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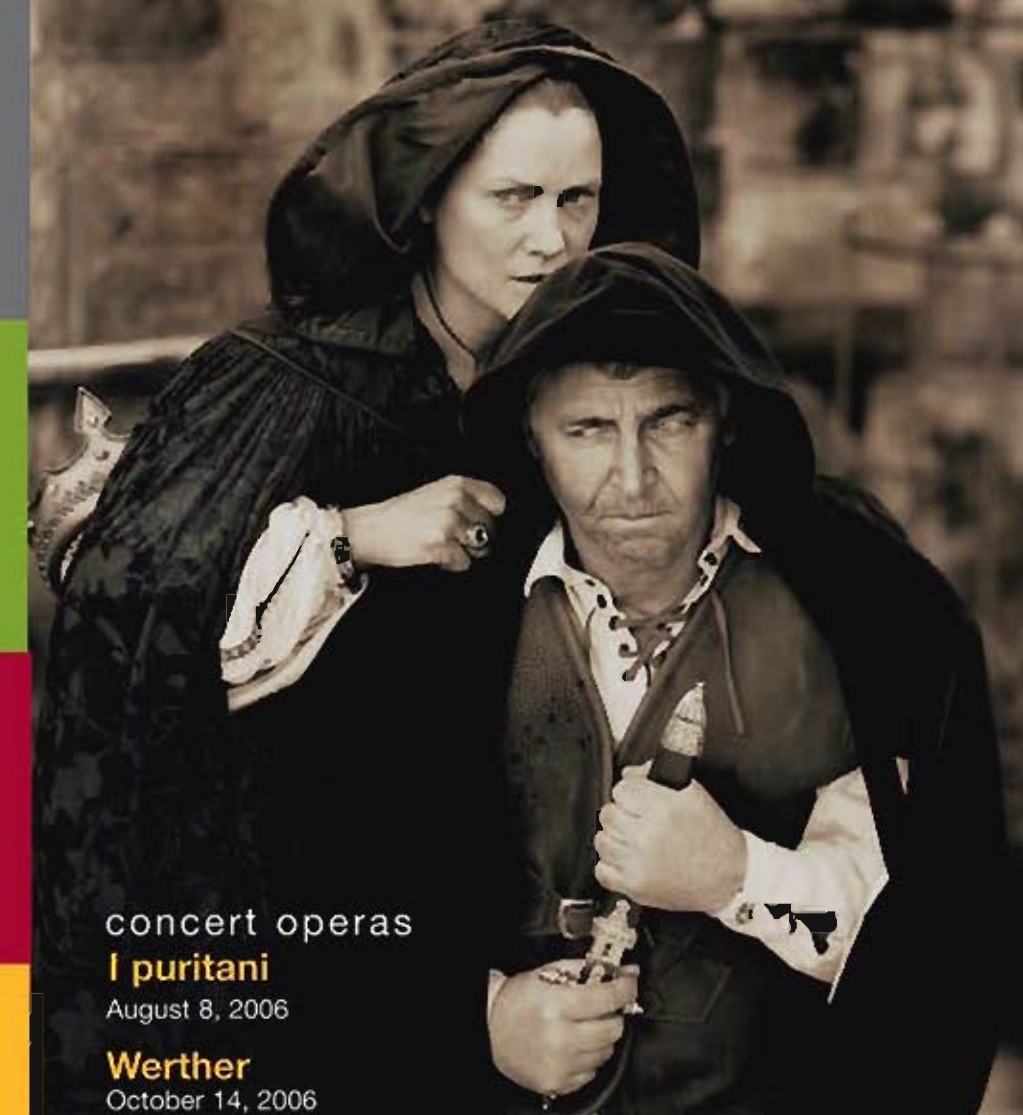
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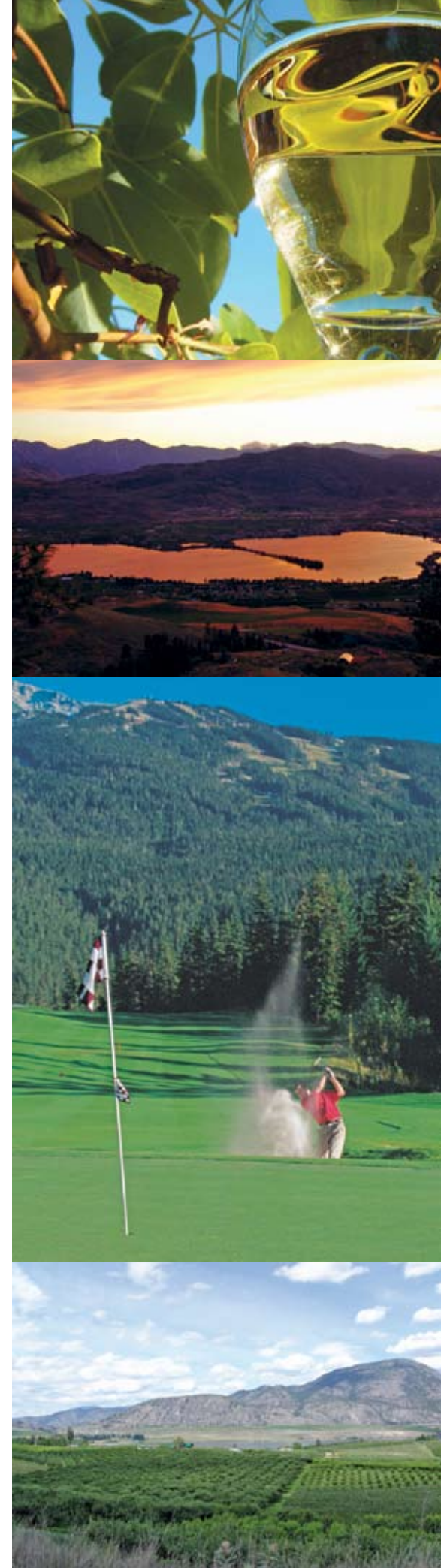
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Editorial

Editor

Terry Tremaine | terry@fusionpublishinginc.com | 1 888 925-0313

Managing Editor

Marja Rese | marja@fusionpublishinginc.com

Contributing Editors

Gael Arthur | gaela@goodlifecanada.com

Geof Wheelwright | geofw@goodlifecanada.com

James Dolan | jamesd@goodlifecanada.com

Janet Collins | janetc@goodlifecanada.com

Jonni O'Connor | jonnio@goodlifecanada.com

Kevin Woodley | kevinw@goodlifecanada.com

Sandra Tonn | sandrat@goodlifecanada.com

Tony Whitney | tonyw@goodlifecanada.com

Art Director & Production

Senior Production Manager

Marla Britton | marla@fusionpublishinginc.com | 1 888 925-0313

Photography

Staff Photographer

Connie Ekelund | connie@fusionpublishinginc.com

Circulation & Distribution

Canada Post

Distacor Inc.

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Subscriptions & Back Issues

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info@goodlifecanada.com

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Publishers

Publisher

Terry Tremaine | terry@fusionpublishinginc.com | 1 888 925-0313

Associate Publisher

Connie Ekelund | connie@fusionpublishinginc.com | 1 888 925-0313

Advertising

Sales Manager

Inga Liimatta | inga@fusionpublishinginc.com | 1 888 925-0313

Rick McMorran | rick@fusionpublishinginc.com | 1 888 925-0313

Advertising & Public Relations Inquiries:

Fusion Publishing Inc.

1 888 925-0313

info@fusionpublishinginc.com

www.goodlifecanada.com

Marketing

National Marketing Group

Synergy CMC | info@synergy-cmc.com | 1 888 925-0313

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Corporate Office

Fusion Publishing Inc.

#317 – 1489 Marine Dr.

West Vancouver, BC

Canada V7T 1B8

1 888 925-0313

info@fusionpublishinginc.com

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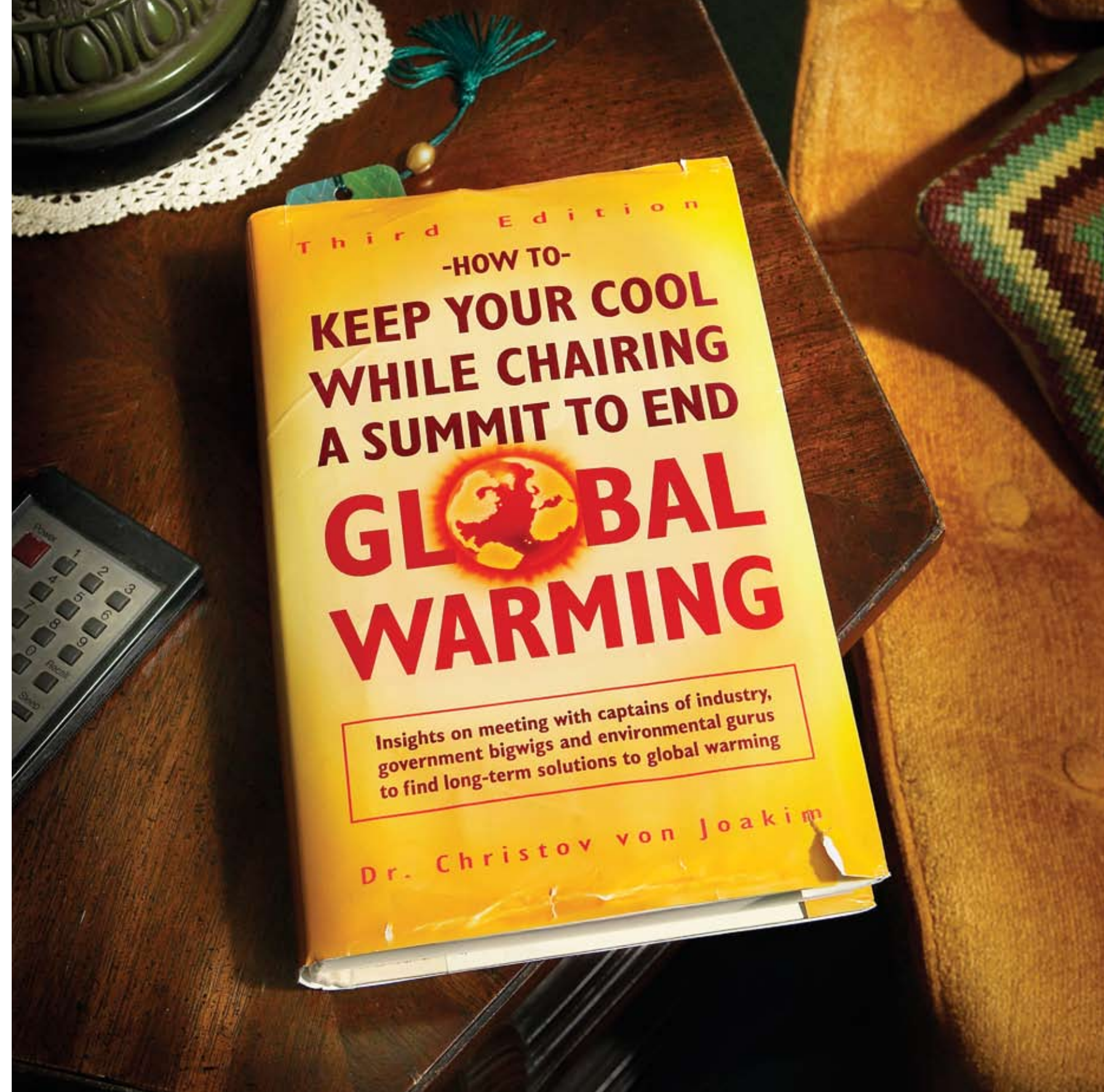
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I moved to Vancouver from Toronto after growing up in Halifax and then Montreal. It was July. As far as I can remember, that month it only rained at night, never during the day. I found the city a true treat for the eye. It wasn't a surprise to one day hear the morning radio jock saying, "Isn't it a gorgeous day? Don't the mountains look great? The ocean looks wonderful! When you get to work, make sure you call Toronto, and tell them it's raining. We don't need any more people."

If truth be told, I think that instead of following that advice, everyone called Toronto to brag about the weather and the scenery. Certainly the word has gotten out – British Columbia in the summertime is the place to be.

Tourism has been an important industry here for some time. However, once outside Vancouver, Victoria or Whistler, quality accommodations were rather hard to find. But in the last little while a nice selection of luxury establishments have sprung up in most sections of the province. Our cover story provides insight into some of the more recent arrivals on the hospitality front – where you can expect to find comfortable rooms, interesting cuisine and a reasonable wine list.

Of course, come the fall the rain will return and I'll be looking for sunshine again, and our fall cover story will help solve the problem. With the help of Mexico Tourism we've just returned from a tour of the haciendas in the Yucatan. I've made many trips to Mexico visiting most of the major centres, but had never been to Merida in the Yucatan.

What an eye-opener! This is a part of Mexico with its own identity. Merida, the capital, is looked upon by Mexicans as the number one city in Mexico in which to live. They have their own culture, their own cuisine and their own way of life. The extensive Mayan archeological sites provide an insight into the people who live in this land. Mayan, to my surprise, is not a dead language at all, but very much alive. You can watch the evening news broadcast in Mayan.

But the high point for us was the haciendas. Quite a number of these abandoned palatial homes have been converted into boutique luxury resorts. With a small number of rooms the focus is on quality and service – fine cuisine, luxurious facilities, and excellent spas.

Those of you who have yet to subscribe should do so. If you want a trip this winter that combines novelty with quality services, then you will want to read about the Yucatan. Coming in our next issue – don't miss out.

Terry Tremaine
Publisher
terry@fusionpublishinginc.com

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Beautiful British Columbia

By Terry Tremaine
Photographs by Connie Ekelund

It rains in Vancouver. Actually it rains quite a bit. The comeback is that without the rain, there wouldn't be a rain forest. It's the rain forest that we all enjoy come the summer months. At this time of year there is nowhere I would prefer to travel than in British Columbia. The ocean, the mountains, the vineyards, the islands; all are spectacular when the sun shines.

Tourism has been an important industry here for some time, however once outside Vancouver, Victoria or Whistler, quality establishments used to be rather hard to find. But in the last little while a nice selection of luxury accommodations and resorts have sprung up in most sections of the province.

Vancouver Island Bear Mountain Resort

Bear Mountain Resort, just outside Victoria, illustrates how much the bar has been raised. The development of this 1,300 acre property has been spear-headed by ex-NHLer Len Barrie. Since purchasing the land in the fall of 2001, Barrie, with the financial support of a number of his NHL buddies, has fast-tracked the development of this destination resort. The official opening of its Westin hotel was on June 8th.

In the very short five years between conception and opening, buyers from around the world have invested in excess of \$400 million in

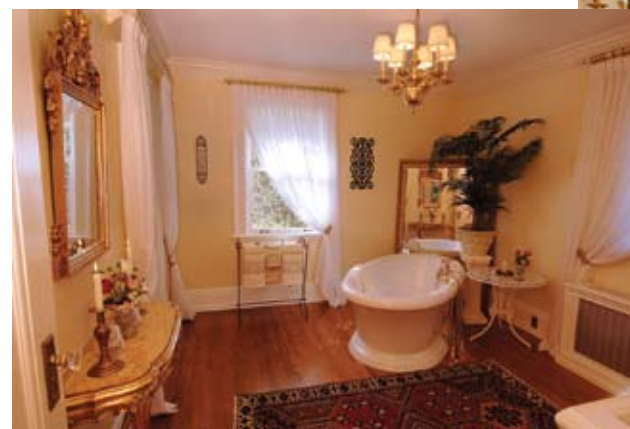


*Photos top to bottom:
Bear Mountain Resort -
fairways building,
14th green,
Panache Restaurant - glassed in kitchen*

presale residential real estate. This international support was warranted. The resort already boasts the Mountain Course, a Jack and Steve Nicklaus co-designed 19 hole (yes, 19) golf experience, considered by many to be the best course in Canada. It will soon be complemented by a Nicklaus-designed 18 hole Valley Course (currently under construction) and the Nicklaus Golf Academy, a world

class practice facility.

