

SOAR

Inflight
Magazine for
Pacific Coastal
Airlines

IN THE AIR

Longtime PCA pilot
Pierre Lajeunesse retires

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Port McNeill
company catches
the “organics” wave

HOME OF WICKED SALMON

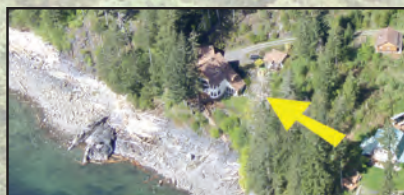
A three-generation fishing adventure

Pacific Coastal
AIRLINES®

August /September 2014 | Volume 8 | Number 4



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Quadra Island Oceanfront: This is the complete package! **2800+ sqft.**, one-of-a-kind 3 bed/2 bath home on 5 forested, south facing, **oceanfront** acres with **265** feet of frontage and permission for future private moorage. Quality craftsmanship. Expansive **oceanside** decks wrap the front of the house, overlooking **Open Bay**. Detached garage/shop and a guest cabin. **\$779,000**



Alice Lake Acreages: North Vancouver Island lakefront investment opportunity! **17** individually titled lakefront lots from **9.88-16.48** acres. Total of **220** forested acres, **4000ft** of low-bank diverse lakefront. **Link River** bisects the property at the **Link River Regional Campsite**. Forest service road access and water access. **\$1,450,000**



Harlock Island: .92 acre private island located minutes from **Canoe Cove Marina** and amenities in **North Saanich**. This unique little island has licensed protected moorage, electrical service, appealing natural features, a diverse shoreline and a mostly level topography. Location provides easy access to the **Gulf Islands** and the rest of **Vancouver Island**. **\$595,000**



Sturt Island: A True Gem in the heart of the **Discovery Islands**. An extraordinary estate with a magnificent **4500sqft** main residence, **800sqft** log home and additional **400sqft** log cottage; **85.6 acres**. Deep water moorage, expansive oceanside deck, infrastructure for power, water and communication, outbuildings and equipment, gardens. **\$4,950,000**



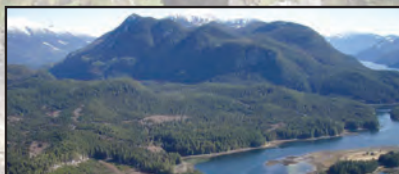
Farewell Harbour Resort, Berry Island: Located in the **Broughton Archipelago**. **9.91** acres, appealing **7500sqft** oceanfront lodge facility. **\$990,000**
Lot B: **9.8** oceanfront acres, **1900sqft** rustic residence, self-sufficient, manicured lawns and forest **\$295,000**
Lot C: **9.91** undeveloped **oceanfront** acres, walk-on low bank frontage **\$185,000**



Farquharson Island: **135** acre private island in the south central **BC** coast region, in **Clio Channel**. Completely undeveloped, moderate topography. **4733 metres / 2.9 miles** of diverse shoreline including a number of bays, peninsulas and beaches. Previously logged now in a state healthy regeneration. Network of internal roads. Great adventure region. **\$655,000**



Cortes Island Waterfront Acreage: A rare opportunity to enjoy both ocean and lake frontage on one substantial property! **70 acres** with **2000+ft** diverse, low-bank oceanfront on **Gorge Harbour** and **1400ft** frontage on **Anvil Lake**. Fully forested, surrounded by Crown Land. Three small, rustic dwellings. Water access property in the **Discovery Islands**. **\$970,000**



Chatham Channel Acreages: Six appealing, private **oceanfront wilderness** acreages with southern exposure, shared loading dock, internal roads, cleared building sites and stunning views. Enjoy this magnificent outdoor adventure area on the doorstep of **Broughton Archipelago**, world-renowned for fishing, whale watching, kayaking and more. Water access. **\$75,000 - \$140,000**



Echo Bay, Gifford Island: Diverse, forested **82 oceanfront acres**, solid classic home with nice wood trim, floors and detailing, workshop, boardwalks and patios, generator shed. **Deep water bay**, due west exposure overlooking **Cramer Pass**. Near world-renowned **Broughton Archipelago Marine Park**, known for unsurpassed marine recreation and wildlife. Timber value! **\$345,000**



Nootka Sound: West coast Vancouver Island. **10** acre oceanfront lots in **Plumper Harbour**, with good building sites. Central to popular west coast fishing regions. Water access, near **Tahsis**.



Phillips Arm Acreage: **BC Mainland Coast**. **2.67** oceanfront acres where the **Phillips River** enters **Phillips Arm**, surrounded by majestic mountains and Crown land. Two adjoining titles. Flat topography, **1000sqft** dwelling with new roof. Substantial shop. Water access only, approx. one hour from **Campbell River**. Amazing wilderness region with lots of wildlife. **\$295,000**



Quatsino Sound: **38** acres with **1400ft** of low-bank oceanfront, just south of the **Village of Quatsino** on northern **Vancouver Island**. The property is heavily timbered with mature forest and has some dramatic natural features. Property provides beautiful views and access to excellent fishing and other outdoor activities in a spectacular west coast region. **\$249,999**

Lot 9: potential deep water moorage. **\$119,000**
Lot 1: Specific permission for private moorage, facilities currently being installed. **\$199,000**

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Photo: Benjamin Yong

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Quentin Smith
President,
Pacific Coastal Airlines

I am proud to say that we fly to more than 65 destinations in British Columbia, more than any other airline. However, the preceding statement fails to convey the fact that these so-called destinations are much more than a mere collection of dots on a map. They are unique communities scattered across vast expanses of some of the most beautiful and pristine habitat on the planet.

