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Have Montrealers Unearthed the Fountain of Youth?

BY KRISTIAN GRAVENOR

In the health-food industry, you relish the day a customer waltzes in demanding a previously unheard-of product with supposedly stupendous health benefits.

Not long ago, pomegranate juice seekers were rare, but the pink juice has made a rapid switch from strange to staple. A survey of Westmount and NDG grocers suggests that many health-conscious consumers have developed a healthy addiction to the stuff.

Chris Hills, manager of À Votre Santé health-food store on Sherbrooke St., reports that the craze caught fire
about two years ago when locals read about the *continued on page 8*



Pomegranate juice is all the rage at Montreal health food stores.

Restaurant Review

A Tale of Two Tapas

BY STUART WOODS

The leading culinary destination of the moment isn't Paris, New York or London, but the Basque city of San Sebastian, which boasts the highest per-capita concentration of Michelin stars in the world. Its renown is the legacy of *la nueva cocina vasca* (New Basque Cuisine), which in the late-1970s invigorated Spanish haute cuisine. Defined by diminutive, exquisitely crafted portions and an irreverent attitude towards flavour, texture and tradition, the Basque style fused the concept of
continued on page 12

Maternally Yours

Overnight Camps: Part 1 of 2

BY ANNIKA MELANSON



Ahhh, the thought of heading off to summer camp in flip-flops and tie-dyed T-shirts, and seeing old friends from the summer before who have become pen pals over the winter months (or is it e-mail pals these days?). Many of us have fond memories of summer camp: learning new skills, spying on the boys (or girls!), making new best friends and even a first crush.

Overnight camp provides a healthy,
continued on page 4

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My game isn't feathery fowl but finding a home for your down-filled pillows. As a real-estate agent, my biggest thrill is helping my clients track down the right home for their needs.

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HAPPENINGS

Vivva Montreal's guide to what's on around the island.

Music

- Quebec klezmer and gypsy ensemble **Gadji-Gadjo** perform traditional music from Eastern Europe. Tickets are free. Maison de la Culture Côte-des-Neiges, 5290 Cote des Neiges. For information call 514.972.6889. **February 1 at 8 pm.**
- Toronto-based nine-piece **God Made Me Funky** showcase their God-given talent at



God Made Me Funky gets funky

- Jello Bar, 151 Ontario East. Tickets are \$10. For tickets and info go to www.globalntt.com. **February 2 at 10 pm.**
- Just in time for Valentine's Day, Maison de la Culture Côte-des-Neiges & NDG presents a series of programs devoted to that most romantic art form, the tango. Performances by Buenos Aires trio **Cien Caminos** (**February 3 & 8**); Montreal-based musician **Romulo Larrea**, who plays bandoneón, a traditional instrument similar to the accordion (**February 6 & 20**); and a program of South American-inspired music by trio **La Shunta** (**February 21**). Tickets are free, but reservations are recommended. Maison de la Culture Côte-des-Neiges, 5290 Cote des

Neiges & Maison de la Culture NDG, 3755 Botrel. For more information and to reserve tickets call 514.872.6889 or 514.872.2157.

- **The Arcade Fire** plays five sold-out shows at the Ukrainian Federation, 5213 Hutchinson. 50 tickets are being reserved at the door for each show. Tickets are \$25. **February 6 to 10.**
- Local impresario Global NTT's bi-monthly showcase continues, featuring **Sule** on **February 6** and spoken word trio **Ashes on the Table** on **February 20**. Jello Bar, 151 Ontario East. Tickets are \$6. For tickets and info go to www.globalntt.com. Showtime at 10 pm.
- Emerging Canadian pop diva **Eva Avila** at Métropolis. Tickets are \$29.50. For tickets go to www.ticketpro.ca. **February 14.**
- Free jazz at Maison de la Culture NDG, 3755 Botrel. Trio **Lauzier Perkin Kuster** performs **February 15 at 8 pm**; **Tricycle** performs **February 17 at 8 pm**.
- **Johnny Clegg**, "White Zulu" and Jazz Festival favourite, plays Métropolis. Tickets are \$37.50. For tickets go to www.ticketpro.ca. **February 23.**
- Celebrate black history month with a free performance by Festival international Nuits d'Afrique alumnus **Annie Ébène**. Maison de la Culture Côte-des-Neiges, 5290 Côte des Neiges. To reserve tickets call 514.872.6889. **February 23 at 8 pm.**
- McGill Chamber Orchestra presents a rising star in the world of classical organ: 20-year-old **Felix Hell** performs music by Handel and Poulenc. Tickets are \$30, \$15

for students. Church of St. Andrew & St. Paul. For tickets and information call 514.487.5190 or go to www.ocm-mco.org. **February 18 at 8 pm.**

CINEMA

- **Films That Transform.** The McGill medical faculty's ongoing film series features *Joseph Guinta: A Silent Triumph*, which documents the 95-year-old Montreal artist's preparations for a major retrospective of his work while coping with his wife's worsening Alzheimer's disease. Tickets are \$10, \$15 for students and seniors. Moyse Hall, 853 Sherbrooke St. West. **February 13 at 7 pm.**
- Pianist **Louis-Maxime Dubois** accompanies silent films of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. Maison de la Culture Côte-des-Neiges, 5290 Côte des Neiges. For information call 514.972.6889. **February 18 at 3 pm.**
- The NFB screens a program of animated short films. Maison de la Culture NDG, 3755 Botrel. For more information or to reserve tickets call 514.872.2157. **February 25 at 3 pm.**

THEATRE

- Montreal-based theatre group Geordie Productions presents *The Secret Life of the Octopus*, a children's play about how rival classmates come together to care for Fred the Octopus. Performed in English and

suitable for ages 5 to 12. Free. Maison de la Culture NDG, 3755 Botrel. For more information or to reserve tickets call 514.872.2157. **February 4 at 3 pm.**

ART

- Mexican artist **Estela López Solís'** large-format landscape photographs are turned on their head through digital manipulation. *Lejanía – Éloignement* is a collection of recent work. Quebec artist **Patrick Beaulieu** spreads stardust in the form of hundreds of small, star-shaped lights. His new installation, *Poussières d'étoiles*, features video footage of Mexico and the Yamaska region of Quebec. Maison de la Culture NDG, 3755 Botrel. For more information call 514.872.2157. Vernissage **February 9 at 5 pm.**

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Celebrate the season at the Westmount **Winter Carnival**. The event features broomball, sleigh rides, hot chocolate and evening entertainment at Victoria Hall. Westmount Park and Westmount Arena. For more information call 514.989.5353. **February 1 to 3.**
- Troubadour Richard Desjardins (aka Guétare) is the guest of honour at the seventh edition of **Festival Voix d'Amérique**, a bilingual festival of oral literature, spoken word and "text in performance." The

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continued on page 3

Vivva MONTREAL

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• Distributed by Canada Post to 22,000 residential and business addresses in Westmount and eastern NDG (H3Y, H3Z and H4A) and 1,300 business addresses in Knowlton, Sutton, Magog, North Hatley and Ayer's Cliff. Bonus for next three issues: 3,700 business addresses in downtown Montreal (H3H, H3G and H3A) • 600 copies distributed to over 45 waiting-room drops. • Monthly. Distribution begins on the last Tuesday of the month, except January. We understand that some people do not want to get *Vivva Montreal* in their mailbox. If this is the case, Canada Post advises that you place a sticker on your mailbox that says, 'No ad mail.' **Chers concitoyens et concitoyennes** qui ne veulent pas recevoir *Vivva Montreal* chez eux: nous ne sommes pas capable de bloquer une adresse individuelle. Il faut mettre une étiquette près de votre fente à lettres qui lit « Pas de média-poste ».

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Westmount, QC H3Z 2M9
Fax: 514.935.9241

vivva@vivvamontreal.com
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Editor: David Price 514.935.4537

Assistant editor:
Stuart Woods 514.223.3578

Design: Studio Melrose

Advertising sales:
Annika Melanson 514.223.3567



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COOKING

Recipes for Romance

BY ANTHEA DAWSON

Now that the holiday season is officially over, we Canadians start to feel a little withdrawal. While our American neighbours celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day and George Washington Day, we settle in for a long haul of full work weeks. Thank heavens for Valentine's Day. Yes, it may seem like just another Hallmark holiday, but February 14 offers us a reason to come together and celebrate.

Eat Your Heart Out

There are many types of food and drink that have long been considered aphrodisiacs, edible delights that get your blood pumping and get you in the mood for love.

