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ne very gratifying aspect of our trip to Malaysia was that we were, in effect, representing Canada. Malaysia Tourism invited media representatives from over 30 countries to attend the Citrawarna Festival. Whenever the Canadian representatives were asked to present themselves - for the TV cameras or in the conference hall - we were the ones who stood up and received a warm reception.

The perception of Canada and Canadians is generally very positive, though sometimes slightly skewed. For instance, the response from the cab driver in Kuala Lumpur who, upon learning we were from Canada, said, "That's where, when you move there, they give you money."

Or the US customs officer's comment, after being presented with Canadian passports: "There are two kinds of people in the world, Canadians and wannabe Canadians."

And also somewhat protective, such as our Malaysian guide's comment to the American journalists who joined us for a time, "You be nice to the Canadians." I assure you that throughout our time in Malaysia, we found everyone was 'nice to the Canadians'.

Next issue we're going to take you to Baja California. I had not been to Los Cabos for about ten years. During that time the community has certainly grown-up. At that time it was principally a surfers' haven. Now, many would consider it the 'hottest' town in Mexico.

To our surprise we weren't accosted by time share salesman and didn't find allinclusive resorts in a long row along the beach. Instead we found some of the finest hotels, each with their own excellent spas. Sommeliers abound and the cuisine is fabulous. This is west coast fusion with a Mexican twist, for instance tuna sashimi, encrusted in chile powder and soy sauce tempered with lime juice.

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T.R

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# Colours and Flavours of Malaysia

By Terry Tremaine Photos Connie Ekelund

Photos of Citrawarna Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur is a true reflection of both harmony and leading edge development.



hen Tourism Malaysia invited us to attend Citrawarna Malaysia there was absolutely no hesitation. The annual month long festival kicks off with a huge parade in the center of Kuala Lumpur. As invited guests, we were able to sit with representatives from 30 other countries in a place of honour beside the King aand Queen of Malaysia, while some 4,500 dancers put on an incredible show.

The parade begins in the late evening after the arrival of the Royal Float carrying the Royal family and follows a 1.5 kilometre route around some of the most historic buildings in the capital city. The parade's dancers are from all 13 of Malaysia's states. The troupes perform traditional dances – fused with modern moves and rhythms – reflecting the cultures of the Malays, Chinese, Indians and Siamese, as well as indigenous groups.

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Dressed in exotic and very colourful costumes, the dancers save their best performance for when they are positioned in front of the King. With a backdrop of moving lights pointed against the historic Sultan Abdul Samad Building and punctuated with fireworks, the show is truly spectacular. With so many participants the parade goes on long past midnight and finishes with a dramatic fireworks display.

For the rest of the month simultaneously throughout Malaysia there is a kaleidoscope of events. Each State has its unique draw based on its culture, heritage, arts and crafts and most importantly food. For a relatively small country geographically, it is remarkably diverse and does include Sabah and Sarawak on Borneo.



The city almost feels like it came out of a science fiction story, the buildings are that spectacular.

My favourite Malaysia dish is satay – beef, chicken or lamb grilled on a stick and dipped in peanut sauce when eating. And of course there is Nasi Goreng – a kind of pilaf with egg. Each region has its own epicurean delight. Then add in the Chinese and Indian influences and eating couldn't be better. The markets can be the best places to eat and of course are relatively inexpensive.

Tourism Malaysia has declared 2007 to be Visit Malaysia year. This very hospitable country hosts some 17 million tourists every year and hopes to up the number to 20 million in 2007. Upon arrival at the very modern KL International Airport the diversity of these tourists is most apparent. As Malaysia is predominately Muslim, there are many visitors from the Middle East. But the walk through the transit halls brings one in touch with people literally from all parts of the world.

If you are making your first trip to Malaysia I would suggest using Putrajaya, the new administrative capital, as your base. Halfway between Kula Lumpur and the airport, the city was dirt fields ten years ago. Now it is a model township boasting highly innovative urban design and features the latest in technology.

Each of the eight bridges spanning Putrajaya Lake, man-made and the focal point of the city, is an architectural show piece. Even the streetlights command admiration for their unique design. The city almost feels like it came out of a science fiction story, the buildings are that spectacular.

The Putrajaya Shangri-La Hotel sits on the highest point in the middle of Taman Putra Perdana, a large park with a panoramic view of the city. The hotel has an excellent spa, one of the best dining rooms in all of Malaysia, comfortable rooms and a shuttle service to Kuala Lumpur.







Photos this spread clockwise from left: Poolside at the Shangri-La Putrajaya, Worship Statues in Hindu Temple Kuala Lumpur, Putra Mosque in Putrajaya, Traditionally dressed Malay Woman in downtown, Seri Wawasan Bridge in Putrajaya, Terry in front of Twin Towers, Buddhist Temple in Kuala Lumpur, Dome at the Hindu Temple Kuala Lumpur

The magnificent pinkdomed Putra Mosque is unmistakably one of the most beautiful sights in Putrajaya. But every building is an architectural pleasure.

Kuala Lumpur is truly a cosmopolitan city. Its impressive skyline includes the world's tallest twin towers, the old Moorish-styled but Britishbuilt railway station and numerous temples and churches. Whatever you would want in a big city is found here. Just don't expect the wild night life of its neighbour to the north, Bangkok. But what really sets KL apart and for that matter all of Malaysia is its people.

I've visited Malaysia four times over the last ten years and my general impression is that it's very much a country whose people are striving to move from being a developing country to being recognized as developed. The previous prime minister was definitely a man with a big vision for his country. During his tenure the country changed dramatically, while the airport, the new capital and the Twin Towers were built.

In a world where religion tends to be the basis for ongoing conflict, the people of Malaysia manage to live in harmony, though all the religions are strongly represented. A stroll through the oldest part of Kuala Lumpur will lead you past mosques, temples and churches. It is a pleasant surprise to find a general mix rather than specific ethnic districts.

The country is about 60 per cent Malay, with the remainder being almost equally divided between Chinese and Indians. The common language is generally English. While Malay is the official language, English would seem to be the language of choice.



Kuala Lumpur is a true reflection of both this harmony and leading edge development. Although a large city by any standard, with all of the amenities and modern conveniences, there is little sign of the strife that often comes from large numbers of people living in close quarters. A tourist will feel quite safe wandering around.

A survey of 71 cities worldwide by Swiss

banking giant UBS found that Malaysia's capital has the most competitive prices when it comes to food, electronic goods, clothes, public transport, hotel rates and entertainment. A five-star hotel room in Kuala Lumpur costs an average US\$150 compared to US\$450 for a similar room in New York.

The UBS survey put together a basket of goods consisting of an overnight stay for two in a first-class hotel, two dinners with a bottle of house red wine, one taxi ride, a 100 km trip in a rented car, two outings to the theatre by public transport and miscellaneous expenses. It found that one only has to pay US\$260 for the package in Kuala Lumpur compared with US\$920 in New York.



hotos on this spread clockwise from left:

Diverse historic architechture in Kuala Lumpur, Decorated bicycles in the Dutch Square in Melaka, Medicine woman sets up her practice on the sidewalk in Kota Bharu, Malay woman weaving traditional songket naterial in Kota Bharu, Wet market in Kota Bharu, Extreme shopping n Suria Kuala Lampur, Renaissance Kota Bharu Lobby Lounge, Selling llegal Turtle Eggs in Kota Bharu

Melaka, on the west coast, is where Malaysia began. Originally founded in 1396 by a Sumatran Prince who married into the Malay aristocracy, the city was later controlled by the Portuguese, followed by the

Dutch and the British. It is here that the Malaysian harmony amongst diverse cultures was first established. This long history is also reflected in its buildings. There are actually some 3,000 people who have retained their Portuguese roots still living in the city.

Melaka is an easy car ride from Kuala Lumpur along an excellent highway running through one plantation after another of palm oil trees. Malaysia is actually the dominant producer of palm oil for the world. Old historic buildings and museums as well as traditional trades and crafts make Melaka one of Malaysia's most visited destinations. The colourful trishaws, used by both locals and tourists for transportation, are unique to the city.

Jonker's Street, once the rich man's street, is now living proof of Melaka's rich baba-nyonya heritage. 'Straits Chinese' or the Baba and Nyonya, are Chinese of noble descendants that adopted much of the Malay culture. The buildings are immaculately constructed with elaborate carvings on the pillars and walls. The street is also famous for its antique shops.

Kota Bharu, on the east coast and only some 20 kilometres from Thailand, is also worth a visit, principally because it is so different from Kuala Lumpur. It's the capital of the state of Kelantan whose people voted for an Islamic state government. As a result, the only establishment with a license to serve alcohol in the whole city is the luxurious Renaissance Kota Bharu Hotel. This fine hotel is definitely the best place to stay.

The way of life is much quieter than the life of those living to the south. Known as the Islamic City, wandering around the downtown area brings one through open air markets and to the attention of the local citizens who are friendly and curious. Don't be surprised if more than one person asks you where you are from and generally tries to strike up a conversation.

The 'wet' open air market has many vendors offering a very broad selection of foodstuffs. Many things from the ocean I did not recognize. Further, Malaysia has a remarkably broad selection of indigenous fruits. Some are far more appealing than others.

Our guide pointed out turtle eggs. They are forbidden to be harvested or sold. But they are still imported and offered by some merchants more concerned with money than ethics. When the police are seen to be about to appear, the turtle eggs vanish.

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*It's very much a country whose* 

### people are striving to move from being a developing *country to being recognized as developed.*

Off the east coast is the island of Redang. If you are looking for a tropical resort getaway, Berjaya Redang Beach Resort is certainly the answer. The only resort on this quiet island has its own bay with a fabulous sandy beach - lovely crystal clear water so warm that spending hours floating on your back is no problem. The dining is good, the wine cellar reasonable and the rooms modern and up to date.

The island is surrounded by a marine park. No fishing is allowed within a 3.2 kilometre radius of Redang and the collection of corals and other aquatic life is prohibited. The waters around Redang also contain two historic shipwrecks - the HMS Prince of Wales and the HMS Repulse were both sunk at the start of World War II, setting the stage for the Japanese occupation of Malaysia.

Access is by ferry, which has a very comfortable first class section, from Terengganu, a large city south of Kota Bharu on the coast. The same company, Berjaya, also has a similar resort on equally gorgeous Tioman Island further down the coast. They offer air transport from Kuala Lumpur. For first-time visitors, landing is a bit nerve wracking in that the short runway ends at the flat base of a very large mountain.

connoisseur's choice = TRAVEL & RESORTS



## Tourism Malaysia has declared

2007 to be Visit Malaysia year.

Taman Negara in central Malaysia is the nation's largest park, with over 4,000 square kilometres of tropical rainforests that are among the oldest in the world. There are some 10,000 varieties of plants and trees – from palms to oaks and ferns to orchids, and innumerable species of birds and animals of all shapes and sizes – elephants and tigers, barking deer, wild boar, monkeys and a myriad of bugs and insects.

A four-hour drive from Kuala Lumpur ends at the Kuala Tembeling landing stage, where the passage upriver begins – the park headquarters at Kuala Tahan is only accessible by boat or plane. A motorized longboat takes three hours to go upstream, providing a very leisurely view of the slowly moving scenery, wallowing buffalo and exotic bird life.

The highlight of any trip to Taman Negara is the chance to move across the forest canopy on suspended bridges between the tallest trees, 25 metres above the forest floor. Our guide explained that the park has been so well protected and is so large that there are actually aboriginals living, for the most part unseen, as they would have thousands of years before. He also told of a wild elephant herd trampling an empty campsite the night before.

Malaysia has one of the highest standards of living in the region, complemented with one of the lowest costs of living. Combined with a stable government and year-round warm weather, the country can be very attractive to those seeking an Asian abode.

Quite a number of expatriate British and North Americans have taken advantage of Malaysia's My Second Home program, promoted by the Government of Malaysia. The Social Visit Pass is also a multiple entry visa which is initially for a period of ten years and renewable.

