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The ecology of Eden

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Table of Contents

Features

12 BAND OF BUDDIES
The Bills are cultivating a sizeable following with their innovative interpretations of traditional folk music tunes from around the world.
Story by Star Weiss, photography by Dominique Secret

15 A MAN FOR FOUR SEASONS
Jody Broomfield’s work celebrates Coast Salish artistic traditions and those who have kept them alive.
Story by Isabel Nanton, photography by Quinton Gordon

18 ECOLOGY OF EDEN
Jutting out from the southernmost tip of Vancouver Island, the historically significant Race Rocks islets host a dynamic cross-section of marine life.
Story by Garth Eichel

23 LIVING LARGE IN LITTLE INDIA
Vancouver’s Punjabi Market is a sweet smidgen of the East in the Pacific Northwest.
Story and photography by Ross Crockford

Departments

6 DAYPLANNER
Local Festivals & Events

9 HELIJET PROFILE
Employee Bio

10 FLIGHTPATH
Helijet Update by Garth Eichel

11 UNKNOWN COAST
Peculiarities & Points of Interest by Ross Crockford

26 INDULGENCES
Personal Consideration by Kerry Slavens

28 VITALITY
Balanced Living by Star Weiss

29 DOMAINS
Architecture & Interior Design by Isabel Nanton

32 GRAPE & GRAIN
Local Fermentations by David Preston

33 EPICURE
Fine Dining by Garth Eichel

34 ICONS & IMAGES
West Coast Photography by Garth Eichel
Welcome Aboard!

CHANCES ARE, if you're reading this first issue of our new on-board magazine, *In-Flight Review (IFR)*, instead of looking outside at the incredible view, you're probably one of our many frequent flyers who regularly commute between Vancouver and Victoria.

Helijet has flown this route for almost 22 years now, operating more than 140,000 flights. After a while, it's easy to take the spectacular scenery for granted, but all of us at Helijet are doing our best to make sure we never take you, our customers, for granted. After all, we've carried more than 1.8 million of you over the past two decades, and we never forget that your travel plans and choices are what keep us in business.

While *IFR* is the name of our new magazine, it also has another more aeronautical meaning. You see, in our business, it also stands for *Instrument Flight Rules*, which, in conjunction with our specially equipped aircraft and instrument-qualified pilots, allow Helijet to provide the kind of reliable day and night service you've come to expect, even in bad weather. As such, *IFR* seemed a natural name for this new publication.

*In-Flight Review* is designed to meet your interests and expectations. If you'd like to see a particular topic covered in future issues, please let us know. We can't guarantee every story will be able to compete with the scenery, but we'll do our best!

Thanks for flying with us between Vancouver and Victoria — part of The Best Place On Earth!

Danny Sitnam  
*President & CEO*

Rick Hill  
*Vice President, Operations & Commercial Programs*
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WHEN YOU WANT

Whether it’s a spectacular scheduled flight between Vancouver and Victoria, a scenic custom charter to the destination of your choice or a sightseeing tour, Helijet will get you there in comfort and style.

HELIJET HAS AN ADVENTURE TO SUIT EVERY TASTE AND BUDGET.
Vancouver

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL
March 4 to 29
www.vidf.ca
The 2008 Vancouver International Dance Festival presents local, national and international dance artists in cabaret and stage performances, as well as workshops, art and photography exhibitions.

VANCOUVER SUN RUN
April 1
The largest 10K run in Canada attracted over 50,000 participants in 2007, and organizers anticipate the number to exceed 54,000 this year. This year’s race starts at the Hyatt Regency Vancouver and finishes at BC Place Stadium.

ST. PATRICK’S DAY PARADE
March 16
www.celticfestvancouver.com
Don something green, celebrate Celtic traditions, and rhapsodize about the Emerald Isle at the 5th Annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade through downtown Vancouver. This year’s festivities march along Howe and Granville Street, with day-long celebrations continuing afterwards at the Celtic Village on Granville.

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VAISAKHI ON MAIN
April 19
www.sikhpioneers.org
Visit the Punjabi Market on April 19 for Vaisakhi, a celebration of the harvest (in the Southern Hemisphere) and the beginning of the solar year. As one of the most significant holidays in the Sikh calendar, more than 100,000 Indo-Canadians turn out for this annual parade, which begins at the Sikh temple on Southwest Marine Drive and proceeds up Main Street.

ONE WORLD
March 15
www.rmts.bc.ca
Each year the international students of Pearson College in Victoria share the music and dance of their homelands through their performance of the One World Concert. The concert includes two perennially popular acts, The South African Gumboot Dance and the One World Chorus. This year’s performance is being held at Vancouver’s Norman Rothstein Theatre. (The students also perform in Victoria on March 8 at the Royal Theatre.)

BEETHOVEN FESTIVAL
March 28 to April 7
www.vancouversymphony.ca
Conducted by Maestro Bramwell Tovey, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra performs all nine Beethoven symphonies — in chronological order, no less — with guest performances by world-renowned artists Anne-Sophie Mutter and Lang Lang.

SEAFOOD DELIVERED RIGHT TO YOUR DOOR, OR PACKAGED FOR YOUR FLIGHT!

Victoria-based RBS Seafoods has an established reputation for the highest quality seafood. Located just steps away from Helijet’s Victoria heliport, RBS Seafoods offers a gourmet selection of salmon, halibut, tuna and assorted shellfish morsels. Come visit us at our fish store on Fisherman’s Wharf!

PHONE 250.383.6462
Whistler & Squamish

Open to any judge, lawyer, law office employee or law student, this annual race event is open to teams of six, including at least one woman and one racer over 40.

WORLD SKI & SNOWBOARD FESTIVAL
April 11 to 20
www.whistler.com/wssf
Mark the calendar, dude. The TELUS World Ski & Snowboard Festival in Whistler is 10 radical days and nights, with 50 live concerts, pro ski and snowboard camps, arts events, gear demos, exclusive parties, sizzling nightlife and the best spring skiing and riding to be found. Highlights include a fashion show, fundraisers, a dogfest, rail sessions, pro photographer and filmmaker showdowns, parties and so much more.

CAN-FIT-PRO SHOW
April 18 to 20
www.whistler.com/events
The Can-Fit-Pro Personal Training, Sport Conditioning and Mind Body Conference and Trade Show will educate, inspire and motivate you over three days at the Fairmont Chateau Whistler. Highlights of the conference will include interactive learn-to-ski sessions, wellness training for personal trainers, indoor rock climbing, CPR re-certification, and an assortment of other offerings and opportunities.

CHARGE OF THE GODDESS
March 1 to 9
www.whistler.com/women
Whistler Blackcomb invites women from all walks of life to participate in Charge of the Goddess: A Week for Women in Whistler, a week of women-only ski and snowboard camps. And, of course, every night is “Ladies Night,” with wining, dining and shopping opportunities aplenty. The week’s festivities wrap up with “A Night With Venus” toga party fundraiser for the BC Cancer Foundation.

WILD AT ART FESTIVAL
March 14 to 23
www.wildatart.ca
The Squamish Wild at Art Festival is an annual event showcasing the arts, culture and heritage of Squamish and the Sea to Sky corridor. The festival includes art exhibitions and installations, concerts and theatre, hands-on workshops, movies, food, and a street party.

