



the Commuter

Transwest Air Inflight Magazine

Complimentary Winter 2002

The ephemeral art of
sculptor Patricia Leguen

Elk Ridge Resort adds five-star
flavour to wilderness retreats

Call of the Wild:
Trapper Alex Flett is one of
the North's true originals

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Issue One, Volume Three

Transwest Air Inflight Magazine Winter 2002

WELCOME! TOKED YA U'S TANISI! ANIN SIGWA! EDLANETÉ!

Message from Managing Partners

A lot has happened in the world since our last magazine came out. We will limit our comments to two brief statements. One - the unrest and lack of respect for human life which has plagued the rest of the world has arrived in North America. Two - the people at Transwest Air extend our condolences to the innocent victims around the world who are affected by terrorism and its repercussions.

A number of security measures have been implemented since September 11th. Some of these are visible and some are not. The Canadian government is still working through some proposals. Transwest Air needs your co-operation to help keep our flights on time as a result of the extra time needed to security screen passengers. The best way to help is to check in at least 45 minutes prior to boarding time. This allows us the time to carry out the normal pre-takeoff operational duties and any new security requirements.

To an outsider Saskatchewan can look like a bleak place in the winter. What they don't know about is all the great winter events and activities that go on here. How about numerous winter festivals, world class dog team races, snowmobiling, skiing competitions, hockey and the list goes on. Tourism Saskatchewan is a good place to check these out. Transwest Air is a good way to get there!

We wish you the best of health and success for 2002. Thanks for your support.



Jim Glass
Managing Partner



Pat Campling Jr.
Managing Partner

2 CALL OF THE WILD

Old-timer Alex Flett is content in his brand new cabin, but that doesn't mean he's ready to give up his trap line.



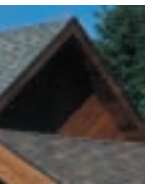
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Cover photo: Sean Francis Martin

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story: Christina Weese
photography: Sean Francis Martin



Sometimes your perceptions play

tricks on you. Saskatchewan

would seem to be a

tame province – no hill,

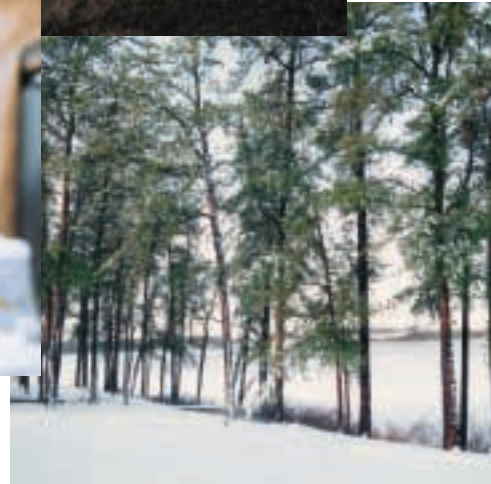
no coulee, no bit of

land has been allowed

to lay wild. The grassland knows the touch of

the plow or the passage of cattle, and small pockets of original

prairie lie nearly hidden by fields of golden wheat.



The Call of the Wild

There is, however, a part of Saskatchewan that most of its one million residents never get to see. A large part – in fact, the greater part of the province; the forests of the North. Forest is a constant up here – pine trees, red sandy soil, clear, cold lakes and a particular brand of silence that isn't found anywhere else. It's the kind of silence that occurs only when you know you are many miles from the nearest town.



In 1971, men came north to Cluff Lake looking for a precious metal – not gold, but uranium. One man was there before the surveyors. He watched the mining project develop and bring a community to the shores of Cluff Lake. Now, with the mine scheduled to shut down, he'll be here to watch them leave.

Alex Flett is a small Native man in his eighties. He's almost always grinning. He was already living and trapping

"I'd still be working if they didn't push me away," he says. "I like working . . . I'll trap my whole life."

