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Beethoven's 5th

September 28 & 29, 8pm



Beethoven's musical signature launches an unforgettable Classics Season with Music Director Roberto Minczuk. This monumental work is paired with Walton's mighty *Belshazzar's Feast*, featuring the Calgary Philharmonic Chorus and baritone John Fanning (*Frobisher, Sweeney Todd*). Symphonic mastery on a grand scale!

Handel's Water Music

October 4, 7:30pm



In 1717, King George I requested a spectacular concert on the River Thames. The result was the glorious music that is now Handel's most famous piece. Filled with pastoral airs, sailor's hornpipes, and even a rollicking country dance, this is a royal feast for the ears!

Firebird Festival

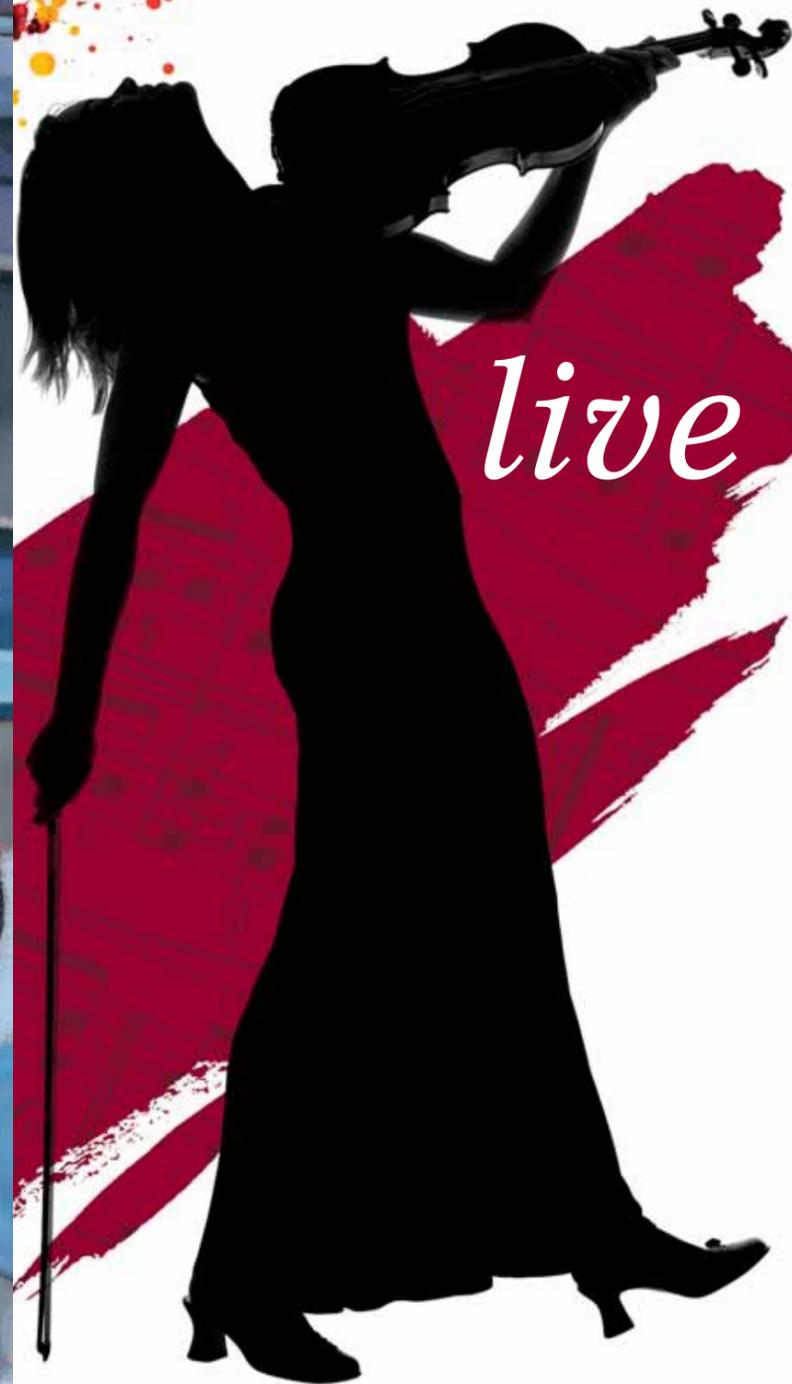
October 13, 8pm



Stravinsky's shimmering *Firebird Suite* highlights this festival of "top 100" favourites, including Sibelius' *Finlandia* and Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 1*. Hong Xu, an artist of incredible intensity and stage presence, joins Maestro Minczuk for this night of pure musical excitement.



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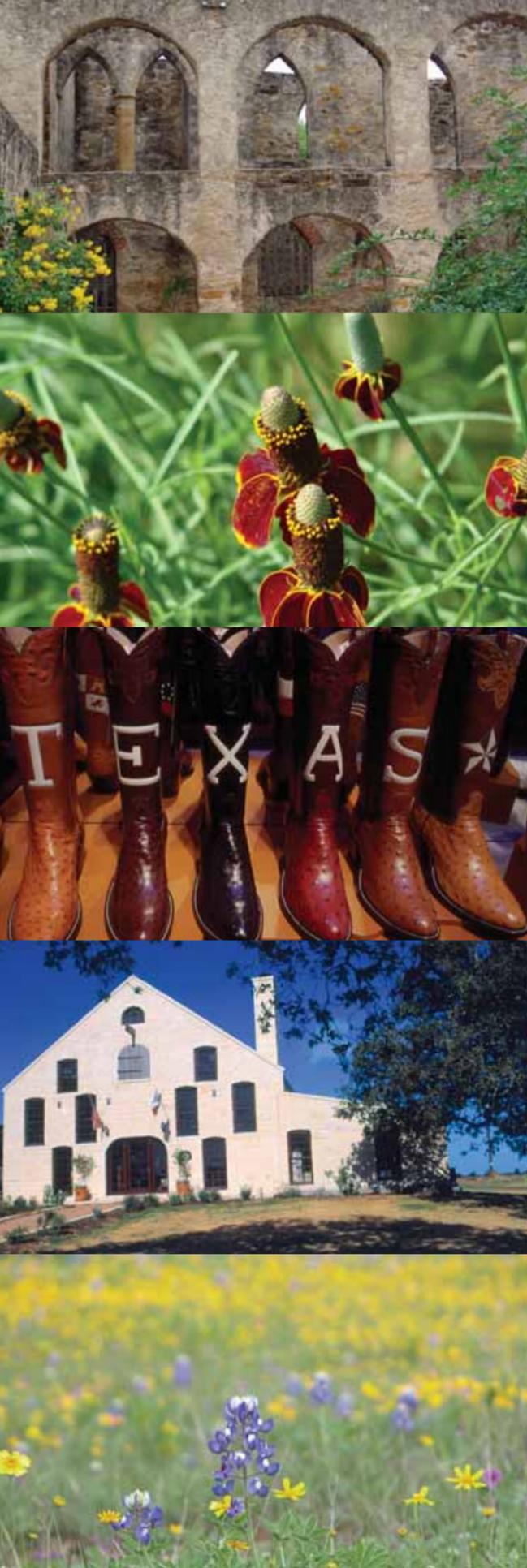
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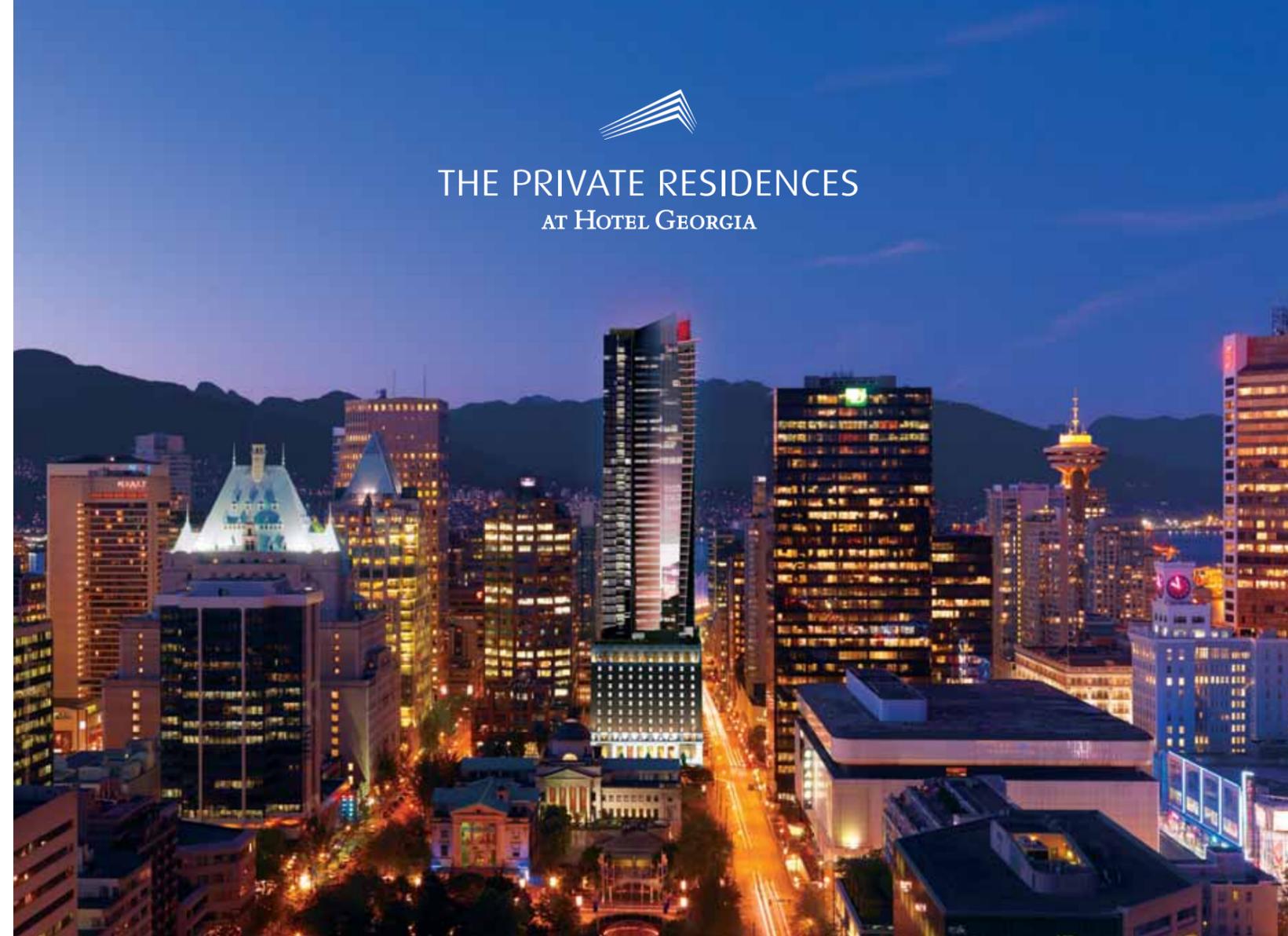
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Prior to visiting Texas we had a certain image in our minds; oil, cattle, John Wayne, George Bush and of course Dallas. Surprisingly enough, John Wayne filmed more movies in Arizona and George Bush didn't even grow up there.

Texas is a huge State and there is little doubt that native born Texans think Texas first. Traveling to the hill country opened our eyes to how diverse Texas really is. The citizens of Austin, the state's capital, insist the slogan: "Keep Austin Weird." We're really not sure what that means, but presumably it has little to do with shoot outs at the local corral.

The hill country is an area we would consider having a second home. The climate is right, prices are more than reasonable, the vegetation is very easy on the eye, there's waterfront and they even have wineries.

We also had the opportunity to visit the Washington wine country for this issue. We love strong red wines, Zinfandel is first to come to mind. From Washington State you can find an amazing Syrah that is full bodied and complex. We may have a new favourite for our cellar!

With Fall upon us, we wondered "did Summer even happen?" We're prone to saying to anyone who will listen "where's global warming when you need it." Next on the agenda is Barbados, that should fill the gap. We're looking forward to some sunshine and warmth at last!

Other than Cozumel this is our first visit to the Caribbean. The country is one of the oldest democracies in the Commonwealth and has a reciprocal tax treaty with Canada. Maybe this should be the location of that afore mentioned second home? Learn all about our adventures in the next issue. Don't miss out! If you don't have a subscription to Good Life, be sure to mail in the reservation form opposite this page.

Terry Tremaine
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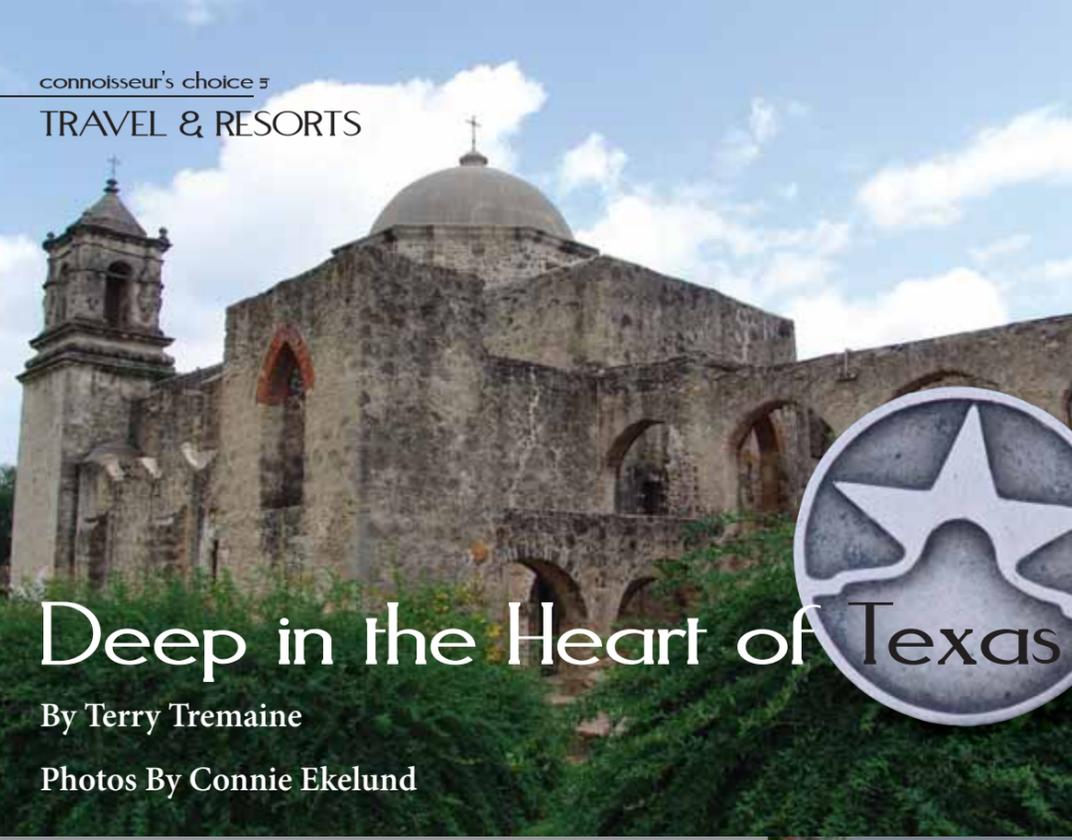
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Deep in the Heart of Texas

By Terry Tremaine
Photos By Connie Ekelund

As any Texan will tell you, Texas is a country unto itself. Constitutionally it has the right to secede from the Union at its whim and as a result the Texas flag, unlike other State flags, flies at the same height as the Stars and Stripes. Within any large country and Texas is certainly large, with approximately the same population base as all of Australia, there is going to be different regions with unique conditions and customs.

Texas Hill Country is a prime example of how different a region can be. Roughly bordered by San Antonio in the south and Austin to the north the area was settled principally by Germans in the 1800s. Those of German extraction still represent some 30% of the population and many like to boast that not so long ago the teaching language in the schools was German not English. We even heard a tale that when the Constitution was being written English barely beat out German as the official national language.

We found this a bit of a conundrum considering the constitution predates this German immigration but then again Texas is also known for its citizens' tale telling abilities.

We began our exploration of the region in San Antonio, the name of the city is certainly Spanish. We discovered Mission San Jose, known as "the Grand Dame of Missions," she was truly an amazing site. Another historic site is the Alamo, being the most famous historic site in all of Texas, a Mexican influence is to be expected. It seems somewhat ironic, considering what the Alamo represents, that the largest Mexican market outside of Mexico is to be found here in San Antonio.

Although San Antonio has a historic Spanish influence with five missions dating from the 1700s likely its biggest attraction is the Riverwalk. Early in the 1900s, city planners with foresight turned the banks of the San Antonio River in the downtown area into a park which continues to grow and expand.



Mission San José - San Antonio

Today in the core of the city the river is lined with shops, restaurants and galleries. There are some three miles of winding pathways often 20 feet below street level featuring unique footbridges and native landscaping. This is definitely the dynamic hub of the city. Since traffic is solely on foot or by water taxi the ambience is truly unique.