For those used to the travel experience provided by the likes of Mexico or Europe, a trip to Malaysia is guaranteed to be very different and enjoyable experience. Photos clockwise from above top left: Surrise in Redang, Private beach in Redang, Boats on the chanel leading to the straights of Melaka, Floating Mosque in Terengganu, The unique and deadly Durian fruit in Terengganu

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D

connoisseur's choice 5 RECREATION

# World Class Ski Resorts

By Steven Threndyle

#### An evening in downtown Asp

resorts are similar to many luxury consumer products. Though many try to "be all things to all people," the fact is that some resorts igcup shine and have particular signature attributes that they become famous for. Hence Good Life Connoisseur's guide to the top ski resorts in the world - but with a twist. We've come up with eight different categories and picked a world leader in each of them. As with any list, there's sure to be some controversy - but that's part of the fun.

#### PLACE TO BE SEEN - ASPEN, CO

American folksinger Christine Lavin once wrote a hilarious ditty called "Nobody's Fat in Aspen" and it's an accurate summation of its "can't be too rich, can't be too thin" clientele. Indeed, Vanity Fair magazine once devoted an entire two thousand word plus story that was little more than a laundry list of which Hollywood mogul, Saudi prince and Silicon Valley tech entrepreneur had a vacation home there. Need names? How about Kevin Costner, Saudi Prince Bandar (whose estate - valued at \$40M - carries the highest valuation in Aspen), Michael Dell and even deceased Enron chief Ken Lay - who - as VF wrote, resided on Shady Lane.

### Cream of the Crop: from Steeps to Corduroy, Cross Country to Heli

The rich and famous wouldn't be here, though, if the scenery, the skiing and the weather weren't outstanding. Smack in the middle of the Colorado Rockies lie four legendary mountains: Aspen, Snowmass, Aspen Highlands, and beginners-only Buttermilk. The town – notwithstanding luxe hotels and world class shopping (a Prada store, anyone?) - has enough cultural events and art galleries that donning your Nordicas isn't even necessary.

#### www.aspensnowmass.com

#### Dine

Every Aspen visitor sooner or later finds himself at the Crystal Palace, where dinner includes a howlingly funny theatre revue in which politicians, movie stars and other names in the news are routinely skewered.

### Rest & Rejuvenate

Choose from state of the art upscale (St. Regis Aspen), or the Victorian to beat all Victorians - the historic Hotel Jerome.

#### Honourable Mention - Davos, Switzerland

Home to the World Economic Forum each year, this rarefied Swiss resort deep in the Parsenn offers some of Europe's longest runs, including the 18km long Weissfluh-Jenaz route. www.davos.ch

#### TO TACKLE THE STEEPS - WHISTLER-BLACKCOMB, BC

You could start a fight to end all fights if you asked a room full of hard-core skiers what the best resort for balls-out steep skiing is. Hands (and fists) would rise for La Grave in France, Jackson Hole in the United States, and even Las Lenas in Argentina. But chances are at the end of the evening that one resort would beat 'em all - Whistler-Blackcomb, in British Columbia. Sheer size (over 8,000 patrolled acres), vertical drop (exactly one vertical mile - 5,280 feet) and snowfall (32.7 feet of snow annually) don't tell the whole story. You haven't lived until you've been woken up at sunrise by the sound of avalanche guns booming off the mountain walls, ridden the state-of-the-art high speed lifts to the top of either mountain, and then watched in awe as some of the very best freeskiers in the world rip down Whistler Bowl and nonchalantly throw backflips off aptly-named cliffs like Air Jordan and The Waterfall. And land them, and ski away. www.whistlerblackcomb.com www.tourismwhistler.com Dine

Sushi Village is top of the charts for watching just who comes in the door. Is it a champion freeskier, or a Hollywood mogul? Can melt your credit card if you get carried away.

#### Rest & Rejuvenate

Four Seasons Whistler is the only resort hotel in Canada to fly the prestigious Four Seasons flag. It's also one of Whistler's newest hotels. Honourable Mention - Jackson Hole, WY

Jackson Hole is home to North America's most infamous "pucker factor" run - Corbet's Couloir is a double-black diamond run which starts with a freefall fifteen foot cliff drop to a steep, powder-choked outrun. Egos are badly bruised here. www.jacksonhole.com

#### FOR SMOOTH CRUISING CORDUROY - DEER VALLEY, UT

#### Nothing quite revolutionized or popularized skiing like the invention of snow packing and grooming machinery - those track-driven "cats" which prowl up and down the mountain after the lifts closes, pulverizing the snow and arranging its molecular structure into perfect swales of corduroy. With a perfect, ice-free surface laid down, skiers can carve

rounded arcs in the snow merely by being tipping their edges - it's like the skis turn themselves.

No resort has perfected corduroy grooming quite like Deer Valley, a tony, secluded resort less than an hours' drive from Salt Lake City. Indeed, Deer Valley's director of skiing is the iconic Stein Eriksen, a Norwegian Olympic (Oslo, 1952) champion whose style still dazzles as he nears 80. Deer Valley boasts an impressively high rate of return guests who are simply addicted to ski runs whose surface is the equivalent of putting greens at Augusta National or Pebble Beach. www.deervalley.com Dine

Take the shuttle downtown to see if you can spot movie stars in town for the annual Sundance Film Festival. Mikado and Wahso offer Asian/fusion, while Chez Betty (French/American) and Adolf's (Swiss) provide more Continental fare.

#### Rest & Rejuvenate

Eriksen's namesake lodge is one of the most prestigious lodges in all of ski country - a AAA Five-Diamond property that takes pampering and customer service to as lofty an altitude as the surrounding Wasatch Range peaks.

#### Honourable Mention - Sun Peaks, BC

Like Deer Valley, Sun Peaks boasts an iconic personality who anyone can ski with - Nancy Greene-Raine, Olympic gold medalist (Grenoble, 1968), voted Canada's Female Athlete of the Half Century in 2000. The accommodations are deluxe, (especially the Delta Sun Peaks), the grooming team have won awards and the weather - well, it is called Sun Peaks. www.sunpeaksresort.com

Above right: Legendary Olympics star Stein Eriksen keeps young by skiing Deer Valley's perfectly buffed corduroy slopes every day Right: The Steep at Whistler Blackcomb Below: Symphony Amphitheatre at Whistler Blackcomb



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### connoisseur's choice 5

#### RECREATION

#### TO COMBINE FOOD, "FAITES DU SKI", AND JOIE DE VIVRE - QUEBEC CITY, PQ

While the ski resorts near Quebec City (Mont-Sainte-Anne, Stoneham and farther east, Le Massif) all offer a stunning array of slopes and smashing views of icebergs floating on the St. Lawrence River, they are perhaps topped only by the historic beauty and culinary excellence of nearby Quebec

City. From the fairytale hilltop setting of the Château Frontenac to the steep, narrow streets inside the fortress (Old Town), Quebec City is an unparalleled winter destination which comes alive each February during the annual Winter Carnival. The real fun, though, is wandering from one tiny "boîte" (with their prix fixe menus written on sandwich boards or taped to windows) to the next, trying out your fractured high-school French and treating your palate to the most dazzling array of flavours imaginable.

The skiing, particularly at Mont-Sainte-Anne and Le Massif, is among the very best in Eastern North America.

Frequent storms pound Le Massif, known as one of the powder capitals of Quebec, while a hugely impressive network of mostly intermediate cruising runs fans out on both the North and South sides of Mont-Sainte-Anne. If you take a day off skiing to sightsee in

Quebec City, you can send the kids to ski at Stoneham, which features one of Canada's best terrain parks. www.mont-sainte-anne.com www.bonjourquebec.com

#### Dine

It's literally impossible to get a bad meal in Quebec City, and its true charm is discovering a small, out of the way spot that oozes pure ambience. **Rest & Rejuvenate** 

The Fairmont Château Frontenac is the most impressive historic building in a city that is chock-full of them.

#### Honourable Mention - Salzburg, Austria

Salzburg just might be Europe's most perfect city. With over fifty ski resorts within a two hour drive, Salzburg combines culinary excellence, historic charm and almost endless skiing. www.salzburg.com

#### FOR THOSE WHO CROSS COUNTRY SKI, AND DOWNHILL SKI, TOO - SILVER STAR MOUNTAIN RESORT, BC

Dad loves to ski heart-stopping steeps, Mom's training for a marathon and the kids like to play hockey or snowboard. How do you find a winter resort that can please all four?

Check out Silver Star Mountain Resort, an hour north of Kelowna, BC. Nestled at a mile-high elevation at the edge of the Monashee





Clockwise from above Nordic skiing at Silver Star STO Park Skiing in Quebec Nordic skiing at Silver Star

Mountain range, Silver Star's renowned Nordic centre offers over 60 kilometres of trails that are perfect for both skate and classical technique skiing. The mountain receives over 20 feet of snow annually, and snow conditions are generally reliable from early November until the end of April. Downhill skiers can choose from over a hundred runs, while the skating pond, tubing park, and TELUS Park half pipe and terrain park provide excellent diversions for those who eschew the skinny skis. www.skisilverstar.com

#### Dine

Nordic skiers and downhillers alike need their carbs, which makes the Italian Garden a great bet for a variety of pasta dishes.

#### Rest & Rejuvenate

Snowbird Lodge opens this season. This intimate, luxurious lodge is right in Silver Star's Village, a short glide from the x-c and downhill trails. Honourable Mention – Lillehammer, Norway

The Norwegians invented cross country skiing, so it's no surprise that Lillehammer, which once hosted the Winter Olympics (1996) should be near the top of the list. What makes Lillehammer great for Nordic and alpine enthusiasts are the nearby slopes of Kvitfjell, where the ski races were held. www.lillehammerturist.no



Snow tubing at Vail's Adventure Ridge is not to be missed - fun for the whole family! Photo taken by: Jack Affleck, Vail Resort

TO COCOON WITH THE FAMILY - VAIL, CO Russian HeliPro is the only helicopter skiing company that offers skiing on Though a least a dozen resorts call themselves "family friendly' several continents - Greenland, Chile, Nepal, and Antarctica are just a few there's little doubt that Vail leaves the rest in the dust. Easy to fly of their destinations. Their most popular trip is to Tien Shan (Celestial) Mountains near the border with China. www.helipro.ru into? Check. Vail-Eagle airport handles flights from major American cities, and it's less than two hours from Denver. Slopeside lodging? Both photos courtesy of Mica Heliskiing, BC Check. Vail offers more on-mountain accommodation than any resort in North America, and the bus system works beautifully. Outstanding terrain and snow conditions? Check, and double-check. Vail and its sister resort Beaver Creek have endless, perfectly-tilted groomed pistes and the famous Back Bowls, a powderhound paradise. The recent addition of Blue Sky Basin has provided some much-needed black diamond terrain. Vail's copious amounts of dry powder (almost 350 inches, much of which falls at night) are augmented by days of endless sunshine.

Former CEO Adam Aron had a great deal of respect for the way Disney Corporation operates its theme parks, and Vail's Adventure Ridge is pure homage to Walt's Way. Open from 2 pm until 9 pm daily, it's the perfect place for the entire family after a day on the slopes. Located at the top of the gondola, Adventure Ridge has a plethora of family-friendly activities such as snow tubing, ice skating on an outdoor rink, snow biking (truly a blast - you don't know until you've tried) and a snowmobile track for rippin' around on the sleds. www.vail.com Dine

Adjacent to Adventure Ridge, the Blue Moon Restaurant & Bar is perfect for families.

#### Rest & Rejuvenate

The Vail Mountain Resort & Spa features the local hangout Terra Bistro restaurant, and kids will love the only indoor climbing wall in the Valley. Honourable Mention – Big White, BC

It's over six miles from one end of this friendly giant of a mountain to the other, and from boundary to boundary you'll find over 118 runs and dozens of great glades and expansive bowls. Champagne powder is a given, but the real Big White advantage is the totally ski-in/ski out accommodation. A great ski school, plethora of après-ski activities and an easy, convenient lift system make Big White a family favourite. www.bigwhite.com

#### FOR A "ONCE IN A LIFETIME" ADVENTURE - MICA HELISKIING, BC

Helicopter skiing, filmmaker Warren Miller says, is the kind of activity that if you put it off any longer, "you'll only be one year older when you go." British Columbia is the world leader in helicopter skiing, and Mica Heli Skiing offers an experience found nowhere else in the world – the opportunity to ski pillow lines - hugely puffy, light, dry powder snow-covered rock. The idea is to catch air and vault from one soft mushroom of snow to the next - like floating through space and landing on a series of pillows.

