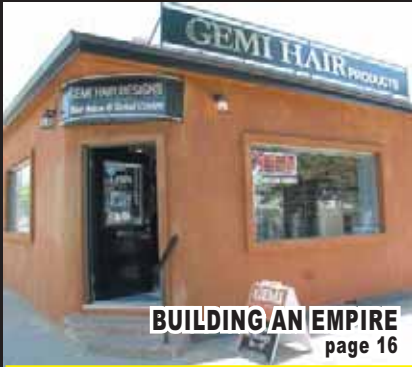


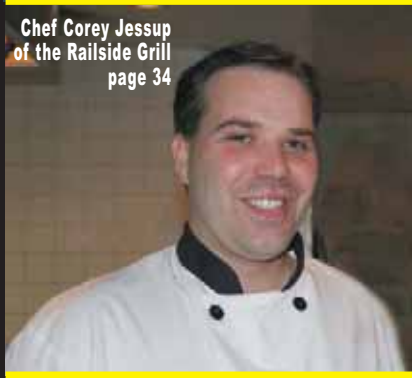
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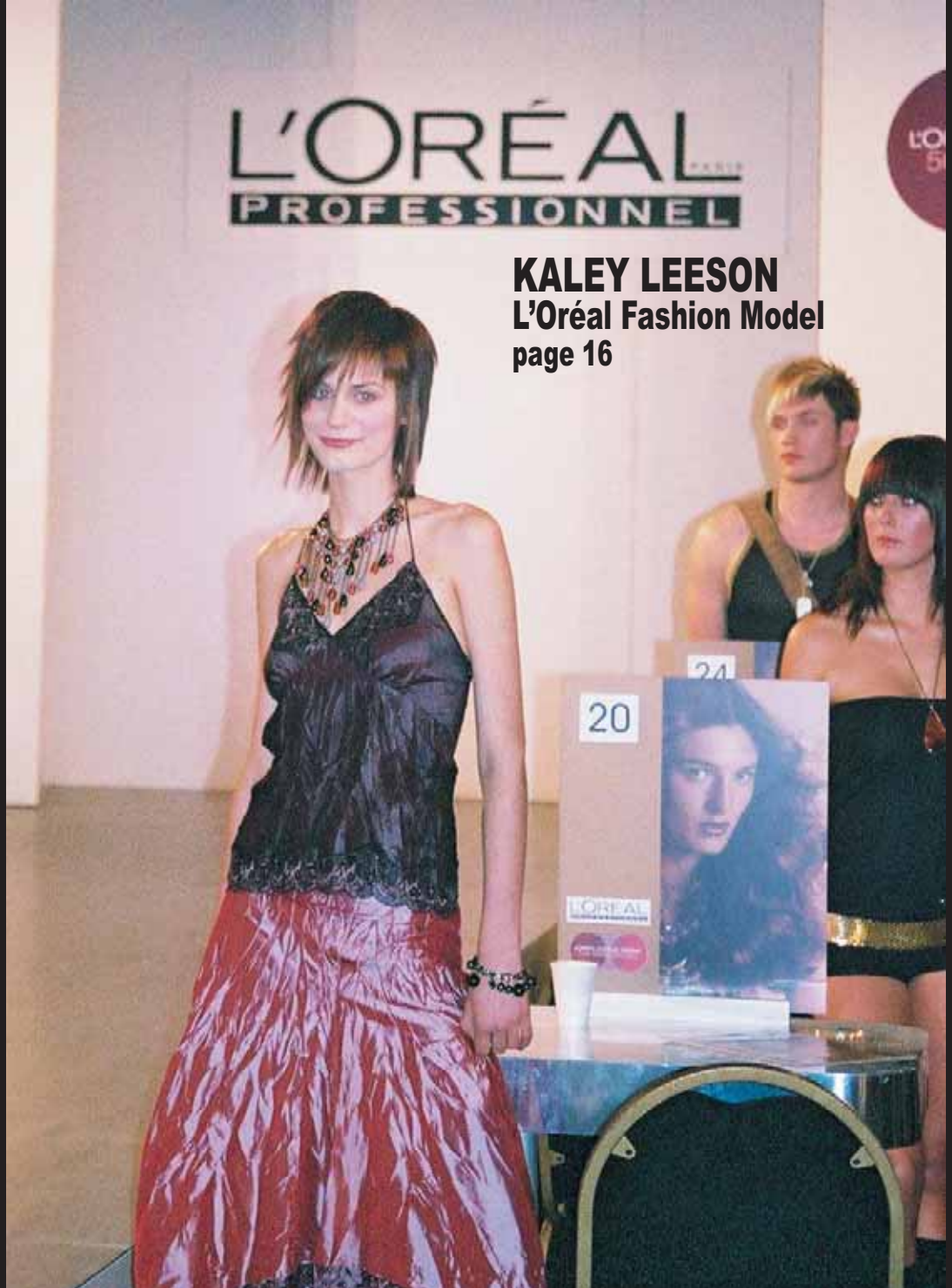
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VANCOUVER ISLAND INSIGHT

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23 QUESTIONS

with

RYAN NICHOLSON

**President/CEO of
Flesh and Fantasy Inc.**



InSight Magazine: Tell us a little bit about yourself. Where were you born, when did you move to Vancouver, etc.

Ryan Nicholson: I'm an Alberta boy, born in Edmonton and raised there until 1981. My family picked up and moved to Atlanta, Georgia, so my Father, Dr. Roy Nicholson could attend Chiropractic College there. After about one year, the family moved again, this time to Portland, Oregon, where we lived until 1986. Once my Father graduated, he set up his practice in Victoria, BC, where I resided until 1995. For the last decade, I've been across Canada and back to Vancouver, working on movies and building up my own empire of sorts!

IM: Your bio talks about your dad facilitating your love of the horror genre. Do you owe him a debt?

RN: Well, my Father was into the horror and sci-fi stuff as a kid himself. He used to take me to all of the scary movies and the ones with wicked creatures and gore. I really, truly became obsessed by the genre and I guess when my obsession started eclipsing my school work and my grades went down the tubes, that's when his attitude shifted into 'Go to school, get good grades, this make-up effects thing is only a dream'. My parents ended up giving me the boot at age 17 because I was more interested in making rubber masks than studying math. That was probably the best thing that happened to me because I ended up getting a job at 24 Hour Video in Esquimalt and I watched horror movies day in, day out...and the odd porno!

IM: Most people in your position pick up a video or super8 camera to fulfill their desires in film. What made you turn to make up and prosthetics instead?

RN: I really was intrigued by the creatures and the gore. Plus in school, when I was there, I excelled in the arts. I always had access to clay and plaster of paris so I made do with what I had. I use to save up any allowance and buy liquid latex at Tony's Trick and Joke Shop as well as other make-up supplies. He was always great about carrying the theatrical make-up and other goodies, books and stuff. I always thought his Daughter Julie was cute too, so that gave me another reason to go into Tony's!

IM: Give us a quick rundown on your history in the movie industry.

RN: My first movies were student films at Barry Casson's film school in the early 90's. Then I did a little stint on Abducted II back in '94, I think. A fake arm for a drowning scene at Thetis Lake. I did another film called 'Making it Home.' I did a cool old



age make-up with an old friend, Damon Bishop, who has since become a famous artist back East. I started doing all sorts of short films, a really weird one called 'Slave World.' I remember they shot some of the gore in the basement of my video store at the time, Front Row Video in Fernwood, back in '94. It was a sick little movie! I loved it. After doing the video store thing in Fernwood for a couple of years, I got a chance to work in Montreal on a movie called 'Bleeders.' I went for it and ended up living there for a year, cutting my teeth on films under the brilliant guidance of Make-up Effects guru Adrien Morot.

The bloody weather was too cold and then too damned hot so I came back to Victoria for a bit, then decided to move to Vancouver. I've been back East a couple of times since, one to work on David Cronenberg's eXistenZ for 6 months and another to collect my Gemini Award for Best Make-up back in 2002. I was nominated on two other occasions for the same award. I was glad to finally win it for 'Andromeda.' I busted my butt making aliens and other things for nearly 4 years on that show. It was a warranted win.

IM: You've been doing Flesh and Fantasy for about a decade now. Tell us about some of your clients/shows/productions.

RN: Some highlights in my career have been meeting some great directors and actors. Some of whom have become close friends to me. I've done Jon Voight's prosthetics for three films and Jon's a personal friend. A great man who always brings the prosthetics to life. Working with Frank Oz and taking him out for dinner was a highlight for sure, he was so awesome and so down to earth, I keep in touch with him to this day. I flew down to Morgan Freeman's house just outside of Memphis. He has a huge plantation that is beautiful. I molded his head and other extremities for a movie that has yet to be released. That was a highlight. I would say flying first class on British Airways to Cape Town, South Africa for a Nokia Commercial was probably the most fun I've had on a gig. The weather and the scenery was amazing!

My Father and I even had time to take in a Great White Shark tour out near Seal Island. I saw a dorsal fin but that was about it. The skipper of the little boat we

were in tells us when we're out there floating that some of the sharks are bigger than the boat we were on! I felt a little on edge after that! I flew to Taipei, Taiwan for a Wrigley's chewing gum commercial a few months later. That was an experience. The director didn't speak a word of English!

Writing and directing my own Feature Film, 'Live Feed,' is probably the cr me of my career to this day. An amazing experience that I doubt will ever be recreated.

IM: What was the hardest thing you've ever had to do in makeup/prosthetics?

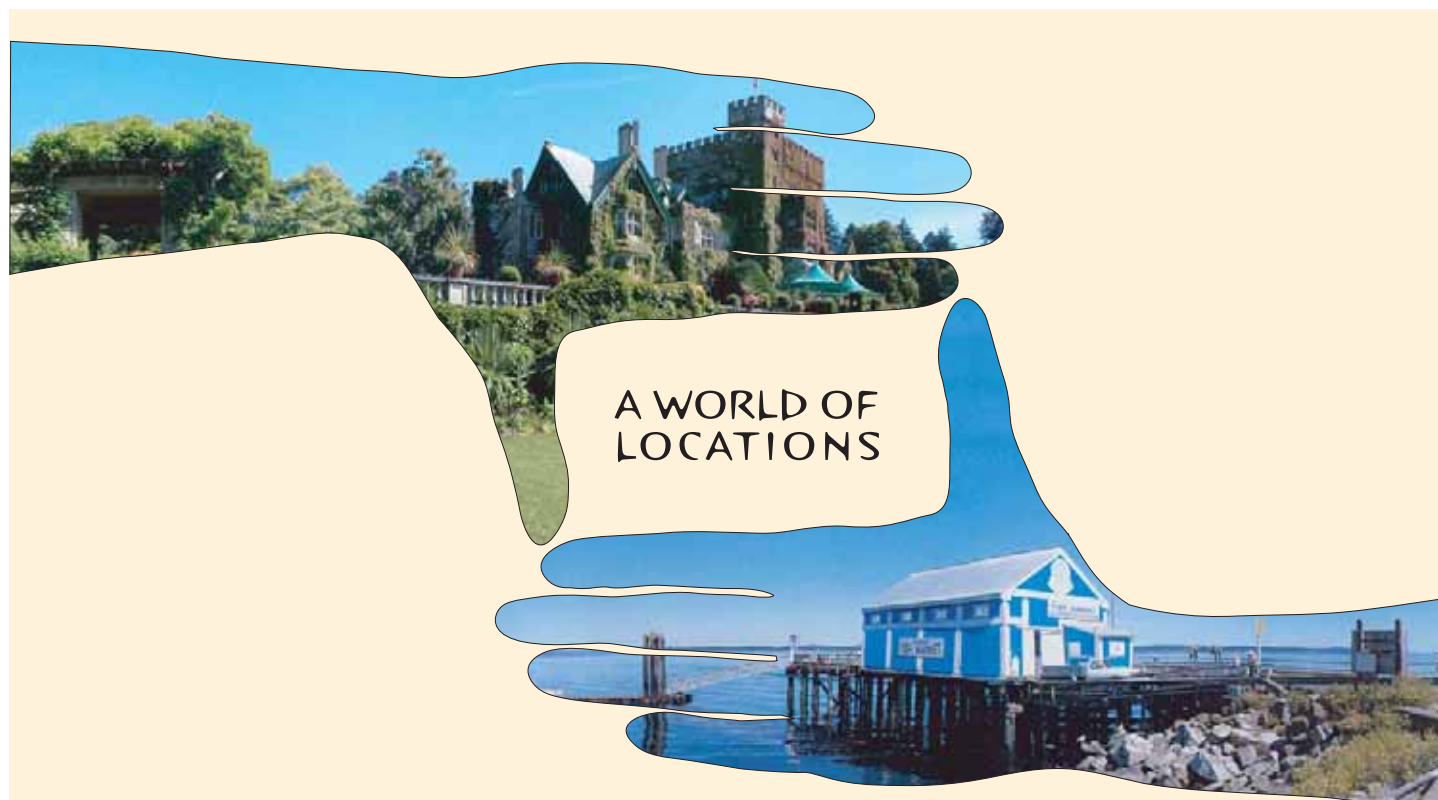
RN: The hardest thing I've ever had to do was the movie 'The Five People you Meet in Heaven'. It was just so many applications on Jon Voight and we had to make him look old, and then younger. It was the middle of summer and the gelatin pieces were problematic under those conditions. But overall, it was also very gratifying to do the final application on the last day of shooting. Man, we did applied that prosthetic make-up to Jon 55 times! Thank God it was him, any other actor would've been a pain in the ass!

IM: What was the most satisfying thing you ever done in makeup/prosthetics?

RN: The make-up effects in my movie 'Live Feed' was the most satisfying gig because I built the gags and I shot the gags. When you have the ability to light and shoot your own stuff, it's so gratifying.

IM: What's the weirdest request you've ever had from a production/film company? Did you do that work?

RN: We've had tons of strange requests over the years. Someone who won the lottery wanted to be in disguise... I smelled bullshit... he just wanted to rob a bank I think, so I passed on that job. Another fellow had sleep apnea or whatever that disorder is called, he wanted a silicone gasket made around his airmask so oxygen wouldn't leak, otherwise he could die in his sleep. I made a few gaskets but I started to think this guy was a bit of a nut as he started to bring in charts of his sleep patterns and it seemed like nothing I did would satisfy this guy, so I sent him packing. We made 350 silicone asses for the



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FILM INDUSTRY PROFILE

23 QUESTIONS with RYAN NICHOLSON

Boyscouts of America! Well, let me explain, they we're training kits, like how to dress a wound with gauze and ointment. It just so happened, the wound was a bedsore an inch up from the asscrack! The same company now has us working an inch below, making silicone assholes for a fecal extraction bag. Enough said!

IM: Tell us about the new make-up school you've started up with John Casablancas International.

RN: It was apparent a few years ago that Western Canada had no prosthetic effects classes that were on par with classes being offered in LA or Toronto for that matter. So I designed a 4 month Creature Effects Course that is in conjunction with John Casablancas Institute. Casablancas offered the closest thing to teaching make-up effects in a lab environment so I improved on that and we now offer it in a working prosthetics lab, the Flesh and Fantasy Inc. Studio.

My graduating students have already worked on genre movies, one gig was doing Michael Ironside's prosthetics for a feature film, they did a great job. My other students did the make-up for my movie 'Live Feed'. They did a wicked job! They have my seal of approval. The 'Mastery in Prosthetics' course runs year round and anyone interested can go to www.fleshandfantasy.com for more info. Best course around, I should know, I teach it!

IM: Do you do any of the teaching/instructing, or do you leave that to the "toby slaves?"

RN: I had a great make-up effects artist and close friend of mine, Jason Ward, a Victoria boy too!, substituting for me for 3 weeks while I shot 'Live Feed'. The students loved him and he'll be teaching more for me. Jay also was the prosthetic supervisor for 'Live Feed'. What a trooper, he'd teach in the day and come to our set at night. That's dedication! But other than that stint, I have and



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SOCIETY OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS

A non-profit organization, CineVic was established in 1991, the first film co-op to serve Victoria and Vancouver Island. Our aim is to assist in the production of independent film, the education of independent filmmakers and the integration of film with the community. CineVic also maintains an office space and library to help further these ends.

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will be the main instructor. I enjoy teaching. I love to show things I have learned and it keeps me on my toes, keeps my skills sharp.

IM: How "hands on" are you still with *Flesh and Fantasy*? Do you still get to get your hands dirty, or are you mired in paperwork and keeping the business running.

RN: I'm more hands on now than I was 7 years ago when I had 25 employees in my studio. Back then I was neck deep in contracts and bidding on shows. I sculpted a few things but the business stuff was brutal, a big learning curve. As the years went by, I figured the best way to run the shop was to step away from the bids and business, let my Father handle those elements and get back into the plaster and clay. Now, I do almost everything in the lab. I keep a couple of people around but mostly it's me and the mice that scurry across the studio floor when the clock strikes midnight.

IM: Here's a segue for you. You've just started up your own film production company called "Plotdigger Films." Has this been a lifelong dream?

RN: Plotdigger Films is really where I'm at nowadays. *Flesh and Fantasy Inc.* is

it's own beast and after a decade, it's all grown up and needs less attention than Plotdigger Films, which we're currently pushing full force. To write and direct is my passion and really always has been. Make-up effects stopped being fun when my relationships with best friends and buddies I learned with and hung out with started to go sideways over money issues and credit issues, etc. I've lost some good friends in this business. Artists are so God-damned temperamental!

IM: Will writing, producing and directing movies get in the way of your makeup work? How do you think it will affect *Flesh and Fantasy's* business?

RN: I'm way more interested in writing and directing than doing make-up effects for other people's movies who don't give a shit about you or how hard you worked to build them. The only time someone comments on the effects is when something goes wrong. They never tell you 'You did a great job, thanks' I'd rather do my own movies, I can pat myself on the back and tell me what I need to hear. 'Live Feed' didn't interfere with *Flesh and Fantasy* jobs, it actually created a gig by my movie being so effects heavy.





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FILM INDUSTRY PROFILE

23 QUESTIONS with RYAN NICHOLSON

IM: Tell us about the first productions from Plotdigger Films.

RN: The first production for Plotdigger Films was actually a co-production with my dear friends at Creepy Six Films. It was a 45 minute long movie called 'Torched'. It was a rape-revenge story with some great gore and some penis torture. I wrote the original script and we were going to shoot it at a hospital ward in Victoria but had to scale back when the costs got past \$4,000.00. So Vince D'Amato from Creepy Six re-wrote the picture and we shot it in seedy downtown Vancouver. It truly is a nasty little picture. It will be available on an anthology called 'Hell Hath No Fury' this fall I think. Go to www.creepysixfilms.com for more details.

IM: Are you having fun with this aspect of the industry, or do you find it's just "more work?"

RN: I love making my own movies. I'll do it until I'm six feet under and even then I'll make a movie in the afterlife!

IM: Would you describe Plotdigger Films as a "low budget horror factory?"

RN: Plotdigger Films isn't a 'low budget horror factory.' I would consider Troma Films to be that. I'm getting stunts and special effects that are worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now, these industry professionals are giving me a break because they like the scripts and the projects. 'Live Feed' looks like a seven figure movie. Besides, I have scripts that are dramatic, not horror. Some of my favorite movies are dramas. I don't want to be so single-minded to just do one genre. I have a dramatic tv series that I'm developing right now. It's a bit like 'The Shield' meets 'The Sopranos' meets 'Nip/Tuck'. It's called 'Halfway'. Look for the pilot soon.

IM: Describe your ambitions in relation to Plotdigger and how will Flesh and Fantasy fit in with these?

RN: Plotdigger Films is going to make at least 2 movies a year. We want to become a fully in house production studio with all of our own equipment, staff, etc...The only way to do something is to do it yourself.

IM: Local Victoria low budget horrormeister Brian Clement says that the most important things in low-budget films is "organization," and "imagination," coupled with the ability and desire to do it yourself if needs be. Do you agree with this, and what's your take on low budget films?

RN: Yeah, I'm a fan of Brian's movies and he's right. When you are doing things yourself, you need to be extremely well organized because you don't have the luxury of a big Hollywood budget. You have to stay on schedule. Any mistakes are costly, especially if you're renting gear and pulling in favours. You need to think on your feet. You always have to be shooting, no matter what happens. The power goes out? Get a flashlight and keep shooting!

IM: Are you aware of Clement's films? What do you think of them?

RN: I saw 'Meat Market' a few years back and thought it was fucking well done! I like the fact that he showed a cock in it. It was something you don't see in low-budget horror too often, usually it's all women getting naked but Brian had a bonerfide penis in his movie. I laughed my ass off!

IM: What are your goals for the future?

RN: Make Plotdigger Films into something worldwide. I'd love to be able to shoot movies in other countries. But that takes some dough and it'll be a few movies from now until we are on location shooting in South Africa or Hong Kong.

IM: Compare living in Vancouver to living in Victoria.

RN: I'd rather live in Victoria. I find it more refreshing. I love the vibe. In Vancouver, it's always go go go, whereas in Vic, it's mellow.

