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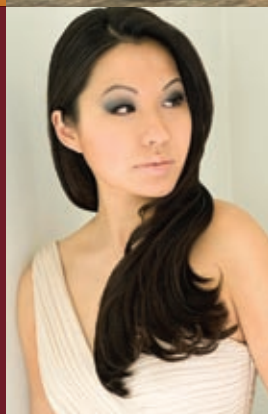
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*Pacific Resort Aitutaki, Cook Islands*

*Photographer: Connie Ekelund*

*Camera: Sony A 850*

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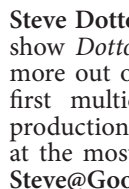
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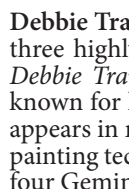
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By happenstance, this issue has become the island issue. We travelled to the Cook Islands and then on to the other side of the world to Newfoundland, a very large island. The similarities between the two are not too surprising. In both instances, the strength of the local communities stands out. People tend to know everyone else or at least their brother or cousin. Plus there's a "can do" attitude required of isolated communities that need to rely on each other to get things done.

Even today, Newfoundlanders living in rural communities come together to help each other build their homes. So, unlike their city counterparts, they tend to not have mortgages. And, in the Cooks, after Tropical Cyclone Pat devastated Aitutaki in February of this year, it was the community members who first banded together to provide help for those most affected. This feeling of togetherness dominates the community. As a visitor, the most outstanding feature is not so much the spectacular natural environments but the sense of togetherness which is so apparent.

Next on the agenda is a trip to Egypt and a cruise down the Nile. I'm pretty certain this destination has to be on most people's "bucket list." The opportunity to view firsthand some of the oldest man-made structures on the planet is bound to be truly memorable. Who has not speculated about the people who built the pyramids while studying history books in school? To actually go and see them first hand and to cruise the Nile as the pharaohs once did is an extraordinary opportunity, not to be missed.

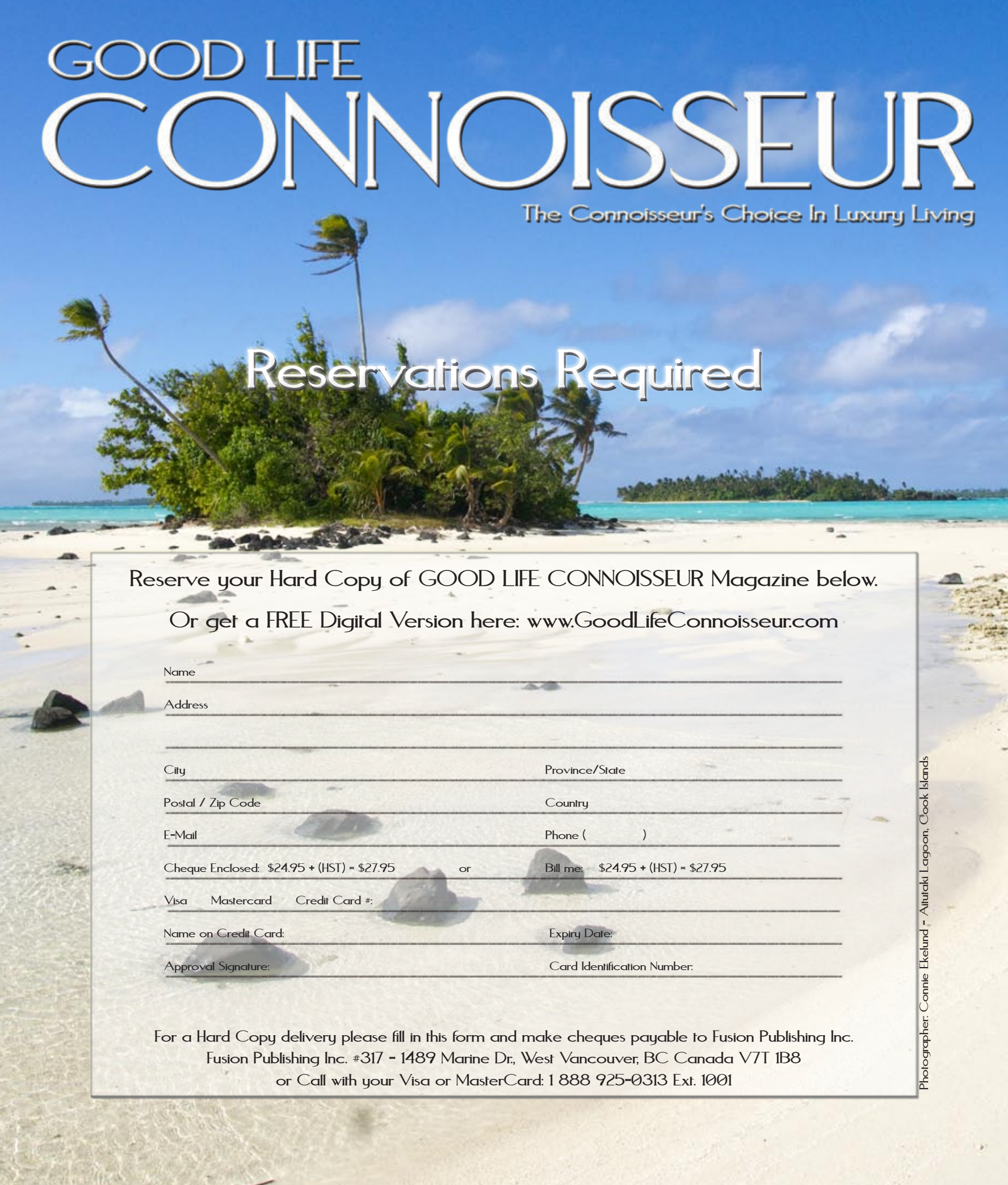
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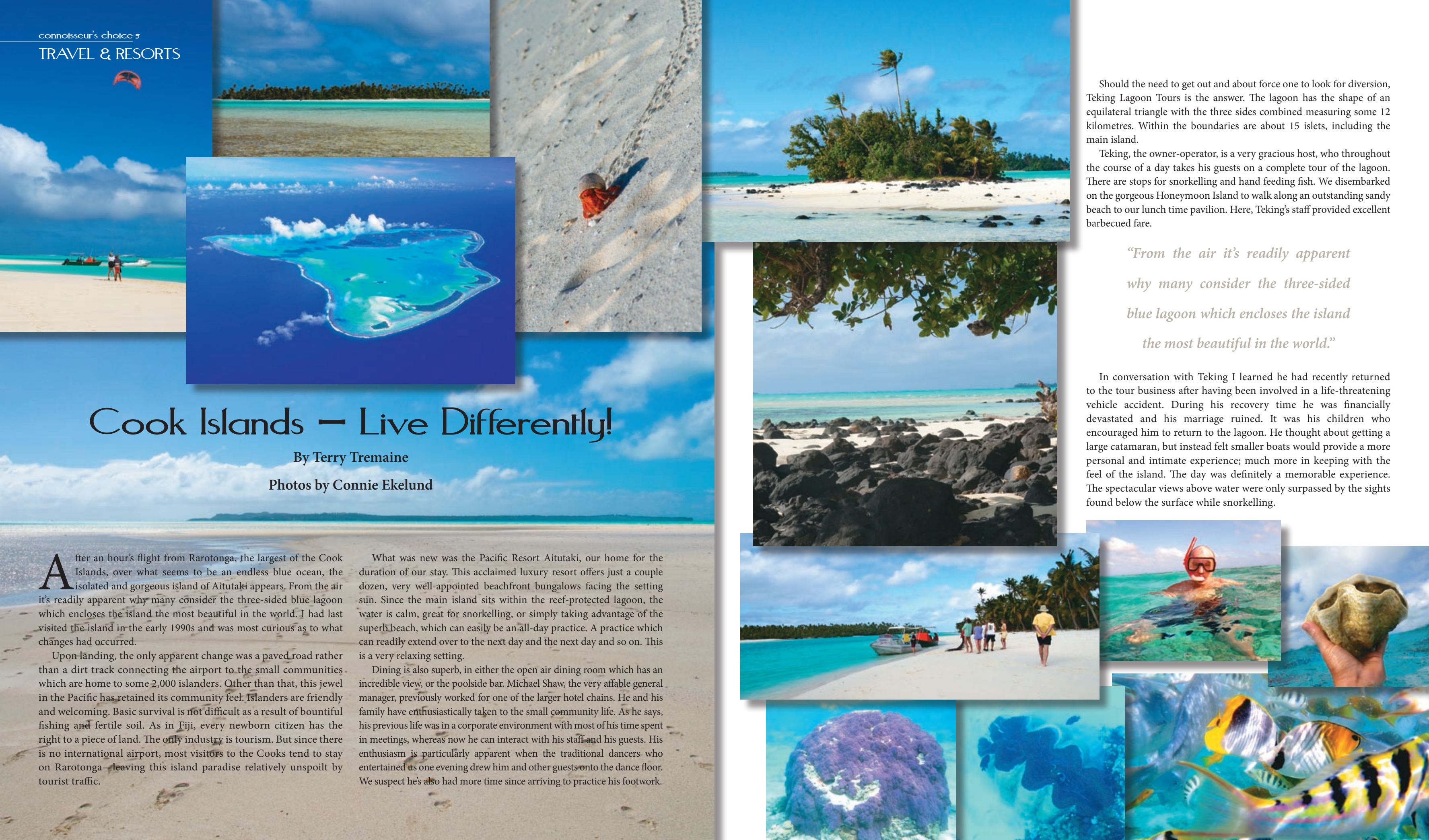
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Photographer: Connie Ekelund - Aitutaki Lagoon, Cook Islands





# Cook Islands — Live Differently!

By Terry Tremaine

Photos by Connie Ekelund

After an hour's flight from Rarotonga, the largest of the Cook Islands, over what seems to be an endless blue ocean, the isolated and gorgeous island of Aitutaki appears. From the air it's readily apparent why many consider the three-sided blue lagoon which encloses the island the most beautiful in the world. I had last visited the island in the early 1990s and was most curious as to what changes had occurred.

Upon landing, the only apparent change was a paved road rather than a dirt track connecting the airport to the small communities which are home to some 2,000 islanders. Other than that, this jewel in the Pacific has retained its community feel. Islanders are friendly and welcoming. Basic survival is not difficult as a result of bountiful fishing and fertile soil. As in Fiji, every newborn citizen has the right to a piece of land. The only industry is tourism. But since there is no international airport, most visitors to the Cooks tend to stay on Rarotonga—leaving this island paradise relatively unspoilt by tourist traffic.

What was new was the Pacific Resort Aitutaki, our home for the duration of our stay. This acclaimed luxury resort offers just a couple dozen, very well-appointed beachfront bungalows facing the setting sun. Since the main island sits within the reef-protected lagoon, the water is calm, great for snorkelling, or simply taking advantage of the superb beach, which can easily be an all-day practice. A practice which can readily extend over to the next day and the next day and so on. This is a very relaxing setting.

Dining is also superb, in either the open air dining room which has an incredible view, or the poolside bar. Michael Shaw, the very affable general manager, previously worked for one of the larger hotel chains. He and his family have enthusiastically taken to the small community life. As he says, his previous life was in a corporate environment with most of his time spent in meetings, whereas now he can interact with his staff and his guests. His enthusiasm is particularly apparent when the traditional dancers who entertained us one evening drew him and other guests onto the dance floor. We suspect he's also had more time since arriving to practice his footwork.

Should the need to get out and about force one to look for diversion, Teking Lagoon Tours is the answer. The lagoon has the shape of an equilateral triangle with the three sides combined measuring some 12 kilometres. Within the boundaries are about 15 islets, including the main island.

Teking, the owner-operator, is a very gracious host, who throughout the course of a day takes his guests on a complete tour of the lagoon. There are stops for snorkelling and hand feeding fish. We disembarked on the gorgeous Honeymoon Island to walk along an outstanding sandy beach to our lunch time pavilion. Here, Teking's staff provided excellent barbecued fare.

*“From the air it's readily apparent  
why many consider the three-sided  
blue lagoon which encloses the island  
the most beautiful in the world.”*

In conversation with Teking I learned he had recently returned to the tour business after having been involved in a life-threatening vehicle accident. During his recovery time he was financially devastated and his marriage ruined. It was his children who encouraged him to return to the lagoon. He thought about getting a large catamaran, but instead felt smaller boats would provide a more personal and intimate experience; much more in keeping with the feel of the island. The day was definitely a memorable experience. The spectacular views above water were only surpassed by the sights found below the surface while snorkelling.



## TRAVEL & RESORTS

One evening, we took it upon ourselves to dine at the highly regarded Café Tupuna. The restaurant structure is open air with sand floors. Service is unpretentious. The cuisine is commendable. It's well worth a visit.

During our stay on Aitutaki we were lucky to have a land tour of the island courtesy of Misepa Isamaela, the Aitutaki tourism officer. It's apparent that this is a small community where everyone knows each other and it would appear they also get along. As she explained, life is not difficult, but if the desire is to gain financial wealth, people have to leave the island. Rarotonga would be the first destination, but many Cook Islanders also move on to New Zealand. There are actually five times more Cook Islanders in New Zealand than on all the Cook Islands combined. At one time the Cooks were a protectorate of New Zealand, but now are self-governing, with New Zealand administering foreign affairs under the direction of the Cook government. Many like Misepa return, drawn home by the close-knit community life and relatively carefree existence.

### Ika Mata Recipe

*Courtesy of Chef James Croat of Pacific Resort Aitutaki*

- 500 g fresh yellow fin tuna loin
- 300 ml lime or lemon juice
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 2 tomatoes, seeded and diced
- 2 whole capsicum, diced
- 300 ml fresh coconut cream
- 1 large handful fresh coriander chopped
- 1 red chilli, seeded and finely diced (optional)
- Flaky sea salt & fresh ground black pepper to taste

### Method:

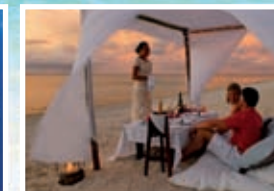
1. Dice tuna and marinate in lime or lemon juice for at least an hour
2. Once tuna is marinated, pour off any excess juice
3. Combine tuna, red onion, tomato, capsicum, coriander (chilli) & coconut cream
4. Season with salt and pepper, and serve.



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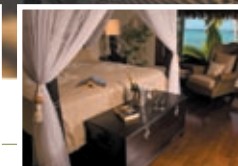
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It was with considerable regret that we left the calm tranquility of Aitutaki. Rarotonga seemed almost busy in comparison. We arrived back utilizing the just-remodelled Rarotonga International Airport. Security and custom issues are tended to with efficiency and a smile. One welcoming musician has been serenading each arriving international flight for over a decade. Apparently he doesn't want to share the fun!