Throughout the year the residents of these communities come together in various ways to celebrate and honour their local culture and heritage, and our staff is always eager to be part of these important community events. In just the past few months, our employees have marched in parades at Silver City Days in Trail, Cranbrook's Sam Steele Days and the Williams Lake Stampede.

We have offered seaplane flights to raise funds for local charity at Port Hardy's Filomi Days and

entered a rowing team to race at Powell River's Seafair festivities. We sponsored the Qatuwas Tribal Canoe Journeys 2014 in Bella Bella and the International Choral Kathaumixw in Powell River; we helped raise funds for children's charities in Victoria, flew rescued owls, ospreys, and marine mammals to animal care centres in the Lower Mainland, and raised a significant amount of money for two BC-based charities at our 22nd Annual Memorial Charity Golf Tournament.

It might seem like a lot, but it is really just a small sample of the dedication and commitment shown by our staff throughout the year. At Pacific Coastal we do more than fly to destinations. We serve communities, and that's the most important thing to remember.

MEET A PACIFIC COASTAL EMPLOYEE



Name:
Dmitriy Ponomarenko
Position: Flight
Dispatcher
Based at:
South Terminal YVR
**Time with
Pacific Coastal:**
One year

Department Mission or Vision:

The mission of the dispatch department is to ensure that all necessary documentation is prepared and all information is gathered for safe and efficient day-to-day flight operations. Our responsibilities include, but are not limited to: flight planning, evaluation of en route meteorological conditions, aircraft weight and balance analysis, inflight monitoring and support.

What do you like best about your job?

The work environment is fast-paced and dynamic, so no day is ever the same! In addition, ensuring passenger safety and comfort is of the utmost importance to me as part of a team of highly skilled professionals responsible for uninterrupted airline service provision.

Where do you live?

Richmond, BC

Where did you grow up?

Kyiv, Ukraine.

What are your hobbies outside of the job?

I practise Muay Thai and boxing.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Susan Lundy is a freelance writer, author and editor, who grew up in Victoria and now lives on Salt Spring Island.



Benjamin Yong is a freelance journalist and community news reporter based in Richmond, BC. He enjoys writing about lifestyles, culture and cars.



Susan Quinn is a veteran Vancouver Island journalist with more than two decades of experience and a passion for flying.



Montreal-born **Brian Kieran** has worked for several BC newspapers, taking him from England to Qatar.

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A LIFETIME IN THE AIR

TEXT AND PHOTO
BY BENJAMIN YONG

After being in the air for the better part of 40 years, French Canadian pilot Pierre Lajeunesse is hanging up his wings.

And while much of his career was focused on flying commercial planes all over BC with Pacific Coastal Airlines, he spent significant time taking tiny aircrafts over the jungles of Peru and the Congo.

Wearing a bright, orange safety vest over a navy uniform, the tall and wiry Lajeunesse sits in his office with a perfect view of the runway at the South Terminal of Vancouver International Airport. Now 58, he actually started his career in a slightly different field — as an aircraft mechanic.

“I think I became a pilot by accident more than anything. I was doing a pilot’s license at the same time as I was going to school, and there were aircrafts on the ground doing nothing in the summer. I asked my instructor, and I ending up doing the training for the price of fuel, which in 1978-79 was about \$10 an hour for a small airplane,” says Lajeunesse, who attended Collège Édouard-Montpetit in Quebec.

TAKING FLIGHT

Like many other pilots, he had an interest in winged vehicles from a young age, and later discovered his talents were better suited to flying planes rather than fixing them. His background as a mechanic opened the door on a job at St. Andrews Airport in Manitoba,

where he plied his trade as a bush pilot, and learned valuable skills he would take with him to South America and then Africa.

“It was an airline called Air Service Freedom. It had always been a dream of mine to fly for that company, so I applied for it and I had all the qualifications. One day they called me, and I packed my backpack and away I went.”

Flying compact and agile de Havilland Beavers, Otters and Cessnas, his work involved everything from performing medical evacuations of missionaries to picking up and dropping off supplies between remote villages.

“We were flying constantly, 700 to 800 times a year. You bring one of those guides to a town to get hooks, salt to preserve fish, machetes. You fill up the airplane with all the supplies that are supposed to last for a year,” he says.

OVER THE JUNGLE

This often meant having to take off and land on makeshift airstrips located in the middle of farmland. This proved difficult, but added to the challenge and excitement of the job and his appreciation of life. He cited a couple of examples that stood out in his mind as being particularly dangerous.

“When you start to lose [altitude] pressure over the jungle, you have to drag the airplane to the nearest field and hope the engine will keep going. And sometimes you push it too much on a load and you see the trees coming at you on takeoff, and maybe you say to yourself ‘I hope I’m going to make it this

time,” recalls Lajeunesse.

With four young kids at the time — all born and raised on airplanes, he jokes — Lajeunesse made the decision to return home.

This marked the beginning of his long-standing career with PCA. At that time, the airline was still called Powell Air before merging with the Port Hardy branch of the now defunct Air BC. Starting off flying floatplanes between Powell River and Bella Bella, he had no idea he would end his career with the company that had grown from two or three planes to 65, in over 15 destinations.

“I didn’t think we would stay here for 27 years,” says Lajeunesse, laughing.

