

Cicada Fest at five

Mike Zettel, staff

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Roger Marin said he didn't have any expectations when he and long-time friend Tom Lepp launched the rootsy-rock festival known as Cicada Fest five years ago.

He just knew it was something he wanted to do, having played at some impressive music festivals all over the world — everywhere but Niagara.

"I just sort of wanted to bring my friends to St. Catharines and have them play," he said.

"It went really, really smooth and organic and everyone had a good time. It wasn't a forced thing."

That good time involved musicians from across the country — with a healthy dose of Texas rockers thrown in. It involved musicians watching each other play and jamming together around the campfire when the official concert was done for the night.

The first of the three-day festivals was in Niagara Falls. For the next two years, it was on the shore of Lake Ontario at Club LaSalle. Once the festival outgrew that venue, it moved to Henley Island, where it returns to this year.

Marin said the location is near-perfect, with shady trees keeping audiences cool as they watch the main stage and a large camping area. And despite being in the city of St. Catharines, it doesn't feel that way.

"It feels like you're in a remote place," he said.

This year's festival kicks off 6 p.m. Friday, with music playing non-stop until midnight.

Featuring an impressive list of 19 performers, it continues Saturday noon until midnight and Sunday noon until 8 p.m.

Inside the clubhouse, the musicians will be running more intimate workshop sessions.

Tickets range from \$15 (\$20 at the gate) for one-day passes to \$100 (\$119 at the gate for three days with camping).

For more information, visit <http://cicadafest.com>



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