The community around the Cogema mine consists only of the miners and contractors who work there. They have a grand sense of humour - the landing strip has a hand-painted green and white sign that reads "Cluff International." Everyone refers to the main administration complex as "City Hall." No one has a personal vehicle up here, and it can be hard to find a free company truck, so if you are going in the right direction you may be called into impromptu taxi service via the CB. In a community like this one, everyone watches out for everyone else. That's why, before the mine shuts down, they decided to build a new house for Alex.

"The new cabin is just about finished, and it's probably a good thing," explains Martin Durocher, "because Alex's old one is just about ready to fall down." It will be bigger than the old cabin – three rooms instead of two – and have a propane stove and heater instead of kerosene. It will also have electricity from the Cluff Lake generator. Though the mine is shutting down, there will be a monitoring station here for at least ten more years. Neither cabin has running

around Cluff when the first prospectors came to the area in the early seventies. That's when he started a long relationship with what would become the Cluff Lake Mine. He started out cutting lines through the bush for the surveyors, and witnessed the discovery of three of the open pit mine sites. As the mine grew, he worked for eleven years as a handyman until they retired him at age 65. He still seems a little put out about retirement; it's not in his philosophy.



water, since Alex is often gone for months at a time. He hauls all of his water from the lake and says he's glad that the new cabin is closer to the shore. Though there's no indoor plumbing, Alex does have a small T.V. and satellite dish. He says he likes to watch wrestling.

Alex was born in the early 1920's. His mother died when he was young, and he and his sister were raised in a mission in Fort Chipewyan, Saskatchewan. When he was 12, his father took him out into the bush. He taught Alex the bush lore – how to trap, how to find your direction and how to survive when the temperature drops. Alex's father trapped in the Athabasca region of Alberta, and Alex did too until 1958, when he moved back to Fort Chip so his children could be closer to a school. Four of Alex's eight living children have since worked at Cluff

Lake – three of the boys in the mine, and one girl in the administration office. Ed, one of Alex's boys, has worked here for 22 years. He finished high school and college and now operates heavy equipment at the mine.



It was in '58 that Alex started his trap line around Cluff Lake. He has travelled back and forth between his family at Fort Chip and his trap line

at Cluff ever since. There are no roads this far north – if you want to cut through the bush, you are dependent on your own two feet. It takes about a week for Alex to hike the distance along the Douglas River, and when it snows he will take his snowmobile. "Many years ago, my father and I travelled by canoe or dogsled in the winter. We also used dogpacks. A dog can carry about 100 lbs," relates Alex. "We had about twenty dogs. There were six in a sled team. And, believe it or not, I used to take the mail plane to Fort Chip for fourteen dollars. The mail goes by weight, so it's a good thing I'm skinny!"

Getting around in the bush isn't a problem for Alex, either. He seems to have an innate sense of direction. "I just watch the sun," he explains, "and the wind also. You have to watch the wind, sometimes it changes." He doesn't use a map or a compass,

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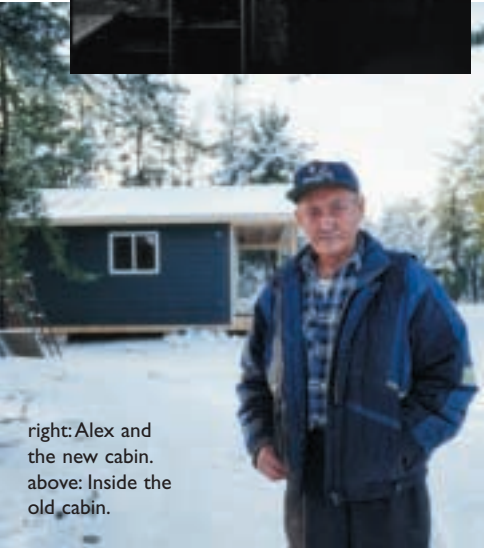
though he says he tried out a compass once. “I don’t need it. Used one once to go to Athabasca Lake. I left it behind in the bush.”

Alex buys a trapper’s license every year, and the season opens November 1st. The money isn’t as good as it used to be - a pelt may be worth less than half of what it was twenty years ago. He traps fox, martin, bear, wolf and squirrel. “But not mice,” he says with a grin. “Some of the younger trappers come up here but they don’t like going in the bush.”

