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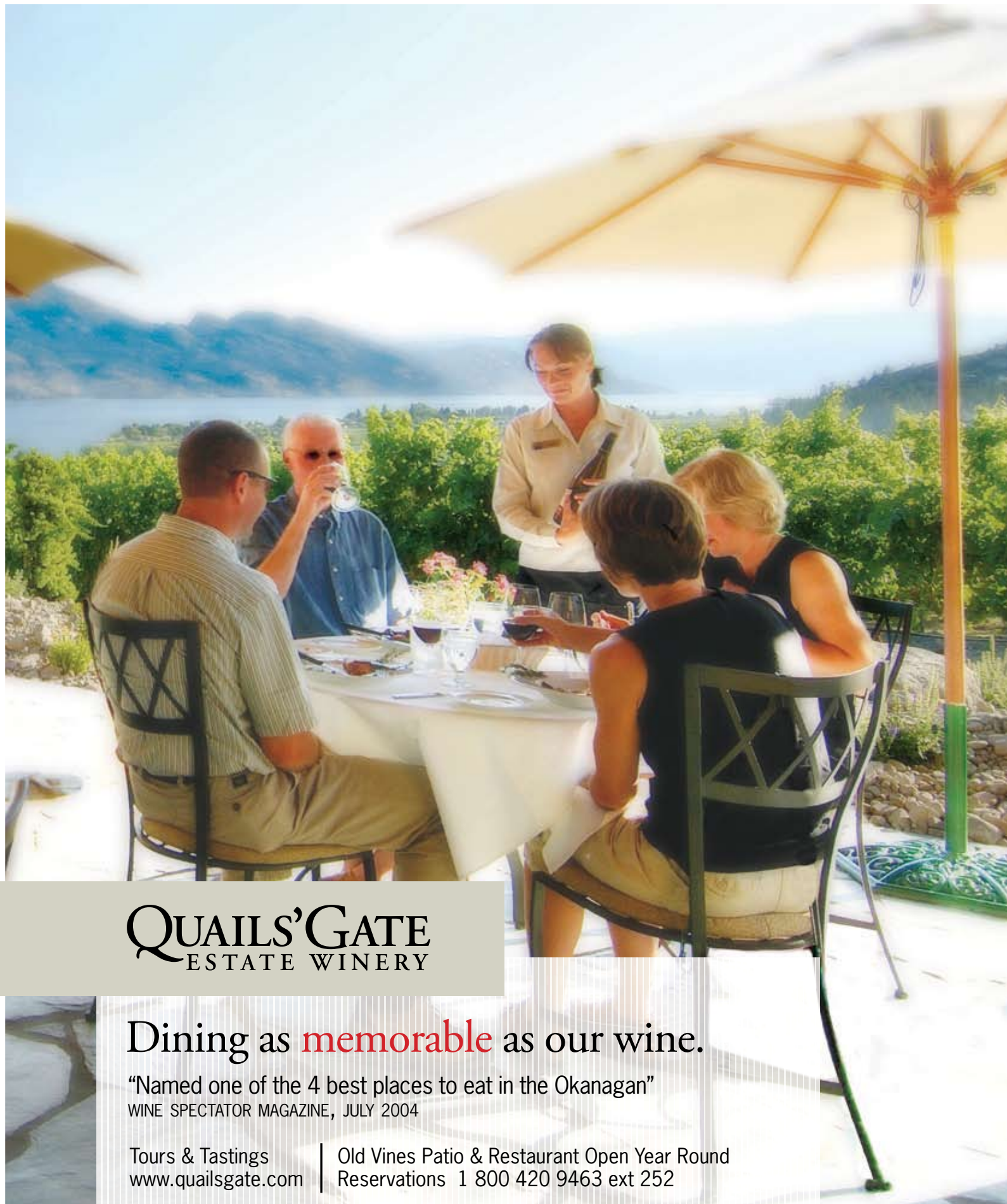
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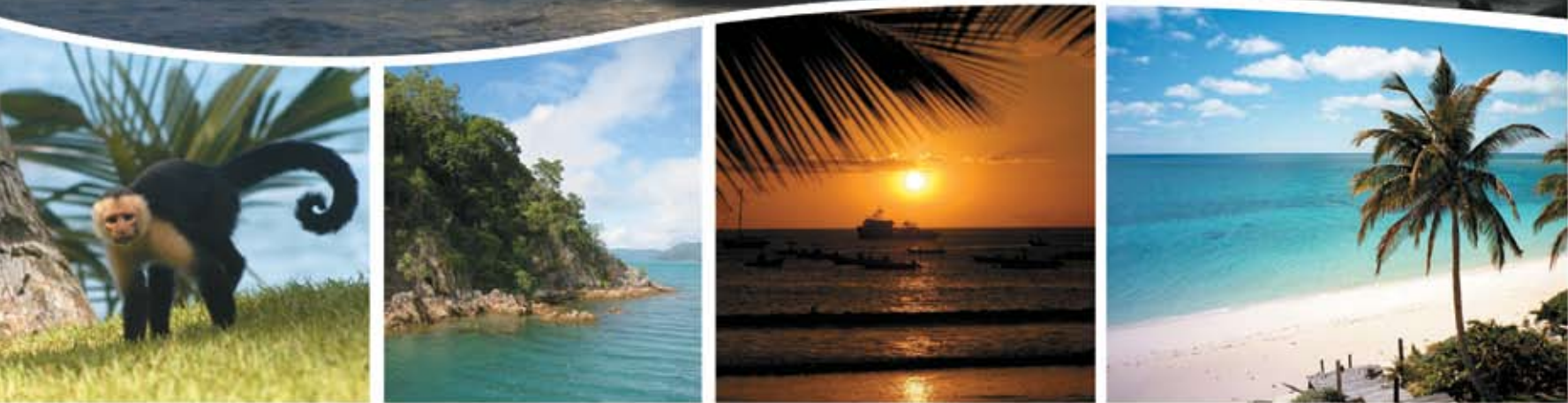
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Editorial

Editor
Terry Tremaine | Terry@FusionPublishingInc.com | 1 888 925-0313 X1

Managing Editor
Marja Rese | Marja@FusionPublishingInc.com

Contributing Editors
Gael Arthur | Gael@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com
Janet Collins | Janet@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com
James Dolan | James@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com
Vladimir Markovich | Vladimir@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com
Basil Nestor | Basil@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com
Jonni O'Connor | Jonni@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com
Sandra Tonn | Sandra@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com
Debra Walker | Debra@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com
Geof Wheelwright | Geof@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com
Tony Whitney | Tony@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com

Art Director & Production

Production Manager
Marla Britton | Marla@FusionPublishingInc.com | 1 888 925-0313 X5

Photography

Staff Photographer
Connie Ekelund | Connie@FusionPublishingInc.com

Circulation & Distribution

Canada Post
Newsstand
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Subscriptions & Back Issues

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info@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com
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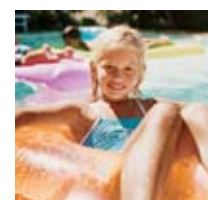
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Publishers

Publisher

Terry Tremaine | Terry@FusionPublishingInc.com | 1 888 925-0313 X1

Associate Publisher

Connie Ekelund | Connie@FusionPublishingInc.com | 1 888 925-0313 X2

Advertising

Sales Managers

Inga Liimatta | Inga@FusionPublishingInc.com | 1 888 925-0313 X3

Rick McMorran | Rick@FusionPublishingInc.com | 1 888 925-0313 X7

Donna Whalley | Donna@FusionPublishingInc.com | 1 888 925-0313 X8

Jack Liimatta | Jack@FusionPublishingInc.com | 1 888 925-0313 X9

Advertising & Public Relations Inquiries:

Fusion Publishing Inc.

1 888 925-0313

info@FusionPublishingInc.com

www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com

Marketing

National Marketing Group

Synergy CMC | info@Synergy-CMC.com | 1 866 684-9727

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My first trip to Mexico was in 1970. A buddy and I drove from Toronto to Guadalajara in only two and a half days. From there we drove over to the coast to visit a little fishing village called Puerto Vallarta. The village had a gorgeous sandy beach and a few rudimentary cane shacks furnished with hammocks, which rented for a peso a night. It was advisable to keep a wary eye open for scorpions dwelling in the fronds. Come evening, you could share the local catch and cold cervezas for a couple of pesos, while sitting at one big table in the open air.

Since then I've returned to Mexico many times visiting pretty much every major center at least once. I always enjoy Mexican hospitality and of course the guaranteed sunshine. But I had never been to Yucatan.

Researching this cover story was truly a pleasure. We were toured by the finest guide available and learned about the history of the Mayan culture. We enjoyed some culinary delights that are truly unique to this area, explored the wonders of ancient ruins and were splendidly spoiled in munificent haciendas.

Yucatan is almost a country of its own. Definitely the people and their culture and gastronomy are unique to the region. I hope to return many times.

Next issue the cover story focuses on Malaysia. I had been to Malaysia a few times and so when Malaysia Tourism invited us to attend their "Citrawarna" Colours & Flavours of Malaysia Festival, I said yes immediately. Malaysia is a fascinating country that welcomes visitors with open arms. In Malaysia, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians have been living together, in harmony, side by side since the 1500s.

The story of Malaysia is its people; their respect for each other, their culture and of course their cuisine. Don't miss it; be sure to reserve your copy by filling in the form on the next page.

Terry Tremaine
 Publisher
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Treasures of the Yucatan

By Terry Tremaine
Photographs by Connie Ekelund



...they had a very advanced civilization with its own written language, science and established social structure

With bags in hand we walked out of the Cancun airport to face a wall of Mexicans, most of whom were holding placards with someone's name. I was pleased to see a placard looking for us. We had challenged the Vancouver office of Mexico Tourism to show us a different Mexico. We had stressed our lack of interest in a long sandy beach covered with peddlers carrying their wares from in front of one all-inclusive resort to the next.

Humberto, the man with the placard, would be our guide to that different Mexico. He would introduce us to the Mayan culture and the haciendas of the Yucatan.

The Yucatan is like no other part of Mexico. Merida, the capital, is thought of by Mexicans to be the nicest city in the country in which to live. It's clean, safe and relatively prosperous. Prior to our tour I had thought



Photos clockwise from above: French inspired home in downtown Merida, Ruins in Chichen Itza Mayaland, The Observatory Chichen Itza



Photos clockwise from above: Hanging Mayan bed in Hacienda San Jose, Master Suite Xcanatun, Hacienda Xcanatun breezeway, Church at Hacienda Xcanatun, Traditional Lovers Chair



of the Mayan culture as being long gone. Far from it – the evening news on television is presented in Mayan and many of the locals prefer speaking Mayan amongst themselves. There are those who still refer to the Spanish as “the conquerors.”

The first stop on our tour was the Mayaland Hotel. Built in the 1930s, the Mayaland is not a hacienda. The grounds are a bird sanctuary housing the guest bungalows. Each bungalow represents a different Mayan ruin through the carvings in the elegant wood trim that embellish each structure. A very pleasant place to stay but the best feature is that the main entrance faces the back gate to the archaeological site of Chichen Itza. An early breakfast on the open air patio can be followed by a tour of the largest excavated Mayan site prior to the heat of the day and the arrival of the bus tours from Cancun.

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Yucatan is basically flat with no rivers or lakes. Vegetation is typical of an arid hot environment. The impression is that water would be difficult to find. How untrue. Chichen Itza was built around a very large cenotes. A cenotes is an underground cave full of fresh water.

There are some 3,000 cenotes in Yucatan. Every Mayan community would have its own cenotes and so too the haciendas. The water in the cenotes is so clear that it seems to be air.

My impression prior to our tour was that the haciendas were cattle ranches. Again I was way off track. The haciendas of the Yucatan were plantations devoted to the growing of sisal. In the 1800s, prior to the emergence of synthetic fibre, sisal was an alternative to hemp. Plantation owners made family fortunes exporting as much sisal as they could possibly



One street in Merida was modeled after the Champs-Élysées.

just six miles north of Merida, it was one of the largest sisal plantations in the Yucatan. There are only 13 very large, very well appointed rooms and 5 suites, all with their own balcony and Yucatecan hammocks. A number have their own hydrotherapy tub on the balcony. The property is set in a very private nine acre garden setting.

The hacienda restaurant has been a recipient of the American Institute of Hospitality Services Star Diamond Award for a number of years while the hacienda has a 4 Diamond rating from AAA. This property is an excellent reflection of its gilded past.

Hacienda Temozon, with 28 rooms, is a little further from Merida and part of the Starwood's Luxury Collection. All the buildings have been fully restored and the rooms still bear the name of their original use, such as payhouse, pharmacy and priest. The main building still functions as in the past, with the open air dining room at one end and the master suite at the other.

All rooms boast modern amenities, most with their own plunge pool which staff will fill and then decorate with flower petals to enhance a romantic evening dip. The spa is housed in what was the sisal factory and offers massage treatments in the hacienda's cenotes.

Hacienda Santa Rosa, another member of Starwood's Luxury Collection, has only 11 rooms. Each room is unique, with the largest boasting a king size bed which is literally hung from the ceiling, apparently quite popular with the honeymoon crowd. The grounds are lush, private and very tranquil.

When travelling in Mexico I've come to expect that even at the best establishments there are things wanting. With these haciendas that is certainly not the case. The amenities are all of a high calibre, the dining experience excellent and the wine cellar reasonable.

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Hacienda Teya, on the edge of Merida, has been restored to function solely as a fine restaurant. Yucatecan cuisine is certainly unlike what you would find in Puerto Vallarta, or Mexico City, for that matter. There is a greater stress on rice than beans and citrus plants native to the area play a major role. Sour orange, for instance, replaces vinegar. We were so taken with lime soup that we've had to prepare it numerous times ourselves since returning home. Another dish that was a surprise was stuffed Gouda.

The Yucatan was one of the first points of landing when the Spanish arrived. They were followed by other Europeans whose influence was felt. Large Gouda cheeses are now imported in great quantity from Holland. The locals first carve out the interior by eating the cheese inside, being careful to keep the outside intact. They then stuff it with a ground pork mixture suitably spiced and bake it and serve it as a main course.

Hacienda Sotuta de Peon has been restored as a completely functional

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grow. Their wealth was such that most spent little time in the Yucatan, preferring the European capitals.

However, for that one month out of the year that they returned to check up on their holdings, they needed accommodation comparable to the best they had grown accustomed to in Europe.

One street in Merida was modeled after the Champs-Élysées. Each plantation owner tried to outdo the other with the scale of his mansion, sometimes brothers competing side by side. Many of these still line the street – while most have become commercial buildings, a few still remain in the original family's hands.

