

Sin City cuisine

Richard Ouzounian discovers six hot new places to dine in Las Vegas, **T11**



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TRAVEL



The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth is always full of surprises. This July's 100th-anniversary Calgary Stampede promises to be the best one ever

Still horsing around



TODD KOROL/REUTERS

More Canadian than maple syrup and back bacon, the Stampede draws 1.2 million visitors per year.

HEATHER GREENWOOD DAVIS
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

CALGARY—The next time you're bragging about the Calgary Stampede, Canada's oldest rodeo, be sure you remember to thank an American.

The annual festival (July 6-15) that gives Canada its Wild West chops was actually started in 1912 by American vaudeville rope trick performer Guy Weadick of Rochester, N.Y. Weadick created the Stampede after convincing four of Calgary's wealthiest to invest in creating the "Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth."

With a \$20,000 purse and a dream, Weadick went on to create Canadiana history.

Today, the Stampede showcases six key rodeo events (bare-back riding, bull riding, ladies barrel racing, saddle bronc, steer

wrestling and tie-down (calf) roping), alongside audience favourites such as chuck-wagon racing and wild pony racing (where kids ages 8-12 try their hand at mounting one) and more.

Now 100 years strong, the festival is more Canadian than maple syrup and back bacon, and draws record crowds of 1.2 million people per year while offering the largest purse in outdoor rodeo history: more than \$2 million.

Weadick, who died in 1953, would be proud. Canadians should be, too.

STAMPEDE continued on T5

ITALY

Mud slinging, Roman style

Rapolano Terme attracts world's rich and famous

CLAUDIA CAPOS
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

RAPOLANO TERME, ITALY—The clatter of metal wheels on time-etched tile echoed off the arched brick ceiling and pale walls of the narrow passageway inside Terme Antica Querciolaia, a thermal spa resort in the Tuscan hill town Rapolano Terme.

The grating noise stopped inside the bare-bones treatment room, where I was laid out like a slab of raw beef on an elevated table covered with a thin sheet of paper.

A dark-haired female attendant in a white uniform donned thermal-lined gloves and scooped a handful of steaming gray mud from a pail on the wagon. The fine pulverized clay, aged in thermal water and heated to 47C, gave off a faint whiff of sulfur.

The attendant, who spoke little English, indicated for me to sit up and then plopped the unsightly muck on the table where the small of my back had rested. Gently, she pushed me back down onto the blistering hot dollop. My therapeutic full-body mud treatment was underway.

The town was a romping grounds for early Romans who frolicked in its hot springs and basked under its warm sun

Defly, the attendant wrapped the paper sheet around me cannoli-style and then began slathering more glop on my legs, arms and torso. Once I was well-basted, it was time to bake.

She quickly encased me in plastic wrap that pinned my arms to my sides. Beads of sweat raced for the exits. Then she leaned over and whispered "Dieci minuti" in my ear. Ten minutes. Practically an eternity.

By the time the 10-minute buzzer sounded, the mud had worked its mineral-enhanced magic on my travel-sore muscles and cooled to a dry crust. After unwrapping the plastic cocoon, the attendant pointed to a large white tub of bubbling mineral water. "Dieci minuti," she said again, adding in broken English, "Then you push button" to drain the tub.

The 10-minute Alka-Seltzer submersion was more to my taste. Although the sulfurous fumes made it hard to breathe, the tub's jet propulsion left everything tingling. Stepping out, I pulled on the robe and shuffled unsteadily down the hall to the "relaxation" room, feeling as delightfully limp as overcooked fettuccini.

MUD SPA continued on T8

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