It takes about two weeks to hike around the trap line. Alex looks for tracks and sets his traps there; once an animal has travelled a path, it’s likely to do so again. Whitefish is used for bait. It’s netted and dried at Cluff Lake – mining hasn’t compromised the fish or wildlife in the area.

Sometimes, out on the trap line, the temperature can plunge to -50°C. “There’s some hard times,” Alex says. “It’s not an easy job.” Alex uses four of the original surveyor’s cabins around the area, but often at night there is nothing over his head save the starry sky and the cold northern lights. All he has is a warm blanket at his back and a good fire in front. He uses a special feather blanket that his wife made for him out of duck feathers.

When the mine finally closes, Alex isn’t worried about being left alone again in the wilderness. “Lots of people say, ‘How you goin’ stay there? There’s no one to talk to.’ I just say . . .” He trails off and waves his arms as if to dismiss unwanted concern. “I can talk to people when I go to town. When I hear a wolf calling in the bush, then I’m glad.”



right: Alex and the new cabin.
above: Inside the old cabin.

ART OF THE MOMENT

story: Beverly Fast • sculpture photos: courtesy Patricia Leguen • portrait photo: Sean Francis Martin



“I can carve anything,”

sculptor Patricia Leguen says.

It’s not a boast, just a state-

ment of fact. In the early days

of her career, Leguen worked

in bronze, cement, soapstone and

alabaster. Today, she devotes much of her

talent to carving in more ephemeral elements – snow, ice, sand and fire.



above: Where the Buffalo Roam fire sculpture waits for sunset in Normandy, France at the 2001 International Fire Sculpture

inset: buffalo sculpture ablaze at 2001 River Roar, Saskatoon

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Leguen (inset, top) and Siberian sculptors Alexandre Zaitsev and Serguei Tselebrovski worked for six days carving 36,000 pounds of pure Alaskan ice into a stunning ice landscape 16 feet high and 20 feet long.

Northern Sun (inset, bottom) took home a bronze medal and artist's choice in the abstract category at the World Ice Art Championships in Fairbanks.



It's the week before Christmas and Leguen sits in her cluttered home office, digging through photo albums and clippings. When you work in such fleeting media as ice and snow, photographs are an important record of your work. Right now, she's trying to decide which sculptures she wants to showcase in the magazine. She's also preparing for a trip to Harbin, China this January, where she's been invited to compete in the International Snow and Ice Sculpture competitions.

"It's so busy right now," she says. "I'm away the week before Christmas, then home, then leaving for Vancouver on January 2. From there, I fly to China for the competitions, then back for a day and off to Lake Louise for Ice Magic on January 18th. And I have competitions in Mexico and Russia coming up in February and March."

The jet-set schedule sounds exciting – is exciting – but it takes a tremendous amount of discipline and energy to maintain. Although Leguen represents Canada at international competitions, her media are considered too transitory for funding by provincial and national arts granting agencies. Meaning she pays her own way. To do this, she runs a successful translation and conference interpretation business out of her Saskatoon home office.

A native of Saint-Nazaire on the west coast of France, Leguen is fluent in French, English, Spanish and German, and almost fluent in Russian. Following a Master's degree at the University of Nantes, she was eager to explore the world – specifically, the English speaking parts of it.

"I wanted to work in the United States, but that fell through so I decided to try Canada instead," she says. "One day my professors called me into their office for a job interview. Their first question was, 'You know where Saskatoon is?' I said, 'Of course!' I got the job. Then I ran to the library and got an atlas to find out where Saskatoon was."

With no family and few possessions, Leguen arrived in the city in the fall

of 1979 and began teaching at the University of Saskatchewan. She also began pursuing a secret love – art.

"I've always loved to draw but my parents didn't want me to be an artist; they wanted me to go to medical school or something more practical," she smiles. Living so far from home, Leguen felt free to sample the university's art classes.

