

SOAR

Inflight
Magazine for
Pacific Coastal
Airlines

SNOW WITH *the* FLOW!

It's snow time in BC

CARIBOO STRONG

Williams Lake exhibit revisits
the 2017 wildfires

ON TAP!

Something's brewing in the
West Kootenays

Pacific Coastal
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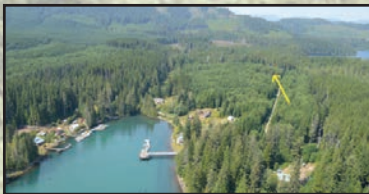
Office 250.286.3293 Toll Free 1.888.286.1932

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shelleymckay@bcoceanfront.com



Dent Island Acreage: 80.7 acres on Dent Island, east end of **Cordero Channel**. Encompasses the entire southern and western shorelines plus well-protected **Mermaid Bay** on the **SE** end of the island. Property is fully forested in healthy second growth. Phenomenal active tidal water area in the **Discovery Islands**. Close to **BC** mainland and **Bute Inlet**. **\$1,200,000**



Quatsino Sound Acreage: 4 inland acres in Bergh Cove which is part of the boat access community of **Quatsino** on northwest **Vancouver Island**. Nicely treed in second growth forest, drilled well, hydroelectric power to the lot. Village road access to the property, walking distance to the community dock. Zoning permits up to two cabins. Great fishing region. **\$69,000**



Campbell River Oceanfront: Just south of town. **5185sqft** home, gourmet kitchen with large island, up to **5** substantial bedrooms **3** with ensuites, dining room, family room, living room, plus more. Full width oceanside patio deck, attractive landscaping incorporating seaside seating areas. Desirable oceanfront neighbourhood. **\$1,495,000**



Westcoast Residence: Charming **1512sqft 3** bedroom home with country flair in historic **Telegraph Cove** on **Vancouver Island**. Beautiful wood interior finish, lots of windows. Open concept living with an expansive custom kitchen. Large primary bedroom suite with ensuite and walk-in closet. Ocean views. Covered wrap-around porch. Detached, wired single garage. **\$599,500**



Winter Harbour Oceanfront: NW **Vancouver Island**. New **1664sqft** new home, modern contemporary style with main level entry and walkout basement. Spacious rooms, lots of windows, full oceanside deck. Professional build, new home warranty. On one of three adjacent oceanfront lots with approval for moorage facilities. Premier fishing region **\$799,000**



Bute Inlet Oceanfront: Spectacular **17.3-acre property**, approx. **2500ft** of south facing, low bank oceanfront **25** nautical miles up **Bute Inlet**. **3** small streams/creeks, beautiful sand and gravel beaches at low tides. Dramatic views. Direct access to miles of Forest Service roads. Some of the best salmon and trout fishing literally from the beach. **\$585,000**



Neroutsos Inlet Oceanfront: Two acreages, **31.8** and **36** acres, **1400 - 2700ft** of diverse oceanfront, on the shores of **Neroutsos Inlet** across from the village of **Port Alice**. Access via forest service road or **5** minutes by boat, leaving from **Port Alice**. Gated driveways. Seasonal creeks border each property. Great recreational area. **Lot 2: \$140,000**
Lot 1: \$157,000



Oceanfront Island Residence: **7** acre $\frac{1}{4}$ share interest in **44** acre **Coulter Island**. **2738sqft** oceanfront home with expansive views, three levels, abundant windows for natural light, beautiful wood features throughout. Detached shop and large wood storage shed. Shared protected moorage. Comprehensive shareholders/co-ownership agreement. In the **Discovery Islands**. **\$687,500**



www.bcoceanfront.com

CONTENTS



Features

- 9 A WINTER DISCOVERY:**
UNESCO Global Geopark
- 11 SNOW YOUR OWN WAY!**
It's snow time in BC
- 15 SOAKING IN THE SENSES**
Whistler's Scandineave Spa



- 18 CARIBOO STRONG**
2017 wildfires exhibit

- 22 ON TAP!**
Find your new beer style in the
West Kootenays



Departments

- 4 UP FRONT**
President's Message
- 6 MEET A PCA EMPLOYEE**
- 6 AROUND BC**
News from Pacific Coastal
Airlines

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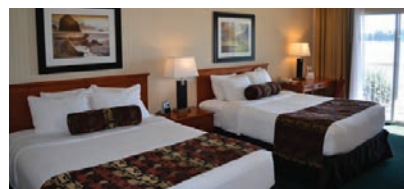
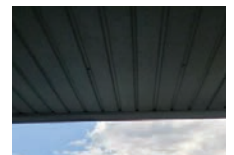
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ADAPTING TO COVID-19 AND THE NEW WORLD OF TRAVEL

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As many of you are aware, COVID-19 has had a massive impact on the travel industry and, in particular, the aviation sector. In March, we made the decision to implement a temporary suspension of Pacific Coastal network operations. Following government and healthcare official's guidance, on June 1, we reinitiated our scheduled service with many enhanced safety practices to ensure the health and well-being of our customers, employees and the communities that we serve.