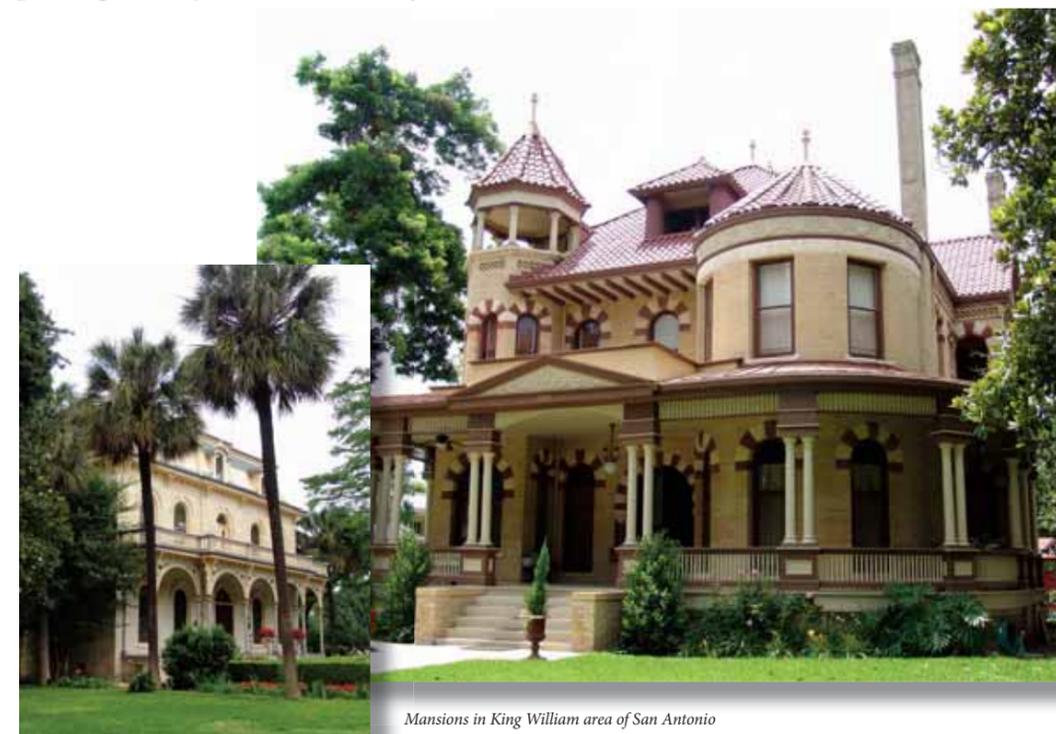
We started our walk at the now refurbished Guenther House which now houses a museum and café, and is located on a bend of the San Antonio River, at the foot of King William, one of the oldest historical districts in Texas. Carl Hilmar Guenther, the founder of Pioneer Flour Mills, built this elegant home in 1860. From this point on, a twenty minute walk to the core of the downtown area, King William Street follows the bank of the river and is lined with stately homes from the era.

To my surprise these elegant historic mansions, which anywhere else I would expect to command millions of dollars, reflect the continuing modest price of Texas real estate with pricing in only the hundreds of thousands.



Riverwalk area of San Antonio

"Texan elegant historic mansions reflect the continuing modest price of Texas real estate with pricing in only the hundreds of thousands."



Mansions in King William area of San Antonio



TRAVEL & RESORTS

Our home base in San Antonio was the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort & Spa. Just 20 minutes from either the airport or the downtown core, the resort is housed on an expansive 200 acre wooded property, formerly the Rogers-Wiseman working ranch. The decor admirably reflects its beginnings. Within the Hyatt organization this property continues to win awards for their service oriented staff. Many Texas families view the resort as their holiday retreat returning year after year.

Amenities include a 27-hole golf course designed by Arthur Hills which takes great advantage of the scenic rolling landscape of lakes and age-old trees. Fairways are broad and the vegetation is lush. Naturally there is the pre-exquisite full service spa with its own private pool surrounded by wildflowers. Antlers Lodge, the signature restaurant, has a menu with innovative twists on traditional Texas fare. There is also a four acre water playground.

Approximately an hour and half drive northwest from San Antonio, through lush rolling hills is Fredericksburg, Gillespie County's county seat. Founded by Germans in the mid 1800s, the county is the only Texas community to make the top 100 list of most desirable rural counties in America and is proudly ranked sixth. The county is home to both established ranching families and newcomers leaving the stresses of urban life. Not only is it the largest peach growing county in Texas it is also home to seven wineries.

Fredericksburg still has a German flair and the downtown area comprising some 150 shops is housed principally in historic buildings dating from its founding. But the attitude of the community is far from historic, Cuvee Bistro, one of the newer restaurants in this growing community has some 500 wines on its list.

On the outskirts of town is a new real estate development, Boot Ranch, focused on a spectacular 18-hole golf course designed by Hal Sutton. Hal is also building the first home in the planned community of acreage homes. Everything about the project is spectacular, from the clubhouse, to the views, to the 34-acre golf practice park.



Hyatt Hill Country Resort & Spa

"Keep a shelf in your cellar open for Texan wines!"

We had time to visit just one winery, Becker Vineyards. Their award winning Bordeaux, Burgundian and Rhone-styles wines have been served in the White House. The oldest winery Fall Creek Vineyards, located on the northwest shores of Lake Buchanan, was established in 1975. Their wines have won international recognition.

We had no idea that Texas was the fifth leading wine producing State in the USA. With a bit more time, and some viticulturists from various parts of the world taking notice, we have great expectation of what will develop from this region in years to come. Keep a shelf in your cellar open for Texan wines!

Just outside Fredericksburg we discovered Wildseed Farms. Likely inspired by Lady Bird Johnson, this is after all LBJ country, and her efforts to beautify America's highways with wildflowers, is the largest working wildflower farm in the country. Open to the public, the many species of Texas wildflowers are planted for their seeds which are mainly sold to highway maintenance authorities. We were lucky enough to catch numbers of species in bloom producing acres of colour.

Clockwise from above: Award winning wines from Becker Vineyards; Der Lindenbaum German Restaurant; Wildseed Farms in Fredericksburg.



Boot Ranch in Fredericksburg





Clockwise: Longhorn at Sculpture Ranch by Bettye H Turner; Horse at Sculpture Ranch by Bettye H Turner; View from Benini's Sculpture Ranch Formerly LBJs' home.



Outdoor Hammock and Spa Salon at the Four Seasons.



Further along the road as we headed to Horseshoe Bay, a rapidly growing community for expansive second homes on the south shore of Lake Buchanan, we quickly pulled to a stop upon seeing a gleaming, stainless steel, oversize, sculpture of a 'Texan Longhorn Steer' in the corner of a field. At its feet rested a small sign 'Sculpture Ranch 5 miles' pointing down a country road serving the farming community. Our curiosity got the better of us.

After a few twists and turns we came upon the Benini Foundation & Sculpture Ranch. Developed by Italian artist, Benini, the 140 acre ranch was at one time LBJ's home. The main house sits on a hill with a 360 degree view of a horizon 80 miles distant. According to Benini, LBJ liked to say that while lying on his bed the sun would rise behind his head and set between his toes. The studio and gallery rests at the base of the hill. Through out the acreage are many sculptures, most on a grand scale, by different sculptors, all with international reputations.

Benini's personality is on the same scale as the sculptures. Born in Italy, during the Second World War, he left home at 14 and has been supporting himself with his art ever since. It's his art, he's proud to say, that's paid for the ranch. The term foundation in this instance is not representative of a non-profit designation but rather a foundation in the European sense whereby a recognized artist's work can be exhibited and studied together with the work of artist friends. Benini, himself is best known for his painting; his preference being the symbol of the rose which he painted in a surrealistic or symbolic style for some twenty years. He is most famous for his painting of the rose with the American flag, which was bought by Bill Clinton.

Our next find was the Lakeway Resort and Spa on the shores of Lake Travis. This long time local community focal point has recently undergone a complete renovation and updating by the Dolce Group. The 168 rooms are elegantly appointed and all feature expansive private balconies with spectacular views of the sun setting over the lake.

Locals consider the resort their private club. The women's bridge club has used the lounge as their games room for years, the lake view backdrop providing a unique flavor to their game playing. Local traditions were so strong when management began the task of rejuvenating the menu the mayor was called upon by his supporters to intercede so long time favorites wouldn't be lost. The end result a quality dining room offering continental cuisine with a southwestern flair.

The resort now features full amenities with the pre-requisite spa and guest access to a number of golf courses. The locals continue to be proud.

Further along the Colorado River system, which provides the soul of Texas Hill country, lays Austin with all the grand buildings expected of a state capital. But for residents of Austin, grandeur is not the focus, the local slogan being 'keep Austin weird.' Weird would seem to be a knock off of bohemian.

Boasts of being the 'live music capital of the world' are supported with establishments such as the Broken Spoke known as the last true Texas dance hall. Two-steppers of all levels dance the night away to honky-tonk music. West Sixth is Austin's newest entertainment district and features upscale clubs and restaurants such as The Belmont, Key Bar, Molotov, Maiko Sushi Bar and Ranch 616 -very trendy, and popular among Austin's "scenesters."



Lakeway Resort & Spa Back Porch Wine & Coffee Bar; Outdoor Lounge; View from the rooms.



Right in the midst, sitting on the shores of Town Lake, is the Four Seasons. No surprise, the property lives up to the high standards expected of this well known luxury brand and is regarded as the best hotel in Austin. It boasts numerous awards for both dining and accommodation. A just completed \$15 million renovation includes the addition of a 5,500 square foot spa. The property has an almost resort like setting out its back door on the lake. There are jogging trails along the shores which are also home to rowing clubs.

Also seen from the 'backyard' is the Congress Street Bridge. Surprisingly the bridge is best known as the summer home for 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats. These harmless high flyers have spawned entire festivals in their honor; some 100,000 tourists visit the city each year just for the opportunity to see them take flight. One of the best vantage points to see the nightly exodus is the Four Seasons.

The bridge also leads to the South Congress shopping area, home to an eclectic group of merchants, who attract both shoppers and people watchers alike. The area could be seen as the foundation for: 'keep Austin weird.'

In the past decade the 100-1700 blocks of South Congress have been transformed from a dirty rundown strip to a cool destination featuring colorful high-end boutiques and quirky shops, restaurants with huge outdoor patios and music—live and through speakers—from every direction.

Second Street just west of the Congress Bridge is home to the recently completed upscale shopping district. Here can be found the height of western fashion and home fashion boutiques, interspersed with the compulsory trendy espresso bars.



Clockwise from top: 'Keep Austin Weird'; Austin Congress Building; The Driskill Hotel.



The presence of the University of Texas adds a significant flavor to the city as a result of its 50,000 students. Michael Dell, is likely its most prominent graduate, having launched Dell computers with his college buddies, and helped to foster the city as the 'silicon valley' of Texas.

The Blanton Museum of Art is the university's newest museum and houses America's largest university-owned collection and specializes in Renaissance and modern Latin American art. Another UT establishment, the Ransom Center showcases a world-class cultural archive. On permanent exhibit is the first photograph, a rare Gutenberg Bible, an exhibit on Earle Stanley Gardner's study (Gardner created Perry Mason) and more, a total of some 45 million items. Guests can also request to view the center's anthology of film artifacts including Gone with the Wind and Robert de Niro's personal collection.

The university might be best known for its cancer research centre. Attracting some of the best research scientists from around the world, the centre's very substantial endowment fund supports leading edge research, likely as progressive as any ongoing research being conducted anywhere.

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The Driskill Hotel, located in the town centre, has been the activity centre for Texas politicians since its construction by a wealthy land baron in the late 1800's. It's claimed, ghosts haunt the secret hallways which allowed philanders to surreptitiously leave their wives for a late-night dalliance with a mistress in a room near by. The colorful history warrants a visit providing an opportunity to taste the goodies, at the on premise 1886 Café & Bakery, prepared by its award winning pastry chef.

We always look at Real Estate as we travel, with the thought of second, third or fourth homes. Surprising to me is that the average price of a home in Austin is just \$200,000. Seems like such a bargain for what you can get!

Texas has not experienced the volatility of the real estate market found in other areas. Our travels through the Texas Hill Country presented beautiful vistas, in comforting surroundings, with equality services. The string of lakes and rivers making up the Colorado River system has lots of undeveloped waterfront. With its excellent climate our next trip back with be not simply to enjoy again its Texas hospitality, but to also seek out a potential additional home. ■

THE STATE OF TEXAS

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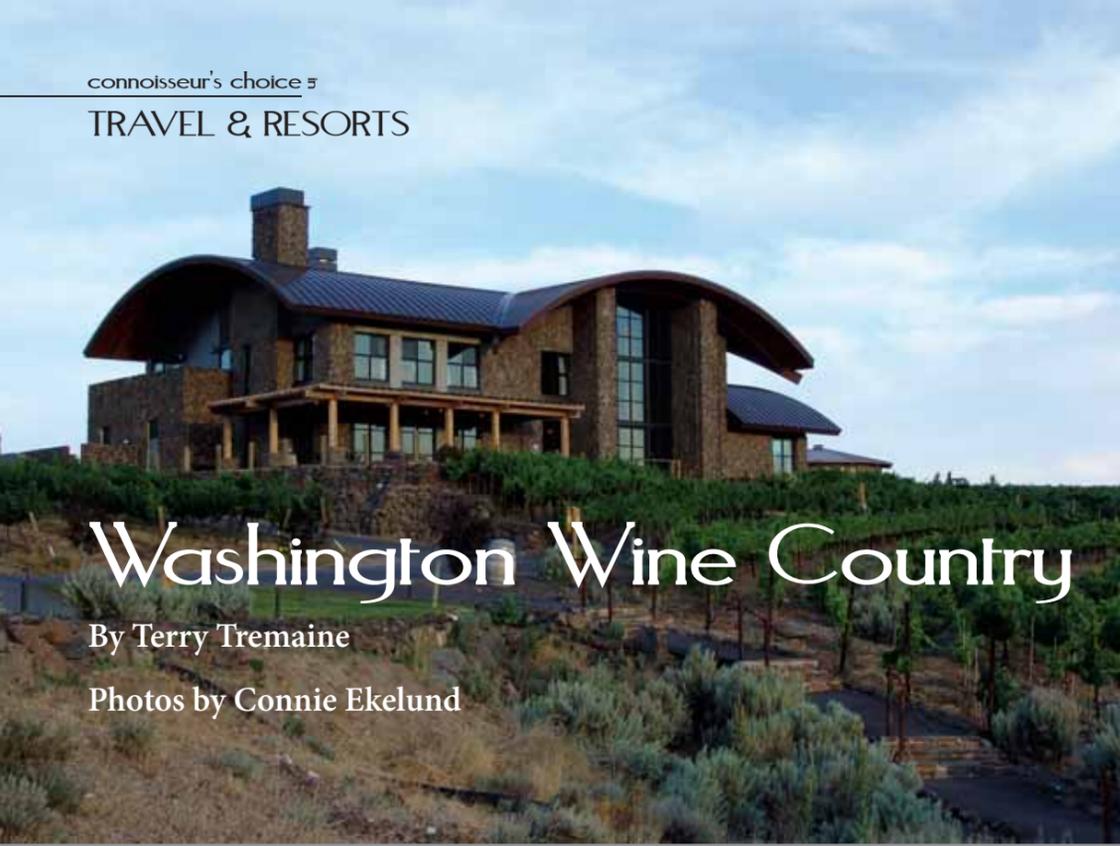




Washington Wine Country

By Terry Tremaine

Photos by Connie Ekelund



Clockwise from left: Cave B Inn; Cave B Inn - A pool with a view; View from Hedges Family Estate; Terra Blanca Cave Door.



L'Ecole No. 41 - winemaker Marty Clubb

For those of us who associate Washington State with the rain of Seattle, it would seem unlikely that it is second only to California nationally in wine production. The first grape vines were actually planted by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1825. Since that time, over 500 wineries have spread throughout the nine unique American Viticulture Areas that comprise Washington Wine Country. With the wineries has come the fine dining and quality inns commonly associated with wine growing areas.

Cave B Inn at Sagecliffe, in Quincy, certainly strives to provide the experience wine tourists spread the word about. The family owned and cared for property is the Northwest's first destination winery resort. Stunning views of the Columbia River from the top of 900 foot basalt cliffs provide the setting for amenities sure to encourage return visits.

The focus is on the wine but everything about this property makes the wine taste that much better. The inn is comprised of 30 large well appointed rooms, with three different luxury amenity levels spread among 6 different buildings, all with sunset views of the river below from their private balconies.

Tendrils restaurant James Beard Award winning chef, takes full advantage of the working farm environment to source organic produce to complement the wines. The inn even boasts a full service spa.

When the family first began developing the property it included the Gorge, a natural amphitheatre which in the summer hosts international music stars. That has since been sold to eliminate any distraction from the pursuit of the family vision for the winery. Next step is the development of an in-residence artist community and construction of units for sale to those wishing to make those return visits. The vision is certainly grand and easy to accept while sipping wine on your balcony watching the sunset after a gourmet meal.