"Soon, I was taking every kind of class I could: drawing, painting, art history, print making. And then I discovered sculpture. Bill Epp was the sculpture instructor at the time and he took me under his wing. He opened a whole new world to me; it was a wonderful time."

It was the beginning of a career that today sees Leguen travelling around the world. Before it could happen, though, she had to conquer a different challenge.

"My visa ran out in 1981. I knew when I went home that I wanted to come back, and I thought a good way would be as a French teacher, so I took a B.A. in French. Then I spent a year at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts to study drawing, etching and sculpture. When I returned to Saskatoon in 1983, I decided to take a Bachelor of Education because I thought it would help me stay," she laughs.

Her two-year immigration odyssey came to a successful end in 1985, when she went before an immigration court and won the right to stay in Canada. She became a Canadian citizen in 1989.

In the interim, Leguen continued to develop as a sculptor. When she wasn't carving, she was taking graduate studies at the U of S and teaching French immersion. A serious motorcycle accident in 1987 ended her teaching



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“Sand Flower”
Sept. 7-9, 2001
Harrison Hot Springs, BC



“Escape”
February, 2001
Second place, Sapporo, Japan

Snow and ice melt, sand washes away, fire burns. Leguen’s work captures the imagination for an oh-so-brief moment

career and left her reeling from painful back and neck injuries. Her struggle to reclaim her life is evident in the intensity of her work and, perhaps, in her choice of mediums.

Snow and ice melt, sand washes away, fire burns. Leguen will work fifteen hours a day in sub-zero temperatures carving ice and snow, or spend hours in sweltering 30 and 40 degree Celsius heat creating sand sculpture. Her work captures the imagination for an oh-so-brief moment ... and is gone.

Last February in Sapporo, Japan, she created an abstract vision in snow called *Escape*. At 13 feet tall and 10 feet wide, it was the only semi-abstract sculpture to claim an award. The previous year, she and Siberian

sculptors Alexandre Zaitsev and Serguei Tselebrovski worked for six days carving 36,000 pounds of pure Alaskan ice into a stunning ice landscape 16 feet high and 20 feet long. *Northern Sun* took home a bronze medal and artist’s choice in the abstract category at the World Ice Art Championships in Fairbanks.

In August, one of her works lit up the night sky on the beaches of Normandy, France. It was the International Fire Sculpture Festival, and Leguen’s Team Canada created a massive 18-foot tall by 34-foot long buffalo out of wood 2x4s and 1x2s.

... and is gone.

“We had ten hours to build the sculpture. We covered it with hay, which was tied on with twine and wire. It was put upright and sprayed with a gallon of kerosene. At eleven p.m., we lit it on fire,” she says. “It really is amazing to watch the sculpture come to life with the flames, while dying at the same time.”

Since ’91, Leguen has created many such moments. She’s competed in close to 60 events, both as a solo sculptor and as a team captain. In 1993, she led Team Saskatchewan to first place and artist’s choice awards at the National Snow Sculpture Competition in Quebec City. A day later, she represented Canada during the international competition and

earned herself the honour of captain-ing Team Canada at the Olympic Snow Sculpture Championships in Lillehammer, Norway in 1994.

She tried ice sculpture after a chance meeting with a chef, who was working on a centre piece for a local hotel. It was 1995 and Leguen, fascinated by the form, asked him to show her the basics.

“That Christmas, I bought my first chainsaw,” she says, referring to one of the main tools of the ice sculpting trade. “But I had to convince the chef to let me borrow his expensive tools so I could go to the World Championship in Fairbanks, Alaska in March. Our team won seventh place in the solo event and the silver medal in the multi-block competition. After that, I was hooked.”

1996 was also her first trip to the World Championship Sand Sculpture Competition in Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia. “Sand is tricky, but also very addictive.” She’s been back every year since. In 2000, she teamed up with Ulli Meng, Al Fauchon and old friends Zaitsev and Tselebrovski to create a 14-foot tall Russian cathedral that won the award for best architecture.