What makes Mica Heliskiing special are both the immense variety of the terrain – over one million acres – and the competence of the guides - they'll show you gnarly steeps and powder-choked couloirs that other companies wouldn't go near. The experience is exclusive - there's one guide, three skiers, and a maximum of twelve guests at the lodge each week. Simply put, you haven't achieved Rock Star status in the ski world until you've been to Mica Heli. www.micaheli.com

#### Honourable Mention - Russian Heli Project



### Discovering Nirvana "Deep In the Monashees" with Eagle Pass Heliskiing

The small, powerful helicopter lifts off in a cloud of swirling dry **L** snow. As it peels off towards the valley bottom, it leaves us standing in quiet anticipation. After a few carefully picked words of wisdom, our guide Dave motions for us to follow. He drops into the fall-line, into some widely spaced and heavily blanketed trees, wisps of snow

curling up over his shoulders. We follow. It's like an effortless free fall, a rhythmical dance between the trees. After 3,500 vertical feet of bliss, we pull up beside our guide. Wow. High fives and perma-grins are going to be the norm for the day.

We had chanced upon experiencing some heliskiing with a brand new gem of an operation, deep in the Monashees near Revelstoke, British Columbia. Eagle Pass Heliskiing located itself in the heart of huge snowfall country. They are surrounded by larger and more famous helicopter skiing companies, but their aim is to be recognized as a small, friendly operation that provides the ultimate in a deep powder skiing experience.





We talked to Norm, one of the 3 local ski guides-come-entrepreneurs, who said that the goal is to provide the ultimate ski adventure with a small company feel to it. "Besides being able to ski some of the planet's best snow conditions and experience some true wilderness, we want the guests to establish some genuine friendships here. It's great for the group of 12 to sit around the same dinner table and share stories of life, lies and the best 'head-plant' of the day," he added.



When it comes time to relax after a day of adventure in the mountains, nothing is better than kicking back in an outdoor hot tub, sipping a beverage and looking at the sun set on the looming peaks above. The lodge itself is warm and inviting. Huge fir posts support high beams and interesting antiques adorn the walls. The welcoming hosts Wayne and Heather go great lengths to make sure everyone is well fed and comfortable.

Overnight the snowfall continues, with classic fat flakes the size of shredded tissues falling ever so quietly. As morning breaks, the smell of fresh baking wafts through the lodge. Everyone is abuzz about the 30 centimeters of newly fallen fluff outside. The guides take it in stride; apparently this is quite normal.

We spend the day doing run after run of amazing skiing in some beautiful open glades; the trees form a dependable shelter that retains the feathery dry crystals. We are skiing and boarding in a drainage called "Crazy Creek" - the dry snow is up to our waist, and blows in clouds behind us as we free fall to the valley bottom. None of us have skied in snow so light, dry and bottomless. We are informed we get to name today's runs as they had never been skied before. Epiphany. Ecstasy. Words cannot begin to describe the experience. In the end, it is a day that ranks as another life altering experience.

The next morning we are presented with a colder day, and the cloud square kilometers for only 12 guests. Compare this to Whistler-Blackcomb's total of 33 square kilometers and layer seems to be breaking. We lift up through the parting clouds to witness a spectacle that leaves us speechless. After circling and landing you get the picture. If you get the sense you are laying ski tracks where no one else has ever been, you may just be right. on a ridge top, we gather our equipment and excitedly clamber to get One of the added benefits of this small and friendly operation is that ready. Andy, our guide for the day, pauses quietly and lets us take in the panorama. With a sense of awe and wonderment, we gawk at the rugged they are very accessible – Eagle Pass Heliskiing can pick you up at the peaks jutting through the cloud layers. Snow blanketed mountains sprawl Kelowna International Airport and have you at the lodge within 2 hours. The lodge is located right on the Trans Canada Highway, yet it still has as far as you can see. Not a person, track, or sign of civilization in sight. The quiet is deafening. Our attention is then drawn to the large bowl that isolated mountain lodge feel to it. It seems they have the best of both worlds. Deep in the Monashees. below. After some very specific instructions we set off, and get into a rhythmical flow down the open slope. No battling for fresh tracks here. For more information, When we gather, we take turns brushing the powder off each others' call toll-free 1 877 929-3337, goggles and hats. We glance back up into the pristine bowl and admire or visit www.eaglepassheliskiing.com a perfect set of 5 tracks. This is a day that even Warren Miller would For an offer exclusive to readers of decide to ski instead of filming. We swap mountains and experience Good Life Connoisseur, contact more virginal thigh-deep fluff. After lunch we mix things up by cruising andy@eaglepassheliskiing.com to receive GLE PASS a gentle open glacier and then exploring some exciting chutes. Another a \$100 discount on booking a package. HELISKIING day in heaven. Photos by: Adam Stein, Eagle Pass Heliskiing

www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com



There is no shortage of terrain here; Eagle Pass Heliskiing has an exclusive use permit for over 1,000



Big White and Silver Star Resorts Create Unforgettable Family Memories

Above: World-famous Snow Ghosts at Big White

What are the moments that make a family skiing vacation truly special? For some, it's the snow; weaving and carving arcs through powdercaked pine trees while knee-deep snow billows over the boot tops. For others, it's sipping a glass of Okanagan pinot noir in a hot tub on the deck of a luxury condo while enjoying a panoramic mountain view. Or, it might be gathering in a postcard perfect setting to watch a torchlight parade and fireworks show, followed by playing a little hockey on a frozen pond or skating rink. Maybe it's seeing the smiles on your kids' faces when they burst out of the ski school, full of chatter. "Mommy, Daddy, we went over these big jumps! I really loved the pizza we

had for lunch! Can we come here again, tomorrow? Mom, Dad, can we move here, sometime?"

We're **Big White and Silver Star Ski Resorts**, and we make these dreams come true hour after hour, day after day, for the hundreds of thousands of guests we are so fortunate to serve during the winter months. While we're world-famous for feather-dry Okanagan Champagne powder snow, what we're really about is families and friends spending quality vacation time together. If you've never visited our resorts, read on; then call up a dear friend or a family member and invite them to share your next vacation at Big White and Silver Star this winter. The only word you'll use to describe it will be 'unforgettable.' And isn't that what great family vacations should be?



Left: Family Fun

#### Big White: "It's the Snow!"

And it's as simple as that! "It's the Snow!" is the motto at Big White Ski Resort. Each year, over seven metres (24.5 feet) of Mother Nature's finest, driest champagne powder blankets our mountain. You will instantly feel the difference that natural snow makes as you cruise the long, immaculately-buffed trails, float through the powder bowls, and slalom through the "snow ghosts" – our signature snow-clad glades.

This year, we've added the Snow

Ghost Express, Canada's longest six-person chairlift, to augment four express chairs, a high-speed gondola, four fixed-grip chairs, and numerous surface lifts. It's one of the most efficient and comfortable lift systems in North America.

With over 600,000 skier visits annually, Big White is the second most popular resort in British Columbia.

Big White's romantic village boasts Canada's most modern ski-in/skiout resort properties. With over 17,000 on-mountain beds there's a room for every taste and budget. Hotels, luxury apartments, vacation homes and even themed log cabins, (most with private outdoor hot tubs) dot the snowy slopes. There's even a flaming shotgun coffee drink at Snowshoe Sam's – Big White's award winning restaurant.

Above: Slopeside property at Silver Star, Right: Silver Star Village

#### Silver Star: My Mountain

Skiers and snowboarders from around the world have fallen in love with Silver Star Mountain Resort's fairytale village. This Victorian themed 19th century mining town is truly a winter wonderland. Brightly coloured store fronts and wooden boardwalks create a unique atmosphere that radiate fun and excitement for everyone.

Whether you stay in the classic Victorian-styled vacation homes or at the brand new Snowbird Lodge located right in the heart of the Village, you'll see why Silver Star Mountain Resort is a hit amongst skiers and snowboarders. Silver Star's accommodation is exclusively ski-in and ski-out, with trails and lifts right outside the door.

amongst skiers and snowboarders. Silver Star's accommodation is exclusively ski-in and ski-out, with trails and lifts right outside the door. Covered annually in seven metres of dry, feather-light champagne powder, Silver Star is a huge mountain with three distinct faces and 112 runs, bowls and gladed areas. The Vance Creek face is the most popular area on the mountain, featuring beautifully manicured runs, quiet slopes and great mountain views. Kids just love TELUS Park, packed with rails, monstrous jumps, a half pipe, mogul course and aerial site.

monstrous jumps, a half pipe, mogul course and aerial site.
Silver Woods has plenty of intermediate terrain, with gladed meadows
and groomed trail serviced by Silver Star's newest high-speed quad. Then
there's Putnam Creek, the 'Dark Side of the Star' which is renowned
for its winch cat grooming, even on some of its steepest runs! Head to
Putnam Creek for vertical double black diamond chutes choked with
fresh powder. New for 2007, the Alpine Meadows chair opens up 'local's
secret' runs in the Attridge area.

Located just a short ski or slide away from the Bullet Express quad, the
Copper Kettle Lodge is currently selling its Phase Two units. Copper Kettle
Lodge is the only concrete building on Big White. Each suite features
vaulted ceilings, in-floor heating throughout, a steam shower, granite
counters, real wood cabinets, a rugged stone fireplace and spectacular,
unobstructed views of the Monashee Mountains. These luxurious threebedroom units range in size from 1,550 to 2,100 square feet, with two
different floor plans available.



Many visitors to Big White and Silver Star have had such a fabulous time that they have paid us their highest compliment – they've purchased a second home or investment property here. Both mountains offer outstanding real estate opportunities which compare extremely favourably in terms of value and investment growth with other North American resorts.



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low-season business and create a more cosmopolitan ambience at the resort. "Mountainfront living" is now defined at Big White Ski Resort. Feathertop is a unique, private enclave of exclusive homes that command The prestigious architectural and engineering team behind the River Rock Casino in Richmond has been retained to design and build a magnificent expansive views, privileged access and the rareness typically associated with exceptional lakefront homes. Feathertop's location is prime - it is by showpiece resort that will truly be one of a kind in the Okanagan. far the most sought-after location on the entire mountain. Conveniently Silver Star Mountain Resort's BaseCamp 360 is a real estate offering positioned between the Sundance and Millie's Mile ski runs, skiers and unlike anything before at Silver Star, and indeed may be unique in Western riders enjoy easy access to not one, but two Express lifts adjacent to the Canada! Situated next to Brewers Pond and the Tube Town amenity area, property. You can take advantage of several options with the purchase of BaseCamp 360 is an ideal starting point to access all of the outdoor activities either a Feathertop Custom Homesite or a Chalet Homesite, with several offered at Silver Star. 125 condominium hotel units will be offered as plans to choose from. This is an excellent opportunity to build the family 'Adventure Ready Homes' over the next few years. Phase One will consist of ski chalet of your dreams, utilizing sturdy exposed-beam timbers, river 24 units and will be released this winter 2007, in studio, one-bedroom, onerock fireplaces, and a first-class amenities package. bedroom and den, and two- and three-bedroom units with full kitchens. The Edge is stunningly innovative – a mountain top development BaseCamp 360 will feature adventure-inspired touches such as extra storage with pricing starting in the \$200,000 range for a studio.

like no other at Big White. There are just 26 homes available, each of units for multiple sets of gear, an in-suite laundry and drying room, and them unique and special. Developer Christopher Sherriff has asked his a hip, outdoor chic design package for bedding, bath and kitchen. Each designers to "build high." "Build high for the views, for snow storage, for unit will be furnished and outfitted in the kitchen, bath and bedrooms, privacy between homes, for volume in the loft. And with an allowance for 17 metres, they are high!" With that height comes a freedom of interior Located in the heart of Silver Star's intimate village, Snowbird Lodge space design and living zones on each floor – the living/dining zone, the features the finest ski-in/ski-out location on the mountain and all units activity zone, the privacy zone and the sleep zone. The best part - no have private hot tubs. What makes Snowbird Lodge stand out is the Club stairs! Each of the four storeys will be accessed via private elevator. The Snowbird amenity collection - a 24 seat theatre, on-site gymnasium, butterfly roofline, 25' high walls, natural materials inside and out, clean kids' playroom, family lounge and underground parking. Now ready straight lines, geothermal energy, continuous fresh air circulation – The for occupancy and to generate rental income, a number of units are still Edge leaves no detail un-thought, no thought unfinished. available at this prestigious address.

