

# Destinations

WorldMark  
BY WYNDHAM

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## Bedazzling Banff

SET IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES,  
YOUR NEW RESORT IN CANMORE  
BASKS IN OTHERWORLDLY BEAUTY  
NEAR BANFF NATIONAL PARK

+ What's Up at Whistler

BALLOT ISSUES | CABO CRUISES | ELECTION SECTION

# Canmore, Take a Bow

THE TINY TOWN RELISHES ITS PLUM ROLE AS A RECREATION PLACE IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES—AND HOME OF YOUR NEW WORLDMARK CANMORE-BANFF.

BY LISA FOSTER



Moraine Lake

**N**ESTLED BENEATH THE DISTINCTIVE, snow-capped peaks of The Three Sisters in the Bow River Valley in southwestern Alberta, lies the small town of Canmore.

Long perceived as a gateway to the Canadian Rockies—to Banff and Jasper national parks in Alberta, and Yoho and Kootenay national parks in neighboring British Columbia—Canmore has become a destination in itself these days.

With six majestic mountains nearby, the scenery here is simply stunning. The mountains—all towering more than 8,500 feet—include Grotto Mountain, Mount Lawrence Grassi, Mount Lady Macdonald, and, of course, the Three

STEVEN WILDER/GETTY IMAGES/CONRIS



WorldMark Canmore-Banff

DAN STEBANS



Banff Gondola

PHOTO COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM



Bighorn rams

PHOTO COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM



Photo ops



Mountain biking

PHOTO COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM

PHOTO COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM



Canoeing and hiking on and around Lake Louise.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM

Sisters. People from far and wide have put down roots in this scenic, though once humble mining town. As a result, Canmore's population (11,000) has tripled in the past 20 years.

A prime example of the town's diversity can be found at your newest Canadian resort: WorldMark Canmore-Banff. Its 18 staff members come from as far away as Newfoundland in the East to Vancouver Island in the West.

"I worked in Jasper [in northern Alberta] until I got chased by a bear," assistant resort manager Doug Neave says. "But when I went home [to Ontario], I realized I belong out here in the mountains. I can't live anywhere else now."

Cynthia Ladouceur, from Ottawa, who works the front desk, drove across Canada last August to settle here because she wanted to live and work in the mountains. And resort manager Darren Holden has had an

ongoing love affair with the Canmore-Banff area for years. "I keep coming back because of the fantastic snow conditions here. But really, we're a 12-month resort," says the English-born Ontarian.

#### Overlooking a forest

The resort is a good home base to explore the recreational playground that awaits you right outside your door. On three floors, the 109 units (studios, and one- and two-bedrooms) offer views of either The Three Sisters mountains or a forest with opportunities for spotting elk and deer.

Each unit has modern furnishings and décor, kitchenettes, DVD/VCR players, and stereo CD players; some units also have decks and fireplaces. Purchased by Wyndham Resort Development Corporation in 2006, the recently refurbished resort—which resembles a European mountain lodge—also features an indoor and outdoor spa, a year-round heated outdoor pool, a fitness center, and a recreation room.

For those wishing to take it easy, Canmore's downtown shops and art galleries provide a perfect way to while away the time. The nearby town of Banff (21 miles) offers even



Front desk clerk  
Cynthia Ladouceur



Assistant resort manager  
Doug Neave

DAN STEARNS (2)



WorldMark Canmore-Banff



MOUNTAIN LIGHT STUDIO (2)



A striking exterior, comfortable furnishings, and a heated outdoor pool sweeten your stay in the Canadian Rockies.



more shops and galleries, as well as the popular Banff Gondola, Fairmont Banff Springs Resort, and Upper Hot Springs (see page 19).

Local dinner theater can be enjoyed at Oh Canada, Eh! (1 mile), with its rotating shows and all-Canadian menu. Entrees may include French Canadian pea soup, roasted Manitoba chicken with Prince Edward Island potatoes, fresh Atlantic haddock, or the province's top-grade, world-famous Albertan beef.

