



# Ontario Fall Cruises

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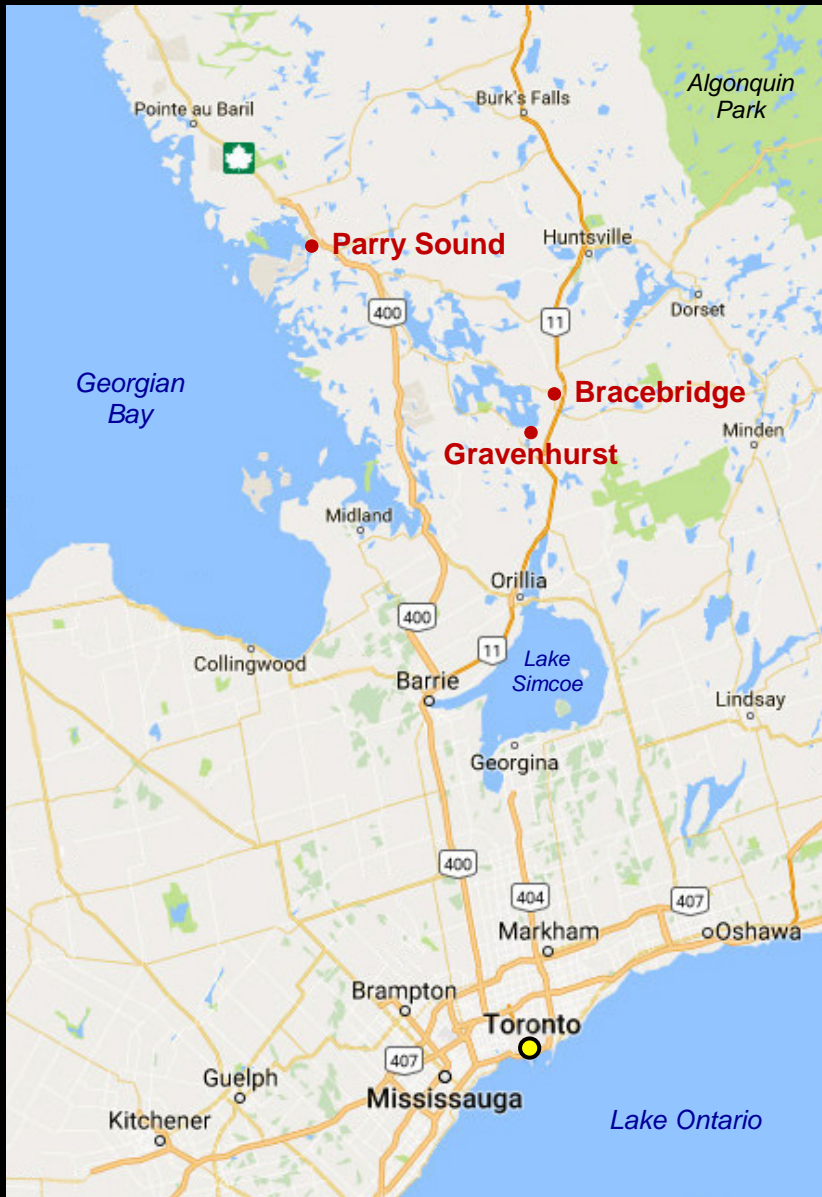
# Ontario Fall Cruises

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# Ontario Fall Cruises

## Introduction



Here are photos from two short trips north from Toronto to go on autumn colour day cruises.

Both the 2017 and 2019 trips featured the same three afternoon cruises.

In 2017 I travelled alone, and found that the autumn colours weren't vibrant yet.

My friend Chris Paton joined me in 2019 to share photographic duties, and we were rewarded with more developed colour.

Tour boat operators in Ontario's "cottage country" operate until just after Canada's Thanksgiving (second Monday in October) to showcase the spectacular vistas as leaves, trees, and forests turn colour.

But global warming is delaying these changes. The deep, saturated colours usually emerge after there has been a heavy frost. Even in the absence of that the views are spectacular.

These trips also offer a chance to see a bit of these central Ontario communities, and to explore some of the history of tourism in Muskoka.

