

# Walk, drive, run to NOTL's inaugural Studio Tour

Richard Wright  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Known for its theatre, wine, history and natural beauty, Niagara-on-the-Lake has so much to offer that it's hard to imagine needing anything else.

But like a good glass of Chardonnay or an intense performance-ending scene, it's very easy to crave just one more.

That's the thought of a group of local artists who will usher in the community's first NOTL-specific community showcase of the fine arts June 1 and 2.

Known simply as the NOTL Studio Tour, organizers hope it will add to local pride, artist exposure and to the destination wish lists of tourists across the region and beyond.

"There are four of us who get together for lunch and one day we just sort of looked at each other and said, 'Why couldn't we do a studio tour?'" said organizer Barb Zimmermann, who, along with her husband Ron, owns and operates Zimmermann Pottery in NOTL.

"This region puts a lot of its spotlight on the theatre, which is fantastic, and the wineries are a big driver of



Patricia Haftar, seen in her home studio, is part of a group of local artists who will oversee the first Studio Tour on June 1 and 2. RICHARD WRIGHT

the economy, music gets a lot of attention, but there hasn't been the same energy, in my mind, focused on the fine arts," she adds.

"We want people to think about artwork now too."

A total of 28 artists will take part. The tour will stretch through 16 locations on three different routes.

"We have potters, we have glass people, we have wood working people and all manner of painting," adds

Patricia Haftar, another organizer and painter of acrylics, water colours and mixed media collage work.

"Our vision is that this will continue for many years to come and attract people to the area and to Niagara-on-the-Lake specifically."

Meandering through NOTL's common, residential and even rural areas, the tour is meant to be a marathon more than a sprint.

Haftar, a retired teacher who as a young child picked up the love of painting from her grandmother, wants people to take their time and to explore not only the various sites, but to get a feel for the character of the artists, their inspirations and, of course, their work.

For her, art is the ultimate expression of individuality, creativity and familiarity.

"Why do this tour? It's

just because this is what we do. If you look at our work, and this may sound strange to some people, but this is us. This is who we are," she said.

"If you look at the choice of topics that we use, it is usually places we are familiar with, places we have been or places we have a history with," she continued pointing to a painting of hers that mirrors a scene she remembers of her

grandmother's cottage on Lake Muskoka.

"Art creates emotion and that's what we want to share."

Haftar believes that for most people, it will take at least a full day to visit all the locations, but recommends taking it slow and visiting all over the two days.

To find out more about the tour, its artists, locations and routes, visit [notlstudiotour.com](http://notlstudiotour.com).

*Mimosa Day*  
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All proceeds from Mimosa sales during *May 13 - 17* will be donated to Red Roof Retreat.

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## Swifties bond over drinks and tunes at Limited Distillery

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

Swifties flocked to Limited Distillery and SRC Vinyl on Sunday in Virgil for a special edition of the Spin the Black Circle series.

Sunday was the third episode of Limited Distillery's special themed afternoons where musical food and drink are served while spinning the vinyl of a particular artist.

Other Spin the Black Circle afternoons highlighted Pearl Jam and Queen, but last Sunday's was focused on all things Taylor Swift.

David Waddington and his family came from St. Catharines to listen to some music and grab some new records.

"I'm a Swiftie dad," Waddington told The Lake Report as he sifted through the selection of vinyl.

His daughters — 12-year-old Sylvia and nine-year-old Esther — weren't able to get tickets to the coveted Eras



"Swiftie dad" David Waddington searches through Taylor Swift records to add to his daughters' collection. JULIA SACCO

Tour, so this was a nice way for them to enjoy the music together.

"I like her because she sings about life and she doesn't lie," Esther told The Lake Report.

Fans of all ages came by to enjoy the tunes.

Meaghen Calder and Kristi Elia from NOTL enjoyed Florida Creamsickle mocktails and shared plans about their upcoming trip to take in the Eras Tour in

Toronto in November.

Elia is a regular at SRC Vinyl and said she was told about the listening session the last time she visited the store.

There are more sessions to come — for all different artists.

Keep your eye on the website at [limiteddistillery.com/products/spin-the-black-circle-sundays](http://limiteddistillery.com/products/spin-the-black-circle-sundays) to find out what artist will be featured at the next one on June 2.