There is no historical precedence or data to forecast the pace at which the demand for air travel will return. As a business, we can only move forward as we adapt to the new world of travel. We will continue to monitor the demand throughout our network and publish schedule changes on our website in advance to provide customers with a reliable schedule to book with confidence and make travel plans accordingly.

Since we returned our scheduled service, we have introduced additional safety measures, including a mandatory mask policy, enhanced aircraft sanitation practices, physical distancing and hand-sanitizer stations at airport facilities, reduced contact between customers and staff, and a health check questionnaire at check-in. We have currently suspended the offering of our in-flight magazine to reduce unnecessary contact. Moving forward, you can expect to receive SOAR magazine as a digital publication that can be viewed on our website or your personal mobile device.

I want to thank all of our customers, partners and employees for your continued understanding, patience and support. We all have a role to play in ensuring safe and responsible travel in British Columbia.

Stay safe, stay healthy and thank you for choosing to fly with us. 🇨🇦


Quentin Smith

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MEET A PACIFIC COASTAL EMPLOYEE



ARLENE BALITOS

Flight Attendant / Calgary, AB
Time with Pacific Coastal: 2 years

Job description: My primary role is to guide and assist for safety and comfort to passengers, while providing the best customer service. I monitor, manage and secure the cabin and handle emergency situations as they arise.

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born and raised in Manila, Philippines.

What path did you take to get this job?

Initially, I graduated with a nursing degree. During a short break after graduation, my friend invited me to apply to a local airline. It wasn't my first choice, but everything fell into place as if it was meant to be. And the rest is history. After 20 years in this industry, it is true that time flies when you're flying.

What do you like best about this job?

My name plate has "I care" printed on it. I am grateful to have the chance to connect with people from all walks of life — from elderly passengers, mothers with babies and small children. It gives me such joy to be able to touch someone's day by giving them the best possible experience in flights.

AROUND BC

PCA announces new seat-selection option

RICHMOND:

Pacific Coastal Airlines has introduced new seat-selection options for scheduled flights within the PCA network, effective November 30.

"It has been a long-time goal to introduce seat selection at Pacific Coastal Airlines," said Johnathan Richardson, Pacific Coastal's vice president of commercial services. "We believe that customers will value the option to choose their preferred seat on our aircraft."

The seat-selection option will be available for customers during the on-line booking process. Customers may also select a seat after their reservation has been made by going online or by contacting the airline's Call Centre.

Seat selection will be complimentary to customers travelling on Encore Fares and QuikPass Encore. Customers travelling on all other fares will have the option to select their seat in advance for \$5 per passenger, per flight. Seat selection is available for all customers choosing available seats within 24 hours of departure during online check-in or check-in at one of an airport counters.

Pacific Coastal Airlines has also adopted additional safety measures to ensure the health and wellbeing of staff and customers. The measures include enhanced aircraft sanitation practices, physical distancing at airport facilities, reduced contact points and the requirement for all customers to travel with a face mask and answer health-check questions before boarding. Learn more about the additional safety measures online.


ful deliberation, consultation and consideration of provincial health orders (PHOs), they plan to present an exciting, safe and comfortable 2021 edition of the famed Coldsnap live music festival!

The Prince George winter music festival will happen between January 29 and February 6. The lineup of exceptional Northern BC and visiting performers, as well as the venues, will be announced soon.

The plan is to present live music in front of a small-but-live audience—if permitted by PHOs—at the usual reasonable ticket price. The society plans to present live music shows throughout the festival week, with two performers per evening show for a maximum of 90 minutes with no intermission.

Also on tap is "Coldsnap for Kids" with a live audience (if possible)! A fully developed safety plan is in place, following current PHOs, and formulated with safety consultants from the entertainment world. To maximize the number of people that can enjoy the music, all the shows will be live-streamed on various online platforms at no charge, courtesy of the society's funders and sponsors!

"We will also present our famous daytime outreach series during the week, although right now we plan to do most or all of these online with no live audience," say festival organizers. "The safety of our audience, artists, volunteers and staff is paramount, so please know that we need to stay flexible in our presentation and plans. But we are very excited and grateful to be planning for Coldsnap 2021 with all the support we have received from our funders, sponsors, members and volunteers."

Watch the festival website, coldsnapfestival.com, for details on the artist lineup, schedule, venues, safety protocols and when and how to buy tickets. 

Coldsnap 2021 is happening!

PRINCE GEORGE:

The board and staff of Prince George Folkfest Society have announced that, after months of care-



GRIZZLY BEARS:

TEACHERS OF THE LAND

A new art exhibit explores the lessons of the Grizzly

For Indigenous peoples in North America, the grizzly is a teacher. Knowledge of it strengthens our relationship with the land, guides stewardship and offers insights into humanity. By observing a society so outwardly different from our own, through reverence and kinship, we grow closer to finding our place within the whole.

