

SOAR

In-flight
Magazine for
Pacific Coastal
Airlines

The healing power of nature

A place to exhale

Campbell River and
Naturally Pacific Resort

Walk on the wild side

The Bella Coola
Valley

BC hotels embrace the
wellness travel trend



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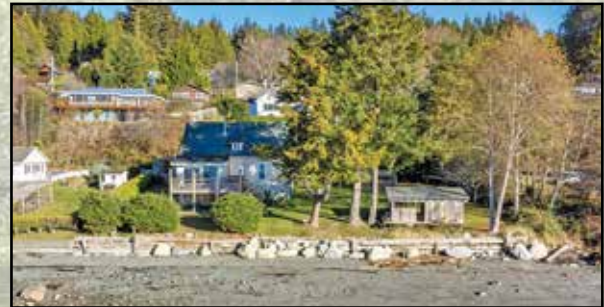
Alert Bay Ocean View Home: Stunning **2884sqft** home overlooking the waters of **Johnstone Strait**. Built in **2016**, the home is arranged on two levels, with the lower level rented out as a well-established **Air BnB** accommodation. Beautiful gardens, tastefully finished interiors and large oceanside deck. Close to the **Alert Bay** airstrip – fly in, skip the ferries and walk to the property! **\$899,000**



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**



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



Sointula Oceanfront Home: Stunning oceanfront on **Malcolm Island**, with approx. **125ft** of walk-on waterfront and outstanding views across Broughton Strait. **1850sqft** **4 bedroom** older home with large oceanside patio. So much potential on this amazing oceanfront property! **\$689,000**



West Coast, Ingersoll, Lot 10: **2.5 acres** with approx. **200ft** low-bank user-friendly oceanfront in **Quatsino Sound**, west coast **Vancouver Island**. New **840sqft** sleeping cabin with **3 bedrooms**, no services. Substantial shared moorage, limited forest service road access. Part of a **15** property development. **\$469,000**



Quadra Island Acreage: Picturesque **5 acre** highbank oceanfront lot, offering a private, peaceful island sanctuary away from the hustle and bustle and surrounded by nature. Part of a **77 acre** development on the southern shores of **Quadra Island** subdivided into **8** titles. Standing forest, beautiful pastoral land, a valley ravine and a secluded beach. **\$862,000**

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Cover: The beach at Tigh Na Mara.

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WELCOMING A NEW YEAR

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As we enter 2025, I would like to begin by wishing you all a year filled with soaring heights and meaningful connections. May you seize every opportunity and explore even more destinations across British Columbia.

We are immensely grateful to welcome in another year along with you. Our customers' unwavering support is the ultimate reflection of our dedication and commitment to delivering top-quality service and exceptional travel experiences.

I am excited to share with you some milestones and celebrations we achieved at the start of this year.

We kicked off 2025 with the 10th anniversary of our Prince George base. On January 12, 2015, we launched our first route to Prince George from Victoria, creating memories with our staff and passengers ever since. It is hard to believe that a decade has passed—and during that time, we also launched a new route to Prince George from Kelowna! I want to express my sincere gratitude to our passengers for their continued support, and to our staff for their hard work, which has enabled us to expand our Prince George base.

I am also thrilled to share with you that during the winter holiday season, we raised approximately \$10,925 within Pacific Coastal Airlines alone for our Community Sharing Program. Each year, as a collective employee group, we work together to find a family or charity, among each community we serve, who is in need of help during holidays. This year, once again, we proudly helped families through gift certificates for utilities, food, warm clothes and more!

At Pacific Coastal Airlines, our motto of "People Friendly. People First." extends beyond the skies we traverse. We strive to meet the needs of everyone around us with care and dedication. Giving back to those communities to which we are deeply connected emphasizes our commitment and highlights our vision of helping enrich, support and embrace the places we serve. We look forward to continuing our support through the Community Sharing Program for many years to come!

As we enter the second half of winter, I want to draw special attention to February 23—the National Day of Aviation. As a BC-based airline, we take immense pride in our connection to Canadian aviation and its rich history. On this day, it is especially important to recognize and honour Canadian aviators and the country's advancements in aviation technology. I would like to extend a special thank you to all Pacific Coastal Airlines employees and passengers for your contributions in keeping the spirit of Canadian aviation strong!

Seasons change, but your genuine support, trust and loyalty in us remain the same. We extend our deepest gratitude to each of you for choosing Pacific Coastal Airlines. Thank you for including us in your travel journeys; we are always beyond grateful and excited to welcome you on board! 🇨🇦

Warm regards,

Quentin Smith

children's
HEALTH FOUNDATION
OF VANCOUVER ISLAND

Emma's JOURNEY OF HOPE

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NIGHTS AT JENECE PLACE

600

TANKS OF GAS

130

MISSED SCHOOL DAYS



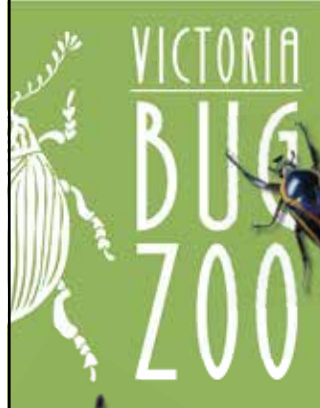
This year, thousands of Island families will need to travel for their children's health care.

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Emma | 11 years old
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Tamara Davidson, MLA
North Coast-Haida Gwaii

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MEET A PACIFIC COASTAL EMPLOYEE: STUART



Position: Customer Service Agent

Location: Vancouver, BC

Time with PCA: 1.5 years

Job description:

Assist passengers with bookings, check-ins and travel needs, while delivering exceptional service and creating memorable travel experiences.

Where were you born?

I was born in Victoria, BC.

Who is your family?

I have two grown children and three grandchildren.

What path did you take to get to this job?

After retiring from Air Canada in 2017, I travelled a lot and resided in Mexico during the winters. During the pandemic, I decided to return to work and Pacific Coastal Airlines was looking for part-time employment.

What do you like best about this job?

I love working for a small airline, where you get direct interaction with wonderful people from rural areas of British Columbia.

What is your favourite thing to do in your city?

I enjoy the diversity of living in Vancouver and having all the events a city has to offer, as well as the ease of being able to travel to Vancouver Island with my partner to see our families.

PCA BRIEFS

The end of a legacy

Ace pilot Dale Buchan retires



The end of 2024 marked the start of a new chapter for Pacific Coastal Airlines' ace pilot Dale Buchan, who retired after a storied career.

Described as a PCA "gem" and a legendary Beech 1900 airplane captain, Buchan began his flying career in October 1979. Throughout the next 45 years, Buchan's presence served as the backbone of PCA as it grew from its humble beginnings to its current status as a major BC airline.

According to journalist Tanya Hill, writing in the *Coast Reporter*, Buchan was a veteran aviator with a staggering 43,600 flying hours.

