

# GOOD LIFE CONNOISSEUR

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*The Great Pyramid of Giza, Egypt*

*Photographer: Connie Ekelund*

*Camera: Sony A 850*

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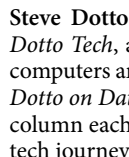
GOOD LIFE  
**CONNOISSEUR**  
The Connoisseurs' Choice in Luxury Living

Volume 8 | Winter 2010  
[www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com](http://www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com)

Contributing Editors



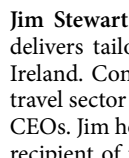
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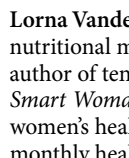
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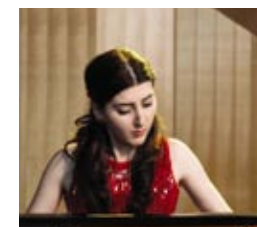
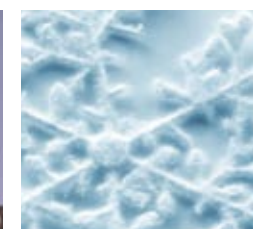
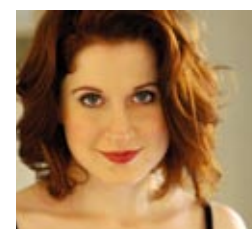
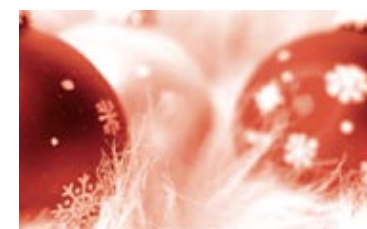
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# GOOD LIFE CONNOISSEUR

The Connoisseurs Choice in Luxury Living

Volume 8 | Winter 2010  
www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com

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## Published by

### Fusion Publishing Inc.

**Canadian Office**  
Fusion Publishing Inc.  
#317 – 1489 Marine Dr.  
West Vancouver, BC  
Canada V7T 1B8  
888.925.0313  
info@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com  
www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com

## Circulation & Distribution

Canada Post  
Newsstand  
Digital

## Subscriptions

Hard Copy Subscriptions: 1 year - \$24.95  
888.925.0313 Extension 1001

Digital Suscriptions: Free  
www.tiny.cc/connoisseur

info@GoodLifeConnoisseur.com  
www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com



www.facebook.com/GoodLifeConnoisseur

Publication Mail Agreement #41124091  
**Non-deliverables please return to:**  
Fusion Publishing Inc.  
Good Life CONNOISSEUR Magazine  
#317 - 1489 Marine Drive  
West Vancouver, BC, V7T 1B8 Canada

Good Life Connoisseur is published four times a year by  
Fusion Publishing Inc.

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Apparently, some ten million people visit Egypt every year. Likely that shouldn't be a big surprise considering the number of children around the world, who think to themselves while studying history, "I'd really like to see the Pyramids some day." When it comes to the proverbial bucket list I suspect Egypt is on 99% of them. And why not? Where else is there such a concentration of extraordinary history? Plus they are finding more artefacts on an ongoing basis. It's an amazing experience to spend each day visiting another temple or two dating from two or three thousand years ago. A must see for sure!

This sense of the passing of time and people is probably a little more prominent in my mind as I'm about to become a grandfather for the very first time. I know; how can that be when I'm barely past thirty. No, wait, that's how old my daughter is. The notion of helping the next generation lead the following generation certainly lends history to one's life. I wonder, will he be an archaeologist? (Yes, we already know both his sex and name). The Egyptians would have gone to a soothsayer. Our science is a little more accurate. I wonder what it will be like for his children. Will they be designed?

After the stress of welcoming another person into the world, we're going to take a break by visiting Scottsdale to be pampered with spa treatments and epicurean delights. I know I always say we don't do repeats, but Scottsdale is the exception to the rule. When the sun doesn't rise till nine and then sets by four on a rainy day, thoughts of sunshine, spectacular scenery and some of the best golf and spas in the world is definitely a draw.

As always we'll return with lots of photos so I suggest you have your reservation for the next issue by filling in the form opposite.

Also, later on in this issue we have a promotion for the First Annual *Good Life Connoisseur* Art Auction, with proceeds going to Operation Rainbow, an organization that truly makes a difference. Artists from across the country are participating. Go to the website and Facebook page to vote for your favourite.

Terry Tremaine  
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# GOOD LIFE CONNOISSEUR

The Connoisseur's Choice In Luxury Living

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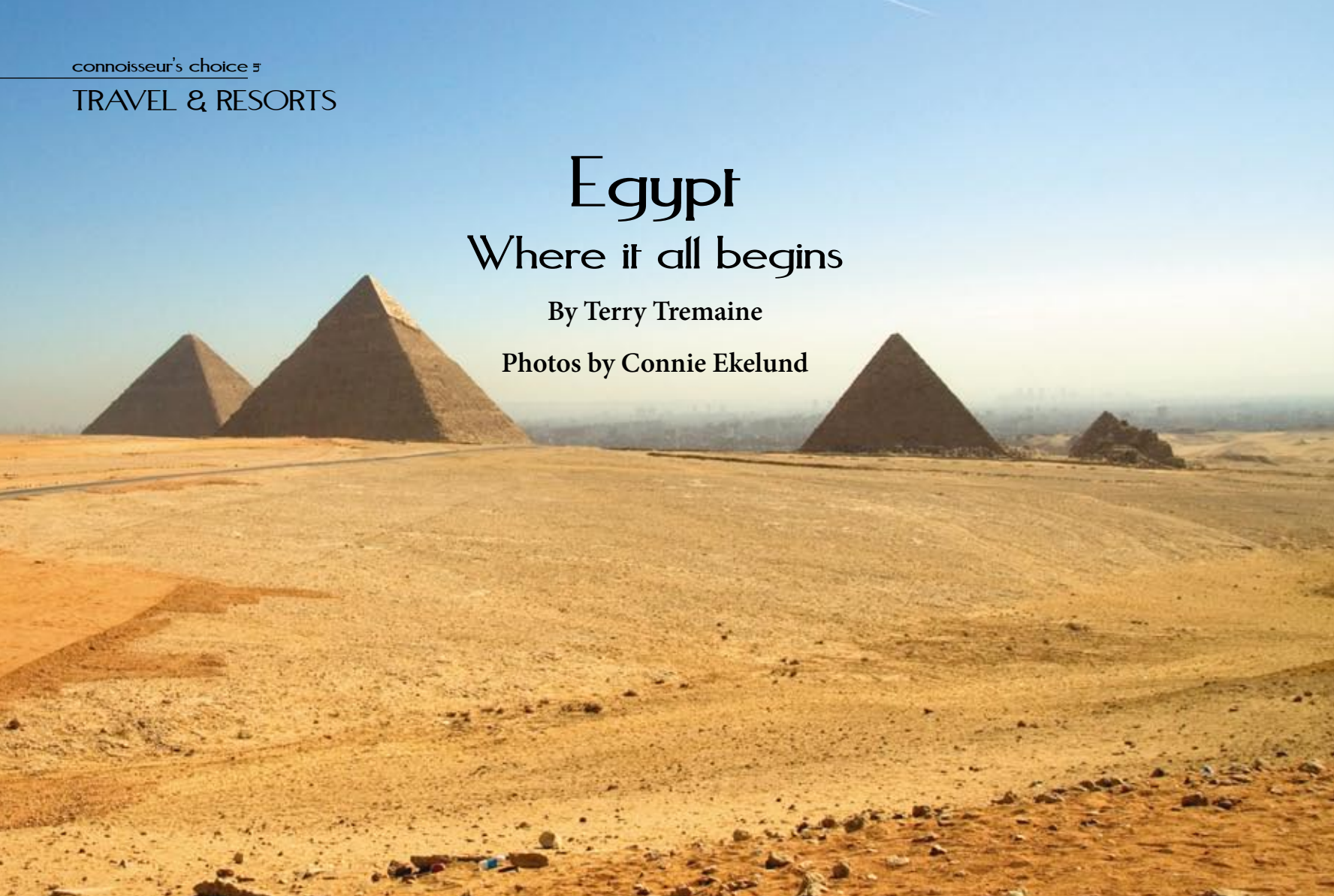


# Egypt

## Where it all begins

By Terry Tremaine

Photos by Connie Ekelund



My image of the Great Pyramids and the Great Sphinx of Giza has always been of them sitting regally on their own in the middle of the desert. So after stepping onto the balcony of our suite at the Mena House Oberoi Hotel in Cairo and seeing the pyramids on the other side of the road, it was apparent some rethinking was definitely in order. Further shattering my image was the sound and light show playing off the pyramids that we took in on our first evening in Egypt. Originally well removed from Cairo, the city has grown to meet the pyramids. Tourists wanting to see what's likely number one on everyone's bucket list, certainly take advantage of the proximity. Every evening some 4,000 people are seated in a gallery built facing the Sphinx to experience history through a very modern high technology presentation.

We had arrived in Cairo by way of a direct flight from New York. The new Egypt Air terminal was spacious and immigration and customs was a very efficient process. The only peculiarity was the need to buy a visa prior to reaching the custom official. This was accomplished in short order as we were first in line. Once we had collected our bags, we were met by Mohamed, our Abercrombie & Kent (A&K) tour co-ordinator, who proceeded to ensure our whole trip was worry-free. Generally we don't seek out group tours, but having now been to Egypt with A&K, I would suggest this is the way to go.



Mena House was originally built in 1869 for the Egyptian King Isma'il Pasha as a hunting lodge, we learned from Tarek Lofty of the Oberoi Hotel group. Tarek has had some association with the property for most of his life. He has such a passion for the property that he has made it a preoccupation to collect associated photos dating prior to 1952. These photos grace the walls of the hotel and provide a perspective on the social elite from that era. The property has played an important role in Egypt's history. Today it's a luxury resort providing the quality service and amenities you would expect from one of the finest hotels in Africa. The hotel was an excellent base camp from which to explore the antiquities we had come to see.

*“Some 15,000 people a day visit the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities in Cairo. It contains the world's largest collection of Pharaonic antiquities, and many treasures of King Tutankhamen.”*

First up, of course, were the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx. Simply said, they are extraordinary. However, the experience is principally one of walking around the outside of these immense, ancient structures. Only one of the pyramids can be entered. The passage is only a few feet tall and barely wide enough for two crouching people to pass each other. It is a few hundred feet long and has a 30-degree incline leading to a large empty chamber. As with all the historic attractions found in Egypt, they attract huge numbers of tourists. So as one stream of people climbs in, another is coming out. Those with any sense of claustrophobia will be most uncomfortable. Of the 19 people in our tour group, only six completed the climb to the chamber.

On site is the Solar Boat Museum, housing the oldest, largest and best preserved vessel from antiquity. Discovered in 1954, the 141-foot vessel was originally built for King Cheops around 2,500 BC. When found, the boat was in a kit format of over 1,200 pieces and had to be assembled, which took years. This “masterpiece of woodcraft,” constructed of planks lashed together, is housed in a building designed to allow visitors to view the boat from all sides.

Some 15,000 people a day visit the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities in Cairo. It contains the world's largest collection of Pharaonic antiquities, and many treasures of King Tutankhamen. The Mummies Room houses 11 royal kings and queens of ancient Egypt, including the Great Ramses II, Egypt's longest-ruling pharaoh. Seeing mummies close up, it's amazing to realize how long these bodies have been preserved and are still in remarkably good condition.



From Cairo we flew to Luxor to board the luxury cruise boat, the Sun Boat IV. Again, the staff from Abercrombie & Kent organized our baggage and boarding passes so the short trip was absolutely trouble free. Further, they have their own dock at Luxor so our boat was easily accessible. There are many tourist cruise boats on the Nile all travelling to the same points of interest. It's not unusual to see six boats tied side to side, meaning passengers on the outside boat have to pass through the other five boats to get to and from the dock.

The Sun Boat IV is a most comfortable way to cruise the Nile. A maximum of 80 guests can be accommodated in reasonably spacious, well-appointed suites. It even has a small pool on the upper-deck; a true bonus in the Egyptian heat. The food and service is commendable.


Prior to boarding we visited the Temple of Karnak, the first of a number of temples we would explore. Unlike the pyramids, the temples were designed for people to enter and be impressed. The Temple of Karnak is actually three main temples built and enlarged over a 1,300-year period. The great “Hypostyle Hall” found in the centre of the vast complex is an incredible forest of giant pillars, covering an area larger than the whole of Notre Dame Cathedral. The walls are covered with scenes of battle.

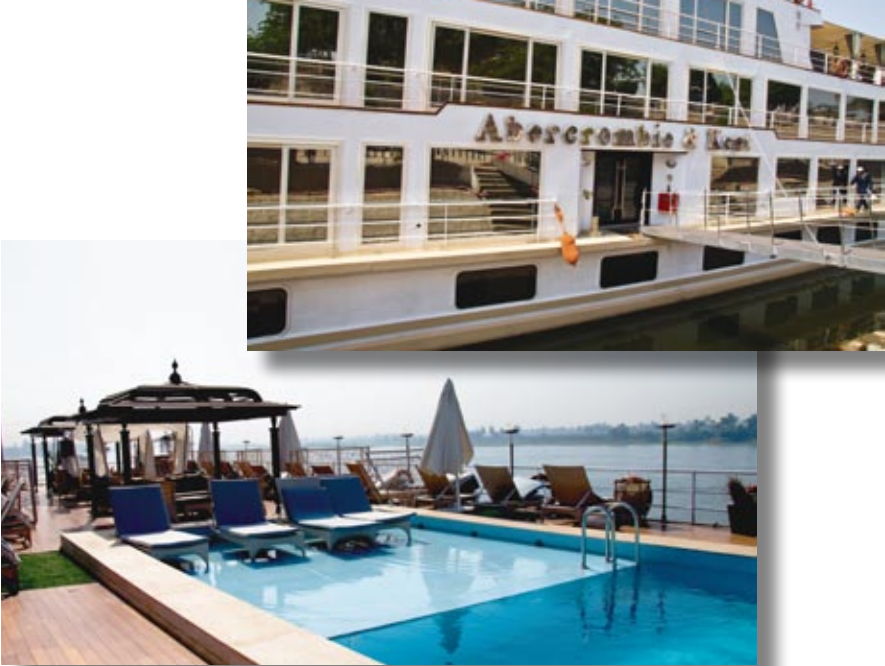
Outside the hall can be found the Obelisk of Hatshepsut. It is 97 feet high and weighs approximately 320 tons. Besides the Lateran obelisk in Rome, this is the tallest standing obelisk in the world. Walid el Batouty, our Egyptologist, explained that when Hatshepsut's father, the king, died, she was able to gain power. That was very unusual for a woman at the time. She banished her nephew to a military school. When he eventually was able to gain power he had a wall built around the obelisk to hide her memory and had her images and cartouches (name) carved out of the temple walls. This “hacking” is apparent as one wanders the temple.

