

2026 ISSUE 02

LIV

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MAGAZINE





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Built to Last

How Reece Tomlinson Is
Redefining M&A in Alberta





Long before Calgary became part of Reece Tomlinson's national expansion strategy for RWT Capital, Alberta shaped the way she thought about business.

Early in her career, she worked alongside companies tied to Alberta's energy sector and saw firsthand how founders built businesses through commodity cycles, economic uncertainty and relentless hard work. She also learned that behind every successful business was a deeply personal story. That experience has stayed with her and continues to shape how she approaches dealmaking today.

As thousands of Alberta business owners approach retirement and begin considering what comes next, succession planning is becoming one of the defining issues facing the province's business community. Tomlinson has built one of Canada's fastest-growing boutique M&A firms by focusing on a segment of the market that is often underserved: founder-led and mid-market businesses that represent far more than a financial asset.

While larger institutions tend to concentrate on major transactions, RWT works primarily with entrepreneurs and business owners who have spent decades building companies, creating jobs and contributing to their communities.

"These businesses are often someone's life's work," says Tomlinson. "Our job is to help owners achieve their financial objectives, but also their personal ones. In many cases, legacy matters just as much as valuation."

That philosophy is one reason Calgary became a natural fit for the firm's continued growth.

For Tomlinson, Calgary wasn't simply another office location. It was an opportunity to deepen RWT's presence in one of Canada's most entrepreneurial markets and strengthen the firm's expertise in sectors that remain critical to the country's economic future, including energy, industrials and manufacturing.

"Calgary was a very deliberate choice for us," she says. "It's become one of the most dynamic business hubs in Western Canada, with a concentration of businesses operating in industries that drive Canada's economy."

Today, RWT continues to invest in its Calgary team as it expands across the Prairies and beyond. What makes Alberta particularly compelling is the nature of the businesses themselves. Many are founder-led, family-owned and deeply connected to the communities they serve. As ownership transitions accelerate, Tomlinson believes successful deals require more than financial engineering.

"Many owners want to know their employees will be looked after, that their customers will be supported and that what they've spent decades building will continue to thrive," she says.

That philosophy was recently reflected in RWT Capital's advisory role on the sale of H2Oil Energy to GFL Environmental, one of several notable transactions completed amid growing M&A activity across Canada's energy sector. For Tomlinson, the transaction reinforced a trend she sees across Alberta's mid-market: founders increasingly looking beyond price alone and focusing on finding partners who can support the next chapter of the business.

"The best transactions create value for everyone involved," she says. "Price matters, but so do people, culture and the long-term future of the company. When both sides feel they've achieved their objectives, that's usually a sign you've found the right partner."

It's a perspective that also influences the way she leads.



Tomlinson has built a reputation for taking a relationship-driven approach to both sides of the transaction, believing empathy and financial discipline aren't competing forces but complementary ones. Understanding motivations, navigating uncertainty and building trust are often what determine whether a deal succeeds or fails.

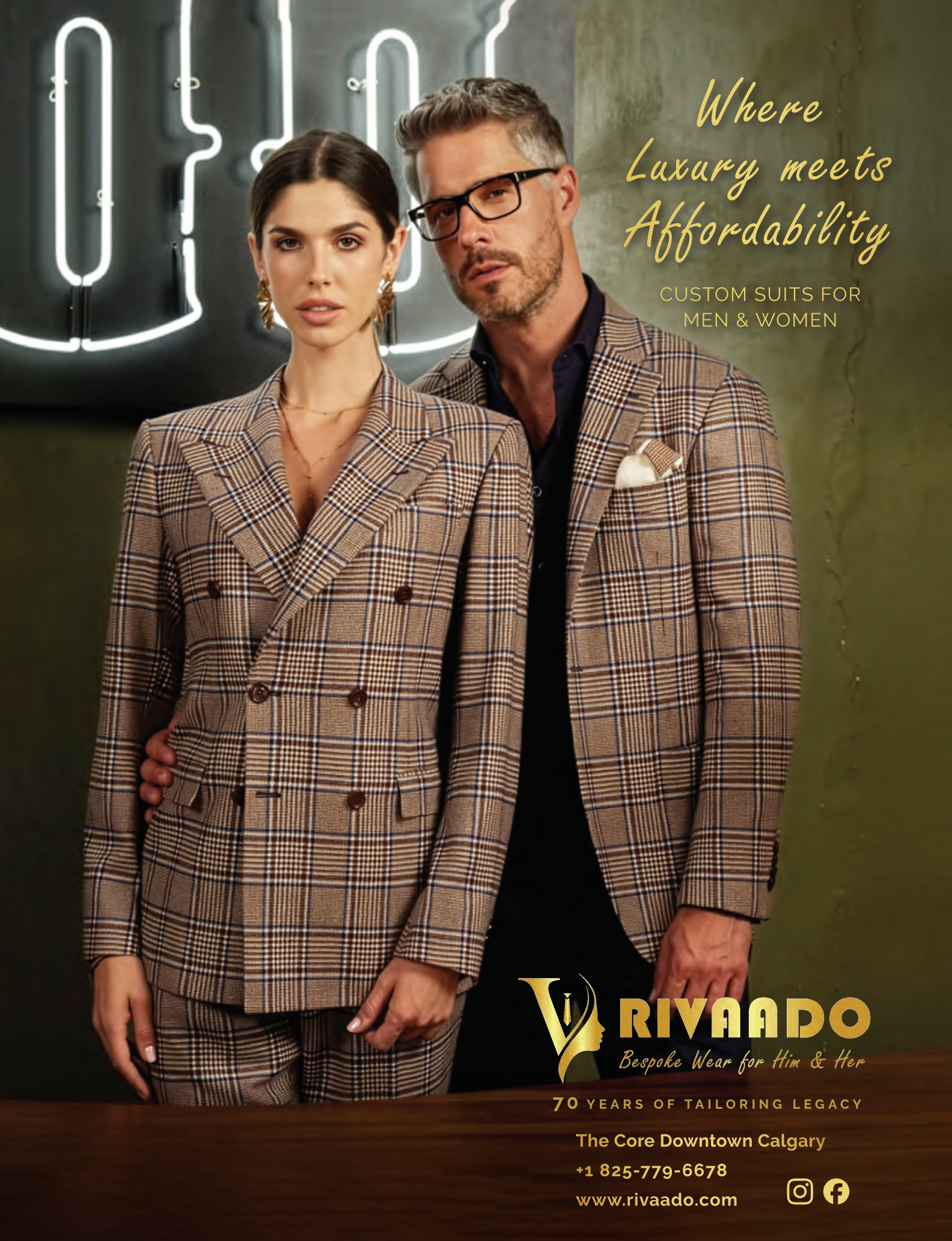
That approach has helped distinguish both Tomlinson and RWT in a competitive marketplace while challenging some long-held assumptions about leadership in finance.