IM: What would you say to aspiring young people who want to get into the movie/TV industry, no matter what aspect they are shooting for?

RN: Anyone with a mini-dv camera can make a feature film nowadays. My advice to anyone wanting to get into the industry as a technician would be to volunteer on any independent film no matter what the genre and no matter department. Wardrobe, lighting, sound, make-up, camera, etc... Help out and learn, learn how to help out. Network and you'll find you'll be hopping from one set to another. Don't expect to get rich fast. It's a long hard road and not one to be on if you're into it for the money. But if you have a passion for the celluloid, as Nike said, Just Do It! Or was that Reebok? Hmmm.

LOCAL MOVIE INDUSTRY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Victoria Film School Happily Welcomes

KATHERINE BILLINGS

The Victoria Motion Picture School has announced that Katherine Billings will head up the school's September Acting Program as Artist in Residence. Ms. Billings brings her extensive acting and coaching experience to the job.

Katherine's resume is very solid – she was trained at Northwestern University, U.C.L.A., The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts as well as with David Craig, Robert Lewis & Stella Adler. She has coached actors on shows such as Wonder Years, X Files, Stargate and DaVinci's Inquest, as well as the movie Bull Durham. Her awards roll is equally impressive, as she's received kudos from The US Film Festival, the International C.I.N.E. and the LA Drama Critics. She also is the owner of Katherine Billings Productions, she serves on the National Advisory Board for the William Inge Center for the Arts, and is the newly appointed Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Repertory Company.

According to the school, Ms. Billings' Master Seminars will emphasize "camera wisdom," "acting craft" and the technical skills necessary for careers in the entertainment industry. Without a doubt, her expertise will add an additional jewel in the Victoria Motion Picture School's crown.

For more information contact the Victoria Motion Picture School - #101, 775 Topaz Ave. at the corner of Topaz and Blanshard, call 381-3032 or email bcasson@peakfilm.com.



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Barry Dodd



Director, Greater Victoria Film Commission

InSight: Tell us about the Greater Victoria Film Commission.
Barry Dodd: We are a not-for-profit organization made up of representatives of the business community and the film industry. We are here to further Greater Victoria and Vancouver Island's competitive position in the world film location market.

IS: When was the commission formed?

BD: We were formed in 1996 with the help of three levels of government, and the private sector.

IS: Okay, we know what you are, now, what do you do?

BD: The primary area we are known for is our Production/Location Services Department. We use our photo library as a base source to try and locate specific locations based on a script breakdown. We will also assist production companies with direct scouting and surveys. Our staff also helps out productions in contacting local agencies of all types, including getting filming permits, talking with trades and unions, studio facilities and that kind of thing.

One of our greatest assets is our photo library. We are constantly updating and expanding our library, which is comprised of key images from all over Greater Victoria. We use the library when we do script breakdowns for initial location scouting. These images are then used by producers, location managers and other industry personnel to directly locate specific places.

IS: How much do productions companies pay for your services?

BD: The Greater Victoria Film Commission is a member of the Association of Film Commissioners International, the body that certifies Film Commissions. As a Certified Commission, we are required to provide our services to the industry at zero cost. We make our

revenue from corporate sponsorship, fundraising and provincial and municipal grants.

IS: What's your history in the film industry?

BD: I started off by graduating from Camosun College's Applied Communication program, and since then, I guess I've done just about everything you could in the industry. I have a ton of television experience, doing everything from program development and acquisition, to production, promotion...you name it, I've done it.

I have been the Director of Programming for BCTV, CHEK TV and CIVI. I'm very proud to have administered CHUM Television's \$12 million commitment to independent production on Vancouver Island, and I like to think I've helped the local filmmaking community with mentoring and creating initiatives to assist Vancouver Island writers and producers.

IS: What's your greatest challenge as the Director of the GV Film Commission?

BD: Trying to figure out how to make the Film Commission sustainable from a financial perspective.

IS: What's the most fun part of your job?

BD: Showcasing Greater Victoria to potential productions.

IS: Do you get to travel very much?

BD: Unfortunately, I do very little travel at the moment.

IS: You say you've worked with mentoring and such. What's your impression of the local film schools?

BD: I have a very good impression overall, although I have to admit

that I don't have any real first-hand knowledge of the schools themselves.

IS: Now let's get to the heat of the matter. What's going on right now in Victoria?

BD: We have a few things currently shooting in Victoria - "In the Land of Women" with Meg Ryan and Adam Brody; while in Cowichan there are two ongoing - "Eureka" and "The Fog."

IS: How is the future shaping up?

BD: We've had a good year to date - 18 confirmed productions including theatrical, television episodic and commercial work.

IS: From your vantage point, if there was one thing that Greater Victoria could do to boost its image as a production location, what would you have them do?

BD: Probably the best thing would be to adopt a "one-stop shop" approach to permitting across all of the municipalities in the Capital Region. The current "balkanization" of municipalities right now can make things more difficult than they need to be.

IS: Sounds like this Director gig is a tough row. Would you call this position a dream job, or just a job?

BD: It is a good fit for my skill set. It's challenging and it gives me the opportunity to contribute to the community. I really enjoy what I'm doing and I don't think of it as just a job.

IS: What is your take on the local film festival scene?

BD: The Victoria Independent Film and Video Festival, which has just completed its 11th year under the direction of Kathy Kay is just great.

IS: What are your favourite type of films?

BD: I like character-driven films, whether they come out of Hollywood, or the indie scene.

IS: One final question. What do you think is Greater Victoria's best moment in any film or TV show that's been shot here?

BD: I think it would have to be in "X-Men 2: X-Men United," when Hatley Castle (as Xavier's School) gets invaded.

IS: Thanks a ton Barry. Best of luck in the future, and we all hope to see lots of production trucks parked around town.

BD: Thank you.



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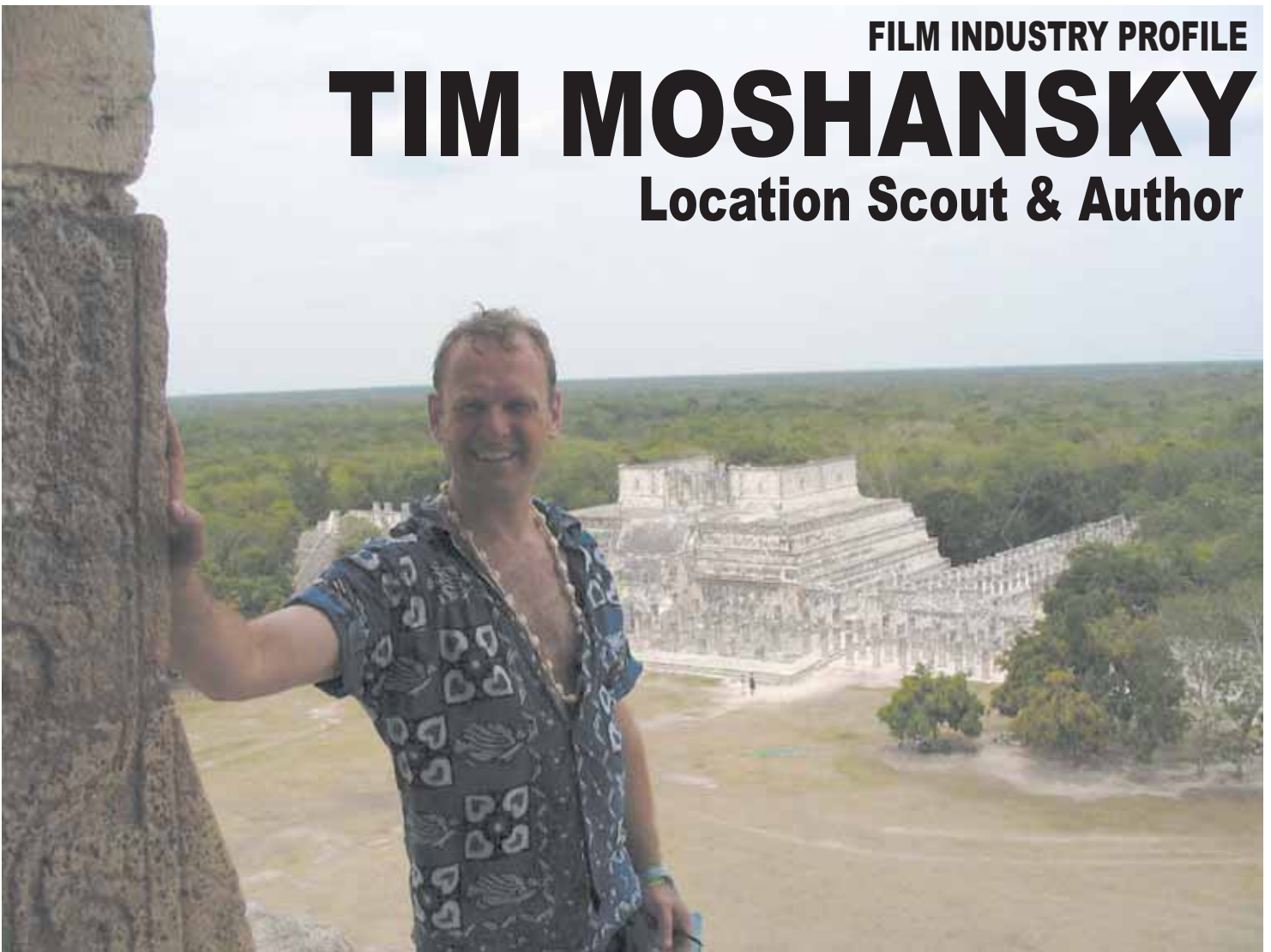
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TIM MOSHANSKY

Location Scout & Author



CONDENSED BIOGRAPHY

Tim got his first portable tape recorder (with a condenser mike) in 1977 at the age of 12. That same year he saw Star Wars at the theater nine times. (They didn't have VCRs yet).

In 1981 while in Grade 12, a movie was filmed at Tim's high school St. Michael's University School (Paul Almond's feature about life at a boarding school Ups and Downs). Tim was involved as an extra in several scenes.

In 1989 Tim was hired as a squad sergeant/production assistant on the Japanese samurai epic, Heaven and Earth. He was a squad sergeant for 40 soldier extras. The movie used a total of 2500 extras in costume and 500 horses. It was his first "real" movie job.

In 1993 Tim began writing freelance, "stringer" articles for Mix Magazine based in Emeryville, California. Since this time he has written dozens of articles for Mix as well as Post Magazine, Professional Sound and Canadian Musician.

In 1995 Tim became a member of the Director's Guild of Canada. That same year he also began work as a location scout and published the first edition of the A to Z Guide to Film Terms.

Tim currently lives in Lions Bay, BC with his wife Wendy and their dog and two cats.

Insight caught up with Tim on a hot spring day to have a chat about the movie industry and working as a location scout:

Insight: You've worked as a location scout for over 10 years now. How did you get into doing that?

TM: I guess it was a natural evolution from working as a locations production assistant. After a few years of working on set, I was given an opportunity to do some scouting, and I loved it right away. I didn't think I'd be doing it 10 years later.

Insight: It sounds like a cool job. How does it all work?

TM: I usually get a call from a P.M. or L.M. at the beginning of a new show, and then go and meet with the Director, Producer and Production Designer to determine what the priorities are for locations. Sometimes I read the script, sometimes not, but we always have a meeting by phone or in person to brainstorm and get a firm grasp on the concepts they're after. Then off I go to try and find the perfect locations. Of course each project is different and there are often many parameters for the scout. A classic example is this one: "We need a house from the 1960's that's small on the outside and large on the inside with a large tree in the backyard that you can see from the kitchen window and we prefer an open floor plan and the DP doesn't like white walls. Oh, and can you find it within a half block of the studio?"

Insight:What is your favourite part of scouting?

TM: I love the fact that it's something new almost everyday, that I have a certain level of independence and freedom that's rare in this industry. I'm kind of a natural explorer and adventurer and I love the thrill of finding the perfect spot for a certain scene. The best is when they rent you a 4x4 and send you out on the road for a week out of town in search of great locations. I've been really fortunate to have been able to go to Whistler dozens of times and other parts of the interior. It's often like getting paid to go and have an adventure. That happened just recently on the new Robin Williams movie "RV." I got sent to Whistler for a week, all expenses paid, no clock to punch, nobody telling me what to do. Just find the perfect spot.

Insight:What's the craziest thing you've ever done on the job?

TM: I remember once scouting on the series Mysterious Ways, where I did two seasons. One day I was at the PNE and it was off-season with no one around. I was given authorization to wander around and take pictures of the grounds. Then I thought I could get a great view if I climbed to the top of the old, wooden roller-coaster. So I climbed up there and took a bunch of shots. When I got back down, I was in fairly big trouble from the PNE people. Apparently no-one is allowed up there, not even the staff. When I got back to the office my L.M. said, "So, how was the roller coaster?"

Insight:What's the funniest thing that's happened?

TM: There's lots of funny moments, but I remember one that was quite good. We primarily work with digital photography now, but back a few years ago, when we were still using film, a Production Designer whom I hadn't worked with before gave me a roll of film to get developed. Later that day I picked up my shots as well as those of the PD. AS I was looking through the photos, there was an entire roll of nude pictures of a young woman. They were all quite artistic and not dirty by any means, and I thought, "Well, this guy has an interesting hobby." My perception of him changed immediately, and I wasn't sure if I should just give him the photos and not say anything or what. As it turned out, there had been a mix-up at the lab and those were the lab owner's wife's shots for her photography class. When I told the PD and my LM we all got a good laugh out of it.

Insight: What advice would you give to someone who might be interested in becoming a location scout?

TM: Work on set for awhile as a PA to get a firm grasp of what filming on location is all about. From the time the trucks move in at dawn to when you wrap after sunset, there is a lot that goes on. Work on set and try to meet as many Location Managers as you can. As for the actual day to day job requirements, I think it's good to have the following: a good handle on digital photography and computer skills; a good car that won't break down; good PR skills; a knowledge of story and scripts; a creative mind, and a knowledge of the geographical area you're in. Keep a good attitude and remember that it takes a long time to build up the contacts necessary to keep the jobs rolling in. In this industry there's a saying, "You're only as good as you're last show."

Stand by, picture's up! Cameras are rolling. Scene 24, take 2, A and B camera common mark...Speed! And...Action!

For more information or to order the A to Z Guide to Film Terms, visit www.filmterms.com

What would you do if you were on a movie set and the assistant director came up to you and asked:

"Can you go to the circus and look for the first team before they check the gate on the Abby? We've got a blocking coming up, and they're just about finished greeking the hero location before the magic hour steadicam POV shot. We're going M.O.S. on the next take, so stand by with the stand-ins until we can work out this pull focus so we won't have to push the call time or do French Hours next week. Copy that? Oh, and do you know where the honeywagons are? I've got to go 10-100."

Confused?

If you had the A to Z Guide to Film Terms in your back pocket, you wouldn't be. This best-selling pocket-sized film phrase book has helped thousands of film students, movie buffs and industry professionals figure out what the heck crews are talking about on film sets.

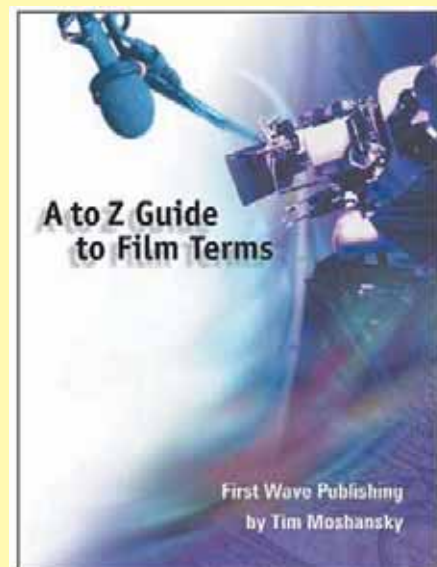
Tim Moshansky had just graduated from UVIC with a BA in English/Film and got a job as a P.A. on a Vancouver movie set. (Directly from BA to PA) His first job? Watching a parking lot for 14 hours a day. With all of this extra time on his hands, Tim began compiling all of the strange terms and phrases he was hearing over the walkie-talkie. The result is a unique book that has become an industry standard in the film community.

Book Description:

Have you ever wondered what it's like to work in the movie industry? Do you watch the credits for a film and wonder what a grip or a gaffer is or what they do? Do you want to learn the behind-the-scenes lingo used by the cast and crew?

With the A to Z Guide to Film Terms, you're sure to be talking like Steven Spielberg in a hurry.

Over the last 10 years Tim has worked as a location scout for scores of TV shows, feature films and commercials, and has lots of fascinating behind-the-scenes stories. As anyone who's been in it knows, it's a crazy business.



COVER STORY

KALEY LEESON:

FROM VIC HIGH TO LONDON'S HIGH FASHION

It's a long way from the hallways of Vic High to the fashion runways of London. Former Victoria resident Kaley Leeson got to strut her stuff at L'Oreal's British Colour Competitions on May 17th. At the event - billed as the most magnificent hair show ever - she was gawked at by an audience of some 3,000 people, including 1,000 hairdressers.

The L'Oreal Trophy was launched some fifty years ago and is considered one of the most prodigious hair competitions in the world.

Kaley's walk started after her arrival in England in early December. She settled in Swindon, a smaller city located north-west of London and obtained work cooking in a nursery weekdays, serving drinks in an '80s bar three nights a week and cooking in an Irish bar on Sundays.

As her pocket book started to grow, so did her hair, and she visited the J.J. Hair Group (They have salons in Crombey Street and Old Town in Swindon, and Cirencester.). Her 6'1" height, plus her "altogether look," prompted the question, "Would you like to model?" Kaley, who had only modeled before a Baptist woman's church group when she was twelve, agreed and the Swindon team began practicing on group nights. Her hair was cut and coloured, as well as makeup applied, over a couple of sessions until they achieved the look they wanted.

This was interesting and exciting, and rewarding in other ways.

"They were really, really kind to me," Kaley remembers. "They were pleased with how I took part, and was part of their team and always on time and everything and really devoted and got off work early and took the day off work ... They were really appreciative and understanding ... I got along with them really well. They were really funny and friendly. They were some of the first friends I made in England."



"It was just the fact that I was in London and doing this modeling thing, and there was a sense of cockiness and joyfulness, thinking of where I was. I'm standing in front of 3,000 people, strutting my stuff, to this amazingly cool, funky song."



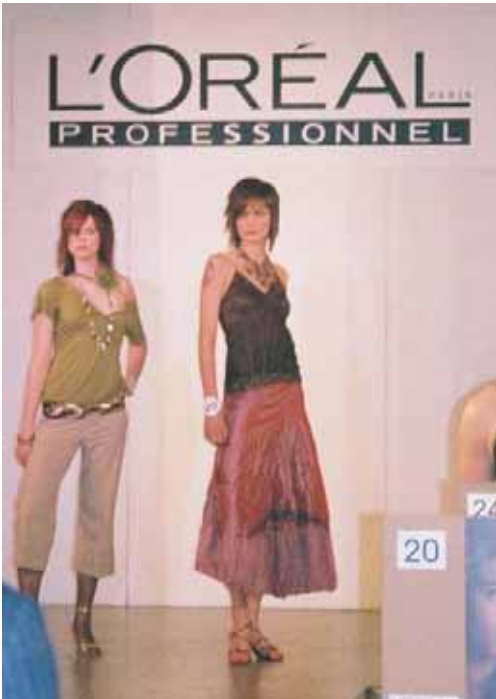
L'Oreal was calling for entrants to their British competition in March and 1500 applicants submitted pictures to qualify for Regional Finals. L'Oreal's mandate was: "to create a visionary street style incorporating sensational styling with innovation."

Kaley describes the JJ. look for L'Oreal: "Right now the style in London and Europe is kind of Moroccan – Bohemian ... My hair was kind of spicy colour, like turmeric, kind of cayenne - a rich look. And my dress was this kind of rich, pinky-red colour - with lots of beads and jewelry."

The JJ. group headed off to the regional finals and the pressure was on.

Joe Hemmings, who styled JJ.'s male entry, said: "The fact that serious names in the industry are there to judge you makes it really nerve-wracking, but so worthwhile...."

Backstage in the Bristol Marriott, Kaley had her own pressures. She quickly realized that all of her competitors were professional models.



"I was the only one who wasn't trained as a model," she smiles. "Everyone else knew how to do their thing...."

So, what did Kaley do? "I just had to go on, making up being a character – pretending I was acting or something."

She also used one of her greatest assets, humour, to help her along.

"Every one was fairly quiet, until you started talking to them," Kaley smiles. "And I'm friendly and started cracking jokes. On the backstage in Bristol, just to make everyone laugh -

everyone was quiet and we were all just standing there waiting to go on stage - and I said, "I really want MacDonald's."

In Bristol, the rookie model went Supersized to win the English Western Colour Trophy.

And, it wasn't just the colours and cuts that won the competition.

"In Bristol the judges came up to me afterwards and said, 'Really excellent job,' because the stairs collapsed and I almost fell. One of the judges said, 'I really carried myself well and nobody noticed.'"