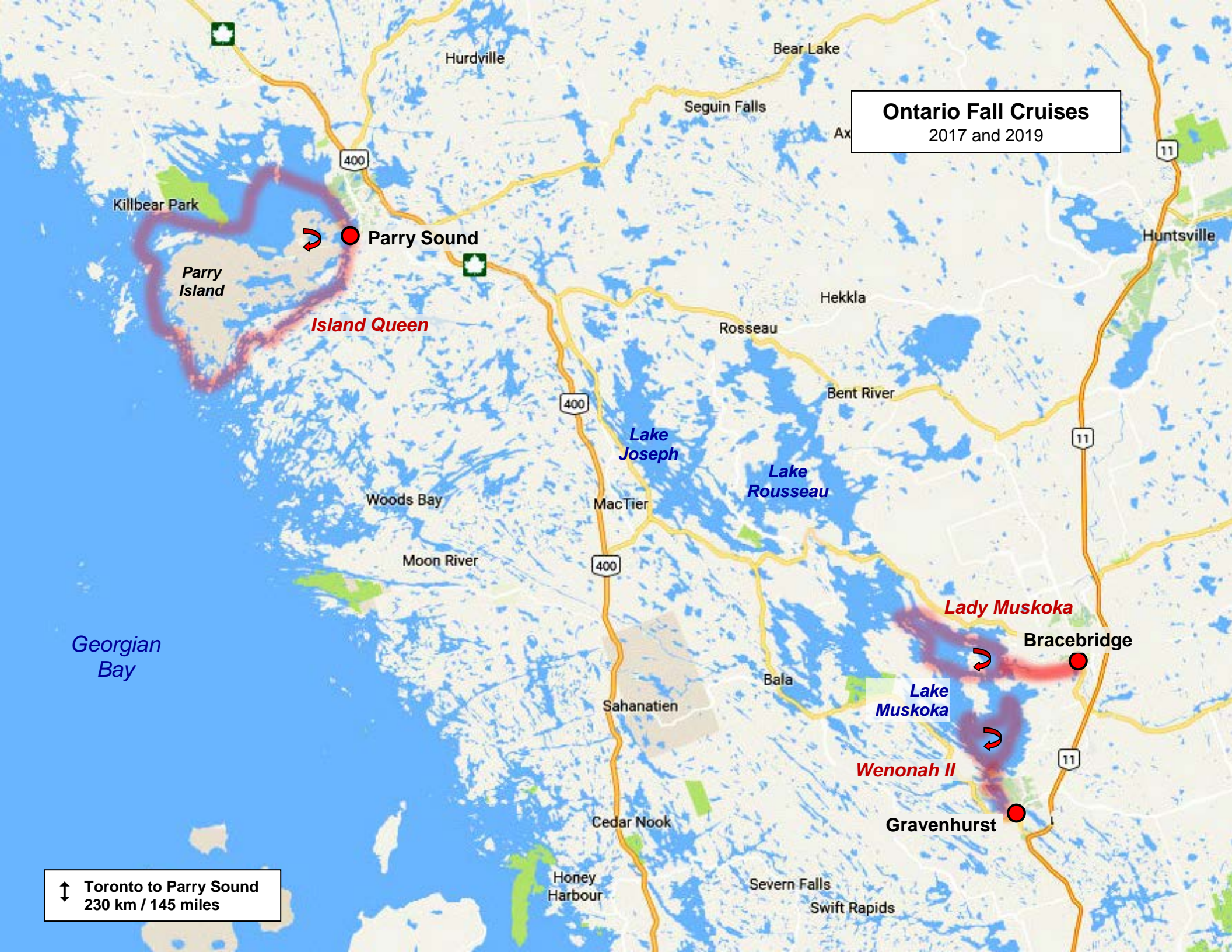
It's also great to escape the hustle and bustle and noise of the big city, and to enjoy the fresh air, the rugged landscape, and the more relaxed approach to life.



## Ontario Fall Cruises

2017 and 2019

↑ Toronto to Parry Sound  
230 km / 145 miles







## Parry Sound

First it's north to Parry Sound, the main town on the eastern side of Georgian Bay, with the largest natural harbour on the Bay.





## Parry Sound

Parry Sound developed from the mid-1800s as a lumbering centre and transportation hub.





## Parry Sound

Both national railway companies, CN and CP, use this long trestle bridge to move freight between eastern and western Canada. Busy!





## Parry Sound

Georgian Bay Airways provides services for business, for hunting and fishing expeditions, and for sightseeing.