Grizzly Bears: Teachers of the Land is a brand new exhibit at the Bateman Gallery in downtown Victoria, on Lekwungen Territory, produced by the Bateman Foundation and the Grizzly Bear Foundation. It features work from more than 20 artists, and includes paintings, photography and sculptures that capture this majestic creature from a range of perspectives, alongside an immersive storytelling space, and a family activity area with drawing materials.

As a keystone species, saving the grizzly and conserving its habitat not only creates sustainable natural landscapes, but helps to enrich our own lives as co-inhabitants of our shared lands.

Nicholas Scapillati, executive director of the Grizzly Bear Foundation, said: "The Grizzly Bear Foundation is proud to partner with the Bateman Foundation on this one-of-a-kind exhibition celebrating an icon of the North American wilderness: the grizzly bear. This culturally and ecologically important species captures our hearts and imaginations. Through art, grizzlies inspire a sense of wonder and strengthen our connection to the wild. Thank you to all the talented painters, sculptors, carvers, photographers and artists who have come together to celebrate the grizzly bear, and Robert

Bateman's 90th birthday!"

Many of the artists featured in the exhibit have original paintings, prints and art cards available in the Bateman Gallery Shop, which also stocks Grizzly Bear Foundation merchandise. All sales support the artists, grizzly bear conservation efforts, and the philanthropic work of the Bateman Foundation.

Grizzly Bears: Teachers of the Land will be at the Bateman Gallery until January 23, running alongside a new permanent exhibit, *The World of Robert Bateman*, which celebrates the career of the iconic Canadian artist. The gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am to 4 pm, with physical distancing protocols in place. A late night opening takes place on the third Thursday of the month from 4:30 to 7 pm.

Admission is by donation. 🎨

Bateman Foundation

Gallery of Nature



Art

inspired by the natural world.



Background image by Robert Bateman



The Gallery of Nature Gift Shop carries Robert Bateman prints and handmade items by BC artists.

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Discover BC's UNESCO Global Geopark this winter!

By Carleen Nugent

As sunshine fades and the last of the leaves fall, it can mean just one thing—winter is here. And, when cold weather calls, Canadians will be the first to answer!

This year as winter beckons, grab your gear and make your way to Tumbler Ridge Global Geopark, located about 4.5 hours from Pacific Coastal Air's Prince George destination.

Here are the reasons that it is THE place to be this winter!

What is a UNESCO Global Geopark?

To earn the title of a UNESCO Global Geopark, an area must have international geological significance. Rare to come by, with only five in all of Canada, Tumbler Ridge is a one-of-a-

kind spot—rich with heritage, captivating landscapes and remarkable biodiversity.

With more than 50 geosites to visit year-round, there are numerous opportunities to connect to the earth and explore, and activities that reach far beyond hiking and exploring. With dropping temperatures, here are a few favourite winter festivities to take advantage of this season.

Cross-Country Skiing:

With many Nordic trails to choose from for traditional and skate skiing, Tumbler Ridge has something for all skill levels. Whether you're in the mood for rugged ski mountaineering or if a cruising trip is more your cup of cocoa, nearby hills, valleys and flatlands offer something for everyone. The Wolver-

ine Trail system is a popular choice for many, with the 10-kilometre route showcasing stunning forest views, and many interlocking loops letting you turn back whenever you want to.

Snowmobiling:

Ready to rev up the adrenaline this winter season? Exploring Tumbler Ridge trails on a snowmobile is a sure-fire way to get your heart pounding! Snaking through the foothills of the Rockies, speeding up hills and racing back down, find thick layers of white glistening powder greeting your quest for adventure.

Snowshoeing:

Once the cold weather hits, what was once a summer trail transforms into a snowshoer's paradise, meaning



there's a good selection of trails for everyone. If you wait a little longer to strap on your snowshoes, the patience will be well worth it—rivers become frozen highways winding to the base of thundering waterfalls that you can't reach come summer.

Ice Climbing:

As the Waterfall Capital of the North, Tumbler Ridge offers dozens of seeps and falls for climbers to conquer. With so many of these natural wonders throughout the area, you might be the first to stumble across one—leading your own kind of discovery.


Whether you're on the hunt for a short, easy climb or a challenging technical ascent, you'll be sure to find something in your skill range. A popular choice for many in winter is Babcock Falls.

Tobogganning:

There's nothing quite like sledding down a snowy hill and feeling the rush of this wild winter pass time. Get close and cosy and load up the family together to go soaring down or fly solo and send snow spraying!

Before you go:

Before you head to Tumbler Ridge this winter, make sure to check local information about conditions, including snow and avalanche reports. You can find this information on Tumbler Ridge's website, or you can visit their Facebook and Twitter pages for activity reports.

Also check in advance for COVID-19 safety and protocols. Dress warmly, plan ahead, and get ready for a wild winter season! Visit tumbler-ridgegeopark.ca to learn more and plan your visit. 

This story first appeared on westcoasttraveller.com. Plan your travel adventures here and on Facebook and Instagram @thewestcoasttraveller.

Ice climbing at Tumbler Ridge.



Snow *with the flow!*

Big White Ski Resort.