#### Helicopters and hikes

For the more active traveler to Canmore, assistant manager Doug offers up three of his favorite summertime activities: whitewater rafting, horseback riding, and going up in a helicopter. Alpine Helicopters offers heli-hiking—flying by helicopter to a remote, alpine region that would usually entail a long, steep hike to access. The heliport (3 miles) offers two different roundtrip options starting at either \$319 CAN or \$459 CAN per person. >>

DAN STEARNS



PHOTO COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM

Shop or clop: Around Canmore, you're enticed to explore the boutiques and beatific scenery.

After a 15- or 30-minute flight, each option includes three or four hours of hiking.

Don't let the price scare you, says Doug. "It's worth it. It's probably the most beautiful thing I've done out here." He advises hikers in the wild, as well as on the trails around town, to pay attention to posted safety notices and recommendations, such as letting others know where you're going.

**Rafts, horses, and caves**

Doug's other favorite activities—horseback riding and whitewater rafting—can be experienced in town. The Cross Zee Ranch (1 mile) offers one- to two-hour riding sessions from \$38 CAN to \$62 CAN. The Canmore Rafting Centre (2.8 miles) features whitewater rafting excursions down the Bow River lasting from a half-day



Cave crawling: Leaving the Laundry Chute.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM

to two whole days (ranging in price from \$75 CAN to \$259 CAN).

A tour of the wild, undeveloped Rat's Nest Cave beneath Grotto Mountain is offered by Canmore Caverns Ltd. (2.5 miles). The half- or full-day guided tours are physically challenging, yet require no experience. Prices range from \$99 CAN to \$350 CAN, and all necessary gear is provided.

**Choices for golfers**

If you're an avid golfer, Canmore's got three golf courses: Steward Creek (1 mile), Silver Tip (3.4 miles; ask about discounts at the front desk), and The Canmore Golf Club (2.5 miles). Front desk manager Lisa Hawkins, from Nova Scotia, is an avid beginning golfer. She also recommends the Kananaskis Golf Course (50 miles), and the Fairmont Banff Springs Golf Course (21 miles). "Many famous people have played at Banff Springs—from Marilyn Monroe to Kevin Costner and many of Canada's



Fairmont Banff Springs Golf Course.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM

**OWNER PROFILE**

**Jason and Monica Maharaj**

**Residence:** Calgary, Alberta  
**Professions:** Jason is vice president of quality management at a Calgary software company; Monica, an IT consultant  
**WorldMark owners since:** 2002  
**Favorite WorldMark resort:** Depoe Bay  
**What's next:** Seattle at The Camlin



LISA FOSTER

"We were really excited about the resort in Canmore opening," says Jason Maharaj. Why? After living in the Seattle area for six years, it was great to have a new WorldMark nearby when he and Monica returned to their hometown of Calgary.

Jason, 33, and Monica, 29, recently made the move to be closer to family—and to start a family of their own. Monica is expecting her first child in late August, and looks forward to spending many more vacations at WorldMark resorts.

"We want to have lots of vacation spots to go to and that was the main reason why we joined WorldMark," Monica explains. "We've been to fabulous places already—Birch Bay, Depoe Bay, Victoria—and we did an exchange to Orlando where we all met up with a group of friends from our days at the University of Calgary."

WorldMark Canmore-Banff is destined to become a popular weekend getaway for the couple. "It's so close, and yet you don't always appreciate what's in your own backyard," Jason says. "This is a nice, low-key spot for us. We'll check out downtown Canmore and go to Banff and just be lazy and relax."

In the future—once their baby is a bit older—Jason and Monica hope to go to WorldMark resorts in Hawaii and Mexico. They also plan on staying at WorldMark Seattle from time to time, to see old friends.