"After 45 years of flying with PCA, Buchan took flight one more time, from Powell River Airport to Vancouver International Airport. Before take-off, fire trucks were on site for a ceremonial spray-over of the plane, which has been a long-standing tradition in the aviation world."

As PCA's longest-serving employee, Buchan's loyalty to the airline remained steadfast. Working closely with company founder Daryl Smith, Buchan was never

phased by taking on different roles. Buchan and Smith had a special bond, which was reflected in the company as it developed and expanded over the decades.

"In the old days, we would pilot the King Air 100 as well as float planes six days a week with Saturday as our only day off," Buchan recalled. "We even did our own ticketing. Daryl was great to work for. What he said was cast in stone."

Asked about his most memorable moment at PCA, Buchan proudly shared that he was the first chief pilot to bring a female pilot onto the airline team. His contributions to PCA went beyond the horizons of flying, but his passion for aviation will continue to inspire the new generation of pilots that fly with PCA today.

Staff at PCA thanked Buchan for his service and wished him all the best in his future endeavours. 🇨🇦

Soak, savour and sleep



The dock at Hot Springs Cove is the only access point to the park.

Exploring Hot Springs Cove and the wild west coast

By Alicia Peters

Vacationing in British Columbia in the winter months can be risky if you don't want the rain to dampen your wanderlust. However, the cost to visit sunny spots that require an international flight are soaring as high as the plane itself and so, we decided to travel closer to home. Expecting rain and fog, it was with some trepidation that I booked a five-night stay on Vancouver Island's wild west coast.

Ucluelet and Tofino are world-class destinations known for incredible beaches to explore, waves to surf, and wild west coast storms to watch.

I hadn't visited since 2015, and a lot has changed since then, including a 25-kilometre paved bike path through Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, which we could do rain or shine. You can bring all your gear with you on four wheels, now that Highway 4,

the main road in and out, is largely repaired after the 2023 wildfire, or you can soar above it all with Pacific Coastal Airlines—the only scheduled-service airline that provides year-round flights to Tofino Airport.

We were delighted to have spectacular sunny days for most of our time and this good weather put my husband in a favourable and reflective mood. On our second to last day, he woke up reminiscing about his childhood adventure sailing around Vancouver Island and visiting Hot Springs Cove, a natural phenomenon located in Maquinna Marine Provincial Park and accessible only by boat or float plane. He insisted that I take a break from chasing our crawling nine-month-old son, and visit Mother Nature's spa. How could I refuse?

In the off-season, the big crowds have thinned out and last-minute bookings can

sometimes be accommodated. My flight to Hot Springs Cove, aboard Atleo River Air Service, was booked at 8:30 am for a same-day departure at 11 am.

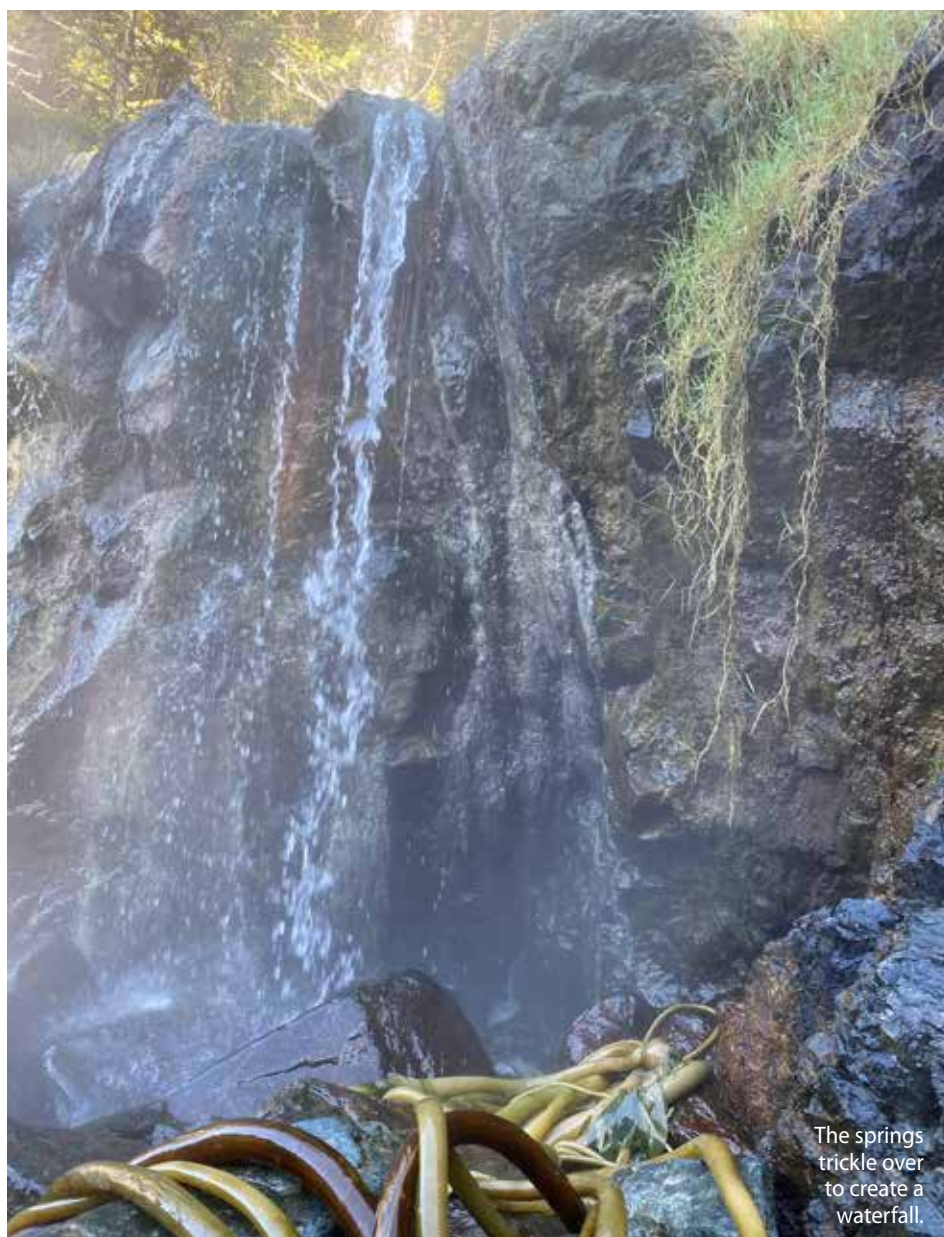
I arrived at the dock before the rest of the party. A small shed serves as the main office and I checked-in and met the pilot, Dan. He had a hipster vibe and was as rugged looking as the windswept coastline we were about to fly over. Was he a little young to have enough experience to land on the open ocean, I wondered, taking a moment to indulge my nervousness around flying.

