

# SOAR

Inflight  
Magazine for  
Pacific Coastal  
Airlines

## Powder power

It's snow time  
at BC mountain resorts

### Where time stands still

The Cariboo  
Chilcotin Coast

### Fired up for pizza

Trail's iconic  
The Rustic Crust

*Pacific Coastal*  
AIRLINES



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**110 Hillside Rd, Sointula:** 3.76 acres across the frontage road from the beach. 1543sqft 5-year-old main residence, older 1367sqft secondary residence, studio, garage/workshop. Expansive ocean views. Forested area, artesian spring water, BC hydro and solar power. Sointula has ferry service from Vancouver Island. **\$1,199,000**



**Campbell River Ocean View Home** Opportunity awaits with this beautifully renovated 7 bedroom, 4 bathroom home! Separated into a 5 bedroom and a 2 bedroom suite, both offer modern styling and finishing throughout. Large deck, fully fenced backyard, garage, additional RV parking, great income potential. **\$899,900**



**Nootka Sound Oceanfront:** Access the Pacific Ocean from this 10-acre property with approximately 400ft of oceanfront in Plumper Harbour, Nootka Island. The property faces east, looking out across Kendrick Inlet to Strange Island in the foreground and beyond to the mountains of Vancouver Island. A cleared trail leads from the beach to the highest point on the property. **\$199,900**



**Oceanfront Home, Porcher Island:** Turn-key property! 6.38 acres with approx. 108ft of walk-on oceanfront as well as a private dock. Family-friendly move-in ready home, 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom. Off grid power and water systems. Includes most furnishings, equipment, two kayaks, fish cleaning table. Near the mouth of the Skeena River, approximately 16 nautical miles from Prince Rupert. **\$349,900**



**Lot 10 Reid Island:** Oceanfront property in the stunning natural beauty of the Gulf Islands! 3.57 acres, nicely treed, with views to the north across to Valdes Island and to the east through Porlier Pass, with approx. 487ft ocean frontage. Off-grid property with no services, boat access only. Partially built cabin on site. **\$325,000**



**Hidden Cove Lodge:** Eco-resort on Vancouver Island, just north of Telegraph Cove. Property is 8 acres with oceanfront on a private bay. Resort facilities include a main lodge, cabins and modern suites, offering a comfortable nature get-away. Drive-to, off-grid property with substantial infrastructure in place. Great opportunity to purchase an established resort. **\$3,450,000**

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## CELEBRATING MILESTONES

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**A**s we approach the most joyous time of the year, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to all our valued passengers for choosing Pacific Coastal Airlines this winter season. Your continued support and loyalty are what drive us to deliver exceptional service, and we are deeply thankful for the trust you place in us. I am eager to share with you the exciting milestones and celebrations we've experienced over the past few months.

Reflecting on the fall season, we've had much to celebrate. On October 17, we celebrated the one-year anniversary of our Kamloops base. It's hard to believe that it's already been a year since we began offering the Kamloops-to-Victoria route. Time truly flies when you're doing what you love, and this milestone would not have been possible without our passengers' continued support. You are the driving force that inspires us to explore new destinations and continue to grow!

On October 28, we proudly launched a new route connecting Kelowna and Prince George. This new service, which operates six times a week from Sunday to Friday, is designed to provide fast, reliable travel for our passengers in the communities we serve. We're excited to offer this new option and look forward to making this route a convenient choice for your travel needs.

This fall, we were also honored to play a significant role in the remarkable journeys of two special passengers—an orphaned bear cub and a rehabilitated seal pup. The bear cub, rescued in Powell River, flew with us to Vancouver for rehabilitation, while Theodore, a seal pup, made his journey back to the waters of Rivers Inlet—a First Nations community on the

central coast of BC—to be released back into the ocean. Being a part of these journeys filled us with pride, as it reinforces our commitment to serving communities in all their forms—from people to wildlife—and helping to protect the precious ecosystems of our province.

As the year draws to a close, we were privileged to attend the 2024 Silver Wings Awards, hosted by the British Columbia Aviation Council. This event was an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of aspiring students and industry leaders in aviation. We were especially proud to congratulate the three recipients of the Pacific Coastal Airlines scholarships, each valued at \$10,000. These scholarships, in honor of Daryl Smith, Paul Biglin and Sheldon Smith, are designed to support Indigenous youth and students pursuing careers in aviation—whether as pilots or aircraft maintenance engineers. By supporting the next generation of aviation professionals, we are helping to foster the growth and innovation of our industry.

Looking back on 2024, we are filled with gratitude for the opportunities that have come our way. It has been a year of growth, laughter, perseverance and hard work. From new route launches to aircraft rebranding, we've continued to push forward with our vision of connecting, supporting and enriching the communities we serve.

Thank you for being part of another memorable year with us. We are excited about what the future holds and look forward to continuing our journey together in 2025 and beyond. Here's to an even brighter new year! 🇨🇦

Warm regards,

**Quentin Smith**



# CHILL CHASERS.

Glide effortlessly into the coolest winter scene in Kamloops, where the vibes are as fresh as the powder on our slopes. Immerse yourself in adrenaline-packed slopes, savour a culinary adventure that's a burst of flavours, and explore an arts and culture scene that's as chill as it gets.

Welcome to the 'Loops, where winter isn't just a season; it's a chill state of mind.