GROWING WITH PCA

Coming from a small town outside of Quebec, he prefers the quieter lifestyle of Powell River where he now resides, and flies in and out of Vancouver when he is on duty.

“We have a population of 15,000 people. It’s on the shoreline. It’s a little bit insulated and if you don’t have an airplane, you’re stuck on the BC Ferries. You’ve got three traffic lights, grocery stores, a movie theatre and the Internet. You have everything you can dream of five minutes from home.”

Although an opportunity presented itself during his time with PCA to return overseas and pursue his passion of piloting relief missions, he says he made the right decision to stay.

“I wouldn’t have done anything differently. I enjoyed my time in the bush, but with Pacific Coastal it was exciting growing for 25 years.”

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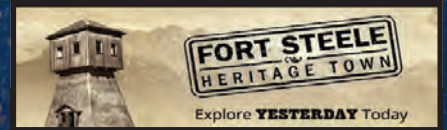
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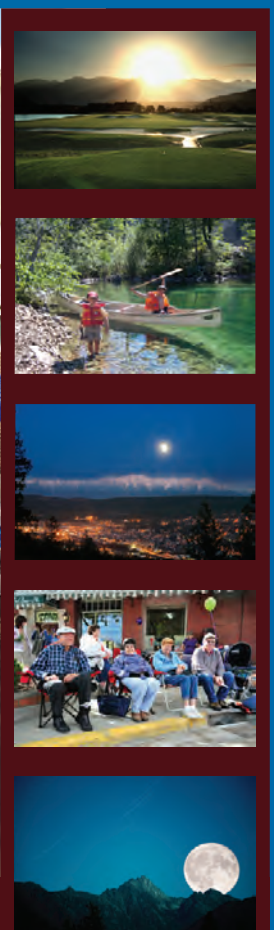
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PCA GOLF TOURNEY RAISES \$84,000

The greens at the Mayfair Lakes Golf & Country Club were packed June 3, when more than 120 golfers and sponsors gathered under balmy skies to help raise money for two important BC charities at Pacific Coastal Airlines' 22nd Annual Memorial Charity Golf Tournament.

"It was a fantastic day," said PCA President Quentin Smith. "A lot of people stepped up to help make it a very successful event and we are pleased with the outcome."

The event, presented by Canadian Western Bank, brought in over \$84,000, which, after expenses, will be shared by two charities: the Source Club of Powell River and the Native Education College (NEC) of Vancouver.

BC's largest private aboriginal college, NEC offers BC Adult Graduation Diploma programs, and college certificates and diplomas that provide access to employment or further post-secondary education.

The Source Club of Powell River is an organization that provides educational and life skills programs to people with mental illness, and helps them re-integrate into the community.



Photo by Susan Lundy

A bear viewing area at Tweedsmuir Park Lodge allows visitors to get up close to grizzlies.

"Our annual tournament is a labour of love," said Smith. "These charities are very important to us and we are grateful for the many golfers and sponsors who contributed their time and money to these worthy charities."

For event photographs visit www.facebook.com/pacificcoastalair or www.instagram.com/pacificcoastalair

BEARS IN FOCUS

Bella Coola's Tweedsmuir Park Lodge is hosting three wildlife and grizzly bear photography workshops this year, set amid the stunning backdrop of glaciers, rugged peaks and lush, old growth, coastal forests that characterize this region.

Every autumn, when salmon return

More BC ROUNDUP, page 10

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SEA SOIL IS THE FINE
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COMPOSTED SOILS

North Vancouver Island seems to be in a perpetual state of strategic economic analysis.

Whether in Port McNeill, Port Hardy, the Regional District of Mount Waddington or the regions' chambers of commerce, identifying and exploiting business

opportunities is a 24-hour occupation.

David Mitchell, president of the Port McNeill Chamber of Commerce, admits it's tough. "It is a challenge creating value-added opportunities that link to the area's larger forest industry."

So, on a visit to Port McNeill this summer, it was a delight to discover a home-grown business flying under the radar — a family-run operation that represents a beacon of entrepreneurial hope: Foenix Forest Technology. Environmentally conscious gardening enthusiasts across Canada know it better as "Sea Soil," or what owners Don and

Helene Waugh like to call "the fine wine of organic composted soils."

The Waughs launched Foenix quietly almost 20 years ago and went to market five years later. Changing environmental regulations in BC paved the way for an evolutionary business model that takes a sustainable supply of waste products from the forestry and fishery sectors, and creates a new product that meets the highest standards of environmental and business stewardship.

Those new environmental regulations prohibited logging companies from burning or land-filling their waste. Fish processing companies also needed a new method of waste disposal as they were no longer allowed to ocean dump or landfill their leftovers.

Sea Soil is created by composting fish waste (some of it from the 'Namgis Closed Containment salmon farming project on the Nimpkish River) and "forest fines" — a logging term for bark and other organics that fall off logs at a dry land sort. The Waugh's team blends the waste for two years,



Foenix produces about 20,000 cubic metres of bulk and packaged product annually. It has a dozen seasonal employees, a Canada-wide distributor and it also uses up to eight trucking companies.

turning it over a number of times and introducing beneficial micro-organisms that continue to elevate nitrogen levels, even after the product is bagged and shipped.

On the wood waste side of the equation, there seems to be an endless supply of logging debris. Recent estimates indicate that 125,000 cubic metres of wood biomass is easily accessible by road on North Vancouver Island, and that's only 15 per cent of the total available biomass in the region. Foenix has cornered the market on virtually all the dry land sort debris produced in this area.