To get an understanding of the scope of the wine growing area we drove from Quincy to Walla Walla—basically from one end of the prime growing area to the other. Along the way we travelled through a number of very distinct growing regions.

Our first stop was Terra Blanca Winery and Estate Vineyard in the Red Mountain area overlooking the lower Yakima valley. The name of the winery is Latin for white earth and refers to the high calcium carbonate content that whitens the soil and imparts a unique flavour to the wine. Winemaker Keith Pilgrim and ReNae, wife and partner, began planting in 1993.

Keith grew up in Napa and studied viniculture at the University of California. His passion for the Red Mountain area is evident as he takes you through a sampling of their award winning red wines. Production has already reached over 30,000 cases. They have recently added an amphitheatre, beside their two acre lake, as a setting for a variety of performances and outdoor entertainment. The theatre complements the Tuscan style facility housing their tasting room, wood fired oven and demonstration kitchen.

Also found in the Red Mountain area is the Hedges Family Estate. Founded by Tom and Anne-Marie Hedge, they came to the Red Mountain area after having entered the business with a virtual winery and the Swedish government their first client. Again the red wines they produce take advantage of the characteristics of the growing area.

The Hedges are committed to the natural aspects of farming. In January 2007 they began the 3 year Biodynamic certification process. What distinguishes a Demeter certified Biodynamic farm from a certified organic farm is that, in its entirety, a Demeter Biodynamic farm is managed as a living organism. The Biodynamic method dates back to 1924 and is one of the original approaches to organized organic farming worldwide.

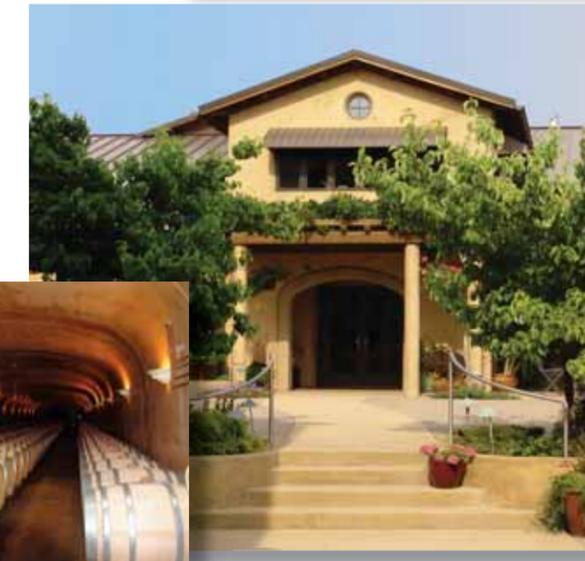
The Red Mountain Viticulture area is the smallest viticulture area in Washington and surprisingly is home to the research facility which produced the radioactive material used in the first nuclear bomb. Apparently one of the scientists simply put it in the back seat of his car and drove to the Nevada facility. Today the area is home to more PhD's per capita than any other area in the US.

Next on our agenda was L'Ecole 41, the winery which first opened our taste buds to Washington wines, having been already been introduced to either the personable winemaker Martin Clubb or his wines at various travel destinations. We were actually offered L'Ecole 41 wine by a sommelier in Cabos St Lucas. A big surprise considering their production is only 30,000 cases.

"Washington is second only to California nationally in wine production"

The winery is in Lowden in the Walla Walla Valley area and derives its name from the old school house in which it is housed. The winery is considered one of the pioneers in the area and continues to further the reputation of Walla Walla wines by consistently producing award winning wine.

Next door to L'Ecole 41 is the Woodward Canyon Estate Vineyard. Rick Small planted the first forty-one acres of the winery in 1976 on his family's dryland wheat ranch having developed a personal interest in winemaking from his friend Gary Figgins, founded of Leonetti. Rick's agricultural upbringing has him convinced that the quality of the wine is established to a large extent in the vineyards. A tasting would suggest he is right.



Leonetti Cellar - Wine Tasting Room and Barrel Room

A short drive away is Leonetti Cellar, bonded in 1977 and was the very first winery in the area. This quality small volume producer, 2000 cases, was founded by two brothers who personally painstakingly planted and tended the vines and developed the wines. Today it's the eldest son who runs the family operation. While leading a barrel tasting for us, so we might understand how he blends the final product, his tales of working in a family business seemed to add flavor to the wine.

When the family decided to build their new spacious underground cellar, he had suggested to his Dad that they add a tunnel between the old cellar and the new. Dad of course thought this to be a waste of money. A year later Dad had a great idea, let's build a tunnel between the old cellar and the new one.

TRAVEL & RESORTS

Leonetti Cellar was soon followed by Va Piano Vineyards. Va Piano Vineyards is a much more recent participant in the Walla Walla area. Justin Wylie, the winemaker, is a fourth generation resident who spent his senior year studying in Florence. Upon his return he began making wine and began his first commercial crush in 2003.

The name of the winery means "go slow" and Justin firmly believes the quality of the wine comes from the fruit. Given half a chance he'll take you on a tour of the fields to elaborate on how quality fruit is carefully produced. But a few moments with him and you will discover going slow is not part of his makeup. Already he's acquired further acreage to augment his current 20 acres and which he's already planted.

It would be difficult to imagine a more perfect introduction to the pleasures of Walla Walla wine country touring than to spend a few days at The Inn at Abeja. Abeja (pronounced uh-BAY-ha), which means 'bee' in Spanish, spreads comfortably across 32 acres of wooded farmland and vineyard on the eastern fringe of Walla Walla.

The original outbuildings of the farm have been restored into five individual, private and spacious guest accommodations. Craftsmanship has been combined with salvaged materials. Don't let the cottage names fool you: Chicken House Cottage, Locust Suite or Summer Kitchen Cottage are not what they would seem. Each is uniquely appointed with antiques and eclectic furnishings. Modern touches such as heated floors have not been forgotten.

The inn is so popular that reservations have to be made far in advance. In order to accommodate both the demand of locals and visitors during festival periods, the inn conducts a lottery to give every one a chance at booking one of the rooms. The same attention to detail that's evident in the lodging can also be tasted in their wine.

A wine lovers trip that should not be missed. You will fall in love with the beauty of the area, the extreme passion of the winemakers and of course the wine itself! Cheers! ■

Special note: Do pack a picnic basket if you plan of touring this wine region, as dining establishments are extremely difficult to find on the trail.

Abeja Wine tasting room; Abeja Bunkhouse.



Terry and Va Piano winemaker Justin Wylie; Barrel tasting at Va Piano

Connoisseur's Choice

Cave B Inn and Estate Winery
348 Silica Road NW
Quincy, WA 98848

Abeja
2014 Mill Creek Road
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Hedges Family Estate
53511 North Sunset Road
Benton City, WA 99320

Terra Blanca
End at 34715 N Demoss Rd
Benton City, WA 99320-8797

Woodward Canyon Winery
11920 West Highway 12
Lowden, WA 99360

L'Ecole No. 41
41 Lowden School Road
Lowden, WA 99360

Leonetti Cellar
1278 Berney Drive
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Va Piano Vineyards
1793 JB George Road
Walla Walla, WA 99362

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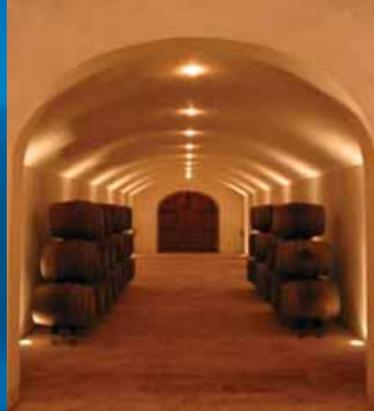
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Autumn Wine Harvest: Romance and Reality

By Gael Arthur



Harvest—it's a word that conjures up images of reaping nature's bounty—produce that was lovingly nurtured through the spring and summer, its progress measured by changes in colour and slowly emerging aromas, until the perfect day.

This imagery has been carefully crafted by the wine marketing folks, and we eat it up, picturing happy people singing as they snip clusters of grapes, stopping occasionally for great meals at long tables set up under the trees. Can't you just see the children running around, laughing and playing with the dogs? The grapes disappear, effortlessly transforming themselves into a glorious wine that sleeps in oak casks deep in an underground cellar, quiet and safe until its unveiling at the quintessential seven-course meal.

The reality may have moments of this good life, but in truth, harvesting grapes is backbreaking work, generally in the sweltering sun, or, worse, in torrential rains. Once the grapes are at the winery, the fermentation must be monitored constantly, night and day. The temperature must stay within a specified range to control the pace of the conversion of sugar to alcohol; the crust or cap that forms on the top of red wines must be punched down to aerate the wine and extract the maximum flavours from the skins. Everything must be watched and regulated to nurture the wines through their birth and infancy. There is a tremendous amount of work in making winemaking appear simple, sending a clean, balanced wine into those oak casks to work their way through childhood and adolescence with a minimum of disruption.

Clockwise from above: Fèlsina cantina at night; Fèlsina cellars; Chardonnay vines in Burgundy; Fèlsina Sangiovese

The romance of happy singing women in peasant skirts stomping grapes is an illusion at best—and a nightmare at worst. Steve Girard now laughs when he talks about an early harvest disaster involving non-professionals. It was back in the early 1980's, when he and his wife Carol were the proprietors of Girard Winery in Napa Valley. At the time, it seemed like a good idea to invite family members to be involved in the harvesting of the grapes. The winery was building its reputation on Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, so Steve chose the low-risk plot of Zinfandel that he used to make a fun wine sold only through the winery.

"It was an unmitigated disaster. One of my older relatives was keen and she took the lead, organizing an event, making food for the picnic that would epitomize everybody's preconceived idea of harvesting grapes. We were all fine with it, until the weather cooled down unexpectedly, and the grapes slowed down. I called her to let her know that there was a change in plans. She told me that no, there would be no change in plans; she had everything organized and they would all be arriving on Saturday. Somehow, she didn't quite understand the concept of waiting for the grapes."

When the day came, Steve carefully explained how important their task was: "I made it as simple as I could, saying things like, 'If it is green, leave it on the vine, purple or even pink is okay to pick.' But no, they picked every vine clean."

Steve and Carol now own Benton-Lane Winery in Oregon, making premium Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris. With two of last year's Top 100 wines in the Wine Spectator list, it's obvious he pays close attention to the details of every aspect of making wine. He admits

that people—family, friends, tourists, wine writers—aren't welcomed around harvest with open arms. "We can't really spend time with them and, more than that, it can be dangerous. We have three forklifts being driven as fast as possible through the winery by people who are operating on very little sleep. We have white lines, but people who are excited about winemaking don't really want to stay behind the white lines—they want to take pictures of the grapes going into the crusher. I can't police them and do all the other things I need to do during harvest."

While small wineries like Benton-Lane simply can't afford to welcome visitors during the crazy period surrounding harvest, larger wineries in North America have recognized it as a terrific marketing opportunity and they staff accordingly. Visitors probably won't be able to stand on the crush pad as the grapes come in, but they can definitely get a feel for the excitement and the tension. It's worthwhile checking out which wine regions celebrate the harvest with festivals and plan around places that really cater to visitors.

In Burgundy, the team at Bouchard Père et Fils have their work cut out for them every harvest. They own small parcels of land up and down the narrow strip of land that is considered the birthplace of both Pinot Noir and Chardonnay (and, centuries later, still home to some of the best of both).

As Luc Bouchard explains, "The most difficult thing is to decide when to harvest each parcel. Indeed, we cannot harvest our vineyards in the same order each year. During the harvest period, our technical team meets daily to decide what vineyard will be picked the next day. We have to constantly adapt our day-to-day picking programme depending on the grape maturity in each vineyard and on the weather forecasts."

"We have to be very reactive, especially when the vintage is early. When we pick at the end of August, temperatures are often higher than at the end of September and the maturity can evolve very quickly—grapes can gain half of degree of sugar in two or three days, whereas it takes one week at the end of September."

In Burgundy, every vintage is fraught with concerns over late frost, mid-season hail and early rains. All this unpredictability means that harvest can vary by several weeks. In the scorching summer of 2003, Bouchard Père et Fils began harvesting on August 21, while the latest harvest in recent history was October 9, back in 1980.

For the true feel of harvest, it is hard to beat Tuscany. Wine festivals take place throughout September and October, often including parades of decorated carts, along with food stalls showcasing regional foods and lots of entertainment. A quick look at the festival schedule could easily result in visits to three or four festivals within two weeks, all without travelling very far from Siena.

The Italians have a more laid back approach to visitors to the vineyards—at Fèlsina, a centuries-old property perched on the divide of Chianti and Crete Senesi (about 20 kilometres from Siena), Giuseppe Mazzocolin advises that visitors are welcomed, but expected to understand that they may not get much personal attention.

Even in Tuscany, the winemaker is at the mercy of the weather. As General Manager of Fèlsina, Giuseppe has seen a lot of great vintages in his more than thirty years there, along with a few that were not so great.



Harvesting Pinot noir at Benton-Lane in Oregon





Clockwise from far left bottom: Punching; Fèlsina sangiovese; Harvesting Pinot noir at Benton-Lane in Oregon; Pinot Noir at Benton-Lane; Sorting table at Bouchard Père et Fils.

“The worst vintage in the past ten years was 2002. There was never the right moment to start picking. With a very

thorough selection we were able to produce a basic Chianti Classico that was quite enjoyable. Another “minor” harvest to remember was 1996. But that year, we also produced a quality wine at the expense of quantity.”

For Fèlsina, to have a small harvest means even smaller than their low yielding vines, which, for the amazing Chianti Classico Riserva Berardenga, are over fifty years old. What they lose in quantity is more than compensated

for in intensity and complexity. The Fèlsina property is spread out over terrain with a large variation in elevation, boasting a huge range of different Sangiovese clones. All this diversity means that grapes ripen at different times. This is a huge advantage for the operation, as the pickers can move from vineyard to vineyard, without a mad rush of everything being ripe on the same day. In hot vintages, like 2003, the whites are ready in the third week of August, while cooler vintages have Sangiovese still hanging on the wines well into October.

The unpredictability of the harvest is exemplified in the vintages of 2002

and 2003. In 2002, the harvest at Fèlsina was the latest in ten years and in 2003, it was the earliest. Fèlsina is fortunate that most of the people who pick their grapes are locals who have been doing it for years. These longstanding relationships mean that the harvesters know they have work every year, and Fèlsina knows they have workers when they are needed, regardless of the weather.



Giuseppe Mazzocolin,
General Manager, Fèlsina

The fickle nature of the Oregon weather is something Steve Girard appreciates all the more for his time in Napa Valley. “Here in the Willamette Valley, we are on the edge climatically—we have been very lucky for the last decade. In 1997, we weren't so lucky. We were all greedy and were foolish enough to leave too much fruit on the vines. At the last moment a trough of low pressure came in and stalled over the valley. The vines simply shut down, so no more sugar was produced. Suddenly we had a lot of unripe fruit and not much chance of it ever getting ripe.”

Hand harvesting the limited clusters that did eventually ripen allowed Benton-Lane and other Oregon producers to make small quantities of “okay” wine. Steve looks back on 1997 almost fondly: “In retrospect, it was a great year. It taught me a valuable lesson—never to be greedy and try to bump up the yields. We know how much the vines should yield and we make sure we are at that level. We don't ever want to be caught with fruit that can't ripen.”

Back in Italy, one way of reducing the risk of weather is to have a bit of diversity in the form of a second crop—olives. Fèlsina produces a range of exquisite olive oils—the trees are interspersed with the vines, growing in areas unsuitable for grapes, creating a wonderful landscape. The olive harvest is generally later, but it has happened that the olives were ready at the same time as the grapes. There are some similarities in the olive and grape harvest. In both cases, it is a matter of monitoring the sugar content and colour of the fruit. Then, different lots are processed independently, and may be blended before bottling, or kept as separate lots. Fèlsina has four main types of olive trees, and produce bottles of each type; from the herbaceous Leccino to the peppery Raggiolo, each oil has subtle nuances that pair with specific foods.

Unlike Fèlsina's wines, the olive oil is ready almost immediately. In fact, it is best consumed within the first year of production. The Italians are as passionate about their olive oil as they are about their wine and it's easy to understand why. Once you have tasted fresh high quality olive oil, it is hard to go back to the big brands that bottle oils in huge factories that import oil from several different countries and blend them, creating an elegant label and attractive price to seduce customers. A small 100ml bottle of quality olive oil like Fèlsina's is truly worth more than a litre of the generic product. Like most of the best things in life, a little goes a long way. ■

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EVERY GREAT WINE SHOULD LOOK THIS GOOD.



The Big Game: The ultimate casino experience What it is and where to get it

By Basil Nestor



Clockwise from left: Wynn; Borgata; Venetian



Photo: Robert Miller

Your heart is pounding. Your palms are sweaty. The dealer finishes shuffling the deck, and he nods in your direction. All eyes are on you. You push a tall stack of chips toward the centre of the table. As your hand returns across the line, the dealer begins delivering cards. That's it. No going back. By law, you are committed. The money is in limbo. It will disappear or be doubled (maybe even tripled or quadrupled, depending on the game). Everything moves in slow motion. One card slides across the table, then two. That's your starting hand. Will it be a perfect combination? You reach for the cards...