As one of the few women leading a national M&A advisory firm in Canada, she's often found herself in rooms where she was the only woman at the deal table. Rather than seeing that as a disadvantage, she's learned to view it as a source of strength.

"Once you start betting on yourself and your ability to succeed, your differences become an advantage," she says. "The people who might underestimate you become a lot less intimidating."

When she's not advising clients, Tomlinson can often be found running along the Bow River before sunrise or heading west toward Canmore and Banff to recharge. It's a routine that keeps her grounded amid the demands of growing a national firm.

As Alberta enters a new era of business ownership transition, Tomlinson believes the most successful advisors will be those who remember what many founders already know. A business may have a valuation on paper, but for the people who built it, its value is about more than the numbers. **LIV**



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The Canadian landscape holds a distinct kind of luxury — where wide open skies, mountain grandeur, and river valley serenity converge. For those who dream of a getaway that reflects their lifestyle, values, and aspirations, Alair Homes has emerged as the premier creator of custom vacation residences across North America. With each project, the company brings together thoughtful design, local expertise, and a commitment to craftsmanship that ensures every home is a lasting investment in both comfort and long-term value.

Alair began with a simple belief: everyone deserves a home that reflects who they are and how they want to live. Its story started with British Columbia-based builder Blair McDaniel, who understood that great building requires more than tools and plans. It requires trust, transparency, and a team that listens with care. As the company grew, Blair surrounded himself with other builders and creators who shared that philosophy, forming a network of skilled professionals who prioritize connection and collaboration. Founded in 2007, Alair has since expanded to more than 100 locations across North America — including offices in both Calgary and Edmonton — empowering homeowners to imagine a retreat in whatever landscape inspires them, guided by knowledgeable local teams at every step.



Yet the most compelling chapter of the Alair story is written in the living spaces they bring to life. In the mountain corridors of Alberta's most celebrated destinations, families gather in properties positioned at the base of Canmore and the surrounding ranges, where timber framing recalls the textures of the Rockies and expansive decks invite long summer evenings under an endlessly bright sky. These homes do more than host the perfect post-hike gathering. They become generational hideaways, places where memories are layered year after year and where value grows with time.

Along the shores of the Bow River and the turquoise lakes of Kananaskis Country, Alair's Calgary and Bow Valley teams build retreats that embrace a different rhythm entirely. Here, warm mountain air drifts across private decks, mornings begin with the sound of moving water, and evenings settle into the wide amber light of the foothills. Whether designed for long weekends with friends or extended summer stays, these homes are built for presence, comfort, and longevity. Expansive outdoor living spaces, open-concept great rooms, and thoughtful natural materials allow life to unfold effortlessly while capturing the landscape that defines the region.



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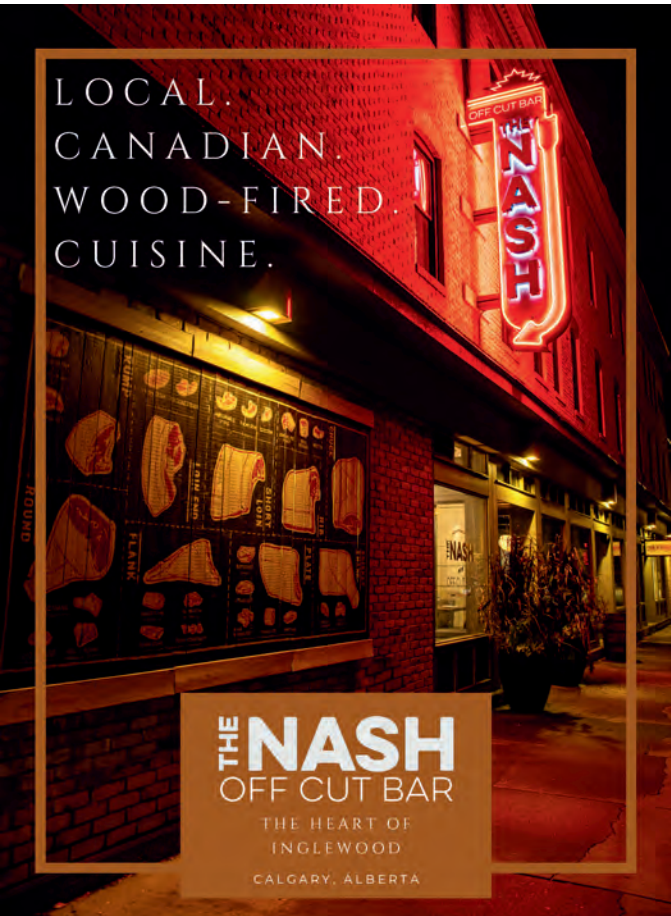
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In Edmonton and its surrounding river valley communities, Alair brings the same standard of craft to recreational properties and acreage builds that offer proximity to year-round adventure. From properties on the city's edge to homes positioned near world-class trails and backcountry access, each build blends modern ease with natural elements. Owners experience the wilderness without sacrificing the comforts they expect. Moving south into Alberta's lake country, Alair's Red Deer team builds stunning open-concept lake homes that embrace the tranquility of the water's edge, with the close proximity to the conveniences and amenities of Sylvan Lake.

