

# the Commuter

business • lifestyle • travel

December/January 2004  
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## *Vietnam: Testament to Spirit*

The Ao Dai:  
Rethinking a  
Vietnamese Classic

The Remarkable  
Lady Behind  
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Guitarist  
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from Rock Star  
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Issue Six, Volume Four December/January 2004

BUSINESS AND LIFESTYLE FOR A CULTURE ON THE MOVE

*From the editor ...*

In this issue, we bring a new perspective to a place we've all heard about, Vietnam. It was probably the most difficult journey I've yet undertaken. Vietnam is not the easiest place in the world to understand. The weeks I spent there were trying, eye opening and wonderful, and I will always have a special memory of the place. Once you visit, you understand the fascination the country holds for people. It is unforgettable.

Organizing your own transportation and itinerary is not always the best way to see a foreign country. But when I travel, I try to offer a more in-depth look at the people and culture than you might find on a package tour. This type of trip is not for everyone, but I believe it is part of what makes articles in the Commuter unique. We also try to find links to our own country. In this issue, we tell the story of one lady and her family's struggle to come to Canada.

I would like to dedicate this issue to my recently departed mother and our good family friend, Dr. Danny McFadden. They both encouraged me in my career and with this publication. I would also like to thank those who helped with my trip to Vietnam: Rose Tran and her son Andy, who were fantastic; Le Tran Vu for helping with the fashion story on his brother; Le Du for the hair raising jeep ride and guided tour through the villages; and the many people of Vietnam who were so friendly and helpful when communication was so difficult. Finally, thank you to our advertisers for their support over the past year. Happy New Year!

Sean Martin



**VIETNAM: A TESTAMENT TO SPIRIT**

*Vietnam and her people struggle to emerge from centuries of conflict.*

**26 ROAD WARS**  
*Pitting the 2004 Porsche Boxster against the Beck 550 Spyder Replica.*

**21 10 TIPS TO DRESS YOUR HOME**  
*Design professionals offer tips to give your holiday decorating a fresh twist.*

**25 SAIGON ROSE**  
*She fled Vietnam in a small boat; today Rose Tran enjoys the rewards of success.*

**29 NEVER LAY DOWN YOUR GUITAR**  
*Kenny Marco charts his journey from rock star to producer to family man.*

**30 THE ETERNAL AO DAI**  
*Si Hoang blends past and present in his redesign of the traditional ao dai.*

- 3 MARKETPLACE *Join the Millionaire's Club?*
- 5 VINTAGE *A Vintage Wish List*
- 9 OPPORTUNITY IN SASKATCHEWAN *Weyburn Inland Terminal*
- 26 FITNESS *Resistance Training*
- 38 RECIPE *Vietnamese Duck Breast Noodle Soup*
- 41 WHAT'S OUT WEST *Events to Warm Up Winter*

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**On the Cover:** Young boy herding cattle near Hoa Thang.

2 December~January 2004

## MARKETPLACE

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Reporting is done as if your portfolio is a business. That only makes sense, since at some point in time your nest egg will become your biggest business venture. It is necessary to treat it like a business, and in keeping with this philosophy, reporting includes profit and loss, income, cash flow and capital gain and loss statements. With this level of information, detailed reporting becomes essential for clarity and client understanding.

A final point, but perhaps the most important, is safety. Money mangers, consultants and independent advisory groups all scrutinize your investment portfolio. This due diligence process is the best in the business.

If managing your money like a multi-millionaire interests you, call your investment advisor and ask about institutional money management and investment counsellor relationships.

Todd Degelman, M.B.A. is National Sales Manager for Wellington West Capital Inc. He can be contacted at 1-866-844-4400.

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## vintagereport

THE WINE:  
 St. Francis California Cabernet Sauvignon 1999  
 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:  
 USA (Sonoma County) California  
 GRAPE VARIETY:  
 Cabernet Sauvignon

COLOUR:  
 Deep dark colour - quite dense  
 NOSE:  
 Spicy oak - black currant  
 IN MOUTH:  
 Still fairly tannic - cassis, tobacco, hint of cherry

FOOD:  
 Prime Rib, Filet Mignon  
 Steaks, rack of lamb, hard cheeses

VALUE:  
 This is an excellent value for the price range. Can be drunk now but tannins will soften with time. This is a food friendly wine. Wine maker Tom Mackey did a great job.

RATING:  
 4.5 grapes (0 lowest - 5 highest)  
 This one is worth trying.



Try it with prime rib at John's Prime Rib and Steak House.

*John's*

# Vintage. HO! HO! HO!

BY LEN STECKLER

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR. Christmas is coming and all the good boys and girls are looking forward to it with anticipation. For all the bad boys and girls, there is some solace in the fact that the lump of coal you receive from Santa will keep you warm on cold winter nights. I've written Santa to ask for wines of different categories and countries. I've decided to share my list with you.

- If I've been OKAY (did nothing out of the ordinary but didn't burn the house down):
- Carmen Chardonnay (Chile) or Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay (Australia)
  - Soave Classico Bolla (Italy) or Yalumba Oxford Landing Chardonnay (Australia)
  - Rene Barbieri Tempranillo (Spain) or Lindemans Bin 45 Cabernet Sauvignon (Australia)
  - Jacob's Creek Cabernet Sauvignon (Australia) or Freixenet Cordon Negro Brut (sparkling wine) (Spain)
- If I've been GOOD (remembered birthdays, anniversaries, said please and thank-you):
- Mission Hill Estate Chardonnay (Canada) or Sumac Ridge Private Reserve Gewurztraminer (Canada)
  - Hawkes Bay Sauvignon Blanc (New Zealand) or Latour Chardonnay a Latour (France)
  - Dunnewood 'Dry Silk' Carneros Chardonnay (USA) or E.J. Gallo Chardonnay Sonoma (USA)
  - Mirassou Petit Syrah Monterey County (USA) or Foppiano Petite Syrah (USA)
  - Beringer Gamay Beaujolais (USA) or Beringer Chardonnay (USA) or Beringer Cabernet Sauvignon (USA)
  - Bouchard Anne et Fils Beaujolais (France) or Casa Lapostolle Cabernet Sauvignon (Chile)
  - Santa Rita Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Chile) or Rosemount Estate Shiraz (Australia)
  - Wolf Blass Yellow Label Cabernet Sauvignon (Australia) or E+C Seaview Shiraz (Australia)
  - Jaboulet Cotes du Rhone 'Parallele 45' (France) or Col di Sasso Banfi (Italy)

- If I've been VERY GOOD (all above plus gifts, yard work, helped clean house):
- Mommessin Pouilly Fuisse (France) or Robert Mondavi Chardonnay Napa Valley (USA)
  - Centine Banfi (Italy) or Penfolds Thomas Hyland Shiraz (Australia)
  - Penfolds Kalimina Bin 28 (Australia) or Meerlust Rubicon Bergkelder (South Africa)
  - Marques de Caceres Gran Reserva Rioja (Spain) or Gardine Chateaufeuf du Pape (France)
  - Anforio Barolo Reserva Premiovini (Italy) or Robert Mondavi Cabernet Sauvignon (USA)
  - Gallo Zinfandel Frei Ranch Sonoma Single Vineyard (USA) or Rosemount Estate Chardonnay (Australia)
  - Mumm's Cordon Rouge Champagne (France) or Sumac Ridge Pinnacle (Canada) or Mission Hill Oculus (Canada)

- If I've been EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD (all of above plus should be nominated for sainthood):
- Moreau Chablis Grand Cru Clos (France) or Jaffelin Meursault (France)
  - Gallo Northern Sonoma Estate Chardonnay (USA) or Caymus Mer Soleil Chardonnay (USA)
  - Pol Roger Sir Winston Churchill champagne (France) or Wolf Blass Black label (Australia)
  - Moet + Chandon Dom Perignon champagne (France) or Ironstone Vineyards Optimus (USA)
  - Penfolds Grange (Australia) or Rothschild Amaviva (Chile)
  - Paul Jaboulet Aine Hermitage la Chapelle (France) or Sassicaia (Italy)
  - Castello Banfi Excelsus (Italy) or Penfolds RWT Barossa Valley (Australia)
  - Banfi Poggio All'Oro Brunello Riserva (Italy) or Caymus Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Special Selection (USA)
  - Mondavi/Rothschild Opus One (USA) or any Vintage Port (Portugal) or Icewine (Canada)

That's my list. I hope I'm not warming my feet with a lump of coal like last year. By the way, Mrs. Claus says that Sumac Ridge Gewurztraminer (Canada) is the wine to go with turkey or ham. It has enough body to handle the salt in ham as well as the richness of stuffing and gravy. If you must drink a red, try a Zinfandel that is not too peppery (Gallo Sonoma USA). May the New Year bring you health, prosperity and happiness. Till next time, CHEERS!