Port McNeill's legendary mayor of 38 years, Gerry Furney, took me on a tour of the Foenix facilities in town.

"It's perfect," he said. "This intrepid couple married two waste products that were costly and troublesome to bury or burn, and created a new environmentally sensitive product that is shipped across Canada from a little place like this."

Helene Waugh, who Don says is the brains behind the operation, said Sea Soil was initially a hard sell.

"The first year we did 40 gardening shows. It wasn't an easy market at first. We went from garden centre to garden centre. Back then nobody was into organic [fertilizers]; everything was chemical."

Helene, who was raised on a farm in southern Alberta, was a teenager when manures gave way to chemical fertilizers. She says the evolution from chemical garden products back to organic was customer driven. Consumers were educating themselves, and they quickly realized Sea Soil was a healthier option.

"A lot of garden centres wouldn't carry our product at first. They said organics would never fly. It did and they all came back to us. They are all our customers now."

Shirley Marshall, manager of Sticks 'N Stones Nursery in Campbell River, was just taking delivery of her weekly order of 50 yards of bulk Sea Soil the day I dropped by.

"We go through a lot of it, bulk and bagged," she said. "Our customers use it mainly for their vegetable gardens and flower beds. They love it because it is rich and black."

Today, Foenix produces about 20,000 cubic metres of bulk and packaged product annually. It has a dozen seasonal employees, a Canada-wide distributor and it also uses up to eight trucking companies in its own distribution network.

Helene said the Foenix business model is elegantly simple and their location on North Vancouver Island close to raw material is excellent and essential. She added that they could not manage this scale of operations elsewhere: "There's lots of potential here." ■



THE KIERAN REPORT

with BRIAN KIERAN



Vancouver Island's iconic Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort gets a culinary facelift

Centrally located in Parksville on Vancouver Island, Tigh-Na-Mara is an all season destination resort set in 22 acres of tranquil Arbutus & Douglas Fir forest overlooking the ocean. The resort features 192 handcrafted log accommodations, two unique restaurants the award winning Grotto Spa, over 10,000 sq ft of meeting space, free WIFI & parking, an indoor pool with fitness facilities & 3 kms of sandy beach with the warmest swimming waters in Canada.

In 1946 a tent was the first "home" erected on the Tigh-Na-Mara 11 acre property and here we are 68 years later having completed a \$600,000 culinary facelift to our restaurant and lounge says Paul Drummond General Manager at Tigh-Na-Mara.

With a full service property we try and keep up to date with renovations and the time was right to transform our old restaurant into something fresh, tasteful, while still maintaining that rustic charm that our guests have come to love and expect. New **Cedars Restaurant and Lounge** décor is comfortable with blues, greens and brown taking in the elements of the ocean, forest and our log construction. "Our inspired chefs are creating local, regional and international dishes from the past and present. The seasonal menu showcases rustic dishes with a contemporary spin. We're creating special dishes, handcrafted favourites, maintaining the integrity of the ingredients, guaranteeing freshness and using local whenever possible... we're creating classic family favourites." says Director of Food & Beverage Manager, Bryan Stokes.

Cedars Restaurant and Lounge has a new face with a contemporary spin. Guests can sit back and relax over a craft beer, fine wine, great coffee, half price appetizer nights, a delicious steak, cedar plank salmon, our over the moon peanut butter pie or our comfortably priced 3 course dinners, says Drummond. **Cedars Restaurant and Lounge** is open every day for breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as having the ability to host small and large banquets for corporate retreats, weddings and any number of special events.

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BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Cont. from page 7

from the ocean to spawn in their rivers of origin, the Bella Coola Valley becomes home to a large concentration of grizzly bears. Capturing this majestic animal in its natural setting through the lens of a camera can be one of life's most thrilling experiences for both professional and novice photographers.

Wildlife photography requires intimate knowledge of animal behaviour, technical understanding of light and composition, and the professional photographers at these workshops help participants learn the many tricks of the trade.

Each workshop is limited to between five or 10 guests, giving participants ample opportunity for one-on-one interaction with the photographer and up close viewings of grizzlies. Nature hikes led by expert guides teach guests how to identify bear signs, and river floats immerse guests in the bears' preferred fall habitat. Participants will also have a chance to visit the quaint seaside village of Bella Coola, the Nuxalk art gallery and other cultural attractions.

For more information on the photography workshops, visit Tweedsmuir's website at: <http://www.tweedsmuirparklodge.com/adventures/grizzly-bear-photography-workshops-bella-coola-bc-canada>



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HOME OF WICKED SALMON



At top, reporter Steve MacNaull reels in an 18-pounder; and a successful day for three generations.

SUCCESS ON A THREE-GENERATION FISHING TRIP

BY STEVE MACNAULL

The rod shudders violently and the fight is on.

My 22-year-old son, Alex, has a 17-pound Chinook salmon on the line and, naturally, it doesn't want to come in the boat.

"Alright, alright, game on," yells Wade Dayley, our guide from Bear Cove Cottages & Sport Fishing.

"This fish is a real reel-screamer. Play it out, Alex. But keep tension on the line."

It's a classic battle between man and salmon.

The initial hit on the line is dramatic and the fish takes off, creating that distinctive screeching of the reel. The fish tires, Alex cranks the reel, pulls the rod up into an impossible arc, the Chinook gets a second wind — and is off again.