**kamloops**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

[TOURISMKAMLOOPS.COM](http://TOURISMKAMLOOPS.COM)

## MEET A PACIFIC COASTAL EMPLOYEE: DANIELLE



**Position:** *Flight Attendant*

**Location:** *Vancouver, BC*

**Time with PASCO:** *5 years*

### What path did you take to get to this job?:

I was initially hired for just a temporary summer contract and didn't expect to be here very long, but at the end of that contract, I was asked to stay! I loved my experience that summer, so I said, "yes." Five years later, I'm still just as happy to be here.

### What do you like best about this job?

I love that every day is different. I get to meet new people and have new experiences all the time. It keeps me on my toes and I'm always learning new things. But the best part about this job is the people I get to work with, especially our incredible team of flight attendants.

### What are your hobbies outside of the job?

I was a singer and performer before I started at Pacific Coastal, and music is still a big part of my life. I also love to bake; chocolate chip cookies are my specialty!

### What is your favourite thing to do in your city?

I love living so close to the ocean. My favourite thing is starting my day with a walk by the water, hoping to catch a glimpse of an otter or a seal along the way!

## BRIEFS

# 200 South Vancouver Island acres purchased for preservation


VICTORIA: The BC Parks Foundation has purchased 200 acres of southern Vancouver Island land that it plans to protect from future development.

A 34-acre Central Saanich parcel sits next to Gowlland Tod Park, near Brentwood Bay. A vital habitat for at-risk species, including the olive-sided flycatcher, red-legged frog and Pacific sideband snail, it is also home to Hazlitt Creek—a major tributary of Millstream Creek.

"For me, conservation isn't just about setting land aside; it's about building a relationship with nature," said Michael Bocking, who partially donated this land through the Government of Canada's

Ecological Gifts Program, in a news release. "When people experience these landscapes firsthand—walking among the towering Douglas firs or listening to birdsong by a clear, flowing stream—they begin to understand the intrinsic value of these spaces."

The plot also connects Gowlland Tod and Hazlitt Creek Municipal Nature parks.

"It's a lifeline for the region's diverse flora and fauna," added Bocking. "With over 90 per cent of Hazlitt Creek...now preserved within parkland, we've secured an uninterrupted corridor for wildlife and the natural flow of ecosystems." 



## Lighting up the festive season


WEST KELOWNA: The annual Festival of Trees returns to Mission Hill Family Estate on Friday, November 22 with the festivities continuing through January 5. The landmark winery marks its eighth year as a community host venue in support of BC Children's Hospital Foundation.

Beginning with the Festival of Trees Opening Celebration, which was held on Friday, November 22, the estate will be aglow for the season with a collection of trees decorated by local community sponsors, displaying creativity and holiday spirit across the winery grounds.

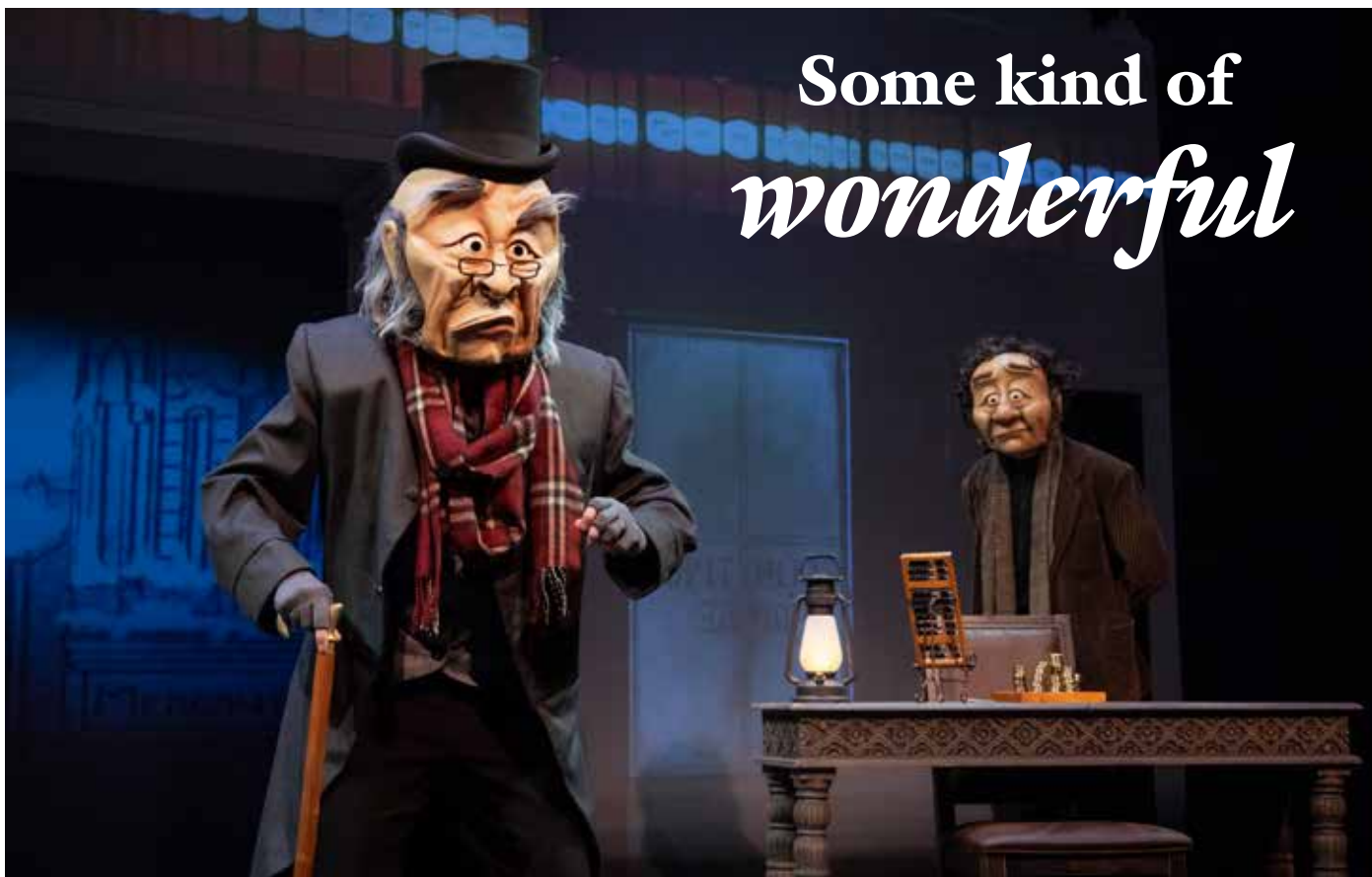
The Festival of Trees Winery Experience runs November 23 to January 5, welcoming guests to the beautifully