The newly opened Westin offers 91 very comfortable rooms and suites and houses the clubhouse, three restaurants and a spa. The overall tone is west coast wood-and-stone, exemplified by the expansive timber-beamed lobby with a two storey waterfall and stone fireplace. The penthouse suite



*Photos clockwise from top left:
Marco Polo -
Soaker Tub,
Main Salon,
Bedroom*



... in the last little while

a nice selection of luxury

accommodations and resorts

have sprung up in most

sections of the province



is a two storey beauty with not only a view of the course, but even Mount Baker in Washington State.

During an excellent dinner in the cozy Panache restaurant, hosted by GM Terry Yacyshen, we came to better understand the vision with which Barrie has led the project. During his tenure as a professional hockey player he visited many facilities around the world. That experience so drives his desire to provide a quality environment and excellent service that lobster is available at the 9th hole. According to Yacyshen, that desire even extends to the hot dogs; while possibly premium priced, the buns are definitely the very best.

The Spa certainly lives up to the standard of excellence the resort strives to reflect. The first Santé Spa was opened by Dr. Wendy Smeltzer in her home base of Calgary; Bear Mountain's accredited Santé Spa offers traditional spa treatments, non-surgical procedures such as Botox, microdermabrasian and laser hair removal, and a lifestyle program which includes nutrition, fitness training and sports medicine. All services are administered by therapists and medical professionals trained under Dr. Smeltzer's supervision in Calgary.

My experience was a new pleasure. The surroundings were relaxing and the staff very competent. When in a spa I look for a good massage. This time around I was encouraged to try my first pedicure. Though somewhat of a ticklish experience, I have to admit it was great. I could easily become a regular.

Bear Mountain is already a destination resort which will only get better.

Villa Marco Polo Inn

While in Victoria, we took the opportunity to spend a night at the Villa Marco Polo Inn, a Bed & Breakfast with a decided difference. I'm generally not a big fan of B&B's, but the Marco Polo sets a very high standard. Eliza Livingston purchased the Italian renaissance mansion a few years ago and coerced Liam Morton to be her innkeeper and partner. The property is set in Victoria's tony Rockland neighbourhood and features four truly elegant bedrooms, all beautifully appointed.

Liam is service personified. His knowledge of the local eateries is insightful and led us to an excellent establishment which we otherwise would never have discovered. But it's his breakfast that really makes the experience memorable. We enjoyed the companionship of three other equally enthusiastic couples for a multi-course delight that spread over some 2 and a half hours, making our luncheon obligation hard to fulfill.

Over a glass of good Shiraz in the main salon the night before, we came to understand the passion Eliza and Liam have for the property. There is a story behind each individual piece of furniture which certainly adds charm to the rooms.



Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa

As Vancouver residents, we enjoy Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa as a convenient weekend getaway destination. Halfway between the Sydney ferry terminal and Victoria, Brentwood Bay is a relatively new arrival on the BC hospitality scene and opened to critical acclaim as a result of its extensive wine cellar. One of only three establishments in Canada to have been designated a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, this boutique resort boasts three one-bedroom suites which have their own decks equipped with their own hot tubs. Sitting in the tub with a glass of BC wine while looking out over the picturesque bay prior to that spa treatment or dinner is a great way to unwind after an exhausting tour of the local wineries.

The Okanagan

BC wines are also new arrivals on the hospitality scene. There are strong rumours that the Okanagan is on its way to becoming the Napa Valley of the north. Led by pioneers like Sumac Ridge, who are this year celebrating their 25th anniversary, BC wineries are gaining increasing international recognition for their wines.

...in the summer months there
is nowhere I would rather be



Brentwood Bay - view of the exterior with the pool,
Ocean suite with candles and exquisite black cod from the dining room.



Photos above and right:
Orchard overlooking
Okanagan Lake, looking
east towards Peachland,
green grapes in bins.



Photos this page clockwise from top left: South
Okanagan - Osoyoos and Oliver, Sante Spa,
Nk'Mip desert heritage centre, Kalamalka Lake,
Table with a view - Burrowing Owl Winery,
Sumac Ridge Summerland BC Riesling sign.



Ice wine opened the door and has been followed by a host of whites winning awards, and reds have gained increasing attention. A few intrepid winemakers have even taken on the challenge of the normally California sun-soaked red zinfandel. The problem for those interested in sampling these wines at their source has been accommodation – until recently a day spent enjoying a leisurely tour of wine sampling rooms ended in an overpriced motel room.

Help has not only arrived but more is on the way. Stanley Yasin, the driving force behind Summerland Waterfront Resort, has announced the development of a new 220-room Westin condominium hotel in Kelowna, scheduled to open in 2009.



Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa

Bellstar, the Calgary-based developer and manager of luxury boutique resorts, has opened Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa as a joint venture with the Nk'Mip band of Osoyoos. The

band chose another quality partner, Vincor, to launch their award-winning Nk'Mip Winery. The awards came quickly and perhaps not surprisingly, considering the band's vines had gained maturity while they previously sold grapes to many of the wineries in the area.

The band sets an example with almost full employment; Chief Clarence Louie's motto is "you're in school, have a job or are in counselling".

A stay at Spirit Ridge, which currently offers 30 one and two-bedroom quality villas, provides easy access to the band's Sonora Dunes, a 9 hole golf course, the winery sampling room and the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre.

We very much enjoyed a personal tour of the centre conducted by manager Brenda Baptiste. Insight into the culture and way of life of the people who have inhabited this desert terrain for thousands of years is the focus not only for the visitor but for band members as well. The building contracts for the various structures on the site, matching habitations of years gone by, were restricted to bids by young members of the band.

There were very specific requirements for each bid that not only addressed budget over-runs and time delays but also required each bidding group to include an elder of the band. This last requirement produced an interesting tale:

One group of successful bidders was having a lot of trouble constructing their dwelling. Each time they would near completion the structure would fall down. Their frustration was growing and their profit margin diminishing until finally they turned to the elder, whom they had

*British Columbia
is truly endowed
with remarkable
natural beauty*



previously ignored. He readily pointed out the error of their ways. When questioned as to why he hadn't come forward earlier, he simply stated that he hadn't been asked.

Scheduled to open in July, Santé, the same folks with the Spa at Bear Mountain, will open a medi-spa at Spirit Ridge. As well, presuming everything remains on track, 64 new one-bedroom suites will be completed, as well as the Passatempo restaurant. The resort is definitely a welcome edition to an area that boasts some of the best wineries in BC.

Predator Ridge

At the other end of the Okanagan, outside Vernon, is a golf resort we've enjoyed a number of times, Predator Ridge. We're particularly taken with their one-bedroom cabins, which likely could be considered for year round living quarters. They not only have a living room and a complete kitchen but a deck with a gas barbeque as well. But this is the good part – as part of the room service menu they offer all the trappings for a do-it-yourself barbequed steak dinner.

So, after a day of wine sampling or golf, when you just want to cozy up together in front of the fire-place, rather than make your way to the restaurant you organize with room service to deliver some great steaks and all the fixings. A little barbeque magic on your part and there's your private dinner.

Predator Ridge is also the setting for one of our best golf stories. The course is truly spectacular with gorgeous views and lots of wild life, thereby the tale.

We were teeing off, as one of the first groups in the morning, on a beautiful day. We were all happy with our first drives of the day. As we headed down the fairway to our balls, a coyote appeared and proceeded to start playing with one of the balls. He went into the typical stance a dog takes when he wants you to play with him. He picked the ball up. He dropped it. He picked it up again and tossed it in the air. He bounced around the ball on the ground. Finally, when he decided we weren't going to play with him, he grabbed the ball and ran.

We never were able to agree on how to score that hole. Personally, I thought it should have been scored as a hole-in-one.



*Photos clockwise top left:
Predator Ridge twin rainbow,
Rowena's Inn on the river:
Phyllis cabin with private pond,
view from cabin,
Rowena's main house*

Fraser Valley

Rowena's Inn on the River and Sandpiper Golf Resort

Sandpiper Golf Resort, outside Harrison Mills, is the setting for another golf tale. The course is found along the Harrison River on land originally granted to the Pretty family by Queen Victoria. The Pretty Estates also houses Rowena's Inn on the River. To say the setting is picturesque is a decided understatement. Bald eagles circle the estate. The view from the first tee is of the river, next to green fields, leading to snow-capped mountains.

The course itself is deceptive. At first glance, the view suggests an executive course, but it is actually a demanding par 72 that runs 6,500 yards. We had come for the weekend with friends to enjoy a little golf. We had also managed to book two of the four luxury cabins available through Rowena's; more on that later.

We were on the 15th fairway, a long 486 yard par 5, enjoying a great

day, when our female friend called out "it's a bee!" She then proceeded to jump up and down, swatting at her bottom. Her partner is no slouch in an emergency. He immediately pulled her pants down, revealing the offending villain, and a very cute posterior.

The estate is still in the hands of the Pretty family, with Betty Anne being the latest member of the family to watch over the property. We were particularly taken

with the four cabins named after different members of the family. Each has a giant wood-burning fireplace that we've always found ready for a starting match, along with a stock of long-burning firewood close at hand. The well appointed washrooms have radiant floor heating and a Jacuzzi tub for two. In the morning a knock on the door announces the arrival of your breakfast basket with everything to start the day off right.

The Inn itself offers four luxurious guest rooms furnished with antiques, including overstuffed beds. Dining is available at the River's Edge Restaurant and Lounge, which serves both the golf course and the inn. An hour and a half from Vancouver by car, this property is definitely a gem.

British Columbia is truly endowed with remarkable natural beauty. Even after twenty years of exploring, seeing

the ocean set against the mountains on a sunny day or a mountain stream rushing down a slope makes me very thankful to be a resident. In amongst all this natural beauty are other gems I haven't mentioned. Some have received accolades from around the world. As I said at the beginning, in the summer months there is nowhere I would rather be.

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The Westin Kelowna, to be located in the heart of Kelowna's vibrant downtown, is an all-condominium hotel, a home for you when you come to town and a hotel that generates revenue when you're away. It will be the Okanagan's first high-end, year-round luxury resort, complete with modern amenities and signature services synonymous with the upscale Westin brand. Westin has been rated by Global Traveller Magazine as North America's best domestic hotel chain and by J.D. Power and Associates as "highest in guest satisfaction". Security comes from knowing that your investment will be maintained by Westin's high standards.



Orchard overlooking Okanagan Lake



The Marina at Sunrise

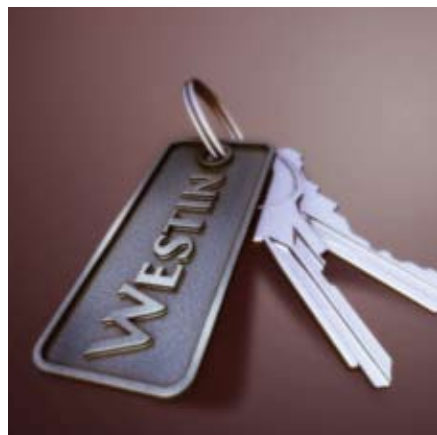
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The Westin Kelowna development supports the rapid growth of the city, and is expected to meet the demand for luxury accommodation downtown and near the waterfront. With only 220 available suites, this highly anticipated condominium hotel real estate opportunity is limited. For more information and to register, visit www.westinkelowna.com or call 1 866 768-9488. World wide sales commence this summer.

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Great BC Golf Experiences

...first-class courses surrounded
by world-class resorts

By Kevin Woodley



Bear Mountain Resort, 11th green

Everyone knows British Columbia is beautiful (it says so on the license plates). What many around the world are discovering is that beauty extends beyond breathtaking ocean and mountain views previously accessed best by boat or bike or others on the long list of outdoor activities that has long defined a true West Coast lifestyle. Visitors are finally figuring out it can be just as easy to see BC in a golf cart. And with first-class courses surrounded by world-class resorts, they're learning it can be a lot more fun to discover the province on perfectly manicured fairways than it is aboard BC Ferries. As for those still determined to try other, more stereotyped pastimes inspired by BC's moderate climate and idyllic settings, they're learning



Predator Ridge, Peregrine #9 Red Tail #1 Photo by Gord Wylie

it is possible to do both, often in the same day. Where else can you enjoy world-class golf in the morning and world-class fishing (deep sea fishing for salmon if you're near the ocean, fly fishing for trout if you're in the interior) in the afternoon? At Whistler you can ski when you get up, eat a gourmet lunch (in either a five-star restaurant or a sidewalk café) and get in 18 holes on a championship course before retiring to another unique west coast feast. It's little wonder, then, that the International Association of Golf Tour Operators named British Columbia the "Undiscovered Golf Destination of the Year" in 2004. It won't be long before they have to remove the first word of the award entirely.

Bear Mountain Resort

If there are two things hockey players know more about than sticks and pucks, it's fairways and greens. In the NHL the taste in golf runs toward high-end resorts so with ex-NHL player Len Barrie as the driving force – and a list of investors that includes Mike Vernon, Joe Nieuwendyk, Rob Niedermayer, Ray Whitney and Ryan Smyth – it's not surprising Bear Mountain Resort has loaded up with the kind of world-class facilities that are fast making it one of Canada's most sought after top-end golfing destinations. With postcard inspiring views and a championship Jack- and Steve Nicklaus-designed course as its centrepiece, Bear Mountain has added a



Big Sky Golf and Country Club

six-story, 160,000 square foot Clubhouse featuring the second phase of a 156-room Westin hotel, an accredited Santé Spa, two unique restaurants, a Master's Lounge, an athletic club, and full conference facilities.

Fairwinds Golf Club

Few places combine the ocean with golf as well as the Fairwinds. With the Schooner Cove marina attached, the hardest choice will be what to do after golf. Should you go fishing or sailing? Chase whales or the sunset on a cruise? Play tennis or go kayaking, deep-sea diving, hiking or biking in and around this spectacular setting? Either way, golf will be the staple. With ponds, streams and trees on the course, ocean views in the background, and eagles soaring overhead, the Les Furber course blends challenging shots and decisions with an atmosphere that makes it easier to forget the poor ones.

Westwood Plateau Golf & Country Club

Set high on Eagle Mountain just outside Vancouver, the views from Westwood Plateau are enough to make anyone come back. The par-72 track that surrenders them isn't too shabby either, with its blend of large Douglas Firs, granite rock faces, rugged ravines, and breathtaking elevation changes, and it was named Canada's top new course in 1996 by Score Magazine. Perhaps the longest lasting impression comes from the service, a personable approach from arrival to departure that sets Westwood Plateau apart from every other public course in the lower mainland. Combined with two restaurants and a 35,000 square foot wood-and-beam clubhouse, it's no surprise Westwood has become the first choice for Whistler travelers seeking a one-day golf escape, and the perfect place to entertain important clients.

Northview Golf and Country Club

If you need a reminder why you are trekking to Surrey to play golf, the Northview Golf and Country Club provides it as soon as you turn into the facility. Payne Stewart Drive is both a tribute to the deceased golfer and a reminder that he was one of many PGA Tour stars who for seven years made the trip north to play the Ridge Course. The chance to relive some of the now-defunct tournament's greatest moments – from Stewart holing out a five iron on the second hole of his last round there, to Canadian Mike Weir sealing his first-ever PGA victory with an eagle from the fairway on 14 – makes Northview an experience worth savouring. Add a maintenance staff that learned what it takes to keep the Arnold Palmer-design in PGA Tour shape and Northview, with its gently rising terrain, meandering streams,

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deep lakes and Palmer-worthy risk-reward track, is worth the drive.

Nicklaus North Golf Course

The world is coming to Whistler for the Winter Olympics in 2010. The smart ones will stick around to discover why a resort made famous for skiing is now fast becoming one of the best places to golf. After one trip around Nicklaus North Golf Course, they'll start to understand why Whistler was named one of the world's top-20 golf resorts by Golf Digest. With snow-capped peaks towering above a Jack Nicklaus-design combining thick green forests and emerald-blue lakes – all minutes away from the resort's famous cobblestone walkways, stores and cafes – it doesn't take long to see why the course earned rave reviews while hosting the likes of Nicklaus, Vijay Singh, John Daly, Stephen Ames, Greg Norman, Nick Faldo, Fred Couples and Ernie Els at various events. "The greatest place I've been to play golf," Couples told Sports Illustrated.

