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**In-Flight Review
Magazine**

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BY ELAYNE SUN
PSF COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
PACIFIC SALMON FOUNDATION



Helijet pilot Chris Waymouth (second from right) pitches in for a Chinook egg take in Rivers Inlet. Photos: Sandie MacLaurin

Helijet Takes Commitment to New Heights

An exciting new partnership with the Pacific Salmon Foundation helps restore wild salmon stocks.

SALMON ENTHUSIASTS can now support wild salmon restoration projects in the Strait of Georgia and on Vancouver Island when they fly with Helijet.

In a new partnership, Helijet will donate a portion of proceeds from every scheduled one-way flight purchased between Victoria and Vancouver, or Nanaimo and Vancouver, to the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF). The program has the potential to raise \$24,000 annually for a variety of community projects.

To help spread awareness of PSF's work, the PSF logo will be emblazoned on Helijet's fleet of courtesy vehicles and on a brand-new Sikorsky S-76 helicopter. The new program will also provide occasional use of a Helijet helicopter for remote research and restoration work.

"Helijet has sponsored PSF's fundraising dinners for well over a decade," says Michael Meneer, executive vice president of PSF. "We were thrilled when Helijet president and CEO Danny Sitnam said that they wanted to step up their commitment. The result is this unique partnership that will raise money for Pacific salmon, and helped us significantly reduce costs, by donating chopper time to restoration efforts like our Chinook program in Rivers Inlet, B.C. with the Wuikinuxv First Nation."

Last Fall, Helijet donated a helicopter and pilot for an egg-take on the Chuckwalla and Kilbella rivers in



PSF and Helijet touch down at the Percy Walkus Hatchery in aid of wild Pacific salmon stocks.

Rivers Inlet. Eggs and milt were collected from returning Chinook in both rivers and flown to the Percy Walkus Hatchery also in Rivers Inlet. The fertilized eggs will become approximately 130,000 salmon fry that will be released back into the rivers to enhance those stocks. The rivers were identified as a top priority by a steering committee dedicated to Rivers Inlet recovery.

The Rivers Inlet Salmon Initiative is a partnered effort comprised of the Wuikinuxv First Nation, Duncanby Lodge, Good Hope Cannery and other local lodge owners, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Rick Hansen Foundation, PSF and independent scientists.

“Apart from the importance of raising funds, this is also a great opportunity for PSF to generate awareness among potential new donors and supporters,” says Sitnam. “Many of our customers who fly between Vancouver and Vancouver Island are anglers or government workers who are uniquely positioned to make a difference for salmon.

“If we don’t do our part to help protect salmon stocks and our West Coast environment, it will impact all of us,” he adds. “Our company benefits from the recreational fishing sector, but doing our part to help maintain the overall well-being of coastal B.C. is also the right thing to do.” 📍

To read more about the new partnership visit the Pacific Salmon Foundation website at psf.ca/helijet



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Work To Live

Steve Stanley, Aircraft Maintenance Engineer



Steve Stanley working on the engine of a Sikorsky S76.

THE AVIATION INDUSTRY is rife with men and women who are passionate about aircraft. Steve Stanley is not one of them.

Like many Newfoundlanders raised in small fishing outposts, Stanley learned early on the importance of education and finding a career that can allow you to enjoy all that life has to offer.

“When I was 17 I didn’t care about aviation,” recalls Stanley. “I didn’t have a clue what I wanted to do with my life. My father said, ‘You’re going to pick out a trade and I don’t care what you do after that.’”

Stanley heeded his father’s advice and soon thereafter left his hometown of Eastport for St. John’s where he attended a 15-month avionics course at Career Academy. Upon completion, he sat down at a telephone and began calling every aviation company

across Canada looking for a job. The first to respond was Pacific Avionics in Richmond. Stanley accepted their offer and days later the 19-year-old avionics technician moved to Vancouver with his whole world packed into two suitcases. Stanley honed his trade at Pacific Avionics for two years before being headhunted by Helijet in November 1998.

“At first, I mostly worked on anything with an electrical wire attached to it, but I eventually became a jack-of-all trades, working on sheet metal, engines and airframes. After a few years I did my maintenance exams and became an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (AME).” He adds, “I’ll fix anything that needs to be fixed. Growing up in Newfoundland you learn to fix things when they break; you don’t hire someone else to do it for you.”

If there is a defining characteristic of an AME it is their quiet professionalism and aversion to self-aggrandizing. (It is worth noting Stanley went to great pains to avoid being interviewed for this column, but we felt his 20-plus years of service was worth recognizing.) Even so, Stanley, like all AMEs, takes pride in a job well done, particularly when it comes to trouble-shooting difficult problems.

“I like to take something that’s broken and hard to fix and fix it — something you can’t read how to fix in a book. And I like to do it without wasting money.”

Such expertise is in high demand in the aviation industry, which is currently struggling with a worldwide skilled labour shortage. Even so, Stanley has no plans to move on.

“I like the guys I work with at Helijet. They’re a good bunch, and Morris Forchuk (Director of Maintenance) has always been good to me, and Danny Sitnam (President and CEO) is a top-notch guy. They can depend on me to fix things when they break, and the company respects time off for family. A steady paycheck is all the satisfaction I need.”

Indeed, spending time off with family is what animates Stanley most. He and his wife, Carolyn — also from Newfoundland — have a daughter, Hannah (11), and a son, Alex (8), who they spend days off with exploring the B.C. coast and backcountry.

