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MONEY WEEK

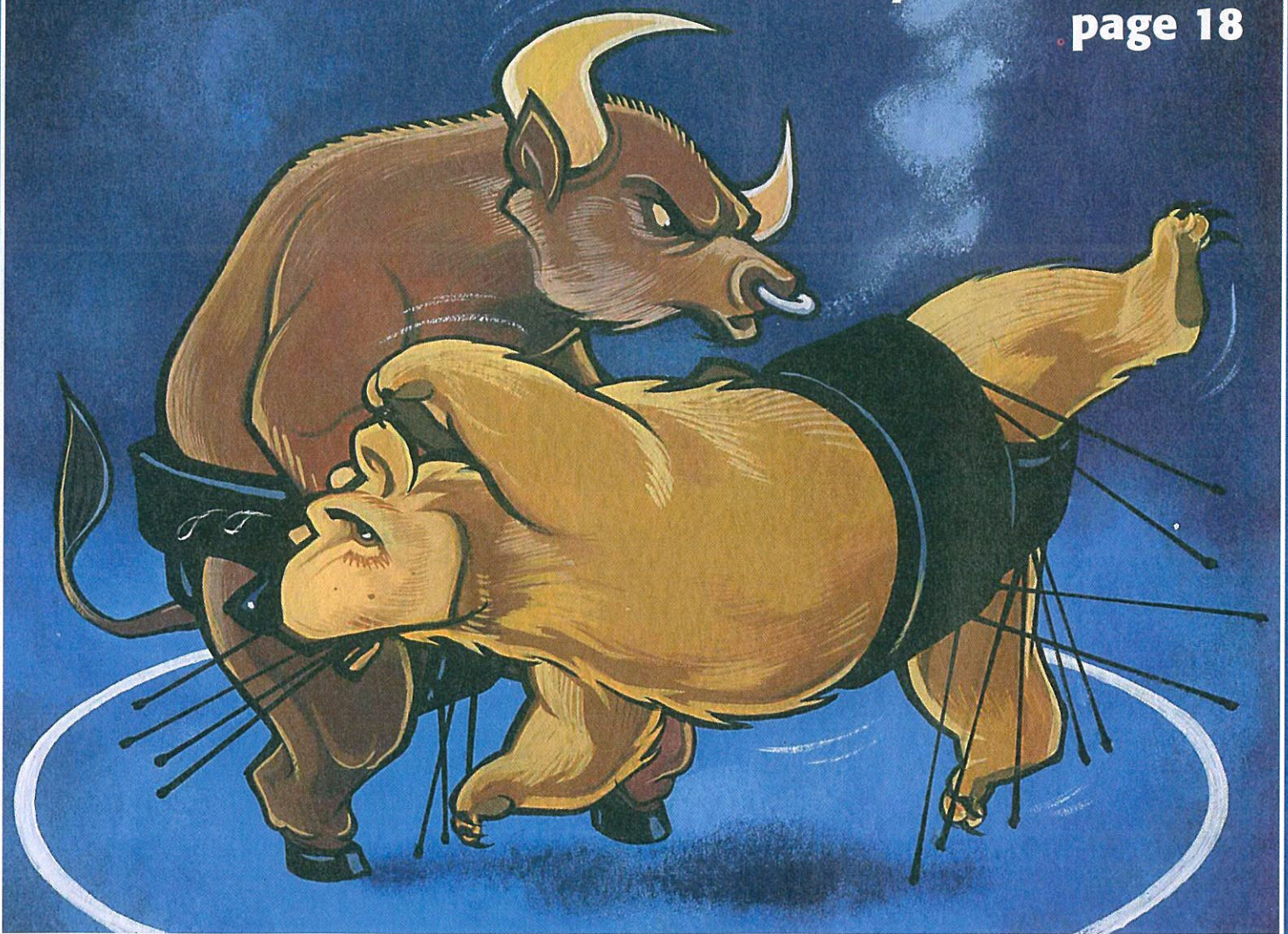
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Travel

A spectacular biking holiday in Canada

Some of the world's most spectacular biking is in Canada and is accessible only by seaplane, says Stuart Millar in *The Guardian*. But thanks to a weak dollar and low-cost flights, getting there is not as expensive as you might think. The best place to go is undoubtedly the west coast. From the elevated timber trails in the rainforest of Vancouver's north shore through to Whistler's world-beating bike park, this is "one vast playground, designed by nature to test the limits of riders".

To make the most of your stay, you'll need a guide as most of the "exquisite trails" are hidden. The guides at Big Mountain Freeride Adventures have "a simple mission: to bag some of the world's best – and least ridden – single-track trails while getting up close to the spectacular alpine landscape of the Southern Chilcotin mountains". They succeed: the trips are



The best biking routes in Canada can only be reached by seaplane

"unique". And although the going may be tough, the trips are "by no means aimed solely at expert riders: there are trails and obstacles for every level". The bike rides are truly exhilarating and the scenery "breathtaking". You may even encounter a black bear – they are seen all over the mountainside in summer.

And just because you are on a "hardcore adventure", doesn't mean you have to "deny yourself a serious bit of pampering". Stay at the "major new player in town", the five-star Four Seasons Whistler (00 1 604 935 3400,

from £145 a night). It has a "relaxed, funky vibe" as well as a spa and an outdoor pool with superb mountain views. Big Mountain Freeride Adventures (00 1 604 894 0220, www.ridebig.com) runs a five-day trip costing £750, which includes guiding, seaplane flights and lunches.

Why not stop over in Vancouver?

Many travellers pass straight through Vancouver, says Jane Wooldridge in *The Miami Herald*. That's a mistake. Here are just a few of the city's many attractions.

Walks: Vancouver is an incredibly green city, so it's great for walks. "One of the best areas for wandering" is the West End, a "cheerful" area set in an "endless garden of tulips, cherry trees and weeping willows".

Shopping: The "hip" Yaletown district is the place to go for "stylish" boutiques and cafes. Don't miss Urban Fare, a "temple" of gourmet food (177 Davie St).

Theatre: During summer months, Shakespeare plays are performed in the evenings along the beach at Vanier Park in Kitsilano (00 1 877 739 0559).

Art: Don't miss the Vancouver Art

Gallery, which has 20th century artists including Miro, Dubuffet and Bacon.

Dining out: For "a fun evening", head for Delilah's in the West End, which serves "memorable" food alongside an eclectic selection of music (00 1 604 687 3424).

Where to stay: Crown Plaza Hotel. "Historic style" just opposite the Art Gallery. From £50. (00 1 800 663 1424).