

A TAIL SO GRAND

A seemingly typical town reveals an amazing natural wonder.

BY CHERYL SMYTH



*Evening overlooking
the Camel's Back.*

NOTHING HINTED AT THE INCONGRUOUS BEAUTY cutting through the town of Grand Falls in the Canadian province of New Brunswick as I drove through a typical urban setting—paved roads lined with stores and other businesses, and intersected with traffic lights to keep the inherent bustle organized. While looking for the town's namesake, my fur girl, Tessi, and I ended up at the Falls & Gorge Campground. The office worker, after providing directions, suggested I head over to the nearby fence. I could not have been more astonished as I beheld the vista beyond its boundary. It revealed a gorge with massive craggy walls bursting with rich woodland on top and cradling a river far below.

We followed the accompanying pathway. In one direction, the Camel's Back Trail loops be-

hind the campground, mostly hugging the gorge and featuring several gasp-inducing lookouts. Tessi cared little about the scenery; however, the substantial woodland vegetation kept her sniffer busy. In the other direction, the pathway led into the heart of the town, eventually slipped under a bridge spanning the chasm and presented the 75-foot waterfall.

That visit a few years ago was brief, as we needed to continue on home. We returned this past summer for leisurely exploration. With thoughts of enjoying morning coffee near that view and the convenience for Tessi walks, I set us up at the campground.

In addition to frequent jaunts on the looped trail, we wandered to the waterfall several times over the course of our stay. The route strays away from the gorge as it leaves the

campground and passes through a recreational park. The smell of chlorine from the public pool flooded me with memories of childhood summer days. Fresh evergreen scents delighted my adult senses as woodland soon returned. The La Rochelle Tourist Center peaks out from the trees in wait for anyone needing guidance and offers the challenge of 401 steps to the base of the gorge. A side path along the way dips into the treeline to lead to yet another dizzying lookout.

Forest retreats to expose the downtown falls area. The waterfall is considered seasonal, as time of year substantially affects its flow. The end of April to the beginning of May typically displays its torrential spirit—vastly different than what I have experienced in the equally impressive narrow ribbons tumbling over rocky ledges.

PHOTO CREDIT: CHERYL SMYTH

The nearby Zip Zag zipline hurls brave individuals over those solid, unyielding depths. I was happy to use the excuse of having a fur companion to not have to test my courage. Instead, I concentrated on exercising our leg muscles as some of the approximately mile-long pathway involves stairs and slopes. We old gals managed easily; however, I pushed us further to conquer those multitude of stairs to the gorge's depths, where the 418-mile Saint John River squeezes down to its narrowest.

To change it up one evening, we detoured from the path for a stroll along the main street, Broadway Boulevard. Commerce lines its far sides; however, the roadway's median strip comprises a walkway through a park-like oasis—gardens, statues and benches. We happened upon a group of adult musicians entertaining a small gathering. While listening, I chatted with one of the locals, who mentioned the musicians were music students—off for the summer, yet keeping up with their practice.

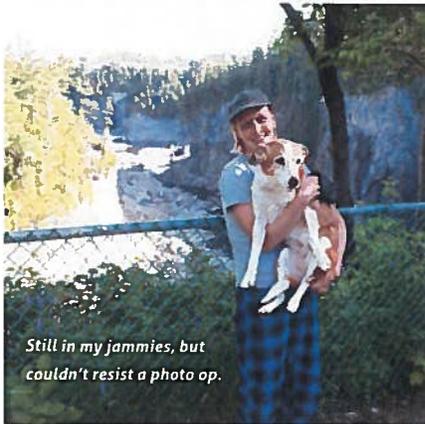
From amiable conversations with residents and other tourists, while Tessi lapped up attention from them and other doggy travelers, I am left with the impression that this distinctive town boasts a special quality in addition to its unique scenery making it an all-around enjoyable visit. 🐾



◀ **CHERYL SMYTH** enjoys exploring nature and finding travel destinations she can share with her best pal—her dog, Tessi.