The scenario repeats itself several times until the salmon surfaces, gives a final fight and is scooped up in the net by Wade.

"Congratulations, Alex, you are no longer a Chinook virgin," says Wade

with a laugh and a high-five.

We're situated at the northern tip of Vancouver Island (off Port Hardy) in the Pacific waters of the Goletas Channel. Since this is a three-generation boys fishing trip, it seems only fitting that Alex, the youngest, gets the first fish of the day.

I get the second fish a few minutes later, an 18-pounder, in another wild man-and-fish back-and-forth.

And then my dad, Alex's grandfather, nonchalantly lands the biggest fish of the day — a glistening 21-pounder.

We rib each other about salmon size and fishing technique and then do it all over again.

We catch our limit of two Chinook per person, per day, for a total haul of over 100 pounds of the most red, tasty salmon there is.

We're full of ourselves and talking trash. But the reality is, Wade's done all the work and we've reaped all the glory.

A veteran guide, Port Hardy born-and-bred, Wade knows the secret spots where the Chinook hang out.

Setting out at 6 a.m. because "the bite is on," we speed to these exclusive waters

in Wade's 27-foot Grady-White boat, which is called *Double Header*.

In fishing, a double header is the phenomena of two big salmon being on separate lines at the same time, putting two fishermen in the boat into a frenzy. So, naturally, Alex and I cap the day with a double header.

Wade sets two big rods off the back of the boat, equipped with down riggers and anchovy bait on a treble hook with big, mean-looking lures.

"This is my secret spot and these are my secret weapons," he says, pointing to the set ups.

The boat is also equipped with a fish-inder, making it seem like the odds are stacked in our favour.

But this is what fishing guides do to ensure success for their customers. Otherwise, they'd go home empty-handed; Chinook — the most desirable salmon — are almost uncatchable for a newbie sports fisherman.

"I never get tired of helping my clients catch fish," says the tall and bearded Wade with a smile.

"I'm excited every day for this job."

Wade takes care of everything on the water for Bear Cove Cottages & Sport Fishing and his wife, Shannon, is responsible for


everything on land. Bear Cove's most popular package is a three-day fishing extravaganza and a four night stay in one of eight rustic-luxe cabins.

Price is \$2,500 per person, based on double occupancy, which includes meals, the freezing and vacuum-packing of fish and airport shuttle.

Pacific Coastal Airlines is the only airline that flies in and out of Port Hardy, with three daily flights from Vancouver.

While Chinook (also called spring and king salmon) is definitely the marquee attraction, sockeye and coho salmon, halibut and cod fishing are also available.

Bear Cove can also set up whale watching, bear watching and other North Island excursions.

While the business has a typical website at www.bearcovecottages.ca, it's also branding its fishing with the www.wicked.salmon.com site. Also check out www.pacificcoastal.com and www.vancouverislandnorth.ca 

To Get There

Pacific Coastal Airlines runs several flights daily between Vancouver Airport's South Terminal and Port Hardy. Visit www.pacificcoastal.com for more details.

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BY MEGAN COLE

My eyes open. I look over and my friend Jolene is laying beside me, her eyes wide, staring at the roof of the canvas tent cabin we're calling home for the night. The wind is violently shaking the small cabin, which is set out on the rocky ledge of a point in Halfmoon Bay on the Sunshine Coast.

Earlier that night — as we ate dinner with Ivan Mansanet, tour and travel manager of Rockwater Secret Cove Resort — we asked how much wind the trademarked tent cabins could handle. Mansanet reassured us they'd been tested and proven to withstand gusts as strong as 150 kilometres per hour. At 3 a.m., as Jolene and I lay staring at the flapping beige canvas, we wonder if the wind has hit that speed.

Halfmoon Bay is located on the lower Sunshine Coast and these tent cabins immerse visitors in what it means to live on the 180-kilometre stretch of locked land on British Columbia's West Coast. The glamping (glamorous camping) cabins are situated on a boardwalk that weaves along a rocky point lined with cedar and arbutus trees. The air combines the sweet smell of a West Coast forest with the salty smell of nearby waves.

The canvas and wood exterior of our tent cabin didn't reveal the secrets of the amenities inside. There is a hydrotherapy tub, heated floors and a huge king-sized bed. Lit from the inside, the cabins glow like paper lanterns after dark. Only the setting makes the experience resemble "camping."

The ocean-view deck provided the perfect place to relax, unwind and enjoy the ever-changing seascape. As we turned in for the night, the waves lapped at the rocky shoreline beneath us — a gentle, sleep-lulling sound. But dark clouds lined the horizon, and by 3 a.m. the waves no longer simulated the gentle soundtrack of a sleep machine: they crashed in unison with the wind.

Visions of the *Wizard of Oz* played out in my mind. Would the canvas casing of our beautiful little cabin lift off, leaving Jolene and me huddled in bed? Would the whole cabin slide into the sea? Eventually the wind subsided, and we were able to fall asleep.

As we left the resort the next morning, staff asked how we enjoyed our stay.

"Great, except the wind kept us up for a while," I replied.

"That was nothing," we were told.



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Aerial Photo Credit: Dean Van't Schip

COAST



Aerial view of "glamping" cabins. Photo courtesy of Rockwater Secret Cove Resort


I later checked the weather, and sure enough, the wind only reached 25 kilometres per hour — nowhere near the 150 our tent cabin could handle.

