

The 25 Best Things in Alberta

They say you can't buy happiness. We beg to differ

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If you're looking to spoil yourself this year, you've come to the right place. We've amassed a list of the 25 best things money can buy in Alberta, from a bottle of single malt scotch that might be older than your grandfather to an evening with the most decadent bathroom fixtures in the province. None of it is cheap and some of it might seem completely over-the-top, but in a way that's the point of the list. Alberta's business community is by and large a sensible lot, populated with pragmatic people who wouldn't dream of spending over \$3,000 on a kitchen knife. That's for the best, and it helps explain why so many of them are successful at what they do, but sometimes it can be fun to dream just a little bit. So, dream on – we won't tell anybody.

Recreation and Leisure



[Canada Mountain Holidays](#), which operates out of Banff, offers a week of heli-skiing in the Rockies near Valemount for the cool price of \$198,000. For a group of up to 10 people, that gets you a private chartered plane from Calgary to Valemount, unlimited use of a helicopter for skiing, two guides, a private lodge with catered meals, an outdoor whirlpool and a Ping-Pong table.

You're on a boat! But not just any boat – a 31-foot [Larson Cabrio 927](#) with barbeque, refrigerator, coffee maker, microwave, stove, wet bar, flat-screen television and two 320-horsepower engines. Ideal for cruising around Sylvan Lake and crushing lesser vessels beneath its mighty hull, the Cabrio costs \$248,000 and includes everything but a nautical-themed pashmina afghan.



Watching professional hockey on a television, however large or highly defined the screen might be, pales in comparison to getting up close and personal with the real thing. A year of access to a [luxury, centre-ice suite at the Saddledome](#) runs about \$360,000. It comes with 12 seats for every event at the arena, including Flames games and concerts, along with food and adult beverages. A 12-seat

suite for a single [Oilers game at Rexall Place](#) goes for \$12,500 with food and drink. That works out to \$512,500 over the course of 41 regular-season home games.

If you're on the hunt for adventure, a mere \$12,995 will get you a week of it. [Andrew Lake Lodge](#) offers float plane flights to secluded lakes in the northeast corner of the province for guided hunting trips in search of bull moose, wild buffalo and black bear, along with fishing for trout, walleye and northern pike. Almost 100 per cent of hunters reach their allowed two-bear limit on each trip.



Golf might not be the sport of kings, but that doesn't mean you can't spend like one to play it. The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge's [Stanley Thompson Cabin](#) looks directly out onto the first fairway of the resort's golf course and features five bedrooms and three Jacuzzis. Throw in a personal chef and a daily round of golf for each guest and the tab for a summer weekend comes to \$15,360.

Food and Drink

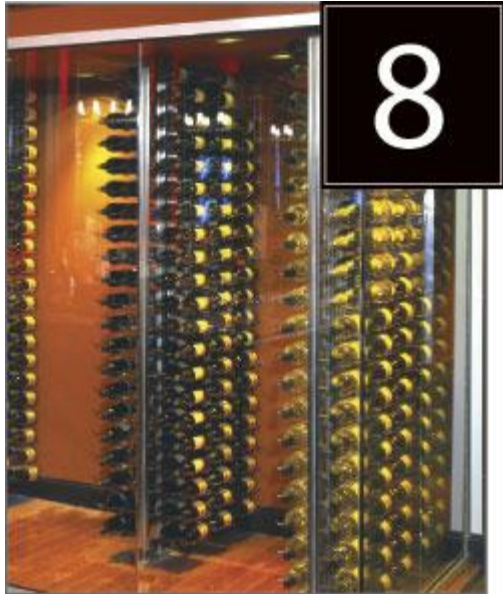


There are plenty of jaw-dropping single malt scotches available for purchase at Calgary's Kensington Wine Market, but none are more impressive – or more expensive (at \$22,000 for a 700 mL bottle or \$6,000 for 200 mL) – than the Gordon & MacPhail Generations Glenlivet 70 year, which dates back to 1940. Bottled in a made-to-order, tear-shaped crystal decanter with a sterling silver stopper and a box made of hand-crafted Scottish elm, it might be the most elegant presentation of an alcoholic beverage in human history. [Learn about the amazing history of this whisky here.](#)

There are knives, and then there are knives. The Konosuke 270 mm Yanagiba knife, which is available at [Calgary's Knifewear](#) for \$3,659, definitely falls into the latter category. The knife is made in Sakai city in Japan, the same place that produces the majority of the country's



famous single-sided knives that professional sushi chefs use. But what truly sets this blade apart is the fact that it's "honyaki-forged," a traditional heat-treatment process that was once used to make a samurai's katana sword.