As remote work reshapes the way people live, more Albertans are investing in secondary homes that offer both sanctuary, lifestyle opportunities and sound financial growth. Vacation and recreational properties in sought-after destinations show strong appreciation, and many owners offset costs through mindful rental strategies. With consistent standards across all locations and deep local knowledge in every region, Alair removes uncertainties and simplifies the journey of building in new terrain.



Expansive outdoor living spaces, open-concept great rooms, and thoughtful natural materials allow life to unfold effortlessly while capturing the landscape that defines the region.

The lasting value of an Alair-crafted home goes far beyond its materials or its address. These homes are designed to evolve with their owners, offering comfort, purpose, and a sense of belonging in every season. In the long golden days of an Alberta summer, the calm of mountain mornings, and the vast expanse of the foothills, an Alair build becomes more than a getaway. It becomes a place that reflects how its owners want to live, now and for decades to come — a retreat that welcomes them back, time and time again, to exactly where they feel most at home. **LIV**



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Wealth Without Borders

How a Ranch Kid Built a Practice Without Boundaries

When Stephen Maser set out to build Aura Wealth Management, he drew on more than two decades of experience in financial services. The firm he founded reflects a straightforward conviction: wealth management is most valuable when it is tailored to the actual lives that clients live.

Maser's path to finance was not traditional — his personal history is shaped by Alberta cattle ranches and oil fields. Raised on a cattle ranch in southern Alberta, he studied agricultural production at Olds College before spending a decade as a service engineer in the Alberta oil industry. "Growing up in Alberta agriculture and spending a decade in the oil industry means living and breathing real-world economic cycles," Maser explains. That grounding shaped the way he reads a financial situation — not as a portfolio of isolated assets, but as a complex, interconnected system. "Clients in these sectors know they don't have to translate their business realities or worry about being misunderstood by a corporate suit," he adds.

To back this practical experience with the right credentials, Maser completed his Canadian securities licensing in 2004, and by 2015, earned his U.S. cross-border credentials by passing both the Series 7 and Series 66 exams.

He also holds the Life Licence Qualification Program (LLQP) designation, enabling him to integrate life insurance, annuities, and segregated funds into estate planning.

While the majority of Stephen's business is focused right here at home on Canadian wealth strategies, his dual-country licensing is a valuable asset that very few advisors hold.

For Canadians with U.S. ties — whether through employment, cross-border property, dual citizenship, or inherited retirement plans — the regulatory and tax landscape can be incredibly complicated.

"Cross-border licensing is rare, mostly because the regulatory hurdles are a massive headache," Maser notes. A common blind spot is the PFIC rule: if a U.S. taxpayer holds the wrong type of Canadian investment account, the IRS can impose significant tax penalties. "Where things go sideways fastest is when people treat cross-border investing like a standard financial plan," he says. His approach is measured. "We move slowly, deliberately, and methodically to ensure every single box is checked and their wealth is fully protected on both sides of the border."



“Cross-border licensing is rare, mostly because the regulatory hurdles are a massive headache.”

Outside the office, Maser believes that professional life and community life are closely connected. His early involvement with Rotary laid the foundation for years of community engagement, with charitable commitments spanning cardiac health, cancer research, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and palliative care. Alongside his wife Laura — a former chiropractor, optician, and retired local business owner — he helped raise over \$270,000 for the Central Okanagan Hospice Association through their “Swinging with the Stars” fundraiser, later serving on its Foundation Board from 2021 to 2023. His dedication to local culture includes roles with Opera Kelowna and the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra. This mix of financial background and community focus led to his role as a keynote speaker at the Canadian Securities Exchange’s 2025 Summit on Responsible Investment. When clients begin thinking about philanthropy, Maser encourages them to move beyond the tax return. “It doesn’t always have to be a sterile, corporate line-item,” he says. “It can be active, engaging, and deeply personal.”

For him, that shift reframes the entire conversation. “Structuring philanthropy into your financial architecture moves it from ‘How much do I have?’ to ‘What kind of impact can I create?’”

When he is off the clock, Maser is an avid collector of first-edition hardcover books, with a library spanning science fiction, history, and graphic novels. A shared passion for food and wine drew him and Laura to the Okanagan Valley in 2011 — though Alberta, he is quick to note, has never really let go. “I love Alberta; I grew up there, and five generations of my family have called it home,” he shares. He returns frequently to meet clients face to face, while the family’s two Biewer Terriers, Leela and Chip, wait for him at home in the valley.

After 20 years, his view of the work has only sharpened. “Great financial advisors are not sales-driven,” he says. “The real value of this work is helping people protect what they’ve built so they can focus on living their lives without the constant background noise of financial anxiety.” **LIV**



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Too Polished for a Patio

Summer Dressy Edit

Too polished for a patio, too considered for casualwear — this is dressing with something to say. BC-born designer Christopher Bates built his Milan-based label on the conviction that clothing is neither afterthought nor armour, but the most personal form of language available. Grounded in Italian craftsmanship, driven by an unwavering eye for detail, and guided by a colour palette that refuses to recede, his pieces are designed for those who dress with intention and wear their confidence as fluently as their wardrobe. **LIV**

Designer: Christopher Bates
christopherbates.com

Photographer: Aleksandar Antonijevic

Models: Nicholas (Elite Models) & Kiana (Ciotti Models)

Hair & Makeup Artist: Gelareh Kamazani













Cupcakes You Crave

The Heartfelt Rise of a Family Bakery





BY TOBY TANNAS

Some of the strongest bonds begin in childhood kitchens — where stories are shared over mixing bowls, and traditions are passed down one handwritten recipe at a time. For sisters Carolyne McIntyre Jackson and Jodi Willoughby, that bond was forged on a farm just outside High River, Alberta, surrounded by wheat fields, prairie skies, and the irresistible scent of something sweet in the oven.

The sisters grew up knowing there was always a treat in the deep freeze, tucked away amongst layers of wax paper inside 4L ice cream pails. In their home, baking was more than just dessert — it was love and connection. Moist chocolate cakes, swirls of buttercream and gooey squares became the foundation for something much bigger than either of them could have imagined.

