



Bill Statten and Major navigate one of the trails that traverse the 95-acre Back of Beyond property near Port Sydney.

that might be suitable for the job.

Major, a large Belgian draft horse, pulled the wagon when Foyston and Statten got married in the high pasture at Back of Beyond 15 years ago.

They didn't own him then but when the opportunity to buy him presented itself, they did. Now Back of Beyond is Major's home and he is a crucial part of the sleigh rides that are offered.

Powerfully and proudly he pulls the sleigh around the property and gratefully accepts the adulation and treats of adoring passengers.

He is one of two horses that pull the sleighs during a Back of Beyond sleigh ride.

The other is Neko, a five-year-old Friesian mare owned by Johanna Neuteboom of BARNBOOTS.ca, a company that collaborates with Back of Beyond for sleigh rides and offers smaller off-site private events. Resplendent in red tack, the beautiful black mare is a photographer's dream.

"We specialize in custom sleigh adventures and can accommodate groups of any size, yet still offer a unique and intimate experience. We prefer to use the smaller cutters or bob-sleighs in lieu of the larger group wagon-sleighs," Neuteboom explains.

Imagine an evening sleigh ride being whisked along a woodland trail, just you and a special someone, with a cozy blanket over your knees, and the sound of the snow crunching with every hoof strike. The stars in the clear winter sky are amazing as you stop at a private location where you're served hors d'oeuvres by a bonfire.

However, the most popular rides at Back of Beyond usually consist of four adults or four adults and a couple of children. Larger groups can be accommodated as well. Much depends on the number of people and of course, the weather.

"We don't do a large, large group. It's much more customized than that," explains Foyston of the rides.

She recounts how the first sleigh ride they offered was a group of 20 college kids who were

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