Unfortunately for the plantation owner, he would have to spend at least one day of that month on the actual plantation and of course would need an elegant hacienda. Where else to review profits with his plantation manager and entertain his friends from Europe? Typically the hacienda



Photos this spread, clockwise from above: Hacienda Santa Rosa, Pool at Hacienda Temozon, Hacienda Temozon, Restaurant at Hacienda Santa Rosa, Hacienda Santa Rosa, Massagebeds at Hacienda Santa Rosa, Cenotes massage at Hacienda Temozon, Private Spa area in Hacienda Temozon

would be long and narrow with high ceilings and lots of open space for cooling breezes. The master bedroom would be at one end and the kitchen at the other, with dining and living

rooms in between. There would be outbuildings to house the staff, each a reflection of the occupant's status. Nearby would be the factory where stream driven machinery would strip the sisal branch into fibre to be dried and woven into rope.

Most of the haciendas remained derelict after the Mexican revolution, when the land was redistributed amongst the people. Recently quite a number have been restored and converted into luxury boutique resorts, boasting elegant dining, generally their own spas and always excellent service.

Hacienda Xcanatun opened in 2000 after a five year restoration. Located

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The Mayan influence is certainly everywhere... the evening news on television is presented in Mayan



sisal plantation, which visitors are able to tour. The owner has taken the time to scour the area for parts to repair the steam-driven machinery original to the plantation. Carts pulled by donkeys, originally for carrying the sisal to the factory, act as transportation to the fields to see how harvesting was done. If one wishes, a refreshing dip in the cenotes is also possible.

The Mayan influence in the Yucatan is readily apparent to any visitor. At the time of Christ they had a very advanced civilization with its own written language, science and established social structure. They were principally an agrarian and trading society and their science provided an accurate forecast of weather conditions which would affect their crops.

The credibility of the forecasting ability was so strong that when the Mayans were on the edge of victory, having driven the Spanish invaders back into Merida, they deserted the field, knowing the rainy season was about to begin, to plant their crops.

Fernando Castro Pacheco is a local artist, with an international reputation. There is a gallery of his magnificent murals in the Merida city hall which depict the epic events that followed the arrival of the Spanish.

Humberto told us a tale of arriving at Chichen Itza one day to find Fernando sitting looking at the tableau depicted on one wall. Realize that the Mayan



Photos this page clockwise from left: Sisal at Hacienda Santa Rosa, Terry investigates a Cenotes, La Conquista-a depiction of the ongoing battle the Mayans had with the Spaniards, Terry gets lessons on how to handle an Agave plant, Working Hacienda Sotuta de Peon-transporting the sisal threads to the factory for processing

structures were built over a period of many years, with one generation's efforts being the foundation for the work of the generation to follow.

On one side of the wall there was a depiction of the impact of a group of Mayans who arrived with a new interpretation of the religious beliefs. As they were more aggressive than the locals, they forced their beliefs on the local community. Fernando was able to point out to Humberto that one of the artists depicting the impact of the new arrivals was very accepting of these new insights and presented them in positive images, while another artist working only ten feet away was not nearly as accepting and his presentation was very negative.

In the last five years work has been going on at the Ek Balam archaeological site. At this point the site is much less developed and far smaller than Chichen Itza and thereby attracts far fewer visitors, which is, possibly, a bonus. However, the one building that has been recovered

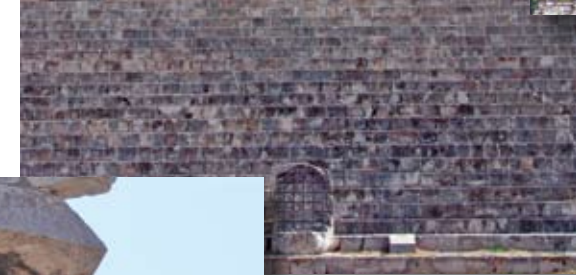


Photos clockwise from above: Dancing flamingos in Celestun, Newly found ruins still with original plaster in Ek Balam, Ruins in Uxmal, Scoring hoop at the games court in Uxmal, Mayan Sun God,

is unique in that there is one room still decorated with the original plaster work that would have normally covered all the Mayan structures before being painted. The room was where the local king went to meditate and his son in reverence, unique in Mayan burial practice, made it his father's tomb, allowing for the preservation of the plaster.

Having seen the smoothness of a Mayan structure with the plaster intact it's far easier to imagine how the buildings would have looked when they were the centre of a very active society, rather than worn through the ages. In this instance the walls are white, the same as when the father frequented the room, not highly coloured as was the norm with Mayan buildings.

To the west of Merida, on the coast, is Celestun, an ecological reserve. Rather than sandy beaches, here mangrove swamps mark the edge where



the land meets the ocean and for long stretches of the Yucatan coastline.

Celestun is home to a large population of flamingos. Interestingly, their pink colour is the result of the

shrimp they consume; at birth they are white. During a boat ride through the mangrove we also saw large numbers of pelicans, coots, egrets and frigates. The water in the roots of the mangroves was teeming with many varieties of tropical fish.

As a frequent visitor to Mexico I was very pleasantly surprised at how different the Yucatan truly is. Humberto went so far as to say it was similar to how unique Quebec is from the rest of Canada. The Mayan influence is certainly everywhere.

When we were at the beginning of our visit and Humberto was introducing us to the Mayan culture, he continued to stress the accuracy of the Mayan calendar and the ability of its science to forecast weather conditions. I challenged him to predict when the rain would start. Without hesitation he gave me a day. Throughout our tour I asked a number

of people the same question. All felt it was some time away. As we were sitting in our plane on the tarmac waiting to take off for our journey home, rain began to fall on the windows. It was the exact day Humberto had predicted.



Mayakoba



Photos clockwise from left: El Camaleón hole 7 Myakoba, Fairmont Mayakoba beach front casitas, Fairmont Mayakoba canals with gondolas

The course itself I found very forgiving, for which I was most thankful. Doug Goubault, the course general manager and Victoria, BC native, was quick to assure me that not everyone felt the same. No matter – the surroundings are fabulous and the attention to the environment extraordinary. One such measure is the self-contained

water system. None of the water leaves the course. It is recollected, treated and pumped back into the course's irrigation lake. Little doubt the alligator we saw in the water trap on the 5th was appreciative.

The hotel is everything one would expect of a Fairmont. Facilities are extensive and excellent. The accommodations range from a 1 room casita

at about \$300 to one of the presidential suites (with a butler's casita) at about \$5,000. There is an oceanfront eatery which competes with the main restaurant to be viewed as the facility with truly gourmet delights on top of the other food and beverage facilities. Doug from El Camaleón, on the other hand, feels the golf club restaurant is the best. Of course there is a spa, the Viceroy. Standards are very high and the surroundings spectacular.

The Mayakoba vision is truly grandiose – five luxury hotels with a PGA calibre golf course sitting in an ecological reserve all connected by canals. I am truly anxious to return to see how the project grows. The 600 hectares that are currently being developed lie between the ocean and the highway that runs from Playa del Carmen to Cancun. On the other side of the road OHL has another 600 hectares. The story is that they're not quite sure what they are going to do with the additional property. I'm inclined to wager they'll decide to do a residential development offering luxury homes to those seeking second residences with guaranteed sunshine.

While we were on the Yucatan peninsula we took the opportunity to visit the new Fairmont Mayakoba. The Fairmont is the first, and the largest, of what will be five luxury hotels in the Mayakoba development situated just north of Playa del Carmen. This very ambitious project has been undertaken by the Spanish company OHL, which has gone to great lengths to preserve the natural environment. Some 600 hectares have been set aside for the resort development, a large portion of which is an ecological reserve.

A system of canals has been constructed by expanding on the natural cenotes water systems that were already present. These canals connect the facilities and weave through the ecological reserve. Once you've checked in, transportation to your room or the other facilities is solely by boat, augmented by golf carts travelling foot paths.

From our suite's deck overlooking both the canal and the 8th fairway of the El Camaleón golf course we actually saw a tiger cat strolling along in the early evening heading towards the green. As the property includes mangrove through to oceanfront, wildlife teems with everything from toucans to monkeys.

The El Camaleón, Greg Norman's first course in Mexico, is managed by the Fairmont and will host the first official PGA tour event to take place in Mexico. The Mayakoba Classic will be held in February 2007 with 144 players competing for a purse of \$3.5 million and the winner will take home \$630,000.



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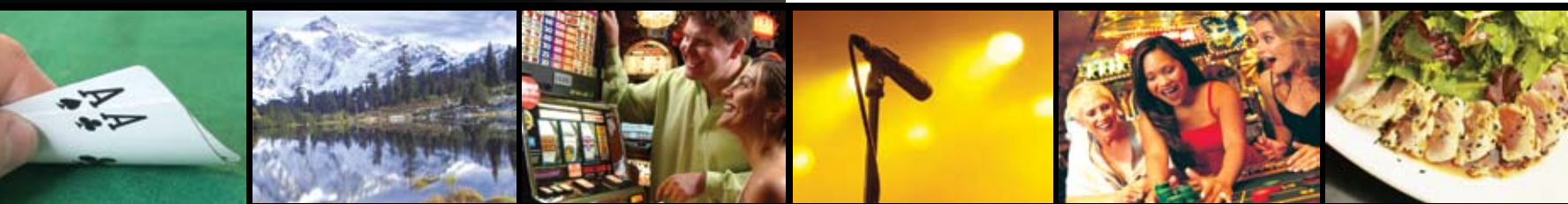


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*...in the back offices and corridors
of the casino you are affectionately
referred to as a whale*

Going All In: Big Risks bring Big Rewards at the World's Best Casinos

By Basil Nestor

They call you a whale. Not to your face, of course. To your face you are Mr. P, Ms. D, Miss K, or whatever is the first letter of your last name. This is a venerable casino custom that gives players anonymity in public encounters. And if you allow the hosts permission, they address you warmly by your first name. Officially, you are a "high-limit player."

But in the back offices and corridors of the casino you are affectionately referred to as a whale, someone who regularly bets at least \$1,000 per hand. And obviously, most whales bet much more.

The rewards for being a whale can be astounding. Would you like a hotel suite that has its own bowling alley? How about an in-suite basketball court? Do you need a recording studio? If you enjoy opulence, think marble floors, Tang dynasty horse sculptures, art by Picasso and Matisse, and 16th-century Portuguese tapestries. And hey, check out the baby-grand piano. Of course, every suite or villa comes with a personal butler and a great view of something (the ocean, the mountains, the Las Vegas Strip, London).

The casino's goal in providing the ultimate suite experience is to envelop you in an astonishing and all-comforting cocoon of amenities and services, yet keep you near the gaming tables and slot machines.

To those with a cynical streak, this might sound as if the casino is being predatory. Heck, maybe it is. But it's crazy-good fun. You were www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com

gonna gamble anyway. Right?

Here's the big twist. The best accommodations supposedly cost between \$4,000 and \$40,000 per night, but many casino properties won't charge you anything. In fact, some won't let you make a reservation if you intend only to stay and not play. You have to be a player (or you have to be so famous that you'll attract players).

We'll talk about those particulars in a bit, but first let's take a closer look at some of the best casino properties around the world.

Atlantis

Atlantis takes advantage of every natural attribute that a place called Paradise Island could possibly offer. The centrepiece of the property is an 11-million gallon marine habitat that covers seven acres and has thousands of sea animals, lagoons, an underwater tunnel for viewing sharks, and other underwater views.

The casino has skylights and windows. Crazy, huh? You can enjoy the sunlight and lush landscape even while you're playing slots and blackjack. The surroundings are stunningly beautiful.

The best place to stay at Atlantis is in the Bridge Suite, so named because it sits on a bridge between the hotel's Royal Towers. This gives you an astounding view of the ocean, the lagoon and nearby Nassau. The suite covers 5,000 square feet, has twelve-foot high ceilings, marble floors,



Photos clockwise from top: Atlantis Royal Tower lit up at night, The Ritz London, MGM Grand Skylofts-living room from the second floor, Le Casino de Monte-Carlo

a baby grand, an iron and 22-karat gold chandelier in the dining room (seating for ten), a kitchen with its own service entrance, an 800-square-foot balcony, a full-service bar and a bar lounge which is also a gaming and entertainment center.

A four-poster bed dominates the master bedroom (17' x 28') with a tester frame that soars to the ceiling, and the bathrooms have even more marble, picture windows, and chaise lounges.

The official price for this luxury is \$25,000 per night, butler included.

The Mansion and Skylofts at MGM Grand

An 18th-century villa near Florence was the inspiration for the architecture of the Mansion at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. The Mansion includes twenty-nine individual villas from 2,000 to 9,000 square feet. Each one has a special design, its own pool, and unique touches such as Persian rugs, art by Picasso, Giacometti, Oldenburg and others. It's everything you would expect, plus heated tiles in the bathrooms. All the villas are connected by a covered verdant courtyard which is kept at a comfortable 72 degrees year round. The property has its own chefs, a private casino and two spas.

And if you're looking for something more high-tech and contemporary (rather than tapestries and vases) check out the MGM Skylofts. They range in size from 1,440 to 6,000 square feet. Each one has a custom Bang & Olufsen and Sony HDTV entertainment system including a 32" LCD television next to every bathtub, a steam room in the master bathroom and an "immersion chamber" total-shower experience which delivers steam and "rain."

Of course, guests at Skylofts and the Mansion receive preferred seating at MGM's award-winning restaurants such as Craftsteak and Shibuya as well as preferred seating at Cirque du Soleil's stage show KÀ.

The price for a Skyloft (when you're paying) can be as little as \$1,000 or as much as \$10,000 per night, depending on the season and the size. The



Mansion ranges from \$5,000 to about \$15,000.

The Ritz

This is the place for which the phrase "ritzy" was coined. It is on Piccadilly in the heart of London. The Ritz has an ornate, gilded

and embroidered look. Lotta gold. Very European. The suites are luxurious in a classic fashion with framed oil paintings, furniture in the Louis XVI style, tables with intricate wood inlays and a lot of warm colors. Tea at the Ritz in the Palm Court is so popular and such a venerable tradition that it is served by reservation only from 11:30 am to 5:30 pm.

The casino is small by most standards – only four blackjack tables, four roulette tables, baccarat (called punto banco) and a smattering of other games such as Three Card Poker. No slots in evidence (but we haven't yet checked the cloak room). Nevertheless, what the casino lacks in size, it makes up in ambience. The room is an astonishing display of gilded opulence.

Note that the Ritz Club (the portion of the hotel where the casino is located) is an actual club that requires membership or

guest privileges. Inquire as to the particulars when you make a reservation. And, of course, be prepared for a dress code.

Suites at the Ritz go for about \$2,300 per night, depending on the season.

Le Casino de Monte-Carlo

Gambling has been around since civilization began, but in many ways, the Casino at Monte Carlo is the original gambling palace, evidenced by the fact that it doesn't even have a name besides Casino (some people call it the Grand Casino).