Carolyne and Jodi are the heart and hands behind Crave Cupcakes, a bakery born from family recipes and a craving to sprinkle a little joy — one cupcake at a time. The pair opened their first shop in Calgary's Kensington neighbourhood more than 20 years ago, followed by three more Calgary locations, Saskatoon and Edmonton, and into BC.

At Crave, every recipe has a story. Grandma's chocolate cake, mom's buttercream, but gone are the days of ice cream pails! Cookies, cakes, and slices are served up with style in charming blue boxes. Even more than the recipes, it's the feeling they want to preserve.

"We hope a Crave treat brings people back to a moment," says Carolyne. "A birthday, a Tuesday, a hug from your mom. Something warm and familiar." Jodi recalls a moment that perfectly captured this: "I pulled up to one of our stores and watched a woman peel the paper off her cupcake, take a deep breath, and bite in. The look on her face — that's what we're doing this for. That quiet little moment of pure joy."

Everyone has a favourite Crave indulgence. For some, it's the Crave Olicious — a decadent chocolate cupcake topped with Crave's signature periwinkle blue buttercream. Others swear by the Red Velvet Elvis, with its glorious cream cheese frosting. Then there are the monthly features — limited-time creations dreamed up by Crave's team to celebrate the seasons, surprise loyal fans, and keep the menu feeling fresh and fun.

The aesthetic of Crave stores — charming and nostalgic — matches the heart behind it. From the moment you walk in, the goal is to feel like you've stepped into a modern version of the past. "We wanted it to feel like home. Like that warm place you always want to return to," says Carolyne.

That feeling does not come easy — it takes a whole team. Crave has always been a family affair, with husbands and kids pitching in behind the scenes. "Working with family comes with its challenges," Jodi laughs, "but it's also where the magic happens. We trust each other completely. And we're all in it together."

Twenty years in, some things have changed — systems have evolved and the team has grown — but core values remain the same. The product must look beautiful and taste even better. "That's always been our rule," says Carolyne. "It can't just be pretty — it has to deliver." And deliver, they do. Whether it is for a wedding, a baby shower, or just a midweek pick-me-up, Crave has become part of life's most cherished moments.

So what is next for Crave? The sisters are not giving away all their secrets, but there is talk of continuing to expand, maybe a sequel to the first Crave Cookbook and adding more offerings to their line of bake it yourself products. Whatever comes, it will be made with the same love and intention that started it all. **LIV**

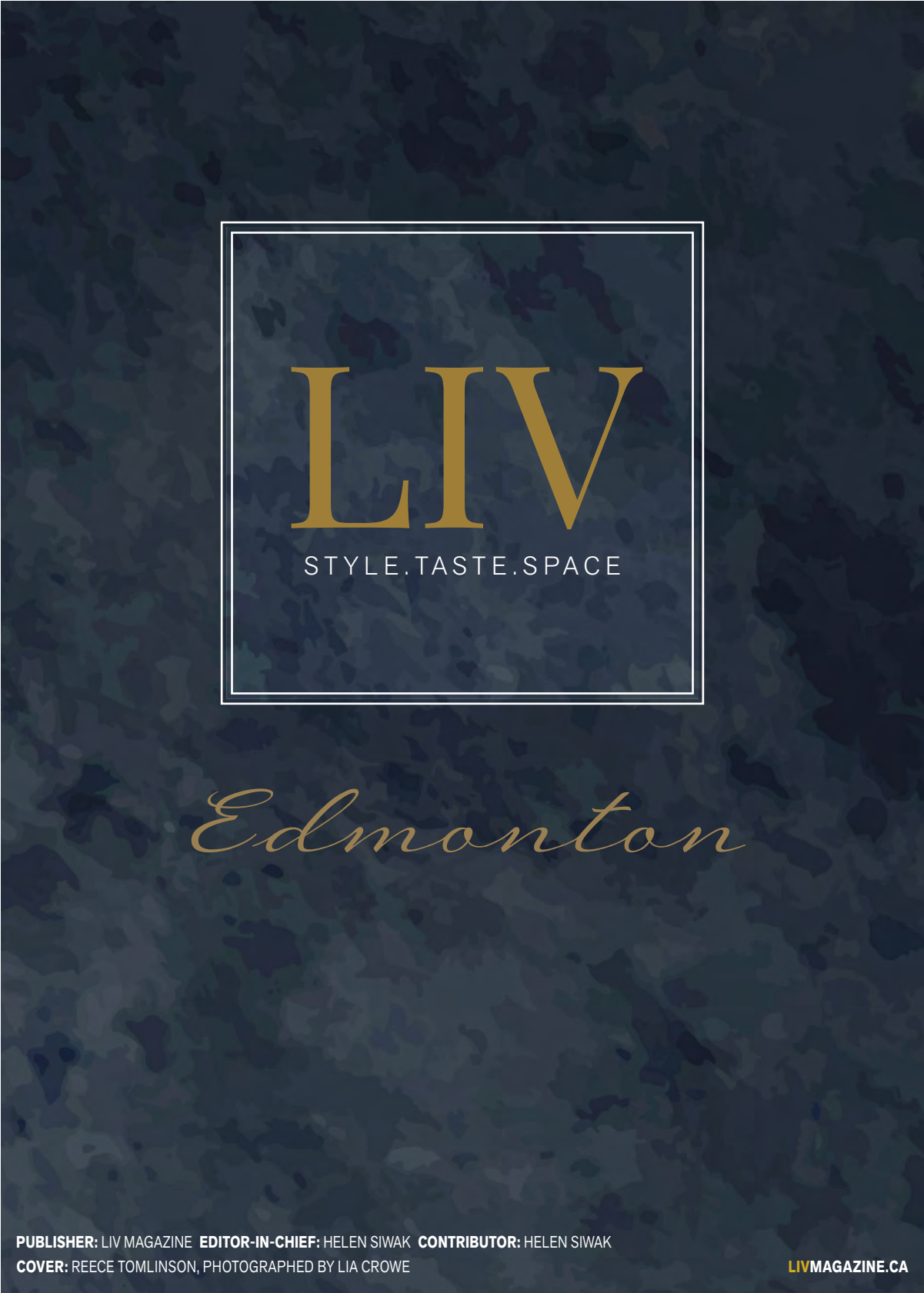
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The cover of LIV Magazine features a dark, textured background with a subtle pattern of leaves and branches. In the center, the word "LIV" is written in a large, gold, serif font. Below it, the words "STYLE.TASTE.SPACE" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The entire central text is enclosed in a thin white rectangular border. Below this, the word "Edmonton" is written in a gold, cursive script font.