Sand sculpting has taken Leguen from Harrison Hot Springs to Quebec, Florida, Texas and China. She was the only Canadian Master sand sculptor invited to the first-ever international sand sculpture festival in the United Kingdom, where she used 50 tons of sand to create a 12-foot tall statue of Athena in the heart of downtown Glasgow, Scotland.

In China in 1999, she and team mate Fran Cuyler were the only Canadians - and the only female sculptors - at two international snow and ice sculpture competitions in Harbin. They found themselves, much to their amazement, something of media darlings.

“They were using pictures of us and our sculpture on the news to

bring people out. After that, people began following us around, snapping pictures. Later, a friend travelling on business told me he had seen my picture on a Chinese billboard advertising the event,” she says.

As Leguen prepares to return to China for the third time, she looks back on

the past ten years. She’s carved in Greenland, Italy, France, Russia, China, Japan, across Canada and the United States. Her works may be art of the moment, but for that moment, they are wondrous. 

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Fifteen years ago
Arne Petersen took
a moment to peek
out from his thriving
engineering company
and ponder life as a
retiree. First he
noticed the incredible
number of people
looking in the same
direction. Then he
saw the perfect
opportunity.



Just beyond the southern border of Prince Albert National Park lies an area of unsurpassed beauty. It's just off the main highway, yet tranquil almost beyond belief. This is where Petersen envisioned the development of what is today Elk Ridge Resort.

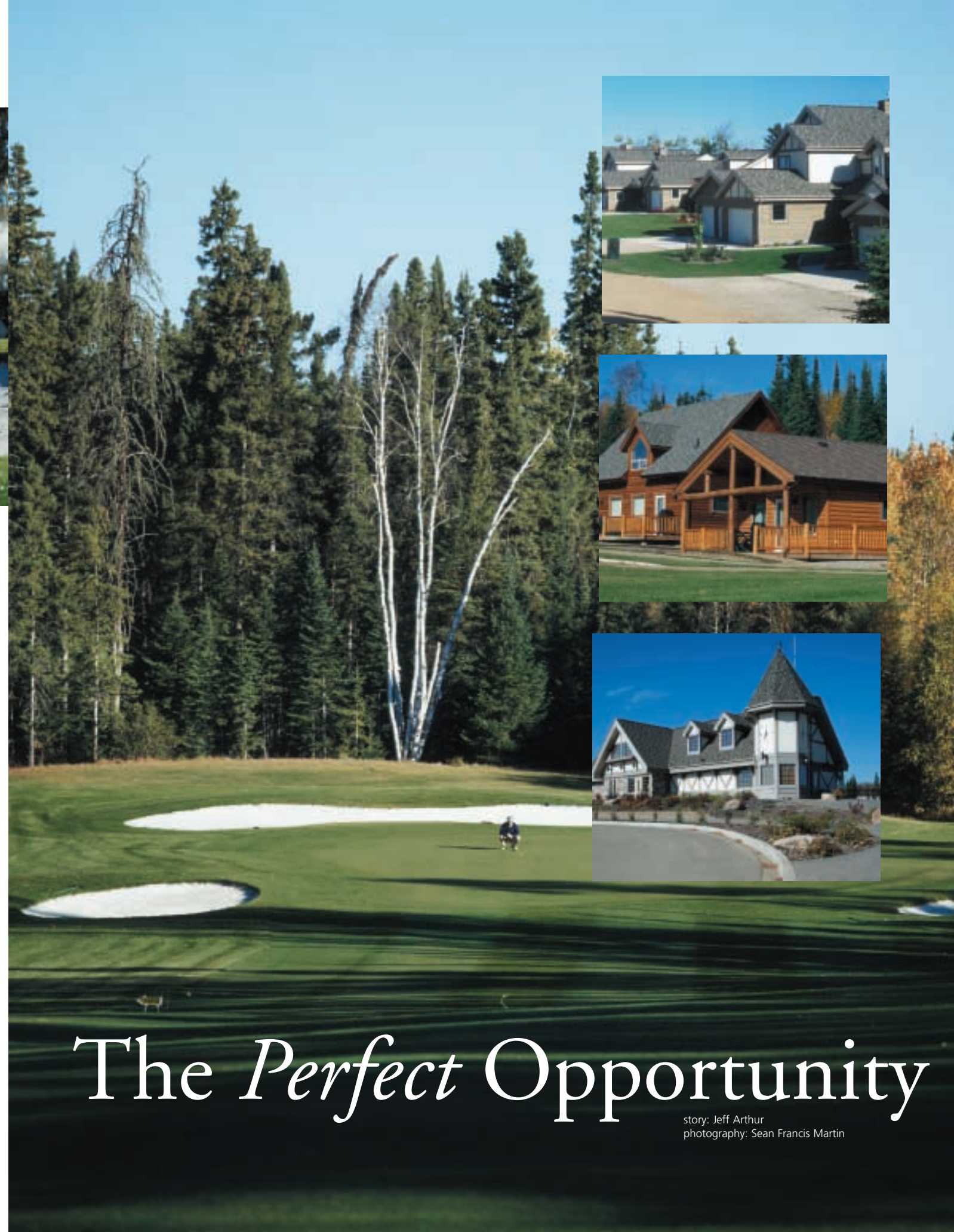
"I thought to myself, 'This is the cat's meow,'" the now 65-year-old entrepreneur exclaims. "I was looking for an investment that would carry me into retirement and I knew there were a lot of people looking for the same thing. With all the baby boomers coming through, I realized resort condominiums were going to be a tremendous growth industry."