SOLICITORS ON SKIS
March 15
www.whistlerblackcomb.com
Be careful not to run into anyone on slopes this March 15 when Whistler Blackcomb hosts the BC Law Firm Ski Championships.
Victoria

FREE SPIRIT
March 13, continuing
www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca
In keeping with the 150th anniversary of the founding of British Columbia as a Crown Colony, the Royal BC Museum opens its doors on March 13 to an all-new Free Spirit: Stories of You, Me and BC exhibition, which documents the story of British Columbia as seen through the eyes of ordinary and extraordinary citizens. This impressive display celebrates the stories of B.C. through its First Peoples to its newest citizens, from early European surveyors to today’s high-tech visionaries, and from the pillars of the province to its legendary eccentrics.

DINE AROUND & STAY IN TOWN
February 21 to March 9
www.tourismvictoria.com/dine
Victoria’s perennially popular “Dine Around & Stay in Town” event has 53 local restaurants participating this year, each offering three-course menus for $15, $25, or $35 per person, all paired with B.C. VQA wine suggestions. For those looking to retire after dinner, some of Victoria’s finer hotels and accommodations are featuring “Pillows & Plates” packages with one-night room rates as low as $69, $79, $99, and $129.

PACIFIC FESTIVAL OF THE BOOK
March 10 to 20
www.victoriaartsconnection.com
Victoria Arts Connection presents the 2nd Pacific Festival of the Book, a unique celebration of diversity in the literary arts. Various venues include Victoria Arts Connection, Greater Victoria Public Library branches and the Community Arts Council of Victoria.

VICTORIA FRENCH FEST
March 13 to 16
Get in touch with Victoria’s Gallic traditions at the 11th annual French Fest, taking place over four days at Market Square, Alix Goolden Hall and Victor-Brodeur School. This year’s festival includes a concert featuring renowned Quebec singer Michel Rivard, a Sugar Shack dinner with music by La Bardasse, and numerous other performances, events and exhibits. For details, contact the Victoria Francophone Society at (250) 388-7350.

DANCE VICTORIA
Spring Season
www.dancevictoria.com
Contemporary dance enthusiasts have plenty to look forward to this spring with a Dance Victoria triple bill, including Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal (BJM), Rubberbandance Group and Compagnie Marie Chouinard. BJM’s Mixed Program, March 14 and 15, is a passionate and sexy new work, combining the heat and texture of tango with the expressive freedom of contemporary dance. Another Montreal company, Rubberbandance Group, follows on April 4 and 5 with Elastic Perspective, a performance that fuses gritty street/club dancing with ballet. The third of Dance Victoria’s spring performances is the wild, brilliant Compagnie Marie Chouinard’s Body Remix, an innovative deconstruction of ballet that has provoked and thrilled audiences around the world.

VICTORIA HARBOUR FLOATING BOAT SHOW
April 24 to 27
The Victoria Harbour Floating Boat Show — Canada’s largest in-the-water boat show — has over 150 boats on display, as well as many booth exhibits with marine-related products. For details, phone (250) 416-0097.

TIMES COLONIST 10K
April 27
www.tc10k.ca
This spring, Victoria marks the 19th running of the Times Colonist 10K race. Over 10,000 people are expected to participate in this year’s community-based walk/run event. This year’s race starts beside Beacon Hill Park, passes through downtown, and finishes in front of the Legislature Buildings. Highlights include an awards ceremony in front of the Fairmont Empress hotel and a corporate tailgate party on Government Street.

In conjunction with the Times Colonist 10K, this year marks the first annual Lifestyle and Fitness Expo, April 25 to 27, with over 100 booths showcasing all varieties of lifestyle and wellness professionals, as well as two stages for fashion shows, speakers and demonstrations.
Mission Reliability

Morris Forchuk, Director of Maintenance, brings decades of experience and resourcefulness to the job of keeping Helijet’s aircraft flying.

Morris Forchuk is a man who carries a lot of responsibility on his shoulders. As Helijet’s Director of Maintenance, he is responsible for overseeing all work performed by the company’s aircraft maintenance engineers (AME’s) on the fleet of aircraft that deliver you back and forth between Vancouver and Victoria. Like most senior engineers, he has a no-nonsense demeanour that speaks of a career spent keeping helicopters airworthy.

One of the longest-serving employees at Helijet, Forchuk joined the company in 1987. Originally, he hailed from a small farm just outside Vauxhall, in southeastern Alberta, but driving tractors wasn’t his calling. In 1973 he travelled to Calgary to pursue aircraft maintenance at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT). After a two-year training stint at SAIT, Forchuk began his apprenticeship, working on helicopters positioned in mineral exploration camps in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. From there he moved further north, turning wrenches on aircraft based on contracts in the Northwest Territories (NWT).

Forchuk is mildly nostalgic about his years working in the High Arctic. “You need to be resourceful when you’re operating helicopters far from civilization,” he says. To illustrate his point, he recalls an incident in which he and his helicopter crew became stranded on the polar ice cap, hundreds of miles from their base at Rae Point, NWT. The helicopter, a Bell 212, could not light one of its two engines because of a faulty starter. Fortunately for all concerned, Forchuk was able to improvise a solution that involved swapping an exciter from the operable engine to the unserviceable one — while the good engine was still running!

Almost wistful, Forchuk says such creativity is not necessary in Helijet’s urban operations where replacement parts and support crews are always at the ready. Still, he takes pride in the demands of being an AME — one of the many crucial components of the Helijet team.

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UNWIND HERE.

This four-diamond resort & spa is located in the heart of the city, on the waterfront of Victoria’s charming Inner Harbour. Featuring amenities such as a European Spa, LURE Seafood Restaurant and Bar and a 24 hour fitness centre with an indoor solarium style swimming pool, the Delta Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort and Spa is spectacular in every sense.

1-800-667-4677  www.deltavictoria.com
What a difference a century-and-a-half can make. In 1856 the territory of what is today the province of British Columbia consisted of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island, the Colony of the Queen Charlotte Islands and the Hudson’s Bay Company’s territory of New Caledonia, which covered most of mainland B.C. The combined population numbered just over 50,000, of which no more than 200 were non-aboriginals mostly employed by the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC). But that started to change in 1857 when rumours of gold in the Thompson River area spread, causing tens of thousands of prospectors to start pouring into the region — many of them from the United States.

The Fraser Canyon Gold Rush, as it came to be known, presented then Governor James Douglas (who was also an employee and officer of the HBC) with the unique challenge of having to exert authority over a largely alien population. In order to normalize its jurisdiction, Douglas urged the British Parliament to convert the HBC’s territory of New Caledonia into a British colony. As a result, the Crown Colony of British Columbia was established on August 2, 1858, with New Westminster as its capital. Thus began the “official” origins of the province.

Of course, B.C.’s history predated a simple act of parliament. The rich and varied history of indigenous peoples on the West Coast spans centuries, and documented European contact dates back to the exploration of Spanish navigator Juan José Pérez Hernández in 1774 and Captain James Cook in 1778. (That said, there is evidence to suggest Sir Francis Drake made a clandestine voyage to the B.C. coast in 1579.)