LIV

STYLE.TASTE.SPACE

Edmonton

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Loreli Madiuk Photography



Collected, Not Decorated

Why the Most Personal Interiors Begin With History, not a Mood Board

Along Edmonton's 149th Street, Circa Home is doing something altogether different from your average furniture showroom. It is not simply a place to source pieces for a room. It is, in the words of co-founder Trevor Compton, a collection of past, present, and future — and the moment you step through the door, that philosophy becomes immediately apparent.

Those doors, as it happens, are worth pausing over. Standing eleven feet tall, with hand-etched glass panels, they once graced a Parisian hotel in the 1800s. Generations of guests passed through them — travellers, romantics, dreamers — before they crossed an ocean and a continent to find their place at Circa Home. They did not arrive by accident. They arrived because this is exactly the kind of object Trevor, Laurie, and Sherri seek out: one that carries history in its grain, and sets a tone before a single word is spoken.

On any given day, you might walk in and find yourself in the middle of a room where an antique roll-top desk faces a contemporary upholstered armchair, where a hand-carved mantelpiece anchors a tableau of taper candles and sculptural ironwork, where zebra-print ottomans encircle a tufted velvet centrepiece crowned with an ornate cast-iron urn and fresh orchids overhead. “Every decade has redeeming qualities and style when you begin to dig into images and handle all the goodies from the past,” Trevor said. “We get the luxury to dabble and use and admire all these things today. What an honour.”

Every corner has been considered, every vignette composed with the kind of deliberate layering that takes decades of eye and instinct to achieve. That instinct belongs to three people who have built something genuinely rare in just two months of operation: a design studio grounded in collaboration, mutual respect, and a shared belief that the objects in your home should tell your story.

Trevor's love of antiques began at age nine, when he attended a farm auction with his parents and walked away with an 1860s Russian brass bed — purchased with money earned collecting bottles. That early fascination evolved into a career spanning visual display work for Eaton's, Holt Renfrew, Harry Rosen, and others, and eventually into the founding vision behind Circa Home: that theatre, provocation, and beauty belong together on the same floor.

Laurie Murphy brings more than 35 years of interior design experience to the partnership, with a portfolio spanning new builds, large-scale renovations, and considered transformations across Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, and Victoria. Her background as a visual artist, combined with a deep knowledge of Feng Shui, gives her work a quality that is both refined and intuitive.

“I love when I can collaborate with my client throughout the process,” she explained. “It allows me to build the relationship and empowers them with the choices they make.”



Sherri Schmidt rounds out the trio with a perspective rooted in the relationship between people and their spaces. A graduate of the University of Alberta's Residential Interiors Program, with specialties in Building Construction and Green Design, Sherri approaches every project by asking what chord a client wants their home to strike. Her process is thorough and deeply personal — covering everything from how a family lives day to day, to whether they entertain, to any sensitivities that might shape material choices.

What Circa Home has cultivated in its opening months extends beyond interior design consultations and custom furniture sourcing. The store has already become a gathering place — a venue that draws Edmonton's design community together around a shared appreciation for craft, beauty, and objects with genuine provenance. "The end goal is for the client to smile, exhale, and feel like they're finally home," Sherri shared. "I've never made two spaces look alike."

That warmth is not incidental. It is built into the way Trevor, Laurie, and Sherri operate every day. Open Tuesday through Saturday, and available by appointment for focused, one-on-one consultations, Circa Home invites you to take your time. To linger over a piece. To imagine it not on a showroom floor but in the room where your life actually happens.

Your home deserves that kind of consideration. And so do you. [liv](#)



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Dressed to Lead

Style, Standards, and Life Beyond the Suit

Style, Dave Pavelich will tell you, was never really about clothing. It was always about respect — for the occasion, for the people sharing the room, and for the version of yourself you choose to show up as.

That distinction is the foundation of everything he has built. Dave is the founder of Conxeppt, Edmonton's appointment-only bespoke tailoring studio, but the work extends well beyond fabric and fit. It is a conversation about standards — about what it means to carry oneself with deliberation, and about the growing number of people in this city who are ready to have it. There is a line that captures his philosophy precisely: you can never be over-educated or over-dressed, only underprepared. He did not arrive at that position by accident. He built a studio around it.

"Clothing alone does not change the world," he reflects, "but the people wearing it do." The suit, in this reading, is not the point. The point is the person commissioning it — the purpose they bring to the appointment, the life they are constructing, and the standard they hold for themselves in every room they enter. The clients Conxeppt attracts are not looking to be noticed. They understand that self-presentation communicates something real — about values, about commitment, and about the respect extended to others. They are deliberate, they invest in things built to endure, and they are drawn to others who operate by the same code.

Edmonton, Dave believes, is full of those people. The city has long carried an understated form of ambition — people who build carefully, live with consideration, and require no audience for validation. What it has not always done is name that ambition clearly or celebrate the calibre of what is being created within it. That is precisely where his collaboration with Erin McDonald of EMC³ Consulting begins.



The two have known each other for a decade, their practices developing in parallel long enough that the question between them was never really "why collaborate?" It was simply "when?" "What I recognized in Erin was a shared respect for culture, quality, and intentionality," Dave noted. "We approach the work differently, but we are both interested in helping people see value in what is already around them, and in creating experiences that feel considered from beginning to end." Tailoring and curatorial practice may occupy different rooms at first glance. Look closer and the overlap is clear: both are built on discernment, presentation, context, and care.

