

# TRAVEL



## Nature cruise

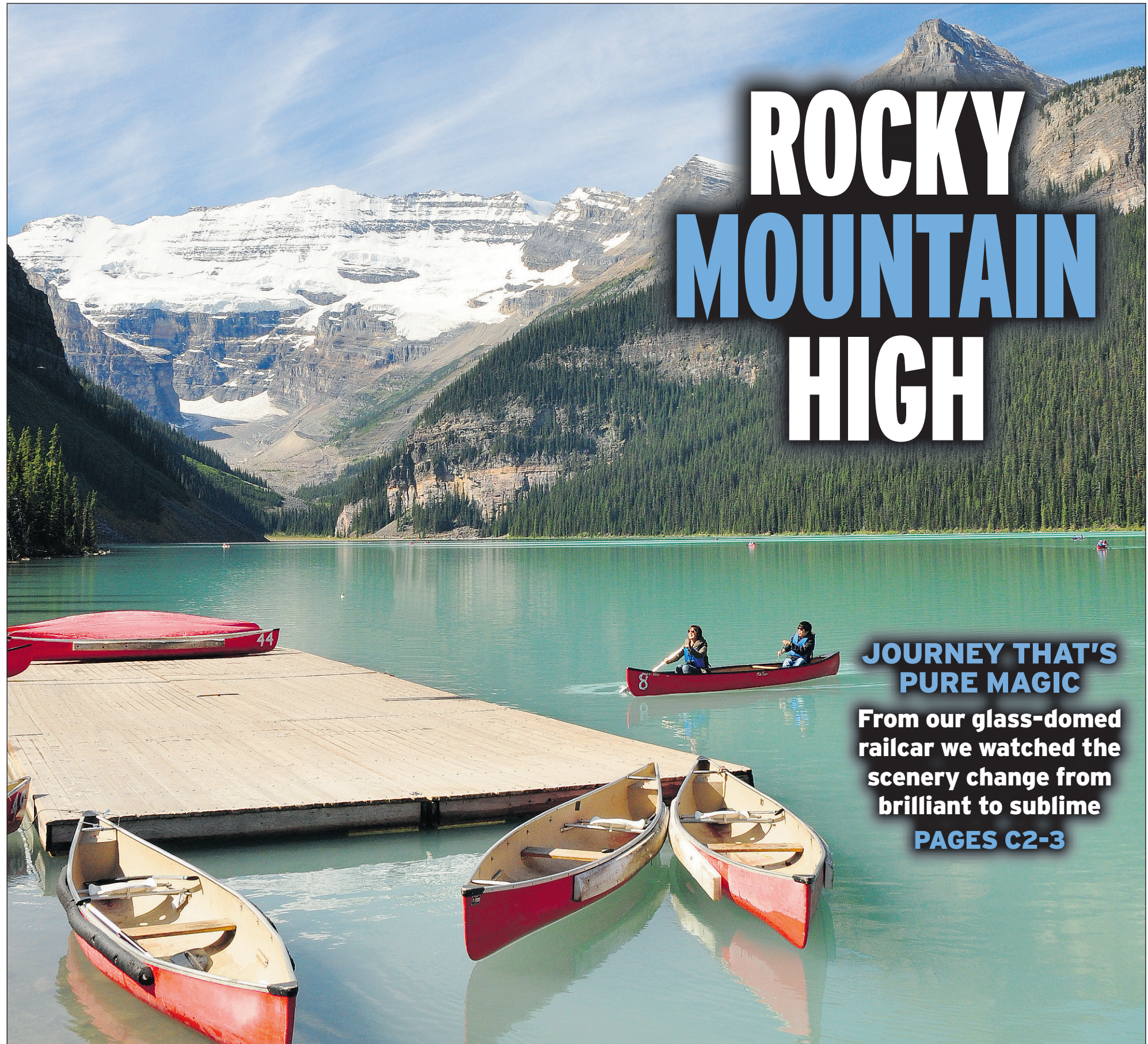
European river cruise along breathtaking Rhine a once-in-a-lifetime holiday for flower show aficionados

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## TIME TO GET AWAY

CARALYN CAMPBELL (EDITOR) • 604-605-2784 • cacampbell@sunprovince.com | SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2011

## SECTION C



# ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

**JOURNEY THAT'S PURE MAGIC**

**From our glass-domed railcar we watched the scenery change from brilliant to sublime**

**PAGES C2-3**

Padding across the aquamarine waters of Lake Louise with the towering Victoria glacier as the backdrop. CURT WOODHALL — FOR THE PROVINCE



**Rick Cropp and Barbara Braidwood**

FOR AS LITTLE AS ...

**Free**

... receive a round trip rail ticket to Paris on the high speed TGV (good for use through Dec. 10) when you purchase any Swiss Pass by Oct. 12 with the "Explore Switzerland and Paris is on Us" offer from Rail Europe (1-800-361-7245, www.raileurope.ca). Restrictions apply.