Nevertheless, as far as milestones go, the date 1858 is still significant by virtue of the fact that it is a useful datum from which to measure the extraordinary growth of the province since just prior to entering Confederation.

Over the course of the past 150 years, B.C. has grown to become one of the most diverse and dynamic provinces in Canada. The arrival of new immigrants from all over the world has swelled our population to nearly 4.5 million souls, our economy is one of the strongest in Canada, and B.C.’s role in emerging Asian markets cannot be understated.

But how the province evolved from colonial backwater to world-class destination is a remarkable and fascinating story, complete with dramatic events, colourful characters and, admittedly, its share of blemishes. It is a story worth telling, and Helijet International is proud to be a BC 150 partner, the program tasked with putting on celebrations throughout the province this year that relate the adventures, struggles, people, events and achievements that have shaped our provincial identity as “The Best Place On Earth.”

On August 2, 2008, British Columbia marks the sesquicentennial of its founding as a crown colony. The celebrations are already underway.

By Garth Eichel
Map Out

By Ross Crockford

BRITISH COLUMBIA is vast. As every schoolkid knows, at 944,735 square kilometres, B.C. is bigger than Washington state (184,827), Oregon (255,026), and California (423,970) combined. By itself, it would be the 32nd largest country in the world, bigger than Turkey or France. But what today’s kids probably don’t realize is that our huge province has also inspired some very big maps.

In 1945, George Challenger, a mining and forestry millionaire, decided to create his own map to figure out the best routes for shipping lumber from remote corners of B.C. Over the next seven years, he cut and shaped more than 986,000 pieces of plywood in his basement, and fit them together to create a 24- by 23-metre (6,000-square-foot) 3-D rendering of the province — The Challenger Map, the largest relief map in the world.

Challenger sold his extraordinary woodworking project for $50,000 to the Pacific National Exhibition, which housed it in its B.C. pavilion starting in 1954. And when Challenger died 10 years later, his ashes were stored beneath the map, in accordance with his wishes. But that wasn’t his final resting place. When the PNE grounds were overhauled in 1998 and the pavilion was bulldozed, Challenger’s ashes were returned to his family, and the 196-section map went into storage.

Since then, mayors across the province and retired premiers have pleaded for The Challenger Map to be brought out of mothballs. Alan Clapp, a former TV producer, is raising the $1 million he estimates is needed to repair and repaint the map, and upgrade it with computer terminals describing B.C.’s regions. “It’s going to be quite a job,” says Clapp, who’s pushing all levels of government to have the map resurrected by 2010, preferably in Vancouver. “We have other places that want it, and if worst comes to worst, we’ll take it to them.”

A few years ago the organizers of The B.C. Experience tourist attraction in Victoria tried to get The Challenger Map for themselves. Clapp turned them down, so they built a 12.2- by 22.5-metre (2,955-square-foot) foam relief map of their own, and installed it in the Crystal Gardens’ former swimming pool. The attraction went bankrupt in 2006 — perhaps because there already was a 336-square-foot 3-D map in the lobby of the Royal BC Museum across the street (pictured) — and, like The Challenger Map, the Experience map sat in limbo. But the Galey Farm, an agro-tourist attraction in Saanich with a popular corn maze, recently bought the Experience map and will unveil it (with miniature moving trains and ferries) in 2009. Soon, schoolkids on both sides of the Strait may gain a new appreciation for the size of our province — and the ambition of our cartographers.

— Ross Crockford is the author of Victoria: The Unknown City, a comprehensive guide to the city’s history and peculiarities.
Band of Buddies

With their lush vocal arrangements, exuberant live performances, and refreshingly innovative interpretations of traditional tunes from around the world, The Bills’ folk music following is growing well beyond the West Coast.

By Star Weiss

The Bills perform at Espace Prévert at Savigny le Temple, a small town on the outskirts of Paris. From left to right are Jeremy Penner, Adrian Dolan, Marc Atkinson and Chris Frye. Not visible is Glen Manders, a.k.a. the “Reverend” Bill Bass.

Photo: © Dominique Secret meodomfree.fr
TWO-TIME JUNO NOMINEES The Bills, one of Canada’s favourite folk groups, got their start more than 10 years ago in Victoria’s iconic hangout, Pagliacci’s. I met two of The Bills’ members for lunch there recently, and we sat about a guitar’s length away from the spot where I first saw the group perform in the early days.

One of the outstanding characteristics of The Bills has always been versatility — their collective sum total is made up of multi-talented musicians evolving on their own, as well as together, in a variety of genres, from classical to jazz. Here was my chance to ask Adrian Dolan and Chris Frye about their musical progressions and what it’s like to be one of The Bills (formerly the Bill Hillys).

Dolan, who was a 17-year-old blue-haired wunderkind when he joined The Bills in 2000, admits he was “in awe of the band” when he became a member. “They were the top performers in town,” he says, and he wasn’t even old enough to go get a beer with them after a gig. He’s still not old enough, at 24, to drive the rental car when they’re on tour!

But Dolan’s musical talents were already well recognized when he joined the group. He started playing the piano at age eight and says, “It pretty much instantly became an obsession.” He stuck with classical piano, then added fiddle under the tutelage of Victoria’s well-known fiddle mentor, Daniel Lapp. Next came accordion — “My one untrained instrument, which leaves a big element of fun to it” — and he admits he first started bringing the accordion to Pagliacci’s to play because it was “the loudest thing” he had. Now, it’s the instrument he’s featured playing in The Bills at least 70 per cent of the time, finding it well-suited to the Eastern European and South American music the group favours.

At this point in the interview, lead vocalist/guitarist Chris Frye arrives at Pag’s and pulls up a chair to join us as we squeeze around a window table during a typically crowded mid-week lunch scene. Frye, who keeps track of things like this, says The Bills have toured more than 40 states, every province and territory, Great Britain, and Continental Europe. I ask him if he has a favourite performance.

He says it was the night The Bills played at a folk festival in Tonder, Denmark. Two other groups were performing that night — Canadian Lenny Gallant and Lunasa, one of Ireland’s best-known Celtic groups. The Bills were last, which was a little intimidating.

“Lunasa did a good set, but we played as strong a set as we’ve ever played,” Frye remembers. “It all came together.” Frye has a weakness for the Danes (he lived in the country at one point), but being on the bill with world-class musicians and still holding their own, underscored by the warm reception from the audience, was “a beautiful night for me,” he says.

Frye enjoyed it while it lasted because two days later, The Bills had one of their worst performances ever, at a Scottish ceilidh where they played only two songs, both plagued with technical problems. Such is life on the road.

Dolan remembers the high he felt the first time The Bills were in the spotlight onstage at a large Montreal theatre, after previously playing “filler gigs” at unremarkable venues in that city. And both Dolan and Frye recall their first appearance at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival in 2003. “We came out and the audience was so with us. Really magical,” Dolan says. They were hometown heroes.

Frye, who has been with The Bills since shortly after the group was formed in 1996, likes to describe their music as “global acoustic roots.” Now he is also satisfying his songwriting craving by performing with his new group, Chris Frye and the Analog Ghosts, whose first album was promptly nominated for a Western Canadian Music Award.