decorated estate. This curated experience includes a tour of the Mission Hill Family Estate cellar, followed by a seated tasting of wines paired with small bites from the estate's culinary team.

Tickets for the seasonal Festival of Trees Winery Experience are \$65 per guest (ages 19-plus), with partial proceeds donated to BC Children's Hospital Foundation. Reservations for the holiday-inspired experience can be made online at [exploretock.com/missionhillwinery](https://exploretock.com/missionhillwinery).

For more information about Festival of Trees, how to get involved in sponsoring a tree or to make a donation, visit [fundraise.bcchf.ca/event/festivaloftrees/home](https://fundraise.bcchf.ca/event/festivaloftrees/home) 





## Some kind of *wonderful*

### A WONDERHEADS Christmas Carol lights up the season

The WONDERHEADS, who specialize in visual storytelling, have been praised by the CBC as “pure magic” and the Globe and Mail as “powerful, surprising and moving”.

**T**his December, acclaimed theatrical “imagineers” the WONDERHEADS will light up the stages of three Pacific Coastal Airlines destinations with A WONDERHEADS Christmas Carol, an extraordinary reimagining of the Charles Dickens classic, featuring giant masks, whimsical puppets and wondrous theatrical invention.


The WONDERHEADS, who specialize in visual storytelling, have been praised by the CBC as “pure magic” and the Globe and Mail as “powerful, surprising and moving.” Now in its fifth year of touring, A WONDERHEADS Christmas Carol has become a holiday tradition for thousands of theatregoers, and it will tour across BC and Alberta this December with stops close to PCA-destination airports in North Vancouver (Centennial Theatre, December 11-12), New Westminster (Massey Theatre, December 13-14), Victoria (McPherson Playhouse, December 18-21) and Nanaimo (Port Theatre, December 23-24).

A feast for the eyes, ears, heart and funny bone, this production features larger-than-life characters, glowing

ghosts and 10-foot-tall puppets—to name just a few of the treats in store for audiences as they are whisked away with Ebenezer Scrooge on his magical Christmas Eve adventure. Audiences should prepare themselves for laughter, tears and enchantment.

Starring Kate Braidwood, Pedro M. Siqueira, Sarah Robertson and Emily Case, A WONDERHEADS Christmas Carol was adapted and directed by Andrew Phoenix and Braidwood (the WONDERHEADS), and developed in ensemble by Phoenix, Braidwood and Jessica Hickman.

The WONDERHEADS have spent more than a decade touring the world to critical acclaim and sold-out audiences who describe the experience as watching animation come to life. Performed entirely without dialogue, their enchanting work has earned widespread praise, including six Critics’ Choice Awards and 12 “best of fest” honours, and they make it their business to step beyond words and into the hearts and imaginations of every audience member.

Find more information at [wonderheads.com](http://wonderheads.com). 



# Powder power

**It's snow time at BC  
mountain resorts**

*By Susie Quinn*



Whistler Village



**B**ritish Columbia's ski resorts are celebrating the return of La Niña—the name for the cooling of ocean surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean. What that means for ski hills is colder temperatures and snow, snow, snow.

All BC resorts contacted reported late-November to early-December openings, and staff were hard at work getting everything ready for a solid winter, and considering everything from amenities to snowpack.

Skiing remains a popular pastime in British Columbia. Skier visits in Western Canada reached 8.75 million last year, according to an economic impact study published by the Canada West Ski Areas Association. While down slightly from a record season in 2022-23, those numbers show people are still flocking to ski resorts.

"This indicates a strong and confident industry, especially considering the significant capital investments being made across the industry this summer," the report notes.

Read on for more information on snow resorts at or near Pacific Coastal Airlines destinations.

## LOWER MAINLAND

### ➞ WHISTLER BLACKCOMB

Whistler Blackcomb continues to live up to its name as the number-one ski resort in North America in the 2024 UK Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice competition. Known for its "unmatched terrain, breathtaking scenery and world-class facilities," Whistler caters to everyone from beginners to Olympic-class athletes.

Whistler and Blackcomb are two side-by-side mountains offering 200 marked runs, 1,200 acres of terrain and 37 lifts. There are 200-plus marked trails, and the longest ski run (the Peak to Creek) is 11 kilometres long.