HAPPENINGS... continued from page 2

week-long festival includes a showcase of Toronto talent, a free daily "5 à 7" series and a late-night open mike. Casa del Popolo, 4873 St. Laurent & Sala Rosa, 4848 St. Laurent. Tickets available at the door or in advance at www.admission.com. Go to www.fva.ca for more information. **February 2 to 9.**

■ **Young, Gifted and Black.** A program of drama, music, dance and spoken word in celebration of black history month. Tickets are \$20, \$15 for students. The Oscar Peterson Concert Hall, 7141 Sherbrooke St. West. For information call 514.918.3352; for tickets go to www.admission.com. **February 3 at 8 pm.**

■ The Jean Monbourquette Foundation presents **The Honourable Senator Roméo Dallaire**, who chairs a conference about children and war. Proceeds go to the Jean Monbourquette Foundation. Tickets are \$50. The Oscar Peterson Concert Hall, 7141 Sherbrooke St. West. For tickets call 514.848.4848 or go to www.admission.com. **February 12 at 7:30 pm.**

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February 24 Rod Stewart
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March 28 Christina Aguilera
April 5 Nelly Furtado
April 6 Harlem Globetrotters
April 10 Il Divo

Though there is little scientific proof to confirm that certain foods make you hot under the collar, there is a long history of tales through the ages to back up the claims.

Probably the most notorious aphrodisiac is the oyster, the true pearl of the ocean. Here in Montreal you can find a wide variety of Atlantic oysters in most fish markets, and February is one of the best months to sample them.

Oysters, like most shellfish, follow something known in the cooking world as "the R-rule," meaning that they are at their best during months that have the letter R in them. Luckily for us, that includes most of the dismal winter months, and what better way to jazz up your Valentine's Day than with these delectable treats? Whether you prefer the saltier Malpeques and Caraquets or the fruity Pine Island variety, oysters on the half-shell are a true delicacy that require little fanfare – just a wedge of lemon, cocktail sauce or a dollop of mig-nonette (a red-wine vinegar dressing).

More Aphrodisiacs

Other edibles that can spice up your love life and your menu are asparagus (a hormone stimulant famous for its suggestive shape and high levels of vitamin E), basil (which boosts fertility), ginger (which stimulates the circulatory system), and chili peppers (which boost heart-rate and release endorphins, creating a natural high).

And then, of course, there is chocolate. The longtime favourite gift of lovers on Valentine's Day, chocolate is the most famous of the aphrodisiacs, and there is some scientific evidence that explains why. Containing chemicals that affect neurotransmitters in the brain, as well as antioxidants – enzymes that prevent cancer – good-quality dark chocolate is the perfect way to finish off your Valentine's Day.

Hoisin-Ginger Glazed Salmon with Asparagus

4 8 oz. salmon fillets, skin removed
kosher salt & pepper
2 Tbsp. vegetable oil

Glaze:

4 Tbsp. hoisin sauce
1 Tbsp. ginger, minced
1 tsp. garlic, minced
1 tsp. hot chili sauce
1 Tbsp. soy sauce
1 Tbsp. sesame oil

4 Tbsp. black sesame seeds
4 cups mixed greens
1 bunch medium asparagus, trimmed, blanched and cut into diagonal chunks
1 red pepper
1 yellow pepper
4 scallions, chopped
2 Tbsp. chopped basil
2 Tbsp. seasoned rice-vinegar
4 Tbsp. sesame oil
4 Tbsp. coriander, chopped (for garnish)

Pre-heat oven to 350°F.

Season salmon fillets with salt and pepper to taste. In a cast-iron skillet, heat vegetable oil until smoking. Sear the salmon fillets on one side (flesh-side down) until crispy and golden. Flip fillets and keep them in the skillet, but remove from heat.

Meanwhile, prepare the glaze by mixing together all ingredients except for the black sesame seeds. Evenly spread the glaze over the seared salmon fillets and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Put the skillet in the oven and bake at 350°F for 4 to 5 minutes (for medium-rare) or 8 minutes (for medium). Remove from oven and set aside.

While the salmon is baking, throw together the salad by mixing the vegetables together in a large bowl. Whisk together the seasoned rice-vinegar and sesame oil in a small bowl and toss with the salad.

To serve, divide the salad evenly amongst 4 plates (being sure to get each veggie on each plate). Place salmon on top. Sprinkle generously with coriander and serve!

Serves 4.

Molten Chocolate Cake

4 oz. (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
4 oz. bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped



The oyster: natural aphrodisiac

3 large eggs
½ cup sugar
½ cup flour
Confectioner's sugar

Pre-heat oven to 450°F.

Butter 6 6 oz. ramekins and dust lightly with flour. Set ramekins on a baking sheet.

Melt butter in a small saucepan. In a small bowl, pour melted butter over chocolate and stir until smooth.

Using an electric mixer, beat the eggs in a separate bowl at medium speed until they are thick and pale. Beat in flour and add chocolate mixture. Pour batter into the ramekins and bake in the middle of the oven for 12 minutes, or until a dime-size shape appears in the centre of the cake. Let cool for 1 minute.

Sift confectioner's sugar over each cake and serve with French-vanilla ice cream.

Serves 6.

Anthea is the executive chef of Simply Wonderful, a catering company.

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MATERNALLY... continued from page 1

non-threatening environment for the important work of separating from parents, and gaining self-confidence and independence. It is a place to learn teamwork, sharing and cooperation while enjoying the great outdoors.

If you are considering sending your child off for the first time and are overwhelmed with the abundance of choice out there, then read on.

Summer Camp Experts

I recently had the pleasure of speaking with Lynn Yaphe of **Student Camp and Trip Advisors**. Lynn and her business partner Koral Zeidel offer a *free* consulting service to families who are interested in camps, trips, tours and schools for their kids during summer vacation. Lynn and Koral have been in business since 1970 and offer a personalized service. They begin by interviewing each family to ascertain a child's specific inter-

See Camp Checklist p. 6

ests, so that they can suggest an appropriate camp from among the more than 650 programs the company represents in Canada, the US and Europe.

If anyone knows how to choose the right summer camp for your child, it's these ladies! Lynn Yaphe says she spends every summer visiting camps "to see programs in action, get to know directors and staff, talk with campers and assess the physical campus."

Lynn has given me the scoop on what to look for in an overnight camp for children ages 7 to 18.

According to Lynn, an important first step when choosing the right camp for your child is meeting the camp director. "A good rapport with the director is a most

important component of a successful choice. This is the person that has the most interaction and the greatest effect upon the campers."

You can get a feel for the director by imagining how your child will interact with him or her. Will your child feel comfortable telling them if there is a problem? If



Canoeing – A Camp Favourite

they are proud of a new achievement? If they are feeling lonely or homesick? When meeting the camp director, take the opportunity to talk about anything special that is going on in your child's life (e.g., a new baby at home, a divorce, if your child is a bed-wetter or has difficulty making friends and socializing). That way, the camp staff will be better prepared to deal with your child's unique circumstances.

"Camp should be a positive experience that your child looks forward to summer after summer," says Lynn. "The camaraderie and continuity that camp can provide is invaluable."

To set up a personal appointment with a representative from Student Camp and Trip Advisors, contact Lynn Yaphe at 514.482.1462 or Koral Zeidel at 514.482.6756.

More Advice

Ask yourself and your child what your expectations of the camp experience are. Is your child involved in a sport in which he would like to excel? Would you like to encourage your child to try new activities and experience something completely different? Does your child have special needs (e.g., diabetes, learning difficulties, allergies, a weight problem, physical or mental disability, etc.) All of these things must be taken into consideration.

Specialized camps run the gamut from sports *continued on page 5*

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#4	13-17	Aug. 4	Aug. 11
#5	9-12	Aug. 12	Aug. 18

For further information contact: **Parkside Ranch Inc.**, 1505, Alfred-Desrochers, Orford, QC, J1X 6J4
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MATERNALLY...

continued from page 4

.....
camps to creative arts camps, adventure camps to science camps, as well as camps specializing in the performing arts, music, language and education. I can't say that math camp would have been my cup of tea, but to each their own!

Overnight Camp Resources

It is a good idea to ask for references from families whose children have attended a particular camp. Having said this, it is important not to rely solely on word-of-mouth. The camp where your niece thrived may not be suitable for your child. There are rarely terrible camps, only camps that are a terrible fit for your child! Do your detective work and choose carefully.

When choosing an overnight camp, consult the following online resources: **L'Association des camps du Québec** (www.camps.qc.ca), the **Ontario Camping Association** (www.ontariocamps.ca) and the **American Camp Association** (www.aca-camps.org). These camp associations provide you with a list of accredited camps, as well as criteria for keeping campers happy, healthy and safe. Note that certified camps are visited by camp consultants and must adhere to health, safety and staffing-ratio standards.

Some important points to consider when choosing an overnight camp:

- Is the camp co-ed?
- How is the camp staff trained and what are their qualifications (first aid, CPR, etc.)?
- What is the ratio of camp counsellors to campers?
- Is there a nurse and/or doctor on staff?
- What kind of communication is permitted with the parents?
- Are visits allowed?
- What are the accommodations like?
- What is the camp's attitude regarding discipline?

Summer Camp Fairs

To find out more, I suggest attending the **Montreal Camp Fair** hosted by *Montreal Families*. Approximately 40 summer camp directors will be on hand to answer any questions you might have about their camps. The event will mostly feature overnight camps from Quebec, Ontario and the US, as well as some local day camps. It is suggested that your child accompany you so that they can get a feel for which camp they like best. Admission is free. Lower Canada College, 4090 Royal Ave. For more information call 514. 487.8881 or go to www.montrealfamilies.ca. **February 26, 6 pm to 8:30 pm.**

continued on page 6

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MATERNALLY...