Guitar/mandolin player Marc Atkinson and bass guitarist Scott White formed The Bills, as Atkinson says, to explore the roots of folk music from around the world. Soon, band members were writing their own songs and exploring the world to play them! The fans loved it: The Bills won Entertainer of the Year at the Western Canadian Music Awards in 2006.
Atkinson, whose virtuosity on the mandolin is all the more startling when you realize this is his second instrument, also formed the Marc Atkinson Trio, now a renowned jazz group, with Frye playing rhythm guitar. Atkinson has recently been focusing his energy on playing jazz guitar for a new album just recorded by the Trio.

For his part, Dolan made a special appearance playing fiddle with The Chieftains during their five-day tour of the Maritimes. When not touring, he collaborates with the “alternate country” scene, and does string arranging and orchestration. He credits The Bills for stretching him in “totally different directions,” and pushing him to get into improvisation.

White is living in Berlin, but managed to join The Bills for their recent appearance at the Celtic Connections Festival in Glasgow and a successful tour that included France and Great Britain. So did former Bill, Jeremy Penner, who has been touring with the Wailin’ Jennys for the past year or so. Meanwhile, The Bills’ fiddler, Richard Moody, has been working on classical arrangements and compositions commissioned by the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra and the CBC.

Keep an eye out for this eclectic group’s upcoming Canadian performances right here in B.C. at Richmond’s Gateway Theatre and Vancouver’s Rogue Folk Club in late April.
A Man for Four Seasons

Jody Broomfield’s work celebrates Coast Salish artistic traditions and those who have kept them alive.

*Story by Isabel Nanton*

Working in his studio on the Squamish Nation, Jody Broomfield paints a panel that is part of a three-door project for the Squamish-Lillooet Nations Whistler Village Cultural Centre, opening in June 2008.

Photo: Quinton Gordon
When the Squamish nation put their website together five years ago, artist Jody Broomfield submitted his portfolio designs having no idea that four years later the Royal Canadian Mint would come calling.

“I never pictured my art on Canadian currency,” says the brown-eyed, goateed 31-year-old artist, running his hands over his current project, one of three doors he is carving for the Squamish-Lillooet Nations Whistler Village Cultural Centre.

Broomfield’s Four Seasons Moon Mask design was selected by the Royal Canadian Mint as the basis for its 14-karat gold, $300 “Moonie” coin, which he recently spotted in a coin shop in Burnaby’s Metrotown.

“There it was, Number 125 out of the 1,200 minted, now selling for $1,560,” he says, eyes shining. “My mom and dad bought one,” he adds, describing the process of collaborating with the mint’s engraver “back and forth, back and forth” to fine-tune his vision.

Artistic vision imbues Broomfield’s studio on this sunny day on the Squamish Nation, a serene spot, close to the water, with easy-listening radio playing in the background. “I can’t work without music,” he says, a packed timeline of his door-carving and etching project prominent on the wall behind him.

When the weather is cool, Broomfield works in the shed. In summer, a tent structure on a raised platform provides a warm-weather carving space.

Carvers talk in dimensions and Broomfield is no exception. The first of the four-foot-eight red cedar doors he carved took four people to carry it. This door relates to the human face, welcoming guests and tourists of all interests and cultures to the centre. Mars Black (“the deepest black you can buy”) pigment delineates mountains; a sacred eye represents the Squamish Nation, with a Salish weaving pattern representing the Lillooet.

The second door was inspired by the Coast Salish spindle whorl, specifically the four spindle whorls in Washington state’s Burke Museum, which Salish weavers once customized with their own designs.

Broomfield’s work calendar is full, but not too full to pay tribute to his carving mentor. “In the summer of 1999 I was living in Whonnock and was introduced to my mentor, Klatle-Ehi, who went with his gut feeling, took me on as his apprentice and I have been his pupil ever since.

“He became my best friend, lent me his knives, showed me how to carve masks, carving half a mask, then I would match his half of the mask. It was a precise, careful,
diligent apprenticeship of baby steps, learning to know the form line, learning the attributes of red cedar, yellow cedar and alder.”

The great woods of the Pacific Northwest are Broomfield’s medium and, like all artists, he understands the moods and foibles of his raw materials, loving red cedar for its forgiving nature.

“In my first two to three years I barely sold anything; I got constructive criticism from galleries, but learning how to take it is a learning process in itself. You just have to keep on trucking. I did 20 years’ work in nine years. Canoes, totem poles, doors, wall panels.”

In February 2007, Broomfield won the Four Hosts National Design award, standing on the VANOC stage for the launch, his parents in the audience. Now, he is paying tribute to his elders by carving a dish for his mentor, a sign of appreciation.

A red cedar disk, three feet across and one-and-three-quarter inches deep — the work shows Klatle-Ehi as the head of a whale pod, a dorsal fin representing him, smaller dorsal fins his family. The sky containing a moon celebrates Broomfield’s achievement with the Royal Canadian Mint, and is surrounded by eight stars for the years he has worked with Klatle-Ehi. The sacred eye on the outer part acknowledges his ancestors.

Tellingly, when Broomfield interprets the work, he starts with his mentor, ending with himself depicted in the moon. “Will he be surprised?” I ask. “I guess he will when I bring it out after dinner,” says Broomfield, a genial twinkle in his eye.

And the projects keep rolling in for this accomplished artist. He is working on a 15-foot red cedar Salish House Post for a West Vancouver Marine Drive condominium development, along with four metal sculptures of six-foot-long salmon weighing 250 pounds, each in weathered steel — a theme reflecting the creek in the area where “my dad said the river was full of fish.”

Machine-cut in a Delta warehouse the size of a football field, Broomfield relishes the plasma machine there that cuts the steel, giving life to his fish.

Though he likes to fish himself, he grew up playing lacrosse and basketball and enjoyed the thrill of downhill mountain biking at Whistler (“my helmet shows it”) until he broke a finger. “I had to slow down,” he says wistfully, looking at strong fingers. “These are my carving hands.”

Broomfield’s projects stretch into the foreseeable future. A Board of Trade eagle is slated for completion in January 2009. Work for galleries continues, including a six-foot-tall Salish house post in the Eagle Spirit Gallery on Granville Island depicting the four transformation brothers.

“Our elders taught us the right way to live, not to take too much; those who did were transformed into rocks by their greed when they disobeyed.”

He’s just finished a piece to donate to the Shaker Church on Capilano Road, a fundraiser for their second art auction, a $5,000 carving of two rotating salmon, representing the circle of life.

“By the end of my working day, I’m a bit cold and my back is as stiff as a board,” says Broomfield. He’s not complaining though. In the same breath, he acknowledges being “blessed with creativity” and with an ingrained grasp of life’s many dimensions.
Perched off the southernmost tip of Vancouver Island, the historically significant Race Rocks islets host a dynamic cross-section of marine life.

Story by Garth Eichel
If you are arriving at, or departing from, the Victoria Heliport, gaze out the window of your helicopter to the south and follow the coastline of Vancouver Island to its southernmost point. Weather permitting, you can just make out a small island offshore with a hairline tower rising up from it. That is the historic Race Rocks lighthouse on Great Race, the largest of nine small islets collectively known as the Race Rocks Ecological Reserve — one of the most diverse and fecund marine sanctuaries on earth.