**Babaghanoug Salad**  
*By Chef Fathy Hassan (MS Sun Boat IV)*  
*Serves 10*

**Ingredients**  
1.5 kg Eggplant  
500 g Onions  
200 g Tahini (sesame paste)  
½ tsp Lemon Juice  
5g Cumin (ground)  
5g Red Chilli  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Instructions:**  
Roast the eggplants and onions in a 400°F oven. Once roasted, peel under water. Chop eggplants and onions and mix together with all the rest of the ingredients. Garnish with a fresh sprinkle of olive oil, chilli and parsley. Serve with pita bread. Enjoy!





The Temple of Karnak, Luxor

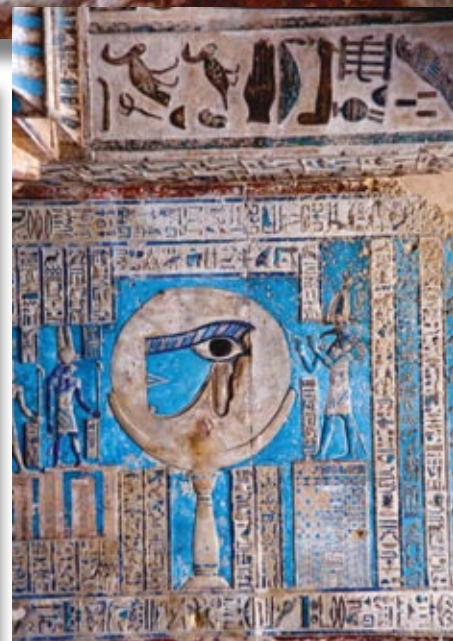


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The Temple of Queen Hatshepsut



On the West Bank of Luxor is the Valley of the Kings. Beginning with the 18th dynasty, the kings abandoned the Cairo area and pyramid style tombs. The Valley is home to tombs cut into the limestone following a similar pattern: three corridors, an antechamber and a sunken sarcophagus chamber. The walls of the tombs open to tourists tend to be covered in untouched, original colourful paintings depicting the stories associated with the particular king. This valley can best be described as extraordinary, a term that comes to mind often when in Egypt. One of the tombs houses Tutankhamen's mummy, which is on display in a climate-controlled chamber.

Nearby on the desert plain, set against limestone cliffs, is the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut. She was a very successful pharaoh and a great builder and the temple reflects her success. Unfortunately, more hacking as a result of her nephew is found here.

The Luxor area is remarkable for the number of antiquities found under the sands surrounding the area. The governor of Luxor is quite progressive and has been successful in having a number of mosques moved in order to uncover ancient wonders. The latest being the three-kilometre-long road of sphinxes leading to the Temple of Luxor. The road is bordered by many opposing sphinxes standing but a few feet apart. Another recent undertaking was the removal of a small community sitting on one of the sandy hills near the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut in order to begin digging on the site. Not too surprising was the discovery that many of the homes concealed the residents' own diggings in the search for treasure. There are numerous international research groups conducting their own digs in the area. The thought is there is much more to be discovered.



The Temple of Hathor, Dendera



From Luxor we set sail for Qena. Cruising the Nile provides an insight into the diversity of Egypt and the importance of the river. Near to the water there are lush fields interspersed with built up communities and often times there are groups of youngsters playing in the shallow water who yell and wave as the boat sails by. As a backdrop to the green vegetation lie the desert dunes with nothing but endless sand.

*“The amazing ceiling, with its astronomical representations, is the major attraction for many visitors...and is where the term horoscope originated.”*

The Temple of Hathor, found on the shore opposite Qena, was built in the first century BC and is one of the best-preserved temples in Egypt. Ptolemy VIII and Queen Cleopatra II built it, and then later, Roman emperors continued to decorate it and honour the goddess Hathor; the goddess of maternity, love and music. The Greeks identified the goddess Hathor as Aphrodite.

The amazing ceiling, with its astronomical representations, is the major attraction for many visitors. It is divided into seven divisions, one of which shows a perfect representation of the zodiac signs and is where the term horoscope originated. The relief on the southern exterior wall depicts Cleopatra VII and her son Caesarian, son of Julius Caesar, making offerings to Hathor and the other deities.



Back in Luxor we toured the Temple of Luxor as the sun was setting on the entrance Pylon. The temple was dedicated to the triad of Amun, Mut, and Chons and was the focus of the annual Opet Festival, in which a cult statue of Amun was paraded down the Nile from nearby Karnak Temple to stay a while, with his consort Mut, in a celebration of fertility. The festival itself was to reconcile the human aspect of the ruler with the divine office. At the temple, the king and his ka (the divine essence of each king, created at his birth) were merged, the king being transformed into a divine being. The crowd outside, anxiously awaiting the transformed king, would cheer wildly at his re-emergence. This solidified the ritual and made the king a god. The festival was the backbone of the pharaoh's government.

Next we cruised to the Temple of Horus at Edfu, the best preserved ancient temple in Egypt, and the second largest after Karnak. It was believed that the temple was built on the site of the great battle between Horus and Seth. Hence, the current temple was but the last in a long series of temples built on this location.

Further upriver is the temple known as Kom Ombo, which is actually two temples consisting of a temple to Sobek, the crocodile-headed god, and a temple of Haroeris the falcon-headed sky god. Everything is duplicated along the main axis. There are two entrances, two courts, two colonnades, two hypostyle halls and two sanctuaries. There were probably even two sets of priests.



The Temple of Luxor



Left and above: The Temples of Ramses and Hathor, Abu Simbel

Aswan, further up river, is the site from which most of the rock was quarried to build the various temples. Here in the granite quarries is a huge unfinished obelisk which would have been the largest of all the obelisks, but it cracked as it was being carved. It's the site of this giant unfinished monument that makes the back-breaking work required to build all these amazing temples become absolutely apparent. The stones were carved by men beating the rock with a round rock held in their bare hand. Then the finished rock had to be dragged or rolled on trees to specially built boats, remains of which have been found, waiting in the Nile for transport to the various locations along the Nile.

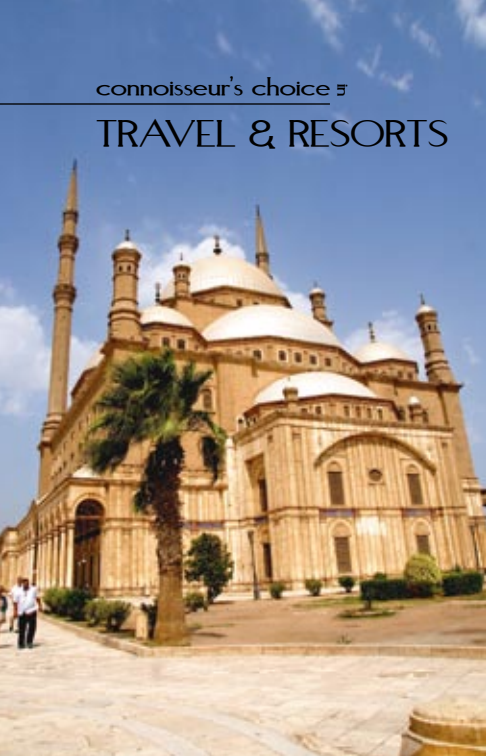
Nearby is Philae Temple, which was dismantled and reassembled on Agilika Island to save it from the waters rising as a result of building the Aswan dam. The temple is dedicated to the goddess Isis with most of the work done by the Romans; a period of immense popularity for Isis when pilgrims would come from all over the Mediterranean.

A short flight from Aswan are the Temples at Abu Simbel. The flight is recommended as otherwise it's a four-hour drive on a perfectly straight road through the very uneventful Sahara Desert. Aside from the pyramids, the Temples at Abu Simbel are likely the most recognized monuments in Egypt as a result of the removal and reconstruction being so closely followed around the world. When the temples were threatened by submersion in Lake Nasser, due to the construction of the High Dam, the Egyptian government secured the support of UNESCO. During the salvage operation, the two temples were dismantled and raised over sixty metres up the sandstone cliff where they had been built and reassembled and covered with an artificial mountain.

Originally built by Egypt's longest-ruling pharaoh, Ramses II, the first temple is dedicated to Ra-Harakhte and was designed such that on the day of solstice the light of the sun would just touch the nose of the statue of Ramses found on the very back wall. Amazingly, with reconstruction the event happens just one day later.

*“When the temples were threatened by submersion in Lake Nasser, due to the construction of the High Dam...the two temples were dismantled and raised over sixty metres up the sandstone cliff”*





Walid and Terry



Back in Cairo for the last few days of our adventure the Four Seasons First Residence Hotel was our base camp. As expected, the very well-appointed property delivered on what the Four Seasons is recognized for, superb service.

Cairo is home to 22 million. Walid pointed out one traffic signal light, and suggested it was one of only four in the whole city. Further, it was apparent that the white lines painted on the multi-lane highways were simply for decorative purposes only. On one occasion we came out of the hotel with the intention of catching a taxi only to discover the traffic was literally not moving at all.

We found Egyptians very friendly and English was commonly used. They all seem to have a great sense of humour and welcome an opportunity to display it. As an example; as we toured one site, one of the guides got up and stood in my way saying for no apparent reason I couldn't go where I was heading. I was perplexed until a huge smile broke across his face and we did a high five. Often times the banter between the hawkers in the market was full of humour as well. One claimed I had broken his heart when I walked away. My retort that it must be often broken brought forth a good giggle.

Tourism must be a huge part of the economy of Egypt and there seem to be white-uniformed tourist police everywhere. Their purpose is the safety of the tourists and they take their job seriously. Walid claimed a survey had been done which demonstrated some sixty-three percent of all the school children in the world want to visit Egypt and see the monuments. It is apparent as adults many of them do and aren't disappointed with what they find. Egypt is the trip of a lifetime!

On the way back we took a little time to stay over in New York which helped to readjust to time zones and the like before heading home. The Four Seasons Hotel, New York, certainly helped to make the adjustment that much easier. Then while sitting having lunch in Bryant Park we thought we should spend more time here. Hmm, maybe the basis for a future issue. ■

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17th Green at The Old Course, St Andrews. © 2010 St Andrews Links Trust

Scotland and Ireland boast some of the most breathtaking golf courses in the world. The majority of these are located at seaside venues, and are generally known as “links.” Effectively, a links is the parcel of land found between the arable ground and the sea. These environments tend to be proliferated with natural sand dunes, long thick grasses and windswept plains; all of which make for a landscape that is open to the elements and one that requires an imaginative style of play.

**The Old Course, St Andrews**

Golf has been played on The Old Course since the 15th century, and much of that history has percolated down through the years to leave us with the Mecca we refer to today as The Home of Golf. However, much has also changed here over the last 600 years. The number of holes has been decreased from 22 to 18, and the routing changed to anti-clockwise. But the course we are left with today is full of charisma, excitement and classic Scottish charm. It may play a little shorter than some of the other major championship layouts due its fast and fiery fairways, but much of the difficulty is provided by Mother Nature herself. When the wind blows, there is an extremely high tariff on placing your drives between the countless number of swales and pot bunkers. The approach shots often tempt the golfers with a risk/reward dilemma. The putting surfaces are vast, and finding the right-side of the hole is often a more important pre-requisite for par than simply hitting the green in regulation. For some, like Jack Nicklaus, it was love at first sight. But for others it's an acquired taste. It's not golf in its most conventional form, but when respected and appreciated there is no finer place to play golf in the world.

**The Dunluce Course, Royal Portrush**

Situated on the northern coastline of The Emerald Isle is, in my opinion, the country's finest golfing masterpiece. Royal Portrush Golf Club was founded in 1888, but the magnificent layout we see today was mainly the work of celebrated architect Harry Colt, who set out his new blueprint for the course in 1929. It holds the prestigious title of being the only course outside the mainland U.K. to host The Open Championship, which was won by Max Faulkner in 1951. Three things stand out for me at Portrush—the scenery, the routing of the course, and the quality of the turf. The first two are understandable and commonly used classifications, but to explain my third point—well, the fairways at Portrush are perfect. They play hard and fast like a links course should, but they have this very subtle spring to them. It's a difficult concept to describe, but I am in no doubt this is the ultimate surface on which to play golf. The stand-out holes on “The Dunluce” are the fifth and the 14th. The former is, without doubt, one of the most aesthetically pleasing golf holes you are likely to find anywhere. From an elevated tee, this gem of a par 4 meanders off to the right and culminates in a double-tiered green set beautifully on the edge of cliffs that overlook White Rocks beach. The 14th, also known as Calamity Corner, is a demanding par 3 that requires a carry of over 200 yards to a raised green. The chasm below and to the right drops over 100 feet, so the caddies usually request the ball to be struck on a safe line...but this wish is very seldom granted.



3rd Hole, Royal County Down © 2010 Aidan Bradley



18th green, Kingsbarns © 2010 Kingsbarns Golf Links

**The Championship Links, Royal County Down**

RCD, as the locals call it, is undoubtedly the toughest test of golf in Ireland. It is also the most beautiful. The course is framed by the stunning backdrop of the Mountains of Mourne, where it winds its way through a series of dunes bordering Dundrum Bay. It's one of those very memorable courses where each hole is completely unique and one where it is easy to visualise every fairway and green when you reminisce with your post-round pint of Guinness. Finding the fairways here is a must; it can be very punishing from the tee. The fairways are protected not only by acres of thick rough, but with a series of excellently positioned bunkers. The favourite memory for many visiting golfers and perhaps the most photographed hole is the ninth, looking towards the imposing mountains as they sweep down to the sea. A tremendous course, and a very stern test of golf.



9th Hole, Royal County Down © 2010 Aidan Bradley

**Kingsbarns Golf Links**

Kingsbarns is quite simply unchallenged as the best new course of the 21st century in Scotland, if not the world. Golf was actually played here in different guises until the onset of the Second World War, when it was required for defence purposes, after which the land was sadly left unkempt. Designer Kyle Phillips has been lauded for his efforts and quite rightly so. Kingsbarns may be a mere 10 years old, but it would be an honest mistake to think it was in at least its second century. There are not many of the world's top courses where the following statement holds true but, impressively, the ocean is visible from every single hole. And aside from the spectacular views, it's a true links course turbo-charged with added excitement. It's extremely difficult to nominate a hole for special mention at Kingsbarns, but I think most people who have played the course will hold a fond recollection of number 12. A par 5 that curves around the edge of the bay, it boasts everything from undulation and a panoramic view to crashing waves and a three-tiered green.





1st green, Carnoustie © 2010 Carnoustie Golf Links

**The Championship Course, Carnoustie**

Carnoustie is renowned as the toughest course on The Open Championship rota. It is long, tight and provides no respite for the wayward golfer. Although known globally for its difficulty, I feel this connotation does Carnoustie somewhat of an injustice. What springs to mind when I think of Carnoustie is conditioning. Typically, they produce the best greens in Scotland. Unlike some of the other top links courses, the putting surfaces are relatively flat, but it's how you manoeuvre your golf ball to the green that matters. Driver is needed on most holes, and that includes the par 3 16th! At 248 yards and into the prevailing wind, making par here feels like a birdie.

