

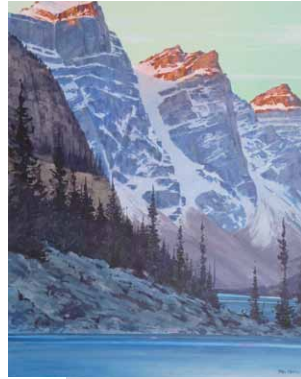
5 signature souvenirs

keepsakes that represent place

BY LISA STEPHENS

The Canadian Rockies is just the place for those who love open space, pristine scenery and exciting adventure. The awe inspired by a thundering waterfall, hiking the alpine or spotting a bear is almost tangible. If only you could capture that feeling to take home.

So, how do you find an item that represents the essence of a place? When I see wildlife, I purchase a memento of that animal. For instance, a plush wombat from Australia sits on my mantel much to my own (ahem...aging) chagrin. But I also have a lovely pewter whale tail letter opener as a reminder of Nova Scotia. Another rule of mine is to seek out products unique to the areas I visit. Locally crafted items make nice souvenirs, plus I support the people who embody the landscape that awed me.



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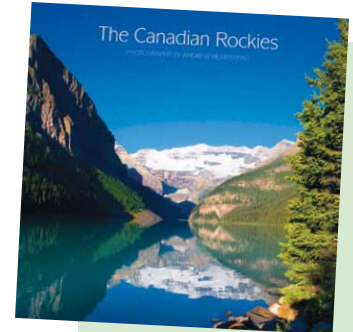
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1 / Artwork

These mountains inspire artists. From First Nations to multi-media painters, our rocks have found their way onto thousands of canvases. Mountain Galleries at the Fairmont owner Wendy Wacko believes that Canadian landscape specialist Mel Heath “has nailed the Canadian Rockies.” With over 50 years of painting watercolours in a romantic style, Heath has recently embarked into oils. On June 19, Heath’s oil paintings debut at the Banff Springs gallery—they will also be featured during the reopening of the Jasper Park Lodge gallery in August. Local mountains, wildflowers and wildlife are prevalent themes in our galler-

ies, so perhaps your trophy is waiting on one of their walls.

2 / Clothing

There’s sure to be a garment that demands a spot in your suitcase, whether it’s a high-end Canadian fur or lowbrow humour shirt. But let me suggest apparel made from Qiviuk, the rarest natural fibre in the world. According to Qiviuk store’s Akie Fujimoto, “our Banff and Lake Louise boutiques sell 98% of the world’s production.” Incredibly soft, lightweight and warm Qiviuk comes from the undercoat of the Canadian Arctic muskox. The elegant sweaters, jackets, shawls and scarves feel sumptuous. The Cuadrado cardigan shown (\$595) has a

motif that evokes Canada, or purchase balls of Qiviuk yarn to make your own creation. Akie adds that Qiviuk “is a combination of the very rare and the very functional, which makes it a perfect keepsake for the person with everything.”

3 / Jewellery

Our jewellery stores can entice your inner celebrity to purchase a sparkling gem (there’s no harm in window-shopping). Top of the list are Canadian diamonds and Alberta ammolite. Another option is the sterling silver Grizzly Cub pendant (\$99) at Philippe of Banff. This cute slider adheres to my wildlife rule (above), plus it’s a local product created by master

goldsmith Philippe Plourde. “A grizzly cub suddenly crossed the busy highway, so I stopped my vehicle to thwart other cars from hitting him,” reminisces Philippe. “The bear gave a little grunt and a look of thanks. I couldn’t wait to reach my bench to carve a figure of him.” Philippe smiles in remembrance each time he works on a Grizzly Cub slider. And you’ll smile too with this little wonder nestled on your neck.

4 / Books

Books with superb photography, local insights and divine price just scream souvenir. Canmore’s Café Books owner Joy McLean recommends *The Canadian Rockies* by Andrew Hempstead

as a coffee table edition with fabulous photos and thoughtful captions. Produced by Banff’s Summerthought Publishing, at under \$20 “it’s your best value,” notes Joy. *Handbook of the Canadian Rockies* by Ben Gadd goes beyond a hiking guide by extensively covering wildlife, birds, flora and geology with colour images and maps. *Wildlife of The Canadian Rockies: A Glimpse at Life on the Wild Side* by John Marriott is another favourite, and “the two bear bums cover photo is available as a card,” offers Joy. She adds a children’s book to the mix, *Never Bug a Bear* by Carol McTavish. This interactive book advocates preserving mountain habitat for the wild creatures.

5 / Food

Local delicacies are great to bring home, and our shops offer plenty of treats to temp. While Canada is known for smoked salmon and maple syrup, neither is truly local to the Rockies. For a specialty that is created here (and complies with my wildlife rule) try Bear Paws. Made with cashews and caramel, and covered in milk, white or dark chocolate, these goodies are available in most candy shops. Beware—they might not survive your late night munchies. So pick up an extra few so some might make it home.

Editor’s note: Souvenir choices are listed in Shops sections, pages 98, 107, 108 and 162.

PHOTOS: PAINTING, “SUNRISE - MORNAINE LAKE” OIL PAINTING BY MEL HEATH