Petersen's instincts were true. Of the approximately two dozen condominiums sold outright at Elk Ridge, fewer than ten per cent have mortgages attached. Buyers are mature, financially secure and largely able to pay cash for properties that start at \$165,000.

Leading Elk Ridge Resort is CEO Ron Erikson. He was brought on board to help transform the property from a golf course into a resort property. Scenery and great golf will entice visitors but investors need something more concrete.

"You can't sell from an empty lot," Erikson comments. "Thanks to an incredible amount of construction over the past few years, we really have made a significant shift in the positioning of the property."

"Elk Ridge is now so much more than a golf course. It's condominiums, it's single dwellings on privately owned lots, it's rentals, it's RV's. Also, with this being the first time we've operated through the winter, it's now a full-service, four-season resort."



The *Perfect* Opportunity

story: Jeff Arthur
photography: Sean Francis Martin

Elk Ridge's development into the only self-contained, year-round resort in the province is something Erikson credits to the determination of its sole owner – Petersen – whom he calls 'one helluva visionary.'

Petersen was running a highly successful company, Precision Services and Engineering, when he first heard of a golf course proposal for Elk Ridge in 1987. A group of friends had gathered some money, but Petersen knew there was only enough in their budget to build a couple of holes. He could not accept half-measures.

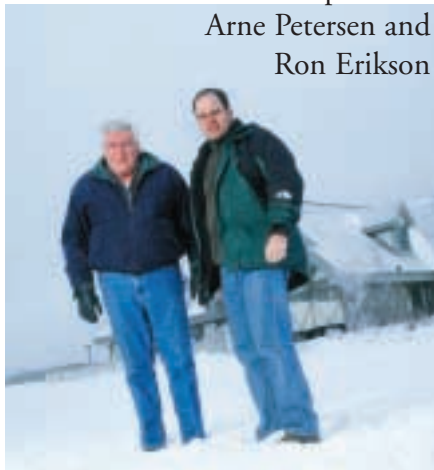
"I got involved in the construction and we did the whole first nine, then I took over totally in 1995 and finished the second nine immediately."

The area surrendered some pleasant surprises during initial development. Peat excavated to create a reservoir served as the base for the golf course, built on the naturally thin topsoil of

the boreal forest. Also, an ample supply of pure water was found in two underlying aquifers.

Entrepreneurs

Arne Petersen and
Ron Erikson



A nasty surprise awaited, however, when Petersen began condominium development.