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L'Association des camps du Québec also hosts **Camp Caravan 2007**, a camp fair with more than 30 accredited Quebec camps. Camp directors will be available to speak to parents and kids. Place Laurier, **March 9 to 11**. Olympic Stadium, **March 30 to April 1**. For more information call 514.252.3113 or go to www.camps.qc.ca.

Annika Melanson is the author of THE MONTREAL POCKET PARENT and LE BOTTIN DES BAMBINS and co-author of YUMMY IN MY TUMMY IN MONTREAL.

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- ☐ Long pants
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Bug repellent
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Hat
- ☐ Shorts and T-shirts
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Toiletries
- ☐ Closed walking shoes, hiking boots or running shoes
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ART REVIEW: PARISIAN LAUNDRY

Fresh and Clean

BY CHRIS “ZEKE” HAND

Parisian Laundry is one of the bright new stars in the Montreal exhibition firmament. It had a soft opening in 2005, came into its own in 2006 and now, in 2007, has hit the ground running, leading the rest of Montreal galleries onward and upward into the future. I'm good friends with the director, and know the owner, and always have a very nice time when I go visit.

The exhibit on the main floor is a two-person show organized by Jean-François Bélisle, featuring the work of **Lynne Cohen** and **Denis Farley**.

Cohen has been getting an awful lot of exposure in Montreal recently. A series of her photographs was included as part of the Sound + Vision show at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in the summer of 2006. In that show her photographs were paired with those of Stan Douglas.

Denis Farley pretty much nails it dead-on. His large-scale photographs are digital

collages of three or four different images. For the most part, they feature an exterior shot of some fancy-ass 21st-century Canadian building, a person sort of looking like they might be a mirror image (which in fact they aren't), and an image of some “nature” in the middle. From where I was standing, they look pretty gosh-darn cool.

Ms. Cohen's photographs are also dispersed throughout the large exhibition space. Unfortunately, for my taste they aren't dispersed far enough away. Her photographs – extremely static shots of the insides of rooms, devoid of humans – are barren of any emotion. Looking at them is like looking at a wall: cold and dispassionate.

Fresh Faces

I had to pick my jaw up off the floor when I discovered the work of **Tim Lewis** and **Mathieu Gaudet** elsewhere in the gallery. I had never heard of either artist and their work is a wonder and a joy to behold.

Mathieu Gaudet works in MDF. Yes, you read that correctly: medium density fibreboard is his medium of choice. But unlike the cabinets in your kitchen, or the desk you got at IKEA, Gaudet's work looks more like something the Mad Hatter would use to make one of his headpieces. They also could be details from a three-dimensional relief map of the Canadian Shield, or a miniature skate park. Your choice.

The awe-inspiring objects of the afternoon, however, were Tim Lewis' models of a bunch of human beings small enough to fit in your pocket. The work is similar in function to a zoetrope, one of those spinning wheels from the 19th century considered to be the first animated film. Mr. Lewis, however, dispenses with the wheel, the mirror and the vertically cut slits in the sides. As far as I can tell it, is a negative reversal, or an illusion of an illusion.

Show, Don't Tell

Down in the basement of the Parisian Laundry is an “interactive video system” by **Philomène Longpré**.

If you ignore all the textual references to what she is doing and how she is doing it, it is an interesting piece of art. I actually sat through it twice in its entirety. And as I can't stand most video art, I consider this the equivalent of two thumbs up.

But where I was sorely disappointed was in the multi-syllabic art-speak nonsense distributed before entering the room, which attempted to explain and rationalize the art. To quote the “text”: “*Formica*, which means ‘ant’ in Latin ... deals in fact with the web of connections that can be woven together between a virtual character and the public.”

Oops! Wrong! Big mistake! Formica is actually the laminate that goes on top of MDF. It was invented almost 100 years ago: it's copyrighted, trademarked and protected by the Formica Corporation. Apparently, it was initially intended as a replacement for mica – hence the lack of a space between the two words.

The pamphlet goes a long way towards convincing me that I should continue (and you can too) to ignore any and all texts that accompany art exhibits that contain words longer than three syllables.

Parisian Laundry, 3550 St. Antoine. For more information call 514.989.1056 or go to www.parisianlaundry.com. All shows continue to **February 24**.

Chris “Zeke” Hand runs Zeke's Gallery. All opinions expressed herein are his own. He does not represent, manage, consult or otherwise have ANY affiliation with the artists or galleries he writes about, unless it is explicitly stated.

BOOK REVIEW

Childhood Revisited

BY CATHERINE MCKENZIE

The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid
by Bill Bryson



Running with Scissors
by Augusten Burroughs



If I had really applied myself, I might have been able to come up with two memoirs about childhood that were more different than the two I read this month. But then again, maybe not.

Innocence Lost

First, I read *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid* by Bill Bryson, admittedly one of my favourite authors. Bryson is at his best in this recounting of his childhood from ages 6 to 12 in mid-20th century middle America. Bryson remembers his childhood as a Normal Rockwell, *Pleasantville*, *The Truman Show* kind of place, without any of the present-day cynicism that we now tend to infuse into these types of portraits.

Things were simpler then, and that was a good thing. People were more naïve, and they reveled in their innocence. And somehow, all of this co-existed with the sinister things that were going on in the world: men who had come home from years of hell in World War II, the Cold War, the rise of communism, the beginning of the civil rights movement. It seems hard to believe, but Bryson makes you believe it, and makes you laugh out loud while doing so.

Ironically, the funniest moments come when Bryson describes how he never fully fit into this world that he loves so much. While other people's parents were fretting about nuclear disaster, his father was fretting about saving a buck. While other children were coddled by their mothers with milk and cookies after school, his mother worked as a journalist and was never much of a homemaker. And while other kids bought every story they were told, Bryson refused to hide under his desk when a siren wailed and was labelled a communist.

Ignorance Can Be Bliss

It struck me, though, after I had completed the book, that these same kids who had such a nice time are the same kids who were so pissed off with the government a decade later. They became the hip-

pies, and then the disco-goers, and then the greedy yuppies of *Wall Street*.

Was it because of the shock of learning what the real world was all about? I guess it is the nature of our humanity that we don't like being lied to, even if the lies are pleasant and we were happier in our ignorance.

Innocence Missing

In *Running with Scissors*, Burroughs recalls a much darker childhood that few would have fond memories of. Much of Burroughs' childhood was spent with the Finches (the family of his mother's psychiatrist), while his mother went through a series of psychotic episodes after his alcoholic father left the house. Burroughs is quasi-adopted by the Finches, a dysfunctional group of misfits led by the completely unorthodox Dr. Finch.

Some truly awful things happened to Burroughs. He was gay, and had a two-year relationship with a 30-year-old man who was also an adopted son of the Finches. Burroughs describes their sexual encounters as they must have been: raw, abusive, scary. Yet he thought he felt love for his abuser, and that also comes through.

His father was absent and refused to accept Burroughs' collect calls. And his mother, despite her love for him, was too busy dealing with her own breaks from reality to provide any continuity. So he simply floated along, hanging out with the other Finch children, barely going to school, dreaming of owning a chain of hair salons and writing in his journals.

Lost in Translation?

I have not seen the movie based on the book that came out earlier this year, but I wonder how it could have been translated to film. Or how the movie could have been funny, as it reportedly was. Because, while this is a well-written book, I did not find it funny. I can appreciate black humour, but this is black-hole humour where no light exists, not even one particle.

If you want to read a very funny series of memoirs about a man growing up gay in a slightly dysfunctional family, read any of David Sedaris' books before you read this one.

Catherine McKenzie is a Montreal lawyer.



COUNTRY DOCTOR

Confronting the Common Cold

BY DR. VIRGINIA HEESE

What we call "the common cold" is in fact a group of symptoms caused by many different viruses. The symptoms include sore or "scratchy" throat (which often disappears quickly), nasal symptoms (such as runny nose, sneezing and congestion) and coughing (which tends to show up a couple of days into the illness). Mild fever and headache may also be present.

Colds usually hang around for between three to seven days in a normal, healthy person, but some may linger on for up to two weeks.

Colds are caused by different types of viruses, of which the most common – the rhinovirus group – includes more than 100 strains. The vast number of different strains means that there is a huge number of viruses a person is susceptible to in their lifetime, and this is why developing a vaccine has been unsuccessful.

Cold viruses are very contagious and are spread when the virus makes contact with the mucus membranes of a person's eyes, nose or mouth. This occurs by inhaling the virus particles when an infected person breathes, sneezes or coughs, or by touching eyes, nose or mouth with hands contaminated by the virus. Many cold viruses are hardy and can survive on surfaces such as door handles, phones or countertops for several hours.

The number one way to protect yourself is to wash your hands frequently; it also helps to keep your hands away from your face. Alcohol-based hand-rubs are a good alternative when soap and water aren't readily available.