Perhaps no development has the potential to change Big White's Both resorts are incredibly easy to get to – less than an hours' shuttle future quite like the Chateau Blanc, a 17 storey high-rise that will house from the Kelowna International Airport, which boasts non-stop service a 400 room hotel, a convention centre and a commercial area. Situated from Toronto, Seattle, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and now Las Vegas and Honolulu. Come and see for yourself why Ski Canada magazine has on a spacious eight-acre parcel of land at the base of the Ridge Rocket bestowed so many 'Best of Skiing in Canada' awards to Big White and Express and the brand new Snow Ghost Express, the \$200 million project will allow Big White to host major conventions, attract shoulder and Silver Star Mountain Resorts!

www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com



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#### connoisseur's choice <del>s</del> HOUSE & HOME

# Cruisin' Through Life

**By Janet Collins** 

"It's an opportunity to see the world from the comfort of your own living room."

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Photos clockwise from above: The World in the Maldives, view from the deck, The World bedroom and living room

ver taken a cruise and wished you could live the lifestyle Lon an ongoing basis? Ever travelled and longed for the comforts of home? Well, a new housing option just might fulfill all of those wishes and more.

Welcome to the world of liveaboard luxury cruise ships.

Leif-Erik Hvide, a partner with the Ocean Development Group out

of Miami, Florida, says this live-aboard experience is unique. "This is not a residence that moves every few days," says Hvide, "it's an opportunity to see the world from the comfort of your own living room." And property and cruise ship developers - and potential owners - are starting to take notice. Here are some of the more luxurious options currently available:

Touted as the only private residential community at sea, The World is unlike any other accommodation option and, indeed, any other liveaboard cruise ship.

According to Gauri Kitchlu of public relations firm Lou Hammond and Associates, "It is a successful private community at sea that launched in 2002. By comparison, the competing ships inspired by The World are expected to launch in 2007, 2008 or even 2009. However, the [other] vessels have not yet been built." There are other differences as well.

"Ownership is a key difference," says Kitchlu. "The World is owned by the people who call it home - its residents. Competitive projects are represented by development companies." She says other differences include the number of residences and how the vessel is structured.



The World has 165 residences, which range in price from USD\$1.3 million to USD\$6.3 million. They include 106 private apartments, 19 studio apartments, and 40 studios, all of

which can be purchased. There is no fractional ownership. However, owners can rent out their suite when not using it themselves. "Another difference is that those interested in purchasing a home aboard The World can stay aboard as guests for a minimum six-night stay," adds Kitchlu. Guests must like what they see - at press time, more than 90 percent of the units had sold.

In addition to owning their unit, residents of a live-aboard cruise ship embark on a rather unique experience. As they explore the seven seas, they take their home with them. This is a significant shift from typical cruise experiences where guests leave home to travel aboard a ship.



Aside from the convenience

The World will soon be of never having to leave home joined by other live-aboard when they travel, residents of luxury cruise ships. The World are able to enjoy some The Four Seasons hotel very fine onboard amenities. group will be managing a soon-to-be launched live-aboard cruise ship Boasting a casino, cigar bar, that the Ocean Development Group currently has under construction. card room, art gallery, theatre, Dubbed the Four Seasons Ocean Club, the vessel will have all the quality spa, fitness centre, salon, pool, of other cruise ships built by the same development and construction conference room, business team. Previous cruise ships built by the team sail under such familiar centre, four restaurants and banners as Royal Caribbean, Norwegian Cruise Lines, Royal Viking Line luxury shopping opportunities, and Disney Cruise Lines. The World features all the "The senior partners in the company have 100+ years of combined comforts of home - including a multi-denominational chapel and 24experience in the business," says Hvide of the people behind the Four hour concierge. But you won't see the residents swabbing the deck. "The Seasons Ocean Club project. "We also have a firm contract with World continues to be managed by ResidenSea Ltd. and its professional the ship yard, so potential buyers can be confident about making property management team on behalf of the owners," explains Kitchlu. an investment." Ownership has another privilege: "Since they own the vessel, the residents Potential buyers have the option of purchasing a whole or fractional are able to decide on the ship's yearly itineraries," Kitchlu adds. ownership in a live-aboard suite aboard the Four Seasons Ocean Club.

So who lives aboard The World? Kitchlu says this lifestyle appeals to the same customer base that chooses second and third homes in gated communities, private islands, private yachts or private clubs. "All those things provide customized, exclusive and private environments that elite travellers enjoy," she says. The typical resident is an accomplished entrepreneur averaging 52 years of age. Most are still actively involved in their business, and they are extremely welltravelled. Most own on average two or three homes. Roughly half are American and another 30 percent European. One other thing: "Those interested in purchasing an apartment on the vessel must have a net worth of at least \$5 million," says Kitchlu.





"What they get is very similar to what they'd have if they owned a private yacht, but with less hassle and more sense of community," says Hvide. They're also likely getting a heck of a lot more bang for their buck.

Not many private yachts are capable of boasting a 10,000 sq ft spa, fitness centre and boutique shopping. There's even a helipad on board for those wanting a quick getaway. If owners and their guests ever tired of the onboard restaurants, on-shore dining opportunities when in port or 24-hour room service, an onboard gourmet food shop offers the option to cook up something in their private luxury suite. Throw in the Four Seasons guarantee of quality products and services, and investors will find the Four Seasons Ocean Club a very attractive housing option.



connoisseur's choice <del>s</del>

#### HOUSE & HOME

Photos clockwise from above: Couple on the deck, Illustration of the Magellan, Magellan indoor pool

There will be 110 units in all, 10 of which have been set aside for fractional ownership. Prices are posted in Euros with 800 sq

ft one-bedroom units listed at EUR2 million, 1336 sq ft two-bedroom units at EUR3.3 million, and 3,500 sqft three-bedroom units in the 4 million Euro range. Also up for grabs are two four-bedroom penthouses measuring 7,000 sq ft that span three decks with two-storey living rooms and have a large terrace with Jacuzzi and grill. Asking price: 22 million Euros.

There are three basic design options currently available - contemporary (think Four Seasons hotel style), traditional and maritime. As the ship is still under construction, buyers can still choose the type of finish they want in their specific unit, much like buyers of a condominium tower that is still under construction might do. The difference here is that this is a turnkey operation, so linen, dishes and furniture are also included in the package.

Buyers should remember that this is not real property, warns Hvide. "It's personal property with a lifespan of about 50 years," he says. "It will depreciate, like an airplane will." And in addition to the purchase price, buyers need to factor in regular maintenance fees that average 4% of the purchase price, "which is a far cry from the 10-15% per year you'd be paying on a private yacht, depending on the size of your staff and how much you use it," Hvide adds.

Hvide says the product appeals to a broad spectrum of potential owners. "The people making inquiries range in age from their mid-30s to 60s, with the average age in the mid-50s," he says. "There are a lot of self-made business owners, and a couple of heirs, too. A real mix." Hvide reports that 40 individuals have placed reservation deposits on suites, while Ocean Development Group has fielded 3,000 inquiries to date with only a few small ads in select publications to generate interest.

Another live-aboard luxury cruise ship that is garnering a fair bit of attention is the Magellan.

Setting sail in the summer of 2009, the Magellan just might be the most ambitious luxury live-aboard project undertaken to date. Designed to be 860 feet long by 106 feet wide, the vessel will feature 15 decks and a multinational crew of 300. Boasting more than 76,000 tons, it is estimated that the Magellan will be 60% larger than any other residential cruise ship. That increased size means plenty of room for more amenities.

In addition to indoor and outdoor saltwater pools, an aqua spa, 450-seat satellite theatre, observatory, greenhouse, onboard marina and tennis court, luxury brand stores will be available along with restaurants offering cuisine created by world-famous chefs. "The developer is working hard to align with luxury brands so residents can enjoy all the comforts of home when they're at sea," says Teri James of Teri James Public Relations. "They're always looking for

new ways of pleasing the senses." An all-weather heliport will ensure access to the ship anytime,

anywhere.

Other unique features about the Magellan: it's the first residential cruise ship to offer financing for full and fractional ownership units. And if fullownership residents want to rent their unit, the management company will be able to help if the resident decides against using their own firm.

Pre-sales are brisk, with one-bedroom fractional ownerships starting around USD\$134,000 and other available units ranging up to the USD\$8 million 2,881 sq ft four-bedroom/four-bath penthouse. "The design has been altered slightly since the website was put together," says James. "The tennis court was added since then, and so have the four one-bedroom units." Since ports of call have already been posted for the first three years, fractional owners can buy with specific travel destinations in mind.

"I can't tell you how many units have sold to date," says James, "but I can tell you that sales have certainly exceeded expectations."

As the concept of live-aboard cruise ships catches on, those sales - and sales aboard other luxury live-aboard vessels - will no doubt increase even further. Says James: "It's definitely the start of a big trend."

> To find out more, visit the following websites: The World www.aboardtheworld.com Four Seasons Ocean Club www.oceanresidences.com Magellan www.magellancruisecondos.com



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# The Ultimate Wish List

By Tony Whitney

#### Audi R8 sports car exterior and interior (inset) It's a dream most of have had from time to time.

spouse, close friend, relative, workmate – whoever – suddenly pulls off a mega-millions business deal and decides to reward all those years of support and companionship with the ultimate gift – and it's sitting in your driveway on December 25th, complete with the obligatory satin ribbon.

There's no doubt that a car of any kind is always a gift to upstage just about anything else and (more dreams here) we all have a notion of exactly which model would have the most jaw-dropping effect. Could it be one of the classic Italian sportsters, a large and opulent German sedan or a luxury SUV capable of cosseting you in comfort while climbing half way up the Matterhorn? For me, any of the above would do nicely, but like everyone else, I do have my favourites – some of them very new to the market and others not even available yet. The least expensive of them costs upwards of \$200,000, so we're not talking about your typical graduation-gift Toyota Yaris here.

How about, for example, Audi's stunning new V-8 powered allaluminum R8 sports supercar that made its debut recently at the Paris Auto Salon? Right through the press days, it was almost impossible to get near the car, such was the media frenzy. It was no surprise that Audi should come up with a car like this – after all, the company's racing division has been taking home the spoils from Le Mans and other major events for many years now.



an

IN&R 805

The R8 is clearly a tribute to these victories and fits the bill nicely. It's an unashamed two-seater with the low-slung, predatory looks you associate with race cars. The engine is where it should be in a car like this – right behind the driver's head. If the R8 goes and handles as well as it looks, it'll take its place among the world's best and like all great Audis, it features Quattro all-wheel drive. It's worth adding that fabled Italian manufacturer Lamborghini is part of the big VW/Audi Group and may well have had some influence in the development of the R8. And make mine silver like the Audi-ancestor Auto Union Grand Prix racers of the 1930s.



Also brand new and revealed in Paris was the superlative Mercedes-Benz CL63 AMG. This is the ultimate statement as far as luxury coupes go and is priced to match, but it offers advanced technology, outstanding performance and drop-dead-gorgeous looks just about unmatched in the industry. There is a "base" CL, but the top dog is undoubtedly the 12-cylinder AMG version which, after the Paris show, propelled me (legally, I'll hasten to add) at 255 km/h along the Munich-Salzburg Autobahn. So solid and refined is this car, my drive companion was asleep in the passenger seat at the time and only stirred when the electronic limiter cut in to deny me an even faster top speed. The CL-Class coupes, based on the big S-Class sedans, have always found a spot in my "world's best" list over the years. The new one is more impressive than ever and one of the most desirable cars money can buy.