LEN STECKLER received his Cellar Masters Diploma in 1995 and is a member of the Wine Educators Society. He has visited wineries in every major wine region in the world and does wine seminars for sales groups, customer appreciation groups, and restaurants (staff training and wine list building and maintenance). If you are interested in learning more, call Len at 306-933-4393.



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# ROAD WARS: 2004 PORSCHE BOXSTER VS. BECK 550 SPYDER REPLICA

**Driving two Porsche classics side-by-side underlines the huge difference that time and technology can make in performance.** story by Charles Renny photography by Sean Francis Martin

What could two cars built nearly 50 years apart have in common? Considerably more than you might think. Separated by half a century, the 2004 Boxster S and 550 Spyder are united by Porsche's commitment to building the best sports cars around.

Built at a time when 'real sports cars' didn't have doors, heaters or all-weather gear, the 550 Spyder sat at the pinnacle of sporting design and left no doubt about its ability to win at the race track. Mainstream auto enthusiasts didn't particularly care for the car and its winning ways until James Dean made his fatal driving error.

Today, an original Porsche 550 Spyder would set you back about \$750,000, if you could find someone willing to part with their bit of history. The 550 Spyder Replica recreated by Beck Engineering faithfully duplicates the original car as well as the driving environment that existed in 1954. The basic package costs about \$32,000, but the price rises if you order such options as seats, carpet or one of the slightly improved engines that now exist thanks to fifty years of technological advances.



With the Boxster S, Porsche has included all the creature comforts that five decades of decadence have brought to the automobile. A top that does more than redirect rain to other parts of the interior is high on the list of improvements.

When you take the measure of each car, it's clear that Porsche has never been afraid to think outside the box. The Spyder and Boxster use engine layouts that produce memorable driving moments. With horizontally opposed cylinders, the 'boxer' styled engines are mounted behind the driver in what is referred to as a rear-engined layout.

By having so much mass concentrated at the rear, these cars tend to oversteer dramatically on corners. To correct this in the Boxster, Porsche has used modern ideas such as larger rear tires and electronic traction control. In the Spyder, it was the human brain coupled

with quick reflexes that kept the car going the direction it was pointed.

In addition, the hundred or so horsepower four cylinder Spyder was air cooled and carburetted, while the 270-horse six cylinder Boxster is water cooled and fuel injected. These seemingly simple improvements allow for a much smoother delivery of engine power. By eliminating the need to 'cam the engine', Porsche has taken a highly strung, peaky power plant that required constant attention to the throttle to keep the engine coming off the power band, and turned it into a docile motor that goes up the rev range smoothly. Acceleration no longer comes on like the afterburner of a jet, but more like the steady hard push of a rocket heading for orbit.

Porsche still uses a rack and pinion steering box. In the Spyder, mechanical advantage and steering control were gained by using a large diameter





steering wheel. And sitting close to the steering wheel allowed the driver to use his whole body when making steering inputs. In contrast, the Boxster's power assist removes the need to have biceps as big as leg muscles. Steering effort is minimal, but provides nearly as good a feel for the road and what the car is doing. Modern design dictates that a driver sit back from the steering wheel in a more relaxed and (due to air bags) safer driving position.

Comfort and safety have changed considerably over the years. When the Spyder was new, seat belts were a novel idea and roll bars were crude affairs that offered minimal protection in the event of a crash. Today's road-going Boxster has dual front air bags, side impact air bags, energy absorbing crumple zones, collapsing steering columns and enough electronic driving aids to keep any novice on the straight and narrow.

The opulent, by 1954 standards, Boxster goes faster and corners better, all while keeping its occupants in a climate controlled environment. The Spyder exposes you to the elements, requires constant attention and doesn't have provision for a radio let alone a CD player.

The Boxster is a child of its time. Comfortable, with electronic aids that react faster than the human brain, it coddles the driver, yet lets you experience and enjoy driving. The 550 gets your adrenalin moving at a rate similar to that of water going over Niagara falls. Your brain is the master computer in this simple, nimble and quick car. Different paths, certainly, but the grin on my face is the same at the end of each drive. 🍷



# Opportunity in Saskatchewan



WIT's dedication to serving Saskatchewan farmers and its focus on innovation has helped to weather some difficult times in the agricultural sector. The Terminal's mission statement "*Profitability Through Service, Innovation, and Integrity*" is the foundation of their business. WIT was the first inland grain terminal in Canada to condominiumize a portion of storage space to sell to farmers. Its unique facility design is one of WIT's major competitive advantages, allowing greater separation of product than typical prairie grain terminals.

As an incentive for local producers to use the facility, WIT is the only major grain company to offer net weight tariffs, resulting in lower handling fees to farmers, for elevation, cleaning and shipping. "Our connection with our local customers is a critical asset. We have no long-term debt so we can operate at a lower cost and still have the ability to provide real value to farmers."

WIT's CEO, Rob Davies, knows that in order to compete with the price and market support of major competitors, Canadian agricultural producers and grain handling companies must continue to work together to be at the leading edge of efficiency.

Weyburn Inland Terminal was started in 1976 by a group of farmers in southeastern Saskatchewan that were looking for a way to better respond to the needs of the province's agricultural

producers. Today, more than 97% of the company's shareholders are Saskatchewan residents, the majority of which actively farm here in the province.

## Long-Term Growth and Shareholder Returns

(see graph below)

WIT is almost solely owned by Saskatchewan shareholders. In addition to providing value through innovative and flexible service, WIT provides regular returns to its shareholders through dividend yields. WIT has paid dividends every year for the past 16 years, a trend which is sustainable because the company has no long-term debt.



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WIT's policy is to declare and pay annual cash dividends equal to approximately 1/3 of its after-tax earnings. In 2002, the company paid a total of \$1.3 million in dividends to common and preferred shareholders, an increase of more than 49% over the previous year.

Although southeastern Saskatchewan was affected by drought in 2003, WIT's management recognizes that variable production levels are a fact of life on the prairies. *"We will continue to work with our customers to provide them with the information, products and services that meet their needs and allow them to farm as efficiently and productively as possible. Just like in farming, it is important for*

*WIT) to maintain a long-term focus. We need to think about the impact that decisions we make today will have on the future. We will be here for the long haul and will work with our staff and customers to ensure success for both the farmers of Saskatchewan and our shareholders."* 🍀

Weyburn Inland Terminal Ltd. ("WIT") operates an inland terminal and grain condominium complex on CP Rail's Soo Line near Weyburn, Saskatchewan. The company's primary business is processing, handling, and marketing cereal grains and oilseeds to satisfy specific demands of its customers. WIT also owns and operates a specialty crop processing and marketing operation located at Sedley, SK, known as Vigro Seed and Supply ("Vigro"), as well as a full service seed, fertilizer, and plant protection products business at its Weyburn

facility. A grain screenings pelleting operation compliments the core grain handling business at the terminal in Weyburn, and WIT operates a small satellite elevator and farm supply operation at Lake Alma, SK.