Kaley knew she couldn't trip at Earl's Court 2, where tickets were selling for \$600 and there would be the press from some 33 countries.

continued on next page...

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COVER STORY

KALEY LEESON: FROM VIC HIGH TO LONDON'S HIGH FASHION

"We arrived at 9 a.m. in the L'Oreal Institute in London," she remembered, "where the school is, and had breakfast and they started the competition – working on our hair - and we did a catwalk in front of a panel of judges. The presentation was at Earl's Court that night, but the competition was at L'Oreal that day."

Kaley was facing 25 competitors, all of them highly-paid professionals. "The competition seemed a little more steeper [than in Bristol], because everyone there seemed like they were taking things more seriously ... They just knew what they were doing. They knew how to act and feel comfortable in all of the situations. They didn't really show any nervousness - which was intimidating." Once again, Kaley was the friendly Canadian.

"I think I initiated a lot of chat," she laughs. By the time they were in Earl's Court, everyone was relaxed. "The models in London were the ones who knew what they were doing," Kaley continues, "so they were really comfortable in themselves. They were all getting drunk and 'taking the piss.' They were smoking and talking to each other."



So, how did Kaley cope with the 3,000 spectators and two dozen professional models staring at her? "I was just thinking about my attitude, and there was really a good song playing, and I was taking it in the experience. By the end of the whole thing, by the end of the whole day, when I finally did the cat walk, I was pretty much relaxed, as much as I was nervous. It was pretty much the end of it, and I didn't have anything to lose. It was just an enjoyable moment ... It was just the fact that I was in London and doing this modeling thing, and there was a sense of cockiness and joyfulness, thinking of where I was. I'm standing in front of 3,000 people, strutting my stuff, to this amazingly cool, funky song."

In the end, the legendary Scotts won once again. The Alan Edwards salon from Glasgow became the first team in the L'Oreal history to win the competition twice (Toni&Guy of Kensington in London and Barbara Daley from Liverpool placed second and third.).

Had Kaley's team members thought they could win? "They were just happy to get there – in the top 26," Kaley says. "They were just pleased to get there."

Did Kaley think she could win? "Because of the scale it was, you could never think this could happen to you. I mean, I never win at anything, so I never thought, 'I would win at this.' And we actually won at Bristol, so I guess in London there was a part of me that said, 'Anything can happen.'" But I was really content in the fact that I had made it that far."

By the time the hair spray bouquet had diminished, Kaley had made some modeling contacts, was given the beautiful dress she had worn, and was returning to Swindon in a limo.

And the M4 was a long way from the Island Highway.

THE L'OREAL WEBSITE SHOWS A VIDEO CLIP OF THE EARLS' COURT FINALS:
<http://www.lorealcolourtrophy.com/Newsroom/VideoClips.htm>



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GEMI HAIR PRODUCTS & PHOENICIA STYLES

BUILDING A FAMILY LEGACY



Burt's Cash Store If Burt could see his store now!

In 1905, Burt's Cash Store, on a historical downtown corner, served the city as a general store. Today, recently reinvented by combining the site of Burt's old store with another of the city's oldest buildings, the corner still serves the public as a retail space. Standing proudly at Cook & Johnson, the character building now houses Phoenicia Styles, a new full service salon, and Gemi Products, a 37-year-old business that has spanned two generations of family operated enterprise.



Georges and Michel Murr arrived in Canada from Lebanon in 1965 and began working with fellow countryman George Fayad. George operated three of the most reputable hair salons in Victoria, including Maison Georges at the Executive House, in the current site of Bartholomew's Bar and Grill. Trained in Switzerland, Germany and France, the Murr brothers brought a welcomed European style and flair to the Victoria beauty business. Three years later, they launched their own venture, Coiffure Gemi, named for the first two letters of each of their names. They opened their doors on January 4, 1968 (when patrons paid \$2.00 for a shampoo and set), and quickly built up a steady clientele, attracting customers from as far away as Tacoma, Washington.



In 1977, Georges quit hairdressing after developing a reaction to the chemicals used in permanent wave solutions and colours. He opened another successful business, Ali Baba's Pizza, (385-6666) where his son Marc Murr joined him as a partner. Ali Baba's Pizza has now expanded operations into Colwood, Saanich, and Tsawassen at the BC Ferries terminal. They also opened La Fiesta Café, (383-6622) located on Douglas Street in the old Sussex hotel building.

In 1992, at Gemi Hair Designs, Michel decided to expand his salon business to include the sale of professional hair care products. Michel's first hair product lines included Paul Mitchell, Redken, Lanza, Joico and Aveda. Informed by a sales rep of the suggested retail price of the products, he said, "That's too much to charge my customers. I came to Canada with \$113.00 in my pocket. I know what a dollar means. People work hard for their money." That began the story of a little old building where professional hair care products sold at an affordable price.

Later told by a supplier that he would need to raise prices to carry a particular line, he became infuriated. Michel would not budge on his position, did not raise the prices, and took a financial hit. He lost the line but still carried Paul Mitchell, Redken, Lanza and Joico.



Now the largest retailer of professional hair care products in town, Gemi carries over 85 lines at Victoria's lowest prices. In their onsite testing station, Gemi's staff diagnoses problems with fine, limp, frizzy, or unruly hair, and prescribes the right products for any hair type. Clients have the advantage of testing the products before purchasing, allowing them to become familiar with the performance, touch and scent of a product, determining exactly which styling tool best suits their needs.

Gemi now has a new neighbor, Phoenicia Styles. The name comes from the ancient tribe and civilization that once occupied the coastal cities of the Mediterranean, Africa and the Middle East. Phoenicia literally means 'the dealer in purple', the first color derived from nature and used to dye hair. Phoenicia Styles has been fashioned after the old tribal concept of inviting clients to be part of the mixology of the color process. This reinvented concept brought the color technician out to work in an open area at our color bar.



Old concepts remain ingrained in the staff's dedication to good service, and clients enjoy complimentary cappuccinos, lattes, an espresso bar, and warm friendly service. The customer is always the focus. More services have been added to the aesthetics room, a tranquil setting for nail sculpting, facials, manicures, pedicures, massage and waxing, making Phoenicia Aesthetics the perfect one stop destination to cover all your beauty needs.

Tell them Burt sent you!

We extend a sincere thank you to everyone who supported our renovation and growth, and special thanks to: Our hair stylists and color techs, Magda, Candice, Chelsea, Alex, Anna and Kevin; all our junior stylists from the hair schools; Paula, Alan and Mama and Teresa from aesthetics. Pro Line Roofing, Deccico Bros. Stucco, Ali Baba's Pizza, La Fiesta Café, Dave the electrician, Monarch, Alliance, Absolute Beauty, Icon Systems, Insight Magazine (Bill Code), Nova Beauty (Vero 4 Life), Klaudia, our beloved Product Manager (smile), Grant Construction (Kenny), and all of Victoria.

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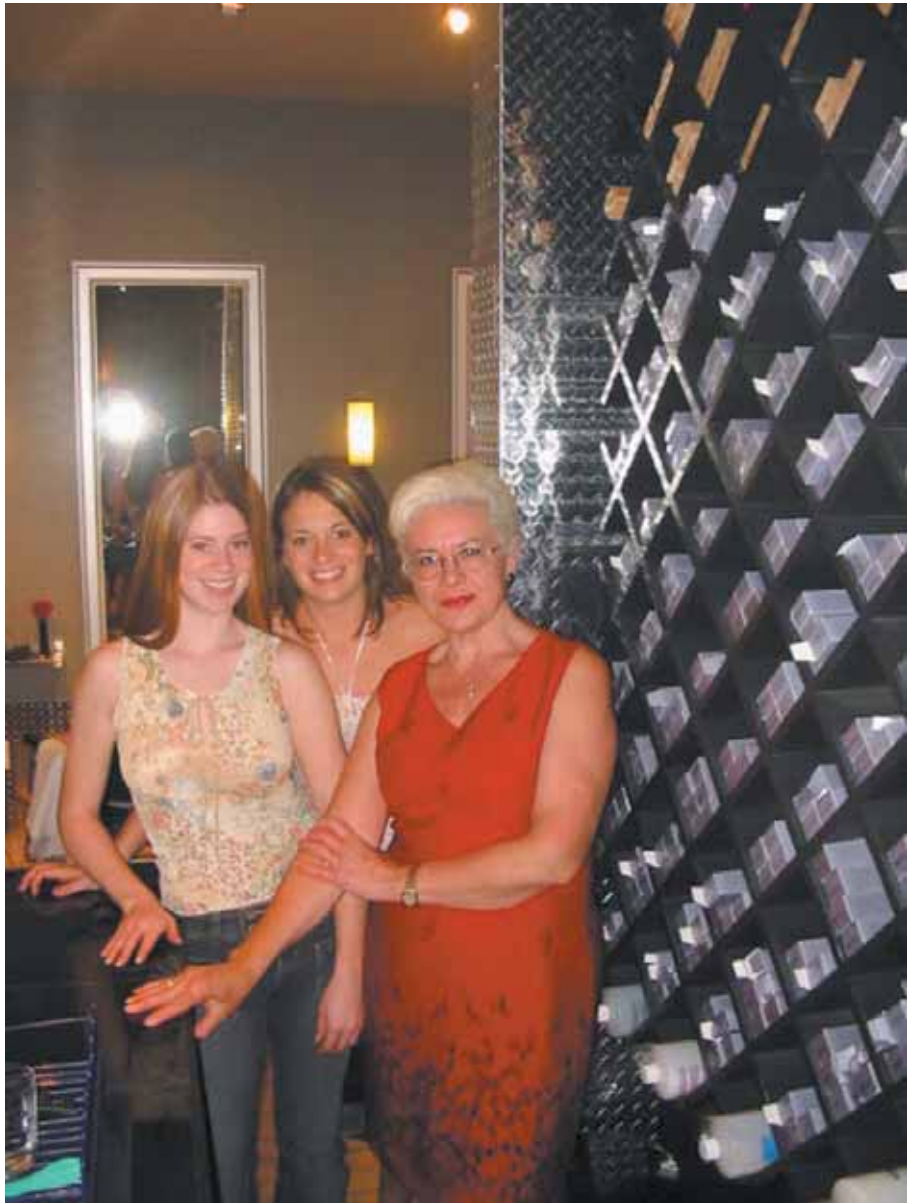
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On Saturday, June 11th
Gemi Hair Design featured
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With over 85 product lines, being represented by the industries top sale represenatives, (REDKEN, LANZA, JOICO, SHWARTZKOPF, MATRIX, GOLDWELL, OPI, AG, PAUL MITCHELL, TOSCA and so much more there was no shortage of styling and product techniques.

What was provided to the public? 'FREE' samples, waxing, manicures, straightening, updo's, curling, makeup application and knowledge The show was definately a win-win, for those who attended! The event which was fully catered with an open bar went from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

From nearly a year in the planning, another in the renovations, and one of the industries most successful grand re openings. When owner Fadi Murr was asked when the next hair and beauty show would be? Looking exhausted he just laughed and said "look for the white Banner that hangs outside the building!"





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CHURCH & STATE WINES



Warm, Classy & Casual Comfort

The newest winery on the island, Church & State Wines, opened their doors in Brentwood Bay on May 5th. This winery replaced the Victoria Estate Winery, and rather than settle for a simple transfer of ownership, Church & State Wines started fresh with everything from new management to a newly renovated retail and tasting room, dumping nearly 12,000 cases of wine left from the previous establishment.

Visitors sit in a warm and classy yet casually comfortable atmosphere on the open-air patio, with views of the vineyard and of the kitchen, where the catering talents of Feys & Hobbs prepare lunch. Currently the kitchen is open Thursday to Sunday from 11:00 to 3:00, but expect the summer hours to change.

As one would gather from the name, Church and State Wines prides itself on a balance of opposing forces – tradition and change – to produce consistently high quality wines. This 12-acre estate has bigger ambitions. The winery

plans to purchase property in the Okanogan, where they'll grow grapes the island's climate can't support. Future endeavors include landscaping the grounds to create a picnic area around the estate's pond and a market garden to supply the kitchen with fresh produce.

The winery is now offering approximately 11 varieties, and rather than expand the menu, Church and State believes in keeping the list short, executing every wine consistently well. Thus far, their most popular have been the Madeleine Sylvaner, Ortega, Reserve Merlot and Syrah.

Be sure to stop and take a tour of Victoria's newest addition to our expanding wine culture the next time you're on your way out to Buchart Gardens – it could make for a nice full afternoon.

-Paul Embury



“ This new winery is now producing approximately 11 varieties, and rather than expand the menu, Church and State believes in keeping the list short, and doing each and every wine consistently well.

”



Remarkable wines are coupled with 5-star cuisine prepared in Feys & Hobbs newly renovated and outstanding kitchen. Or you can sample the wines at the adjacent bar....



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*See Our Entire Dinner Menu
on page 1003 in the Telus Pages*



There is one winery on the Island who is completely breaking the traditional mold, and injecting a fresh new spirit of passion and fun into the mix. Bringing with them a very laid back and open armed approach, Marley Farm Winery is a definite welcome breath of fresh air to our blossoming industry, and what else would you expect from an Vineyard owned and operated by the legendary Bob Marley's second cousin?

by Paul Embury



Eleven years ago, Michael and Beverley Marley moved to Victoria from Jamaica, and in the spring of 2002, faithful to the spirit of the family, they opened a winery. And family is definitely what this vineyard stands for. Far from the mature norm, Marley Farm Winery is an experience for everyone, young and old. Not only a vineyard but a true farm as well, there are plenty of animals running free to entertain the kids. But it doesn't end there – the Marleys enjoy having as many people involved in the process as possible. Bring your kids down to the annual kiwi squeeze and let them get their hands sticky while you sample some of the many fruit and grape wines produced on location. Enjoy EweHoo!, a day of fun in the sun with a barbecue and hands-on sheep shearing, or the farm's horse show, a combined driving event involving the entire 50-acre farm, held the second weekend in June.

Last but not least, if you have a budding young artist, you may want to watch for the farm's art contests. Your child's artwork could end up on the label of one of the winery's products, as did Nathan Hanousek's and Jessica Pollard's, both age 9. You'll find their work on bottles of Blueberry Vinegar and Kiwi Gold dessert wines.

Under consultation of Canada's most decorated Vintner, Erik Von Krosigk, Marley Farm Winery has put together a unique menu of flavorful fruit, dessert, and table wines. From Kiwi Gold to Blackberry and Pinot Grigio to Raspberry-Rhubarb, there is definitely something new for you to discover. Be sure to keep your eyes open for a new product in the making, a blend of raspberries and tayberries, to be called – what else – Rasta Wine.





Check out the lush garden areas or enjoy the mountain views

Enjoy refreshing samples of their fabulous wines on the patio, and enjoy the spectacular view!



MARLEY FARM WINERY SPECIAL EVENTS

The Summer Frolic (Combined Driving Horse Show) July 9th - 10th

The Ewe Hoo (Sheep and Wine Festival) October 8th

The Kiwi Squeeze Jan 28th -29th

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Hans and Evangeline Kiltz



VINEYARDS
&
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Blue Grouse Vineyards & Winery

Blue Grouse Estate Winery, one of Vancouver Island's first commercial wineries, not only remains a family run business but also remains dedicated to retaining 100% of all process and production on the island. Located in the Cowichan Valley, the vineyard has consistently gained both respect and medals since first licensed in 1992. Blue Grouse has received numerous awards from the Northwest Wine Summit in Oregon, primarily for their Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, and Black Muscat.

The humble yet productive ten-acre vineyard supports a state of the art commercial winery, led by the head of the family, Dr. Hans Glitz. Formerly a veterinarian, Dr. Glitz holds a PhD in microbiology. With the family's philosophy that wine production involves a balanced and tethered dance of both science and art, there is no doubt of their dedication to quality.

Although one of the island's smaller wineries, Blue Grouse is one of the most professional, sparing no expense on equipment or process to produce the best the region can provide. Proudly producing wines using only family grown grapes, Blue Grouse markets 8 - 10 flavorful varieties, many complimenting our island's popular seafood diet. Vancouver Island's climate restricts growers to a limited variety of grapes, but this winery has taken every advantage to produce superior varieties and to introduce wines not commonly known to our area.



Hailing from Europe, the family brought with them some of the most popular European wine recipes. Possibly most notable is the Bacchus, (named after the Roman god of wine), a white grape wine with aromas of nectarine, melon, and peach. This wine is quickly gaining popularity with locals looking to pair something new with their seafood, pasta or chicken dishes.

To ensure the ongoing family tradition, Dr. Glitz's son Richard, one of the island's only European trained winemakers, is actively involved and currently pond jumping back to Europe to pursue further education in the art. Dr. Glitz proudly and patiently anticipates the release, by the end of summer, of what he expects to be his best Pinot Gris and Bacchus to date.

Be sure to look into the rest of the wines produced by Blue Grouse. Sample their Siegerrebe, Ortega, and one of Europe's most popular wines, the Mueller-Thurgau, a dry, crisp dinner wine with apple and citrus aromas, a great accompaniment to the fresh halibut on your dinner plate.

Although the winery isn't able to entertain large group tours, they do invite you to stop in for a tasting. Find out more at www.bluegrousevineyards.com.

-Paul Embury

“

Blue Grouse is a family-owned and operated vineyard and winery established as one of the founding Estates wineries of Vancouver Island. Originally from Germany, the Kiltz family has lived all around the globe. They moved to the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island in 1989 where they established their beautiful home and surrounding vineyards. What initially started as a hobby, later turned into a full-scale pioneering business. Since 1993, their elegant wood-paneled wine shop and tasting room has been welcoming visitors to taste and purchase the wines that Hans and Evangeline Kiltz have been growing and producing on their land.

”

excerpt from
www.bluegrousevineyards.com

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One of the fastest growing names in island wineries is Cherry Point Vineyards in Cobble Hill. In the spring of 2004, the Cowichan Tribes of Duncan purchased the winery, and if they had any questions regarding their progress, they got their answers this May. They returned from the Northwest Wine Summit with two Gold medals (2004 Pinot Noir and Seigerrebe), two Silver medals (2003 Merlot and 2004 Pinot Gris), won the special Jerry Mead award for the best valued wine for Gold medal winners (2004 Seigerrebe) and took the 2004 Gewurztraminer "Best in Category" at the All Canadian Wine Championships.

Eighty percent of all grapes come from the estate, with the remainder sourced from the Similkameen Valley. Cherry Point offers approximately 10 varieties, including their most well known, the Blackberry Port. Credited with setting the bar high with the Blackberry Port, Cherry Point recognized the surge in competition that would follow, and developed their three-tiered solera aging process, involving both American Oak barrels and a great deal of patience, ensuring the winery a steady supply, and in time, a higher quality of port.

Cherry Point maintains an open door policy in their newly constructed wine shop and tasting room – bring your lunch and enjoy the afternoon on their great outdoor patio. The winery has really put the emphasis on guest services and currently offers tours on the weekends. The estate is also host to some fantastic summer events, including their annual Jazz Fest on the 25th and 26th of June, their Summer Concerts (two afternoons of classical music) on July 24th and August 21st, and a Harvest Festival from August 30th to September 2nd, all of which welcome the entire family out for a good time.

So if you're looking for another winery to add to your tour, be sure to treat yourself to both Cherry Point Vineyards and their Blackberry Port. Learn more about their events at www.cherrypointvineyards.com

-Paul Embury



Cherry Point maintains an open door policy in their newly constructed wine shop and tasting room...



The estate is also host to some fantastic summer events, including their annual Jazz Fest on the 25th and 26th of June, their Summer Concerts (two afternoons of classical music) on July 24th and August 21st



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TRAVEL WITH TASTE



By Victoria Stevens

Kathy McAree
Queen of Culinary Culture

Driving around south Vancouver Island with Kathy McAree is a delicious experience.

photo by Seven Bohrer

Whether it's a stop at the Marley Winery on the Saanich Peninsula for a tasting of their pinot noir and a chat with its genial owner Mike Marley, or nibbling a piece of Belle Ann at Hilary's Fine Cheese farm in the Cowichan Valley, Kathy's enthusiasm for Vancouver Island's culinary and wine culture is infectious.



"Not enough people know what a treasure we've got here," she enthuses. "Our food and wine and scenery is every bit as wonderful as Provence or Tuscany."

Enjoy the scenery at the award winning
Cherry Point Vineyard

She knows just about everyone involved, from the organic farmers who grow the produce served in the restaurants, to the chefs who cook it and the vintners whose cool climate vintages are beginning to be recognized at national and international competitions.

As the first and so far only culinary tour company on the island, called Travel with Taste, she can tell you a story about each establishment and the people involved.

"That's Shady Creek Ice Cream, she says, pointing out a nondescript house on the Saanich Peninsula. "It's the best ice cream on the island. They use all natural products."

photo by Andrei Fedorov

Driving by a poky little store not far from there, she points out a blue bus parked outside. It's part of a restaurant called The Roost, she says.

"They serve the best pie on the island and their quiche is made with ostrich eggs. They grow their own flock."