Anyone who's followed auto racing over the years and knows a little of its history won't need reminding of the impressive achievements of the If your tastes run to a more regal and opulent form of bugs-in-the-teeth legendary Ford GT40 at the Le Mans 24-hour race and others associated motoring than you'll get with a mere Mercedes CLK Cabriolet, the new with the World Sports Car Championship of the day. A 1960s icon, the Bentley GTC might just make it to your gift list - as it has mine. GT40 topped the best in the world back at a time when Ferrari was the Bentley has been hugely successful with its Continental GT 2-door car to beat in this class. Today, it's hard to imagine a major US automaker model and Flying Spur 4-door variant and has upstaged just about taking a serious run at overall victory in a race like Le Mans but there every rival in the super-luxury class. Unsurprisingly, then, a convertible is at least one compensation in the form of the Ford GT - a roadgoing version of the Continental was recently launched and it's a remarkable replica of the wonderful GT40. I have to say that if I could pick one race automobile by any standard. Claimed to be the world's fastest full 4-seat car I'd give anything to own, it would be a GT40 - so called, incidentally, convertible, the GTC is as luxurious as a car like this can possibly be. Its 550-horsepower twin-turbo W-12 will take you right up to 312 km/h if because under the regulations, it couldn't be more than 40 inches high. The car had a grace of line that has never been equalled since in a race Bentley is to be believed, but for most owners, it'll be the ultimate ride car in this class. I'd get some arguments from Porsche fans on this one, to Monte Carlo, Gstaad or perhaps Pebble Beach. Sitting in the back of but the GT40 just looked so right - and it went pretty well too. Today's this car at over 300 km/h with the top down must be quite an experience America Le Mans Series race cars are downright ugly in comparison. and I for one would be very tightly strapped in.



Clockwise from left: Mercedes-Benz CL63 AMG Coupe interior, exterior, Ford GT interior, exterior



So to be able to buy a replica of the original car – and a very close one at that – is a dream come true and full marks to Ford Motor Company for coming up with this beauty. Naturally, the car is packed with modern technology, but this in no way interferes with the GT's "heritage content." You can even get one in the fabled Gulf Team blue and orange, so it's easy to imagine you're Bruce McLaren or Dan Gurney flying down the Mulsanne Straight at Le Mans when you motor down to the golf club at (hopefully!) a more sedate speed.



Continental GTC from above, exterior, Bugatti Veyron exterior, interior

Who really does build the fastest, best looking and most prestigious sports cars? The question will never be answered because there are so many variables, but if one brand consistently comes to the fore, it's because it belongs there - and that name is Ferrari.



Even the mere mention of the name "Ferrari" conjures up images of decades of Grand Prix wins, fast drives across Europe, exhilarating performance, head-turning styling, unmatched prestige and above all, engineering excellence.

The Ferrari 612 Scaglietti is the choice for people who simply must squeeze a couple of passengers into a back seat now and again. To be brutally frank, you'd not want to sit there for 500 km, but for occasional use, the seats get the job done and they do constitute a key feature of this very interesting Ferrari model.

The heart of this handsome car is a Ferrari tradition of many decades – a front-mounted V-12 engine, in this case providing 534-horsepower from its 5.7-litres. In many ways, the 612 looks a lot like Ferraris of yesteryear, with more than a few vintage touches in its styling, something few fans of the marque will complain about. It's a successor to the old 400i 4-seaters of years gone by. Again, buyers (or gift recipients!) can choose a 6-speed manual or a 6-speed paddle-shifting semi-auto.

Of course, your imaginary gift list could be a lot longer than mine and it would probably include models I've passed over in order to cut the roster down to five mainstays (I wouldn't want to confuse that rich uncle, after all!).

Easy to add would be the BMW M6 Coupe, Porsche 911 Turbo, Maserati Quattroporte, Lamborghini Murcielago, Audi RS4, Mercedes-Benz McLaren SLR, Aston Martin Vanquish, Cadillac XLR-V, Chevrolet Corvette Z06, Jaguar XK, VW Phaeton and lots more.

And how about SUVs? I've always loved the original H1 Hummer - especially in Desert Storm camo colours - but a Range Rover would be most gratefully received. There's also the Cadillac Escalade, Lincoln Navigator, Audi Q7, Porsche Cayenne Turbo, Infiniti Q56, Lexus LX 470 and probably a few that don't spring to mind right now.

And if that benevolent gift giver is seriously well off, you could always go for the two most expensive vehicles it's possible to buy on this - and probably any other - continent. Both have "don't ask" stickers and neither will leave you a whole lot of change out of a million bucks. The unbelievably spiffy Maybach sedan from Mercedes-Benz was opulent enough to deliver Pavarotti to his wedding, so it should fit the bill for anyone wanting a car that's like a rolling Palace of Versailles. And Bugatti's amazing Veyron with its 1001-horsepower engine will bring you an exclusivity just about unmatched in the entire auto industry.

Just keep dreaming – who knows what delightful surprise may arrive on December 25th?



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## Health of the Aging Baby Boomers: Boomers Go Green for Health

By Sandra Tonn, RHN

few years ago if you were to ask baby boomers if they were getting enough greens they'd probably talk about golf or bowling greens. Today, however, getting enough greens means topping up on green food to increase energy, health and longevity.

Most baby boomers will agree winter is a season that brings many reminders of aging. With cold temperatures, less sunlight, less fresh food and possibly less exercise, this season is a perfect time to boost health with some of the many green foods available.

While most plants and many foods are green, the term "green foods" is used to describe chlorophyll-rich foods such as spirulina, chlorella and wheat and barley grasses, which are known to provide green power. The greener the plant, the greater amount of chlorophyll it contains. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, chlorophyll helps to maintain health by cleansing and rebuilding the body, and also counteracts inflammation. Most experts agree that chlorophyll has an anti-aging function as well, due to its antioxidant properties.

#### Spirulina

This blue-green algae is high in protein and a rich source of many important nutrients including B complex vitamins, beta-carotene, vitamin E, carotenoids, manganese, zinc, copper, iron, selenium, and gamma linolenic acid (an essential fatty acid). A study published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* (March 2001) concluded that the iron level in spirulina was comparable to – and more digestible than – that of beef.

Research also shows that spirulina may be helpful in the prevention of flu, virus and cancer, and that it offers protection for the liver. The blue pigment in this blue-green algae, called phycocyanin, has been shown to inhibit cancer-colony formation. Spirulina is also known to be an antiinflammatory, and is even showing up in skin care products due to its tightening and moisturizing properties.

Another good reason to consider spirulina during winter months is its immune-boosting properties. Spirulina has been used in Russia to boost the immune systems of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster victims. Studies suggest that spirulina increases production of antibodies and other cells that can ward off illness and disease.



#### Chlorella

A green algae, chlorella is comparable to spirulina, but features less protein and betacarotene and more chlorophyll. Chlorella is also better known as a detoxifier.

You'll probably find that chlorella is more

expensive than spirulina because it is more costly to harvest and difficult to process due to a tough outer cell wall. This toughness has proven valuable, however, because it binds heavy metals, pesticides and cancer-causing substances, such as PCBs, and safely carries them out of the body.

In addition to its detoxifying effects, chlorella has been studied for its cancer-preventing and immune-boosting properties. This green algae has also shown promise in the area of fibromyalgia syndrome research.

#### Green grass

It's not uncommon to see a lineup for a shot of wheat grass juice these days at juice bars in airports and shopping malls. Even those with wheat allergy or intolerance can enjoy the health-promoting benefits of wheat grass juice, since this grain does not pose a problem when in the grass form.

Why are boomers lining up for wheat or barley grass juice? The strong green liquid of these cereal grasses provides a powerful dose of energy, nutrition and protection. The energy boost comes from the high chlorophyll content, which also provides cleansing and rejuvenating actions. Nutritionally, the protein content of these grasses juice is similar to many meats, but with more vitamins. Wheat grass is said to pick up more than 90 of the 102 minerals available in soil, further increasing its nutrient profile.

One of the most appealing features of cereal grasses to baby boomers is its age reversing potential. Wheat and barley grasses contain a powerful antioxidant known as superoxide dismutase (SOD for short), which has been shown to slow cellular deterioration and mutation – helpful in the treatment of degenerative disease and in reversing the effects of aging. In addition, these healthful grasses offer anti-inflammatory properties.

#### Get your green

So, how does one benefit from all the immune-boosting, health-protecting and anti-aging effects of green foods? Health stores carry capsules, tablets and powders. You can find individual green nutrients, such as spirulina or chlorella, or a powder combination that may be mixed with water, juice or a shake. A liquid version is the most quickly and easily absorbed. Wheat and barley grasses are available at juice bars, but if you have a juicer or wish to invest in one, the grasses are easy and inexpensive to grow at home from seeds for the freshest option.

Are you wondering about the taste of green food? Green foods taste... well, green. Find out for yourself. Go green this winter for increased health, energy and longevity.



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## Bubbles: Champagne and **Other Sparklers**

By Gael Arthur

"In victory, deserve it; in defeat, need it."

~ Churchill



t's all a matter of perspective. For some, champagne represents the ultimate drink, a sublime illustration of the highest and best use of **L** both grapes and human ingenuity. For others, the thought of anything bubbly spawns an unfortunate association with the lukewarm, slightly fizzy sweetish stuff they have sipped or gulped at one too many weddings after one too many speeches.

The problem is a bit like comparing processed cheese slices with Stilton, or hamburger with tenderloin. The bubble scale is akin to the Richter scale, each one point increase representing a tenfold increase in quality. Sadly, there is not a direct price-to-quality correlation. The eight per cent of sparkling wines that qualify to be called champagne (that is, they are produced according to strict guidelines with grapes grown in the Champagne region of France) do not all fall neatly into the top of the scale.

Happily, there are many fabulous sparkling wines that are exquisite and can help protect your wallet from the expensive champagne habit.

The simple and safe way to expand your sparkling wine vocabulary beyond champagne is to look for the words "traditional method" or "méthode champenoise". These words will give you the assurance that the process of making the wine has not been rushed – you won't be drinking last Tuesday's production. Wine is made, then bottled along with a little concoction of yeast and sugar, and sealed with a crown cap (like a beer cap). The bottles are a marvel of human ingenuity, designed to withstand five or six atmospheres of pressure building up as the yeast works away on the sugar in a secondary fermentation, creating carbon dioxide – dissolved in the wine as tiny bubbles – and alcohol.

the alcohol content

getting too high. The wine that goes into the bottles is relatively low in alcohol, so sparkling wines made in this manner rarely top twelve per cent. After aging, the sediment is removed and a nice fat cork is jammed in the top, with a wire cage to keep the bubble where it belongs until you are ready to drink it.

Great winemakers all over the world have developed their own strategies for making this celebratory wine. Sometimes, they follow in Champagne's footsteps, building on Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, like BC's own spectacular Sumac Ridge Steller's Jay (well, with a bit of Pinot Blanc in there as well...) and New Zealand's Cloudy Bay Pelorus. In other countries, the method of production is the traditional one, but the grapes are indigenous to the region. There are some wonderful wines that are both affordable and tasty - real bargains for the consumer.

The reality is that few of us can justify champagne every time we Indeed, there are a million quotes about champagne, Churchill's reportedly feel like celebrating. A wise imbiber will always have both a bottle of being "In victory, deserve it; in defeat, need it." champagne and a good cava in the fridge, allowing the circumstances Is one champagne better than all the others? Definitely, but what I to dictate which should be opened. If that sounds excessive, think think is the best may not be your favourite. And please don't go on the about it for a minute. Aren't most causes for celebration a surprise? ratings alone - those are just guidelines and the opinions of a few people Who wants to wait for the champagne to chill? If you do need to chill a who taste a lot. (If they told you that pig's ears were the best thing on the bottle quickly, don't wedge it in the freezer (if you forget it, you will be menu, would you order them?) too upset to celebrate). Instead, fill a champagne bucket or a large bowl Choosing wine - any kind of wine - is all about personal preference. with a combination of ice cubes and cold water and leave the bottle in Tasting champagne and other sparklers side by side is an extravagant project, there for at least 15 minutes. but there is an easy and affordable way.