Golden Opportunities Fund Inc. is Saskatchewan's First and Largest Provincial Labour-Sponsored Venture Capital Corporation. The Fund has made 27 investments in 22 Saskatchewan companies located throughout the province and is diversified across nine different industry sectors. The Fund's investment into small and medium sized Saskatchewan companies focuses on long-term capital appreciation and affecting hundreds of workers, their families and their communities. We applaud the success of Weyburn Inland Terminal Ltd. and are proud to be a shareholder.



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Despite years of war and grinding poverty, the spirit of the Vietnamese people remains undefeated – just as their country has remained undefeated for over a 1,000 years.

What can you say about Vietnam that has not already been said? There have been so many stories of love, war and tragedy. Daily life is still a struggle for most, but no one complains much. Everyone is willing to give a stranger a smile. They seem to have so little, yet they don't seem to want for happiness in the way so many others, who have so much more, do. Vietnamese people are some of the most dedicated to family that I have ever met. They work endlessly to aid in the survival of their own, and do their best to serve their young. I guess when you've been stripped of so many things and left with only the basics, you learn to cherish what's really important.



# VIETNAM

A TESTAMENT TO SPIRIT

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN FRANCIS MARTIN



Saigon, or Ho Chi Minh City as it is formally known, is the economic capital of Vietnam. It's a bustling, hectic place to visit, let alone to live in. The official population is about 5 million, though the actual population is closer to 7.5 million. To live in any part of Vietnam, you must have an identification card, and the only way to get the card is to have a job or property in a particular city or place. Job seekers are in the city without permission, so no record of them exists.

Still, Saigon is the destination for people searching for a better life than in the countryside, where crops of rice and baskets of fish barely bring in enough income to feed themselves, let alone provide for their families.







The streets of Saigon are crowded with every kind of wheeled and motorized contraption you can imagine. Mopeds zoom around you in what seems to be madness. There's a constant sound of horns and putt of motors. To add to the chaos, there are no traffic lights and controlled intersections are rare. You have to use caution crossing the road. As a pedestrian, you have no right of way or special consideration, you're just in the way!

Somehow, though, the traffic moves. Like water running in a river full of rocks, people flow in and around the city with little effort. No shouting or dirty looks, no hand waving or finger flying. Like much of the country, things seem to be in disarray but they also seem to work.

As you watch the young people cruising around Saigon on their mopeds, you can't help but wonder where they're going. A night on the town, to a show, to a restaurant with their girlfriends and boyfriends? In fact, they're mostly just enjoying the freedom. Young people have little spending money and few places to go for entertainment or privacy. The moped gives them the kind of space and freedom living with their families in a crowded city does not.

You watch them on their mopeds, the girl on the back, hair flowing in the wind and arms tight around her lover. In the parks, they sit on their mopeds and hold hands or kiss shyly, alone with each other amidst the busy streets. It seems the simplest love. In a country that has little to offer in monetary ways, you see what is of value, even among the young who in most other parts of the world have become the 'me' generation.

The young women do their best to protect their skin from being tortured by the hot sun and pollution. Their faces covered with scarves and arms in long gloves, they look like bandits riding through the streets. But to a Vietnamese woman, light coloured skin is a symbol of beauty and much more desirable than skin darkened by hours of working in the fields or rice paddies.





In Vietnam, don't expect to find rows of tourist hotels lining the beaches and English-speaking locals catering to your needs. At least not yet, thank god. Tourism is still relatively undeveloped, though sure to emerge in the next decade – investment from Japan, Taiwan, America and Europe will see to that. Along the coastlines, you can see the early signs: road construction and property development.

Some of the areas targeted for tourism development, however, are also important fishing and agricultural areas. For local people, tourism development is creating excitement and hope for a better future. It may be a huge boost for local economies, but it could also be dangerous. Other developing countries have counted on tourism for economic growth and been let down. Vietnamese people could suffer a similar fate. People who now rely on fishing or other traditional means of support may lose their beaches to big hotels. Once the land is purchased, the construction complete and the money spent, the lives of local people may be forever changed.

Hopefully, tourism developers will realize that a big part of Vietnam's appeal is the people and their simple lifestyle. Visiting the villages is one of the most interesting experiences. The people are friendly, warm, inviting and just as curious to meet you as you are to meet them. Having a bowl of soup with the locals at a makeshift vegetable and fruit stand by the roadside is interesting as well as delicious.





Vietnam is a relatively small country, but the changes from one region or province to the next can be quite dramatic. It stretches nearly 3,500 kilometres north to south, from the Mekong Delta and its flooded rice paddies and river systems, to the central highlands, to the cooler regions near Hanoi. Lifestyles and cultures vary according to the landscape and environmental conditions. There are more than 53 ethnic minorities in Vietnam, with populations ranging from a few hundred to tens of thousands.

Until you visit Vietnam, though, you can't really comprehend just how foreign this landscape must have seemed to American troops being dropped in to the jungles and rivers. You wonder what it must have been like for the soldiers. You can't escape that thought, as there are constant reminders of the war. The sites are easy to get to and many have hardly changed. Vietnam was left to its own devices after the war, and recovery from the tragedies and horrors of that terrible time has been slow.



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Travelling along the rivers of the Mekong Delta is an experience in itself. The smells and sounds are unique. You feel removed from western life as you travel in small canoe-like riverboats, which putt along at a quick pace among other boats of all sizes and shapes. The water is muddy and as busy as a freeway.

People work and live on these rivers. They trade their goods in open water markets from boat to boat. They travel for miles, congregating to exchange their daily catch and the day's pick of vegetables, fruits and meats. Life for the river people has not changed much. They have no knowledge of the outside world and don't care to. They seem content, though poor, and do not seek change. Their existence is simple.

For all this, the river people welcome strangers. They offer you fruits to taste, asking for nothing in return. They have no apprehension of you visiting their daily life. It is like a scene from another time, one that leaves you wondering how they survive on such meagre means, yet can laugh and smile at the foreigner among them. Their life is hard, but it's not defeating them.



Vietnam faces stiff challenges ahead. It has little infrastructure or social safety net, and change is slow in coming. Foreign investment is pouring in, taking advantage of cheap labour, low taxes, inexpensive property and lax environmental controls, but some say this is just taking advantage of poor people. Unfortunately, in a country where a professional such as a doctor or lawyer earns less than a minimum wage earner in North America, poverty will continue to be a fact until the country can build a stable economy through exports and tourism.

Change will come to Vietnam, as I believe the people are resilient and determined to make change happen. The efforts seem small, but they are being made. As the wounds of war heal, the culture and pride of the Vietnamese people will flourish again. For those with an open mind and a willingness to learn, Vietnam has a lot to offer. You will never understand it completely – just take it as it is. Once you've been there, it will stay in your mind forever. ♣



# 10 Tips to Dress Your Home for the Holidays

story by Noelle Chorney &  
photography by Sean Francis Martin

Christmas decorating techniques have been handed down in my family for generations. It's a fail-safe process: pull out a ratty cardboard box filled with a hodge-podge of tree decorations and plastic garland. Strew on the tree and around the house. On January 1, return everything to the box and store until next year.

Occasionally an extra ribbon makes its way into the mix, or we use the decorations in off-the-wall ways. My mom's fig tree has been covered in bows for the last several years and probably will be forevermore. But aside from fresh tinsel and replacement lights, our decorating ideas all come out of a box.



## 2. Let There Be Light

If you have a fireplace, use it. It adds a warm glow to your holiday décor. If you don't have a fireplace, fill your home with candles and votives. You don't even have to buy new candle holders. Use anything that will hold a votive or tealight: wine glasses, martini glasses, anything metal or that will reflect the light. It's a great way to use your crystal pieces.

Coloured candles in rich, warm tones can also be part of your colour-coordinated accessories. Group the candles, making them a focal point, and add fresh garland to your cluster to finish the festive look.