EAT AND DRINK:

- Persephone Brewing Company: Experience farm to cup brewing in a big red farmhouse on a former flower farm in Gibsons. The diverse range of beers includes their BC Beer Award winning stout, Stout-Off Stout.
- Northern Divine Caviar: For the price of a tin of caviar, tour Sechelt's local, organic and sustainable Fraser River white sturgeon caviar producers.

• Nancy's Bakery: One of the best tributes to the local blackberry on the Sunshine Coast is the famous blackberry cinnamon bun at Nancy's Bakery in Lund.

ARTS AND CULTURE:

- FibreWorks Studio and Gallery: Housed in a collection of yurts on highway 101 between Earls Cove and Madeira Park, Yvonne Stowell showcases her own weaving, spun and dyed wool along with other work of local, national and international fibre artists.
- L'hos Cultural Tours: Experience First Nations culture first hand with these unique tours. 



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HISTORY REVISITED

MYRA CANYON TRESTLES OFFER TASTE OF THE PAST IN A PANORAMIC SETTING

Photo by Clare Conning, courtesy of Kelowna Tourism

BY ANGELA COWAN

The smell of alpine air, the Okanagan sun on your shoulders, the undeniable sense of historic and natural grandeur — it's no wonder the Myra Canyon Trestles in Kelowna attract more than 60,000 tourists every year.

With their stately pace, innate class and sheer power, the romance of trains has long captivated the imagination. Up on the trestles, locals and tourists alike can wander the old steam engines' paths and get a close look at the brilliant workmanship that went into their construction.

And with its leisurely grade and beautiful ambiance, the area is a cyclist's paradise, drawing hundreds of two-wheeled visitors each year.

Built at the beginning of the 20th century, this 12-kilometre stretch of the Kettle Valley railway is an engineering marvel, especially when one realizes it was completed strictly on the strength of steam, horse and manpower.

Construction of the Kettle Valley railway was fraught with challenges as it negotiated some of Canada's roughest landscapes, including a maximum 2.2 per cent rail grade to accommodate the limitations of steam technology at the time. Enter the Myra Canyon — a deep, wide gouge in the earth with steep walls — and chief

engineer Andrew McCulloch had his hands full.

To navigate the canyon, McCulloch originally built 19 wooden trestles, and hung the railway from rock walls, using 11 kilometres of track to circumvent a distance less than a kilometre wide. The Myra Canyon section was completed in October 1914, and McCulloch apparently commented that he'd never before seen a railway built in such difficult conditions.

The project was, however, a resounding success and served to strengthen BC's economic backbone for decades, until newer technology and transport arrived. Finally, in 1980, the Canadian Pacific Railway removed the rails and handed the entire parcel over to the provincial government. Without the funds or impetus for maintenance, the once-grand tracks fell into disrepair and became a danger to those who had been using them as walking and cycling trails.

It wasn't until 1992 that the Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society was formed, and boardwalks and guardrails were installed to make the trails safe once again. It took 11 years for completion of the improvements, which ranged from repairing the trails and installing pit toilets and benches, to cribbing one of the tunnels (to improve stability), and scaling the rock cuts and the insides of the two tunnels.

To protect the land and all the work going into it, the restoration society lobbied for five years and finally succeeded in getting the Myra Canyon and its trestles included in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park. And in January 2003, mere months before the Okanagan mountain fire ripped through the area, the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board designated Myra and its trestles historically significant.

The fire damaged all but two of the trestles, but they were rebuilt as close as possible to replicas of the originals, preserving the ingenious design and dedication that went into their initial construction.

The result is 18 trestles and two tunnels, which are safe and echo the designs of nearly a century past. Travelling the trails now, visitors can almost hear the chug and hiss of the old steam engines as they worked their way through the mountain passes.

For tourists, the spot is a cyclist's dream. The 18 trestles, varying in height and size, all with different views, offer a thick slice of history in an afternoon's worth of cycling.

The return trip usually takes around four hours if there's no scheduled stop for lunch. It's a leisurely cycle on a nearly flat



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boardwalk. The restricted incline makes the tour accessible to practically all fitness levels.

Ed Kruger of Monashee Adventure Tours has been cycling the trestles for 40 years, and leading tours since the 1990s. He says he's had all kinds on his bike tours.

"I've had families. I had a child that was just eight weeks old in the chariot, and then all the way up to 92-year-old people," he says. Kruger also offers pedi-cab tours up to the sixth trestle for those who just want to sit back, relax and take in the view.

"It's great for seniors or those with mobility issues."

Tour groups can book lunch at one of the many wineries in the area, but even if there's no reservation waiting, cyclists don't have to go hungry.

"There's black currents, thimbleberries, and raspberries along the trail. They're plentiful, you can get treats along the way," Kruger says.

Sunset tours are popular in August when the summer sun is still Okanagan-hot, but as September rolls in, the air among the trestles — which sit 4,100 feet above sea level — cools off deliciously and offers a welcome respite from the heat.