**The Ailsa Course, Turnberry**

Think of The Open Championship, think of the lighthouse, think of the magnificent red-roofed hotel, and the memories of Turnberry will come flooding back. It's everything links golf should be—a course that's not overly long, but one that requires precise course management in addition to accurate shot-making. It was awe-inspiring to watch Tom Watson challenge for The Claret Jug here at the age of 59. He missed out by a single stroke to become the oldest major winner of all time and add a sixth Open to his mantelpiece. Stewart Cink prevailed after a playoff, but the entire golfing world was behind Watson that sunny Ayrshire afternoon. It is a testament to Turnberry that someone with Watson's guile and experience can still compete in their advanced years. Importantly, it goes to prove that there are more intrinsic ways to toughen up a golf course than simply adding length.

*“Tralee was Arnold Palmer’s first course design in Europe, and the result was one of the most enjoyable, exciting links courses in Ireland.”*

**Tralee**

Tralee was Arnold Palmer's first course design in Europe, and the result was one of the most enjoyable, exciting links courses in Ireland. Former European Tour Pro Wayne Westner put it well when he said “If heaven's not like this, I don't want to go there.” On any other course, the front nine would be hailed as an amazing stretch of holes, but at Tralee it just serves as a warm-up for the crescendo that lies ahead. Palmer humbly quoted, “I may have designed the front nine, but surely God designed the back nine.” The 12th is a truly fantastic golf hole. A long downhill par 4 of 460 yards, the right-side of a tight fairway is the goal off the tee. As the fairway begins to widen, everything kicks off to the left. There's a wall to one side and punishing rough to the other, so to finish on the short-stuff in crucial. A decent drive leaves you with a long iron or fairway wood to a raised plateau green. A deep chasm collects everything that misses to the left, and short-siding yourself isn't really an option either. Basically, it's a game of hit the green in two, or work hard for your bogey. Walking to the next tee with a four would give a feeling of tremendous satisfaction. I have yet to experience it.



**The Old Course, Ballybunion**

Perhaps the most famous golf course on the island, Ballybunion was a conveyor belt for visiting golfers during the 1990s. Perhaps it's the influx of new courses, or a wider education of the existing ones, but golf tours now seem to be more evenly spread across the South West, and Ireland as a whole. Ballybunion, however, remains near the top of the tree. The premium here is not so much on driving, but the demanding approach shots which seem to appear on a hole-by-hole basis. Distance control is an advanced skill because so many of these shots are being played either downhill or to a raised green. Having lamented on its difficulty, I would counter that by saying it's a very enjoyable tussle to lose. Catch this place on the right day, and you will not want to leave. I know a few who have not.

**Old Head Golf Links**

Some of the hardened traditionalists of the game will see this entry as blasphemy, but in my opinion it is “the” most astounding and impressive topography in golf. Picture a 200-acre promontory of land hanging by a thread from the mainland. At its perimeter, this circular piece of land sits 300 feet above the crashing waves below. Miss the fairway on the wrong side, and your ball will spend a considerable amount of time in freefall before finding a watery grave. You couldn't design a better setting with computer-aided graphics, but does it succeed as a playable golf course? My answer is yes. Before playing, I think it is important to remember that Old Head is not true links golf as the purists would have it. But what it does provide is a fair, exciting (five par 5s), well-conditioned golf course that everyone from the professional to the high-handicapper will love and want to come back for more. It's the kind of course that makes the hairs stand up on the back of your neck. The levels of service are five-star and the complex as a whole is faultless.



**The Strand Course, Portstewart**

Some of the experienced rankings observers may raise an eyebrow when they see Portstewart listed as one of the top courses in Scotland and Ireland, but in my opinion the only reason for its exclusion from some listings is that the assessor has not played it. Built on a beautiful stretch of dune land between the Atlantic Ocean and the River Bann, it's a course completely exempt from plain or non-remarkable holes. The finest stretch of the course, a parcel of land named Thistly Hollow, was only acquired by the club in 1981, a full 86 years after its inception. Holes two through nine run through soaring dunes and a superb display of bunkering. This is a course that one day will receive the considerable recognition it deserves, but in the meantime those on the inside are enjoying the quiet before the storm. ■

**Special invitation to Connoisseur readers:**

Connoisseur Golf is delighted to announce the 2011 St Andrews Spring Invitational to be held in Scotland, May 2011. For more information, visit [www.connoisseurgolf.com/spring-invitational](http://www.connoisseurgolf.com/spring-invitational).

**Connoisseur's Choice in Golf**

- The Old Course, St Andrews [www.standrews.org.uk](http://www.standrews.org.uk)
- The Dunluce Course, Royal Portrush [www.royalportrushgolfclub.com](http://www.royalportrushgolfclub.com)
- The Championship Course, Royal County Down [www.royalcountydowntown.org](http://www.royalcountydowntown.org)
- Kingsbarns [www.kingsbarns.com](http://www.kingsbarns.com)
- The Championship Course, Carnoustie [www.carnoustiegolflinks.co.uk](http://www.carnoustiegolflinks.co.uk)
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- The Old Course, Ballybunion [www.ballybuniongolfclub.ie](http://www.ballybuniongolfclub.ie)
- Old Head [oldhead.com](http://oldhead.com)
- The Strand Course, Portstewart [www.portstewartgc.co.uk](http://www.portstewartgc.co.uk)





Left to right: Furniture painted white, pale blue or gray characterizes Swedish style; Open shelving painted cornflower blue visually unites an array of tableware while highlighting the form and colour of individual pieces; Lars Bolander's *Scandinavian Design* shows this stunning example of the decorative quality of green-blue faience tiles that cover a brick wood stove; Scandinavians make the most of limited space by tucking beds under the eaves. White paint brightens every surface.

True to the Scandinavian penchant for light, even attic bedrooms are bright and inviting. Sloped wood ceilings and walls are painted white. Beds tucked under the eaves, or built into an alcove are layered for warmth with natural linen, cotton and wool textiles. Traditional patterns show stripes, checks and small floral motifs in blue or occasionally red and white. However, there was a flourish of colour and modern shapes in the 1960s with the appearance of Finnish designer Marimekko's bold printed cottons, which started a graphic revolution that continues today.

#### A Rustic View

There will always be a more rustic side to Nordic style that is conceived of wood left in its natural state, hand-hewn log furniture, and earthy colours. This love of wood is shared with North American Cottage or Log Cabin style, irresistibly inviting and homey. Being surrounded by the satin smooth touch and fresh, clean aroma of wood creates an aura of protected wellbeing that is peaceful and revitalizing no matter what part of the world you are from.

The guest rooms and cabins at Lake Placid Lodge in New York state celebrate this rugged, handcrafted look; wallboards have natural, imperfect edges, the beds are all hand made—one is shown here with driftwood style posts—and fireplaces are built piece by piece by Adirondack stone masons.

A lodge bathroom has traditional wood panels and sloped ceiling, all painted white. The black and white tile floor is an old classic design that is popular in any century and most every country. The built-in bath tub keeps the room's vision soft and unified, while the sink floats over metal legs promoting an airy mood.

## The Charm of Nordic Style

By Debbie Travis

Scandinavian décor celebrates light above all else. Given the geography that places these countries close to or straddling the Arctic Circle, it is not surprising that they crave a style that invites images of a brilliant day of sun by the sea year round. Frigid temperatures and long hours of darkness in winter are not for the faint of heart. To bring the bright, airy freshness of summer into their homes, Scandinavians have chosen decorating elements that are light in colour and spirit. *Lars Bolander's Scandinavian Design* is a beautiful new book that illustrates how homes from Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland utilize simple, natural materials and lots of paint to create their welcoming homes.

Wood is an abundant resource that appears in every aspect of building and furnishings. An interior composed of wood's essentially dark hues could be overpowering and heavy, but the Nordic penchant for painted finishes alleviates the problem. Wood ceilings prevail, painted white or stained with a whitewash. Wood floors are treated in the same manner and left bare except for a Rya wool rug or woven cloth runners. Walls are painted white, cream or pale shades of blue or gray. Furniture is painted mainly white or pale blue, and cushions and upholstery in striped or checked fabric, or a delicate floral pattern, repeat the basic colourway.

Scandinavians are pragmatic people who enjoy a comfortable, uncluttered space that is simply decorated. Basic furniture made from different types of wood—in particular, inexpensive cuts—are easily unified with paint, and mingle alongside the rich lustre of a mahogany table or bureau. Storage is neatly packed away in painted cabinets and armoires. But they also vie for open shelving, especially in their kitchens, where everything is easily accessible. Crockery, serving pieces and cooking utensils are carefully selected for their practicality and aesthetic sense, so that the filled shelves offer a well-balanced and colourful addition to the kitchen, inviting the cook and helpers into a delightful area to prepare and eat meals.

The wood stove takes pride of place in northern homes that withstand the rigours of long months of ice and snow. Traditional cast iron stoves and brick stoves clad with glazed tiles deliver heat far more efficiently than an open hearth fireplace.

The Nordic dining room, even when formal, is a sensitive blend of pared down and classic features. Bare wood floors and simple white linens contrast a sparkling crystal chandelier and glistening silver. Shown here, panelled doors and mouldings are painted in a soft blue and white that complement the hues in the elaborate Chinoiserie wall paintings.



Left and below: All wood interiors and furnishing crafted by hand provide an irresistibly cozy atmosphere at Lake Placid Lodge; All the wood in the Lodge's North Country bathroom is painted white for fresh, airy appeal.





#### Get the Look

Perhaps I am drawn to the painterly style of Scandinavian design because paint, and its ability to set any mood and enhance any style, is my passion. I have produced furniture makeovers and wall designs that have the essence of Scandinavian style, and here are a few of my favourites.

Inspired by Swedish art, I decorated a plain pine chest with the soft colours indigenous to Scandinavian design. The base coat for the chest is a soft olive green, the panels are blue-gray. A light gray glaze is applied to the entire surface with a stiff, dry brush to create a delicate grainy effect. Although the design around the drawer knobs looks hand painted, it is actually cut out ribbon designs that I photocopied and glued in place. Two coats of varnish seal and protect your work. This captivating effect would suit an armoire or chair back as well.

Old fashioned kitchens have a combination of freestanding cabinets and open storage shelves all built of wood. I achieved this look with newly built cabinetry that purposely did not match, and painted the pieces in vintage colours. To produce a paint finish that looks like it had seen decades of life, start with a cream coloured base coat, then rub candle wax over areas that would naturally be worn, such as around the handles and the edges. Apply a coat of your chosen colour (I used russet and green) over the entire surface. Rub over the areas where you applied the wax with steel wool or sand paper. Since paint won't adhere to wax, the cream base coat is revealed.

Mirrors are an important element in Scandinavian design as they reflect light and brighten a room. To personalize the bedroom of one of my Swedish friends, I inscribed a mirror with a Swedish nursery rhyme using etching cream. The mirror was glued onto a large piece of plywood that has been painted to resemble expensive and rare ebony. The effect is sleek and modern. ■

*Produced by Debbie Travis and Barbara Dingle.*



*Clockwise from above: An etched mirror is the focal point of this modern Swedish style bedroom; An inexpensive wood dresser is transformed with paint and paper details; Newly built cabinets are given an antique paint finish to fit the historic architecture of this country kitchen.*



*Left to right: A bejewelled mask decorates the fanciful Masquerade Ball tree; This Peppermint tree promises sweet dreams for any child; Scandinavian blues, white and silver portray holidays in a Winter Forest.*



#### Decorate for the Holidays

One of my very favourite times of the year is the winter holiday season. It's madly busy and exhausting, but the parties with friends and most of all the special times with my family make the shopping and baking all worthwhile. And what a perfect excuse to decorate! Every room in the house gets a little extra fluff and sparkle to celebrate the holidays. I've been working on an exciting project with my design team—for the first time you will find a complete line of Debbie Travis Christmas decorations, exclusively at Canadian Tire stores. Now you can really set the stage with imagination.

Christmas tree ornaments, tableware and accessories have been styled within categories, but they are also interchangeable. The colour and drama of Masquerade Ball will thrill you. Miniature masks, butterflies, and costumed figures, all in brilliant shades of purple, gold, blue and orange, dance on the tree.

For the romantics, garlands of pretty pastel flowers, lacy hearts, soft feathers and glittering butterflies float over every branch. Cinderella's slipper has its own story to tell hanging on the tree or perhaps a door knob, and for the bedroom, there's a plump wreath entwined with ribbons and flowers, and a set of wire reindeer for a side table.

My Pistachio theme is yummy and sophisticated, featuring a lovely assortment of pale greens, nutty browns and bronze and silvery whites. The ornaments appear as delicate treasures, the overall mood serene.

For the child in all of us, there's a delectable Peppermint tree, all red, white and silver. Ribbons and bows, shiny balls, berry sprays and snow flakes promise enduring memories of a candy cane Christmas.

A Canadian Christmas is not complete without a festive dose of red and green, and don't forget the plaid. For this fun-loving theme there are snowmen, reindeer and Santa himself, dressed in cozy winter gear. Red plaid ribbons and bows, red and white striped ornaments, berry sprays and pinecones crowd the snow-covered branches.

For those of us who live in cold weather climates, I imagined the magic of the woods blanketed in snow for my Winter Forest theme. The colours are true Scandinavian—white, blue and silver. Arctic polar bears lumber along the branches, fat snowflakes swing in the winter wind, round snowmen smile, and silver birds nestle among the bare-branched wreaths. This makes a glorious setting in which to enjoy a warm cup of cheer.

Enjoy this happy season, add some sparkling inspiration to your home and most important, share the pleasure of your smile and time with friends new and old.

#### Connoisseur's Choice in House and Home

Photography and references on Scandinavian design reprinted with permission from *Lars Bolander's Scandinavian Design* by Heather Smith MacIssac, published by The Vendome Press.

Photographs of the all-wood, North Country bedroom and bathroom from Lake Placid Lodge, Lake Placid, New York. [www.lakeplacidlodge.com](http://www.lakeplacidlodge.com).

Hand-painted Scandinavian dresser from *Debbie Travis' Painted House Weekend Projects*, by Debbie Travis with Barbara Dingle, Clarkson Potter.

Swedish nursery rhyme bedroom from *Debbie Travis' Painted House Bedrooms*, by Debbie Travis with Barbara Dingle, Clarkson Potter.

Antiqued Country Kitchen cabinets from *Debbie Travis' Painted House Kitchens and Baths*, by Debbie Travis with Barbara Dingle, Clarkson Potter.

The Debbie Travis Christmas Collection is available exclusively through Canadian Tires stores. [www.canadiantire.ca](http://www.canadiantire.ca)



# More Champagne, Darling?

By James Cluer, MW

If you crack open a bottle of Champagne at a dinner party, you can be guaranteed that someone, usually an attractive lady, will start swooning, and then launch into a very public declaration that it is her “absolute favourite wine.” At that stage I usually smile, mutter words of agreement, and make a mental note-to-self that time spent with the said individual could be fun for me, but not for the VISA.

