

SOAR

Inflight
Magazine for
Pacific Coastal
Airlines

Land of plenty

Kelowna has a bit of
all-season everything

TRUE TRANQUILITY

Haida Gwaii lives
up to its legend

RIDING THE RAILS

A peek into the
Cranbrook History Centre

Pacific Coastal
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ED HANDJA & SHELLEY MCKAY

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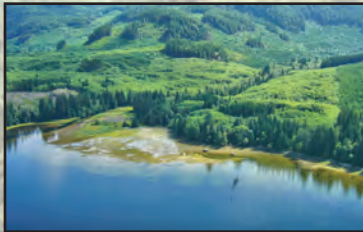
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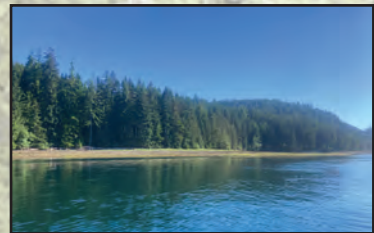
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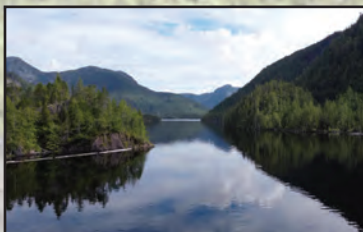
Loughborough Inlet Acreage: Unique opportunity to acquire a large coastal acreage in the south central coast region of BC, offering a true west coast wilderness plus an investment in timber. **160** acres south central BC coast. **4276ft** of diverse oceanfront. Healthy regenerating forest, complement of large conifers throughout, substantial creek. **\$1,280,000**



Quatsino Sound Acreages: Two adjacent properties, with **26** and **51** acres and approx. **3025ft** of south-facing, lowbank beachfront. Fish-bearing creek flows through both properties. Impressive mature forest with complement of older growth and substantial size timber. Great options for homestead or recreational properties. NW Vancouver Island. **\$461,500 and \$558,400**



Quadra Island Acreages: Two **4.9** acre highbank oceanfront lots at the south end of **Quadra Island**. Water, electricity and septic hookups, mature forest and pastoral land, views south over **Georgia Strait**. Part of a **77** acre development offering a private, peaceful island sanctuary away from the hustle and bustle and surrounded by nature. **SL1: \$642,000 SL2: \$657,000**



Surf Inlet, Princess Royal Island: Substantial acreage with oceanfront, lakefront and a historic dam, with water licenses and a foreshore lease. **251.88** acres in four contiguous titles with oceanfront at the head of **Surf Inlet** and lakefront on **Cougar Lake**. **Princess Royal Island** is halfway between **Prince Rupert** and **Bella Bella** on the central BC coast. **\$3,500,000**

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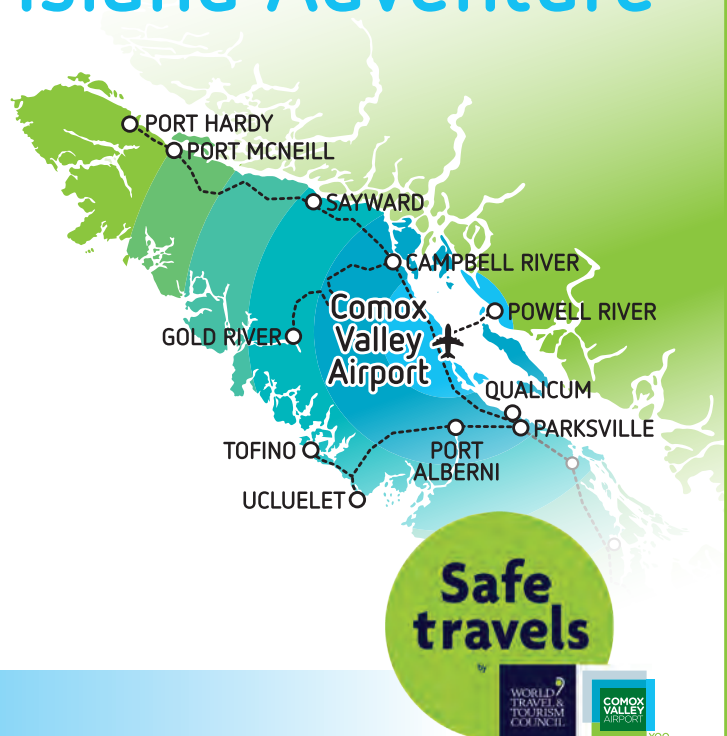
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LOOKING AHEAD

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The last 16- months have been a challenge for all of us, but it seems that the light at the end of the tunnel is getting closer and stronger.

It was an exciting milestone and great news to hear that BC has introduced a four-step restart plan to bring us back together. More and more Canadians are being vaccinated every day and doing their part to help reduce transmission of COVID-19.

With the provincial restart plan announcement, we are starting to see an increase in reservation bookings as we continue through the summer months. As part of the initiatives to meet the increased demand, we have returned our Saturday service to several of our communities.

I would like to remind our customers that we remain committed to our enhanced safety measures and, as per Transport

Canada, masks are still mandatory during flight and on the aircraft.

As we look forward to a better future and the return of travel, we continue to look at new ways to advance and improve our business. We recently introduced a new improved internet-booking engine and Apple/Google wallet electronic boarding passes for a quicker and more convenient online customer experience. To learn more, you can visit our website and check out our blog for more details.

Thank you again to our customers and partners for their support and patience as we continue to work through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please remember to stay safe and stay healthy. 🇨🇦



Quentin Smith

BC COVID recovery fund aids Indigenous tourism



Nisga'a Museum in the BC Northwest is among the Indigenous tourism projects funded for improvements by the province's COVID-19 recovery fund. (Nisga'a Lisims Government photo.)

By Tom Fletcher
westcoasttraveller.com

BRITISH COLUMBIA:

With interprovincial travel and tourism restarting in July, the BC government has committed \$28 million from its COVID-19 recovery funds to assist Indigenous tourism development in every corner of the province.