By Susan Quinn

Alpine resorts across British Columbia have re-tooled winter operations in the wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic that hit last year in the prime of the 2019-20 season.

This year, many resorts were poised to open on a solid snow season in early and mid-November when BC's medical health officer temporarily put the brakes on non-essential travel, including travel for recreation. Operators are holding out hope that the travel restrictions will be lifted as the province "flattens the curve" on COVID-19.

"The adrenaline of opening day is a favourite part of the year for many of us, and admittedly, this year is especially significant," wrote Christopher Nicolson in a November 2020 Canada West Ski Area Association newsletter. The CWSAA is considered the voice of the ski industry in western Canada.

"The ski season is no longer a concept or distant abstract viewed through a pandemic haze...it is here and we are in it."

Nicolson said the industry "can

legitimately feel confident" about the season ahead because of the collaboration of resorts to include COVID-19 protocols in their operations, minimizing risk to guests and staff alike. Resorts have posted their protocols on their individual websites. All—like other businesses in BC—require guests to wear face coverings, wash their hands, observe social distancing and not visit if they are feeling unwell.

The impact of ski areas in western Canada accounts for \$2.51 billion annually to provincial and national economies, according to a 2018-19 valuation conducted by the CWSAA. More than 27,000 employees earned \$1.12 billion in wages and benefits. Resorts were forced to close their doors last March as Canada's federal government instituted emergency measures in the face of the pandemic. As they work to recover financially, operators have been quick to adjust to the swiftly changing landscape.

"We expect that we may need to make some revisions and adjustments, sometimes day to day, based on the recommendations of health authori-

ties or as we find efficiencies, on an ongoing basis," says Cypress Mountain president and general manager Russell Chamberlain. He called for patience, flexibility and understanding this year.

"We are all in this together."

KELOWNA

Big White

Big White is ready for a big season.

"Everyone in our resort has done a huge amount of work, we have a really strong and amazing winter product, and I want us to convey to our guests that their skiing experience will not be compromised," president and CEO Peter Plimmer wrote in a letter to visitors.

Staff spent the off-season working on ways to accommodate COVID-19 protocols: automatic sliding doors to reduce contact points, touchless taps in public washrooms, and plexiglass partitions installed in all day lodges. As well, the lodges will be operating at 50 per cent seating capacity to abide by physical distancing standards.

The resort has instituted online-only booking for seasons' passes and day



Big White Ski Resort.

tickets. Walk-ups won't be accommodated. Rentals must also be pre-booked online. Lifts will be loaded according to visitors' "bubbles."

Among the changes for 2020-21 is the lack of express-bus service to the resort from central Okanagan/Kelowna.

Big White was able to keep all its employees despite an early closure last ski season; something management felt was significant.

Big White was due to open November 23.

bigwhite.com

TRAIL

Red Mountain

Red Mountain is ready for guests. With COVID-19 protocols in place, the ski and snowboard experience may look a bit different this year.

Some of the changes include having a parking attendant in the parking lot, the removal of guest services' indoor area and a move to solely outdoors. Visitors are asked to boot up before they get to the lodge, as indoor boot-up areas have been removed. With food services, staff recommends spreading out the time you want to eat to avoid a lunch rush. Online ordering and reservations will be available, and there will be outdoor seating in some areas.

Red Mountain was due to open December 12.

redresort.com

CRANBROOK

Fernie and Kimberley Alpine Resorts were still formulating their opening plans in late November.

Resorts of the Canadian Rockies suspended operations March 15 and cancelled the remainder of its 2019-20 winter season at all their western Canadian resorts shortly thereafter.

"Here at RCR our No. 1 priority is the safety, health and well-being of our guests, team members and the communities which we live," presi-

dent and Chief Resorts Officer John Shea said.
skircr.com

VANCOUVER ISLAND

Mount Washington Alpine Resort

"There has never been a time when I anticipated the arrival of a winter season more than this year," Mount Washington Alpine Resort general manager Dean Prentice said. "The magic of winter—snow silently falling, the crisp winter air and the excitement of linking turns on every unique run is always special."

He added: "This year it's safe to say 'special' could be expanded to include therapeutic. In a sense, we need this ski season for our emotional and physical wellbeing as much as for the enjoyment. We believe recreation is one of the essential food groups—now more than ever."

Embracing unexpected changes is going to be critical to a successful ski season, he added. Season's pass holders will be given priority, and capacity will be managed by limiting the number of daily lift tickets, if necessary. An online advanced reservation system has been created in the event terrain is limited.

Mount Washington was slated to open December 4, with a base of both natural and man-made snow.
mountwashington.ca

Mount Cain

Mount Cain is playing its 2020-21 season cautiously. Accommodation bookings were being put on hold until mid-November. Opening day was tentatively scheduled for December 12, depending on snow and provincial travel recommendations.