What makes Race Rocks so unique is its underwater topography. The rocky outcrops above the surface are essentially the peaks of an undersea mountain. As huge volumes of tidal ocean from the Strait of Juan de Fuca pass through, billions of gallons of nutrient-rich seawater are forced to the surface. This in turn supports a whole range of marine animals, from the tiniest phytoplankton to large sea mammals.

“Race Rocks is the gear that turns the engine of the Strait of Juan de Fuca,” says Jeff Lorton, boat captain of West Coast Wildlife Adventures. “The site has such great biodiversity that it matters significantly to the health and vitality of the local ecosystem as a whole.”

Lorton has been plying the waters around Race Rocks for years as a whale-watching and adventure tourism boat operator. For personal and professional reasons, he is encouraged to see this protected area thrive under the auspices of Lester B. Pearson College, which manages the preserve on behalf of BC Parks. Still, despite the natural resilience of the islets and the tremendous stewardship of the college, Race Rocks is a fragile wonder that requires vigilance and protection if it is to endure.

Swift Waters

Anthropological evidence suggests the ancestral Straits Salish made extensive use of the area around Race Rocks as much as 1,500 years ago. The abundance of sea life would have been much valued over the centuries, but the islands appear to have held significance for burials as well. A number of stone configurations on Great Race are dated around the late prehistoric period, between AD 500 and 1000. The area still holds particular significance for the Salish, who refer to the area as XwaYēn (pronounced shwai’yen), which means “swift water” in the Klallum language.

Race Rocks also holds significant meaning for mariners. As the most southerly part of Canada on the Pacific Coast, ships have to round Race Rocks as they arrive from, or sail out to, the Pacific. The reefs and strong currents make Race Rocks treacherous at the best of times, but at night, or in bad weather, the area can prove deadly. Indeed, Race Rocks has claimed a number of vessels and lives over the years in all types of conditions.

The necessity of a lighthouse to warn navigators was obvious as far back as the
mid-19th century. The British Navy began construction in 1860 using massive granite sections that were cut and numbered in Scotland and shipped as ballast. As if to highlight the urgent need to finish work, the 385-ton tall ship Nanette ran aground and sank just three days before the new light was lit.

The light from the tower improved navigation considerably, and the distinctive black and white stripes were later painted on to improve the tower’s visibility against the shoreline. Two powerful fog horns were installed in 1892. Even so, Race Rocks continued to claim ships and lives. The worst disaster occurred on March 24, 1911, when the ferry Sechelt sank with the loss of her crew and 50 passengers.

With the advent of GPS and modern navigation aids, Race Rocks is no longer the menace it once was, but it still warrants healthy respect and a lot of leeway. Nowadays, sailors attach more sentimental meaning to the Race Rocks Lighthouse, which is the first thing they see when returning home, or the last thing they see as they depart.

Life on the Rocks

From 1860 to the 1990s the lighthouse on Great Race was illuminated by a succession of keepers. But the trend towards technology was inevitable and on March 1, 1997, the Canadian Coast Guard shed responsibility for maintaining Race Rocks. Fortunately, Mike and Carol Slater, the last in a long line of keepers, were hired by Lester B. Pearson College, which now exercises responsibility for managing the Ecological Reserve, as it was designated in 1980. (Race Rocks is Crown Land of the B.C. government. BC Parks administers the islets as a Provincial Ecological Reserve, maintained by the college on a 30-year lease. It was made a Candidate Marine Protected Area by the federal government in September 1998.)

Working closely with Christian Blondeau, Pearson College’s Director of Operations, the Slaters now assist students in their research, monitor local wildlife and keep a keen eye out for poachers and others who might disturb the preserve out of curiosity. In fact, with the exception of Pearson College students, no one is permitted to set foot on any of the nine islets without a permit issued by BC Parks.
As a protected ecosystem, Race Rocks is crucial to the curriculum at Pearson College, where 200 international scholarship students from 88 different countries come for two years of high school studies. Science, marine biology and environmental studies are core components of the academic program, and the Race Rocks Ecological Reserve is a real-world classroom where students can collect data and study the wide range of species that inhabit the area.

“It’s a very dynamic environment where students can interact and learn hands-on,” says Blondeau. “The diversity and density of marine life is remarkable — every bit of space is occupied by one species or another. As soon as one dies, another takes its place.” He adds, “It’s a strong ecosystem that thrives and flourishes in 50-knot winds, but is also quite fragile and susceptible to environmental change.”

Because of its nutrient-rich waters, Race Rocks acts like a nursery for all sorts of marine life, including salmon smolts, sea urchin eggs and seabird chicks, right up the food chain to northern sea lions and elephant seals. Accordingly, any kind of disruption can have far-ranging effects on the wider ecosystem as a whole.

For that reason, Pearson College is striving to eliminate any “carbon footprint” by relying on solar panels and a tidal turbine generator to power its facilities on Great Race. Such projects are expensive, though, and the school depends on support from corporate sponsors and government ministries, such as B.C.’s Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources.
Look, But Don’t Touch

For those wanting to see Race Rocks up close, the easiest way is aboard a “whale watching” marine adventure tour boat. These operators are expert at handling their vessels in the challenging narrows, and they are knowledgeable about the species that inhabit the ecological reserve, particularly the local whale, seal and sea lion populations.

The limitation of these tours, however, is that 80 per cent of the show takes place beneath the surface. To truly appreciate the spectacular diversity of Race Rocks, it is essential to don a tank and dive gear. The only operator that puts on regular dive trips to the Reserve is Ogden Point Dive Centre, which has been running divers out to the area for over 20 years.

“It’s definitely the best showcase for West Coast diving on southern Vancouver Island,” says Scott Stevenson, Manager of Ogden Point Dive Centre. “Every diver likes to see different things, but Race Rocks is one of those few places that has everything. There are kelp forests full of fish, octopus, wolf eels, and walls full of sponges and soft corals.”

The highlight for many divers, though, is when the sea lions come to play. “It’s a bit intimidating at first to see a big animal that close in the water,” says Stevenson. “Generally, they are playful. They are very inquisitive and they know they can swim better than you. Juvenile males will often entertain themselves by tugging on your fins.” However, he adds, “During mating season, adult males can be quite territorial. The first sign of aggression is if they blow bubbles at you. That’s when you back away.”

As magnificent as the undersea show is, Race Rocks is significant from a variety of perspectives, be it anthropology, history, marine biology or just pure, beautiful scenery. As Christian Blondeau notes, “It’s one of the few places you can go and feel the raw power of nature. Watching a day unfold there is nothing short of marvelous.”
LIKE ME, the tourists at the next table are puzzling over their desserts.

After feasting upon the superb vegetarian buffet at All India Sweets, we've all taken small cupfuls of what appear to be vanilla Timbits, floating in syrup.

“What is it?” someone asks.

“I think it's like a low-fat dumpling.”

“Mmmm! It's good!”

I spoon up one of mine and bite into it. Good, wow, yes — a soft, hot bulb of butter and sugar, so much heavier and richer than any donut that I have to close my eyes to comprehend its overwhelming sweetness.

Vancouver’s Punjabi Market is a sweet smidgen of the East in the Pacific Northwest.