The program reaches from the Nisga'a Museum in the Northwest to the Shuswap Trail Alliance in the Interior, the Songhees Nation on Vancouver Island and the Katzie First Nation in the Lower Mainland. With tourism beginning to recover as pandemic gathering and travel restrictions ease, assistance is going to what tourism

minister Melanie Mark calls a prime area for attracting visitors.

"Indigenous tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments in BC tourism because it provides opportunities to share Indigenous cultures and to experience communities in a new way," Mark says. "This funding demonstrates reconciliation in action by creating and expanding tourism economic development projects with Indigenous Nations and supporting self-determination for Indigenous businesses."

Projects and organizations qualified under six separate recovery funds: destination development,

unique heritage, rural economic recovery, regional tourism development and tourism dependent communities. Communities receiving funding are Fernie, Grand Forks, Kimberley, Prince Rupert, Sun Peaks, Lillooet and Powell River.

Indigenous communities are making their own call on when to receive visitors, based on their COVID-19 vaccination levels, health services and other considerations. The province maintains a list of Indigenous attractions that are receiving visitors online here: indigenusbccom/stay-local-support-indigenusbccom

MEET A PACIFIC COASTAL EMPLOYEE: MATT



Position: *Cargo Lead at YVR*

Location:
Vancouver Airport Operations

Time with PASCO: *About 2.5 years*

Job description: Responsible for the day-to-day cargo operations in and out of our hub at YVR, coordinating time-sensitive shipments and making sure all items are security screened and safe for transportation on our aircraft.

What do you love most about this job? I love working for a smaller company, and getting to know people across all departments and the other bases. I've been fortunate enough to complete my flight training while working here, and having first-hand exposure to our daily operations and being around other aviation professionals has been extremely useful. And there's always someone up to go flying too!

Who is your family? I live with my partner Gareth and our little two-year-old rescue dog, Angus. He's a Jack Russell and Italian Greyhound mix (we think), so equal parts of boundless energy, mischievous and super chill.

Where were you born and where did you grow up? I was born and raised in Horsham, Sussex in the UK before spending periods of time in Bristol, Linköping and then London. I moved to Canada in 2017 and have been based in Vancouver since then.

What are your hobbies outside of the job? Anything that enables me to get outdoors—dog-friendly hikes, beach days or trying to remember how to ski is always a fun time. I'm a big fan of the various breweries around Mount Pleasant and Strathcona areas too.

AROUND BC



Self-guided Cowichan Valley Wine Festival runs in August

*By Jennifer Blyth
westcoasttraveller.com*

COWICHAN VALLEY: Twelve wineries. Thirty-one days. Thirty-six unforgettable wines. Raise your glass this summer to the Cowichan Valley Wine Festival.

The self-guided passport-style festival invites you to explore 12 award-winning wineries across the Cowichan Valley throughout the month of August. Explore Cowichan over 31 summer days, with your passport and tasting glass. The festival highlights the valley's unique place among British Columbia wine regions.

Cowichan has been designated as a specific British Columbian sub-GI wine region—an important distinction—so you know your wine was produced with at least 95 per cent Cowichan-grown grapes. It's part of what makes the Valley's winemakers and wine so special.

Participating wineries include: Averill Creek Vineyard; Blue Grouse Estate Winery; Cherry Point Estate Wines; Damali Winery; Deol Estate Winery; Divino Estate Winery; Enrico Winery; Glenterra Winery; Rocky Creek Winery; Unsworth Vineyards; Venturi-Schulze Vineyards; and Zanatta Vineyards.

All events will follow the current health protocols. Check with each location before arriving for the latest infor-

mation about safety precautions, and note that some businesses require reservations for all tastings.

Campground renamed to recognize First Nations

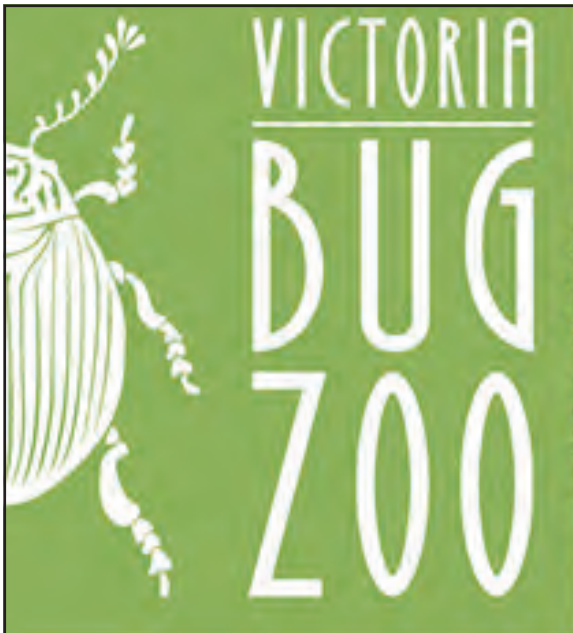
By Wolf Depner, westcoasttraveller.com

SIDNEY: A small ceremony held in May renamed a southern Vancouver Island campground in a move recognizing Indigenous culture and connection to the land.

SMONECTEN—the new name of McDonald Campground—will continue to serve as a seasonal Parks Canada campground in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.

Jonathan Wilkinson, minister responsible for Parks Canada, said that Parks Canada and Indigenous peoples are partners in conserving the natural and cultural heritage of the region while sharing their stories.

"The renaming and enhance-



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ments of SMONECTEN Campground will help Canadians gain further appreciation of local Indigenous culture, while ensuring WSANEC community members of all ages see their culture and language reflected back on these lands of enduring significance," he said.

The new name comes from the local SENCOTEN (pronounced sen chaw thun) language and means "fir pitch place."

WSANEC Leadership Council chair Don Tom welcomed the renaming of the site, a place where local First Nations would harvest various materials.