The Mount Cain Alpine Park Society has yet to reveal its COVID-19 operating strategy.
mountcain.com

LOWER MAINLAND

Whistler Blackcomb

"Safety first" is the mantra at Whistler Blackcomb this season, says Rob Katz, CEO of parent company Vail Resorts. In a lengthy letter to stakeholders and visitors, Katz outlines changes to operations during the pandemic and said community health recommendations will drive the winter season.

Physical distancing, health screenings and pre-booking are requirements this year, especially in ski and snowboard rental locations. Face coverings are a must throughout the resort. Food options will be affected this year, depending on restaurant configurations. Chairlifts and gondolas will be loaded with related parties and physical distancing will be required in lineups. Capacity will be managed through a reservation system.

Any changes will be updated on the resorts' website.
whistlerblackcomb.com

Grouse Mountain

Grouse Mountain opened with limited terrain access on November 20. In addition to the requirement of face coverings inside all resort facilities, access will only be granted with advanced Skyride reservations. Visitors may reserve upload and download times as part of their lift ticket purchases or with the passholder Skyride reservations. Loading of individual chairlifts will be limited to family or household groupings.

grousemountain.com

Mount Seymour

Mt. Seymour has introduced staggered, reservable four-hour time slots on weekend and holidays for visitors with season's passes or purchased lift tickets. This will help manage capacity while keeping to COVID-19 protocols.

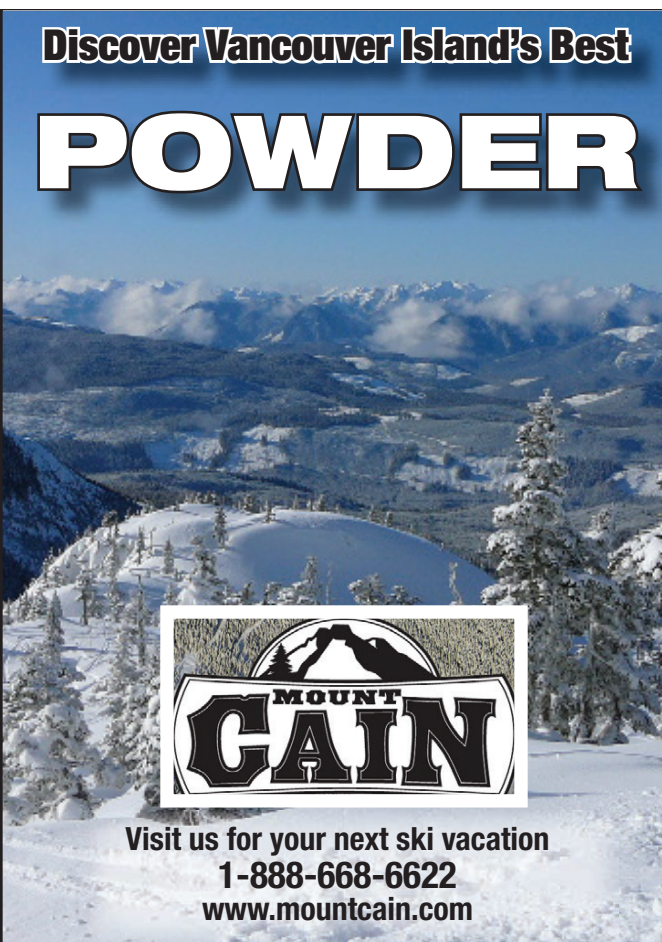
All activities at Mt. Seymour will need to be booked and paid for in advance this year.

mtseymour.ca

Cypress Mountain


Cypress Mountain on Vancouver's North Shore was the first coastal resort to open in 2020-21, opening their downhill area on November 13. Like other resorts, its plan is to ease into operations as conditions dictate. Lift tickets and tickets to the Gnarly Tube Park need to be purchased in advance. 🏔️

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Soaking in the Senses

Outdoor spa adds to the Whistler experience

By Susan Lundy

Photos courtesy Scaninave Spa and Tourism Whistler

Each of my five senses comes to life as I move between warm, cold and relax cycles at the outdoor Scaninave Spa in Whistler.

Sitting in the hot pool, I feel the brush of breeze on my face and hear a gentle whistle of wind in the spruce trees above me. Moving indoors, and now relaxing on a cushiony recliner, I take in the beauty of lush foliage seen through floor-to-ceiling windows. And the moment after I run through an icy cold waterfall, my skin tingles with an electric-like buzz.

There's the heat of a fire pit, the cosy embrace of a blanket, the sound of a running stream, the scent of essential oils and the sensation of steam and sweat lingering on my skin.

Most important—the experience of every sense is exaggerated due to the absolute and mandatory silence. People move between the various stations without a word. And I understand completely: silence is golden.

We discovered Scaninave Spa on a trip to Whistler late last fall. After driving just five minutes up the highway from Whistler Village, we were unsure of what to expect when we arrived. But we left a few hours later as absolute converts to this year-round, outdoor spa experience.

As we entered the main lodge, we were immediately transported to a place of peace: it seemed as though our entire bodies exhaled. Embraced by the building's beauty and its calm and sweet scent, we peered through the windows at a ring of forest that surrounded grassy-roofed buildings, hot pools and a trickling creek winding its way through the entire scene.