Story and Photos by Ross Crockford
If you're in Vancouver on a wet afternoon, there are few escapes more simple and yet more complete than those found in the Punjabi Market, the cluster of shops around Main Street and 49th Avenue. Behind every door are colours, sounds, scents, and tastes that momentarily obliterate the muted, winter greyness of the city. And, as I was discovering, *gulab jaman* — deep-fried pastry balls made of dry milk and soaked in honey — was one more of them.

Immigrants from the Indian subcontinent first came to British Columbia in 1904, many of them Sikhs from the province of Punjab who'd served in military regiments of the Empire, and sought work in distant British colonies to support their families back home. But it wasn't until the 1960s, when Canada opened up its immigration policies, that Vancouver's East Indian community grew large enough to establish its own neighbourhood. Many of the new arrivals took jobs in sawmills along the north shore of the Fraser River, and built their homes nearby. Sucha Singh Claire, a tailor, opened a shop near Main and 49th in 1970, and dozens of Indian-owned businesses sprang up soon after. The Punjabi Market was born.

"It still is a destination for a lot of people," says Sunny Khurana, whose family has sold bright dresswear at their Guru Bazaar (6529 Main St.) since 1977. The sawmills are gone and many families have moved across the river to Surrey, but Khurana says they keep coming back to the Market for products that can't be found anywhere else. (One tip: don't visit on Tuesdays, when nearly everything is closed.) And the 300,000 Indo-Canadians in the Lower Mainland aren't the only customers. Actress Goldie Hawn is another: "Her whole house is decorated with our fabric, and she wears our saris," says Khurana, grinning.

Real star power's at work at Bollywood Crossover SE (6468 Main St.), a spectacular boutique that opened in 2006, carrying fashions by the same costume designers who work on India's biggest films. "Indian style is always driven by our movies. As soon as a movie comes out, that's what girls want to wear," explains Raanee Khaira, a designer herself, who started the shop with Sunil Shetty, the Arnold Schwarzenegger of India.

Judging by the steady stream of young women passing through with their mothers, Khaira's store is an essential stop for those planning a dazzling wedding — several jewellers, and tailors with gorgeous men's Nehru jackets, also line the street — but she's careful to note that her clientele is "pretty much everybody. This is modern Indian fashion; it's not just ethnic wear or traditional costume." To complete the effect, she also recently opened a salon next door, staffed by movie makeup artists. "Here you can dress like a star, and look like a star."

Of course, you can also find the movies themselves at the Market. As I scanned the thousands of DVDs at Main Video (6621 Main St.), I told a fellow shopper that I loved the few Bollywood musicals I'd seen, but wasn't sure which were the classics. "You don't know *Sholay*? Or *Mughal-E-Azam*?" he exclaimed. "My friend, my friend," he muttered, shaking his head and writing down a helpful list of titles.

But certainly the most popular subject along the strip, for tourists and residents alike, is food. Numerous restaurants do brisk business, and afterward many locals stop at one of the stands offering *paan* — a combination of ground betel nuts, lime paste, fennel seed, coconut, and rose syrup, all wrapped in a betel leaf and chewed together, to sweeten the breath and help digest that lamb curry.
More exotic ingredients dwell upon the shelves of grocery stores like the Punjab Food Center (6635 Main St.). The owner, Harinder Toor, in business since 1981, says his customers come from as far away as Seattle and Portland to stock up on fenugreek powder and anistar, fresh turmeric and curry leaf, ber and cheeka fruit, and more. People are becoming more adventurous with their palates, and working chefs and entire cooking classes regularly cruise the aisles, seeking new flavours.

“We are serving all the communities here, no matter the culture or race to which they belong,” says Kewal Pabla, president of the Original Punjabi Market Association, over a cup of chai tea. The neighbourhood is where all of Vancouver meets India — which is why he’s lobbying the provincial government to build a large wooden gateway over Main Street, commemorating the Indo-Canadian pioneers who worked in the lumber industry.

Pabla’s a bit of a pioneer himself. He arrived in Canada in 1972 and, after working on a farm in the Fraser Valley, realized that no one was making the huge varieties of Indian desserts that are important at any ceremony. He started creating them in his basement, and became so successful that today he co-owns an entire building at Main and 50th, containing his Himalaya restaurant and several apartments under construction — a small empire built upon sugar. As Pabla can tell you, at the Punjabi Market, life is sweet indeed.

Window shopping in the Punjabi Market presents a dazzling kaleidoscope of colour.
IN ANCIENT TIMES, Roman men, including Emperors, enjoyed revitalizing body rubs with grape extracts before soaking in hot mineral pools. Meditrina, the Roman goddess of wine, health and longevity, would surely have smiled, and no doubt been just a little jealous that such rituals were reserved mostly for brawny males.

Centuries later, men and women, including such famous beauties as Tyra Banks and Sarah Jessica Parker, are indulging in the beauty-enhancing allure of le vin.

Vinotherapy, as it’s now known, is the indulgence at many of the world’s finest spas, including The Aerie Resort & Spa at the summit of Vancouver Island’s scenic Malahat.

With thoughts of the wine goddess on my mind, I revel in the beautiful 20-minute drive from Victoria to the summit of the Malahat and The Aerie, which rises like an alpine oasis from the mountainside, 1,500 feet above the glittering Saanich Inlet. I can hardly wait to partake in the ultimate wine lover’s indulgence — a full-body Chardonnay vinotherapy treatment.

For my gourmet spa treatment, there is to be no wine tasting; vinotherapy experts do not recommend drinking wine during treatments. Instead, my body is to be pampered with a full vin experience: a revitalizing Chardonnay grapeseed body rub, Chardonnay wrap, and a stimulating lymphatic and pressure-point massage with moisturizing lotion. These products are part of the OLAVIE Chardonnay Wine Therapy line, which contains extracts from the seeds of Chardonnay grapes, sourced from Burgundy, France.

As I lie draped in warm towels, with soft music playing, I swear I can smell the sweet scent of Chardonnay grapes. I imagine myself reclining in a springtime European vineyard, pondering Galileo’s thought that wine is “sunlight, held together by water.”

The OLAVIE body rub, containing Chardonnay and essential oils, promises to exfoliate and improve my skin tone and texture. The preservative-free scrub has finer granules than traditional scrubs so the treatment, expertly performed by The Aerie Spa’s Assistant Director Deborah Wynne, is more...
like a vigorous massage. My skin feels awakened. Deborah, who says The Aerie is exploring using ingredients from the vineyards of the Cowichan Valley, is impressed with the concentrated, high-organic ingredients of the OLAVIE line.

Following the revitalizing body rub, I am comfortably wrapped and left to detoxify and dream as the Chardonnay wrap works its magic. Vinotherapy does not rely on the wine but on grape extracts (antioxidant-rich seeds, stems and skins) for its potency. In French Chardonnay, the grapeseed is extracted before fermentation to save the highest amount of antioxidant. Each grape yields precious few seeds, so the results of the process are coveted. One tonne of grapeseeds is required to obtain just one kilogram of the grapeseed OPC molecule, which studies show is 10,000 times more powerful than Vitamin E for fighting free radicals.

