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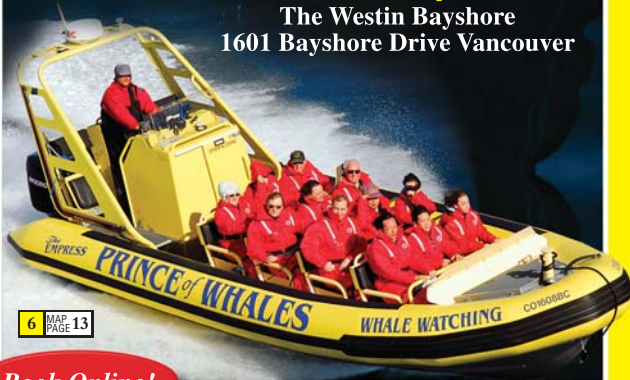
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VISITORS' GUIDE

SIGHTSEEING & STREET MAPS

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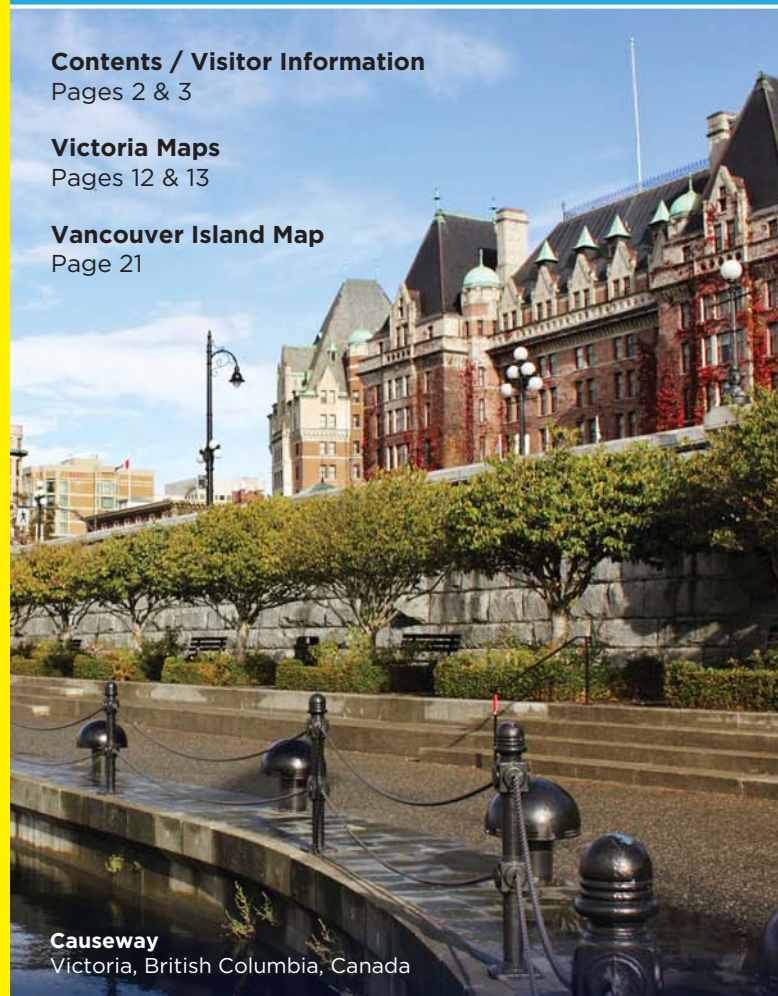
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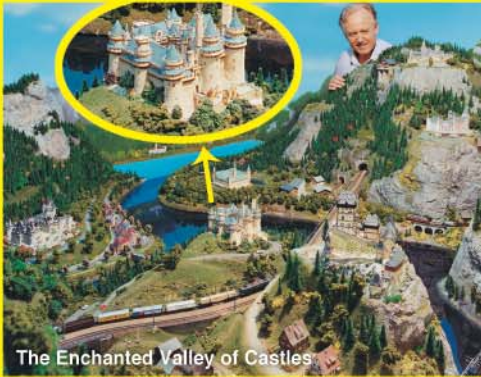
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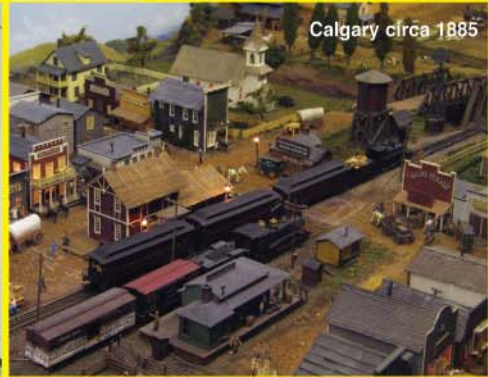
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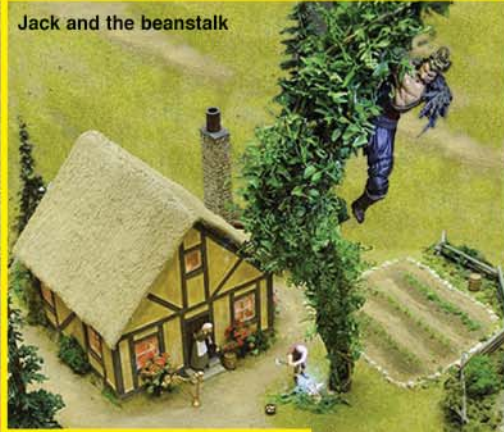
Battle of Britain



