

Toronto mini-vacations offer escape from suburban blues

There's a bit of the masochist in all of us when it comes to travel.

Even when we know our budgets won't allow us to follow the sun or "do Europe" this year, we longingly pore over travel articles with a "Maybe next year" resignation.

However, if the rat-race and Ontario's exhaustive winter is starting to get to you, there's a mini-vacation available that is within reach of most pocketbooks.

More and more couples from Oshawa or Oakville or Burlington are taking advantage of the weekend special rates offered by Toronto hotels to have themselves a mini-vacation away from the kids and the in-laws while they save for that big trip they hope to take next year or the year after.

A couple we know recently spent a Winter Weekend at the Prince Hotel at 900 York Mills Road in Toronto and they found it so relaxing and inexpensive that they're planning to do it again this year when the winter blahs get to be too much to handle.

The Prince offers one of their oversized rooms for two nights on the weekend for \$59 a couple. If you want to brown-bag it and just watch television for the weekend, that's all your escape from Pickering or Bronte or wherever will cost you --

except for room tax that goes towards making Ontario-ario a better place in which to stand.

But if you won a hundred bucks from Wintario and you feel like splurging a little, you can dine on superb French cuisine in Le Continental or try your hand at eating with chopsticks in the Katsura Restaurant which features some of the best Japanese delicacies this side of the Ginza.

One area in which our couple felt the Prince showed a great deal of class was room service. They ordered coffee and croissants for breakfast and along with a huge pot of coffee, they got small individual jars of Robertson's jam and marmalade instead of the usual blob of jam served on a saucer with no guarantee of how many other rooms it had visited that week.

However, to quote the tag line from the movie 'Some Like It Hot', nobody's perfect. There were a couple of little disadvantages at the Prince, but they were far outweighed by the many positive aspects of this Japanese-owned hotel.

For instance, the pop machine must have been installed by a former tax department employee because you kept feeding it money and got nothing in return. However, this is

a common fault in hotels and one we have resigned ourselves to, just like mail that takes three weeks or more to reach us.

The Prince really should do something, though, about the noisy

cash register in its open-air coffee shop. The morning our couple chose to breakfast there, the cashier spent about 15 minutes totalling up an endless number of tabs and it got quite annoying. Another disadvantage

applies only if you overindulge in the booze department and have a hankering to see Toronto's nightspots.

The Prince, being located in the north end of Toronto, is about an eight dollar cab ride from city

centre. However, if you drink in moderation and use your car to get downtown, you get a bonus because the Prince provides free parking with a polite attendant who will take your car off your hands right at the

door and fetch it for you when you want it.

All in all, the Prince offers a great way for you to break out of the winter doldrums without having to sell off the family jewels to finance your trip.

Out and about (The Canadian scene)

Hemisphere Tours Ltd. of Toronto is offering the ultimate to the ski nuts who are constantly in search of a new ski experience.

If you take one of their Winter West charters to Banff or Lake Louise, for a few dollars more (82 to be exact, including transportation from Banff) you can go glacier skiing near Radium, B.C.

A Canadian Mountain Holidays helicopter takes you to the top and gives you 3,000 vertical metres of pure skiing experience.

As a safety precaution, you get an avalanche radio and your own guide.

Travelways Tours of Markham, Ontario have four aces up their sleeve in a game called "Follow the Sun".

Their 30-day bus tour to Florida gives you your choice of 24 days of sunshine at Melbourne, Daytona Beach, St. Petersburg or Sarasota.

Referred to as their 'Stay-Put Efficiency Tours', these four destinations offer an economical and enjoyable way to enjoy Florida sunshine -- without having to listen to Anita Bryant!

If you have a flair for marketing and a nodding acquaintance with

chemistry, your trip to British Columbia this year could make you decide to stay there and run your own business.

One of our staff writers recently visited the premises of 'Pym of Saltair', a perfume laboratory situated in a woodland setting just south of Ladysmith on Vancouver Island.

Owned by Dave Godkin, the lab is located in a long, low Shakespearian-type building Dave built himself. The building also contains the Godkin home, a studio for Dave's artist wife, Thelma, and living quarters for Keith Brown, the chemist who has developed the for-

mulas for the many varieties of perfume the lab produces.

Dave and Thelma have themselves been bitten by the travel bug and wish to spend their retirement years wandering around North America, stopping wherever Thelma finds interesting subjects to paint.

The Godkins have therefore decided to sell their perfume business, lock, stock and barrel. Dave figures he has \$1-million worth of perfume in stock and he is willing to turn this over along with the buildings and the property to the proper buyer for something in the range of a quarter-million dollars.