In a bit of cyclical history (pardon the pun), Kruger says the grand reopening of the trail after the fire took place June 20, 2008 — 35 years later, exactly to the day, that the

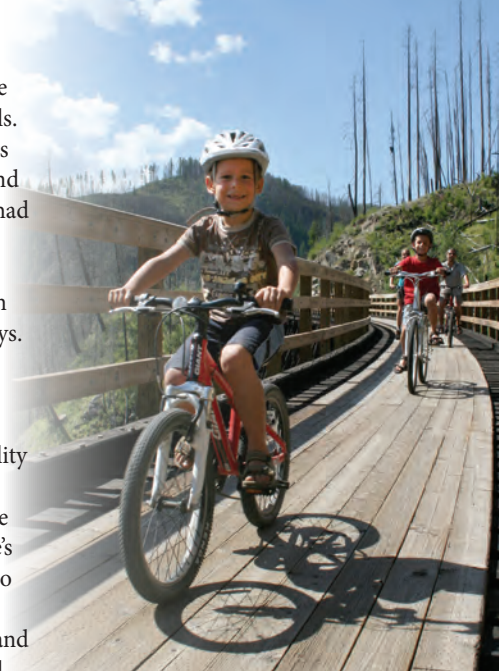



Photo courtesy of Myra Canyon Bike Rentals and Tourism Kelowna

Left, the Myra Canyon Trestles in Kelowna, which attract some 60,000 visitors a year. Above, cycling the trestles.

last train rumbled down the tracks in 1973 for *The National Dream*, a Pierre Berton television mini-series.

Taking in a century's worth of history, plus panoramic views and wild-harvested berries, is certainly not a bad way to spend an afternoon. 

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DATEBOOK

BELLA COOLA

Bella Coola Valley Fall Fair and Logger Sports Festival Sept. 7

A down-home event at the Bella Coola Fairgrounds reminiscent of old country fairs with horseshoes, ring toss and bingo, along with logger sports and axe throwing. FMI: www.bellacoola.ca

CAMPBELL RIVER

47th Annual Salmon Festival Aug. 8-10

A tribute to the prime industries of Northern Vancouver Island — forestry and fishing — the event takes place at Nunns Creek Park. FMI: www.crsalmonfestival.com

COMOX VALLEY

31st Annual Filberg Festival Aug. 1-4

Artisans and musicians gather at Filberg Heritage Lodge and Park in Comox. FMI: <http://filbergfestival.com>

Comox Valley Exhibition Aug. 22-24

Pioneer Days and Modern Ways: A celebration of agriculture, livestock,

healthy country living and community spirit on the banks of the Tsolum River in Courtenay. FMI: www.cvex.ca/

CRANBROOK

Cranbrook Pro Rodeo Aug. 15-17

Cranbrook Pro Rodeo has been a stop on the Canadian Professional Rodeo Association roster for over 25 years. Takes place at Wycliffe Exhibition Grounds. FMI: www.rodeocanada.com

Kootenay Country Fair Sept. 14

Taking place at Fort Steele, the annual fair includes contests, an auction and exhibits. Fort Steele's regular displays and shops will all be open, and the steam train will be running from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. FMI: www.fortsteele.ca

KELOWNA

Hopscotch Festival Sept. 26-27

The Kelowna Curling Club is transformed into an educational tasting event where people come to sip, taste, learn, and shmooze about premium whiskies, beers, and other spirits that are both new and old to the local market. From 6 to 10 p.m. FMI: www.hopscotchfestival.com/kelowna

MASSET

Edge of the World Music Festival Aug. 8-10

Features on and off island musicians at the Tlell Fall Fairgrounds. FMI: <http://www.edgefestival.com>

32nd annual Tlell Fall Fair Aug. 3

Local produce, livestock, arts, crafts and food. This year's theme is "Haida Gwaii, Our Garden of Eating." FMI: www.tlellfallfair.com

POWELL RIVER

Sunshine Music Festival Aug. 30-31

The 33rd annual event features world-class performances at Palm Beach, celebrating music from across Canada and the world. FMI: www.sunshinemusicfest.com

Aurora

Sept. 5-6

Powell River opens its historic spaces to artists and art enthusiasts for an expressive and eclectic party. FMI: <http://aurorafestival.ca>

PORT MCNEILL

OrcaFest

Aug. 16

The biggest annual festival in Port McNeill starts off with the OrcaFest

Parade followed by a full day celebration at the waterfront. FMI: www.portmcneill.net/upcomingevents

TRAIL

Shambhala Music Festival Aug 8-11

Highly popular music event in nearby Salmo. FMI: www.shambhalamusicfestival.com

VANCOUVER

Festivals:

- Vancouver Pride Parade & Festival, www.vancouverpride.ca, Aug. 3
- Vancouver International Fringe Festival, www.vancouverfringe.com, Sept. 4-14
- Vancouver International Film Festival, www.viff.org, Sept. 25-Oct. 10

VICTORIA

Festivals:

- Victoria Symphony Splash, victoriasymphony.ca/splash, Aug. 3
- Oak Bay Collector Car Festival, www.oakbaytourism.com/events, Aug. 10
- Victoria Fringe, [www.victoriafringe.com](http://victoriafringe.com), Aug. 21-31
- Classic Boat Festival, www.classicboatfestival.ca, Aug. 29-31
- Rifflandia, rifflandia.com, Sept. 11-14.



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Pacific Coastal Airline's amphibious Grumman Goose is used for the annual transport of salmon fry, a team effort between PCA, Rivers Inlet North Coast Salmon Enhancement Association, Wuikinuxv First Nation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and various other funding sources.

SALMON FRY?

No, salmon fly!

BY SUSAN QUINN

Bella Coola and the nearby Pacific Ocean coastline is renowned for its salmon fishing, and visitors often fly to the area via Pacific Coastal Airlines for fishing holidays.

But for three days each year, the fish get to fly with the airline too.

Pilots from PCA's Port Hardy seaplane base have assisted with the Rivers Inlet North Coast Salmon Enhancement Association project since the 1980s and are considered integral partners in the project.