## 3. Get Fresh

Leave the plastic holly berries in storage and use fresh instead! Christmas floral décor is so much more than red and white poinsettias. Tulips make a colourful and affordable alternative. Their season starts in November and carries through till spring. Fill a vase with red or white, but not both – keep it simple.

Carla recommends bulbs as gifts or to brighten your home over the holidays. Amaryllis, hyacinth and paper whites make excellent hostess gifts. Minimal, graceful orchids are a beautiful and unusual addition. Choose white ones for gifts, coloured ones for your home.

Don't stop at flowers. Nikki and Dawn suggest using fresh fruit as a centerpiece: mound mandarin oranges high on a large platter or think of new ways to display your Christmassy-coloured fruits.

## 4. Bring the Outdoors in...

Choose a great outdoor pot or urn and 'plant' your indoor Christmas tree. A smaller tree (4') is more easily plantable. Use fresh garland in wreaths. Add greenery to your home using pine and cedar boughs, with red dogwood as accents. The boughs add both festive colour and aroma.

## 5. ...Take the Indoors Out

Weave fruit into your outdoor garlands for added panache. Oranges can be stuck with a stick and placed in your outdoor wreath, but you'll have to change them every few days. Cedar, pine and dogwood are sturdier. Once they freeze, they stay fresh-looking until spring. Fill up your outdoor pots with greenery that will last through the winter.

## 6. Use Ordinary Items in Extraordinary Ways

Try to see every item in your house as a possible decorative piece. Fill a vase with cookies or candies and use it as a centerpiece. Top a glass container filled with cranberries or kumquats with one floating candle. Martini glasses make unique serving dishes ... when not otherwise in use.

Think reflective. Hang your wreath over a mirror to create a layered effect. Place candles in different containers: a metal box, silver vase or pitcher. Shiny containers also look great filled with candies.

When you're wandering around your house rethinking the decorating possibilities, Nikki and Dawn offer this advice: just when you think you've done enough, add more. Oversized items help give a luxurious look. If you have smaller items to work with, use as many as you have and pile them high.

## 7. Cheat

Plan ahead as much as possible. If you're hosting a party, set up your table and the bar the night before. Rental facilities can provide you with affordable and hassle-free ideas for table settings—and you won't have to worry about doing the dishes.

Mix homemade goodies with a few quality purchased items. Don't fret about using ready-made stuff where you can. If you love to bake, do so, but have your flower arrangements or wreaths made for you.

## 8. Use Your Florist

Carla suggests taking your own vase to your florist, so they can work with its style and colour when making your Christmas arrangements. Consider purchasing a vase in a unique material – cast-iron, metal or hand thrown pottery – and have it filled with flowers. It will be one Christmas decoration you won't store in that ratty old box eleven months of the year. Instead, it will be a year-round centerpiece, given seasonal pizzazz at Christmas time.



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Christmas decorating trends? What are those?

Enter interior design professionals, Carla Scharback of Blossoms Florist and Nikki Begrand Fast & Dawn Syroishka of Urbane Furniture Design & Décor, with piles of ideas on how to give your holiday decorating a fresh twist.

## 1. Pick a Colour

Be creative with colour. Use it where your guests aren't expecting it – purchase tinted sugar for your sugar bowl!

For an up-to-date look, choose one colour that complements the existing décor in your home. Carla recommends layering tones – various hues of the same shade. Take green, for example. Once you've chosen a shade of green, add darker and lighter tones in your selection of decorations and accessories.

Red and green are the traditional colours of Christmas, right? Nikki & Dawn suggest going a little off balance on the colour spectrum. Try fuchsia or a reddish-orange instead of typical holly-berry red. How about lime green instead of Christmas-tree green?

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## 9. Spread the Joy

Instead of piling all your Christmas decorations into the room with the Christmas tree, decorate every room a little bit. If you can afford the space, consider having a Christmas tree in more than one room. If space is an issue, use a wreath.

Think of ways to share a little of your holiday light with everyone who stops by. Simple gifts such as bundles of firewood, candles tied up with ribbon or small packets of Christmas baking will go a long way to pamper your guests.



## 10. But Don't Spread Yourself Too Thin!

It's easy to get caught up in the mad rush of the Christmas season. Don't try to do it all. Do what you love, but not so much that you get sick of it. Instead of baking hundreds of cookies, bake 20 and lavishly decorate them.

Be sure to leave time to enjoy your newly decorated home. Sit in front of the fire or in soft candlelight with the people you care about, sipping a festive drink and soaking in the warmth of the holidays. ☘

# The Price of Success

story by Beverly Fast & photography by Sean Francis Martin

## What would you risk to make a better life for your children?

They say there's a story behind every successful business. Meet Rose Tran, a petite woman of middle years with a gracious smile and razor sharp business sense. Hers is the story of how Saskatoon came to have its first Vietnamese restaurant, the Saigon Rose. A humble topic, maybe, but the story has all the ingredients of a good yarn: perilous flight, danger on the high seas, family sacrifice, days of despair, days of triumph.



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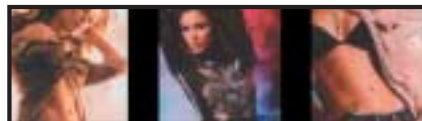


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The adventure begins in Vietnam in 1979, four years after the fall of Saigon. The country is whole again – North and South are united for the first time in more than twenty years – but life is harsh. Private business has been abolished. Jobs are scarce and good positions are going to those with ties to the new regime. One-time professionals, especially in the once American-friendly south, hold menial jobs. Many find themselves among the millions sent to ‘new economic zones’ to work as peasant farmers, reclaiming land scarred by decades of war.

Refugees had been leaving Vietnam since ‘75. But in 1979, the number soared to the hundreds of thousands. It was as if someone had opened the floodgates. By 1981, an estimated one million Vietnamese had fled their homeland. Rose was among them. Her family had been comfortably middle class in South Vietnam. Her father was a respected herbalist, or doctor. Before her marriage in 1972, she had been a teacher, her husband a hospital worker.

Imagine how bleak the future must have looked in order for them to make the extraordinary decision to run. They had two sons: six-year old Andy and four-year old Tung. It would have been easier to stay put. Instead, 15 family members gathered what possessions they could, crowded onto a motorboat and headed out into the South China Sea in search of a better life.

In the decades since, some have called the boatpeople economic opportunists. It’s an odd argument, as if it’s noble to want freedom but bad manners to want economic freedom. Rose doesn’t deny she wanted a better life for her children. To her, freedom meant access to an education and the chance to work hard and succeed.

**She remembers their first attempt to leave Vietnam failed. The boat lost power and they found themselves adrift not far from shore, with the tide coming in. They hid until a second attempt could be made.**

This time they got successfully away, but then came days with little food or water ... and the threat of pirates. The wave of refugees was like chum to a pool of sharks; the pirates were in a feeding frenzy. That year, the United

Nations estimated that close to one-third of all boats leaving Vietnam were attacked. By 1981, the estimates were in the 80% range. The U.N. code for it was RPM: rape, pillage and murder.

Rose doesn’t talk about their days at sea. Her story picks up when the family safely made landfall in Malaysia. Even this was a test of nerves. There were more than a dozen refugee camps throughout Malaysia and Indonesia, with more in Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore and even as far away as the Philippines. But the sheer volume of boatpeople was overwhelming their resources. The Malaysian government put soldiers on its beaches, with orders to turn boatpeople back.

**“We did not stay on the beach, we went straight into the forest,” Rose says of their arrival. “And we met people who warned us not to trust the Malaysian officials. They said, ‘they will tell you they’re going to take you to a refugee camp, but they’re going to put you on a boat and send you out to sea.’”**

It was a catch-22. Their only hope of getting to the West was getting into a refugee camp, where they could be interviewed by sponsoring countries: the United States, France, Canada and Australia chief among them. To do that, they had to go to the officials. As it turns out, they were put back on a boat. Rose is sure that it was only the intervention of an Australian official that kept them from being set adrift. Instead, they were transported to an island refugee camp.