Stanley admits “I spend as much as I can” on snowmobiles, quads, boating, fishing and hunting, but says he can do it affordably by building and fixing most things himself. And besides, he says, “my real passion is spending time with those I love in the great outdoors, either here in B.C. or back home in Newfoundland.” **H**



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BOTTOM LINE 2019: BIG CHALLENGES, BIG CHANGES

MARCH 11 & 12: VANCOUVER

Presented by the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Bottom Line Conference brings together business leaders, policy makers, union representatives and researchers to share ideas and tools for creating psychologically safe and supportive workspaces.

cmha.bc.ca

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MARCH 11-13: VANCOUVER

Discover the possibilities that drive emerging technologies and learn how exciting new realities such as AI, quantum, clean-tech and blockchain can help solve our biggest challenges. Join over 7,650 like-minded, future-focused attendees to explore more than 260 hands-on exhibits and take part in 50-plus sessions with thought-leaders from every industry.

bctechsummit.ca



VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW

MARCH 19-24: VANCOUVER

If that new-car smell is your thing, you'll want to head to the Vancouver Convention Centre to check out the 400-plus vehicles on display at the 99th annual Vancouver International Auto Show. From debuts and concept cars, to the latest in electric vehicles and one-of-a-kind exotics, each year introduces a new and exciting showcase for automobile enthusiasts. Want to get behind the wheel and go for a spin? Look for the sign-up kiosk to book a test drive.

vancouverinternationalautoshow.com

THE ORCHARD (AFTER CHEKHOV)

MARCH 21-APRIL 21: VANCOUVER

Russian playwright Anton Chekhov's 1904 play *The Cherry Orchard* takes on a decidedly local flavour during the Arts Club's presentation of *The Orchard (After Chekhov)*. Told through the lens of a Punjabi-Sikh family struggling to save their beloved orchard in the Okanagan Valley, this adaptation explores themes of loss, life and the Canadian immigrant experience.

artsclub.com

CREATE MOMENTUM: HR CONFERENCE + TRADESHOW 2019

APRIL 2-3: VANCOUVER

The largest human resources event in western Canada, this annual conference and tradeshow presented by the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources (CPHR) of B.C. and Yukon includes five top-rated keynote speakers, more than 40 breakout sessions and loads of networking opportunities to inspire and transform your organization's HR strategy.

cphrbc.ca

TED2019

APRIL 15-19: VANCOUVER

Sharing ideas and inspiring possibilities, TED returns to Vancouver this year to pose even bigger, more challenging questions in the search for deeper meaning. Make connections. Explore mind-bending science and technologies. Expand your creativity and encounter the ideas that are truly worth fighting for. Don't have tickets? Don't worry. You can still enjoy TED at various screening venues throughout the city.

ted2019.ted.com

ART VANCOUVER

APRIL 25-28: VANCOUVER

First-time buyers and experienced collectors alike are invited to meet and mingle with contemporary artists from around the world at the fifth annual Art Vancouver global art fair. Connect with your favourite artist or discover something new and unexpected during this three-day exhibit at the Vancouver Convention Centre. artvancouver.net

ANNUAL CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY DAFFODIL BALL

APRIL 27: VANCOUVER

Known as one of the most glamorous galas of the season, the Canadian Cancer Society Daffodil Ball features a stunning black-tie dinner, dance and auction at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. To date, this event has raised more than \$17 million to fund life-saving research, prevention initiatives and support for those affected by cancer. daffodilballbc.com



Photo: Maia Rubin / RUNVAN®

BMO VANCOUVER MARATHON

MAY 5: VANCOUVER

This marathon is ranked one of the world's top destination marathons for good reason. Not only does the course lead runners through 12 neighbourhoods, six beaches and three parks, the final 10km takes place along Stanley Park's stunning Seawall, giving runners something to look forward to during the final push to the finish line. The marathon welcome runners from 65-plus countries annually, so be sure to sign up for your race bib early. And, for those not quite ready for a full marathon, runners can also choose from a fast half marathon, 8km race, relay or kids run. bmovanmarathon.ca

CANADA GAS & LNG EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE

MAY 21-23: VANCOUVER

A broad technical exhibition coupled with a high-level strategic conference are the cornerstones for this annual event. Three days of sessions reflect on the opportunities, challenges and solutions that face the LNG and gas industry as told by export project proponents, gas producers, government ministers, First Nations partners, market developers and international buyers. canadagaslng.com



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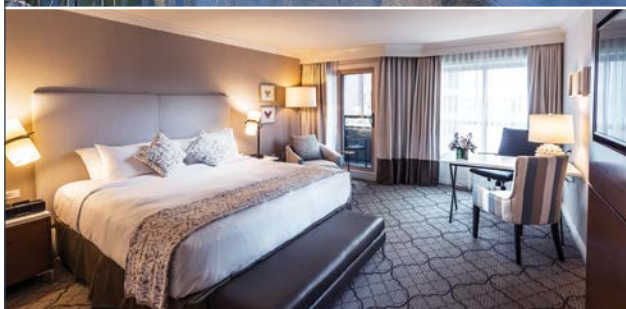
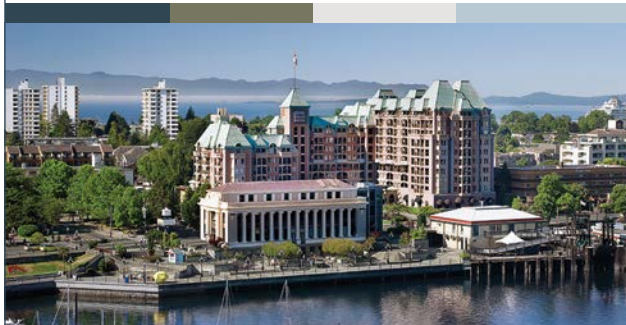




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AGENDA | VICTORIA

SPARK FESTIVAL

MARCH 8-24: VICTORIA

Encounter something new on stage at the Belfry Theatre's 10th Annual SPARK Festival. Four productions, a variety of workshops and a host of free events will be performed by an incredible variety of emerging and established talent. belfry.bc.ca