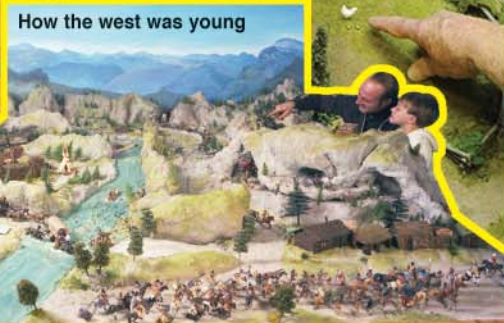
Calgary circa 1885



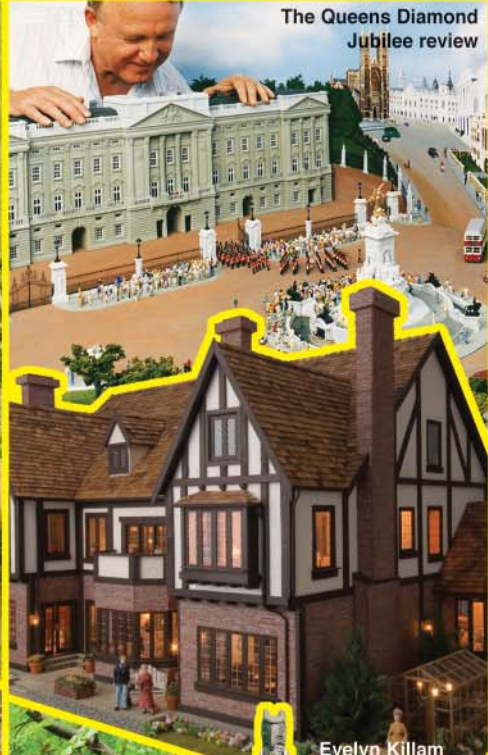
The gnome family home



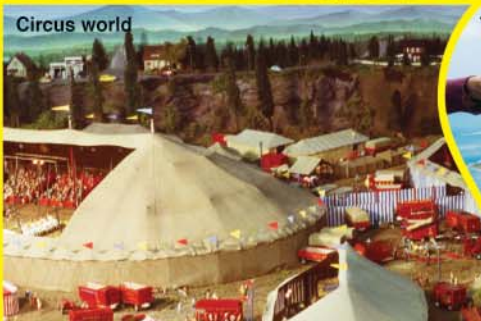
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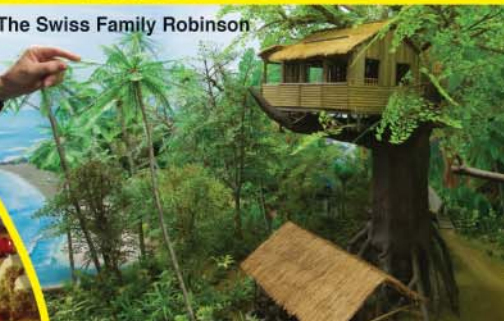
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The Queens Diamond Jubilee review



Circus world



The Swiss Family Robinson



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VOLUME 45 – No. 1 – 2012

BORDER CROSSING INFO

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AMERICAN CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

After 48 hours stay in Canada, Americans are allowed \$400 duty-free merchandise once every 31 days for personal use. Less than 48 hours stay, the allowance is \$200 of merchandise.

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Helijet Airways	1-800-665-4354
West Coast Air	1-800-347-2222
Westjet Airlines.....	1-888-937-8538
Alaska Airlines	1-800-252-7522
Horizon Air	1-800-547-9308

Bus Lines

Greyhound Canada	1-800-661-8747
B.C. Transit Bus Information.....	(250) 382-6161

Ferry Services

BC Ferries.....	(250) 386-3431
Clipper Navigation Ltd. (<i>Victoria Clippers I and II</i>)	
Victoria	(250) 382-8100
Seattle	(206) 448-5000
Black Ball Transport Inc. (M.V. Coho).....	(250) 386-2202
Washington State Ferries	(206) 464-6400

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergency 911

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Poison Control Centres

All areas 1-800-567-8911

Hospitals

Royal Jubilee (250) 370-8000

Victoria General (250) 727-4212

Saanich Peninsula (250) 652-3911

Dental

Cresta Dental Centre (250) 384-7711

Mayfair Dental Centre (250) 384-1154

B.C. Automobile Association Emergency Road Services

..... 1-800-222-4357

FISHING

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Prospect Lake Golf Course (250) 479-2688

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Arbutus Ridge 1-250-743-5000

Bear Mountain Estates & Country Club (250) 744-2327

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Crystal Pool (250) 361-0732

Esquimalt Centre (250) 412-8500

Gordon Head Centre (250) 475-7100

Oak Bay Centre (250) 595-7946

Panorama Centre (250) 656-7271

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourism BC 1-800-435-5622

Tourism Victoria Visitor Centre (250) 953-2033

Tourism Association of Vancouver Island 1-250-754-3500

Canada Customs and Immigration (250) 363-3531

U.S. Consulate (in Vancouver) (604) 685-4311

Marine Weather (250) 363-6880

Directory Assistance 411

Emergency Preparedness Canada (250) 363-3621

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WELCOME TO VICTORIA

“A perfect Eden” was how James Douglas, founder of Fort Victoria, described the city setting. Visitors to the city who enjoy February Blossoms when the rest of the country is buried in snow may well agree with him.

Victoria has a personality as strong as its namesake, the longest reigning English monarch. Western Canada’s oldest city (first known as Camosack), was originally settled in 1843 as Fort Victoria, a regional outpost of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Its harbour was home to one of the world’s largest whaling and sealing fleets and a major port of entry to British North America.

The Oregon Treaty of 1846 settled the boundary dispute between the US and Britain, and Fort Victoria’s strategic location was realized. Victoria had a boom town mentality during the 1860s. At this time, the town had no less than 85 licensed drinking establishments. The city did not neglect the arts either: the Victoria Theatre was created by converting some empty fur warehouses.

Victoria is known today as the “City of Gardens”. Scottish-born John Blair won the 1889 competition to design Beacon Hill Park. The hybrid rhododendrons he planted around Fountain Lake are still glorious more than 100 years later.

The international **Swans Suite Hotel’s** award-winning restoration has created 30 distinctively spacious loft-suites including a penthouse – perfect for families or executive travellers. Full kitchens, private patios, terraces, skylights, and feather duvets are just a few of our special touches. One of Canada’s largest original art collections is displayed throughout the brewpub, restaurant and hotel in this unique 1913 heritage building.

The **Strathcona Hotel** on Douglas Street, built in 1918, is one of the city’s three original hotels. Newly renovated, the hotel offers budget accommodations in its 83 rooms. The Strathcona also features a range of dining and entertainment options with its five pubs and restaurants.

Located downtown, the **Queen Victoria Hotel and Suites** features luxurious standard rooms and suites at an affordable price. Health facilities and restaurant on site. Complimentary downtown shuttle.

James Bay Inn Hotel & Suites is a unique and historic hotel conveniently located within walking distance to the Coho Ferry, the Seattle Clipper, Pacific Coach Lines, local transit and the Inner Harbour. The Hotel is a truly exceptional accommodation, spacious and family-style. All rooms are freshly appointed. Our quaint James Bay Cottage Vacation Rental is perfect for short or extended stays while in Victoria. The Heritage House is a delightful property featuring four luxury suites, all with fully equipped kitchens and all with modern conveniences an experienced traveler would expect.