It was tremendous good luck, but Rose remembers their time in the camp with a shudder. There were 10 hour line-ups for water, little food, poor sanitation and make-shift facilities. “You just go day by day.”

Fate was on their side. “We had been in camp maybe a month when we were interviewed by Canada. We were so lucky. Some people stayed there months, maybe years,” Rose says. “I remember the official saying, ‘if we sponsor you, what would you do?’ I said, ‘anything.’ We would learn any skill.”

Rose, her husband and their young boys were sponsored to Canada. “At first, I had an idea

of this wild place, you know, with cowboys and Indians and wild animals. Like you see in movies. I didn’t know anything.”

She vividly recalls the day they arrived in Saskatoon, one of the key destinations in Canada. “We landed at the airport around one o’clock in the afternoon. By four o’clock, I had a job. It was at a Chinese restaurant answering delivery calls. But I didn’t have enough English, so I couldn’t understand the orders. It was awful. I quit.”

The next day, Rose went to the government employment agency. “I asked to enrol in English class but the man said no. He said, ‘you can say your name, you don’t need to study.’ I was angry. I was frustrated because I wanted to learn. But I didn’t push because I wanted to keep my promise. I wanted to show that my people are hardworking. So I said, ‘then I need a job right away.’”

She got one at the SAAN Department Store. By summer, the family was settled in their own apartment, she and her husband both had jobs, and their boys were enrolled in school. Now came the long process of getting the rest of her family over. Family is absolutely central to Vietnamese culture. There was no way Rose could leave them in the camps. She went through bureaucratic hoops to get government sponsorship for her parents-in-law. For her own parents, who were older and not candidates for the government program, she found a private sponsor through a local church. Sponsors were required to provide newcomers with material and social support for one year, so it wasn’t a trivial commitment. One of the last to come over was Rose’s brother.

**“We needed to find him a job. He had a restaurant in Vietnam. There were no Vietnamese restaurants in Saskatoon, so we decided to open one. We didn’t know if it would succeed, but we decided to take the risk.”**



In was 1982 when they opened Saigon Rose on Avenue A. The whole family helped out. They only had enough savings to pay the rent, so everyone kept their day job. Sometimes Rose would be there till four in the morning, then back at 6:00 a.m. to prep for lunch. The work took its toll on every family member, but Rose's heart seemed to break watching her parents. "I felt so bad for them, for my father. He was an herbalist in Vietnam and now his hands were numb from cooking and washing up."

After about a year, Rose was ready to give up. In despair, she went to her father. "I said it was too much, it was too hard. But my father said not to quit. My grandparents were Chinese. They came to Vietnam and worked hard too, and they told my father, 'work hard and save and you will succeed.'"

Slowly, the tide began to turn. Vietnamese customers brought their sponsors, their sponsors brought their friends and soon the word spread. Today, Saigon Rose is a successful

enterprise. The family owns the building it's located in on 25th Street as well as other real estate around the city. Her sister has Saigon II on 33rd Street, her nephew has the Saigon on Third Avenue.

"Something is returned from all the hard work; something good," she says. "But you pay a price. I kept doing it because I didn't want my kids to have to work so hard."

Her children are grown now. Tung, 28, just moved to Ottawa while Andy, 30, returned to Vietnam several years ago. Rose recently made her first trip back to see the birth of her grandchild. Which brings our story full circle. What would you risk to make a better life for your children? 🌹



# Never Lay Down Your Guitar

story by Cameron Zimmer & studio photography by Sean Francis Martin

"Music's been my whole life. That's all I do. That's all I've ever done. I almost feel guilty – it's been so damn good."

When Kenny Marco started recording music, the Beatles, the Guess Who and the Beach Boys were big. In the time since, he's become one of the few to make a lifetime and a living out of his passion. He's played a gig on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson and talks casually about when he shared the stage with rhythm and blues legend Etta James. But the Saskatoon-based guitarist, producer and songwriter has never stopped searching for the chemistry that brought his early bands acclaim.

"My ship never came in; I had to go out and swim to that sucker," he says with a smirk and a tug on his antiquated Detroit Red Wings sweater. "And I enjoyed the swim, to tell you the truth, because the swim out there was when you met everybody."

Marco first picked up a guitar when he became tired of the wheeze coming from the accordion his family passed around the table after meals in their Brantford, Ontario home. Soon he embarked on his "university education on the road" and started smuggling his guitar over the U.S. border to perform.



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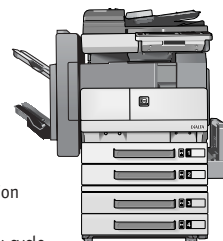
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After playing with more bands than he can easily recall, Marco met up with three other drifters to form Motherlode. Two of the band members were from Ontario and the third, William “Smitty” Smith, was a draft dodger from Virginia who chose to create music rather than fight in Vietnam.

Like most groups, Motherlode gelled while touring. The bond that developed in their two years together paid off in the hit, “When I Die.” Although the song was originally rejected in the Canadian market, in 1969 it broke onto U.S. charts at number 18. Its serious sound was appealing to an America in the midst of the Vietnam War.

“I felt so bad that we couldn’t do it in Canada,” says Marco. “I mean we were so proud to be Canadians and we thought, ‘Well gee whiz, God you guys, you voted us out. You said that the record just wasn’t good enough.’”

**“Our own country – God it hurt. It was a razor blade to the heart, that’s what it was.”**

With its U.S. success, the song was eventually picked up in Canada and sold over 500,000 albums. Soon after, RPM magazine labelled the band as Canada’s

first supergroup. They enjoyed a rapid rise to celebrity, appearing on country legend Ian Tyson’s television show and touring constantly.

It was Marco’s first encounter with success. He has remained infatuated with the chemistry that produced it. “What I enjoyed with those three other guys, the creativity and where it went, the creativity that I know I’ll never achieve again – it’s beyond hurt, it’s frustration,” he says. “It would be like taking Hawaii off the map and never being able to go to Hawaii again. I love Hawaii, and between you and me, it can raise a little bit of water to the eye knowing I can’t go there.”

He attributes Motherlode’s kinetic energy to the influence of Smitty, who made a career of creating just the right vibe for Bob Dylan and other marquee artists. “That kind of player comes through your life once. It’s like Gretzky to hockey or Mickey Mantle to baseball. Except this guy was a behind-the-scenes guy. He made other people sound good.”

Motherlode and Marco went on to play with Dr. Music, a 15-piece group that impressed the Canadian music scene with a fusion of big band, jazz and rock. It was a blue-collar band that would play on Kenny Rogers’ show, The First Edition, in the evening and then trudge into the Toronto Sound Studio at eight

in the morning to record ad jingles. “We did every kind of ad from toothpaste to Cadillacs to toilet paper to Nescafe coffee.”

Never settling, Marco moved to Los Angeles to work with another musical comrade, David Clayton-Thomas, and his self-titled band. The band toured heavily, inevitably landing in some strange places.

“One time we flew from Los Angeles to this music festival in Rio De Janeiro. We arrived there at seven o’clock in the morning at the Cocoa Cabana where we stayed. Once we got off on the fifth floor, the doors from the elevator opened and here are some guys, leaning on some chairs like you and me, leaning against the wall with machine guns on their laps.”

It was September 1972, not long after the Munich Olympics where 11 Israeli athletes had been assassinated. A band from Israel staying on the same floor of the Cocoa Cabana had its own plain-clothes security squad.

“Initially it was fright night, the biggest scare you could ever have. But by the end of the two weeks we were in their room and they were showing us all the toys they had. Eventually they became friends and came to see the shows.”

After touring with Clayton-Thomas, Marco joined the star as he took over the

Grammy-nominated band, Blood, Sweat and Tears. The pressure of touring brought the band together. Marco recalls playing a gig on the night Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Middleton, Pennsylvania leaked radioactive gas into the surrounding area. The band was supposed to do a show only 20 miles away.