Exciting, yes? Thrilling, but only if the stack of chips represents an amount that has some significance. If it's a piddling sum, then the contest hardly matters. On the other hand, if it's too much money, then the pleasure of risk is eclipsed by sheer terror. Even famed billionaire and gambling enthusiast Kerry Packer had his personal limits (reportedly in the neighborhood of \$250,000 per hand).

For most people in North America, an average bet is between \$10 and \$100. But what if you're not "most people?" What if you crave action in the range of \$500 to \$50,000, or maybe higher?

This presents challenges that average punters never consider. There are issues of credit, confidentiality, and privacy, as well as your special requirements for an exceptional gaming experience.

You want action. You want excitement. And of course, you want to squeeze every ounce of over-sized value from every yellow chip (\$1,000) and brown chip (\$5,000) that you risk. Perhaps you already have an established relationship with a particular casino. That's cool. But it never hurts to look around. And if you're new to the casino scene or ready to move up in betting limits, then you should know the latest and greatest options for your high-limit bankroll.

Anything Within the Law

The best casinos are experts in the chameleon-like ability of providing just about anything you want any way you want. Frankly, it doesn't matter if the casino is in a desert, next to an ocean, on a mountain, or wherever. Once you're there, the outside world melts away. Larry Mullin, President and COO of Borgata in Atlantic City, explains it this way, "Anything within the law, we would try to accommodate a customer."

He's not kidding. Private jet transportation? Done. Ultra-luxury residence? Done. Private gaming area? Done. And the incentives just keep coming. What will it cost you? If you play your cards right (and we mean literally *play your cards right*), then the cost will be zero. Nada. Zilch. It all depends on the size of your bankroll. But before we get into games, costs, and strategies, let's talk about properties.

The Magnificent Seven

The casinos listed in the adjacent table are the best of the best in North America. These properties regularly offer the biggest and most well-presented games, along with amenities and services you would expect in superior resorts.

Besides these casinos, other top-tier entries include Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City, MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, Atlantis in the Bahamas, and Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

In this article, we review what high-limit players should look for when they're evaluating properties. To get started on your big-game adventure, simply call and ask for a casino host.

What You Want

There are three things you should look for primarily when choosing a high-limit casino. These items may seem obvious, but they're tough to get in the right mix. Indeed, only a few places in North America (most notably the Magnificent Seven) excel in all these areas. The best casinos have the following:

1. Games and betting limits that suit your bankroll

"We offer pretty aggressive limits on the floor to anyone walking in off the street," says Mullin. "We're \$100 to \$5,000 on most of our blackjack games. Most places are not so aggressive. They might be up to \$1,000 or \$3,000."

Wynn in Las Vegas offers "upwards of \$10,000 on normal games," according to Brandon Cox, Wynn's PR Manager.

And if you like slots, there should be a good selection of machines in denominations from \$25 to \$1,000.

After an initial credit check, betting at these levels and above should not require a drawn-out series of approvals. If you get hassled with a lot of red tape, or managers are wringing their hands with worry, then this place is not for you.

2. Atmosphere, amenities, and clientele that appeal to your aesthetic tastes

Again, this seems obvious, but it's an important choice that is sometimes lost in the whirlwind of options.

You should love *everything*, from the soaring design of the casino, the chef-focused restaurants, the trendy clubs, the sexy pools, all the way to the thread-count of the bed sheets.

For example, Wynn emphasizes an organic experience. Wynn's Director of VIP Services, Shawn Cardinal, describes it this way, "All of the restaurants here have indoor and outdoor seating, so you can experience the beautiful landscape and design elements... You don't feel overwhelmed by the vastness of it all. And there is a lot of attention to detail in all those little spaces."

It's awesome, if you like that. On the other hand, maybe you *want* to feel overwhelmed at a more in-your-face-palatial property such as the Venetian or Bellagio. Whatever your preference, the better you feel, the better you'll play.

Also, there is the practical matter of the casino's other guests. A property may have superior ratings and a sterling rep, but maybe the crowd is too frou-frou for your taste, too young, too old, or whatever. Do you want to be bumping into Justin Timberlake, Britney Spears, or Steven Spielberg? How about NBA All-Stars? These are practical questions to ask a host. And speaking of hosts...



Starting far left: Borgata high-limit gaming; Venetian poker room; Tao restaurant at the Venetian

Connoisseur's Choice Casinos

Bellagio – Las Vegas

European style with the best poker room on the planet
(888) 987-3456
(702) 693-7111
Bellagio.com

Borgata – Atlantic City

Hip and youthful energy in an elegant environment
(866) MY-BORGATA
(609) 317-1000
TheBorgata.com

Caesars Palace – Las Vegas

A Las Vegas legend that is still going strong
(800) 634-6661
(702) 731-7110
CaesarsPalace.com

Foxwoods – Connecticut

The largest casino in the world
(800) FOXWOODS
(862) 312-3000
Foxwoods.com

Mohegan Sun – Connecticut

The second-largest casino in the world, and somewhat trendier than Foxwoods
(888) 226-7711
(860) 862-7500
MoheganSun.com

Venetian – Las Vegas

Enormous size and breathtaking opulence
(877) 883-6423
(702) 414-1000
Venetian.com

Wynn – Las Vegas

Casino-legend Steve Wynn's latest tour de force, the only five-star five-diamond casino-hotel in the world
(888) 320-WYNN
(702) 770-7100
WynnLasVegas.com

RECREATION

3. Casino employees who are discreet, efficient, and attentive

“First and foremost, you need a personal relationship with somebody, a casino host who is really looking out for you, and who makes sure that everything you need in advance is done,” says Cardinal. “Your credit line is set up, and if you’re a big enough player, your table is reserved, so you have your own 21 table, craps table, whatever you’re playing.”

Besides hosts, dealers, and servers, there also should be top executives interacting with you. That means vice presidents and other top managers.

At the Borgata, Mullin explains, “It may go from a very little amount of discussion that a customer wants to engage in, to one that might be very open, wanting to share many experiences just like you would [with] your favorite real-estate agent or favorite banker.”

Because, of course, you *are* discussing money and credit.



Slots at the Borgata Casino

What is Your Game?

Play what you prefer, but let’s be real. You want to win.

This is how you do it...

Regardless of the contest, every gambling game has an optimal strategy. Casinos are counting on you to deviate from strategy. That is how they earn most of their profits. For example, casinos typically have a razor-thin 0.5% advantage in blackjack when players use basic strategy *without* counting cards. Nevertheless, the house usually earns 2% to 3% of blackjack action. Why? Because most people don’t play so well. As Homer Simpson would say, “Doh!”

This chart shows the house edge on some popular casino bets. Remember that you must use optimal strategies to get these numbers.

How do you learn optimal strategies? Check out *The Unofficial Guide to Casino Gambling* and *The Smarter Bet Guides* (available at Amazon.com).

Here’s the bottom line. When you compete against an edge of 1% or less, just a little bit of good luck can earn you a hefty profit. But you need a lot more luck to finish with a net win against an edge of 3% or more.

Take a Free Ride

Of course, casinos know all the numbers. They’re counting on you to lose at least 1% of your action, and (maybe) you’ll blow a lot more. So they “comp” suites, meals, and other goodies. The exact comp formulas are closely-held secrets, but we can tell you the basics here in a simplified form.

GAME	BET	CASINO ADVANTAGE
Blackjack	Using basic strategy with counting*	-1.00%
Slots: Video Poker	Jacks-or-Better 9/6 played with optimal strategy	0.46%
Blackjack	Using basic strategy with no counting	0.50%
Baccarat	Banker	1.06%
Craps	Pass line	1.41%
Roulette	European wheel with no surrender	2.70%
Slots: Video Poker	Jacks-or-Better 8/5 played with optimal strategy	2.70%
Slots: Reels	Standard \$100-\$500 machine (Las Vegas)	4.00%
Craps	Buy the 5	4.76%
Roulette	American wheel with no surrender	5.26%
Caribbean Stud	Base bet	5.30%
Baccarat	Tie	14.4%
Craps	Any seven	16.7%

* Note that players are welcome to use blackjack basic strategy in standard high-limit games, but betting schemes based on card counting are not allowed. Percentages are rounded and are based on optimal play.

Most casinos are willing to “reinvest” about one-quarter to one-half of their theoretical gross profits. Let’s say you bet \$5,000 per hand at blackjack. At sixty hands per hour, four hours per day, and 1% hold, the casino hopes to earn at least \$12,000, and perhaps more if you play poorly. So you can expect to get comps valued around \$3,000 to \$6,000 per day in return for your blackjack action (and probably much more if the casino staff notices that you’re not correctly doubling on 9 against a 6).

Comps tend to increase when you play poorly, when you switch from blackjack to roulette, or when you move off the craps pass line and start buying numbers or betting the propositions. Casinos *love* players who bet the propositions!

Conversely, comps decrease or disappear when you spend too much time playing traditional poker. That is because the casino earns only the “drop” or “rake” per hand.

We won’t go into the intricacies of game selection and standard deviation here, but just keep in mind that comp deals are negotiated with your host and are based on your total action (how much you risk) and the edge, not on how much you actually win or lose. So it is entirely possible for you to be fully comped and still walk out of the casino a net winner.

And thus, ultimately, the biggest and best game is the contest *you* create, wherever you choose to create it. It’s the deal you make at the property you like. The big game is the whole experience.

Enjoy the game!

Basil Nestor is author of "The Smarter Bet Guide to Blackjack", "The Smarter Bet Guide to Craps", and other comprehensive gambling guides. Got a question? Visit SmarterBet.com and drop him a line. ■



Jess Jackson — Adobe House, Alexander Valley



The French taught me about “terroir.” I learned to be stubborn on my own. It wasn’t until I applied my stubbornness to this classically proven French concept that we were able to create Kendall-Jackson wines.

First, a bit about terroir. The French developed this concept centuries ago — the location, soil and climate of a given vineyard site directly affect the flavor and characteristics of the wine produced from that vineyard. Armed with this knowledge, I found that the grapes grown on California’s cool coastal mountains, ridges, hillsides

and benchlands produced the richest and most intense flavors with unique character.

Low-yield farming on high elevation terrain takes a tremendous commitment in terms of time and cost. But anything else would require compromise. And my stubbornness will never allow it.

I understand that many of you enjoy the taste of our wines, but you’re not sure why. Hopefully, I can help with the facts. So you can enjoy **A Taste of the Truth.**



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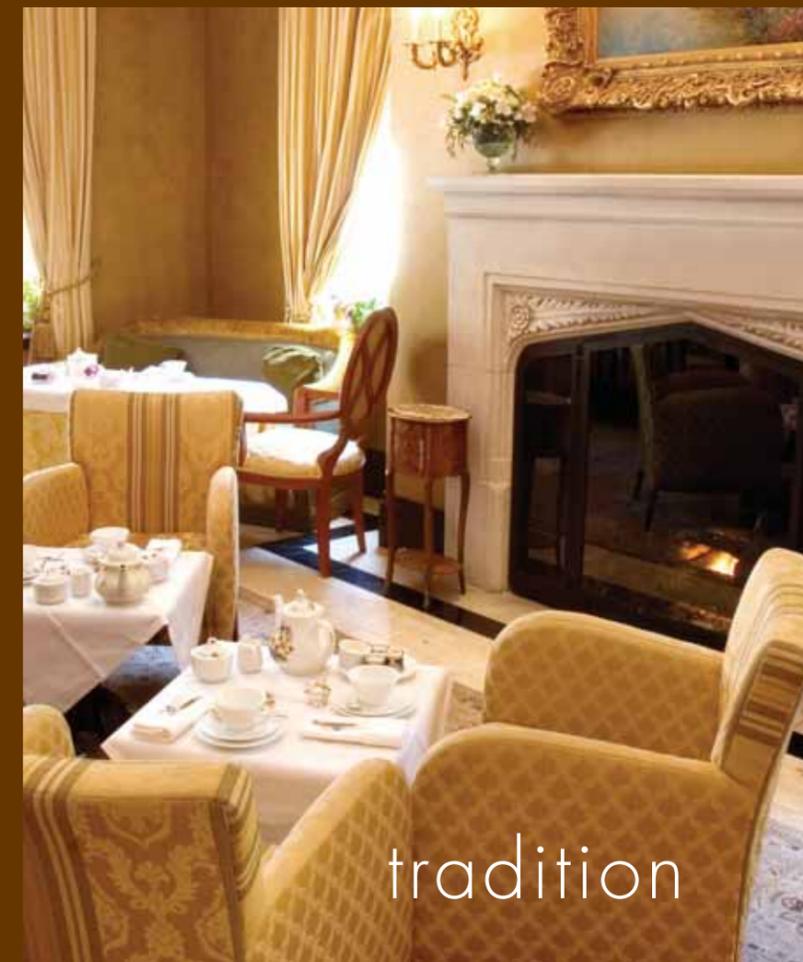
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refined



tradition



Above - by Bernhardt: American Anthology gathering table (left and right); Wiltshire Boulevard dining room table with banquettes (middle).



Left - by Bernhardt: Wiltshire Boulevard dining room table with banquettes. Above from top - by Bernhardt: Tahiti side and coffee tables; Bali side and coffee tables.

www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com

Sumptuous Living Spaces

By Janet Collins

Just as clothes make the man, furniture makes the home. After all, the most beautiful room in the world can't be fully appreciated unless the admirer is sitting comfortably as so to soak up the ambiance of the space at his/her leisure. In fact, one of the most appealing aspects of any space is found in its ability to function – and no bedroom can fulfill its intended role without the aid of some sort of bed, just as no lounge area can be successful unless there is some place to, well, lounge. That said, not all furniture is created equal.

“When it comes to furniture, trends vary,” says James Young, of James Young Design, a Las Vegas-based interior design firm that caters to a well-heeled clientele. “What works in Texas might not be as big in Nevada. And, of course, there are matters of individual taste and personal needs affecting purchasing decisions.” Even so, Young does see some general trends emerging.

“People are suddenly realizing that they don't have to buy a whole house-full of furniture in just one style,” Young says. “It's okay to mix up styles and eras now. But if I had to pick one specific trend, I'd say contemporary furniture is very hot right now.”

Heather Bloom, director of marketing (residential) for Bernhardt Design concurs with Young's suggestion that trends vary with location and individual clients.

“The majority of [furniture] collections in the last few years have had darker woods,” Bloom says, “but lighter woods are more appropriate for sunnier climates.” And while the growing condo craze has sparked a spat of smaller furniture pieces, there are still those who want and need larger-scale pieces that make an architectural statement in larger, often over-height, rooms. The nine-foot tall, or higher, curio cabinets in the Bernhardt's Montelena line forms a case in point.

As for addressing this current trend toward contemporary styling, Bernhardt has responded with the Wiltshire Boulevard Collection.

Clockwise: Platform Bed (Queen size shown), Item# 620Q from the Walnut Bedroom Collection, designed by McGuire Furniture; Cocktail Table, Item# RK-539, Designed by Robert Kuo for McGuire; St. Germain Slipper Chair, Item# WS-22; Copenhagen Lounge Chair in Water Hyacinth, Item# WP-50 designed by Orlando Diaz-Azcuy for McGuire.



McGuire is another furniture manufacturer producing product that caters to those searching for contemporary pieces. Their recently released Robert Kuo designs make a good case for the flexibility of the contemporary aesthetic.

The sleek lines and classic forms of Kuo's designs would easily blend with contemporary rooms/architecture, those with more classic flare, or even something exhibiting an Asian influence.



Thanks to the likes of Al Gore, Bono, and some unprecedented weather extremes, the biggest newsmaker of the last few years has to be the environment. As users of large quantities of natural materials such as wood and leather, furniture manufacturers are often in the hot seat when it comes to questions of sustainability. In recent years, however, there has been a marked move toward the greener side of product production with many manufacturers touting the recycled/recyclable content of specific products as well as an increase in sustainable material sourcing and manufacturing practices.

Bernhardt has addressed environmental issues in a couple of ways with their new line launches. In some incidences, natural fabrics and sustainable woods are used as is the case with the Tahiti and Bali tables which sport coconut twig and abaca tops, respectively. Other companies are following suit. For example, the Copenhagen Lounge Chair in water hyacinth from McGuire's Orlando Diaz-Azcuy Collection picks up on the environmental theme while also embracing the trend towards contemporary styling.