The vision they are building toward is not a product or a campaign. It is a seat at the table — extended to architects, designers, makers, artists, chefs, and collectors. "Anyone who sees themselves as working at the intersection of multiple paths belongs at the table," Dave said. The goal is not ownership but invitation: to help Edmonton recognize the excellence already present within it, and to give the people producing that excellence the confidence to claim it.

"I would like to see people take more pride in the culture, design, craftsmanship, and creativity that exist here," he reflected, "and feel more comfortable wearing it, sharing it, investing in it, and inviting others into it." City-building does not happen overnight. Five years, Dave noted, is just the beginning. But it starts somewhere — with a standard held, a garment made to last, and the firm belief that Edmonton should stop underestimating itself. **LIV**

Powered by Purpose

EMC³ on Building Culture



Standing at the intersection of cultures — artistic and institutional, civic and deeply personal, traditional and contemporary — is, for many people, a disorienting place to be. For Erin McDonald, it is home.

Erin is the founder and sole principal of EMC³ Consulting, an Edmonton-based practice built around three disciplines that mirror the breadth of who they are: culture, collections, and coaching. To understand the work is to understand the person behind it — someone whose curiosity spans centuries of heritage and the immediate pressures facing a leader mid-transition, and whose compassion is as present in a municipal strategy session as it is in a one-on-one conversation.

As a TEDx speaker, Accredited Personal Property Appraiser, and recipient of Edmonton's Top 40 Under 40, the range of credentials reflects the range of the practice — moving between boardrooms and galleries, between a collection appraisal and a conversation about civic identity, with equal fluency in each.





On the surface, cultural consulting and custom suiting occupy different rooms.

Through EMC³, Erin operates as a cultural liaison — connecting arts, heritage, lifestyle, and community in ways that help people and organizations recognize the value already present in what they hold. “I am interested in helping people recognize the meaning already present in what they hold,” they noted, “whether that is a collection, a place, a story, a building, an artwork, or a way of gathering.” The work is less about imposing a framework and more about creating the conditions for something to be properly seen.

That conviction finds its sharpest expression in how Erin reads Edmonton. The city names certain kinds of excellence readily — the Oilers, the Gretzky years, the Edmonton Folk Music Festival, the Fringe — and rightly so. But there is a fuller Edmonton beneath those markers: the jazz rooms, the small theatres, the independent galleries, the craft community, and the people who keep showing up to build something without requiring a spotlight. “Edmonton does refinement in a particular way,” Erin said. “It is not always glossy. It is often thoughtful, practical, experimental, and a bit stubborn. We tinker. We revise. We make do until making do becomes making something extraordinary.” From the Royal Alberta Museum and the Art Gallery of Alberta to independent designers, makers, musicians, and restaurateurs, the ecosystem is richer than the city tends to claim. The question Erin wants to shift is a simple one: from “Is Edmonton enough?” to “What have we failed to notice?”

It is a question that brought them to the table with Dave Pavelich of Conxeppt, Edmonton’s appointment-only bespoke tailoring studio. On the surface, cultural consulting and custom suiting occupy different rooms. Erin does not see it that way. “Collaboration is not simply additive,” they explained. “It is structural and generative — it creates a space where two distinct practices can reveal something larger than either could produce alone.” What Erin recognized in Conxeppt was a shared language: both practices are concerned with value, identity, inheritance, presentation, and care. Together, the aim is to build something Edmonton has not yet fully claimed — culture as something lived, worn, collected, hosted, commissioned, and remembered.

Their invitation to the city is direct: “Let’s get suited, rooted, and curated.” ^{LIV}

Second Life, First Choice

Melanie James on Resale, Luxury,
and Dressing Well



*"To me, that's what fashion is really about:
helping women feel like the best version of
themselves while making thoughtful choices
about what they buy and wear."*

The seasons turn quickly in Edmonton, and Chic Circular Fashion turns with them. As the city shifts from the long days of summer into the layered demands of fall and winter, Melanie James ensures her clientele is ready for every transition.

From rare vintage finds to the labels women are actively hunting this season, she curates with both range and precision. Louis Vuitton, Chanel, and Céline share floor space with Max Mara, Theory, and Vince — and the inventory moves as Edmonton's wardrobe needs do.

That instinct for what women want did not come from a retail playbook. It came from a lifetime spent loving clothes. Melanie's path to ownership was anything but linear — her sister sewed her clothes as a child, she was at a machine herself by her twenties, and then decades in the corporate world intervened.

It took a pandemic, a pivot, and a fortuitous conversation with a retiring boutique owner to bring the dream forward. "I remember trying to convince her not to close," Melanie recalls. "The business had a loyal following and had been serving Edmonton's consignment community for many years." When the opportunity arose to take the reins, she did not hesitate.

Today, Melanie leads a team of approximately seven women managing everything from intake appointments and pricing to merchandising and customer service. "We wear many hats," she says, "and there is a strong sense of collaboration. We celebrate successes together, work through challenges together, and share a genuine passion for helping women look and feel their best."

At High Street Centre — a destination that champions home-grown retailers and independent voices — Chic fits the character of the address well. The philosophy behind the boutique is equally considered. Melanie has watched resale evolve from whispered insider knowledge to a mainstream purchasing decision, and she positions Chic squarely within that shift.

"People are becoming far more intentional about how they shop," she says. "They're looking for quality over quantity and seeking pieces that have longevity rather than chasing trends." Her clientele has kept pace. "What surprises me most is how knowledgeable today's shoppers are. They understand quality, do their research, and often look beyond trends."



*“They’re looking
for quality
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Classic investment pieces — a Louis Vuitton tote, a Chanel flap — remain consistently sought after, but Melanie has observed a meaningful shift toward understated sophistication. Beautifully constructed wardrobe staples that earn their keep across seasons are gaining ground, and for the client who has always wanted a Hermès Birkin at an attainable price point, Chic makes that possible.

The deeper promise, though, is personal. “When you find your own style, you carry yourself differently. You’re more confident,” Melanie says. “To me, that’s what fashion is really about: helping women feel like the best version of themselves while making thoughtful choices about what they buy and wear.”