I’m full of admiration for the way the Champenois have marketed their bubbles. Nobody else has done a better job. They’ve made it synonymous with luxury, romance, special occasions and living the good life. Simply put, we’ve fallen in love with their fizz.

The history of Champagne is fascinating. Firstly, there’s a dispute over who was the first to make it bubbly, because originally it was a “still” wine. In the region, Dom Perignon lays claim to being the inventor. But the winemakers in Limoux, an obscure region in southern France, accuse him of riding down on his donkey and stealing their winemaking secret, and then galloping back to Champagne to begin creating the most famous luxury brand in the world.

But in all likelihood it was not the French who were the first to make sparkling wine in commercial volumes. Instead, it was likely the English, who created the glass that was strong enough to withstand the massive amounts of pressure in the bottle.

Once it was made, it had to be sold. And the proximity of the Champagne region to Paris was a definite advantage because not only was there a large urban population, it was also the home of the aristocracy. The Champenois plied the monarchy with free bubbly, and the elite followed suit.

But it wasn’t just the monarchy and aristocrats in France that sipped Champagne at lavish banquets. The Champenois also managed to convince the tsars in Russia, and the royal family in England, that they too should become devotees. And so, for lack of a better word, the brand of Champagne was established as a luxury product, with prices to match.

But for a luxury brand to endure, it has to be consistently high quality. And on this critical point, the Champenois have delivered, at least at the pinnacle of production. Houses like Krug, Roederer, Dom Perignon, Salon, Pol Roger, Billecart-Salmon, Laurent Perrier, Lanson, Bollinger, Taittinger, and Veuve Clicquot continue to make a quality of wine that is unmatched by sparkling winemakers in other countries, and other regions in France.

The major city is Reims, just a few hours’ drive from Paris. Here you’ll find many of the major houses, as well as the stunning cathedral. But in fact, most of the vineyards are 30 minutes away, surrounding the pretty town of Epernay.



There are three key sub-regions in Champagne to be aware of. The first is the Montagne de Reims, which is a little misleading because it’s more of a large hill than a mountain. This is primarily planted to Pinot Noir, a grape that benefits from the southerly exposure that the hillside provides, in order to help ripen the grapes in this cool climate.

At the bottom of the hill, and following the river, is the Valle de la Marne, which is predominantly planted to Pinot Meunier, another black grape. The reason is that Pinot Meunier breaks its buds later in the spring than the other varieties, and so it is less prone to the severe frosts that can result in crop loss. Keep in mind that a major reason for most Champagne being non-vintage (i.e. a blend of several different vintages) is because the spring frosts can decimate a crop.

Finally, you have my favourite region, which is the Cotes des Blancs, home to some of the most refined wines based on the Chardonnay grape.

In terms of grape-growing, or viticulture, each village in the region has been graded on a quality scale. It ranges from 80 per cent up to 100 per cent, and the classification is based upon the quality potential of the vineyards in that little village. If you own vineyards in a Grand Cru village, rated 100 per cent, then you’re laughing all the way to the bank, because the houses pay a premium for grapes from these terroirs. I love the names of some of the villages, and suggest you make a stop in Bouzy, before heading to Dizy.





“Some of the largest  
houses have several  
million bottles in stock...  
the largest producer, Moet,  
has a staggering 96 million  
bottles ageing.”



One of the key aspects of the terroir is the chalky soils, and in many places it is pure chalk, good enough for a school mistress to use. This chalky soil helps reflect light back onto the grapes to assist with ripening, provides excellent drainage in this wet region, and gives the wines a certain finesse, elegance, and class.

Once the grapes are picked in September, which is always done by hand, they are rushed to the press in order to minimize oxidation. There are strict laws regulating the amount of juice you can extract from a press load, because the harder you squeeze the grapes, the worse the quality becomes.

Once the juice is extracted it is then placed in stainless steel tanks, which have largely replaced the oak barrels that were commonplace until the 1970s. The first fermentation proceeds, generally triggered by inoculation with commercial yeast, and the wine is fermented to dryness.

Now comes the true art of making great Champagne, which is the blending, or assemblage, as they call it. Each house will have a portfolio of wines, which may include a luxury cuvee, a vintage wine, the standard non-vintage, and maybe a Rosé, amongst others.

The winemaker, with the assistance of an experienced team, often has over 500 “lots” to work with. The potential permutations are endless. A little bit of Chardonnay from this village, a splash of Pinot Noir from another town, some reserve wine from two, four or seven years ago for a non-vintage blend, one per cent of this, three per cent of that...and so on. What never ceases to amaze me is that the winemakers are able to foresee how these different lots will marry together, and what they will taste like when enjoyed years later.

Once the blend is made, the wine is bottled and then a small amount of yeast and sugar is added to trigger the second fermentation, which creates the carbon dioxide that dissolves in the wine. This is kept inside the bottle by sealing it with a crown cap.

Then the bottles are taken down into the underground cellars, which are dug out of chalk, and are one of the wonders of the wine world. Some of the largest houses have several million bottles in stock, all slowly maturing, and the largest producer, Moet, has a staggering 96 million bottles ageing.

After the yeast has eaten the sugar and created the bubbles, plus a tiny bit more alcohol, it starts to break down, or decompose. The long ageing time on the dead yeast cells, called the lees, contributes a bready, toasty, biscuit character to the wine which contributes to the complexity and depth found on the nose and palate. No other sparkling wine region has minimum ageing times as long as the Champenois impose on themselves.

To ensure that what we actually drink doesn't have any sediment, or dead yeast, floating around in it, there is an elaborate process of gradually turning the bottles into a vertical position. This is called riddling, or remuage, and at some houses it is still done by hand. A riddler can turn about 40,000 bottles in a day, with a precise motion that causes the sediment to gradually slip into the neck of the bottle.

When the bottle is almost upside-down, and the sediment in the neck, the bottle is dipped in a freezing brine solution and the sediment is frozen into an ice plug. The bottles then rattle along the bottling line, the crown cap is removed, the sediment shoots out from the massive pressure of the bubbles, and then the final sweetness of the wine is adjusted in a process called *dosage*. After that the bottle is labelled, corked and the wine is typically shipped shortly thereafter. ■

#### Connoisseur's Choice in Champagne

So, what should you buy? And what foods should you pair these Champagnes with? Now, if I wanted to make myself popular with the Champagne lover, and I'd taken her to a two star Michelin restaurant for an eight-course dinner, I'd go for a line-up like this:  
Roederer Cristal, Vintage — *The ultimate way to declare your love, perhaps with a few oysters to up the ante.*  
Lanson Noble Cuvee, Vintage — *One of the great winemakers in Champagne is Jean-Paul Gandon, who makes a stunning luxury cuvee that pairs well with smoked salmon.*  
Taittinger Comtes de Champagne, Vintage — *This exquisite Blanc de Blancs, made just from Chardonnay, is a model of elegance, delicacy, yet intense power. Scallops St. Jacques.*  
Krug La Grande Cuvee, NV — *A spectacular Champagne that is very rich, and pairs well with a dish such as halibut.*  
Billecart Salmon Rosé, NV — *A fantastic pink Champagne, which has a touch more body than most whites, and pairs well with a morsel of veal.*  
Bollinger R.D., Old Vintage — *An old Bolly that has been recently disgorged, and pairs well with creamy cheeses, such as goat cheese.*  
Veuve Clicquot Demi-sec, NV — *A sweet champagne, perfect with a light puff pastry with strawberries and raspberries.*  
Laurent Perrier Ultra Brut, NV — *This has absolutely no sugar added during the dosage, and I would explain to my new friend that it's the equivalent of a diet Champagne, enabling one to remain slender, and best sipped as the dawn approaches.*



## Redefining “Wellness”

Our will to survive, even under the direst of circumstances, is the most powerful force within us. Before we evolved into the thoughtful, creative and intelligent creatures that we are, survival was pure instinct. But today it is equally grounded in our appreciation for being part of this wonderful existence on Earth.

As we have learned to tame risk and hardship in daily life, survival has given way to its close cousin, longevity. We want to continually test the boundaries of our limited bodies so that we can enjoy all of the things life has to offer—for as long as possible. For thousands of years, we have imagined and then pursued every form of potion, elixir and magical natural spring of water to prolong life. From snake oil to the legendary fountain of youth, many people have lost their wages, and some their very lives, in search of a simple way to slow or stop the natural process of aging.

As medical science matured we began to understand that there is no such “magical” cure for our inevitable passing on. We learned that the life span of each of our physical bodies is determined by a long yet finite list of genetic, environmental, social, psychological and lifestyle factors. And we even learned that we can combat handicaps in our genetic makeup by working on disease risk factors that are under our control.

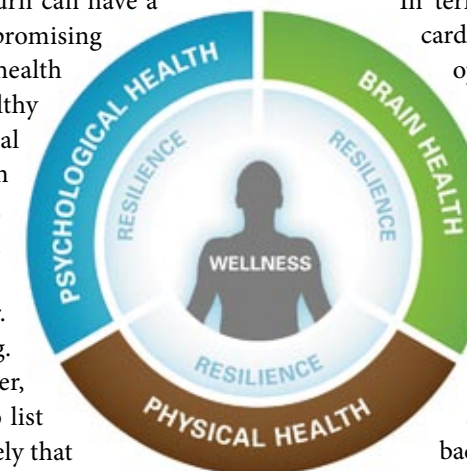
And so today, we understand how to prolong life in the physical sense within the known limitations of our bodies. Now our attention is becoming refocused on how to compliment our prolonged life with optimal psychological well-being. We still want to live as long as possible, but we also want to achieve real happiness in our lives—happiness based on healthy relationships with people and the world around us, the contentment that comes from feelings of purposefulness, and spirituality, however we individually define it. Interestingly, in the process of this exploration we learned that strong psychological health actually increases our chances of living a longer life, and that many of the lifestyle contributions that prolong life help create a healthier psychological foundation.

Today, when people refer to the concept of “wellness,” they usually describe a state of integrated psychological and physical health. But there is much more to true wellness than this.

First and foremost is brain health. The complex nature and critical importance of the brain in defining and controlling our being, along with the fact that it is a very special organ with very special needs, necessitates us looking at the brain and its health in a focused way. Brain health is an important and too-long neglected third dimension of true wellness.

All of our memories, thoughts, emotions, abilities, senses and many critical physiological functions are governed by our brains. Brain health also has important dependencies and co-dependencies with physical and psychological health. For example, an unhealthy body where vascular disease reduces blood flow to the brain often adversely affects the brain’s basic cognitive functions. This in turn can have a profound impact on mood and behaviour, compromising our psychological health. Poor psychological health in turn often creates real impediments to healthy lifestyle, further endangering our physical health—and the cycle continues. The brain works actively with the immune system to fend off disease. It rewires itself to fight terminal conditions like Alzheimer’s disease. It initiates sleep to allow our bodies to rest and recover. It regulates critical body functions like breathing. It controls everything from pain, sight, hunger, thirst, emotions and too many other things to list here. In short, if your brain isn’t healthy, it’s likely that your body and mind won’t be either.

Given all of this, why has it taken us so long to pay more attention to brain health? The delay can be largely attributed to the fact that scientists have only recently concluded that the brain is not a static mass of nerves destined for decline. Instead, it is a dynamic, evolving and complex organ that can be exercised and made stronger throughout our entire life. Now that we know this, we must take a new view of health. Even if we throw aside the brain’s crucial role in maintaining our overall health but accept that life as we know it is largely defined by our memories, then to ignore brain health is to sadly resign to the process of dying, even if we are working hard to preserve the rest of our bodies for as long as possible.



To be truly “well,” we must be healthy in each of the domains of physical, psychological and brain health. Once we achieve this, we need to keep it that way. This is where the important aspect of resilience comes in. Resilience is what keeps us healthy, even when we’re under threat from injury or illness.

In terms of physical health resilience means things like cardiovascular fitness, strength, balance, flexibility and optimal organ and system functionality—achieved through exercise, proper nutrition and protecting ourselves from environmental dangers. When we have good physical resilience, our bodies can avoid the muscle injury that would have occurred in a less fit and flexible person—or fight off infection and disease more effectively.

In psychological health, resilience takes the form of a strong foundation for self-esteem, a sense of purpose, healthy relationships, and the overall social integration and support that helps us bounce back when life throws us one of its big challenges.

*“The brain works actively with the immune system to fend off disease. It rewires itself to fight terminal conditions like Alzheimer’s disease. It initiates sleep to allow our bodies to rest and recover.”*

In brain health, resilience is referred to as brain reserve. It is the brain’s ability to recruit other neural networks or come up with alternate cognitive strategies when its health is compromised. Brain reserve can be built throughout our lives by keeping our brains active and physically healthy. This is why good scientific studies now suggest that people can avoid dementia by keeping their brains as fit as their bodies.

So, what is “wellness?” At Copeman Healthcare, we say it is a state where the health and acquired resilience of the body, mind and brain provide a person with optimal quality of life and longevity. It stands to reason then that a “wellness program” starts with the prevention or control of disease, and then focuses on the building of resilience in each these fundamental areas of health.

Don Copeman is the Founder and CEO of the Copeman Healthcare Centres, which are advanced centres for family healthcare, with a strong emphasis on prevention. For more information on Copeman Healthcare and its premium healthcare services and program offerings, visit [www.copemanhealthcare.com](http://www.copemanhealthcare.com). ■







# Stress, Stress Go Away

## Promote hormone balance for vibrant health

By Lorna Vanderhaeghe, MS

Take a few minutes to try this exercise. Shut your eyes and recall your last tropical vacation. Envision the beach you went to, the balmy breeze caressing your skin. The refreshing taste of that ice-cold drink. The lethargy of utter relaxation as all of your daily worries seemed so far away...

Believe it or not, inside your body at this very moment, millions of cells are hard at work in response to these thoughts. Your brain is transmitting hormonal messages through your nervous system. Your heart is slowing. Your muscles are relaxing. Your breathing is deepening. You are not consciously willing these responses. Your body is a powerfully interconnected system of unconscious triggers and responses. It is this network that makes mind-body therapies such as meditation, yoga, deep breathing, tai chi and even laughter so effective and useful in healing. On the other hand, it is this same connection that makes all of us vulnerable to the effects of stress.

### Hormonal Genetics at Work

Everyone has heard of the “fight or flight” response that allows the body to shift into “survival” mode during acute stress. Our heart pounds, blood flow increases, breathing grows shallow and muscles tense in anticipation of the need for self-defence. These days, few people are required to actually run for their lives—unless that last vacation was perhaps an African safari. Still, the body reacts to all stress in the same way. When you tense up during traffic or in a board meeting, your inner systems are undergoing the same responses as if you were darting through a jungle.

Short term, a little stress can be a good thing, increasing performance and stamina. Long-term, however, stress of any kind can contribute to underlying hormone imbalances that influence everything from how you sleep and handle stress to how your body burns fat. A seemingly simple issue like losing weight takes on new insight when you look at it hormonally. You could be working out every day, but if you are not addressing underlying stress-induced hormonal imbalances, and of course trying to reduce those stressors, you won't achieve your ideal figure. Likewise for all other health conditions, including heart disease and cancer, two leading killers, you cannot truly heal without understanding stress, and dealing with that stress head on.