When visiting the Victoria Downtown Inner Harbour, choose from one of 63 well appointed and attractive guest rooms from the **Quality Inn Downtown**. Enjoy a Traditional Room or a King Suite and your comfort is assured. Onsite indoor pool, steamroom and restaurant. Take a stroll to all of the major attractions that Victoria has to offer all within walking distance of the hotel.

Nearby, located close to major attractions and the Inner Harbour, the **Executive House Hotel** is home to Victoria's most popular restaurants and lounges. Visit the cheerful Café d'Amoré for family dining; dine on the ocean's freshest at Doubles Oyster Bar; enjoy the lively atmosphere in Bartholomew's Bar and Rockefeller Grille.

Victoria's only 3.5 star affordable full service hotel, the **Vacation Inn**, sits beside Victoria's largest shopping center and is 3 minutes from Downtown and Inner Harbour. Friendly courteous staff offer outstanding guest service. Free guest computer in lobby, guest laundry and so much more. Voted Victoria's best hotel value.

The 95-room **Comfort Inn Waterside** is the only hotel on the Gorge Waterfront, and the only Comfort Inn on Vancouver Island. Located 10 minutes from downtown, the Comfort Inn offers one-bedroom suites, water-view rooms, free breakfast and parking, heated outdoor pool, licensed restaurant and laundry facilities.

NOTE: The opinions expressed in the advertising/editorial portion of this Publication are not necessarily those of the Publisher. Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this Publication, the Publisher will not be responsible for any errors or omissions.



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FERRY

The BC Ferries operates one of the world's largest and most modern ferry fleets, with 38 ships servicing 46 ports-of-call along the coast of BC. The major southern route connects Tsawwassen on the mainland (south of Vancouver) to Swartz Bay at the north end of the Saanich Peninsula on Vancouver Island (37 km from Victoria). The fleet includes the S-Class Superferries, Spirit of Vancouver Island and Spirit of BC. During the peak summer months, there are 16 scheduled sailings from each terminal daily. The crossing takes 1 hour and 35 minutes.

The major mid-island route connects Horseshoe Bay on the mainland (north of Vancouver) to Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. During the peak summer months, there are up to 12 scheduled sailings from each terminal daily. The crossing takes 1 hour and 35 minutes.

The Mid-Island Express route between Tsawwassen and Duke Point, with 8 scheduled sailings from each terminal daily, takes 2 hours.

CITY BUS SERVICE

BC Transit System covers the entire city from downtown Victoria to Sooke and Sidney. Take a single trip or ride all day with a day-pass available from many outlets. For further information consult your Transit Riders' Guide (available on line at www.bctransit.com) or phone (250) 382-6161.

OTHER MARINE TRANSPORTATION

Victoria to Seattle

The Victoria Clipper and Victoria Clipper II high-speed catamarans offer year-round passenger service only, daily between Seattle and Victoria.

Sidney, BC to Anacortes, Washington

Washington State Ferries operates at least 2 sailings daily in the summer months, and one daily for the balance of the year. Cars, R.V.s, trucks and foot passengers are carried. Cafeteria service is available. Sailing time is approximately 2½ hours.

Victoria to Port Angeles, Washington

Black Ball Transport, Inc. (M.V. Coho) operates 4 sailings daily during the summer months, 2-3 sailings daily in spring and fall, and one during the winter. Vehicles are carried and a cafeteria is available. Sailing time is 1 hour and 35 minutes.



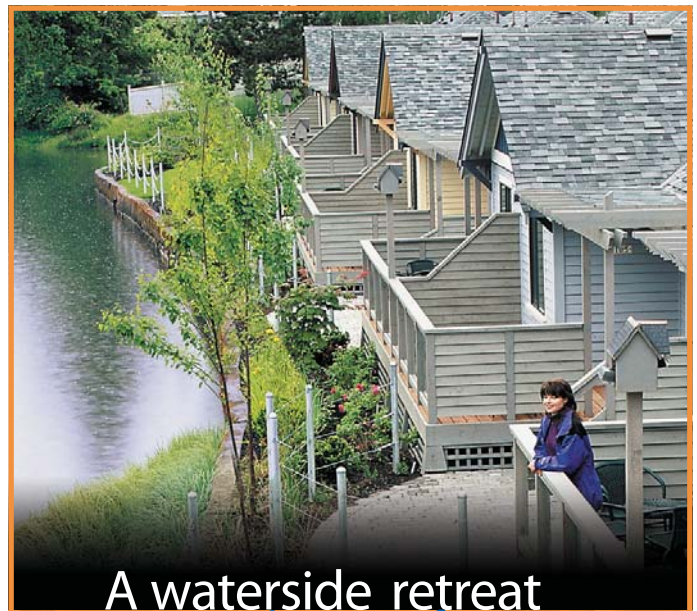
SIGHTSEEING IN VICTORIA

Many Victoria attractions are clustered around the Inner Harbour area, making sightseeing an easy stroll for visitors. You can also rent a scooter or bicycle, or lounge in the back of a pedicab. If you prefer the bus, **BC Transit** is the way to go! Schedules and a riders guide that can help you get to Butchart Gardens or Craigdarroch Castle, are available at locations throughout Victoria. You can also buy day passes, good for unlimited bus travel, at most drug stores.

Guided tours are offered for the Parliament Buildings, constructed in 1898 at a cost of almost \$1 million. A young architect, Francis Rattenbury, won the design competition for this project only a few months after he arrived in BC. Rattenbury designed other magnificent structures flanking the harbour: the classical columns of the Canadian Pacific Steamship terminal and the Empress Hotel, built in 1908. The Empress Hotel is a reminder of the elegance of the Edwardian age. In the afternoons, visitors can enjoy a traditional tea in the main lobby. Recline in an overstuffed wing chair while you nibble watercress sandwiches and strawberries and cream.