At Chic Circular, the second life of a beautiful piece is only the beginning of the story. **LIV**

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The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of light-colored, draped fabric, possibly silk or satin, with soft folds and highlights. In the center, there is a dark square with a thin white border. Inside this square, the word "LIV" is written in a large, gold, serif font. Below it, the words "STYLE.TASTE.SPACE" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

LIV

STYLE.TASTE.SPACE

British Columbia

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Where the Province Meets the Plate

Long before the first course arrives, Chef Harris Sakalis has already made a series of decisions rooted not in trend or technique alone, but in relationship. With experience gathered across Europe, the Middle East, and North America, Sakalis brings a sensibility to ARC Restaurant at Fairmont Waterfront that feels both considered and lived-in.

He speaks about the menu as a reflection of the world he inhabits, shaped by cultural memory, personal history, and the relationships he has cultivated with the farmers, fishers, and artisans of British Columbia. “When you look at our menu, you can immediately see those global influences,” he says. Flavours from his Greek upbringing appear alongside touches of miso and harissa, references to both his travels and the Japanese heritage woven through his family life. These are not fusions for effect. They are honest expressions of a chef who cooks from his own story.

“Seasonality is really the starting point for everything on the Province to Plate menu,” Sakalis explains, noting that around ninety percent of the ingredients are sourced within BC. The Province to Plate dinner menu rotates with the seasons, and it is precisely this quality that draws travellers from across Canada to the Fairmont Waterfront’s table. Summer brings the program into full expression — the rooftop potager garden is at its most abundant, the coast is generous, and the light over Vancouver Harbour makes the dining room feel like an extension of the city itself. Sakalis treats each iteration as a new conversation with the land. The menu is never finished, only current.







Directly above the kitchen, the Fairmont Waterfront's rooftop apiary is as much a part of Sakalis' culinary program as any farm relationship or fishing connection. Home to thousands of honeybees and native solitary mason bees, the garden and its hives operate in partnership with Hives for Humanity, whose involvement has shaped both the apiary's design and its community reach. Since 2014, the hotel has installed over two dozen mason bee houses across Vancouver as part of the Pollinator Corridor Project, a national initiative that speaks to the same values running through every plate Sakalis sends from the kitchen. The honey produced on the rooftop finds its way into the menu; the pollinators sustain the garden that feeds the restaurant. It is a closed loop, and a deliberate one.

What distinguishes Harris Sakalis is not only what he puts on the plate, but the way he articulates what BC's culinary identity actually means. His definition of luxury is grounded in connection to land and sea rather than in spectacle. "Luxury is not about complexity, it is about purity," he says. Purity, in his kitchen, means Chinook salmon from cold coastal waters, vegetables grown within the province, and the kind of cooking that does not need to explain itself.

Harris Sakalis invites guests to experience the region as he does: through the people who shape it, the seasons that guide it, and the honest flavours that make BC's culinary landscape worth travelling for. At ARC Restaurant, that invitation arrives three courses at a time. **LIV**



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Rooted Here

Pluvio Restaurant at the Edge of the Pacific

Rain has a way of making people stay. On Vancouver Island's wild western shore, where Ucluelet sits at the boundary of forest and open ocean, the weather is less a condition than a companion — persistent, softening, the kind that draws you indoors and keeps you at the table longer than you planned.

Warren Barr and Lily Verney-Downey understand this. When they opened Pluvio in April 2019, they were not simply launching a dining room. They were planting themselves somewhere, committing to a community and a coastline, choosing the particular light and fog and rhythm of this small town over anywhere else. After eight years in nearby Tofino, the move to Ucluelet was just a few kilometres down the road — but it felt, as these things often do when the fit is right, like arriving.

Warren grew up in British Columbia. His path through kitchens was neither hurried nor haphazard: classical French training at Le Crocodile in Vancouver, a formative stretch at The Inn at Bay Fortune in Prince Edward Island, where he worked shoulder-to-shoulder with farmers and learned to read a harvest the way you read a room. He returned to the West Coast eventually, took on the executive chef role at the Wickaninnish Inn, and quietly built the kind of reputation that precedes a person without their ever quite announcing it. Ask him about the accolades and he will, by all accounts, change the subject.

The tasting menu changes with the season and sometimes with the day, shaped by what the farmers, foragers, and producers bring in.



Lily's trajectory traced its own arc — a culinary internship at the Wickaninnish Inn, a return to England to finish her degree, and then a decision, clear-eyed and deliberate, to come back. She stepped out of the kitchen and into hotel and restaurant management, finding in hospitality something that felt less like a career than a calling. Her instinct for how people ought to feel — welcome, looked after, genuinely glad they came — runs through everything at the restaurant.

What they have built together is precise without being cold, ambitious without being showy. The tasting menu changes with the season and sometimes with the day, shaped by what the farmers, foragers, and producers bring in. Dishes arrive as small worlds: bright broths, foraged botanicals, garden herbs, fermented vegetables, the careful layering of something earthy against something bright. The kitchen treats each plate as a considered act, not a performance.

The dining room holds this ethos quietly. Service moves with attention and warmth. The bar has depth and character. The team — described by the owners with visible pride — is made up of people who have chosen to live here, in one of the rainiest places in the country, and who seem genuinely glad of that choice.

Behind the restaurant, four guest rooms look out over a kitchen garden and a quiet stand of cedar and hemlock. Each is finished with handmade furniture, heated bathroom floors, and a private balcony.

Canada's 100 Best named it the country's Best Destination Restaurant in 2022, and the designation makes sense. People travel for a Pluvio table. But the restaurant's real quality is something more ordinary and more rare: it feels, from the first glass to the last bite, like somewhere that cares.

pluvio.ca **LIV**



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Nimmo Bay Spa

Discover Serenity





Deep within the Great Bear Rainforest, where the Pacific coastline gives way to old-growth cedar and the kind of silence that asks something of you, Nimmo Bay Spa has built a sanctuary around the idea that genuine restoration begins with where you are. This is not merely a place to visit — it is a destination to inhabit, fully and without reservation.