Treatments

Let's say you have come into contact with one of these mean little viruses. Contrary to what many people think, taking antibiotics (or, more precisely, antibacterial medication) is NOT the first thing to do at the onset of symptoms. The reason is simple: viruses are a much simpler life-form than bacteria, which are complete cellular organisms with the ability to reproduce. Viruses, on the other hand, are like little packages of information that NEED human cells to reproduce. You can design antibiotics to kill bacteria without harming human cells, but it is difficult to wipe out viruses without harming the host cells.

The fact is that your body's immune system will have to do the work of defeating the cold. You can support your body's im-

mune system by getting a lot of sleep (enough to feel rested) and drinking plenty of fluids, especially if you have a fever. Sadly, no medication will cure the common cold, but many over-the-counter remedies will help ease your symptoms.

I usually recommend that my patients limit the number of cold medications they take in order to limit the number of possible side-effects. Instead, target the symptom that bothers you most.

If your throat is bothersome, warm salt-water gargles can soothe the pain. Pain-relievers like ibuprofen or acetaminophen work well for sore throats (and headaches and fever) – try taking them a half-hour before meals to maximize your comfort while eating. I recommend popsicles and ice chips if cold feels best; if warm liquids feel better, get yourself an insulated mug and slowly sip hot tea. For nasal symptoms, try non-medicated saline nasal-spray to soothe and help clear out your passages. Breathing the hot steam of a warm beverage or hot shower (you don't have to be in it!) reduces nasal congestion. Avoid

continued on page 14

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POMEGRANATE... *continued from page 1*

health benefits packed into the hard-shelled hand grenade of health.

The first wave of pomegranate juice fiends was the lineup of usual suspects, but that group has expanded. “We sell quite a bit of it now to all sorts of people,” says Hills. “Pomegranate juice was really, really hot this past year, due to its antioxidant content. People like it for health reasons, but it’s a little bit exotic and it’s low in sugar. When you taste it, you’ll notice it has a distinctly tart berry flavour.”

The drink has long been commonplace in Turkey and Iran, and it’s considered the national drink of Azerbaijan, a country where locals can differentiate between 30 varieties of the fruit and where centenarians were common well before the advent of Western medicine.

The pomegranate parade has pulled in more strays. “Now we get people buying it who have learned about it from reading and from word-of-mouth, including people who have only recently started thinking about their health. My own father started drinking it after having heart issues,” says Hills.

According to a 2005 study published by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, pomegranate juice is a tonic

for the ticker that slows the hardening of arteries by encouraging the production of nitric oxide, the mortal foe of cholesterol and plaque. The study shows that antioxidant levels in pomegranate juice are higher than in other highly touted rival juices, such as blueberry, cranberry and orange, as well as red wine.

The juice, which costs between \$2 and \$6 per litre, is also reputed to be a youth tonic, containing polyphenols, tannins and anthocyanins that lay waste to free radicals – the stuff that decays DNA.

Hills says that longevity is a big draw in the health world. “Once it gets out that something can prolong your life, then it really starts to attract attention.” Seasoned health-seekers are also chasing the fountain of youth in other lesser-known antioxidants, such as the **goji berry** from the Himalayas and the **acai berry** from the Brazilian rainforest. Like the pomegranate, these fruit are jammed with flavonoids and a number of essential acids.

Montreal’s Mavericks

Perhaps Canada’s prime pomegranate pioneer is Azer Souleimanov, who ditched a lucrative career in software programming to preach the gospel of pomegranate juice, which he imports and markets under the **PomeGrande** label. He insists

the best stuff comes from his native Azerbaijan. “Pomegranates were first domesticated in Azerbaijan and northern Iran around 3000 BC, and you can find ancient manuscripts from that time suggesting the treatment of many diseases with pomegranate juice.”

Souleimanov says his Azerbaijani pomegranate juice is possibly the healthiest product out there, since it isn’t from concentrate or mixed with anything else. “Just try it next to another type and you’ll taste the difference.”

Another proselytizing pomegranate peddler is Nasser Akhavan, who imports his own brand that he sells at **Marché Akhavan** on Sherbrooke St. “Where I come from in Iran, you can walk down the street and see people at little booths where they squeeze the juice right in front of you. The fruit is cheap over there. It would be cheap here, too, but it costs a lot to bring it over.”

Akhavan says that pomegranate juice is rivaled only by fresh dates as the hottest item in his store.

Ancient Origins

The fruit, which some believe to be what Eve offered to Adam, was first farmed in 3000 BC in the Goychay plains of Azerbaijan, a former Soviet republic with a population of 8 million roughly the size of Maine.

The Bible is full of references to the fruit, which is also a mystical symbol of prosperity and fertility in many cultures. Researchers, however, are more interested in its ability to reduce the oxidation of LDL cholesterol, the stuff that clogs arteries. It also contains elements known to diminish blood clots and lower blood pressure. Some evidence indicates that it deters breast cancer.

Montreal-area stores such as the **Hudson IGA** have seen such demand for the juice that they specially educate their produce staff about the benefits of pomegranate juice.

Prior to accepting a post as manager of **Les 5 Saisons** on Greene Ave. at de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Jean-François Dugal made sure they were stocking pomegranate juice. “I started here in September, but from where I worked before I knew it was a good seller, so I made sure they had it here.” Since then, pomegranate juice has been a tonic for troops of workers who drop by at lunch to down the drink.



Chris Hills, manager of À Votre Santé, reports a surge in demand

Supermarché Fletcher (Metro) on Victoria Ave., Westmount’s largest grocery store, also has its pomegranate juice junkies to answer to. “If we run out, boy, do we ever hear it from the customers,” says one clerk.

Graham Fletcher, who has owned the store for 21 years, sees 22,000 customers pass through the store each week. About 24 bottles of pomegranate juice fly off the shelves daily. Those numbers have led him to bring in a whole new line of the juice.

Fletcher confesses that he’s never tasted the juice himself, but he knows what kind of people have taken to it.

“What kind of people come here and buy this?” asks Fletcher. “Smart people.”

Kristian Gravenor is a Montreal journalist, author and unrepentant pomegranate juice addict.

Where to go

Aliments Naturels A Votre Santé

5126 Sherbrooke St. West
514.482.8233

Marché Akhavan

6170 Sherbrooke St. West
514.485.4744

Les 5 Saisons

1250 Greene Ave.
514.931.0249

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4849 Sherbrooke St. West
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WINE

Pretty in Pink

BY CAROLA PRICE

In just a few short days, florists' windows will fill with dazzling, ruby-red, long-stem roses. And fitting to the time of year, there will be an abundance of shades of pinks and reds adorning boxes of chocolates of every shape and size.

Valentine's Day is right up there with your wedding anniversary, in which a panic may ensue due to the simple fact that you're obliged to one-up yourself. If you gave her a single rose on your first date, how do you top that and show your woman you adore her?

As a foodie, I would say that you can't eat roses and that each bite of an artisan's chocolate is like sipping an expertly crafted and well-cellared wine. As a woman, I am predisposed, it seems, to adore chocolate. For me, the darker the chocolate the better the flavour.

Chocolate is a lot like wine, and the two can complement each other in so many different combinations. I have the following suggestions for this celebration of love and desire in the food and wine department. The romance is entirely up to you.

Just Desserts

Lava cakes are still a hit at restaurants all over town. Dense, rich and spilling dark and creamy liquid cocoa when a fork breaks them open, there is nothing better

than a Californian merlot, an expressive banyuls from Roussillon, or an Italian nectar known as **recioto della valpolicella** to pair with this dessert. Even the most basic home-chef can make this recipe, and with good wine choices, dessert will be a true showing of your love and affection.

For those who take the high road and steer clear of desserts, fresh fruit and cheese may be the perfect ending to an evening. This brings out ports, sherries, ice wines and great big fat cabernet sauvignon. In order to loosen up the tannins in the wine, we need lactic acid and stinky, gooey cheeses like **Saint André** or **Roquefort**.

Creamy or fruity desserts let whites like demi-sec champagne, sauternes and tokaji aszu from Hungary shine through. The acidity and sugar in the fruit is complemented by the wine, all the while swirling sweetness around the tongue.

In the Pink

You may have decided to forget about your kitchen and take your honey out for a night on the town instead. Armed with flowers or sparkling jewels, you head to your favourite bring-your-own-wine resto and decide to have something pink in your bag.

I cannot stress enough that rosé is not just for the summer. Some rosés can be quite tannic and suited for heavy-flavoured foods. Ladies love it and it looks so good in the glass. Just remember, the heavier the grape the more flavour in the wine.

Wine as a Gift

What if your valentine is a wino like me? Your Valentine's Day wine can be for immediate enjoyment or be suited for the cel-

lar – the choice is entirely up to the receiver, I suppose. Perhaps a well planned meal around the gift will invoke mad drinking and eating followed by mad other things. Look at the SAQ website as they have lots of special bottles. From sauternes to port and many vintage champagnes, all will go nicely with chocolate-dipped strawberries and a smile.