It was designed by Charles Garnier, the famed architect of the Paris Opera. Built in 1878, the Casino has enormous ornate rooms decorated with frescoes, sculptures, paintings and mammoth chandeliers. Oh, and they also have gambling. Like many European venues, the emphasis is on table games, but you can find slots in the Salle Blanche.

The Casino doesn't have a hotel, but visitors often stay at the legendary Hôtel de Paris which is nearby and is an attraction in its own right. Built in 1864, it is frequently rated as one of the top hotels in the world. Suites are about \$3,000 per night, depending on the season.

The Palms

Las Vegas has some awesome properties, but the Palms is easily the trendiest (some might say most outlandish) and the stylistic opposite of places like Monte Carlo. The Palms is the property that boasts an in-suite basketball court, or a bowling alley. This is the casino-hotel that has a full-service recording studio, just in case you're a rap star and need to lay down some beats between hands of blackjack. This is the hotel where the best suites have "show showers." We'll leave the definition of that to your imagination.

The jewel in the crown is the Hugh Hefner Sky Villa. Amenities include an outdoor cantilevered Jacuzzi with glass end walls, a personal glass elevator, a show tub, an eight-foot rotating bed and everything else you would expect from a suite that bears Hef's name. It's a marvel of architecture and design.

Fantasy Suites at the Palms go for \$4,000 to \$40,000 per night.

Are You a Player?

Casinos want to give these vacations away for free (including travel costs). If you're already a player, then you know they're called "comps." Comp formulas and comp strategies can be quite intricate (and they vary dramatically by region), but here is a shortcut calculation for table games. Begin with your average bet and multiply that by the number of hours you play per day. Roughly, that is how much the casino will comp you. So, let's say your average bet is \$5,000, and you play four hours per day for three days. You can expect about \$60,000 worth of comps.

The casino hopes to win about three times that amount from you, \$180,000. But hey, it's gambling. You might clobber 'em for \$250,000. Yes, it happens. And if they invite you for a visit, then the comps are free even if you beat them.

By the way, the best way to beat a casino is to use optimal strategies, so check out the books listed in the byline. A few hours of reading can save you a bundle and make the games even more fun.

Remember, you're a whale. Go ahead. Make a big splash.

Basil Nestor is the author of "The Smarter Bet Guide to Blackjack", "The Smarter Bet Guide to Craps",



Bridge Suite in Atlantis



MGM Grand

The casino's goal in providing the ultimate suite experience is to envelop you in an astonishing and all-comforting cocoon

the "Playboy Complete Guide to Casino Gambling" and many other comprehensive gambling books, guides and articles. Got a question? Visit SmarterBet.com and drop him a line.

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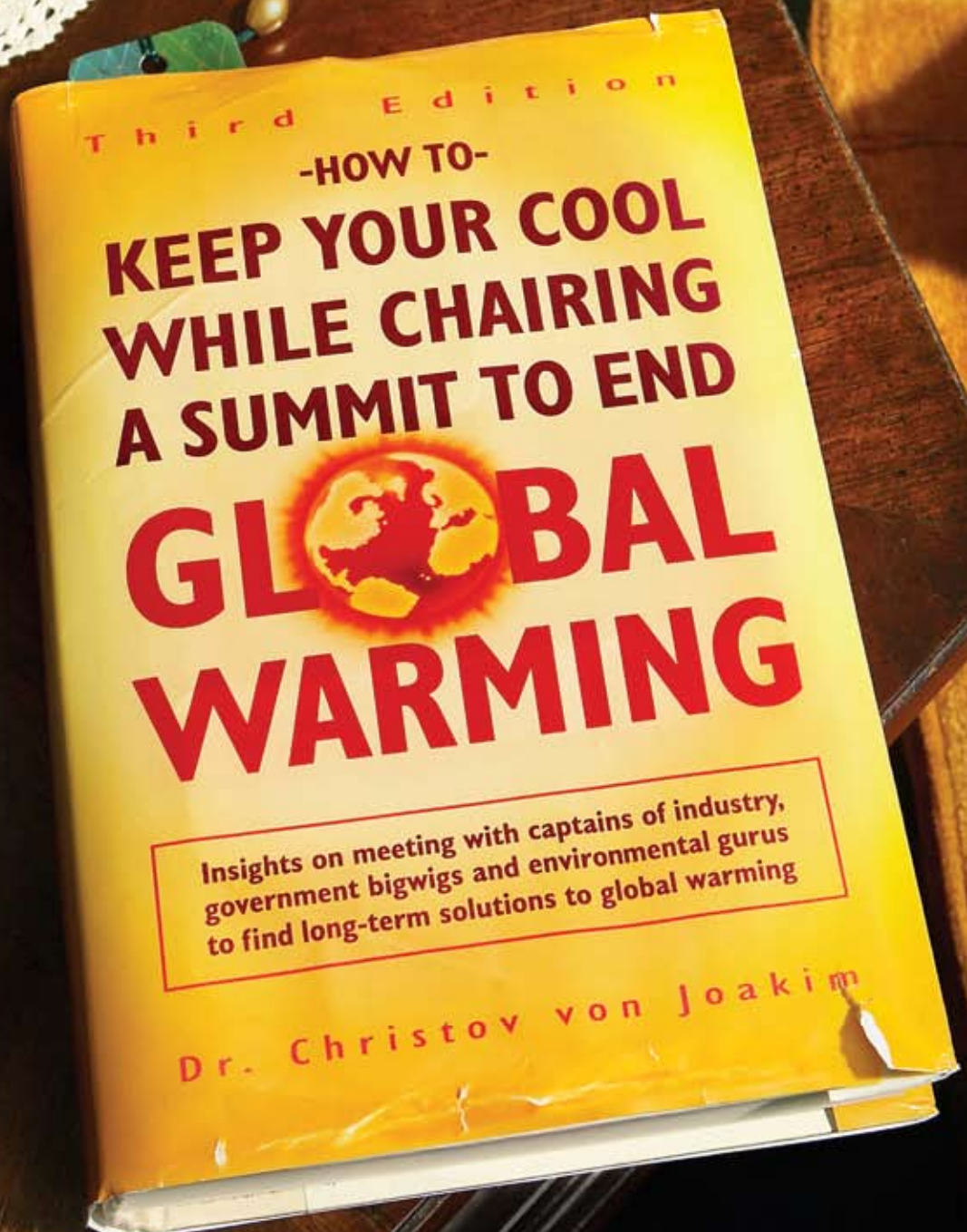
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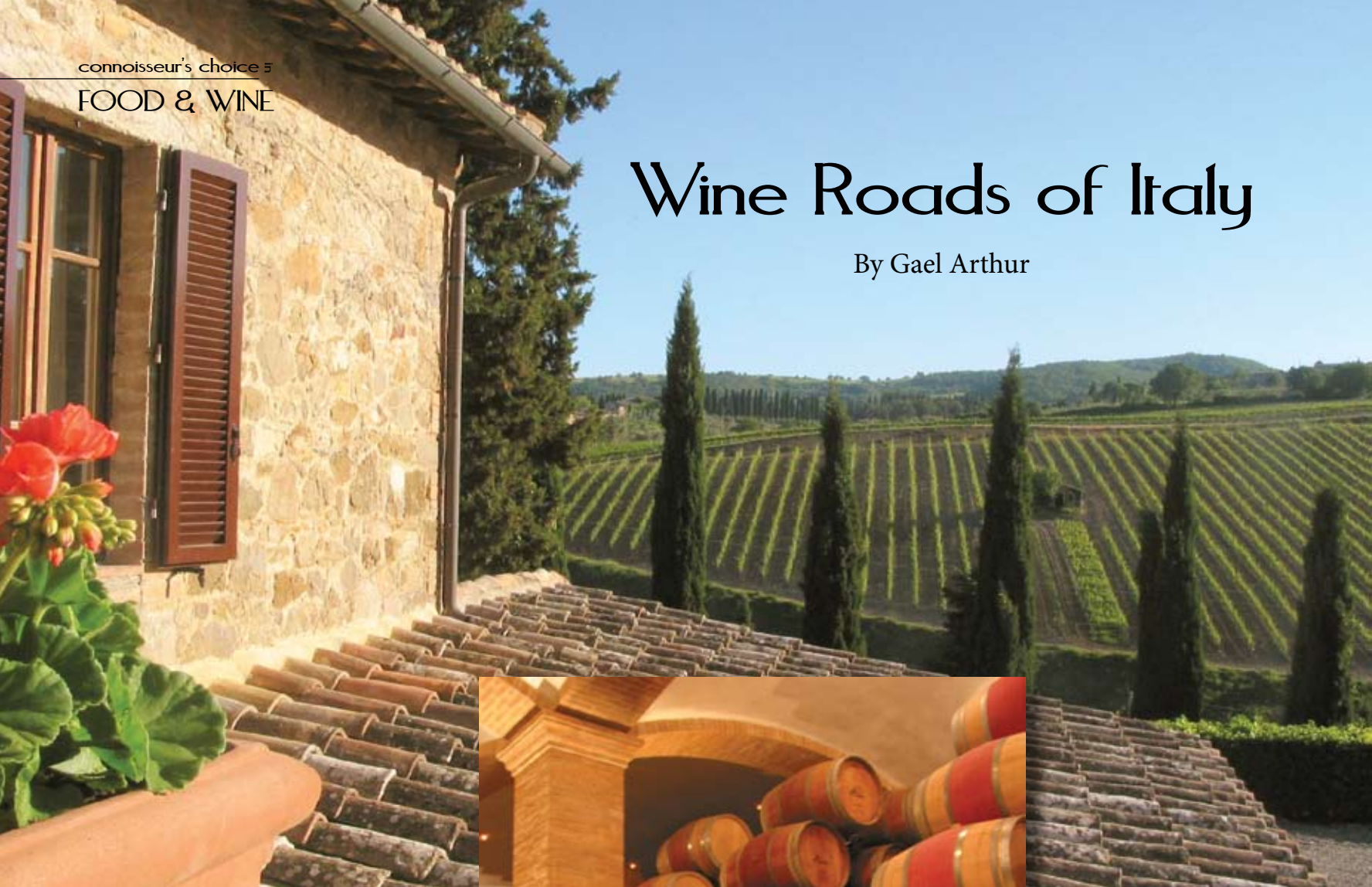
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Wine Roads of Italy

By Gael Arthur



Andrea Costanti's vineyard (above)
Tuscan wine cellar (inset)



It's true: all roads lead to Rome. But those same roads lead away, the super-highways gradually giving way to the curving, confusing wine roads that make Italy one of the best places to explore, invariably encountering fascinating people who lead you to wonderful food and wine.

The classic wine tour for Italy starts in Tuscany, but for fun, start in the south. There are no big gun wines here, but some of the greatest strides in high quality affordable Italian wines are found in Puglia, along the southeast coast, down into the heel of the boot. The vines on this narrow strip of land benefit from the maritime influences of the Adriatic Sea on the east and the Gulf of Taranto on the west. Light, albeit hot, winds blow across the vineyards and keep the vines from shutting down in the brutal summer heat.

Puglia doesn't have a Capri or a Venice to draw the tourists. Other than Bari and Brindisi, city names are unfamiliar. But it has something

pizza one night, as the antipasti kept coming, nine in all – for two of us – including a selection of salamis and olives, grilled artichokes and eggplant, smoked salmon wrapped around buffalo mozzarella, fresh lightly battered and deep fried zucchini and a delicate pea purée for dipping bread.

else – Puglia is home to the most highly evolved antipasto culture in Italy. Go for a drink and five or six plates of things to nibble appear on your table. Peanuts, sure, but when the little deep fried meat stuffed olives, artichokes and little sandwiches start arriving, you may need to rethink your meal plans. When you order the house antipasto in a restaurant, make sure you are really hungry. We actually regretted ordering



Alberobello on market day (above)
Fuligni's vineyard in Montalcino (inset)

Puglia has a reputation in Rome and the north of Italy as a region producing heavy red wines. In fact, the summer heat inspires some terrific rosé wines and full-flavoured but still refreshing and aromatic whites. It's a land of variety, dominated by the indigenous grapes that have served since the seventh century Greeks used the area as their garden. Negroamaro and Primitivo are the main red grapes, with a bit of cabernet and merlot occasionally bringing suppleness to these big dark wines. The most common whites are Fiano and, when viticulturists can find the right locations, Chardonnay and Malvasia.

At Conti Zecca, tradition dates back more than 400 years, so it's no surprise to find the Zecca family passionate about agriculture. "We are farmers, and we have an obligation to be true to the land." While their "farm" is comprised of 800 hectares, it is all within a small single area and the focus is on bringing out the regional qualities of the wine. They make the wines that the land is best suited to produce.

With only thirty years making wine in the region, the Cantele family may be classified as newcomers, but they have a clearly in for the long haul. A new winery is designed for growth and contracts are in place for some of the best grapes in the region to augment their own holdings. The new generation has taken over the reins with relative ease and a clear vision – to make high quality affordable wines. And they do.

While very different in backgrounds, the owners of both Conti Zecca and Cantele understand the importance of marketing. Bold clean labels stand out against the more traditional Italian confusion. The wines are clean as well, offering forward fruit, balanced by good structure and a long finish. The pricing on these wines makes it easy to buy a case or two for the approaching long dark winter. Cantele should be available in the coming months in both British Columbia and Alberta, so perhaps a couple of cases of each would be a better plan.

...Puglia is home to the most highly evolved antipasto culture in Italy

Puglia's tourist attractions are not well known internationally, but they should be. The innocuous sounding Grotto de Castellana is a prime example. Grotto means cave, but the name omits a critical detail – these caves rank

among the most spectacular in the world. The 3 kilometre walking tour through countless caverns takes about 90 minutes, with the high point being an amazing cavern of pure white stalagmites and stalactites, along with the less common formations that take thousands of years to evolve, calcium slowly forming deposits in a perfectly controlled atmosphere.

Just down the road, the "trulli" are famous white cone-shaped stone houses dotting the landscape in and around Alberobello, a UNESCO World Heritage site. As a town to walk around, it gets high marks for both its coffee and its market. While it is hard to find a bad cup of coffee in Italy, some places seem to have exceptional service to accompany the steaming espresso or lightly foamed cappuccino. In the case of Alberobello, the cafes also boast exceptional gelato. As for the market, well, suffice to say that the baggage allowance started to be a concern way too early on the trip.

Leaving Puglia and heading north, the residents of each province seem to believe that their region exemplifies the best Italy has to offer.



...everything
everyone says
about Tuscany
and its beauty
is true



Alcibiade (at right) and Francesco show off their wines at Conti Zecca deep in Puglia

It's hard to argue with Tuscany, where everything is so "Italian", but also easy for visitors to access and understand. In fairness, Tuscan tourism has a huge head start on Puglia. This is both good and bad, with people in some of the most popular towns occasionally showing their fatigue at the foreigners (that would be you and me) coming in, mouths agape at the beauty in one moment, then complaining about the scaffolding on the church facade in the next ("It's going to ruin my picture, Herb").