PACIFIC SALMON FOUNDATION'S SOUTH ISLAND GALA DINNER & AUCTION

MARCH 9: VICTORIA

Show your support for community-based salmon projects in south Vancouver Island by attending this year's gala at the Victoria Conference Centre. Enjoy an extravagant seafood reception, delicious dinner, lively auctions and exciting raffles. Can't make it March 9th? The Foundation's Vancouver gala will be held May 10th at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

psf.ca



Photo: Ballet BC Artists in Petite Cérémonie by Michael Slobodian

BALLET BC

MARCH 15 & 16: VICTORIA

Ballet BC brings a bold, thought-provoking and eclectic program to the Royal Theatre with works by three next-generation choreographers that question the truth of memory, what "life in a box" can mean and a premiere by Artistic Director Emily Molnar. Show starts at 7:30 pm, but you'll want to arrive early for the pre-show chat at 6:45 pm.

dancevictoria.com

CRESCENDO GALA

APRIL 30: VICTORIA

Exquisite music paired with gourmet dining in the Fairmont Empress Crystal Ballroom makes for an elegant evening benefitting Victoria's Pacific Opera and the Victoria Symphony. victoriasymphony.ca

HSBC CANADA WOMEN'S SEVENS RUGBY

MAY 11-12: LANGFORD

The Canada Women's Sevens Rugby team returns to Westhills Stadium this spring for another exciting international tournament. Each match consists of two seven-minute halves of play with a brief two-minute half time, making these fast-paced games fun to cheer for and exciting to watch.

canadasevens.com



156TH VICTORIA HIGHLAND GAMES & CELTIC FESTIVAL

MAY 18-20: VICTORIA

Follow the sound of pipers and drummers to one of the oldest festivals in North America. For three days Topaz Park will kick up its heels with a celebration of all things Scottish and Celtic including music, arts,

dancing, a Tartan Parade, tilted kilt pub crawl and a full array of Scottish heavy events such as tossing the caber, throwing the hammer, putting the stone and sheaf toss. victoriahighlandgames.com

POWER TO BE, POWER TO PLAY

MAY 26: VICTORIA

Help make nature accessible to all by joining this year's action-packed team-building adventure race held at Victoria's Elk & Beaver Lake. Funds raised will support Power To Be, a non-profit organization that empowers people living with a barrier or disability to explore their limitless abilities through inclusive adventures rooted in nature.

powertobe.ca



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Hubbard Street dancer Jonathan Fredrickson in PACOPREPLUTD Photo © Todd Rosenberg

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CJ started a t-shirt design business as part of his Grade 10 personal project, a core part of the International Baccalaureate program.

From design to outsourcing production, he directs all aspects of the operation. The school project is long since complete, but he continues to develop and market his growing clothing company.



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AGENDA | VAN ISLE

SYMPHONY SOUNDBITES

MARCH 21: NANAIMO

The Vancouver Island Symphony puts a new twist on happy hour with their Symphony SoundBites performances at the Port Theatre. Choose either appetizer bites at 5 p.m. followed by an hour-long performance, or start your evening by enjoying the performance at 7:15 p.m. and conclude with a delicious selection of dessert bites. The evening features Bach's Goldberg Variations, an arrangement conceived for Bach's 300th birthday celebration and will integrate the symphony's beautiful new harpsicord.

vancouverislandsymphony.com

GLORY

APRIL 4-13: NANAIMO

Gateway Theatre presents the inspirational true story of the Preston Rivulettes women's hockey team who in 1933 set out to prove that hockey isn't just a sport for men. Fighting through the Great Depression, prejudice and personal upheaval, *Glory* follows this triumphant tale of four friends told with swing dance choreography and smart commentary.

gatewaytheatre.com

COMEDY FOR A CAUSE WITH STEVE PATTERSON

APRIL 5: NANAIMO

Well known for his frequent appearances at comedy festivals and as the host of CBC Radio One's *The Debaters* show, comedian Steve Patterson will grace the stage at the Port Theatre in support of the Nanaimo Child Development Centre. This evening of fun includes a welcome reception, raffle prizes, an outstanding stand-up show and a meet and greet opportunity for VIP ticket holders. Photo: John Hryniuk. porttheatre.com



19TH ANNUAL NANAIMO BUSINESS AWARDS

APRIL 11: NANAIMO

The Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce celebrates “leaders and achievers” at this gala presentation. Twenty-three awards will be presented during an Oscar-style ceremony complete with red-carpet reception, networking mixer and live music.

nanaimochamber.bc.ca

THE FOREIGNER

APRIL 18-MAY 9: CHEMAINUS

Chemainus Theatre presents the sidesplittingly funny tale of Charlie, a painfully shy Englishman, who pretends he can’t speak a word of English to avoid the social interactions he so desperately fears while staying at Betty Meek’s Fishing Lodge. Charlie’s new role as “the foreigner” makes him the unwitting confidante for the other visitors and residents resulting in a web of increasingly complicated (and comedic) predicaments. Sit back, relax and prepare to be entertained. chemainustheatrefestival.ca

FEAST TOFINO

APRIL 26-MAY 5: TOFINO

Celebrate West Coast “boat-to-table” food culture by taking part in this series of collaborative food events featuring some of Tofino’s very own best-known chefs, fishermen, foragers and farmers. Two weeks of events include everything from intimate dinners to restaurant take-overs, happy hour features to large-scale community-oriented activities all taking place at various locations throughout the area. Let your palate be inspired. feasttofino.com

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EVOLUTION OF AN ENTERTAINMENT LANDMARK



Grant Olson, general manager and part owner of The Strathcona, on what it's like to have "the best job in the world" running one of B.C.'s best-known entertainment landmarks

PHOTO: Grant Olson outside the iconic Strathcona block at the corner of Douglas and Courtney Street in Victoria.