Whether you share Valentine's Day with others or keep it between the two of you, enjoy something special. We never seem to take out the good china, crystal and fine wine on just any given night, so now is the time. Eat and drink with passion and Valentine's Day may just trickle into your everyday.

Wines with Passion

16.5/20 Merlot, Forest Glen, Sonoma, California SAQ#00708263. \$19.95

This is a bold wine filled in the nose and mouth with chocolate, baking spice, pepper, plums and berries. This is a good wine for dark-chocolate desserts, roast veal in balsamic glaze and medium-bodied cheeses like Oka or Victor et Berthold.

18/20 Vigneto Fiorato, Tommasi, recioto della valpolicella. SAQ# 00927335. \$23.05

I pair this with roasted nuts, bold

cheeses, figs and blackberries, but it also suits crème brûlée and chocolate fondue. It has a long finish full of rich, black fruit and some smokey character. You can refrigerate it for up to a week, because you may not finish it in one go.

16/20 Lamura IGT, Casa Girelli, Sicilia, Italy. SAQ# 10510151. \$12.40

This rosé is best enjoyed with veal picatta or roasted chicken with an herb and truffle rub. It has a slightly vegetal green nose with some strawberry and honey balancing out a floral flavour in the mouth. Match it with a berry tart with lemon-shortbread crust.

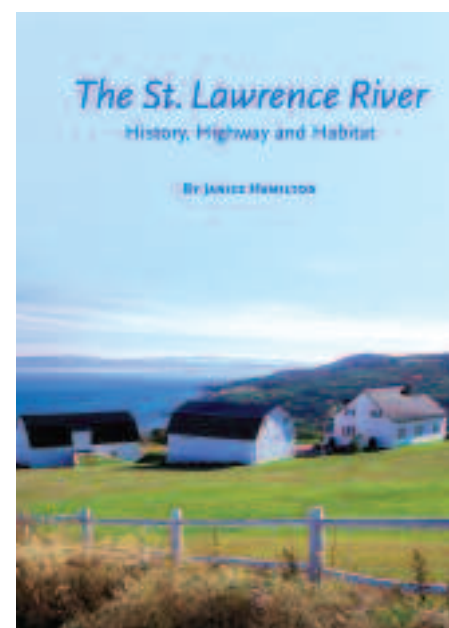
19/20 Mumm Cuvée Napa Rosé, California, USA. SAQ# 00433144. \$30.50

This may be the star of the night. Fine bubbles in the glass swirl around your mouth in preparation for the food to come. It is medium-bodied and refreshing, with a slightly strawberry and floral nose and flavour. It is well matched with strawberries and panna cotta, aged goat cheese and spicy Thai shrimp with cilantro and lime.

Carola is a sommelier & chef. She is a member of the Canadian Association of Professional Sommeliers and The International Sommelier Guild. She can be reached at carola@ivvmontreal.com.



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– J. D. Gravenor in the Montreal Gazette (June 30, 2006)

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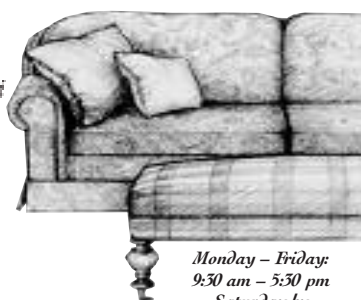
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MOVIE REVIEW: NOTES ON A SCANDAL

Cliff Notes

She Said:



Notes on a Scandal, excellently acted by Judi Dench and Cate Blanchette, is an inside-out primer to one of those mid-30s female-teacher-has-sexual-relationship-with-lithe-young-boy scandals that seems to obsess the media in between wars and terrorist attacks.

Opposites Attract

Imagine you are an English Marie Kay Letourneau. You have been raising your children and are married to an older man. You are an artist and have always dreamed of teaching art to underprivileged children. You want to bring some light and beauty into their lives. So you start teaching at an inner-city London school. There you find many children who don't care about what you have to teach them, and one who does. He is a beautiful, black Irish, 15-year-old boy. And he is pursuing you.

Now imagine you are a British spinster,

a career teacher a year away from retirement. You are a watcher. You write life down in your diaries instead of living it. You are desperately alone. And one day, this beautiful woman comes into your life. She seems lost, but worth helping. You reach out, she reciprocates. She seems, not perfect exactly, but worth loving. Suddenly you are not so alone. Suddenly you have something to take note of.

A Realistic Duo

What follows is the story of these two women, and how their intersection affects both their lives. This relationship is doomed from the start, but the length of it, and the manner of its ending are, if not a complete surprise, a full and compelling story.

This is not a fun, entertaining movie (though there are a few biting British remarks that elicit laughter). Rather, it is a vehicle for two powerful and talented women to portray two complex and realistic women. Watching it I was reminded of the spooky, slightly off feeling created by



Two celluloid Queen Elizabeths face off in *Notes on a Scandal*

The Talented Mr. Ripley (1999), or the latest *Prime Suspect* installment. Sometimes horror can come from the true, and even routine, in people's lives. As I had hoped, both actresses have received Oscar nominations (leading for Dench and supporting for Blanchette). They are greatly deserved.

He Said:



This is a very well-acted movie. As the senior actress with a great and surprise-filled performance, Judi Dench may get more attention than Cate Blanchett, but I would give greater accolades to the latter.

For Dench, playing a curmudgeon – no matter how multifaceted – must be great fun and, in any event, builds on her work in the James Bond franchise and as Elizabeth I in *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) (amongst other roles). Maybe it is not such a stretch by now...

Blanchett (an Australian), on the other hand, has been all over the road (in a positive sense): homely and American in *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, as Katharine Hepburn and American in *The Aviator* (2004), as Elizabeth I and English in *Elizabeth* (1998) – plus roles in films as diverse as *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004) and the *Lord of the Rings* movies. In this film, she is an ineffectual disciplinarian, but not clueless nor without merit as a teacher; vulnerable, but not wholly without spine; maternal, but not saintly – in short, realistic and believable.

Not Everyone's Cup of Tea

I agree with Catherine about the *Ripley* comparison. Like that film, *Notes on a Scandal* is creepy. I am also reminded of the badly named, but absolutely excellent

Year of Living Dangerously (1982) (with Mel Gibson, Sigourney Weaver and the female actress Linda Hunt as the male character Billy Kwan). Like Dench, Billy is an observer, a cataloguer, and the spookiness of both films comes from inhabiting the minds of these characters.

Be warned, though: unlike *Ripley* and its episodes of Italian sun, jazz and Gwyneth Paltrow, or *Living Dangerously* and its vignettes of politics, geopolitics neo-/post-colonial exoticism and a young Sigourney Weaver, this movie's mood is relentless. Behind it – at best – is drab British lower-middle-class life. Nothing exotic here, folks.

And that's why this movie is hard to rate or to recommend. If you like the weird, enjoy the fringe or love the anti-hero, go for it. If your tastes are more conventional (humour, romance, action, travel, good characters triumphing over obstacles – or even coming to tragic, undeserved ends), avoid it. **V**

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REAL ESTATE: HOME INSPECTIONS

What You Need to Know

BY BARRY SCHREIBER



You've made an offer on a house and it was accepted over a competing bid because you had a pre-approved mortgage, you clever person. Now it's time to fulfill the last condition – the home inspection – and the property is yours!

Get the Report in Writing

The home inspection report is a critical document. Both agents and homeowners hold their breath when the home inspector arrives, because his negative findings can kill a deal – and, in fact, many deals fall apart as a result of this report.

The report is important not only because it is often the final key in concluding a sale, but because it will serve as a reminder in written form of what needs repairing. And should major unforeseen problems ensue after the sale (like the roof falling apart after a year, when the report said it would last for ten), your inspector may have to take responsibility. This is why you want to make sure your inspector is insured when you engage him and that you receive the report in writing.

A Negative Report Can Affect a Property's Future Sale

Once a report is given to the vendor, the vendor will undoubtedly share it with his agent. If this is the case, both must declare knowledge of the problems detailed in the report to future prospective buyers. If it is discovered that the vendor and his agent concealed knowledge of a fault, there can be severe legal repercussions and a future deal may fall through.

One way to salvage this situation is for the owner to make the repairs suggested in the report. Then the vendor can honestly say that the house had an inspection that indicated repairs, but that all suggested repairs have been made.

Choosing a Home Inspector

It is always the buyer who chooses the inspector. Inspectors should be chosen carefully and their reports should be read with the help of an agent. Here's why:

1) **There is no uniform standard for home inspectors.** Inspectors have a variety of backgrounds and capabilities, so reports can vary widely. Choose an inspector who has many years of experience *as an inspec-*

tor. On certain occasions, it's wise to commission a second report. In fact, often a seller will commission a report before placing his house on the market to know what to repair.

2) **Some reports seem to make big issues out of minor problems.** If it's your first time reading a report, it can be alarming; so rely on your agent to help you. Inspectors can't be experts at everything. To protect themselves, many inspectors have pages and pages of disclaimers absolving them of responsibility. This is normal. Often, problems are detailed without repair estimates suggested, so it sounds terribly costly.