The New Zealand influence is more apparent in Rarotonga. When we were in New Zealand we came to appreciate their "can do" attitude typified with the expression "using number 8 wire." New Zealanders figure if they have to make something and don't have the proscribed materials they'll make do with number 8 wire. That similar attitude seems to have been absorbed by those in Rarotonga, but without getting too carried away.

Approximately 14,000 people live very comfortably on this luscious tropical island. The one road takes you around the circumference of the island in about 45 minutes. Again, the island is surrounded by a lagoon, with the southern side being the widest and deepest, and providing the best swimming and snorkelling. Tourism is the number one industry and there are numerous facilities for the visitor.



Our home away from home was the Te Manava Luxury Villas. This new luxury resort comprises a small group of 11 luxury villas on the shore of Muri Lagoon. They are individually owned but managed by the Pacific Resort Group. Being self-contained, guests can choose the level of service desired.

We were fortunate to have the Presidential Villa, boasting three bedrooms and its owned courtyard-enclosed pool. Naturally, the property is remarkably well appointed. One afternoon we enjoyed a couple's massage in the sundrenched courtyard and on another evening we were personally pampered with our own chef preparing and serving a sumptuous dinner in our own dining room.

Marc, our chef for the evening, is a Pilipino, who, along with his wife, has been on contract in Rarotonga with Deli Foods. Deli Foods provides an extensive out-catering service while their shop offers freshly baked breads and quality deli foods plus fine wines—many of which, not surprisingly, are from New Zealand. Marc was proud to explain that during his contract his employer had encouraged him to take a culinary course which was certified by New Zealand. Now with his contract at an end, the upcoming holiday visit to the Philippines he and his wife viewed with mixed feelings, as they so enjoyed their life on Rarotonga.

Speaking with Thomas Koteka, the general manager of Te Manava, also confirmed the sense of comfort Cook Islanders feel with their home. Thomas had lived in Canada for many years, working for a large hotel chain. When he returned home he had not expected to stay, but found he was still immersed many years later. One tale he told helped to position the lifestyle well.

Thomas makes promotional tours on behalf of the Cook Island properties. Homeland Security took issue with his documentation. There are no street addresses in Rarotonga. The officer had difficulty accepting the validity of his passport with there being no address. Thomas was taken aside for special treatment. After a considerable length of time Thomas was able to convince the officer to give the prime minister of the Cooks a telephone call. The prime minister of course readily confirmed Thomas was from the Cooks and he was then allowed to proceed.





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George Ellis is a cousin of Thomas and is also the CEO of the Cook Islands Pearl Authority. Cook island fishermen produce quality black pearls. They view Tahiti pearls as inferior and feel they are flooding the market with poorer, inexpensive product. Utilizing the "can do" attitude, the government has encouraged the Pearl Authority to take on the challenge of saving the industry from undue competition.

The result is, just as in Canada where there are Polar Bear diamonds, that now the Cook Islands have Avaiki pearls. The fishermen who produce these quality black pearls are required to adhere to a certain level of sustainable fishing practice that also results in high product standards, while the Authority has now taken on the task of marketing this new brand around the world.

Another example is the newly opened Te Vara Nui Village Tour. Starting with a "Turou" welcome at the village gates, we were escorted along a trail leading among a series of huts, each with its own tale told by a knowledgeable guide. First is the "History Hut" where we learned of ancient warrior weapons, cannibalism, missionaries, the seven canoe migration, traditional navigation techniques, legends, first governance and more. This was followed by six more huts, each with its own tale regarding traditional medicines, ancestral fishing techniques, traditional weaving, ancient carving tools and finally, the Cocconut Hut which explains and demonstrates everything to do with the "Tree of Life."

The finale is the amazing "Ura Po" when Rarotonga's finest dancers and musicians perform by flaming torchlight on floating and fixed stages in a waterfall garden. Old legends are told over the water, presented by fast hip-shaking dancers and beating drums. This stunning show delivers an electric and authentic cultural performance all complimented with a traditional island night buffet fusing local island tastes with food from European chefs. The four-and-a-half-hour experience was much more than we had expected.

[www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com](http://www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com)



Another unique Cook Islands experience is the Pungana`nui Cultural Market, a growers' market where stalls offer a wide range of freshly grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, flowers, plants, and fresh fish. The market is open Saturday mornings from dawn until noon. Many stall-holders sell takeaway meals. Entertainment includes musicians, dancers and carvers. Surrounding the market are many permanent stalls. The market is a slice of Cook Islands life, where locals gather to socialize as well as to purchase their weekly produce. It's interesting to note that shops close at noon on Saturdays throughout the Cooks as the church retains a strong influence in island life.

*"There is an element to life that is hard to explain, but it is most comfortable."*

Throughout our visit to the Cooks, the atmosphere was most relaxed but things still get done. There is an element to life that is hard to explain, but it is most comfortable. Seldom do we ever feel the need to return to a destination, always preferring the "next one" rather than repeats. However, that comfortable feeling has a pulling power that brings back the Cook Islanders as well. ■

**Connoisseur's Choice in the Cook Islands**  
Tourism Cook Islands [www.cookislands.travel](http://www.cookislands.travel)  
Pacific Resorts [www.pacificresort.com](http://www.pacificresort.com)  
Teking Lagoon Tours [www.teking.co.ck](http://www.teking.co.ck)  
Te Vara Nui Village [www.tevaranui.co.ck](http://www.tevaranui.co.ck)  
Deli Foods [www.delifoods.co.ck](http://www.delifoods.co.ck)

[www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com](http://www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com)



#### Tomato Chilli Pickle

Courtesy of Chef Luscious de Rama of Deli Foods Ltd., Muri Beach Rarotonga

- 2 tbsp cumin seeds, toasted and blended
- 250 ml canola oil
- 250 ml malt vinegar
- 8 garlic cloves, crushed
- 150 g palm sugar
- 4 tsp grated ginger
- 1 cup fish sauce
- 6 small red chillies (optional)
- 5 kg red tomatoes, skin off and chopped

#### Method:

1. Heat oil and cook mustard seeds for about 2 minutes. Add garlic, ginger, chillies and cumin seeds.
2. Add tomatoes, vinegar and bring to a boil and simmer for 1 hour stirring regularly.
3. Add sugar, fish sauce and reduce until thick consistency. Be careful not to burn the bottom.
4. Cool and refrigerate. Would last for a week in the fridge or can be bottled.



Legend has it that  
Ina rode a shark to  
be with her lover.  
You can simply take  
the plane.

Perhaps it's the legacy of the beautiful Ina, who rode a shark from Aitutaki to Rarotonga to reach her lover Tinirau. Perhaps it's the endless azure waters, the tiny, tranquil islands or the deserted white sand beaches. Whatever the reason, this place is so peaceful, powerful and insanely romantic, it's very easy to fall in love.

Cook Islands  
ROMANCE

[www.cookislands.travel](http://www.cookislands.travel)

connoisseur's choice 5  
TRAVEL & RESORTS

## Newfoundland Lost and Found

By Terry Tremaine

Photos by Connie Ekelund

Surprisingly, though born and brought up in Halifax, Newfoundland was the only province that I had never visited. So when the invitation from Newfoundland Tourism came our way, there was absolutely no hesitation in saying "let's go." St. John's is a relatively small community, but seems much bigger as a result of attitude and history. The oldest port city in North America boasts colourful houses lining the streets, which run up the hills surrounding the very well-protected harbour. Water Street in the city centre offers a pleasant stroll with a surprising number of good restaurants and art galleries interspersed among the usual business establishments. One block above Water is George Street, best known for the live music offered by the numerous pubs sitting side by side. But don't plan to get there before midnight as that's when the music starts.

Our home while away from home was Ryan Mansion, a short walk from all the action. The current owners have created a most elegant B&B frequented by the likes of Prince Charles and Camilla as well as other celebrities looking for the best available. Originally built by Dan Ryan, a very successful businessman, the property has been furnished in keeping with its age, complimented with an eclectic art collection. A comment from our host positions the property very well. Apparently, when she would ask her grandfather for a little pocket change, the response was, "Do you think I've got the same kind of money as Dan Ryan?"

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## TRAVEL & RESORTS



A short drive down the coast sits Bay Bulls and O'Brien's Whale and Bird Tour. Driving is easy—if you blink at the wrong time you're likely to miss rush hour in St. John's—and once outside the city it's very scenic, with forests of short trees and lots of rock. Here, there are small fishing communities. Our host, Matt, for the tour to see humpback whales and the largest Atlantic Puffin colony, broke into song a number of times while telling the humpbacks how gorgeous they were. Apparently, the O'Brien family are relatives of the very popular "Irish Descendants" and musical talent flows through the whole family. The Puffins are as aerodynamic as a potato, to quote Matt. Apparently they need an updraft to take flight.

A little further down the coast is Ferryland, another small community with a long history. A short walk from the Colony of Avalon archaeological site is the Ferryland Head Lighthouse. Here Jill Curran provides picnic lunches for visitors. Upon ordering, each group is provided with a different coloured flag and a blanket. After finding the perfect spot to sit and watch the humpbacks swimming nearby, the idea is to place the flag in the ground so the server knows where to bring the picnic basket once the food has been prepared. Throughout our visit to Newfoundland I was constantly surprised by how old the communities were. For instance, the Colony of Avalon was established by Lord Baltimore in 1622, about a hundred years after English fishermen first started using the Ferryland harbour.



“...IT WAS A GREAT JOY TO STAY IN  
YOUR SPLENDID HOTEL”

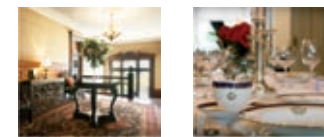
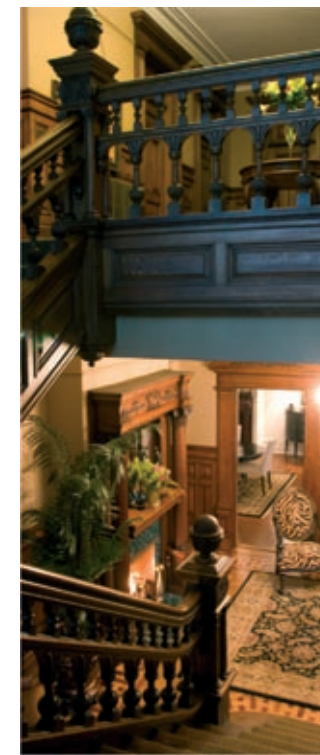
~ HRH PRINCE CHARLES ~  
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DOWNTOWN ST. JOHN'S  
NEWFOUNDLAND



*“A short walk from the Colony of Avalon  
archaeological site is the Ferryland  
Head Lighthouse. Here Jill Curran  
provides picnic lunches for visitors.”*





Cupids, on the other side of the peninsula, was established in 1610 and is Canada's oldest English community. The highlight of our trip was a tour of Bay Roberts, conducted by the very enthusiastic Mayor Glen Littlejohn. The Cable Building in Bay Roberts was designated a National Historic Site in 2008. The brick building was erected as a relay station for trans-Atlantic cable from England to North and South America. It also houses a heritage centre displaying historic goods donated by the locals and refurbished by the curator plus the Christopher Pratt Art Gallery. The town, unlike most rural communities, is actually growing—I suspect as a result of folks like Glen, who spend a considerable amount of their time building and maintaining the nature trails and historic sites which provide a unique and comfortable flavour.

*“As a result of the modest population base  
there are few strangers in Newfoundland,  
and every one seems to know everyone else.”*

As a result of the modest population base there are few strangers in Newfoundland, and every one seems to know everyone else. It's not long before visitors are part of the community. Early in our trip we dined at one of St. John's fine restaurants with Scott Giannou, a principal behind Targa Newfoundland, the only event of its kind to be held in North America. Every September, 2,200 kilometres of Newfoundland's roads are closed to allow auto enthusiasts to race at top speed through the very scenic centre of the province. It wasn't but a few days later when, wandering through town, we ran into Scott again and were promptly invited to a “cleaning out the freezer” party to be held the next day.

Newfoundland has a well deserved reputation for having the friendliest people, and that combined with the natural beauty and astonishing history makes me wonder why it took so long to getting around to visiting the last province to join confederation. ■



#### Connoisseur's Choice in Newfoundland

Tourism Newfoundland and Labrador

[www.newfoundlandlabrador.com](http://www.newfoundlandlabrador.com)

Tourism St. John's

[www.destinationstjohns.com](http://www.destinationstjohns.com)

Ryan Mansion

[www.ryanmansion.com](http://www.ryanmansion.com)

O'Brien's Whale Tours

[www.obriensboattours.com](http://www.obriensboattours.com)