Skiing is not the only focus for Whistler: there are many places to stay, play and dine at the resort. That includes restful spa experiences too.

Whistler Blackcomb is piloting a carpool program for 2024-25 in Upper Lot 7 and Creekside Garage Level P1 on weekends and peak periods. To find out if this works for you, search the website's



Big white ski resort.

Getting Here and Parking page.  
[whistlerblackcomb.com](http://whistlerblackcomb.com)

### ➞ GROUSE MOUNTAIN

Grouse Mountain, one of the North Shore mountains, is located 15 minutes from downtown Vancouver, and known as much for its summer activities as it is for winter. Closing in on its centenary in a couple of years, Grouse has provided people a place to play in the snow since 1926. The mountain has 33 ski and snowboard runs off four chairlifts, six terrain parks, day and night skiing options and nine kilometres of snowshoe trails.

Grouse Mountain's new, state-of-the-art gondola is set to open in 2024-25, featuring 14 towers and 27 eight-person gondola cabins. The ride to the top will take just five and a half minutes, giving visitors faster access to the mountain.

Off-run winter activities include the Munday Snowshoe Park, a skating pond, light trail, different dining options and, of course, the gondola ride.

Grouse's resident grizzly bears are hibernating in the wildlife preserve, but they may be awake in time for spring skiing.

Keep up to date with features and conditions via the Grouse Mountain app, or online.

[grousemountain.com](http://grousemountain.com)

### ➞ MOUNT SEYMOUR

A 30-minute drive from Vancouver will get you on the slopes quickly at Mount Seymour. This family-owned ski hill boasts 80 hectares of terrain and four

terrain parks and is an ideal spot to learn how to ski and shred.

Mount Seymour limits the number of season passes and season pass reservations on weekends and holidays to ensure shorter lift lines and sufficient parking.

New for 2024-25: a limited number of daily lift tickets will include free shuttle bus access from either East Vancouver or Parkgate Community Centre. Note that tickets are only sold on Mount Seymour's website: anything purchased from a third-party site is not valid and will require payment at the ski hill.

[mtseymour.ca](http://mtseymour.ca)

### ➞ CYPRESS MOUNTAIN

Cypress Mountain, also located close to Vancouver, offers million-dollar views of Vancouver's Lower Mainland and myriad activities to do during the winter.

Cypress boasts more than 600 skiable acres, accessible from 53 runs and catering for all levels of skiers. New to the sport? Sign up for one of the ski hill's Learn to Ski and Ride Camps—suitable to all ages.

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing happen on Hollyburn Ridge, near historic Hollyburn Lodge. There are 11 kilometres of snowshoe trails in the area.

If you're looking to switch up the fun from the slopes, check out the six-chute tube park. Don't worry—there's a tube tow to bring you back up to the top for another run.

[cypressmountain.com](http://cypressmountain.com)





Sun Peaks.

## OKANAGAN

### ➔ BIG WHITE

Big White Ski Resort is Canada's largest ski-in, ski-out resort village. The award-winning, all-season resort, located 56 kilometres from Kelowna, features 16 lifts, over 3,140 hectares and skiing/snowboarding for all levels. The longest run at Big White is "Around the World" at 7.2 kilometres.

Big White has several new things debuting in 2024-25, including the \$1.75-million upgrade to the Bullet chairlift (which includes a new top shack, updated computer and controls as well as a spacing system and more). They've added a 2025 Piston Bully grooming machine to their fleet, just in time to ensure slopes are in good shape for skiing and snowboarding.

There are three new retail shops opening and Dizzy's Ski Shop is relocating closer to the village centre. The Ski & Board School has refined some of its programs.

For snow enthusiasts, the new Twinkling Trail creates a magical winter walkway in the Adventure Park.

[bigwhite.com](http://bigwhite.com)

### ➔ APEX MOUNTAIN RESORT

Apex Mountain Resort, located in the south Okanagan (west of Penticton), features four ski lifts, 500 centimetres of annual snowfall (can you say, "champagne powder dreams?") and 610 vertical metres of terrain.

Apex has 80 runs catering to beginners up to advanced skiers and boarders, as well as four terrain parks. There's plenty of après activities, as well as tubing, an adventure skating loop and, later in the season, some competition to watch.

Resort staff were on snow watch for weeks prior to the season opening and they were not disappointed. YouTubers have called Apex "the most underrated ski resort in Canada."

[apexresort.com](http://apexresort.com)

### ➔ SILVERSTAR MOUNTAIN RESORT

SilverStar Mountain Resort is part of BC's Monashee Mountains range. The resort features a ski-in, ski-out village with lots of activities for people of all ages. On the ski/snowboard side, the mountain features 132 runs from beginner to expert over 3,300 acres of terrain. There

is also plenty for cross-country skiers and snowshoers too.

SilverStar is on the market; however, staff have assured that won't affect the 2024-25 winter season.

SilverStar has an app for those who want to keep up with conditions. Find it in your app store of preference.

[sksilverstar.com](http://sksilverstar.com)

## THOMPSON OKANAGAN

### ➔ SUN PEAKS

Sun Peaks is located north of Kamloops and is spread across three mountain peaks, surrounding a European-style, ski-through village.

Sun Peaks will feature a new quad chairlift for 2024-25, the West Bowl Express at the top of Tod Mountain. The new \$12-million quad has been three years in the making and replaces the West Bowl T-bar (closed since 2020-21). The new lift line will be 800 metres longer than the T-bar, with a total lift time of under six minutes. It adds another 169 acres of mainly intermediate terrain, more than triple the previous area.

