

World drawn to city from all four corners



DAVID PARKER
AROUND TOWN

In many ways Calgary has truly become an international city. Consider the number of citizens who have come from or have experienced working in a number of different countries. Add to that list **Ralf Strub**, who was recently appointed as vice-president of operations for **Bellstar Hotels & Resorts**.

Strub was born in the German-speaking area of Switzerland and although his family was in banking, he decided his career was to be in the hospitality industry. So he moved to the French area of the country to take a six-year classic chef's course that was followed by work as a specialty chef at a first-class hotel.

One year's military service was compulsory in Switzerland — Strub stayed on for two — and then worked in Cambridge, England, for a while before returning home to work for the famous **Movenpick** chain of restaurants.

In 1991 and recently married, he and his wife decided on the adventure of testing Canada and lived in Montreal for six months, but they found it rather difficult without work permits. So, after some travelling, they went back home.

Strub was in charge of food and beverage for the five-star **Park Hotel**, was lured back to Movenpick for a while in Zurich, and then enriched his career by moving into sales and marketing with **Panorama Resort**.

In 1995, he furthered his

education with a master's degree in hospitality management and became a partner in a consultancy company, which specialized in turning around hotels and restaurants that had encountered problems.

Strub earned a Swiss Tourism's highest 2Q award, but then a guest shared with Strub that he owned a resort property in northern Ontario.

For the next five years, Strub was back in Canada working with hunters, fishermen and float planes. He converted the property into a four-season resort, promoted it to European tour operators, and persuaded Swiss pilots to use the lake to keep their float ratings.

His next stop was at the encouragement of one of the pilots — to move to help a Maldives property. Then he was off to Innsbruck, Austria, and on to Italy, Russia, Germany and South Korea in his consultancy practice.

He returned to Canada with **Prime Restaurants**, visiting Calgary to open **Fionn MacCool's** on Barclay Parade and stayed in the west as vice-president to open 24 **East Side Mario's** locations.

Strub says he had been studying the Bellstar operation for a long time, liked its portfolio and called president and CEO **Ed Romanowski** to ask, "Do you have room for me?"

He was offered the position as vice-president of operations and has spent a busy couple of weeks visiting all of the staff and properties for which he is responsible.

The company manages 12 properties in Alberta and B.C. and is an investor in **Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa** in Osoyoos,

B.C., where it is selling the 42 units of the **Spirit Ridge Residence Club** above the vineyard and on Canada's only desert golf course.

And Strub will soon be busy operating a new contract with the Osoyoos Indian band in Oliver, B.C., to operate its **Canyon Desert Golf Resort**.

Some banks have been particularly generous to charities in this community. **RBC** has commemorated the opening of its new Aspen Landing and Signal Hill branches with a donation of \$50,000 to the West Side Recreation Centre, at 17th Avenue and 69th Street S.W.

Patricia Berger, RBC regional vice-president, Calgary West, says the bank is committed to investing in youth and education, and the donation to the After-school Homework program will position young people for success while supporting healthy adolescent development.

The program will be an important part of Westside's new youth centre, scheduled to open next month to give young people a place to socialize and take part in activities. Space is provided for them to do their homework and receive help if they need it.

Joe Fardell, who left his position here as president and CEO of **Tourism Calgary** to move to the west coast, is returning back to his Ontario roots to take on the position as managing director of the **Niagara Falls Tourism Authority**.

DAVID PARKER APPEARS TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY. HE CAN BE REACHED AT 403-830-4622 OR E-MAIL INFO@DAVIDPARKER.CA



Leah Hennel, Calgary Herald

Ralf Strub, vice-president of operations for Bellstar Hotels and Resorts, came to Calgary via Switzerland, England, Italy, Austria and other parts of the world.

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