"As these places were taken from WSANEC people, new names were placed on the landscape and our presence in the eyes of settlers was diminished," he said. "But within WSANEC culture, this information was never forgotten. We held it tight to our chest waiting for people to listen once again. Today, I am proud to see the government begin the process of listening by taking these small steps toward preserving and honouring WSANEC culture and history."

The park now includes wood panels, which carvers from all four First Nations on the Saanich Peninsula (Tsartlip, Pauquachin, Tseycum and Tsawout) have crafted. The displays show how the site was once a place to gather liquid pitch, also known as sap, from Douglas fir trees to start fires, patch canoes, heal wounds and light lanterns.

SMONECTEN features 49 drive-in and walk-in campsites just north of the Town of Sidney; it's May 15 to September 30. People also frequent the area for forest walks.

New bridge is good news for Cape Scott hikers

PORT HARDY: Northern Vancouver Island's Cape Scott Trail has a brand new bridge in place after local crews installed a replacement bridge at Hansen's Lagoon, upgrading the previous one that washed away during the winter's heavy weather.

The Cape Scott Trail is now accessible and can be used to reach Nels Bight and Guise Bay.

The most popular camping destination in the park, and a good base for those exploring farther, Nels Bight is just shy of 16 kilometres from the trailhead—about six hours hiking time, one-way. Hikers are rewarded with a beautiful 2,400-metre-long sandy beach that's 210 metres wide at low tide.

Guise Bay, 20.7 kilometres from the trailhead, presents a one-way hiking time of about 7.5 hours. Another beautiful beach with good camping possibilities, the bay is sometimes popular with endangered sea otters.

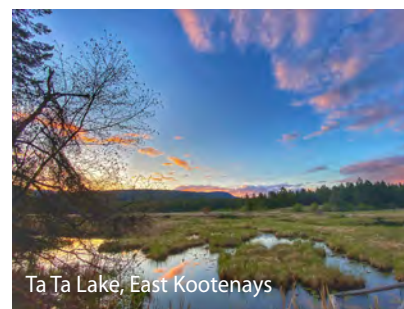
Living Lakes Canada launches photo challenge

BRITISH COLUMBIA: This summer, Living Lakes Canada is calling on BC residents to get involved in the Lake Biodiversity Photo Challenge to help raise awareness around the health of BC's freshwater lakes. Simply snap a photo of your favourite lake(s) and submit it to the contest for a chance to win prizes from Kicking Horse Coffee and Lush. Photo submissions will be accepted until July 31 and displayed in an online gallery and shared on social media.

There will be one winner for each category: Most Biodiverse, Public Favourite and Most Impactful. Winners will be chosen by Earth Rangers President Tovah Barocas and announced at the end of Lakes Appreciation Month in July.

Canada is home to two million freshwater lakes, but not all of them are monitored regularly or even photographed, which makes it hard to tell how these lakes have changed over time. Lakes are subject to impacts such as shoreline development, changing nutrient levels, and water levels. Photos provide reference points that can help determine the scale at which human activity or natural occurrences are impacting these water bodies. These issues, combined with the impacts of climate change, make community-based water monitoring efforts like photo documentation even more important.

Submit your photos by email to lakeblitz@livinglakescanada.ca, via the online submission form at lakeblitz.livinglakescanada.ca or by using #LakeBlitzPhoto on social media. 📷



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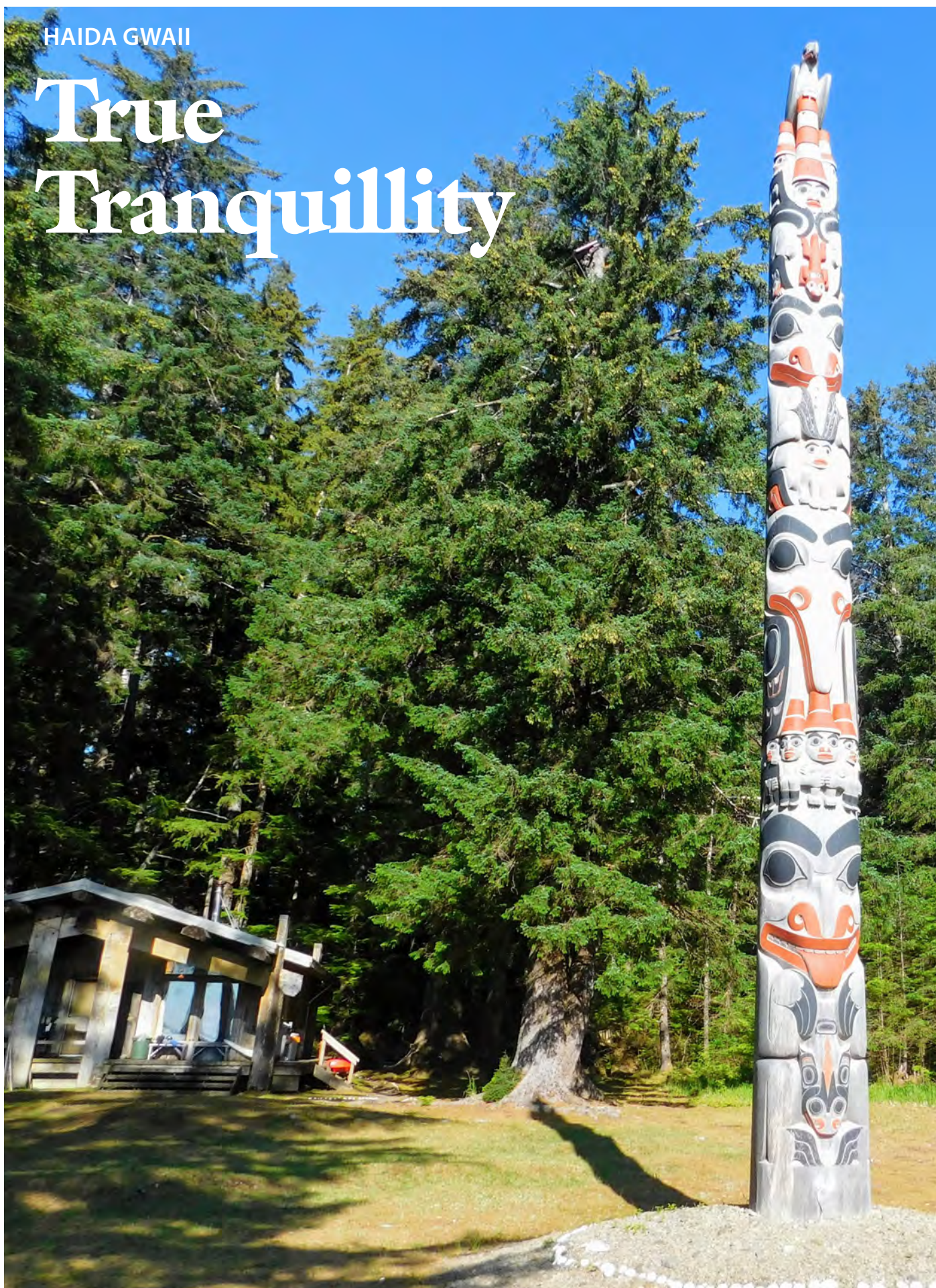
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- Hawthorne Place, Qualicum