There are three new runs coming off the returning West Bowl classics: Whyte's



# ADVENTURE IN CAMPBELL RIVER



**ON  
LAND**

**AT  
SEA**



**BY  
AIR**

łəmatax<sup>w</sup>, Campbell River is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Laichwiltach speaking Peoples of the We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum, & Kwiakah First Nations

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**DESTINATION  
CAMPBELL  
RIVER** 





Mount Washington Alpine Resort.

Ride is by far the longest and is named for one of the original founders of Tod Mountain, Donald Whyte.

The snowboarding conditions—like powder for days, 3,100 vertical feet and racing programs—get a seal of approval from local riders, who put their love of this Okanagan mountain into a video featured on the Sun Peaks website.

Sun Peaks also features a Nordic skiing network with dog-friendly trails (although, call the resort before bringing your pup for a skiing weekend).

[sunpeaksresort.com](http://sunpeaksresort.com)

## TRAIL

### ➔ RED MOUNTAIN RESORT

RED Mountain unveiled some new items for 2024-25, many of them not skiing-related—but no less important to the ultimate snow experience.

The Crescent was due to open in December just steps away from the Silverlode Chairlift. This building features one-bedroom and studio condos for rent.

They've added 100 more parking spots below the Caldera parking lot, and the free ski bus is back too. The schedule was due to be released in early winter, just as the resort was set to open.

The terrain park has new jumps, jibs and park-wide sound system.

RED's also getting recognized around the world. Rafter's Lounge was nominated by USA Today as one of the 10 best après-ski bars in North America.

[redresort.com](http://redresort.com)

## CRANBROOK

### ➔ FERNIE AND KIMBERLEY ALPINE RESORTS

Ski bloggers consider Kimberley Alpine Resort a "hidden gem for powder enthusiasts." Snowboarders are eager to carve up the runs at Fernie Alpine Resort after a strong, 50-centimetre early snowfall.

Kimberley and her twin, Fernie Alpine Resort, are situated along what Resorts of the Canadian Rockies staff call the "powder highway" of British Columbia. With a La Nina season predicted, both resorts are almost certainly assured strong seasons.

Both Kimberley and Fernie feature world-class dining, accommodation, spa services and après-ski activities.

Both resorts are also on the global radar: Fernie has been named one of the Top 10 best places to snowboard in North America, and Kimberley's Winter Sports School was named one of the Top 10 in USA Today's "10 Best" list.

[skircr.com](http://skircr.com)

## THE ROCKIES

### ➔ REVELSTOKE MOUNTAIN RESORT

Revelstoke's premier ski resort is located on Mount Mackenzie, southeast of Revelstoke.

This resort is home to the most vertical in North America at 1,713 metres (5,620 feet) and is renowned for its variety

of terrain—all 3,121 acres of it.

Revelstoke is considered a world-class, ski-in, ski-out resort with something for everyone, from the freshest beginner to the heli-skiing adventure seeker.

[revelstokemountainresort.com](http://revelstokemountainresort.com)

## VANCOUVER ISLAND

### ➔ MOUNT WASHINGTON ALPINE RESORT

Known as Vancouver Island's coastal playground, Mount Washington is situated between the Comox Valley and Campbell River. This mountain boasts more than 11 metres of average snowfall, and with a La Nina year predicted, the alpine resort is ready.

Mount Washington has more than 1,700 acres of terrain and 505 vertical metres of alpine terrain, offering runs from beginner-level to double-black diamond.

Snowmaking machines mean this resort establishes a good base in anticipation of early-season snowstorms.

If bumps and hills aren't your thing, Mount Washington also has 55 kilometres of cross-country skiing trails around Raven Lodge and 25 kilometres of snowshoeing tracks. There's also a tube park and myriad après-ski activities throughout the winter and into spring.

With a good snow year predicted for BC's ski hills, Mount Washington hopes to stay open through to April 13, 2025.

For lift tickets, rentals, accommodation and more, check out Mount Washington online.

[mountwashington.ca](http://mountwashington.ca)

### ➔ MOUNT CAIN

The Mount Cain community started thinking snow back in the summertime. Mountain faithful spent September throwing elbow grease and enthusiasm into prepping for the upcoming season.

Mount Cain is a small ski hill on northern Vancouver Island, but its reputation for deep powder mid-season is legendary. This mountain receives up to 12 metres of snow annually.

Mount Cain is open weekends and holidays. Accommodation can be booked through the website.

[mountcain.com](http://mountcain.com) 

# Kelowna's first Biosphere Certified hotel

The Coast Capri Hotel has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first hotel in Kelowna to be Biosphere Certified through the Responsible Tourism Institute.

This certification aligns with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), underscoring the hotel's commitment to environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices.

"This certification represents our commitment and reinforcing our position as a responsible hotelier," says Hotel Manager, Todd Weitzel. "Our goal is not only to meet but exceed the expectations of today's environmentally conscious traveler."

Coast Capri has demonstrated its commitment to the 17 SDGs by implementing over 100 policies, plans and audits surrounding sustainability.

For example, the hotel is proud to offer in-house catering for over 16,000 square feet of meeting space, using ingredients from local suppliers who focus on environmentally friendly agricultural practices such as Don-O-Ray Farms.

To address potential waste, the hotel has enacted a comprehensive waste reduction plan which emphasizes recycling, composting and repurposing.