That said, everything everyone says about Tuscany and its beauty is true. The geography makes for dramatic hilltop villages – stay a few days and your quad muscles will give you permission to embrace the Italian meal structure, which invariably has one more course than you expect.

While it may make sense to drive the length of Puglia, focusing on a small town or area in Tuscany is a better approach, as trying to see it all will inevitably lead to frustration and disappointment. Montalcino, with its renowned Brunello, is a good town to adopt for a few days, particularly if you are already somewhat familiar with what Sangiovese is all about.

Montalcino may well epitomize what people love and hate about Italian wine. Just knowing the name "Brunello di Montalcino" and the vintage may not suffice. Here is a tiny appellation with 240 producers, many of them making sublime offerings that are carefully crafted and lovingly aged in huge Slovenian oak barrels. But Montalcino is on a hilltop, with slopes that face in pretty much every direction. This means that some properties enjoy a bit of wind off the Mediterranean, while others enjoy optimal sunshine. Some are near the top of the hill and others in the valley – it all matters in the nuances each producer is seeking and it determines how good the wine can be, what style can be coaxing from the land. The French may have invented the word "terroir", but anyone looking for a prime example of the differences a few metres can make would do well to select this idyllic spot. The only way to find out which producer makes

the style of wine you like is to taste...and taste some more.

Brunello di Montalcino fits that classic description of Italian wine, dark and brooding. It is not released for five or more years after production and at least two of those years have been spent in oak. The accountant is probably wringing his hands, wondering if the next vintage will support a price hike to cover escalating costs of holding inventory. Regardless of the cost of production, the producers of Montalcino certainly appear to be thriving. The restaurateurs in the town are probably the biggest winners, as recent statistics indicate that 8% of production is sold locally in wine bars and restaurants (compared to 7% winery direct). Canadian sales weigh in at 5%, suggesting we know quality when we see it.

When it comes to tasting and beginning to understand these wines, considerable amounts of time, patience and food are critical. The wines need to breathe, so haul out those decanters. After all, they slept for years before release, so they need a bit of time to wake up. But the reward is considerable. Lunch with four members of the Lisini clan and four fabulous wines paves the way for dinner with Andrea Costanti and his family along with Roberto Guerrini Fuligni – and, of course, a healthy selection of wines from their two properties.

As the wines open up, the conversation becomes more expansive, focusing on the industry and what makes a wine or a winery successful. Andrea Costanti echoes the views heard the previous week in Puglia – it is the land that makes a Brunello di Montalcino what it is. Of course, the people who determine the direction are what make a wine what it is, but without the right land, there is nothing.

By the end of the pasta course, I am ready to volunteer to come back to work the harvest. By the end of the meal, I am ready to go and look at real estate. I wisely decline the grappa – otherwise, I might still be there.

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Alpine Homes captures the best of what Mother Nature has to offer



If predictions are correct, Three Sisters will soon be North America's premier health, wellness and adventure resort. So it is little wonder that the exclusive development near Canmore, Alberta, is also one of the biggest stories in the UK and US when it comes to resorts. And Alpine Homes has been part of that story since the beginning.

Known for its signature "luxury rustic" designs, Alpine Homes has endeavoured to set itself apart from the competition by creating residential developments that are as much about the neighbourhood as they are about individual homes.

"We're all about creating places where you can get to know your neighbours," says Morley Fast, vice-president of sales and marketing for Alpine Homes.

Timberline Lodges in Canmore's exclusive Three Sisters Mountain Village (located 50 minutes west of Calgary) is one example of the quality projects undertaken by Alpine Homes. The lodges consist of apartment-style condos ranging from 1,000 to 3,200 square feet as well as luxury town homes measuring 1,800 to 3,200 square feet. With a backdrop of mountain views, the design of alpine-inspired architecture by Alpine

Homes captures the best of what Mother Nature has to offer. But that's not all.

Fast points to a range of amenities that have become standard features in Alpine Homes developments. A clubhouse, pool, theatre, hot tub, gym and library are part of the package that Fast believes "gives residents the feeling that they own part of something bigger than just a home."

But the story doesn't end there.

Developments by Alpine Homes are not only designed for the comfort of community residents – the firm is also taking care of the environment.

"Our effort to create lower maintenance projects is an example of our commitment to the environment," says Fast. He points to the use of recycled-tire roofs that look like slate as a case in point. With a 50-year warranty and a 100-year life span, this innovative roofing solution will help keep the earth green by ensuring that many used tires don't make it to the landfill. It will also keep homeowners' pockets green by lowering roof maintenance costs. "We're also installing low-maintenance landscaping," notes Fast.

That type of consideration benefits both the Alpine Home purchaser and the community at large.

In another effort to support the local community, Alpine Homes is committed to hiring trades from the Canmore area. This ensures consistency in the company's trade base.

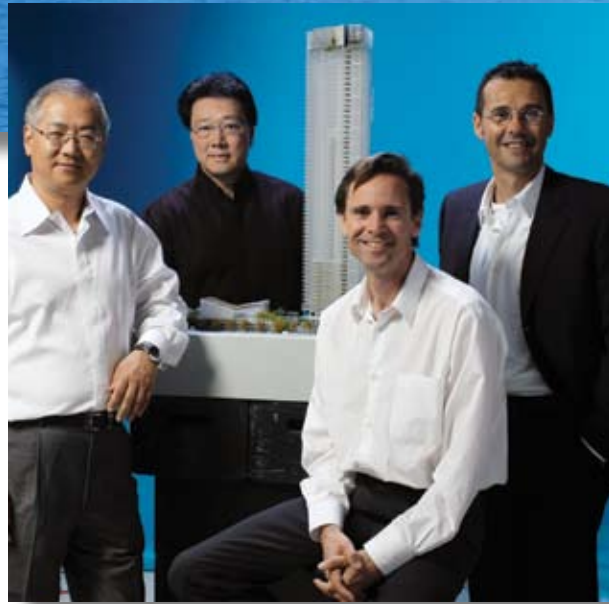
"Since most of the trades are local, we can also ensure buyers that they will have prompt attention regarding any follow-up service calls," says Fast. "And buying locally is another way that we are helping to protect the environment, by reducing the amount of material that has to be trucked in."

Quality, it seems, is what Alpine Homes is all about. Quality construction and attention to detail that surpasses owner expectations while protecting and enhancing the community at large is pivotal to the company's operations.

For more information, visit the Alpine Homes show home at 104 Armstrong Place, just off the Three Sisters Parkway in Canmore. For more information call 403 609-6331, or toll free at 888 884-3948. www.alpinehomescanada.com

Living the Five-Star Lifestyle

By Janet Collins



Living Shangri-La Team

Anyone who has stayed at a five-star hotel can be forgiven for wanting to prolong the experience indefinitely. Who among us, after all, doesn't like to be pampered to the max, whether by having access to high-end amenities, 24-hour concierge and room service, or the simple pleasure of having someone else do the housework? Well, now anyone who can ante up the selling price can actually own a piece of that five-star action – and call it home.

That's right. The hottest trend in high-end living is the condo hotel. No, not the glorified timeshare version, but the real deal. A condominium that is attached to a high-end hotel that – for a price – gives owners access to all the amenities of the hotel while living in the comfort and security of their private home.

"Boomers are especially interested in this type of housing," says Bob Rennie, director of Rennie Marketing Systems, the pre-eminent marketer of residential condominiums in the Greater Vancouver Area. "For them, time is their most valuable commodity – it's about who gets to the golf course first. And the cost? Let's face it; the rich want what others can't have."

The hotels also benefit from the arrangement. The inclusion of attractive condos within hotels can typically garner a higher sales price per square foot, allowing developers to generate cash flow to cycle back into the

facility or new projects (a real bonus for the hotel industry which, for the past few years, has been in the midst of a cyclical downturn). In addition, selling suites to individual owners helps developers pay for their hotels while spreading the risk to multiple owners.

Luxury developments combining five-star hotels with condominiums have been available in East Coast cities and Chicago for many years. In Manhattan, the Time Warner Center is a case in point. Opened in 2004, it includes The Mandarin Oriental luxury hotel as well as The Residences at the Mandarin Oriental, luxury condos ranging from 540 sq ft to 8,400 sq ft. The complex also encompasses Time Warner World Headquarters, The Shops at Columbus Circle, One Central Park condominiums, 211,000 sq ft of Class-A office space, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and 504 parking spaces. The western half of the continent is also latching onto the lure of luxe living, as seen in Scottsdale, AZ, where the new W Scottsdale Hotel and Residences will include 25 to 30 luxury condominiums. Scheduled to open in 2007, the W Residences will offer owners a combination of one and two-bedroom condominiums with the benefits of being attached to a W Hotel. Highlights include in-home catering. And Donald Trump, who knows a good thing when he sees one, is building Trump Tower Waikiki, which offers a twist on the condo hotel theme by marketing fully furnished suites. Examples by other developers show up in Seattle, Dubai, Berlin, London and other trend-conscious world centres where the well-to-do like to hang out.

Brand power has a lot to do with the success of these projects. In New York, for example, buyers are willing to pay more for a branded luxury condominium than a similar condo in another building. "The brand is important because people are buying into a lifestyle and the brand is an extension of that lifestyle," says Rennie.

In Vancouver, the two brands creating the buzz are Shangri-La and Fairmont. Each hotel brand has a project about to grace the city's growing skyline and both are among the finest examples of condo hotels anywhere to date.

Ready for occupancy in 2009, the residential units in the Estates at Fairmont Pacific Rim typically range from 727 sq ft to 2,600 sq ft. Prices



Living Shangri-La scale model

In Vancouver, the two brands creating the buzz are Shangri-La and Fairmont.

All small photos of Living Shangri-La (clockwise starting below right): Shangri-La CHI Spa, Shangri-La limousine, Urban Fare - Produce, Boffi Kitchen,



Fairmont Pacific Rim scale model (aerial view)



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top out at around \$12-million for the 6,600 sq ft double-floor penthouses. Units over at Living Shangri-La start at a mere \$3.1 million.

But are condo hotel units worth the price?

"I certainly think so," says Vic Korajian, a 47 year old unmarried asset manager who just picked up the future keys to five suites at the Living Shangri-La project, one of which he'll keep for his own use. "If I had a family, it probably wouldn't be my first choice. But I've long dreamed of living in Trump Tower in New York. It's all about lifestyle. I spend half my time abroad, so I like the convenience of 2am room service, the security of living in a hotel setting, all the amenities." When completed in 2008, the structure will be the tallest building in Vancouver, at 197 metres (61 storeys). As a mixed-use building, it will contain a hotel on the first 15 floors, with condominiums occupying the rest of the building. Also included will be a spa, specialty grocery store, a sculpture galleria curated by the Vancouver Art Gallery, high-end retail shops, creative restaurants, and the Shangri-La Hotel – the chain's first property in North America.

For Korajian, the condo hotel is a better choice than a detached home. "The downtown location was a real draw, too," he says. "I already live in the neighbourhood, so I'm used to all the conveniences of downtown living. I'd say if anyone is looking for the ultimate lifestyle, they could do a lot worse than to live in a landmark building like the Shangri-La is going to be."

Dan Givens agrees that condo hotel living is going to be hard to beat. A resident of Calgary, he travels to Vancouver on a regular enough basis that he already owns a suite in the prestigious Shaw Tower. But the businessman couldn't pass up an opportunity to also buy into the Fairmont Pacific Rim next door. "It's an investment in true



Fairmont Pacific Rim (above)
Photos top to bottom on the left: Boffi Kitchen Stanley Park colour scheme, English Bay colour scheme, Poliform walk-in master closet

quality," says Givens. "Everyone loves to stay in a hotel. The pamper effect is definitely there. The nature of the building – the hotel component – gives a different style of living."

The five-star Fairmont Pacific Rim hotel will feature 415 guest rooms and amenities on the first 21 floors and 175 luxurious residences on floors 22 to 47. "This will be the only chance anyone has of five-star living on Vancouver's waterfront," notes Rennie.

Like Korajian, Givens is attracted to the convenience factor. "Everything is self-contained," he says. "That's especially nice if you're entertaining – you can have the whole event catered by room service and they'll clean up afterwards too. Security was another consideration for me. I like the fact that the elevator only takes you to your floor. And you can leave stuff there if you return frequently – you can't do that with a regular hotel room."

And you can share use of the suite with friends and family members when you're not using it yourself.

Both men noted the investment potential of purchasing this type of property. "There are only so many places left to do this," notes Givens. "It's a good investment, given that prices are already increasing and the building won't be completed for another three years. Vancouver is a city of increasing desirability. The Fairmont is going to be at the hub of things, especially with the new conference centre going in next door."

But both Korajian and Givens admit they are especially drawn to the luxury lifestyle these properties afford.

"It's not about being rich," says Givens. "It's about quality."



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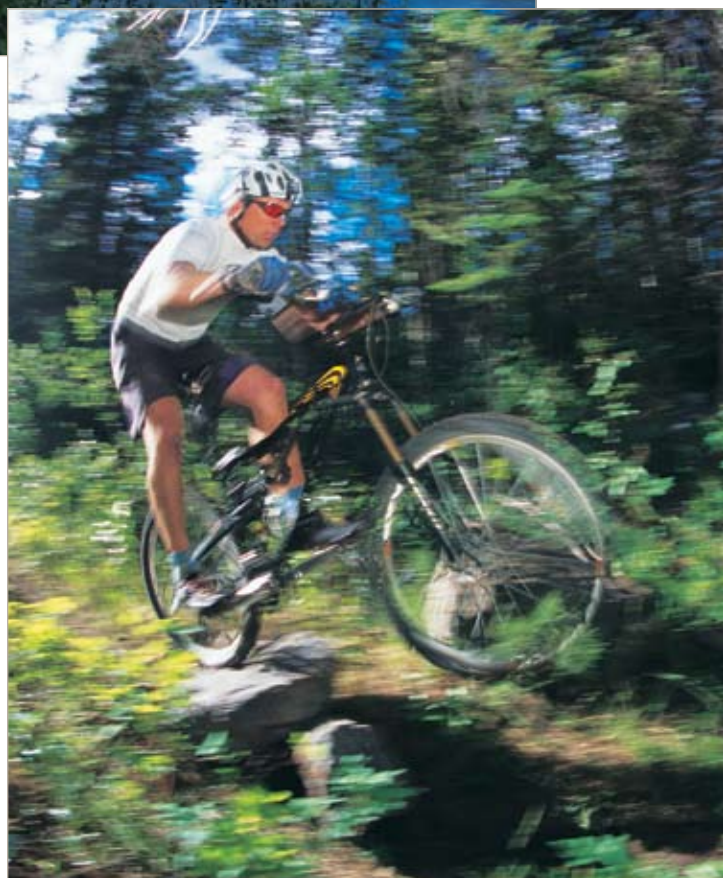
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Banff Lake Louise Tourism

reminiscent of a market square with authentic shops, a boutique hotel, mountain-themed restaurants, pubs, cafés, galleries and an outdoor recreational programming centre. To present the ultimate in luxury and service, The Sanctuary, located alongside the new Three Sisters Resort Course, will offer a more sophisticated, serene atmosphere with fine dining, high-end shopping and a five-star hotel and executive conference facility.