“I remember having a meeting and everyone was scared,” Marco says. “At that point and time nobody knew much about nuclear reactors, but we took a vote to see who wanted to do this gig. Everybody voted and the consensus was that we’d bus in, do the gig, and get the hell out right after. And I remember doing that.”

Marco didn’t stay with the Clayton-Thomas band long, but he was able to solidify his place in the industry and ensure a long career. “I’ll tell you what it is, it’s like finally putting you on a map and now people know where to find you. People start calling you for sessions and want you to play so you can create that sound and that chemistry for their album.”

After leaving these imprints on the music scene, he took the lead from his friend Smitty and built a career out of making other people sound good. He sang backup for a Reggae band called the Ishan People. He played through the early 1990s with a resurgence of Dr.



Counterclockwise from left: Kenny Marco today; Concert in Rio De Janeiro in 1972; Blood Sweat & Tears concert poster; On stage with David Clayton Thomas; Marco with Motherlode in 1969.



Music in a band called John James and the Mother of Hope. He sold music to two U.S. hip-hop acts. And he wrote songs that were later produced by Grammy winner Quincy Jones.

Since his wife Judith attracted him to Saskatoon, Marco has continued to help others make better music. He runs his own production company, Sunnyridge Music, and has a jazz band, The Kenny

Marco Trio, and a rhythm and blues group called Cotton.

Although he misses the creativity of the original music he used to play, he says his family is inspiration enough to continue. He doesn't regret his shift from rock star to family man, he embraces the progression. "That's what I draw from. It's an entirely different angle, but I tell you, it's every bit as

rewarding. And there's a lot less swearing than when I used to play," Marco says.

"Having someone say, 'Hey, Grandpa!' is almost as good as someone saying, 'That was one hell of a solo.' No, it is as good."

Even though Marco is satisfied with this familial groove, he still likes to reminisce, mostly because he has never taken his eclectic rock experiences for granted. The proof is in the hundreds of Super 8 film rolls he shot while touring. "I've got diaries of when it was really something, when you knew you were going to be seeing stuff that most other guys in the music business wouldn't be seeing."

Rather than leave these memories stacked on the shelf, he's putting some of them on repeat. He still collaborates with Clayton-Thomas, Brenda Russell and others he performed with on the world stage. And he's busy working with promoters to bring Motherlode and Dr. Music back together for classic rock festivals.



This persistence is what distinguishes Marco from other professional artists. He's never stopped playing, never laid down his guitar, never turned away from what brought him here. "A lot of it's been burned out, but I still have a passion for music. I still love it tremendously." 🎸

# THE Ao Dai

photography: Sean Francis Martin  
hair & make-up: Tong My Lien  
of mymy beauty salon  
models: Uyen Lan & Duong Yen Ngoc

More than a 1,000 years of art & culture come together in the exquisite work of Vietnamese artist, designer and teacher, Si Hoang.

Fashion as an expression of culture is one of the things Sean Martin wanted to capture in his photo essay on Vietnam. "There's more to Vietnam than the war and beautiful beaches. You can sense a lot of depth, a lot of culture. You know it's there, and that's what I wanted to photograph."



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Tracking it down proved difficult. Martin met with editors of Vietnamese magazines, followed up on contacts and worked the phones, all while coping with the language barrier. Finally, during the last week of his stay, a name came up: Si Hoang.

"My contact said he designed pottery and traditional dresses, and that he had this store I should go see. I didn't think too much of it at the time, but I went and I knew right away I'd found what I'd come to Vietnam for."

Born in 1962, Le Si Hoang is one of Vietnam's most famous artists and designers. He is widely credited with re-popularizing the ao dai, the traditional Vietnamese long dress. He has travelled to Belgium, Berlin, Las Vegas and the Philippines on cultural exchange tours, showing his modern ao dai designs and other works to receptive western audiences.

Despite the acclaim, Si Hoang keeps a low profile in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), he is first and foremost an artist who draws inspiration from Vietnam's long and colourful past. He is also a respected teacher. He holds Bachelor and Masters degrees from Fine Art University, Ho Chi Minh City, and currently teaches at Architecture University, Polytechnic University, Technical & Pedagogy University and the Fine Art Association. He's won several major awards, including the Vietnam Fine Art Award in 1998 and Best Ao Dai Designer award in 1991 and 1995.

What originally brought him recognition, both in his own country and in fashion circles around the world, are his modern interpretations of the ao dai.

The ao dai (pronounced ao yai in the south and ao zai in the north) has been around for centuries. The modern form – a contoured, full length dress with raglan

sleeves and slits down the sides, worn over loose-fitting trousers – dates from the 1930s. It was worn on ceremonial occasions such as weddings and funerals, with different variations for men and women. Colour traditionally reflected the wearer's age: white or pastels for young people, rich vibrant colours for more mature people.

In 1989, Si Hoang did something that has transformed the ceremonial ao dai into a fashionable garment. He hand-painted a traditional design on a dress worn by a young woman named Vu thi Xuan Quy in the Miss Ao Dai contest. It must have impressed the judges, because the girl took second place. It also caught the eye of other participants and audience members. People began asking Si Hoang to design and hand-paint ao dais for them. In 1991, he opened his own shop to handle the growing volume of business.

Si Hoang draws on his skills as an artist and his knowledge of Vietnamese culture to create original paintings on his ao dai. "There are 53 different minorities or tribes in Vietnam, and each has a different design. Si Hoang has an understanding of the culture and designs of the past, and he's been able to bring them forward in his own ideas," Martin says.

He has also redesigned the garment for everyday wear, making it more comfortable and easier to put on. "He uses delicate patterns and all hand-made fabrics, mostly 100% silk, but the lines are still elegant and simple," Martin says.

Today, the ao dai is all the rage. People of all ages can be seen wearing the ao dai to work, to school, to family occasions. Many young designers in Vietnam's emerging fashion industry are making their reputations as ao dai designers. It is Si Hoang, however, who is widely regarded as the leader of the resurgence.



**Resistance Training**

By Andrea Michaud

When winter temperatures hit hard, you may find it difficult to maintain your fitness routine. But feeling physically fit can be a big part of your sense of well-being and confidence, so it's important to continue. The goal of your exercise program should be to reduce body fat and increase lean muscle tissue, while improving or maintaining good health. Along with cardiovascular exercise and proper nutrition, resistance training is an essential part of a well-rounded workout program. So what is resistance training and what are the benefits?

Resistance training involves moving a muscle through a full range of motion with the added resistance of free weights. It's also called weight training. You achieve muscle endurance and toning by increasing repetitions. A repetition is one full range of motion. It refers to how many times an exercise is repeated in one set. For example, if you do three sets of 10 repetitions on a bench press, it means doing 10 bench presses, resting and then repeating two more sets of 10 bench presses each. For maximum results, you should use enough weight to cause muscle fatigue.

Regular resistance training can build and tone muscles while increasing strength and endurance. It can also decrease the risk of osteoporosis, develop coordination and balance, prevent injuries resulting from weak muscles and help maintain lean body mass, which is especially important if you're trying to lose weight.

Since muscle weighs more than fat, the true indicator of your fitness level is not how much you weigh but your percentage of body fat. Fat requires no calories, but muscles are calorie hungry and your metabolism will run higher to maintain muscle tissue.

Everyone has an opinion on muscularity. How much is attractive? Men tend to want increased muscle size and definition, while women are more concerned with overall muscle tone. Some women fear that resistance training will make them look excessively muscular. The fact is, women can make remarkable gains in strength and muscle tone without developing muscular bulk.

Variety is the key to maintaining a fitness routine. Update your program regularly to maximize its effectiveness and keep your interest. Add resistance training to increase your lean body tissue and lose weight more effectively.

The bottom line? Pick up those weights and get lean.