"Additionally, we prioritize the use of biodegradable cleaning supplies, encourage the use of upcycled products within the hotel including furniture, and we minimize the use of non-reusable items through our responsible purchasing policy," says Weitzel.



Energy efficiency is another key focus. The hotel has replaced incandescent lighting with LEDs, installed HVAC occupancy sensors in guest rooms and invested in energy-efficient kitchen appliances for all catering and restaurant services.

"Small steps such as these contribute to the larger goal of aligning ourselves with internationally recognized sustainability standards."

Water conservation is also a priority. Coast Capri uses eco-friendly washing machines, sensor faucets and water meters. Preventative maintenance ensures that leaks are addressed promptly, which is particularly important in a building that has been in operation since 1958.

Guests can also participate in the hotel's Refreshingly Green opt-out program, which

allows them to forego daily housekeeping services in favor of eco-friendly practices.

Additionally, the hotel's guest rooms are stocked with BeeKind products by Gilchrist & Soames, featuring natural ingredients and recyclable packaging, while supporting sustainable honeybee pollination research.

These efforts are part of the hotel's broader initiative to meet the 17 SDGs. Coast Capri hopes to inspire other organizations, particularly within the tourism and hospitality sectors, to follow suit.

"Biosphere certification will enhance our competitiveness, as certified businesses have shown to outperform competitors by 11 per cent," says Weitzel. "It also boosts our international visibility, as search engines and booking platforms prioritize sustainable businesses."

The Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) assisted with Coast Capri's Biosphere Certification through their localized Biosphere Commitment Program.

"TOTA was helpful in guiding us through the process of becoming Biosphere certified. Their expertise made the journey smoother, and I encourage other businesses to take advantage of their support to achieve certification as well," adds Weitzel.

The top SDGs addressed by the hotel are Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Responsible Consumption and Production, and Industry and Infrastructure.



Coast Capri Hotel – Kelowna  
250-860-6060

1171 Harvey Ave, Kelowna BC  
[www.coasthotels.com/coast-capri-hotel](http://www.coasthotels.com/coast-capri-hotel)





# A place where time stands still

## The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast

*By Natalie Bruckner  
Photos courtesy Cariboo  
Chilcotin Coast Tourism*





**F**ar from the frenetic pace of urban life, there exists a realm in British Columbia where time dances slowly to the rhythm of nature's wild heart.

The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast, lovingly known as A Land Without Limits, is a vast expanse, stretching from the untamed Pacific shores in the west to just shy of the Alberta border in the east, covering over 117,500 square kilometres of raw, unbridled beauty. The area includes three Pacific Coastal Airlines' destinations: Quesnel, Williams Lake and Bella Coola. And here, in this expansive sanctuary, the call of the wild echoes loudest, offering solace amidst untamed wilderness.

The unspoiled wilderness is one of the main draws of this sprawling region. With nearly 60 provincial parks, including Bowron Lake Provincial Park, Tweedsmuir Provincial Park and South Chilcotin Mountains Provincial Park, explorers are invited to lose themselves in a tranquil world of forested trails, breathtaking vistas and crystalline lakes.

Indeed, the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast remains a hidden gem, off the beaten path of typical BC tourist trails and just waiting to be discovered. On the Pacific Coast of BC, the Great Bear Rainforest stands as a testament to sheer, rugged magnificence. It's the largest coastal temperate rainforest on the planet, where misty valleys cradle towering trees and crystal-clear streams. Here, in this pristine realm, roams the spirit bear, one of Earth's rarest treasures.

For those looking to truly immerse themselves, Maple Leaf Adventures beckons with cruises delving deep into the heart of the rainforest.

Picture sailing through fjords embraced by towering 4,000-foot cliffs, visiting coastal villages, absorbing Indigenous culture and wandering through wild-flower meadows, all while spotting bears, and being guided by seasoned experts.

**VICTORIA  
BUG  
ZOO**

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## Embark on authentic experiences

To truly grasp the essence of the region, you need to immerse yourself in its stories and histories. The history of the Land Without Limits unveils tales of local First Nations, fur traders, the Gold Rush and the legacy of ranching.

Along Highway 97, numbered markers lead to once-thriving roadhouse towns, with Historic Hat Creek Ranch standing as a poignant reminder of days past.

"A visit to Barkerville is also a must when you're visiting," says Amy Thacker, chief executive officer of Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism.

Here, you can step back in time to the bustling days of the Gold Rush or explore the rich heritage of the region at the BC Cowboy Hall of Fame within the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin in Williams Lake.

Engaging in Indigenous experiences is also a must; this is where storytelling, cultural immersion and outdoor adventures intertwine. At Xat'sull Heritage Village, connect with Elders for enlightening encounters in Indigenous traditions.

For a deeper connection with the land, Copper Sun Journeys leads petroglyph tours in Bella Coola, where ancient tales are etched in stone, revealing the rich tapestry of the region's history and culture.

## The best time to visit

In every season, this diverse region offers something extraordinary.

In winter, experience the birthplace of guided heli-skiing tours, where vast expanses of powder-covered terrain await exploration.

"Bella Coola Heli-Sports, the world's first climate-positive heli-skiing company, has been awarded World's Best Heli Ski Operator multiple times," Thacker shares.

Meanwhile, Tyax Lodge & Heli-skiing boasts over a million acres of premier heli-skiing terrain in the Southern Chilcotin mountains. And then there's Silvertip Lodge, that offers guests an unparalleled heli-skiing experience. Ice fishing is incredibly popular during the colder months.