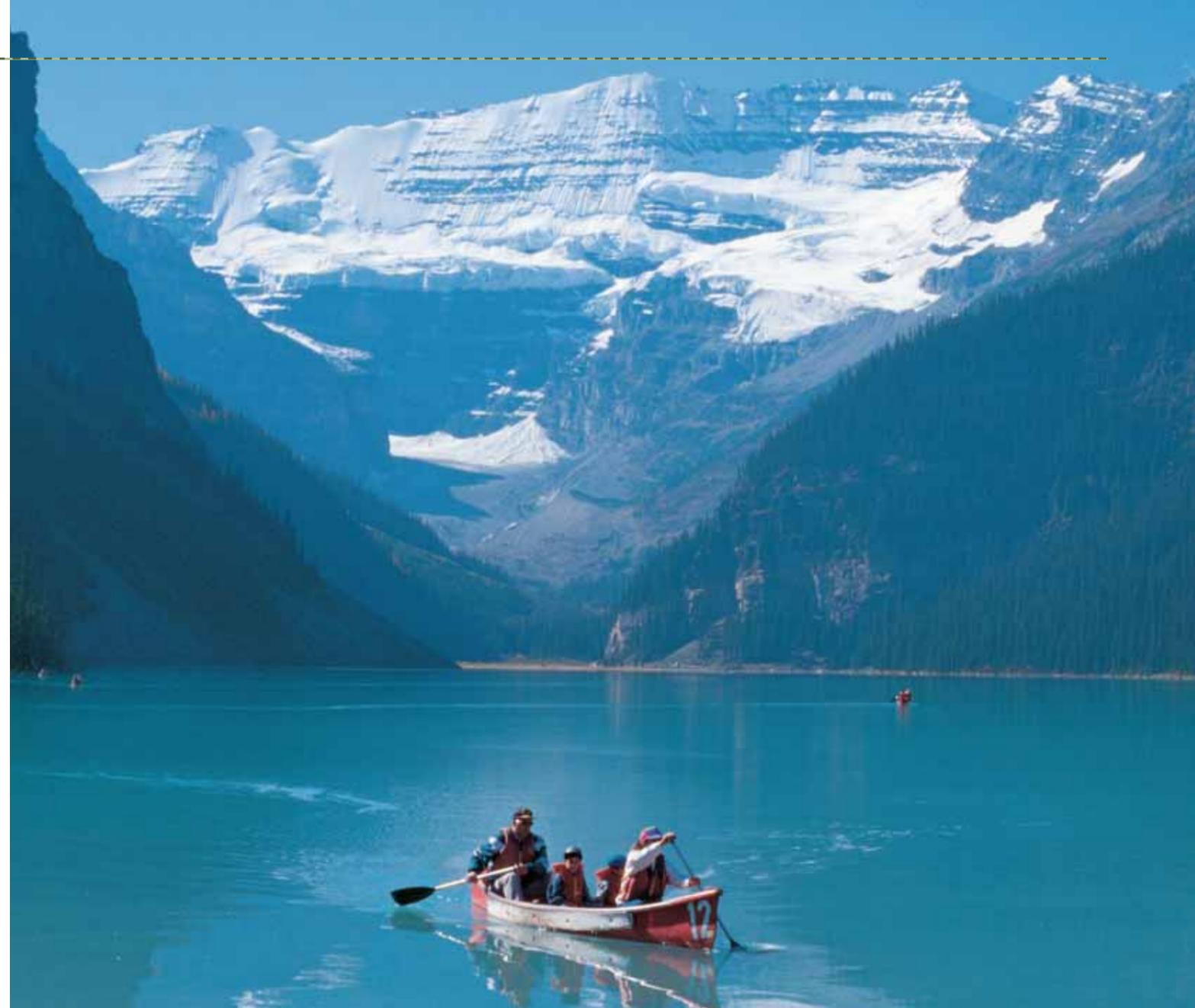


PHOTO COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM

**Linger at Lake Louise**

Planning to visit world-famous Lake Louise during your stay at WM Canmore-Banff? You won't be alone. In the summer, as many as 10,000 daily visitors drink in this 1.5-mile-long, 1,640-foot-wide, and 295-foot-deep natural wonder.

The deep-green lake is framed by mountains on three sides, most prominently snow-capped Mount Victoria (11,350 feet), which sits on the Continental Divide. In the foreground by the shore, there's the luxurious, stately Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise.

To see this stunning setting from on high, take the Lake Louise Sightseeing Gondola (\$24 CAN; open May to September) to the top of Mount Whitehorn.

