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LATE DEALS

AFTER their Canada visit, Wills and Kate are off to California. You can follow in their footsteps:

LOS ANGELES—£899, four nights room-only at the 4V W Hollywood, from Heathrow, November 17. See www.virginholidays.co.uk or call 0844 557 3870.

Or choose from these... **ORLANDO—£665**, 14 nights room-only at the Best Western Orlando Gateway, from Gatwick, June 30. See www.completeorlando.co.uk or call 0800 294 8844.

BENDORN—£480, seven nights half-board at the 4T Hotel Bendorn Plaza, from Manchester, July 28. See www.thomson.co.uk or call 0844 879 8014.

SHARM EL SHEIKH—£649, seven nights B&B at the 5 star Grand Rotana Resort & Spa, from Heathrow, July 6. See www.tcsignature.com or call 0844 879 8014.

BARBADOS—£629, seven nights room-only at the 3-star Butterfly Beach Hotel, from Gatwick, September departures. See www.kuoni.co.uk or call 01306 747008.

GRENADA—£1,359, seven nights all-in at La Source including six spa treatments, from Gatwick, Aug 31 to Sept 28. See www.tropicalsky.co.uk or call 0844 332 9349.

MOROCCO—£489, seven nights all-in at 5-star Aqua Fun Club Marrakech, from Stansted, July 10. See www.lowcostholidays.com or call 0800 111 6271.

TURKEY—£169, seven nights self-catering at the 3-star Sahin Apartments in Dalyan, from Gatwick, July 7. See www.thomson.co.uk or call 0844 412 5970.

Virgin's va va v-room

SOAP stars were given the Rockstar Service last week in Virgin Holidays new v-room lounge at Manchester Airport.

Suzanne Shaw of Emmerdale and Corrie's Chris Fountain were treated like VIPs in the funky lounge, which officially opens on Friday.

They were joined by the "Minions" from Universal Orlando Resort Despicable Me ride, Vegas showgirls and a Caribbean barman—representing the three destinations with direct Virgin Atlantic flights from Manchester.

The new v-room, following the one at Gatwick, caters for the whole family with areas for young kids, teens and adults. It has TVs, a gaming zone and free Wi-Fi. A hot and cold buffet is included in the entry price of £20 for adults and £12 per child (infants free). See www.virginholidays.co.uk/vroom



V.I.P.s... Chris & Suzanne

Nice to B&B in France

If you want a French experience, there's a perfect B&B in the Loire Valley.

Le Clos Rabelais is owned by ex-London coffee shop manager Shaun Baggs, who has created a lovely five-bedroom B&B.

It is in the chocolate-box town of Langeais, 150 miles south of Paris, the perfect base for biking holidays, visiting chateaux, gardens and vineyards, or simply chilling out in the cafes and restaurants.

Double rooms at Le Clos Rabelais cost from around £50 a night. For more details visit www.langeais.co.uk Brittany Ferries has return fares for a car and two adults from Portsmouth to Caen in July from £178. See www.brittany-ferries.co.uk



Gorgeous... Le Clos

By BRUCE PRESTON

SORRY William and Kate, but been there, seen that, bought the T-shirt.

And you don't have to be royalty to be treated wonderfully well in Canada.

The newlyweds head for this awesome (a word used a lot on our trip) country on Thursday and will celebrate Canada Day in Ottawa the following day.

They will end their stay in Calgary to coincide with the Calgary Stampede rodeo shows—and that's where my wife Janet and I began our journey of a lifetime.

Calgary is a city founded on oil and has a unique 15ft-high covered walkway which connects the gleaming skyscrapers and shopping malls so there's no need to go outdoors when it's minus 30°C in winter—clever!

We were collected by John, our entertaining guide for the day, who took us from Calgary to Banff where we got our first view of the snow-fringed Rocky Mountains we had longed to see.

Before long we were above these awesome (sorry, I said it again) peaks on a 12-minute summit ride from Kananaskis heliport.

But I guess our minds weren't blown enough yet as once back on terra firma John took us to Banff National Park.

There we marvelled at ice-covered Lake Minnewanka and the Banff Hoodoos of the Bow Valley—spires of rock carved by the wind and rain which stand guard over the Bow River like sentinels of nature.

There's more chance to gasp at the unbelievable mountains by taking the Banff Gondola which gives you a 360-degree bird's eye view of the 7,486ft summits.

LUXURY

We were still feeling on top of the world when we arrived at our hotel, the majestic Banff Springs. Known as the castle in the Rockies, it combines luxury and relaxation in typical Canadian style.

And style was also in abundance when we boarded the Rocky Mountaineer luxury train—celebrating its 20th anniversary—for a two-day trip to Vancouver. We were taking The First Passage to the West route from Banff to Vancouver, which retraces the steps of the 19th century explorers.

I think our journey was a bit more luxurious than theirs.

Travelling in Rocky Mountaineer Goldleaf service we sat on plush reclining chairs inside a double-decker glass-domed viewing car which gave you a great look at the awesome (I must stop saying that) scenery.

As we pulled out of the station Mark and I, our very informative train attendants, were soon on hand to offer us a glass of champagne.

On we went deep into the heart of the Rockies with dizzying views of the swirling waters in the canyons below, through ravines and mountain forests and past cascading waterfalls. We also had several sightings of bald eagles, elk and, yes, even a bear!