Wait a minute, cava? Isn't that Spanish for cave? Well, er, sort of. It is, more importantly, the easy way to refer to the Spanish sparkling wine that is a personal choice for the best value alternative to champagne. You know, for the "whew,

made it through to Thursday and the Visa bill isn't nearly as bad as I your chance to taste more than 700 wines from 180 wineries, all in one expected" moments in our lives. Cava has been made in Spain for more room. Start with the sparkling wines to celebrate your good fortune at being than a hundred years and the price is hard to beat (in the \$15 range!). surrounded by so many wonderful wines. Then, later, when your taste buds The main grape varieties for these Spanish sparklers are definitely are numbed by plummy, jammy, cigar box reds, wake them up with a crisp clean refreshing sparkling wine. The festival runs from March 26 to April 1. Go to www.playhousewinefest.com for information and tickets.

not household names - Macabeo and Parellada and Xarel-lo. No matter, try some cava and see how it compares. Segura Viudas, Codorníu and Freixenet all have several products available in Canada - just watch out

A brief word about sparkling wines that are not made by the traditional for the sweetness codes. method. Modern science has devised all sorts of faster, less expensive ways Sparkling wine comes in different sweetness levels, but for some arcane of getting the bubbles in. At the far end of the spectrum, carbonation reason, Extra Dry is NOT the driest one you can get: there is an Extra serves to quickly convert a still wine to a sparkling one - in pretty much Brut and, in the case of cava, Brut Nature is the driest. When in doubt, the same way as club soda is made. In the middle, the Italian offerings Brut is safe for pretty much all sparkling wines (if you want dry) – if you of Prosecco and Asti are different again. They are cheery and fun, and are uncertain, ask for help. perfect for the summer on the back deck, but don't ask them to be more Of course, it's hard to compare champagne to anything else. What than they are.

makes it "the real thing" is more than the method of getting the bubbles inside the bottle, and a lot more than just French marketing prowess. It is the selection of grapes, the growing conditions and the aging of the wine before release. Every champagne house has its own style and there is a real commitment to making champagne taste consistent, year after year. This involves a number of rigorous procedures and, in particular, very careful blending of the wines. Champagne houses keep reserve wines from previous vintages, to ensure that they are always able to release wines that match their consumers' tastes.

The champagne most commonly found on Canadian shelves is Brut non-vintage, a label which sends a message to the consumer that this bottle should taste pretty much like the last bottle you had, even if it was three or four years ago. When there is an excellent year (maybe four or five years out of every ten), vintage champagne will be made - a reserve wine, if you will, with the year of harvest on the label and a price tag to match its rarity. Again, each house has its distinctive style, and a vintage bottling gives it the opportunity to showcase its style and build its reputation.

Famous people seem to love champagne beyond the norm, often adopting a single brand (this, long before the days of product placement). Perhaps they have had the luxury of trying them all, or perhaps they just like the label. For the exceptionally wealthy, there are wonderful options, often associated with a person. The Pol Roger Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill wasn't created until ten years after his death, but capitalized on the fact that he apparently only drank Pol Roger.

*"Champagne represents the ultimate drink,"* a sublime illustration of the highest and best use of both grapes and human ingenuity."

The Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival is only a few months away - a perfect opportunity to taste a few dozen of them. With Australia as the host country, there might even be some sparkling shiraz on offer. This is

And finally, to food. The purveyors of champagne and sparkling wine will tell you everything works, then go on to suggest mushroomstuffed lobster (or is it lobster-stuffed mushroom?) or some equally time-consuming and complicated recipe. What about something as spontaneous as the occasion that warrants cracking a bottle? Less time in the kitchen means more time enjoying the wine and the company of friends who deserve the best. Here is an unbearably easy appetizer to pair with champagne or a good sparkling wine. It can even be prepared ahead and then thrown under the broiler after the first few sips of bubble.

#### Nectarine and Prosciutto Appetizer

4 nectarines

Juice of one lime

16 slices Italian prosciutto, very thinly sliced

Fresh ground nutmeg

Slice the nectarines in eighths and generously squeeze lime over the slices. Cut prosciutto slices in half lengthwise and wrap them around the nectarine slices, securing with a toothpick. Broil for about 8 minutes, watching carefully. Remove from oven and grate nutmeg generously all over, particularly on the exposed ends of the nectarines. Squeeze a bit more lime and serve immediately. Serves 6.

# Luxury Holiday Shopping

#### By Catherine Dunwoody

ere's the lowdown on what you simply must-have, must-wear and are sure to love, this fall/winter season. If it's hot, sought Lafter, and the ultimate in luxury and decadent style, it's right here. Read on...

#### **FASHION: Ready-to-Wear**

• Black ruled the runways at all the designer shows this season, making black, well, the new black. Worn head to toe, or paired with white or shots of brights, as shown here from Chanel's fall/winter collection.



Black and white cardigan \$2750, layered chiffon blouses \$1775 and \$1825, boots \$1625, belt \$725, all Chanel.



Jacket \$4475, dress \$4875, pants \$1900, boots \$1625, belt \$725, all Chanel.

• Flannel nightwear? Forget it. Silk lingerie is the only way to go, and those in the know look to **ChristineVancouver** for the absolute best. Shown here is the Bijoux - delicate and quietly sexy, this button-back chemise is 100% silk, \$198.00.



Lacoste has made a huge comeback, with the French sportswear label showing some light-hearted '80's touches for men and women this winter. Check out the funky colour splashes, the padded moon boots, mini's plus patent leather kicks for the guys. Fun, functional gear to brighten up any grey winter day.

Hat \$98, raincoat in wool/ polyamide \$690, cotton polo shirt \$120, all Lacoste.





Hat \$115, coat \$350, polar knit zipped jacket \$175, polo shirt \$110, Bermudas \$195, all Lacoste.

#### **FASHION: Bags and Shoes**

It's the little things that count, and this season accessories are extra important, making all the difference in finishing your look, and defining your personal style. Look for statement-pieces sure to stir conversation, and classics with a spin.

• The handbag: Oversized, rich in tone and texture. and in this case, the tactile reptile. Chanel, \$5575.





• Three important trends in shoes: leopard, lace and the platform sole. Browns Shoes has them all covered.



Think lace is just for lingerie? Try out B2's lacy, racy platforms, \$138. Perfect with your little black dress.

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Pointy toes have stepped back to let the star of autumn's footwear line-up take centre stage: round-toes. Shown here, a sleek navy stiletto pump, with its mens wear toe cap. Chanel, \$600.

Leopard print platform pump by Stuart Weitzman at Browns, \$498 - definitely sexy... meow!

Winter sun creates extra glare when snow and ice are involved it that can wreak havoc on your eyes. Protect yours all year 'round with chic shades like these. Especially smart are the yellow lenses (this colour is well known for its ease on the eyes when worn on the slopes) with black frames, by über designer Philippe Starck for Alain Mikli, \$560.

#### **FASHION:** Jewellery

These jaw-dropping designs are sure to send your delicate pearls to the back of the jewellery box. Minimalism has gone - time to pile on the bling and remember how much fun it is to accessorize.

• Superstar architect Frank O. Gehry has partnered with Tiffany to launch a collection of his own jewellery designs, using precious metals, wood and stones. Strong, unique pieces, like these shown, look ideal with clean, simple tops, (think a black turtleneck or the quintessential white shirt). Great gift idea for the woman who's drawn to forward-thinking design.









• Vancouver jewellery label Myka introduces its Absolute Holiday collection. Rich, almost Russian in feel, this collection uses burnished metallics in 24 kt gold and Swarovski crystals to create an antique look that's wonderful with velvets, faux-fur and embellished garments in shades of claret and amber. Prices range from \$56 to \$375.



• Danish design team Dyrberg Kern know a thing or two about high



end fashion jewellery. The woman's tux has never looked better than when worn with the sexy, icy bling pictured here. Or, try the chunky gold and pewter shades of the linked necklace and earrings, as shown gorgeous with fall's silvery grey fabrics.



**BEAUTY: Fragrance** 

and night, 75ml \$95.

heavenly-scented results.

for Her, 50ml \$190.



• When actress Hilary Swank was asked to be the face of Guerlain's new Insolence ad campaign, she responded with: "It didn't take me long to make up my mind. Guerlain has such a legendary past to build on. It was clear to me that I should accept... gladly!"











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#### **BEAUTY: Skincare**

Luxury cosmetic companies are offering the ultimate in skin care creams, with price tags to match. At last, the fountain of youth in a jar, and with the technology and ingredients to back up its promise. Indulge in one soon. After all, you only have one face.

• Chanel Sublimage. Touted as the French label's essential regenerating cream, from the Precision line. This anti-aging cream, at \$325 per jar, could well be the treat your face deserves.



Prevage from Elizabeth Arden. Allergan, the makers of Botox, have teamed up with Arden to offer this new anti-aging product, 50ml \$200.

#### **BEAUTY: Makeup**

New cosmetics to provide flawless-looking skin. Shimmer and sparkle, just in time for the holidays.

• Giorgio Armani's new Designer Shaping Cream Foundation smoothes on like silk, just as the master of smooth, fluid fashion had in mind when it was created, 30ml jar \$75.



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Nothing like a heady new scent to make you feel glamorous, sexy

and polished. Like the icing on a cake, and with zero calories.

• Armani Code is the latest fragrance from the line-up of

Giorgio's divine fragrances. This one has delicate notes of

orange blossom, vanilla and jasmine, lovely for both day

Fashion designer Narciso Rodriguez has been creating gorgeous in

the world of women's wear for 20 years. Layer up his sensual Musc

for Her fragrance with the ultra-rich body cream, for long lasting,

Here are some that are extra-delish, and yours to enjoy now.





 LancômeAbsoluePremium is formulated for women over 50. The cream contains an allimportant SPF 15, and is \$134.

- Estée Lauder's Mythical Beauty collection's Pure Colour eyeshadows glide on like velvet and come in gilded, luxe packaging. Each is \$20, available in 40 blendable shades.
- Lauder's Holiday Spirit limited edition launch is luminous and shimmery, perfect for sparkling at parties with just a glint of gold. **Brilliant Shimmer** All-Over Powder, \$42.

#### **BEAUTY: Hair**





Colder weather means drier skin and hair. Here, products

that are extra-quenching for thirsty tresses, plus some new ideas from a label you've loved for years.

• Schwarzkopf Professional introduces the new Limited Edition Seah Hairspa Wintercare Mask. Masques are not just for your face anymore, and this one offers the nourishment and protection your hair craves. Slather it on for an at-home beauty ritual, \$36.





• Well-known haircare brand Redken has a new, reinvented styling product line. Graphics on the packaging indicate the amount of control it offers, numbered from 1-26. Redken's design team do the hair for some the biggest runway shows each season, around the world, like Alexander McQueen, Prada and Ralph Lauren.

#### connoisseur's choice 5 **INNOVATIONS**

# Must-Have Gadgets:

The Hottest Gifts from the World of Tech

### By Dave Chalk

gathering dust.