Two popular lake hikes include the walk along the shore (1.2 miles, one way) and the Plain of the Six Glaciers hike (3.3 miles one way, with an elevation gain of 1,215 feet). The latter hike traverses through forests and moraines to two different teahouses (open July to September) until reaching the six glaciers—Aberdeen, Upper Lefroy, Lower Lefroy, Upper Victoria, Lower Victoria, and Pope.

Canoeing is another popular summer activity (even though the lake's water never gets warmer than 39 degrees). In the winter, favorite options are cross-country skiing, ice skating, and sleigh rides. (Inquire at the chateau for canoe and skate rentals, and sleigh-ride reservations. Tel. (403) 522-3800; www.fairmont.com/lakelouise)

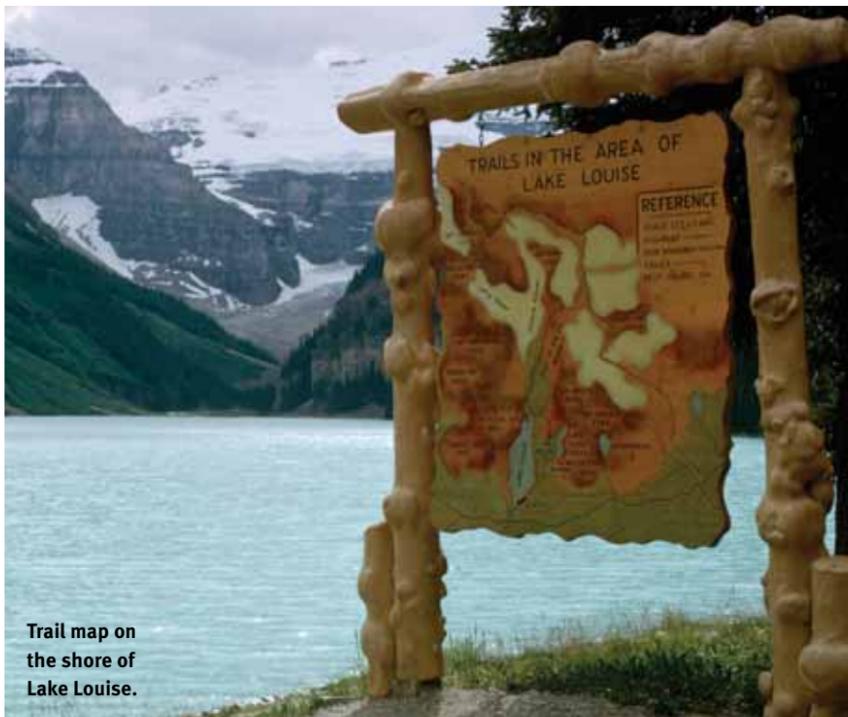
prime ministers,” she says.

Front desk clerk Cynthia also likes to stay active, no matter what the season. At this time of year, she encourages owners to go hiking or mountain biking on the Canmore area’s many trails. During the winter, the Canmore Nordic Centre (1.3 miles)—originally designed and developed for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games—features more than 35 miles of world-class cross-country ski trails.

**Super-duper scenery**

Undoubtedly you’ll also want to head 8 miles up the road to Banff National Park’s closest entrance from your resort. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985, this 2,564-square-mile wonderland offers more than 80 trails for hikers, cross-country skiers, and snowshoers in some of the world’s most magnificent scenery. (For more on skiing, see page 21.)

Open year-round, Banff National Park is busiest in July and August, when it receives the majority of its four million annual visitors. Day passes are \$8 CAN for single travelers, and \$17.80 CAN for cars with two or more travelers. The day passes are valid until 4 p.m. the next day.



Trail map on the shore of Lake Louise.

RIC FREEMAN/GETTY IMAGES

**Easy to experience**

One of the park’s greatest draws is the accessibility of its natural wonders. Most highlights are close to the road system. One renowned must-see is the emerald-colored, glacial Lake Louise (see page 17), surrounded by three snow-capped mountains (50 miles). Just down the road is Moraine Lake, its rival for sheer beauty (open in summer only). >>

**OWNER PROFILE**

**Jason and Jennifer Shanley**

**Residence:** Coeur d’Alene, Idaho  
**Professions:** Jason is a middle school teacher; Jennifer, a homemaker  
**WorldMark owners since:** 2006  
**Favorite WorldMark resort:** “Canmore-Banff is the first WorldMark resort we’ve stayed at, so we don’t know yet.”  
**What’s next:** Valley Isle and Kihei



The Shanley family

out,” Jennifer says. “We’ll check out the Grizzly Paw [local brew pub], but otherwise we’re eating in.”