## Parry Sound

But the port was the key to the town's development.  
Fleets of steamers operated from here beginning in the 1860s.



**Parry Sound** Opposite the docks is a large community centre.





**Parry Sound**

**A practical combination. A theatre and concert hall for the arts, and a tribute to the town's famous hockey player.**





### Parry Sound

Bobby Orr is one of the greatest hockey players of all time. He revolutionized the game in his 1960s and 70s seasons with the Boston Bruins and Chicago Blackhawks.





**Island Queen**

But we're here for the Island Queen Cruise, a 3-hour tour out into Georgian Bay, circling Parry Island, one of the larger islands in the Great Lakes.





### **Island Queen**

The 550-passenger Island Queen was designed for this sightseeing route, with easy maneuverability and a shallow draft. It was built in Canada in 1990 by Algoma Steel.





**Island Queen** We head out across Parry Sound Harbour ...





**Island Queen** ... past some of the harbour's marinas,  
with many boats already bundled up for winter.





**Island Queen** The Rose Point Swing Bridge connects Parry Island to the mainland.





**Island Queen** There are still cottagers here.





**Island Queen** We see cabins, ...





**Island Queen** ... homes, ...





**Island Queen** ... and even some friendly natives.





**Island Queen** But it's the fall colours that really impress.





**Island Queen**





Island Queen





**Island Queen**





**Island Queen** Even cloudy periods are beautiful.





**Island Queen** Back in port, after a good start.





Now it's on to the next cruise tomorrow.





## Bracebridge

At Bracebridge the Lady Muskoka cruise departs from right behind the Quality Inn hotel.





**Lady  
Muskoka**

**This cruise meanders down the Muskoka River and then circles around the upper part of Lake Muskoka.**





**Lady  
Muskoka**

As we go down the river we glimpse a magical wonderland  
(actually a children's theme park) through the trees.





**Lady  
Muskoka**

It's Santa's Village, his summer home on the 45th Parallel,  
half way between the equator and the North Pole.





**Lady  
Muskoka**

**We see some log cabin cottages, ...**





**Lady  
Muskoka**

... echoes of earlier centuries.





**Lady  
Muskoka**

And we see some autumn colour,  
but only dimly because it's raining.





**Lady  
Muskoka**

When we get out into the lake the rain makes for a dreary day.  
It rained on this tour both times.





**Lady  
Muskoka**

At least the second time we get to see the summer homes on Millionaires Row more clearly.





Lady  
Muskoka

Cottage ?





**Lady  
Muskoka**





**Lady  
Muskoka**

**Despite the rain we at least got to see how the other half lives.**





**Lady  
Muskoka**

**And it was dry inside the boat.**





**Gravenhurst  
Area**

This is the view of Lake Muskoka from the Taboo Muskoka resort hotel just north of Gravenhurst.





**Gravenhurst  
Area**

**Armchair sightseeing**





**Gravenhurst  
Area**





**Gravenhurst  
Area**





**Gravenhurst  
Area**





## Discovery Centre

There's lots to see in town too. The Muskoka Discovery Centre preserves the heritage of the Muskoka district, including its development as Ontario's "cottage country".





**Discovery  
Centre**

Muskoka tourism started with large resort hotels, complete with dance halls, croquet lawns, and tennis courts. There were about 30 such establishments by 1879.





1887 - Nipissing (R) is built in sections in Scotland and transported to Muskoka where she is assembled. She cruised Lakes Muskoka, Rosseau and Joseph for 27 years. She was laid up in 1914 when her walking beam broke and fewer ships were needed because of WW I.