Big Sky Golf and Country Club

The 15th hole is called Tranquility, but the entire course could be appropriately described by the same name. Located in a development-free valley a half-hour outside Whistler, it feels like the surrounding mountains rise out of your fairway, leaving golfers to quietly enjoy scenery that would make the visit worthwhile even without an award-winning golf course from Bob Cupp, who also designed Pumpkin Ridge in Oregon. And, while the mountains help shape the feeling of serenity at Big Sky, they don't define a walkable, gently rolling course that remains free of the target-type play so often associated with mountain golf. Add service ranked among the top-50 courses in North America by Golf Digest and one of Canada's top practice facilities – not to mention the Arnold Palmer-designed Whistler Golf Course and Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed Chateau Whistler Golf Course – and it's evident that the Whistler area is now clearly far more than snow and skiing.

Predator Ridge Golf Resort

All you really need to know about Predator Ridge is that PGA Tour star Sergio Garcia liked it so much after playing a Skins Game in 2000 that he bought two homes. Since then the combination of world-class golf and accommodations with first-class service – valets greet you in Payne Stewart-like knickers and bow ties – has earned the Okanagan Valley resort a four-and-a-half star rating in Golf Digest's Places to Play, the highest in Canada. Immaculate undulating fairways – either links style or tree lined depending on what hole – lakes and streams, rugged pine covered ridges, meadows rippling in the breeze with different coloured fescue and wildlife, sprawled over 1,200 serene acres, form a memorable 27-hole golf experience trumped only by the amenities and those who provide them.

Salmon Arm Golf Club

Nestled in the green mountains and crystal lakes of Shuswap country, this Les-Furber designed course skirts the base of an extinct volcano, providing a picturesque setting for fairways cut into the rolling terrain of an evergreen forest. Add well-placed bunkers, some water holes and risk-reward doglegs that can quickly make it as beastly as it is beautiful, and Salmon Arm

RECREATION

Golf Club is fast becoming the local secret that is anything but. With another nine-hole executive course on site, a well-respected golf academy, top-notch practice facility and service that earned honours as the BCPGA Golf Facility of the Year in 2001, it's getting harder to keep this gem hidden.

St. Eugene Mission Golf Resort

With towering mountains framing a trout-filled river that runs through a mix of pastoral valley and majestic pine forest, St. Eugene Mission Golf Resort blends the best of BC's Kootenay Rockies into one spectacular setting.

The same can be said of the golf course, a Les Furber design that opens and closes with a wind-swept links feel, providing a distinctive bookend for a trip into the trees, along the rock-strewn banks of the St. Mary River and into the rugged slopes that surround the area. It's a unique combination of river, mountain and links golf that earned a top-3 ranking from Golf Digest among Canada's Best New Courses in 2001.

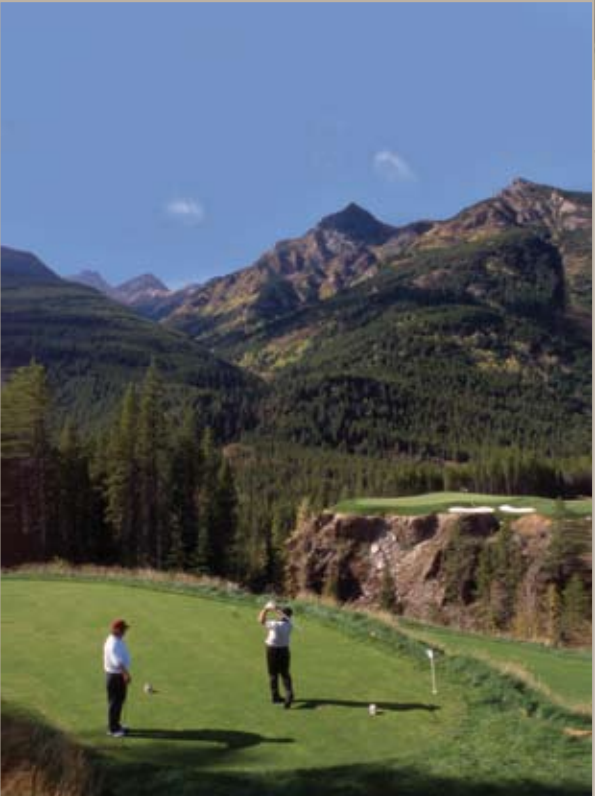
The risk-reward experience continues at the Casino of the Rockies, but there's no gambling when it comes to your stay. St. Eugene Mission offers all the dining and relaxation options you'd expect from four-and-a-half star accommodations, all centred around it's historic namesake, a massive stone mission that dates back to the early part of the last century.

Greywolf Golf Course

Fast becoming known as one of Canada's top golf courses, Greywolf is already famous around the world because of its inclusion on Microsoft's Links video game for the X-box, joining exclusive courses like the old course at St. Andrews. With unparalleled golf and spectacular mountain vistas from every hole, the signature hole is reason enough to visit Greywolf. The appropriately named "Cliffhanger" requires a long carry over Hopeful Canyon onto a green surrounded by huge vertical drops to the river below. Add in 17 other holes that combine inspirational scenery with a rugged mountain experience, but without the target-golf, hit-and-hope downside of typical mountain golf, and a long list of activities and accommodations in Panorama Mountain Village – you can even fly fish in the creek that runs through it – and it's no wonder Greywolf is becoming the toast of Canadian golf.



St. Eugene Mission Golf Resort



Greywolf Golf Course "Cliffhanger"

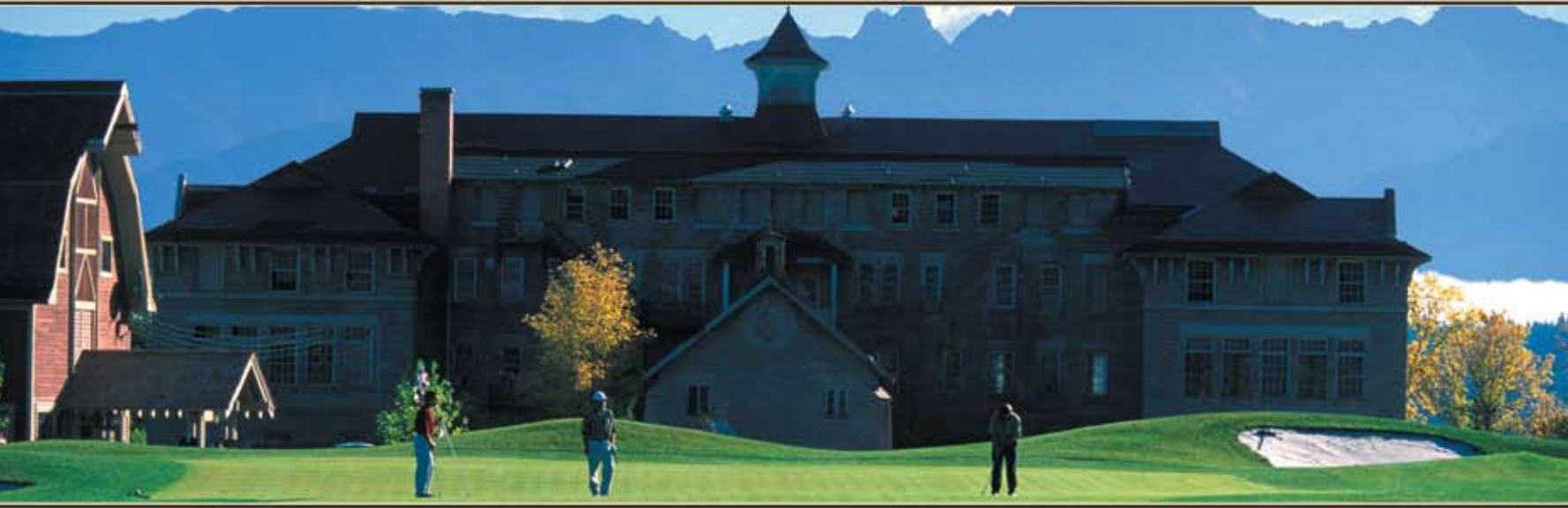
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THE MASTERS 2007



Imagine standing at the edge of the perfectly manicured green on the 18th hole of the legendary Augusta National Golf Club on the final day of the Masters as the shadows lengthen around you in the golden afternoon. The outcome had seemed like a forgone conclusion this morning, and your mind has already begun to wander into the VIP hospitality tent with all of its manifold thirst-quenching delights, but suddenly a murmur begins to ripple through the assembled crowd that grows to a roar. Tiger Woods, one of only three players in history to have won the Masters four times, is storming the leader board down the final stretch in search of his fifth green jacket!

LET US BE YOUR TICKET TO GOLF’S MOST PRESTIGIOUS (AND IMPOSSIBLE-TO-GET-INTO) EVENT. ARRIVE IN STYLE WITH A private police escort and spend the final day of the Masters walking alongside the best golfers in the world as they pursue the coveted green jacket. Celebrate victory in the shelter of our exclusive VIP Hospitality suite, then retire to the luxurious Ritz-Carlton Reynolds Plantation to re-live the highlights over a nightcap and cigar. Play the designer championship courses around Reynolds Plantation for two days of challenging and exhilarating golf with your foursome, then return home to start counting the days until next year...

WHERE WE SLEEP...

RITZ-CARLTON LODGE REYNOLDS PLANTATION



The stunning Reynolds Plantation draws on local history and culture as the foundation of the guest experience. Set against the shimmering blue backdrop of Lake Oconee, the Lodge offers luxurious accommodations and 81 holes of golf along the pristine coast. The 26,000 square foot spa, recently ranked one of the top 5 spas in North America by Travel + Leisure magazine, rejuvenates guests with southern-inspired service and treatments, and the lake itself offers many exceptional activities and diversions.

The Trip

SATURDAY APRIL 7: ARRIVE ATLANTA Fly into Atlanta Airport and transfer to your hotel. Meet your Horizon & Co. guide at check-in and spend an evening at leisure. Overnight at the Westin Atlanta Airport.

SUNDAY APRIL 8: MASTERS GOLF TOURNAMENT (FINAL DAY)

Meet in the hotel lobby at 5:30am for speedy and memorable transfer with police escort to Augusta National. Make your way to the private hospitality area for a brief orientation and to receive your Masters Patron’s Badge, one of the world’s most coveted tickets. Spend the rest of the day following your favourite world-class golfers as they pursue the hallowed green jacket. Or, escape the crowds and enjoy a bounty of gourmet refreshments in our private hospitality room. Following the presentation ceremony, meet at the hospitality pavilion to return your Patron’s Badge. Overnight at The Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation.

MONDAY APRIL 9: GOLF GREAT WATERS Spend a morning at leisure, enjoying the luxurious amenities of the plantation. After an early lunch, tee off at the Ritz-Carlton’s Great Waters golf course for a round of 18 holes. Spend the evening at leisure. Overnight at The Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation.



APRIL 10: GOLF OCONEE, RETURN HOME Enjoy breakfast before your 8:00am tee off at The Ritz-Carlton’s Oconee golf course. Following your round of golf, grab a quick bite of lunch and board the coach for your transfer to Atlanta Airport to fly back home.



The Details

What’s Included:

- all accommodations on a shared twin/double room basis
- VIP hospitality with gourmet all-day buffet and open bar at the Masters
- Master’s Patron’s badge (the toughest tickets to get in sport, period)
- two rounds on the Reynolds Plantation with carts & green fees (clubs not included)
- all transfers by luxury coach and a police escort into Augusta
- the leadership of a Horizon guide (the key to a seamless experience)
- all special events and on-trip surprises
- all gratuities to porters, drivers, caddies and other service staff

Group Size: Not surprisingly, we have a minimum group size of 4 people on this trip (since only foursomes are allowed on the courses during this period). If you have trouble finding a foursome, let us know and we may be able to pair you up with other players. In terms of group activities, the only element of the trip that will be shared with other people are the private transfers and the access to the Horizon guide - apart from that you can do your own thing. If there are more than 16 people in your group, then we will provide a private transfer and private Horizon guide.

Trip Operator: Horizon & Co., founded in 1963, is Canada’s leading boutique travel company. In addition to offering escorted and independent trips on seven continents through our brochures, we also build private custom trips for discerning individuals, families, small groups and corporations.

Dates & Prices

DURATION: 3 nights / 4 days

DATES	APR 7-10, 2007
PRICES	\$4,595* CDN • \$3,950* USD (PER PERSON SHARING)
SGL SUPP	\$600* CDN • \$515* USD
* Prices and availability based on minimum group size of 4 people	
* \$2,500 CDN per person non- refundable deposit required to confirm booking.	
Balance due by Sept. 1 st , 2006.	

WHERE WE PLAY...



Great Waters, an 18-hole Jack Nicklaus-signature design, winds through densely wooded evergreen corridors only to open up to nine holes featuring the blue waters of Lake Oconee as the rough. Named as one of the best courses in Georgia, second only to Augusta National, Great Waters is one of the most aesthetically inspiring golf courses in the continental United States.



The Oconee Course presents a golfing challenge unmatched by any other in the nation. Described by many as “mind-game golf,” the new Rees Jones designed addition to the Reynolds Plantation landscape is noted for its spectacular par threes. The course offers five holes in which Lake Oconee comes directly into play and four others tendering magnificent lake views.



The National Course, designed by Tom Fazio is the third gem at Reynolds Plantation. Boasting 27-holes, the National features impressive elevations, wonderful views and several holes skirting the shores of Lake Oconee. The site, with dense forests of hardwoods, pines, flowering wild dogwoods and some of Lake Oconee’s most dramatic lake front topography, provides a perfect canvas for the artistry of Tom Fazio, one of golf’s premier modern architects.

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FOOD & WINE



The final cut of whites (reds in the background). Photo by Stephen Bonner

Pairing the Wines and Cheeses of BC

By Gael Arthur

Photographs by Stephen Bonner and Gael Arthur

The world has changed on a dime. It used to be that we would pay a premium for the tag “imported” on our food, accepting without question the extra cost of sourcing and transporting some exquisite little bite of something. But a critical mass of food and wine lovers has yielded more than just a decent living for restaurants in the downtown core of Vancouver. Now, we want local everything and, naturally enough, we are looking for our local products to be superior to anything from anywhere else.

The quest for local and fresh is a North American phenomenon, but some areas seem to support this obsession more readily. With our temperate climate in BC, we can produce most of the key requisites to eating and drinking well within a few hours’ drive of Vancouver. This means we can even make the journey to the source, enhancing the feeling of foraging for the freshest and best products.

When it came to exploring one small aspect of this local concept by mixing and matching the wines and cheeses of BC, all it took was a short email to spark the idea for an impromptu theme party. The goal: determine which BC cheeses work best with a broad selection of BC wines. It didn’t seem like a particularly difficult task and participants were invited on the basis of a few simple criteria – love of food and wine, no lactose intolerance and availability on short notice.

There was a bit more. The key to having a successful tasting event is choosing people who are willing to follow instructions and voice opinions. Strong views make for entertaining conversations. Food and wine are



Allison Spurrell choosing BC cheeses

not like politics or religion – it’s hard to find fault with someone else’s taste buds, which are more varied and quirky than hair colour or taste in clothes. Having a few people who don’t know each other also livens up the conversation when you get tired of talking about food and wine.

It’s best to start with the limiting constraint in any food and wine event – in this case, the number of BC wines far outstrips the number of BC cheeses, so cheese was driving the direction of the event. For the best selection as well as the best advice, Alice and Allison Spurrell of Les amis du fromage are the head cheeses of the city. Allison had acquitted herself extremely well with her choices of cheese for a “Terroir de Bourgogne” seminar for the Vancouver International Playhouse Wine Festival, so it was relatively easy to pass the cheese selection along to her.

I’ll be honest – she really did try to keep me from buying so many cheeses. But the names and smells got the better of me and I didn’t want to miss the best cheese for whatever wines happened to be opened at the event. (Note to self: Listen to the experts – they rarely steer you wrong, particularly if they are urging you to spend less money at their store.)