The Sanctuary will also be home to a spa and wellness centre featuring the Living Spa™ concept conceived and adopted by the highly esteemed El Monte Sagrado Spa and Resort® of Taos, New Mexico. The spa will use a sustainable approach to designing, building and operating that is not only in harmony with the environment, but with a “living infrastructure” that brings guests closer to nature and its intrinsic wisdom. This place of wellbeing will be unlike any other spa facility in Canada.

Five internationally acclaimed ski resorts are within a 45 minute drive (some as close as 15 minutes) and for extreme adventure, the planet's best heli-skiing and cat-skiing are close at hand. Thousands of kilometres of hiking trails weave through and around the resort and the mighty Bow River presents a world renowned fly fishing experience. Stewart Creek Golf & Country Club, consistently rated 4-1/2 stars by Golf Digest, offers golfers a challenging course with some of the most spectacular scenery imaginable. Meticulously designed to showcase the dramatic 360-degree mountain views, magnificent terrain and mature forests, this award winning 18-hole golf course will soon be joined by the equally beautiful Three Sisters Resort Course, scheduled to open in 2009.



Further enhancing the Three Sisters experience will be the creation of two amenity-rich retail villages within the resort – “The Village at Three Sisters” and “The Sanctuary at Three Sisters.” The Village will be

Designed to cater to any lifestyle, the unique residential communities within Three Sisters each offer something special. Homeowners can choose from golf-side townhomes to custom estate homes, from mountainside chalets to luxury alpine-inspired apartment condos, all from the mid \$400s. With design and materials that harmonize with the natural environment and optimize the incredible views, the architecture at Three Sisters Mountain Village blurs the distinction between inside spaces and the great outdoors.

The extraordinary resort has already attracted almost \$1 billion in real estate sales. Representing 80% of all land that can ever be developed in this part of the Rocky Mountains – the Three Sisters Mountain Village opportunity is finite and the investment is protected. Almost 1,000 acres of the resort will be retained as natural green space, which guarantees residents' privacy and provides wildlife with safe refuge – a detail that has earned the resort the title of “Best Environmentally Sustainable Resort in North America” from the prestigious 2006 Homes Away from Home Magazine Awards in London, UK.

Visit www.tsmv.ca to explore real estate opportunities in one of the most beautiful places on earth. Three Sisters Mountain Village won't just exceed your expectations; it will take your breath away.

Unravelling the Mystery of Bluetooth

By Geof Wheelwright

Bluetooth is a word you'll hear bandied around a lot these days by technology experts – and salespeople trying to sell you gadgets. And, on the face of it, it sounds like one of those features you'll never need (or really understand).

But appearances can be deceiving. So, if you have ever wondered what Bluetooth is all about and how it could change the way you use a number of everyday technologies, read on. You may be in for a pleasant surprise.



A Special Interest No Longer

Much of the work of publicizing the power of Bluetooth in recent years has fallen to the Bluetooth Special Interest Group (SIG). In June, the group officially launched another initiative – the Bluetooth Experience Icon Program – to “guide and help consumers purchase interoperable products implementing Bluetooth wireless technology”. You can see why these guys are having problems – they need a little less geek speak.

Even the group's definition and description of Bluetooth could use a little work. “Bluetooth wireless technology is the global short-range wireless standard for personal connectivity of a broad range of electronic devices,” says the group, which then goes on to explain. “The technology is now available in its fourth version of the core specification and continues to develop, building on its inherent strengths – small-form factor radio, low power, low cost, built-in security, robustness, ease-of-use, and ad hoc networking abilities. Three new Bluetooth enabled products are qualified every day and 10 million Bluetooth units are shipping per week. The installed base of Bluetooth devices was over 500 million products at the end of 2005 and is projected to surpass one billion by the end of 2006, making it the only proven choice for developers, product manufacturers and consumers worldwide.”

I know – still as clear as mud. OK, well how about we take it from another angle – what does Bluetooth actually do (and how might that prove useful to you)?

At its most basic, Bluetooth lets you easily set up fast and reliable wireless

connections between a variety of different gadgets at short range.

Probably the most popular examples are the Bluetooth headsets used in conjunction with cellphones. The headset itself typically looks like a high-tech hearing aid, but contains both a receiver and transmitter within it, allowing you to remotely control a number of phone functions by merely tapping buttons on the headset to answer and control calls.

Of course, the wearer of a Bluetooth headset does have to get over that inevitable feeling of

appearing to be a little unbalanced as he or she walks down the street apparently talking to no-one in particular. Avid Bluetooth fans tell me you get over it.

But I digress. The Bluetooth SIG offers a fairly comprehensive list of the five key current Bluetooth usage scenarios (from which the group developed its usage icons), and they are as follows:

- **Print** – The print icon lets you know that printing can be simpler by allowing you to wirelessly print directly from your computer, mobile phone, PDA (handheld computer) or any other device displaying the print icon.
- **Input** – The input icon shows that you can control as well as input data wirelessly to a device. This makes for fewer cables on your desk and improved control over portable devices without using the tiny, built-in keyboards.
- **Headset** – The headset icon lets you know that you have the ability to talk on your phone hands-free. Getting rid of annoying cables means being able to move around freely while using your cellphone.
- **Transfer** – The transfer icon tells you that the device can wirelessly send and receive data, text, pictures, music or other files with other devices.
- **Music** – The music icon means these products allow you to listen to Hi-Fi stereo music wirelessly. You are able to send music from your mobile phone, computer or other device bearing this symbol and listen using compatible speakers, headphones, home stereos and many other devices.

The installed base of Bluetooth devices ... is projected to surpass one billion by the end of 2006

...wearable wireless devices are going to become increasingly important



Motorola - H500 Blue

So you begin to get the idea – if you have a laptop computer, handheld computer or smartphone with Bluetooth, you may be able to wirelessly print, input information, use a wireless headset, transfer files or wirelessly transmit music. And these aren't by any means the only applications for Bluetooth. It can also help your smartphone become a wireless data connector for your laptop or facilitate “hands-free” operation of your mobile phone in the car.

Bluetooth Goodies

OK, so now that you know what Bluetooth is, why don't we get down to the fun business of looking at some of the more exciting Bluetooth gadgets you can buy – again with a little help from our friends at the Bluetooth SIG.

To start with, how about some items that the SIG recently reported from the annual “Cool and Connected” Fashion Show at the 3GSM World Congress in Barcelona? They concerned the latest in wireless “wearable” technology. “Increasingly, the wires needed within a device can be woven into fabric,” reported the SIG. “This allows designers to develop sleek garments that incorporate functionality without the bulkiness or weight of having to carry multiple devices in pockets. Bluetooth wireless technology allows your enabled device to be near you – not on you.”

The SIG reported on the way that Infineon Technologies integrated both Bluetooth wireless technology and an MP3 player into the O'Neill H2 Communication and Entertainment Jacket. “Users can coast down



Jacket developed by Motorola and Burton

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Audex helmet and padded hat developed by Motorola and Burton

the backpack, while controls on the backpack's straps let you make hands-free calls without having to dig out your phone.”

Meanwhile, SIG further reported Motorola's development of Bluetooth enabled wearable devices. “In conjunction with snowboarding gear manufacturer Burton, Motorola delivered a Bluetooth enabled jacket, beanie, and snowboarding helmet,” it reported. “Motorola and Burton co-developed gear takes the experience a step further by allowing not only hands-free mobile phone calls but by also facilitating wireless stereo audio. The Motorola and Burton-developed beanie and snowboarding helmet serve as both a wireless headset for a mobile phone and a wireless stereo headset for Bluetooth enabled MP3 players or Bluetooth mobile phones with the stereo audio Bluetooth profile. Motorola has also partnered with Oakley to develop the RAZRWire sunglasses, which include an integrated Bluetooth headset.”

The Bluetooth SIG also cites recent research suggesting that wearable wireless devices are going to become increasingly important for both industrial users and consumers. One such report was Gartner Group's forecast that by 2007 more than 60 percent of people between the ages of 15 and 50 in the US and Europe will “carry or wear a wireless computing and communications device”. It also offers recent examples of the kind of announcements that it says are driving this trend.



RAZRWire Sunglasses developed by Oakley and Motorola



WatchPad developed by Citizen Watch Co. and IBM Corporation

“Citizen Watch Co. and IBM Corporation miniaturized the computer so that it now fits into a watch – the prototype WatchPad includes Bluetooth wireless technology along with a speaker, microphone, and biometric device,” reports the SIG. “IBM has also developed a prototype blood pressure cuff that measures the user's blood pressure and sends it to a mobile phone via Bluetooth wireless technology.”

FALL '06 Ushers In Minimalist Elegance

By Vladimir Markovich
and Debra Walker

One this season are the flourishes and flounces that have been seen in seasons past. From the runways of Europe and North America, the fall/winter 2006 season brings minimalism with a twist. Fabrications for winter move towards three distinct looks – obscuring, accentuating and elaborating – with fabric being a key focus. As well, clothing shapes return to simplicity and the colours and materials will help define the silhouette for the season.

Proportion is the key word this year and it can be found in the waistlines of both dresses and pants as well as in the contrast between sleek suiting and the use of oversized knits with volume and texture, not to mention the use of a cool colour palette combined with pattern and shocks of brilliant colour.

Grey flannel is the “coolest” fabric for the season with other forms of menswear suiting not far behind, with spare silhouettes and attention to detail that give way to sleek dressing both for casual as well as career wardrobes. No longer are the flannels sentenced to the boardroom environment alone. They now take on a life and power that stretches beyond those walls.

Looking towards a clean feminine trend that takes the “men’s club” to new heights, the fashionable woman of the season is wearing dresses, pants, coats and skirts in subdued hues and luxurious fabrication. Hues for this season are sombre and muted, calling on palettes of greys, blacks, purples and blues. As a bright respite from the muted tones come shocking splashes of red in rich tones to add brilliance to an otherwise cool palette. Also providing relief to this palette is the use of plaids – fall brings with it an enthusiastic welcome to the use of plaids, from tartan to windowpane to houndstooth.



Photos clockwise from top: fitted vests, coats can be unstructured and flowing, unstructured capes add interest, red skirt and piping



Waistlines are both dropped and raised this season – from empire waists on evening gowns through to pants that button at the waist rather than the hip, all attention is going to contouring the body. The goal of accentuating and elaborating on the body by bringing attention to the curvature and contouring of the female form are key components of fashion for the season. Gone are the frou-frou details of previous seasons – elongation and sleek dressing are the goals of the female chic silhouette for fall. Highlights are given with bold piping or dynamic stripes – think tweed, flannel, jersey, polka dots and tartan-inspired prints and patterns.

The pantsuit is definitely hot
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for the cooler seasons. Structured suits can be found, with classic cuts, sombre cuts and a multitude of menswear fabrics. Menswear prints and tailoring are found across the fashion houses of Europe and North America this season but definitely built for a woman’s body. With simple tailoring, the classic suit is lending itself to new variations and permutations. Menswear pants, including skinny, cuffed legs as well as full stylings, are given preference and should be worn with the glamour and panache of a 40’s movie star, complete with the addition of two wardrobe additions for the season – the fitted vest and the hat.

The vest shows up in an updated version, to be worn with pants and skirts, and over shirts both structured and tailored, as well as voluminous and flowing. Hats range from fedoras with a feminine twist to knit hats and berets that soften the structured suits and silhouettes.

Along with the sleek stylings and fabrications for the season, another aspect of the fall season is to pile it on. Fashionable consumers are looking to break every fashion rule with offbeat pairings of tunics over skinny pants, pullovers over leggings, multiple sweaters and dresses over boy-cut trousers. Not everyone can wear the skinny pant or the leggings but the fashion of layering allows for the flexibility of incorporating these pieces into a wardrobe.



Additionally, be they ribbed, felted or brushed, this season finds knits that are oversized and voluminous, from pullovers and dresses to capes and accessories. As structured as the suit may be, the addition of knit and this added dimension of proportion can make a wardrobe sing.

Fur continues to be strong across the board, from accents on suiting through to showing up again and again on outerwear coats and incorporated into the knits popular this season – chinchilla, goat, fox and mink are showing up in a wide variety of fashion – everything from trims, collars and cuffs to whole coats and capes. Gloves, both long and short, continue to add to the elegance.

The coat, particularly as a complement to the presence of the suit, is an accent of choice and can go a long way to update your wardrobe. The resonant styling this season includes tailored, military silhouettes and a plethora of variations on the trench style, both long and short. Downtown chic includes outerwear and coats that include designer hoodies, nylon raincoats and oversized parkas.

Accessories include two additional must-have acquisitions to the wardrobe – even the long oblong scarf that is suitable for wrapping and knotting at the waist or throat and purses are structured and tailored this fall.

The secret to fashion this season is definitely in the detailing and the fabrics. In fabrications from knit to satin to flannel to fur, the key is to go for a simplified silhouette – the clean, not cluttered, look.

Photos clockwise, starting from below: detailing is the key, grey pants with bright red accents, piping adds detailing, details and high waist on skirt



Naturally Prevent and Reverse Type II Diabetes

By Sandra Tonn, RHN

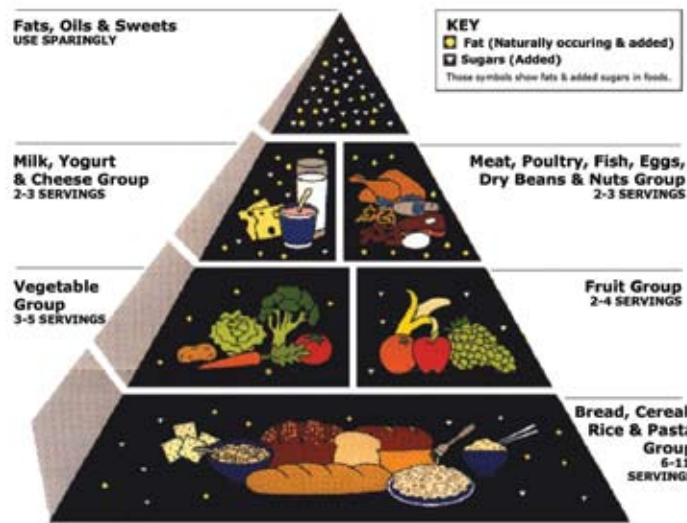
Diabetes is a contributing factor in the deaths of approximately 41,500 Canadians each year, according to the Canadian Diabetes Association. Of the thousands of people who have been diagnosed with diabetes, 90 percent are Type 2 diabetics. A person with type 2 diabetes can expect to die five to ten years earlier than a person without the condition. In addition, we can no longer refer to this type of diabetes as “adult onset,” since an increasing number of children are developing it.