Since Victoria is a seaside city, sightseeing should include a boat tour to visit our resident pods of killer whales and view the abundant sea life including porpoises, seals and sea lions around our shores. All the whale watching companies work with spotters to ensure a whale sighting on almost every trip from May to September. At convenient locations in the harbour, there are several tour companies offering tickets to excitement. **Prince of Whales Whale Watching** offers a premier whale watching experience, with 10 open zodiac style vessels for maximum departure flexibility and two highspeed covered cruisers for those seeking a greater degree of luxury and comfort. We are also the only company that offers a whale watching excursion that delivers guests to our private docks at the Butchart Gardens. Other options include whale watching excursions that depart to and from downtown Vancouver. Find us on the lower causeway of the Inner Harbour or call (250) 383-4884 to reserve your spot.

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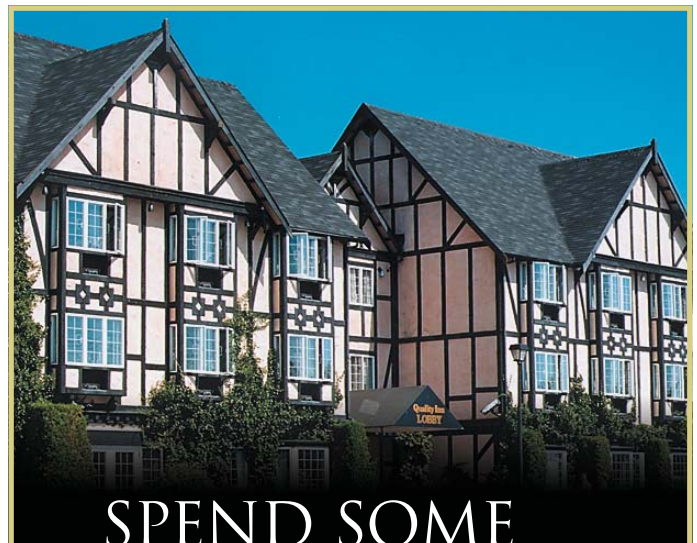


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guests to listen to the whales as well as educational presentations from onboard Marine Biologists. Indoor & outdoor seating, a large washroom and 360° viewing decks combine for the best tours in Victoria! The more daring traveler might consider the fast & fun open-air Zodiacs for a world-class thrill. SpringTide, family owned & operated for almost 20 years, has established a local & international reputation for excellence in environmentally sensitive & educational tours. Visit them at VictoriaWhaleTours.com or contact their friendly staff at 1.800.470.3474 for more info. Let SpringTide's certified biologists and Victoria's incredible wildlife help you create memories that last a lifetime! If your looking for a more 'hands-on' ocean adventure, **SpringTide Sport Fishing** is a **BIG DEAL** in Victoria. And that's not just another fish story! Salmon, Pacific Halibut, Lingcod, Rockfish - Join SpringTide for top-quality fishing charters right out of downtown Victoria! The 46' SpringTide I offers a 4 rod set up, fly bridge, large indoor cabin, full washroom facilities, expansive back deck, and top-of-the-line fishing gear and marine electronics. All bait and tackle, cleaning and bagging, fishing gear and hot drinks included. Whether looking for world-class tours for the experienced angler, exhilarating lessons for the beginner, or just a relaxing day on the water, the SpringTide I and professional guide & crew have provided it all for almost 20 years! Contact them at SpringTideCharters.com or toll-free at 1.800.470.FISH (3474). GO FISH!

Eagle Wing Tours offers Guaranteed Whales and is Canada's first Carbon Neutral eco-adventure whale watching company! This family-owned and locally operated business is highly ranked on Trip Advisor and is sure to deliver a world class marine wildlife experience. For reservations call (250) 384-8008 or visit www.eaglewingtours.com.

Great Pacific Adventures offers year-round Whale Watching and Marine Wildlife Tours! As one of the 1st whale watching companies in Victoria, Great Pacific Adventures sets the standard for marine wildlife viewing experiences. Their fleet of Zodiacs and covered high-speed ocean cruiser offers safety and comfort, while their experienced team of Naturalists and Biologists share their intimate knowledge of the local marine wildlife. Their booking office is conveniently located on the docks at Harbour Air Seaplanes

(950 Wharf St.). Call their 24-hour reservation line at (250) 386-2277 or 1-877-733-6722 (international).

Orca Spirit Adventures, Victoria's premier adventure company offers you world-class Whale Watching and Marine Wildlife tours. Featuring Victoria's most desirable whale watching experience... the large and luxurious, high-speed Orca Spirit vessels! Victoria's only liquor-licensed whale watching vessels. Onboard certified naturalists help make this an educational experience you'll never forget. Offering a complimentary shuttle from any downtown location; call 24-hour reservation line at (250) 383-8411.

Foghorn Fishing Charters specializes in salmon and halibut fishing. With chinook salmon reaching 50 lbs and Pacific halibut 200 lbs, this is world-class sportfishing. Open year-round and offering half-day or full-day trips, all are charters that depart from Victoria and Sooke Harbours. For reservations, please call office: (250) 658-1848 or cell: (250) 812-8923.

Miniature World, nestled in a wing of the Empress Hotel, offers a unique window into an imaginary realm for the whole family. Over 80 attractions include a tiny circus, Fantasyland, dioramas of favourite nursery rhymes, Dickensian scenes of old London, Fields of Glory, and Space 2201. A 35-room version of Queen Mary's famous doll house features incredible detail from the tiny wine bottles in the cellar to the royal ghost in the attic, and a scale model of the Canadian Pacific Railway features special night and day illumination and thousands of hand-painted figures, miniature trestles, the world's smallest working sawmill, and scenes from across Canada.

The Butchart Gardens is located 20 minutes away on the Saanich Peninsula. The Butchart Gardens is one of the top visited attractions in Canada. Enticing visitors since the early 1900s, these breathtaking gardens are now a National Historic Site. The Gardens offers 55 acres of spectacular beauty in every season. Spring features countless tulips, daffodils and hyacinths, with the glorious Rose Garden bursting into bloom in the summer. Perennial borders start their stunning show in late summer, and the Japanese maples turn to russet, gold, and red in the fall. Enjoy fine dining or more casual fare, and be sure to browse their 8,000 sq. ft. Seed & Gift shop.

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The Original Christmas Village

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Your heart will delight in our cozy four level, Alpine-style "Old World" Christmas Wonderland, bursting with thousands upon thousands of ornaments, locally made keepsakes and true one-of-a-kind treasures from all countries. Please read the write-up about our store in this guide in "Shopping in Victoria."