The Strathcona includes a hotel, a night club, a liquor store and five restaurants and bars. Where did it all begin?

Originally, this building opened in 1913 and it was supposed to be an office block called the Empress Building – in fact, you can still see the letters etched on the façade of the hotel. During WWI it was expropriated and turned into officers' accommodation and later it became a hotel. My grandfather, H.B. 'Barney' Olson, thought this area had great potential so he bought it in 1946 and it's been in the family ever since.

It's much more than a hotel now. How did this block evolve into what it is now?

When my grandfather bought this place there was very little food and beverage in town. There was a little restaurant where the current liquor store is, and in 1954 we actually beat the Empress Hotel by getting the first liquor license in B.C. after prohibition. You could get still get a drink on the outskirts of town, but you couldn't get anything downtown before the Strathcona Room cocktail lounge opened. I think just jumping the gun a little bit and getting into the beverage scene like that kick-started a whole movement in that direction.

In 1959 my dad and uncle took over the business and they turned the Strathcona Room into Big Bad John's in 1962. The Seattle World's Fair was happening that year and they were hoping visitors from all over the place would come to Victoria, so they had this idea to put together this little hillbilly bar that was supposed to be a Barkerville-kind of experience. And that simple little room has been magic. To this day Big Bad John's is still world-renowned as a popular spot.

This whole place has changed a lot over the years. At one point there was a bowling alley in the basement and then it was converted into a banquet space, and then it became The Old Forge Cabaret, where the Brothers Forbes played for almost 30 years.

Since 1990, we've actually redone everything because you've got to keep it fresh, you have to be innovative, you have to bring new flavours and ideas.

How did you get your start with the business?

I grew up in this place. My cousins and my brothers and sister, we all started to work early in the business, but my first job was when I was about eight years old selling souvenirs on the Tally Ho Horse Carriages, which we used to own. I would run after the carriage and climb up the back stairs then walk to the front and put on the charm and sell my stuff to everyone. Then I would jump off the back and wait for the next carriage to come along. That was my start in commerce.

Starting at 16 I bartended during the summers and I was able to do that because it was "table service only" at that time. When I turned 19 patrons could order alcoholic beverages directly from the bar.

Sounds like you worked your way up. How did you transition from being the owner's son to being an owner?

I went to UVic and then UBC and graduated in economics. I was trying to figure out what to do, and no one seemed interested in taking over the business, either on the cousin side or my brothers' side, and I

was chatting with my dad one day and he said, "What do you think? Maybe you're the guy." And I thought, okay I'll go for it.

I went back and did an MBA at Cornell University in New York, which is well known for hotel and hospitality administration. But after graduation it turned out there wasn't any work for me here because both of my brothers had gotten back into the business.

So I worked in hotels in New York City and in the U.S. Virgin Islands and then I started working with a company called Laventhol and Horwath, doing valuation, market studies and operational reviews for the hospitality industry. Before a bank would give financing for a hotel project, or a golf course or whatever, they would hire us to do a feasibility study using all the numbers like occupancy rates, average room-rate stats and the financial statements.

I did that for about five years and I got to look at everyone's books, from neighbourhood pubs, to restaurants, to golf clubs and tons of hotels. Using those numbers we would evaluate the business and project into the future. It's like the ten-thousand hour thing. After five years of looking at all these statements and investigative-type work, I learned to automatically look at all businesses that way and to evaluate where they're at and where the potential is.



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In 1990, I returned to the family business to open and manage the Sticky Wicket Pub and Restaurant. And with the passing of our parents, Keith and Jean in 1993, and the retirement of my Uncle John in 1994, we became owners.

Who is your primary market?

We probably have 25 different markets that we cater to. The student market is important. The live-music market is important. The dance scene is important. The sports-watching and -playing market is important. We don't have the tourist swings that other hotels might have, because the food and beverage scene caters to all of these other markets. And we have a great local following. We're not as reliant on the tourist scene as maybe some of the other harbour hotels are.

What does the future hold for The Strathcona?

We're working on a plan for a new kitchen on the rooftop and this incredible retractable roof system. You can create a sunny day on a crummy day and it has the potential to be a year-round facility with increased capacity. Right now our capacity is 1,600. We started out with this little place and somehow by being persistent — and perhaps partly insane — we've built it a bit bigger, and a bit bigger until we've amassed this interesting facility.

How important are on-line reviews and social media in what you do?

We all look at it in the room business, and I know that when I book a hotel I take a look at the reviews. If a place doesn't get good reviews then I'll move onto the next property. And I think those reviews can truly point out some flaws in the place, so I listen to them. They're not going to go away. Social media is really important for us, because beyond the hotel we're always trying to create events and some level of community involvement. Being part of the community is just really important and social media helps us to get the word out about these cool events.

What's the best part of your job?

I really enjoy coming to work and interacting with our employees, our management team as well as all of our great customers. I also enjoy trying to transform the property over time to attract new business to the place.

I've planted trees, worked in a plywood mill, painted houses and had a few office jobs, and I can honestly say that I may have the best job in the world. 🏠

TOP PICKS VANCOUVER

We asked **Salima Jiwan**, Concierge at Vancouver's Fairmont Waterfront and a member of the prestigious Les Clefs d'Or Canada, to share some of her recommendations for "best of" in the city.

Best place to celebrate a special occasion

I love the Blue Water Café in Yaletown – their seafood towers are amazing! They can host a private party for 12 to 450 people, but I especially like their active wine cellar, which has two private rooms that can be set for smaller, more intimate occasions, or they can be combined for a larger group.