Modern vinotherapy owes its beginnings to pharmacologist Joseph Vercauteren of the University of Bordeaux, who discovered in 1970 that grape seeds, generally discarded during winemaking, actually contain nature’s most powerful antioxidant: polyphenol. This miraculous antioxidant forms a protective layer on skin, stimulates cell and collagen renewal, and helps neutralize unstable free radicals, which damage and age cells. The grapeseed also contains a highly effective hydrating oil.

Following an exquisite pressure-point face and head massage, and a warm shower to rinse off, I am massaged with a soothing Chardonnay grape-extract moisturizer, which hydrates and increases blood circulation, resulting in a healthy flush to my skin. The face and head massage, with special attention to my pressure points, is the best I have ever experienced, and the body massage is transcendent.

I am drunk with relaxation, and my skin feels like silk and glows with radiance; it hasn’t been this soft in years. The treatment has a timeless quality, transformative. I can’t help but agree with Ernest Hemingway when he wrote, “Wine is the most civilized thing in the world.” Even a week after my vinotherapy, my skin remains velvet soft. As a convert to the benefits of vinotherapy, I am already planning my return to The Aerie for another offering — a champagne pedicure.

—Kerry Slavens is a Victoria-based writer and Creative Director at Artemis.
I’m stressed about getting this column done on time!

Stress seems inevitable, almost a prerequisite for any professional, but it took Hans Selye, father of stress research, to show, in 1936 (using rats, of course), that we mammals react to any kind of demanding situation in pretty much the same way: our blood pressure increases, muscles tense, pupils dilate, hormones flood the system.

That can be helpful if a predator is chasing you, but in our high-powered world, many of us get physiologically stuck in the “fight or flight” overdrive position. This in turn causes permanent high blood pressure, migraines, weakened immune systems, receptivity to disease, and so on. You’re probably well aware of the dangers, and you know about the benefits of exercise, meditation, sleeping nine hours a night, relaxing and eating well.

But here are some lesser-known ways to lower your stress levels, all scientifically proven, naturally.

1. Have sex

Yesirree, sex increases endorphins, and is “one of the best total-body relaxers around.” Rumour has it you’ll use the same number of calories as a ditch-digger too.

2. Cry me a river

According to recent research, tears actually remove chemicals that build up in our bodies during stress. Crying literally squeezes stress out through the tear ducts, which explains why people often feel better after a good sob. (Note to women: There is still a stigma about the over-emotional woman who cries at work, unless, of course, you are Hillary Clinton, hoping to run for President of the United States.)

3. Give yourself a massage

A self-massage can be as simple as massaging your palm by making a circular motion with your opposite thumb. Use the pads of your fingers to massage small circles on your head, neck, shoulders and feet.

4. Stick out your stomach… and breathe

Take time daily for abdominal breathing. Put one hand on your chest, one on your abdomen and breathe in through your nose and out slowly, while pushing out and pulling in your abdomen. Keep your chest and shoulders motionless. Repeat several times. Breathing from your diaphragm oxygenates your blood, which has immediate relaxation benefits.

5. Laugh often

Try picking up a joke book and updating your store of jokes to tell at work. Rent funny videos.

6. Sit down and eat together

Recent studies support the growing evidence that families who sit down to supper together have a lower incidence of teen substance abuse, child obesity, academic failure, and household stress. Or how about shared Saturday breakfast, Sunday dinner, mid-evening snacks?

One family I know gathers in the evening for a snack and chat they’ve dubbed “Last Call.”

7. Have a haven

Identify a place you can go to for recharging, healing, and renewal — and go there often.

8. Indulge in hot soaks

Try making time for a morning bath, or better yet, get a hot tub, and use it daily. Start your day with a 10-minute soak.

9. Try gentle movement

The slow, balanced movements of tai chi have actually been proven to lower blood pressure and relieve chest tension and arthritis. Yoga also encourages relaxation and correct breathing, thereby improving oxygen supply to the body.

10. Play

Join your kids on the playground, play a board game, join a team. I have a group of friends who gather periodically for bocce and potluck dinner. Laughing, eating, and playing with your friends is one of the best stress busters I can think of!

Now that this column is written, I’m feeling a lot more relaxed. 🌈
Jane Jacobs, the amiable polymath who transformed the disciplines of urban planning and city architecture, was a lifelong advocate of city density and downtowns for people. Jacobs never drove a car and, well ahead of current thinking prompted by global warming, advocated the reclamation of downtowns as “to go” places where people could work, eat, play and live.

Downtown Victoria is currently undergoing one such metamorphosis. In early pioneer days when it was a Hudson’s Bay fort, the subsequent completion in 1921 of the Beaux-Arts styled Hudson’s Bay Building coalesced the city’s retail focus onto this central point in the town’s geography.

In an environment already blessed with the imposing Rattenbury-designed buildings...
of The Legislature and The Empress Hotel, Victoria’s Hudson’s Bay store took up its place — as similar Bay buildings did across the country — as an equally imposing landmark and focal retail centre.

Through the years shoppers have walked past the Bay’s imposing Doric columns, as they did in other Bay buildings across the country, buying iconic Bay ware like the striped, green, red, yellow and indigo pointblankets, while subconsciously celebrating an aspect of Canada’s pioneer past.

“I feel privileged to be part of such a great piece of Canadian history,” says Rick Ilich, President of The Townline Group of Companies, which is restoring the four-storey Bay building as a mixed residential-retail space called The Hudson. “It gives me a warm glow to be working there: it reminds me of when I was a kid.”

Ilich says he “fell in love with the building” when he first saw it, but adds that he had no illusions about the challenges associated with its revival. “We went into the project with eyes wide open. Historic rebuildings are complicated, but we measured the risk factor and responded.

We have done rebuilds before. They are the challenging part of our industry, and I enjoy the challenge.”

And, as with many challenges, pleasure comes from finessing the details. Ilich describes the ceramic exterior tiles he has sourced for the walkways around The Hudson: “We wanted to reproduce historic areaways and old-time sidewalks like the ones I remember as a kid.” In the 1920s, prismatic glass blocks were traditionally sunk into sidewalks, to provide light to subterranean rooms that jutted out below the pavement. Over time, ultraviolet rays from the sun discoloured the tiles, turning them amethyst.

Ilich sourced Circle Redmont in Florida, who had bought the patents from the company that originally made prismatic glass

**Historic buildings need to be brought “down to earth” as technologies come on stream to lessen our carbon footprint**

*The Hudson development will have 152 flats, lofts and courtyard homes featuring elegant kitchens and bathrooms.*

*Photos: Townline Group*
and had the new sidewalk tiles made in modern non-slip glass with an amethyst tint.

While Townline is developing the whole block where the Bay building stands with three residential towers — 24, 18 and 14 storeys high on the adjacent parking lot — phase one is The Hudson with its four floors of 152 suites and 14- and 16-foot ceilings. A roof garden on the top floor provides ocean and mountain views, while a “carriageway” between Fisgard and Herald Streets parallels one side of the building where Townline will be leasing mixed ground-level retail space.

Equally, historic buildings need to be brought “down to earth” as technologies come on stream to lessen our carbon footprint. Victoria traditionally receives a low 25 inches of rain a year (compared to Vancouver’s average of 60 inches annually), so The Hudson’s roof design incorporates a special storm water collection system designed to filter runoff, with areas on the “green roof” also dedicated to reducing wasted heat generation and a beneficial urban eco-habitat for insects and birds.