The rest of the party arrived; they were all friends from past guiding jobs and various connections. While I was the only outsider in the group of four passengers, they made me feel welcome and insisted that I take the prized co-pilot seat. Dan operates the plane on his own, deftly pushing off from the dock, clambering into the pilot's seat and getting us underway. There were no pressed uniforms, slick safety videos (although we did have a verbal briefing) or a well-rehearsed invitation to join a points program.

Any fears I had about flying were quickly assuaged by Dan's confidence and the distraction of incredible scenic views. Flying with friends has its benefits—a whale-watching boat was spotted, so we took a detour and gently dove down into a spin to get a closer look. A gray whale surfaced, and we could see the white barnacles covering its body, all the way from the sky. The whale blew and then dove underwater, its shape slowly darkening until it disappeared.

As secret sandy coves and rugged islets drifted by the window, my daydreaming was interrupted by the pilot, pointing out the location of the hot springs before we curved around to make our landing. I've been on enough float planes to know that the landings can be bumpy, and I expected it today, but I stopped recording on my phone as we touched down because there was no white water foaming or splashing on the floats. It was the smoothest landing I've had, and Dan's friends were duly impressed.

While I love a boat ride, the 15-minute flight with its expansive views and arial



The springs trickle over to create a waterfall.

perspective was worth the extra money and shortened the overall time I'd be away from 6.5 hours to just 3.5 hours. As an added bonus, we were the only ones arriving at the dock when we landed, which meant that I got to walk the 30 minutes along the boardwalk in contemplative silence.

The Hot Springs are on the traditional lands of the **S̓aḥuus̓aṭh** Nation. In their Nuu-chah-nulth language, the name place of the springs is **mux̓šila**, meaning "steaming from rock," which is exactly what the hot mineral rich waters do. A typical hot tub keeps the water between 38 and 40 degrees Celsius and the average temperature at Hot Springs Cove is 50 degrees. For this reason, it is recom-

mended to take plenty of water and get out of the pools frequently to cool down.

Most tours allow for two hours from the dock, giving you about an hour in the pools. My flight with friends, allowed us three hours, which was ample time to soak, find a sunny spot atop the rocks overlooking the bay for lunch and then get back in the pools before changing and meandering back.

Relaxed and in no hurry, I took time to size up the cedar giants along the path and explore a bushwhacked trail through dense salal that dumped me onto a rocky cove bubbling with a forest of kelp.

Squinting in the bright sunlight as I emerged onto the dock, I reunited with



The rugged coast of Flores Island

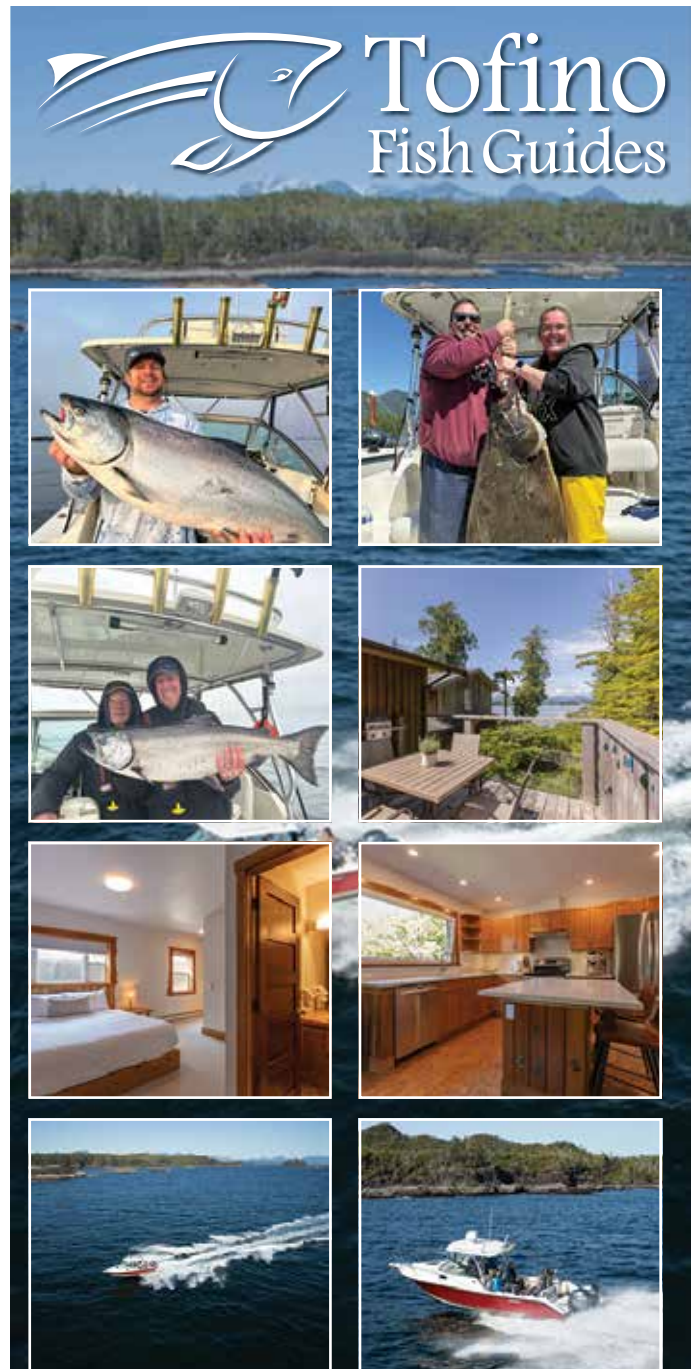
my friends who laid in a heap, while our pilot finished the last of his lunch. We were all ready for a nap, but it was time to go, and the views were too beautiful to miss, despite two-tonne eyelids. One last treat was in store for us as we approached Tofino. One of our passengers had competed in the annual all women's surf championship, Queen of the Peak, and our pilot dove low to buzz the semi-finals at Cox Bay Beach. Watching the talented surfers from the air was a unique perspective I won't forget anytime soon.

WHERE WE STAYED:

As we were traveling with an infant and needed a bit of extra space, we booked our accommodations at Ucluelet Waters Edge Shoreside Suites. With one bedroom and a full kitchen, it gave us plenty of room to stretch out and for our little one to crawl around. Our favourite feature was a large outdoor tub on our private deck. After we put our little one to bed, we could soak the day away while looking out at the harbour.

WHERE WE ATE:

We cooked most of our dinners at our rental but stopped a lot for coffee and snacks. Our favourite spots were: Savory Island Pie Company on Main Street in Tofino; Common Loaf Bake Shop (cash only), their bread is incredible; coffee and smoothies at The Beach Shack at Pacific Sands Beach Resort off Cox Bay Beach; and The Foggy Bean Coffee Company on Peninsula Road in Ucluelet (get their ginger molasses cookie to fuel a hike around the Wild Pacific Trail). 🍪



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A place to exhale

The perfect mix of experience and relaxation at Naturally Pacific Resort

By Jennifer Blyth

The vacations that stand out in my mind are those with a balance of opportunities to see, savour and experience a place, alongside a healthy dose of relaxation.