Then came the wines. The usual problem when you invite people connected to the wine business is an embarrassment of riches. With assorted wines arriving as the guests did, we all agreed that there were too many wines. The job of culling was almost as difficult as the tasting. We started with the “must-haves”, including the new releases from Poplar Grove to go with a couple of the cheeses from the same producer (the only winery in BC to also produce cheese). A sparkling is the best way to start any event,

Tinhorn
Creek



Tinhorn Creek wine line-up

Tinhorn Creek Vineyards: Leading the Pack with Screw Cap



Tinhorn Creek Winery

...the first winery in British Columbia

to be fully committed to bottling all

its wine with a Stelvin closure

It's a typical week for Sandra Oldfield. After spending the first three days in the winery, checking tanks and barrels, tasting wines and organizing workloads for winery staff, chasing Italian equipment manufacturers for her delayed shipment, then driving through a couple of new vineyard blocks, she flies to Vancouver to put on another hat. As Tinhorn Creek's top marketer, she and her wines are the main attraction at a winemaker's dinner at Fiddlehead Joe's. She provides exactly what the Vancouver crowd wants – an entertaining authority to help them understand how to match wines with a variety of food, all while having fun.

The next afternoon, she devotes all her energies to the trade – the people who buy her wines by the case or the pallet. Restaurateurs and private wine store buyers along with assorted staff from the Liquor Distribution Branch converge on a downtown Vancouver ballroom to taste the new releases and chat with her. It's nothing new; this is something Sandy does every spring in Vancouver, Calgary and a few other important markets.

But, in fact, this year it is something new – Tinhorn Creek Vineyards has taken a major step forward in wine quality. It is the first winery in British Columbia to be fully committed to bottling all its wine – whites and reds – with a Stelvin closure (aka screw cap). No more cork and threat of cork taint!

Cork taint: It's a winemaker's worst nightmare – in every shipment of corks, some 3 to 8 per cent of them will contain a chemical called TCA (trichloranisole). Even at very small concentrations, TCA can take

*The corking
machine was
ceremoniously
retired this
past winter*



Tinhorn Creek staff say goodbye to the corking machine



Tinhorn Winemaker, Sandra Oldfield.

a bright fresh juicy wine and make it taste like cardboard (or worse!). Buying the highest quality corks and testing every shipment still can't guarantee that the corks will be flawless.

"What frustrated me most was the idea that I would throw my heart and soul into a wine, making it as good as it could possibly be. Then, as the very last step, I'd put it into a bottle and then cross my fingers with every cork that we used. Deep down, I would know that at least some of the corks would be bad and that they had the potential to ruin our wine. On the basis of a single corked bottle of wine, people might decide they didn't like my wine and I would lose customers without ever knowing who or why."

Like most winemakers contemplating a big change in the process, Sandra did numerous trials comparing cork with polymer closures and screw caps before committing to the Stelvin brand of screw cap closure.

"I wanted a solution that made sense for the long term, for both the fresh white wines that people generally drink right away and the reds they are laying down for several years. After some initial small winery trials, we decided to bottle the 2002 Oldfield's Collection Merlot in Stelvin. After that, it really didn't take long before we started to research the best equipment and laid out plans to abandon cork completely."

The corking machine was ceremoniously retired this past winter, with a portable screw cap machine brought in for the 2005 whites and 2004 reds, pending receipt of that wonderful Italian equipment. The 2003 red wines are just being released now, so there will be Tinhorn red wines in

cork for another year or so.

The initial response has been terrific. People who are knowledgeable about wine are supportive as they have had that awful experience of having to send a corked wine back at a restaurant or, worse, of having carefully cellared a wine for years and years, only to open it for a special occasion and find that it is defective.

For people who are just learning about wine, as soon as they figure out they can avoid the uncertainty of a wine that might be corked or just a little bit off, they are happy too. The mental image of a screw cap being for cheap wine is fast disappearing as more and more exclusive wineries around the world are opting for this closure system. As Sandra says, "It's just good business. I want people to taste our wines the way we made them and screw cap gives us that assurance. And hey, a screw cap is a lot easier to open, plus you can put the cap back on and it fits in the fridge door – or you can lay it down without worrying about it leaking."

The trade event is winding down and restaurateurs are drifting off, back to work. For Sandra, there is a break of a couple of hours. Then she will come back to the same ballroom for a completely different event. Tinhorn has a members club – the Crush Club – and tonight, members are invited to come and taste the new vintages. Sandra loves the Crush Club events: "The people are well-informed and terrific fun. As an event, this represents an incredibly important and powerful tool for me – I get direct feedback from the people who love our wines enough to buy them by the case, year after year. If there is something they don't like, they feel

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This wine isn't human, but you are. That's why you'll appreciate new packaging enhancements that make it easier than ever to enjoy the Tinhorn Creek wine that goes best with the moment. Our colour-coded labels save you time searching the shelf for the right varietal. Our Stelvin twist-off tops save the wine within from the unpleasant possibility of cork taint. With these smart improvements on the outside and the same great estate-crafted wine on the inside, we promise that every bottle of Tinhorn Creek you open will be as satisfying as the last—an important thing to us humans.



Tinhorn
Creek



Tinhorn Creek Winery in the morning sun

they know me well enough to tell me. They also act as ambassadors for us, asking for our wines in restaurants and spreading the word.”

Crush Club members are simply wine lovers who like a deal – by signing up, they get wine automatically shipped to them (a case a year, or more if desired) and enjoy discounts and a few other perks (like tasting events, a vineyard barbecue, advance notice for events, that sort of thing). Crush Club members often also participate in the Tinhorn “futures” program. Buying futures is standard practice for many Bordeaux wineries. It involves shifting a bit of the risk to the consumer, who buys well in advance of release – the reward is better prices and guaranteed supply. For people who collect wines and like to compare vintages, it's great. But it's also convenient for people who like to keep things in the cellar and aren't always good about planning ahead.

Sandra's last event of the whirlwind Vancouver trip is a Friday night dinner at Montri's, Vancouver's top Thai restaurant. Montri is at the trade tasting and very chatty about Tinhorn and how well the wines marry with his food. “We sell a lot of this Gewürztraminer – it just seems to go with so many of our dishes.” He is also intrigued by the first vintage of Tinhorns' 2 Bench, a wonderfully lush and citrusy combination of various white grapes (Sémillon, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Gewürztraminer).

Sandra smiles when she talks about 2 Bench: “I am really happy with this wine. The proportions of different grapes will change a bit every

year, but the style will stay the same. We have some new vineyards coming on stream and we will probably put a bit of Muscat in there as well.” For this vintage, there are only a few hundred cases, but production will increase as more grapes become available. It's a balanced, fruity wine and it's easy to see why Montri is happy to be serving it at his winemaker's dinner. For Tinhorn, it's part of the constant drive to take the best from the vineyards and make the highest quality wine possible.

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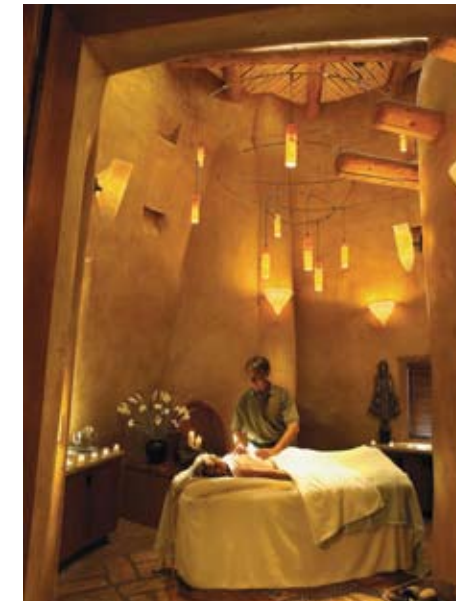
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HOUSE & HOME

Resort Communities

By Janet Collins



Three Sisters Mountain Village, El Monte Sagrado Spa

...it's little wonder resort community

living is garnering so much attention

both locally and abroad

When it comes to choosing a place to live, a progression of thought suggests that bigger doesn't necessarily mean something better. Indeed, as our cities and towns continue to grow and expand, individuals become more protective of what little personal space they have. Increased density, it seems, doesn't necessarily translate into an ever-wider circle of close friends. Witness the growing number of gated communities and high-rise condominium complexes where one resident rarely interacts with another. In short, we've lost our sense of community.

One housing option that is challenging that trend is planned resort community living. Three resort communities in Western Canada provide some clue of the product's appeal. Note that the word "resort" is pivotal to the concept behind all the examples given here.

Predator Ridge

Not only is Predator Ridge located near both Silver Star and Big White ski resorts, but it's also in close proximity to both Kalamalka and Okanagan lakes. BC's most prominent wine growing region is also in the area.

www.goodlifecanada.com



Predator Ridge Golf Course and Cottages

Throw in the famous namesake Predator Ridge golf course, and it's readily apparent why outdoor enthusiasts are attracted to the property. And while golf may be the main event for several who choose to stay and play here, other distractions such as restaurants, an Aveda spa, a fitness centre that boasts a 25m indoor lap pool and top-of-the-line gym equipment, and the entertainment offerings of nearby Vernon and Kelowna up the appeal factor for those less enamoured with life on the links.

"It's so peaceful here," says Chris Kasprzak who, together with her husband, bought a condo at Predator Ridge before moving into a house in the development a year later. Now in their second house in the area, the Kasprzaks feel the property is a good investment, especially for "outdoors people." The network of walking trails is especially popular with the couple who also use the fitness centre and golf course.

"A lot of our neighbours are active retirees like us, but there are some younger folks here, too," says Kasprzak. "A lot of people are coming from the UK. They tell us cost is a big factor, but they also like the spaciousness of the area. Lots of Calgarians are buying summer homes here, but they may end up using them as retirement homes." She feels the purchase she and her husband made has been a good investment. Although Kasprzak declined to say how much the couple made on the resale of their former Predator Ridge properties or how much the assessed value of their current property has increased since purchase, she did say they were very happy with the return after only a few short years.

Given the focus on golf, one could be forgiven for thinking housing options that offer up these types of amenities are the sole preserve of retirees.

Jim and Claire Radford are several years away from retiring, but they found the homes at Predator Ridge equally appealing. In fact, the couple was first introduced to the development when Jim worked on the planning and development of the project. He was so impressed by the quality of the resort as well as the amenities and local scenery, the couple ended up buying a lot and building a home there – that was five years ago, and their home was among the first to be finished and occupied. Now, Claire is a real estate sales rep for Predator Ridge. "The area is so well maintained," says Jim. "A high level of maintenance helps the properties hold their value."

And the Radfords aren't the only ones to recognize the uniqueness of the development. "A group of Chinese developers chose Predator Ridge to emulate for a development in China," says Jim, who went overseas to help get that initiative off the ground.

One of the drawing points of resort developments is that they tend to



Predator Ridge evening from the deck



Predator Ridge Falcon Point living room

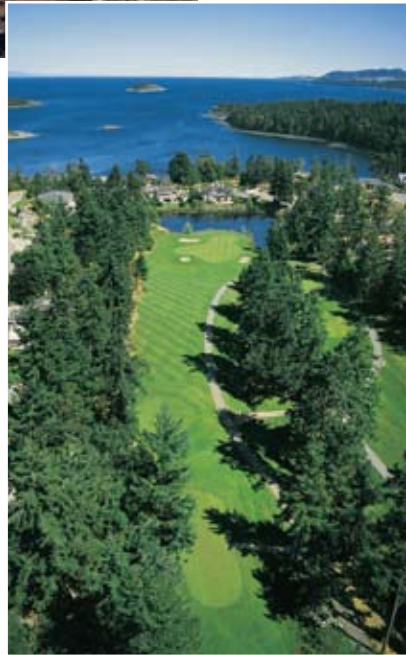


Predator Ridge Falcon Point bedroom



Left: Fairwinds house

Below: Fairwinds
aerial of the
2nd hole



offer an array of accommodation options that appeal to potential buyers with a wide range of interests and individual needs.

The Lodge & Spa at Predator Ridge is an exciting intimate collection of luxurious resort residences at the heart of the development's Village Centre. In addition to fabulous fairway views, the facility offers a health spa as well as an outdoor swimming pool and hot tub. Each Lodge residence is fully equipped and furnished to the same exceptional standards as the surrounding award-winning single-family homes. Ownership of a Lodge residence is highly flexible in that the unit can be put into a fully managed Predator Ridge Rental Program.

The newest master-planned neighbourhoods at Predator Ridge boast home designs that are unparalleled in comparable communities. In fact, Predator Ridge has captured several CHBA Provincial "Georgie" Housing Awards. In addition to taking gold for its sales centre, Predator Ridge garnered silver Georgies for Best Resort Development and Best Salesperson or Team in New Home Construction. The development has also earned a total of nine golds at the Thompson Okanagan Housing Awards.

Visitors can stay in the lodge or cottages on the fairways (cottages have individual owners who have the option of putting their units into a rental pool when not using them themselves). It's the owned units, however, that are garnering the most attention.

Lisa Corcoran, director of marketing for Predator Ridge, notes that in addition to lots which start at \$149,000, Predator Ridge is currently offering three new development projects for potential purchase. All boast Craftsman-style design which helps the developments blend in with their natural surroundings.

Osprey Coach Homes measure almost 2,000 square feet, and overlook the golf course. Prices are in the \$450,000 range. "That's great value compared to Vancouver prices," notes Corcoran.

The third phase of the Dormie Hills development will be available this summer. Currently, lots are available starting at \$149,000. The average price for a Dormie Hills home is around \$550,000. The terrace-level walk-out homes (some of which are ranchers) generally measure out at 2,400 square feet. Most of the homes are on the fairway or have fairway views.

Single family homes in the Vista View at Falcon Point round out the offerings. These properties have the most panoramic views of all the Predator Ridge properties. One house has views of seven golf fairways.

"It's the ultimate holiday location for the active boomer," says Corcoran. "People come for a visit and we tell them if they like it for a day, imagine a lifetime."

Fairwinds

Over on Vancouver Island, the Fairwinds development is making an equally large splash in the realm of resort communities.

Offering up 1,200 acres of living, Fairwinds is a master-planned waterfront community that provides buyers with a number of settings on which to build the perfect dream home.

Today, more than 400 families call Fairwinds home. "Our original buyers were mostly purchasing their retirement home," says Marian Slayter, residential development and marketing coordinator for Fairwinds. "Now, we're seeing more people in the 40+ range who are looking for a second home or a future retirement home. Fairwinds is very much a lifestyle community, and that's something that appeals to a wide range of purchasers."

Slayter says Fairwinds residents come from all over North America, with Vancouver, Alberta, Winnipeg, Toronto and the US being the most popular points of departure. "They're looking for a retirement lifestyle," says Slayter. "Many can afford to purchase early or retire early. Given that Fairwinds has no restriction regarding when a buyer has to build on a purchased lot, some have decided to hold onto their acquisition for future development."

Currently featured is Bonnington Heights, an exclusive offering at Fairwinds that provides panoramic views of the Strait of Georgia and Coast Mountain range. These single-family lots measure 1/3 of an acre and fetch an asking price of \$189,000 to \$410,000. Moments away from the Fairwinds Golf Club, the lots boast an abundance of West Coast vegetation as well as deal-maker views.

Starting in July 2006, 26 West Coast-designed patio homes will be available in phases. Known as Rockcliffe Park, this development is designed for active adults who desire a sense of community and ease of maintenance. The integration of the detached homes with bareland strata lots is designed to create an open, park-like setting. The predominantly single-level homes range from 1,650 to 1,800 square feet, some with walk-out basements. Also available in early 2007 are a grouping of townhomes to be known as The Ridge, large strata single-family lots in a small, private neighbourhood overlooking the Fairwinds Golf Club.

Over at the Fairwinds Centre, the property's large recreation centre, residents can enjoy facilities such as a 20-metre indoor saltwater lap pool, fully equipped

exercise room, hot tub and sauna, billiards and card room, craft room, fully equipped members' kitchen, and a full array of exercise classes to suit any fitness level and lifestyle. Visitors to Fairwinds can still live the lifestyle, for a while, during a stay at the Schooner Cove Hotel & Marina.