Years ago, Jacobs fingered auto use as one of society’s major challenges. At The Hudson, space has been designed for convenient bicycle storage and parking for hybrid, co-op and alternative-fuel vehicles.

At a fundamental level, the quality of urban space often supercedes architecture; however, when historic architecture is combined with thoughtful development, urban revitalization often gets a kick-start.

“The Hudson is a unique and emotional piece of real estate,” says Townline President Rick Ilich. “This is a rare opportunity to own a piece of history.”

Photo: Townline Group

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PRESTIGIOUS EXECUTIVE CONDO AT THE AWARD WINNING BELVEDERE!
Island Wine

Welcome to the first instalment of “Grape & Grain,” a dynamic and entertaining column that provides superior evaluations and commentary on local B.C. fermentations, coupled with expert buying advice.

By David Preston

ZANATTA WINERY
PINOT GRIGIO 2006
(750 ml, 12.5% ABV, $19.69)
www.zanatta.ca

This winery is part of a working farm in the Cowichan Valley, with about 30 acres of vineyards growing six main varieties and dozens of experimental. The farm has been in the family since 1958 and for the last dozen years has run a seasonal wine bar and restaurant.

The 2006 Grigio is a pale, hay colour and gives a pleasant, light nose with hints of earth and greenery — what else from this pastoral setting? It’s fresh on the palate, but not as acidic as imported grigios. Pinot Gris and Pinot Grigio are the same grape, but the Italian vintners produce a much sharper, drier wine, whereas this 100 per cent, estate-grown bottling has a more rounded flavour, though not as sweet as some other B.C. examples.

Served at cellar temperature of around 10 C to 12 C (not straight out of a 6 C fridge), this full-bodied wine pairs well with local seafood, and hot or cold white meats.

CHERRY POINT VINEYARDS
2006 PINOT NOIR
(750 ml, 11.8% ABV, $19.99)
www.cherrypointvineyards.com

Though barely a teenager, Cherry Point is one of Vancouver Island’s oldest and more established vineyards, with two-dozen acres of vines thriving just south of Cowichan Bay. As with many B.C. wineries, the whites gained favour early on, but this vintner is also producing notable reds, such as Pinot Noir. I recently uncorked a bottle of the 2004 vintage, which is similar, but perhaps a little smoother than the 2006 bottling available from the winery today.

A beautiful ruby colour, the wine offers an equally dark and rich nose. Its round oakiness pops out of the glass quite early, but doesn’t hide the definite fruit notes, and then helps deliver a slow-drying, smooth finish that lasts well. This Pinot Noir is a well-balanced, solid wine that pairs nicely with strong flavours and will likely improve a little with age, if you and your cellar have the patience. Just over 400 cases are produced so don’t delay your buying decision.
LIKE A GOOD SON, I periodically invite my mom out for dinner to show a measure of gratitude for a lifetime of love and support. That and it keeps me in the will for another year.

Mom is passionate about seafood, so I took her to Lure restaurant at the Delta Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort. Opened in 2005, Lure quickly established itself as one of the city’s finer establishments. Arguably, it has the best view of the Inner Harbour in the city, and its raised dining level ensures there isn’t a bad seat in the house. Mom and I were seated at one of several tables lining the restaurant’s expansive windows where we could survey the city’s skyline and its streaks of white and amber light reflecting off the shimmering water of the Inner Harbour. Incredibly, this particular evening happened to coincide with a rare lunar eclipse. Our knowledgeable waiter, Jacques, was careful to point out the unfolding celestial drama to those with a good view, which included just about everyone in the restaurant.

Still, spectacular scenery and a sharp waiter can only take a restaurant so far. After listening to a few of Jacques’ suggestions, we ordered some appies. Mom settled on the ahi tuna tartare, while I opted for the extra-small Fanny Bay oysters on the half-shell.

Tastefully presented on a bed of baby frisée, the tartare had a deep carmine hue that suggested rich flavour. Spooned onto toasted sprouted-wheat bread crisps, the delicate tuna delivers a tangy and salty initial kick of curry, which subsides to a profound warm aftertaste. It paired nicely with a full-bodied Thorhaven Gewürztraminer.

In contrast to the richness of the tuna tartare, my oysters were a study in simplicity and elegance. At first I was ambivalent about ordering the Fanny Bay oysters; I generally prefer the smaller varieties. Nevertheless, Jacques assured me that if I liked oysters these were worth sampling. Again, he delivered: the Fanny Bays, judiciously garnished with mignonette, red wine vinegar, pepper, minced shallot, and a touch of sea salt, were exquisite in their subtlety and got along beautifully with a crisp, clear Mont Boucherie that didn’t overpower.

Switching to entrees, mom was predictable and ordered her favourite dish — salmon. Fortunately for her, Lure offers a wild salmon variety plate comprised of three versions: salmon tartare, salmon tempura and baked salmon stuffed with crab. She delighted in all three, but I found the baked version with crab stuffing stood out.

As for the pan-seared halibut, my expectations were high. Developed by Chef Michael Weaver, this halibut dish is pan-seared in grapeseed oil and served on a bed of Savoy cabbage and pancetta ragout, topped with local chanterelles, citrus marmalade and lemon-butter sauce. As a rule, I believe one shouldn’t get too clever with seafood; I wondered if Lure’s take might be a bit over-the-top.

Oh, dear. Oh, dear. How nice it is to be proven wrong, sometimes. The popularity of this recipe is evident at first taste: the smoky and salty pancetta is contrasted by the sweet tang of the citrus marmalade and smooth lemon-butter sauce, which blends neatly with the earthen savoury of the chanterelles. And while I thought the Savoy cabbage might be a tad pedestrian, it actually brings a hearty and wholesome quality that binds everything together.

Satisfied with our portions, there wasn’t much room for dessert. But, hey, it’s important to complete the experience! As such, we rounded off the meal with a hazelnut-crusted goat cheese cake brûlée topped with Chardonnay jelly and grapes reduced in port. With a handle like that, it’s hardly necessary to describe sensory overload. And while I always like coffee with dessert, mom, well, when she’s really happy she indulges with an extra glass of wine — a sure sign she is in a celebratory mood.
IN THE EARLY 1990s a great blue heron chick fell from his nest in Victoria’s Beacon Hill Park. His odds of survival were dismal since heron parents do not feed chicks out of their nests. Local residents took pity, though, and began feeding him. Now almost 15 years old, “Henry” (left) is a regular fixture of the park.

At one time there were more than 100 heron nesting sites in Beacon Hill Park, but that number has since declined to around 65 nests, largely as a result of predatory bald eagles and the 2006 windstorm. The largest concentration of nests can be viewed near the Douglas Street crosswalk at Avalon Way.

Adult herons arrive each year at the end of January and early February and leave around the end of August. However, Henry stays put year-round. His favourite hangout is the northwest edge of Goodacre Lake. After years of generosity, he now rushes to meet those who regularly bring him fish. Apparently, he likes plain water-packed sardines, but rejects those packed in mustard or tomato sauce.

For a bird’s-eye view of this rare urban rookery, visit the online “Heron Cam” at www.heroncam.com.
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