Best brunch spot

L'Abattoir has a fantastic brunch menu and it's in a great building in Gastown. It's actually the site of Vancouver's first jail and was originally attached to the city's meat packing district, which is how it got its



name. The Belgard Kitchen in Railtown is also located in a beautiful building and the food is fresh, local, light and delicious.

Best place for a business lunch or dinner

Ancora is a great place to meet with colleagues or clients. They have a unique Peruvian and Japanese menu

with beautiful views overlooking the False Creek harbour. For dinner, our very own ARC Restaurant + Bar has a three-course Indigenous-inspired Talking Trees Menu that's available this spring. It's definitely worth checking out.

Most unexpected experience in Vancouver

Vancouver's food trucks are so much fun and it's always surprising how good the food is. Also, be sure to download the Street Food app (streetfoodapp.com) to track the latest locations for your favourite food trucks. 📱

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Bursting Blossoms

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B.C.'S FLOWER FESTIVALS AND GARDENS CELEBRATE THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING

From cherry blossoms to tulip festivals and incredible public gardens, B.C.'s flower festivals offer a bountiful bouquet of reasons to get outdoors

By Tracy Smith



Save the date!

WHILE SPRING flowers may fade in the summer heat, there are still plenty of blooms to enjoy during these hot weather blossom festivals.

Canada's Alpine Blossom Festival, Kamloops July 20-21

Sun Peaks Municipality, 55 kilometres northeast of Kamloops, is the northernmost point of the Sonoran Desert presenting hikers with unique alpine flora. Lower elevations feature sage and prickly pear cacti while fiery red, purple and orange wildflowers on Tod's Backside Trail are delightful rewards for hikers. On July 20, guests can join Nancy Greene and other "summiteers" on the seventh annual hike to the peak of Mount Tod. The hike is open to all ages and hiking abilities. Although the family-friendly weekend focuses on alpine flower hikes, other festival highlights include live music, street performers, art workshops and the Sunday Sun Peaks Market.

Chilliwack Sunflower Festival Aug. 1 - Sept. 15

Stroll among five acres of sunflowers in 17 different varieties. The Mammoth sunflowers steal the show reaching up to 12 feet tall! Swing sets, wooden frames, a working windmill and a vintage Dutch bicycle provide perfect photo backdrops. Pick your own sunflowers or purchase fresh-cut or potted ones to take home. On weekends, the Rotary Club of Chilliwack Fraser train offers by-donation rides through the fields.

WHILE MOST of Canada remains blanketed in snow, southern British Columbia experiences warm spring temperatures, basking in the efflorescence of daffodils, snow drops and tulips months before cities from Calgary to St. John's.

In Victoria, spring temperatures hover between 10 to 15 C as early as March. With warm temperatures arriving early this year, Longview Farms in Saanichton welcomed its first daffodil in early January, a photographic opportunity to boast the first arrival of spring just after Christmas.

From cherry blossoms to gardens redolent with hyacinth and honeysuckle, B.C.'s spring flower festivals, botanical gardens and flower farms give us plenty of opportunities to stop and smell — and in some cases count — the flowers.

Victoria Flower Count March 6-13

Boasting the arrival of spring in Victoria was the seedling of an idea that prompted Butchart Gardens and Tourism Victoria to organize the annual Victoria Flower Count. In the 1970s, when the Visitors Bureau wanted to market the City of Gardens as an attractive, shoulder-season destination, Victoria florist Norma Fitzsimmons suggested an annual flower count. The tradition continues and for one week each March Victorians count billions of daffodils, crocuses, ornamental cherries, camellias and other spring blooms in parks and neighbourhoods.

Butchart Gardens later upped the ante by offering free admission with transportation by L.A. Limousines to the school that records the most blooms. Last year, Cordova Bay Elementary was the winning school counting more than 23 million blossoms.

Municipalities also vie for the "bloomiest" with neighbours counting blooms over each other's fences. During Flower Count Week, the hashtag #flowercount logs more than 700,000 hits. Although the count is not based on any "real science" or data analysis (some have been known to fib a bit), it is great fun and brings attention to Victoria's mild climate.



Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival April 4-27

Vancouver's 43,000 cherry trees are the backdrop for the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival, a citywide arts festival under the fragrant blossoms of the city's streets and parks. The Big Picnic in Queen Elizabeth Park on April 13 (12 to 3 p.m.) carries forward the tradition of Japanese Hanami, when aristocrats sat under cherry trees and wrote poems about the blossoms. Some still create poems or take photographs, while others gather under the blossoms to eat home-made picnic lunches. Bring a picnic mat or purchase one of the Festival's connecting Petal Mats. Lots of family friendly activities and performances happen in the park during this free event.

The Spring Lights Illumination from April 11 to 13 (dusk to 10 p.m.) is an incredible media and lights installation projected onto the cherry trees in Stanley Park. Hfour Design Studio creates vibrant projections, lighting and light sculptures creating a unique experience every year.

The Sakura Days Japan Fair April 13-14 at VanDusen Botanical Garden in Vancouver runs concurrently with the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival, and is a celebration of Japanese art, culture,

food and Japanese gardens. Included in the Sakura Day admission are hourly guided Tree Talks and Walks from 11:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Bike the Blossoms concludes the Vancouver Cherry Blossom festival on April 27 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The free event, open to all ages and cycling abilities, begins on the south side of John Hendry Park (Trout Lake). The full bike course is 11 to 12 kilometres, but participants can bike as little or as much as they like. Ride under breathtaking canopies of Prunus Kanzan heavy with opulent pink blossoms, while one of Vancouver Parks' arborists provides facts about the city's many cherry trees, some of which are gifts from Japan.