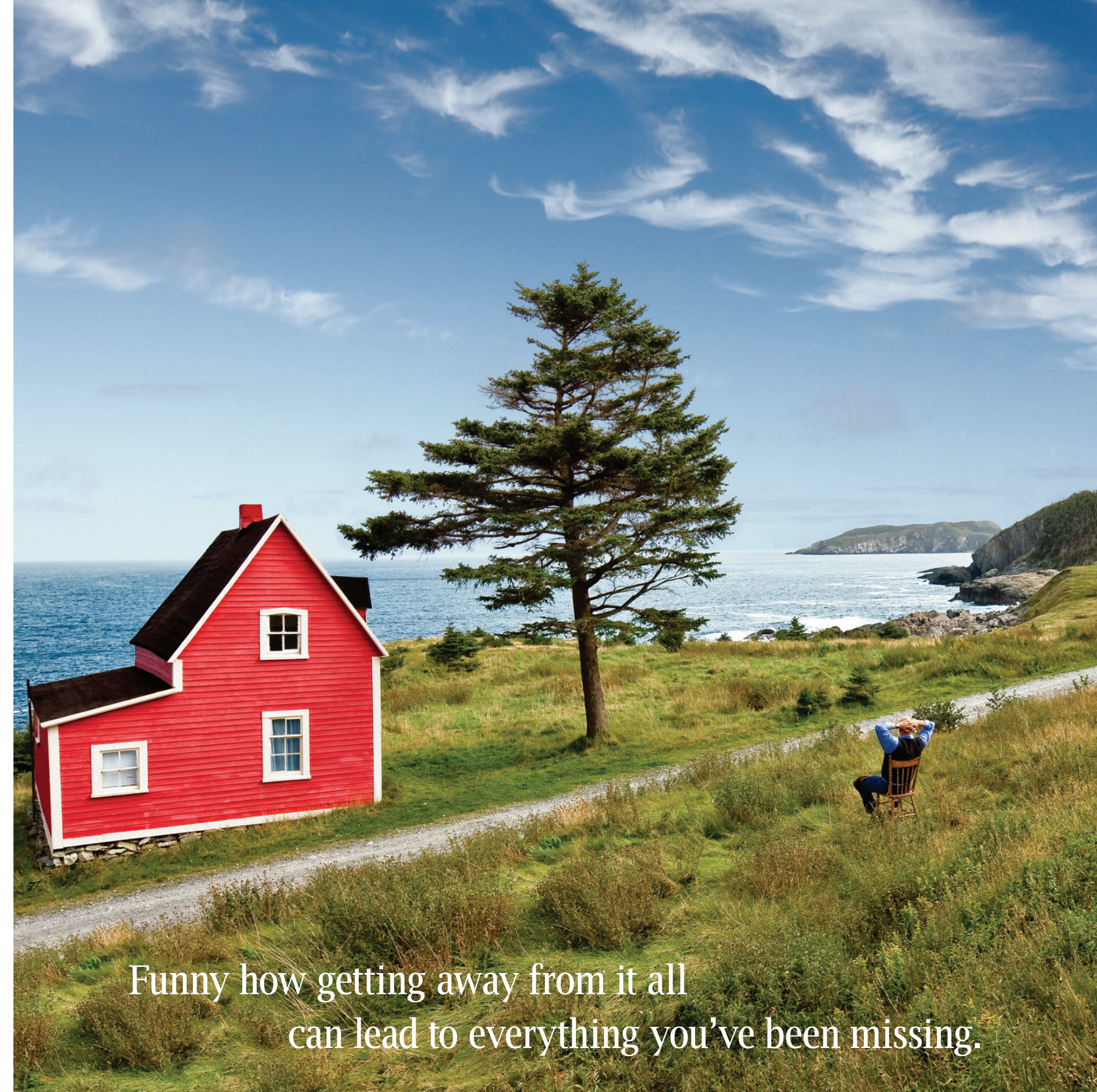
Ferryland Lighthouse Picnic

[www.lighthousepicnics.ca](http://www.lighthousepicnics.ca)

Targa Newfoundland

[www.targanewfoundland.com](http://www.targanewfoundland.com)

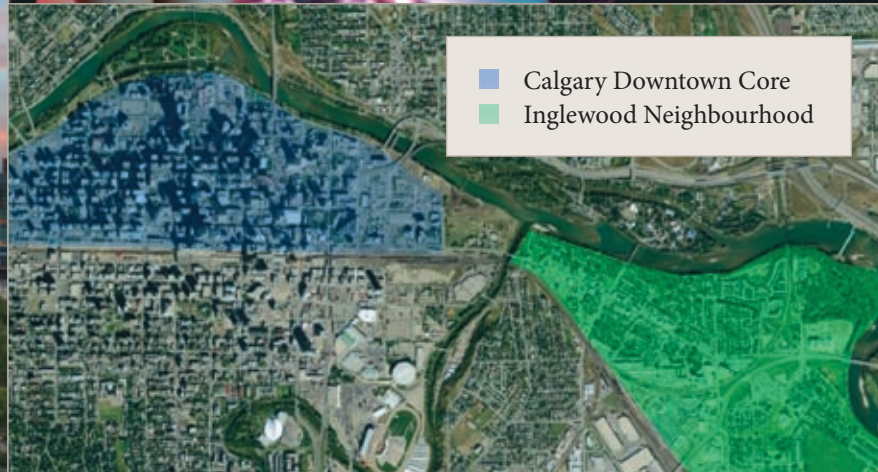
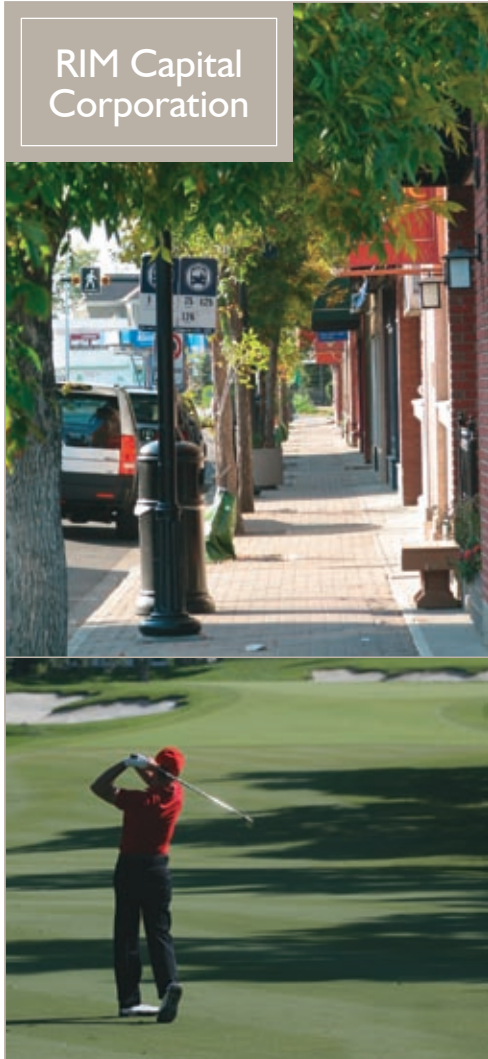
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Funny how getting away from it all  
can lead to everything you've been missing.

Rarely will you find the perspective you're looking for at the end of a long to-do list. It's just not the right medium. Rather, try losing yourself somewhere along our 29,000 kilometres of coastline. Where you can't help but view the world with wide eyes and an open heart. It's exactly the kind of place where all the important things in life seem to find their way, quite effortlessly, back to the top where they belong. For a little inspiration, call Kelly at 1-800-563-6353 or visit NewfoundlandLabrador.com





# RIM Capital Corporation

## Invest in high-yield opportunity

RIM Capital Corporation is a Western Canadian-based real estate development company which has successfully completed numerous high quality projects in British Columbia and Alberta. The company philosophy is to source land in prime locations and develop projects of exceptional quality, ones in which they would be proud to live themselves. This adherence to quality has allowed RIM Capital Corporation to build a reputation of excellence in two of the most competitive markets in Western Canada.

The company is headed by Michael Deakin, who has over 30 years experience in property development. Mr. Deakin started in 1978 in Vancouver and expanded to Calgary in 1993. He has been involved in a wide variety of developments in both provinces. Ryan Ross joined his father in the business 12 years ago and brings business and economic expertise to the company. Michael and Ryan, the entrepreneurial energy driving the organization forward, maintain an uncompromising focus on quality in design, materials and workmanship, creating an excellent opportunity for both investors and purchasers alike.

RIM Capital Corporation has a new project under way, located in the Inglewood neighbourhood of Calgary, a short distance from the city centre. This area is undergoing major redevelopment and will become one of the most sought after neighbourhoods in Calgary—similar to trendy Yaletown in Vancouver. The project will offer views of the Bow River and the downtown core, creating the atmosphere of an urban village within the city.

The Inglewood Landing project will contain a mix of residential and commercial space, including a minimum of 300 condominium units and approximately 75,000 square feet of mixed retail and services to compliment the residences, on a site in excess of 103,000 square feet. The concept will create an urban village feel with pedestrian pathways, water features and a central plaza.

Inglewood Landing is expected to become the most sought after urban lifestyle address in Calgary. The state of the art design, layout, technology and materials will ensure another in a series of successful developments.

RIM Capital will be utilizing their usual team of top tier architects and consultants, whose vision and reputation for excellence reflect the company's core values and past successes. This team of professionals has consistently been in the lead investor group, recognizing a superior project and taking a financial interest at the earliest stage.

RIM Capital plans to incorporate numerous innovative features and green technologies such as geothermal heating and cooling systems in the design, leading to the completion of the greenest building in Calgary to date. The inclusion of green technologies compliments the innovative, cutting edge design of the project and adds considerable long term value in the form of lower energy costs.

New investors—along with numerous repeat investors—are being offered an opportunity to participate in another of RIM Capital's well-managed, conservatively structured, high quality real estate developments. RIM Capital Corporation has an offering of \$4 million in preferred shares, with a minimum commitment of \$10,000, which will entitle investors to 30% of the project's overall profit. As with all of RIM's premium investment opportunities, participants in the financing of Inglewood Landing can expect to earn one of the most competitive returns on investment available today. The generous triple digit ROI is the caliber of return that RIM's management is very well known for, and that which turns first time investors into one of the many pleased repeat investors this development group uses to network. Investors will have the option to convert their investment earnings into condominium ownership, as an alternative to a cash payment, and offering an opportunity for tax deferral.

The projected returns are based on a very conservative financial forecast reflecting the prudence and experience of the project management team. The location in a very desirable area of Calgary, a vibrant and growing city, creates a unique opportunity for investors to participate in the growth of this Western Canadian economic hub. For specific details on this high-yield return and project schedule, please contact Michael or Ryan directly at the contact info provided below. ■

### RIM Capital Corporation

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# Asian Aura

Ancient decorating practices promise to promote health, wealth and wellbeing.

By Debbie Travis



As our western minds turn more and more to the healing powers of relaxation and rejuvenation, it is natural that we look to the East for inspiration. We have embraced yoga and meditation as part of a holistic regime to regain and maintain equilibrium. Asian markets and restaurants have become commonplace as we redefine our diets to include nutritious veggies and fish. The concept of a healthy home has expanded exponentially over the past decade to include everything from green building products, cleansers, air purifiers, and alternate heat sources, to the products we use to decorate our homes and how we set up the furnishings.

Feng shui is the ancient art of furniture placement and energy flow in the home. The goal is to allow the energy force know as Chi to flow smoothly through your home and not become blocked. Items with negative yin require balance from their counterparts, positive yang. The five elements—fire, earth, metal, water and wood—create all the permutations in nature. They each carry their own strengths, and all need to be present to create harmony. It is a complex art that combines compass directions with the elements and their yin and yang. When you are within a space that has been thoughtfully conceived using these principles, it is believed to have a strong effect on the health, happiness, relationships, good luck and wealth of those who live there.



Above top: The hotel's bed suites are decorated with serene colours, tactile textures and Asian-inspired art and artefacts. Above bottom: Meticulous attention to detail and uncluttered space shows off the splendour of the marble and custom designed sink console. Opposite Left: Feng shui's five elements are present in each of Chi's spa suites: fire, water, earth, metal, and wood. Opposite right: The dramatic entrance to Market restaurant showcases a richly veined floor and arty chandelier.

The Asian aesthetic is above all welcoming and relaxing. I have chosen two destinations that exemplify the best of the contemporary Asian spirit in their environments to show how we can reproduce the designs in our homes.

*“When you are within a space that has been thoughtfully conceived using these principles, it is believed to have a strong effect on the health, happiness, relationships, good luck and wealth of those who live there.”*



## Shangri-La Hotel, Vancouver

The beauty and benefits of contemporary Asian décor are present throughout this amazing hotel. Bed suites incorporate life-giving elements and symbols to ensure a restful environment. The vinyl wall covering has a silk-like finish, which provides a sense of wealth and luxury. The room's colour scheme of creamy latte walls, golden silk and satin bed linens in a popular bamboo pattern, and chocolate brown furniture is quietly elegant. Stunning wood details are a focal point. The dark grained floor-to-ceiling cupboard door is pau ferro, a wood similar to rosewood but harder, that has a captivating grain. Natural wood beds are thought to promote undisturbed sleep. Bedside lampshades have the look of rice paper and provide a soft glow.

In the suite's bathroom, the free-standing wood vanity was designed to resemble a piece of antique Asian furniture and provides a striking contrast to the Bianco Statuario marble floor and walls. A major tenet of feng shui and Asian design in general is the lack of clutter. To keep the energy in a room flowing, there must be room to breathe. Cabinets with doors or drawers work well. Mirrors are particularly important in a room with no natural light source, and also add a practical and decorative touch to the space.



Chi Spa at the Shangri-La shows how the five elements can be incorporated to promote balance. Each treatment suite combines bronze and dark wood accents with tones of olive green, browns and creams, a serene backdrop for a soothing setting. Hand-crafted accessories such as bowls and pitchers from Nepal are both functional and design elements. The screens are made in walnut with translucent resin panels; the embossed wall coverings have a soft bronze-coloured texture. A comfortable recliner beside a glowing fireplace and a metal bowl with floating flowers completes the ambiance.

Arguably the most important space in your home is the entrance. It presents the first and last impression that you and your family and guests receive and should greet and welcome all the senses. At the Shangri-La, a calming sensory experience has been produced using light and sound; candle lights flicker along a back wall and natural light streams into a small bamboo garden while the sound of wind chimes, crickets and rustling grass play softly. The circular dynamics of the dramatic entrance to Market, the restaurant at the Shangri-La, enfolds guests amid luxurious materials and a stunning chandelier that mimics the shapes of sea anemones.





