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You can fly in to Great Bear Lake on a 737, but the angling is in a body of water that has seen relatively few rods

BY LYN HANCOCK

Special to The Globe and Mail
 Great Bear Lake, NWT

As the chartered 737 jet from Winnipeg roars to a landing on the airstrip of Great Bear Lake Lodge, we listen expectantly as the voice of Chummy Plummer comes over the loudspeaker system. "Welcome to Great Bear Lake and a week of good fishing."

Some of us will be staying here at Chummyville, the popular name for the Plummer family's world-famous fishing lodge, the only one in North America that lands 737s at its front door. The rest of the passengers will be changing planes to fly to other lodges on the lake — Neiland Bay, Trophy Lodge, Arctic Circle Lodge and Brandson's Lodge.

One American angler who has been coming to Great Bear Lake for 25 years is taking a business associate on a fly-in camping trip farther north to Bluenose Lake. Eight more anglers from Edmonton have just landed in their own private planes but will be staying at Chummyville and taking daily trips to outpost camps such as Tree River on the Arctic Coast. Since Great Bear Lake straddles the Arctic Circle, I have come to give my Aussie parents an easily-accessed taste of both subarctic and Arctic wilderness. They are avid anglers, but we hope to do a bit of everything.

Deep, cold, crystal-clear Great Bear Lake — the eighth largest lake in the world — and the tundra oasis of Tree River are known around the world for consistent catches of big wild trophy fish, such as a 76½-pound (34.7-kilogram) lake trout, a 32-pound 9-ounce (14.8 kg) arctic char and a 5-pound 15-ounce (2.7 kg) arctic grayling. Five consecutive world-record lake trout have come out of Great Bear Lake. There's also an abundance of big northern pike and whitefish.

As one guest said, "If God told me, 'Enslay, I'll give you 48 hours then shut you off. I'll fly you anywhere in the world you want to go,' I'd say, 'God, fly me 24 hours to Great Bear Lake and 24 hours to Tree River.'"

With 150 staff, a fleet of boats, half a dozen planes, five lodges, several outpost camps and more than 50 years' experience catering to a world clientele, the Plummer family is well positioned to show people a good time. A week goes fast. And as Chummy says, "A holiday here is more than fishing."

Our gear was quickly whisked by truck to our cabins. We were whisked another way by boat to a big welcome buffet in the dining



Dream-fishing with the Great Bear

room. Chummyville consists of a couple of dozen red-roofed, white-walled bungalows ringing a small island and linked to the mainland by a man-made causeway. Because the brochures made the accommodation look so luxurious, my mother had arrived in a skirt and high heels — overkill for anywhere but the main lodge. Nevertheless, our lakefront cabins were large and comfortable with heat, electricity, running water and showers. Coffee was delivered to our doorstep in the morning and ice arrived for our drinks in the afternoon.

Each guest (or couple) was assigned a boat and personal guide. Ours were Mike, an Ojibway Indian from Manitoba who'd been guiding at Plummers' for decades, and Gerard, a young fishing fanatic from Ontario who plans to be a competition angler.

Gerard was impressed by my new state-of-the-art Shimano aero reels with their convenient quickfire cast, handy for my mother's arthritic fingers (he said he had 18 reels of his own back home) but led me to the well-stocked lodge tackle shop to buy different lures. "Those floaters are fine if the trout are feeding at the surface but up here we'll be fishing for big lake trout in cold, deep water by drop-offs of six to 30 metres. You need larger spoons." During the week of our visit, we met two of the big names who actually made the lures: Karen Eppinger and Harold Enslay.

Please see FISHING / A17



At top, view from Great Bear Lake Lodge includes fireweed and tranquil water. Below, members of Plummer family, which owns lodge, go out to fish. From left are Chandler, Chummy and Warren. (Photos by Lyn Hancock)



Globe Trotter

Europe

Rome's newest museum

A 17th-century Carmelite convent has become Rome's newest museum, the Modern and Contemporary Municipal Art Gallery. Opened in January, the collection comprises more than 4,500 works dating from 1883 to 1943.

Though the municipal gallery was first opened in 1925, it migrated from one Roman palazzo to another for 40 years until the 1960s when many of the works were either placed in storage or distributed to public offices. The collection remained hidden until it made the convent its new home.

The 140-odd pieces on show are displayed in seven rooms on three floors. Each room covers a different period, including Symbolist paintings and turn-of-the-century statues (including a bust of a woman by August Rodin), the Roman school, bronze sculptures dating from the 1930s and late Futurist art. The third floor houses works by some of Italy's most important 20th-century artists including Giacomo Balla, Francesco de Pisis, Giorgio Morandi, Scipione and Giorgio de Chirico.

Information: Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Roma, 24 Via Francesco Crispi; telephone 4742843. Open Tuesday to Sunday. Admission about \$8.50 (Canadian).

London cathedral at 100

A festival of music, lectures and exhibitions celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of Westminster Cathedral (the Catholic church, not to be confused with Westminster Abbey of the Anglican church) will take place in London through November.

Among the highlights is a series of Lenten Meditations by European cardinals, and a Festival of Flowers from May 17 to 20, with the theme Cathedrals of the World. Two million fresh flowers will be displayed along with a circular floral carpet 5½ metres in diameter, 10 two-tier chandeliers made of flowers, 42 trees and 10 floral archways.

An exhibition from July 2 to Oct. 15, *100 Years of Art, Architecture and Treasures*, will trace the cathedral's history. Visitors will be able to see a collection of original drawings by its architect, John Francis Bentley, as well as earlier plans for a Gothic cathedral that were rejected. One of the historic models that Bentley commissioned for the project is to be restored and will become a focal point of the exhibition. Photographs