If you're running out of room for your ever-expanding wine collection, you'll want to get in touch with [Kool Space](#). It's a Calgary company that custom builds wine rooms, turning unfinished basements into meccas for Malbecs and Montrachets. They offer a wide range of racking options, cooling systems and finishes, and they'll even frame and insulate the room and build an exterior-grade door to fit. Prices range depending on the size of the room and the selection of features, but they average between \$40,000 and \$60,000.

Forget about Kopi Luwak, the (in)famous coffee beans that pass through the digestive tract of Asian palm civets before being passed on to consumers at a considerable markup. Instead, try a cup of the [Hacienda La Esmeralda](#). This brew's beans are grown in Panama before being sold in micro lots at auction, with some fetching as much as \$130 per pound green. [Edmonton's Transcend Coffee](#) acquired some of the 2011 Auction Lot No. 8 and sold it for \$50 per 12-ounce bag, and while it's long gone by now, they'll almost surely be in the bidding for next year's crop.



For the truly dedicated carnivore, there's nothing in the world finer than the Wagyu, the breed of cattle that is fed a diet of oats, barley, beet pulp and other goodies in order to produce the most richly marbled cuts of beef in the world – the famed Kobe beef. In Alberta, you can find Wagyu-cross cattle – male Japanese Wagyu are bred with Angus females – on the [Camrose farm of Patrick and Kimberley McCarthy](#). An entire steer costs an average of \$6,000, and the McCarthys will even arrange to have the



butchered animal shipped to your door.

Clothing and Jewelry



They say the suit makes the man, and a suit made specifically for the man is a cut above the rest. A custom-tailored suit, though, doesn't come cheap. But if you have \$16,995 to spare, the folks at [Henry Singer](#) can create a made-to-measure, three-piece suit cut from pure worsted DORMEUIL cashmere.

The suede shoes from Salvatore Ferragamo might not be blue, but at \$995 you'll still want to make sure nobody steps on them. The [Domino Suede Oxford](#) can be found at [Harry Rosen](#) and comes in black or chocolate. The casual slip-on shoe should be matched with a wool suit or dark denim.



If you believe that time is money, then the 18-karat gold case, crocodile leather black strap and scratch-resistant sapphire crystal on the Patek Philippe Calatrava is well worth the \$14,500 it costs to get one from the [Alberta Diamond Exchange](#). For women, time might seem downright irrelevant when staring at the 32 diamonds surrounding the face of the Rolex Datejust Lady Pearlmaster. Another 10 diamonds replace the numerals on the dial. Set in 18-karat gold, the watch is available for \$22,500.

Tiffany & Co. didn't arrive in Calgary just to the delight of women. Men looking for a new set of cufflinks to finish the look of a made-to-measure suit will also want to check out the New York jeweller's collection, which includes the Paloma Marrakesh. Made from 18-karat gold with a black enamel finish, the original designs were copyrighted by Paloma Picasso and come at a price of \$5,300.

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If diamonds are a girl's best friend, then the Tiffany Legacy necklace is a friendship that will last a lifetime. The 19-inch platinum necklace holds a diamond cut that's exclusive to Tiffany. A combination of square and round brilliant diamonds can add up to a staggering 28.04 carats – and an equally jaw-dropping price tag of \$929,500.

Personal Services

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It turns out you can put a price on peace of mind. Calgary-based J.S. Kramer and Associates provides round-the-clock bodyguard protection services for the Aga Khan when he is in Alberta and Geddy Lee and the rest of Rush when they're on tour, among other notables. Peace of mind for a single month – provided by two bodyguards working in shifts – will run you up to \$40,000 per month.

Driving is a hassle, especially when it involves travelling between your winter and summer home. For a fee, We Can Drive U will pick up your car in Alberta (and your dog, for the right price) and drive it to Palm Springs, California, giving you the opportunity to save time and fly. When winter ends, the driver returns your car to Canada. The round trip costs \$3,600.

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Susan Pointe knows what separates good art from bad and is in business to help companies and individuals get the most out of their own collections. Pointe has assisted the Lois Hole Hospital for Women and the Alberta Investment Management Corporation, among other big-name clients. She charges \$125 per hour for smaller projects – like the purchase of four art pieces – but has also worked to purchase upwards of 700 pieces. The only limitation, then, is the space you have on your walls.