### Inside the Adrenals

The adrenals are the body's “go to” glands. These small glands secrete stress-hormones that govern the body's reaction to stress. The adrenals also make other hormones such as estrogen, testosterone, DHEA (known as the anti-aging hormone), and progesterone. The effects of healthy adrenals ripple through the system, balancing blood sugars, regulating cardiovascular health and contributing to the digestive process. But because so many of us are highly stressed super-achievers—racing from work to home to the gym to family functions and finally to bed with barely a breath—the adrenals are never really given time to rest and recuperate. Fatigued adrenals are common these days. According to a recent Health Canada survey, one-third of working women report stress from a high-strain job, compared with 20 percent of men.

*“In short, cortisol makes our fat cell doors slam shut and not let the fat out even when we reduce calories and exercise.”*

Unfortunately, when adrenals become exhausted, it is a serious concern, especially for women approaching menopausal age. After estrogen production by the ovaries and menstruation stops (menopause), the adrenals are supposed to become the prime producers of estrogen and testosterone. Women going through menopause whose adrenals are exhausted face terrible menopausal symptoms compared to women with well-functioning adrenals. If you are approaching this time in your life, you will definitely want to reduce your personal stressors and help prepare your body for this natural transitional period by nourishing your adrenals.

### Cortisol and Belly Fat

Cortisol is a hormone produced by the adrenal glands to help the body combat stress. But like most things in life, balance is key: too much cortisol is not a good thing. Elevated cortisol is associated with blood sugar problems leading to prediabetes and diabetes, poor immunity, infertility and more. Cortisol also causes our fat cells to change structure and become resistant to fat loss. In short, cortisol makes our fat cell doors slam shut and not let the fat out even when we reduce calories and exercise. That extra roll around the middle is a classic symptom of chronic stress and imbalanced hormones. And why is it that it is mainly women, particularly in their 40s and 50s, who start to accumulate stubborn belly fat? Because this is the time of life when the lifestyle habits of our 20s and 30s are catching up with us. It is not too late to reverse the process, of course, through stress management and specific herbs and nutrients that help the body cope with stress and promote hormone balance. However, ideally, women should be watching our stress levels from as early an age as possible.

A well-researched ingredient in carob called chirositol has been involved in more than 30 studies at the Virginia Medical School over the past 25 years. Research on chirositol has shown excellent results for conditions related to elevated cortisol and blood sugar imbalances, including Type 2 diabetes, prediabetes, metabolic syndrome and polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), as well as for weight loss, particularly belly fat. One of the first signs of diabetes is skin tags. Chirositol, by normalizing blood sugar, can make skin tags a thing of the past. Chirositol stimulates insulin activity, helping to regulate glucose (blood sugar) storage or push glucose into cells, which in turn helps to normalize blood sugar levels. At the same time, it will not cause low blood sugar in those with normal blood sugar levels. Interestingly, in women, chirositol also reduces excess male hormones that contribute to acne and male-pattern facial hair growth (e.g. on the upper lip or under the chin) and improves irregular ovulation or menstruation.



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## Herbs and Nutrients

When it comes to addressing hormone imbalances and combating stress, a good multivitamin with minerals should be the basis of any supplement program, as nutritional deficiencies can contribute to and worsen disease. If you are currently going through menopause and are suffering from hot flashes, night sweats and other symptoms, then acute treatment using other herbs such as dong quai, chastetree berry, black cohosh and sage leaf should be administered. As I mentioned above, women with exhausted adrenals due to stress have a harder transition because the adrenals are unable to produce the necessary hormones. To support your adrenals and to combat stress—not only during menopause but throughout life—herbal adaptogens are key. Adaptogens have a normalizing effect; they help promote inner balance, improve stamina, reduce the bodily effects of stress, bolster the immune system, rejuvenate the nerves, and generally contribute to mental, physical and emotional well-being. I like the adrenal-support nutrients ashwagandha, rhodiola, suma, Siberian ginseng and schizandra berries in a combination formula for best effect. Additional hormone-balancing nutrients, herbs and lifestyle recommendations can be found on my website.

Don't wait until your next holiday to relax. A positive attitude, a loving family and friends, anti-stress supplements and effective stress-coping strategies will help reduce stress, balance your cortisol levels, slow aging, reverse disease, and return vibrancy to your life. ■

## Stress, PMS and Infertility

The hormone-disrupting effects of stress are not reserved for one age group. Just think of all the teenagers who suffer with menstrual irregularities, acne and PMS, then recall the ups and downs of your own school years. The correlation is no coincidence. A recent study in the Journal of Women's Health examined the relationship between perceived stress and PMS symptoms including crying, cramping and pain. After adjusting for age, education, smoking habits and weight/height ratio, high stress was associated with PMS symptoms, both psychological and physical, of increased severity. The researchers concluded that "stress reduction programs may be an effective, non-pharmaceutical treatment for physical and psychological symptom relief."

Another telling study on the effect of stress in relation to infertility was recently reported online in the journal Fertility and Sterility. This was the first study of its kind to document, among women without a history of fertility problems, the truth of the long-held suspicion among scientists that stress reduces a woman's chance of getting pregnant. Almost 300 women between the ages of 18 and 40 were observed for six months and their saliva monitored for a substance that the body secretes in response to physical or psychological stress. The researchers found that, yes, stress significantly reduced the probability of conception during a woman's fertile period. To the one in six Canadian couples who are dealing with infertility, stress reduction is essential. I would also add that nutritional supplementation should also be adopted to reduce the underlying hormonal imbalances that contribute in many cases to fertility challenges and PMS.

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# Gift Guide Holiday 2010

By Connie Ekelund

This holiday season, why not make the first gift you buy one for yourself? This season, bling still reigns strong, but simple elegance has once again taken centre stage. No matter what your situation or event, we have likely found just the thing for you to emphasize your obvious good taste!

When buying gifts for others this year, be aware of the trend to tone it down a notch or two. Supporting a good cause, having a social conscience, going green and buying local are hot on the gift list for everyone.

BAGS



- **Piana Mini Tote** is handmade in Tuscany using Italian polished calf-skin leather and old-world craft methods. The result is a rugged yet supple leather bag with unquestionable quality and durability. \$249. [www.flotoimports.com](http://www.flotoimports.com)

- **Kolobags.** For the woman that does it all, this multi-functional laptop handbag from Gina B holds it all. Silver hardware and braided handles add a classic touch to the look, which can go from office to play. Carry the bag three different ways: with a laptop, as a handbag, or just as a sleeve separately. The traveler will love the fact that the bag has a trolley sleeve so that the bag can sit securely on any wheeled luggage. USD \$259. [www.kolobags.com](http://www.kolobags.com)



- **Magellan's VaultPro OnTour.** The ultimate in travel totes. Exceptionally stylish; discreetly secure. Features include a steel cable-reinforced shoulder strap, steel mesh panel, locking zipper to help prevent theft, contrast lining, and a detachable LED light for easy identification of contents. Multiple pockets and a zippered organizer panel help keep you organized, and the shoulder strap is long enough to wear across your body for added security. \$62-\$89. [www.magellans.com](http://www.magellans.com)

- **Holt Renfrew** has a line up of the season's "best ever" bags. [www.holtrenfrew.com](http://www.holtrenfrew.com)

- 3.1 Phillip Lim quilted leopard print bag, \$420 (Only at Holts)



- Alexander Wang leather Sadie pouch, \$555



- Chloe leather Marcie bag, \$1,265



- Fendi Zucca canvas bag, \$1,990 (Only at Holts)



- Givenchy leather mini Pandora bag, \$935 (Only at Holts)



- Givenchy leather Nightingale bag, \$1,755 (Only at Holts)



- Marc by Marc Jacobs leather Saddlery bag, \$310



- Salvatore Ferragamo suede bag, \$950



- Tory Burch leather python-print bag, \$550 (Only at Holts)

- **Tiffany.** The Bella pleated clutch in brilliant red satin is a must-have accessory for the holiday whirl, from cocktails to black-tie galas. \$995. [www.tiffany.ca](http://www.tiffany.ca)



- **Harveys Original Seatbeltbags** are back, with hotter-than-ever, hip new collections, including holiday—perfect for gift giving. Made of 100 per cent durable seatbelt webbing, the bags are lined with traditional Harveys flight satin and feature the sturdy classic YKK zipper closures. [www.seatbeltbags.com](http://www.seatbeltbags.com)

- Lola Ruffle Baguette \$270



- Carriage Baguette \$195

- **Mad by Design.** Lavish and extravagant, pure iridescent taffeta silk handbags are a must-have for your wardrobe. The distinct details and hand-sewn floral design add charm to this beautiful creation. The perfect accessory to compliment your formal wear. The overall look achieved is stylish and elegant. [www.twistedorchid.com](http://www.twistedorchid.com)

- Ebony Peony Handcrafted Silk Handbag \$45



- Bronze Silk Rose Handcrafted Silk Handbag, \$42



JEWELLERY

- This year from **Tiffany** there is an elaborate collection of stunning classics and collectables.  
[www.tiffany.ca](http://www.tiffany.ca)

- Tiffany's yellow diamonds are among the world's most sought-after gems. Expert stonecutters maximize the stones' natural colour and Tiffany designers set the diamonds in modern, must-have jewellery, including scroll earrings with yellow and white diamonds in platinum. \$20,300



- Return to Tiffany is a signature of trust and timeless design. Engraved on a diamond heart tag bracelet or pendant in 18 karat white, yellow or rose gold, the phrase prompts customers to return to Tiffany for elegant jewellery that generations will treasure. \$65-\$3,200



- Lucida is a masterpiece of modern design. This celebrated diamond cut is showcased in a new double diamond band setting of clean, sensuous curves that maximizes the diamond's luminosity and dispersion of light. Starting at \$3,900.



- Tiffany explores the beauty of black in a bracelet's enamel inlay with 18 karat matte gold and round brilliant diamonds (\$40,000), and fluted black onyx in earrings with diamonds in platinum.

- The classic **Tiffany** style that gives fashion the time of day now gives glamour its starry night with an Atlas cocktail watch in 18 karat white, yellow or rose gold. Expert stone setters hand-set 186 round brilliant diamonds in the design's iconic Roman numerals and around the bezel. With a dial of mother-of-pearl and white satin strap, this dazzling timepiece is set for evenings of ultimate elegance. Quartz movement, Swiss-made. \$23,400



- **American Estate Peony Cuff.** American Estate Jewelry offers absolutely exquisite sterling silver jewellery using old world, artisanal techniques. Every heirloom quality piece is clearly destined to be handed down from generation to generation. \$695.  
[www.americanestatejewelry.com](http://www.americanestatejewelry.com)

- **Dichroic Glass Pendant.** Nancy Giere's Signature Pendant Collection. The pendants come in an array of stylish shapes along with a choice of solid and wire-wrapped bails in either sterling silver or gold-filled. \$45.  
[www.nglassworks.com](http://www.nglassworks.com)



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

- The **Leakey Collection** includes the design and manufacture of contemporary jewellery that is hand made by the Maasai women and men of Kenya from environmentally sustainable materials. Zulugrass is made from an abundant, durable, hollow grass that's so tough livestock cannot eat it.  
[www.leakeycollection.com](http://www.leakeycollection.com)

- **Amani 28" Necklace.** "Amani" means strength in Swahili. Zulugrass beads, dyed with colourfast, low-impact dyes. TLC Porcelain, fired with lead-free glazes and fired in our "bush kiln." Fallen Acacia hardwood Zuluwood beads. Comes gift ready in recycled TLC box with a folding story inside. \$39.95



- **Zulugrass Multi-strand Necklace.** A dazzling display of colour and an eco-fashion statement! 16 strands of Zulugrass beads in a beautiful combination strung with Czech glass beads for extra sparkle. Wear as a long necklace or a choker. Simply adjust with a pull on the satin cord. Zulugrass beads made from natural grasses, dyed with low-impact, colourfast dyes. Czech glass beads or hand made porcelain beads. Comes in a TLC gift box \$39.95

- **Zuluwood 28" Necklace, Adventure.** Fallen Acacia hardwood, sustainably collected. Sterling beads/findings. \$119.95



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BEAUTY

- This holiday season, **Estée Lauder** invites you to experience the intensely lavish, new luxury in cosmetics with Pure Color Extravagant by Tom Pecheux. Taking cue from the sophistication and contemporary glamour of the upcoming holiday season, Tom Pecheux created new looks for eyes, lips and nails that are layered with dramatic style and colour.  
[www.esteelauder.com](http://www.esteelauder.com)



- **Eyes Glisten in Opulent, Shimmering Shades.** This season, the limited edition **Pure Color Five Color EyeShadow Palette** is gilded in luxe metal shades to celebrate the extravagance and modern grace of the holiday season. **The Pure Color Five Color EyeShadow Palette in Extravagant Gold** is a delightfully festive sequence of illuminating shades that capture the smouldering allure of crisp, winter days and warm, snowy nights by the fire. \$45
- **Lips Are Veiled in Rich Reds and Berries.** Expertly create a look from a neutral nude to a bold berry to a classic crimson with the debut of the limited edition **Pure Color Five Color Lip Palette in Extravagant.** This multi-faceted palette holds shades of Pure Color Lipstick and Pure Color Gloss in a range of hues and finishes that are designed to work together for any celebration. **Pure Color Gloss in Electric Ginger, Star Ruby and Extravagant Plum** embellish lips with the exclusive True Vision™ Technology that wraps pigments in a crystal-like coating to provide intense, brilliant colour and shine. Adorn the lips in graceful majesty with glistening, limited edition shades of **Pure Color Lipstick in Extravagant Berry and Extravagant Red.** \$22.50-\$45

- **Nails are Superbly Chic in Metallic Splendour.** Finish off the look with pure luxury on the fingers and toes. **Pure Color Nail Lacquer in Extravagant Pearl and Extravagant Night** are drenched in metallic glamour to perfectly compliment a festively sparkling outfit. \$25



- **Because Skin Care** is a new line of sustainable, gentle and highly effective products that work in synergy with skin to help it return to its natural balance and maintain optimal health. Because is committed to using only the purest, highest quality, and most effective raw materials and uses 70% or greater certified organically grown content (up to 98.5%!) \$32-\$48.  
[www.becauseskincare.com](http://www.becauseskincare.com)



- **FemmeScience** was created with advanced formulations to enhance the vitality and radiance of youthful skin. A keen departure from overpriced and aging skincare lines yet an upgrade from mass produced retail brands, FemmeScience offers customers a unique and distinctive alternative. FemmeScience is scientifically formulated to deliver tangible results for the modern woman. FemmeScience balances the science of a young woman's skin with the technological innovation required to preserve that brilliant and youthful look for years to come. \$27-\$54.  
[www.femmescience.com](http://www.femmescience.com)



CLOTHING

- **Paige Denim.** Verdugo Jeggings have 360 stretch and are very versatile in a dark clean wash with classic stitching. You will never take them off! \$158-\$199.  
[www.paigepremiumdenim.com](http://www.paigepremiumdenim.com)



- **Autrepeau:** What to wear underneath! Autrepeau is a luxurious layer of comfort. The ultra lightweight fabric with a hint of spandex provides everyday protection under clothing. Perfect under: itchy sweaters and pants, sheer blouses, clingy silk, stiff suits. Wearing Autrepeau can help extend the life of your clothes and you'll save money with less dry cleaning and laundering. The “other skin” that catches perspiration and guards against underarm stains. Proudly made in the USA! \$46-\$65.