From too-cool stocking stuffers to the outrageously lavish, here's something for everyone on your list.

t feels like the holiday season really sneaked up on me this year. One minute I was strolling on the beach in shorts and a t-shirt, and the L next it was raining and there were Christmas decorations everywhere. To help avoid that Christmas Eve dash for presents, I've compiled a list of a few of my favourite things, all of which would make outstanding gifts. Admittedly, some of the items are a little over the top, but what are the holidays without a little fun? Just make sure you're buying the right thing for the right person. The last thing I'd want is for any of these incredible items to sit idle,

Chances are pretty good you know at least one avid skier or snowboarder. So why not outfit them with the very latest in headgear, courtesy of Motorola and Burton's R.E.D division. The Audex Ordinance hat is stylish headgear – with built-in wireless. Motorola Bluetooth stereo speakers allow you to hear all your calls handsfree. The headphone wheels let you easily control phone calls or music with your gloves on, while the wind-resistant microphone means you can keep talking while swooshing down the slopes. If you know somebody who simply can't live without their phone, then this gift will help make sure that

taking calls on the slopes won't get in the way of the fun. But it's not just a fancy phone speaker. Set up the Audex Ordinance with any wireless music device and you can kill some moguls while your favourite tunes provide the soundtrack – without the hassles of headphones or cords. The Audex Ordinance hat is compatible with any Bluetooth 1.1 or 1.2 enabled device, and at a moderate \$270, it's a pretty reasonable (but undeniably cool) gadget gift. www.redprotection.com



One consistently popular gift for the past few seasons has been the iPod series of portable music players. Sure, it's enough to give a new iPod nano (they come in fantastic colours now, too) but what about finding a stylish way to protect them from drops and scratches? Designers Marc Jacobs and Gucci have the answer. The Marc Jacobs Music Holder has a polished nickel clip with a Marc Jacobs plaque on the back and is available in black, cherry, or aquamarine. Gucci has designed a more versatile model. It fits other types of music players and cell phones, as well as the iPod. The two ring in at around \$200 each. That's not too much to make your giftee's iPod the most stylish on the block. www.marcjacobs.com www.gucci.com

If cell phones and serenity seem like completely incompatible ideas to you, take a look at the Serene phone. A creation from design masters Bang & Olufsen in collaboration with tech giant Samsung, this is the very latest in mobile phone design. As with most B&O products, they've thrown out the rulebook on this one. Everything about this phone is different, from the motorized hinge that gently opens the cover to the circular keypad. Users may need a little time to adjust to the screen as well, which is at the bottom of the device instead of the top. The ringtones aren't your average, either, with three organic ones that sound like they'd be right at home in a yoga studio. We don't recommend you start taking calls during Downward-Facing Dog though. Available at select B&O stores and at Holt Renfrew in Toronto, the Serene rings in at \$1500. www.serenemobile.com

For all those music aficionados on your list, the versatile Sonos Digital Music System can spread music throughout your home with a single interactive remote control. The wireless Sonos Controller gives you access to millions of songs from Internet radio or from your own music collection. Plus, with Sonos ZonePlayers spaced throughout your house or apartment, you can play different music in different rooms, to keep everyone at home happy. The ZonePlayer 100 Bundle, complete with two ZonePlayers and Controller, is available for about \$1500. www.sonos.com



Know someone who just can't live without their computer? The ultra-tiny USB drive from BUSlink has a whopping 64GB of storage. That's enough memory to back up the entire contents of a main hard drive or more than enough room to fit in all of those photos, songs and movies to get you through holidays with the relatives. The size and convenience of this advanced external hard drive comes at a price though - USD\$5000 to be exact.

www.buslink.com Canadian computer manufacturer Suissa is challenging the idea of traditional PC aesthetics with its wooden computers. Forget disposable hunks of metal or plastic - these models are meant to become heirloom pieces. Plus, technicians Suissa are always available to repair or install any technological upgrades. Models and prices vary, but on average these elegant wooden computers cost about \$6900. www.suissacomputers.com

Home entertainment - the good stuff anyways - doesn't come cheap. Sure you could get a standard plasma TV, but why not get a Pioneer PureVision Elite PRO-FHD1 instead? This brand new TV is one of the very few plasmas to offer viewers full HD (1920 x 1080) resolution, with more than 2 million individual pixels. The higher pixel count, combined with superior processing, delivers a clear and accurate picture, particularly when viewing action flicks or sports. Combine this with a powerful home theatre receiver, Surround Sound speakers, and a Pioneer Blu-Ray Disc player, and



Suissa compute

there's really no need to go to the cinema anymore. The Elite PRO-FHD1 rings in at \$9999. But just think how much you'll save on movie tickets. www.pioneerelectronics.ca



If you're looking for a gift for someone who can't let go of their vinyl records, ELP has just the thing. This laser turntable, the product of 15 years

of refinement, plays all those records in all their analog glory with a contact-free optical system impervious to footsteps, dust and door slamming. It also won't wear down the grooves in your records like a traditional needle would. Incredibly, this system can also play broken records,



as long as you've still got all the pieces and haven't used tape or glue to stick them together. Revive your LPs and relive your youth for USD \$15,000. www.elpj.com

#### connoisseur's choice **s INNOVATIONS**

Photos this page, clockwise from right: The Aquada made by Gibbs in the UK, ESP3000 by SilverTip Marine Products, Ballroom Dancing Robot, Aquada



in billionaire adventurer Richard Branson, who used his Aquada to drive across the English Channel in record time. You can drive straight into the water from the beach, a boat ramp, or a slipway. From there all you need to do is press a button and presto – it's like a life-sized Transformer. The wheels automatically rise and as you press the accelerator, nearly a tonne of thrust gets this car-boat planing. Powerful enough to tow a water skier, the Aquada combines the thrill of a convertible with all the fun of a high-performance speedboat. It's yours for a cool £75,000 – half the original price. www.aquada.co.uk

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traditional boat, you should also think about how to protect it. There were so many cases of boat theft in Vancouver last year that the city has announced a Bait Boat program similar to the hugely successful Bait Car initiative. So if you're giving a boat as a gift this year, be sure to get protection. SilverTip Marine Products has just the solution. Using GPS satellites, the ESP3000 security system can pinpoint the boat's location if it gets stolen. Most intruders will be scared off by the pre-programmed 120 dBA siren, but perhaps you'd like to instill a little more fear.

If you're thinking about giving someone a

Additional defensive tactics, such as turning on strobe lighting and flashing the interior/exterior and running lights, can also be programmed into the system. And if your boat does indeed disappear, it won't be gone for long. The ESP3000 will alert you via email and text messages and then phone

to advise you of a security breach. Once you enter your PIN code, the location of the boat will be disclosed. After that, it's up to you to notify the authorities. Peace of mind is available from \$1999. www.silvertipmarine.com Finally, for fans of

aquada

"Dancing with the Stars," give them their very own Ballroom Dancing Robot.



They'll never be without a perfect partner again. These incredible robots are battery powered and can sense and anticipate their partners' every move. Reportedly they are quite agile too. While it sounds like a husband's perfect escape from endless Saturday nights in ballroom dancing classes, they only come in female form - for now. A Ballroom Dancing Robot will set you back about \$300,000, but just think how jealous all those people who are stuck dancing with humans will be. www.irs.mech.tohoku.ac.jp



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connoisseur's choice **s** 

WEALTH

dmit it: you dream about it. Winning the lottery. Finding a priceless painting in the **L** attic. Discovering you're the long lost relative of a billionaire. Whatever form the dream takes, chances are you've wondered what it would be like to suddenly become fabulously, fantastically rich.

For a lucky few, these dreams will become reality. Every year, people become rich, and many do it quickly. And that, according to Rod Bower of the T. Stenner Group of CIBC Wood Gundy in Vancouver, can be a big problem.

As a partner with a specialized Private Family Office managing wealth for families worth more than \$10 million, Bower has worked closely with a number of individuals and families as they experience the challenges of sudden wealth. He honestly admits that some of these cases rank as the most complex, and rewarding, challenges of his career.

"If you're not prepared for it, sudden wealth can create as many problems as it solves," Bower explains. "It literally has the power to turn The business owner your life upside down, or to amplify certain aspects of your personality," By far the most common "sudden wealth" scenario that Bower and his Bower says. "People who were always partners encounter. Typically an owner inclined to give will tend to embrace will work hard all their lives at their "If you're not prepared for it, sudden wealth philanthropy more fully, while those business, often taking a rather modest who have always spent freely will direct salary and being frugal with their can create as many problems as it solves." an even more substantial portion of personal finances. Then comes the day their wealth to luxury purchases." when the owner sells the business to a



As Bower explains, what makes sudden wealth particularly challenging third party, and voilà – a multi-millionaire is born. is the visceral response that accompanies it. "To manage wealth successfully, According to Bower, not all owners are overjoyed at the result. "To an you have to be logical and unemotional," he says frankly. But as Bower owner, a business often means more than just money - it's part of who points out, those qualities can be tough to find when dealing with your they are. Selling can often represent the closing of a meaningful chapter new-found wealth. "Imagine: a person with a net worth of \$500,000 sells of their lives," he explains. These feelings can sometimes lead to emotional their business and is suddenly worth \$10,000,000. The individual usually decisions, a risk owners need to be aware of before they sell. views a 5% movement in their portfolio as normal market volatility. But with a \$10,000,000 portfolio, a 5% drop amounts to \$500,000 - equal to their The executive entire net worth before they sold." In this way, everyday market movements Another route to wealth is through the boardroom: options and suddenly take on a much greater emotional significance, which can impede restricted stock are common methods of compensation in the corporate the individual's capacity to make sound investment decisions. world, and can make an executive a multi-millionaire in short order.

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### Suddenly, you're Rich! How to manage a sudden windfall-without stumbling.

**By James Dolan** 

It's this emotional component that is the hardest part of getting rich quick. "If you've grown up in a wealthy family, you likely understand wealth in a different way. You may not know how to manage that wealth yourself, but chances are someone in your family does. If you come into wealth suddenly, it's different. You may not know what to do with it, and nobody you know has been in this situation before either. That can be a very difficult position to be in."

Bower's approach to such difficulties is a dose of good-oldfashioned patience. "People often feel they have to change everything once they become wealthy," he explains. "In fact, one of the biggest benefits of wealth is time. You can now afford to be patient." Of course, the situations Bower encounters are a little different from the daydreams that most of us have. Bower identifies six types of sudden wealth "liquidity events" that he and his partners

have addressed in their practice. These include:

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A wish can teach a sick child that anything is possible. Even the Future. To make your donation or find out more please visit www.makeawish.ca or call us at the Make-A-Wish Foundation® of BC and Yukon at 1-866-277-9474 or the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Southern Alberta at (403) 228-3666.

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As Bower explains, such "hand-cuffs" are used as a way of retaining top talent. "Good people are hard to find, and even harder to keep" says Bower. "Significant option or restricted stock packages are effective ways to keep good people in the company.

Bower also notes that owning a big pile of company stock presents another challenge. "A concentrated stock position can leave executives vulnerable to stock-specific risk," he says. As Bower points out, this risk completely derailed retirement plans for many corporate employees between 2000 and 2002.

#### The heir

Many people would love to be a part of a wealthy family. But as Bower explains, the experience is often a lot less than it's cracked up to be. A large inheritance may look good on paper, but it could bring bickering, legal hassles and guilt.

"It depends on the family itself," Bower explains. "If the relationship between the parents and the children was strained, or if the siblings don't get along, then an inheritance can cause a lot of problems."

#### The athlete or entertainer

Salaries among athletes and entertainers have ballooned over the past several years. Along with their new-found fame, celebrities are often handed more money than they know what to do with.

"Financial maturity is the issue here," Bower points out. "If the After a rough plan is formulated, it's time to put the plan into action. One individual achieves this success early in their career, they may not be method that has worked for some of Bower's clients is to divide wealth emotionally ready to handle the wealth." As Bower explains, this makes into two distinct pools. The first is "core" money: "This is the money the individual vulnerable to the kind of wild spending sprees and other that maintains the family's current standard of living," Bower explains. unwise financial decisions that keep the tabloid press in business. "This is the money they can't afford to lose." The second pool is labeled "lifestyle" money. "This is the money that they can use to make changes The divorcee - buy a new house or car, take a trip, start a new business - whatever they need to do to feel good about themselves." Dividing wealth into these two The high failure rate of marriage has spawned a generation of wealthy divorcees. Bower considers these situations particularly challenging, mostly pools minimizes the risk of overspending – a significant problem among the newly wealthy.

because of the strong emotions surrounding the event. If the divorce is particularly "messy," those emotions can derail rational decisions and make planning difficult. "Sometimes the wealth is associated with the previous Even in a civil break-up, the individual's finances will have to be completely

Getting rich is one thing; staying rich is another. That's why Bower spouse," Bower explains. "That can make things a lot more complex." recommends that individuals who experience a sudden wealth event seek out professional advice as quickly as possible. As Bower explains, the ideal reconstructed. Depending on the complexity of the couple's affairs, there choice is an advisor who's familiar with the specific challenges created by could be problems with estate plans, or business succession." sudden wealth events. "You want someone who's worked through these situations before," he says. "As a prospective client, I would want to hire The lottery winner a team that has not only a range of expertise, but also collective wisdom "It does happen!" Bower admits with a laugh. Over the course of their from past experience with similar clients. Expertise and experience should years in the industry, he and his partners have worked with a handful of be non-negotiable when it comes to managing significant wealth."

lucky people who strike it rich by buying the winning ticket.