Set within a spruce and cedar forest, and overlooking Whistler's white mountain vistas, this 20,000-square-foot outdoor day spa is a Nordic-inspired oasis of calm. Here, visitors can access any number of massage treatments and/or flow through the various hydrotherapy stations. We spent the recommended minimum of two hours, moving several times through the hot, cold and relax cycle, which promised to soothe tired muscles, eliminate toxins and improve circulation.

Hot cycles take place in eucalyptus steam rooms, outdoor hot baths, a Finnish wood-burning sauna or a dry sauna. Cold cycles—a bracing-but-necessary step to achieving the full benefits of the hydrotherapy experience—include a Nordic waterfall, rain showers and cold plunges. We were less fond of this part of the cycle, but emerged proud of ourselves for doing them!

The final stage of "rest" offers choices between lounging peacefully beside an outdoor firepit, in one of the solariums, in a quiet room in front of the fireplace or in a fully-stocked, multi-purpose yoga studio.

Set within a spruce and cedar forest, and overlooking Whistler's white mountain vistas, this 20,000-square-foot outdoor day spa is a Nordic-inspired oasis of calm.





Eventually, fully refreshed and relaxed, we headed back into the main building to discover a small food outlet offering hot and cold beverages, as well as healthy snacks from one of our favourite Whistler restaurants, The Green Moustache Organic Cafe. Now completely satiated, we headed back to Whistler Village—and everything it has to offer.

Consistently ranked among the world's top golf, biking and skiing resorts, Whistler is a year-round destination, located just 120 kilometres north of Vancouver.

Whistler has a range of accommodations, totalling 10,000 bedrooms in more than 24 hotels, as well as an extensive assortment of townhomes, condos, B&Bs and chalets.

On this trip, we stayed at Crystal Lodge. Our room was super spacious and comfortable, but the very best thing about this hotel might be its location right in the heart of the Village. In fact, the hotel's slogan is: "At the centre of it all." Within easy walking distance of the base of the mountain, shopping and restaurants, Crystal Lodge also offers a heated outdoor pool, hot tub, sauna, fitness centre and several on-site retail and dining options.

As a winter playground, Whistler and adjoining Blackcomb mountains feature 8,171 acres of terrain and receive an average of 38.2 feet of snow annually. It's definitely a place to revel in all of the senses — starting (or ending) with the Scandinave Spa experience. No reservations required, and baths are open from 10 am to 9 pm daily. 