"Dealing with the government was terribly painful," he says. He estimates that red tape delayed development by

about three years. With each day, potential investors found satisfaction elsewhere and sliced a subscriber list that once numbered 450.

"It was extremely frustrating for me. I've always been the kind of guy who set his goals very high and never did anything cut-rate. I had to jump through all kinds of hoops to get things how I wanted. We proceeded nevertheless and have had condos available for two years now."

This was the situation when Erikson arrived in late 2000. "There were many contracts underway when I came here," Erikson says. "We had to get on track and resolve the issues surrounding the rapid rate of expansion and focus on contract completion right away. A lot had to be done to finish building the organization's business foundation and create a platform to move forward."

Erikson's strength is golf course management. He'd found his vocation as a

teenager, honed his craft as an apprentice golf pro and head professional, and studied university-level management courses. He was in a very comfortable position as executive director of Riverside Golf and Country Club in Saskatoon when Petersen presented him with the Elk Ridge challenge.

"Coming here was something I couldn't have foreseen even two months before I arrived," Erikson says. "I'd played the golf course, and from what I could tell everything was being done first-rate. Being in the golf business, I knew what to look for and what was here wasn't half-baked or partially done."

Erikson describes the impressive Elk Ridge golf course as 'an 18-hole private journey through the boreal forest, where every hole is like you're by yourself'. The density of trees makes it a test for any player, yet tee boxes are set so the course can be enjoyed by golfers of every level.

A dogleg right on the 3rd from an elevated tee and over water, along with a postcard-perfect par three 8th, also over water, are the most heralded holes at Elk Ridge.

"There was obviously good insight into who would be playing the course when the original 18 holes were designed," Erikson says, noting work on another nine is about halfway complete. When this third nine opens in 2003, the wide-open rough is expected to be friendlier to the average golfer.


Friendliness and accessibility are the buzzwords at Elk Ridge, which is often described as playing The Beatles to the nearby national park's Mozart. Not that Erikson or Petersen harbour ill will toward the national park. They view it as a natural drawing card and sister attraction in the area.



lion," Petersen says. "To do everything we want, we need a partner in the resort-hotel industry. I don't think an independent can survive when it comes time for the big dollars and world marketing."

Petersen hopes that legislation to allow time share condominiums in Saskatchewan will be enacted this year. He shudders at the billions of dollars already spent by Saskatchewan people on resorts outside the province, when there's no reason that money couldn't be spent in their own back yard.

Elk Ridge is in full sales mode right now. Erikson is pitching this as the time and place for investors to get involved in condominium development. An informative web site at elkridgeresort.com is undergoing a facelift to further entice buyers.

"We have a very relaxed atmosphere and five-star facilities where people get the best service we can possibly provide," Petersen says. "We want people to know that Elk Ridge is an excellent place to invest." 

"I have \$15 million invested now and a total planned investment of \$35 mil-

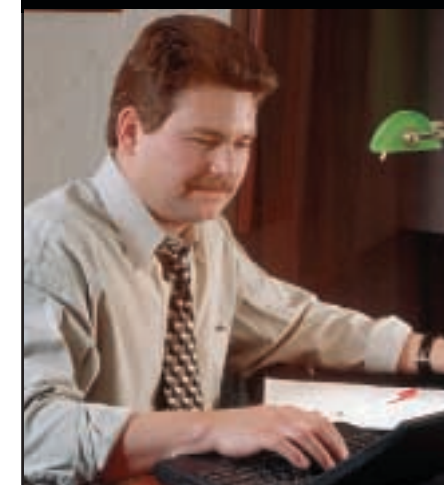
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How early should I check-in for my flight?
We are asking that everyone check-in at least 45 minutes prior to flight departure. In Saskatoon and Regina security lineups will depend on flight loads and the time of day.

Thank you for working with us and complying with these regulations to maintain a safe environment for air travel. For further information please check the airport websites at www.yxe.ca and at www.yqr.ca.

