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LUXURY LIVING

DREAM ON

For those with \$65,000 burning a hole in their pocket there are some luxury items just too good to pass up. Live like the rich and famous and consider some of these super-extravagant buys.

BY TONY WHITNEY

Everyone knows that the days of renting a lakefront cottage for \$500 a week have long gone, unless it happens to be somewhere off-season in the Arctic. But not too many of us would invest \$65,000 for a week at a Whistler chalet, however high-end it may be.

That's the kind of cash deep-pocketed clients have paid to enjoy the Whistler area in the most opulent possible way – thanks to upscale resort rental specialist Wolf Worster Associates. The agency handles rentals like this worldwide and has a client list that runs from billionaires to royalty, according to owner Wolf Worster.

For their \$65,000, clients may rent one of Whistler's most superlative homes and it's sited within walking distance of the slopes. Crafted by an award-winning builder and incorporating numerous unique features, the home sits on four different levels and incorporates a 50-foot-high, 428-year-old red cedar trunk – the centrepiece around which the building radiates.

The house is superbly decorated with oriental and aboriginal artifacts and carvings from renowned First Nations artists such as XwaLackTun. Audiovisual equipment is expectedly state-of-the-art and the entertainment system has individual room controls. No expense was spared when equipping the huge gourmet kitchen with the best possible appliances. Four totems by XwaLackTun flank a 30-foot-long lap pool with a cascading waterfall at one end.

Five small decks and a very large patio with a built-in barbecue overlook the valley. As far as the basics go, there are five bedrooms, five full bathrooms, two extra half bathrooms and views "to die for" from every level. The rental figure (it's less if you avoid winter holiday weeks such as Christmas) includes daily housekeeping and a concierge manager.

We thought it would be interesting to ponder what \$65,000 or thereabouts could purchase in other spheres of luxury living and came up with some fascinating alternatives – a couple of which might make the week in Whistler seem quite a reasonable proposition.



The 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbo Audi TTS roadster packs 265 horsepower under its hood but is surprisingly thrifty on the fuel consumption.

The sum would get you a case of 1961 Château Pétrus – one of the most fabled products of France's Bordeaux region with restaurant prices in the thousands, even for recent vintages. There have been many great years for Pétrus, and some not so good, but the '61 does stand out.

When it comes to a snappy set of wheels, there are few more delightful sports cars than the Audi TTS roadster, a high-performance version of the basic TT that will set you back around sixty-five grand. The TTS is a fine automotive creation with lots of original styling touches that would delight an architect or interior designer. The 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbo under the hood packs a lusty 265-horsepower but even so, fuel consumption is surprisingly thrifty for a car with exhilarating performance.

For somewhere in the low sixty-thousand (with discount) range, Inform Interiors of Vancouver will sell you a spectacular 100-cm-diameter crystal chandelier from the famed house of Swarovski. The chandelier "recreates the perfect sphere using hundreds of crystals on individual threads, all illuminated by LED lighting." It's the work of famed U.K. designer Tom Dixon, who was inspired by "the vision of a meteorite flying through space."

Omega's rare Ladies' Constellation Limited Edition is a superlative timepiece from one of the most revered of watchmakers. In white gold and set with numerous diamonds, the watch has a mother-of-pearl dial to add an additional dose of the exotic and it costs in the region of \$65,000. It's good to know that if you forget to take it off to go for a swim, it's water-resistant to 100 metres.

When it comes to wearable art, Louis Vuitton's Tribute Patchwork Bag falls close to our monetary ballpark and unsurprisingly has been rated "world's most expensive bag." This hand-stitched bag – only 24 were made – was created by patching together material from 15 other Vuitton bags, to form a unique accessory that you certainly won't see gracing the shoulders of anyone but the rich and famous.

Surprisingly, it's possible to spend \$65,000 on a home and not have to hand the keys back after a week. It's as easy as buying a freshly-renovated manufactured home in a pleasant location in Abbotsford. Currently listed by Royal LePage Brent Roberts Realty in the Fraser Valley, it boasts two bedrooms – one with en suite and walk-in closet – plus two full bathrooms.

Incredibly, you can pay more than 60 grand for a Garia golf cart, built in the same factory where some Porsche sports cars roll off the line. And if you're planning a kitchen renovation, a \$40,000 Le Cornue stove and an \$11,000 Northland refrigerator will just get you started.

That week in Whistler is beginning to look like a bargain after all. •



The Whistler 'chalet' includes oriental and aboriginal artifacts. Four totems by XwaLackTun flank a 30-foot-long lap pool, above, which has a cascading waterfall at one end.



The spectacular Whistler house, within walking distance of the slopes, sits on four different levels. Available for \$65,000 a week, it has been rented by billionaires and royalty.