Also, the coconut twig, abaca, and water hyacinth echo another trend Young is seeing. “Affluent buyers want to replicate what they see on their travels,” he says. “They loved the Louis XV chair at that hotel in Paris, and would love to have one like it in their bedroom.” Those grasses may put homeowners in mind of things they saw in the South Pacific, just as bamboo may conjure up memories of a trip to Asia.

www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com

No matter what room you plan to furnish, here are a few things to keep in mind:

Jim Young

- Educate yourself. Do some research. Know what you really want before you call in a designer. Your time is valuable, so approach a meeting with a designer as you would any other meeting. Bring pictures, fabric swatches, anything that inspires you. That will help the designer help you achieve the result you want.
- Remember, TV shows aren't realistic in terms of the time it takes to design a room.
- Take measurements. That helps ensure the furniture will fit where you want to put it.

Heather Bloom

- Understand your preferred style so you're not overwhelmed by all the options available.
- When taking measurements of a room, note the scale of the room – ceiling height is just as important as floor area.
- Consider your lifestyle – grand entertaining versus needs of a young family.

Mark Schurman

- You get what you pay for. Quality never goes out of style.
- Think twice about buying a knock-off. It won't be the same quality as the original. Buying knock-offs discourages original design and innovation. Mark Schurman maintains that branding is gaining importance for these reasons as well as the desire to purchase a specific label – much like the obsession with certain labels in the fashion world.
- Think about sustainability. Vote with your consumer dollars.

Below - by Herman Miller: Nelson Swag Leg Chair and Desk.



A twist on the environmental theme is picked up in another trend: multi-function pieces. In this case, the “reduce” aspect of the 3Rs can be translated into the need consume fewer pieces. Those who have limited space will also welcome the ever-expanding range of multi-function furniture options currently hitting the market. From ottomans that transform into cocktail tables to low-profile armoires that conceal a hidden TV screen that pops up at the touch of a remote control button, furniture manufacturers are helping consumers get more bang for their buck.

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From top – by Herman Miller:
Eames Molded Plywood Chairs;
Eames Molded Plastic Chairs;
Aeron Chair; Mirra Chair (inset).

The idea of having a TV in or on bedroom furniture also speaks to the growing use of the bedroom as a surrogate family room/den as more people are watching TV in bed. Beds have become bigger and more comfortable in an effort to meet that need, too.

Bloom notes that another room, the great room, is also morphing into a multi-functional space.

“The great room is getting a lot of attention right now,” she says. “It’s most commonly set up as a large space off the kitchen that functions as a living/dining/family room.” A popular piece of furniture for these large spaces is the so-called gathering table which boasts a surface that is higher than a dining table but lower than a bar. Most can also expand to accommodate extra friends and family. Benches and stools are the more common seating option. Bernhard’s most popular gather table is the appropriately named (think of a large family gathering a la Norman Rockwell) American Anthology.

Another room, the home office, is also garnering attention, but for very different reasons.

“The increase in telecommuting has renewed attention in the home office,” says Mark Schurman, director of external communications for Herman Miller. “Not so long ago, the home office consumer would invest in a quality chair, but not desk solutions. All of that is changing as the market is putting greater value on work surfaces.” Quality and esthetic values have been enhanced to the point where most home offices are no longer hidden in a closet, and ergonomic designs have made the home working environment much more comfortable.

Herman Miller is synonymous with quality, timeless mid-1900s furniture designs. Manufacturer of highly coveted furniture designed by the likes of Ray and Charles Eames, Herman Miller has reintroduced several discontinued products in recent years. The company’s latest offering a swag leg group (desk, tables, chairs) that’s a revival of a historic collection by George Nelson. But for many design junkies, Herman Miller is all about seating.

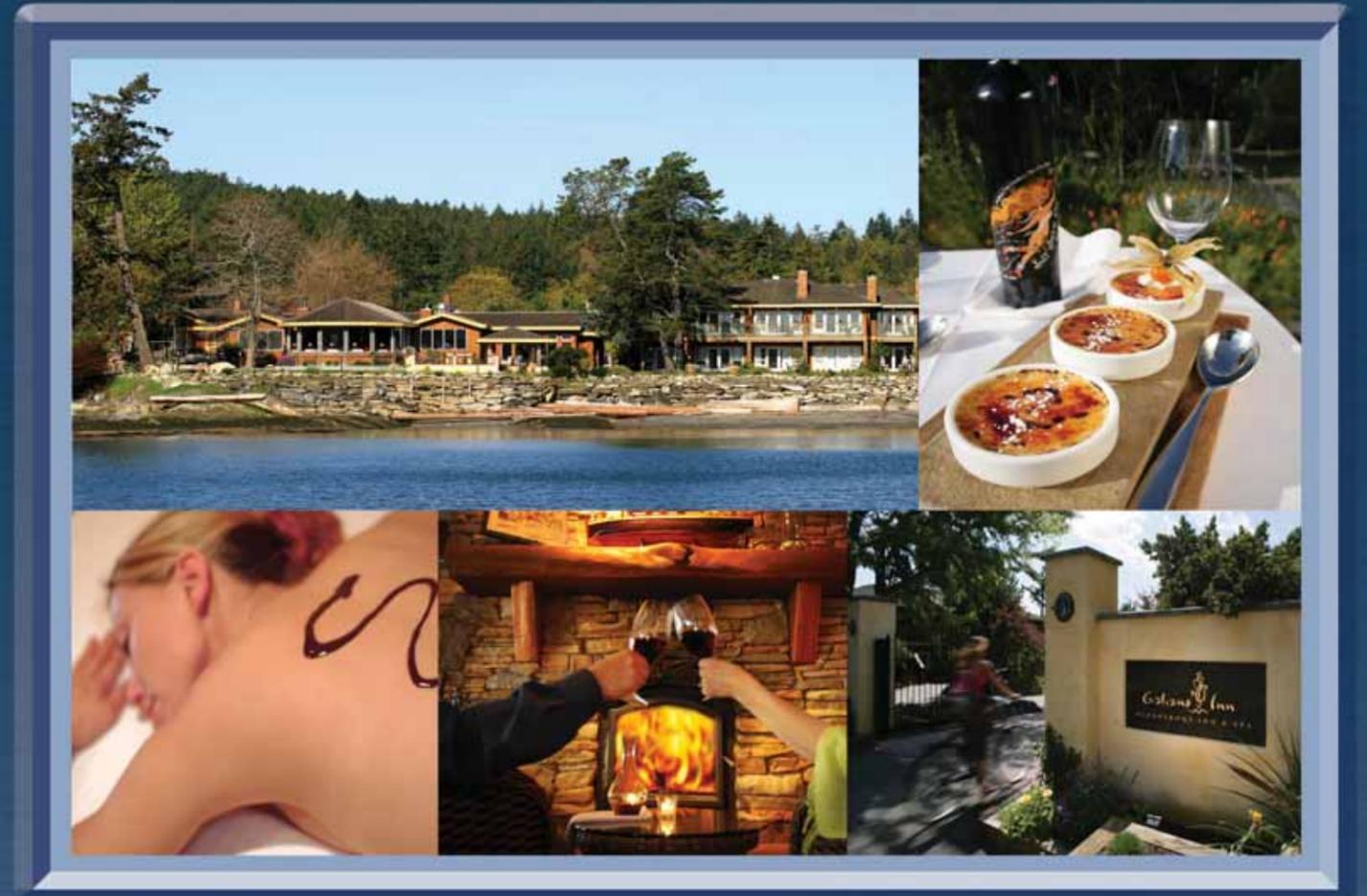
“The iconic Aeron task chair is our most popular product,” notes Schurman. “Price isn’t a factor. It’s popular due to performance and quality [it comes with a 12-year warranty] and timeless design. It’s not over designed, so can fit into most décor environments.”

Since home offices frequently double as guest rooms or spaces with other functions, furniture that wouldn’t normally find its way into a corporate office – e.g. a bed – sometimes shares space with the desk in a home office. Thanks to the timeless design of Herman Miller furniture, pieces such as the Eames shell chair (now manufactured in polypropylene to boost the environmental factor) easily migrate from home office to family room or living room. ■



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Live it up on The Rise

Is it possible to have it all? The Rise, Okanagan's premier golf and wine resort, believes it is. Launched in 2005, The Rise is the only resort community that offers all of the best elements of Okanagan living.

Perched on a hillside with dramatic south-facing lake views, only 3.5 km from Vernon's city centre, The Rise offers the best in golf, wine and beach. The 735 acre master planned resort community includes a winery, vineyards, hotels, village centre, private lakeside beach club and several neighbourhoods consisting of home sites and villas intertwined around the Fred Couples Signature Golf Course.

With four-season recreational opportunities, the hilltop community is a world class, amenity rich destination that will draw Canadian and international visitors to the Okanagan.

"I want The Rise to be a true community where people can come for a weekend—or a lifetime," says Leona Snider, president and CEO of The Rise, "Offering the best of what makes the Okanagan great is how to do this."

In June, one of the world's most famous PGA Tour veterans, crowd favourite Fred Couples, visited Vernon for a site inspection of his Signature Golf Course at The Rise. With 12 of the 18 holes featuring breathtaking views of Okanagan Lake, The Rise will define golf in the Okanagan and serve as the northern anchor for the Okanagan's world class golf experiences.

"The course is absolutely stunning," said Fred Couples. "The lake views on the course are breathtaking and have to be seen to be believed. This course will set the standard for championship golf in the Okanagan."

Clockwise from above: 12 of the 18 holes on The Rise feature breathtaking views of Okanagan Lake; Fred Couples; Newman home interior views; Deck view of The Rise.

The winery is slated to be a 35,000 case, state-of-the-art, gravity-fed facility. It will have a significant underground component with a visitor facility, barrel caves, VIP tasting room and private wine storage.

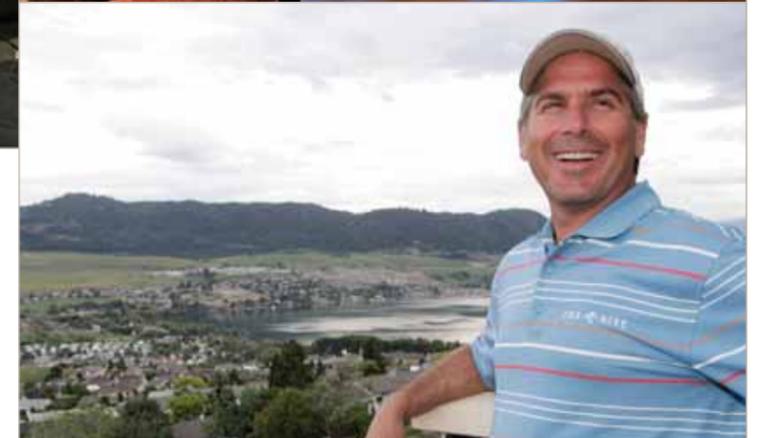
"The Rise is happening and it is exciting watching it all come together," says Snider.

Built from the ground up, each home site in The Rise resort community plan is placed in balance with natural landscaping, walking trails and conservation areas. Quiet streets meander past villas and estate homes among the vines. The winery and golf course provide lively community centres where neighbours and visitors alike gather to share the warmth of the Okanagan.

The Rise is currently comprised of four unique neighbourhoods: Clearview, Sagecroft, Sagecroft Villas and the exclusive Watermark. Each offers a variety of housing options that makes it easy to join the resort community. Home sites, finished homes and attached villas are available, though there is a limited supply in each neighbourhood.

Finished homes in Clearview start at \$709,000, home sites in Sagecroft start at \$219,900, and in Watermark, home sites start at \$429,900. The popular Sagecroft Villas neighbourhood has a few villas left with prices beginning at \$516,950.

The best introduction to The Rise is a visit to the new Discovery Centre to obtain buyer information and book a guided tour of the resort. ■



The Rise Discovery Centre
 364 Cordon Lane
 Vernon, BC V1H 1Z9
 Guided Tours and Resort Sales
 1 866 400 8488 www.TheRise.ca

Cocoon in Style

By Dave Chalk

It's fall, and that means the days are getting shorter, the nights colder, and it's time to pack up the patio furniture. In my last column I highlighted some of the latest and greatest poolside gadgets. It seems only fitting then that for this issue, we take a look at home theatre systems. Let's face it, you're going to be spending a lot more time inside soon, so you might as well pull up a chair and make yourself comfortable. In my opinion, there's no better way to 'cocoon' than with a brand new home theatre system that combines the best of everything.



We'll start with arguably the most important part of a home theatre, the television set. TVs today are a far cry from their predecessors. You've probably heard the terms 'high definition' (HD) and '1080p', and if you've been doing any research you'll know that these standards are giving us some of the best TV we've ever seen. The crème-de-la-crème of HD comes from Pioneer and its new Project Kuro line. Kuro means 'black' in Japanese, and living up to their name, these sets have a black level 80% deeper than previous models, resulting in an astounding contrast ratio of up to 20,000:1. These TVs are smart, too. Their 'Optimum Mode' alters picture output according to both the source's light patterns as well as the light surrounding the display. Models are available in 42-, 50- and 60-inch sizes. Project Kuro has just hit stores, and you could be the first on your block to have one, from \$3,000.

www.pioneerelectronics.com/projectkuro

If you'd rather have the biggest screen possible, then you'll want a projector. While it might take you back to your youth, a projector can be a great and fun way for your entire family to enjoy a home movie night. The Optoma HD81 is a premium home theatre projector that combines a 1080p DLP home theatre projector with a studio-quality imaging processor.



This definitely isn't your high school teacher's projector. Expect brilliant images with high contrast, deep blacks, and incredible precision. It's as close as you'll get to a theatre right in your very own home, especially when you combine it with a 120-inch motorized projector screen, also available from Optoma. With its crisp white screen and long black drop, you'll experience some pretty amazing picture quality that fits nicely into your existing home theatre setting. The projector and screen ring in just under \$8,000 together. Make sure you've got the popcorn ready.

www.optomausa.com



Aside from your kids, it's doubtful anyone else in your household wants to watch TV on the floor. For the ultimate in home theatre seating, take a look at Elite's custom made armchairs. From their website you can customize everything from colour to fabric, then decide which arm you'd like your cupholder in, and what stitch you want on your footrest. Once you've completed designing your very own chair, you'll have a seat that resembles something you'd find in the theatres, but with better legroom. Elite's custom home theatre seating starts around \$2,300.

www.elitehts.com

Okay, so now you're comfortably seated in front of your amazing HD screen—the next thing you'll need is a great sound system. The first part is an audio/video receiver (AVR). Optimizing all of your sound and visuals is easy with a cutting-edge receiver like Denon's AVR-4308CI. This system not only makes HD audio and video even simpler to enjoy, but it also has built-in features like Internet streaming and Wi-Fi capability. Provided you have wireless access in your living room, you'll no longer need to run a pesky cable to your receiver to enable streaming of online radio, and the plethora of HDMI and legacy jacks let you connect all your home theatre components. The system also comes iPod- and XM satellite radio-ready, and is a near bargain at \$2,500.

ca.denon.com



As for getting the audio out of your receiver and into your ears, Energy's Reference Connoisseur speaker series with floor, centre-channel and satellite speakers—plus subwoofer—will give you the full surround sound setup. The Reference Connoisseur RC-30s are sleek performance-driven devices, and some of the best looking floor speakers on the market. With these, you'll experience deep bass, clear midrange, and distortion-free treble for sound that is both incredibly accurate and crystal clear. With front floor speakers in place, the next thing you'll need is the RC-LCR Centre Channel. Optimized for use with every model in the Reference Connoisseur Series, the RC-LCR can be used as a centre channel, or vertically as a front left or right channel.



This centre-channel speaker can also be positioned in a number of different ways while providing you with superior audio reproduction. As well, since every RC-LCR speaker includes port plugs, you'll have no trouble installing them into a cabinet or bookshelf. There's just one more set of speakers that you'll need to complete your 7.1 surround sound experience, and those are the satellite speakers - two for the sides, and two for the rear.