Having travelled extensively herself and gone on a number of culinary tours, even been a culinary tour guide in Tuscany, she developed the philosophy that the best way to see a place is through its food and wine.

"I've always found that the best way to learn about and experience a destination is through the culture of cuisine," she says. "You learn so much about people and their surroundings over a good meal or a glass of wine."

Now 37, Kathy looks back at her early life and sees that what she's doing is the perfect marriage of experience and natural inclination.

Her love affair with food began at an early age, starting in her grandparents' Polish/Ukrainian restaurant in Winnipeg. "I still remember it, even at the age of four," she says. "My grandmother used to decorate wedding cakes and she was an excellent cook, as was my mother.

"When I was in grade two, I asked to take out the Winnie the Pooh cookbook and made ginger cake with applesauce."

It was a talent that served her well when her mother died and she became the cook of the house at the tender age of 12.

"I loved to bake - I used to cook all the time, but I never wanted to go into cooking professionally. It was my therapy - still is."

Even at the University of Saskatchewan, where she studied commerce, she pursued her infatuation with grocery stores and gourmet shops, browsing them for new and exciting products.

So it wasn't a surprise when she graduated and went into the hotel business and from there into the packaged foods business working for Kellogg's,



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TRAVEL WITH TASTE

moving first to Vancouver and then the island.

It was on a month-long trip to Spain, France and Italy in September, 2001, that she had her epiphany.

Arriving on Italy's Adriatic coast just after the terrorist attacks on the U.S. had virtually stopped all air traffic, she was supposed to be taking a cooking course, but everyone but her had cancelled the trip.

"So this wonderful family did the entire course just for me and I was absorbed into the family. They live in a beautiful castle on an olive farm and I had a lot of time to think and that's when I decided to start my own culinary tour company."

Now in her third season, she says the thing she loves the most about her work is the people she meets and introducing them to the joys of island wines and cuisine.

You don't have to be a gourmet or a wine snob to appreciate them and it's a great way to see parts of the island you wouldn't otherwise discover, she says.

"I realized very early on that we need to educate the locals and the world about what we have here."

To that end, she's very involved with the International Culinary Tourism Association, helping to bring their first international conference to Victoria last year and is a board member of the British Columbia Culinary Tourism Society as well.

She's also very involved with a new venture, the Wine Islands Project, which hopes to bring diverse sectors of the local tourism economy together to promote the island as a wine, culinary and agricultural tourism destination with a map-based website and brochure and to encourage a sustainable agricultural industry.

"The local area is rich in natural wonders and businesses that offer truly unique and inspiring experiences. Our parallel aim is to



photo by Diana Nethercott

Travel with Taste offers custom-designed, one-, three- or seven-day tours including Cowichan Valley Cuisine and Wine Tours, Gastronomic Salt Spring Island, A Taste of the Saanich Peninsula, Feast and Forage and "If you can't stand the heat..." offering cooking classes and kitchen chef demonstrations.



photo by Steven Bohrer

Kathy McAree - Queen of Culinary Culture

promote the farming community of the region in a bid to reverse the erosion of our local agricultural economy. We believe that the shorter the distance from field to plate, the less environmental impact our food carries," its mission statement declares.

So, between her tours, her volunteer work promoting culinary, wine and agricultural tourism to the island and gigs like handling the World Feast Stage at this year's 10-day FolkFest, organizing chefs and wineries to present samples of their wares, Kathy is a very busy person.



But she's a happy one.

"I feel very lucky because I'm doing what I love to do."

Travel with Taste offers custom-designed, one-, three- or seven-day tours including Cowichan Valley Cuisine and Wine Tours, Gastronomic Salt Spring Island, A Taste of the Saanich Peninsula, Feast and Forage and "If you can't stand the heat..." offering cooking classes and kitchen chef demonstrations.

She is also teaming up with local food writer Elizabeth Levinson on an Edible Journey July 25 to July 28. The package includes three nights accommodation at Levinson's casually elegant bed and breakfast, the historic John Lewis House, and guided wine and culinary tours in the Cowichan Valley, including visits to the kitchens of a couple of local chefs.

For details, visit www.travelwithtaste.com or call 250-385-1527.



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Chef Corey Jessup

Makes the Drive to Langford Well Worth it!

When it comes to offering a fine dining experience to the people of Langford, Corey Jessup has a simple philosophy. Aim high, but don't forget your friends.

Chef Jessup is the driving force behind the Railside Grill's new approach to dining in the Western Communities: casual fine dining with a regional flare.

"I'm trying to introduce some new elements into the community cuisine. There's more out there than burgers and fries. You can use a lot of local ingredients," says Jessup, who signed on as the Railside's Executive Chef just four months ago. "I try to use local products as much as possible. I try to stick to the market needs. But even with that in mind you still can incorporate local ingredients."

Now, for example, the menu features fresh local halibut served with fresh vegetables and a strawberry salsa, and Cowichan Valley free range chicken served with a grainy mustard demi-glaze. The flavours are unmistakably those of Vancouver Island.

That doesn't mean you won't find old favorites like burgers, ribs and steaks on the menu. But it does mean a lot more choice at a price that will leave the Railside's old and new customers smiling.

Jessup has worked in food service since high school, in Muskoka, Ontario, the heart of "cottage country." He took a work experience position at the prestigious Deer Lake Lodge, part of the CP - now Fairmont - hotel chain. After his four weeks work experience, the chef invited Jessup to stay on. That was the beginning of the journey that ultimately led him to Vancouver Island.

"I met my future wife at Deerhurst Resort. We started dating and wanted to do some traveling. So we decided to come to



British Columbia and stayed at all the Fairmont properties: Chateau Whistler, the Hotel Vancouver, and the Empress. We loved British Columbia so much that we decided to pick our favourite location, the Empress, and moved here."

Jessup and his wife, a front desk agent, put in for transfers to the Empress. She got one; he didn't.

"I said 'fair enough,' quit my job and moved out anyway."

A few weeks after the move, Jessup talked to the head chef at the Empress. There were no positions for first cooks, but there was room for a guy who knew how to wield a knife.

"I started off cutting strawberries for afternoon tea. Within a week, the chef came out and said, 'I'm paying you to cut strawberries?' So he decided to create a position that better suited my qualifications."

Jessup, who has his Red Seal from George Brown College in Toronto, quickly moved up the culinary ladder at the Empress, eventually becoming banquet sous chef. There he experienced the highlight of his career: cooking lunch for Queen Elizabeth during the Commonwealth Games.

Jessup stayed with Fairmont for 16 years, ultimately rising to the position of Executive Chef in the Fairmont's flagship hotel at the Vancouver Airport Hilton. Other jobs followed, but he and his wife could not get the island out of their blood.

They moved back, set up stakes in Langford, and started looking for work.

Four months ago Jessup took over the head chef's role at the Railside and set to work on the master plan.

"The Station House pub is part of the same company, and we're both under the same roof. When I signed on, there was not a huge difference between the two establishments. But I wanted to see the restaurant build an identity of its own. The menus have started to diverge. The pub side is still pub fare. You can't really change that. But we're trying to build the restaurant into a casual, and affordable, fine dining experience."

So far the plan seems to be working to perfection. The pub regulars are as happy as ever, while the Railside Grill's new menu is drawing rave reviews.

"Langford's definitely growing and it's growing fast. The people who are moving into Langford are more urban and white collar. They've got different tastes and like to have alternatives to dining rather than driving downtown all the time. We are trying to accommodate everybody without forgetting the reason we're here in the first place - to give our customers great food in a great family atmosphere for a great price."



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Steve Walker-Duncan creates Tapas with a Classical Twist

Steven Walker-Duncan believes that everyone needs a little more SEC's in their lives. Simply Elegant Cuisine, that is.

"We take classic dishes and give them a slight twist without going overboard. I've seen a lot of things done where people take a classic dish and it doesn't even resemble the original, except by name. We update the old favourites, giving them a new twist without losing their original essence."

That's the secret behind Walker-Duncan's newest venture, SEC's on the Square, which opened February 7 in Victoria's Centennial Square and initially catered mainly to a lunch crowd of city and government employees.

"We knew they were eating on a budget, and since lunch crowds tend to be fairly conservative in their eating habits, we knew we had to offer them something they'd recognize. So we adapted the classic French cuisine, updated it so it's lighter and healthy, and decided to present it in tapas-style: smaller portions at a great price. And people are responding. They're eating it up."

Walker-Duncan, a Vancouver native who came to Victoria in 1982 to finish high school at Dunsmuir, has a history in Victoria food service. After graduating, he got a job cooking at Little Sammy's Fat Burgers, a classic burger and fry joint fondly remembered by everyone who hung out downtown in the 1980's. From there, he moved on to John's Place.

In 1986 he took a detour, working for a high-profile catering company in Britain, where they did a lot of work for the royal family, including Princess Di (who, contrary to rumours, actually did eat). After that, he ran a pub kitchen in Gibraltar for 18 months, then moved back to England where he eventually took over a Kirton Lodge and hotel/restaurant in North Lincolnshire on Britain's north coast.



“

It's all about the flavours. Irrespective of what you do or how you do it, if it doesn't taste great, people won't come back.

”



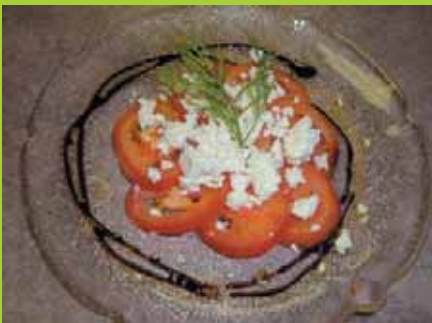


Along the way, he also found time to study under Albert Roux, one of the foremost classical French chefs in England. He's carried a love of the French tradition into his new venture.

"Classical tends to be little heavier, a little more labour-intensive - that's why there aren't a lot of people doing it. But at the same time I'm trying to keep it up to date. Using more olive oil rather than butter, for example. Keeping cream to a minimum wherever possible, but using the same techniques so we get the flavours. It's all about the flavours. If it doesn't taste great, people won't come back."

After a great start, Walker-Duncan and his wife and business partner Lorinda have expanded beyond the coffee-and-lunch crowd (who have taken a particular shine to SEC's innovative mookie: half a muffin, half a cookie, all great taste), and now offer a full dinner menu. It's still the same great concept - light-hearted classics in tapas-sized portions. But the menu has expanded, featuring new favourites like Cup-A-Benny (traditional eggs benedict with ham & spinach, presented in a sourdough bread bowl), Cilantro Prawn Crepes (served with fresh mango salsa), and the ever popular Chilpotle Chicken Cups (yoghurt bound chilpotle spiced chicken with raisins topped with mango chutney in a pastry cup). Simply elegant and delicious food to fit any budget.

"I'd like to see more SEC's all over town. It's a concept that has validity. The whole idea of small portions and choice. People can try three or four different things without gorging themselves. It's well-made honest food. And when you get right down to it, what more can people ask for?"



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Sopranos – *A Rockin' Good Eats Bar*

Whether you want to be entertained or want to do a little entertaining yourself, Sopranos Karaoke & Sports Bar is the place to be! They have a great karaoke system, sports on big screen TVs, and their latest attraction is great pub food. The popular Karaoke Bar has just been revamped, opening a full-service kitchen in time for the summer crowds. The pub food and kitchen is a recent addition to Sopranos, with Trevor and Dustin taking over kitchen duties in May of this year.

Four of us went on a Thursday afternoon for lunch, and as soon as we walked in, we felt welcomed. The low-key ambience and the pub-style lounge offered a warm atmosphere - the ideal place to meet friends, sit back, relax and catch up on the latest. We were reminded of pubs you can find almost anywhere in a small town - dark and comfy, with lots of TV screens and sports, a large bar at one end of the room, a functional and well-lit kitchen, a large dance floor with Karaoke, and the added bonus of a piranha petting tank, right next to the daily special board.

The large variety of daily specials are what keep customers coming back, and there are quite a few regulars who will attest to the great food and have even placed requests for specialty items, which Dustin, the chef, is happy to oblige.

Dustin assured us that if there's something customers would like to see on the specials board, he'd be happy to make it. Thursday's specials included two soups, cheese tortellini with garlic sausage and alfredo sauce, a ham and cheese bunwich, a specialized standard BLT with avocado, and sautéed liver with onions - a favourite among the regulars.

Luncheon specials average \$6.00, and the house special, a 6 oz handmade beef burger platter with fresh cut fries and a beer, sells for only \$8.00.

Dustin keeps a close eye on the kitchen, making sure that house specialties like an 8 oz. sirloin, fresh halibut with beer batter, stirfries, and the Prawns Fantasy are cooked to perfection.

We started with an appy platter to share at \$10.00 and added a dozen wings for only \$5.00 more. We chose buffalo style hot wings, deliciously saucy and perfectly cooked, accompanied by two large ramekins of sauces for dipping: a homemade tzatziki and a plum sauce. The appy platter also had a selection of zucchini sticks, real chicken strips, hommus & pita, hand-dipped onion rings, and a choice of potato skins. Potato skins are prepared several ways: the classic - bacon, green onion, tomato and mixed cheeses; Mexican veggie - with tomatoes, green onion, jalapeno and mixed cheeses; and the favourite at the table, the Hawaiian potato skins, with, you guessed it, pineapple, ham, green onion and cheese. The full sized potato skins were browned and crunchy on the outside and soft and warm on the inside.



The large variety of daily specials are what keep their customers coming back, and there are quite a few regulars who will attest to the great food, and have even placed requests for specialty items, which Dustin, the chef, is only too happy to oblige.



Deep-fried zucchini is always a favorite with me, and these were perfectly cooked, with a light crunchy batter, golden brown and melt in your mouth goodness. The onion rings were fresh, not pre-made nor frozen, with a delightful light batter. The chicken strips were all white meat.

I usually order the clubhouse sandwich for lunch, and the one I saw being served at another table was a triple-decker - piled high with chicken, bacon, lettuce and tomato. But today I decided to be adventurous and, on the recommendation of our server Robin, ordered the Philly beef wrap with cheese, lettuce, tomato and red onion, with a choice of soup, salad or fries. I chose the daily soup, a cream of potato and bacon, very creamy with real potato pieces and sautéed bacon. The wrap was delicious. You can order any of Sopranos sandwiches as a wrap, with all the ingredients rolled up in a large warmed flour tortilla shell.

Two of my guests ordered the burgers with fries and the third ordered the halibut and chips for \$7.50. The 6 oz. handmade burgers, cooked to order, were served with all the fixings on large sesame seed buns. Dustin makes the burgers fresh every morning with lean ground beef and no fillers. For those who love tasty grilled burgers, or are just really hungry, Dustin also makes a deluxe 9 oz burger. Choice of burgers include (but are not limited to): bacon and cheese; cajun and ham, tzatziki;



mushroom swiss; BBQ bacon cheddar; cajun jalapeno & cheddar, and olive, red onion and feta. The burgers got rave reviews, the freshcut fries were plentiful and not greasy, and the fresh halibut came with a light, crunchy beer-batter coating and enough tangy tartar sauce to last the entire meal.

Final verdict - a winner!

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If you want to impress your friends then take them to Shiki Sushi, a popular Japanese restaurant located on Fort St. You can also expect a truly authentic Japanese dining experience where the focus is on delectably refined taste and presentation.

I met my dining companion, who is very sushi savvy, for lunch, this was our second visit, and she was only too happy to join me again. Tony, the owner of the newly opened restaurant, was working happily behind the sushi bar, on our right, as we entered. The dining area room is bright, clean, simply elegance, and the sushi bar was immaculate and full of fresh items, and packed with customers.

The first item presented to us was the chef's special appetizer, a thinly sliced cucumber wrap of crabmeat, salmon roe, avocado, sunflower sprouts and tangy sauce. It was fresh and crisp, and the burst in your mouth flavour left us wanting more.

Next, we shared gzoza hot pork dumplings, served with a spicy sweet dipping sauce. These are always my favourite, and I could have eaten an entire plate of the fried – but not greasy – dumplings myself. We saved room for the hot and crispy tempura platter which came next, and was perfectly cooked. The prawns were large, the carrot and yams were crunchy and warm, the green pepper was sweet, and eggplant melted in my mouth - all were covered with the lightest tempura batter I have tasted in a long time.



An assorted Sashimi platter was next, we were filling up, but that did not stop us from diving into the thinly sliced raw seafood. The beautiful presentation consisted of sweet, melt-in-your-mouth tai (red snapper), textured ika (squid), bursting tobiko (flying fish roe) plump kaibashira (scallops), sweet ama ebi (prawn) and colourful sake (salmon), a unique saba (pickled mackerel), mirugai (surf clam) and two types of ahi tuna, maguro and shiro maguro were exquisite. We devoured the sashimi, washed down with our always-refilled steaming cups of jasmine tea.

Finally, the house roll. The Shiki Special. A delicious combination of salmon, tuna, real crabmeat, flying fish roe, avocado and BBQ eel, served with pickled ginger. I would highly recommend ordering this dish.

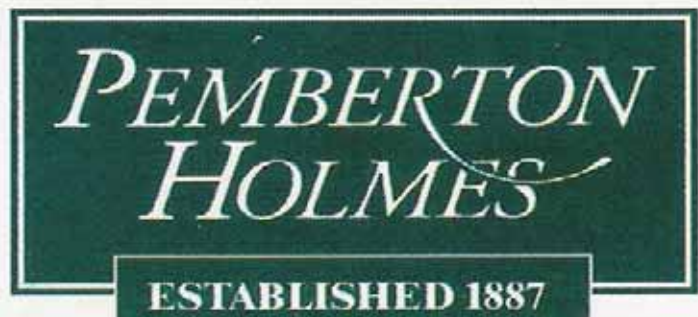
Service was fast even though the restaurant was busy. The restaurant's interior is bright and new, and doesn't intrude upon the real attraction, which is the food!

Shiki Sushi is the place to go for a real special treat - it's a good choice for celebrating that momentous occasion or for impressing friends or clients.

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Brickyard Pizza

Pizza to Perfection

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Build a better pizza, and the world will beat a path to your door. That could well be the motto for Brickyard Pizza, one of Victoria's coolest pie parlours. Centrally located beside the Odeon Theatre, it's a great spot for lunch, dinner or late-night munchies. And despite the funky ambiance, it's a great spot for families. We arrived after work when the restaurant was quiet, our server took our orders immediately, and our meals were served quickly and cheerfully.

The Brickyard offers pizza by the slice or made to order. Two of our boys ordered their favourite slices at \$3.25 each, from the selection of five available that evening. Our youngest opted to have a pizza made to order, an individual with sauce and cheese at \$8.55. It arrived piping hot minutes later. Our hungry guys usually eat several slices of pizza each, but the Brickyard's servings are generous and they were satisfied with one large slice. The kids gave thumbs up all round.

My wife and I both started with creamy Caesar salads. We agreed that the overflowing plates of fresh, crisp, tossed romaine, garlic dressing, real bacon bits and in house home-style croutons were delicious and a great deal at only \$3.95 each. After our salads, we shared the house signature pizza, The Brick, a 14" loaded with pepperoni, salami, onions, mushrooms, black olives and green peppers, a mildly spicy, well balanced combination

of ingredients on a crust that was perfectly to our taste - not too thick but substantial enough to hold all the toppings and eliminate the need for utensils - the way pizza is meant to be eaten! At \$17.00 the signature pizza is well priced and more than satisfying. You may find yourself taking part of your meal home for lunch the next day, as we did.

The Brick also offers calzones, baked subs and salads, along with 4 micro brews on tap and sports TV, and will prepare your order to take out or deliver. As we left, the restaurant began to fill up, obviously a popular spot for many who enjoy their meal a little later in the evening. For value, service, quality, and the casual and fun atmosphere, the Brick is well worth a try - you may find another favourite place to eat as well as another way to avoid making dinner at home!

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A little south of the border ... north of the border.

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There's Mexican, then there's the Baja Grill. Situated on a tidy corner in Fernwood, not far from downtown on 1600 Bay St., the Baja Grill is a funky, brightly coloured little taste of Mexico. Their rain or shine glassed-in outdoor patio is a welcoming haven, with heaters and large umbrellas. We arrived for lunch and the owner, Peter, informed us he had just expanded and revised his menu for a bigger and better selection, with an entire page devoted to burritos.

He combined the old lunch and dinner menus and created several new dinner items. There is all the traditional fare one expects: chili, nachos, quesdillas, taco salads, fajiatas and chimichangas. Besides a large selection of burritos, the menu also offers a burger page, with vegan burgers, veggie burgers, buffalo burgers, chicken, and beef burgers, all grilled to customer's specifications with a large choice of toppings.

Side dishes, such as refried beans, rice and chilli, were no surprise, but the addition of yam fried and curly potatoes were a nice treat.

We started with the crispy wings. Peter recommended the newest wing addition - dry salt and pepper. They were crunchy, twice-baked and not messy at all. With our appetizers, we devoured a delicious tortilla rolled up with cinnamon cream cheese, tequila soaked raisins and chipotle sauce - tasty morsels designed to whet your appetite.