Bloom: Abbotsford Tulip Festival April - May

Located at 36737 North Parallel Road, Bloom Abbotsford Tulip Festival is gaining in popularity for its stunning field of over 2.5 million rainbow-coloured tulips in 40 different varieties. The festival opens April 9 and runs four to five weeks depending on the weather. Pre-purchase your tickets online



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before arriving. You can save on admittance fees by going in early spring (low bloom season), after 5 p.m. daily, or during the week. Wear boots so you can roam freely among the fields and discover the creative photo cutout boards, u-pick field and on-site market.

Chilliwack Tulip Festival (formerly Tulips of the Valley) March – May

Tip-toe through 20 acres of colourful tulips at the Chilliwack Tulip Festival. The annual festival begins in mid-March and continues until early May (official start and end dates weather dependent). The first two weeks feature two acres of ten varieties of hyacinths and 17 varieties of specialty daffodils. The last three weeks celebrate the main attraction: 7 million tulips over 20 acres. Popular photo locations are the wind-mill, Dutch bike, the viewing platform and a variety of floral mosaics. Enjoy traditional Dutch Stroop waffles and poffertjes (mini pancakes). You can pre-order tulip, daffodil and hyacinth bulbs for fall delivery by phone or by visiting the on-site store.

GARDENS THAT PUT SPRING IN YOUR STEP

THE BUTCHART GARDENS, VANCOUVER ISLAND

Over one million people visit Butchart Gardens each year, mostly during the summer months, but this 55-acre National Historic Site is serenely beautiful in spring. The Spring Prelude indoor garden's artificially warm climate convinces daffodils, tulips, orchids and flowering shrubs that spring has indeed come early.

Outdoors, the grounds are an artist's canvas as each week provides another colour and more depth. Tens of thousands of crocuses pop up in late February followed by many varieties of cherry trees, narcissus (daffodils) and other blooming perennials. Hundreds of thousands of tulips provide a spectacular spring show for which the Gardens are famous.

Early May greets the arrival of the Garden's most famous flower, the rare Meconopsis (Himalayan blue poppy) and old-fashioned favourite, the Syringa (lilac). Visit the Sunken Garden, which took nine years to create and is home to five acres of gardens, 151 flowerbeds, and 65,000 spring bulbs.


UBC BOTANICAL GARDEN, VANCOUVER

Within the academic confines of the University of British Columbia's campus lays a hidden gem and one

of the most authentic Japanese gardens in North America.

UBC Botanical Garden began in 1916 when John Davidson, British Columbia's first provincial botanist, wanted a garden to research the native flora of British Columbia. Today, Nitobe Memorial Garden is among the top five Japanese gardens outside of Japan. Observe a rare authentic tea garden while sipping tea at the ceremonial teahouse. Explore the garden on a Segway (\$89/person for 90 minutes) or try the Greenheart TreeWalk, a 310-metre suspended walkway, 23 metres above the forest floor, hanging from huge Douglas firs, cedars and grand firs that are over 100 years old.

VANDUSEN BOTANICAL GARDEN, VANCOUVER

A 55-acre oasis beckons in the heart of Vancouver with over 7,500 plant varieties from around the world. In early spring, over 1,000 varieties of cheerful rhododendrons create a gorgeous colour palate complemented by stunning magnolias, fragrant cherry blossoms and camellias. Adults and children up for a challenge can wander the Elizabethan hedge maze made of pyramidal cedars. Less daring visitors can watch from an observation terrace. 



PETAL PANORAMA

AS YOUR HELIJET FLIGHT soars over Saanich on Vancouver Island, you just might catch a glimpse of the nine million sunny daffodils lining the fields of Longview Farms. According to Ryan Vantreight, general manager, daffodil planting begins in September with the first blooms popping up in early January and full-bloom harvest taking place by late March.

Longview is one of the largest daffodil producers in Canada growing 14 varieties, and is the largest Certified Organic farm on Vancouver Island. Thrifty Foods and distributors in Washington, California and San Diego sell Longview daffodils. The farm has over 150 acres of Certified Organic produce with plans for an on-site organic market.



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SPOTLIGHT ON B.C.'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES



A **SA SKILL SET** and as an economic force, creativity may finally be getting the credit that it deserves.

Billionaire investor and *Shark Tank* personality Mark Cuban made headlines last year saying he predicts that creativity will be the most in-demand skill of the future, soon to outpace hard skills like coding and engineering within the decade.

Then, earlier this year, research conducted by LinkedIn seemed to corroborate that prediction when it analyzed the 50,000 professional skills listed in its job postings worldwide and declared creativity to be the number-one most sought-after skill for 2019.

In B.C. an entire sector of the economy is driven by creativity – a sector that is increasingly gaining a reputation for both its depth of expertise and its positive economic impact.

Packing a punch

Of course, many businesses and careers require creative skills, but as an economic sector, the creative industries, as they are known, include motion picture production, interactive and digital media, book and magazine publishing, and music and sound recording.

According to Creative BC, the agency that promotes the creative economy on behalf of the province, these industries collectively employ more than 94,000

full-time workers and last year contributed an estimated \$6.4 billion to the provincial economy.

Motion Picture

Leading the charge is the motion picture industry which contributed \$3.4 billion to the provincial economy last year thanks to more than 450 film and television productions made in B.C.

Add to that the province's 100-plus animation and VFX companies and it's easy to see why this province is considered the world's largest animation cluster and North America's third largest motion picture hub.

During just 80 days of filming in B.C., Ryan Reynolds' blockbuster hit *Deadpool 2* reportedly added \$100 million to local economies and created 3,000 local jobs. It is estimated that the television series *Riverdale* also created more than 1,000 jobs during its first two seasons of production alone.