However, it wasn't until I was immersed in Vancouver Island's newest luxury destination—Naturally Pacific Resort in Campbell River—that this realization crossed my mind. My mid-week getaway here culminated in the perfect mix of experience and relaxation. It offered a big exhale.

Campbell River is a community of about 36,000 people on the east coast of northern Vancouver Island, and a jumping-off point for all manner of outdoor adventures. And with the addition of the sleek new Naturally Pacific Resort, it's also an amazing place to relax and rejuvenate.

Located about 3.5 hours north from Victoria, or an hour and 45 minutes from Nanaimo, the 100-room resort opened last May at the 18-hole Campbell River Golf Club, designed by Graham Cooke. Formerly the Sequoia Springs Golf Course, the 6,100-yard, resort-style course has gorgeous rolling fairways, airy spaces, water features and more than 200 trees. A complete rebuild in 2017 has replaced everything from tee to green—"Every blade of grass is new," says resort owner Amanda Mailman.

Amanda had a direct hand in both the vision and design of the pet-friendly resort, which was developed by her family, the Mailmans, who have been in Campbell River for four generations. The resort's design embraces the best of West Coast living: weighty timbers beckon visitors inside to a sophisticated interior with nods to the community's location between forest and sea.

Spacious, superbly comfortable rooms, with rounded corners

and curves echoing throughout the interior design, overlook either the golf course or the ocean and mountains beyond the city. There's ample space to sit, relax and enjoy a cosy sleep on the pillow-top bed.

In what has quickly become a popular spot for weddings and special events, the outdoor area around the hotel boasts a variety of beautifully lit and landscaped spaces, adjacent to the pool, hot tub and patio area.

After settling in and soaking in the view from our balcony, my partner, Geoff, and I headed downstairs to the elegant dining room at Carve Kitchen + Meatery, described as a modern interpretation of a classic North American steakhouse. Executive chef Ryan Watson has created a menu highlighting quality, sustainably sourced meats crafted with local vegetables, herbs and other ingredients into delectable comfort food. Along with produce provided by local farmers, a 10,000-square-foot, on-site garden and orchard offer a variety of fresh ingredients, while a small apiary provides honey for signature drinks and dressings.

The room itself is a surprise with a lush green living wall and more rounded corners and curves. The menu offers an array of possibilities, including the expected steakhouse dishes, but vegetarian and vegan options as well. I opted for the glazed short rib—succulent and flavourful with grainy mustard jus, served with pea puree, roasted vegetables and scrumptious potato croquette. Geoff selected from that week's prix fixe menu—a Caesar salad appetizer, striploin steak with mouth-watering tallow-whipped potatoes and roasted vegetables, and a perfectly shareable crème brûlée for dessert.

Beyond its steakhouse offerings, Carve also serves a full breakfast and lunch. Fresh, hot coffee was just the thing before

starting out the day with a hearty eggs Benedict (Geoff) and locally baked sourdough toast, sausage and potatoes (me).

We soaked up the sun with a stroll around the grounds before visiting the resort's Immersion Spa & Wellness—and what truly is the ultimate combination of experience and relaxation: a private hour in the mineral pool, where the silky waters washed away any residual cares from the previous day's travels.

This spacious heated pool features a blend of naturally sourced minerals, including magnesium, sodium and potassium, to soothe sore muscles and revitalize the skin.

Between warm-water soaks in this welcoming space, we sampled the trio of adjacent Italian-made "experience showers," which change colours as they combine chromotherapy, aquatherapy, aromatherapy and sound. With settings ranging from a cool mist to a warm rain or a muscle-relaxing stream, and options designed for relaxation or energy, the showers are a unique counterpoint to the mineral pool, and a highly recommended pairing.

Satiated and relaxed, it was time to venture out of the resort (however begrudgingly, at first) to experience the North Island community.

Long home to Liḡwítḡaḡw people, the community that is now Campbell River later drew the attention of others for its forest resources and rich fish stocks. In the late 19th century, it became one of the province's first tourism destinations, and later earned the title "Salmon Capital of the World," as wealthy overseas visitors relied on knowledgeable Indigenous guides to navigate local waters in hopes of hooking the famed tyee.

While the industry has changed since those early years, sport fishing remains a key element of local tourism and a popular pastime for locals. After a stop at the River Sportsman Outdoor Store for a few supplies, we headed to Campbell River's iconic 600-foot-long Discovery Pier, an ideal spot for fishing or a stroll and an ice cream, while soaking in the views of Discovery Passage.

The pier extends 150 feet from shore and, in addition to fishing, is a popular spot for catching the sunset or spotting passing whales and dolphins. While we brought our own rods, a seasonal concession stand offers rod and tackle rentals, while rod holders, bait stands and cleaning tables are found along the pier.

It was a gorgeous early fall day, but the tides weren't with us and the lone salmon we hooked escaped with a twist,




a splash and a flick of the tail.

With a fish tale but no fish, it was time to explore one of the seaside city's must-visit destinations: the locally owned Beach Fire Brewing, a craft brewery serving flavourful beers, delicious food and good company. I enjoyed perfectly crispy halibut, accompanied by delicious duck-fat-fried potatoes (so much better than the omnipresent fries!) and a tasting flight. Geoff's burger was juicy and cheesy, enjoyed with the Super Trendy Hazy IPA.

Returning to the resort, it was time to visit Velocity, a lounge and driving range, featuring cutting-edge technology from Toptracer. In our private bay, complete with comfy-couch seating and table service for food and beverages, we took turns with the house clubs and automated ball dispenser, tracking our swings, distance and arc. The group next to us brought their own clubs and had fun with the option to virtually play courses like the legendary St. Andrews Links in Scotland.

We finished the night chatting with the friendly team at the bar, sipping Caesars before strolling back to our room via the patio where the fire pit beckoned with a cosy, relaxing glow. We settled in for the night, reflecting on the day's perfect mix of experience and healthy doses of relaxation.

For more information or to book online, visit at naturallypacific.ca or call 1-866-910-4567. 



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PICK A DATE & PLAN A TRIP - GROUND



Captain Eugene was an excellent guide; professional, entertaining, knowledgeable and very experienced on the water. Clayoquot Sound is impossibly beautiful and we saw grey & humpback whales, sea otters, seals, sea lions, eagles and countless seabirds. An absolutely perfect tour hosted by passionate and lovely people I will never forget.

Kate S



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“My first sea kayaking adventure with family and friends was everything I imagined. Beautiful scenery, incredible wildlife and fantastic guides. Shannon and her staff were so inviting and friendly which made our trip extra special. Broken Islands Lodge is truly an oasis in the wilderness and this tour is a bucket list experience. Highly Recommended.”

Don D

Embracing the healing power of nature



Oak Bay
Beach
Hotel.