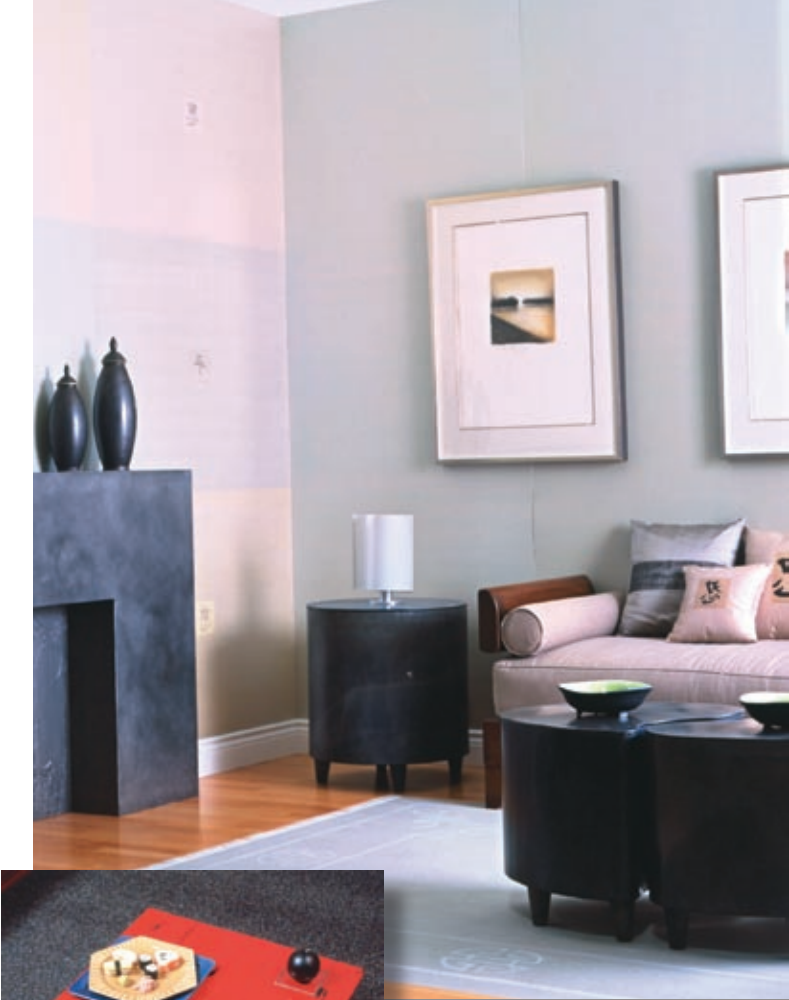
**Spice Route Restaurant, Toronto**  
The Asian inspired theme of this celebrated restaurant has been chosen to relax and indulge guests with an eclectic mix of powerful symbols, wood and stone features, and statuary. All five elements are in position; two waterfalls and a tall fireplace sit amid stones along the entrance walkway shaded by a wood pergola. The dramatic wood and metal doors open wide to let in powerful Chi. The hostess station is bathed in subdued light. Opposing textures of the rough stone walls and smooth tile floors present balance. Lighting is an essential tool for practical purposes and also to build a mood. The rugged stone wall and Buddha are highlighted by spotlights angled to set off these features. Lights are set into the walls to allow energy to move easily, meandering around the richly carved hostess station.

The cleanliness and style of a restroom reveals a great deal about the proprietor's intention to pamper and impress guests. I came across a website that actually holds a contest looking for the best restrooms across Canada and the U.S. Spice Route has been selected as one of five finalists. Their spacious restroom suites are warm and inviting; dark wood sliding doors, exposed stone walls and richly coloured tiles are juxtaposed by minimal glass countertops and bowl sinks. A truly unique feature, the restroom overlooks a private garden oasis. Inspired by the ancient harem tradition of Indian royalty, the owner imported the 10-foot tall bronze dancer from Jaipur.

The Shangri-La restrooms are also finalists in the restroom contest, acknowledging the pleasing aspect of the Asian style. There are easy tips to transfer to your home washrooms that you can take from these prize-winning rooms. Draw on a palette of pastel shades to heighten the feeling of cleanliness and airy space. Black and white can also be used, but inject some colour with towels and accessories. Stylish chrome taps and rounded edges on sink and bathtub bring in positive yang energy. Natural wood cabinets exude a feeling of warmth and hide clutter. Plants are also a positive element, particularly those with lush round leaves.



Counter-clockwise from top: Authentic wood door imported from China, water features, a tall fireplace and wood pergola open to the sky are designed to represent the natural elements at the entrance to Spice Route; Guyin, a traditional Chinese Buddha, signifies purity and healing, a very inviting and welcoming presence at Spice Route; Spice Route's unique restroom suite includes a full view of a garden; This private garden, seen from Spice Route's restroom, has water features and a 10-foot tall bronze statue brought from India.



Top to bottom: I created a calm room with pastel shades of paint, curved furnishings and tactile silk pillows; You can reproduce the lustrous look of Japanese lacquer with paint and high gloss varnish; This rice paper screen fits perfectly into a contemporary Asian living room.



**Get the Look—my Asian-inspired projects**

The allure of the East is most often seen in modern decorative styles. There is a tendency to think of minimalism, but it is not necessary to become too rigid. In the living room shown here, my goal was to develop a meditative space where I could imagine unwinding and rejuvenating after work. The walls were divided into wide square panels and painted in four pastel colours—green, mauve, gray and sand. These panels were decorated with the Chinese symbols for peace and tranquility. I was inspired by some beautiful raw silk cushions, and wanted to replicate the delicate texture on the walls. So I finished by applying a metallic glaze over the pastel squares, and dragged a stiff bristle paint brush through the wet glaze to create the look. A pewter finish was applied to the fireplace. Furnishings with naturally flowing curves have a positive effect on the flow of energy, while a blend of different textures and sheens promote a feeling of balance, peace and relaxation.

You may wish to create a piece for your home that will enhance this seductive style. I found a low table at a futon shop and used a few tricks to reproduce the look of Negoro Nuri, a 14th century Japanese lacquer finish. True Japanese lacquer is a highly refined and lustrous finish, but I produced this table top simply, with black and red paint and a few coats of high-gloss varnish. Over a black base coat I rubbed a candle in random patches, leaving behind a waxy pattern. I rolled on two coats of red paint, and let it dry thoroughly. The top was then burnished with steel wool, revealing the black layer where wax had been applied. High gloss varnish gives depth and lustre to the table.

Room screens are not only functional, but are also decorative surfaces just waiting for any style you choose. I built this screen using rice paper and the art of collage. I selected watercolour paper, tissue paper, Japanese rice paper, brown paper and pressed leaves to make up an intriguing design. Each piece is glued onto the screen with varnish. The finished screen is slightly translucent and allows light to play with the floating shapes.

There are many different routes to take if you choose to decorate all or part of your home in Asian style. It is an ancient style that takes its cue from the earth and life forces, bringing balance to positive and negative elements. Even if you have one room or corner of a room set aside to be your quiet spot, you will experience the difference that a bit of Eastern philosophy can perform. ■

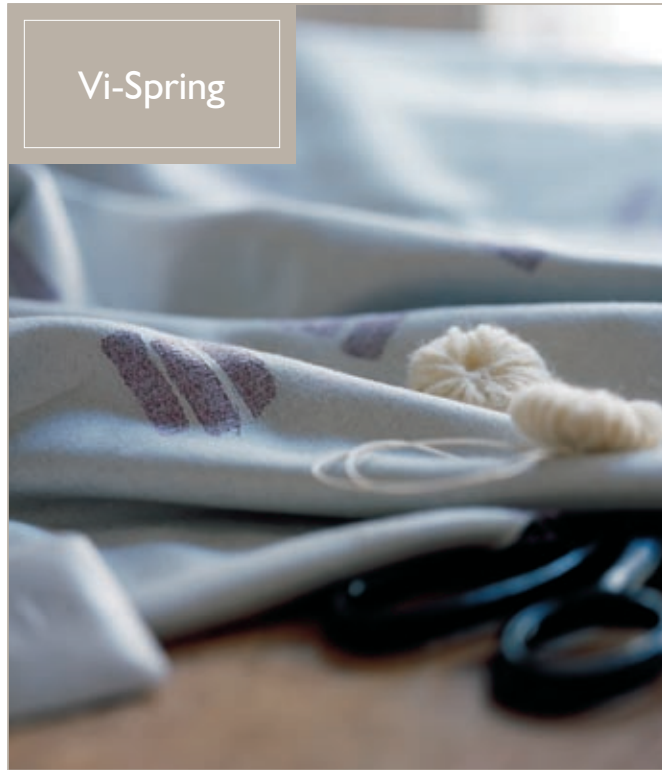
*Produced by Debbie Travis and Barbara Dingle.*

**Connoisseur's Choice for House & Home**

Shangri-La Hotel, Vancouver — [www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com)  
Spice Route Restaurant, Toronto — [www.spiceroute.ca](http://www.spiceroute.ca)  
Best Restroom Contest website — [www.bestrestroom.com](http://www.bestrestroom.com)  
Now & Zen living room, from *Debbie Travis Living and Dining Rooms*, by Debbie Travis with Barbara Dingle, published by Clarkson Potter.  
Japanese lacquer table, and rice paper screen, from *Debbie Travis Weekend Projects*, by Debbie Travis with Barbara Dingle, published by Clarkson Potter.  
[www.debbietravis.com](http://www.debbietravis.com)  
[www.twitter.com/debbie-travis](https://twitter.com/debbie-travis)



Vi-Spring



## A “Life-Changing” Sleep

Vi-Spring, the premier brand of luxury mattresses in the U.K. and Europe, is pleased to announce that our sumptuous natural fibre mattresses are now being offered across Canada and parts of the U.S. From our humble beginnings in 1901, when we purchased the rights to James Marshall’s pocketed coil and built the world’s first pocket coil mattress, Vi-Spring has become the number one supplier of the ultimate sleep experience world-wide.

In this fast paced world we live in, sleep is more important than ever. What is even more important is the quality of that sleep, as this affects every aspect of our health, day-to-day functioning and overall well-being.

Unlike most North American manufacturers, Vi-Spring mattresses are not made out of foam, which is a petroleum-based product, or any other synthetic material, and are completely chemical-free.

Why is this so important? Using foam is similar to putting gasoline in a bowl and leaving it on the counter. Over time it all dissipates. Effectively, that is what foam does. This breakdown occurs in the form of off-gassing, which is very prevalent in the smell of beds when you first receive them, and unfortunately continues even after the smell has gone.

Although the majority of the industry continue to promote “better” foam products—less smell, anti-dust mite, anti-microbial, flame retardant, etc.—this can only be achieved by adding layer upon layer of harmful chemicals to the mattresses.

In addition, foam acts like an enormous sponge that soaks up the cup of moisture the average person loses each night. This turns into mould and mildew in a very short time period, creating an unhealthy sleep environment. Then there are the dust mites.

They typical North American bed will double in weight over a 10 year period. This is because of human skin (which we lose 11 pounds a year of) and dust mites. Dust mites themselves do not harm you, but the off-gas from their feces definitely will. Typical North American mattresses are a haven for these little critters, being that they are warm and moist inside. Even when the companies state their mattresses are treated for this, these chemical treatments only last two years at the most.

*“With the use of time-tested combinations of natural materials, pocket coils and air vents in the borders, a Vi-Spring bed breathes and stays cool and dry inside.”*

Vi-Spring uses only the finest of natural fibres in large quantities. These fibres include wool, cotton, horse hair, alpaca, mohair, silk, cashmere, bamboo, coir (coconut fibre), flax and more. To meet the high U.S. Fire Standards while using these fibres and without using chemicals, Vi-Spring uses only the highest quality lambswool, which just happens to be the best material for fire resistance. Wool has an ignition temperature of over 570°C and will not melt or emit harmful gases, unlike foam. We use an abundance of pure lambswool in the top layer of every Vi-Spring mattress.



With the use of time-tested combinations of natural materials, pocket coils and air vents in the borders, a Vi-Spring bed breathes and stays cool and dry inside. This creates natural control for mould, mildew and dust mites. As a second defence for dust mites, Vi-Spring uses tightly woven Belgium damask to keep dead skin from penetrating into the mattress, so no food for the little critters. A Vi-Spring bed is the perfect solution to people with allergies and breathing problems.

A Vi-Spring supports and lasts like no other. Vi-Spring has always made their own coils, using only virgin Vanadium (surgical) steel, then each of our coils is individually sewn into a calico cotton pocket for breathability and moisture movement. Lastly, we take our coils and hand-nest them in high quantities to give a fully supportive sleeping area. Vi-Spring goes even further for proper support; we offer three gauges of wire on seven of our models and four wire gauges on two models, to give the perfect support for every body. It makes sense why so many athletes and injured come to Vi-Spring for a supportive sleep to help subside their aches and pains.

Vi-Spring mattresses are completely hand made and are the most durable in the industry. In fact, Vi-Spring even warranties their handles—contrary to the industry standard—and actually says people can carry the beds with them. Vi-Spring is the only no need to turn luxury mattress. It is finished on both sides so you can turn it if you want (and this is always recommended) but is not required. Vi-Spring is also the only company that offers a real Lifetime Warranty.

Then there is the Vi-Spring Promise. Vi-Spring wants to ensure everyone that buys a Vi-Spring gets the one that is just right for them. If the purchaser feels the bed is not right for them, they have up to 90 days to do a one time exchange for the same model with a different coil tension or to change to another model. We believe that our mattresses are extremely affordable (starting under \$3,000), and work hard to remain the number one selling luxury mattress in the world. ■

**Vi-Spring Ltd, North America**

1.877.484.7774

info@vispring.ca

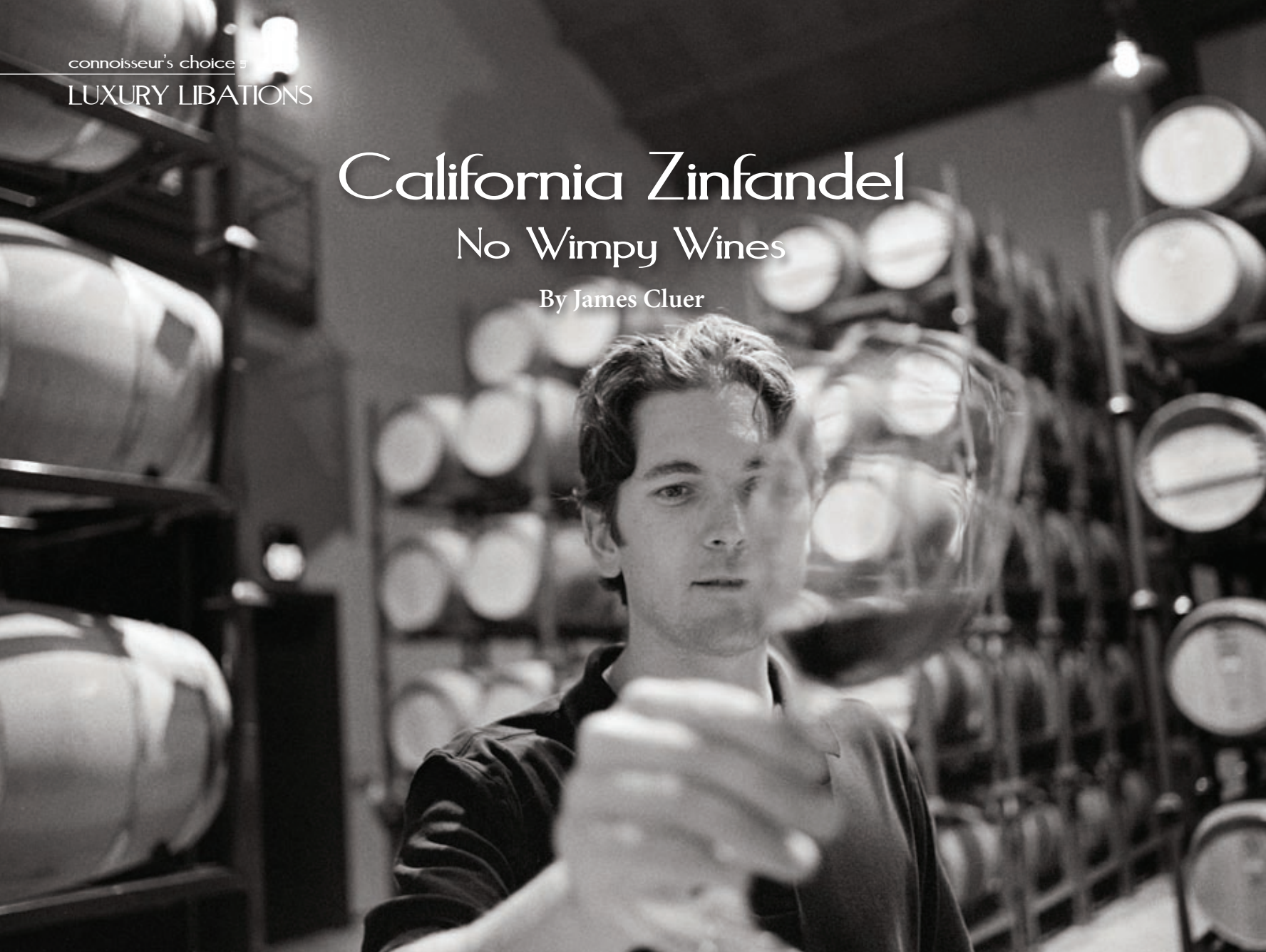
www.vispring.com



# California Zinfandel

## No Wimpy Wines

By James Cluer



When I think of Zinfandel I think of big, juicy, high-octane red wines from producers like Seghesio, Ridge, Ravenswood and Rosenblum. My mind drifts off to the rolling hills of Sonoma, especially the Dry Creek area, where you find some of the best wines. Amongst the mustard flowers you see these thick, gnarly old vines. Some are over 100 years old. Zinfandel, the signature variety of California, is definitely rated “Buy.”