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HAIDA GWAI

True Tranquillity



Haida Gwaii lives up to its legend

Story and photos by Lucas Aykroyd

Weathered, intricately carved totem poles face the sheltered bay in SGang Gwaay. Breathing deeply, I gaze at this abandoned village in Haida Gwaii, an isolated northern British Columbia archipelago with more than 450 islands.

Walter, the native Haida watchman leading my tour group, takes us up the hill to view the remains of a six-beam longhouse with corner posts. Mossy logs overhang a deep indentation in the ground.

"The roof consisted of big cedar planks held in place with rocks," he explains.

Next, Walter recounts a supernatural tale about children transforming into bears.

SGang Gwaay — a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1981 — is the closest thing to Easter Island's awe-inspiring statues that I've ever experienced in Canada. True tranquility abounds.

"I've never seen anything quite like this," expedition leader Mike Jackson says.

I'm on a week-long cruise with Maple Leaf Adventures, an eco-friendly luxury tour operator based in Victoria. Every itinerary is slightly different, based on weather, wildlife sightings and guest preferences. Cascadia, a 138-foot expedition-style catamaran, which was recently renovated and debuted in BC waters in 2019, welcomes up to 24 travellers.

Happily, blue skies dominate on this June trip. Southern Haida Gwaii is federally designated and protected as the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, a National Marine Conservation Area, and a Haida Heritage Site.

This region, about a two-hour flight northwest of Vancouver, offers a unique blend of ancient Indigenous culture, unspoiled nature and ocean-going adventures.

One morning, Cascadia pulls up within eyeshot of Garcin Rocks, a Steller sea lion rookery. More than 200 sea lions are hanging out, mating, diving and barking. They sound like aspiring death-metal vocalists and smell like fishmongers.

After snapping some vivid photos, we move on. We promptly spot a pod of humpback whales. A fin whale — the world's second-largest whale after the blue whale — surfaces nearby and spouts. Standing at the prow, I feel the spray caress my face.

Even more surreal, hundreds of Pacific white-sided dolphins surround the boat moments later, leaping out of the glittering ocean like madcap synchronized swimmers.

"I've never seen anything quite like this," expedition leader Mike Jackson says.

Early that afternoon, we're preparing to stop at Hotspring Island and relax in 44-degree-Celsius pools overlooking Juan Perez Sound, named after the first European to explore the

Pacific Northwest in 1774. Then we sight four transient killer whales. For half an hour, I watch in wonder as the magnificent dorsal fins of the male orca, two females and a calf surface over and over.

And that's just one day. Off-ship excursions provide even more wildlife viewing.

Bald eagles soar overhead during a morning kayaking expedition with Maple Leaf Adventures naturalist Trudy Chatwin, who is always happy to point out ancient murrelets or tufted puffins. Curious seals pop their heads out of De la Beche Inlet, brimming with lion's mane jellyfish with long tendrils. Passing by little waterfalls, we enter a natural grotto, where a rainbow appears, before we paddle back to Cascadia.

Later, we head out in a skiff on Burnaby Narrows, featuring one of the world's richest and most biodiverse intertidal zones between Moresby Island and Burnaby Island. Just off a beach blanketed with black mussels, Mike suits up for cold water snorkeling. Diving in, he carefully retrieves a giant sea cucumber, a red sea urchin, moon snails and other specimens for our viewing pleasure.





Even more surreally, hundreds of Pacific white-sided dolphins surround the boat moments later, leaping out of the glittering ocean like madcap synchronized swimmers.

To keep Gwaii Haanas pristine and respect its Indigenous heritage, trip permits and an orientation on safety and cultural history are required for visitors. For those fortunate enough to sail on Cascadia, there's also a hearty helping of creature comforts.

Chef Mara Jernigan concocts an excellent daily menu, burgeoning with BC-sourced ingredients. Lunch might consist of chicken curry with brown basmati rice, or lamb chili with coleslaw and corn bread. Dinner could feature crisp duck confit with puréed white beans and roasted Brussels sprouts, or sablefish with steamed carrots and Chinese cabbage. The lavish desserts and post-outing snacks are a story in themselves.

There are plenty of ways to relax while sailing. Sometimes, I soak up a nature presentation by Mike or Trudy. Other times, I socialize with other guests while sipping a Maple Leaf ISA specially brewed by Spinakers, Canada's oldest brewpub, founded in Victoria in 1984.

Reading a book from the onboard library is always a good option in this WiFi-free zone. John Vaillant's *The Golden Spruce* (2005) compellingly documents how a logger felled a huge Sitka spruce, sacred to the Haida people, as an ill-conceived environmental protest. I sleep peacefully in my well-appointed cabin, which includes a hot shower, natural soaps and shampoos, and other perks.