After reading one particular report, I asked the home inspector to meet with my now distraught client a second time. I asked the inspector what caulking the windows and redoing a few window sills would cost. It certainly wasn't a deal breaker. But as a result of the detailed language of the report, you would have thought heat sieved out of the house. I also had the buyer re-examine old heating bills to place the discussion in a realistic cost context.

3) **Third reason: the overly detailed report.** When a buyer gets cold feet (also known as "buyer's remorse") and wants out of a deal, he can ask his inspector to detail every possible problem. If the buyer's agent has written a clause to the effect that the inspection must be to the buyer's "entire satisfaction," it is pretty difficult to stop the buyer from cancelling the offer. But without that clause, the problems must be shown to devalue the property.

Miss the Deadline and the House Is Yours!

Because good inspectors are in demand and buyers are often given only 7 to 10 days to arrange for an inspection, it should be started right away. You will usually have an additional four-day grace period after the inspection deadline to decide whether to continue or cancel the offer.

Inspectors eager for work will tell you they can have your written report in two or three days. That is often wishful thinking. Plan on it taking longer. If you miss the deadline to reject a property, it is deemed that you have accepted the report and the condition is automatically removed.

Some inspectors bring in a team with a laptop computer and a printer. As the inspector makes his inspection using a cam-

era with a recording device, he continually drops off cartridges to the person at the computer. By the end of the inspection, a written report is delivered to the buyer. If you are on a tight timeframe, find an inspector with this capability.

Be Present

One final thought: be present at the inspection, especially if you're a buyer.

Typically, an inspection takes from four to six hours. The buyer, and indeed the inspector, may have some questions that the seller may be able to answer. It's often better and more private to have the seller available only by phone.

It's also always prudent to sit down with

the inspector after the inspection for a verbal summary. It's their job to discuss problems and not what is right about the house. One time, after listening to a litany of problems that depressed my first-time buyers, I asked the inspector if he would buy the house. His answer: "In a minute ... if I could afford it."

Sometimes you just have to know how to talk to inspectors. And remember – no house is perfect. There are virtually always improvements to be made.

Barry Schreiber is a marketing specialist and affiliated real estate agent with Sutton Centre-Ouest. If you have a question for him, he can be reached at 514.781.2425 and schreiberb@videotron.ca.

REAL ESTATE COUNTERPOINT

The Not-So-Secret Life of a Listing Agent

Re: "The Secret Life of 'Selling' Agents" – *Vivva Montreal*, January 2007

BY JANICE NEWTON

After reading the above-mentioned article, I felt there were some misconceptions that should be addressed.

Selling Agent's Role

Firstly, what is a listing agent? It is the listing agent who signs the brokerage contract with the vendor and takes responsibility for the sale of a property ensuring that all the information is accurate (e.g., certificate of location, documenting any renovations and being aware of any defects affecting the property). Listing agents are the only ones who may advertise or market the property. They set up appointments and conduct open houses, negotiate offers and deliver the deeds to the purchaser's notary.

Some would suggest that listing agents rarely sell their own listings and rely heavily on hundreds of selling agents. Yes, listing agents do collaborate with other agents, but, in my firm's case, we sell over 50% of our own listings. And we don't abandon our listings to an assistant agent. (We don't even have one.) We are all actively involved with all of our listings.

How Agents Succeed

In my opinion, there is no such thing as a "top selling agent" or a "top listing agent". There are only "top agents". Top agents list and sell, and are constantly replenishing their inventory of properties and buyers. That's how they stay on top. Because of their large inventory of properties, top agents also have a large list of potential buyers. In addition, they tend to receive referrals from clients and agents from other areas. Repeat business is cru-

cial and good service is the only way to get it. In the past, we have often listed and sold the same property two or three times.

All of this experience leads to a better understanding of the many situations that can and do come up in the sale of a property. Negotiating an offer is not just about price; there are many other factors, such as occupancy and financing. An experienced agent knows how to put it all together so that both parties are protected.

How does an agent get started? They work with buyers until they can establish themselves. They do open houses for other agents. They pound the pavement, they knock on doors and some even write articles for local newspapers. But remember, "You have to list to last!"

Janice Newton is a member of the Newton Family Team, which is comprised of her mother, Nancy; and sisters Deborah, Dale & Nancy Jr. Together they have garnered over 100 years of real estate experience both as listing and selling agents. Janice is an affiliated agent and an owner of Royal LePage Groupe Newton. She can be reached at: 514.481.0241.



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RESTAURANT...*continued from page 1*

nouvelle cuisine with the rustic, populist tradition of tapas.

Like hors d'oeuvre, tapas are small dishes meant to prefigure a larger, more substantial meal. They were born in mid-19th-century Seville, where, according to lore, an enterprising inn-keeper placed slices of ham, cheese and bread on wine glasses, to prevent flies and airborne dust from sullyng the drink. Customers referred to the ad-hoc creations as “tapas,” which means “cover” or “lid.”

Each region in Spain boasts distinct traditions, and tapas can describe literally hundreds of dishes. (In San Sebastian, the correct term in the consonant-laden Basque language is *pintxos*.) Their defining characteristic is that they are consumed in a bar, or rather a succession of bars, in a ritual that often lasts well past dinnertime.

In Montreal, where the climate is an obstacle to aimless, alcohol-fueled tapas-bar crawls, tapas restaurants have to compete with restaurants serving full-course sit-down meals. Therefore, it was in defiance of the season that I made reservations at a pair of tapas restaurants on a recent week-night and summoned an ensemble of sybaritic peers.

Part I: Tapeo

Our first stop was **Tapeo**, an upbeat and trendy restaurant on a lonely stretch of Villeray.

We were greeted with a plate of crispy, matchstick-thin frites and a shallow dipping-bowl of extra-virgin olive oil, giving us something to munch on while perusing the varied menu.

Our first dish was the best Spanish tortilla I've ever tasted: a stack of thin-sliced potatoes held firm in a mortar of whisked egg, like a brick of marble veined with translucent, perfectly cooked potato.

The tortilla was followed in quick succession by a plate of charcuteries – velvety slices of serrano ham accompanied by manchego cheese and a tangle of marinated, assertively seasoned orange and yellow bell peppers; spicy chorizo topped by a simple garnish of celery root and white beans; and a handful of locally grown pied-de-mouton mushrooms and chopped yel-

*Live flamenco at Sala Rosa (Courtesy N. Johnson)*

low beats, smothered in a rich, though colourless, veal reduction.

By then I'd tasted all the variety of a multi-course meal, but was prevailed upon to indulge in a second round.

A generous tilapia filet, served in a china dish the shape of a flat-bottomed canoe, was brought to life by a bitter mash of rapini and chopped pecans. The beef tartare was another highlight, a spicy mélange of raw meat, sprouts, chopped celery and piri piri, ballasted by a crunchy carapace of matchstick frites. The patty was topped by a fat green olive with an almond-sized pit. (Bowls of these, at hand throughout the meal, were dispensed like salted peanuts at a sports bar.)

Upscale, Original Fare

The food was simple, fresh and immediately pleasing: each tapas – like a memorable aphorism – the refined expression of a bold thought. And like a good aphorist, the chef had no shortage of bright ideas.

In the same spirit, the service was informal but assiduous, the atmosphere relaxed. I observed one party linger over the coffee course for the duration of our meal, despite the fact that Tapeo is busy enough to require reservations on weeknights.

With this amount of care and attention to detail, Tapeo deserves its outstanding reputation and devoted clientele.

Part II: Sala Rosa

When some restaurants are closing, it's still possible to eat heartily at **Sala Rosa** on St. Laurent, downstairs from the live music venue of the same name.

Operating under the auspices of the Centre Social Espagnol, Sala Rosa attracts a schizophrenic mix of aging bohemians, wizened Spaniards and scruffy Mile End hipsters.

We nibbled on a plate of unremarkable green and black olives while consulting the bulky menu, which lists over 30 tapas organized by ingredient, as well as several main courses, paella and *bocadillo* (sandwiches).

The waiter warned me off the house red – a disreputable Spanish wine that comes in litre bottles – and suggested instead the sangria, a compulsively drinkable concoction served in a plastic beer pitcher.

Authentic Experience

Our first round was a satisfying spread of typical tapas. Here, Spanish tortilla was served in the traditional style: an inch-thick, dinner-plate-size omelette with large hunks of savory potato and chorizo. Despite its unfortunately browned exterior and the unwieldy potato chunks – more halved than chopped – the tortilla was immensely satisfying.

This was followed by a separate dish of four large sardines with heads and tails attached (we sliced up the belly with our bread knives); a plate of Spanish ham that the waiter mistakenly referred to as “prosciutto”; and a *cazuelita* (traditional terracotta tapas dish) containing two quails, overdone to the point of rubbery toughness and returned to the kitchen virtually untouched.

The final tapas of the evening earned kudos, despite the protestations of an over-worked digestive system. Reminiscent of a dessert course, it consisted of four orbs of fried goat's cheese, plunked in a nimbus of honey that radiated from a pile of caramelized onions.