My dining companion ordered the taco salad with mariachi chicken, presented beautifully on a large plate covered in towering fresh greens, olives, corn, carrot, black beans, tomato,

jalapenos and cheese, with a side of sour cream, salsa and tangy guacamole, and a not-too-hot chipotle ranch dressing. She couldn't finish the salad, but assured me it was as fresh and tasty as it looked.

I always have a difficult time choosing, and will defer to the owners' recommendation, or to a popular dish. Peter mentioned that the Santa Fe chicken is one of the most popular items on the menu, so I had to bite. A moist chicken breast, wrapped in a grilled flour tortilla with peppers, mushrooms, onions, taquito cream and baja cheeses, the customer favourite was perfectly seasoned and delicious.

Too satisfied for dessert, we finished with local organic coffee roasted on Saltspring Island, but there are three decadent desserts to die for, all at \$5.00....

Murder in Chocolate - a flourless chocolate cake covered in whipped cream and drizzled in chocolate.

The classic deep-fried ice-cream - encrusted with sweet crumbs and deep-fried to a golden brown.

The scrumptious Frittata Fruta - a large bowl of melt-in-your mouth whipped cream covered in fruit compote and garnished with large cinnamon sugar dusted party twizzels.



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Just flipping through this book intrigues the reader. One expects a cookbook - you know, recipes, big pictures of beautiful food, that sort of thing. Instead, you find a fascinating tale - a journey through one man's life from the standpoint of food and drink.

We all must eat, and we all must drink, and Harvard Budgeon surely enjoys both the preparation and the consumption of good food. *Loose Ends* begins with an explanation of why he wrote the book - and what it is - a collection of his recipes gleaned over a career spent working in some of the best hotels in Canada. Amongst the recipes, Budgeon peppers the book with personal tales, historical anecdotes, a collection of prose and poetry that his mother kept in her "little green book," and an assortment of tempting bon mots.

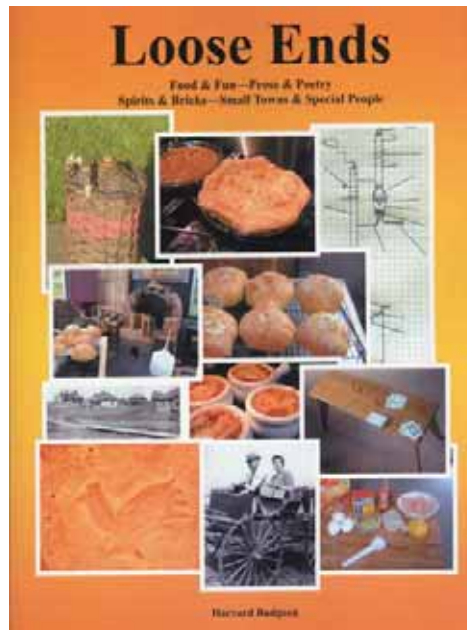
Let's start at the meat of the matter - the recipes. Budgeon literally covers the entire spectrum of food and drink, and not just with a dash here and a splash there, but with a broad brush. He begins with a variety of drinks (both alcoholic and non), a quick primer on distilling alcohol (Budgeon makes it clear this is an illegal activity and was included strictly as a tribute to his uncle), and then gets to the real meat of the matter.

First Budgeon gives us recipes for sauces, including a recipe for one special sauce he uses in many recipes later on. This is the mystical (and perhaps magical) Dragon Sauce, and he is rightly proud of this sauce, for it is wicked. Scan through the book and note how many times Dragon Sauce pops up in a recipe.

Budgeon uses an effective recipe style that takes a while to get used to, but once you do, you'll realize what a great system it is. He separates ingredients into "groupings" - sets of ingredients used all at once in a single step (ie: a spice mixture added to a sauce). He then describes the recipe by referring to the groupings instead of the ingredients. This "recipe shorthand" is most effective in teaching the cook to have ingredients prepared and grouped together, ready for use. Budgeon learned this simple method while working in hotel kitchens, and after you've tried a few recipes you'll wonder why other cookbooks don't use a similar system.

Once he's done with sauces, Budgeon goes through sausages, soups and salads, appies, pizza and pasta, the main course, breads, desserts, and finishes with sweet and savoury old-time candy recipes.

I haven't tested all of the recipes yet, but I've tried a few, and the method makes the most complex recipe easy to follow. Budgeon's writing style, with a soft and learned voice much like a favoured university professor style, aids in simplifying the process. And the results? Well, so far so good. All to date have turned out perfectly



and all were delicious. "Moussaka," the "Raging Bull Chili" and "Mom's Apple Crisp" are next on my list.

Okay, so we've got every food base covered to an extent, the recipes are clearly formatted and the system works well, but what makes this cookbook different from others? The story makes it special. It's a journey through Canadian history (of at least one Canadian) from the perspective of food. The addition of snippets from his mother's "little green book" makes the book great to pick up and flip through, reading when something interesting catches the eye. There are bits about life, food and luck, and charming sayings, phrases and poems.

Budgeon writes about small town Saskatchewan, his mother, his father, his uncles and the rest of his family. He devotes a couple of pages to cribbage, and gives some of his mom's thoughts on playing bridge. It's fun to read, all around.

The quirkiness of Budgeon's historical and autobiographical journey, blended with the excellence and vast number of his recipes, creates a combination that's hard to beat. Enlivened with a dash of spice, *Loose Ends* serves a practical approach, delicious results, and heaping spoonfuls of history and life. This quality cookbook has found a home in my collection. Recommended.

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MICHAEL CONNELLY'S L.A.: WHERE THE EARTH SHAKES THE SOCIETY SHAKES

By Ron Spence

They're North Hollywood and Brentwood - Bel Aire and South Central - polar opposites. They're mystery writer Michael Connelly and his detective character, Harry Bosch. One, an affable family man living in Tampa Bay, the other, a lonely detective marauding L.A.'s mean streets.

What the men share is a love for, and fascination with, Los Angeles. Connelly's initial fascination came from a distance. He spent his early years in Philly and later moved to Florida, where he finished public school, attended university and worked as a crime reporter in Fort Lauderdale.

The L.A. hook for Michael was Raymond Chandler and his hero Phillip Marlowe.

"What I got from the Chandler novels," he explains, "was that Los Angeles was a place where anything could happen - at any time - and that could be good or bad. That still aptly describes Los Angeles."

Another idol, Ross Macdonald, inspired Connelly when he wrote, "Chandler wrote like a slumming angel and invested the sun-blinded streets of Los Angeles with a romantic presence."

"That quote alone," he exudes, "is what helped me want to become a writer. I wanted to have that said about me as a writer. It was kind of like a pipe dream. But I just remembered that quote verbatim." Connelly's other impressions came from the movies.

"I had an ideal of L.A. largely through movies and TV shows. The one movie, *The Long Goodbye*, the Altman movie filmed in the early 70's, that was really my sense of the contemporary L.A."

Connelly worked on a survivor project, which led to a Pulitzer nomination and resulted in an offer from the L.A. Times.

"I came to L.A. fifteen years later [after seeing the movie]," he continues, "and there were still vestiges of that. But, I didn't come there and say, 'Man, this is vastly different than I thought. I kind of thought, 'Man, this is kind of like I thought it would be.' Downtown is empty after dark. And the real city is in the sprawl of the

community and not in the downtown. This sense of a kind of grimy defeatism about Hollywood, where people, especially from New York, come and expect glitz and glimmer and it's just not there. I think I kind of knew that would be the case when I got there."

Asked how L.A. differs from Florida, he replies, "Florida is another destination place, but not to the degree that Los Angeles is. You can definitely see the disenfranchised more visibly in Los Angeles."

Following three years as a crime writer, Connelly started his Harry Bosch novels.

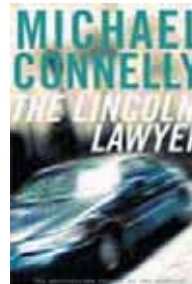
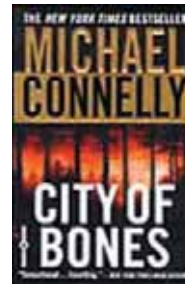
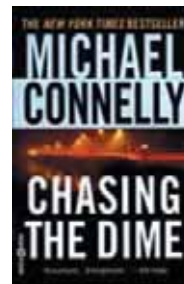
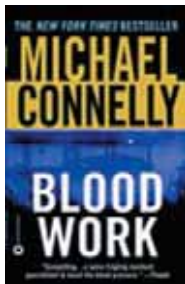
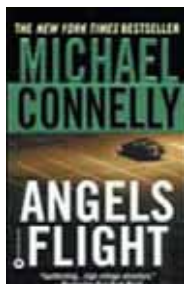
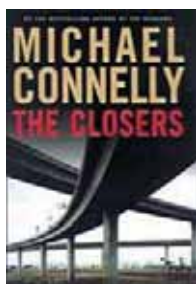
He changed Bosch's contemporary world from Marlowe's L.A. world of the 30's and 40's only slightly.

"It's changed, but a lot of things are the same. The unpredictable nature of it...the milieu that Bosch and Marlowe travel are similar, fraught with suspicious police, police politics and so forth. And that's a conscious effort on my part to emulate my hero, but I'm also trying to use my old journalism instinct and trying to be accurate, and the police department is heavily politicized and the police in the past have had some severe corruption."

American mystery writer James Lee Burke wrote of Bosch's first novel, *Black Echo*, "One of the most authentic pieces of crime writing I've ever read ...you're entering a domain of moral darkness that only Joseph Conrad could adequately describe. It's hard to believe that this is Connelly's first novel. I'm convinced that his career will be a major one."

Comparisons with Conrad aside, Connelly doesn't believe that he recreates Chandler's L.A. He sees himself as a writer of character rather than atmosphere. But he agrees that he creates a mood that can have the same effect as a Chandler-like atmosphere.

"Maybe it all comes out of character," he shrugs. "I had this hope or idea from the start that I would build this character to be emblematic of the city. I really tried to meld place and character together, and I used character to say stuff about the place and vice



versa, and maybe that creates a mood. It's my journalism - where I feel that less is more. I don't spend a lot of time using descriptions of places to set the mood."

Connelly acknowledges that his narrations of Bosch's freeway travels form a grid for L.A.'s "fouled city and brood [Black Echo]."

"I don't know what that is," he ponders. "I don't know why. Maybe it comes from my taste as a reader. I always feel more plugged into books, even if it's a city I've never been in. I just like to hear, 'He went down this street, he took a left there...'"

Connelly agrees that "California dreaming" helps create a "domain of moral darkness."

"It's a destination city," he explains. "People go there to achieve dreams that they couldn't achieve wherever they came from. It takes a certain personality saying, 'It's not happening here, I'm going to find it somewhere else.' And so, that's maybe something that holds a lot of the people together in Los Angeles. They decided to move to get it. And then when they get there, they don't get it. It's a small minority, I think, who achieve everything they hope for. It becomes a city where there's the haves and the have-nots - the ones that made it and obtained their dreams. It's very visible. You can just see it. It's not hidden at all. And I think that adds to the aura of an edge - the edginess of the place."

You mention Blade Runner, and that's a futuristic story, but what they did in that movie, I think accentuates or multiplies that feeling of edginess and anything can happen. Maybe that's one reason I liked that movie so much."

Harry Bosch is a man of hope. And, although not conceived in the City of Angels, he has become an L.A. guy."

"Before I moved to Los Angeles, I wrote a couple of crime novels that didn't go anywhere. They had the beginnings of this character that would take the form of Harry Bosch, but he moved to Los Angeles, so it's hard to look back after eleven books at him from any other place. But some of his attributes, his cynical hopefulness, were in this character...it was a guy who was a private eye in Fort Lauderdale. And that was something I took with me to Los Angeles, to write about Harry Bosch."

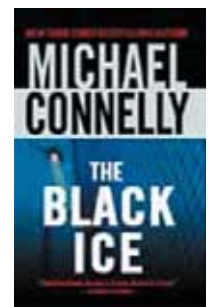
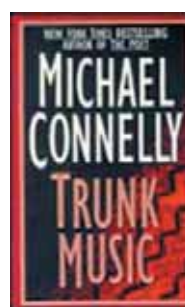
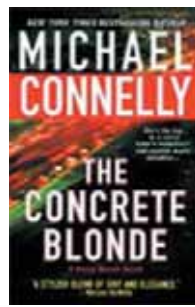
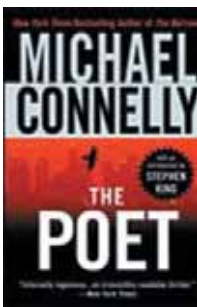
It's like revisionist history. I don't know. He could be what he is now, but I kind of doubt it. I think that he needed the kind of stuff that happens in L.A. to be who he is - the kind of place where the earth shakes - the society shakes."

In his second novel, *Black Ice*, Connelly describes the garden of earthly delights in which Harry Bosch works. "It wasn't a bad record, considering the transient nature of homicide in Hollywood. Nationwide, the vast majority of murder victims know their killers. But Hollywood was different. There were no norms. There were only deviations, aberrations. Strangers killed strangers. Reasons were not a requirement."

Harry Bosch's life has always been surrounded by aberrations. F.B.I. agent Eleanor Wish, his partner and later his lover [*The Black Echo*], tells Harry, "Your [hooker] mother [who was murdered] was alone. She had to give you up. You grew up in foster homes, youth halls. You survived that and you survived Viet Nam and you survived the police department. So far at least. But you are an outsider in an insider's job."

It's probably Bosch's alienation that endears him to many readers.

"I think that's a possibility," Connelly agrees. "I think if you look at it from the standpoint of police detectives who read my stuff, I write about a guy who's got a lot of flaws, makes mistakes, but he's trying



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MICHAEL CONNELLY'S L.A.: WHERE THE EARTH SHAKES THE SOCIETY SHAKES

to do a good job under these difficult circumstances, and write about a police department that's a bureaucratic maze and is politically corrupt, and so forth. And yet I have lots of people from LAPD who like these books. And I think it's because Harry wins them over for me. Because they see something about themselves in Harry, and I think that could extend to anybody who sees this guy as someone who kind of won't suffer fools gladly. Who won't stand for the bureaucratic roadblocks that are put in our way every day of our lives."

People also relate to Harry's vulnerability, revealed in *The Black Echo*, "He searched her face and found what he thought was sympathy. He didn't know if that was what he wanted. He was long past that. But he didn't know what he wanted."

L.A. has long been politically corrupt, but Connelly and Bosch believe that things are getting better.

"You know things are changing and that hopefully comes out in *The Closers*," Connelly adds. "Harry comes back to a different department. There are a lot of reforms going on in the real department and therefore in the book as well."

When Harry had a two book hiatus from the LAPD to work as an independent investigator, Connelly had the opportunity to emulate Chandler's first person private eye style. However, he missed the police department and writing in the third person.

"I came to realize in writing these books that what intrigued me the most about Harry - and therefore I think maybe the readers as well - was in the third person books, you weren't exactly sure what he was up to because he wasn't telling you everything. When you're going to first person, you can't do that, you've got to pretty much tell the reader what you've got. And I missed that...I missed that little



From "THE CLOSERS" Chapter 21
"They crossed the street to the train station, its clock tower rising in front of the them."

Union Station was designed to mirror the city it served and the way in which it was supposed to work. It was a melting pot of architectural styles—Spanish Colonial, Mission, Streamline Moderne, Art Deco, Southwestern and Moorish design flourishes among them. But unlike the rest of the city where the pot more often than not boiled over, the styles at the train station blended smoothly into something unique, something beautiful. Bosch loved it for that.



From "THE CLOSERS" Chapter 2:

"Bosch knew the Pacific Dining Car was a longtime favorite with LAPD brass and the Robbery-Homicide Division. He also knew something else.

"Twelve bucks for a plate of eggs. I guess that means that this is an overtime approved squad."

Rider smiled in confirmation."

From "THE CLOSERS" Chapter 36:

"Bosch got to the squad meeting at the Pacific Dining Car late because of traffic coming in from the Valley. Everyone was in a private area in the back of the restaurant. Most of them already had plates of food in front of them."

Outside the restaurant she gave Bosch the silent treatment while they waited for his car from the valet. She stared at the large plastic steer that was atop the restaurant's sign.

hiding spot that third person gave me. And that played a part in Harry going back into the police department and into the third person."

In *The Closers*, Harry joins L.A.'s new open-unsolved unit, trying to answer the "chorus of forgotten voices."

This career opportunity gave Connelly a new lease on Bosch's life, as Harry can now travel back in time and out of the city while solving cold cases.

"I've got a glass ceiling," Connelly says. "I've revitalized the series with this clip, but that doesn't mean it can go on forever. I think I've got five years."

Los Angeles has changed during the decade and a half since Connelly arrived from Fort Lauderdale. In *The Closers*, he observes that the City of Angels is trying to reinvent itself.

"It's hard to reinvent the whole city because it's such a sprawl," he qualifies. "I see Hollywood trying to reinvent itself and I see tiny microcosms of it happening. One of Harry's favourite areas is my favourite area, the Farmers Market. And that's kind of a completely different place now because they rebuilt it and enlarged it and that's almost like a city centre now because so many people go there. So you see that and you sit back and say, 'I thought I was new to L.A., and now I'm one of the people who remembers the way it used to be.' And that's something that kind of changes your way of looking at it."

MICHAEL CONNELLY'S L.A.: WHERE THE EARTH SHAKES THE SOCIETY SHAKES

L.A. has changed and so has Harry Bosch. A decade and a half ago, Bosch was an angry man. When hassled by an Internal Affairs cop, Bosch barks [Black Echo], "Go back to the leisure suits you used to wear before you became Irving's bendover. You know, the yellow thing that matched your teeth. The polyester does more for you than silk."

And later, when his boss was in his face [Black Ice], "He wanted to throw the guy through his glass wall but would settle for a cigarette out behind the drunk tank."

Harry now has a daughter, quit smoking, and has become a more caring person.

In *The Closers*, Connelly writes, "Bosch was thinking about offering to walk out with [his new boss Abel] Pratt, maybe have a conversation and get to know him better, but his cell phone started to chirp."

Connelly agrees that he and the new and improved Bosch are getting closer. But not too close. Connelly isn't interested in a character similar to himself.

When asked if he'll be writing about reporter Jack McEvoy [The Poet] again, he replies, "I'll bring him back at some point. But I've been reluctant to, simply because that guy is very much like me and it's not as much fun to write about someone like yourself."

Michael Connelly has returned to Florida and now lives in Tampa Bay. Yet L.A. remains his literary home. His latest novel, *The Lincoln Lawyer*, scheduled for release in October, is as L.A. as it gets.

"I met a lawyer about five years ago in L.A.," Connelly recalls, "a stranger who I sat next to at a baseball game...there's 39 court houses in L.A., it's a huge sprawl...you know, most lawyers have an office near a few of them. They specialize in those court houses. But this guy says he goes anywhere and pretty much his office is his car, so his filing cabinets are in his trunk. He's got faxes and printers and he just drives from court house to court house - sitting in the back of his Lincoln while a client drives him and works off his fee."

Michael Connelly admits that without his and Harry's years in L.A., he wouldn't be signing books in Victoria.

"I don't think we'd be sitting here [at the Laurel Point Inn] talking if I'd stayed in Florida and created Hieronymus Bosch in that area," he smiles.

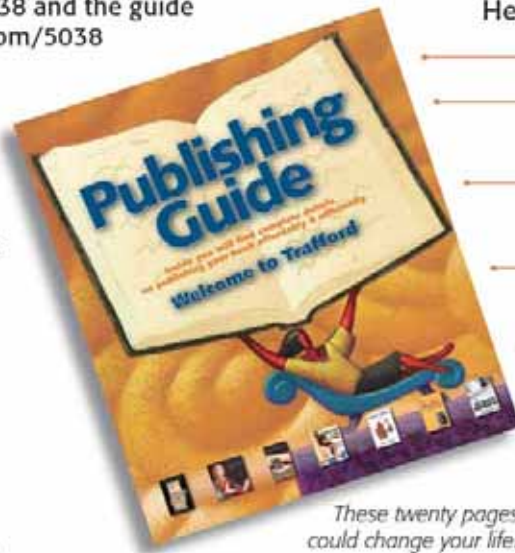
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2005 teatro circo schedule

JULY 01

12:00 - 12:45 pm Ron Pearson
01:15 - 01:45 pm The Acromaniacs
02:30 - 03:10 pm Lelavision
04:00 - 04:35 pm Major Conrad Flapps
05:00 - 05:30 pm The Acromaniacs
06:05 - 06:50 pm Ron Pearson
07:20 - 08:00 pm Lelavision
08:30 - 09:00 pm The Acromaniacs

JULY 04

12:00 - 12:30 pm The Acromaniacs
01:00 - 01:45 pm Ron Pearson
02:30 - 03:15 pm The Acromaniacs
04:00 - 05:00 pm Kawa Brass Band
05:45 - 06:30 pm Ron Pearson
07:00 - 07:30 pm The Acromaniacs
08:00 - 09:00 pm Kawa Brass Band

JULY 07

12:15 - 12:50 pm Major Conrad Flapps
01:30 - 02:15 pm Uzume Taiko
03:00 - 03:45 pm Silk Road Acrobats
04:15 - 05:15 pm Cirkus Jelly
05:45 - 06:45 pm Uzume Taiko
07:15 - 08:00 pm Silk Road Acrobats

FLIX *al fresco!* Launch

08:30 - 09:30 pm *The Bucca Kings*, Exceptional vocals and timeless classics done with class
10:00 pm *Festival Express* (Film) Follow Janis Joplin and The Grateful Dead as they careen across Canada in a train filled with musicians, booze and non-stop jamming in this 2004 documentary.