He says the ideal

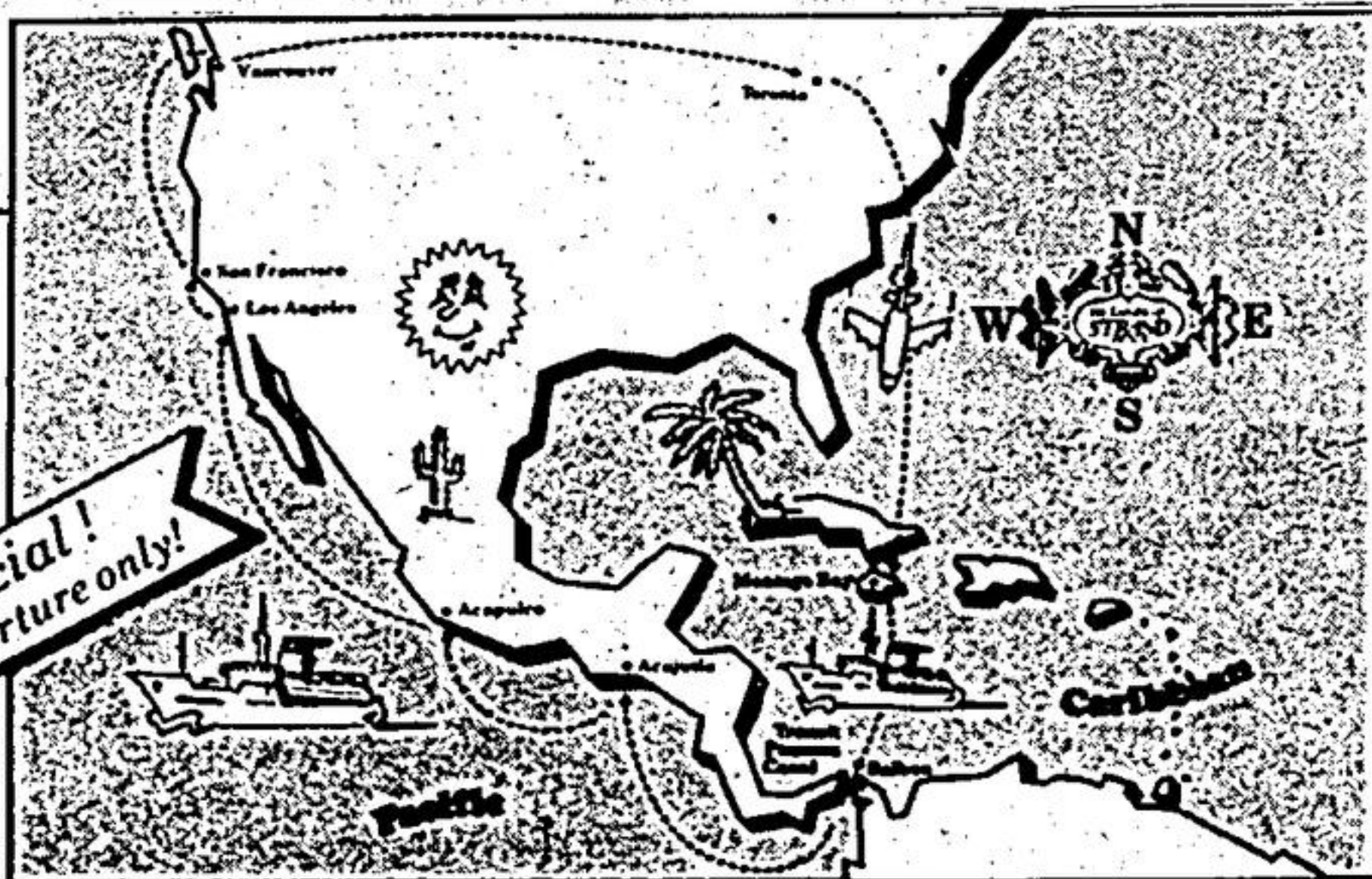
situation would be for a family to run the business, with Mr. Brown's assistance. A flair for marketing is important because Dave sees unlimited potential for his products which to date have been selling well on the Island and in Vancouver.

Many of his sales have come from tour buses stopping at the lab and from repeat business from tourists who return every year from points across North America to stock up on Pym fragrances.

Anyone interested can contact Dave at 9806 Willow Street, Chemainus, Vancouver Island, B.C.



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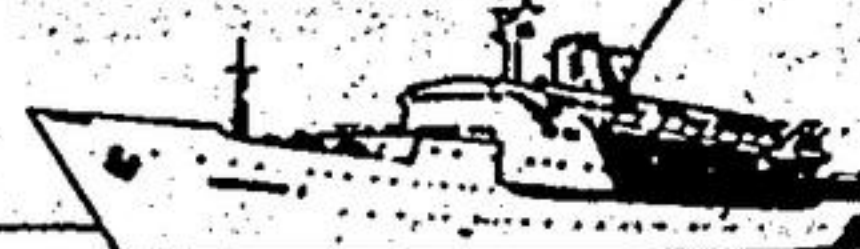
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