Of course, BC doesn't have the exclusive market on resort communities, and Three Sisters Mountain Village near Canmore, Alberta, is also garnering more than a little attention.

Three Sisters Mountain Village

"Three Sisters is the biggest story in the UK when it comes to resorts," says Jeremy Tomalin-Reeves, vice-president of marketing for the development. "Outside of Alberta, the UK and southwest United States make up the majority of our purchasers, with Ontario following close behind. The common thread is a desire for quality and unique four season experience, both of which are provided at Three Sisters Mountain Village."

Tomalin-Reeves predicts that Three Sisters will soon be North America's premier health, wellness and adventure resort. Little wonder. Nestled at the gateway to Banff in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, the resort community covers approximately 2,000 acres of land within the town of Canmore, Alberta. Embracing more than 80% of all the developable land in this Rocky Mountain region, Three Sisters Mountain Village presents a finite opportunity to purchase property on the doorstep of Banff National Park. "This is not a typical resort," says Tomalin-Reeves. "There are many things to do here, not just one activity."

Surrounded by 2.8-million

acres of parkland, Three Sisters acts as a base camp to a larger recreational opportunity that offers 365 days/year of activity. World-class ski areas are only minutes away as are mountain biking areas. Segments of Canmore's extensive hiking and cycling trails will be incorporated within the public open space system at Three Sisters Mountain Village, which in turn connect to the larger public open space systems within the town of Canmore and the Bow Valley. The trail systems offer exhilarating walking, hiking and interpretive experiences along a variety of routes. The villages in Three Sisters will boast five-star restaurants and upscale shops, as well as a spa and wellness centre.

Development will soon commence on two villages at Three Sisters – The Sanctuary and The Village at Three Sisters. The Sanctuary boasts three core activities, a golf course, a spa with attached niche boutique hotel, and spiritual-based programs. High-end shopping in the area focuses on the concepts of health, wellness and adventure. The Village at Three Sisters meanwhile is fashioned around an adventure centre (with extensive recreational programming), an arts and culture village, and activities around a series of squares such as a boutique food market.

Housing options at Three Sisters are equally wide ranging. For example, luxury townhomes and apartment condos ranging from 1,000 to 3,200 square feet – and priced from \$440,000 to \$1.7 million – are under construction in the Stewart Creek Village. Luxury condos measuring 1,150 to 1,930 square feet – and selling for \$535,000 to \$962,000 – are available in the Mountaineers Village area. Over at Wilderness Ridge, luxury townhomes of 890 to 2,746 square feet (no price available at time of publication) are within walking distance of the exclusive Stewart Creek Golf & Country Club. Other housing options are also available.

Given the types of housing offered up at these resort communities – and the range and level of activity accompanying them – it's little wonder resort community living is garnering so much attention both locally and abroad. If current market indicators are anything to go by, they appear to be a good investment whether you plan to retire there or use it as a true recreational property.



Top: View of the Three Sisters Mountain

Left: Three Sisters Mountain Village



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FINALLY, ART YOU CAN LIVE IN.

Okanagan builder creates architectural masterpiece.

In the stunning Casa Loma Estates above Okanagan Lake, just minutes from downtown Kelowna, gifted designer John Jacques is creating an architectural masterpiece: a home of such exquisite beauty, craftsmanship and opulence that all others pale in comparison.

Unfolding over three floors and 6,358 square feet, “The Baltimore” captures the splendour and grace of a turn-of-the-century New England mansion. Nothing has been compromised in this \$3.2 million custom built home; the detailing is impeccable and period features such as architectural ceilings, decorative mouldings, stained glass windows and a variety of faux finishes have been meticulously reproduced throughout. The exterior features copper eaves troughs, double plank siding, weathered brick and pine soffity - all typical of the era.

A luxurious master suite, including library, lounge with wet bar and laundry amenities, occupies the entire upper floor ensuring privacy and comfort. The guest room can be found on the main floor along with kitchen, dining room, office and living room. The lower level offers additional bedrooms and the main entertainment area of the home - a spectacular home theatre with bar and poker alcove, billiards room, wine room and mini gym. The lower level also provides

The Baltimore blends the beauty and quaintness of a bygone era with stunning views of Okanagan Lake, Kelowna and the surrounding mountain ranges.

access to the outside patio, barbecue area, heated salt-water swimming pool and private putting green. On every floor expansive windows have been positioned to make the most of the panoramic views of Okanagan Lake and the mountains beyond.

The design may be borrowed from the past, however, the amenities are all 21st century in origin. The heating, cooling, electrical and plumbing systems have each been carefully selected for optimum performance, style and convenience. Multi-award winner, Joseph Iozzo of Cucina Del Re, has designed an exclusive cabinetry package for the kitchen along with \$60,000 worth of appliances including a \$3,000 Miele coffee maker.

The Baltimore is more than a showcase for the unique talents of Jacques and his company - Willowood Projects - it represents a coming-of-age for property development in the Okanagan. Jacques and partner, renowned Master Roofer Clark Johnston, believe that the Okanagan real estate market is ready for a new standard of elegance. Willowood brings to the Okanagan a level of sophistication more usually associated with international resort destinations such as The Hamptons, South Beach or Monterey and Carmel.

“The international buyer looking to purchase a multi-million dollar second home has the highest expectations for service and product. We have the location and the lifestyle they are seeking, but to attract these buyers to the Okanagan we need to build homes of distinction—art you can live in,” explained Jacques.

“The Baltimore epitomizes this notion; every effort has been made to surpass the expectations of a discriminating buyer. But this is only the beginning. Willowood Projects will provide buyers with the opportunity to create their own vision of unprecedented design and timeless craftsmanship. It could be a Spanish hacienda, a New England style, turn-of-the-century home or a 1940's era Southern California mansion; whatever captures their imagination,” said Jacques.

If you would like more information about building a custom designed home by Willowood Projects please call (250) 762-7090 or visit www.willowoodprojects.ca. The grand opening of the show home is scheduled for June 2006. Register online for an exclusive invite to the show home event.

Aloha
Whistler



Summer at Whistler: The Good News is Out

During the go-go years of the late 1990s and post millennium, ski magazines started to consistently rank Whistler BC as North America's top ski resort. Skier visits climbed to over two million per year as the resort extended its skiable terrain to over 8,000 acres serviced by the best high-speed lifts that money could buy. The undervalued Canadian currency, friendly service and novelty of this new resort attracted the curious and the adventurous to this booming destination. This is turn fed an unprecedented building boom as Whistler attracted the top hotel chains, mountain resort architects and luxury homebuilders.

What went largely unnoticed (except to the locals) during this frenzied development activity was the emergence of Whistler as a premier summer resort. Four championship golf courses designed by the likes of Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Robert Trent Jones came on stream. No other mountain resort anywhere has so many championship quality golf courses within such an easy commute. No wonder the Telus Skins Game makes Whistler a regular stop on its cross Canada circuit. Whistler is now ranked as 'Canada's #1 Golf Resort' by international travel publications.

The completion of the 20 km Valley Trail for pedestrians and cyclists and the gentrification of lakeside public parks and swimming areas have created an infrastructure that is family-friendly and free of charge. More recently, warm weather outdoor adventure activity providers at Whistler have created a huge potpourri of exciting experiences such as

skyline tours, bungee jumping, river rafting, horseback riding, downhill mountain biking, windsurfing and small-craft sailing.

In the mountain bike world, Whistler has become a Mecca for extreme downhill cyclists who travel up the ski lifts and roar down the mountain in a terrain park-like venue. Less adventurous mountain bikers can make their way up and down the numerous local mountain trails in the peace and quiet of these serene forested surroundings. Not surprisingly, Whistler has become a place where mountain bikers of all ages participate in annual international biking festivals and competitions such as 'Crankworx' in mid summer.

There is something for everyone to do at Whistler in the summer. For those who want to get away from the crowds in the valley, activities such as alpine tours by Hummer vehicles, ATV rides, summer dogsled rides, guided nature tours and alpine hiking outings have created an array of summer experiences that is unsurpassed in any mountain resort anywhere. The combination of recreation technology, infrastructure investment and Mother Nature's gifts to this resort have created a world class summer resort experience that is getting ever easier to access from Vancouver through the new \$600m Sea to Sky Highway upgrade project and the recently inaugurated Whistler Mountaineer rail service.

Why is there such a huge range of choices at Whistler? The simple answer is that Whistler is uniquely blessed with a combination of easily

accessible mountain alpine areas, valley lakes available for swimming, fishing and sailing, and safe valley bottom trails for walking, cycling, and in-line skating where there is no fear of vehicular traffic impeding one's experience of the great outdoors. This is why winter visitors to Whistler are now coming back to enjoy the treats of summer with the predictably warm and dry weather, cool nights, easily affordable prices and greater array of recreation choices that summer at Whistler brings. Guests are starting to imagine Whistler as 'one big outdoor summer theme park'. Whether the visitors are a family looking to connect on their annual summer vacation or a group of friends looking for a quick getaway to golf or enjoy the ambience of outdoor dining in Whistler's cobblestone pedestrian village, there is something at Whistler for everyone's taste.

Where to stay in the summer to best experience these summer delights? Increasingly, Whistler summer visitors are opting for privately managed homes as the best environment to enjoy what Whistler has to offer. Whether one wants to live on a fairway overlooking a great golf course, or sit outside on the deck of a mountainside chalet gazing at the sun setting over the valley, private homes offer the ideal combination of privacy and comfort that most visitors want so they can kick back and savour what summer in the mountains is all about.

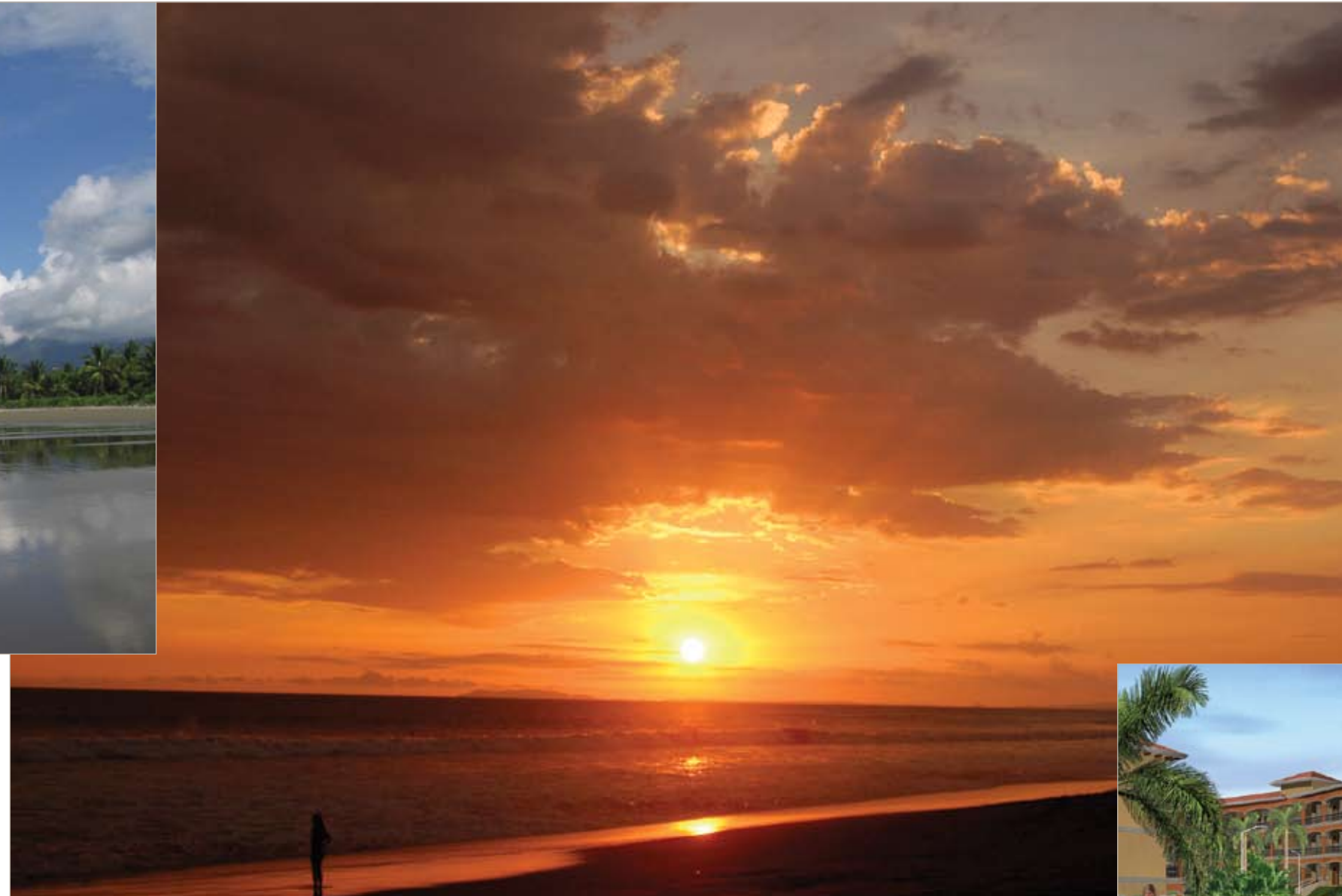
Aloha Whistler Accommodations Ltd. is the acknowledged leader at Whistler in managing vacation rentals in private homes. Aloha Whistler

has the best selection of slopeside and golf course homes from which to choose for the optimal summer vacation experience. Moreover, Aloha Whistler's staff of long time local residents know better than anyone where to find that pristine summer picnic spot, as well as which activity providers have the best equipment and friendliest staff to make the visitor feel special and anxious to come back next year. Working closely with local golf courses, activity providers such as Cougar Mountain Adventures and health and wellness experts such as the new authentic Indonesian Taman Sari Royal Heritage Spa, Aloha Whistler can handle every detail of what should be the best ever mountain resort summer vacation experience.

The bonus in all this is that the rates for summer accommodation are roughly one third of what these same properties command in the winter high season. So, unlike the rest of Canada that relies on summer as the key revenue driver, at Whistler the summer rates for world-class accommodation are a fraction of what the visitor would pay in the heart of the winter ski season.

Aloha Whistler Accommodations Ltd. can be reached at 1 888 938-9998 or check out the website, www.alohawhistler.com. Ask about Aloha Whistler's 2006 special packages, such as the Summer 2006 Golf Package and the Whistler Summer 2006 Outdoor Experience.

Exclusive
Costa Rica



Costa Rica Far off Land or Luxury Investment Opportunity?

Costa Rica: Is that an island?

Tucked between 1,459 kilometres of coastline in Central America, the small country of Costa Rica is making a big name for itself as a luxurious tropical destination. Roughly the size of the US state of West Virginia, Costa Rica boasts mountainous terrain teeming with rain and cloud forests, rushing rivers and picturesque vistas bordered to the west by the Pacific Ocean and to the east by the Caribbean Sea. This tiny country that makes up 0.03% of the Earth's land mass is home to 6% of the world's biodiversity. A militarily neutral country, Costa Rica has been nicknamed the "Switzerland of Central America", with a stable economy and extensive governmental infrastructure. Millions of tourists each year fall in love with the sparkling waves, exotic flora and fauna, breathtaking sunsets and warm local people.

And of course, where there are kilometres of amazingly beautiful beaches and a reasonable cost of living, there is a booming real estate market. Appreciation of land values have increased phenomenally over the past five years, generating extreme interest from Canada and the US alike in investing and living in Costa Rica. And the country has not failed to deliver; beachfront property is being bought up by the hundreds of

acres for as little as \$7,000 per acre and building prices can start at just \$60 per square metre. Development has increased as well, providing buyers with luxury finished oceanfront and oceanview condominiums for as low as US\$350,000.

Exclusive Costa Rica

As any savvy investor knows, it is important to understand the market you are entering, and to work with people of the utmost integrity. One such company, Exclusive Costa Rica, is taking the real estate scene by storm. Incorporated in the fall of 2005, Exclusive Costa Rica, better known as ECR, has spent the past 9 months educating North American buyers about the beauty and allure of Costa Rica and its expansive investment opportunities through high-quality and cutting-edge marketing efforts. ECR signs exclusive contracts with only the most luxurious and high end land and real estate developments throughout the country to market and sell their amazing projects. It is important for the buyer to understand that ECR holds a strict line regarding integrity – they will only support developers that have exhibited proper use of

the land with regard to permits and zoning, as well as those that exercise efforts to maintain and incorporate eco-friendly options throughout development.