Our customers are in heaven: pleasing music, capeted floors, professional service, getting lasting values.

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Behind the ornate heritage facades of our Victorian buildings, you'll discover a novel shopping experience. Exclusive fashion boutiques, art galleries featuring West Coast crafts, and specialty stores offering a variety of imported goods such as Irish linens and British china, are all just a short stroll from the Inner Harbour.

Pick a direction, any direction, and just go! In Victoria, heritage is truly cherished, and it is one of the few cities left in North America in which height restrictions are maintained to preserve the value (and the seaview) of its older buildings. As a result, the city remains "small-town friendly".

Right in the middle of Government Street, tastefully blending with heritage neighbours, is a four-level mall, where more specialty shops rub shoulders with recognized chain outlets. As for clothing, you can find whatever is your personal style and price range in the wide selection available. Keep on the lookout for the little gems tucked away on side streets branching off Government Street – you never know what you might find.

Further along Government Street, you will find **The Original Christmas Village**. This store has made Victoria famous for year-round Christmas shopping and is on the "Must Stop and Shop" list, as it features four Christmas, Souvenir, Gift, and Chocolate Shops under one big roof. You can buy Nutcrackers from Germany, the Candle Windmills, Incense Smokermen, Wooden Miniatures, Handblown Glass, Pewter Ornaments, Wax Angels, Cuckoo Clocks, Steins, Swedish Candelabras, Dolls, Nativities and Collectibles such as Hummel, Goebel, Steiff, Boyds Bears, Cherished Teddies, Gnomies, Radko, Pipka, Rhyn-Rivet, Snowbabies, Dep. 56, Charming Tails, Sarah's Angels, Seagull, Willow Tree, Jim Shore, musical snowglobes and authentic Russian Nesting Dolls, to name a few. The Original Christmas Village offers daily, new, below-cost specials also on collectibles. Be prepared to stay awhile!

For more heritage splashed with colour, walk down Johnson Street, remembering to look up as you go. These buildings have been lovingly preserved and, once again, house an

... continued on page 17



EXPLORING BRITISH COLUMBIA'S COLORFUL PAST

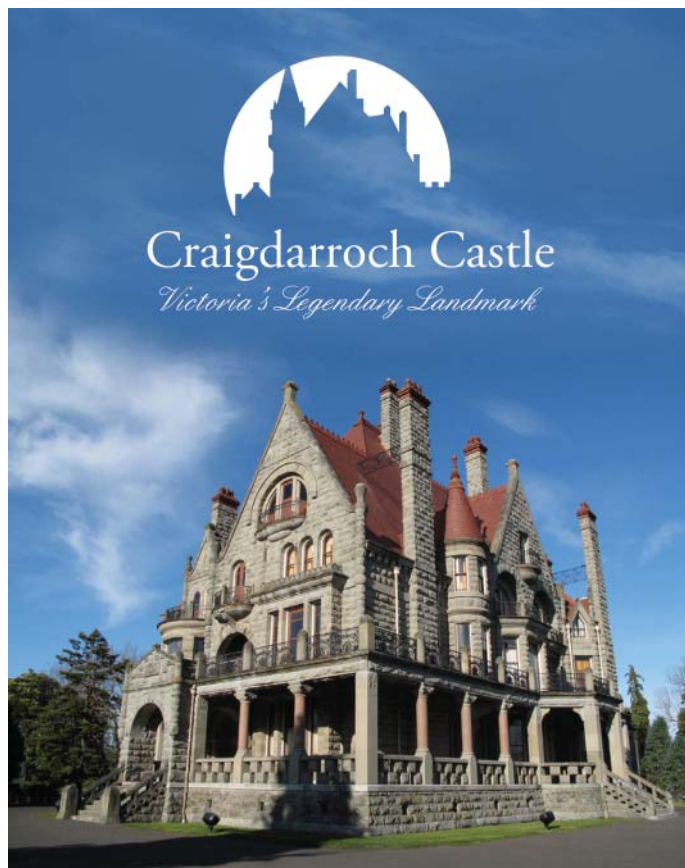
Heritage is alive and well in Victoria! The aura of history is very much evident in the public buildings, places of worship and elegant homes of the last century.

Much has been done to ensure our heritage is preserved with many homes and museums open for public tours. One of the many must-see sights on the heritage itinerary is **Craigdarroch Castle**. Built in 1887-90, the mansion features the best collection of residential stained and leaded glass on the West Coast, period furnishings and fabulous wood panelling and carving. Since restoration, the castle has been featured in a number of movies, including "Little Women".

Located next to the Royal British Columbia Museum is Helmcken House, the former home of Dr. J. S. Helmcken, Hudson's Bay Company's doctor. On display are the sometimes frightening implements of Dr. Helmcken's trade, which represent one of the finest collections of nineteenth-century medical equipment. Helmcken House is open daily.

Farther along Government Street is Carr House, birthplace of Emily Carr, one of Canada's foremost artists and writers. In the summer months, meet "Emily", who will delight you with stories and gossip from the 1890s, accompanied by her pet monkey "Woo".

Also near Government Street is Bastion Square, site of the original Fort Victoria. The square's major focal point is the Maritime Museum of British Columbia, housed in a heritage building which was originally the Provincial Courthouse. Ride the oldest operating open-cage elevator in North America and see the newly restored Vice-Admiralty Court Room where Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie, known as BC's "hanging judge" presided. The Museum's gift shop and bookstore offer some unique nautical gifts.