Gifts for sale range from Susan Musgrave's *A Taste of Haida Gwaii* cookbook (\$40) to eagle-adorned silk scarves (\$80) by Haida artist Dorothy Grant. My favourite gift, though, is simply spending time in Haida Gwaii. It has inspired legendary BC art.

At Tanu, we visit the burial site of Bill Reid, who carved the iconic Jade Canoe statue at Vancouver International Airport. We also tour the village of Skedans, whose longhouses and mortuary poles were immortalized by Victoria artist Emily Carr in her moody paintings and her 1941 book *Klee Wyck*.

I'm more of a wordsmith than an artist, but visions of Haida Gwaii will linger in my mind for many years to come. 🏠



Photo by Dave Hollis, courtesy Maple Leaf Adventures.

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(to do and see)



Biking on Knox Mountain. All photos courtesy Tourism Kelowna

This Okanagan town has a bit of all-season everything

Welcome to Kelowna. Urban and rural, nature and culture, playtime and downtime: Kelowna isn't just one destination. It's a whole bunch of them, located in one uniquely beautiful place that should be explored in all seasons.

The largest city in the interior of British Columbia and along the shores of Okanagan Lake, Kelowna's name originates from the Syilx/Okanagan peoples word for grizzly bear. Kelowna is cradled within a glorious range of mountains and is a sanctuary filled with pristine lakes, pine forests, abundant gardens,

orchards and vineyards, sandy beaches and superb amenities.

Kelowna has miles of beautiful parkland and several sandy beaches that provide wonderful opportunities for boating, swimming, water-skiing, windsurfing and fishing in the summer. As well, you can hit

Kelowna isn't just one destination. It's a whole bunch of them, located in one uniquely beautiful place that should be explored in all seasons.

the links at one of the many golf courses nine months out of the year. In cooler months, the snow-capped mountains and pine-filled forests are a haven for skiers, boarders, snowmobilers and outdoor adventurers of all types and levels.

Orchards and vineyards thrive within a 10-minute drive from the downtown core and provide year-round seasonal delights. You can pluck ripe cherries or juicy peaches from trees or spend a day sampling award-winning internationally acclaimed wines.

That's not all. Kelowna's growing Cultural District covers several blocks in the downtown area and features a concentration of galleries, museums, theatres, artists' studios, fine dining,

unique shops and a vibrant cultural life all year long.

Any time, any day, any season, Kelowna and the Okanagan Valley offer a world of things to do. The options are endless and there's something for everyone.

Wine

Kelowna is the birthplace of wine-making in British Columbia; it's known for its top-quality wines that regularly win national and international awards.

With over 40 wineries within a 20 minute drive, you'll find plenty of terroir to swirl, sip and savour. The area has five unique wine trails: Kelowna's Southeast Bench, Lake Country's Scenic Sip, West-side Wine Trail, Lakeshore Wine Route and Downtown Grapes & Grains. Explore the wine country where you will find an abundance of culinary experiences as well as unforgettable winery and vineyard events throughout the year.

Golf

Averaging over 2,000 hours of sun every year, Kelowna offers one of the longest, driest golf seasons in Canada. Vineyards, orchards, semi-desert terrain, rolling hills and expansive lakes make

the golf courses in the area some of the most picturesque in the country. Many golf courses also offer amazing dining experiences that range from casual to gourmet.

With courses that range from easy-going to ego-shattering, there is something in Kelowna for every skill level. Build your own golf package, view sample golf packages or book tee-times to experience the mild weather, stunning scenery and more than 19 exceptional courses that make Kelowna a must-play destination on every golf enthusiast's list!

Farms, Orchards & Markets

Kelowna's agricultural roots go deep. You want fresh? You've come to the right place. Kelowna is internationally renowned for its locally grown fruit and produce.

Each season is celebrated with special festivals. Stop at a roadside fruit stand. Visit a farm or orchard. Gorge yourself on cherries, bob for apples and stomp grapes. The region's micro-climate and predisposition for a long, hot growing season mean you can tour stun-



Quails Gate Winery Dinner in the Vineyard.



Kayaking Okanagan Lake.

ning floral gardens, take tractor tours of orchards, and stroll vineyards.

Farm to Table Dining

Here in Kelowna and the Okanagan Valley, farmers and chefs take pride in their commitment to quality and share a passion for locally grown food. Because the farms and restaurants are so close together, chefs can pick products at just the right moment to create tasty works of art, all in the same day. So go eat local and give it a taste.

Lake Activities

Stunning Okanagan Lake spans 135 kilometres (84 miles) from north (at Vernon) to the south (at Penticton). Kelowna sits just about half way, and the east and west sides of the lake are connected by the wondrous five-lane William R. Bennett Bridge, one of very few floating bridges in the world, suspended over the lake floor almost 200 feet below.

Okanagan Lake is known for its beaches with over 30 throughout the

region. Many beaches are equipped with playgrounds, concessions and bathrooms.

Enjoy the lake from a stand-up paddleboard (SUP), wake boat, sailboat, pedal-boat, charter boat, flyboard, kayak, or canoe—boats are available for every kind of water enthusiast. Okanagan Lake's water temperature in July averages 19 to 23C (69 to 71F).

The lake is welcoming and refreshing during the summer but it also has mysteries—creatures, hidden coves and tombs. Search for Ogopogo, hike Paul's Tomb trail at Knox Mountain or snorkel in the crystal clear water of the quiet, secluded bays.

Where to stay

Want a budget-friendly vacation with the family or a couple's getaway? Rest assured knowing that lodging in Kelowna will exceed your expectations, wants and needs. From outdoor camping at provincial and regional parks to cosy bed and breakfasts with lake and valley views,

lakeside resorts along the shores of Okanagan Lake and family-friendly hotels with pools and waterslides, there are many options.

