



OUT THERE

Under the Sea

When we heard about MUSA (Museo Subacuático de Arte), an underwater sculpture museum that doubles as an artificial reef near Cancun, Mexico, we couldn't wait to take the plunge—literally.

My daughter and I donned snorkel masks and jumped into the crystalline water at Salon Manchones, one of two underwater galleries. We hyperventilated at first while we got our bearings, but, as we paddled over *The Silent Evolution*, an army of 450 life-sized statues, our breathing became a calm, rhythmic backdrop to our unusual museum visit.

Created by Mexico-based British artist Jason deCaires Taylor, the stunning sculptures are made with special marine-grade concrete designed to encourage the growth of corals, and to take tourist pressure off nearby natural reefs.

The Silent Evolution statues rest about eight metres below the surface. Algae clings to their surreal bodies while striped fish flit between them. We saw a starfish on one grey chest, and watched a stingray glide by, seemingly oblivious to the statues—and to us.

This site is a 15-minute boat ride from Cancun, and there are a variety of tour operators and options available, including scuba trips and glass-bottom boat excursions. Our snorkeling tour cost us less than \$50 per person. (underwatersculpture.com) —*Kathleen Engman*

WESTJET'S FUN 'N FESTIVAL SERIES

Brampton Board of Trade Santa Claus Parade

(November 17)

This holiday season, thousands of twinkling lights will lead Santa's way at Brampton's Santa Claus parade. Voted among the top five community parades in Canada, the nighttime spectacle includes 200 costumed characters, approximately 50 floats, 20 bands from across Ontario and western New York State and, of course, jolly old Saint Nick. Festivities start at 5 p.m. at Main St. and Sproule Dr. (westjefestivals.com) —*Mandy Savoie*



HEALTHY TRAVELLER

Run-cations

Destination marathons and fun runs

By Kristen Manieri

Take your sneakers on a road trip by combining your next vacation with a marathon or mini race. Here are four that are worth training for.



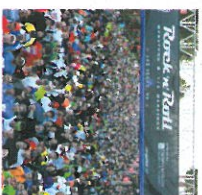
Rock 'n' Roll Marathon.

Las Vegas December 2, 2012

This Sin City run is the world's largest nighttime running event—and the only one that attracts hundreds of runners dressed as Elvis. **Route** Taking up all eight lanes of Las Vegas Boulevard, the course travels

past the strip's iconic hotels and landmarks. **Payoff** Live music along the route, plus pre- and post-race parties.

Perks Couples can wear off the route for a three-minute wedding or vow-renewal ceremony. (stripnightrun.com)



Honolulu Marathon.

Hawaii December 9, 2012

One of the world's biggest and most picturesque marathons, this event has taken place on the second Sunday of December for nearly 40 years.

Route The palm tree-lined course takes runners alongside

Waikiki Beach and the Diamond Head volcanic crater.

Payoff First prize is US\$40,000, and the first five men and women receive payouts. **Perks** Pre-race concert, luau, an all-you-can-eat buffet, plus free shiatsu massage for finishers in Kapiolani Park. (honolulumarathon.org)



Marathon Bahamas.

Nassau January 19-20, 2013

Take on this magnificently scenic race solo, or compile a team of four to relay-run the 42.2-km marathon distance.

Route Starting at Junkanoo Beach, the route travels through downtown Nassau, Paradise

Island and along the shores of Cable Beach. **Payoff** Oceanfront start and finish, plus a unique finisher medal.

Perks Seasonal temperatures in the low-20s Celsius range make for ideal long-distance running conditions. (mb.marathonbahamas.com)



7-Mile Bridge Run.

Marathon, Fla. April 13, 2013

This lighthearted but highly sought-after race starts on Marathon's Knight's Key and ends on Little Duck Key.

Route Flanked by the iconic turquoise waters of the Florida

Keys, the bridge route is completely surrounded by water from start to finish. **Payoff**

Bragging rights—only 1,500 runners are permitted to run this race each year. **Perks** A post-race party follows after the runners are returned to the starting area by bus. (7mbun.com)