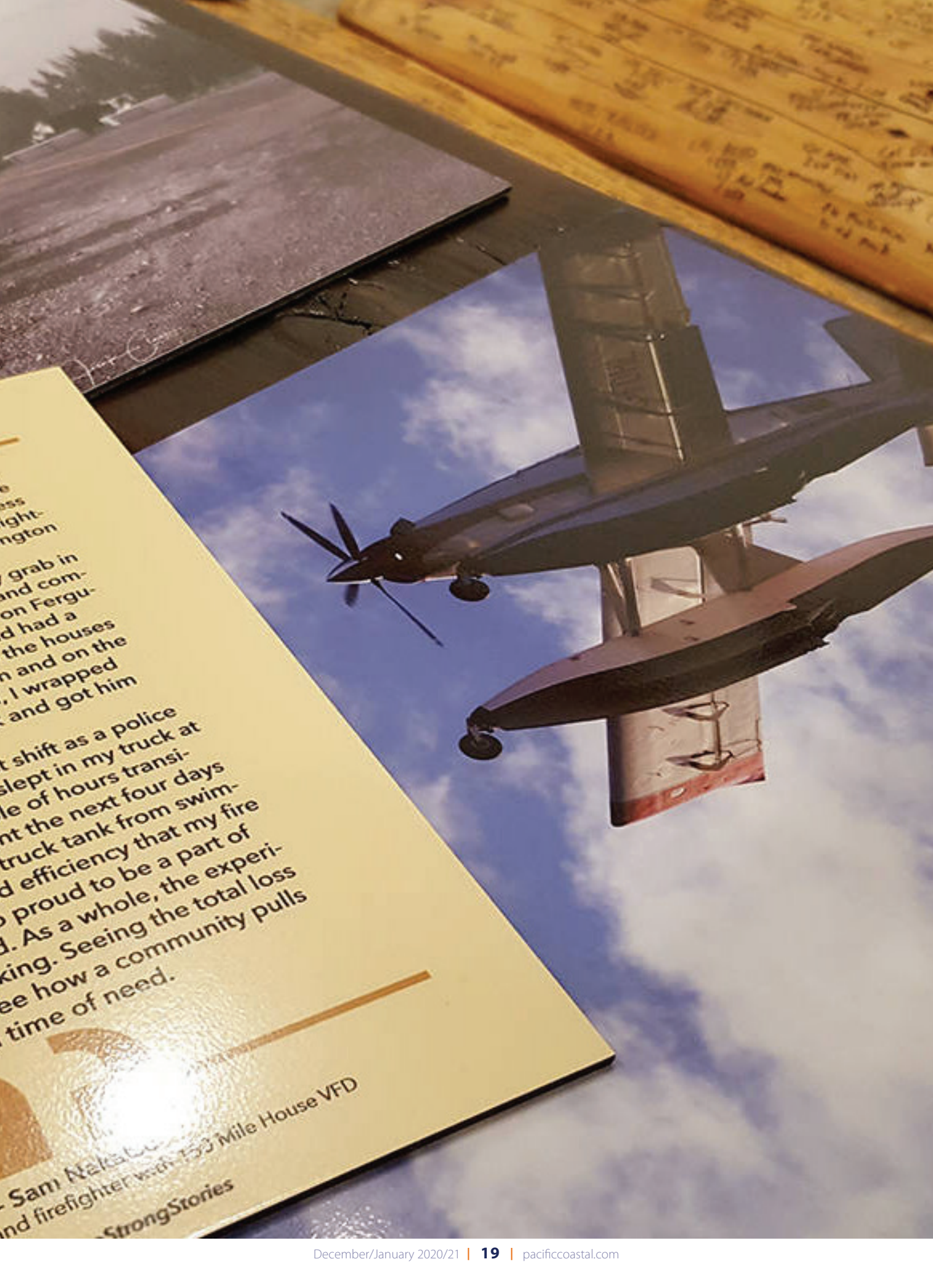


PHOTO BY MIKE CRANE.

PCA ROUTE MAP



son Road. On one donkey, the donkey's
round me, the donkey's
roadway. Utilizing the donkey's
police tape around the donkey's
back into his pen.
The day the fires started were my last
officer. Once it was over, I went and
the fire hall and then after a couple
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fighting spot fires. Filling the fire
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...d. As a whole, the experi-
...king. Seeing the total loss
...ee how a community pulls
...time of need.

 Sam Nakagawa
...and firefighter with 153 Mile House VFD
Strong Stories



Museum exhibit shares stories, experiences through 2017 wildfires

Story and photos by Greg Sabatino

A new exhibition at the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin has Cariboo residents sharing their stories and experiences in the historic 2017 wildfires.

Cariboo Strong—Resiliency in the Face of the 2017 Wildfires aims to paint a picture of how the community banded together in the face of the devastating impacts of the wildfires, which forced an almost two-week evacuation of the city in July of 2017.

The exhibition showcases a vast collection of submitted stories, photographs, videos and objects loaned to the museum by residents, businesses and first responders on how they were affected during the wildfires.

"I think the overall theme throughout is it's something that connects and unites us," said Casey Bennett, project assistant with the MCC who, along with fellow staff members, has been hard at work setting up for the

exhibition's opening. "You'll see sad stories; you'll see uplifting stories. It's really something that everyone here [in the Cariboo] can relate to—it affected everybody."

Alex Geris, MCC manager, said initial work on the project got underway in 2018 after they received a grant from the Canadian Red Cross, as part of the MCC's relocation and restoration project.

Initial plans to have the *Cariboo Strong* exhibit open to the public earlier this year were dashed due to the pandemic, which also presented its own challenges in coming up with ways to share and display the vast amount of information through submissions and interviews received from the community.

"It's definitely been a difficult year to open an exhibit where we are hoping to engage the community, but it's come together very nicely," Geris said.

One museum wall is entirely dedicated to photos and story excerpts submitted by residents. The museum's website will further share those stories in their entirety in what will be a living, virtual exhibit. Submissions will also be collected throughout the exhibit's run at the museum, which staff expects to stay open for at least a year.

"We're hoping the online portion will provide a nice space for people to interact and have those shared experiences, as well as when they visit the museum," Geris said.

Objects on display at the museum, to name a few, include three logs, donated by Pioneer Log Homes of BC and bearing hundreds of signatures from emergency personnel who assisted during the wildfires in the Cariboo-Chilcotin, and a bench built from reclaimed wood created by Bill James, and featuring metal fabrication done by Monster Industries Ltd.



Nemiah Valley resident Jesaja Class also created a film titled *Afterlight*—captured entirely by drone and depicting the devastating impacts of the wildfires in the Chilcotin—which is viewable at the museum.

Due to its location at the Tourism Discovery Centre, the exhibit will also provide an opportunity to educate visitors from outside the community on the series of events that transpired during the summer of 2017.

Bennett and Geris both noted that a lot of thought and time has gone into the project by many members of the community; they are extremely grateful to residents for sharing their stories with the museum.

"Without their stories and without their information, this exhibit wouldn't be possible," Bennett said.

Geris also thanked the entire team

at the MCC for its help, including MCC marketing and promotions coordinator Davana Mahon, artifact technician and professional museum conservator Raene Poisson, the MCC directors, former project assistant Nadia Erasmus and research assistant Rowan Paulsen.

"It's been an entire team effort," she said.


Bennett noted that for him, it's been an insightful process to revisit the summer of 2017.