Lone Butte Fishing Adventures offers guided ice fishing trips along the Fishing Highway, and Ecotours BC provides snowshoe tours in the Cariboo Mountains, offering glimpses of wildlife, spectacular winter mountain views and, if you're lucky, the Northern Lights, too.



Summer invites exploration of the region's 8,000 lakes and 17,000 kilometres of rivers and streams, renowned for fishing and culinary delights. Discover

cascading waterfalls like Hunlen Falls or embark on horse-packing journeys near Chilko Lake with Tsylos Park Lodge.





## Indulge in hospitality and local cuisine

After a day of adventure, travellers can retreat to an array of accommodations.


At Echo Valley Ranch and Spa, immerse yourself in soft adventures and wellness programs. Journey through boreal forests to the Fraser Canyon for meditation, indulge in forest bathing, or forge a connection with ranch horses.

For a remote wellness retreat, Siwash Lake Wilderness Resort offers massages, stargazing from cedar hot tubs and locally foraged cuisine amid rugged wilderness.

In a land blessed with fertile soils and pristine waters, dining here is about indulging in a true farm-to-table experience. Each area offers its own unique flavours.

From halibut and prawns on the coast to Chilcotin berries 'n' BBQ or Cariboo steak 'n' garlic—this too is unique to where you are staying and the season.

## Leave no trace

As you venture into this wild and untamed region, it's essential to tread lightly and respect the natural environment that surrounds you. For those seeking authentic encounters of this vast and varied region, Thacker shares this insider wisdom: "Engage with your experience provider—they're not just guides; they're keepers of local culture. Ask questions, seek recommendations and uncover hidden gems and local events. By tapping into their knowledge, you'll truly unlock the heart of the region and discover its hidden treasures." 



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# *Fired up for pizza*

## The sparks that ignited Trail's iconic The Rustic Crust

By Lauren Kramer  
Photos courtesy The Rustic Crust

If you're looking for pizza, gelato, beer and a sense of community in Trail, there's the perfect spot to go: The Rustic Crust—By The Park. The bistro offers lunch-hour pizza slices, handcrafted Italian gelato, wood-fire pizza orders and take-and-bake pizzas and catering from its riverside location. It also celebrates the Italian history of Trail and the pizzerias in town that preceded it.

The Rustic Crust is a business built on family, and it had its start when Rich Wiley built a clay oven at the family property on Mirror Lake near Kaslo, BC back in 2005. As the Wileys put the oven to good use, they also began competing, each trying to make the best pizza. And with many extended family members coming to the lake, they weren't short of input. After many tweaks, they found their favourite formula for their pizza nights.

"I remember thinking, 'I don't think most people eat pizza that tastes like this!'" says Rich's son Tim Wiley, who co-owns The Rustic Crust with his sister, Heather Wiley.

That sparked the idea that their pizza should be shared. So in 2010, Rich set to work building two more pizza ovens, one of them a mobile oven on a portable trailer. The family drove the trailer out to community events from spring through fall, going to car shows, Trail's Silver City Days, summer markets, local bike swaps, theatre premieres and nights at the local brewery.

They loved being part of Trail's community and culture, but, also, the response to their pizza was overwhelmingly positive.

"There would be lineups for pizza like we'd never seen before," Heather recalls. "It made us realize that we can do this! We have a product that is rare and unique, and that people will keep coming back for."

By 2012, Tim had left his job in engineering and civil design to assemble a basement kitchen where he started selling take-and-bake pizzas a few days a week. Customers would pull into a back alley and pick their pizza up from the

basement door. Within two years he expanded, bought a commercial oven and decided to offer catering, too. Together with Rich, and his mother, Maureen, the trio offered catering services that included thin-crust, Roman-style pizzas, desserts, salads, drinks and delivery. Again, the demand was overwhelming.

"We didn't understand the scale of the need for catering in Trail," Tim admits. "Once we began, we realized we were one of the only places in town to offer this, and our schedule was packed."

In 2018, Heather took a leave of absence from her employment with Teck's Trail Operations to help with the business. She and Tim decided they would expand into a joint partnership and rebrand, but hold onto the product they loved. As part of their expansion, Tim attended a gelato-making course in Bologna, Italy, bringing Italian gelato machines back to his hometown.

"Most people didn't even know what gelato was at that time, but I knew it was unique and that I wanted to bring it to

Trail," he said.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and as the demand for take-and-bake pizzas and frozen pints of gelato escalated, so too did the siblings' expansion plans. They began designing and building their bistro on Heather's property near Trail's Gyro Park, along the Columbia River.

"We were extremely excited about providing our community with a beautiful, new storefront location alongside the park and river, with great views. There aren't any other places in Trail doing this," Heather said.

Three years later, The Rustic Crust offers lunch-hour Roman wood-fired pizza slices and gelato, as well as craft beer, cider and wines on its small patio. It still offers take-and-bake pizza, dinnertime wood-fire pizza orders and catering, and family members are still at the core of its operations.

"My two kids have come through the business, and my three nephews are currently working here, alongside my parents and my husband," Heather said. "We also have a small group of employees that we treat as family."

While Rich, 75, is no longer building pizza ovens, he's still busy in the kitchen.

"Dad will whip up lemon blueberry focaccia, French baguettes and cinnamon buns that customers call ahead to reserve," Tim said. "He's always creating something new and special to put on the counter, and is fondly known in the community as Papa Rich."

