



## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

### A MEMORABLE FESTIVAL FOR ALL!

**SAINT-BONIFACE, February 22, 2016** – After 10 days of programming, the 47<sup>th</sup> edition of Festival du Voyageur turned out to be, once again, a great success with over **102 000 visits** to all the official festival sites, a 13% increase over last year's attendance numbers! Due to ideal weather conditions, a large number of visitors were able to enjoy the festivities and celebrated the "joie de vivre" at the winter festival!

### FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

A plethora of events, workshops and concerts were presented during Festival du Voyageur 2016 and many of them were great successes. This winter, Festival du Voyageur offered many **special events** for its patrons, amongst the most popular we should mention the **Coeur de pirate concert** in collaboration with Winnipeg Folk Festival at the Voyageur Trading Post, the **Fashion Show on Ice** at the Rendez-vous on Ice and the **Rendez-vous des chefs** in Maison du Bourgeois. Also very popular this year were the new **themed nights** such as, Karaoke Night, Singles' Night, Board Game Night and more!

Historical interpretation inside **Fort Gibraltar** once again took visitors back in time to the fur trade era for the duration of the festival. On the second floor of the Maison du Bourgeois, the **Voyageur Apprenticeship Workshops** were back for a third straight year and were just as popular as last year. They offered visitors a chance to take in traditional demonstrations and participate in workshops touching on a variety of subjects, including wood carving, brain tanning and Métis beading. Still in Fort Gibraltar, the **lunches and dinners in Maison du Bourgeois** offered by Festival du Voyageur and Gibraltar Dining Corporation were also a hit. Finally, with the help of over 200 photos submitted by Festival du Voyageur social media followers, a **Giant Louis Riel Mosaic** was created in honour of Manitoba's founding father and was unveiled on Louis Riel Day.

The **musical programming** once again took centre stage at Festival du Voyageur. In all, **140 artists** were in concert at Voyageur Park as well as in our Official Sites during the 10 days of the festival. Among the most popular acts we can list **Sweet Crude, Les Hay Babies, The Harpoonist and the Axe Murderer, Attica Riots** and much more. Many of the artists from a variety of musical styles played to jam-packed crowds.

Festival du Voyageur's Executive Director, Ginette Lavack Walters, is proud of the latest edition and its celebrations: "This festival was a great success at all levels. Thanks to diverse programming and mild temperatures, visitors came out in large numbers to celebrate winter, joie de vivre and francophone culture with us. On behalf of the entire Festival du Voyageur team and our Board of Directors, we would like to send out a big thank you to all those who participated in this 47<sup>th</sup> edition of the largest winter festival in Western Canada!"

### OFFICIAL PARTNERS



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## THE WINNERS

The Beard Growing Contest was once again one of the winter festival's most popular activities. Taking place at the Voyageur Trading Post, the contest featured **36 contestants** who competed in four different categories: the Festival Beard (contestants shaved on December 10 and grew their beards until February 19), the Voyageur Beard (wild and wooly), the Novelty Beard (groomed mustache or beard) and the Open category (homemade beards). The winners were Michael Toogood in the **Festival Beard** category, Wayne Uprichard in the **Voyageur Beard** category, Anthony Monienik in the **Novelty** category and Lisa Kappel in the **Open** category. As for the **Rendez-vous des chefs**, our very popular pea soup competition, the people's choice award went to **Stella's** and the judges' prize was awarded to **The Mitchell Block**.

The winners of the **Fiddling Contest** were: in the under 7 category, Shilo Hiebert; in the 8-10 years old category, Malacai Hiebert; in the 11-13 years old category, River Sawchyn ; in the 14-17 years old category, Caitlin Armstrong; in the 60+ category, Henri Hince; and in the open championship category, Simon Reimer. As for the **Jigging Contest** the winners were: in the 9 years old and under competition, Cassity Kent; in the 10-13 years old category, Brooklyn Rees McKary; in the 60+ category, Joyce Beach; and in the open championship category, Ryan Richard.

A survey is currently available on the Festival du Voyageur website at [www.heho.ca](http://www.heho.ca) to gather visitors' feedback and comments on this 47<sup>th</sup> edition. Respondents are eligible to win a \$1,200 VIA Rail travel voucher and a Thermëa spa package. The deadline to participate is March 3rd.

Festival du Voyageur's staff would like to thank its volunteers, sponsors, partners and many visitors who contributed to the resounding success of the 2016 edition of Festival du Voyageur. We hope to see you next year for the 48<sup>th</sup> edition of Festival du Voyageur from **February 17 to 26, 2017**.

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