Wellness here unfolds well beyond the treatment room. Days begin with floating yoga sessions on calm, glassy water, each movement answered by the stillness beneath. Guided meditations drift through the forest canopy, the towering trees a kind of architecture that reorients the mind before any formal treatment begins. The rhythm of the place does its own work.

Signature treatments at Nimmo Bay are conceived in direct response to the surrounding environment. Botanical facials, integrative bodywork, and massage crafted for genuine release are offered alongside more immersive rituals that define the experience. The Rhythms of Nature half-day ritual combines a Forest Bathing Meditation with a choice of Intertidal Scrub or Ayurvedic Head Massage, followed by an invigorating outdoor rain shower and a customized massage that draws the session toward something close to silence.

Days begin with floating yoga sessions on calm, glassy water, each movement answered by the stillness beneath.



For those seeking a longer arc of renewal, the Wellness Within the Wild package transforms the entire stay into a personally curated retreat. Natural thermal therapy, remote floating saunas, and a continually evolving program of bodywork ensure that no two hours at Nimmo Bay feel the same. Every element is designed to do one thing well: return the guest to themselves.

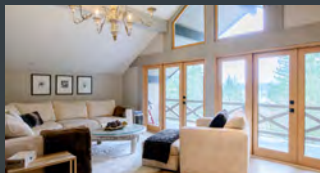
The experience does not end when the treatments do. Nine private two-bedroom cabins are woven into the landscape itself — six positioned along the waterfront, three set back among the trees — each designed to extend the ease that the resort cultivates from the moment of arrival.

Waterfront cabins offer unobstructed views of the bay. Cabins 1 and 2 are stilted directly above the intertidal zone, the ocean shifting visibly beneath your feet, with an enclosed main-floor bedroom and a loft above. Cabins 3 and 4 are the most expansive of the collection, with an open-concept main level and a second enclosed bedroom suited to families of up to five. Cabins 5 and 6, positioned on the forest side of the bay, are the only units to feature a large soaker tub — a distinction that makes them a considered choice for those seeking complete immersion in the restorative spirit of the stay.

The three forest cabins sit close to the waterfall hot tubs and a stream, their natural soundtrack doing the work that silence alone cannot. Spacious living rooms and a loft bedroom make them equally well-suited to couples and families, with glimpses of ocean visible through the trees.

Every cabin is appointed with the kind of detail that distinguishes genuine hospitality from mere amenity: house-made cookies and savoury snacks, local British Columbia wines, handmade robes from Vancouver, organic bath products, and linen bedding chosen for comfort. Housekeeping and turn-down service go well beyond the standard, and each guest departs with a reusable Nimmo Bay stainless steel water bottle — a small, considered gesture that speaks to the resort's broader ethic. Groups of up to 26 may reserve the resort exclusively, making Nimmo Bay a rare proposition: the Great Bear Rainforest, entirely your own.

Whether shared with a partner or embraced alone, Nimmo Bay invites guests to depart feeling grounded, recharged, and more closely acquainted with the particular beauty of British Columbia's wild coast. **LIV**

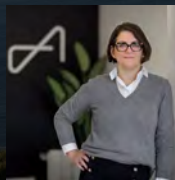


4573 Prospect Lake Rd | Prospect Lake, Saanich
\$4,390,000 | 6 Beds | 7 Baths | 5,422 Sq Ft | 17.05 Acre Lot

A private 17-acre West Coast estate in Prospect Lake, just 20 minutes from downtown Victoria. Bella Farm is a rare offering combining timeless architecture, exceptional privacy, and remarkable versatility. The 5,000+ sq ft residence is designed for multi-generational living, with flexible spaces for family or guests. Zoned A2 (Rural Residential – Two Dwelling), the property allows for a second full-size residence. Established gardens, orchards, terraced landscapes, irrigation, and detached studio buildings complete this extraordinary estate. Bella Farm may also be offered fully furnished.

2773 Arbutus Rd | Ten Mile Point, Saanich East
\$2,895,000 | 4 Beds | 4 Baths | 3,448 Sq Ft | 15.313 Sq Ft Lot

A stately French Country Manor in prestigious Wedgewood Point on Ten Mile Point, backing onto Benson Park. Set on a private 1/3-acre lot, this exceptional home blends timeless craftsmanship with modern luxury, featuring lush landscaped gardens, raised vegetable beds, a covered patio, hot tub, and southwest exposure. Inside, custom millwork, a designer kitchen with Wolf and Sub-Zero appliances, and a vaulted great room with a dramatic library wall create an unforgettable living experience. Upstairs, the luxurious primary suite is complemented by two additional bedrooms, while a detached garage with a 400+ sq ft loft studio offers outstanding flexibility for guests, work, or creative pursuits.



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A fully self-contained two-bedroom suite with its own entrance offers ideal space for extended family or a caretaker.

An infinity-edge saltwater pool and tiled hot tub overlook the lake, while the new dock with three boat lifts invites endless summer days on the water. A detached garage/man cave with bar, wine room, bathroom, and conference space complements the attached five-car garage — an exceptional offering for collectors and entertainers alike.

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Welcome.

I have been thinking a lot about Alberta lately — the Rockies, the foothills, the prairie winds, and how all of it somehow ends up in the work we do. This issue, we step into a shop where cupcakes are treated as a nostalgic delight, find peace within at an isolated spa, and celebrate the craftsmanship of Canadian fashion designer Christopher Bates in an editorial that asks a little more of summer dressing — then consider how luxury resale is making that same sense of glamour accessible in a whole new way.

We also look at what happens when art and design meet with intention, through a collaboration that proves the two have always belonged together.

Alberta's strength has always been its people, and this issue includes those shaping the landscape of development and wealth — the advisors, the builders, the strategists who help families secure what they are working toward.

And then we travel. We cross the Rockies and land in British Columbia, where two hidden gems and a chef who harvests his own honey are waiting. Chef Harris has made a downtown Vancouver luxury hotel his domain, and once you read his story, you will understand why.

Summer in Alberta is never small. Neither is this issue.

Helen Siwak

Editor-in-Chief, LIV Magazine



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