Buyers can rest assured that they are buying into a quality project, adding a safe and reliable investment to their portfolio, when they work with Exclusive Costa Rica. Due diligence processes regarding the research of property lines and title registration, possible liens and/or encumbrances on the land, as well as squatting and expropriation issues, are all thoroughly managed by ECR scouts, so that by the time a property makes it to the "sell list," it is primed and ready for the buyer with little to no work on the buyer's end.

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Please call our office to learn how our trustworthy, reliable team is changing the face of real estate in Costa Rica. With an innovative and eco-responsible approach, our team is successfully aiding investors, home-buyers and developers throughout the country with the purchase, sales and marketing of exclusive real estate.

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Exclusive Costa Rica

But where in Costa Rica?

For someone who has never considered foreign investment, even a small country like Costa Rica can seem daunting! The Pacific Coast, which is divided into two provinces, comprises the largest portion of the booming real estate market. The majority of real estate and land developments that Exclusive Costa Rica represent are in those two provinces.

The northwestern province of Guanacaste, named after the large umbrella-like trees prevalent in the zone, encompasses a vast area of diverse topography. From boiling mud pots to sun-drenched beaches, this corner of the country offers much to the adventurous traveller and sun worshipper. Also labelled the “Gold Coast”, Guanacaste is home to the fastest-growing beach town of Tamarindo. Property values are highest in this province, as the breathtaking vistas are mixed with the convenience of an international airport receiving daily flights from major cities in the US. Exclusive Costa Rica proudly represents three projects in Guanacaste: Montaña, Las Vistas and Leora Pacifico.

Blessed with seemingly endless beaches, Puntarenas stretches along two-thirds of Costa Rica’s Pacific coast to the southern border with Panama. This province is home to the Manuel Antonio National Park, which is packed with howler, spider and titi monkeys, along with three-toed sloths and multi-coloured iguanas. The largest beach town in Costa Rica, Jacó, is also in Puntarenas. Sporting the typical adventure tours and souvenir shops of the best beach towns, Jacó is also an epicentre of convenience for the Pacific Coast, with large grocery stores and a brand new movie theatre. Exclusive Costa Rica currently represents three enticing projects in Puntarenas: Mango Beach Resort & Spa, CocoMar Beach Resort and Monte Cielo.

High mountains thick with tropical forests, spectacular waterfalls and raging rivers provide settings for a multitude of nature and adventure activities in the Central Valley of Costa Rica. People seeking the comfort of having the big city nearby, with all of its accessible conveniences, fall in love with the luxurious residential communities nestled into the breezy

mountains that make up this part of the country. Exclusive Costa Rica currently represents one project in the Central Valley, in the hills of San Rafael de Heredia, called Villas Los Crestones.

The Caribbean coast of Costa Rica comprises the province of Limón. One hundred and thirty miles of sandy beaches and coconut palms on crystal clear waters beckon dreamers to this part of the country, with its alluring laid-back Afro-Caribbean character.

Want to know more?

Details of projects, as well as more information about Costa Rica and investing there, are available on the ECR website. Also, Exclusive Costa Rica’s Executive Sales Team is eager to share even more information about Costa Rica and the exciting developments that they represent. Just give them a call!

Another way to learn more about Costa Rica and why it is quickly becoming the hottest foreign market in which to invest is by attending one of Exclusive Costa Rica’s insider’s investment seminars – see the website for details about upcoming seminars. While you are there, you can register for ECR’s free newsletter, which will keep you up to date on what is happening in Costa Rica and what kinds of projects ECR is representing.

So, what’s it all mean?

The bottom line is simply what savvy investors have known for years – Costa Rica is a beach-lined gem, teeming with possibilities and opportunities to achieve even the most far-out investing goals. Like Anthony Robbins says, “It is in moments of decision that our destiny is shaped.” Decide to think big, and let a knowledgeable and trustworthy liaison like Exclusive Costa Rica lead the way.

Exclusive Costa Rica
www.exclusivecostarica.com
From Canada (646) 415-9115
info@exclusivecostarica.com

...pick music, movies, TV shows, photos and even surf the
Web from the comfort of your living room chair...

Entertainment... the Digital Way

By Geof Wheelwright

Digital technology has dramatically changed the way we entertain ourselves. It wasn't so long ago that we used a variety of technologies for watching television, enjoying family photos, home movies and pre-recorded movies, and listening to radio stations and pre-recorded music.

These days, however, life is digital – and all of the above can be accomplished with a single device. And it can be as simple as a home computer, which now typically includes the ability to play (and often record your own) CDs and DVDs, look at pictures from your digital camera or camcorder, play music that you have purchased online, listen to online radio stations, read online magazines and even watch regular TV programs (as well as downloaded TV shows, which are increasingly being offered by mainstream broadcasters).

And let's not forget that these machines also still let you do everything you expect to do on your computer, including Web browsing, e-mail, word-processing and game play.

The computers that include these functions will also typically include a TV-style remote control that will let you pick music, movies, TV shows, photos and even surf the Web from the comfort of your living room chair. There's a catch, however, and I'm sure you've spotted it fairly quickly.

All of these experiences carry with them a different set of expectations and "mode of use" – while you may be quite comfortable sitting in an office-style chair when you are browsing the Web or hammering out an email to a friend, you are unlikely to want to watch the latest episode of "Desperate Housewives" while hunched over the screen.

And that's where you need to start thinking a little creatively about what will carry the sound for your digital music, or display your DVD movies and digital pictures. Here are some goodies that you should consider for your digital living room:

A latest-generation LCD flat screen monitor

If you've been yearning to have a large, stylish flat screen in your home for the past few years – but believed that it would be just too complicated and expensive – you can be assured that it isn't. New flat screens such as the HP f2105 21-inch wide flat panel monitor, which sells for only \$855, provide crisp, clear picture quality and the ability to be wall-mounted or free-standing. And it's an excellent choice if your computer comes with a built-in TV tuner and a remote control that allows you to control all its functions without leaving your chair. If you don't mind using a keyboard and



HP f2105

mouse remotely, there are also a vast array of wireless keyboards and mice that will let you control your entertainment PC from your armchair (although it looks a little geeky).

A flat screen LCD TV

This is a choice that is either complementary to (or a replacement for) the flat screen/PC option. You can either buy a flat screen TV (of whatever size suits from, from around 32 to 46 inches; exact sizes vary with manufacturer) that will accept the signal generated by your entertainment PC, or you can buy an LCD TV that comes with a DVD player built-in, such as the LG Electronics 23LX1RV, which sells for less than \$1500. If you go for the latter option, you'll end up with something that can typically play DVD movies, let you watch TV (it also offers the ability to



LG LCD TV 23LX1RV

carry HDTV - High Definition TV - signals), play standard music CDs, display digital photos that you have copied onto a CD and even play MP3 music files. For those who aren't big fans of computers (or just don't want one in their living room), this may be a useful option.

A plasma flat screen TV

Plasma flat screen TVs used to be considered the premium, high-quality choice in flat screen TVs. But recent improvements in LCD technology have narrowed the gap, leaving plasma TVs with a higher available contrast ratio, a theoretically superior range of colours (although this begins to become a bit moot when you start talking about millions of colours) – and a higher price tag. Our best advice to you would be to look at both – in lighting conditions similar to what you have in your home – and make a decision based on what looks good to you. Also look at the lifetime rating of the unit (how many hours you can expect it to run before burning out).

High-impact speakers

If you've got this great digital picture to look at, you don't want to listen to the sound track of your movie or TV show on tinny computer speakers. The good news is that speakers for digital devices (including portable music players, computers and flat screen TVs) have improved dramatically in recent years in every possible respect. They look nicer, sound better and are more competitively priced than ever. And don't be fooled by the notion that bigger is always better. There are some great speaker systems that won't take up a whole lot of space, but still deliver sound that will match your picture. You'll also need to think about where you want to place the speakers in relation to the screen – there's lots of great online guidance on this topic at sites such as <http://www.buildorbuy.org/speakers.html>. Also note that LCD and plasma TVs – and some flat panel monitors – do come equipped with built-in speakers of varying quality.



LG Home Theatre LH-RC9500TA



LG Plasma TV PDP_50PZ90

LCD projector

If you really want something that is more akin to a movie experience in your home, you may also want to consider buying an LCD projector for your living room. This has the advantage of being able to be tucked discreetly out of the way (perhaps mounted on the ceiling) and used with a pull-down projection screen and speakers that are plugged directly into your entertainment PC. You'll probably feel a lot more like you are in a "home theatre" if you get an LCD projector, but you should really consider if that's how you want to feel every time you want to watch something. I have tried this option – and it was a lot of fun – but it seemed a little weird to watch regular TV shows on the big screen (particularly when



Dell 5100mp projector,
Courtesy of Dell Inc.

you really need to dim the lights to get the best picture quality). I would suggest that this is really only a sensible option for those who have a room that can be dedicated as a "media room" – one that doesn't have windows or ambient light (unless you want to invest in blackout curtains).

In short, there are lots of great choices you can make to bring all your digital technology together into something that will really give you fantastic quality in the music, movies, pictures and games you enjoy in your home – and do so from only one or two devices.

One word of caution, however. If you decide to go for a solution based on an entertainment PC, don't make it the only PC in your house – you don't want to start a fight over whether to watch someone's favourite TV show or someone else's urgent need to check their email. Although it might be entertaining...

Well-Heeled Summer Feet

By Vladimir Markovich and Debra Walker

Put your best foot forward



We have always had a fascination with shoes. Okay, footwear in general. We're not sure when it started and how; it just sort of crept into our respective worlds gradually and insidiously. With the existence of museums dedicated to foot apparel, we appear not to be the only ones. There are shoes and footwear for every occasion in life, from good to bad, and everything in between.

We are particularly fond of summer footwear. Being from northern climates and cultures where the closed-toe shoe was the norm and the accepted, a chance to kick off the formality of a 'winter' shoe and slip into the light airiness of a 'summer' shoe has always been a treat.

Before we look to the trends for summer, let's examine some of the ways to keep our feet happy and healthy during the active months of heat and sweat. In anticipation of giving our feet a little freedom, we'd like to pass along the following tips for getting those well-heeled summer feet:

Caring for your feet

- Soaking – nothing like a good soaking – at least 10 minutes in warm water. In fact, treat yourself to a little bit of Jacuzzi at the same time and your entire body will thank you;
- Dry – very important, especially for those in warm tropical climates – don't forget in between the toes;
- Clip – cutting your toenails straight across will help to prevent painful hangnails. Some people prefer to use an emery board – not a problem, but don't proceed with a board until your nails are completely dry;
- Smooth the rough areas – using a pumice stone or heel emery, remove any rough areas from your heels. If you are like us, you will want to put on a nice long CD and pour yourself a glass of wine for this part – it could take a while;
- Massage – every part of your body appreciates a good massage and your cuticles are no exception. Rub in a little oil or moisturizer, then gently push back the cuticles while they are soft and pliable;
- More massage – apply foot lotion (peppermint is particularly nice) and massage into each foot. Remove any excess;
- Polish – purely optional but a nice added touch; and
- Cozy for sleeping – before going to bed, amply apply a good moisturizer and put on a pair of socks. Your feet will reward you by feeling soft in the morning.

More handy hints

- Sanitize all of your equipment with alcohol and store when dry.
- Nail polish can be stored in the fridge.
- If polish is too thick, it can be thinned with a little polish thinner (not to be confused with polish remover).
- To prevent the cap on the polish from sticking, coat with a little Vaseline.
- Do not use oil-based blends in wet conditions or when wearing flip flops, as your feet will slip when wet or sweating.
- Alcohol, vinegar (not the best smell to have on your feet), witch hazel or aloe gel bases are good for quick relief and a cooling effect. Also try peppermint herb/oil or rosemary.



Toes "round" out the options.



Platforms and wedges of all types are popular once again.



Straps and ties in all shapes and sizes for summer.



An alternate to a strappy sandal is a glamorous mule.

- Tea tree oil is a great antibacterial, good for athletes foot, insect bites and itchy feet. Other anti-fungals to try are lavender, myrrh, patchouli, geranium/rose geranium (also deodorize and have cooling effects), lemongrass (also cooling, deodorizing and pain relief) and sweet marjoram.
- The best exercise for the feet is to walk barefoot on the grass in your garden, if possible.
- Foot stretch – sit on the floor with your legs out in front of you. Loop a towel around your feet. Keeping the heels on the floor, pull with both hands. Use the towel to draw the mid foot and toes towards your body. Hold for a few seconds; relax; repeat 5 times.

Now that our feet are feeling 'happy happy' and are ready for the summer sun, we need to follow some tips on keeping them that way:

- Slow and steady wins the race – instead of heading straight into an 8 hour day, try breaking in your feet gently – say 1 to 2 hours to start.
- It's not just bras that need padding – in order to prevent those thin straps from cutting into heels and toes, have the shoe repair shop insert foam pads for the thinnest parts of the straps.
- 3. It's not one size fits all – if your must-have new sandals or shoes are tight, consider having them stretched by a shoe expert to add a bit more room.
- A little elastic never hurt anyone – if the straps and buckles are too tight, have your shoe expert add a bit of elastic to give more room for movement with your foot.
- Proactive blister prevention – use those silicone bandages which stick to the skin and stay there. If you put them under a thin strap or a bothersome buckle or pressure point, you can protect the skin before blisters appear.
- Give your feet a breather – alternate so that one day of strappy sandals is countered the following day by wearing a pair of more practical and comfortable mules or slides. If you do that, your feet will have a chance to heal any minor cuts or raw spots before you wear your sandals again.

*What are we going to be
seeing in the malls,
on the beach and
going out for dinner?*

Now that we have pampered our feet and prepared them for their exposure to the elements, what are we going to be seeing in the malls, on the beach and going out for dinner? Wedges are definitely the must buy for the season – they have surfaced again and come in a wide variety of styles and shapes. Be they wood, cork, mules or espadrilles, there is definitely something for everyone. In addition to the style of the wedge, there will also be a lot of fastening, braiding, and wrapping, and even a revisit of the platform sole.

The good news is that the straps and even the wedges are more solid and wider for more support. The shoes themselves will be of sturdier stock. Styles are much more earthy in feel, with embellishments which include fringes, wood, pearls, shells or straw accessories. Moccasins are another alternative for people who prefer flat soles.

Loud colours are on the way out and natural tones and textures are coming into their own. The natural look is also contributing to giving wooden clogs a revival; wooden heels are definitely 'in' once more.

The sad news is that flip flops are no longer cool except by the pool. If a shoe with a toe divider is desired, then purchase one that has a big top piece.

Pointy tips are out for slightly higher class pumps. You will find more rounded models with light, sometimes even transparent, materials in pastels and some even in floral patterns.

All in all, a myriad of options for the well-heeled summer reveller. So put your best foot forward.

All images provided by Edward James of fashionWATCH.

Nature is Necessary for Health

By Sandra Tonn, RHN

When was the last time nature eased your mind, energized your body or soothed your soul? If you consider nature a luxury, or at least something that will have to wait until the weekend, you may be compromising your health. Anyone who has emerged rejuvenated from a walk in the park, time in the garden, or a visit to the beach has experienced the nurturing qualities of nature, yet most of us do not realize just how powerful, and absolutely necessary, nature is for health, healing and well-being.

We’ve gradually come to view our modern-day surroundings as more natural than nature itself. Living and working in cities and urban sprawl, and spending most of our time indoors, at computers, in front of televisions, and in cars, is not natural. It’s only recently, however, as our stress levels and rates of chronic disease increase, that we’ve begun to seriously consider the impact that nature, or a lack of it, can have on our health. Dr. Gabor Maté, Canadian researcher and best-selling author of When the Body Says No (Knopf Canada, 2003), says, “We’re just becoming conscious of the value of nature because we are no longer in it.”