“We took a drive up to the Canmore Nordic Centre and were impressed by all the hiking and biking trails. There’s tons of hiking there.”

The one outing the Shanleys did plan: a day trip to Calgary, a 70-mile drive from the resort. “We’ll check out the Calgary Zoo and the kids want to go to a mall,” Jason says. The couple’s daughters—Danielle and Kana—have just finished the ninth and sixth grades, respectively.

Going to Calgary with their kids is a trip down memory lane for this couple of 21 years. Jennifer, 36, and Jason, 35, traveled around Alberta together back when they were high school sweethearts.

“Next year—going to Maui—is the big spend,” says Jennifer. “We booked its two WorldMark resorts 13 months in advance.” And more WorldMark vacations are certainly in the works.

“Our friends and family are WorldMark owners,” she says, “and that’s why we became owners.”

USA POSTER

**Banff’s Fab Three**

Set along the Bow River, the picturesque town of Banff (21 miles) offers fine dining, interesting shops, unique art galleries—and these “don’t miss” activities:

**1. Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel**

This “castle in the wilderness” was built in 1888 by the Canadian Pacific Railway to attract wealthy tourists to western Canada. The original design—an 11-story tower joining two wings in a baronial style—is like a cross between a Scottish castle and a French country chateau. It is one of the largest, grandest, and most opulent mountain-hotels in the world (rooms start at \$459 CAN).

You can take a 30-minute historical tour for \$24.95 CAN, or walk through on your own to admire the 5,000 pieces of furniture and antiques, paintings, prints, tapestries, and rugs. You may also wish to pamper yourself at Willow Stream, the hotel’s luxurious spa facility, or dine in one of the 12 eateries or four lounges.

**2. Banff Gondola**

The easiest way to get high above the town without raising a sweat is the eight-minute ride on the Banff Gondola to the top of Sulphur Mountain (7,486 feet). From the observation deck, the breathtaking view includes the town below, the Bow Valley, Cascade Mountain, Lake Minnewanka, and the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel. At the top of the mountain, you can buy souvenirs at a gift shop and snacks at a café. Cost: \$24.95 CAN.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM

**3. Banff Upper Hot Springs**

Also atop Sulphur Mountain is the Upper Hot Springs. Enjoy unparalleled views of the Rockies while relaxing in the warm, soothing, mineral-rich waters that originate from deep beneath the scenery. Come for a relaxing soak (\$8 CAN) from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. On-site massage is also available at Pleiades Massage & Spa.



RAYMOND GEHMAN/CORBIS



Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel

PHOTO COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM



Exploring the Columbia Icefields.

A two-hour drive north of Lake Louise, the Icefields Parkway begins its spectacular course along the Continental Divide to Jasper National Park. If you're sightseeing in this area, make sure to take part in the Columbia Icefield Glacier Experience (130 miles). With tours departing every 15 to 30 minutes in the summer, the 90-minute journey in a special vehicle called a Snocoach will take you onto the 1,200-foot-thick Athabasca Glacier (\$35.95 CAN).

**Guided science treks**

Another popular excursion is a visit to the Burgess Shale Geoscience Foundation in Yoho National Park near the town of Field, British Columbia (71 miles). It offers three different strenuous day-long hikes—the "Burgess Shale" (\$69 CAN), the "Mt. Stephen Fossil Beds" (\$48 CAN), and "Climate Change in the Rockies" (\$37 CAN) treks. On these guided hikes you climb either to 505-

million-year-old fossil beds at Mt. Stephen (2,560 feet) or along the Iceline Trail (2,280 feet) to view receding glaciers and other evidence of climate change.

Naturally, you may work up an appetite after taking in so much Mother Nature. If you're still in Banff, head to the Grizzly House Restaurant at 207 Banff Ave. "I love it because they have a good selection of wild game including caribou," resort manager Darren says.