If easy beach and lake access is top of your list, consider the historic Eldorado Resort with its charming boutique hotel that is perfect for couples, or the more urban resort hotel that's a fit for a family. The Delta Hotels by Marriot Grand Okanagan Resort is conveniently located downtown within easy walking distance to all amenities. The Cove Lakeside Resort located on the western shores of Okanagan Lake features all suites, making your stay feel like home away from home.

Hotels with pools and waterslides make for a perfect family-friendly stay. Try the Comfort Suites, newly built Hyatt Place Kelowna, Coast Capri or Prestige Beach House. All have great amenities including breakfast, parking and convenient locations to easily explore Kelowna and area. 🏠

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On your bike!



Sugar Cane youth, along with WLFN councillor Shawna Philbrick, are all smiles as they take some new mountain bikes for a test ride Monday afternoon. (Angie Mindus photo - Williams Lake Tribune)

Williams Lake First Nation breaks ground on multi-use bike trail project

By Greg Sabatino
westcoasttraveller.com

As the sun peeked over the mountaintops above Chief Will-Yum Campground just south of Williams Lake earlier this spring, there was excitement in the air.

Williams Lake First Nation Chief Willie Sellars, joined by James Doerfling of Jimco Services, Thomas Schoen, CEO of First Journey Trails, and Sugar Cane Archeology's Marvin Bob, broke ground on a new vision for the nation to bring members onto the land through recreational mountain biking and hiking.

The morning's ceremony—led by traditional drumming and singing from community member David Archie—kicked off construction of a multi-use connector trail joining the Chief Will-Yum Campground to the Sugar Cane community across Highway 97.

Phase 1 of the project would see the construction of a 1,750-metre hiking and biking trail.

"It's about getting people out onto the land, and how important that is, which has become very apparent

during COVID," Sellars told the Williams Lake Tribune. "And it's starting with this trail here ... this is part of a really cool vision and I couldn't be more excited. Mountain biking is going to be a valuable tool for us—getting people out onto the land and doing physical activity—incorporating other things into our culture and tradition."

Doerfling, a professional, world-class mountain biker now turned trail builder, is heading up the machine-built construction of the trail, while Schoen is managing the project. Once

complete, the single-track trail will be suitable for all types of bicycles and will also allow for winter snowshoe or fatbike activities. The trail will also include some additional infrastructure, including a viewing deck.

Doerfling said the bi-directional trail will be a green—or beginner—trail, with dirt features that will make it fun for advanced mountain bikers as well. Construction time will be roughly eight to 10 weeks, making a summer-time launch likely. The trailhead, equipped with parking access, will act as a launching pad for future gravity flow trails and a mountain biking trail network to connect to, with even the potential for a commuter trail stretching to 150 Mile House.

Schoen, a longtime trail builder, said following the devastation of the 2017 wildfires and the destruction of some of the mountain biking trails in the area, the project marks a new beginning.

"These trails have such a profound impact on community members and non-community members," Schoen said.

The trail also puts into motion the results of a comprehensive community master trail plan for WLFN.

"We circulated a survey to collect stakeholder input from WLFN community members," Schoen said, noting an overwhelming majority of community members thought new trails would enhance their quality of life.

"We are following their recommendations and this new trail is a step in creating a much larger trail network in and around the T'xelc community."

Schoen said he's been involved in trail development for the WLFN for years, and noted it was sad to lose three popular trails in 2017 wildfires.

"Starting to rebuild and create additional trails is something I'm excited and passionate about," he said.

The long-term goal is to build a network of trails that members can use for running, walking, hiking and riding as a springboard to finding additional ways to keep youth active and busy. 🇨🇦

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Riding the rails



Cranbrook is a true rail town.

A peek into the Cranbrook History Centre

By Hans Tammemagi

Can you imagine Garry Anderson's surprise when he spread paint remover onto the wall of a railway car he had recently acquired, and slowly a beautiful black walnut wood, inlaid with a delicate rose, appeared?

Research revealed that the railway car he had obtained for the price of scrap metal to display at the museum in Cranbrook's downtown railway area was the Argyle, the dining car of the famed 1920s Trans-Canada Limited, a special CPR train that was richly appointed to transport the ul-

tra rich. "It was like discovering the Tomb of Tutankhamun," Garry said.

He was hooked! From 1975 to 2013, Garry scoured the continent to collect and renovate 26 additional rail cars, many of them historic treasures, ultimately establishing what is considered the finest railway museum in North America. He was executive director of the museum during this time, and also a formidable fundraiser—since acquiring and renovating rail cars is far from a cheap business. In 2007, he received the Order of Canada in recognition of his work.

Railways played a significant role in the early days of Canada before highways and air travel dominated. It's appropriate that such a fine glimpse into that historical period is displayed in Cranbrook, as this small city was created in 1898 because of the railway, and long trains continue to roll regularly through its western edge.

The Canadian Museum of Rail Travel was renamed the Cranbrook History Centre in 2013 and now contains displays of paleontology and Cranbrook's history.

The museum presents an important and fascinating look into our nation's past. For example, seven of the museum's rail cars comprise a complete set of the Trans-Canada Limited, the only one in existence today. (Limited meant it only stopped at major cities.) The 1929 Trans-Canada Limited was the pinnacle of luxury and the ultimate way for the rich to travel. The seven luxuriously appointed cars were constructed of steel but with a rich finishing in black walnut and mahogany inlaid with elegant designs. Sumptuous meals were prepared and consumed. The décor included stained glass, observation platforms and plush velvet. Social life centred on the dining car and the solarium lounge car at the end. It was a deluxe five-star hotel on wheels with no comparable service in its day and no equivalent today. Running on CP tracks between Vancouver and Montreal, the train did not pass through Cranbrook.