A number of countries are blessed with having their own signature grape variety. Argentina has Malbec, Chile has Carmenere, there’s Pinotage from South Africa, and the list goes on. But I reckon that California has one of the best grape varieties to call its own. Zinfandel can produce some excellent wines at the very top end.

Ravenswood’s slogan “no wimpy wines” pretty much sums up the style of the big wines, which are amongst the most powerful and concentrated of any red. A classic high quality Zinfandel is always very dark in color, with plenty of viscosity when you swirl it in the glass.

Because of the warm climate in most of California, the nose is typically jam-packed with ultra ripe fruits, which can include strawberry, sweet black cherry, and there is often a spicy note, too.

The palate is very full bodied, usually clocking 14.5%-plus alcohol, and the tannins tend to be fairly smooth and supple. In the big wines you can often find raisin and jam notes, along with cloves, liquorice, vanilla and coconut. It’s hedonistic pleasure in a glass.

But there are various styles of Zinfandel, principally distinguished by their weight in the mouth, the ripeness of the fruit, and their alcohol degree. Some producers—the more extreme ones—flaunt wines at 17%-plus alcohol, which is amongst the highest in the world for regular wines. They delight in calling them “fruit bombs” or “blockbusters.” These styles of Zin pair well with loud Hawaiian shirts, a plate of ribs, and a romantic conversation with someone who doesn’t challenge the intellect.



*Trinchero Family Estates, St. Helena, California*



*Above: Roger Trinchero  
Right: Bob Trinchero*

But there are also some Zinfandel producers who prefer a lighter and more elegant style, which wouldn’t be too far off a very ripe and full bodied Pinot Noir. The trick to recognizing these is often by looking at the alcohol degree on the label, and if it is 13.5% or less, then chances are it will be a lighter style.

But Zinfandel is versatile enough to produce another style of wine, known as white Zinfandel. Astonishingly, white Zin became the best selling wine in the United States for two decades. Granted, classic producers of red Zinfandel typically roll their eyes when you mention white Zin, as if an ugly duckling was ruining their brand image. And, to a degree, they are right, although they’re probably jealous of all the money the white Zin producers are racking in.

The pioneer of white Zinfandel is Bob Trinchero of Sutter Home. He had the great misfortune to have a stuck fermentation in one of his tanks back in the 1970s. Instead of making a dry red Zin, he ended up making a slightly sweet pink wine that charmed the pants off Americans for decades. His winery now sells over four million cases a year of it, and Bob is a very happy man.

He explained that, for most people, the jump from drinking sodas/pops to dry tannic red wine is too much of a stretch. So the best way to ease into wine is with something chilled, a touch sweet, and with candied strawberry notes. In the winery, the maturation time for a white Zin is short. You can skip the oak barrels, and have it shipped in a flash. So it actually pays wine producers’ bills too.

When it comes to viticultural origins, you can bank on Zinfandel to spark wine lovers into a demonstration of superior knowledge. The first person usually remarks that Zinfandel is actually the Primitivo grape of southern Italy. The second connoisseur usually then jumps in to mention that the grape has its origins in Croatia and is in fact a grape called Crljenak Kastelanski. If the pronunciation can be pulled off then the conversation usually ends there, and the other guests roll their eyes at the wine snob that won.

But whatever the origin, Zinfandel’s home is in California, where it is the workhorse grape, planted throughout the state. If you had a glass of red wine back in the 1850s then chances are it was Zinfandel.

It’s generally agreed that Sonoma produces some of the finest examples. The Dry Creek AVA is particularly well regarded, but the Alexander valley isn’t to be forgotten either. There are some famous wines from the Russian River as well and it’s quite common to see “Old Vines” proudly mentioned on the label of many Sonoma wines. Some of the plantings date back over 100 years. Seghesio is a favourite of mine.

But there are also some excellent Zinfandels in Napa too, particularly from vineyards “up valley” around St. Helena and Calistoga where the temperatures are warmer. Caymus, Storybrook Mountain, and Chateau Montelena all produce sought-after wines. I find these wines to be very polished, particularly plump and soft, with an explosion of sweet ripe fruit covering the palate. Caymus is impressive every time.

Another area to look for, particularly for value-priced wines, is Lodi in the Central valley. This area is where the bulk of California’s wine comes from, but that’s not to say that low yielding vineyards don’t produce high quality wines. Ravenswood does well in this sector, with their distinctive logo and fun slogan.





Ridge Vineyards, Cupertino, California. Top to bottom: Monte Bello Vineyard; Lytton Springs Winery and tasting room; Monte Bello Lower Winery (original production facility) and tasting room.

There are certainly other parts of California, like Mendocino and Monterey, that produce good Zinfandel too, but these aren't the best known areas. So in almost every corner of California you'll find people making Zinfandel. And many of them are small producers, usually with an artistic bent. Yes, there can be a certain hippy style to these farmers living on ranches in the beautiful valleys that line the California coast.

A key criterion for ripening Zinfandel is a high level of heat units. In wine speak, that means it should be pretty warm, even hot, where you plant it. And while some of the coastal regions see a thick marine fog roll in during the summer months, these same valleys can also get nice and toasty from noon onwards.

Then, as harvest approaches, winemakers need to be particularly vigilant when it comes to picking. The sugars in Zinfandel can rocket up in a few days and all of a sudden you have grapes that might create a 17% alcohol wine. The good news is that nobody will accuse it of being thin and weedy—the ultimate insult for Ravenswood—so you have to be fast when you decide to pick.

Speaking of price, one of the attractive things about Zinfandel is that even for the most famous producers, including their single vineyard wines, you rarely pay more than \$60 per bottle on the shelf in Canada. And when you compare that to the top Pinots, Cabernets and Syrahs, then Zinfandel starts to look like a bargain. In my tastings, I've been impressed with wines costing less than \$30 a bottle.

In terms of food pairings, a steak is a sure bet, and so are burgers and ribs. The more refined the wine, the more refined the food should be. Because they are usually very big and powerful, you can go with a rich dish. But some of the slightly lighter styles can drink well by themselves because the tannins aren't too aggressive.

So what's the future for Zinfandel? With people making rude jokes about varieties like Merlot and other classics, and a cycle of boredom among consumers, surely Zinfandel is set to occupy a growing niche for many years to come. There will be detractors who say it lacks ageability, can be short on complexity, and often a tad sweet. But, personally, I like them.

If you want to learn more about the signature grape of California and join its legions of devotees, visit [www.zinfandel.org](http://www.zinfandel.org). ZAP, which stands for Zinfandel Advocates & Producers, is the HQ of all matters relating to the grape, and has information on their tastings, which have a cult-like following. ■

Connoisseur's Choice in Wines	
WINE	FOOD PAIRING
Bonterra, Mendocino	All by itself
Ravenswood, Lodi	Burgers
Caymus, Napa	Roast beef
Seghesio Rockpile, Dry Creek	BBQ steaks
Ridge, Lytton Springs	Leg of lamb



## COLLECTORS KNOW

Collectors know that Nichol Vineyard has been operating in Naramata British Columbia using 100% Naramata Village fruit since 1993. They gravitate to the small lot portfolio, which includes Canada's oldest Syrah. Now, under the skilled and watchful eye of owner/winemaker Ross Hackworth, Nichol is proud to announce delicious new blends and a new look.

While the wines will happily age in the cellar, they will look great on your table too.  
Be sure to order your 9 Mile Red before it's gone!

## TRUE TO OUR ROOTS

[WWW.NICHOLVINEYARD.COM](http://WWW.NICHOLVINEYARD.COM)

Ask for Nichol wines wherever fine wines are sold in BC and Alberta.  
Follow @Nicholvineyard on Twitter or find us on Facebook to receive insider offers.





## Fall Style 2010

By Connie Ekelund

As soon as I feel the crispness in the air, my mind wanders fondly to memories of “back to school” and, of course, my favourite wardrobe season! Nothing says “autumn” like a new coat, a pair of hot jeans and some fabulous boots!

### LADIES' COATS

- Milly wool peacoat, \$535.  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)



- Smythe cadet coat, \$895.  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)



- Elie Tahari wool drew coat, \$798.  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)



- Red Valentino wool duffel coat, \$995.  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)



- Holt Renfrew cashmere coat, \$1995.  
*Only at Holts.*  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)



### DENIM

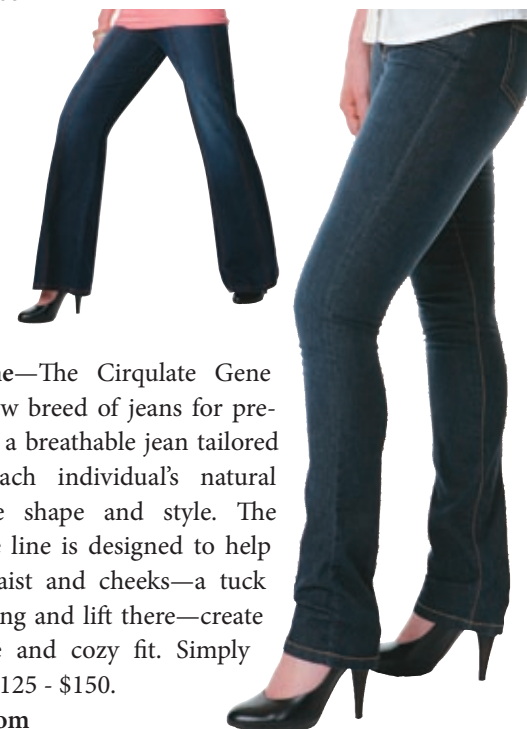
- Fidelity Denim—The coming of fall finds Vancouver-based Fidelity embodying the season by letting go of all the excess, and focusing on sleek basics. Gone is the reliance on your “boyfriend” and the destructed mayhem. Fall is clean, polished, opulent denim. Effortless basics for every woman make up the collection.

The denizens of denim will be rewarded with Fidelity's famous 3F principle: Fabric, Fit and Finish. The unwavering attention to detail has garnered Fidelity many devotees since its inception. Fall 2010 offers the same amazing fit and hold, but with an ease that will enhance your existing style. \$125 - \$245.  
[www.fidelitydenim.com](http://www.fidelitydenim.com)



- Paige Denim is the jean-ious of former fit model-turned-denim designer Paige Adams-Geller. With over ten years of behind-the-seams experience, Adams-Geller has parlayed her denim expertise into her own eponymous collection of men's and women's denim.

Paige premium denim will lift the derriere, lengthen your legs and slenderize your hips and thighs—all with an uncompromising commitment to detail and premium quality. \$129 - \$249.  
[www.paigeusa.com](http://www.paigeusa.com)



- Circulate Gene—The Circulate Gene line offers a new breed of jeans for pre- and post-natal, a breathable jean tailored to enhance each individual's natural curves, unique shape and style. The Circulate Gene line is designed to help support the waist and cheeks—a tuck here, a tightening and lift there—create an ideal shape and cozy fit. Simply Cheeklicious! \$125 - \$150.  
[www.byanew.com](http://www.byanew.com)

- indiDemin—A brilliant concept for those of us who have our own ideas of what a perfect pair of jeans should be. How it works:

1. Pick Your Fit: slim, relaxed or trouser
  2. Choose Your Wash: from light to dark
  3. Design Your Style: rise, leg, pockets and more!
  4. Customize Your Fit: jeans are made for your body
- It's that simple! \$150 - \$195.  
[www.indidenim.com](http://www.indidenim.com)



- Hem-Eze—“Wear high heels this morning and sandals tonight.” Hem-Eze is a specially designed double-sided strip for temporary hemming needs. Perfect for jeans!  
[www.hem-eze.com](http://www.hem-eze.com)





STYLE

FOOTWEAR

LADIES

Over-the-knee boots are the must-have footwear for fall and winter 2010. Once considered only for the daring, those wearing this shoe trend will find the tops of their boots creeping up even higher with thigh-high boots also in the mainstream. From elegant suedes to futuristic wound-and-bound leathers, the options are many and various. Not to be undermined, the ankle bootie is still as hot as ever!