BC hotels respond to the wellness-travel revolution

By Natalie Bruckner

With the global wellness tourism sector projected to reach an astounding US \$1.7 trillion by 2025, British Columbia stands poised as a leader in this thriving market. Wellness here isn't just a trend; it's woven into the very fabric of life.

The province offers a rich tapestry of experiences—from luxury retreats harmonizing with the wilderness to spontaneous hikes, invigorating cold plunges and intimate wildlife encounters. As wellness travel surges globally, BC's untamed beauty and profound connection to nature make it a sanctuary for the soul.

"By virtue of our geography, BC is a mecca for wellness experiences," says Cheryl MacKinnon, founder of Wellness Travel BC. "There are really not too many places in the world that compare to the access we have to our raw, natural beauty, year-round."

A NEW ERA OF WELLNESS

To harness this burgeoning trend in 2022, MacKinnon launched WellnessTravelBC.com, a mobile-first directory connecting consumers with exclusive wellness and transformative travel experiences. This innovative platform showcases award-winning hotels, resorts, attractions and

community destinations, making it the go-to resource for wellness-seekers in BC and the Yukon.

"Our mission is to generate increased revenues for our 50-plus partners by collaborating in this rapidly expanding sector," says MacKinnon.

WellnessTravelBC.com features awe-inspiring experiences set in breathtaking natural environments, complete with wellness trends, tips, reviews, blogs, contests and thought-provoking multimedia content. From forest bathing to invigorating hikes, mineral-rich hot springs and farm-to-table dining, it showcases how BC's offerings cater to affluent travelers who prioritize their well-being. Each experience embodies the mission to help consumers relax, reset and restore, while tapping into the province's stunning landscapes and vibrant local culture.

Among the partners of WellnessTravelBC.com, Balcomo, a Ramada by

Wyndham in Penticton, is transforming its wellness sanctuary under general manager Jessica Dolan to meet the growing demand for holistic experiences. Inspired by a rejuvenating visit to a town ironically named Carefree, Arizona, Dolan is spearheading a renovation of the hotel's wellness centre.

"We're not a typical box hotel," she says.

The upgrades reflect this commitment, introducing an indoor hot tub that opens to the outdoors in summer, a yoga studio with salt walls, and amenities like a barrel sauna and cold plunge—all designed to enhance relaxation and rejuvenation. With a wellness space spanning 2,200 square feet, the plans aim to provide guests with opportunities to "re-centre themselves, whether they're here for work or leisure," Dolan says.

UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S WELLNESS TRAVELLER

As our understanding of benefits to the mind, body and soul has evolved, so too has the wellness traveller. MacKinnon observes two distinct types of wellness travellers. The first group prioritizes wellness as the primary purpose of their trips, seeking in-depth retreats and resorts dedicated exclusively to wellness experiences.

"Then we have what I refer to as most, if not all of us: every time we 'get away,' it's a break from the everyday—work and family duties. This secondary traveller might be on a business trip but still wants a great run in the neighbourhood, spa services and healthy food choices on all the menus. I often refer to this traveller as a wellness visitor—someone who needs to maintain their routines from home while they're on the road. Frankly, I think that's most of us!"

Dolan echoes this sentiment, highlighting the urgency of self-care in today's fast-paced world: "I think we got so busy being busy that we forgot to take care of ourselves."

People are increasingly recognizing that neglecting their well-being impacts their ability to thrive personally and professionally.

"You can't just work all the time; you need to make time for yourself," she says.



Her vision for Balcomo's wellness centre is clear: it's about disconnecting from the chaos, even if only for a day or two.

DIVERSE OFFERINGS FOR EVERY TRAVELLER

Where once a pool and jacuzzi sufficed, hotel owners today understand that wellness is not one-size-fits-all. Instead, they are leveraging their unique selling propositions to attract diverse clientele. MacKinnon highlights exceptional partners like Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort and Nimmo Bay Resort, renowned for their luxurious waterfront settings and unparalleled wellness offerings.

"Many hotels and resorts strive to emulate the Nimmo experience," she remarks. "Curated annual—often sold-out—wellness retreats at Fairmont Chateau Whistler and Oak Bay Beach Hotel, spa treatments featuring local marine and earthly elements, and water excursions that immerse guests in nature's bounty are increasingly common."

In Penticton, Dolan enhances the wellness experience at Balcomo by integrating natural Okanagan elements surrounding the hotel.

"This area is great for wellness because of its culture and the variety of outdoor activities available," she explains. With opportunities for road biking, mountain biking and exploring local trails, more people can embrace active lifestyles during their stays, enriching their wellness journeys.

LOOKING AHEAD: THE FUTURE OF WELLNESS TRAVEL

There's no doubt that the wellness travel sector will continue to expand, and MacKinnon highlights how BC hotels and resorts are actively reaching out to global wellness travellers to understand what is required today and into the future. Notably, there's a growing focus on cultural experiences—such as music, fine arts and gardens—as vital components of wellness.

MacKinnon also notes the increasing popularity of the "sober-curious" movement, prompting establishments to collaborate with local kombucha producers and create enticing non-alcoholic drink options—something particularly apt for Dolan in Penticton, an area previously renowned for its wine tours. Dolan envisions a future where wellness journeys become "more personalized," ensuring everyone can benefit from offerings that enhance overall health and well-being.

As MacKinnon concludes: "There is a lot of money being spent on feeling better, improving health outcomes or simply taking a break to recharge and reset as we face life's trials. Wellness travellers are more affluent and educated, and more likely to invest in their health. Their spending is higher than any other travel segment. It's no longer just a luxury market; wellness now crosses over into all segments of travel, and hotels and resorts can capture more by being creative and thinking outside the box with their offerings." 🏡

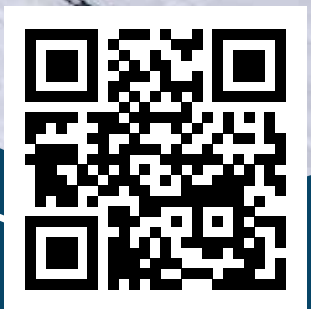


WINTER MEETS
WONDERLAND IN
NORTHERN BC

PRINCE GEORGE

ON THE NORTHWEST BC ALE TRAIL

In winter, Prince George transforms into a snowy wonderland, offering unforgettable experiences for outdoor adventurers and craft beverage enthusiasts alike.



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#TakeonPG #ExplorePrinceGeorge

DISCOVER PRINCE GEORGE: YOUR ULTIMATE WINTER DESTINATION

When winter blankets Prince George in snow, this northern British Columbia gem transforms into a frosty haven of seasonal activities and cozy retreats. Whether you're seeking adventure, relaxation, or a taste of local culture, Prince George has something for everyone. Here are six must-try experiences to make the most of your winter visit.

GLIDE THROUGH CALEDONIA NORDIC SKI CLUB

Prince George is home to one of Canada's premier destinations for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. **The Caledonia Nordic Ski Club** boasts an extensive trail network that offers options for both beginners and pros, all while showcasing the stunning northern landscape.