According to a study by the American Diabetes Association, the full effect of this type 2 diabetes epidemic will be felt as children with the condition become adults with many diabetes-related complications. It's estimated that diabetes and its complications already cost the Canadian healthcare system \$13.2 billion each year, with predictions that this amount will rise to \$15.6 billion by the year 2010 and \$19.2 billion by 2020. Complications may involve a long list of ailments and diseases, including kidney disease, eye problems and blindness, nerve damage, foot problems, skin disorders, heart disease and stroke. In fact, 80 percent of people with diabetes eventually die from heart disease or stroke.

What has caused this epidemic? As with the other major killers in Canada today (cancer and heart disease) we must look to our diet and lifestyle for both the cause and the means to prevent and reverse it. According to a study published in the international weekly journal Nature, “Changes in human behaviour and lifestyle over the last century have resulted in a dramatic increase in the incidence of diabetes worldwide.” Michael Murray, ND, author of How to Prevent and Treat Diabetes with Natural Medicine, says, “Obesity is a major contributing factor to the development of insulin resistance in approximately 90 percent of individuals with type 2 diabetes.”

Our modern day diet, which is abundant in processed foods, and our high-stress, low-exercise lifestyle, all add up to type 2 diabetes. Processed foods and sugary treats are devoid of nutrients and break down very quickly into sugar in the body. These include not only junk food and fast food, but many of the boxed cereals and other packaged products on our grocery store shelves. White rice, white pasta and anything made with white flour also provide empty calories and a rush of sugar into the blood stream.

The more sugar in the body, the more of the hormone insulin the body must use to balance the sugar level in the blood. Over time, one of two things may happen to cause type 2 diabetes – the pancreas, which is responsible for secreting insulin, gets tired and does not secrete enough insulin, or the body's cells get so used to insulin that this vital hormone becomes ineffective. In either case, insulin is not reaching the body's cells and not regulating blood sugar as it should. In addition, when there is too much sugar in the body it is stored as fat, which affects metabolism and insulin. Stress and lack of exercise also affect metabolism and insulin.



Achieving a healthy body weight is key to restoring blood sugar levels to normal. Many scientific studies have shown that regular exercise improves glucose (sugar) tolerance in type 2 diabetics and is key in the prevention of this condition. As a nutritionist I recommend a whole food diet. That is, a diet that focuses on preparing fresh foods instead of processed, ready-made food. A high fibre diet is also helpful in the prevention and treatment of type 2 diabetes. Vegetables, whole grains, beans and legumes are foods that provide sustained energy, since their fibre helps to slow down the breakdown of the glucose in the body. Fibre is also helpful in ridding the body of toxins.

In addition to choosing quality foods, understanding how foods affect blood sugar levels is also helpful. A chart, known as the glycemic index, is helpful in planning a healthy diet that will stabilize blood sugar levels. The glycemic index tells us which foods result in the most and least rises in blood sugar in the body after consumption. The glycemic index is tricky – some healthy foods, such as baked potatoes and bananas, significantly increase blood sugar. Processed foods are generally high on the glycemic index scale, but even when they are not, they are still poor choices for preventing and reversing diabetes.

The solution to preventing and reversing the type 2 diabetes epidemic is to give up the unhealthy choices in our modern society. While it takes dedication and commitment, transitioning to a healthy diet and a lifestyle with less stress and more exercise is the only way to find true balance for a long and healthy life.

A Plan for Prevention and Treatment	Choose Low- and Medium-Glycemic Foods:	Avoid High-Glycemic Foods:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat a whole food diet high in fibre • Avoid processed foods and alcohol • Eat low and medium-glycemic foods • Reduce intake of animal fat • Work toward a healthy weight • Exercise regularly • Invest in high quality vitamin and mineral supplements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most fruits • most vegetables • whole grains • nuts and seeds • beans and legumes • plain yogurt • popcorn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • processed foods • most boxed cereals • bananas and raisins • potatoes, beets, corn and carrots • all white flour products • white rice and rice cakes • crackers



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Part of the Family: The Rise of the Family Office

By James Dolan

First, let us note the obvious: as wealth grows, so too does the complexity of one's finances. Stakes grow higher. Options multiply. Financial decisions become more difficult. This is particularly true of those fortunate enough to have crossed the threshold that divides the comfortably well-off from the fabulously rich.

What, then, is the multi-millionaire to do? Professional help is clearly needed – managing a six or seven-figure investment portfolio isn't a "do-it-yourself" project. But not just any professional will do. What's needed is a group of knowledgeable experts capable of providing guidance over a wide range of financial issues. Such professionals must be both affable and trustworthy, and should in large part share both your personal and financial values.

Welcome to the family office.

Think of the family office as the "Rolls Royce" of wealth management: a team of experienced, highly-skilled professionals from across the financial industry (a portfolio manager, an accountant, an estate lawyer, etc.) who work for you and you alone. Unlike your everyday stock broker or financial advisor, the family office offers complete wealth management. You want your portfolio tweaked to account for the latest goings-on in the oilpatch – call the family office and it's done. You want to update your will to give your first cousin, twice removed, a little something when you pass into the great beyond – no problem, your family office will take care of it. You want an expert opinion on the tax implications of your offshore account in the Caymans – you get the idea.

Far from an innovation, the family office has been around since at least 1882, when John D. Rockefeller, architect of the Standard Oil monopoly (of which ExxonMobil is the largest remnant), hired his own staff of financial gurus to manage his money. Considering Mr. Rockefeller's position as the richest man the world has ever seen (five years ago, researchers estimated that were he alive today, Rockefeller's net worth would be valued at approximately \$200 billion in 2001 dollars – just under four times Bill Gates' fortune at the time), the necessity of full-time financial help is understandable.

But the idea behind the family office is much older than the Rockefeller fortune. For centuries, European private banks have served the continent's well-heeled with attentive, client-focused service; the family office can be seen as an extension of this highly personalized approach. By building long term relationships with clients and fulfilling their day-to-day financial needs, as well as implementing long term financial strategy, the family office

functions as the ultimate private banker.

It's easy to see the appeal of such an arrangement. As your independent, full-service wealth management team, your family office provides detailed financial strategy and advice that's custom-built to respond to the needs of your family. The exclusivity of a family office ensures first-rate service, as well as access to the best investment managers in the business. The people working for you will know your family situation inside and out, hopefully for years to come, making long term investing and estate planning easier. Perhaps most importantly, the intimate nature of the family office allows it to handle delicate financial matters discreetly and professionally. Almost as if the family office was part of the family itself.

There's only one problem: a family office isn't cheap. Annual costs can run as high as \$5 million, depending on the level of talent hired, which means that if you didn't have a few hundred million in your back pocket, a family office was mostly likely to remain something you read about, rather than experienced. Until now.

The Multi-Client Family Office

Over the past several years, a number of private firms have begun developing the "multi-client family office" (MFO) – a version of the traditional family office structure that offers much the same service, but at a fraction of the cost. Instead of serving a single family with, say \$500-million in assets, the MFO serves a few dozen, each with a minimum net worth of \$10 million.

The multi-client family office is typically structured as a fee-based wealth management practice. Instead of charging a commission each time a stock is traded, the MFO charges clients a percentage of assets under management, usually between 0.5% and 1.25%, depending on the size of the portfolio. For advanced planning services that lie outside the traditional investment realm – tax planning, wills and estates, business succession services and the like – some MFOs tack on an "advanced planning and integration" charge to supplement the annual management fee.

"It's an evolution in the industry," notes Thane Stenner, leader of the T. Stenner Group, a private multi-client family office at CIBC Wood Gundy in Vancouver. "As the number of wealthy families has grown, so



*Think of the family office as the
"Rolls Royce" of wealth management*

clients low, and the number of team members high, we can focus on highly personalized service. That's what affluent individuals demand," he says.

Ask Stenner why wealthy people are attracted to the MFO structure, and he's quick to respond. For those with a sizeable (yet not limitless) net worth, the multi-client family office is a pretty attractive combination. Unlike the common transaction-based wealth management practice, an MFO can offer a wide range of expert-level planning and strategies, coupled with vastly superior service. Unlike a full-fledged family office, there are lower costs and fewer administrative hassles. "It's the best of both worlds," Stenner says.

Even so, Stenner believes the main appeal of the MFO isn't the bottom line. "At the end of the day, it's about trust," he says. As individuals build their wealth, the need for trust increases, alongside the need for more complex wealth management solutions. This naturally leads them to longer-term, more personalized relationships with their financial professionals. The MFO structure is ideally suited for such needs. "An MFO encourages the professional and the client to get to know each other on a personal, as well as a professional level," Stenner says. "That level of knowledge is crucial when you're dealing with more complex transactions and strategies that wealthy individuals are often involved

has the need for more highly specialized financial expertise, along with more personalized service. The industry recognizes that and has started to transform itself to be more appealing to the upper end."

Anticipating the growing demand for high-net-worth advice and service, Stenner retooled his financial advisory business five years ago, transforming it into a multi-client family office that exists within the larger firm. It's a decision that has paid off for his group, as well as their clients. Instead of spreading his time among several hundred clients, as they did before, he and his team now serve 35 client families, with an average net worth of about \$30 million. The result: better service for clients, and a greater professional challenge for the group. "It was the next step," Stenner confirms. "We're working with fewer people, but what we're doing is more in-depth, and ultimately, more rewarding," he adds.

Going forward, Stenner anticipates adding between five and seven families every year, until the group reaches a maximum of perhaps 60. Stenner puts it plainly: "Service is the key. By keeping the number of

WEALTH

in. [see “trust curve” diagram]

As good as it sounds, however, Stenner is first to admit that an MFO isn't for everybody. If your financial affairs are relatively simple, then there's probably no need for an MFO, he acknowledges.

For those who are interested, Stenner advises a cautious approach. Finding the right MFO is an important task and not everyone who offers MFO-like services is truly worthy of the label. “The best way to find one is to ask around,” Stenner says. “Word-of-mouth counts for a lot in this business.”

How can you distinguish the multi-client family office from the multitude of other firms vying to manage your money? Stenner offers the following features for consideration:

Focused client base

Obviously, with such an emphasis on service, the MFO should serve a limited number of client families. While there's no hard-and-fast rule, Stenner says anywhere between 25 and 60 clients is the norm. More important than the number, however, is the type of clients served. “When we meet with someone, we make it very clear: not everyone can become a client,” Stenner notes in a matter-of-fact tone. “They have to fit with our culture, with our views on how money should be managed, and the importance of family.” This alignment makes it easier to maintain client relationships and ensures all parties are on the same page when it comes to financial strategy.

Comprehensive service offering

Just like a traditional family office, the MFO is a “one-stop shop” when it comes to your financial affairs. If the MFO does not have experts on staff to provide guidance in a particular area, it should have established relationships with a number of specialists who can. “You shouldn't have to go anywhere else,” Stenner says.

“Four Seasons” service culture

As Stenner explains, superior service is the hallmark of the successful MFO. In this way, the MFO operates like a luxury hotel – not only does it seek to exceed client expectations, it intends to establish a new standard for those expectations with every client interaction. Stenner puts it more colloquially: “You should be blown away every time you meet with them.” Stenner suggests investigating the MFO's client-staff ratios, and asking about the proposed frequency of client contact to gain a glimpse of the overall service experience.

“Family first” attitude

A top-notch MFO doesn't think of you as an account, or even as a client – you are a member of the family. As Stenner makes clear, this “family-first” attitude is a central part of the MFO. “The number one priority of the MFO is to build and secure wealth for your family, across multiple



generations,” he says. Team members need to be comfortable working within a family dynamic, and should be ready to offer guidance or even mediation should financial conflict arise among family members.

Open architecture

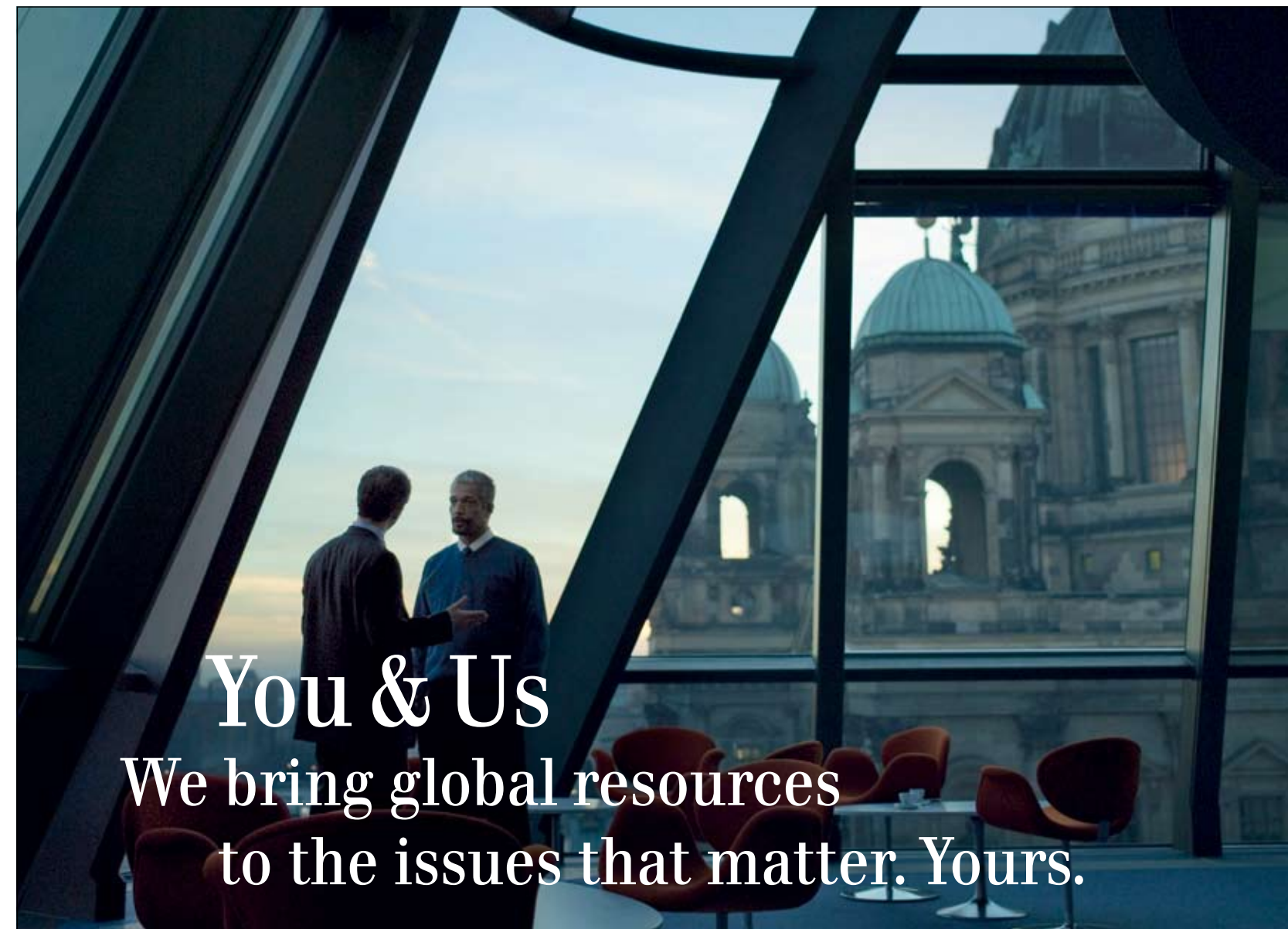
“When it comes to investments, the MFO should be an independent shop,” says Stenner. It should offer a wide range of products and services and should not be tied to the products of any one brokerage or investment manager. If the MFO operates as part of a larger corporation, it should be capable of recommending products from a variety of different firms. Such independence ensures clients receive the advice and the investments most suitable for them.