JULY 02

12:15 - 12:45 pm The Acromaniacs
01:15 - 01:55 pm Lelavision
02:30 - 03:15 pm Ron Pearson
03:45 - 04:15 pm The Acromaniacs
04:45 - 05:30 pm Anne Glover
06:00 - 06:45 pm Ron Pearson
07:15 - 07:45 pm The Acromaniacs
08:20 - 09:00 pm Lelavision

JULY 05

12:00 - 12:45 pm Cirkus Jelly
01:15 - 01:45 pm The Acromaniacs
02:15 - 03:00 pm Aaron Gregg
03:30 - 04:15 pm Silk Road Acrobats
04:45 - 05:45 pm Kawa Brass Band
06:15 - 06:45 pm The Acromaniacs
07:15 - 07:50 pm Major Conrad Flapps
08:15 - 09:00 pm Silk Road Acrobats

JULY 08

12:00 - 01:00 pm Cirkus Jelly
01:30 - 02:15 pm Aaron Gregg
02:45 - 03:30 pm The Carpetbag Brigade
04:00 - 05:00 pm Uzume Taiko
05:30 - 06:15 pm Axé Capoeira
06:45 - 07:30 pm The Carpetbag Brigade
08:00 - 09:00 pm Uzume Taiko

JULY 03

12:15 - 12:55 pm Lelavision
01:30 - 02:00 pm The Acromaniacs
02:30 - 03:15 pm Ron Pearson
03:45 - 04:30 pm Anne Glover
05:00 - 05:30 pm The Acromaniacs
06:00 - 06:40 pm Lelavision
07:15 - 08:00 pm Ron Pearson
08:30 - 09:00 pm The Acromaniacs

JULY 06

12:00 - 12:45 pm Silk Road Acrobats
01:15 - 02:00 pm Aaron Gregg
02:30 - 03:30 pm Kawa Brass Band
04:00 - 05:00 pm Cirkus Jelly
05:30 - 06:15 pm Silk Road Acrobats
06:45 - 07:45 pm Kawa Brass Band
08:15 - 09:00 pm Axé Capoeira

JULY 09

12:00 - 12:35 pm Major Conrad Flapps
01:00 - 02:00 pm Uzume Taiko
02:30 - 03:30 pm Cirkus Jelly
04:15 - 05:00 pm The Carpetbag Brigade
05:30 - 06:30 pm Uzume Taiko
07:00 - 07:45 pm Axé Capoeira
08:15 - 09:00 pm The Carpetbag Brigade

JULY 10

12:00 - 01:00 pm Cirkus Jelly
01:30 - 02:15 pm Axé Capoeira
03:00 - 03:45 pm The Carpetbag Brigade
04:30 - 05:15 pm Aaron Gregg
06:00 - 06:45 pm Axé Capoeira
07:15 - 08:00 pm The Carpetbag Brigade

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The Russian TallShip Pallada at her berth. Read more about this huge sailing ship in the Special Report.

Victoria TallShips Festival

June 23-26, 2005

Victoria turned out in massive numbers to view the Tall Ships over the June 24 weekend of 2005. As many as 250,000 or more crowded the Inner Harbour in an effort to see, and walk on board, these amazing ships. Local officials estimated that the TallShips Festival brought over \$30 million in revenue to the city.

Despite some long lineups and a bit of a mix-up on Friday, the Festival was a roaring success, with entertainment, a food carnival, crafts, displays, even a Pirate School for the smaller members of the crowd.

It seems a shame that regulations of the Tall Ships Challenge state that a city can host only one event every four years, but the good news is that Victoria has first refusal for 2008.

Let's hope that they can make it happen. This was a wonderful show!



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You never know who you'll meet at the TallShips Festival. Here two crew members welcome me to the docks.



Below: The Lady Washington out of Aberdeen, WA, was a big hit. She's the ship that played the "Interceptor" in the movie "Pirates of the Caribbean."



Above: The North Star of Herschel Island – the last of the sailing Alaska cargo ships. Below: The Mexican Naval Training Vessel Cuauhtémoc at sunset. This three-masted barque was second only in size to Pallada, but this barque has bite: she's equipped with at least two guns.



MASTER AND COMMANDER: Captain Nikolai Zorchenko of the STS Pallada

Captain Nikolai Zorchenko has been Master of the STS Pallada for 12 of the ship's 16-year existence. The ship makes 5 to 6 voyages a year, 97 in all to date.

Although he hails from Novosibirsk in Siberia, (descended on one side from Ukrainian "colonists,") Captain Zorchenko admits that he always wanted to become a sailor. Immediately after graduating from middle school, the aspiring young mariner enrolled in the Far East Marine College in Vladivostok, where he graduated in 1975.

The Pallada is a training vessel, and Captain Zorchenko was most proud of his role as teacher, as opposed to his duties as Captain. He feels that, especially in the 21st Century, it's vitally important that sailors learn "the physics of the sea," and he feels, the best way to do that is to learn to sail. He reveals that the Pallada is quite unique, as they generally only take first-year cadets, for many it will be their first time at sea. By doing this, the cadets obtain a deeper understanding of the sea.

"The cadets rarely need punishment," he continues, "as we keep a strong routine." The cadets are generally busy from dawn to dusk, and have little time to get into mischief. I also discovered another, deeper motive for these young cadets to perform well – for many of them, failure as a sailor here could very well mean ground action in Chechnya. Strong

motivation, indeed!

A soft spoken man during our interview, the Master of Pallada became very animated about his favourite subject: the sea. His home.



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Victoria TallShips Festival

June 23-26, 2005

by J. Michael Dlugos
and Nataliya V. Sokolova-Dlugos

SPECIAL REPORT



Victoria, BC June 24, 2005

We stood with a crowd on the breakwater, watching a 21-gun salute between the Mexican ship Cuauhtemoc and a Canadian patrol vessel - but our eyes were drawn further out to sea, where the massive STS Pallada waited her turn to enter the harbour.

365 feet in length, with three masts soaring 160 feet into the sky and a draft so deep she had to wait until high tide to pass the shallows at the mouth of the harbour, the Pallada commands attention. When her turn came, with surprising grace and speed she

STS PALLADA *Vladivostok, Russia*

slipped through the water, most of her 97 cadets hanging off the rigging. The remarkable sight stirred the crowds lining the breakwater and the shore, and they cheered and waved as the huge ship sailed past. The young cadets responded enthusiastically, waving back and cheering at the crowds.

Pallada is not just a pretty ship - she is an important cog in the training of Russian sailors. Built in Gdansk, Poland, in 1989, the Pallada and her four sister tall ships serve as training grounds for all three branches of the Russian sea-going fleet: naval, merchant and fishing. Pallada comes to the TallShips Festival from her home port of Vladivostok, on Russia's east coast. Under the command of 51 year-old Nicolai Zorchenko, in 35 days she traveled over 5,000 nautical miles, sailing almost the entire distance without assistance from her two engines (driving a single screw).

My wife Nataliya and I visited with Viktor, the Pallada's Communications officer, and Tatiana, Viktor's wife and the ship's Chief Cook, an unassuming couple who take great pride in the ship and in their work. While my knowledge of the Russian language is limited (I know enough to order beer and chicken in a restaurant), Nataliya's native languages are Ukrainian and Russian. Nataliya and the Russian couple hit it off like long lost cousins. Viktor apologized for his rusty English, saying it had been many years since he'd had a chance to practice, but he spoke a little of our language as well as some Polish that he'd picked up when he was with the ship during its construction.

Later, my wife explained that Viktor and Tatiana aren't really Russians, they're sailors. I began to understand (my background is prairie life, a landlubber) that it doesn't

matter what your home country is - if you live and work on the open ocean, you are part of a large extended family comprised entirely of mariners. While countries may face off against each other in conflicts, and navies may fight one another, the first adversary any sailor faces is the sea, creating a powerful solidarity amongst the sea-going fraternity.

Viktor and Tatiana, our gracious hosts, gave Nataliya and I a grand tour of the ship. While the Pallada may have the external appearance of an 18th century sailing vessel, inside she's modern and well kitted out. The crew is comprised of 97 marine cadets (mainly 18 and 19 year- olds), 6 training officers and a core of 43 professional sailors serving as the permanent crew.

The cadets begin their days at 7:00 a.m. and work until 7:20 p.m., combining physical training with classroom work and breaking up the day with 4 meals, the fourth a late "tea". The rest of the evening is often spent watching TV or movies on video or DVD, until evening muster is called at 10:30 and lights out at 11:00.

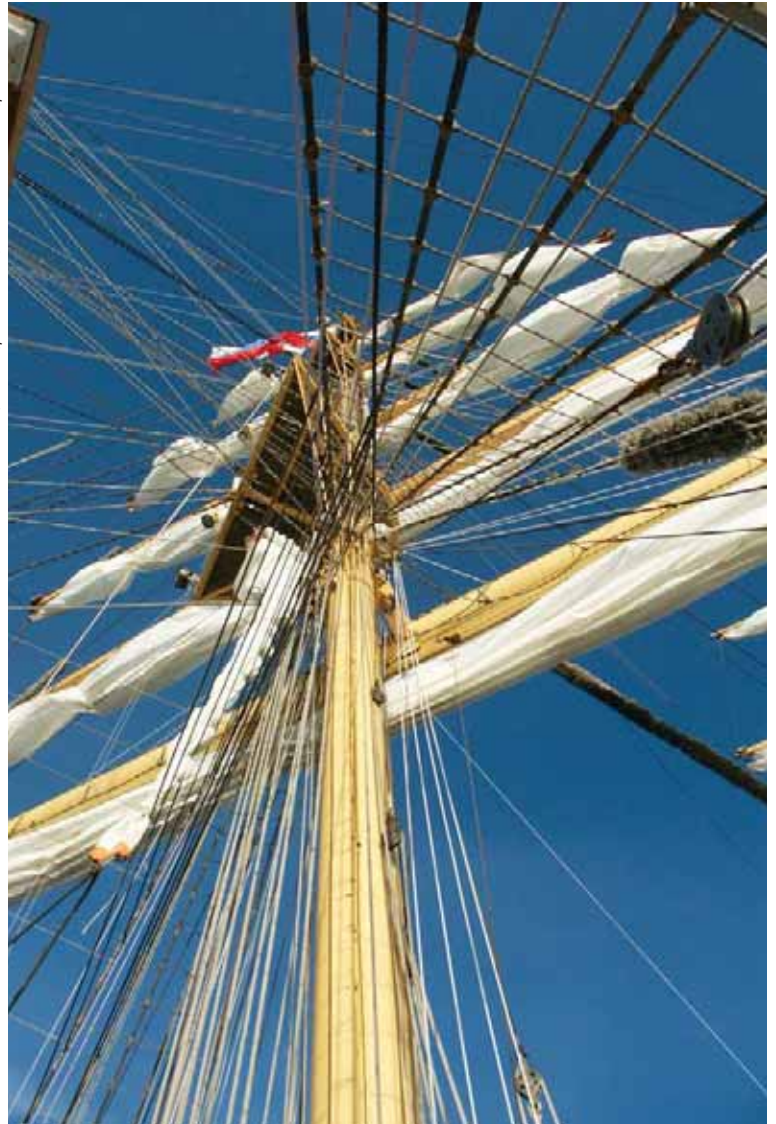
As we toured the beautiful vessel, Viktor and Tatiana regaled us with wonderful stories of their trips around the world. They spoke of visiting Hong Kong, Japan, Australia and other ports of call. Viktor smiled as he showed us a piece of shredded sail that the entire crew had signed, explaining that it had been torn to ribbons by high winds during a bad storm. He watched for my reaction, and the landlubber didn't disappoint - I was in awe. I asked if they were afraid during the storm, but he and Tatiana shrugged. It was just part of life at sea. The crew and cadets don't use safety lines on deck, even in storms. Lines are used only when climbing the rigging and working the sails. It seems there is still some old school left in the Russian fleet.

Viktor and Tatiana have lived and served on Pallada for 8 years, and call the ocean their home. Ports-of-call around the world provide opportunities to walk on solid ground and create diversions that break up the standard shipboard routine. While the Pallada is large - one of the largest tall ships on the planet - she is not the biggest in the Russian fleet. Two of her sister ships are slightly bigger. Below decks, you realize how cramped a sailing vessel really is. The hallways are narrow, with just enough room for two people to slide by each other, and the rooms are small - cadets sleep twelve to a cabin. As a married couple, Viktor and Tatiana have their own shared cabin, a small but cosy home with their own video system and, especially



Above: The ship enters Victoria harbour - the cadets hang off the rigging in a wonderful display.

Right: And you thought you had complex problems - the 160' tall masts of the STS Pallada from below show the mass of lines and rigging that hold the masts up, the sails out, and things together.





The Pallada is a training vessel for the Russian fishing fleet. Above, cadets work to tie things down after the ship has docked. Right: a view of the classroom that cadets spend much of their time in, when they are not working on the deck or in the rigging.



important, a private head with shower. I pointed out to Viktor that rank has privileges, and he laughed. Even after eight years in the small cabin they would live no other way.

When Viktor showed off his office, the modern communications station, we were impressed with the display of high technology. While the cadets may be learning seamanship in the 'old school' way, communications are fully up to 21st century standards.

After our tour of the ship, we offered to show off our city, and our hosts eagerly accepted. We walked through downtown Victoria, giving Viktor and Tatiana a quick history lesson on the early days of our capital. They were keenly interested, showing a hunger for knowledge of the world that exists outside of their sea-going world. They asked probing questions that we sometimes had to work hard to answer, and were visibly happy to walk with us and share a warm June evening. We took in Bastion Square, Government Street, the Causeway and

Thunderbird Park. They were impressed with the totems at the park, and captivated by the original totems on display in the museum's big picture windows.

They were surprised to learn that Victoria is the oldest city in Western Canada, and had only been founded in the 1830's. They asked about Victoria and Vancouver, and were fascinated that Vancouver had been just a collection of ramshackle saw mills until the railway came to town. The last stop on our tour was one of my favourite downtown watering holes, the Garrick's Head Pub, where we chatted and enjoyed some fine local microbrews. Viktor and Tatiana savoured our hometown brews, comparing them favourably to those they had sampled in Hong Kong, Japan, and yes, even Australia!

You're probably wondering what these first time visitors to Victoria, with their worldly knowledge, thought of our city. They were impressed.

Both commented on how beautiful the city is, how clean and full of flowers and trees, and

remarked on the good looking, friendly people walking the streets. My chest swelled with pride - I understood Viktor's satisfaction at showing us around the Pallada.

Nataliya and I escorted our new friends back to their ship just before lights out. It had been a wonderful few hours and an affirmation that no matter where you are from, people are just people, and if you treat them with respect, care and trust, that is what you receive in return.

The crew was able to obtain American visas, and the Pallada's next port-of-call was Tacoma, Washington, followed by a tour down the west coast and across to Hawaii before returning home to Vladivostok.

The TallShips Festival is an exciting addition to the festival season in Victoria and we look forward to visiting with more new friends next time.

Unfortunately, if you missed the ships on this go-round, it will be awhile until you'll have another chance - they won't be back for four years.



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Built in Gdansk, Poland, in 1989, the Pallada is one of five tall ships in the Russian fleet. It is one of the largest tall ships on the planet, and the biggest to visit Victoria's TallShips Festival.



Weather effects: Above is what remains of one of Pallada's sails after a severe storm. The sailcloth is literally shredded, looking almost burned along the tears. My new friend Viktor informed me that this was the result of high winds. The crew signed the piece as a reminder that the sea can be a harsh mistress.

Left: A view of the stern of Pallada, proudly displaying the Imperial Double Eagle of Russia.



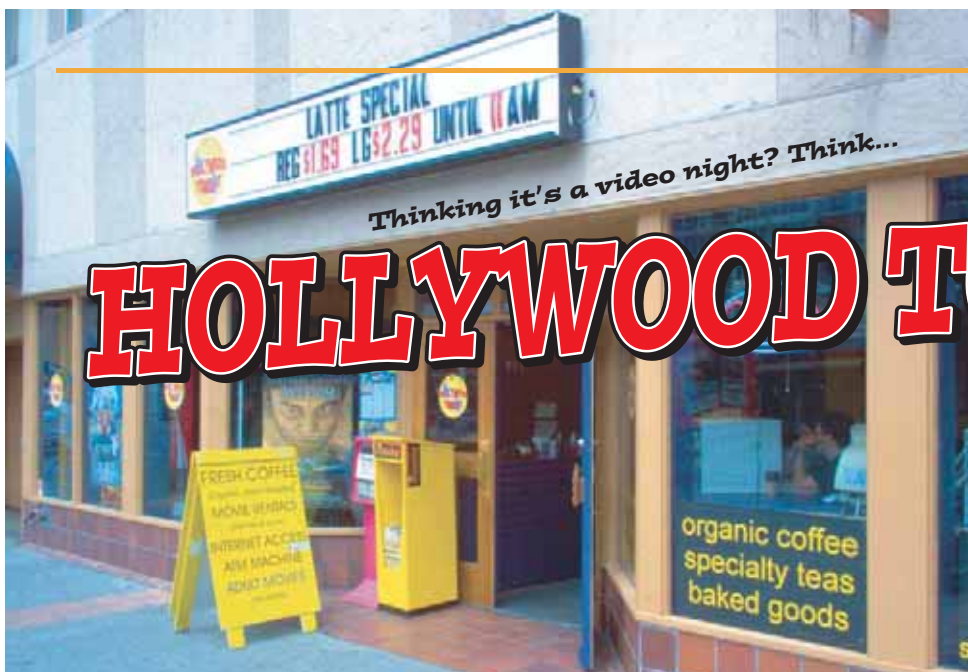
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HOLLYWOOD TONIGHT

Hollywood Tonight is a rarity in our modern world - an independent video store that is growing and thriving. Now remember, the very first video store in North America, the very store that rented the first video over 27 years ago, just closed its doors. To be an independent video retailer in the world of Rogers, Blockbuster and video-on-demand takes a certain amount of courage, moxie, and an unparalleled commitment to the business.

I chatted with Matt Bourque, the general manager of Hollywood Tonight, to see if I could get the low-down on this independent success story.

"We are a store that prides itself on awesome customer service, very fair pricing and an awesome selection of movies," Bourque said. "We want the customer to keep coming back to us because they know we can't be beat." It's a bold statement, but look around the store and you see proof in the selection and the service. I asked him about being an independent video retailer.

"Independent video retailers are the little guys, trying to make it in a very competitive market. We have to compete not only with other video stores but also the internet, pay per view and piracy." He went on to say that companies such as Movie Experts assist with ideas and programs to help these "little guys" grow their businesses. Hollywood Tonight averaged a 20% increase over last year, which Bourque attributes to the hard work of the store's dedicated and knowledgeable staff. He acknowledged that smaller stores have some built-in advantages over the mega-video stores.

"We are always entertaining new ideas to help increase our business - which is what you have to do in order to adapt to a changing market. The coolest thing about being an independent video retailer is the ability to adapt to your customers needs. Being able to order whatever movies you want to satisfy your particular market is totally cool. We have a lot of customers that love foreign and cult films and we are able to hunt down some pretty awesome stuff."

Hollywood Tonight recently moved their premises - not far, mind you - literally across the street from their old Yates Street location. I asked Bourque about the move.



"We were forced to move because our lease was up and the landlord had another company that wanted all the space in our building and

the building next door." Bourque smiled. "The move wasn't a surprise, but it was still a lot of prep and finishing work to make the new space just right."

"We are now located just across the street at 860 Yates Street, under the Sugar night club." He paused. "Our only concern is the noise level from Sugar on the nights they have special events, but I think in the long run the space will really work well for us."

When asked about retaining the same services, he was straightforward. "We will continue what we are currently doing because it seems to work very well."

I asked about competing against the big-box video retailers. Bourque noted the depth of selection that Hollywood Tonight features. "We compete by listening to our customers and bringing in the movies they really want to see and not what the big chain stores think you want to see." He continued, referring to his own experiences renting from big-box chain stores. "I have always liked the look of the big box stores but never liked the high prices or the lack of specialty films."

Bourque became excited as he talked about some of Hollywood Tonight's future promotions. "We are participating in the Zone 91 Days of Summer and are planning to give away a trip for two to Vegas and other prizes to help promote the new location."



He smiled when I said it sounded like a good time for new people to try out Hollywood Tonight. "It's always a good time to try Hollywood Tonight," he said.