A lovely oasis on the Broadway Boulevard.



Still in my jammies, but couldn't resist a photo op.



Grand Falls, along with the rest of New Brunswick, is officially bilingual—English/French. The town sits east of the state of Maine's border and is easy to sniff out from the Trans-Canada Highway.

LA ROCHELLE TOURIST CENTER

1 Chapel Street,
Grand Falls, NB
(877) 475-7769

There is a five-dollar charge to tackle the 401 steps, which actually split—one staircase lands at the base, the other at a lookout.

BY THE FALLS:

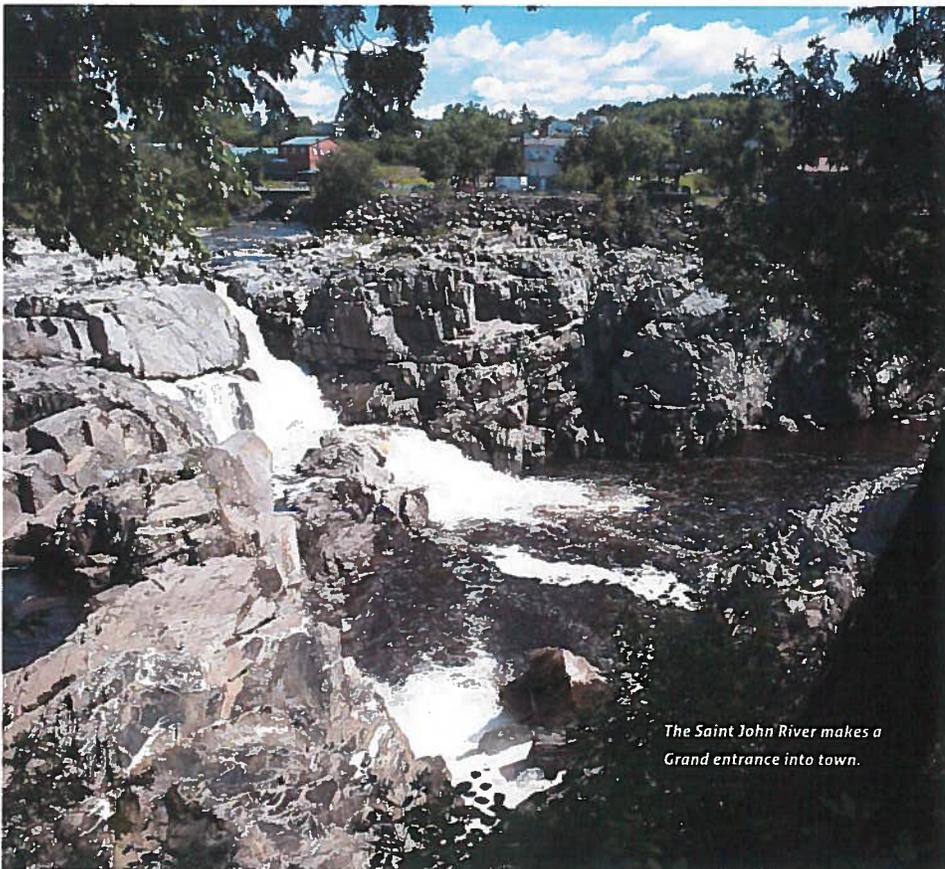
MALABEAM TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER
25 Madawaska Road,
Grand Falls, NB
(877) 475-7769

FALLS & GORGE CAMPGROUND

120 Manse Street,
Grand Falls, NB
(506) 475-7797 or (877) 475-7769

I recommend reserving a site as the campground is popular.

For those not inclined to camp, all B&B's and hotels near the waterfall are Fido-friendly. Visit grandsault.com for accommodations info, plus general info about what Grand Falls has to offer, such as the annual Fido-friendly Potato Festival (afpotatofestival.ca).



The Saint John River makes a Grand entrance into town.