SCALE NEW HEIGHTS AT OVERHANG

For a unique indoor activity, head to **OVERhang** for some climbing fun. This modern climbing facility welcomes climbers of all skill levels, making it a must-do activity for couples, families, or solo adventurers.

SKATE UNDER THE SKY AT THE OVAL

The Prince George Outdoor Ice Oval offers a magical winter skating experience. This beautifully maintained rink provides a picturesque setting for skaters of all skill levels, whether you're gliding for fun or honing your technique under the crisp northern sky.

HIT THE SLOPES AT POWDER KING MOUNTAIN

For those willing to venture a bit further, **Powder King Mountain Resort** is a two-hour drive from Prince George. Known for its incredible powder conditions, it's a dream destination for skiers and snowboarders looking for an unforgettable day on the mountain.

CHEER ON THE COUGARS!

Feel the energy of a live hockey game by catching the **Prince George Cougars** in action. Join local fans cheering on the home team while experiencing a quintessential Canadian winter experience.



SIP AND SAVOUR LOCAL CRAFT BEVERAGES

After a day of exploring, warm up with Prince George's thriving craft beverage scene.

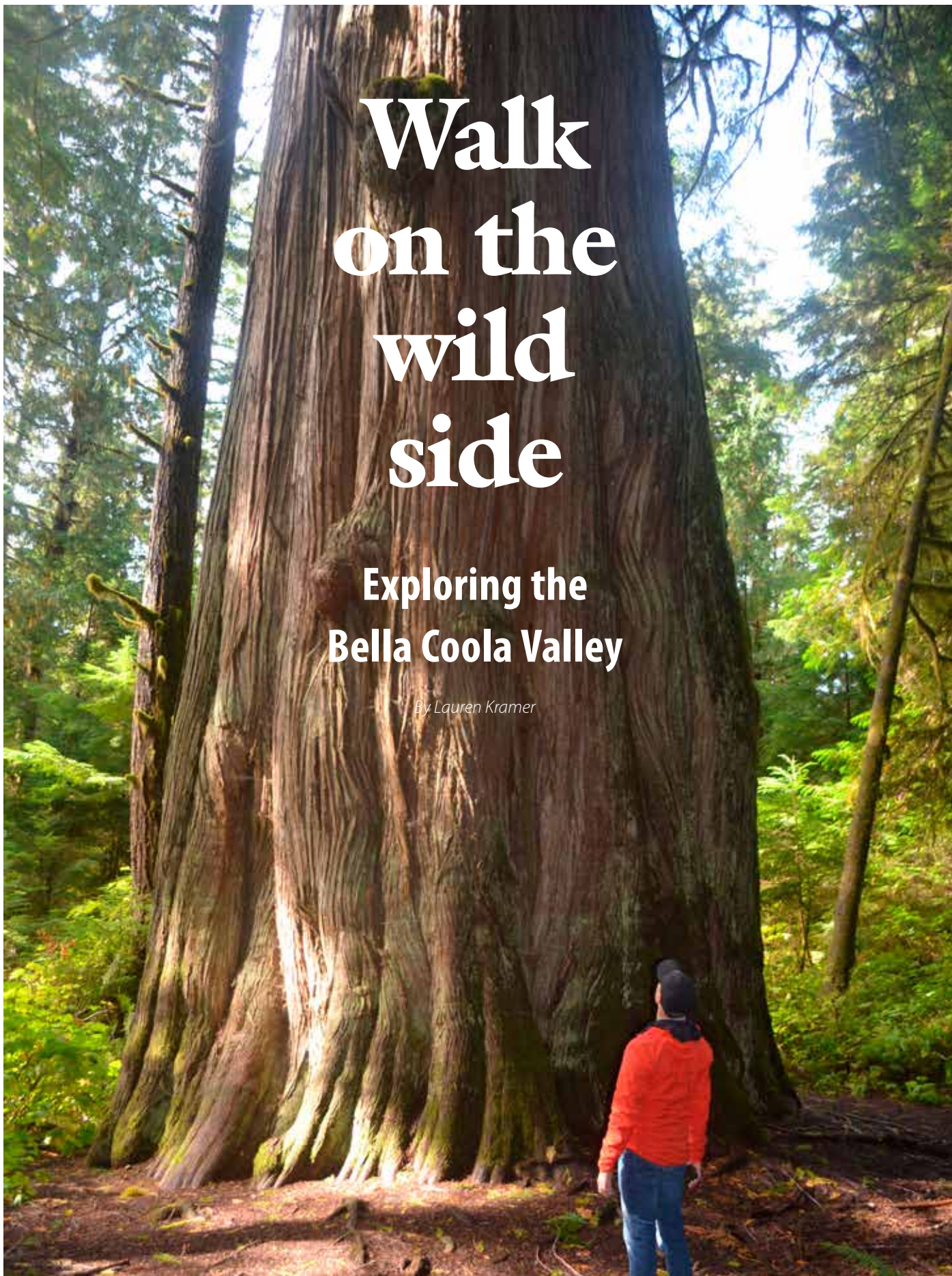
- **Trench Brewing & Distilling:** Cozy up with their delicious food menu, lively events, and a welcoming atmosphere.
- **CrossRoads Brewing & Distillery:** Downtown brewpub boasts hip patio, wood-fired pizzas, and a stellar beer lineup. Check out their College Heights Tap & Kitchen location, too.
- **Deadfall Brewing Company:** Discover award-winning beers, including the 2023 Canada Beer Cup winner! Enjoy live music, games, and more in this relaxed setting.

From thrilling outdoor adventures to savouring the flavours of its vibrant craft scene, Prince George delivers endless opportunities to make the most of winter. Whether you're a lifelong local or visiting for the first time, this northern BC gem promises to create unforgettable memories for everyone. ♦

Walk on the wild side

Exploring the
Bella Coola Valley

By Lauren Kramer



If you want a glimpse at what Vancouver might have looked like when white settlers first arrived in the 1860s, pack a spirit of adventure and head to the Pacific Coastal Airlines destination in the Bella Coola Valley.

The five small townlets dotted through the valley are dwarfed by massive mountain ranges thick with forested slopes. Glacial snowmelt cascades down steep granite rock faces, tumbling into the rivers and estuary below.

On land, grizzly, wolf and moose sightings are common, while in the water, humpback and killer whales feed in the Bentinck Arms. This landscape is British Columbia at its finest: wild, fierce, rugged and insanely beautiful. But it's also unpredictable—hence the need for a sense of adventure.

We've come on a quest to experience Tallheo Hot Springs, a mineral spring emanating from deep within the earth, just a stone's throw from the ocean. The hot springs are located in the South Bentinck Arm of the Burke Channel on BC's central coast, accessible only by boat. To reach them, we venture out with Bella Coola Grizzly Tours on a day-long boat excursion that combines wildlife viewing with some oral history.