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... enter Holland America Line's sweepstakes by Nov. 30 on Facebook (www.facebook.com/HAL-Cruises) for a chance to win a 7-day Alaska cruise for four including two veranda staterooms.

**Free**

... earn a stay at Whistler's 77 suite Nita Lake Lodge (1-888-755-6482, www.nitalakelodge.com) with the "Stay for Free" promotion. When you stay between Oct. 10 and Dec. 15 you'll receive the amount you paid for your room to use on a mid-week getaway between Jan. 8 and Apr. 15.

**\$16 US**

... mid-week, visit the "Fashion World of Jean Paul Gaultier: From Sidewalk to Catwalk" exhibit at the Dallas Museum of Art (www.dal-lasmuseumofart.org) between Nov. 13 and Feb. 12. It will showcase approximately 140 haute couture dresses.

*Barbara Braidwood and Rick Cropp are Vancouver based writers.*

Prices and availability subject to change

# Spectacle like no other

**ROCKIES:** I felt pride watching world visitors transfixed by the landscape

**MHAIRRI WOODHALL**  
SPECIAL TO THE PROVINCE

My last trip to the great Canadian Rockies was a in a 1986 gold Ford station wagon with tent trailer in tow.

Standout memories of that family vacation include my younger brother's face an inch from mine whispering 'not touching' waiting at the side of the highway for my father to return with coolant for the car (a recurring theme of our road trips), and my mum's large wooden spoon carefully positioned as constant reminder for us to behave.

Travelling GoldLeaf service aboard the Rocky Mountaineer promised to be a more relaxing experience. The two-day journey from Vancouver to Banff kicked off with a gourmet breakfast followed by Caesars and beer from the comfort of our sun-drenched glass-dome car.

There is something both nostalgic and luxurious about train travel, and as each mile marker passed I watched the scenery transition from city to lush farmland, listened to the quiet chatter of South African, Australian and American accents and felt myself slip into a state of pure relaxation.

Throughout our journey we passed glacial fed rivers with emerald water, rugged mountain peaks, lush swamplands, turquoise blue lakes and dense forests. Perhaps even more magical than the spectacular scenery was experiencing the wonder and enjoyment that our landscape brought to all the passengers visiting from around the world.

All the while, our on-board attendants shared scenic and historical facts while keeping our wine glass topped and bellies full. By the time we reached Banff I was rested and ready for exploration.

We selected Canmore as base



Get close and personal with the spectacular scenery on the Rocky Mountaineer — SUBMITTED PHOTO

camp for our two-day stay in the Rockies, which is only a 20-minute drive from Banff and about an hour from Lake Louise.

The town of Canmore was settled as a coal mining post in 1884 after the Canadian Pacific Railway was built.

While Banff with its hot mineral springs developed as a playground for the wealthy, Canmore became home to the working class railway

men, miners and their families. Historical buildings, such as the North West Mounted Police Barracks, Canmore Hotel and Miner's Union Hall now stand among quaint shops, cafés and restaurants in the centre of town.

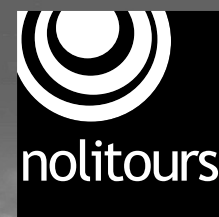
A peaceful morning can be spent window-shopping along Main Street with a stop at They Old Tyme Candy Shoppe for Gold Mine Gum, Pink Elephant Popcorn and a Cad-

bury Curly Wurly bar.

After the sugar buzz subsides, head to the Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park to hike or bike the 100 plus kilometre trail system. Built for the 1988 Winter Olympic Games, the Centre has undergone major renovations and now offers an assortment of outdoor pursuits, including a 6.5 kilometre paved rollerski trail, 18-hole disc golf course and orienteering programs.

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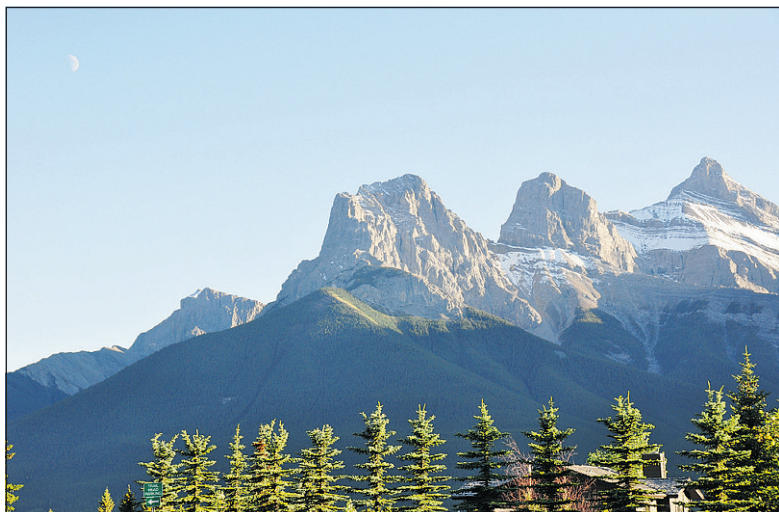
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The Three Sisters mountains in Canmore, Alberta rise above the historic old town.

