

I'm betting on the squirrels

For years, my family has enjoyed the seasonal beauty of Mother Nature from our family room window.

The window has a commanding view of the world outside, and at this time of the year, I'm called into service to put up the bird feeder in preparation of the ensuing winter.

Of course, getting me to erect the bird feeder is one of those tasks that I figure my family must earn. So after an undisclosed amount of hinting, suggesting, whining and downright threatening, I finally got the bird feeder up and functional a week or so ago.

Now this year, we bought a new bird feeder. The old one, a plastic model, had pretty well outlived its usefulness, with one of the perches broken off the side of it. Besides, the filler cap on top was cracked, letting in the rain and snow.

It was time to replace.

We perused the feeders at the local mall, and finally, after my daughter and wife inspected every damn model known to the Audubon Society, we were the proud owners of a 100 per cent cedar model. It's called "The Chalet."

It's quite a bit larger than its predecessor, and I swear that sucker can hold a whole 10 kg. bag of bird seed at once. And, being considerably larger, this bird feeder has one attribute which has become a curse — a huge roof.

And guess who jumps on that roof?

You guessed it, the squirrels.

Now with the old one, the squirrel problem was virtually non-existent. It being small, plastic and mounted on a pole with a disk on it (actually an old Volkswagen hub cap off my dune buggy from my teenage years,) the local squirrel population could only watch in envy as the birds ate their fill from the little trough.

They would try to jump from a nearby tree, but the plastic roof was so slippery, they'd slide off and land on the ground.

But now that my wife is feeding the birds from The Chalet, its all cedar construction and

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Ted Brown

much larger size is a perfect landing pad for the most intimidated squirrel. Even the wimpy ones jumped across with a perfect one point landing.

At this point, it was Squirrels 1, Wife 0.

It was suggested I move the pole further away from the tree. I did — about four feet.

All that accomplished was the little beggars took a running jump from the tree to land on the roof, and once again, eat their fill.

Squirrels 2, Wife 0.

Now this battle is becoming personal for my wife. She suggested I move the pole still further away from the tree, but I pointed out if I keep moving that pole, the feeder will soon be out of the view of the window.

Joking, I suggested we could cut down the tree. For a split second, I think she considered it.

Enter my daughter, the improvising little dear, who took it upon herself to add something to the top of the feeder — vaseline.

And it actually worked. Once they landed, they slid off the edge. That was, until they managed to clean the vaseline off — in one day.

Squirrels 3, Wife 0.

My wife and the squirrels are at a standoff.

Do we move the feeder again?

Do we line the roof with slippery plexiglas?

Shoot the squirrels? (Okay, just kidding...)

I dunno, but whatever line of attack she

decides upon, I've decided one thing is certain.

I'm betting my money on the squirrels.

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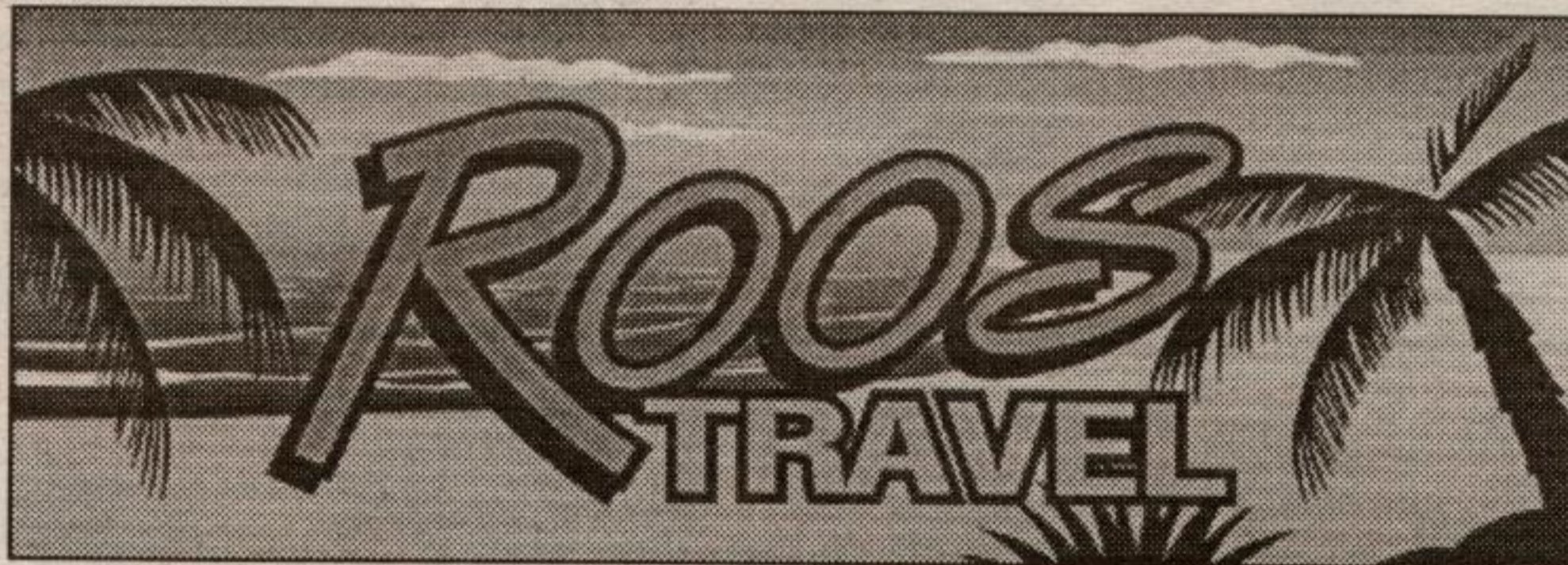


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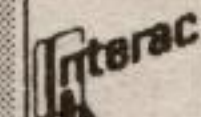
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