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

- **Cécile Bénac.** Exclusive hand-made luxury knitwear. Celebrating a milestone 12th anniversary in 2010, Cécile Bénac Knitwear remains one of the most unique lines of hand-made knitwear in Canada. The collection boasts a range of mid- to high-end pieces that blend traditional techniques and attention to detail with modern designs and innovative materials.  
[www.cecilebenacknitwear.com](http://www.cecilebenacknitwear.com)



- Wool/viscose Shrug scarf \$245
- Wool/viscose Kimono scarf \$275

- **Icebreaker**  
[www.icebreaker.com](http://www.icebreaker.com)
  - **Igloo Hood.** You'll never go back to a synthetic fleece once you've experienced the luxury of brushed merino. On the outside, the Igloo Hood is strong, durable and hard-wearing; on the inside, it's a haven of soft, cosy, gentle-on-the-skin premium merino. Bliss. \$230



- **Aspiring Hood.** We challenge you to find a warmer, softer and more luxurious winter jacket than the Aspiring Hood, made from our new Realfleece fabric—nature's alternative to a synthetic fleece. With a shaped hood, a zippered chest pocket and a chin guard for extra protection, this is one jacket you won't want to take off when you come in from the cold. \$230

- **Revenge** Our “Best Revenge is Peace” t-shirt embodies our commitment to strive for greater social justice, equal economic opportunity, and more effective local and international laws and cooperation to reduce the violence around us. Tee is made from a blend of recycled plastic bottles and organic cotton. \$32.  
[www.revengeis.com](http://www.revengeis.com)



- **Earth Creations**  
[www.earthcreations.net](http://www.earthcreations.net)

- Fall's uniform of long tops and dresses over leggings, skinnies or tights gets a fun new favourite in the Sadie Top, a hemp and organic cotton jersey hooded tunic that features cute decorative button detail, feminine seaming and side pockets. \$75



- The organic cotton and Lycra jersey **Pagoda** provides a stretchy, yoga-like flared style with dressed-up merrowed hem band detailing. \$65



- **Big Roots.** Roots run deep as does the motto “Every Day is Earth Day.” Design printed using eco-friendly non-PVC inks on our long sleeve clay-dyed T-shirt. 100% organic cotton. \$33





FOR THE TRAVELLER

- **Tilley** The world's best hats! Guaranteed to fit, insured against loss, come with owner's manual and a secret pocket. The true hat of travellers.  
[www.tilley.com](http://www.tilley.com)



- **The R5 Women's Wide Brim Fedora Raffia Hat.** The R5 Women's Raffia Tilley hat is designed with a broad-brimmed, pinched fedora-style crown. A wide black hatband with an eye-catching rear bow, along with black binding around the brim, gives this Hat stylish appeal while offering ultimate sun protection. The brim can be worn turned up or down. \$95



- **The LTM6 AIRFLO Nylamtium Hat.** The LTM6 AirFlo Tilley hat is designed with a wide brim and 3/4" polyester mesh built into the crown. This lightweight hat offers superb ventilation and is made from Tilley Nylamtium, a strong water-and-mildew resistant form of nylon. \$76

- **Photo Book.** Portable digital album with eight-inch 800 x 600 LCD screen and 4GB internal flash memory. Featuring slim design encased in a soft leather-like case for a convenient, elegant photo display, Photo Book offers over 2.5 hours of battery life and an easy and portable way to enjoy and share digital photos in a comfortable setting. \$189.  
[www.digitalfoci.com](http://www.digitalfoci.com)



- **KODAK PlayTouch Video Camera.** The Kodak PlayTouch Video Camera has a 3" capacitive touch screen that allows users to easily glide through and show off videos and photos. With full 1080p HD video recording and on-camera editing to trim and extract 5MP HD still pictures, users are able to highlight any moment they capture. Not to mention the Share button and built in USB cable allows for easy uploading and sharing to sites such as YouTube and Facebook. \$230.  
[www.store.kodak.ca](http://www.store.kodak.ca)

- **Bushnell BackTrack.** BackTrack utilizes GPS technology in its most basic format. BackTrack has only two buttons and stores up to three locations—just mark it and forget it until it's time to return. At the end of the day, select your location and the BackTrack displays direction and distance to travel. Use it to find your car in a crowded parking lot, your treestand or the trailhead, even to rendezvous with your group. It's extremely compact and stows conveniently in your pocket, pack or purse. \$80.  
[www.bushnell.com](http://www.bushnell.com)



- **Complete Support Travel Pillow.** This travel pillow addresses the key elements lacking from the traditional pillows on the market: no frontal or lateral support, no way to carry and store during travel, and rarely any removable, washable covers. Ultra-soft, compact and extremely functional the Complete Support Travel Pillow has a little something for everyone. \$35.  
[www.completesupportpillow.com](http://www.completesupportpillow.com)
- **GoGirl** allows women to stand up to go to the bathroom when bathrooms are unavailable or undesirable. GoGirl is reusable and made of medical grade silicone. \$10.  
[www.go-girl.com](http://www.go-girl.com)



- The **TomTom GO 730** uses innovative IQ Routes technology to get you where you're going using the fastest route depending on the time of day and location. It calculates your route based on the real average speed measured on roads rather than speed limits. Its text-to-speech technology features voice address input so you can tell the GPS where you want to go—no need to type it in—and the TomTom is equipped with hands-free calling and can read your text messages to you so you can stay focused on the road. \$280.  
[www.tomtom.com](http://www.tomtom.com)



- The **Magellan RoadMate 5045** is a premium 5.0" navigator packed with features. Personalize your travel experience with the OneTouch favourites menu, lifetime traffic alerts, highway lane assist, AAA TourBook, maps of the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, plus much more. \$220  
[www.magellangps.com](http://www.magellangps.com)





- **Bottle Armor.** Protect that special bottle of wine or spirits en route. Made of durable leak-proof nylon lined with a layer of protective padding, Bottle Armor protects bottles in your checked luggage, cushioning them from the bumps and bruises of travel. Features include a see-through window, two extra-strength zip-top seals and a Velcro fold-over flap to prevent leaks should breakage occur. It even includes a corkscrew that stores conveniently in a pocket on the back. Two per order. \$22.85.  
[www.magellans.com](http://www.magellans.com)

- **Android Traveler's Time Treasure.** Pocket-sized alarm clock. \$45.  
[www.android-usa.com](http://www.android-usa.com)



- **Mobile Edge** designed their new Checkpoint Friendly Laptop Case Collection with this new renewable resource which reduces energy consumption during production by 30 percent, reducing our dependency on oil and petrochemical products. The Sorona fibres are soft and extremely stain resistant with high strength and stiffness qualities. \$99.  
[www.mobileedge.com](http://www.mobileedge.com)



FOR THE HOME

- Goodbye plain old thermostats, hello **ColorTouch**—the first and only thermostat with customizable wallpaper backgrounds and screensavers, such as slideshows and clocks. It's also the first thermostat that gives users the ability to upload their own photos as wallpapers and screensavers. \$200.  
[www.venstar.com](http://www.venstar.com)
- **Bohemiarts Stemware.** Each Bohemiarts glass is truly unique due to the intricate and authentic process they created a century ago called “a la vitrage.” It allows for every glass to be made to consistent standards of quality and beauty. Considered functional art, their wine goblets, martini glasses and trumpet stemmed water goblets are a sophisticated way to tie together a room's theme. Bohemian Glassware is what's hot in retail for 2010 according to the *New York Times* Home Section. These timeless glasses can be found in select retailers across the nation, and through Neiman Marcus online. \$64-\$90.  
[www.bohemiarts.com](http://www.bohemiarts.com)



- **The Libre tea glass**—for loose leaf tea on the go. BPA-free and designed with a built-in filter that allows you to drink your favourite loose leaf teas on the go while keeping tea leaves in the glass and not in your mouth. \$25.  
[www.libreteatea.com](http://www.libreteatea.com)

- **Katy Potts Utterly English Teaware.** For a unique Christmas present that will be cherished for years to come, look no further than Katy Potts Utterly English Teaware. This new collection of luxury teapots is made all the more glamorous by the packaging—a stitched black hat box with rose-patterned interior—and whimsical card found inside. And, thanks to a moulded foam inner, is safe to send anywhere across the world. £135.  
[www.katypotts.com](http://www.katypotts.com)





# Geek Gifts

By Steve Dotto

Christmas used to be a time of joy, of wonder and of downright excitement. We now typically overindulge our kids to try and recapture some of that lost magic in our own lives. While it has become very difficult to surprise or delight our mates (except for the old standby—diamonds!), if your mate tilts to the geek side, one of these fine gifts may be just the ingredient for a Christmas from days of yore.

## Channelling Your Inner Cousteau

As the crab in *The Little Mermaid* said, “The seaweed is always greener” yep, under the sea, and now you can capture all that green, without laying forth too much green of your own. The Sanyo VPC-CA9 is a nine megapixel HD video camera combination that gives us the opportunity to go deep, and come back with the stunning video to prove it. Well, not too deep, it is designed for up to about five feet in depth, which makes it more useful for snorkelling expeditions than discovering lost wrecks.

A unique design sets the Sanyo video cameras apart from the competition, but it is more than a unique design that makes this a great candidate to make an appearance under the Yule bush.

A special underwater scene mode that compensates for difficult lighting conditions under the water, direct connection to TVs or PCs, and a direct import feature to iTunes (Mac users celebrate!) are just a few of the features that make the CA9 the ideal travelling companion for those fun in the sun destinations. At an MSRP of \$500, you don't need to find a sunken treasure to pay for it.

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



## Busting the Bluetooth Blues

Pretty much everyone ends up being disappointed with their Bluetooth headset. The culprits are usually battery life, or more likely, fidelity. The boys at Bose (sorry girls, alliteration knows no politically correct boundaries) have cast a new headset into the mix, practically guaranteeing that we are going to be thrilled with the quality. Their promise? They have incorporated their patented TriPort technology, also found on their very well reviewed noise cancelling headsets.

The microphone features technology that adjusts the volume of the speaker to compensate for background noise. The earpiece itself is unique, not relying on a loop to hold it in place. They call the ear nub the StayHear in-ear tip. It is designed to fit snugly, while being oh so Bose-tively comfortable. The earpiece is Bluetooth 2.1 compatible, and should be found for around \$190.

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

## Spinning Vinyl into MP3s

The CR6002 Crosley Revolution Portable USB Turntable is too cool for school. It will play back your collection of vinyl records and while you are enjoying that walk down memory lane, it will rip the songs and convert them into MP3 files. I don't know why, but this record player absolutely screams Christmas!

The Revolution plays back your old records at speeds of 33 1/3 and 45, and the audio being ripped will go straight to a memory card or a USB-connected PC, both Mac and PC being supported. The Revolution has a host of cool features, including a wireless transmitter, meaning you can play back your records through any FM receiver. It has its own built-in speaker, and can run off battery power, meaning you can spin discs anywhere you desire! Oh, yes, I want one. I got rid of all my old records, but I will find new ones—I just want one. \$149

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



## Um, Wow!

Would be the appropriate reaction from anyone entering your home and coming face-to-ear with speakers that will certainly set your media room apart from theirs—and pretty much any media room in the known universe. Arcadian Audio's Pnoe speakers are not really a new concept, they are horn speakers, the theory being the horn creates the purest possible sound, the smooth shape allowing the sound to flow out unimpeded, allowing for a cleaner and untainted sound that conventional speaker designs can't match.

While I can't speak from personal experience by listening to the Pnoe speakers (my goodness, my spell checker is having a conniption!) as they are special order products (from Greece), I can be awed by the form meets function design. Arcadian warns us to stay at least three meters away from these bad boys—it is not clear if that is for acoustic or safety reasons! Price....um, no they won't say!

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

## Mail Call

If you have a loved one who tends to be tardy replying to their email, or, on the complete other end of the spectrum, someone who can't go 10 minutes without checking their inbox, the USB Mail Box Friends Alert may be a stocking stuffer that delights, and delivers! It is a small plastic USB mailbox, you plug it in, and when you get mail it lights up, plays a sound and even flips up its oh-so-cute flag just as the cherry on top.

Pretty much every mail and social media service is supported including Gmail, Twitter, Facebook, Yahoo, Outlook, Windows Live, Live Mail, and generic POP3 email. The mailbox actually turns from green to red to indicate how many unanswered messages you have. Mac users are off the route though, this is a Windows only product. \$18.

[usb.brandoo.com](http://usb.brandoo.com)

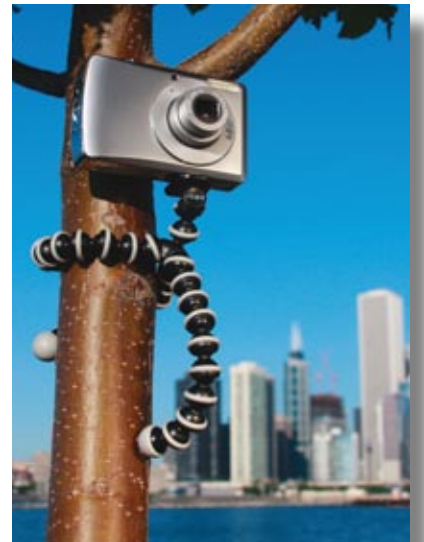


## GorillaPod, get the shot, and make it easy!

OK, it might not be the most cool high tech item in this feature, but you will get the most use out of it! And if you buy this as a gift for someone they will use it and love it. The GorillaPod is probably the most useful addition to the digital photography/video market since, well, binary code. It just works, simple and elegant, a tripod that works as well on a table at a restaurant taking a picture of 2 lovebirds celebrating their anniversary as it does perched on a rock on the side of a mountain capturing a climber's self-portrait that will become his/her Facebook profile pic for all time!

The GorillaPod has flexible legs that you can bend and position to hold your camera under most any circumstance; you can even wrap the legs around a tree limb or hang it to a window frame. It is small, fits easily into a camera bag or backpack, is almost instantaneous to set up, is light and, best of all, cheap! Try \$19.95 cheap! Other versions are available for heavier cameras such as camcorders.