Another exclusive aspect of the museum is its enormous size. Each of the 27 cars is approximately 90 feet long and weighs about 90 tons, which dwarfs the typical museum artifact. The cars occupy three tracks about 100 metres in length and together with many additional historical buildings, the Cranbrook museum is probably one of the physically largest in the country. Caring for such a huge, unique collection of rail cars, most with extremely fragile and valuable interiors, is challenging. The first phase of providing protection from the elements has just been completed with a permanent roof that shelters about a third of the railcars. The next two phases, estimated to take about five years, will complete the roof and add walls and heating/cooling.

The museum also obtained four cars from the even older fabled Soo-Spokane Train De Luxe, which started in 1907 and was also luxuriantly finished and intended for ultra-rich travellers. An express service, it made few stops as it ran between Spokane and Minneapolis, passing through Cranbrook and Sault Sainte Marie.

Garry's detection and persuasion skills were crucial in tracking down two of the rail cars—which had been converted to lake-side cottages in Minnesota—and convincing the owners to part with them. The purchase price, transportation and renovation costs were enormous, but Garry pulled it off. Renovations revealed a luxurious Art Nouveau interior design décor. Although the train ran partly in the USA, it was owned by CPR and formed an important part of Cranbrook's early history.

The 1927 Strathcona was a special executive car reserved for dignitaries and it carried people such as Princess Elizabeth and Prince Phillip, Winston Churchill, John and Jackie Kennedy, CP Rail executives and many other VIPs. The car usually travelled with a partner car, the Mt. Steven, and went wherever in Canada the passengers wished to go. There were



Sleeping car on the Trans-Canada Limited.

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usually additional cars, not as luxuriously appointed, for the dignitaries' entourage. As an example of its opulence, ice was used for cooling in the summertime—a 1930s version of air conditioning.

These trains are far from ordinary. They represent the most beautiful, historic passenger trains ever operated in Canada and show that our country in the first half of the 20th century had one of the highest levels of train design, interior decor, construction and operations in the world. Not only did they provide a rich lifestyle but they were faster than any transcontinental train in the USA. This collection is of international importance.

The museum also has two locomotives, a water tower, a freight shed and the Elko station. The pièce de résistance, however, is the Royal Alexandra Hall. CPR's elegant Royal Alexandra Hotel was built in Winnipeg in 1906

and operated until 1971. The oak-panneled Grand Cafe, though, was saved, along with the massive oak fireplace from the formal dining room, and reconstructed in Cranbrook. The goals were to expand the CPR historical experience and give Cranbrook a glamorous heritage space that can hold several hundred people for special events.

Today, you can wander through the History Centre and reminisce about the days when railroads were the king of the land.

If You Go

The Cranbrook History Centre offers three tours: 1) The Trans Canada Limited; 2) the Soo-Spokane cars; 3) And an overview of how trains changed from the early 1900s to modern times.

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Flavours of the West Coast

Chef Warren Barr and
Lily Verney-Downey.

Pluvio restaurant flourishes amid a blossoming Ucluelet

By Susan Lundy

We're in Ucluelet on Vancouver Island's west coast, settling into seats at Pluvio restaurant's chef's table. In front of us, Chef Warren Barr and his sous chefs seem immersed in choreography as they spin and dance around the kitchen, transforming food into cuisine that has our mouths watering.

Suddenly, I spot something out of the corner of my eye.

"Excuse me," I say, pulling aside Lily Verney-Downey, who owns Pluvio along with chef-husband

Warren, but who is also hands-on in the dining room. "Did I just see food plated on a bed of sticks and stones?"

She nods and smiles. This is my first inkling that the dinner at Pluvio—named fourth best new restaurant in Canada just six months after opening in the spring of 2019—will be unique.

It's riveting sitting at the chef's table watching the transformation of ingredients from raw to edible art. The plating is so unique but so obvious. Why wouldn't you serve smoked spruce-flavoured candied salmon on a beach setting of stones and sticks? It tastes like

a campfire at the water's edge, why shouldn't it look like one?

Still trying to decide my own meal, I watch Warren plate a ring of succulent-looking butter-soaked scallops, my absolute favourite food. "Would it be possible to make that for me without butter?" I ask (regretting my dairy allergy).

Warren hesitates and then shakes his head. "No," he says. "But I can add some scallops to your plate."

At first, I'm taken aback because most restaurants meet this request. But suddenly I am thrilled. Here is a

"I want Ukee to be known as having the best . . . a small humble town that people take pride in."

chef so proud of his creations, he's not willing to compromise.

This is the second time today I've met a sky-high personal standard and it says something about Ucluelet. Once considered the slightly dowdy cousin of hip Tofino down the highway, Ucluelet (or Ukee as it's known locally) now bursts with its own flavour and personality. Ukee is not "Tofino Lite;" it stands alone as a must-do destination.

A few hours before our dinner at Pluvio, we stop by Pacific Rim Distillery, where Luke Erridge creates uniquely flavoured gin and vodka, using four-generations worth of his family's whisky-making techniques. Spirits don't get more hand-crafted than this. Everything is fermented using Luke's own wild yeast culture, propagated in nearby Barkley Sound. He hand-forages all nine botanicals used in his Lighthouse Gin, and everything is made on-site at a distillery hand-built by Luke and his grandfather.

The spirits are made in small batches—each is unique—and when we visited, Luke had little stock left. At the time, just three select restaurants carried the spirits (Pluvio was one), and Luke had no intention of ramping up production. In fact, he seemed a bit reluctant to sell one of the last bottles of his hand-crafted vodka to any old bloke.

"If you say you're going to mix it with Coca Cola, I probably won't sell it to you," he laughs. For sure, his gin and vodka are meant for sipping straight up. The flavours are that unique.

"I want Ukee to be known as having the best . . . a small humble town that people take pride in," he says.

To this end, top-notch hand-crafters are sprouting up around town, including the brand new

Ucluelet Brewing Company and Foggy Bean Coffee Co. Ukee may not have the Pacific Rim's signature long sandy beaches, but a hike on the Wild Pacific Trail offers breathtaking, wild-sea vistas and a relaxing immersion in a lush rainforest. And there's lots to do in this booming town that's filled with young, creative people.