100% confidentiality

Those who work for an MFO are privy to the most intimate details of a client's financial and family life. This places a tremendous responsibility on the MFO to protect that information and ensure all staff members keep that information confidential at all times. To demonstrate his firm's commitment to confidentiality, Stenner offers to sign a personalized non-disclosure agreement in his first meeting with a client, sometimes even before the client has mentioned the topic. “By being proactive, we show clients how serious the issue is to us,” he says.

The MFO structure was created largely as a response to the changing needs of wealthy clients. But Stenner for one believes it also meets the needs of professionals. “It makes work more fulfilling,” Stenner says. “When we sit down and talk with a client, we talk about money, but we also talk about work, family, life in general. The relationship goes beyond business – you're a part of the family.”

Which, of course, is precisely the point.



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Luxury Lineup for 2007

By Tony Whitney



Z4 M Coupe, Z4 Roadster (inset)

Looking at upcoming model year vehicles was once a fairly straightforward task. All the automakers would announce their new products during the fall season and consumers thus knew exactly where they stood.

Not so these days. In the intensely competitive world of automobiles, manufacturers rush new vehicles into the market on an almost constant basis – as soon as they're ready to ship. As a result, vehicles for the next model year may appear just about any time after the major January auto shows like Detroit and launches may continue right up until the end of the year.

This feature takes a look at some of my personal favourites for 2007 and bearing in mind the aforementioned scenario, many of them are already on the dealer lots, while others may take a little longer to reach us. There are a few surprises in store, though, and several manufacturers plan late year introductions of 2007 models. The big international show this season is Paris, which always yields one vehicle or another "right out of the blue." I'll be there to check on newcomers for a future issue of Good Life Connoisseur.

It doesn't seem that long since the current Mercedes-Benz E-Class was introduced in its latest form (four years, in fact), but already it's past the middle of its model cycle and thus sees many changes for 2007. In fact, Mercedes points out that this is virtually a new-generation vehicle and not simply a "mid-cycle refresh," as the industry often calls this kind of workover.

A new powerplant range includes ten engines (not all available in North America), six of which are new or enhanced. All offer more power for lower fuel consumption. In fact, the new power units develop up to 26 percent more power and 18 percent better torque, but the cars shouldn't

be more expensive to run. The overall look is very handsome indeed and the car sits nicely on the road with its rather sporty "stance." Inside the car, the cabin is typically Mercedes and superbly finished – no surprise there. The seats are generously sized and comfortable and power adjustments are numerous. If you can't get comfortable in a Mercedes-Benz E-Class seat, you won't find happiness in any car.

Top gasoline engine is a 5.5-litre V-8 developing 388-horsepower and "borrowed" from the bigger S-Class range. This is a newly-developed engine with impressive power and refinement. A zero to 100 km/h time of just 5.3 seconds is claimed by Mercedes. A diesel version will reach us later.

Enthusiasts who love BMW sports cars – and that surely means everyone with the least interest in fine performance machinery – are in for triple treat for 2007. Not only is BMW launching a new 3-Series Coupe, but an "M" version of its popular Z4 Roadster is being followed up with a new M Coupe based on the same model. BMW doesn't put that legendary M badge on just any old warmed-over model, so the new sportsters promise to be something very special indeed.

The M Coupe is based, as one might expect, on the excellent Z4 platform. Although closely related to the M Roadster, BMW points out that the car "goes its own way with design and styling." Power comes from a 3.2-litre inline six-cylinder similar to the one used in BMW's M3 model. It's a potent (5 secs to 100 km/h) and torquey unit, putting out an impressive 343-horsepower – a substantial amount of performance for what is a fairly light automobile.

Of course, for many diehard fans of sports models, "coupes are for wimps" and there's no substitute for a bugs-in-the-teeth roadster. For them, BMW is shipping the new Z4 M Roadster for 2007. Adding the M



2007 Lexus GS

powerplant to an already exciting roadster like the Z4 should make for a highly desirable automobile by any standards. BMW M cars don't come along that often – they're very intensively developed and that process takes time, so to get two new ones to choose from in a single model year is a special treat.

BMW's third performance entry – the 2007 335i Coupe – is a delightful sportster with an amazing twin-turbo engine. It looks much more svelte than its sedan relative and doesn't share a single panel. It won't be too long before the M version of this car appears and that should really be something special.

The Lexus GS series of sedans is being boosted by a hybrid model for 2007 – the very first luxury sedan with this type of drivetrain. The GS is a handsome piece of design work and it even outdoes earlier models which were styled in Italy.

Like other Lexus and Toyota hybrids, the vehicle can run on electric or gasoline power, independently or in unison. The gasoline power unit in the 450h is a 3.5-litre V-6 that's used on other Lexus models. It produces 292-horsepower and is a state-of-the-art motor with every electronic and engineering benefit Lexus could pack in. The electric motor ensures that very large amounts of torque are available – and you feel that torque as soon as you head up the road in a 450h. The engine is mated to a continuously-variable automatic transmission which enhances refinement even more.

A zero to 100 km/h rating of something like 5.5 seconds is claimed, which makes it faster than most competitors' V-8 powered cars. Claimed fuel economy is 8.7-litres/100 km in the city and 7.8-litres/100 km on the highway. These are figures you'd normally associate with a much smaller car.

On the safety front, the GS has all the technological goodies you'd expect in a vehicle in this price range. The 2007 GS 450h is an intriguing car packed with fascinating technology which all works beautifully. It is expensive, but Toyota offers all kinds of more affordable hybrid vehicles nowadays.

Readers of an upscale magazine like Good Life Connoisseur might be wondering why a Hyundai has been included in this luxury car report. In fact, Hyundai has every right to be included, thanks to its new Azera.

Unbeknownst to most North Americans, Hyundai has been building luxury cars for years in the form of its long-running Grandeur sedan. The Grandeur has been sold for decades in the Korean market and in fact, Azera just happens to be the name Hyundai chose for the product in North America. Back home and elsewhere, it's still a Grandeur.

The Azera is a great-looking car by any standard. The bodywork manages to combine lots of modern styling touches with the kind of



Bentley Continental Flying Spur, exterior and interior

"dignity" luxury buyers look for. It's a practical and roomy body design with a nice large trunk and something not that common in the luxury segment – a big pass-through between the trunk and rear seats. Hyundai says that the Azera has more room inside than a Toyota Avalon, BMW 760i or Mercedes-Benz S-Class. There's no question that the fit and finish and general quality of this sedan is right up there with the very best.

Azera power is provided by a 3.8-litre all-aluminum V-6 with four valves per cylinder and developing 263-horsepower. Transmission is a 5-speed automatic equipped with one of those semi-manual modes that seem to have become almost standard fare with cars like this. On the safety front, the Azera has as good a complement of features any rival in its segment. A suite of eight air bags gives Hyundai something of a competitive advantage – some other makers in this segment don't even have options that would run the air bag complement up to eight.

The price is remarkable for what you get – the cars start at just \$34,495.

Recent years have seen a flurry of new models at the very pinnacle of the automobile market – a segment populated by products from makers like Bentley and other luminaries. Some have been downright failures, but at least one manufacturer has found fulfilment in the almost mystical world of the super-rich – Bentley.

Very much representative of the direction in which Bentley is headed, the Continental Flying Spur is a superbly styled four-door sedan that



Photos from left to right: Eos, Mercedes-Benz E-Class exterior, interior

carries on Bentley's decades of tradition. The dramatically beautiful car (what a contrast to the latest Phantom from Rolls!) is being touted as the fastest 4-door sedan in the world with its 6-litre, 550-horsepower, W-12 twin-turbo engine, 6-speed transmission and four wheel drive to get all that power to the road. OK, it has some Audi innards, but who's going to complain about that? Very few automobiles will get you to 100 km/h in under 5 seconds with as little fuss as the Flying Spur.

All this luxury, prestige and technology comes at a price, of course. The Flying Spur costs over \$227,000, but in the world of supercars, it's fairly reasonable. Joining it for the 2007 model year is the new Continental GTC convertible – the fastest 4-seat ragtop on the planet.

Audi has offered its A3 hatchback in Europe for many years and those of us who make regular trips over there always wondered why the product wasn't offered here.

The notion of a small but luxurious sports hatchback just never took off in the huge US market but now, at last, the Audi A3 is here for whatever reason and enthusiasts of the brand are celebrating – and buying them in fair numbers, judging by what I see out on the road. Audi naturally hopes to attract young buyers who possibly haven't bought an Audi before – to get them into the Audi "family" early and start moving them up the range as time goes by.

Power for the A3 comes from a choice of two engines – a 2.0-litre turbo with 200-horsepower and a 3.2-litre V-6 developing 250-horsepower. We tested the six-cylinder, but the four-banger is a real blast and possibly a better choice for many. Order the 3.2-litre unit and you get Audi's wonderful Quattro all wheel drive system, which is just outstanding in slippery weather – and in the dry too, if you drive the car fast.

The car handles very well, as it should, given its performance pedigree and well-engineered suspension. It's worth remembering that Audi has dominated the legendary Le Mans race for years and at least some of that competition know-how has trickled down to road cars. The car we previewed was packed with just about everything possible and thus the price ran up to a daunting \$52,000 or so. The starting price, though, is in the low thirties and you get lots of value at that end of the spectrum.

The new A3 is a great choice for people who care more about how a car feels than what it costs. You could certainly buy all kinds of "show

off" cars for the price of one of these, but the A3 is all about personal satisfaction.

Convertible hardtops have been largely confined to the upper end of the luxury market, but the scenario is changing fast with several recent introductions. Quite soon, Volkswagen's exciting new 2007 Eos will join the fray.

What VW has come up with is a very attractive and quite luxurious product that meets the key demand of any convertible buyer - it looks good top-up or top-down. One feature that makes this VW unique, even among hardtop convertibles, is its sliding/tilting glass sunroof. This means that even with the top up, you can still get a bit of fresh air by opening the sunroof. This must give VW a competitive advantage in what is becoming almost a crowded market.

The engine we'll get is a 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbo developing 200-horsepower. I found this a delight, just as I did with the GTI, and coupled with the 6-speed manual transmission my test cars were fitted with, it was more fun than could be imagined.

Obviously, the convertible hardtop is a major draw with this car, but anyone who bought one simply for its power characteristics and handling would be happy. The car will be priced at a very competitive \$36,990 and will compete with 4-seat convertibles from BMW, Audi, Mercedes, Volvo and others.

Doubtless other luxury or upscale vehicles will make the news before the end of the year. Expect to see a flurry of new models, including an all-new Mercedes-Benz CL-Class coupe version of the recently-introduced S-Class. Also set to launch is Volvo's new S80 – the Swedish automaker's flagship which promises to be more powerful, safer and even more luxurious than the old model.

On the domestic front, 2007 will see the debut of the exciting new Lincoln MKS, the luxury automaker's newest full-size sedan. Production has begun and the cars will be arriving before the end of the year.



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CULTURE



Making Friends with the Stranger You Sleep With

By Jonni O'Connor, PhD



I know the language of dreams is not readily understood in the conscious mind because dreams are self-created in the subconscious mind, but please do not discard them simply because you do not understand their language. The language of dreams is the strange experience of imagery and emotion. Dreams are constantly downloading information to us in answer to the questions we ask ourselves: what do we need to feel better, how can we stop what is going on, why can't we change to make it work? Through our dreams, we are continually advising ourselves how to de-stress, how to find balance, love, and whatever our heart desires. Dreams are the most important advisors we have in our lives. They are precious jewels waiting to be discovered and accepted.

You've probably been told to write down your dreams when you awaken. If you don't, your dream is ignored and will very likely leave your mind and emotions. So writing down your dream-gifts first thing in the morning – before you even get out of bed or dress – will solidify what you do remember. Just jot down a few words about what has been revolving in your mind. Add the emotion you were feeling or reacting with in the dream. Then date it and, as an extra, add a few lines about any indecisive thinking you may have been doing in your life. Tuck it away and look at it later – perhaps days or weeks later – but for now, the simple act of transferring it to paper from the elusiveness of your mind is all that is required. And that's it. That's all you have to do. Whether in a designated dream journal or on scraps of paper, keep these entries and over time you will notice their value. Let me start to give you the basics.

Your subconscious mind, your dream mind, is in partnership with you. Through your dreams, it is trying to dialogue with you, to get close with you – to have a personally enlightened, inspired conversation. Your dream-self is your reflective partner, companion and friend. During the day, you sometimes talk aloud and sometimes keep your thoughts rolling around in your mind, emotions and body. But then the magic of the night enters. At night, the conscious mind becomes the listener, not the talker; your dreaming mind wants to share with you everything it has noticed and gleaned from those revolving thoughts, feelings and questions perhaps still unframed, perhaps begging for solution.

Many people can have a long conversation with someone and later only remember a fraction of what transpired – select bits and pieces that usually had emotional reference to them. A full night of dreaming is like a long conversation: by the morning, our memory has often retained only fragments of those emotional references. That's okay. Those are sufficient to jot on your paper and keep for later introspection.