[www.joby.com/gorillapod](http://www.joby.com/gorillapod)



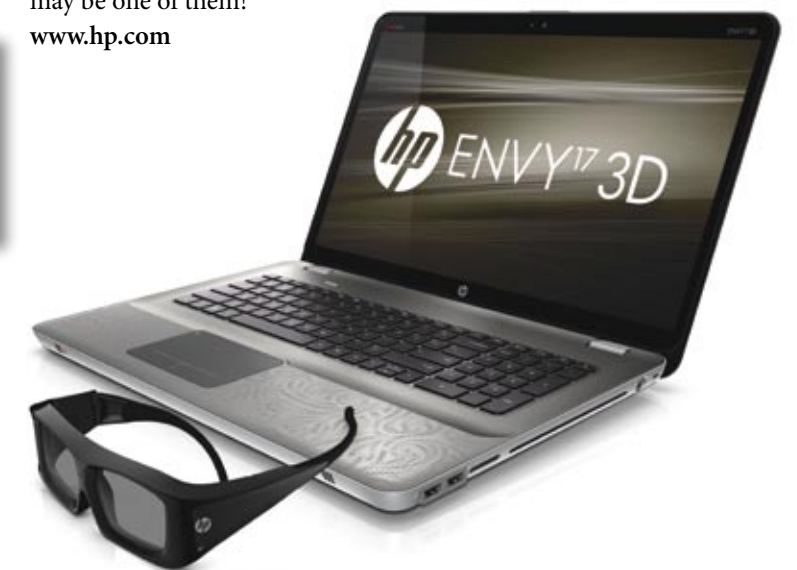
## The envy of the coffee shop

When you are sitting in your favourite coffee shop, plugging away on your notebook, sipping a double espresso, what does it take to separate you from the crowd? Perhaps those 3D glasses!

HP thinks everyone will want your new notebook, if it is the Envy.

The HP Envy 17 3D features a 17.3-inch 1920 x 1080-pixel screen, AMD Mobility Radeon HD 5850 graphics and built-in Blu-ray drive, plus a superb Beats Audio sound system which even features a built-in subwoofer, something not found in other notebooks! For your viewing pleasure HP includes a pair of HP active-shutter 3D glasses. Wearing them in the coffee shop assures a reaction from other patrons—Envy may be one of them!

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







**Chargelicious**

One of the true ironies of our time is the relentless march to hands-free/wireless freedom. In most of our lives, our wireless devices actually end up meaning we have more cables and wires than ever! All those chargers...we need powerbars the size of coffee tables to accommodate all the brick power adaptors, we typically have multiple chargers, as we need one for the road and one for home. And the mess, the nasty mass of cables, snaking their way from the power bar to our desktops, is unsightly and frustrating.

IDAPT i4 may be the clean, lean practical solution! A single multipurpose charger that will adapt to charge up to 4 devices at a time. Ideal for charging an iPod, cell phone and bluetooth headset for example, (my personal retinue) the IDAPT series of multi chargers uses a series of custom tips to tailor the device for your unique mix of devices. If you change devices, upgrade or add to the mix, more tips are available. The IDAPT i4 can charge up to four mobile devices simultaneously, and is compatible with over 4,000 mobile electronic devices including the iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, Nintendo DS, PSP, portable GPS devices, digital cameras, and Bluetooth headsets. \$59.99.  
[www.idaptweb.com](http://www.idaptweb.com)

**Making up for the disappointment of X-Ray Specs!**

As any 50-year-old knows, those most excellent looking X-Ray specs in the back of comic books didn't work worth a darn. Darn! I have much higher hopes and expectations for the night vision goggles from Spy Net Night Vision Infrared Stealth Binoculars. Claiming to allow you to see up to 50 feet in total darkness, the Stealth Binoculars may just make up for major disappointment after all these years. \$49.95.  
[www.spynethq.com](http://www.spynethq.com)

**Card Scanner**

If you have a road warrior to buy for, who gathers names and leads like a kid gathering treats on Halloween night, the Dymo Cardscan business card scanner may make a super gift. A pint sized one trick pony, the Cardscan is only for scanning in business cards, but it does so with aplomb and efficiency. The USB-based device, which works on both Mac and PC, scans in cards and imports the data into the PIM (Personal Information Manager, such as Outlook) of your choice.

It saves hours of laborious keying in of information, and means those cumbersome business card files are a thing of the past.  
[www.cardscan.com](http://www.cardscan.com)



**iBling**

If you absolutely need to make a statement, converting your iPhone into a piece of jewellery may be the statement you want to make. Starting at a paltry \$699, you provide the iPhone and Computer Choppers will covert it into a custom piece of jewellery by 24 carat solid gold (or other metal) plating, replete with custom engraving or etching. The result is the baddest iPhone on the block. You aren't limited to iPhones, as Computer Chopper is happy to bling-ify many phones and computers. Options include making diamonds your iPhone's best friend.  
[www.computer-choppers.com](http://www.computer-choppers.com)



**THE ULTIMATE IN LUXURY**  
Classic 712GCB





# Dream Cars Wish List

By Tony Whitney



2011 Porsche Boxster Speedster

When Shakespeare penned his immortal line “perchance to dream,” he obviously wasn’t thinking about luxury automobiles, but today’s booming upscale auto industry reflects that this is exactly what dreams are made of, almost 400 years after the Bard’s death.

The fact is that for so many people, a luxury car—and perhaps even something seriously opulent with a megabuck price tag—is right up there with the waterfront home, the world cruise and the Rolex Daytona watch. It’s something almost everyone wants at some stage of their lives and for those with the means, upscale vehicles are simply a key element of an opulent lifestyle. And it’s often said that everybody should buy something close to their dream car at least once in their life—whether it’s a world-weary Corvette with a fire sale sticker price or a brand new Bentley Continental.

With buyers hungry for quality vehicles in Canada and many of them willing to part with several hundred thousand dollars, automakers are wasting no time in bringing an almost endless stream of tempting products to the marketplace. In several cases, the luxury end of the business has been a saviour, bringing the automaker much-needed cash while sales at the lower end of the model ranges dwindled. Clearly, there really are people around who are more or less “recession proof.” Luxury manufacturers like Aston Martin are turning a profit after years of doubt as to whether or not they’d even survive. Many other upscale nameplates are seeing the most prosperous years in their existence and, month-by-month, table new records.

So putting aside all notions of initial cost and investment potential (we may, after all, be talking about a gift here), what does the luxury vehicle segment have to offer dreamers this Christmas season? We’ll look at products in all kinds of price ranges from the almost-affordable to the megabuck category.

*“I’ve always believed that all-wheel drive should be a feature of all high-performance cars and clearly Audi follows that philosophy.”*



2011 Audi R8 Spyder



2011 Aston Martin Rapide

It may not be the most expensive of Porsches, but the Boxster Speedster is surely one of the most exciting to look at. With its humped double fairings behind driver and passenger, it looks just like one of those wonderful Mille Miglia racers of the 1950s—except that it’s a technologically advanced sports car with every possible performance and safety feature. Although it’s the kind of car you’d never want to drive closed, there is a cleverly-designed top—albeit a two-part manual affair that stows almost magically beneath the “humps.” It looked challenging to me the first time I tried to stow it, but actually, it was quite easy. The only mystery is how Porsche figured out how to store the top between the mid-mounted flat six engine and the humped rear panel. There are very few sports cars that drive as well as the Boxster—it’s so well-balanced. It might just be the best all-round car on the market in its class. With the innovative and rather nostalgic Speedster bodywork, it’s just that much more interesting.

When it first appeared in 2006, Audi’s R8 was hailed as a triumph for the Ingolstadt automaker with its low-slung, feline, “ready-to-pounce” looks. Few of us at the time would have believed that a Spyder (convertible) version would ever be feasible, but feasible it is and you’ll soon be able to snap one up at an Audi dealer. It works wonderfully as a “ragtop,” whatever doubts were around when the project was announced. As a bonus, it comes with a wonderful new 5.2-litre V-10 putting out an impressive 525-horsepower. Audi’s Quattro all-wheel drive means that you can get all that power safely to the road even in wet conditions. I’ve always believed that all-wheel drive should be a feature of all high-performance cars and clearly Audi follows that philosophy.

Old-established British automaker Aston Martin surprised everybody when it announced a while back that it would produce a four-door model. Dubbed “Rapide,” the car doesn’t look that different from its two-door stablemates, so it’s quite an achievement for the designers. Aimed at competing with rivals like the Porsche Panamera and four-door coupes like the Mercedes-Benz CLS, the Aston isn’t especially roomy in the back, but nobody who rides in one is likely to complain. The car is every inch an Aston Martin, with superb lines and interior that the British still seem to be best at executing. The car has exhilarating performance, to say the least. Engine for the four-seater is an all-alloy 6.0-litre V-12, which is silky smooth and seriously powerful with its 470-horses.

When Bentley revived the Continental nameplate some years back, it created a sensation—mainly due to styling that was totally modern, yet “respectful” to the much-collected models of the 1950s that have always been among the most coveted of Bentleys from that era. The car was an instant hit, winning the hearts of everyone from communications tycoons to European soccer stars. Now there’s an all-new model and it promises to be every bit as popular as the earlier (launched in 2003) version. The new Continental GT doesn’t depart too dramatically from the older model, which was a smart move by Bentley. Perfection is tough to improve on! Somehow, it manages to look even sleeker, more muscular and more elegant than ever and the technology is bang up to date. Power for the 2011 car comes from a twin turbo 6.0-litre W-12 (the cylinders are laid out like a “W,” rather than a “V”) with 567-horsepower on tap. For the thrifty, there’s also a V-8 available. The interior is as opulent as expected—a feast of leather and fine woods.



2011 Bentley Continental



Far less expensive but no less exciting is the new Cadillac CTS-V Coupe, which as its name implies is a two-door version of the successful CTS sedans. And the “V” in Cadillac nomenclature means that it’s a performance version of the base car with a 6.2-litre V-8 plus supercharger developing a lusty 556-horsepower. This car is very quick indeed and more than a match for European competitors, which would surprise people more used to earlier products from this GM division. It’s said that people either love or hate Cadillac’s sharply creased “origami” styling (put me down as an admirer) but ask any European auto stylist which North American maker they admire most and the name “Cadillac” usually comes up first. The CTS-V isn’t available with all-wheel drive like the less expensive CTS Coupe base model, which is a pity. With that much power, all-wheel drive is very reassuring, though the CTS-V does come with all the latest electronic stability control systems.

Even the most devoted Jaguar fans believed that the last XJ model was just a little too much like its predecessor, even though it was far more advanced from an engineering standpoint. Not so the 2011 Jag XJ, which is far more dramatic-looking, without losing what the UK maker calls “essential Jaguariness.” Larger and roomier than the old XJ and a far closer competitor for the big sedans from Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Audi, the XJ has an expectedly stunning interior in the best “acres of wood and leather” British tradition. Buy an XJ Supersports version and you get a seriously potent 510-horsepower, aided by a supercharger, as well as that legendary refinement Jaguars have had since the days of the old twin cam sixes decades ago.



2011 Cadillac CTS-V Coupe

*“It’s said that people either love or hate  
Cadillac’s sharply creased “origami” styling...  
but ask any European auto stylist which North  
American maker they admire most and the  
name “Cadillac” usually comes up first.”*



2011 Jaguar XJR Sedan



2011 Lamborghini Murcielago convertible



2011 Mercedes-Benz S600 Guard

Quite possibly one of the world’s most desirable cars, the astonishing Lamborghini Murciélago LP 650-4 Roadster is surely a piece of Italian fine art, rather than mere transportation. With its 6.5-litre, 650-horsepower V-12 engine, it’ll get you to 100 km/h in just 3.4-seconds, according to the Italian automaker, which got its start building—surprisingly enough—tractors. The plan was to build just 50 of these, so hunting one down may not be easy. Of course, there’s always the standard Murciélago with “only” 640 horses. You’d better like the grey and orange paint job with matched interior trim, because that’s the only way it comes. This Lambo must be the “gold standard” when it comes to top-down motoring.

In these challenging times, perhaps the gift for someone who hasn’t quite got everything might be an armoured Mercedes-Benz sedan. Mercedes-Benz builds armoured vehicles right in the factory under its S-Guard brand label. According to Mercedes, an S-Class with this kind of upgrade “offers an unsurpassed level of protection against terrorist attacks and the threat of violent crime.” Just in case it’s simply a matter of outrunning your assailants, the car comes with a 517-horsepower V-12 powerplant. Mercedes has been building vehicles with this kind of protection for 80 years and although understandably secretive about details, points out that the car is impervious to military grade small arms fire and shrapnel from hand grenades and other explosive devices. The S 600 Guard, as it’s called, doesn’t look significantly different to a standard S-Class sedan, so it’s very discrete—a feature buyers usually demand.

Other highlights include run-flat tires, a self-sealing fuel tank and an alarm system for endangered occupants. I once examined an S-Guard vehicle that had been peppered with fire at close range from a 7.62 mm NATO assault rifle and neither the bodywork nor the window glass was pierced. Action movie star Jason Statham would just love one of these under his tree this Christmas! ▮



There are many ways to design, structure and guide your nest egg. Much revolves around your needs, objectives and tax situation. Accordingly, I'm going to highlight some areas of wealth management that are often glossed over.

First, I suggest setting aside the numerical aspects of your portfolio for just a moment. Then mull over this question: "What is important about wealth management to you?" The key emphasis is "to you."

Start a conversation with your family about all your money matters. Hear everybody's opinion. Here are some ideas to stir your discussion:



My belief is that portfolios are best steered by a personal investment plan. One that withstands the tests of time and can be easily tweaked, as and when required. I consider a long-term plan the centrepiece to stewarding family wealth. It outlines the investing strategies and steps you will follow to reach those personal goals.

There is a lot to be learned from this discussion. Listen to all the answers and weave them into the fabric of your plan of action. Investing will be smoother when you follow your personal road map. The initial step is always paying attention to what's important to you and your family.

# What is Important About Wealth Management to You?

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

- Is it preserving your present nest egg?
- Is it growing your portfolio over time?
- Is it achieving a comfortable retirement for you and your family?
- Is it creating more leisure time with your family?

- Is it focusing on your RRSP, RRIF, pension or family business?
- Is it minimizing your probate fees and income taxes?
- Is it recognizing all the investment risks you incur?
- Is it assessing the potential of your current investments?

- Is it caring for your family in case of your disability or early death?
- Is it crafting your comprehensive estate plan?
- Is it funding education for your children or grandchildren?
- Is it leaving a legacy to your charitable cause and to your loved ones?

Concentrate closely on what matters to you and your family. Then make sure your advisors do the same.

**Market direction**

I've been pondering the last year in the markets and contemplating the future. I continually have to remind myself that our profession is managing "long-term" portfolios. The ones I label as the "serious money." Not reacting to short-term events, or news which can and does create daily havoc.

Market volatility during the last year has been challenging for portfolio managers and hard for investors to endure. There are continuing issues affecting the sluggish U.S. economy. Consumers are cautious and companies are still cutting costs. Jobs are desperately needed and housing is not on side. Debts are spiralling and deficits are high. Just to name a few.

The U.S. needs at least 200,000 new jobs per month to sustain its economic recovery. This fuels expectations that the U.S. Federal Reserve continues to rescue the economy by printing more money—even though the first round of money printing did not work.