"It's been quite eye-opening for me to hear what other people experienced during that time," he said. "I'd only been back here in Williams Lake for two years, and to come back and have something like that happen, it really shows you how a community can pull itself together and operate."

Poisson, who arrived in Williams Lake from Saskatchewan during the summer

to spearhead the MCC's ongoing deaccessioning project, added the submissions in the exhibit have helped her empathize and connect with people.

"In my work I'm usually in the back, but this made me more aware of how I should prepare for and think about this type of disaster actually happening," she said.

The MCC and the *Cariboo Strong—Resiliency in the Face of the 2017 Wildfires* exhibition is open Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm. To view the online exhibit visit: cowboy-museum.com/cariboo-strong-exhibit. 

This story first appeared on westcoasttraveller.com. Plan your travel adventures here and on Facebook and Instagram @thewestcoasttraveller.



On Tap!

Find your new favourite beer style in the West Kootenays

By Kate Robertson

Since the very first BC micro-brewery, Horseshoe Bay Brewery, was established in 1982, British Columbians have had a love affair with craft beers. Today, with more than 150 breweries strewn across the province, craft-brewery tourism is alive and well, and the West Kootenays, with five breweries within an hour's drive from the runway at the Trail airport, are no exception. So assign your designated driver and be prepared to taste

some unforgettable brews.

First stop is the Trail Beer Refinery, Trail's first microbrewery, which opened in 2017. The décor of the 75-seat all-ages taproom gives a nod to the city's main industry of zinc and lead smelting and refining, with its modern twist on industrial, reclaimed elements.

"Trail Beer Refinery is quite different from other local breweries. We not only make a full range of beers and vodka sodas but we serve amazing

food [think beef carpaccio and grilled cheese pizza]. Check out our weekly burger Instagram post!" says co-owner Mike Konkin. In the summer of 2020 they will release a new Radler brand.

Ten minutes up the mountain in Rossland is the Rossland Beer Co., where as soon as you go through the door, you're overlooking floor-to-ceiling tanks. Petri Raito, co-founder/owner and CEO, says, "The vibe of our tap room is very happy and easy. It's a place where you don't see people on

Craft-brewery tourism is alive and well, and the West Kootenays, with five breweries within an hour's drive from the runway at the Trail airport, are no exception.



their phones. The beer menu changes all the time, there are almost always one-offs on the menu, and our beers are always very distinct from each other.”

The taproom is small so get there early (especially on Friday nights when there’s live music), but in the summer there’s also a sunny patio to enjoy your beverage. Either way, it’s guaranteed you’ll be rubbing shoulders with friendly locals dropping in for a pint of their favourite brew after a day of shredding it up on the mountain bike or ski trails.

A half-hour drive brings you to the new kid on the block, Tailout Brewing, opened in late 2019 in Castlegar.

“Tailout” is a fishing term that refers to a pool of water where fish like to hang out, and true to form, you will see fishing references throughout their taproom. Tailout doesn’t serve food in house, but they encourage patrons to bring their own, or arrange for local delivery straight to their table.

A 40-minute drive and you’re in Nelson. With three craft breweries and easy walkability, this is the perfect place to park the car. Stretch your legs with a walk up the hill to the Nelson Brewing Company, the OG of the West Kootenay breweries, established in 1991. In 2006, NBC went fully organic to set themselves apart and to cater to Nelson’s all-natural setting and population. They have a very small tasting room, where you can sample some limited edition brews and one-offs.

Then there’s Backroads Brewing Co, located in the heart of Nelson’s downtown action. BBC is all about local — the 100-seat taproom is made from wood from local mills and forests, and filled with custom-made furniture and local art.

“Our taproom is for sure our biggest differentiator,” says

Brent Malysh, founder and CEO. “We’ve gone for a very cosy cabin vibe. All our tables are community seating, and we don’t have TV or WiFi, so it all encourages strangers to sit together and talk to one another. If you’re one of the lucky ones to get a seat on the patio on a sunny afternoon, it’s pretty special. Baker Street is known for being really eclectic and sometimes just plain weird, so the people-watching is next-level!”


At BBC they make a lot of traditional beers, plus explore lesser-seen styles and do some playful experimentation.

“There’s been a huge increase in the number of companies producing beer in our region, and this has really helped get locals interested in trying a lot more different styles of beer. Right now, probably the biggest trends are hazy beers and sour beers,” says Brent.

Down closer to Kootenay Lake is Torchlight Brewing Co., where they serve up craft beers in a spacious industrial-style setting.

“It doesn’t have the feel of a conventional bar and that’s deliberate,” says managing director and brewmaster Craig Swendson. “We wanted it to be a different and more open space. You can see, and sometimes hear, the equipment in the back. There are pipes and ducts running on the ceiling. We want everyone to know where their beer is actually made. At Torchlight we like to pursue the ethos of delicious innovation.”

Torchlight also has a full kitchen and a menu of tasty pub grub with a twist as well as their own house-made craft sodas on tap as a non-alcoholic option.

Think you can’t be budged from your current favourite beer style? A tasting flight at any one of these West Kootenay breweries might just change your mind. 



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