If you don't yet remember even an emotion or an image from your dream-state, just realizing that your relationship with your subconscious mind is strained and not flowing is the first step. As in any relationship where you desire more intimacy and more real conversation, your heart needs to soften and open; your mind needs to slow down and take a back seat. Expand your listening abilities beyond your limiting, literal, logical mind. Listen wholeheartedly for essence and caring intent, not for fact. That means removing all defences such as fear or skepticism from your channels. It means listening by opening wider, deeper than before. The only intention you need is to be in the present moment and open to receive the natural gifts your partner desires to share with you. Then, when your listening receptivity has been adjusted, when your partner is speaking and giving you the gifts of opinions and insights, acknowledge this – again, in the present moment – by writing down the multi-dimensional words, the essence of love and care.

Just talking isn't necessarily enough to establish a beautiful relationship of any kind. Another level of heartfelt bonding is required. Establishing that connection doesn't happen overnight: we're talking about more than a one-night stand here! The connection is cultivated, nurtured and patiently held until it flourishes. Dreams require your commitment to them. They want you to stretch your abilities to understand them, to do what it takes to honour them through a dialogue back in trust and genuine interest.

There are many great books, workshops and teachers who specialize in dream analysis. There are also amazing books, counsellors and programs specializing in couple intimacy. The key to the best dream understandings is in the magical combination of both.

Chali-Rosso Art Gallery: One of a Kind



Chagall: Lover's Dream

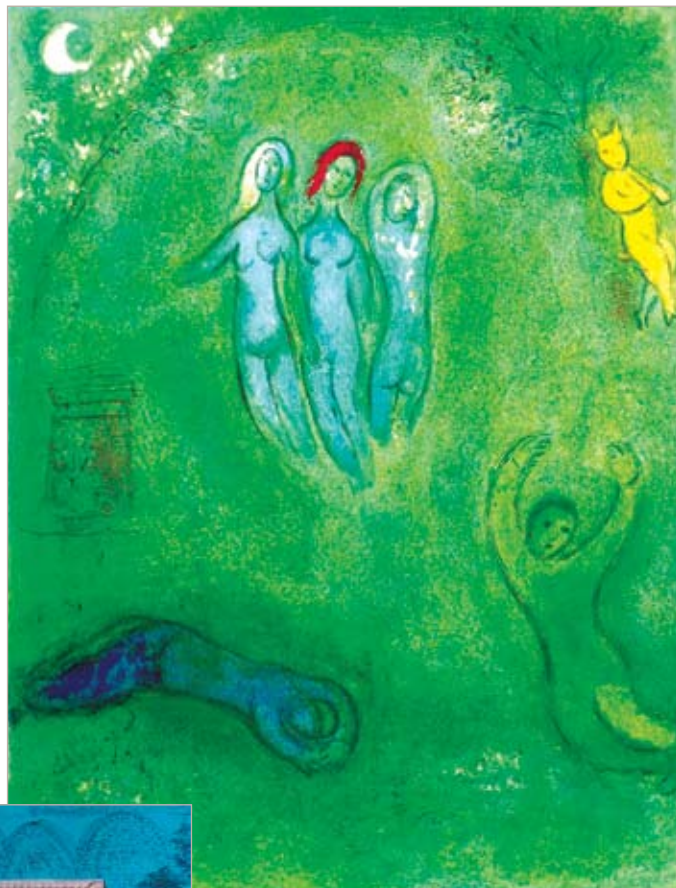
It wasn't that long ago that you might need to leave the country or even the continent to find original fine art by the European masters. And, if you did find a gallery that carried Modern Masters, the selection would be painfully limited to a few works of art. Enter the Chali-Rosso Art Gallery. Finally, an art gallery you can just walk into, enjoy fine art and ask questions without feeling intimidated.

Located in the heart of Vancouver's "gallery row" on South Granville, Chali-Rosso has found a niche market in graphic works by the 20th century European masters. The name of the gallery is derived from the names of the main artists whose artwork they represent. Chagall and Dalí became Chali, and Miró and Picasso became Rosso.

The collection is quite diverse. There are lithographs from Matisse, etchings and lithographs from Picasso, Chagall and Miró, and from Salvador Dalí, woodcuts and mixed media works. Although the walls of the gallery are always covered with works by these artists, you just never know when you might find a Rembrandt, a Matisse or a Renoir amongst them.

Susanna Strem and Zoltan Kulley, owners of the gallery, brought their experience and connections in fine art and antiques from their gallery

"I work in whatever medium likes me at the moment."
~ Marc Chagall



Chagall: Daphnis's Dream and the Nymphs



Dalí: Dressed in the Nude in the Surrealist Fashion

those shown in museums. How does this artwork differ from museum collections? It doesn't! They are part of the same limited edition suites which are considered original works of art. They were conceived and created by the artist just like a painting, but in the case of a lithograph, the design is drawn on a stone instead of a canvas. After creating the first piece called a "bon à tirer" ("good-to-pull") image, the artist authorizes a limited quantity to be rendered. The creation process is lengthy, detailed and sometimes tedious requiring the assistance of an experienced craftsman

in Europe and opened Chali-Rosso in May 2005. Their love and appreciation of the arts grew from their childhood when they were surrounded by classic treasures. They enjoy Canadian art, but decided to stay with what they knew best. With their connections and access to private collectors in Europe, they felt it was a good time to marry the two and create a gallery specializing in the work of these artists.

When you first look around, you are overwhelmed by the power of the collection as the artwork is the same as



Miró: La Translunaire

to complete a high quality impression. The artist monitors the progress and after inspecting every piece, the numbering and signatures complete the project. European master artists like Marc Chagall and Pablo Picasso created more than a thousand etchings and lithographs because these were mediums that offered a different and challenging experience for them.

Most of the artwork was created and published in Europe where the artists lived a good portion of their lives. Chali-Rosso's collection originates mostly in France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Spain and Denmark. All artwork the gallery considers adding to their collection, including a limited amount of local consignments, goes through a thorough authentication process.

Many people assume that a signature itself proves authenticity but this is not true. You can put a Mercedes hood ornament on any car – it doesn't make it a Mercedes. There are a number of factors to look at to determine authenticity; paper, watermark, margins, medium, embossed seals, colours, edition and image size and of course, the image itself. The actual signature is only one small part of it.

The gallery is very particular with the source as it serves as part of the provenance. Apart from consulting with the Catalogue Raisonnés or reference guides for each individual artist, they thoroughly research the historic provenance and do a thorough database and comparative signature analysis.

In addition to all this, Susanna and Zoltan work closely with a certified authenticator and appraiser.

"We hear the same thing over and over from our customers, says Susanna – 'I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like.' The most important thing I tell them is that the great thing about art is that

"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."
~ Pablo Picasso



Picasso: El arrastre, avec écuycère et putto - 347 Suite



Chagall: Red Siren

"I try to apply colours like words that shape poems, like notes that shape music."

~ Joan Miró



Miró: Pasadena Art Museum



Photos clockwise from left:
Chali-Rosso exhibition at the Chan Centre
András Schiff, famous pianist, visits the Chali-Rosso Art Gallery
Interior of the gallery

*“The only difference between me
and a madman is that I’m not
mad.” ~ Salvador Dalí*

you don’t need to know anything about it to enjoy it. There is no right or wrong art! It is very important, however, to make the distinction between decorative and fine art. Decorative art is a part of the interior design, whereas fine art has its own life and merit. It doesn’t need to match your furnishings – it just needs to match with you. Spend time in galleries and get an idea of what you like and what you don’t like. Don’t visit just one gallery or you may end up collecting what the gallery likes, not what you like. Ask a lot of questions – dealers and gallery owners are the best source of information. Most importantly, NEVER be intimidated.

When you are ready to make your purchase, there are really only three important factors to consider:

Image

Always choose artwork you love. You will be enjoying it for many years, so it should be a piece that speaks to you and moves you; something you relate to. This should be your primary consideration.

Quality

Smart collectors agree: choose the best you can afford. Look at your budget and consider buying a better piece that you like on instalments over a lesser piece paid in full.

Investment

Consider the investment value. The artist’s history, time period, size of edition and popularity of the image are all factors that contribute to the potential investment value of a work of art. Not all artists’ work appreciates in value though, so remember the first rule.



The purchase price of an original, one-of-a-kind painting by Picasso or Dalí would start at six figures but there is nothing even approaching that price range at Chali-Rosso gallery. A painting would indeed start at six-figures but this is another of the reasons artists create lithographs, etchings and woodcuts. It allows a much wider audience to know and appreciate an artist’s work.

Susanna and Zoltan share and practice the same philosophy as the artists by bringing the art to the people. The prices are extremely competitive and they also offer instalment plans and upgrade opportunities.

Art has been recognized as an attractive investment for centuries, but has gained increasing attention, as it has outperformed most of the conservative investments in the last few decades. Research shows that art has very little or no correlation to equity and bond markets and is therefore a good investment vehicle for people to diversify their investment portfolio.

For the last two weeks a woodcut by Dalí has been offered as a fundraiser for a Silent Auction. Every month, there is an in-house silent auction to raise funds for different charities. Apart from the ongoing exhibition and presentation series, the gallery often organizes or takes part in fundraising art auctions with part of the proceeds going towards helping people in need. The gallery is fortunate to have Oree Gianacopoulos on their team, a professional auctioneer with 10 years of experience in fine art. Her assistance enables them to organize a nationwide auction series to raise funds for a medical foundation.

Later this year, look for an exhibition commemorating Rembrandt’s 400th anniversary. All exhibition and info are posted on the gallery’s website, www.chalirosso.com



*Where could I
buy a
Rembrandt?*

Self-Portrait by Rembrandt

Tinyan: Endless Beauty



*Tea Time in the
Courtyard Garden*

*Tinyan's
paintings
provide his
collectors
with endless
beauty*

The Grand Majesty



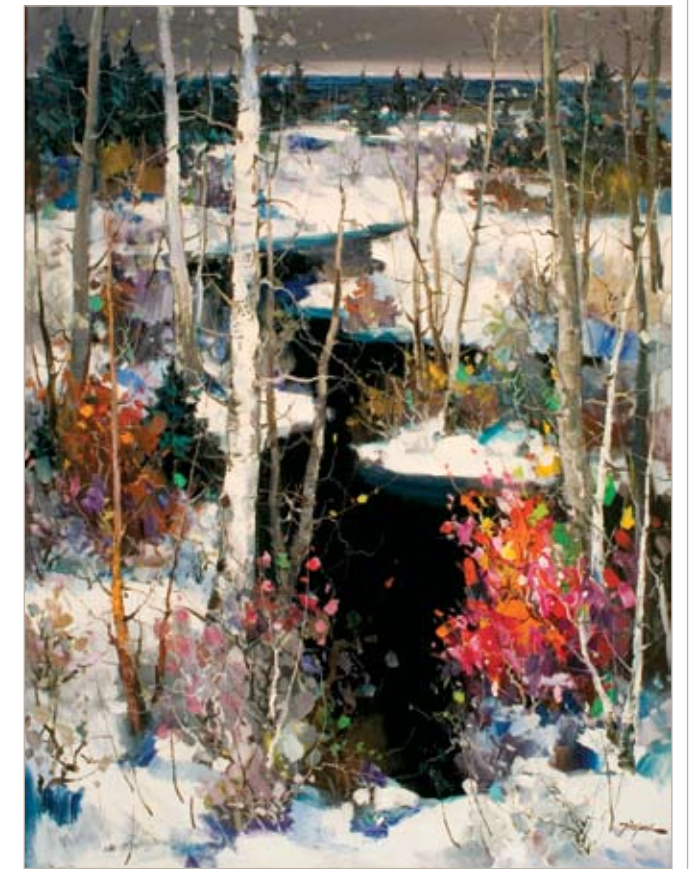
Everyone who has met the artist knows that Tinyan is very much like his artwork – full of colour, passion and exuberance for his work and life. Tinyan Chan was born in Hin Kwong Village, Go Yew County, Kwangtung, China in 1942. As the youngest in a family of artists, he developed a great interest in art at an early age.

When he was nine years old, Tinyan's fondness for art had flourished under the influence and guidance of his family. He was encouraged and instructed by his older brother, Sheung, who is well known in Hong Kong for his oil portraits.

During Tinyan's years in high school, his work was often exhibited. At sixteen, he enrolled in the Mid-Southern China Academy of Fine Arts in Wu Han, Hubei. He was one of only forty students accepted from amongst two thousand applicants because of his outstanding achievements on his entrance examination and his obvious artistic potential. Hardworking and self-motivated, he completed hundreds of sketches in his leisure hours. Tinyan continued his artistic education and graduated from The Canton Academy



Irises & Poppies



Canadian Winter Forest

of Fine Arts in China in 1962 and the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France in 1967.

In 1965 Tinyan put his talents to work in Africa, where he designed fabric prints as Chief Designer for the United Nigerian Textile Company. The beautiful scenery of the Nigerian tropics provided him with countless ideas and his keen eye for colour and composition can easily be recognized in the prints he designed. Tinyan's amazing ability to combine colour in stunning and harmonious combinations is apparent to everyone who views his paintings to this day.

In 1968, Tinyan immigrated to Canada where his future as an artist was firmly established. During the first year, he achieved his goal to become a professional painter and soon after, he became one of Canada's most renowned artists. His works are primarily painted in oils, although he also works in acrylics and watercolours.

In all his years in Canada, Tinyan has never run short of subjects for his paintings. His ideas are numerous and vary in theme. Among them are vivid floral bouquets and breathtaking landscapes of Hong Kong and Canada. Tinyan is extremely dedicated and is constantly searching for new ideas to express on his canvasses. Through his many years as an artist, Tinyan has held high expectations and beliefs for his



A Breezy Autumn Day



Afternoon Breeze

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and life*

success. Tinyan's sincere determination has led his work to win great fame, awards and recognition throughout the world.

Tinyan has traveled and sketched in many diverse countries including the previously mentioned Hong Kong, Nigeria, China, France and Canada, but also in Switzerland, Italy, Holland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and the USA.

The artist expresses his philosophy best when he says, "I capture the spirit of light and colour and express it on canvas. I like to paint familiar subjects so I close off all outside trends and paint what gives me freedom. This lifestyle provides me with endless happiness and success."

In the same way, Tinyan's paintings provide his collectors with endless beauty, transporting the viewer to gorgeous gardens, serene forests and exotic Oriental settings. The invitation is open to all – come and explore the world as seen through the eyes of a master artist. Come and enter the world of Tinyan.

In Calgary on October 14, 2006, Gainsborough Galleries will be hosting their annual one-man exhibition of new works by Tinyan. For more information on this major exhibition and on the works of Tinyan, contact Gainsborough Galleries at 866 425-5373 or visit us online at www.gainsboroughgalleries.com



Paradise Found

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Georg
Schmerholz
sculptor



Wings of Prey

7'H x 5'W x 6'L
sculpted out of a
20 tone block of
Cambrian Black Granite
- available for purchase or lease -

view a presentation of the making of this sculpture
at: www.schmerholz.com/creatingwings.pdf

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