In recent years, he has expanded his business to include more of Vietnam's traditional arts and crafts. The first floor of his three-storey shop on Ly Tu Trong Street is dominated by handcrafted pottery. For more than a



The musicians play a variety of instruments: the sao (bamboo flute), t'ring (bamboo xylophone), Sun Lute and Moon Lute. Then there's the dan da (stone lithophone), which consists

thousand years, artisans in the village of Bau Truc have used natural red clay to make distinctive, hand-turned jars, pots and cookers. But the art form was gradually dying, a victim of modern manufacturing methods and cheap supplies of plastic and aluminum. In 1997, Si Hoang revived it by incorporating traditional glass bead decoration on the simple red pots. He has successfully combined two ancient arts to create a new art form, the bau truc decorated pot, which is proving popular with both Vietnamese people and foreign visitors.



of stones of varying shapes and sizes, cut or carved into relatively flat bars that offer different tones when hit. Played together, they create a solemn, resonant sound. The dan da is on loan from the local museum, and estimated to be about 2,000 years old. It's one of the many surprises in Si Hoang's shop, and part of his passionate commitment to keeping a thousand years of Vietnamese culture and tradition alive in the 21st century. ♣

The third level of Si Hoang's store (the ao dai collection is on the second level) houses a real treasure: a tea salon. Here, patrons sit in well-appointed comfort

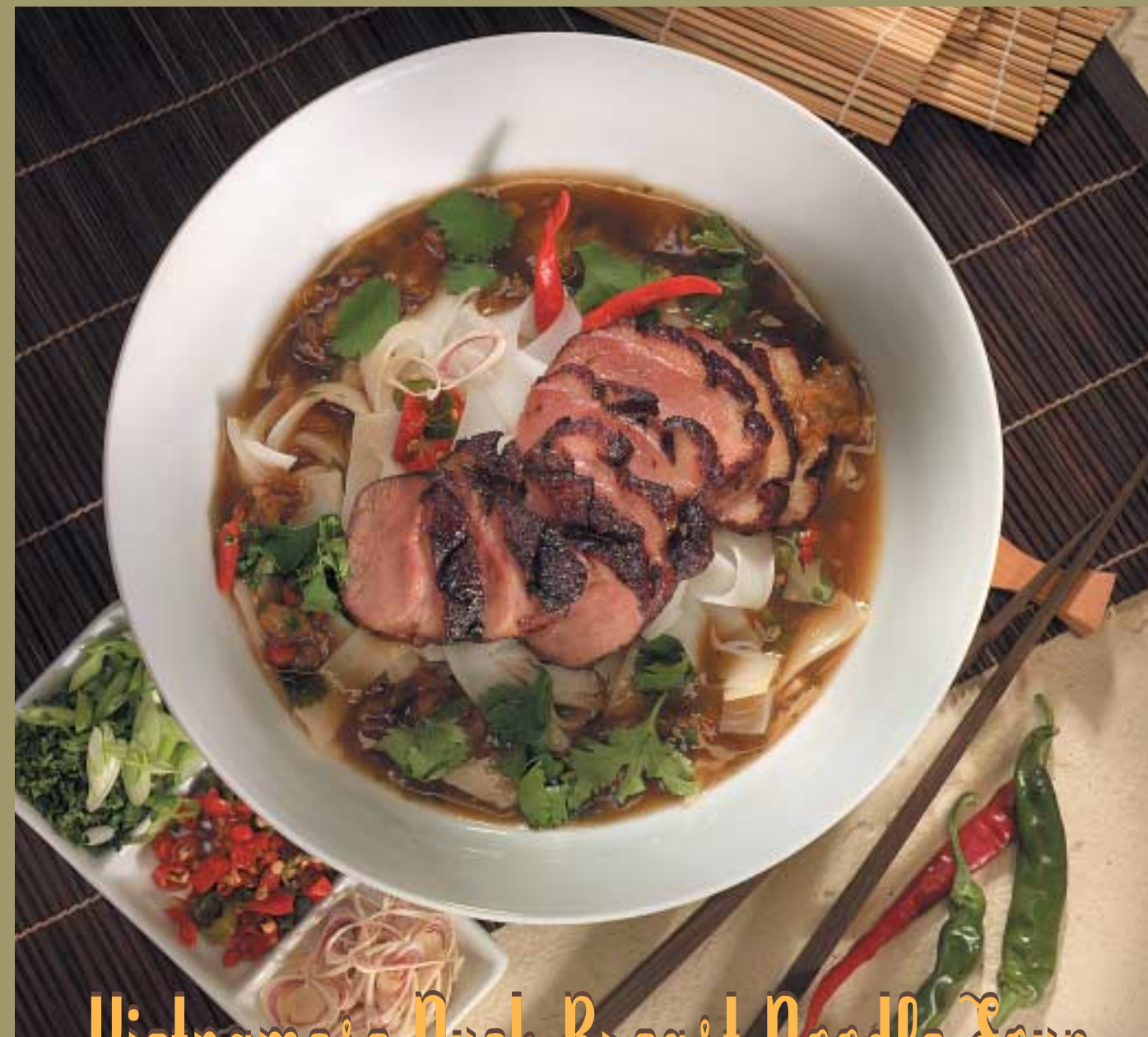


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**Vietnamese Duck Breast Noodle Soup**

- 6oz dried rice stick noodles
- 1 cup sliced shallots (3 large)
- 3 (1/8 inch thick) slices of fresh peeled ginger
- 1 tsp minced fresh Serrano chili (including seeds)
- 1 tsp canola oil
- 3 1/2 cups of beef broth (fresh or canned)
- 1 3/4 cups of water
- 1 star anise
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1/2 lb or 2 8oz duck breasts thinly sliced
- 6 oz of fresh bean sprouts
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves
- 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves (fresh or canned)
- 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tbsp fresh lime juice