But B.C. is much more than just a cost-effective locale for Hollywood productions, it's also home to domestic production companies that are telling new stories through new channels.

"One of the exciting things that's happening right now is what's happening with the positive sides of disruption," says Liz Shorten, senior vice-president of operations and member services for the B.C. branch of the Canadian Media Producers Association.

“Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime Video and now we have Shopify, which just announced that they are going to do their own content creation, all of these and other new players represent real opportunities for B.C. production companies. A lot of these streaming services are looking for great stories, so there’s an opportunity for our members to pitch shows to them and to produce commissioned content.

“There’s a robust stable of healthy domestic companies right now that are developing and producing their own slate of diverse projects, and that to me is the measure of health in the industry,” she adds.

Interactive & Digital Media

Interactive and digital media is the next largest contributor to the province’s creative economy with 1,300 digital media companies calling B.C. home, pumping some \$2.3 billion into the economy.

A sector that started in the 1980s and 1990s with the presence of Electronic Arts in Burnaby has since ballooned to a workforce of 16,500 professionals who are hired by both B.C.-owned companies as well as many major international players with established studios in the province. The result? B.C. is now one of the fastest growing virtual reality/augmented reality hubs in the world.

Book & Magazine Publishing


Next to Ontario, B.C. has the second-largest English-language book publishing sector in the country. In fact, with 48 book publishers throughout the province, B.C. is home to 20 percent of all English-language publishers in Canada as well as more than 80 magazine titles.

Like other companies under the creative industries umbrella, B.C.’s publishers are exporters, bringing Canadian stories and culture to a global audience. And there’s tangible reason to be excited for the future: In 2020, Canada will be the Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair, the world’s largest trade fair for books and an important event for securing international deals.

Music

If audience numbers are any indication, British Columbians love to listen to their music live: some 560,000 people attended music events last year alone.

And, on the recording side, more than 160 sound recording studios and 80 independent labels make B.C. the third largest music production centre in Canada after Ontario and Quebec. From pop and blues, to classical and jazz, B.C.’s music industry professionals are optimistic about future growth.




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5 strategies to help nip spring allergies in the bud

Pollen plays an essential role in the circle of life, but for those with seasonal allergies, pollen definitely poses a problem.

MORE THAN ONE in six Canadians suffer from seasonal allergic rhinitis, more commonly known as hay fever. For some, allergic reactions are triggered early in the spring by tree pollen, for others by grass pollen during summer months, and yet others react to mold spores and ragweed that can linger well into the fall. For the unlucky ones who are allergic to all of the above, the misery can seem endless.

But before you resign yourself to staying indoors during the sunny season, try these simple strategies to help keep seasonal allergies at bay.

1. Reach for your runners

Your nose is running, your eyes are itchy and you're having difficulty focusing. It sounds like the perfect time to hit the treadmill, right? Right. Despite feeling under the weather, engaging in exercise can help reduce some allergic symptoms.

Allergies cause the blood vessels in nasal passages to dilate, which contributes to swelling and nasal congestion. But as you work out, blood flow is instead directed to your hardworking muscles and not to your nose, thus producing an anti-inflammatory effect for nasal passages. And it doesn't take a marathon to reap the rewards: relief can occur with as little as five minutes of exercise and can last for several hours.

2. Take a level check

Before you head out the door for a walk or run, be sure to check not only your local pollen counts, but pollution levels as well.

Pollen counts change throughout the day, causing many people to experience worsening symptoms either very early in the morning or later in the evening. During the day, warmer temperatures push pollens up into the air, but as temperatures cool in the evening those allergens fall back to earth, oftentimes triggering a wave of symptoms for allergy sufferers.

Pollen counts are one thing, but why do allergies seem to get even worse on hot days when outdoor air quality is at its lowest?

A recent study out of Germany has found that air pollutants caused by climate change may be contributing to the increased prevalence of allergies worldwide. According to researchers, both nitrogen dioxide and ground-level ozone appear to provoke chemical changes in certain pollens, which increase their potency and potentially turn them into supercharged airborne allergens.

Apps such as Allergy Sufferers and WebMD Allergy provide area-specific pollen counts and future pollen forecasts to help users plan their outings when pollen levels are at their lowest. You can even program these apps to alert you when individual pollen allergens are on the rise, to record your use of medications, or to keep track of the effectiveness of other interventions.

3. Keep it clean

For many people, a morning shower is just part of the regular routine, but allergy sufferers may want to change things up and shower when they get home at

the end of their day instead. Pollens stick to clothing, hair and skin, so rinsing and changing clothes upon arrival home can help prevent the spread of allergens to indoor environs.

Likewise, make a habit of leaving your shoes at the door to prevent tramping pollen into the house and resist the temptation to hang laundry outside where it can quickly pick up allergens.

4. Choose houseplants wisely


Sometimes the culprit behind your sneezing and sniffing isn't outside at all; it's that not-so-innocent houseplant sitting in the corner of your living room.

The National Center for Biotechnology Information has studied the connection between household plants and allergic rhinitis. Turns out, *Ficus benjamina*, yucca, ivy and palm tree plants were all identified as the most common potential allergens for those already suffering from allergic symptoms.

Some plants, however, are hailed as household heroes for their air cleaning qualities. Back in 1989, NASA undertook an extensive study to identify the best indoor plants for air pollution abatement. That study, and others since, have shown that plants such as *Marginata*, Janet Craig, gerbera daisies and Chinese evergreen are effective indoor air scrubbers, which can, in turn, help reduce the aggravation of allergy symptoms.

Whichever plants you choose for inside your home make sure to treat them well so they treat you kindly in return. Wipe leaves often with a damp paper towel to prevent dust buildup, and water only when needed to prevent soggy soil which can be a breeding ground for mold.