**Eateries abound**

Back at home base in Canmore, there are more than 20 different restaurants. A delicious choice for vegetarians is The Sunfood Café (2.1 miles) at 743 Railway Ave., where two Swiss chefs offer healthy food at great prices. The rest of the WorldMark staff overwhelmingly recommends The Grizzly Paw Pub & Restaurant (1.8 miles) at 622 Main St.

"It's a cozy, well-maintained, well-run restaurant," says Cynthia. "They make all the beer they serve there—at the brewery in back." The pub also brews its own sodas and serves halibut and chips, handmade burgers, AAA steaks, flatbread pizza, and pasta dishes. Cynthia's favorite: a steak sandwich with a Caesar salad, fries, and a beer for \$16 CAN.

For Doug, sitting outside at the Grizzly Paw is the perfect end to a summer's day—or perhaps even for ending your stay in Canmore. He says, "Sitting outside the pub and looking at the mountains—especially in August when the sun sets between 10 and 11 p.m., is simply amazing." ■

**OWNER PROFILE**

**Theresa and Trevor Johnson**

**Residence:** Mission, British Columbia  
**Professions:** Trevor is in outside sales for a plumbing wholesaler; Theresa, a real estate agent  
**WorldMark owners since:** March 2007  
**Favorite WorldMark resorts:** Arrow Point and Canmore-Banff  
**What's next:** Kihei



LISA FOSTER

"My husband and I recently became WorldMark owners, and when we found out Canmore-Banff was opening we booked right away," Theresa Johnson says. "We decided to have our first WorldMark vacation here—and am I ever glad we did!"

What makes Canmore-Banff so special for Theresa, 25, and Trevor, 32, plus their children Alexandra, 5, and Christian, 2, is how picturesque it is.

"The resort is located at the base of a towering, snowy mountain,

and the views are breathtaking," Theresa says. "I love waking up in the morning and looking off our balcony—it's the scene dreams are made of."

But her favorite thing at the resort is the outdoor pool and spa. "It was so comfortably warm. By day, you can look at the Rocky Mountains; by night, you can stare at the dark skies and sparkling stars," she says.

She's also full of tips for getting out and about. "Banff is nearby—just 20 minutes away," she says. "Make sure you go up in the gondola there. From the top of the mountain, I saw some of the most stunning views in my lifetime. In winter, ski hills are just a 30- or 45-minute drive away, depending on where you want to ski."

To quell your hunger and satisfy your sweet tooth, Theresa recommends two Banff locations: The Keg [Steakhouse & Bar] and Mountain Chocolates for "the best candy/caramel apples and treats ever!"

**Places to Play in the Snow**

**Canmore Nordic Centre.** Built for cross-country skiing and biathlon events at the 1988 Winter Olympic Games, the complex provides exceptional winter cross-country skiing. Ski rental available. 1.3 mi.

**Sunshine Village.** Sunshine Village is a popular skiing and snowboarding site near Banff, with a season that lasts nearly 200 days a year. A highlight for downhill skiers is the steep "Delirium Dive," but there are also runs for beginners and intermediates. Lift packages from \$56 CAN per day. 21 mi.

**Ski Banff at Norquay.** Just outside of Banff is the family-friendly Ski Banff at Norquay, with terrains suitable for all levels. Lift packages can be purchased by the hour or for \$49 CAN per day. 21 mi.

**Lake Louise.** Cross-country skiing is a popular activity on Lake Louise itself while it's frozen over, as well as along nearby Moraine Lake Road and in the Skoki Valley, all within Banff National Park. For details and helpful trail classifications, pick up a copy of *Cross-Country Skiing—Nordic Trails in Banff National Park* from the Lake Louise Visitor Centre. There's also the Lake Louise Mountain Resort, which offers daily lift packages down four different mountains for \$69 CAN per day. 54 mi.

**Nakiska.** In nearby Kananaskis County, this alpine resort was built to host the alpine skiing events of the 1988 Winter Olympic Games. The runs here will satisfy the intermediate-to-advanced crowd. Lift tickets cost \$46 CAN. 35 mi.



Ski Banff at Norquay



Lake Louise

PHOTOS (3) COURTESY OF BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM



Sunshine Village