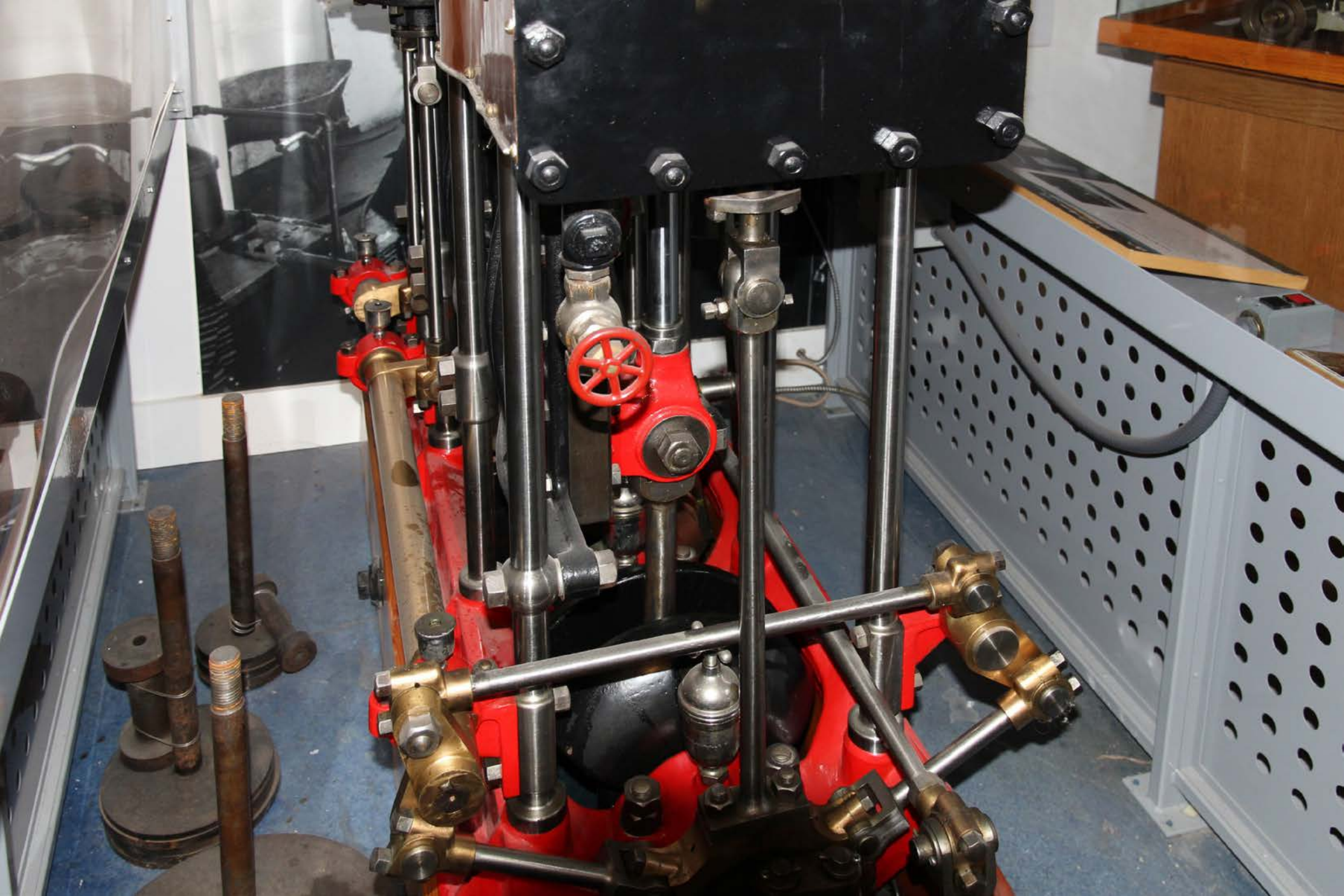
1925 - The laid up Nipissing is refurbished with new engines and paddlewheels removed. She is renamed Segwun, meaning Springtime in native Ojibway language. For the next 34 years she ran daily but in 1958 after hitting a shoal on Lake Muskoka and few customers, her days were ended and she languished at the dock in Gravenhurst.

RMS Nipissing  
1887-1914

Discovery  
Centre

Steam navigation on the lakes began in 1866. After the railway reached Gravenhurst in 1875 fleets of steamers ferried throngs of vacationers throughout the lakes.





**Discovery  
Centre**

The Centre has extensive exhibits about the steamer era. It also showcases the next phase: private vacation homes and personal water transportation.





Discovery  
Centre

The first summer cottages appeared in the late 19th century. They were the preserve of the wealthy, who brought their sense of style, and deep pockets.





**Discovery  
Centre**

Before highways a boat was a practical necessity, but it could be elegant too. Muskoka developed a custom boat building industry famous for style and quality craftsmanship.





**Discovery  
Centre**

This is North America's largest collection  
of in-water classic antique wooden boats.





**Discovery  
Centre**

*"All the boats are privately owned and are on display due to the generosity of their owners."*





## **Wenonah II**

Today's cruise will be aboard the Wenonah II, named after the first steamship to sail on Lake Muskoka – in 1866.