- **Christian Louboutin** Leather Over-The-Knee Boots, \$799.  
[www.christianlouboutin.com](http://www.christianlouboutin.com)
- **Rosegold** fold-over leather boots, \$295.  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)
- **Joie** distressed leather lace-up boots, \$595.  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)
- **Givenchy** leather mid-calf boots, \$2095.  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)

- **Camilla Skovgaard** leather ankle boots, \$565. *Only at Holts.*  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)
- **Yves Saint Laurent** cag-front lace-up wedges, \$995.  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)
- **Saint Francis Couture** High fashion, comfortable, sexy shoes and accessories that are cruelty-free. \$58 - \$85.  
[www.saintfranciscouture.com](http://www.saintfranciscouture.com)

MEN

- **Boss** orange work boot, \$395.  
[www.harryrosen.com](http://www.harryrosen.com)
- **Cole Haan** Chukka boot, \$270.  
[www.harryrosen.com](http://www.harryrosen.com)
- **Gucci** leather dress loafers, \$490.  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)
- **Gucci** leather slip-ons, \$595.  
[www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)

ACCESSORIES

- **PILLA** High Performance Eyewear has become the authority in performance eyewear for the competitive athlete. Designed for athletes by athletes, PILLA utilizes cutting-edge materials with superior clarity, sun protection capability and a proprietary contrast technology to enhance visual acuity and depth of field, both critical to maximizing focus and minimizing eye fatigue.
- The Monaco is a sporty frame designed for a more narrow or petite facial structure, an excellent choice for both men and women. \$229 and up.
- The Hornet, originally designed for shooting sports, is a very classy looking frame with a bit of a throwback style, somewhat reminiscent of the late 70s. \$399 and up.
- The National, Performance Golf Eyewear, features a unique two frame system to manage light — one frame for tee to green and one frame for the putting surface. PILLA's high performance green-reading lenses are specifically formulated to accentuate minor changes in green contour with a lens that infuses an extremely high level of contrast while intensifying color. \$449 and up.  
[www.pillasport.com](http://www.pillasport.com)



COSMETICS



- **Heaven's Alchemy**—One thousand and one enchantments await! A single drop releases the spirit renaissance: Magical gardens, hypnotic rhythms, intoxicating poetry and heartrending beauty. Treasured by royalty since ancient times, pure perfume transforms the heart and transports the spirit. \$85. [www.heavensalchemyperfumes.com](http://www.heavensalchemyperfumes.com)



- **Geisha Ink Liquid Eyeliner** is a 24-hour water and smudge-proof formula that delivers effortless and precise application with its revolutionary microfiber brush tip. This quick-drying formula helps create subtle to dramatic looks. \$30. [www.geishaink.com](http://www.geishaink.com)



- **Kiss Me Mascara**—STOP painting your lashes... TUBE them! The original mascara invented to form tiny water-resistant “tubes” around your lashes rather than painting them like conventional mascaras. \$30. [www.cimel.ca](http://www.cimel.ca)

- **Frownies**—Frownies products contained in the “Face Lift in a Bag” will naturally and effectively help any skin problem you may have and prevent those problems associated with aging skin. FROWNIES skin care system helps lift the depth out of expression lines, tone skin, brighten and even skin coloration, reduces puffiness, and hydrate, soften and plump fine lines. \$179. [www.frownies.com](http://www.frownies.com)



- **Benefit POREfessional**—Perfect-looking skin starts with the POREfessional! NEW from Benefit, the POREfessional is a pro balm that minimizes pores and leaves skin feeling silky smooth. \$34. [www.benefitcosmetics.com](http://www.benefitcosmetics.com)



- **Linacare**—Linacare's most potent body cream formula, Rehydrating Body Cream—Intensive, will leave your skin feeling soft, supple and silky smooth by providing the longest lasting moisture available. \$58. Transforming Face Cream visibly improves the appearance and texture of your skin. In a short time, skin becomes softer, firmer and fine lines disappear. It is highly compatible with other cosmetic products and is suitable for use both day and night. Recommended for all skin types. \$58. [www.linacare.com](http://www.linacare.com)
- **Moroccan Oil**—If you haven't heard of Moroccan Oil yet, you just haven't been listening! A powerful antioxidant and UV protector, Moroccan Oil's proprietary Argan oil blend is rich in vitamins and natural elements that fortify the hair, including Vitamin F (Omega 6), Vitamin A to improve elasticity, Vitamin E to protect against free-radicals, and phenols to shield against environmental stressors. \$34 - \$78. [www.moroccanoil.com](http://www.moroccanoil.com)





The Copeman Healthcare Centre, with facilities in both Vancouver and Calgary, is fast becoming Canada's recognized leader in the field of primary healthcare. It is particularly known for its efforts in preventive medicine. As a pioneer in team-based healthcare and the use of advanced technologies to support health and wellness programs, the Centre is tackling the troubling issue of undiagnosed illness and disease for middle-aged Canadians — while trying to head off future problems with prevention programs that are supported by strong medical evidence.

It seems the Centre has arrived right on time. Over fifty percent of Canadians with heart problems do not show symptoms that are visible to their family doctor. One in seven men will develop prostate cancer. One in nine women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. And about one in 15 adults will develop colorectal cancer. "Our objective right now is to make sure we fully understand the current state of our client's health and to catch disease at a stage where treatment is most successful," says Don Copeman, the Centre's founder and CEO. "But our primary goal is to prevent illness altogether, so that it doesn't have to be treated with costly hospital interventions and medications.

We are being successful on both fronts." Mr. Copeman says that after almost three years of research and hard work developing prevention programs, the data is overwhelmingly positive. "53% of all people who came to our Centre in the first year had an undiagnosed disease. Of those patients, 70% had conditions that significantly increased their health risks and warranted immediate medical attention. The good news is that all of these clients are now on a path to optimal health."



The Copeman Healthcare Centre model provides an integrated team of doctors and healthcare professionals to each client of the Centre. Insured services under provincial health plans are combined with all non-insured services to deliver a complete healthcare experience under one roof.

"We're completely dedicated to ensuring that our clients live the longest, healthiest and most pain-free lives possible," says Copeman. "It doesn't matter if a person has already been diagnosed with a disease or illness, or if they are completely healthy and just want to stay that way." The heart of the Centre's program is a comprehensive health plan based on advanced screening for disease, and on detailed analysis of a client's family history and current medical profile. The soul of the program, according to Copeman, is the health education, counselling, and coaching that they provide their clients as they follow their health plan. Secure, on-line access to health information, personalized education and goal tracking is also part of the service.

*"Due to an ever-increasing amount of research, scientists have now concluded that the brain is not a static mass of nerves destined for decline as we age. Instead, it is a dynamic, evolving and complex organ that can be exercised and made stronger throughout our entire life."*

So what's new on the horizon for Copeman Healthcare Centres? A world leading program to improve the health of our brains.

Due to an ever-increasing amount of research, scientists have now concluded that the brain is not a static mass of nerves destined for decline as we age. Instead, it is a dynamic, evolving and complex organ that can be exercised and made stronger throughout our entire life. There is even increasing evidence that combining healthy lifestyle habits with specific brain exercises can help fend off Alzheimer's disease and other degenerative conditions. Copeman Healthcare has expanded its vision of what "wellness" really is to include this important aspect of healthcare, and is soon launching one of the most comprehensive programs for Brain Health in the world.

New client enrollment is limited, but both centres are still accepting new patients through to the end of this year. Free on-site consultations can be arranged through a toll free service (888.922.2732) or facility tours can be taken online at [www.copemanhealthcare.com](http://www.copemanhealthcare.com). ■

## The Healthcare You've Been Waiting For





# Lean Legs

By Cara Thien

Clothing provided by [www.VibrantFit.com](http://www.VibrantFit.com)

When I was young, I was sent outside to play a lot of the time, amusing myself with making forts, climbing trees, running up the mountain in the back yard and even a little road hockey with the neighbours. It was actually a blessing. It created a life-long love of the outdoors and a feeling of accomplishment that has carried over into my professional fitness career.

If you are not getting the results you want or your body has hit a plateau, you should consider changing up your glutes and lower-body routine to help you achieve the lean, shapely legs that you are looking for.

*“Look to your natural recourses  
to find a new place to challenge  
yourself and keep you interested  
and excited about your workouts.”*

Consider your local area, the parks, the beach, the river, the hills on the other side of town. Look to your natural recourses to find a new place to challenge yourself and keep you interested and excited about your workouts.

I love this workout for all my clients who travel, don't have a gym pass or don't want one. You can do this just about anywhere, even if you're traveling to a new country. Don't let locations stop you from reaching your goal.

When I review any site for a workout, I look for the surface of the landscape. I want to see that I can change up exercises depending on the grade of the surface and stability. For example, if I were to go to the park, I would look for hills and trees and picnic tables. If I'm heading off to the beach, I would look at the grade of the hill, the stable part of the sand and the rocky part as well, also logs for different training. Keep your eyes open and you will find everything you need for an amazing workout that gives results. ■



1. Walking Lunge: Targets glutes, hamstrings, quads and calves



2. Cardio Component: Increase your exertion as you get accustomed to this exercise to keep improving on your cardio.

### Workout Tips

1. Always warm-up 5 to 10 minutes before training—to bring synovial fluid to the joints, preparing them for exercise.
2. Cool-down and stretch 15 minutes after your workout—to improve flexibility and encourage recovery.
3. Keep a workout log to track your progress.




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Nothing can spoil a pair of fabulous gams more than unsightly veins. Unattractive legs plague 80% of women. Putting on a pair of shorts or a skirt should not be depressing. According to Dr. Martin Braun, of Vancouver Laser and Skin Care, “If you want your gorgeous gams back, there is no need to suffer from debilitating and painful surgical treatments. With modern technology, these veins can be eliminated without any surgery, scars, or downtime.” Now’s the time...

Veins carry the blood from the tissues back to the heart and to the lungs. There are two kinds of veins: the deep veins and the superficial veins. All veins have valves that prevent the blood from going back in the tissues. When those valves and/or the walls of the veins weaken, the blood pools, which in turn stretches the vein wall and makes it more prominent.

The superficial veins can be seen through the skin and are the ones that can become the varicose veins. They are bulging, dark purple or blue in colour and four millimetres or larger in diameter. Reticular veins are the unsightly blue veins under the skin that are two to four millimetres in diameter, whereas spider veins are the reddish tiny vessels that are less than two millimetres in diameter.

Problematic veins can cause a plethora of symptoms in the legs including a heavy sensation, numbness, itching, aching, restless legs, rashes, pigmentation, and, ultimately, skin destruction or ulceration.

Factors that exacerbate the venous problems are prolonged standing, sitting and pregnancy. Excessive weight has very little influence on the development of varicose veins; your genetic heritage has the most influence.

Sexy Legs

Want Sexy Legs?

Call us today!  
604.708.9891

Mention this article to receive your  
complimentary vein consultation.

If one parent has varicose veins, your chance is 50% of developing them. If both parents have varicose veins, your odds increase to 90%. The only non-invasive treatment for varicose and spider veins is to wear compression stockings and walk a lot. In the past, the compression stockings were somewhat unsightly, but today they come in a variety of colors and fabrics, and look very similar to regular stockings. Some people wear them every day, as their legs feel much better. The best compression stocking is fitted for the patient’s leg using exact measurements, and not simply “bought off the shelf.”

*“Everybody wants them, and if you’ve  
got them, you should do everything  
you can to keep them looking great!”*

For decades the recommended treatment for varicose veins was surgical stripping. This was effective, but left the patient with scarring, pain, down time, and a relatively high recurrence rate. In fact, about 50% of varicose veins return with surgical stripping. And while stripping is relatively safe and is still being used, the unsatisfactory results have led to the development of more effective vein procedures.

Using the latest ultrasound technology, the entire venous network of the leg can now be mapped. Poorly functioning valves are indentified with backflow of blood, and those veins can then be targeted for an ultrasound guided foam treatment. During this procedure, a needle is inserted into the main affected surface vein. This is the only part of the procedure which might cause some discomfort, and it is usually performed with a small amount of local anaesthetic. The position of the needle is carefully monitored using ultrasound imaging so that it is in exactly the right place. Next, the foam is injected while watching the progress using the ultrasound machine. Surprisingly, injecting the foam causes no discomfort, although the leg may ache slightly afterwards.

In the next few weeks the veins collapse and are absorbed by the body over time. Compression stockings are then used for two days to make sure that the vein walls stay collapsed. Patients usually require three to six treatments at weekly intervals to close all the varicose veins. At Vancouver Laser and Skin Care, Dr. Braun says, “With proper follow up, the success rate for closure of incompetent veins approaches 100%. Once the larger veins have been treated, we then perform sclerotherapy or laser treatments on the remaining reticular and spider veins, although some of those also would fade following the ultrasound guided treatments.” ■

In 1996, Dr. Martin Braun co-founded the Vancouver Laser and Skin Care Clinic with his wife, Dr. Susan Braun. As sincere practitioners with a sense of warmth and fun, Drs. Martin Braun and Susan Braun have made an exceptional and unique team. Dr. Braun has the distinction of being the first doctor in Canada to perform laser hair removal, over 14 years ago.

With their vast amount of knowledge and experience, and a well known international reputation, the Brauns offer personalized workshops for doctors. The Brauns are particularly creative in finding innovative solutions to treat a variety of aesthetic conditions. They are committed to bringing clients clinically-tested breakthrough vein treatments, botox, filler, laser hair removal and laser skin treatments that best combat the signs of age, stress, and genetics, without the high costs, risks and downtime of surgery.

At the Vancouver Laser and Skin Care Centre, warm and friendly staff work with the doctors to provide the individual attention, instructions and follow up that are essential to achieving results. For more information on the most effective, non-invasive aesthetic treatment options available today, go to [www.vancouverlaser.com](http://www.vancouverlaser.com).



**Vancouver Laser & Skin Care Centre**  
Suite 309 - 750 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1H2  
Phone: 604.708.9891  
[info@vancouverlaser.com](mailto:info@vancouverlaser.com)  
[www.vancouverlaser.com](http://www.vancouverlaser.com)





As we all strive for a healthier lifestyle, there are some products that can help us get there. We have tried to collect some of the most compelling. In researching this article I came across more miracle products than you could fit onto late night TV. For every legitimate item, I came across dozens of electronic stress reducers that also help you lose weight and, of course, grow hair. Here are the items that made the cut...

#### Weighty issues

Just what we all want to do, broadcast our weight to the world on the Internet! The Withings Internet Connected Body Scale is a creative piece of technology that actually makes a lot of sense in a lot of situations (pride aside!).

The scale will interface (through WiFi) to your computer, iPhone or iPad, or for those more into sharing, with the Internet. Once received, the data can then be used in a variety of training and health related applications. There are a variety of training applications, such as TrainingPeaks, which monitor and advise on your training and nutrition ([home.trainingpeaks.com](http://home.trainingpeaks.com)).

If you are on any training program and want to track your weight or body mass index (BMI), the Internet scale is a super way to input the data, and there is no temptation to fudge the data! (Especially if you gorged on fudge the evening before!) You can keep the data private or share it with your personal trainer, or your training buddy—it is ideal for those “I can lose 10 lbs before you” bets!