5. Rinse and repeat

In an allergic person, pollen causes the release of histamines, which signal mucus glands to make more and thicker mucus. That mucus traps additional pollen and the whole cycle runs on repeat. To clear excess mucus, allergists recommend rinsing nasal passages with saline solution. Look for either a squeeze bottle or a neti pot and be sure to use only water that's distilled, sterile or previously boiled and cooled to make up the saline solution and to clean your device after use. 




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Kick your spring greens into high gear this season with these tasty tried-and-true salad-dressing recipes. Plus, follow our simple tips and tricks to truly make your salads restaurant worthy.

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR BETTER SALAD DRESSING

Tip #1: Ratios rule

Most well-balanced vinaigrettes follow a three-to-one ratio rule with three parts oil to one part vinegar – or thereabouts, depending on the tanginess of the vinegar. Need a little something to counterbalance a too-tart vinegar? Try adding a dash of honey which not only adds a bit of sweetness, but can also stabilize a dressing to help it stay emulsified longer.

Feature recipes

Champagne Vinaigrette

Champagne vinegar is made from the same grapes as the bubbly stuff: most often Chardonnay or Pinot Noir grapes. Like its namesake, it has a milder, more delicate flavour and is less acidic than other types of vinegar, lending this recipe a light, fresh taste. If you can't find champagne vinegar in your local market, a quality white wine vinegar is a good substitution.

¼ cup champagne vinegar
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tsp each oregano, basil and Kosher salt
½ tsp white pepper
1 cup olive oil
Fresh lemon

In a blender, pulse the vinegar, garlic, mustard and spices until well mixed. Slowly blend in the olive oil and add a squeeze of lemon juice to taste.

Vegan Caesar Salad Dressing

What is nutritional yeast, you ask? Vegans have long relied on this inactive yeast to add a dairy-free, gluten-free, Parmesan-like flavour to a variety of recipes from soups to risotto and pasta. (An added bonus: It's fat-free!) Once you're done using it in your salad, try sprinkling it over a hot bowl of popcorn. You'll be hooked.

3 tbsp nutritional yeast
3 tbsp tahini
2 tbsp Dijon mustard
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ tsp Kosher salt
⅓ cup water
3 tbsp lemon juice
Fresh cracked pepper, to taste

Combine nutritional yeast, tahini, mustard, garlic and salt in a blender. Puree until smooth. With the blender on, slowly add the water and lemon juice. Add pepper and extra Kosher salt to taste if needed.



Tip #2:

Check your temperature

Oil and vinegar are begrudging partners in a vinaigrette. Given the chance, they separate as quickly as possible unless there's a compelling reason for them to play together nicely. Using a blender or hand whisking is your best bet for effectively combining ingredients, but temperature also counts: the cooler the oil, the harder it is to emulsify.

Tip #3:

Get into the mix

Dijon mustard is a favourite dressing ingredient for both its taste and its ability to unite the other players in the bowl. But if you're ready to experiment with other flavour profiles, try substituting mustard with tahini for a slightly nutty flavour, or nutritional yeast for a cheesy taste. Or, try using all three together using our Vegan Caesar Salad Dressing recipe, shown below.

Tip #4:

All in order

To really draw out the flavours in your dressing recipe, mix the vinegar with salt and seasonings *before* adding the oil. Salt doesn't dissolve in oil, so it's important to blend the seasonings with the vinegar first, and mix in the oil last. Then, if time permits, let your vinaigrette sit at room temperature for one to three hours to let the flavours meld.










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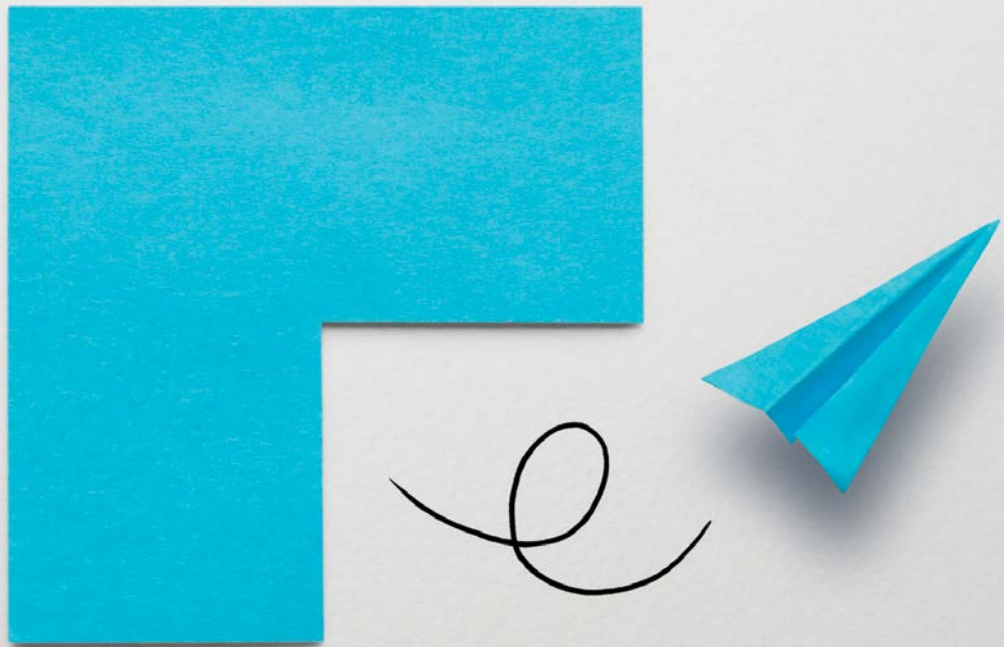
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