With our guide, Daniel Ellis, we putter away from the harbour towards the mudflats on the other side of the estuary, looking closely for the grizzly bears that can often be seen feeding here in the fall. Ellis points to the remnants of a pier, its stakes sticking out of the water like outstretched fingers.

"A Norwegian community settled here in the early 1900s, preferring the sunlight exposure of this area to Bella Coola, which sits in the shadow of the mountain," he explains.

The community had unknowingly built their new homes on a floodplain, and in 1936, when the first big flood arrived, everything was washed away. The Norwegians rebuilt in a new settlement, Hagensborg, 16 kilometres from Bella Coola, where their European-style homes stand to this day.

We motor by sheer granite cliffs, watching the waterfalls spill down the slopes and marvelling at the trees that cling to impossibly steep mountain walls.



The red-roofed Tallheo Cannery, which processed canned salmon from 1910 to 1947, is closed and in ruins now, but a remote bed and breakfast still operates here in the summer months. Behind it, sunlight sparkles off an icy, blue-tinged glacier, its snowmelt spilling into the mouth of the ocean.

Tallheo might just be the most perfect natural hot spring in all of British Columbia. We peel off our clothes and clamber over the boulders that separate the shoreline from two small pools. One overlooks the ocean, while the warmer one behind it is ensconced in foliage—a natural bathtub that never loses its warmth. It's the perfect answer to a cool fall day, and we succumb to the warmth, sticking our hands and toes into the crevices to find the hottest water closest to the source of the springs.

With floors softened by fallen leaves, these pristine pools are rinsed clean by a constant flow of fresh hot water. On warmer days, visitors plunge from the ocean into the heat of the springs, and last summer orca whales surfaced right alongside a stunned group of bathers.

Whale sightings are common in the

Bentinck Arms, and as we venture on, we see the waterspout of a humpback whale and the dips and dives of dolphins. We stop on land for a walk to the Big Cedar Tree, a massive-girthed red cedar beauty that is easily 1,000 years old. En route back to the harbour, we pass petroglyphs thousands of years old, painted on the rock walls. A world away from civilization, this valley feels untouched by time.

Back on land we take a walk to see more petroglyphs with Zach Nelson, a Nuxalk guide with Copper Sun Journeys. Most of Bella Coola's population of 400 belongs to the Nuxalk First Nations, and as we walk through the forest, Nelson tells us the community was 150,000 people strong and spread across 45 villages until 1863. That's when a smallpox epidemic decimated the population, leaving just 126 individuals alive. The residential school system inflicted further damage, he says, as we pass a creek thrashing with water after a recent rainfall.

"There's a strong urgency to preserve our history and let outsiders know what we've been through," he says.

We walk past a sweat lodge—an Indigenous healing site—and then we're

there, surrounded by carvings sculpted into the rock faces some 13,000 years ago. Human faces, ravens, serpents, frogs and supernatural beings stare back at us hauntingly from the rocks.

"Our ancestors knew we'd need these carvings to tell our stories, and how right they were," Nelson reflects. "They did their best to pass on these stories, and we're trying to stitch all the pieces together and understand their meaning."

A feeling of spirituality hangs in the still air. Around us, the forest drips with moisture, and moss carpets the rocks and the mesh of gnarly tree roots. Nelson says he's had several experiences here that can only be described as supernatural.

"I heard voices once, speaking in old Nuxalk," he says. "Another time our guests heard children talking and laughing

when we adults were the only people present."

Our last stop is for a scenic float down the Atnarko River to see the grizzly bears. We sit in an inflatable boat steered by Fraser Koroluk, a biologist who owns Kynoch Adventures. The salmon are spawning, so the river writhes with spawning fish and the air is pungent with the scent of rotting fish carcasses. The bears are usually around feeding on them, Koroluk says, as we watch juvenile eagles glide over the treetops.

As we drift, Koroluk regales us with grizzly facts.

"It's not uncommon to see grizzlies with long tapeworms extending from their butts in the fall," he says. "That's because the salmon they are consuming are rife with parasites. To rid themselves of

the parasites, the grizzlies eat grass and other foliage, so that by the time they head into their dens, they're parasite-free."

In previous years he's seen as many as 21 bears on a single float ridge. But this year the salmon run has been especially large, and the bears, spoiled for choice on where to dine, don't make an appearance.

"They're wild, they don't show up on demand," Koroluk says. "And while bear-viewing is great, there's so much more to the Bella Coola Valley."

He's referring to the vast wildness of the valley, where glacier-carved mountains yield to heavily forested slopes, and creeks and rivers thriving with wildlife rush toward the ocean. Bella Coola is remote, a distance that has limited development and left services relatively sparse, but that has thankfully also preserved the valley's astounding beauty.

Spend time here and you witness how truly spectacular British Columbia's furthest reaches remain today. But brace yourself for an adventure where nothing is predictable, because here, nature makes all the decisions.

➔ IF YOU GO:

Pacific Coastal Airlines offers daily service to and from Bella Coola via 80-minute flights from Vancouver. The valley can also be reached by car and by BC Ferries.

BC Grizzly Tours offers Glacier Fjord & Hot Springs tours departing from the Bella Coola Wharf between May and September. The family-owned business also offers fully equipped chalets in Hagensborg. bcgrizzlytours.com

On Kynoch Adventures' seasonal scenic river tours, grizzly viewing is always a possibility. kynochadventuretours.com

The petroglyphs in the Great Bear Rainforest are a Nuxalk sacred site and require accompaniment by a Nuxalk guide. **Copper Sun Journeys** offers guided walks with Indigenous guides. coppersunjourns.com

Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism is a valuable resource for travel planning and information about the Bella Coola Valley. landwithoutlimits.com, 1-800-663-5885. 📍



Always on call

Learning from the hockey team



Following is an excerpt from *Always On Call: Adventures in Nursing, Ranching, and Rural Living*, 2024 by Marion McKinnon Crook. Reprinted by permission of Heritage House. In the much-anticipated sequel to *Always Pack a Candle*, intrepid public health nurse Marion Crook juggles marriage, children and a vast array of patients and cases in rural British Columbia in the 1970s.



“We have to deal with the Stampede, Marion,” Angela told me one Monday morning as she popped her head into my office.

The local hockey team took their game seriously. There was a snarling rivalry between the Williams Lake Stampede and the Quesnel Kangaroos.

“One of them has mono,” she continued.

“We don’t see that often,” I said.

“The players are at a vulnerable age. Dr. Anderson is concerned, and the manager is worried the whole team will get it.”

I conjured up the page on mononucleosis in my Communicable Diseases in Man text. I’d memorized large portions of that book as a student. Mono was contagious, but not highly contagious.

“It’s transferred in saliva,” I remembered. It’s sometimes called the kissing disease. I’d have to forget that term when dealing with the hockey team.

“They probably share water bottles,” Angela said. “Or towels.”