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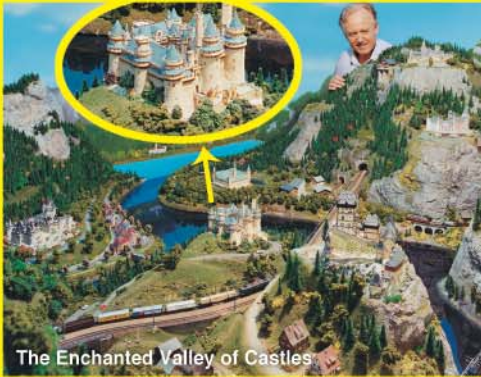
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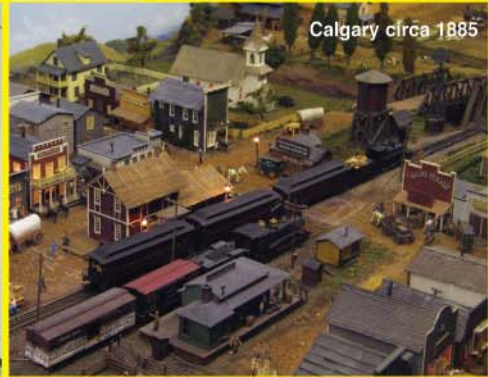
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The Enchanted Valley of Castles



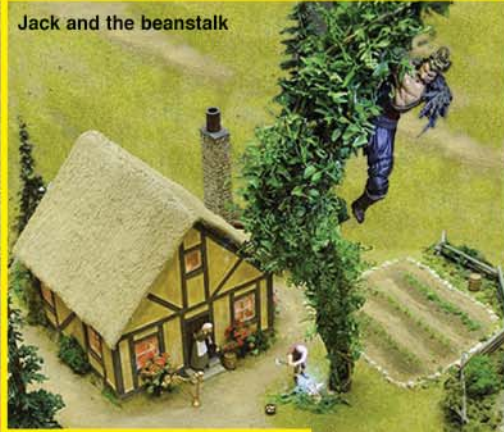
Battle of Britain



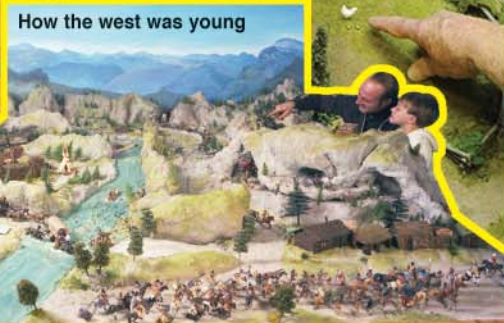
Calgary circa 1885



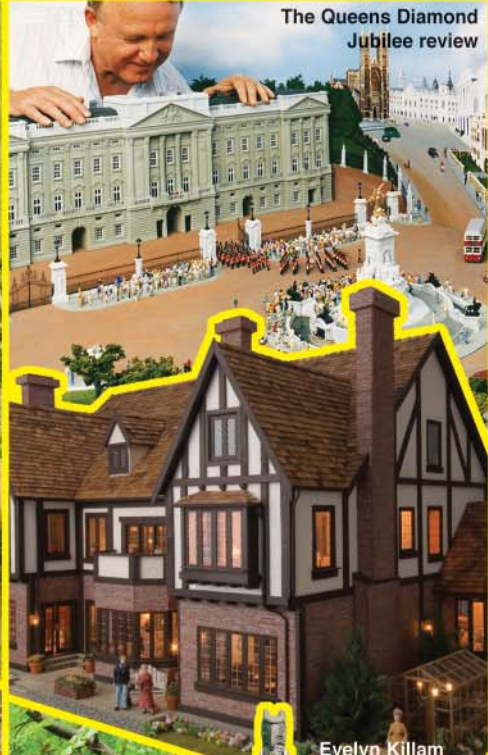
The gnome family home



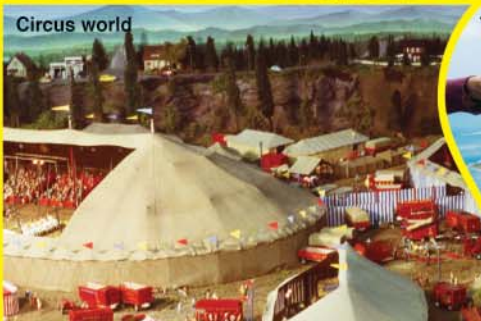
Jack and the beanstalk



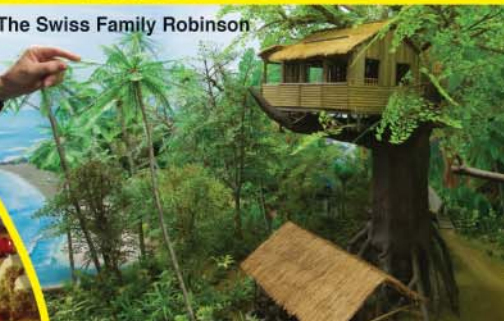
How the west was young



The Queens Diamond Jubilee review



Circus world



The Swiss Family Robinson



Evelyn Killam Doll House

Haida Village

DINING AND NIGHTLIFE

The only important decision to make each day on any carefree holiday is, “Where do we eat?” In Victoria, the answer to that question might be difficult since there are so many choices of restaurants, pubs and bistros reflecting unique atmospheres. You can dine al fresco, afloat, or “choose your view”; stick with tried-and-true; or challenge your taste buds to experience nouvelle or “West Coast” cuisine.

Those who are connoisseurs of “real ale” will find many brew pubs and microbreweries. As home of the annual Great Canadian Beer Festival, real ale aficionados travel from all over the world to taste and compare the many varieties.

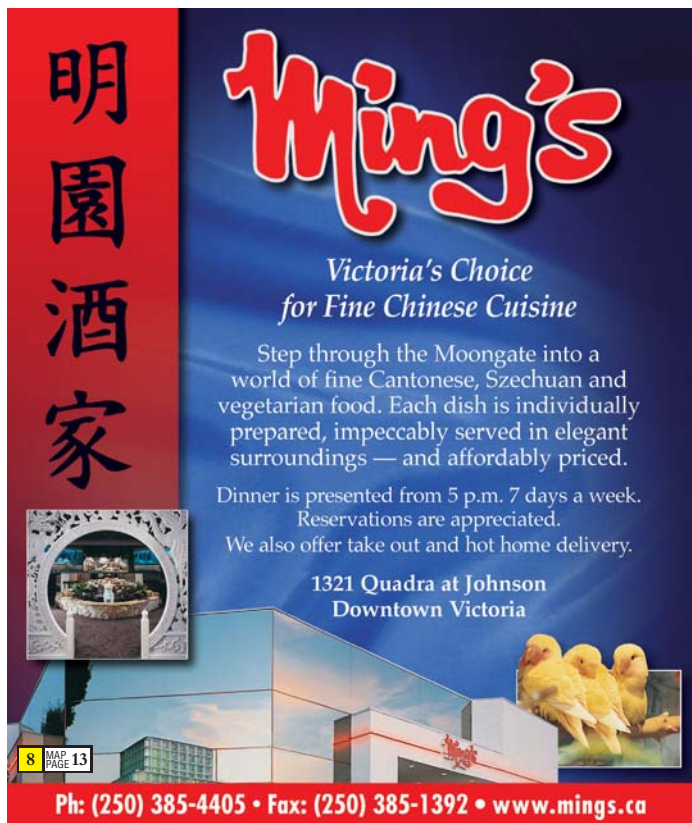
Not far from here you can find the Oriental flavour. **Ming’s Restaurant**, at 1321 Quadra Street, features an extensive dinner menu including traditional Cantonese and specialty dishes such as garlic crab and barbecued duck, complemented by Szechuan and vegetarian favourites.