Taking a day-trip to the Banff National Park is a must while in Canmore. We chose the scenic Bow Valley Parkway one-and-a-half hour drive to Lake Louise, hoping to spot some Rocky Mountain wildlife. The winding two-lane road has a maximum speed of 60 kilometres an hour, which is the perfect pace to take in the jagged mountain peaks, crystal lakes and colourful wildflowers.

There are plenty of lookout points with interpretive information boards along the way to learn about the Park's flora and fauna. Although bears, elk and even wolves have been spotted along Bow Valley we had to settle on a few birds and the occasional chipmunk.

My minor disappointment over the lack of wildlife quickly subsided when we arrived at Lake Lou-

ise. The aquamarine body of water bordered by lush greenery, beautiful Fairmont Chateau and towering Victoria Glacier was magnificent. We rented a canoe from the hotel and spent an hour paddling and taking photos of one of Mother Nature's finest accomplishments. Post-canoe refreshments were enjoyed on the Chateau's Lakeview Lounge patio before we set-off to Moraine Lake.

In the Valley of the Ten Peaks, 14 kilometres from Lake Louise, you'll find the visually stunning, glacial fed Moraine Lake. The turquoise hue of the water is so intense it could easily be mistaken for the Caribbean Sea, although the icy breeze and snow-capped peaks of the ten surrounding mountains quickly bring you back to the Rockies.

There are hundreds of hiking trails



Lake Louise: It's certainly counted among the most beautiful natural spots on earth

CURT WOODHALL — FOR THE PROVINCE

in the area and canoe rentals are also available on the lake.

I was warned how the dry mountain air can play havoc on the skin, so I booked in for a Personalized Facial at the newly opened One Wellness Spa in the Solara Resort. After an epidermis examination Kelly, my esthetician, went to work.

My custom treatment included a deep cleansing, Vitamin C scrub, skin brightening Pumpkin Purifying Enzyme Peel, which smelled like homemade pie, moisturizing mask and foot and hand massage. 75-minutes later I was glowing, and felt five years younger.

It's amazing how the great outdoors can stimulate ones appetite, and with the variety and abundance of quality cuisine it is impossible to hold back. There were many culinary 'bests' experienced on this trip, including the French toast with caramelized gala apples and maple syrup at The Georgetown Inn in Canmore. Pizza lovers should definitely check out Bear Street Tavern in Banff for thin crust pies with imaginative toppings, such as The Bison (smoked bison, caramelized onions and edamame beans) and The Donair

(lamb, onions, tomatoes, shredded lettuce and garlic sweet sauce). Best patio is awarded to The Iron Goat Pub & Grill where you can watch the sunset over the famous Three-Sisters peaks while indulging in the fall-off-the-bone Alberta Baby Back Ribs or award-winning Game Meatloaf made with bison, elk, lamb and a hint of maple syrup. In the province famous for beef, dinner at a steak house is essential.

Rustica overlooking the 18th fairway of the Silvertip Golf Resort serves only 100% Canadian Prime (the top 0.3% of Canadian graded beef) and has proudly made the steak knife obsolete. Our chateaubriand accompanied by fingerling potatoes and bok choy almost brought my husband to tears, and the portions were so generous he enjoyed it again at breakfast.

We stayed at Solara Resort & Spa, an all-suite hotel within walking distance of downtown Canmore. The cozy suites with mountain-inspired decor, large gourmet kitchens and fireplaces in the living room and master bedroom are perfect for a weekend getaway or longer retreat. Recent additions to the resort include two indoor relax-

**If you go**

- Tourism Canmore:**  
www.tourismcanmore.com
- Rocky Mountaineer:**  
www.rockymountaineer.com
- Solara Resort & Spa:**  
www.solararesort.ca
- One Wellness & Spa:**  
www.onewellnessandspa.com
- Fairmont Lake Louise:**  
www.fairmont.com/lakelouise
- Georgetown Inn:**  
www.georgetowninn.ca
- Bear Street Tavern:**  
www.bearstreettavern.ca
- Iron Goat Pub & Grill:**  
www.irongoat.ca
- Rustica Steakhouse:**  
www.silvertipresort.com

ation hot pools, full-service spa and 96-seat entertainment theatre. The magnitude of the Rockies astounds me, and it's as if everything, from architecture to cuisine, is intent on competing with the area's grandeur. We look forward to returning next winter to experience the beauty of Banff National Park sparkling under a veil of snow and ice.



Canoeing in the surreal aquamarine waters of Moraine Lake in Banff National Park is a real treat.

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