**Wenonah II**

We'll head out from Gravenhurst and  
circle around lower Lake Muskoka.





**Wenonah II** Nice sunny day.





**Wenonah II**    Great fall colours.





**Wenonah II**    The summer homes punctuate the vistas.





**Wenonah II** And it's temping to categorize or name the "cottages".





**Wenonah II**

*Rustic Modern*





**Wenonah II**    *Modern Modern*





**Wenonah II**     *Mixed Traditional*





**Wenonah II**     *Splendid Isolation*





**Wenonah II**     *Communal Living*

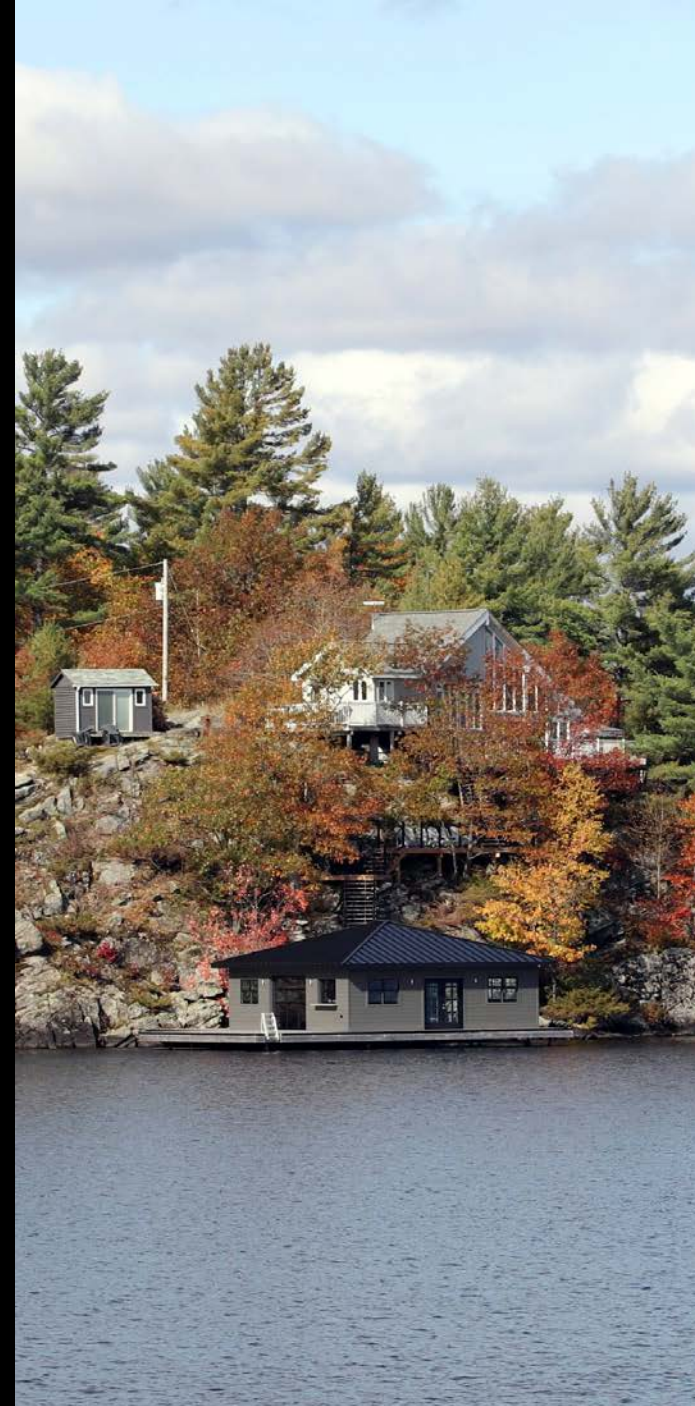




**Wenonah II**

***Fortress Muskoka***





**Wenonah II**

***Cliff Dwellers***





**Wenonah II**

Shouldn't be critical  
when it's just jealousy.





Wenonah II

!!





**Wenonah II**





Wenonah II





**Wenonah II**

Back in Gravenhurst.  
That's the *Dock of the Bay* restaurant.





**Wenonah II**

End of the cruise.  
Hope you enjoyed the ride.



< End >

 **Ontario Fall Cruises**