When you get up from the table, the second most important holiday question to ask is, “Where do we go for the evening?” Victoria is a safe city after dark, but that doesn’t mean it is dull. With everything from rollicking nightclubs to vibrant local opera, the city is cosmopolitan in its nightlife options. Two jazz festivals, a blues festival, folk festival and Harbour Festival add to Victoria’s musical smorgasbord.

Symphony Splash on the Inner Harbour is a veritable feast of experiences. Approximately 40,000 spectators take their positions on the Causeway, the lawns of the Parliament Buildings, pleasure boats, kayaks and hotel rooms with the best view for a full evening of popular symphony music. Visitors from all over the world take away special memories of a full symphony orchestra in a white bandshell on a barge floating in the Inner Harbour. Pure magic!

Theatre offerings range from experimental to classic British farce. Victoria is also a favourite destination for touring productions and nationally-known rock groups.

If you’re staying at the Strathcona Hotel, you won’t have to go very far. The hotel has five different pubs and restaurants from western-style watering holes to rooftop dining and the relaxed informality of the Sticky Wicket, an eatery with an English influence, or Legends for live music and dancing. Long after twilight, Victoria is alive with laughter and music – the perfect finale to a day of sightseeing.



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... continued from page 10


abundance of unusual shopping diversions. Look for the year they were built carved into the stone or brick facade.

Between Johnson and Pandora Streets (enter on Johnson below Government) is a shopping complex with a wealth of history and a sense of occasion. Market Square, known as Victoria's historic festival marketplace, has more than 45 stores surrounding a central courtyard alive with entertainment.



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DISCOVER SIDNEY AND THE SAANICH PENINSULA

Whether you have an hour to spend, or a whole day, the Saanich Peninsula, which lies north of Victoria, is one of the Island's most charming destinations. As the transport hub of south Vancouver Island, it is home to the international airport, plus the ferries sailing to the BC mainland, the Gulf Islands (including Salt Spring Island), Sidney Marine Park, Anacortes, WA, and across the Saanich Inlet to Mills Bay.

The Peninsula enjoys the mildest climate and the most sunshine of anywhere in BC, and is still mostly rural. In the south, there's the century-old (and very famous) Butchart Gardens, of course, where you can spend hours wandering through spectacular flora. And not far away, the Dominion Observatory's Centre of the Universe is well worth a visit, with its space exhibits and giant telescope.

Sidney is a seaside town, and the facilities close to the water are there for you to enjoy. A fine sea walk follows the shoreline for several kilometers, passing in front of the luxury **Sidney Waterfront Inn**, the old federal wharf and the fishing pier. There are whimsical statues, flower gardens, and wonderful views across Georgia Strait. On a clear day, you'll see the snow-capped summit of Mt. Baker to the east and Mt. Olympus to the south. Watch for eagles, seals, sea ducks, gulls and cormorants.

Closest Best Western to Butchart Gardens, the **Best Western Emerald Isle** in Sidney-by-the-Sea is conveniently located 5 minutes from the Victoria International Airport, BC Ferry Terminal, and the Anacortes Ferry Terminal. Air conditioned, newly renovated rooms feature fridge and microwave. Pet friendly. Earn Best Western rewards! Licensed restaurant on site. Just 7 blocks from the ocean.

Also on the Sidney waterfront, at **Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre**, discover the amazing diversity of the Salish Sea in massive aquarium habitats teeming with marine life, from anemones to zooplankton. Friendly Oceaneers, interactive exhibits and hands-on/hands-wet exploration.

Why not sign up for a whale watching or kayaking tour with **Sea Quest Adventures**? Sidney is located in the middle of the Orca whales foraging grounds, meaning you have a much shorter boat ride and more "whale time" than departing from anywhere else. Plus, new this year Sea Quest is offering an Aboriginal Tour including dance, song and

food, offering a glimpse into the Aboriginal Culture that has thrived on this coast for a millennium.

The British Columbia Aviation Museum offers a unique experience to view an extensive collection of military, commercial and civilian aircraft artifacts, models and pictures of British Columbia aviation history is displayed and sold in the gift shop.

For the actively inclined, the Peninsula is a great jumping-off spot for a host of outdoor sports. Take a salmon fishing charter, or rent a kayak to explore the Gulf Islands at your leisure. Many of the island parks allow camping. The local channels are also famous for their diving. Experience the spectacularly clear water of the Saanich Inlet, or the HMCS MacKenzie (a 110m long destroyer) and GB Church (a coastal freighter) wrecks just offshore of Sidney.

If your idea of a holiday is something a bit more relaxing, how about a round of golf at Glen Meadows or Ardmore Golf Course, where visitors are most welcome year-round? Or visit one of the local vineyards to sample the medal-winning vintages of Vancouver Island. And be sure to visit the BC Air Museum, located on the airport lands, where the planes dating back to 1910 are on display.

Barely a month passes when there isn't a festival in Sidney. The summer markets on Thursday evenings (Jun 15 - Aug 31) turn Beacon Avenue into a pedestrian mall with hundreds of stalls, selling everything from wild salmon, fresh farm produce and delicious bread, to clothing, jewelry and crafts. Plus, lots of live music!

The Howard Johnson Hotel & Suites is the newest hotel on the Saanich Peninsula. Centrally located just minutes from downtown Victoria, Butchart Gardens, Sidney and the rest of the beautiful Saanich Peninsula the Howard Johnson Hotel & Suites offers one bedroom suites, full kitchen units, heated outdoor pool as well as the acclaimed Lakes Grillhouse and Bar.

Need accommodations? There's everything from camping, B&Bs, motels and hotels from which to choose. Centrally located halfway up the Peninsula, both the **Quality Inn** and **Western 66** offer good value and convenient highway access to Victoria and Sidney.