Research is showing that nature is valuable in restoring and maintaining health. In a study of cancer patients, 20 minutes of nature or gardening three times a week was shown to be restorative. Subjects got better, got back to work and started new projects faster than the control group. A study of burnt-out caregivers showed that the best thing for their restoration was movement in nature (the worst thing was watching TV). When children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) connected with nature they experienced a decrease in symptoms and an increase in their ability to focus and concentrate. Additional studies have also suggested that simply adding trees to a neighbourhood can positively affect human behaviour and communities in terms of building relationships and reducing crime and violence.

While heading out to the forest to connect with nature each day is ideal, research indicates that simply seeing nature on a regular basis will also bring benefits. A nine-year study found that patients recovering from surgery, who had a window view of greenery, required close to a full day less of recovery time and less painkillers than the patients who looked at a blank wall. A survey found that office workers and prison inmates who could see trees from their office or cell reported higher levels of satisfaction and performed better than those who did not. Studies on driving-related stress found that those who drove along scenic roads are less likely to have a negative response to stress when compared to those who saw billboards and buildings from the driver’s seat. Research even suggests that indoor plants will deliver the restorative benefits of nature. In fact, we are so hard-wired to be connected with nature that even seeing a picture of nature has been proven to increase health.

If nature can enhance healing and happiness, improve functioning and reduce stress, we have many modern day reasons to seek it out and



invite it into our daily lives. We are well versed, for example, on the links between stress and chronic diseases such as cancer and heart disease. Research tells us that connection with nature helps to calm the nervous system, increase immunity and lower blood pressure. “Perhaps a day will come when doctors prescribe a dose of nature as readily as drugs or a change of diet.”

There are many ways to receive the benefits of nature. Keep indoor plants or an outdoor garden, walk in parks and along streets with trees, plant trees and greenery outside your home and office windows, hang natural art or photographs of nature in your living and working spaces, seek out green spaces in your neighbourhood, take your lunch to the park or beach, hike in local and provincial parks and plan weekend trips and vacations that provide exposure to nature’s many benefits.

Feeling sand or grass under your feet, looking up a tall tree, breathing in mountain air, hearing the wind in leaves and feeling the energetic bath that nature provides are natural ways to heal and rejuvenate. Essential for health, healing and well-being, connecting with nature is as natural as life itself.

BRING NATURE INDOORS

Indoor plants are an excellent way to ensure a daily dose of nature. In addition, since plants eat carbon dioxide, they will also produce oxygen to freshen your air, reducing indoor air pollution. The plants listed below have been found to clean the air of formaldehyde, benzene and other chemicals that off-gas from household articles, such as fabrics, plastic, flame-retardant curtains etc.

- reed palm
- english ivy
- areca palm
- weeping fig
- spider plant
- rubber plant
- philodendron
- dwarf date palm
- chrysanthemums
- boston fern, peace lily



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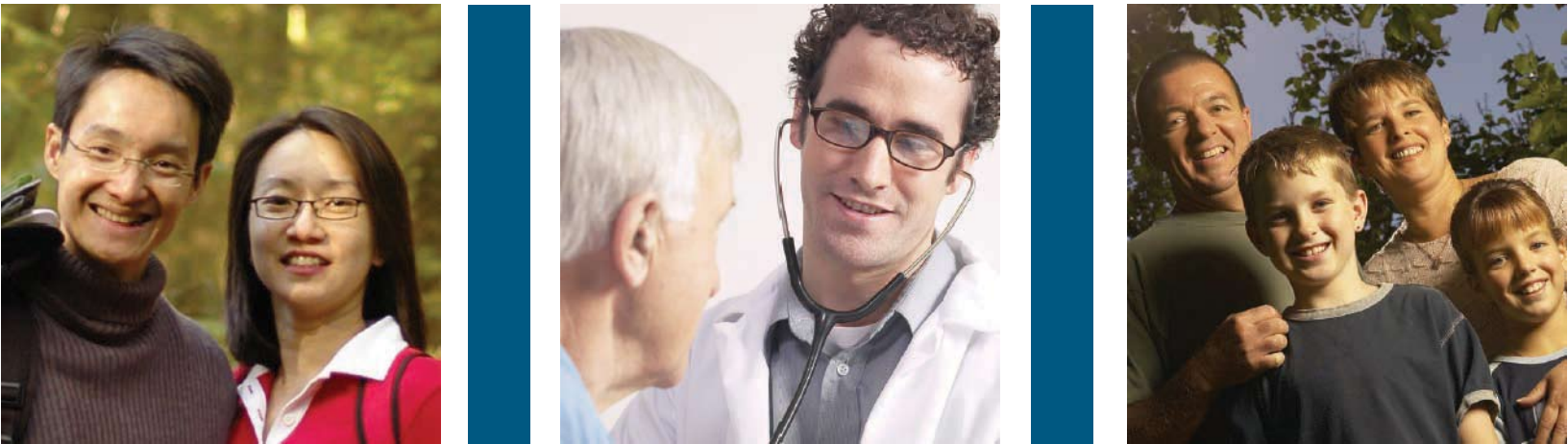
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The Not So Simple Life: New survey proves living the good life is a lot harder than it looks

By James Dolan

What is wealth? A simple question. But one that lacks a simple answer.

Wealth is money, for starters. But how much? That's difficult to say. Everyone seems to have a different definition of how much it takes before you can call yourself truly "wealthy."

Others say money is only part of the equation. Good health, happy family relationships, a fulfilling, satisfying life – you can't take any of these to the bank, yet without them, it doesn't matter how many zeros there are on your net worth statement. You're not truly wealthy without them.

This problem we have in understanding wealth is what this ongoing column will explore. By taking up some of the topics surrounding the building and preservation of wealth – entrepreneurship, investing, business succession, philanthropy – I hope to provide an answer (or perhaps many of them), to the deceptively simple question, "what is wealth?"

Imagine: You're driving the autobahn in your fire-red Italian supercar. Or perhaps you're flying off to New York in your private jet for a springtime shopping spree. Or maybe you're sipping champagne on the deck of your custom-built yacht...

"That's certainly the stereotype," admits Thane Stenner, First Vice-President and leader of the T. Stenner Group of CIBC Wood Gundy, a private family office based in Vancouver. "In reality, the life of a multi-millionaire can be a lot more complicated."

As Stenner explains, being rich isn't nearly as easy as it looks. Lack of privacy, family squabbles, security concerns – all of these are among the burdens of wealth, to say nothing of the ongoing struggle to care for one's family, to leave a meaningful legacy, and to actually find the time to enjoy the wealth one has amassed over the years. "Most people don't realize there's another side to wealth," Stenner says. "It often creates as many problems as it solves."

To those who work successfully with the wealthiest families, as Stenner does, this discrepancy between the fact and the fiction of wealth is old news. Over the past decade, a number of Wall Street firms (Citigroup, U.S. Trust, Merrill Lynch/CapGemini, and Goldman Sachs among others) have conducted detailed studies of the ultra-affluent population south of the border. All of them reveal that great wealth creates a host of difficulties

for those who have it.

Until now, the ultra-affluent population in Canada has largely escaped the kind of research applied to their American counterparts, in part because there are fewer of them, but also because they are more difficult to reach. "These people place a high value on privacy," says Stenner. "They enjoy the finer things – big houses, nice cars, travel – but in a lot of ways, they prefer to remain invisible in most situations. You have to know them before they let you into their lives."

So in December of 2005, Stenner and his team set out to do just that. Drawing on their connections and extensive relationships within the ultra-affluent population (the T. Stenner Group offers private family office wealth management and financial planning services to those with a minimum net worth of \$10 million), Stenner and his team discreetly asked wealthy individuals from across Canada to describe both the blessings and the tribulations of great wealth.

The group's reputation as one of the country's top advisors to the ultra-affluent helped secure candid answers to a variety of financial and lifestyle-related topics, from investment selection to charitable giving to hobbies and collecting. Stenner explains that the questions were carefully chosen in order to gain a broader understanding of how the very rich are different from the rest of us. He also says that the survey has an emotional side: "We wanted to understand what these people think about wealth, and what they feel about wealth as well," he points out. To that end, the survey also asked respondents to list their worries and anxieties: What do they like most about being wealthy? What concerns keep them up at night?

The answers were then confidentially compiled and analyzed by Sensus Research, in consultation with Irving + Company, and published as the 2006 T. Stenner Group TrueWealth Report.

Who are the rich?

Who exactly are we talking about when we talk about the "ultra-affluent"? In general, we are talking about males (77% of survey respondents) who are married (78%), of which 41% are between 40 and 55 years old, while another 32% are between 56 and 65.

As for wealth, they have it. A lot of it. Almost 85% of respondents report their net worth to be more than \$10 million; 45% report a net worth over \$25 million. And that number seems to be growing. Fully 70% of survey respondents report annual income greater than \$1 million. A fortunate 15% report income greater than \$5 million per year.

Most of these people have earned this wealth for themselves. Nearly half (49%) identify a privately-held business (one they still own, or one they have sold) as the primary source of their wealth; 16% can trace their wealth to their jobs as corporate executives. Only 16% of respondents say they

inherited the bulk of their wealth. The vast majority of respondents still work, either full-time (51%) or part time (30%).

Passions and interests

As the saying goes, all

work and no play makes for a dull life. If survey data are any indication, it would seem Canada's ultra-rich have taken this advice to heart.

Example: travel. Some 53% of respondents identify travel as one of their favourite hobbies or activities; London, New York, and Paris are their top three travel destinations (Vancouver ranked fifth, with 9% identifying it as a favourite). While on the road, respondents noted a distinct preference for Four Seasons properties, with 44% saying they are most likely to reserve rooms there. A further 22% prefers to stay with Ritz-Carleton.

When they get behind the wheel, most of Canada's ultra-high-net-worth population prefer those wheels to be German: more than half (53%) of all survey respondents own a Mercedes, while 44% own a BMW and 33% own a Porsche.

When they're not on the move, Canada's ultra-rich are busy pursuing a wide range of interests. Most are avid collectors of art (collected by 90% of respondents), antiques (72%), and wine (69%). Other collections include jewellery (collected by 23% of respondents), cars (22%), and books (17%).

Advantages and drawbacks

Of course, wealth isn't all fun and games. In fact, it can make for a good deal of stress. The proof: fully 60% of survey respondents "strongly disagree" with the assertion that managing wealth is easy. When asked if managing that wealth could be characterized as a "burden on your time," 80% agree, either strongly (23%), or somewhat (57%).

Asked to identify the three financial issues that cause them the most concern, 75% of respondents admit they worry about their ability to maintain their current lifestyle. Another major concern is their children, specifically whether children or grandchildren will be less motivated to succeed because

Jewellery clockwise from top left:
Palladio s09-korr,
Charlmers Ring - Costen Catbalue,
Plester Opal Earrings -
by Mary Ann Buis of Costen Catbalue

of growing up in a wealthy household (noted by 57% of respondents).

When asked to identify the top three “challenges” of wealth, respondents again focused on their children. The difficulty in maintaining a strong work ethic and sense of social values in the family was identified by 38% of respondents as being their number one challenge – more than twice as many as those who identified “keeping up with inflation,” which occupied the next highest ranking. In third place: the challenge of maintaining the safety and security of property and family. Along those lines, 39% of respondents noted that maintaining personal or family privacy is an additional worry or challenge of their wealth.

As for the advantages of wealth, according to survey respondents the real benefit of being rich has nothing to do with private jets or luxury yachts. Rather, it’s the long-term security and peace of mind that wealth brings (ranked as the number one benefit by 36% of respondents). Close behind it are the advantages it brings for one’s family (ranked number one by 30% of respondents).

Building and protecting wealth

When it comes to building and protecting their wealth, most of Canada’s ultra-affluent individuals have realistic expectations; 55% of respondents expect an average annual return of 7-8% before tax over the next five years. An additional 16% expect even less than that. Only 10% expect returns above 10%.

Not surprisingly, they use sophisticated strategies and investment products to protect those returns. Some 75% of respondents say they use a family trust to protect their wealth, while 68% use a corporate holding company and 59% use a custom-built insurance structure.

As for the big question – what they hope to achieve when it comes to investing – the ultra-affluent are focused on the family. When asked to identify their primary motivation for investing, some 49% of respondents identify “taking care of family” as their primary objective.

The survey asks some interesting questions about real estate, the performance of which has given property owners in Canada reason to celebrate over the past several years; 91% of respondents own at least two real estate properties, and 69% own two or three. But only 20% acquired a property within the last year, compared to 62% who have sold some of their property in the past 12 months, specifically to lock in profits.

The reason? Fully 89% view Canadian real estate prices as either “expensive” (45%) or “somewhat expensive” (44%), and 67% believe the real estate market is likely to suffer a downward turn in the near future. When asked where they would likely invest were they required to allocate 20% of their net worth tomorrow, only 12% of respondents chose real estate. By contrast, 49% chose the stock market. Clearly, Canada’s ultra-rich are getting out of real estate while the getting is good.



New York - Statue of Liberty at sunset
London - Westminster Abbey
Paris - Eiffel Tower at night



Philanthropy and values

As wealthy as they are, Canada’s ultra-affluent are more than willing to lend a helping hand. They have big hearts. Fully 87% of respondents plan to leave a substantial portion of their estate to charitable causes and/or religious groups, 37% plan to leave between 21% and 30% of their estates, while 38% plan to leave between 11% and 20% of their estates. A further 17% of respondents plan to leave even more.

Of course, charities also need money in the here and now. Here again, Canada’s richest families are doing what they can. Fully 69% of survey respondents say they have made a donation of more than \$100,000 in the past twelve months; 5% say they have donated more than \$1-million during that time. Most of that money has been funnelled to a few specific causes; 70% of respondents say they are committed to supporting charities or causes that assist children. Causes involving the arts take second place, with 55% of respondents noting their support. Religious causes (42%) and health care (38%) are other popular choices.

As for why they give, respondents offered a number of reasons; 50% identified an obligation to support people less fortunate, with 23% ranking it their primary reason and 39% noting they direct their giving to causes and organizations that have helped friends and family in the past (11% ranked it first). Interestingly, 60% of respondents identified the personal tax and estate benefits that come with charitable giving as a good reason to give, but a mere 7% ranked it as the primary reason for giving.

To some, these findings will be nothing more than an interesting topic for the next cocktail party. But there is a deeper truth here. Yes, being rich has its advantages. But it’s not quite as attractive as we may make it out to be.

A photograph of three people (two men and one woman) sitting in a modern, high-rise office with large windows overlooking a city skyline. They are engaged in a conversation.

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BMW X5 (2006), exterior and interior

The Upscale SUV Class Just Keeps On Growing

By Tony Whitney

When the sport utility vehicle trend took root in the mid 1980s, few automakers could have foreseen that the luxury end of the market would become as strong and vibrant as it is today.

The fact is that luxury car buyers desire the same levels of comfort, performance and opulence in their SUVs that they were used to in their premium sedans and sports coupes.

The result is a top-end luxury SUV market that offers more choices than ever before, with many of the products tempting well-heeled buyers by offering even more desirable features than many a rival luxury sedan.

But what is a high-end luxury SUV anyway? It's more likely than not to be

a full-size unit with considerable space for passengers and cargo. It's likely to be powered by a V-8 engine much the same as those used in upscale sports sedans. It will boast every currently available technological feature to take care of key factors like ride comfort, safety and all-wheel drive. And finally, it will have a level of quality far beyond that normally associated with less opulent sport utility products. These are the aristocrats of the SUV market and are, understandably, priced accordingly, most of them slotting neatly into the \$70,000 – \$110,000 price bracket or even higher.

The 2006 model year lineup of full-size, luxury SUVs amounts to a dozen different products – more if some “marginal” vehicles are included.

Luxury SUVs certainly fall into what automakers call a “niche category,” but that hasn't restricted their interest in building them. Perhaps it's a matter of prestige that any maker involved in the luxury sedan category must have a matching SUV in the stable as well. There are several luxury SUV makers that swore in years gone by they'd never get involved in what they considered “truck business,” but those who took the plunge lived to enjoy considerable success. In some cases, getting into the SUV market with successful products actually drew attention to luxury sedan lines



Cadillac Escalade (2007)

and boosted sales there too. And as one might expect, several automakers that decided SUVs didn't fit their image are now quietly regretting the decision.