Recall that the U.S. Fed has already spent near \$2 trillion in the last two years trying to spur economic activity by lowering interest rates. It's hard to tell what was accomplished by that strategy. It will likely take years to rebuild the U.S. jobs picture. More people have stopped looking for work and many jobs are simply not coming back.

However, despite the global economic uncertainties, there are now some positive things happening with several companies around the world. For instance, share buybacks, corporate takeovers and companies increasing dividends. Bit by bit, these "baby step" indications are reason for the markets to look forward and anticipate some positive news, which hopefully translates into increasing stock prices.

Our strategy has been and continues to be staging our clients into the equity markets. We are not market timers so staging in is the prudent approach. Dividend yields on many of the investments we suggest help the wait for the stock recovery to take flight. The markets are much about investor confidence.

Comfort and suitability of an investment strategy to pursue is uppermost. Our approach is to always ensure client comfort with the continuing market risks and uncertainties. We are interested in knowing whether any changes in a client's financial situation warrant a review of the present asset mix. Portfolio changes are then made according to the asset mix outlined in the existing investment plan.

Ease of owning equities now and in the future should be evaluated vis-à-vis one's goals. Some retirement portfolios may wish to continue with a defensive asset mix. However, investors looking for long-term growth, and having higher tolerances for risk and volatility, could slowly add to their equity positions.

*"However, despite the global economic uncertainties, there are now some positive things happening with several companies around the world."*

**Slimming your information overload**

Anthony J. D'Angelo, in his book *The College Blue Book*, said it so well: "In your thirst for knowledge, be sure not to drown in all the information." The same argument can be made for the stock markets.

Investors are deluged every day by the information overload. Good and bad economic news, especially for the U.S., lands in our inbox all too frequently. Many investors are feeling overwhelmed sifting through the heaps of daily financial information. Others find it hard to ignore the continuous stream of new facts and figures.

Scores of concerned investors have difficulty separating relevant bits from noise of the day. All in the quest to try and make sense of what applies to the precious nest egg. Perhaps one solution is to slim down your appetite for information overload—without worrying that you'll miss out on something important.

I know first hand about the need to not be swamped by the onslaught of daily information. So let me wrap some perspective around the overloaded information highway. I checked the monthly calendar of U.S. economic data releases. I tallied more than 50 key upcoming releases, all sporting various expectations. The 50 data releases are just the most visible. There are plenty more where they came from.

I empathize with frustrated, overwhelmed investors. Even professionals trained to separate facts from daily noise can have trouble keeping up. Give it a rest and do yourself a giant favour. Tap the highway, but learn how to filter what's applicable and what's not.

It's not always easy adopting those information filters. Too often, more information does not translate into making better investing decisions. Being in the profession means that I can easily get an enormous daily overload sent my way. I have no plans to drown in the jumble of information, so I choose the light version.





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## WEALTH

I use three favourite filters to put my information channel on the slimming plan. First, I develop confidence in my chosen investment strategies before implementing them. Then I find the nerve to ignore the constant onslaught of research, economic data, predictions and conflicting advice. Lastly, I think total portfolio and stick to my disciplined approach.

*“Your goal is to incur the fewest distractions  
and rely less on being plugged in.”*

Each filter reduces my need to know and react to the daily deluge of details. Your goal is to incur the fewest distractions and rely less on being plugged in. My simple diet curbs the hungry appetite for the crowded information highway.

Ease up and take a breather. It helps you make better investment decisions and avoid hasty ones.

Filters that keep the information overload in check are my medicine of choice. You will be amazed at how much information you really don't need!

### Untangle your retirement plan

This brings me to the main event. Most reasons to save and invest lead to a long-term retirement plan. However, it seems that not a day goes by before someone publishes yet another retirement report—typically highlighting how unprepared people are, especially boomers.

It can be frustrating trying to stitch your retirement plan together, particularly when you have to juggle an abundance of conflicting viewpoints. Too often retirement projections are out of date. Worse yet, others are simply non-existent.

It's critical to get to know the size of portfolio you need to deliver on your goals. Then get a handle on the approximate annual return you seek to retire comfortably. To me, retirement planning is a very personal decision process. It need not be worrisome, or complicated.

Here is my straightforward planning approach:

1. Set out your retirement goals—age to retire and desired income in today's dollars.
2. Calculate the capital estimate required to achieve your retirement, say to age 90.
3. Determine the amount of regular savings you need to inject into your investing plan.
4. Compute the investment rate of return range you need to achieve your goals.
5. Design your personal investment plan with the above in mind and invest within it.

Start with my simple approach to build a strong foundation for your retirement plan. Professional advisors can help if you're not comfortable with your retirement math.

Some cases may benefit from more complexity. If so, then methodically add to your established foundation. Always keep in mind that it's about what is important to you about your wealth management. ■



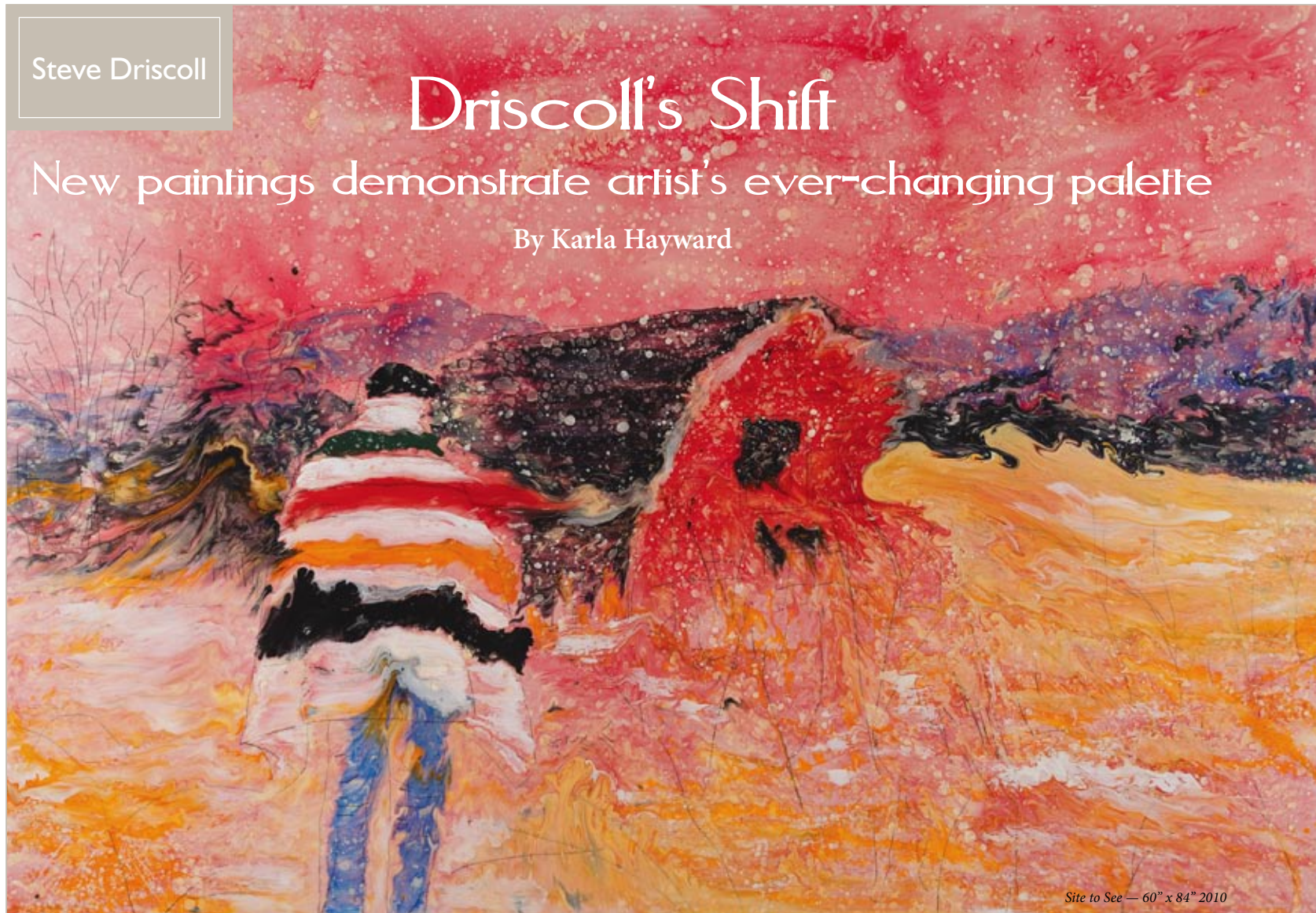


Steve Driscoll

# Driscoll's Shift

New paintings demonstrate artist's ever-changing palette

By Karla Hayward



Site to See — 60" x 84" 2010

There are artists who seem driven to create—less as a means of expression than as a way to soothe an obsessive-compulsive itch. They worry at a theme or subject, endlessly reiterating, producing a similar work time and time again, with only slight variation.

Steve Driscoll is not one of these. From troubling, muddy industrial works built on chicken wire and festooned with vinyl tubing, to delicate flowers viewed at the macro level and executed in clean high-gloss pigments, to multi-layered, snow-veiled Canadian landscapes, Driscoll is a painter who is ever-evolving. One who is constantly learning and growing in his craft.

## Natural occurrence

According to Driscoll, changes in technique or subject aren't part of a conscious plan. Rather, they're something that happen organically.

"I'll learn something in the studio that will inform how I look at the work. [For instance,] when I learned about carving, I became focused on line work. I started to think about vines, branches. I realized I had a new way to control the urethane. I could approach a piece completely differently after that."

From this discovery sprang Driscoll's simply gorgeous floral series, punchy and intricate on their high gloss black backgrounds. This carving technique, in which Driscoll gouges channels into board to contain areas of colour variation, can also be seen in several of the landscapes in his current work.

The idea for a new series can also come from the exterior world. Recently, while spending a week in a secluded log cabin in northern Ontario, Driscoll was struck by how a house can be seen as a portrait of the people inside it. A previously uninteresting, "nothing special" structure suddenly became enthralling, spawning pieces based on the small homes and cabins near where he vacationed.

The works in Driscoll's latest shows are largely literal landscapes that Driscoll was exposed to in British Columbia, Ontario, Newfoundland and the north-eastern U.S. Many, which he collectively nicknames "the birches," are landscapes seen through the trunks of a stand of trees. Most are also seen through falling snow.

"That's sort of a Pollock thing; a veil of paint on the surface. Then there are the trees, then the landscape, then the black background. It's all designed to keep the eye dancing, moving. Within this image of stillness, there's still so much happening."



I Never Forget Their Passing — 44" x 55" 2010

Unusual in Driscoll's work are figures. Barring his samurai series, the works rarely show any living thing with a pulse. In this new work, however, we find a lone man, wrapped in broad stripes of colour, outside a red barn (*Site to See*, 60" x 84").

*"The works in Driscoll's latest shows are largely literal landscapes that Driscoll was exposed to in British Columbia, Ontario, Newfoundland and the north-eastern U.S."*

"I've always wanted to do [figures]. We were near Lake Placid, and a freak snowstorm came up. We had no jackets, nothing warm. My friend found this Hudson Bay blanket in a thrift store and wore it around for days. There was just something so amazing about him standing there... something so Canadian, even though we were in the U.S."

Learn more at [www.stevedriscoll.com](http://www.stevedriscoll.com). ■



The Sun Shines Today — 44" x 55" 2010

**To view work in person visit:**  
Winsor Gallery, Vancouver, BC  
Hayden Beck Gallery, Whistler, BC  
James Baird Gallery, St. Johns, NL  
Jamie Angell Gallery, Toronto, ON



# Operation Rainbow Canada

## Bringing Smiles to Children



Operation Rainbow Canada (ORC), a non-profit, all-volunteer organization of physicians, surgeons, nurses and support workers, was established in 1998 by Dr. Kimit Rai, an internationally recognized plastic surgeon, and to date has helped nearly 2,000 children in Mexico, Lebanon, the Philippines, Cambodia, India and China. ORC performs free reconstructive plastic surgery on children with cleft lip and cleft palate deformities.

Dr. Rai is a Board Certified Plastic Surgeon in both British Columbia and the U.S. He began his practice of Plastic, Reconstructive, Cosmetic and Hand Surgery in 1976 in New Westminster (Royal Columbian Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital) and Port Moody (Eagle Ridge Hospital). He has continued to practice in New Westminster and the surrounding areas. Dr. Rai has held several senior positions with the Fraser Health Region and different plastic surgery societies, and has published numerous medical papers.

ORC missions consist of volunteer medical teams that include health care professionals as well as non-medical support personnel, who travel to developing countries where they are hosted by local hospitals. ORC medical teams perform reconstructive surgery for children and young adults whose families could not otherwise afford this. The patients are drawn from the indigenous population of the host country, and often families travel days from their homes in order to have their children treated. In addition to cleft lip and palate surgery, ORC also performs reconstructive surgery for burn and post contractures.



Without corrective surgery, children born with cleft lip and cleft palate deformities are shunned, ostracized, denied schooling, and eventually succumb to a solitary life lived in the protection of their homes. The services provided by ORC transform the life of each child and their family. It offers them new hope, and opens the door to many opportunities they would have been denied throughout their lives.

In addition to the surgical services ORC performs, they also offer an educational program for Canadian plastic surgery, paediatric, and anaesthesiology residents. Through their participation in the missions, these residents not only develop their medical skills, but also cultivate a greater appreciation for the lives and struggles of so many who are less fortunate than themselves. Through their participation in ORC missions, team members develop a greater sense of responsibility to share their skills, and continue to support the work done by ORC as well as countless other medical organizations throughout the world.



As part of each mission, ORC also trains local medical practitioners in the hospitals they visit. Local medical personnel are taught state-of-the-art medical techniques, further enhancing the quality of patient care as well as promoting medical self-sufficiency.

Operation Rainbow Canada depends solely on donors and fundraising to continue to provide these services to underprivileged children. As a result, ORC has developed a number of fundraising initiatives that include an annual Auction and Brunch as well as the ORC Teddy Bear Sponsorship program.

Today, ORC's work continues at a prodigious pace. ORC is currently developing a support program with Lin Yi City in northeastern China and Baru-Sahab at the foot of the Himalayas in India. These programs are designed to educate local doctors and teach peri-operative nursing care and treat children with cleft lip and palate deformities. In addition, local doctors will participate in the caring for patients, as well as being involved in the education program.

Through the hard work, dedication and expertise of ORC medical personnel and countless volunteers, the lives of so many children and families have been transformed in unimaginable ways. The touching words of thanks from so many families, and the look of hope in each parent's eyes, has touched the hearts of everyone involved in ORC—and is why we continue this important work. ■

For more information, to volunteer or donate:  
[www.OperationRainbowCanada.com](http://www.OperationRainbowCanada.com) | 1.888.956.3399

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Proceeds will go to help support **Operation Rainbow Canada** in its ongoing missions.

OPERATION RAINBOW CANADA



# GEORG SCHMERHOLZ



## *SPIRIT OF THE WIND*

*6"W x 15"H x 10"L*

*Jade & Doug-Fir root*