On a more serious note, it is ideal for health care. If you have a parent who has diabetes or CHF (Congestive Heart Failure), it can give a family member a heads up to the gaining of water weight in advance of it becoming a serious issue, and, because the data is online, you can monitor Dad from a different city. The scale will track up to eight people, so whole families can use it to create their own version of “the biggest loser.” \$159. [www.withings.com](http://www.withings.com)

#### Riding hard, getting nowhere!

Without a doubt, stationary bikes are terrific fitness tools. They are ideal for longer fat burning, cardio friendly workouts. But BORING! We try to alleviate the boredom by listening to our iPods, reading books and magazines or watching TV. The Espresso Bike ups the ante by offering a web enabled experience.

There are a wealth of features designed to make your workout more fun and challenging.

The Espresso Bike has all the bells and whistles. A 17” monitor offers a world of fitness content before your eyes. Functional handlebars monitor your pulse and allow you to steer (yep, you get to steer!) and variable resistance peddles challenge you on hills. There are a variety of modes you can ride in including having a pacer, who leads you, ensuring you get the most out of your workout time. There is also a “ghost” function, which I really like, as you get to race against your own best time—a terrific way to judge your progress.

There is also a built in TV tuner, and virtual radio tuner, for tunes, but the key to this product is the motivation and challenge you find though the interactive services. There are a variety of health clubs all over that offer the Espresso to their members; their website will quickly identify the ones closest to you. \$5,000. [www.expresso.com](http://www.expresso.com)



#### Just a spoon full of bits and bytes helps the medicine go down

Anyone who is on a course of medication knows it is easy to miss a dose now and then. When we add the complexities of an ageing population, the potential for forgetting to take a dose or double medicating is exacerbated. The consequences can be dire, and the folks at Vitality.net may have an answer.



The solution? An ingenious device called “GlowCaps.” They are IP-connected bottle caps that replace prescription pill bottle lids. Depending on where you live and which features you use, the GlowCap has a wide range of applications.

At its most basic level it will simply flash or play a tune when it is time to take medication. More sophisticated features include the ability to automatically phone the patient’s home number to remind them it is time to take a pill, or message a caregiver to notify them of a missed dose. The features go on to create a report which will let caregivers know that medication is being taken on time (the GlowCap logs the bottle being opened for a pill to be taken out). In some areas the GlowCap can even interface with doctors and pharmacies to automatically re-order prescriptions. When one considers the cost to our medical system and to families when mishaps occur around prescription drugs, a concept like GlowCaps is an elegant and perhaps vital concept. The makers of GlowCaps are working to place the item with pharmaceutical companies and pharmacies. Check their website to see who is offering the system in your area. Free... where available. [www.vitality.net/glowcaps](http://www.vitality.net/glowcaps)

#### Picking up the sleep fragments

Fatigue is a dangerous thing. Lack of effective sleep can be an inconvenience leading us to make poor decisions (no, we can’t blame all of the 80s on lack of sleep) or it can be far more dire, indicating a serious health problem, or it can cause a life altering mishap. Few of us know how well we really snooze at night. We know how much sack time we log, but is it effective sack time?

Fatigue Science has a handy dandy wrist watch called Readiband (based on technology developed for military use) that one wears for a week, while it logs and interprets our motion. It is like Santa knowing if you are asleep or awake, however probably not so hot on if you have been naughty or nice. After a week’s wear, a report is created, and this report tells you how well and how much you sleep, the consistency of your sleep periods, and whether or not your sleep is fragmented. Out of that it determines your mental effectiveness.

The Readiband does not replace sleep clinics and more advanced sleep analysis, but it does tell you if lack of sleep is a problem for you. If you are feeling fatigued, but getting enough sleep, you need to look for other issues. If you aren’t getting effective sleep, then you know you need to look at that as the root of your fatigue. Readiband is available through pharmacies and partners, for a rental fee. Visit the website for details [www.fatiguescience.com/products/readiband](http://www.fatiguescience.com/products/readiband)



#### Diabetics’ little buddy

There has been steady process made in the world of blood glucose meters. The biggest step may be represented by the littlest meter. The Contour USB blood glucose meter with built-in USB technology can be plugged directly into a computer, allowing for instant access to blood glucose monitoring results.

The Contour USB Meter uses standard blood glucose test strips currently available for other CONTOUR meters.

Usually patients need to keep a manual log tracking their blood glucose levels, which can be a tedious and sometimes less than accurate process. The USB meter will digitally store up to 2,000 tests and interface directly with software on both Mac and PC computers. It has a built in re-chargeable battery that will charge while plugged into a PC. The Contour Meter is an easy-to-use, convenient tool that will make life a little bit easier for diabetics. \$99. [www.bayercontourusb.ca](http://www.bayercontourusb.ca)





Start me up!

I saw one of these in a James Bond movie, and I don't know why, but I want one. Philips has designed an advanced, apparently safe and easy to use home defibrillator. The Philips HeartStart Home Defibrillator is the first and only home defibrillator available without a prescription for use by virtually anyone to help save a life when minutes count. A virtual coach walks you through each step needed to effectively and safely deploy the device, it even delivers instruction on providing CPR. I think I can safely say this is the single coolest piece of technology one can have in their house. Even though it may not be the most eye-pleasing item, I would keep mine front and centre in the front hall for all my guests to gaze at in awe and wonder! \$1,800.  
[www.heartstarthome.com](http://www.heartstarthome.com)



Bright ideas

If you are prone to suffer from the Winter Blues, you may in fact have a real disorder. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), to be precise. Lack of sunlight not only makes us moody and feel lethargic, it can also lead to real depression. Fortunately there is a good chance an artificial “Day Light” may supply what your body is missing and help combat those blues. Verilux is one of many companies offering lamps that replace the daylight our body craves. One unique model is in the form of a natural alarm clock, mimicking the natural rising of the sun to gradually wake you from your repose complete with the sounds of nature rising with you. The Rise & Shine Natural Wake-Up Light creates a natural, non-jarring wake-up experience that leaves you feeling far more refreshed and alert. Once you are awake and alert, the addition of natural lighting to your work area will help combat the more insidious symptoms relating to SAD.

Day Light has several lamps that fit into the home or office environment providing much needed task and area light that has the benefit of reproducing the feel good energy of the sun. The Day-Light Sky pumps out up to 10,000 LUX, which is the ideal level of light intensity recommended by experts to have maximum therapeutic effect. Rise & Shine Natural Wake-Up Light, \$99. Day-Light Sky, \$220.  
[www.verilux.com](http://www.verilux.com)  
[www.day-lights.com](http://www.day-lights.com) ■



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2011 Acura ZDX

# Luxury Crossovers

By Tony Whitney

*Just what is a crossover anyway?*

The question is a source of endless and often spirited debate among automotive industry people, analysts and journalists covering the industry. When the word was first coined, it was applied to all kinds of products that were originally launched as sport utility vehicles—little more than a “quick fix” when the term “SUV” became a little less respectable due to environmental concerns. With SUVs getting some of the wrong kind of attention from certain elements of the public and media, automakers were quick to look for another term to apply to products where functionality and style, rather than go-anywhere capability, were the main aims.

Most of the “re-badged SUV” crossovers have gone now, replaced by purpose-designed vehicles planned from the ground up to fulfill multiple roles. With a crossover product, it’s not a matter of what it is, but rather what it’s not. A true crossover is not an SUV, a station wagon, a minivan nor a modified sedan, though it combines elements of all those vehicle types and one or two more as well. The real contenders—call them the true crossovers—are in a class of their own and usually combine good looks with car-like handling and performance, all packaged up in a roomy, cargo-swallowing vehicle. For many buyers who only need the capability of handling the occasional well-graded gravel road, crossovers can be the ultimate all-round vehicles.

*“A true crossover is not an SUV, a station wagon, a minivan nor a modified sedan, though it combines elements of all those...”*

As one might expect for an industry that would understandably rather sell well-optioned upscale products than bare-bones economy cars, the luxury crossover segment has boomed in recent times and there are probably a dozen or more choices out there. Remember that a specific automaker might not use the term “crossover,” preferring to adopt a more imposing moniker for a spiffy new product. Sometimes, it’s left to the automotive writer to decide which category a new vehicle slots into—the market is that varied. It’s worth noting, incidentally, that a few luxury crossovers are particularly good in the fuel consumption department, although there are bound to be a few hybrids waiting in the wings.

Acura’s ZDX is typical of a number of upscale crossovers with its aggressive styling, capable stance and roster of luxury equipment. It’s a fairly large rig and boasts a very eye-catching styling approach. It’s tough for a large vehicle to look sleek, but the ZDX pulls it off nicely. A powerful 3.7-litre V-6 sits under the dramatically styled hood and if backroad challenges are planned, it uses a very advanced all-wheel drive system that pops up on various Acura and Honda vehicles.

The BMW X6 uses a similar design approach to the ZDX with bold lines and a very “in your face” demeanour about it. Every inch is unmistakably BMW despite the X6’s radical “giant hatchback” styling. The X6 is big and brash and comes with a choice of inline six or V-8 powerplants. At the top end of the range, there’s an M version with no less than 555-horsepower, so like the Porsche Cayenne mentioned later, it could probably do a fair job lapping a race track. Inside, buyers get the usual ambiance that goes with any BMW, even the entry-level models.

Perhaps more elegant than either the X6 or the ZDX is Cadillac’s all-new mid-sized SRX, which manages to offer most of the goodies expected from an upscale crossover without the bulk. Using either a 3.0-litre V-6 or a 2.8-litre turbo V-6, the SRX is one of the quickest crossovers around with sports car performance to go along with its excellent handling. And Cadillac has made a supreme effort in recent years to upgrade quality and opulence in its products, so the SRX boasts the same fit and finish you’ll find on any rival from Europe or Asia. The SRX is available with either front or all-wheel drive. One of the big selling points of the SRX is its clever and innovative cargo management system, which is best checked out at a dealer rather than described in print. Far too few automakers pay attention to the business of distributing multiple loads around the cargo area. The entire Cadillac range has never looked better and no buyer browsing the luxury class should ignore this highly-praised domestic nameplate.



2011 Ford Flex

The unusually-styled Ford Flex is not specifically marketed as a luxury vehicle, but one look around it and a peek into the interior and you’ll realize that it is products like this that have made Ford the top selling nameplate in Canada. With its unique lines, the Flex really makes a very bold statement and one glance confirms that it’s a very practical vehicle too. One bonus is seven-passenger capability and the 3.5-litre V-6 is amazingly thrifty. All-wheel drive is an option, along with an auto-park system that’s a big help around town once the driver gains confidence in it. This is one nicely-designed crossover that won’t break the bank and one that always seems to turn heads out on the road—even when there are far more opulent and expensive utility vehicles around.



2011 Cadillac SRX



2011 BMW X6





2011 Infiniti FX

There are those who argue that Infiniti makes the best-looking crossovers out there and certainly the FX35, FX50 and smaller EX35 feature expressive and dynamic styling. The FX35 and EX35 use V-6 engines while the FX50 has a big V-8. These are fast and powerful rigs but can be expensive at the very top of the model line-up. As with so many Infiniti products, interior design is exceptional and all three of these vehicles have considerable appeal as design icons. There's something very appealing about the way Infiniti designs its instruments, controls and cabin fittings. People who love fine modern furniture, classic watches and premium home theatre gear will immediately warm to the way Infiniti tackles its design work.

Lincoln's MKT is the upscale Ford division's newest effort in the luxury crossover field and it fits the bill nicely with its sleek "non-SUV" styling and car-like poise. It has that big Lincoln grille, which seems to have become as recognizable as those from the major European premium automakers. You'll not mistake a Lincoln these days for anything else and that can be a big plus in a competitive marketplace. The vehicle has two engine choices, both of 3.5-litres displacement. One is a basic V-6 and the top choice uses Ford's EcoBoost technology with two turbochargers to produce a stirring 355-horsepower. Clearly, this is not your grandparents' SUV! Both versions have all-wheel drive.



2011 Lincoln MKT Interior



2011 Mercedes-Benz R-Class

The big Mercedes-Benz R-Class has been around for quite a while now and must be regarded as one of the "fathers" of the luxury crossover segment. It's a spacious, cargo-hungry and thoroughly luxurious product and every inch a Mercedes. Looking more like a big station wagon than an SUV, the R-Class can be spec'd with a conventional V-6 or one of Mercedes' outstanding and economical BLUETEC diesels, which is the way many of them seem to be sold these days. Both variants have the company's 4MATIC all-wheel drive and there are three rows of seats taking up to seven occupants, just like a minivan. Everything about this rig shrieks "premium luxury sedan" and that's just the way Mercedes-Benz intended it.

Porsche's recently-revised Cayenne is a crossover of a different color—it "crosses over" into the realm of high-performance sports cars. The top Cayenne Turbo S develops no less than 553-horsepower and it has handling to match. It's said that Porsche test drivers have lapped the legendary Nurburgring circuit in Germany faster than their colleagues in some of the automaker's serious sports models—they're that good from a dynamic standpoint. Any Cayenne is a wonderful vehicle, but the Turbo S is something very special indeed. All Cayenne models are superbly finished and laid out very much with the driver in mind—this is a Porsche, after all.



2011 Porsche Cayenne S

Often forgotten (which is a pity) by people shopping the crossover market is the Volvo XC60, which combines great looks with some of the most advanced safety features in the industry. A little smaller than some of the crossovers I've looked at for this feature, the XC is nonetheless a highly practical vehicle with lots of room for five occupants and plenty of cargo space. Also, you can get a 236-horsepower T6 turbo V-6 version, so the performance is there without any frills, spoilers or multi-coloured badges or stripes. For those who plan to stick to paved roads, there's a basic front-wheel drive variant and even in that form, it can handle most extremes of snow and ice with its electronic stability aids.

The crossover market is bound to grow significantly in the years ahead and many of the upscale nameplates will surely add vehicles in this class sooner or later. Audi is known to be readying something and there may be a few other surprises down the road now the class has become established. One marque that could probably do very well with a crossover product is Jaguar, but for the time being, the British automaker is insistent that its role is producing fine sedans and sports cars and any kind of utility vehicle is "taboo."

For other makers, getting into this segment has been a clever business move and one that paid off—among the best examples here are Porsche, Infiniti and Lincoln. Without crossovers and SUVs, none of these companies would be the successes they are as we approach the second decade of the 21st century. ■



2011 Volvo XC60



# Surviving Market Jitters and Uncertainties

By Adrian Mastracci, Portfolio Manager, KCM Wealth Management Inc.

