue Sainte-Thérèse.
- 1966** Order of Duchesses is created.
- 1970** A new tradition is born — event closes with fireworks display.
- 1975** The Innu participate for the first time in the International Snow Sculpture Competition.
- 1980** New Carnaval sites are created — Place des Enfants (first winter playground dedicated to children) and Place du Manège (for Carnaval get-togethers).
- 1984** Carnaval celebrates its 30th anniversary.
- 1986** Women's teams begin to participate regularly in the canoe race.
- 1987** Snow bath becomes part of Carnaval program.
- 1990** Place des Enfants moves to the Plains of Abraham and is renamed Place de la Famille.
- 1994** Carnaval turns 40.
- 1996** Increased emphasis on family; activities take place at Esplanade de l'Hôtel du Parlement and the Plains of Abraham.
- 1997** Duchies, duchesses, queens disappear; bonhomies replace duchies.
- 2002** Focus on interactive activities — giant soccer game, ice fishing, snow sculptures.
- 2003** Coldest temperatures on record.
- 2004** Carnaval celebrates its 50th birthday.
- 2010** Place Hydro-Québec is replaced by huge outdoor stage on the Plains of Abraham and Scène Hydro-Québec.
- 2013** Project LUMOCITÉ launches in four places in the city core; a huge figure of Bonhomme is set up in front of Parliament; Festibiére is introduced.
- 2014** Carnaval de Québec celebrates 60th birthday — Duchesses are reintroduced, Carnaval Streets are presented, Battle of the Dukes is launched.

## Canada Goes Completely Carnaval!



The 60<sup>th</sup> edition of the Carnaval de Québec will be in full swing from January 31 to February 16 with a revamped program designed to attract more carnival-goers and businesses than ever. Unique and authentic, the world's biggest winter carnival is introducing a host of amazing new activities this year for an anniversary lineup with a resolutely contemporary twist.

### A World-Famous Celebration

The Carnaval attracts over 600,000 visitors annually from across Canada and around the world, generating 28 million dollars in direct economic spinoffs. For 60 years, Bonhomme Carnaval, the celebrity snowman and star of the event, has been spreading his love of partying and winter as he travels the globe, inviting carnival-goers everywhere to join in the Carnaval fun.

### Outstanding Partners

Each year, the Carnaval de Québec teams up with new partners and sponsors who take advantage of the event's reputation and customized sponsorship programs to enjoy exceptional visibility opportunities. So join the festivities. Contact:

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**Carnaval de Québec**



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