If you're worried that all these speakers are going to clutter up your living room, don't be. In fact, the RC-10 satellite speakers are small enough to fit on a bookshelf. Finally, make sure you take a look at Energy's RC-6W subwoofer. You can position this piece anywhere in the room for distortion-free and deep, powerful bass. The High Frequency cut switch also improves the sound quality in rooms without carpets or drapes. Available in black, cherry and rosenut, these Energy speakers look as good as they sound. The entire set can be yours for around \$3,300, but be warned, you'll never listen to anything the same way again.

www.energy-speakers.com



To help you get the most out of your favourite movies, try the new LG Super Blu SMB-007, a Blu-Ray Disc player that also plays HD DVDs, keeping you covered no matter which way the HD format war goes. Paired with your 1080p HDTV or projector, you'll see more than six times the detail of standard DVDs. The system also boasts a user-friendly interactive menu system so scene searches are super easy. Plus, since the Super Blu also plays standard DVDs, it'll add new life to your existing movie collection by upconverting them to near-HD quality. Movie nights will never be the same and just think of what you'll save in tickets to the multiplex. Get the best of both HD worlds for around \$1,450.

ca.lge.com

www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com

Even if you're not into gaming, there's a good chance your kids are. Keep them happy (and out of your hair) with the Sony Playstation 3. The PS3 also comes with a Blu-ray Disc player, which means a whole new level of high-definition and huge capacity for today's complex games. Meanwhile, the PS3 Cell Broadband Engine™ gives you a gaming experience unlike anything you've ever experienced. And it's not just for playing, the PS3 also provides you with music, HD movies on Blu-ray Disc, and online connectivity for online gaming and more. A warning: your kids might use these exact same reasons to convince you why they just have to have one of these. Once you try it, you just might discover that you're a gamer too. If not, the \$550 price tag is still worth every penny.

www.playstation.ca



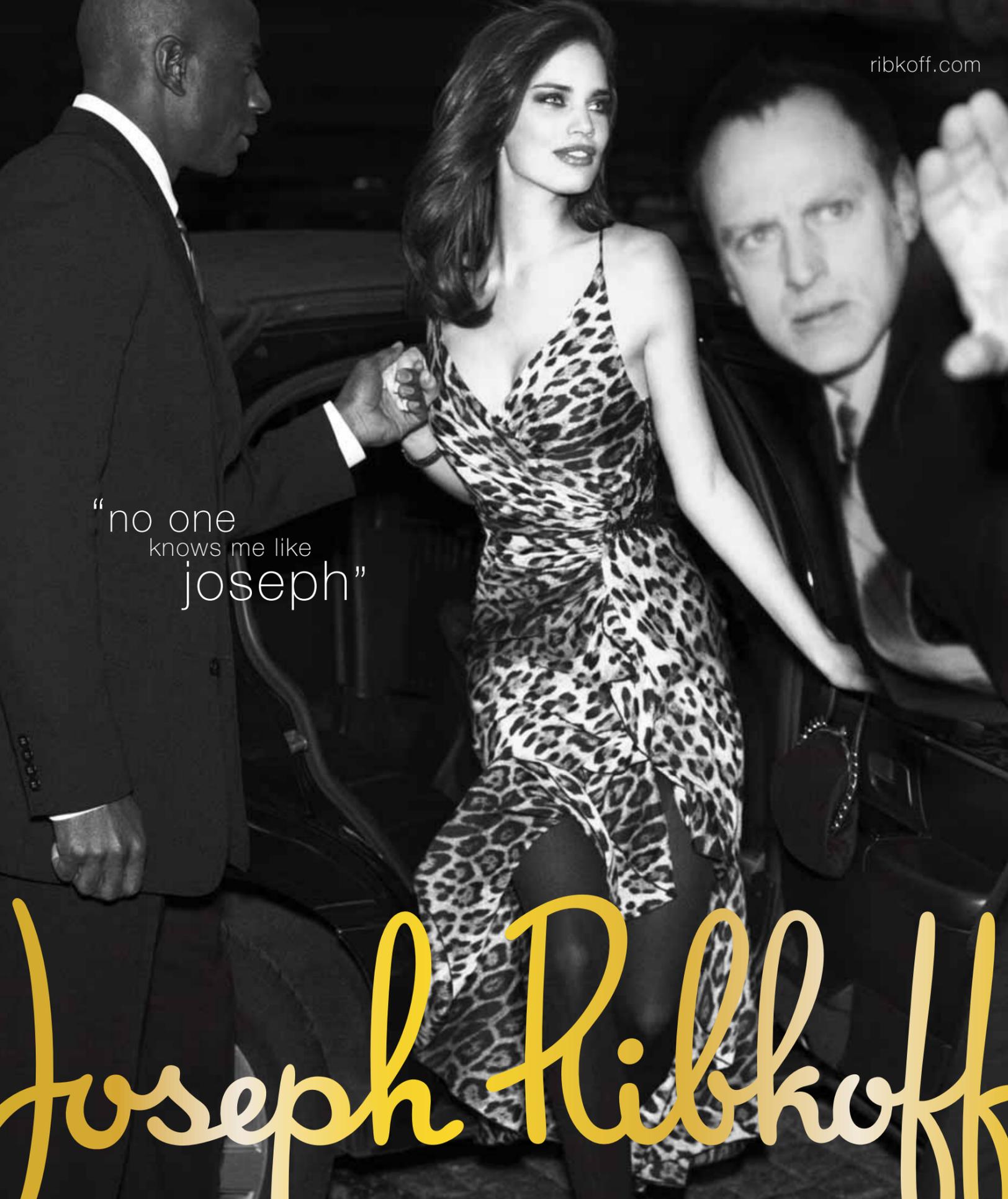
Now, I know what you're thinking. All these gadgets probably mean a huge stack of remotes. Not so! The Harmony 1000 Advanced Universal Remote controls your entire home theatre system, and even compatible lighting systems and window shades. The unique touchscreen allows you to navigate every option with ease, and I can guarantee you'll love the ability to actually understand what all those buttons on your remote actually do. Setup via Logitech's online wizard is a snap, and with 175,000 components in its online database, you'll be hard-pressed to find something this remote can't control. Plus, you'll also never have to worry about changing batteries ever again. Just place the Harmony on its own home docking station and let it charge. At \$600, the Harmony 1000 is admittedly a premium remote control, but it'll make you wonder how you ever lived without it.

www.logitech.com

So now you've got the ultimate system in place: the very latest in HD entertainment, a world-class audio system, and a way to control it all. However, there's still one very important detail to go, and that's the wall system. No home theatre is complete without a place to tastefully put everything, and that's where the Step Vision modular wall system comes in. This incredibly well-thought-out system includes shelving, containers, and benches complete with wood back panels and optional lighting. Designed by Norberto Delfinetti, this beautiful unit is also available with different frame finishings, and drawer fronts are available in wood, matt or glossy lacquer, or if you prefer, clear or frosted glass. It's the perfect way to present the home theatre you've worked so hard to put together, and that's worth the \$11,600 price tag.

www.ddcnyc.com

You're going to be spending a lot of time in this room, so pull up a customized chair and make yourself comfortable. It's going to be a long winter—hopefully. ■



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Joseph Ribkoff

connoisseur's choice

STYLE

Luxury Style

By Catherine Dunwoody

Autumn's here. For many, this is the season we wait for when it comes to exquisite style. Richer hues. Texture. What's new in style this season?

FASHION

Last spring, fashion looked toward the future. Fall 2007 has many designers paying homage to the past, with re-interpretations of classic looks and styling that appear modern, and new.



- Director Sofia Coppola's film, *Marie Antoinette*, was the vintage-inspiration for this romantic new fall collection from the Scandinavian lingerie label, *Change*. Slip into their latest bras and panties in luxurious lace and embroidered satins, like *The Colette*, shown here, in moss green woven satin. Bra is \$98, hipster bottoms, \$52. www.change.com

- The vest is back in a big way in menswear this season. This updated 3-piece suit by *Canali* ruled the runways at the fall shows, at *Harry Rosen*. www.harryrosen.com



- The same people that brought us *Swiss Army knives*, have just launched their women's collection by *Victorinox*. The label's best known for their stylish coats, jackets and pants in techno-fabrics (very hot again this season) that are insulated and water repellent. Jacket shown in fall's hottest shade of red, \$498. www.victorinox.com



www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com

- L.A.'s *Paige Premium Denim* have realized that not all ladies are tall and lanky, and now offer a range of jeans for the woman 5'3" and under. Paige's petite line offers the same sexy, butt-lifting fit of stretch denim styles, but proportioned for the shorter woman. \$160 - \$200. www.paigepremiumdenim.com www.fabclothing.com



ACCESSORIES

Still going strong, the add-ons, and the extras that make all the difference.

- *Chanel* is celebrating 20 years of watch-making with this limited collection of ultra-exclusive timepieces. Love the ultra-chic red and black, shown here. \$638,850 - \$766,625 www.chanel.com



- Wingtips, sherpa linings, riding boots, and distressed leathers—all re-interpreted for 2007, very hot in men's footwear. Boots shown by *Boss*, at *Harry Rosen*. www.harryrosen.com



- *Coco Chanel* was once quoted: "a woman with good shoes is never ugly." And in celebration of the 50th anniversary of her much copied two-tone shoe, why not treat yourself to a pair of these lovelies? Boots, \$1000, at *Chanel*. www.chanel.com



STYLE

MAKEUP

Beauty on the runways this fall had models looking like women, not girls—with full faces of makeup. Beige lips were banished, and strong, bold lipcolours appeared in its place. Love the defined eyes, and the return of chic hairstyles.



- Balmshell's floating art lip-glosses are reminiscent of those souvenir pens you'd tip back and forth to reveal fun images. Their new "1 in 8" refers to the fact that 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. \$25 each with \$1 per lip-gloss going towards The Breast Cancer Research Foundation
www.Balmshell.com

- Guerlain has redefined luxury packaging with their sleek new gold eyeshadow compact, Ombre Eclat Duo & Liner. Contains 2 powder eyeshadows and 1 cream liner, in silky-rich fall shades, \$56.
www.guerlain.com



- OPI chose Russia for their autumn nail lacquer and lipstick collection. Since nails and lips showed up in deep reds and burgundies on the runways again this season, a must-have is St. Petersburg, a deep claret, or Midnight in Moscow, charcoal with a hint of maroon glimmer. \$12.50 for nail lacquer and \$13.95 each for lipstick and liner.
www.opi.com



SKIN

Where it all starts. Here's what's new:

- La Prairie, the Swiss line of luxury skin care, launches new products this autumn to celebrate the 20th anniversary of their Caviar Collection. Treat yourself to the Skin Caviar Luxe Eye Lift Cream for starters.
www.laprairie.com



- Nip and tuck just not your thing? The Face Wrap promises firmer skin that lasts about a week. Elastic cotton fabric is saturated in liquid minerals, and then wrapped around the face to detox the skin of water retention and impurities in about 30 minutes. The mummification of your face might be slightly alarming the first time, but the results could be worth it.
www.thefacewrap.com

- Cosmetic companies are thinking from the inside...out, and that what you put in your body is as important as any product you put on its surface. Imedeem Time Perfection is a new skincare nutritional supplement containing BioMarine Complex, vitamin C, grape seed extract and 10% lycopene (the good-for-you stuff in tomatoes). \$95 per one-month box. Call 1-800-668-4466 for more info.



- Clarins Super Restorative Décolleté and Neck Concentrate is new for women over 50. Did you know that the neck and décolleté give away your age more often than your face does? Try this for dealing with age spots, and firming of this delicate area.



www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com

HAIR

The blunt cut bob is hands down the cut of the season. Keep your sleek and glossy with this.



- At last! A cordless, ceramic flat iron, much like the curling irons we have come to depend on for travel, has just hit store shelves. Conair's Heat Chic has been approved for airline travel too, \$69.99.
www.conaircanada.ca

FRAGRANCE

New scents for cooler days, from two of your favourite style-makers.



- Marc Jacobs Modern Gardenia is a new limited edition eau de parfum, available in mid-October. 50 ml, \$80,
www.marcjacobs.com

- Covet Sarah Jessica Parker is the fashionista's latest scent, with notes of crushed geranium leaves, French lavender, and chocolate. Her catch line? "I had to have it." 100 ml eau de parfum spray, \$89.

www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com



- Annick Goutal, the Parisian perfumer, passed away in 1999. Daughter's Camille and Isabelle Doyen, carry on her legacy with this special candle, called Le sac de ma mere, which translates to "My mother's purse." "We wanted to recreate the scent of Annick's Kelly bag," explains Isabelle. The contents of that handbag: a Guerlain lipstick, a compact powder and the scent of violet mixed with leather, have come together in this scented candle. 175 gr (burns for 60 hours) \$63.
www.annickgoutal.com





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Less Meat for a Longer Life

by Sandra Tonn, RHN

There was a time when we vegetarians were putting our health at risk by shunning meat. The tides are turning, however. An increasing number of people associate a reduction in meat consumption with an increase in health—and for good reason. Advances in nutrition research now show that a vegetarian diet is helpful in maintaining health, preventing disease and even increasing longevity.

Vegetarians tend to have a healthy lifestyle overall. They are reported to smoke and drink less, and exercise more than non-vegetarians. In addition, vegetarians generally have a lower body mass index than non-vegetarians. Such factors add up to better health and a reduced chance of disease and possibly a longer life.

Both the American Dietetic Association and the Dietitians of Canada state that, when appropriately planned, vegetarian diets are “healthful, can be nutritionally adequate, and provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases.”

Diet and Disease

According to The American Dietetic Association, a vegetarian diet reduces the risk of many chronic degenerative diseases and conditions, including heart disease, cancer, obesity, hypertension, and diabetes. A large amount of research examining the health of vegetarians shows that a vegetarian diet is beneficial for preventing and treating obesity, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, renal disease, diverticular disease, gallstones, rheumatoid arthritis, dementia, and cancer. In fact, people suffering from chronic disease may experience a dramatic improvement in health by switching to a vegetarian diet.

Vegetarians develop less cancer and heart disease, the two top killers in Canada. Scientific research shows that high blood pressure, which contributes to heart disease, can be reduced with a vegetarian diet. A vegetarian diet has also been proven to lower blood cholesterol levels, reducing the risk of heart disease. Studies also show that eating a high amount of fruits and vegetables significantly reduces the risk of stroke.

The consumption of red meat is associated with an increased risk of colon cancer, while a vegetarian diet is thought to help protect against the development of prostate cancer. A Western-type diet, high in protein and fat, has been associated with breast cancer, while a vegetarian-type diet showed an opposite correlation. With cancer touching the lives of so many people, it is empowering to know that dietary choices can have a significant impact on our health status and reduce the risk of developing this chronic disease.

Diet and Longevity

Increasingly, it appears that a key factor in disease prevention is a diet low in saturated fat and high in plant nutrients. A vegetarian diet is also beneficial in weight management, which is another significant factor in the development of many modern diseases.

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The reason vegetarians live longer is probably multi-factorial—eating less meat and more nutrient-rich plant foods, eating less saturated fat and more fibre, and an overall healthier lifestyle certainly all play a role. It's important to note that there is no cholesterol in vegetables, and that there is no fibre in meat—two crucial factors in overall health and the development of disease.

With less chance of disease and increased protection from powerful plant substances, fibre, enzymes, vitamins and minerals, it makes sense that vegetarians live longer than meat-eaters. The results of a study conducted with vegetarian Seventh Day Adventists found that vegetarian men lived an average of nine years longer and vegetarian women 6.6 years longer than the general population.



Vegetarian Ideas for Longevity

Even if you don't give up meat entirely, there are many ways to benefit from the science surrounding a meat-free diet. Try to incorporate some of the following healthy habits into your longevity diet:

- Replace one, two, and eventually three or four meat meals with a vegetarian meal each week. Do so gradually, taking time to convert current recipes or try out new ideas.
- Eat smaller amounts of meat and more vegetables when eating a meat meal.
- Get to know beans and legumes. Beans and legumes are excellent replacements for meat. They are versatile and provide plenty of plant protein, along with fibre, vitamins and minerals. Try a new bean recipe each week.
- Explore unfamiliar vegetables. There are many vegetables available, especially in the fall harvest season. Choose vegetables you wouldn't normally purchase and find out how to prepare them.
- Use familiar vegetables in new ways. If you're used to stir frying veggies, try a casserole, or simply steaming or roasting them and topping with a sauce or gravy.
- If you have a juicer, or are willing to invest in one, you can take in the nutrition and disease-fighting properties from many vegetables all at once in an easy to digest manner.

Whether you decide to go completely vegetarian, or simply want to benefit from more vegetables and less meat, it's always best to change the diet gradually. With a gentle and informed transition, the body becomes used to your new ways, and your new ways become habits that will add up to a healthier, longer life. ■

Integrated mind-body health experience offered at the Copeman Healthcare Centre



Above middle and right: Dr. Kevin Kjernisted, Copeman Neuroscience Centre; Exercise Medicine Centre.
Opposite page from left: Don Copeman, Founder and CEO; Welcoming and refreshing - the lobby at Copeman Health Centre; Dr. Beth Donaldson.

How would it feel to know the exact state of your health based on the most modern medical technology and expertise?

How would it feel to know that any changes to your condition would be quickly known to a distinguished team of health professionals - early enough to minimize the risk of disease taking hold or spreading?

How would it feel to feel better?

Helping you live the longest, healthiest and most pain-free life possible is what the Copeman Healthcare Centre is all about.

The Copeman Healthcare Centre in downtown Vancouver provides world-class screening & disease prevention programs that are combined with the general care of physicians, specialists and other health professionals to provide people with a complete health care service.

The latest addition to the Copeman Healthcare service, in addition to the Calgary location opening soon, is a stress & mental health centre, staffed with leading psychologists and psychiatrists, that allows for the complete integration of physical and mental health programs.

"We learned early on that we were going to achieve the best results in disease risk reduction for some of our clients by addressing emotional and other issues that may have become real obstacles in their achievement of optimal health," said Don Copeman, founder and CEO.

"Our goal is to put patients at ease by reducing the burden of health risks."

"The mind and body systems are tightly coupled, and it is often very hard to deal with one without dealing with the other, particularly when it comes to therapeutic lifestyle change."

This new Copeman Neuroscience Centre treats clients with specific medical conditions while helping prevent mental health issues by identifying common risk factors. The Centre also conducts mental health research focused on the early detection of illness.