Busy executives hardly have time to think, much less pick up their dry cleaning or arrange dinner plans. That's where [Time is Money](#), a full-service personal concierge agency, comes in. The company's premium membership, called "[Anytime, Anywhere,](#)" puts the company on call for any errand you can dream up with an immediate response time. That membership runs \$1,000 annually, plus \$93 per hour for the most demanding services. For a busy executive, that's a small price to pay for the end of errands.

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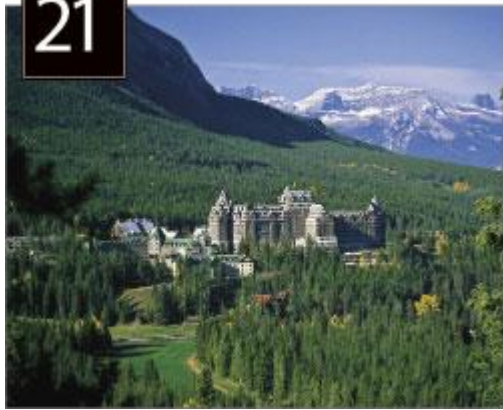
The [L Spa](#) can help get you toned and in shape. Well, part of you, anyway. For \$2,700, you get 12 one-hour sessions of [Tripollar RF treatment on your thighs at the Grande Prairie spa](#). The treatment aims to stimulate collagen and reduce fat in the body in order to ameliorate the more visible signs of aging. The spa also treats other areas of the body – the face is a popular choice – at lower prices.

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Travel

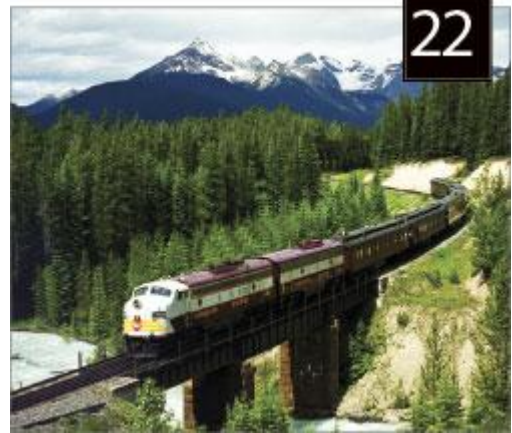
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No discussion of luxury in Alberta can be had without mention of the province's five Fairmont Hotels: the Château Lake Louise, Jasper Park Lodge, Banff Springs, Hotel MacDonald (Edmonton) and Palliser (Calgary) all come with their own variations on luxury. Banff Springs, for example, has the [Presidential Suite](#), which features a reception foyer, grand piano, library and powder room. Located in the pinnacle of a castle peak, the suite has a panoramic view of the Bow and Spray valleys, and can be yours starting at \$3,000 a night.

From Calgary, the [Royal Canadian Pacific](#) takes guests on a rail tour of the Rockies in classic style. Wending its way through the rugged terrain of Alberta and B.C., the tour includes stops in Golden and Lake Louise and off-train activities like golf and fly-fishing. The Royal Canadian Pacific consists of 10 refurbished vintage rail cars from the 1920s coupled to two 1950s locomotives, and for \$8,200 per person you can spend five nights touring the Rockies in one of them. Modern amenities are complemented by period furniture, fine wines and gourmet cuisine.

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If you're looking for something a bit more intimate, [Lake Louise's Post Hotel & Spa](#) – a member of the prestigious Relais & Châteaux chain – has put together a romance package that is sure to please. For \$1,426 for two nights, you get dinner for two, champagne, a fireplace and a Jacuzzi set amidst the natural wonders of Banff National Park. It also includes spa treatments, couples massages and breakfasts.

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For a simpler version of luxury, check into the suites at the historic [Prince of Wales Hotel](#) in [Waterton Lakes National Park](#). This architecturally striking hotel was built in 1927 and sits on a bluff overlooking the town. There are no TVs or air conditioners in the suites, which can be yours for \$799 per night. Instead, there are two bedrooms and a balcony looking over spectacular Waterton Lake. One caveat: the hotel operates seasonally, from June 8 to September 17 in 2012.

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Calgary's [Hotel Le Germain](#) is all about the finer things, from Egyptian-cotton linen to Frette towels, California king beds (bigger than a regular king) and Italian leather chairs. "But the best part is the bathroom," says Ashley Wright, director of sales at Le Germain. "Women love the bathrooms." That's because they come with rainfall shower heads, natural light and porcelain sinks. And in the apartment suites, the soaker tub fills from the ceiling. It all starts at \$759 per night for a 1,100-square-foot apartment suite