The markets have been anything but normal this year. Frenzied comes to mind. I’m going to try and make sense of where we’ve been and how to move forward. The aim is to overview five areas of investing.

First, let’s look back at some investment facts to the year 1900. Then we’ll revisit the infamous 1,000 point drop in the Dow Jones Industrial Average in May of this year. Following, we’ll see how to spot if you need a portfolio realignment. Then I’ll present some timeless tips on investing amid those jitters and uncertainties. Lastly, a few thoughts on whether you ought to steer your ship or also seek the assistance of a professional.

### 1. Looking in the rear view mirror

The May 2010 market mayhem served up a rough month for investors. For instance, the Dow dropped 7.9% for the month—the Dow’s worst May in 70 years. Investors tend to brush aside market volatility as nothing new. However, market plunges always attract more attention than upswings.

Volatility has been and continues to be part of the investing landscape. Perhaps even more so going forward, given the speed of information technology. I revisited 110 years of the Dow’s annual returns, before dividends, from 1900 to 2009.

Here are a few observations from the rear view:

<i>DOW JONES FACTS – 1900 TO 2009</i>	<i>ANSWERS</i>
Total number of positive return years	70
Total number of negative return years	40
Biggest percentage gain year	+81.7% in 1915
Biggest percentage loss year	–52.7% in 1931
Total years with gains of 25% or more	21
Total years with losses of 25% or more	8
Largest one-day point gains	+936 on Oct 13, 2008
Largest one-day point losses	–778 on Sept 29, 2008
Longest consecutive period of gains	9 Years
Longest consecutive period of losses	4 Years
Major one-day percentage gains	+15.3% on Mar 15, 1933
Major one-day percentage losses	–22.6% on Oct 19, 1987

One takeaway is that the Dow has served up nearly two gain years for every one losing year. Investors are wise to expect some loss years. Yes, they will happen!

Hopefully, every investor is ready for the bears to feast on some of the precious nest egg, either sooner or later. It’s also encouraging that average Dow returns for 20 to 30-year periods were positive. It bodes well for long-term investing, especially for those near or in retirement.

This drives home the point that portfolios need some boring fixed income. It smoothes out the bumps of volatility and preserves capital. No matter how it’s measured, volatility is here to stay. Everyone needs strategy to navigate its stormy waters.

### 2. Dealing with sudden thumps

Market gyrations on that day back in May were brutal. The Dow plummeted close to 1,000 points, or near 9%, in about 15 minutes. Then promptly retraced 650 of them.

It was the largest intraday drop in the history of the Dow—some frightening moments indeed. The bigger question is how can investors deal with such events? Here is a closer look at some takeaways.

The mayhem was swift and sudden—there was no time to react. Large market drops and upticks are not frequent, but they are part of investing. The markets often overreact both to the downside and upside. It’s always good planning for investors to expect the unexpected.

Economies are still sporting some cracks. It’s a global problem that includes Europe, China and the USA. We continue mired in one mess after another. All the problems that got us here have not been fully addressed.

There is no quick fix—volatility is likely to continue. It’s all about the amount of risk investors are prepared to incur. They should be braced for additional turmoil to spring up at any time. Hopefully, data releases going forward will gradually improve.

This market is not for the faint of heart—the roller coaster continues. It’s in pressing need of some improved confidence. Every investor should prepare for continued market fireworks. Always stick to the fundamentals of stewarding the portfolio.

### 3. You need a portfolio realignment, if...

Much thought goes into a well designed portfolio. Investors that have one should not need many tweaks. However, most investors typically just buy and hold their stuff. Very little change takes place within the investments owned, often for years.



Let’s highlight some signs where a portfolio realignment pays off:

- You don’t know what your portfolio is supposed to provide.
- You are not happy with your investment plan.
- You question the objectivity of the advice you receive.
- You don’t know if you’re saving enough to reach your goals.
- You would not purchase the same investments today.
- You are not comfortable with your asset mix.
- You have many “DSC” notations on your mutual fund statements.
- You don’t understand investments you own.
- You don’t recognize all investment risks you incur.
- You have a portfolio that is simply too complicated.

These are telling signs that pinpoint muddled portfolios in need of tweaks to makeovers. The portfolios I review typically display various combinations of these signs. My observation is that the muddles play no favourites. They apply to both novice and more seasoned investors.

Don’t fret if some of these signs are part of your nest egg. The good news is you can start now to change direction. A simple tweak or two may suffice for some. Others may need a bigger overhaul.

### 4. Timeless tips help smooth the jitters

More than enough concerns surface when investing amid the jitters. The aim is to keep doing things that work and bail from things that don’t. Wise investors know that solid discipline helps during market turmoil.

Here are some timeless tips to help navigate the jitters:

- First, make risk management your priority one. It’s always in fashion. Let it be your best friend for life.
- Investing is a logical exercise, not emotional. Avoid knee-jerk reactions and decisions. Be ready for price moves in both directions.
- Decide if it’s more important to preserve your capital or grow it. The answer affects your portfolio design. You can’t avoid all the potholes. The risks you take ultimately deliver return.
- Stick to investing basics. Dwell on things you can control. Like risk tolerance, diversification and asset mix. Simple has virtue.
- Be confident in your investment strategy. Resist temptations for second guessing along the way.
- I like to set aside some cash for sales. Buy in three or four instalments, say over a year or two. The occasional tweak of the mix also helps.
- Lastly, adopt a sensible capital loss strategy. Perhaps, selling one-third of a position if it drops by 20% to 25%. Resist averaging down on the losers. And don’t cling to troubled stocks.



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### 5. Steer your ship or hire an advisor

After the last two years, you may have considered becoming your own portfolio manager. Or, perhaps you may have been doing it for a while already. Taking the helm and navigating your precious nest egg through the often stormy waters of investing is not easy. I salute the brave ones who have stepped up. Some have fared well on this voyage. Others have taken on a bigger task than they can handle. I’ve met some from both camps.

*“Do you have sufficient time, wisdom and  
resolve to successfully take or keep the helm  
and steward your family's future?”*

Steering your wealth management ship is a marathon, not a sprint. For example, a 40-year-old could easily be at the helm four to five decades. Some investors can steer the wheel successfully and also hold a full time job. But it’s a tall task, even at the best of times.

Let’s uncover what it takes to be good at it:

- Becoming your own wealth steward requires plenty of personal time, patience, discipline, strategy and extensive knowledge about things like investments, retirement, income tax, managing risks, estates and business matters.
- In addition, you need experience and drive to design, implement, monitor and tweak your investment plan throughout different economic cycles, while at all times directing your insights without emotional attachments.
- You will need a few financial math skills to put together various retirement estimates. You also know that it’s difficult to keep on top of everything that can change daily.
- No one cookie jar fits all your situations. And do expect some things to fall overboard with any plan—including the one you so carefully stitched together.

Now you’re at the crossroads, contemplating a very important decision—one whose impact will unfold over years to come. Do you have sufficient time, wisdom and resolve to successfully take or keep the helm and steward your family’s future? Or is it best to hire a portfolio manager you’re comfortable with and delegate some responsibility?

If you have what it all takes—go for the gusto. If you’re struggling in deep waters—find qualified help.

This guide should help in surviving the potholes and market gyrations around the curve. It may also help you appreciate the scope of the professional’s role. ■







The place where Tracey Tarling resides is a land of mercurial water and strange mists. They are at once magically veiled forests and light bursts of open horizon. Ancient rivers wind their tributaries. Quiet places of contemplation lead to old oak and evergreens that press and reach until dawn. Night skies fill, calm prevails. Botanical elements float and decay with a reference to process, struggle and hope. Water flows as much downward from the breaking clouds as it evaporates upward to complete the journey. It is a heady mix of magic realism and a chiaroscuro play of light.

It's not surprising that these images come naturally to Tarling. Born on the west coast of Canada, she grew and flourished with the sharp salt breeze of the Pacific Ocean. Frequent treks through the damp carpeted forest instilled a love of mysterious landscape. "As an artist I understand that the struggle is in the re-creation, trying to capture the essence of that landscape or tree, not a direct representation, but trying to provide the feeling of oceans or treeness. Not everything should be revealed on first glance. Something must wait. I know that when I walk my dog through the mountain trails or along one of the beautiful salt-washed beaches of Vancouver, I am allowing myself an open space for reflection and communication with the natural world. The quiet space that is necessary for the imagination to prosper."

Tarling began her studies at Emily Carr Art Institute in Vancouver, Canada. She later attended The Vancouver Academy of Art and studied Zen Brush Painting, which involved the meditation of hand grinding carbon in water to create the "ink" before the liquid is lifted through the body to the tip of the brush.

Over the years she developed an art practice that involved spending time in Europe as well as the west coast. In Europe, Tarling studied the Old Dutch and Italian masters with exquisite tables spilling ripe abundance. Then English landscape paintings flush with turbulent skies, memento mori or reminders of an all too brief and fleeting life. She came to spend some time with an icon painter in Santorini, Greece. There she learned to prepare a wood surface with glues and heavily gypsonated plaster which allows for the sanding and subtle atmospheric mark making Tarling was looking for. She began to use the language of oil paint, gold leaf, photography, drawing and ink to bring forth images of mood, spirit and light. "The paint takes on a life of its own. Some days I walk in the studio and the painting will tell me exactly what it needs," the artist says from her wooded studio on the side of the North Shore Mountains of Vancouver. "The image forms on the surface all on its own. That's the beauty of art. You have to listen, watch and breathe. You can only take it so far in your head, the rest is pure magic."





Tracey Tarling



*“One night and long into the morning, I sat in this damp dark 1950s building. It was pitch black outside. No one around. You could taste the waves of ocean and feel the damp brick.”*



In an inspiring coastal trip closer to home, Tarling, along with a few other artists, was invited to participate in five days of field/lab studies at Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre, a preeminent marine research center. BMSC was founded in 1972 by five Western Canadian universities, in Barclay Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island Canada. The centre provides research facilities and offers university-level courses in marine and coastal sciences.

Each artist provided one work of art created from this unique adventure to help support the BMSC public education fund. “I had an amazing experience at the Marine Sciences facility. The researchers were wonderful and shared their enthusiasm for the coastal marine environment. One night and long into the morning, I sat in this damp dark 1950s building. It was pitch black outside. No one around. You could taste the waves of ocean and feel the damp brick. I was photographing slides that I had created moments earlier. My old Nikon digital camera had the attachments for the dual light path microscope. At first glance I wasn’t sure what I was seeing, looking down the microscope I may have been looking at the night sky. The black of the oculus framed the starry scene and in one magical moment I saw a perfect image of unity. The next day I started to sketch out a few rough drafts of what later became a body of work based on my experiences there. The beautiful cellular images still find their way into my work today.” These original oil paintings were exhibited in a solo exhibition at the Bau-xi Gallery, Vancouver, Canada, the Nanaimo Art Gallery, Nanaimo, Canada, and Galerie Zuger in Santa Fe, USA.

This project has led to more fascination and explorations of the natural world. Recently Tarling has been invited by the Vancouver General Hospital Public Art Collection to create a 15-foot-long painting to grace a large-scale wall in one of their pavilions. The nature of the project is something that she would love to explore further.

You can follow her journey and the creation of this work of art at [www.traceytarling.com](http://www.traceytarling.com). ■

Tracey Tarling is represented by:  
**Bau-xi Gallery**  
3045 Granville Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6H 3J9  
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Have you ever had a time in your life when things were just flowing effortlessly? A project that came together, a last minute vacation that went off perfectly, a party that went off like clockwork. It's like all the balls are lined up, the universe is smiling down upon us and life is good. Most of us have had moments like this and it is incredibly pleasant when we experience this sweetness to life. Whether it lasts minutes or months, we tend to take it as a sign that we are doing something right.

One of the internationally known founders of positive psychology, Mihaly Csikszentmihályi, coined the term “flow” to describe the very focused, very energized mental state when a person is fully immersed in an activity. Other terms for flow are to be on the ball, in the zone, in the groove. Elite athletes relate that time seems to slow when they are in the zone and they can almost anticipate where the puck is going or sense what their opponent will do.

So what creates this sense of flow? According to Csikszentmihályi, flow is created when we have total absorption in a specific task, whether it is cooking a fine meal or writing a book. We feel positive, energized, and aligned with the task at hand. We need to be fully present to be in the flow. Not multi-tasking, not juggling, but fully alive and engaged in the task at hand.

Martin Seligman is another internationally respected founder of positive psychology. As a field, positive psychology focuses on how to help people thrive and create optimal well-being. It's similar to life coaching in that both focus on building on people's strengths, helping them to create what they want. Seligman has created what he calls a “Happiness Formula” where Happiness = Pleasure + Flow + Meaning. There is definitely merit in looking at this formula to remind yourself on days when you are not feeling the love, so to speak, of how to get back on track and in the groove of life.

## In the Flow of Life

By Dr. Lesley Horton, MD

Of the three pillars of happiness, Seligman notes pleasure is the most commonly experienced, but also the most fleeting, i.e. buy an ice cream, the pleasure lasts moments. In an interview, Seligman says bluntly about pleasure, “You can take drugs, masturbate a lot, or engage in mindless entertainment. It will probably make you happy for a bit, but at some point, most people look in the mirror and ask, ‘Is this all there is?’” Seligman calls this the “fidgeting until death” syndrome.

Enter the third ingredient to happiness—having meaning to one's life. For most of us, having meaning to our life also means having a life purpose. Each of us has a life purpose. Some people never look for it, but it is there. Our life purpose is the reason we are on the planet. It is the thing we are meant to accomplish, or the gift we are meant to bring. When we are “on purpose,” we feel fulfilled. We are contributing and making a difference. When we are not on purpose, we feel discontented, unfulfilled and even dead inside.

Sometimes it can be challenging to uncover our life's purpose, but we can ask others for help or pray to the universe for guidance. What we most enjoy and are naturally talented in is often a great indicator. Or we might feel like we are not in the flow of life. It can be like trying to herd cats. No flow and all frustration. Take heart and be patient. Sometimes a new way of being is trying to make its way into our life while the old way of being is still dissolving. Listen within for guidance and lean into trusting that life is unfolding as it should. Pleasure can be big, like a new car or all-inclusive vacation, or it can come simply—in the caress of a child's soft cheek or helping an elderly neighbour.

In the end, with our understanding of the universe evolving—that we are all interconnected in a quantum field of energy—your happiness serves the world. Thanks to Seligman's formula, following our bliss, our heart and our spirit's guidance is good medicine and good math, indeed. ■



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