Another distinguishing service is Copeman Healthcare's new Exercise Medicine Centre, one of Canada's first medically prescribed and managed fitness and rehabilitation facilities. It is designed for patients with medical conditions such as heart disease, osteoporosis, pre-diabetes and obesity that must be considered when developing a fitness plan. The Centre's team-based approach of physicians, physiotherapists, kinesiologists and dieticians provides testing and exercise-prescription plans tailored to individual patient needs.

"Physical inactivity after a set-back such as a heart attack is a major disease risk factor," said Dr. Michael Koehle, sports-medicine physician and exercise physiologist at the Copeman Healthcare Centre.

"To prevent the recurrence of disease, the Exercise Medicine Centre helps patients become active again with a one-stop destination for fitness testing, long-term rehabilitation and a preventive healthcare plan."

Copeman says the company's overall approach to healthcare represents the type of innovation that is desperately needed in Canada right now.

"It all boils down to the two things that define quality primary healthcare - access to professional expertise and the proper amount of time spent with your doctor and other professionals."

"Our goal is to put patients at ease by reducing the burden of health risks. We carefully monitor their health - giving them all of the time and expert attention they deserve."

To register for a free consultation, call 604-707-CARE (2273). Or take a facility tour online and hear what clients are saying about the Centre at: www.copemanhealthcare.com. ■



Member Benefits

- Timely Access
- Medical Expertise
- More Time With Doctors
- Collaborative Care
- World-class prevention
- Early Disease Detection
- Integrated Mental Health
- "All Inclusive" Fees

Our Health Team

- Expert Physicians
- Specialist Services
- Kinesiologists
- Registered Dietitians
- Psychologists
- Nurse Coaching
- Physiotherapists

Fees

- \$2,900 per year per adult (fees can be defrayed by private health plans), \$3,900 in the first year of service.
- Free for children of members under the age of 22.

More information

Call 604-707-CARE (2273)
Or visit us at
www.copemanhealthcare.com



Luxury Car Lineup 2008

By Tony Whitney

A strengthening economy inevitably brings success to automakers targeting the luxury market. Although talk of “impending environmental doom” persists in North America, buyers in the premium segment continue to look for exciting new products on which to spend their hard-earned cash.

Of course, in recent times we've seen several luxury vehicles that are aimed squarely at the “green” market with standouts being the hybrid Lexus LS 460h big sedan and the same maker's hybrid RX 400h mid-size SUV. Many other non-hybrid luxury vehicles for 2008 offer better fuel economy despite boasting more power—such is the pace of technological development in the auto industry. Don't look for a green Ferrari any time soon, though, unless it happens to be painted that colour. There are some vehicle segments where the word “economy” is never even whispered either by manufacturer or customer.

Luxury vehicle lines tend to stay in the market for years longer than their entry-level equivalents so all-new models are never that prolific in any new model year. Even so, 2008 sees some interesting new products, a few good workovers and even a couple of automakers taking tenuous steps into the luxury arena.

At the very pinnacle of 2008 luxury models is the majestic Rolls-Royce Phantom Drophead Coupe, “drophead” being British classic car-speak for convertible. This huge and aristocratic-looking automobile is as luxurious as any convertible could possibly be with hand-finished (and somewhat controversial) bodywork, an amazingly opulent wood and leather interior and a megabuck price tag. When the top is down, a polished teak deck section behind the rear seats is revealed—reminiscent of the “boat-tailed” cabriolets of the 1930s. A mighty 6.7-litre V-12 propels the beast on its stately way - but don't expect to have much change, if any, out of half a million bucks if you plan to sit behind the wheel of one of these limited-edition machines.

On a more affordable level, the big news from Mercedes-Benz for 2008 is an all-new C-Class model—one of the most affordable sedans from the famed Stuttgart automaker. The C-Class features more ambitious styling than its predecessor, but you still won't mistake one for anything else but a Merc. At the media preview in Valencia, Spain earlier this year, many journalists I spoke to were saying that at last, Mercedes-Benz has matched its arch-rival, the BMW 3-Series, in this hard-fought class. The 3-Series has long been the leader in the compact performance sports sedan segment. It'll take a very special car to dislodge it from that lofty position, but the new M-B might just be the model to pull it off. Prices start at a reasonable \$41,000.

Infiniti has announced a very busy 2008 with several models due for a mid-term workover, a couple of all new products waiting in the wings and its major release for the model year - the new G37 Coupe. The old G35 2-door was always highly praised by the automotive media and has sold very well for Infiniti, but even so, after a long run its replacement was inevitable.

Counterclockwise from left: 2008 Mercedes C-Class - two versions; 2008 Infiniti G37 Coupe; 2008 BMW 5-Series.



Left to right: 2008 Buick Enclave; 2008 Subaru Tribeca; 2008 Hyundai Veracruz.

Left: 2008 Rolls Royce Phantom Drophead Coupe;

The new G37 doesn't have a single body panel in common with the earlier car, but there is something of a family resemblance—and nobody's going to complain about that. The car has very sculptured lines with some clever work around the hood and front fenders. It looks very sensual and almost organic in concept. The 08 car boasts a 3.7-litre V-6 with a new valve timing system and a lusty 330-horsepower. A new chassis features improved handling and inside the car, there's also an entirely fresh approach using some traditional Japanese cues. Basic G37s come with almost every imaginable tech and convenience feature but a bit more cash gets you a touch-screen navigation system and an entertainment package that includes a 9.3-gigabyte hard drive. One auto magazine had this new Infiniti ahead of the latest BMW 3-Series Coupe in all-round performance and it certainly pleased me when I drove one recently. A basic G37 costs \$47,350.

For decades, the luxury car segment has been dominated by names like Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi, Jaguar, Lexus, Infiniti, Acura, Cadillac, Lincoln and others, but there are always new automakers anxious to get involved in the most profitable of all vehicle classes.

Two automakers not really noted for luxury products are Subaru and Hyundai, but both are launching products for 2008 that have the kind of luxury and quality necessary to earn a spot in the upscale market.

Subaru's stylish new Tribeca crossover SUV is certainly deserving of a spot among competitors from Lexus and Acura. The cabin of the Tribeca approaches the luxury level and has taken things a step further than Subaru's usual level of quality, which has always been very good. This might be the best interior job in the segment, it looks that stylish. It has a nice upscale feel about it and there's no faulting the fit and finish. The Tribeca uses an all-new and highly refined 3.6-litre horizontally-opposed 6-cylinder powerplant - a configuration used by Porsche. Tribeca prices run from the low forties to the low fifties.

Hyundai's toehold in the luxury crossover class is provided by the 2008 Veracruz, an appealing product, the quality of which will surprise buyers who haven't considered a car from the Korean automaker before. The styling of the Veracruz is very contemporary and fits right in with rival crossover utility vehicles. Best of all, bodywork quality is just excellent, matching that of the best in this segment. All the panels fit beautifully, as does the door trim, window seals and other components. Hyundai has tried very hard to try and match Lexus quality and this work is really paying off. Veracruz power comes from a 3.8-litre double overhead cam V-6 developing 260-horsepower. And if you think Veracruz is only a tentative step into the luxury class by Hyundai, stand by for a large V-8 powered sedan to appear some time during 2008. Veracruz prices run in the \$40,000 - \$46,000 range.

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When I attended the first “reveal” of Buick's new Enclave crossover SUV in Los Angeles, they had no less than Tiger Woods in attendance at the launch party to give the spiffy new product a quality sendoff. Certainly the Enclave is worthy of plenty of attention in what is fast becoming a key market slot in the sport utility field. Combining style and elegance this is one of the most appealing Buicks to come along in a while—it looks so good it's being compared to the Mercedes-Benz R-Class, Lexus RX 350 and Audi Q7. It's roomy too, with three rows of seats and a rear one that compares more with a minivan than a crossover SUV. Right now, the Enclave comes with a 275-horsepower V-6, but rumours persist of a V-8 version some time down the line. Come it may, but in the meantime, the V-6 will surely please most buyers. Enclave prices run from \$41,000 to \$60,000, according to options, of which there are many.

BMW is giving its 5-series midsize sedan range a thorough workover for the 2008 model year, which marks the mid-point in this car's lifespan (it was launched in 2003). The range will include several sedans and a Touring (wagon), several of them featuring new engine choices. Also on the roster is the awesome V-10 powered 500-horsepower M5, one of the world's most desirable high-performance sedans by any standard. All models have at least a few bodywork modifications and there's been a lot of work done on interior design too. Even so, these models retain their handsome general profile and typically BMW grille and tail treatment. High-tech options now include a very effective lane departure warning system. Best news of all for enthusiasts, apart from the continuation of the M5, is the availability of BMW's wonderful 300-horsepower N54 twin-turbo inline 6-cylinder which first appeared in the 3-Series Coupe. As before, V-8 options are available within the 5-Series range, which is priced from \$59,900 to \$113,300 (M5).

As the end of the year nears and with it, the major North American and overseas auto shows, several more exciting luxury models will take a bow, but until then, only rumours point the way to the future. There's certainly going to be a new Cadillac CTS—the car that saved the company from near-obscurity a few years back.

Lexus is said to be readying a production ultra high performance IS-F model which might be a rival for BMW's M-cars and the AMG performance models from Mercedes-Benz. The car has been shown in concept form at various shows. Lexus usually chooses refinement and good manners over out-and-out performance, but apparently not this time around. Squeezing a 400-horsepower V-8 into a compact sedan isn't quite what this company is noted for, but this one sounds intriguing. Will it be the first of a line of Lexus F-cars? Only time will tell.

One thing's for sure - the luxury car segment shows no sign whatsoever of slowing down any time soon. ■





Keyera's operations in Alberta are based mainly in geographical areas of the west central and foothills region of the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin, as well as in the Edmonton/Fort Saskatchewan hub. These areas offer excellent opportunities for expansion. They currently operate three business lines, each with planned expansion projects: natural gas gathering and processing, NGL infrastructure and NGL marketing.

KEYERA Facilities Income Fund

There are so many places you can invest your money now-a-days. But how much do you really know about the companies you are investing in? How do you know that the companies doing well today, will continue to do well in the future? Keyera Facilities Income Fund, a company based in Calgary, Alberta, has a history of stable and increasing distributions. They are not only thinking of today, but also tomorrow.

Keyera, a midstream service provider to the energy industry, has been operating as an income trust since 2003. Eighty percent of their revenue comes from the fee for service businesses creating a stable and predictable source of cash flow derived from long life assets. They hold a geographic competitive advantage as they operate mainly in the western regions of the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin, where significant geological prospectivity exists. Gas from this region typically contains hydrogen sulphide and natural gas liquids (NGLs), which Keyera's facilities are designed to accommodate. Keyera is also positioned in the middle of the Edmonton – Fort Saskatchewan hub, the fastest growing energy complex in North America.

The Keyera management team has strategically positioned itself to take advantage of the growth opportunities presented by the robust development of the oil sands deposits in this Basin. The growth over the next twenty years is expected to increase the demand for the services Keyera delivers. The management team also enthusiastically embraces the growth opportunities available believing that they can build unit-holder value and increase cash flow over the long term by maintaining a strong competitive position in the expanding energy sector.

A leader in the Canadian energy sector is the province of Alberta. The recent increase in demand, mainly from the steadily rising Asian consumption, has pushed crude oil to record highs with many analysts expecting prices to continue to move even higher over time. Higher crude oil prices have increased the economic viability of the oil sands projects and these projects are now the centre of economic activity in the province. The pace of economic growth offers excellent potential for expansion to those businesses, like Keyera, that provide services to this dynamic industry.



Keyera predicts that there will be a substantial increase in demand for condensate as the oil sands production increases ... up to 4 million barrels per day over the next 15 to 20 years.

The natural gas gathering and processing operations is a fee for service business and is not directly dependent on the price of natural gas. Keyera owns and operates over 2,500 kilometres of large diameter gathering system pipelines that supply gas to 16 gas plants that have a combined capacity to process over 1,600 million cubic feet per day of raw natural gas. These facilities offer excellent flexibility as over 90% of their capacity is capable of processing both sweet and sour gas, and extracting NGL mix from the raw gas stream. The ability to process sour gas will be a distinct advantage going forward as the provincial government would rather see the expansion of existing sour gas plants than the construction of new facilities.

Keyera expanded into BC acquiring the Caribou gas plant half way between Fort St. John and Fort Nelson in 2004. Since the acquisition, Keyera has expanded the facility in conjunction with the construction of a 50-kilometre gas gathering pipeline. The plant is in an area with very promising geology, and drilling indicates an excellent potential for future expansion. Keyera is currently evaluating expansion of the current facility and the addition of new infrastructure in the area.

The NGL infrastructure side of the business encompasses the processing, transportation and storage of NGLs delivered to its NGL facilities through the company's pipeline systems and rail and truck terminals. The company operates 4 NGL processing plants with a combined capacity of 65,000 net barrels per day, which separate NGL mix into saleable propane, butane, condensate. These products are then shipped to customers throughout North America. Keyera also recently announced a new expansion project in this side of the business. They plan to modify existing equipment to extract ethane from the raw natural gas processed at the Rimbey gas plant. The new plant is expected to extract up to 5,000 barrels per day of ethane for delivery to a major petrochemical producer via a proposed 32-kilometre pipeline that will be constructed as part of the project.

Since Keyera's processing operations are based in the lucrative Fort Saskatchewan area, it is encouraging for Keyera's growth. Many of the other major energy companies in the Fort Saskatchewan are expanding; 8 upgrades are proposed in the area in addition to the expansion of existing facilities.

As part of the growth strategy in this sector of the business, Keyera is expanding its NGL pipeline system by adding a fourth line between Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan with a capacity of 100,000 b/d in either direction. This will significantly enhance the operational capabilities of Keyera's facilities as it will allow the bidirectional movement of propane, butane and condensate between the two facilities at increased rates.

One of the main uses for condensate, a product of raw NGL mix, is as a diluent to enhance the flow rate of bitumen, a product mined in the oil sands and shipped by pipeline to Fort Saskatchewan for upgrading. Condensate is typically mixed with bitumen in a ratio of 4:1 bitumen to condensate. Keyera predicts that there will be a substantial increase in demand for condensate as the oil sands production increases from the current 1 million barrels per day to industry estimates of up to 4 million barrels per day over the next 15 to 20 years.

Another competitive advantage that Keyera holds is currently being the only third party underground condensate storage provider in Fort Saskatchewan. The total NGL storage capacity is in excess of 8 million barrels, which can now be fully utilized with the recent completion of a new 3.9 million barrel brine pond at the facility.





The infrastructure side of the business includes the operation of 12 rail and truck terminals. Keyera is expanding the truck loading rack at their Fort Saskatchewan facility, which will increase NGL loading capacity and add flexibility in the delivery of NGL products throughout North America.

The marketing side of Keyera is the only side that has direct exposure to commodity price and operates as a margin business. The marketing division is fully integrated into the other two operational divisions allowing Keyera to take advantage of the midstream value chain and leverage their other operations. The integrated nature of the businesses allows the marketing division to leverage the storage capacity available, which enables this group to capitalize on surges in demand. A fleet of 600 rail cars deliver to areas during peak demand when prices tend to be most favourable. The marketing division operates with a conservative strategy to control risk and is enhanced by the access to the integrated facilities capitalizing on Keyera's strength in the midstream segment of the energy sector.

This strength has been apparent in increases in the Keyera Facilities Income Fund over the past four years. The most recent was a 5% increase announced in May 2007, bringing the total increase in distributions to 38% since May 2003. The fund now pays a distribution of \$0.125 per unit monthly or \$1.50 per unit annually.

In anticipation of the tax changes passed by the Federal Government, Keyera has proposed eliminating most of its taxable subsidiaries in order to postpone the utilization of tax pools until after 2011, when the fund will become a taxable entity, reducing the impact of the tax changes on unit-holder distributions. Management believes that the current levels of distributions are sustainable and that its strategic asset base and growth opportunities will allow Keyera to grow its distributions to unit holders in the future. ■



Keyera Focused on Delivering Results

Excellent growth opportunities from oil sands and natural gas activity in western Canada.

With natural gas gathering and processing plants, natural gas liquids (NGL) processing, transportation and storage facilities, an NGL marketing business and crude oil midstream activities, Keyera is well positioned to benefit from oil sands and natural gas developments in western Canada. Our natural gas processing plants and associated facilities are strategically located within key gas production areas of the western Canadian sedimentary basin. Our NGL and crude oil infrastructure includes pipelines, terminals and processing and storage facilities in Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, a major North American NGL hub. Keyera markets propane, butane and condensate to customers in Canada and the United States.



INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Monthly distributions
- Stable cash flows with growth potential
- Low risk profile with SR-3 stability rating from Standard & Poor's
- Strategic assets situated to capitalize on increased oil and gas industry activity
- Excellent growth opportunities from oil sands and natural gas developments in Alberta
- Experienced management and operating personnel
- Conservative capital structure
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What Kind of Millionaire Are You?

By James Dolan

What do you think about money? How do you feel when you invest? What role does wealth play in your life?