Carpe Diem

The food at Sala Rosa was unpretentious and prepared without flourish. The kitchen's unsophisticated vocabulary consisted entirely of terms like “salty,” “crispy,” “spicy” and “sweet” – which is precisely the assertive palate required to

Where to go**Tapeo**

511 Villeray – 514.495.1999

www.restotapeo.com

Open for lunch and dinner Tuesday to Friday

Open for dinner on Saturday

Sala Rosa

4848 St. Laurent – 514.844.4227

www.casadelpopolo.com/restosala

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stand up to endless rounds of fruit-perfumed sangria, the overpowering din and garish artwork that adorns the walls.

Part of me is inclined to believe that Sala Rosa, with its dingy cachet and rustic palate, is closer to the original tapas, which after all was rimed in dust and fly carcasses. However, most people rightfully aren't concerned with questions of historical authenticity when eating out. It's where the expression “savouring the moment” comes from.

Stuart Woods is the assistant editor of VIVVA MONTREAL.

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DRIVING: THE MAZDA RX-8

Love It or Hate It

BY MICHAEL PRESSEAU

Compromise isn't about take-it-or-leave-it; compromise is about take-it-and-live-with-it. Its connotation is dependent on context, and it may be either bad or good. When it comes to buying a car, however, it ultimately means one thing only: remorse.

There is so much that is undesirable about the Mazda RX-8 that at first glance one would be mad to live with any of it. That is, until one sits in the cockpit and sets it underway. There isn't another car currently in production quite like it.

A Wankel Engine

Mechanically, what really sets this vehicle apart is the beer-keg-size propulsion system known to motorheads as a twin-rotor Wankel engine. While a number of manufacturers have given it a shot, Mazda is now the only company that uses a Wankel in one of its cars.

Way back in the 1920s, German innovator Felix Wankel was able to reproduce the four strokes of a regular combustion engine with a triangular-shaped rotor placed in an oval chamber that spun an eccentrically-shaped drive shaft. The important part in this abridged whoopdeedoo is that this high-revving, piston-free engine could produce the equivalent amount of power as a normal engine, but at half the size and with far fewer moving parts.

The RX-8's styling also sets it apart. This is an authentic sports coupe, *but* it has four doors. The ingress to the back seats, which are fully comfortable for adults, is made possible by the doors' characteristic clam-shell arrangement. Generous fender flares, side vents and the repeated rotary-

triangle theme (look, they're everywhere!), amongst other styling features, add to the car's uniqueness. A decent size trunk also arguably makes it a practical vehicle. When all is said and done, the car certainly looks unique. But you are either going to love it or hate it.

Slow To Get Going

The RX-8's minuscule 1.3-litre, naturally aspirated powerhouse accomplishes a respectable 232 bhp at 8,500 rpm and 159 lb/ft of torque at 5,500 rpm. (You get a bit less with the free automatic transmission option, but heck, if you want a Ford Taurus, buy a Ford Taurus.) That's enough to propel the 1,389 kg front-engine rear-wheel-drive car from nought to 100 kph in just under six seconds. Nice... but not blazingly fast.

What the engine lacks in size, it more than makes up for in thirst. Don't believe the Mazda pamphlets that claim 12.8/9.2 litre consumption per 100 km of city/highway driving. This is the only car that I've driven where I could actually see the fuel gauge needle saunter towards "E" while running. What's more, the engine uses oil as part of the combustion process, so it goes through 5W-20 like Britney Spears goes through Cheetos. But hey, we sports-car pilots aren't trying to impress tree-poetry Birkenstock consumers anyway.

Start the car and wait – no, just a bit more. Ok, now, go. That's when the fun begins. (The use of different types of metal in the construction of the rotary engine, what with their different coefficients of expansion, makes starting the RX-8 something only an obsessive compulsive can

love. It's highly suggested, somewhere in the Yellow Pages-size manual, that the extremely high-revving engine be brought up to running temperature before driving. Look, you could start 'er up and take off, but it's not "suggested." You've got to exercise patience in shutting her down too. Rev the engine in neutral then let it idle a bit to drain most of the fuel from the combustion chambers, and never shut the engine down while still cool or, my friend, you're going to flood it.)

Yes, that's when the fun begins. Good gracious, the car is an absolute dream to drive. The small size of the engine enabled the engineers to push it way back in the front of the chassis, resulting in a front/rear 48/52% weight distribution. It drives like a mid-engined rollercoaster scalpel with a steering wheel. Throw the



The Mazda RX-8 is built for connoisseurs of the open road.

car into a corner and it never lets up. The GT-package standard dynamic stability control, limited slip-differential and traction-control driver's aids rival the best from any car manufacturer, and never have they been so well implemented or unobtrusive in a car at this, or possibly any, price point.

Built for Drivers

But if you want to have real fun, shut all that nonsense off with the button just over your left knee, grab the helm, and you're in complete control. Push it hard into a

curve, kick the rear out exactly the amount you want it, touch the brakes, precisely play the steering wheel, feel the car react, and do it again. It's just so easy and balanced that you won't get tired from driving all day long.

You can either snick around the amazing six-speed short-throw gearbox, heel-toeing the perfectly placed pedals (they are a bit too close for winter boots), or let the engine ride way up to its 9,000 (!) rpm red-line. The engine is so smooth and consistent that the dashboard actually beeps to warn you to change gears when the tachometer hits its limit. This is a driver's car through and through.

Except, however, for one thing: the lack of torque. There's no other way to say it: this car needs more. It *deserves* more. While this is Mazda's showcase sports car

and "Zoom Zoom" standard-bearer, it's not their fastest car off the line. It's not even their second fastest. You'll soon see the taillights of a Mazdaspeed 6 containing family and slobbering dog when the light turns green. It's one of the inherent weaknesses of the rotary engine; but while it will take longer to get up to speed, there is no car that's easier to keep there.

The RX-8 is not about compromise; it is all about balance in which the driver plays the part of the fulcrum. Once behind the wheel, we forget all the car's undesirables and are consumed by the distinctiveness that makes it a pleasure to drive. This car shouldn't be purchased for prestige or to transport the ankle-biters to soccer practice; rather, it is bought to be driven. When you start looking at maps just to find those roads with the most bends between points A and B, then you're at liberty to tip the scales in whatever way suits you best.

Michael Presseau is a Montreal-based car enthusiast.

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PRACTICAL POINTS: INVESTING

What the Mean Means: Oil, Loons & Copper

BY JOHN SMITH

We have recently seen some remarkable changes in the underlying factors that made Canadian financial markets the darlings of the universe.

For example, oil – that most fundamental of commodities – was forecast to be trading at some \$75 to \$100 (US) a barrel by 2007, and Canada was going to be gushing cash from every tap in Alberta.

It looks now as if oil is doing what most markets do over time: reverting to the mean. Somewhere between \$40 and \$50 a barrel is considered the mean. The best you will hear about the game is, “Hold ‘em.” Which is the weasel’s way of saying, “We haven’t got a clue.”

Rocks & Loonies

The fall also saw the culmination of takeover battles for Canada’s major mining companies. As the price of copper rocketed to new highs and nickel inventories sank to new lows, the pencil-heads who quantify these things forecast the world was running out of mineable ore bodies. Since then copper has sold off about 30% and nickel inventories seem to be getting back to normal.

“So what,” you say? Well, all of these comings and goings in commodities have made the loonie a vulnerable currency. When the world discovered that we had oil and copper and uranium, they turned their beady eyes and trading screens in our direction, and zingo!: the loonie was quoted at 92 cents to the US dollar. And there

were multiple forecasts of parity. Now, in the scheme of things, the loonie is an odd lot in the basket of currencies. So if you are a big and leveraged hedge-fund, you can suck up a few billion loonies in a couple of weeks without breathing hard. And that can have a major effect on the price. And so it came to pass. “But wait,” you ask. “What if they want to sell?” Another zingo and the bird rests at 84 cents. And reverting to the mean ... about 80 cents.

Lessons & Personalities

Now, what have we learned in all of this? Firstly, commodity and currency markets are volatile. But they tend to swing around fairly well-defined baselines, and it is the wide swings on either side of the slope that cause the average investor to become either lucky or disconcerted. These extremes are aided and abetted by large pools of capital that circulate throughout the world, looking for a trade that will enhance their portfolio’s annual return.

Secondly, we should learn that when experts agree on something, they will be wrong in the short run, since they have already bought into the idea and are telling you about it; so you will buy in at a higher price and make them rich. Beware the conventional wisdom! It may be correct in a few years, but it will most likely be wrong over the next 8 to 12 months.

John Smith is the nom de guerre of a retired investment executive. John has been a broker, investment banker and trader in Montreal and Toronto.

COUNTRY DOCTOR... continued from page 7

smoke and other lung irritants. Over-the-counter decongestants can relieve sinus pressure, but should always be used with caution.