Back at Pluvio, the theme that local-is-best continues to emerge as Chef Warren presents us with several courses of inspired Canadian cuisine, rich in seasonal and wild ingredients—many foraged from nearby forests and coastlines or grown in Pluvio's own garden. The wine and cocktail list is similarly inspired, with the wines carefully selected, frequently from lesser-known, small-batch wineries. Finally, even the name celebrates the site: "Pluviophile: (n) a lover of rain; someone who finds joy and peace of mind during rainy days."

Our meal is peppered with surprises, both in the flavours and presentation, and we leave completely satiated with the flavours of Ukee.

Here are some other things to check out in Ucluelet:

- In addition to Pluvio, another excellent spot to dine is located right next door: Heartwood Kitchen features West Coast flavours served up from an expansive, vegetarian-friendly menu with lots of gluten-free options. For breakfast, try The Blue Room across the street; for waterfront happy hour, drive out to Float Lounge at Black Rock Resort. Be sure to drop by Zoe's Bakery; it's another local hot spot.
- The Ucluelet Aquarium is a



great place to experience local sea life showcased in exhibits designed to inspire respect for ocean habitats. Some of the displays are interactive and the entire experience is both educational and entertaining. The aquarium has a unique catch-and-release program, and consistently releases more animals than it collects as babies are born and new animals arrive through the facility's water system. 🐟

GETTING THERE ➔

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Meet Snowbird Captain Logan Reid

By Darcy Nybo
Photos Contributed

When Logan Reid was a child, his family would drive from their home in Central Saanich to Comox for the air show. Much to Logan's delight, they went every year.

"I was inspired about aviation by going to those air shows," he said. "I loved the noise and the thunder and the grace of watching the planes fly through the air. Those were the first seeds planted for me to want to be a pilot."

When Logan was 13, he joined the 676 Kittyhawk Air Cadets at the Victoria International Airport.

"It was one of those things that seemed interesting and it turned out to be a great exposure to the aviation industry," he recalls. "The beauty of the air cadets is that it provides access to so much experience that most people don't get. My first experience in a glider was that it was graceful and eerily quiet."

While the glider was peaceful, Logan wanted to fly jets and go as fast as possible.

"I moved from Central Saanich (near Sidney) in 2008 when I went to Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario. You need to have a degree to be a pilot and I got mine in aeronautical engineering."

Logan met his wife in Victoria in 2010 when he was posted to Comox 442 Squadron.

"We had a long-distance relationship until I was done college and we've been together ever since."

The couple moved to Moose Jaw once Logan graduated. Then in 2018, after his first tour as a flight instructor, he tried out and was accepted into the famed Canadian Snowbirds.



Captain Logan Reid

He flew with them in 2019 and, in the 2020/2021 season, advanced to become the lead solo.

Living away from family has been hard, but Moose Jaw provides a solid base for Logan, his wife and their three-year-old son.

"It's very demanding to be married to me. In normal times, we [Snowbirds] travel a lot and have little time at home. My wife is very supportive and a great mom to our little guy. He's also getting excited about airplanes."

Logan, his wife and his son get back to Vancouver Island whenever possible, although not recently given travel restrictions.

"We were back in Comox in May for training. The Snowbirds' schedule started in June this year and we fly all over Canada. It's such a big season for us, as we didn't fly our 50th season in 2020, so we'll be doing it in 2021. To be performing in front of the North American public is a huge privilege. I'm looking forward to remaining with



the team through 2022.”

In talking about his family, he describes his mom as a “hesitant” fan.

“She worries and it’s hard for her to watch me fly 1,000 kilometres an hour at another airplane and miss it by 30 feet. She’s still very supportive, though, and watches the shows every year.”

Logan isn’t sure what he’ll do after the Snowbirds, which is normally a three- to five-year posting.

“Every time I visit the island, I imagine myself finding a way to get back. There are so many options out there to anyone in the aviation industry. Anyone with a skill set in that industry is fortunate. The Canadian Armed Forces have a base in Comox, a unit in Pat Bay and a naval base in Esquimalt.”

Representing the Canadian Forces is something that brings Logan great satisfaction.

“I love visiting the small towns” he said. “One year in Killam, Alberta, the whole town shut down to watch us and we were able to meet the town’s people and have a barbecue with them. Some people never get to meet a member of their military. It’s an honour to show

the skill, professionalism and teamwork of the Canadian Forces.”

These shows are the result of thousands of hours of experience and training.

“There are a lot of complex aerodynamics involved. We judge our rates of movement from the lead jet, and the lead aircraft also calls out commands as to how they are manipulating their plane,” he

“I loved the noise and the thunder and the grace of watching those planes fly through the air.”

explained. “In Moose Jaw, we spend time in looser formations and then get tighter as we get more comfortable with our references. We get to a point where we can fly with six- to eight-foot spacing between wings. Sometimes we fly with four feet of overlap—that’s when the outboard wing of one aircraft will be only four feet from the inboard wing of the other aircraft. You do a lot of training and trust building.”


The result is a show like no other.

“We have a 30-minute air show that has a beginning, middle and end. In the beginning, nine planes do aerobatics together. In the middle, we call it specialty maneuvers when seven planes break off and the two solos do their head-on crosses. The rest of the formation conducts other specialty maneuvers, one right after the other. The end of the show is when the solos rejoin the seven and all nine planes fly in tight formation and do things like splits, loops and rolls.

“It’s not just watching airplanes dance in the sky. The visual aspect of the smoke trails, the music we do our routine to, and the flying are all amazing to experience.”

Logan was looking forward to coming back to the island for training.

“Vancouver Island is the Squadron’s second home. We love going to Comox; it’s valuable training for us and we love the community.”

The Snowbirds’ schedule is subject to change due to COVID-19. Please google Snowbirds 2021 schedule for current dates and places you can see them perform. 



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