

ICE CARVING COMPETITION

THE COLD HARD FACTS **Lucy Haines**

It's crystal clear where Boardwalk Ice on Whyte shines brightest—it's the Professional Ice Carving competition, running Jan 25-26. The festival is home to 1 of only 3 International Ice Carving Competitions in Canada (the others are held on surrounding weekends in Lake Louise and Ottawa). It's a rare treat for festival patrons; a chance to view the unparalleled expertise brought to the art form of ice carving thanks to the skill and experience of world-renowned carvers.

On opening day, Boardwalk Ice on Whyte patrons can watch carvers at work, interact and ask questions as eight pairs of carvers vie for prize money, Metro People's choice awards and bragging rights. A first place win here also provides an automatic berth into the Canada Cup of Ice Carving to be held in Edmonton in 2019.

"It's such an important aspect of the festival that we've moved the ice carving competition inside a huge tent (40-foot high by 135-foot long). We're playing it safe by removing the weather variables that can ruin the carvings and the carver's hard work—sun, wind, warm temperatures," says festival producer Wanda Bornn. "Ice carvings of this calibre make our festival unique. We're also gearing up to host the Canada Cup of Ice Carving in 2019 (Ice on Whyte's 16th anniversary), so this marquee event deserves our focus."

Gone are the giant ice/snow slides, skating rink and snow mazes of years past, but festival patrons can see the amazing work the ice carvers have sawed, chiseled and sculpted from 15 blocks of crystal clear carving into award-worthy art pieces. Prizes will be awarded on Friday, January 26 at 4:30 pm to first, second and third place winners in the judged and timed main event. Festival-goers can have their say too, voting for the Metro People's Choice Award throughout the two-weekends, with a winner announced on closing day. This year's carving teams hail from the Netherlands, Mexico, Malaysia, Nepal, China, Russia, Philippines, France, Poland and Canada (Alberta and Quebec).

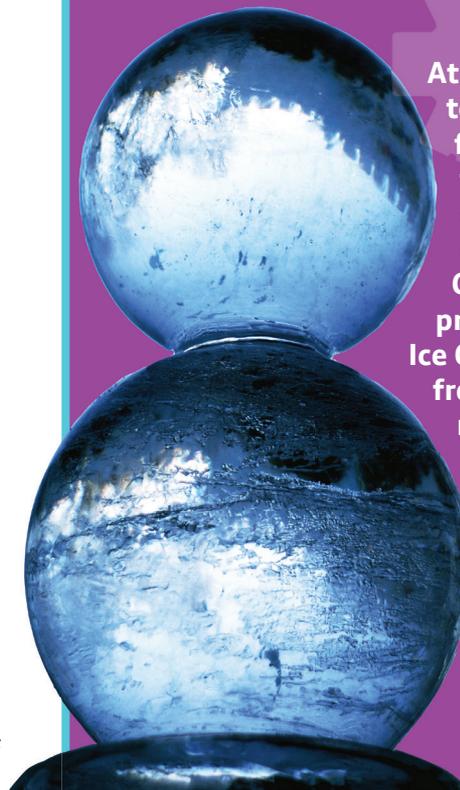
"We are privileged to present the beauty and wonderment that this artform showcases," says Bornn.

For patrons that get swept up in the beauty and intricacy of ice carving, Ice on Whyte offers on-site lessons throughout the festival. L'il Chipper carving lessons run Saturday and Sunday afternoons, while new Big Chipper sessions for those age 15-plus go Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. Experienced carvers will lead up to 30-per-class in taking a solid block

of ice and turning it into something else. If it's on your bucket list to create an ice carving, sign up take in a 30-45 minute lessons. Free with Boardwalk Ice on Whyte admission.



THE COLD HARD FACTS OF CARVING ICE **LUCY HAINES**



At Ice on Whyte, two-person teams of professional artists from around the world will take 15 blocks of crystal clear carving ice and 34 hours to create their ice masterpiece. Carving ice is made by a special process (sourced from Ontario's Ice Culture) that freezes water from the bottom up in a Clinebell machine. This process allows the impurities to rise to the top and be trimmed off, resulting in a crystal clear block of ice. Each block of ice is 1M (40") X .5M (20") X .25M (10") and weighs 135 KG (297 LBS).

A group of children are riding bicycles on a snowy path. They are wearing winter jackets and helmets. The scene is bright and sunny. There are decorative snowflake graphics overlaid on the image.

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