Know When to Consult Your Doctor

It’s important to know when to seek medical help. Cold symptoms worsen over the first few days, but ease up over the next seven to fourteen days. If any one symptom starts to get worse and worse – that is, your symptoms come to a focus – or your symptoms don’t improve at all over 7 days – you may want the once-over from your family physician. For instance, a severe persistent sore throat with high fever (over 101°F or 38.5°C) without the typical nasal symptoms of a cold could indicate a bacterial throat infection that would benefit from antibiotics. A cough associated with

chest pain or shortness of breath is another good reason to seek medical attention. Severe headache with fever or neck stiffness may best be evaluated in an emergency room. Have a low threshold to be evaluated if you have a high fever – 101°F or 38.5°C, especially if it persists over a couple of days. Any person with chronic illnesses is at risk for more severe illness and should also strongly consider checking in with their doctor.

Never forget that your healthcare provider – someone familiar with your health status – is the best source of information for your recovery.

Dr. Heese is a Canadian and American Board-certified family physician and a graduate of McGill. She resides in Vermont. She cannot stress enough that the general advice supplied above should not, and cannot, replace the individualized advice and care of your own family physician.

TOWNSHIPS CALENDAR

Valentine’s Day Escapes

Though Valentine’s Day falls on a Wednesday this year, there are plenty of incentives to turn a romantic evening into a weekend jaunt.

Gourmet Getaway

For a truly memorable Valentine’s Day, escape to **Hovey Manor** in North Hatley. Renowned for its highbrow, French-in-



Hovey Manor: Haute cuisine, classic ambiance.

spired menu, which features seasonal and regional ingredients, Hovey allows diners to enjoy the sophistication of nouvelle cuisine in an old-fashioned, wood-panelled dining room.

For the week of February 10 to 17, Hovey Manor is offering an overnight package including accommodation, breakfast in bed and a three-course dinner including a digestif. Rates start at \$135 (including tips) per person per couple. Hovey Manor, 575 Hovey, North Hatley. For reservations call 1.800.661.2421 or go to www.manoirhovey.com.

The Great Outdoors

After winter’s late arrival, nature lovers are eager to get outside and enjoy the snow. With over 75 km of high-altitude

trails, heated “prospector’s tents” along certain routes and rustic overnight accommodations, as well as winter camping, **Parc du Mont-Mégantic** is an ideal setting for outdoor intimacy. For those who prefer nature in measured doses, the park provides a daily shuttle service to the summit of Mount Megantic; then it’s up to you to cruise down the slopes on ski or snowshoe.

On Saturday nights throughout the winter **ASTROLab** presents a series of special events for stargazers, which includes dinner, skiing and snowshoeing on a torch-lit trail, and a guided tour of the cosmos.

Overnight packages for skiers and snowshoers begin at \$49 per person. Daily shuttle service to the top of the mountain is \$17. Saturday evenings with ASTROLab begin at \$28 per person. Parc du Mont-Mégantic, 189 Parc, Notre Dame des Bois. For more information call 1.800.665.6527 or go to www.parcquebec.com.

Pamper Yourself

For a relaxing getaway, head to **Spa Eastman**, one of the largest spas in the Eastern Townships offering a long list of personalized services. Packages include traditional treatments like massage, facials, manicures and pedicures, as well as access to the Hammam (Turkish steam bath), a gourmet dining room and onsite naturopathic consultants. Set in 315 wooded acres, the spa also offers fitness packages featuring cross-country skiing, snowshoeing or skiing at nearby Mount Orford.

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MUSIC

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MOVIES

Théâtre Lac Brome screens *Leonard Cohen: I'm Your Man*, a documentary

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EASTERN TOWNSHIPS EVENTS

about the life of the Montreal bard. Tickets are \$7, \$5 for members. Arts Knowlton, 9 Mount Echo Rd. For more information call 450.242.2270 or go to www.theatrelacbrom.ca. **February 4 at 5 pm.**

Théâtre Lac Brome screens *The Last Trapper*, about a Yukon trapper, his pack of sled dogs and their dying way of life. Tickets are \$7, \$5 for members. Arts Knowlton, 9 Mount Echo Rd. For more information call 450.242.2270 or go to www.theatrelacbrom.ca. **February 4 at 5 pm.**

LECTURE SERIES

Historian **Jim Manson's** winter lecture series continues with three lectures: "Ever Vigilant: Freemasonry in the Eastern Townships, circa 1900," "Class before Race: French-Canadian Nationalism as seen by English-Speaking Townshippers during the Duplessis Years" and "The People's Choice: Glen Brown's Life in Politics." Presented by the Brome County Historical Society. Admission is free. Old Court House, 15 St. Paul Rd. For information call 450.243.6782. **February 10, 17 & 24 at 1 pm.**

SPORT

Grand Prix de Valcourt, a showcase for snowmobile racers and enthusiasts in the "world snowmobile capital." Tickets are \$25, free for children under 12. 917 Route 222, Mariecourt (just outside of Valcourt). For tickets and information call 1.866.532.7543 or go to www.grandprixvalcourt.com. **February 16 to 18.**

Racing fiends compete for \$130,000 at the 9th edition of the **Challenge sur glace**, where stock-cars, motorbikes and ATVs compete on the slippery stuff. Also featured: tubing, sleigh rides and ice sculpture presented by the **Carnaval de Sherbrooke**. Admission is free, but grandstand tickets are \$20. For information call 819.560.4270 or go to www.challenge-canada.com. For tickets call 819.560.4270 or go to www.admission.com. Palais des sports, 350 Parc, Sherbrooke. **February 22 to 25.**

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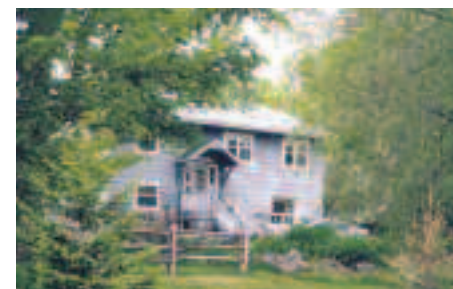
JUST WHAT YOU NEED - Downtown Knowlton condo with 3 bedrooms, 2 full baths, kitchen with breakfast nook, wood-burning fireplace, private balcony, intercom and locked entrance, and the comfort and convenience of inside parking. \$180,000



DOGS AND HORSES - Country life exemplified. Excellent stable with groom's quarters, kennel, 165 acres, trails, ponds, great hunting. Roomy bungalow with hardwood floors, 2 fireplaces and a view of your private lake, inground pool. \$749,000



WATERFRONT BUILDING LOT - 131 feet on beautiful Brome Lake, 1.9 acre, sunrise views across the water. Well-located between Knowlton and the Eastern Townships Autoroute, this would be the ideal site for your new country home, \$469,000



THE JOYS OF FAMILY LIFE are yours, here near Brome Lake. 6 bedrooms, many with adjoining bath, large open plan living/dining room, pine flooring. 1.7 acres of land and a registered lake access just steps away. Check it out! \$197,000



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Westmount Spectacular, 6-bedroom family home, loaded with architectural details and quality renovations. Deluxe eat-in kitchen/family room/office. Beautifully finished basement. Absolute move-in. Asking **\$1,525,000**
Virtual tour: www.mcguiganpepin.com/571408



Upper Westmount Located on a quiet 6-house street, near the look-out and park. Highest quality renovations, from top to bottom. Low maintenance house with automatic irrigation system, garage, perfect for busy professionals. Asking **\$1,375,000**
Virtual tour: www.mcguiganpepin.com/570755



Westmount Prime location – Grove Park. Elegant, spacious rooms, ideal for entertaining. Gourmet kitchen has top notch appliances, granite counters, quality cabinetry with dinette. Gar. Asking **\$1,050,000**
Virtual tour: www.mcguiganpepin.com/571472



Westmount Prime location, close to shops, transit, park. Magnificent house blending contemporary and old world charm. Quality renovations, street-level multipurpose office space, 2 pkg. Worth the price. Asking **\$955,000**
Virtual tour: www.mcguiganpepin.com/571213



Westmount Beautiful Victorian townhouse facing Staynor Park. Three bedrooms, plus two bedrooms in basement, parking, garden. Walk to Atwater and Westmount Square. Asking **\$570,000**
Virtual tour: www.mcguiganpepin.com/571163



Downtown Situated at the back of a quiet courtyard in a prime downtown Montreal location, this house has potential for renovators. With 4 bedrooms, plus two in the basement, house is bright with windows on 3 sides. Asking **\$599,000**



Downtown Luxurious historical condo on des Pine W. near Peel. Two-bedroom condo with 1.5 bath. 1400 sq. plus 100 sq. ft balcony overlooking pool, downtown and river. Parking, storage, snow removal included. Asking **\$2,300/mo, heated.**



Nun's Island Lovely condo in Jardin de l'Archipel. 1465 square feet offering wonderful views of the river. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, garage, central air. Offers. Asking **\$259,000**



The Canal One bedroom condo, corner unit, walk to Atwater Market, metro. Pleasant view of park. Garage, air conditioned. Asking **\$189,000**

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