This pioneering route also took us through the legendary Spiral Tunnels and past the spot where the last spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway was driven in when it was finished in 1885. We crossed the Continental Divide of the Americas and hugged the Thompson River to the old ranch town of Kamloops, our stop for the night.

By the second day, the landscape was flatter, arid desert—at times looking more like the surface of the moon—before giving way to lush green countryside. That brought us

Orf to Canada...

Kate and William



Zip trip... Janet on Whistler high wire and Banff's Lake Minnewanka



Stunning scenery... Whickaninnish Inn and Vancouver, left



Bear hug... Janet and Bruce get set for bear hunt, and Stanley Park, right



Anything you Canado

ENJOY ROYAL WELCOME JUST LIKE WILLS & KATE

wood Hotel and Spa, ideally situated in the downtown district.

Vancouver is a vibrant, modern and extremely clean city. One of the best ways to see it is by bicycle along miles of safe cycle lanes and with the help of Josh, our guide from Cycle City Tours, we set off to explore.

The jewel in Vancouver's crown is magnificent Stanley Park, 1,000 acres of West Coast forest and home to bald eagles, nesting blue herons and a host of other wildlife you don't expect to find in a city.

MAJESTIC

We would have loved to stay but we had a train to catch. We boarded the Rocky Mountaineer Whistler Sea to Sky service for our return to Vancouver. Sight after breathtaking sight followed such as the Brandywine Falls, Mount Garibaldi (8,786ft) and Cheakamus Canyon, which is home to spectacular lava columns and granite rock faces.

Back in Vancouver, we stayed three nights at the elegant Wedge-

going for a great meal and one of head barman Shaun's innovative cocktails. A perfect way to end our stay in Vancouver.

Soon we were driving across the majestic Lions Gate Bridge and heading for the ferry to Wickaninnish Inn in Tofino on Vancouver Island off Canada's west coast.

More spectacular scenery awaited us—a pristine coastline and emerald forests including Cathedral Grove, a collection of towering Douglas fir trees, some more than 800 years old, with a network of trails for visitors to stroll through.

Wickaninnish Inn was our version of heaven where you come face to

face with nature. That evening we ate at the Inn's Pointe Restaurant with unparalleled waiter service and views of the Pacific Ocean waves crashing on the rocks below.

Next day we caught a boat plane from Tofino across Clayoquot Sound's fjord-like coastline to soak in the natural mineral pools of Hot Springs Cove.

A short walk through a lush, temperate rainforest brings you to the sulphurous geothermal hot springs where—if you can take the heat—you can sit back and relax in pools of water constantly at 50°C.

Back in Tofino we were picked up by Don from Remote Passages to get us ready for our bear watching trip (yes, it was all got) Suitably

decked out in waterproof gear, we climbed aboard one of their Zodiac boats and sped off into the mist and rain in search of black bears who forage along the coastline.

We didn't have to wait long before we saw a mother and two cubs strolling along the shore's edge.

Black bears have poor hearing and even poorer eyesight, but a fantastic sense of smell. So, keen to get a closer look, we killed the engines and were able to float to within 10 metres without causing them any anguish!

OUTDOORS

It was an unforgettable experience which we dined out on during our last night at the Hotel At The Pier in North Vancouver which has wonderful city views over the water.

You see, that's the thing about Canada—you can't go wrong on scenery. It's a big country for big imaginations where you really do need a love for the great outdoors.

Wills and Kate, I thoroughly recommend it. Have an AWESOME time. For more information about the activities on this trip go to www.notw.co.uk/travel

Holidays for heroes

PREMIER Cottages is donating over 60 weeks of luxury breaks to our brave servicemen and women.

The families to benefit will be chosen by the Band of Sisters branch of the Help for Heroes charity.

Launching the worthy project ahead of yesterday's Armed Forces Day, Premier Cottages boss Beth Bailey said: "I offered a holiday in my cottage in a Help for Heroes fundraiser last year and it was very well received. This got us thinking that there must be more we could do to help."

The company has over 1,000 four and five-star UK cottages and many have collection boxes for Help for Heroes.

Visit www.premiercottages.co.uk and to donate to the charity, go to www.helpforheroes.org.uk/donations.html

NATIONAL Express is introducing a bargain basement £9 fare.

The one-way summer deal covers more than 900 destinations including Exeter to Edinburgh or Inverness, London to Liverpool and Newcastle to Bristol.

No hidden extras but book 14 days in advance. Go to www.nationalexpress.com/coach or call 08717 81 81 81

£38 stays for 2012

AMONG the lucky ones who got Olympic 2012 tickets? Combine it with a London stay that won't break the bank.

Hostelworld.com has rooms from £38 per person per night. The Generator Hotel in Tavistock Place was awarded Best Budget Accommodation by the London Tourist Board last year.

Clint78 combines 200 years of history with a quirky interior in King's Cross. And Palmers Lodge Swiss Cottage is the perfect place to relax after a day of sport. See www.hostelworld.com

CRUISE NEWS

WATCH out for ventriloquist Paul Zerdin if on a Disney Magic Med cruise (www.disneycruise.co.uk) from Barcelona next month.

The star and his puppets will have family and adult comedy shows. And if you aren't at sea, catch Paul at a seaside resort here—including Skegness, Blackpool, Torquay and Great Yarmouth or his autumn tour.

See www.paulzerdin.com for more details.

NEWS OF THE WORLD

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LIVE LIKE A KING IN COUNTRY HOUSE WHERE

HENRY VIII WOODED HIS THIRD WIFE: Next page