All are important questions, and while there are no right or wrong answers, your responses may just determine whether you're able to keep the wealth you've worked so hard to build.

"This business isn't all about numbers," says Rory O'Connor, Senior Investment Advisor, Stenner Investment Partners of GMP Private Client in Vancouver, a private family office group serving those typically with a net worth of \$10-million or more. "The personality of the individual is equally, if not more important. In our group, we spend as much time analyzing a client's personal needs as we do analyzing financial data."

The general name for such understanding is "psychographics"—the study and profiling of individual personalities. And while such profiling does not replace detailed analysis and one-on-one experience with a client, it can be a very useful tool in predicting financial challenges that an individual might face.

However, not all millionaires are created equal. Some are family-focused parents who want nothing more than to provide for their spouses and children. Some are detail-minded micro-managers who revel in the intricacies of personal finance. Others want nothing to do with their wealth. Who you are may play as much a role in your long-term financial success as your ability to pick winning investments.

"Identifying your personality type may be the key to financial success"

"The goal isn't to slot individuals into pre-fabricated portfolios," O'Connor says, "What we want to do is to answer two important questions: (a) what does money mean to the individual; and (b) what does the individual want from his or her money?" The answer to these basic questions allow the professional to zero in on the emotions that dominate the way an individual thinks about wealth. "That can be an immense help in making sure wealthy clients remain wealthy for the rest of their lives."

For the purposes of investing and wealth management, O'Connor and his group have found that most high net worth (HNW) individuals will have one dominant personality type along with one complementing trait. There are nine basic personality types:

1. The Caregiver

"The motivation for this person is family, and lies behind most of the financial decisions they make." He says Caregivers are good clients to work with, because they tend to be focused on longer-term goals, and are less susceptible to short term market fluctuations. However, he has seen cases where a particularly generous individual has trained their children to be financially dependent: "Teaching the kids to have a healthy relationship with money can be a challenge for this personality type. They have to be careful that their desire to care for their family doesn't mean giving the kids so much that they'll be unmotivated."

2. The Boss

Wealth is something the boss needs—and relishes. But it is rarely an end in itself. "To this type of individual, money means power." Sometimes these traits can translate into a motivated, driven individual who's attentive to detail and willing to accept risk. But bosses are impatient people, and are prone to making quick, ill-considered financial decisions. "Working with this personality often requires more assertiveness and the ability to present a solid business case. The Boss reacts best to being treated like the CEO of his own investment company. You have to be able to explain the rationale of what you are recommending, and allow the client to feel that he's made an informed and intelligent decision."

3. The Libertarian

When libertarians think of money, they think of freedom—freedom from work, freedom from bills, freedom from worry. "This is their most important financial goal. They want to live life on their own terms, not someone else's." As a result, libertarians tend to care less about the investment process, and more about the investment result. They can be impatient. "I've seen a few who have quit work before their portfolios could support such a move," He adds that they can also suffer from a narrow financial vision. The single-minded focus on building a large nest egg can leave important goals such as estate planning or tax planning ignored.

4. The Runaway

"The runaway doesn't want to be involved with their wealth. They'll do almost anything to avoid talking about it, thinking about it, or managing it." In the best of cases, this leads to the delegation of important financial decisions to a trusted financial professional. This isn't always a bad thing, as it allows the runaway to avoid many of the self-made problems and financial challenges that other personalities may face. But it can just as easily lead to the complete abdication of financial responsibility. "I've seen some very wealthy people who have ignored even the most basic financial responsibilities."

5. The Player

For the player, investing is a game, and wealth is a way to keep score. The player will often separate their "serious money" from their "play money." The former would be invested with a trusted professional, while the latter is often invested in high-risk ventures and "hot stocks" that the individual has selected themselves. "Sometimes the gamble pays off," O'Connor admits. But more often than not, the constant pursuit of high-risk opportunities leads to a portfolio that lacks any clear purpose and fails to fit into any long-term strategy.

6. The Recluse

Most HNW individuals want to keep their financial affairs private. But for the recluse, this desire borders on an obsession. "The desire for privacy influences everything they do. Not only with their wealth, but with their life as well." Even when working with a professional, it's common for the recluse to withhold key information and maintain multiple portfolios. "It can make the professional's job exceptionally difficult." In some cases, the recluse will compensate for this by developing their personal financial knowledge. But as O'Connor points out, that doesn't always result in a well-structured portfolio.

7. The Superstar

For the superstar, wealth is ultimately a stand-in for status. "The more wealth they have, the more important they feel. Often this personality is very focused on spending. That puts a great strain on their wealth, and tends to make them uninterested in financial matters." O'Connor takes pains to point out that by no means are all celebrities superstars—although the personality does take its cues from the spendthrift attitudes of mega-wealthy heirs and Hollywood bad boys.

8. The Academic

Some HNW individuals pride themselves on their financial knowledge and acumen; O'Connor and his group call these individuals "academics." "These are people who like to stay in the loop." Because they're keenly aware of what's new in the investment world, Academics can be more aggressive than other personality types, and are often attracted to sophisticated, higher-risk products. "Often their ceaseless attention to the numbers of wealth management—the statistics, the calculations, the performance figures—make it easy for them to forget the big picture."

9. The Empire-builder

For the empire builder, wealth is a means by which to measure success and self-worth. "This tends to lead to a 'more is better' attitude." Because they are driven to build their wealth, empire builders are usually open-minded and willing to invest in most anything as long as the returns are attractive. In some cases, this attention to performance makes them financial "nomads," as they wander from investment to investment (and from advisor to advisor) in search of better returns. Because of their narrow focus, empire builders often spend more time on speculation than on estate or tax planning.

"It's sometimes surprising to see what motivates people financially," O'Connor says, "It's often not what you might think." Speaking from his own experience, he has worked with many well-paid corporate executives who look forward to being financially independent, street-smart business owners who want nothing more than to take care of their family, and professional athletes or entertainers who live in the public eye, but are concerned about their privacy.

O'Connor is quick to point out that these personality types aren't set in stone, and can change throughout a client's life. Often times, a young entrepreneur will evolve from an Empire Builder to a Caregiver as the family nest fills out.

All of which means that as useful as these profiles are, they in no way replace the hands-on work that O'Connor and his partners do to understand the needs, fears, and desires of their clients. "These profiles are meant to be a starting point. At the end of the day, individuals are unique, and the same solution that worked for client A, won't necessarily work for client B, even if they are the same wealth personality," he explains. Sure, that's a challenge, but at the end of the day, it's why he got into this line of work. "It's the people," he says, smiling. "They're what keep me interested in this work." ■



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Shift or Get off the Pot

By Jonni O'Connor, PhD

You heard me. Shift. Move. Get going. I have no doubt you're overdue for it.

You know you want to shift, because you keep going over it, in your head, again and again. And then the 'what ifs' have a field day with you. "What if it doesn't work? What if I'm wrong? What if I can't? What if I'm fooling myself?" But the desire to make that all-important shift never really goes away either. It too keeps itself in your head. You can hear it saying: "You've got to do this. You've got to try or you'll never be happy. It's now or never."

So, you have to shift. Finally. You've reached a place—a tipping point—where you have to make a powerful change in your life. It's time to get off the metaphorical pot and get on with it.

Now, it's always better to choose to make this shift consciously, and see it through as best you can, step by step, because if you continue to stay in fear (or in a "comfort zone"), something else will undoubtedly intervene and make the choices for you. And you may not like what those choices mean to you. Your time has run out and something's got to give. The pause button is about to click off.

When shift becomes inevitable, it's because your direction hasn't been serving you and this is your last chance to recognize what's going on and to set yourself going in a new direction. If you haven't chosen to do this of your own accord, then your life and the things around you will reach a pivotal point. One of two things can then happen: a low or a high. In human terms they look like either a crisis—a rock bottom situation, or an epiphany—a break-through moment of absolute clarity and insight. The light bulb will either turn fully on or fully off, but it will no longer keep flickering. And then you're left to evaluate where you are on the map of your life.

Either the crisis or the epiphany provides you with a much-needed wake-up call that says, "Ah, you are here." It's your place on the map. Look at it. Feel it. Is this where you really want to be? Are you at the place in your life that pleases you, that brings out the best in you?



Is this place and experience in life chosen out of fear, out of obligation, out of insecurity? Is it based on old choices that you've now outgrown, evolved beyond, because you attempted to keep things in autopilot?

Whether it shows up as a crisis or an epiphany, this wake-up call asks you to really see where you are and how you got there, and more importantly, it gives you the phenomenal opportunity to make a choice as to where you really want to be.

The check-up that follows this crisis or epiphany serves to inspire you to want more—more than you have been settling for and more than you may have allowed yourself to attain and indeed to be. 'More' is a very powerful energy and a most attractive one. You can want more, but because you haven't been actively pursuing and accomplishing this, you may have needed this pivotal point to stop and re-route yourself.

Clients often come to me because they have reached that pivotal position in their

life, whether in their health, their relationship, their career, their home—it doesn't matter. Something has slammed them into this moment of evaluation. And it is at this point that together we begin to build them out into the 'more' factor that they are now ready for—the more that they are finally willing to put time and energy into.

Clients also come to see me because they want to reach that pivotal point. They know they need that kind of an energy push to get them to shift. They come to actively seek out the experience of the epiphany that will motivate their movement into the very empowering energy of more.

Building the more in your life, once you've reached the high or low and the inevitable evaluation that follows, is a process of incorporating the essential elements of commitment, dedication and consistency together in equal measures. We infuse the more-plan with necessary steps, strategies and checkpoints that ultimately build trust in this new direction. Where once there was doubt, fear and trepidation, now they are building trust, belief and confidence. It's a beautiful shift. ■

"Soul of Africa" collection

Zimbabwe

"Shona" & Realistic Sculptures



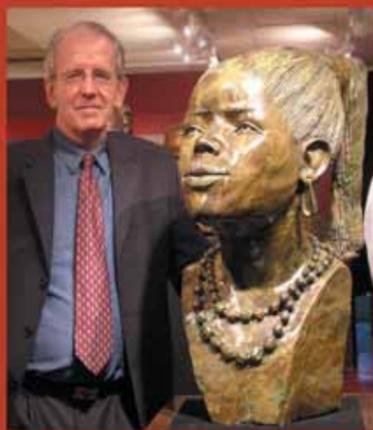
Our World Is Falling Apart
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Open Mind Wellington Karuru



3.5 billion year old
Verdite stone



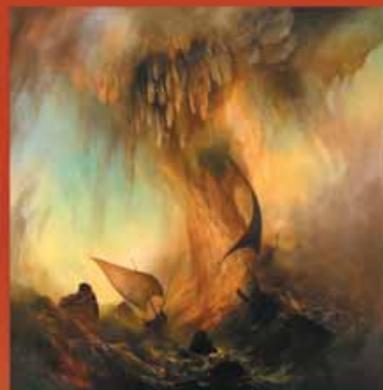
Beautiful woman
Semi-precious Verdite



I Think I Can Fly Chituwa Jemali
Zimbabwe



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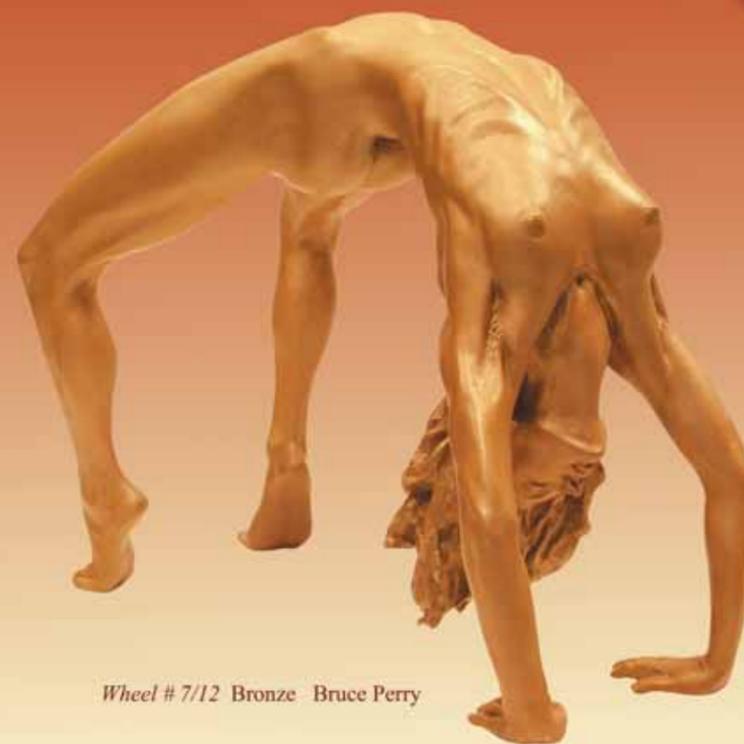
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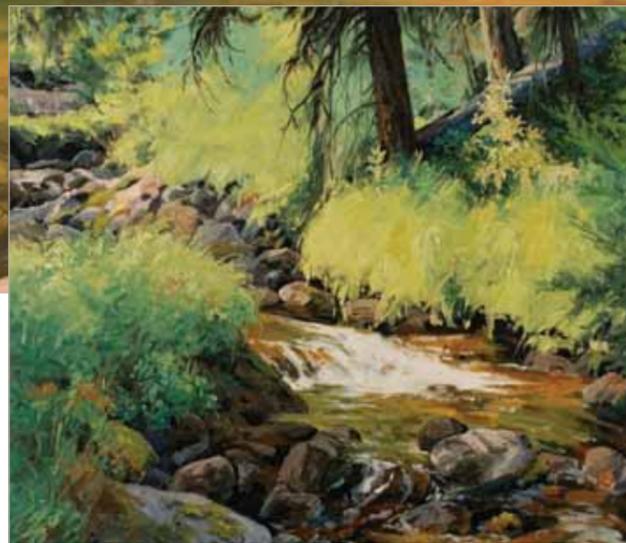
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Light is Everything

Light is everything to Western Canadian artist Robert E. Wood and it's the dramatic play of light and colour that makes his work so captivating. "There's beauty everywhere if you take the time to look for it." That beauty and vitality of his subjects is reflected in his fresh and spontaneous paintings.

Wood's early inspiration and training came from his father, Karl E. Wood (1944-1990)—with whom he spent eight months training—and grandfather, Robert E. Wood (1919-1980). He has also studied with several other professional painters and has been pursuing his art for 18 years. Robert has had a paintbrush in hand since early childhood, prompting his grandfather to call him "the little painter." From the beginning he has been successful. "My first paintings went into a gallery in Calgary in December of 1989. The dealer picked them up from my studio on a Sunday afternoon and called me Monday at noon to say that the first one had sold. I never looked back."



Above: *Arnica Lake* - 36" x 48"
Below: *Forest Idyll* - 35" x 35"

While most artists are limited to specific subject matter, Wood is versatile and has a strong desire not to be categorized. His art reflects his varied experiences and wide travels and some of his most recent paintings include street scenes of London and San Francisco's Chinatown. Landscapes remain his first love because of the infinite variations and subtleties of nature and the seasons.



Clockwise from above: *July Meadow* - 40" x 60";
Last Light - North Saskatchewan River - 30" x 40"; *Opal Creek* - 12" x 16"

"I want to paint light so effectively that the viewer can feel the warmth of the sun"

Wood works on location as often as possible—plein-air painting—where the artist's eye can capture the subtle effects of light and colour that elude a camera's lens. This personal experience enables him to blend subject with mood to evoke a sense of "being there." The result is striking. Not limited to working outdoors, Robert shoots countless photographs as reference material for his studio paintings. What is always necessary is the personal involvement and experience of the artist. "You have to know what it feels like to be there—the temperature, the breeze, the smells of pine forest or wildflowers and sounds of birds or rushing water. It all contributes to the authenticity of my paintings."





Above: *The Opera Tavern - London - 24" x 36"*
Below: *Chinatown Colours - San Francisco - 36" x 48"*

Wood stays focused on the fundamentals: good drawing, composition, paint handling, tone values and colour. "I want to paint light so effectively that the viewer can feel the warmth of the sun and believe it's reflecting in the shadows." Painting is all a matter of balance: "I think it's the perfect balance between boldness and subtlety, between colour and tone, looseness and detail, hard and soft edges." Through his skilful handling of these elements, Wood achieves a distinctive expression of mood.

His works are impressionistic and pleasing to the senses. "I'm focused on painting shapes and colours, rather than the thing itself. I like people to be able to come up close to a painting and see spots of colour and obvious brushwork, and then be able to step back and have the painting come together almost like magic. When you leave something to the imagination you achieve a personal connection that entertains the mind."

Viewing a Wood landscape makes you wish you could step into the scene. "I want you to feel like you're there—I want to capture the essence of my subjects. I paint what I enjoy looking at and hope my work will connect with others."

Collectors will have a chance to enjoy a large selection of Wood's finest paintings to date at his upcoming exhibition with the Gainsborough Galleries. His paintings hang in private and corporate collections around the world and his dramatic work has earned Robert E. Wood a place in the ranks of the finest Western Canadian artists. ■

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