As Bower explains, lottery winners are particularly vulnerable to As Bower explains, whether sudden wealth turns out to be a dream or a nightmare depends on the receiver. "For some, it's the end of all making unwise financial decisions. "Often winners don't know a lot about wealth management, so you're educating them on the fly," he says. their troubles," he says frankly. "For others, it's just the start." To Bower, So what should you do if you suddenly find yourself in the above the deciding factor is not so much the individual's net worth, but how situations? As Bower is quick to point out, there is no one correct answer he or she views wealth itself. "Do you see wealth as an end in itself? Or to that question. No two people have the same financial goals, nor do is it simply a tool - one of many - for accomplishing life goals?" Bower they handle money exactly the same way, so each situation demands a asks rhetorically. "Your answer often depends on how much you have. And vice versa." different approach.

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That said, Bower does recommend that the newly wealthy follow the following process in order to keep their windfall secure.

#### Step 1: Take a time out

An unexpected windfall often leads to euphoria – an emotion that does not always lead to sound financial decisions. So Bower recommends that the first step in managing new wealth should be a "time out" when large purchases and investing decisions are deferred for a few weeks or months. "This will give the individual time to adjust to their new financial circumstances, and protect themselves from making unwise decisions," he explains.

#### Step 2: Prepare, plan, evaluate

Wealth has the power to change a life – sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. That's why Bower recommends some careful planning and

#### "Chances are you've wondered what

it would be like to suddenly become fabulously, fantastically rich."

preparation, so the individual can become more comfortable with their new-found wealth, and strategize about what changes need to be made. Bower suggests using the time out to review current finances and formulate new financial and lifestyle goals. At the end of this process, the individual should be able to make a "wish list" and

prioritize: what would he or she like to accomplish immediately, and what can wait?

#### Step 3: Separate wealth

#### Step 4: Seek professional help



ancis LaRouche, "Luxuria," oil on board, 35 ½ x 23 inches

**R**omanov Gallery is a regal space housed in the elegant Terminal City Club situated in the business district of downtown Vancouver. In fact, the gallery is positioned across from a little park where downtown passersby seek respite from everyday hustle and bustle. In addition to the natural beauty of this location, Romanov Gallery also enjoys the refinement of nearby private clubs, world-class hotels, the Cruise Ship Terminal, fine restaurants and the new and upcoming Vancouver Convention Centre, all of which makes it naturally predisposed to hosting collectors from around the world.

Its location is of no coincidence. Given that a fair majority of its clients are internationally based, arriving in Vancouver for business or for luxury travel, and that it specializes in international fine art, it seeks to appeal to these sensibilities and tastes.

Kelvin C. Beaudette, Director of Romanov Gallery, speaks about the gallery's raison d'être: "For the discerning connoisseur of exceptional acquisitions we exhibit one of Vancouver's finest selections of international oil paintings. Our showcase includes a world-class collection of Russian, contemporary European and international fine art of outstanding quality."

While the gallery's focus is on high end paintings, it has also assigned itself the objective of offering collectors original works of art with which to build a legacy. This takes into account art that will speak to the present and to future generations and will represent excellent investment opportunities. Thus a philosophy is followed that runs much deeper than quality offerings of art.

# Romanov Gallery Fine International Art



Alexander Sheversky, "Sunny Morning," oil on canvas, 30 x 60 inches



Andrei Tsoy, "Mystery of the Ninth Sun," oil and mixed media on canvas, 32 x 59 inche



Alexander Melnikov, "Four Seasons," oil on canvas, 39 x 39 inches



represent the 'blue chip' investments in that their value is secured and accrues sharply from one's initial purchase," says Beaudette, "but the extraordinarily high costs associated with these acquisitions and their relatively minimal offerings do not make it a reality for most." Romanov Gallery insists that high quality art that can increase its value in the present and for future generations is available now with current artists. Beaudette posits this idea: "It is better to invest in a first-rate painting from an artist whose work both moves you and offers the ongoing excitement of watching their careers flourish than a third-rate painting from a well-known 'master' whose namesake impresses more than the artwork itself."

As such, Romanov Gallery has aligned itself with a collection of artists whose works will continue to resonate for the collectors and their families. And for values that are reasonable, leaving the necessary room for the collection to grow.

Their catalogue is a carefully furnished exhibit of important artists today who are making themselves known around the world. Consider the following four artists - the first two classically-educated - who illustrate exceptional acquisitions and a trajectory of good investment for today and the future.

The work of Alexander Sheversky, whose comprehension of the interplay of light and shadow speaks to his vocation in the discipline of his icons, Rembrandt and Vermeer, is breathtaking. His masterful classicist technique gives way to a more contemporary predilection on his canvases.

With his education in Botticelli and Russian masters, the silent dramaturgy of Xue Yanqun's Renaissance-inspired portraiture is expressed in radiant colours that excites as much as it invites meditation.

Our most recent offerings in modern art include the inimitable Andrei Tsoy, who utilizes an abstract-representational medium. Given to influences stemming from literature, empire and monarchical pretensions, and classical civilization, Tsoy's mixed media work embodies the idea of cultures and ideologies of convergence, presented in an academic yet free-form manner.

Anna Sheversky, "Peonies in Blue Porcelain Jug," oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inches



Evgeni Troshev, "Samovar," oil on canvas, 25 x 29 inches

Below: Pavlik Stooshnoff, Owner, in Red Square, Moscow Right: Kelvin Beaudette. Director, at the Louvre, Paris



### Romanov



Piotr Shumashenko, "Spring Bells," oil on canvas, 27 x 34 1/2 inches

And Alexander Melnikov is a painter of bold, endearing figurative works that belie the usual concepts of portraiture. This scholar's fascination with late Medieval works lends him a two-dimensional yet modernist perspective for his subjects, wrought with symbolism, conferring pathos and beauty in his haunting figures.

These artists ably follow Romanov Gallery's outgoing philosophy: a carefully nurtured collection marrying the spirit of Old World masters with contemporary relevance, thus an outlook that honours traditional integrity while appealing to modern sensibility. This renders them as fine examples of legacy-building in one's own private collection.

Says Beaudette, "Our artists exemplify classical vocation - their masterpieces speak to an erudite sense of composition. Technical skill and form poetically converge to lay siege to the human spirit on an aesthetic tableau of raw human emotion. Each is timeless, each inspires, and thus represents a stately addition to one's collection."

Stately and timeless. This is the concept behind Romanov Gallery's outlook. An acquisition that considers inheritance and thus attests to inter-generational value and prestige. "For us the value of art is ascertained by one's falling in love with it, as well as being determined by the legacy it leaves," says Pavlik Stooshnoff, the owner of the gallery, with 45 years of experience as an art dealer, "and we are ambitious in meeting this!" Adds Beaudette, "It is better to acquire a superlative Sheversky or Tsoy than a second-rate Chagall for six figures because, at a fraction of the cost, one is left with room to invest further; our clients are elated at the prospect of watching the development of young masters in the making, knowing that the possibility of adding subsequent masterpieces to their collection is made more real by the immediate value they receive."



Xue Yangun, "The Poem," oil on canvas, 31 x 39 inches



Lev Verkman. "Russian Sailor," oil on board, 23 x 18 inches

**Romanov Gallery** The Terminal City Club 875 West Hastings Street Vancouver, BC V6C 3N9 604 687-6968 Private appointments: 778 228-2502 www.romanov.net





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Build your cultural legacy with an original oil painting from Vancouver's foremost purveyor of fine international art

Alexander Sheversky, Morning Adage, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches, 2006



#### connoisseur's choice 5

#### CULTURE

# The Expanded Perspective

By Jonni O'Connor, PhD

rom your perspective, is the cup half empty or half full? Don't say, "It depends on the situation." That's a cop-out. Your perspective is wrapped up in your belief system: if you say "It depends", you haven't yet taken the time to form a solid belief system about yourself and the world. You haven't taken yourself or the world seriously enough to give some conscious thought to forming your own beliefs. And if you don't care enough to do that, you'll be swept up in other peoples' opinions for the rest of your life.

Your perspective is instrumental to any and all decisions you make in life. All actions that you take in the world are completely based on these perceptions. It's what drives you forward or backward. That puts a lot of importance on your perspective and for good reason. It illustrates how necessary it is to gain the most

consistently open-minded, compassionate, positive and understanding perspective so that everything else can flow from that premise.

An expanded perspective is one that takes into account the vastness of the macro-picture of life. It recognizes patterns forming, pendulums swinging and history repeating itself. It doesn't get caught up in the limited emotional viewpoint of the dramatic moment. It is formed from trust, knowing and love rather than the narrow perspective of fear, drama and attachment. To put it succinctly: the limited perspective is pessimistic, whereas the expanded perspective is undoubtedly optimistic.

And realistic? The truth is that the "realistic perspective" doesn't really exist. You are either a pessimist or an optimist. There is nothing in between. You are seeing things in a limited way or in an expanded way. Sure, some people take the stance of being on the fence: pessimistic with some opinions and optimistic with others. They seem to flip back and forth depending on their mood or who has recently influenced them. They like to call themselves "realists" but that really means they haven't spent any time establishing their own genuine overall belief system. So they sway back and forth, being led by one group one minute and by another the next. They are wishy-washy, inconsistent and ultimately untrustworthy, for their opinion can change at any minute and by any influence. Without the strength of conviction they are weak and easily influenced. They can get caught up in a fear-based perspective quickly and dramatically and make poor decisions based on it. It happens all the time because they are surrounded by the loud noise of pessimists, and because it's not very fashionable these days to be optimistic. One gets called "Pollyanna" and "unrealistic" by all those affected would-be sophisticates. The trend has an insistently critical tone with much sarcasm and negativity. Critics sharpen their prose by writing the most creatively contrary reviews of people,

places, restaurants, companies, movies, leaders,

albums, fashion, you-name-it. Everything and

everyone is judged these days. Sarcasm wastes

all the wit; venom drenches the humour. It hurts

to hear or read the reviews if one is an optimist,

for it sounds like nasty gossip. While optimists

wince, pessimistic and wishy-washy people

begin copying the critics by speaking exactly

"See the difference between bright

wit and stinging sarcasm."

like them. Their opinions and viewpoints are all angled by their caustic pessimism. It's sharp, not soft. It's biting, not gentle. It's edgy, not heartbased. And its influence has a big effect on the wishy-washy.

But if you step back and consciously take the time to see them, you'll notice these trends and can choose not to be caught up in them. You can choose to see the difference between bright wit and stinging sarcasm. You can choose to see life with a combination of this wit and warmth rather than from the coldness of ridicule or the sadness of victimization. You can speak to others from a perspective of enthusiastic intelligence coupled with a compassionate voice. You don't have to lose your positive discernment or believe it's not valid because the pessimists' tongues are sharper. But you must make the choice and get off the fence once and for all.

Pessimists will choose to spend time with other pessimists: misery loves company. They will compete for the most barbed opinions and their perspectives will result in the most outrageous actions. Optimists will see their fear and disdain, but the optimists, in their courageous strength, will still be able to hold their own opinions. Their viewpoints will also trickle down into their decisions and actions as they share their perspectives with others who feel the optimism in their hearts.

The importance of the expanded perspective will make all the difference in your life.

also representing:

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