

## Last hurrah for Coristine

### News

By LJ MATHESON, QMI AGENCY

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LJ MATHESON QMI Agencylan Coristine and his dog, Molly, enjoy a quiet moment on his island off the mainland at Mallorytown. Coristine's new book, *The Very Best of Ian Coristine's 1000 Islands*, will be out in June and on Friday at the Brockville Arts Centre, he will present his new book while joined by The Great Lake Swimmers, who will perform a concert that evening at 7 p.m.

If you love the 1000 Islands, you will adore Ian Coristine's fifth and final masterpiece - *The Very Best of Ian Coristine's 1000 Islands*, which is due out next month.

On Friday, June 4, at the Brockville Arts Centre, he will present his new book alongside The Great Lake Swimmers who will perform a concert at 7 p.m. in a night to celebrate the islands through music and images. The show is now sold out. A second show will be held in Clayton, N.Y. on June 26.

The band filmed a music video of the song "Palmistry" on board the tall ship *Fair Jeanne* last fall as she sailed through the islands, as well as at Coristine's island, which will be screened at the event.

The Swimmers originally discovered the region when Coristine extended an invitation after he heard them play on Stuart MacLean's Vinyl Café, an episode which was taped at the Thousand Islands Playhouse.

Coristine said they came and were immensely impressed with what they saw and that resulted in recording much of their CD, *Lost Channels*, at a number of acoustically unique spaces within the region, including one of the area's most storied landmarks, Singer Castle on Dark Island, the BAC and at St. Brendan's Church in Rockport.

Coristine thought their "beautiful music would make a beautiful fit with a beautiful place" and he has since collaborated with the band's leader, Tony Dekker, to produce an audio/visual tribute to the 1000 Islands. The piece will be screened at the Brockville event and includes a ballad written and performed by Dekker, paired with Coristine's images from the new book.

Coristine is best known for his riveting aerial photographic portrayal of the majestic 1000 Islands and this fifth volume will be his final photographic book about the islands.

The book is the best of his 30,000 images shot over 15 years while living in the islands.

"It's the last photo book, so it had to be the very best," Coristine said from his cozy island cottage, while a CD of the Great Lake Island Swimmers permeated the sun-drenched kitchen. His red Irish setter Molly lounged on a sofa in front of floor-to-ceiling windows that span the length of the cottage. From this vantage point, Coristine has captured many images of the islands during all four seasons.

"This book had to make a statement of how I feel about this area," he said. "I tried to raise the bar. I only hope it shows."

Coristine was unrelenting in his search for a printer for this finished product. The pages had to be of the highest quality gloss -like a book cover, but finding a printer who could do it proved a challenge.

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"I guess you could say that every page is a cover," he said.

It still has the familiar padded cover that will stand the test of time and the title is embossed in gold. There are 100 images selected from his collection. Some of the photos are favourites from previous books, but roughly half are brand new images.

Coristine has captured some incredible photos of the cloaking misty fog as it creeps around the islands and a dawn's purple glow, plus a mother loon with her baby is tucked deep inside the feathers of her back.

You will catch your breath viewing his images with the high gloss adding depth and vibrancy to the golds of the twilight skies and the way he uncovered skeletal remains of shipwrecks beneath the clear green waters of the river.

He did this while hovering in his airplane just high enough in the sky to reveal the labyrinth which isn't visible at water level where the next shoreline hides what lies beyond. He says he "just got lucky with a camera" (the Canon 5D Mark II), a wide angle lens and an air-to-air photography technique learned in his former career which helped him create these riveting works of art.

Coristine spent 22 years in the aircraft business handling the distribution of Challenger recreational aircraft across Canada. He wrote articles for aviation magazines which included air-to-air photography.

"Without realizing it, the demanding techniques of close formation flying while shooting pictures prepared me for another career I never planned," he said.

In 1992, a random flight in a float-equipped Challenger led to his discovery and love affair with the 1000 Islands.

"This island is literally one in a thousand because it offers a natural harbour exactly a wingspan wide," he said. "It protected my plane from storms perfectly."

He says his photography began simply to share his amazing discovery with friends. He has used many different kinds of cameras, including a pocket-sized point and shoot.

His 1000 Islands photos have been featured internationally, in Canadian Geographic, Central New York Magazine, Coastal Living, Cottage Life, Country Discoveries, Le Figaro (France), Faerie Magazine, Gourmet, Kingston Life, Lakeland Boating, Les Echos Serie Limitée (France), SAIL Magazine, Volvo's LIV Magazine(International Edition), Volvo Car España (Spain), as well as in a number of books and publications by other authors about the region.

Coristine has since sold his plane ... and so with this book, the series of photos bound inside padded covers trimmed in gold comes to an end. This is a legacy that will live long after the sun sets on the St. Lawrence River.

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