“What do they want us to do?”

“Take blood from the whole team. You’ve taken blood before. You should be competent.”

Nurses knew how to withdraw blood but usually left that chore to the lab technicians. But I took blood every Monday from inmates at the jail, where everyone

had to have a test for syphilis. It shouldn’t be hard. The challenge would be in setting up a special clinic and getting everyone to arrive on time.

“You can deliver the samples to this lab at the hospital, where they’ll test for antibodies,” Angela gave me instructions.

“I’ll call the lab so they can block off some time to deal with it. How many people will there be?” I asked.

Angela looked at her notes. “Twenty-two players, two referees, and four management staff. The manager is Robin Ferris. You can tee it all up with him.”

I reached for the phone and contacted Robin Ferris. He wasn’t a full-time manager—no one was full time, neither management nor players; they all had other jobs. Robin Ferris owned a garage and auto repair shop.

“Hell of a thing,” he said on the phone. “Big strapping lad. Weak as a kitten.”

“It hits some people like that. I hope he’s getting rest. That’s the treatment.”

“Yeah. He boards with my sister and she’s looking after him. I’m worried that more guys are going to come down with it. I don’t want them playing when they’re sick, but I need to field a team to meet Quesnel this weekend. Hate to forfeit that game. Quesnel’s at the top of the league. Lose this Friday and we won’t have a snowball’s hope in hell at the trophy.”

“The lab results usually come back in a day or two,” I reassured him. “If we could

hold a clinic here tomorrow at the health unit, it will give the lab time to get the results back to me then to you, before Friday.”

“Sounds good. What time?”

We arranged for an after-hours clinic at 6:00 pm the next day. I asked him for two volunteers to help with the clinic and gave Robin some advice. “You need to make sure the players and staff don’t share towels, water bottles, or anything that might come in contact with their mouths.”

“I can do that.”

The next night, the waiting room was filled with young men of every size and shape. The first volunteer, Thelma Parks, the wife of the assistant manager, helped by keeping order and demanding everyone fill out their requisition slip. The second, designated to help me in the much quieter treatment room, was Peggy Ferris, Robin’s wife.

All went well until Wayne Abbot shuffled in. He was about six foot two, bulky and cheerful.

“Hi, Wayne.” He worked for Robin at the garage; I often saw him when I got gas and had my car serviced.

“Hiya, Mrs. Crook. How’s it goin’?”

I smiled. “Pretty good. Just give Peggy your requisition.”

He did that.

“You can sit here.” I waved toward the chair.

"Nah. I'd rather stand. Seems easier, somehow."

He seemed relaxed, so there wasn't any reason not to accommodate him. I stood as well.

"Just rest your arm on the gurney here." I indicated the padded stretcher against the wall.

Peggy handed me the sample tube with Wayne's name written on it. I picked up an alcohol swab and the tourniquet. I wrapped the rubber tourniquet around his arm and picked up a syringe with an attached needle.

"Just open and close your fist a couple of times. That's right. Lovely veins." I slipped the needle into the vein. Easy.

"Watch out!" Peggy called.

I looked up just in time to see Wayne's eyes roll back and his body start to slide sideways. I grabbed him by the shoulder with my left hand and eased him to the floor—very quickly as he was so heavy. The needle was still in my right hand but no longer in Wayne's arm.

"What happened?" Peggy asked.

"He fainted." I dropped the syringe into the basin on my desk, then checked Wayne's colour, his breathing and his heart rate.

"Hand me another syringe, please, Peggy."

She plucked a prepared syringe from my desk and passed it to me. I found Wayne's vein again, released the tourniquet and withdrew the blood. I shot the blood into the sample tube and handed it to Peggy. I was wiping Wayne's arm with alcohol when he blinked.

"All done," I said.

"Ah, shit," he said. "I hate blood. You won't tell the guys, will you, Marion?" If he'd told me that at the beginning, I'd have insisted he stay seated. He could have injured himself or me. But I wasn't about to make his day worse.

Peggy was suppressing a grin.

"I won't tell a soul," I said.

He sat up and got to his feet. We eyed him warily, but he had good colour and was intent on leaving.

I took a couple of deep breaths. There were about 20 more in the waiting room. This was going to take some time. We worked until eight. I thanked Peggy and Thelma, loaded the samples into my car and drove in the dark, cold evening. It was only a six-minute drive to the hospital lab. When I got there, I delivered the samples to the night orderly who was expecting me.

After dropping off the samples, I drove home along our gravel road. The headlights picked up the white of the snow still in patches by the roadside. I was the only driver on the road. It felt as though I was alone in the universe.

Andrea, the lab technician, called me early in the morning two days later.

"Can you come up here?" Her tone was serious. She didn't give me the results of the tests.

"Sure." I left the office and drove up the hill to the hospital. What had gone wrong? Were there many cases of mono in the team? Would I have to deliver bad news to Robin? The game was tomorrow.

But it wasn't the results that were bothering Andrea.

"You hemolyzed the whole lot," Andrea said.

I looked at her, stunned. I didn't even know I could do that.

"You must have shot the blood into the tube too fast. All the

red cells clotted."

I sat down on a chair with a thud. I could see Robin Ferris's face as I explained I'd made a mistake and would have to arrange another clinic and take blood from every one of those young men, including Wayne, again. I couldn't do that and get the results by tomorrow. They'd have to forfeit the game. Hard on them and hard on me. Robin would think I was incompetent. That information would fly around town like wildfire, and everyone would think I was incompetent. Well, I had been. I hadn't known I could hemolyze the sample. Should I have known? Probably. But I hadn't. What about the samples I took every week at the jail? But I didn't shoot the blood into the sample vial at the jail because I never felt rushed there. I'd only done that with the hockey team. I thought about resigning.

"I have to do it all again," I whispered. What would Angela think of me? What would my colleagues think of me? I bit my lip and tried to concentrate.

"No," Andrea said. "Luckily, it didn't interfere with the test. We could still use the samples. The results were all negative."

"Oh, thank God!" The relief was incredible. My hands tingled. I took several deep breaths.

Andrea nodded with understanding.

"Why don't you come here after work tomorrow? You can take blood from me, and I'll show you how to put it into the





THE AUTHOR



Author Marion McKinnon Crook is a nurse, educator and the author of more than 25 books, including the award-winning *Always Pack a Candle*.

sample tube without hemolyzing it. There are lots of tests it can affect.”

“You’re on,” I said. “Thanks so much.”

The next day, I drove up to the hospital after work. Andrea bravely bared her arm, and I took blood from her. Then she showed me how to carefully let the blood flow into the tube. It was such a simple correction, and it made

me think there might be many other mistakes waiting for me.

“I hate making mistakes,” I said to Andrea.

“Yeah. It’s called being human. You can fix this one, though. Just don’t use much pressure.”

“No fear of that.” I’d escaped public humiliation by pure luck. As a lesson in lab technique, it was unforgettable. ✈️



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