"It's a collaborative effort with the Wuikinuxv First Nation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and other funding sources (like fishing lodges, Sid Keay and the Rick Hansen Foundation)," said Sandie MacLaurin, community advisor for North Central Coast, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

From the egg take, to storing the fry at Snootli Creek Hatchery, to flying the fry to several locations, it's a team effort, she said.

"The lodges are putting something back...we've used Pacific Coastal since almost the beginning," she added.

Fry are flown at a subsidized rate, which is less expensive than barging.

An initial scouting trip is conducted in early May, and the final trip — transporting the fry to net pens in one of the airline's Grumman Goose amphibious aircraft — is done in June.

"Loading and unloading is a little difficult given (the fish) are items that have to be handled carefully," said Vince Crooks, general manager at the seaplane base.

"We always have lots of help at both ends."

Eventually, the smolts that mature in net pens are released and, once full-sized, are caught everywhere from Langara Lodge to Hakai Pass and north to Alaska.

Assisting with the salmon enhancement project is just one of



the non-traditional flights PCA undertakes.

The airline is frequently called to fly injured wildlife to Vancouver, Crooks said.

"Quite often we'll take (eagles or seals) down to the different rescue societies."

In June, for example, a seal pup was found on a log boom in Bella Coola after the boom was hauled more than 24 kilometres upriver.

PCA flew the pup to Vancouver, where someone from the Vancouver Aquarium's Marine Mammal Rescue Centre picked it up.

"I'd say once a month there's some kind of creature we ship out," Crooks said.

Pacific Coastal also helps remote communities relocate dogs from overpopulated regions, transporting them to the SPCA in Vancouver for adoption.

While the seaplane base in Port Hardy uses the amphibious Grumman Goose for these flights, other aircraft are used for similar tasks company wide.

In June, an osprey chick in danger of starvation was removed from a nest in Nelson, BC and transported via Pacific Coastal to Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre (O.W.L.) in Delta, B.C.

'Nel' is thriving at her new home.

<http://www.owlcanada.org/baby-osprey-from-nelson-bc/> 

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Q&A

Marsha Walden

President and Chief Executive Officer for
Destination British Columbia

Marsha Walden is the President and CEO for Destination British Columbia. A life-long British Columbian, Marsha's career spans corporate leadership roles in marketing, strategy, transformation, operations, communications and social responsibility. Marsha is also an active volunteer, and currently a member of the 2014 Grey Cup Festival organizing committee and the VSO School of Music board of directors. Marsha holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of British Columbia, loves to travel, and takes full advantage of family time in this extraordinary province.

Q: WHAT IS THE MANDATE OF DESTINATION BC?

A: Destination BC is an industry-led Crown corporation with a mandate to fulfill several key marketing and leadership responsibilities critical to the long-term, sustainable growth of the provincial tourism industry. These include: marketing BC domestically, nationally and internationally as a tourist destination; promoting the development and growth of the tourism industry in BC to increase revenue and employment, and the economic benefits generated by the industry; enhancing public awareness of tourism and its economic value to BC; and providing advice and recommendations on tourism-related matters.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AND HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED?

A: As Destination BC's president and CEO, I'm focused on helping BC's tourism industry achieve results — growing the sector through high-impact, innovative and creative marketing, enhancing the visitor experience, and developing and maintaining strong relationships with the tourism industry. I joined the organization last November and have since met with over 200 industry stakeholders to learn how to better align and collaborate, to ensure our marketing is more effective and to accelerate industry growth.

Q: WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING BC'S TOURISM TODAY?

A: Governments around the world have awoken to the power of the visitor economy and we see major new investments from countries across the planet — both our traditional competitors as well as new ones. Canada and BC are also premium travel destinations. It's expensive to get here, and it's pretty expensive to be here. And new competitors have very compelling, cheap-and-cheerful products in exotic places.

Q: HOW WILL YOU ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

A: We'll be unveiling a new corporate strategy in the next few months, which will address these challenges head on. We'll invest more of our money in marketing that actually touches the consumer, and we plan to make more funds available for co-op marketing with communities and sectors. We are also revitalizing our destination brand to fuel inspiration and urgency. We need a magnetic brand, one that not only attracts visitors but also brings industry into the fold. Destination BC will also focus more attention on supporting remarkable experiences — increasing the relevance and competitiveness of BC's tourism products. By working with industry and government, we will create a provincial strategy for destination development, ensuring BC's tourism experiences continue to improve and, most importantly, are highly recommended by visitors. We will also develop an visitor servicing model to reflect today's new travel planning behavior — both online and offline. This will help communities provide the best experiences possible to their guests. We will never have enough money to outspend our competitors, so we must outsmart them! That means creating a new model for collaboration that increases our impact and reduces unnecessary costs.

Q: WHAT ELSE DO PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BC'S TOURISM INDUSTRY IN GENERAL?

A: Tourism is a key economic driver in BC. The value of our visitor economy impacts communities all across our province, employing over 127,000 British Columbians in over 18,000 businesses and contributing \$1.2 billion in tax revenue in 2012 alone. Tourism also improves our quality of life. There are many activities we enjoy as citizens that would not be as viable without the tourism engine—museums and galleries, festivals and sporting events, transportation, dining and wine touring, parks and recreational facilities, and many other benefits that make life so good here in BC. ■

When you've
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Photo Credit: Sheila Karrow

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