As they reflect on the career changes that landed them at The Rustic Crust, the siblings agree they have no regrets.

"We're devoting ourselves to something bigger than ourselves," Tim said. "We're both doing exactly what we're meant to be doing, and we know it's the right place to be."

Looking towards the future, the Wileys know only that the business will continue to evolve.

"Our food will continue to centre around the wood-fired oven and feature scratch-made, unique cuisine that puts Trail on the map," Tim said. "Our goal is not to make a million dollars. It's to do what we love and deliver something unique and special to the Trail community." 🍕



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Of all the images cast for Slumach, we find this one from Michael Collier's 1994 film *Curse of the Lost Gold Mine* to be the closest representation of what he may have looked like. The role of Slumach was played by Indigenous actor Norman Natrall, who passed away in 2014. Keep this image in mind when viewing other, probably inaccurate, photos and drawings of Slumach, where he is often portrayed as a young, roguish, rabble-rousing man. Slumach was likely about 80, had long white hair, and carried a rifle like this when he shot Louis Bee.  
Credit: Michael Collier Collection



## The legend of Slumach and his lost creek gold mine



It was the summer of 1957. Darkness and gloom hung over six young lads huddled around a campfire, the wind-driven crackle of flames making their hearts beat fast with excitement. An old woman sat on a log stump among them, captivating all of them with her ghost stories—the very stuff of summer camp. The boys shuddered in the cool evening, afraid but wanting more.

The fisherman's wife was also the camp cook. Her daytime friendliness turned conspiratorial in the post-dinner shadows thrown from the fire pit. She leaned toward the campfire. Her words entranced the circle of youngsters.

"There's a lost gold mine up on Pitt Lake," she began, slowly shifting her head in a westward motion, her shrug indicating the mine was close, though not nearby. "But you'll never find it—at least not find it and live."

Her gaze flickered from boy to boy until she'd locked stares with each pair of wide-open, innocent eyes.

The woman continued her tale about an Indigenous man named Slumach, who was hunting deer in the rough mountain terrain when he stumbled upon a creek scattered with gold nuggets. She shivered and pulled her shawl close around her shoulders. Her voice was eerie.

"There's a curse that protects his mine from discovery by anyone else."

Two of us around the fire were brothers, one nine years old, the other eight, and her words gripped our imaginations. She spoke of a mystery that would remain unsolved, she claimed, unless people like us grew brave enough to go searching for the lost gold, despite the curse.

The campfire that night was on the shores of Hatzic Lake, near Mission, British Columbia, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) east of Vancouver. Tired and ready to fall asleep, the six of us sipped hot chocolate with our feet pressed near the fire for warmth. The fisherman's wife stoked the



New Westminster in 1888 as Slumach would have known it, if, indeed, he ever visited the city. Note the Golden Ears in the background, looming over the eastern flank of Pitt Lake. Credit: Public domain, courtesy of the Vancouver Archives.

fire back to life and continued to tell us the legend of Slumach's gold.

"That was in 1890," she said. "Slumach would bring gold nuggets into the town of New Westminster. And he'd buy drinks for everyone as he bragged about his secret creek."

Her voice was raspy yet strangely clear: "Greedy people tried to wrestle the source of the gold from Slumach, but all failed. He'd slip out of town in the night, time and time again, but would return weeks or months later with more gold."

We believed every word as her story unfolded. Slumach was real, and none of what we'd just heard seemed remotely like a legend.

She took the curse seriously: "Any gold seekers who tried to follow Slumach vanished themselves on the dead-end trails leading into the mountains from Pitt Lake. There, dense fog appears without warning. Canoes tip in the sudden winds that churn the lake into nightmare waves to protect the mine from being found." None of the boys around the campfire were of Indigenous descent, though each longed for a personal link to this mysterious tale.

We leaned closer to the fire, riveted.

"It was on the prison gallows that Slu-

mach uttered his curse as they put a hood over his head and a noose around his neck. It happened just before the trapdoor sprang open and dropped Slumach to his death at the end of a five-strand rope."

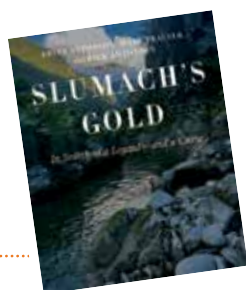
We hung on her words just as surely as if the noose had been strung around our own little necks.

"Witnesses believed the curse would protect the mine from any future gold seekers, threatening the lives of anyone who went searching for Slumach's gold."

What story could be more gripping to the young brothers' imaginations?

Decades later, even after a handful of books had been written by us and others—and after there had been well over 100 public presentations, two television series, numerous documentaries, countless newspaper and magazine articles and radio programs, a podcast and never-ending searches near Pitt Lake—the mystery of Slumach's gold remains unsolved and the captivating legend is very much alive.

After all our years of research, the telling of the legend is far removed from the facts. Is there evidence that Slumach had such a secret find? Or, is there evidence against Slumach having gold, making the legend just that—a myth? Have those who searched and those who died been chasing fool's gold? There's a bit of all of those. Over 130 years after Slumach was hanged—and nearly 70 years after the "best campfire story ever"—Slumach's tale remains a mystery shrouded in history, informed by ongoing research, extensive documentation, fierce debates and enchanting gossip.



The following is an excerpt from *Slumach's Gold: In Search of a Legend—and a Curse* by Brian Antonson, Mary Trainer and Rick Antonson. © 2024. Published by Heritage House. All rights reserved.

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