Frequently Asked Questions

Transwest Air Employees

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| ACCOUNTING | MARKETING |
| AVIONICS | OPERATIONS |
| COUNTER | PAYROLL |
| DISPATCHER | PILOTS |
| DOCKHAND | RAMP |
| ENGINEERING | RECEPTIONIST |
| FREIGHT | RESERVATIONS |
| FUELER | SALES |
| GROOMER | SUPERVISOR |
| HANDLER | TECHNICAL |
| ITMANAGER | UPHOLSTERER |
| MAINTENANCE | |

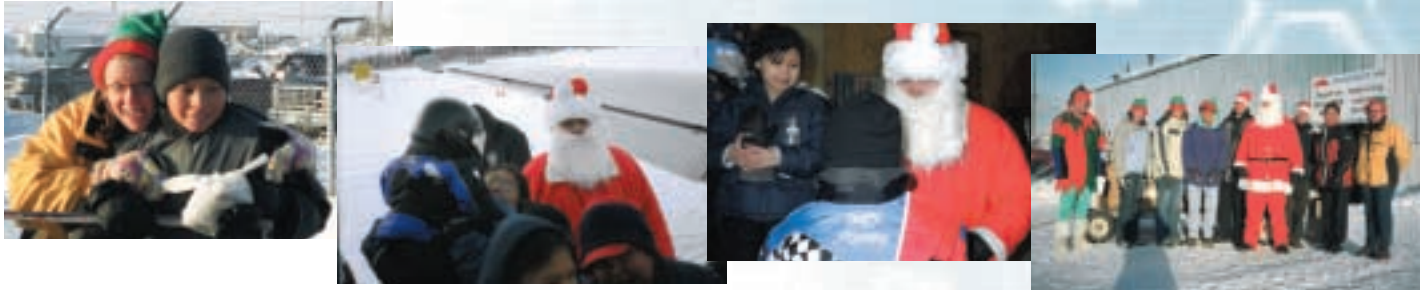
Santa Clause Takes Flight

Transwest Air hosted the 2nd Annual Santa Claus Takes Flight project on Dec. 17, 2001. Transwest Air flew to Saskatchewan's northern communities of Wollaston Lake, Black Lake, Fond Du Lac and Stony Rapids presenting gifts to 1100 children from Santa



Claus. This project was made possible with sponsorship from the following businesses. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your generosity and support with the Santa Clause Takes Flight project.

- A & L TRANSPORT
- CAMECO
- CIGAR LAKE MINING CORPORATION
- ESSO
- GRAHAM CONSTRUCTION
- LOUIS MARTEL
- PHARMASAVE, PRINCE ALBERT
- SAFeway, PRINCE ALBERT
- SNOWBIRD PETROLEUM
- TORSON CONTRACTING LTD.
- WAL-MART
- WATERBASE INN, LaRonge
- WEYERHAEUSER



EMPLOYEE PROFILES

Hi, my name is Shelley Hyshka - oopps... I mean Shelley Olson, I am still very much a newlywed and am not used to my new name yet. I am the Reservation Manager in our Saskatoon office and have been in the aviation industry for approximately three years. I have held a variety of positions such as reservation agent, counter service agent and receptionist in our Prince Albert and Saskatoon bases, with the former Athabaska Airways company. My husband Brian and I are both hockey players and we can hardly wait for the first snowfall to happen as we both enjoy a variety of winter activities. If you have any questions regarding our reservations system, please call me anytime.



EMPLOYEE PROFILES

Hi, my name is Deb Wrightson and I am usually the voice on the other end of the "Northern Reservation" 1-800 line. I say 'usually' because I am also the station manager in both Prince Albert and La Ronge, and find myself 'up in the air' commuting between these bases quite often. I am formerly the reservation agent for AirSask Aviation and held that position for the best part of nine years. My husband Gord and our three children thoroughly enjoy our time at our cabin on Lac La Ronge both in the summer and winter months. If I can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to call.



TRANSWEST AIR *Charter and Schedule Service*

For reservations and information call **1-800-667-9356** or **1-800-665-7275**, book on-line at www.transwestair.com, or call your local travel agent.