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WELCOME TO VANCOUVER ISLAND

It's difficult to describe North America's largest Pacific Island because its character is so diverse. Whereas Victoria is "genteel" and "cultivated," "rugged" and "remote" more accurately describe some of the more northern fishing and logging communities on Vancouver Island.

Goldstream Park, just minutes north of Victoria on Highway 1, is a good spot for picnicking. In the fall, hundreds of salmon come upstream to spawn in one of nature's most amazing rituals.

The City of Duncan is the commercial centre of the valley, now also known as the "City of Totems" for the nearly 40 totem poles that line the streets there.

Don't be in too great a hurry to reach the city, though, because when you opt for the waterfront route instead of the highway, you'll find the quaint, traditional fishing settlement of Cowichan Bay and its seaside mixture of cafes and chandlers, boatyards and boutiques.

North of Duncan is Chemainus, a thriving community that attracts thousands of visitors annually to see the "outdoor art gallery" - 32 murals illustrating the pioneer heritage of the Chemainus Valley. Visitors can tour by horsedrawn wagons, coaches or train.

Fifteen minutes south of Nanaimo, **WildPlay Element Parks**, an outdoor adventure playground, offers bungee jumping, the King Swing and TreeGO, an aerial obstacle course with swinging logs, suspended bridges and zip lines! For current hours call, 1-888-668-7874 or visit www.wildplayparks.com.

Nanaimo, known as the "Hub City" for its central location, is a busy deep-sea shipping port, and terminus for the BC Ferries' routes from Horseshoe Bay and Tsawwassen. Around its shores are some excellent scuba diving venues and recreational spots such as nearby Newcastle Island.

The Parksville-Qualicum Beach area is home to miles of safe, sandy beaches offering some of the best swimming in the province. The **Quality Resort Bayside** offers beachfront accommodations, ocean views and great food. Dozens of private campgrounds are located in the region, as well as the popular Rath Trevor Provincial Park, with its beach, towering fir trees and nature trails. This area also features world-

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201	45 COURTENAY																				
230	204 159 DUNCAN																				
337	91 136 294 GOLD RIVER																				
336	310 265 106 400 JORDON RIVER																				
202	176 131 28 266 134 LADYSMITH																				
252	226 182 30 317 136 51 LAKE COWICHAN																				
179	153 108 51 243 157 23 73 NANAIMO																				
145	117 73 87 208 192 58 109 36 PARKSVILLE																				
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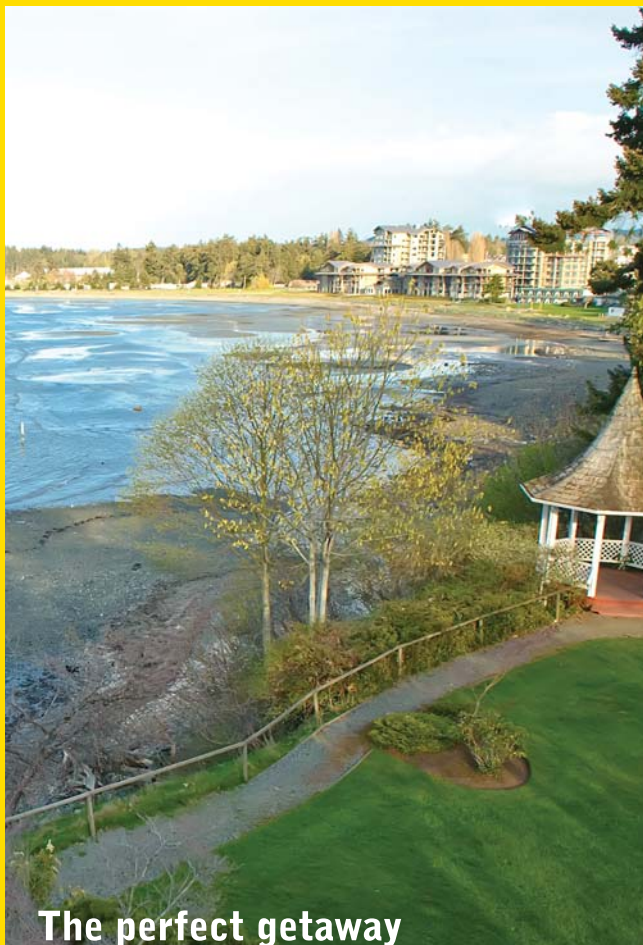
renowned arts and crafts, and numerous antique and collectable shops. Qualicum Beach, which calls itself “The Best Bloomin’ Town on Vancouver Island”, is just minutes from Parksville along Highway 19A. Quaint shops and tea rooms reflect its British heritage, as do many of the buildings in the village’s main shopping district. There are golf courses, art galleries, and the famous beach itself offering not only fabulous swimming, but also a variety of marine wildlife and spectacular ocean vistas.

Should your trip plans include experiencing what the rugged West Coast of Vancouver Island has to offer, enjoy a scenic drive along Highway 4, which you can access from either Parksville or Qualicum Beach. Your drive will take you through the majestic Cathedral Grove, a towering stand of ancient, massive cedars that are at least 800 years old.

The road then opens up to the Alberni Valley, an eco-playground on the doorstep of Canada’s stunningly rugged Pacific Rim. Port Alberni’s Harbour Quay is a downtown destination on a working harbour, with a picturesque wilderness backdrop. Board the old Number 7 steam train at the refurbished train station in downtown Port Alberni and ride out to Mclean Mill, Canada’s only National Historic site that features a working steam sawmill and camp.

Once you’ve entered Pacific Rim National Park near Tofino and Ucluelet, you’ve arrived at one of the most renowned vacation spots on Vancouver Island. Both of the communities are picturesque, casual and welcoming.

From the Parksville–Qualicum Beach area, if you choose to continue along the east side of Vancouver Island, you will find a string of interesting communities and seascapes including Oyster Bay, Bowser and Fanny Bay. The Comox Valley, encompassing the towns of Comox, Cumberland and Courtenay, is where you can ski, sail, fish, kayak, canoe, hike, trailride, beachcomb and golf all on the same day. Campbell River, which vies with Port Alberni for the title of the world’s best salmon fishing area, is an ideal casting off point for yacht charters to the warm waters of Desolation Sound, a marine wonderland which belies its name. A short ferry ride from here takes you to picturesque Quadra Island.



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