I asked how the store kept up with new release videos and all of the paraphernalia that goes with them. Bourque replied, "We have been dealing with the same supplier since the beginning. Video One Canada along with Movie Experts from Ontario have been supplying all the information I need to make informed decisions. When you have a limited budget each month for movies, you really want to make sure you're spending it on the movies that are going to rent and not the ones that just sit on the shelves."

When asked how he wants customers to feel when they walk into Hollywood Tonight Bourque replied, "I want them to feel very welcome and also feel that they are a part of our store." He waved his arm to encompass the entire store. "My staff are very good at letting the customer know that we are here for them. If they need to put off a late charge or want us to order them a movie it's not a problem. We want to make our store their store. The coolest thing is that every day I get to help someone pick out a movie that I think they would love and to hear their reaction when they return it. There are so many amazing lesser known films out there - and helping someone discover them is awesome."

I asked him what kind of films he likes the most. "I love films like "In America," "Donnie Darko" and "Frailty," he replied. "I feel these films are truly the creme de la creme of film making. Movies that make you think about them days after or even make you want to watch them again are my favourites." After a pause, he continued, describing how he feels about the current state of movie-making in Hollywood.

"The movie industry is making way too many remakes. The industry as a whole needs to come up with new and better ideas. How many times can you re-make a film? I would like to see more independent films getting the spotlight and less Hollywood."

Wanting to finish our chat on a personal note, I asked him for some background information.

"I have been doing this job for over 13 years now and I love it," Bourque said. "My customers and staff have been awesome and make my job a lot of fun. The owner of the store, Ray Lam, has been tremendous and it has been my pleasure to work for him."

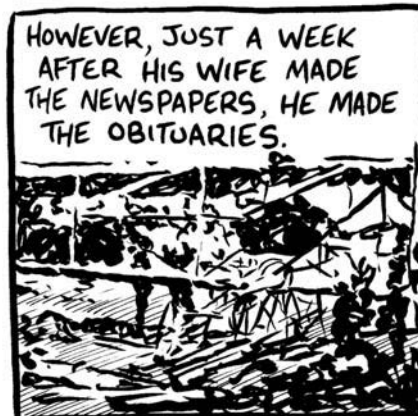


I pressed for something more personal. Bourque responded, "I was born in Saint John, New Brunswick, and moved to Victoria when I was 19. We lived in the country for many years and that is where my brother Jason and I got the movie bug. We didn't have much to do, so movie watching became our main pastime. My brother made several very low budget films as a kid. He now lives in Vancouver making music videos as well as directing, producing and scripting movies. I've lived in Victoria for 15 years and have loved

every minute of it. I met my wife Nicky here and have raised two amazing kids, Donovan and Ginelle." He finished the interview with a comment on Victoria. "I love the people and the weather. The neatest thing about Victoria is the diverse culture. There is so much to see and do."

Remember to visit Hollywood Tonight - at their new address, 860 Yates Street, under the Sugar night club, centrally located, with lots of parking right next door. Say hi to Matt while you're there.

Magic TEETH — by Gareth Gaudin



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MI-5 VOLUME 1

MI-5 Volume One
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My family doesn't watch much television. My 17-year old trolls through a couple of hours of teen-oriented music shows a day, I watch the odd Discovery Channel or History Channel show, and we watch quite a few DVDs. But in our house, the TV is usually off. It's been years since I've sat down at the same time on the same day to catch the next episode of a television drama or comedy. So I nearly missed the newest DVD wave entirely.

Now there are seasons and seasons worth of TV shows on disc - oldies, cult shows, really cheesy stuff and really cool stuff. I'd seen the box packs of complete seasons of TV shows: X-Files, Sopranos, Sex in the City, Buffy, Mayberry RFD, Sgt. Bilko...

The Honeymooners and I Love Lucy were always good for a chuckle. But I never wanted to own a season of any TV show (except maybe James Burke's Connections) until I saw MI-5.

The show is from the BBC, and across the pond, the series was originally titled Spooks. Think about it, and you'll realize why they changed the name when they brought the product over to the colonies. I first saw it when A&E ran the series on cable. Awesome. But it was difficult to catch the show on a regular basis. I missed a lot of episodes, so I've always had a bit of a longing to see the whole series, one show after another. I finally got my chance, on disc.

BBC Video released season one (and season two, but I'll focus on the first season here) on DVD, a three disc set of six episodes, plus all the usual add-ons, voice tracks, cast bios, background videos and the like.



Read almost anything about this show and you'll find it gets rave reviews. The show deserves all of the accolades dished out. Kudos to the gang at Kudos Productions, especially David Wolstencroft, the series creator. So what's so special about this show?

First, it's well written. The stories are interesting and intelligent, the dialogue crisp, and the cast is second-to-none. Each and every one rings true. There is not a disjointed note in the crowd, and they seem happy working together. Good casting, good acting coupled with good writing, and you have the makings of something serious. Only two things could kill this - shoddy direction and production values. They nailed both. Truth to tell, MI-5 is the first show I've seen in a long time that puts the split screen technique to good use.

What's it all about? Pretty much what the title says - the British Intelligence Service, MI-5. Originally called Military Intelligence, Department 5, Britain's intelligence services changed, morphed and swallowed other services until eventually there were three - MI-5, to handle threats originating within the British Isles, the more famous MI-6, to handle external threats (yeah, James Bond works for 6), and the GCHQ (or Government Communications Headquarters), which sort of runs both things. In any case, these are the tales of MI-5's anti-terrorism team of Section B.

At the top, as Head of Section, Harry Pearce, a tough as nails spymaster, can run with the best of them. His team includes Tom Quinn, Zoe Reynolds, and Danny Hunter, assisted by Tessa Phillips and a host of lesser characters.



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This team works week to week to keep the British Isles safe from terrorism and foes including the IRA, fanatic anti-abortionists, white supremacists, Americans, and government bureaucracy. Then they go home at night and try to live normal lives. Right.

That's what sets this series apart - the ease with which the series shows us the personal lives of the central characters. Mainly we see Tom Quinn's life outside of work, but the series also keeps Zoe and Danny in focus and allows the odd peek into Harry and Tessa's lives. The seamless quality of the whole production makes the characters (and situations) compelling.



Even with the most well written characters, if the actors don't work, the show doesn't work.

MI-5 is loaded. Matthew MacFadyen as Tom Quinn, the central character, gets the most screen time, and this man pulls it off. MacFadyen easily transitions between the soft, loving man at home with his girlfriend and her young daughter, and the cold, hard, calculating head-of-ops that his job demands. MacFadyen uses facial expressions to perfection. Zoe and Danny are perfectly cast as well. Keeley Hawes as Zoe and David Oyelowo as Danny strike perfect chords as newly active agents forced to use every skill and instinct to keep up with Tom Quinn and the relentless war on terror. Their private lives add dynamics to the mix, and these two actors have an on-screen chemistry, that, while not red-hot, is certainly interesting.

Peter Firth plays Harry to perfection. Harry, a bulldog of a man, is whip strong and steel cold. He has no qualms about sending people into harm's way. He's fiercely patriotic, loyal to his troops, and has a propensity for quoting the Bible - a fascinating character. Jenny Agutter, rounding out the central cast as Tessa, adds extra spice to the show as an exchange agent who has come from Ports and Harbours. Tessa is distant and hard to get to know, but she sure knows her stuff. Revelations about Tessa, as the series wears on, are jaw-dropping.

While the show is slightly set-bound (no doubt as a cost

control measure), this in no way hampers the show, and in fact serves to highlight the fascinating dialogue. The stories run at a quick pace, inexorably moving toward a conclusion, suspense and anticipation growing along the way. Stunning work.

Each of the six episodes is complete to UK running time, which means about an extra 15 minutes or so across the length of the series that we didn't see on A&E. It's great to watch TV shows without commercials. I love that part.

The DVD package is slick and well designed, and the extras on the discs add to the experience. I particularly like the menu style. A spy breaks into The Grid (the main office) of Section B and uses a desktop terminal to get information about MI-5. The viewer uses this desktop to navigate the discs. For example, click on the stack of DVDs on the virtual desk and the spy picks one up and slips it into the virtual iMac to start the selected show. A Rolodex on the desk provides detailed information and a telephone adjusts the audio settings. A well thought out DVD here - slick and easy to use.

I can't say enough good things about MI-5. Whether you're a TV fan or not, this is a fantastic series that leaves you wanting more. Highly recommended.

J. Michael Dlugos

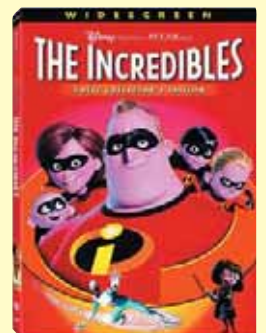


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DISPATCHES FROM ANIME COUNTRY

by Glenn Russell

The girl walking toward me is wrapped in layers of voluminous red robe gathered at her waist by a long sash. Clunky wooden prayer beads swing around her neck, a massive blue-grey wig spills down her back to her waistline, and she carries a wicked-looking but physically improbable sword – don't panic, it's only made of cardboard. The business end of the weapon seems impractical, overcomplicated and top-heavy, designed by an artist half a world away to catch the eye on the page, never meant to appear natural in reality. She smiles, and with a twinkle in her eye, stops near me. I wonder if I haven't been so distracted by all the glitz that I've missed recognizing someone I know. After a moment of squinting at her one-eyed, I see that underneath the special effects she's unfamiliar.

"Nice costume," I tell her. "Inu-Yasha, right? That must have been a lot of work."

She seems pleased. "Oh, not really. This only took a few hours. You should see what I'll be wearing tomorrow -- making the wings took me forever!"

I promise to watch for her, and she's off, up the stairs, toward the heart of the weekend's event, leaving me bemused, impressed and a little lost.

I am in what I can only think of as the Japanese Pop-Cultural Embassy to the world at large – that strange and quirky event known as an Anime Convention. It's like spelunking and skydiving stark naked – a fairly novel hobby that can leave onlookers a little bewildered...like me, after meeting the Inu-Yasha Girl. An Anime Convention is where fans of imported Japanese comic books, cartoons, movies and music can come together in the safety of numbers, let down their collective guard and, for a couple of days, behave in public as they do in private.

Don't worry. You can always make a break for the nearest exit if things get too weird. Until then, get ready to meet a fresh breed of toy collectors, ooh and aah over the latest bootleg imports, page through the portfolios of local aspiring local artists, and get trampled by armies of excitable teenage girls who have discovered that a tiny, wonderful country on the other side of the ocean has created some of the coolest comics, films and TV shows on planet Earth.

I suppose it's best to start at the beginning. A few months back, a good friend asked for help organizing events at an upcoming convention. Steered by the Anime Club at the University of Victoria, Keikon settles into buildings on campus once a year for three days of anime screenings, junk food, dealer tables, costume contests and other anime-related pastimes. I agreed to help...and that's how I wound up surrounded by extras from a sci-fi cartoon version of a Fellini film for one wacky long weekend in March.

Anime, a nickname derived from "animation", if you haven't already guessed, is an umbrella term that, more or less, covers any cartoon that sees the light of day in Japan. Anime includes the ubiquitous magical girl series, Sailor Moon; weekly televised Rage-Aholics Anonymous



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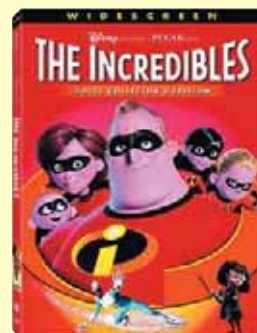
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DISPATCHES FROM ANIME COUNTRY

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Chobits is the story of a young man who finds a female robot on a junk heap. Persistent master/slave sexual connotations aside, I'm told that much of the series is relatively innocent.



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meetings on Dragonball Z; the merciless trash-talking monster throwdown that is Yu-Gi-Oh; Inu Yasha, 2004's breakout hit for Rumiko Takahashi, already the world's best-selling female comic book artist long before her stuff came to North America, and the show that started it all for so many of the current generation of kids on this side of the Pacific, the televised branch of Nintendo's cross-marketing triumph, Pokemon.

Manga, meanwhile, is the word for comic books in Japan, though some folks over here might be surprised at what that entails. Far from the rigidly controlled, highly stylized superhero stuff you find in your average Canadian comic book shop, Manga covers everything from the essential giant robot stories to crunchy science fiction packed with enough hard science to jack up a reader's IQ whether he wants to cooperate or not – hey, read anything by scary-smart writer/artist Masamune Shirow if you don't believe me. You'll also find epic fantasy, raunchy comedy, explicit adult comics, soap operas, period dramas, teen slapstick romantic comedies, and political suspense stories – even comics that revolve around professional chefs in their search for the perfect recipe. The field is wide, wide open here.

Manga is anime's older cousin, and, like any two related teenaged girls who are near the same age, they have about as much in common as they do in contrast. Check out any franchise that jumped the boundary and saw production in both of these formats and you'll find yourself looking at some pretty different end products. In Japan, series that find success in one format are routinely retooled to fit another, dumping themes, characters and art styles in the process. An anime pitched to boys on TV might be altered to skew toward girls in manga, and can be even more drastically re-imagined as a movie. Try any of this mix-and-match jigsaw-puzzle approach to comic book adaptations in North America and producers would soon find themselves looking for the remnants of their careers in trashcans in the back alleyways of Hollywood...but in Japan? No problem. Imagination is key. Diversity is all.

This is where the convention scene comes into play – after all, now that you've seen the show and read the book, it's time to talk about it, right? Every year in cities all over the globe, anime and manga fans come together to gorge themselves on a manic binge of anime screenings, reckless spending, autographs, costumes, games, panels featuring industry professionals, and good times with old friends they never knew they had. A quick look at the schedule for Keikon (remember, that's where we are: Victoria's own homegrown anime convention) and you'll be hard pressed to figure out how you're going to see everything. It's not all about the back-to-back rows of anime screening rooms. There are video games to play, contests to enter, music videos to watch and role-playing games to chase down.

It's not so strange really – Star Trek fans have been doing the convention thing from way back, and Xena: Warrior Princess and Buffy The Vampire Slayer fans still do it, cancelled shows or no. Star Wars fans do it in a big way. Doctor Who fans do it too, Daleks and all. Even gun companies and triple-X adult video stars do it, and why should they have all the fun?

Step in through the front doors and – chaos! Wild colours, unfamiliar sounds, strange languages and people with antennae dashing in all directions. It's enough to make a person think he'd forgotten to take his morning anti-psychotics.

My job here won't be challenging or front-and-center; I'll be facilitating a few contests and overseeing a series of gaming events; pretty low-profile stuff. I sign in at the registration tables, get my all-access badge and take my cue from fellow volunteers – play it cool.

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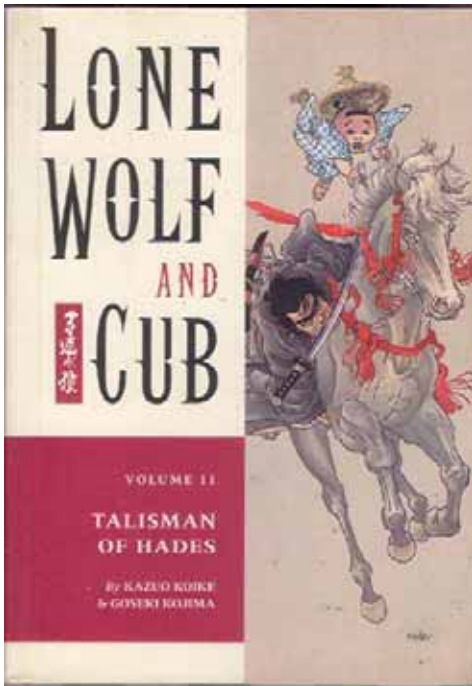
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... fledgling independent publisher First Comics won a loyal readership with their pioneering translations of the long-running, bleak and bloody samurai epic, *Lone Wolf & Cub*. Rising star of sadistically violent film noir, Frank Miller – writer, artist and now co-director of the film *Sin City*, provided many original cover illustrations for the First Comics run of *Lone Wolf & Cub*, citing the harsh influence on his career.

look at my schedule and I'm disappointed it leaves little time for rubbernecking. If I'm lucky I'll squeeze in a show or two, but it's not looking likely. Sure, maybe there's little on offer here that you can't download on your computer at home, but this event is less a chance to catch up on your series backlog than it is a rare opportunity to socialize with your fellow anime enthusiasts.

A few hours later and I'm two events down – so far so good. I still feel like the proverbial stranger in a strange land, but the natives are happy, upbeat, having a good time and glad to be here. I'm taking a break, sitting on the sidelines, indulging in a little people-watching. I watch the enthusiastic crowd comb through stacks of J-Pop-fueled anime soundtrack CDs, oversized silk-screened posters, non-articulated so-called action figures – mostly pink-haired anime girls with proportions bending the laws of physics, cast in various states of undress and compromising behaviour – and mountains of colourful little cardboard boxes, their surfaces clogged with kanji and dramatic illustrations, each hiding a tiny randomized pre-painted plastic model kit inside. These last items are the coveted collectibles known as capsule figures.

I watch as two con-goers haggle over one of the figures – named for their availability in goose-egg-sized plastic capsules dispensed from vending machines all over Japan. The negotiations over the model appear intense; the party interested in acquiring the item claims he's already blown a considerable amount of dough on this line of capsule figures today, slowly working his way through the vendor's stock one by one in hopes of finding this particular character. The other fella just happened to luck into it. Neither seem able to let it go.

Elsewhere in the hall, con attendees – some in full costume, some in civilian clobber – wander up and down the spaces between the vending tables and the registration area, consulting the schedules and formulating plans. The sounds of explosions, panicked shrieks and laser bolts spill from the open doors of the nearest screening room.

I can spot many of the volunteers – wearing what look like weird little pink and grey earmuffs. Triangular and apparently homemade, they stick out on either side of the wearer's head like little bat-ears. I was offered a pair, but guessing that they had something to do with giant mice, I'd politely declined. By this point, it's been explained to me that they are part of the signature look of an anime character – Chii, from the *Chobits* series.

Chobits is the story of a young man who finds a female robot on a junk heap. Persistent master/slave sexual connotations aside, I'm told that much of the series is relatively innocent. The robot calls herself Chii and looks like many gorgeous young anime girls – huge dreamy eyes, long improbably-coloured hair, and a face and body that don't quite match up but evoke something in the 15-25 year old age range – all perfectly ordinary as far as anime girls are concerned. Perfectly ordinary, that is, apart from the weird triangular mouse-ears stuck on either side of her head.

Whew! That's one weird sex-robot-anime-costume bullet successfully dodged. My ignorance is working against me and I feel lost, coasting a tide of in-jokes I can't track. Ride it out, I tell myself. It's all good.

Manga & anime have clawed their way up the domestic sales charts for close to thirty years. Chances are that one of your favourite Saturday morning TV shows when you were growing up was one of the pioneers of anime exports; shows such as *Robotech*, *Star Blazers*, *Speed Racer* and *Battle of the Planets* were among the early arrivals, earning a generation of loyal fans who had never heard the term "anime". I watched *Astro Boy* every morning before school, singing along to the catchy theme song around a mouthful of porridge. I knew even then

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DISPATCHES FROM ANIME COUNTRY

that there was something subtly different about the show, but hey, I grew up in Winnipeg, land of the Festival du Voyageur, Louis Riel and pea soup. I thought Astro Boy was French.

Meanwhile, in comic shops throughout the eighties, fledgling independent publisher First Comics won a loyal readership with their pioneering translations of the long-running, bleak and bloody samurai epic, Lone Wolf & Cub. Rising star of sadistically violent film noir, Frank Miller – writer, artist and now co-director of the film Sin City, provided many original cover illustrations for the First Comics run of Lone Wolf & Cub, citing the harsh series as a major influence on his career.

Marvel Comics, creative powerhouse behind many of the super-hero pop-culture icons of the last 40 years, made much ballyhoo of its foray into manga-esque storytelling with a pair of successive publishing initiatives. First, the Marvel Mangaverse, where familiar characters like Spider-Man, The Punisher and the Incredible Hulk were filtered through a morass of Japanese pop culture cliches and re-imagined as ninjas, giant rampaging monsters and the like. Then, the Marvel Tsunami line, designed to ape the visual appeal of anime while still supplying time-honoured superhero slugfests.



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Sailor Moon, the soap-opera epic about a group of Tokyo high school girls chosen by fate to defend against evil, is a member of an infamous family of series that made it to US and Canadian TV screens in a form far removed from what their Japanese creators had intended.

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Rival DC Comics, home of Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman, recently took a different approach, opening a new editorial wing dedicated to importing fresh Japanese titles. With much publicity surrounding their launch and stated goal of bringing the best manga to North America unedited and undiluted, they weren't long out of the gate before one of their titles, Tenjho Tenge, turned out to be too hot to handle.