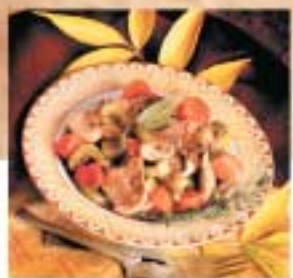
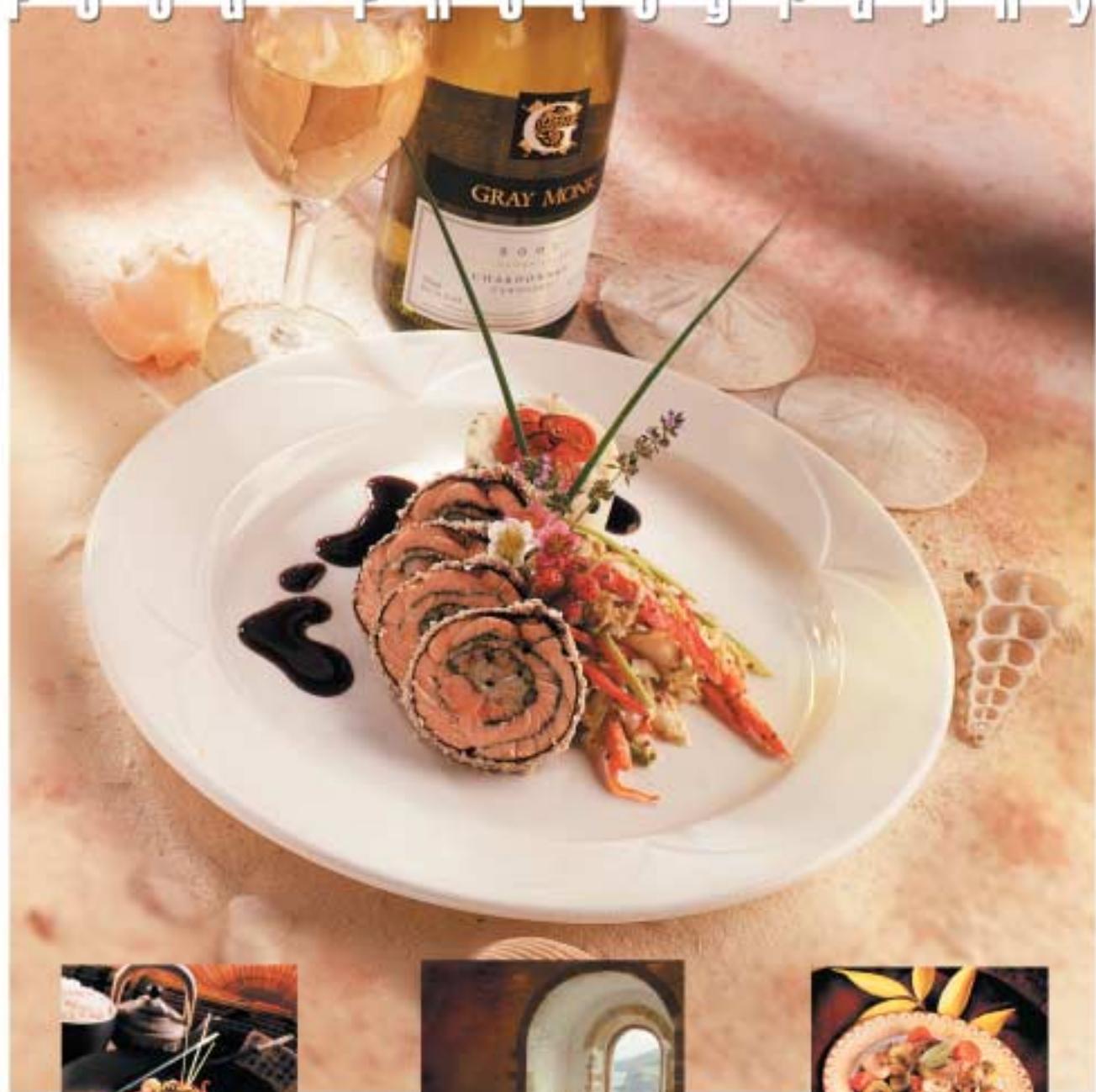
Cook noodles in boiling water for 4 minutes, drain and rinse under cold water. Cook shallots, star anise, cinnamon stick, ginger and chile in canola oil over med heat until shallot are browned. Add broth, water and simmer for 10min. While broth is simmering, divide noodles, duck, bean sprouts and herbs among 4 bowls. Discard ginger, star anise and cinnamon stick from broth and stir in fish sauce and lime juice. Ladle broth among the 4 bowls and serve.

This recipe courtesy Executive Chef Steve Driver and Sous Chef Rusty Penno from Boffins.

Boffins offers cooking classes to its members on a monthly basis. Classes range from themes such as Asian cuisine, East Indian cuisine and summer BBQing to bread making, soups and stews. Guests are taken through the process of preparing items from scratch with hands-on training.

Classes are both entertaining and informative, with on- and off-topic discussions featuring a wealth of knowledge and kitchen lore shared by both chefs and managers. The finale of the class comes when everyone is seated at a large table together and returns to the kitchen with plate in hand to sample the foods that have been prepared.

For schedules and costs contact Ray Dulos at 249-5344.



**DHS**  
COMMUNICATIONS



# what's out west

## WINNIPEG

### Royal Winnipeg Ballet's - The Nutcracker

December 22, 2003 - Centennial Concert Hall

Set on the prairies in 1913, the RWB's Nutcracker reworks a classic tale with typical Canadian panache. The dancing mice, waltz of the snowflakes and sugar plum fairy are still there, but they come alive at a time when Winnipeg was the trading hub of North America. Other dates, tickets at [www.rbw.org](http://www.rbw.org)

## SASKATOON

### The SIGA Enchanted Forest until January 11, 2004

Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park & Zoo

Canada's largest outdoor drive-through Christmas light display is back with more than 900 brilliantly lit images, animated displays and giant Christmas trees. 5:30-11:00 p.m. nightly. Car pass available at gate, advance passes at Saskatoon Canada Safeway stores.

### Transforming Presence: The Landscape of the Spirit

until January 18, 2004 - Mendel Art Gallery

Drawn from the holdings of the Mendel Art Gallery, this exhibition of painting, photography, weaving and sculpture is a veritable who's who of artists of Canadian, American and British artists. Mendel Art Gallery. Call (306) 975-7610. [www.mendel.ca](http://www.mendel.ca)

### Fame - The Musical - February 6-8, 2004

Centennial Auditorium

Inspired by the Academy Award winning film and Emmy Award winning TV series, Fame-The Musical is an emotionally charged, red hot, spectacular new musical. It chronicles the 4-year odyssey, from audition to graduation, of a group of talented and dedicated students at New York City's High School of the Performing Arts. For tickets, call (306) 938-7800 or 1-800-970-7328. [www.saskcent.com](http://www.saskcent.com)

## REGINA

### Rory Allen Band - A Rockin' Elvis Christmas

December 17-21, 2003 - Casino Regina Showlounge

World-class entertainer and Elvis tribute artist Rory Allen is back and ready to rock your holiday season. For tickets, call (306) 565-3000 or 1-800-555-3189. [www.casinoregina.com](http://www.casinoregina.com)

### SaskPower Festival of Lights

until January 7, 2004 - Wascana Centre

Regina's annual drive-through light festival in beautiful Wascana Centre will delight both the young and young at heart. Nightly from 6-10 p.m.

### Sylvia - January 28 - February 14, 2004

The Globe Theatre

It's puppy love when's Kate's husband Greg brings home a stray dog. Can Kate learn to love Sylvia? Will Sylvia ever stop scooting on the white living room carpet? Two paws up for this hilarious romp by A.R.Gurney. Call (306) 525-6400. [www.globetheatrelive.com](http://www.globetheatrelive.com)

## CALGARY

### Calgary Flames vs Edmonton Oilers

December 23, 2003 - Pengrowth Saddledome

For tickets, call (403) 777-4646 today! [www.calgaryflames.com](http://www.calgaryflames.com)

### David Bowie with Macy Gray - January 21, 2004

Pengrowth Saddledome

Bowie's first full-fledged world tour since 1995 includes songs from every era of his remarkable career. He changes set lists from night to night, so buckle up. Tickets available online at [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca)

## EDMONTON

### Edmonton Oilers vs Minnesota Wild

December 30, 2003 - Rexall Place

For tickets, call (780) 414-GOAL (4625) or Toll Free 1-866-414-GOAL (4625). [www.edmontonoilers.com](http://www.edmontonoilers.com)

### 2004 BMO Financial Group

Canadian Figure Skating Championships

January 5-11, 2004 - Rexall Place

Canada's best compete for national honours in ladies, men's, pairs and dance, junior and senior categories. For tickets, call (780) 451-8000. [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca)

## VANCOUVER

### 42nd Street - December 16, 2003 - January 3, 2004

The Centre in Vancouver for Performing Arts

42nd Street tells the timeless, inspiring tale of small town Peggy Sawyer's rise from chorine to Broadway star. Lullaby of Broadway, We're in the Money, I Only Have Eyes For You, and the spectacular title number add up to a smiling, sparkling, tapping, back-flipping classic Broadway production! For tickets, call (604) 602-0616 or visit [www.centreinvancover.com](http://www.centreinvancover.com)

### Vancouver Canucks vs. Colorado Avalanche

January 2, 2004 - General Motors Place

For tickets, call (604) 280-4400 or Toll Free 1-800-663-9311. [www.canucks.com](http://www.canucks.com)

## VICTORIA

### Polar Bear Swim

January 1, 2004 - Elk Lake

What better way to start the year than with an invigorating dip in Elk Lake. Join countless other daring dippers on a memorable first day of the year ... or just watch the lunacy. Find out more at [www.tourismvictoria.com](http://www.tourismvictoria.com)

### Jann Arden - Love is the Only Soldier

January 9-10, 2004 - The Royal Theatre

Canada's premier chanteuse performs two nights in Victoria during her cross country tour. An intimate, inspiring, hilarious, soulful and moving concert experience. Get your tickets soon. Call (250) 386-6121.

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