One of the newer models in the luxury SUV market is the recently-introduced Audi Q7, which draws heavily on the German automaker's expertise with its Quattro all-wheel drive systems. The Q7 shares some of its engineering with the Porsche Cayenne and Volkswagen Touareg, which were developed jointly by the two manufacturers. This biggest-ever Audi has three rows of seats, a 4.2-litre V-8 and lots of that much-admired German precision.

BMW has been very successful with its X5 model and there's no doubt that many owners also have a BMW sedan or sports car in their garages. The Bavarian company was among the automakers that weren't expected to get into this segment, but the move was a great success and the X5 is a common sight on our roads, despite a fairly substantial price. Top versions have a silky 4.8-litre V-8 and all X5s offer outstanding handling and that unmistakable BMW mystique.

Cadillac is another maker known mostly for sedans, but the addition of the big 6.0-litre V-8 Escalade was a good move for a manufacturer that's been undergoing a renaissance and it certainly raised the profile of the brand. Escalades come in two sizes (the ESV has a longer wheelbase) and there's even a novel EXT semi-pickup version which must be a favourite with top rodeo cowboys everywhere. An all-new Escalade is on the way for 2007 and it promises to be even better than its predecessor.

Also from the General Motors stable is the unique Hummer, which comes in two full-size versions – the original military-based H1 and the newer and slightly smaller H2. The H1 is quite rare nowadays and has risen in price, but the H2 seems very popular and with its rugged, boxy lines, it is certainly an eye-catcher. My experience has been that the H2 is a lot more refined than one might expect and definitely qualifies as a luxury truck. It uses a similar 6.0-litre V-8 to the one under the hood of the Cadillac Escalade.

One of the newer arrivals on the luxury SUV scene is Infiniti's 5.6-litre V-8 powered QX56, which boasts a very high level of luxury and refinement and adds some of the style this Nissan upscale subsidiary has become famous for. The QX56 has a very impressive level of fit and finish, something that's common in this class. Infiniti seems to have a special way with vehicle interiors and its products stand out in a market that offers

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Range Rover Sport (2006), exterior and interior

almost limitless levels of luxury and cabin ambience.

The long-lived Range Rover might be the daddy of all luxury SUVs, but that hasn't inhibited technological progress by the Ford-owned British automaker. The Range Rover uses a lot of aluminum in its construction – a long-standing Land Rover practice – and is thus quite light for its size. Unlike its rivals, Land Rover doesn't build sedans – just SUVs with serious off-road capability. The most recent Range Rover variant is the Sport, which uses a supercharged V-8 “borrowed” from Jaguar and is aimed right at the Porsche Cayenne Turbo.

Lexus is well established in this category with its big LX 470, which might be the most refined product in a marketplace packed with smooth-riding vehicles. Like many of its rivals, it comes with electronic stability control, traction control, height control suspension and other goodies. The engine is a highly-refined 4.7-litre V-8.

Lincoln rejuvenated its image by getting into SUVs – a fairly common scenario in the auto industry now. The big Navigator has been a major success for Ford's luxury arm and more than likely the market prospects for the company's just-out Zephyr sedan will be enhanced by the big rig's popularity. The V-8 powered Navigator is roomy and lavishly equipped and also offers more ground clearance than most large SUVs. Though



Clockwise from top left:
Mercedes-Benz GL-Class (2007),
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (2006),
Volvo XC90 V-8 (2006),
Volkswagen Touareg (2006)

... a level of quality far beyond that
normally associated with less
opulent sport utility products

few owners will be heading for the logging roads in this vehicle, it is very capable off-road. An all-new 2007 Navigator with even more chrome has been doing the rounds at the spring auto shows.

Mercedes-Benz is in the process of launching its new GL-Class range of full-size SUVs and they promise to be a considerable market success. The GL will ultimately replace the G500 – a large, boxy vehicle based on a military design like the Hummer H1. With its V-8 powerplant, the GL is an impressive off-road performer, proving that although vehicles like this are as sophisticated as any luxury sedan, they can take some rough stuff now and again. The GL-Class offers all kinds of novel engineering and convenience features, Mercedes-Benz having pioneered many of today's performance, comfort and safety advancements.

It was something of a surprise to see Porsche entering the SUV market, but the company has no regrets for a decision that has made it one of the world's most profitable automakers. As might be expected, the Porsche Cayenne (standard and turbo variants are available) goes and handles almost like a race car and has great road "presence." This is perhaps the nearest any automaker has come to a true sportster in the SUV class. Porsche purists may resent the company diversifying from its 911 and Boxster sports car roots, but the bottom line says they made all the right moves.

The Cayenne was developed in cooperation with Volkswagen/Audi, as mentioned earlier, and VW's Touareg is based on the same platform.

There are SUV fans out there who prefer the Touareg to the Cayenne and it is expectedly less expensive. VW did an especially good job with the interior and my experience driving a Touareg on snow-covered mountain roads proved that it can run with the very best in the market. For 2006, VW fitted a new 4.2-litre V-8 to its Touareg and it develops 36 more horsepower than its predecessor. Sadly, the V-10 diesel version of this rig has been withdrawn from the Canadian market.

Since Volvo recently started offering a V-8 version of its rugged XC90 SUV, it now slots easily into the luxury class. Like its siblings in other classes, this Volvo is impressively safe and benefits from the Swedish automaker's decades of expertise in this field. Nothing less could be expected from the company that invented the three-point safety belt. Volvo has also spearheaded safety technology to prevent rollovers and to deal with them if the worst happens. Volvo was a late arrival on the SUV scene, but this indicates careful development work, rather than a rush to get involved in what is a lucrative segment for automakers.

These opulent full-size SUVs don't sell in huge numbers, but even in this very limited class, buyers have all kinds of choices. Most of the automakers discussed in this feature also offer mid-sized luxury SUVs and a couple have even broached the compact size class. Will we see even more luxury SUVs joining the market in the years ahead? You can pretty well count on it.



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There is a New Renaissance on the Earth

By Jonni O'Connor, PhD

...build a life of passion and depth, of joy and gratitude

There is a new renaissance on the earth defined by those with distinct values of personal growth and a well-developed social conscience.

These people desire an expanded view of the world, and want to see all the parts and trace the interconnections, because they know the world is too complex to be only linear, logical and analytical. Intelligent forms of psycho-spiritual counselling appeals to these people because they seek out direct personal experience as well as intellectual ways of knowing the world. They may be Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists or agnostics, but they get passionately engaged with social movements, new forms of psychology, whole systems of ecology, consciousness expansions in spirituality, abundance, and holistic healing and health. They want to have a deeper, more passionate connection with everything and everyone in their life. They want their life to flow.

They insist on looking at more than just their mind, emotions and behaviours. They want to define and understand their own belief systems, their energy systems and what's in their subconscious and superconscious states of awareness. They attempt to leave no stone unturned in their path.

These people are the creative, innovative leading-edge thinkers, inventors, educators, environmentalists, writers, musicians, artists, business owners, psychotherapists and alternative health care providers seeking fresh solutions for themselves and the world. They decide what is real and important. They take life personally and want to build a relationship with it – organically and without force. They often seek out psycho-spiritual varieties of experience so they can learn to express themselves and their world with intimate wisdom, spiritual awareness and personal authenticity. They work on developing an ability to communicate and influence, to initiate and commit, through integrity and especially,

emotional intelligence. They come from the heart while using their head in understanding how to balance their emotions. They care and they want their life to reflect that.

And what of their personal and intimate relationships? They intend to break down outworn relationship models and instigate new, original ones that truly work. They want to understand what drives them, what attracts them and most importantly, what brings out the best in them. They desire a deeper understanding of what magnetic energy, karmic interplay and passionate surrendering are really all about. Their sexuality is important to them and they strive to know its power as a conduit to a greater energy. Psycho-spiritual work ignites them into creating a delicious space for intimate play, showing them how to grant their beloved partner growth and expansion and bring humour and joy into their relationship. They learn that what's missing from their sex life is not technique, but rather being present, in the moment. They start to realize that this presence comes through their body and their heart, not from their thinking mind. They learn to play, explore and bring back the innocence of what sex was originally meant to be.

Passion seems their middle name, defining passion as a depth of connection and an exchange of energy. If they are not passionate about their intimate partner they learn to recognize it and move on. If they are passionate about someone it is because they are passionate about life and all its components. They desire a connection, a fully conscious knowing, of all that they really are in order to build a life of passion and depth, of joy and gratitude.

I love these people, for their beautiful vulnerability, their open and utterly honest expression and their courage in seeking more.

The Artful Life of Thomas Arvid



"Reflections"
Limited Edition Giclée on Canvas

The painting is old, small and unsigned.

It is on a wall in Thomas Arvid's house, one floor above his studio. Thomas stands in front of it, telling the story of the intersection of the painting with his life, and it is clear that, in some ways, this is a story of how Thomas lives his life – and how he makes art a central part of that life.

He discovered the painting on a trip to France with good friends. They were visiting a country decorative arts market where wine and food were casually served and even more casually consumed; friends enjoying simple, gracious things. The painting literally lured him. He passed it several times, his eyes becoming more aware of the strokes of the brush, the flame of colour, the play of light. The painting became important both because of the talent behind it and the moment Thomas had discovered it. He showed his friends and Vanessa, his wife, what he was seeing, how he could feel the artist at work, know the skill that went into it, understand what the artist wanted him to see. And how, by owning it, he could capture both that feeling and this perfect day.

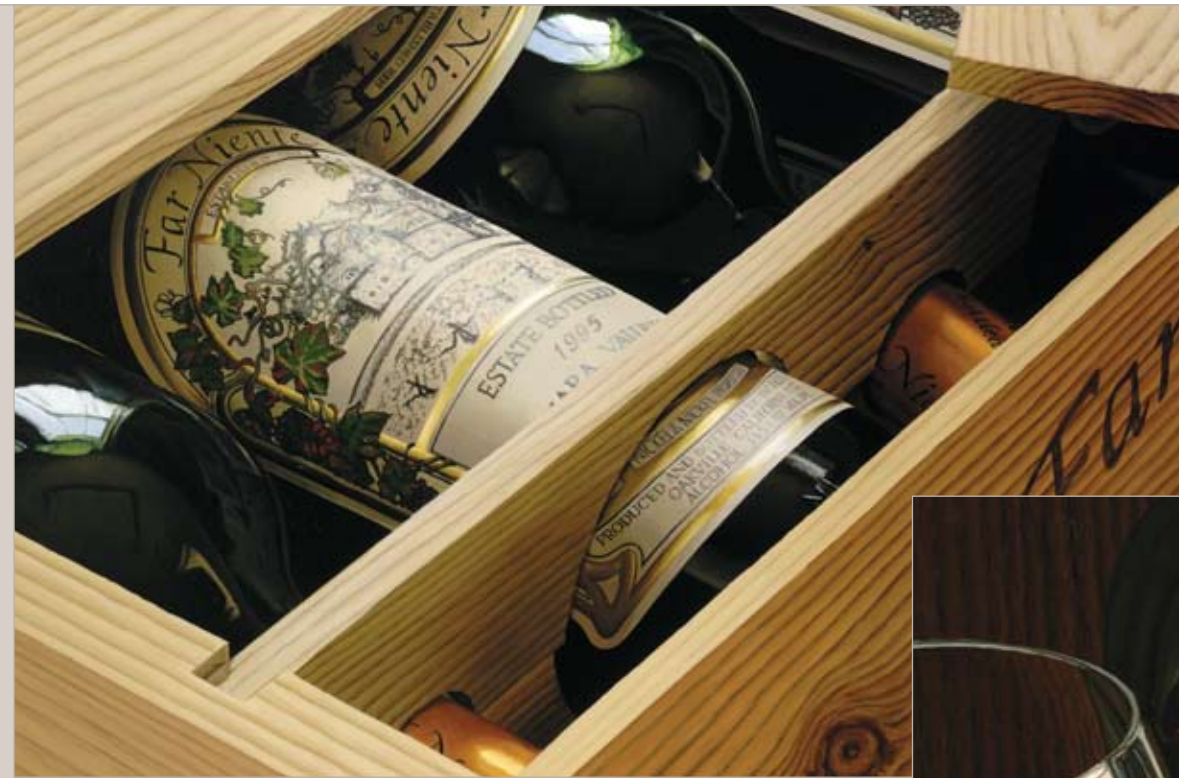
Thomas likes to both show the painting and tell its story. He knows it is much different from his own art, from the alluring, over-sized tableaux he has spent a quarter of his life painting. Yet the discovery of the painting in the market was an instance of one master painter recognizing another, one artist admiring another's talent. At the same time, it speaks of the things Thomas values so deeply – true colours, gracious living, dear friends, endless talent, the creation of perfect moments. Art and life, combined.



"Tour de Force"
Limited Edition Giclée on Canvas

Thomas Arvid uses unusual words to describe his art, words about music and laughter and friends, words about the feel of a stemware glass in his hand or the smell in the air after a cork leaves a bottle.

They're not words you immediately associate with a painter of Thomas' calibre, the descriptions of depth and shading and subject that bring to life an imagined moment. Thomas has long since perfected those aspects to a degree that leave critics and patrons praising him for the



"Best Case Scenario"
Limited Edition Giclée on Canvas

"It Takes Two"
Limited Edition Giclée on Canvas

*"You can't really do it alone, the good things in life
– work that you love, places you visit, wine that
you drink – are best when shared."*

– Thomas Arvid

creation of an artistic genre. Yet it his willingness to integrate life with art – canvas and oils with the labour of farmers in their vineyards, the pleasures of a simple shared meal, the swirl of a deep red cabernet in an elegant glass, the softness of a well-worn denim shirt – that makes his dramatic paintings so appealing on so many levels.

His art is an invitation to a lifestyle for which there is no one label – California living? Wine country life? Shopping with best friends in a French market? – but which collectors have come to instantly recognize as an Arvid style: welcoming, richly textured and beautifully executed. Original paintings and limited editions of the four pieces he paints a year now hang in the homes of people who feel compelled to accept that invitation. In addition, Thomas' work is finding its way into very special places where wine and life merge, including well-known vineyards and restaurants.

Colour, movement, power and design infuse Thomas' work – and his own life seems to follow. A self-taught artist who united a love of wine with a drive to paint, he has spent a decade honing his art. He has also spent a lifetime learning how to live, preparing for the moment when the colours of the bottle, the reflection in the glass, the rich promise of the liquid came together in his mind and in his life.

"I live a life based not on income but on a choice I've made to live graciously." For him, that means sharing his home with Vanessa, their two young boys and a host of friends who come by to sit on his porch, savour wines and take pleasure in the scents of gardenia and honeysuckle coming from his gardens.

In his studio he makes moments for his life beyond painting,





"Private Study"
Limited Edition Giclée on Canvas

"Cover to Cover"
Limited Edition Giclée on Canvas

occasionally putting down his paintbrushes to pick up an acoustic guitar or wander into his small wine cellar to become reinvigorated with the beauty and quiet of the bottle-lined walls. Even the offices of Thomas Arvid Fine Arts Inc. outside Atlanta hold a promise of good friends and good times, a cabin in the woods decorated with soft textures and rich wood, where the windows open so the sound of rain on the roof is as much a part of the experience as the food being cooked on a sheltered wood-fired grill outside.

Ultimately, separating the man from his art is impossible, as the many patrons lucky enough to share a moment with him at a gallery opening or one of the dinners he hosts at major wine auctions around the country have discovered. "In order to accept things into our life, we have to be able to apply it to our life," he says. In his art, that means cropping in close on his subjects and allowing the onlooker to imagine the background and supply the definition and memory that makes the piece their own. It also means creating those moments for his artistic admirers, so that when the question sandwiched quietly between 'Half Full' and 'Eight Empties' at a spring gallery opening gets asked – "How many Arvids do you own?" – it develops the intimate quality of a question about how you spend your time. With good friends? With good food? With good wine? Amid good art?

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