What started with a couple of strategic trims and cover-ups in the first volume won't help them by the time they get to Volume Ten, featuring a graphic – and hoo boy, do I mean graphic – sex torture scene. DC created their own controversy, angering die-hard manga fans who would prefer to see the series as originally promised: translated but not edited. They'd hoped for a top-shelf approach, maybe shrink-wrapped and labeled for an adult readership, as with similar titles Battle Royale and Berserk. In the other camp, those pleased with the edits on Volume One could not possibly wrap their heads around events later in the series; the unsuitable bits, unsavoury as they may or may not be, are pretty much an integral part of the story. Abandoning them entirely would leave readers with a story that doesn't make sense. DC is being harried by the very audience it sought to attract.

Contrary to expectation, smaller publication houses are reaping the most benefits from the anime industry. Dark Horse Comics, long a bastion of lesser-known titles and the prime source of English-language manga for much of the 1990s, brought series like Oh My Goddess!, Ghost in the Shell, Dirty Pair and Akira to our bookshelves. Tyros like Tokyopop, ADV and CPM have shown there's much more gold to be mined in them thar hills, smashing their way out of nonexistence to muscle DC and Marvel off the top of the graphic novel charts in less than half a decade.

Anime is everywhere, and like that letter in Poe's story, it seems it was hidden in plain sight all along.

It's much quieter up here on the second floor, removed from the activity around the retailers' tables, contests, game rooms, and the endless troop of con-goers heading from one projection room to another. It's been quite a day. I've got five minutes to spare and welcome a little downtime.

I find myself in what appears to be the only active projection room on this floor. It's empty. Not a single soul to grumble over the director's choice of voice actors, wisecrack about poorly written lines or chuck popcorn at the screen. Even the DVD player hooked up to the projector

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LARGEST SELECTION OF ANIME AND ASIAN MOVIES RENTALS IN VICTORIA

DISPATCHES FROM ANIME COUNTRY

is unmanned, chugging its way through the feature program unsupervised.

I wonder what sets this room apart from the rooms downstairs that have been packed to the gills since the convention opened. Maybe this is too far off the main drag to draw drop-in traffic. Or maybe the air conditioning is on the fritz? I conclude it's more likely because the projection screen is dominated by a six-foot high image of a teenaged blonde in knee-high boots, a gold tiara and pigtails, threatening a big bug-eyed monster: "In the name of the Moon, I will punish you!"

Yes folks, it's time for that anime so many people love to hate -- Sailor Moon.

Perhaps a little back-story is required. Sailor Moon, the soap-opera epic about a group of Tokyo high school girls chosen by fate to defend against evil, is a member of an infamous family of series that made it to US and Canadian TV screens in a form far removed from what their Japanese creators had intended. Deemed too racy for what Canadian production company DIC had settled on as their target audience, the nation's eight to twelve year olds, Sailor Moon was drastically cut before reaching our sensitive TV screens. Gone were many subtleties of plot and nuances of character; gone was the homosexual relationship between two of the male villains; long gone were the messy deaths of all but one of the Sailor Scouts in the final episodes of the first series.

Still, in whatever state it was broadcast, the series' success prompted further seasons of the Japanese TV show to be licensed, and, of course, edited. Romances, plot details, and even genders were re-written. Demand continued until the English-language run of the show ground to a halt at the doorstep of the final season. There was just no way that DIC could edit what they wanted out of the last, no-holds-barred episodes and still have anything left to show in North America that made sense. The unfinished product that made it onto TV here may have been more palatable to censors, but viewers aware of the strengths of the original -- i.e., most of the attendees at this convention -- saw it as a missed opportunity.

And then, of course, there's the part of the audience that just plain hates it. Don't get me started.

It seems the only other person on this floor is bored enough to pass a little time watching the sanitized Sailor Scouts kick some multidimensional butt. A blond kid of about twenty, he hangs in the doorway, slouching against the jamb and sucking on his teeth.

"Pretty quiet up here," he eventually observes. "But all that's going to change once the Hentai starts."

His comment sets off alarm bells in my head. I may not have solved the mystery of the empty screening room after all. For those readers unfamiliar with the term -- Hentai, a word borrowed from the Japanese, refers to an unhealthy sexual perversion, the sort of thing that would land you in some serious counseling, prison or worse. In the anime/manga arena it's used as a catch-all term to describe any animated short, comic book, film or series with explicit sexual content.

"Hentai? What do you mean? They're playing Sailor Moon."

He points to the schedule, posted on the wall just outside the door. Sure enough, the daytime lineup of the over-edited and much-loathed Sailor Moon is about to wrap, and the evening program -- chock-a-block with nubile young anime girls being attacked by lusty multi-tentacled creatures from Dimension X -- is due to start rolling within the hour.

The guy grins. "This place is going to be packed in a little while." He waggles his fingers at me. "Hey, hands above the table, everybody!"

It's obvious now why this room is deserted. No one wants to be seen hanging around waiting for the porn to start. I guess you're supposed to sneak in the back after the credits roll, when no one will notice or recognize you. I make my excuses and slink back downstairs.

At this point, you may be wondering if all of this strangeness is some peculiar quirk of Vancouver Islanders -- maybe something weird in the water, or a short-circuit in the intersection of local leylines that keeps everyone slightly off-center -- but anime conventions are making inroads all over the world. Natives of Seattle pack the halls at Sakura Con, and die-hards make the pilgrimage to Dallas, Texas, for North America's longest-running Anime convention, Project A-Kon. Drop in at any of the big-name shows like the New England Anime Society's Anime Boston Convention or New York's Big Apple Anime Festival and you'll walk away having had an eyeful.

Canada, not to be outdone by our neighbour to the south, is no slouch in the anime-con department. At Winnipeg's Convention Center this August, Ai-Kon 2005 will jam art shows, panels, screenings and make-your-own homemade Anime Music Video contests into a frenetic three-day window. Vancouverites can look forward to the annual Anime Evolution, hosted by Simon Fraser University, boasting 24-hour video rooms, games, karaoke and even an anime themed dance. Calgary cowpokes rally at the strangely named Otafest and Edmonton's Animethon hosts anime fashion shows and competitive anime improv.

Toronto natives can split their time between Anime North -- featuring a toy show, anime-themed gaming events and a skewed version of the TV show you love to hate, J-Idol. At Canada's largest anime event, the Canadian National Anime Expo, you can dip into the Canadian Gundam Model Building Championship, take a class in Voice Acting 101, or get your portfolio reviewed by industry professionals.

And yes, they even do this stuff in Japan. The yearly Tokyo International Anime Fair attracts 200 production companies and enough established anime creators and ambitious rookies to choke a giant robot. It has the strange distinction of being the only convention organized by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and counted more than seventy thousand attendees over a four-day period in 2004. In short, this is Anime Convention Mecca, people.

From Tokyo, Japan, to Leicester in the UK, from Trinidad in the West Indies to the Twin Cities in Minnesota, from Vancouver Island to Melbourne, Australia, the total combined forces of these anime convention-goers could, if harnessed, topple governments or colonize the surface of Mars.

Good thing we've got all this anime stuff to keep 'em occupied, eh?

The end is near. With just a few hours left, real life is slowly creeping in under the doors like icy water finding its way into the innards of the Titanic. Instead of winding down, attendees seem to be kicking it up a notch, knocking back a quick Starbucks and generating enough nervous energy to carry them through to the end without missing a thing.

DISPATCHES FROM ANIME COUNTRY

I'm back on the main floor, running a painting contest in what, in its civilian life, is one of UVIC's lab rooms. People keep darting in and out of the room with confused looks on their faces, asking for the Anime Music Video Room: "Is this it? Is it over? Did I miss it?"

The peculiar progeny of easy-to-use editing features in Windows, plenty of video footage readily available on the internet and fans with too much time on their hands, Anime Music Videos have become something of a tradition at conventions. Combining images from their favourite shows and the pop song of their choice, AMV makers get to play with – and in some cases, snap, mangle and mutilate – the toys that other fans just admire from a distance. Some of the only original video features on offer at events like this, there are certain famous AMVs that are tacitly banned from casual distribution and carefully divvied out to certain conventions as a little added incentive for fans. This year, Keikon has bagged the infamous Nescaflowne, and the results are plain to see in the faces of everyone who mis-reads the posted maps and ends up stumped at the sight of my painting contest.

One after another, I tell them: "Don't worry, you haven't missed it. It's happening just down the hall, second door on your right."

I see the relief on their faces in the point-three nanoseconds it takes them to spin around and beat it outta there, leaving me in the dust like the Roadrunner outdistancing Wile E. Coyote in less time than it takes to blink. Hey, I had to work in a domestic cartoon reference somewhere.

And then it's over. I pack up, pulling down event posters and shuffling out of the MacLaurin Building with enough leftover convention ballast - prizes, paperwork and promo materials – weighing me down to alter

local space-time and create my own personal planet-sized gravity well. I crash in slow-motion onto one of the wooden benches outside, and, as the sun sets, take a minute to collect my thoughts.

After three days, it seems strange to think that if I turn around and go back inside the buildings, there won't be some anime-convention-related activity still going on. The screening rooms are quiet and dark, the chairs folded up, ready for the next series of lectures scheduled for Monday. The vendors have collected their wares and returned to Seattle, Vancouver or wherever else they came from. The cosplay fans have reverted to publicly acceptable personas, stashing their flashy robes, shining tinfoil armour, cardboard swords and styrofoam muscles in their closets, content to carry their spiky rainbow-coloured hair around in their hearts for the moment. The Hentai aficionados have gone back to the anonymous internet, hoping that Canada Customs won't stop their next special order at the border. The shoals of giddy anime guppies, having eagerly devoured the wide and varied diet of entertainments on offer at the con, have broken up into their cliques, mentally gorged on dozens of episodes of fresh new series but nevertheless eager to return to their regular diets of Kazaa, Anime Suki and Bit Torrent.

I'd lay money that a lot of people are thinking, as I am, that this convention zoomed by too quickly. It was flashy, confusing and noisy...like being on the inside of a pinball machine. It was hard work, but it was fun too, and in the end – as so many kids will be telling their parents when the bank statements and Visa bills arrive in next month's mail – it was worth it.

When's the next one?



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VICTORIA
MUSIC
LEGEND

GERTRUDE HUNTLY GREEN

Lisa Szeker-Madden PHD Musicology



When I told people that I was writing a piece about Gertrude Huntly Green (Durand), they responded with “Who?” Gertrude Huntly Green was an important figure in the musical life of Victoria and also in the musical life of Canada. She was the first Canadian piano virtuoso to achieve international renown. And she did it at a time when women were still considered second-class citizens. That fact is acknowledged by her contemporary, The Reverend Father Boltz. Writing about Green in 1927, he confirmed that “the field of piano playing has so completely been dominated by men pianists of such spectacular ability and popularity that a woman pianist must be good and very able indeed in her profession to make an international reputation.”

Ms. Huntly (as she preferred to be called) was born in St. Thomas, Ontario, on July 21, 1889. Her fate was sealed before she was born. Her mother, Anne Kerr, loved music, but had never received any formal music education. Unfortunately for the young bride, she had married into the very musical Huntley family. When her mother-in-law complained that she had dearly hoped her son, Hamilton, would have married a girl of greater accomplishments, Anne vowed that she would have a child so talented it would play an instrument before it could walk. Little Gertrude partially fulfilled her mother’s desires by picking out simple tunes on the piano with her small, chubby fingers before she could walk. And she gave her first public performance on the piano at the age of four. She was born with an extraordinary sense of musical pitch, so perfect that she could name the musical note made by the tiniest squeak of a chair. Reminiscing about her childhood, Green recalled, “Naming the notes of chords was one of my pet games with the minister who used to visit me in St. Thomas.”

Her parents nurtured her musical gift and ensured that she had the best teachers. Her mother had a fondness for the violin, so Gertrude

studied both violin and piano at the Conservatory of Music in nearby London, Ontario. Growing up, she was a consummate tomboy. Once, at a picnic, while swinging on her stomach, she fainted and broke her leg. She laughingly remembered that her little friends “were so frightened, they didn’t know what to do, so they gave me caramel icing and dill pickles to bring me around – and all I could remember afterwards was that I wanted to pull the doctor’s pointed beard when he began to give me chloroform.”

She graduated from the Conservatory of Music at the ripe old age of 12, winning the Barron Gold Medal and the Heintzman scholarship. Conservatory director William Caven Barron saw a brilliant musical career ahead of her, and recommended to her parents that she continue her studies with more prestigious teachers in Europe. So, off to Paris she went. She took piano lessons from Victor Staub, and to please her mother, she began violin studies with Paul Viardot, then the director of the Paris Opera. Things didn’t go well with Viardot.

Huntly confessed, “I’m afraid I didn’t treat Viardot very well. Forgot lessons, etc.” Viardot had a fine sense of humour about the whole thing.

After young Gertrude had missed a lesson, in mock melodrama, he wrote to her exclaiming, “Where are you? In Paris or in Canada? Dead or alive?” Despite Viardot’s good humour, when the opportunity arose for Huntly to study with the more gifted Albert Gélos, she jumped at the chance.

She had a close relationship with Gélos, and in letters he referred to her as “my very dear little friend.” Surprisingly, Gélos had recognised her talent for the piano and asked her to play with him at his violin recitals. That opened up a whole new world for Green. Musicians from all over Paris clamoured for her to accompany them at their recitals.

“
 She is the most gifted woman pianist that I have ever heard...she possesses such superlative artistic qualifications that it is no exaggeration on my part when I state that she deserves a position among the great and leading pianists of our time.
 ”
 - Leopold Godowsky

That was how she attracted the attention of the great Polish composer/pianist, Moritz Moszkowsky, a tremendous honour for young Gertrude, because Moszkowsky had retired from the stage 11 years earlier and rarely accepted students. To mark the auspicious occasion of their first lesson, Moszkowsky sent the little girl a very official-looking appointment card.

“[It was] very formal and very dignified,” she wrote, “but he was a wonderful human person.” In fact, he would play games with her in the woods of Fontainbleau. “He was so tall, and had such very long legs,” she recalled, “I can see him now – how funny he looked!” Gertrude would even spend afternoons with Moszkowsky at his studio, indulging in hot chocolate, always remembering to leave a little bit at the bottom of her cup for his dog.

Much to the disappointment of her mother, it was decided that Huntly’s future lay with the piano rather than the violin. Both Moszkowsky and Géloso collaborated to make her debut piano recital at the Salle Érard on March 5, 1908 the musical event of the season - by appearing jointly with her on the programme. The recital opened with Huntly and Géloso playing the Schumann Sonata in A Minor for violin and piano, and closed with Moszkowsky accompanying her performance of his own piano Concerto in E minor.

“Think of it ... little me in my teens,” she exclaimed, “with the assistance of those two big artists, and Moszkowsky’s first appearance after 11 years retirement from concert work! But he was so kind to me, so genuine, so real – a great character. Oh, the confidence of youth!” And young Gertrude was on her way.

After her successful Paris debut, Gertrude paired up with the famous American singer Kitty Cheatham, and the two performed in recitals together all across England. But Gertrude’s fledging career came to a crashing halt. Her family, thinking that she was too young for a solo career, demanded that she return to Canada. She did, but not before stopping at New York City to play at Massey Hall. That winter, disaster struck when Green was hit with a crippling case of neuritis that left her unable to play. She was rescued from the tragic turn of events by St. Thomas native John R. Green, who stole her heart in New York City. After the two were married, he whisked her off to Cuba, where the warm weather helped her overcome her neuritis and she could perform again.

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VICTORIA MUSIC LEGEND **GERTRUDE HUNTLY GREEN**

The young couple settled briefly in St. Thomas before moving to Victoria in 1912 with their two children, Douglas and Trudie. Victoria's high society welcomed the gifted pianist, but she seldom appeared at social events, preferring instead to spend her time with her children and her music. Huntly quickly became a fixture in the musical life of Victoria. She frequently gave piano recitals at the major theatres around town. She often performed with important European artists as they made their debuts in Vancouver, Victoria, and Seattle. But her influence throughout these early years in Victoria was most keenly felt during the First World War. It was then she established the Red Cross Orchestra, with which she played both violin and piano. She assembled some of the finest amateurs and professionals in the city to play in the orchestra. On its own or in conjunction with the Red Cross Dramatic Company, the orchestra gave many benefit performances in order to raise funds for the war effort.

Huntly played host to many world-famous artists when they came to perform in Victoria. She often entertained them in her studio, where they played together and talked of music. That was how, in the early 1920's, she met the virtuoso/composer Leopold Godowsky. The two quickly developed a close relationship. Gertrude immersed herself in his music and his techniques. Reflecting on her relationship with him, Huntly admitted, "I think I owe more to him than to any other good fairy who has helped my music."

The respect was mutual. Godowsky proclaimed, "She is the most gifted woman pianist that I have ever heard....she possesses such superlative artistic qualifications that it is no exaggeration on my part when I state that she deserves a position among the great and leading pianists of our time."

Godowsky had such faith in her abilities that he contacted a powerful New York management company on her behalf and laid the groundwork for a joint world tour. Together, they would perform with the symphony orchestras of the major musical centres of the world. It was the opportunity of a lifetime! Huntly was torn. The contract would keep her away from Victoria for the better part of three years, and her children were still too young for boarding school. The decision was made for her while she was performing in Eastern Canada. Her son, Douglas, had become ill, and both of her children pleaded for her to return. She immediately cancelled her concert tour, returned to Victoria, and flatly refused Godowsky's offer. The welfare of her family was too important to her.

Three years later, with her children safely tucked away at boarding schools, Huntly travelled to England. With the assistance of Ernest Urchs, the director of the artistic department of Steinway pianos, she played before the celebrated piano virtuoso Paderewski. He was so impressed by her playing that he helped schedule a concert tour of Great Britain and important European centres for the following year. He also had a surprise in store for her. After their three hour session together, he presented her with a new Steinway piano to replace the inferior piano she had been using while she stayed in London.



Urchs did Huntly another favour and arranged for her to study with the composer/pianist Nicolai Medtner in Germany. She admired Medtner's music tremendously, and eagerly anticipated learning its secrets from the composer himself. But Germany was in a terrible state during the 1920's. Rocked by communist riots and suffering from food shortages, it was a dangerous place to travel. After an arduous journey to the tiny village of Pilnitz where Medtner lived, Huntly knocked at his door, only to be dismissed by his wife, Anna. After Huntly explained that she had come all the way from Canada to meet him, Anna fetched her husband, who was in the middle of shaving. He rushed downstairs, face half covered in shaving cream, and asked Huntly to play for him. She tried to be serious, but the sight of the important master covered in shaving cream only made her laugh. And so their friendship began.

Huntly's time in Germany was difficult. The German mark was practically worthless and things were expensive. In her papers, there survives a receipt for a piece of sheet music that cost more than four million marks! Even though she was happy to be playing and learning from Medtner, she often went hungry. She relied on care packages from friends in England for essentials such as bread and butter. But things still progressed swiftly. She studied Medtner's Concerto in C Minor, which she admitted was "very long and very difficult." Working with Medtner was a challenge because he spoke no English, and she didn't know Russian or German. They carried on in French.

While Medtner made preparations for Huntly to appear in a concert tour of Germany, once again family matters crushed her dreams. Her mother had become fatally ill and Gertrude rushed to St. Thomas to take care of her. The bad news continued. In Victoria, her husband had suffered a number of financial losses, and she returned home to find that all of their personal possessions, including their house, were gone. Still, all was not lost. The Green family retreated to their ranch overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca. As her husband rebuilt their fortune, Huntly decided to teach advanced piano students who flocked to her from Seattle, Tacoma, and Vancouver.

In time they were able to move back to Victoria, and in 1927 Huntly travelled to London, England. There she prepared for her debut solo recital, scheduled for March 3 at Wigmore Hall. This was to be the recital that would make or break her career. Several prominent London critics would be in attendance. The day of the recital she was overcome with stage fright. She admitted, "I don't think I'll ever get over my nervousness when I meet my audiences – do you know, not until I have played my first group do I seem able to get my fingers down into the real keyboard and feel it. Until then, I am playing on an imaginary keyboard an inch above the real one. Paderewski never lost his nervousness – and Godowsky suffers, too. You would hardly believe it, but it's true. I suppose it is the more one learns – the more one realises how far one is from one's ideals of perfection."

Huntly had nothing to worry about. The concert was a huge success and the critics hailed her as an artist of the first rank. This was indeed a great accomplishment. Hector Charlesworth, the editor of *Toronto Saturday Night* noted, "The London critics are the severest in the world and absolutely straight. I was struck by the unanimity and the sincerity of their views regarding Gertrude Huntly, especially the critic of the *London Observer*, Fox Strangeways, who is in some respects the most competent of all critics. He said – and it is the greatest compliment to a pianist that I have read in the last 20 years – that anybody who was interested in hearing the piano played as it should be played ought to go and hear Madame Huntly."

After firmly establishing her reputation internationally, Huntly made frequent concert tours of Canada, the U.S. and Europe. The Depression and the Second World War hampered her career somewhat, but she nevertheless appeared as a guest artist with the symphonies of Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria, and Seattle. She received rapturous accolades for her work with the Hart House String Quartet. During the Second World War she continued to support the Red Cross by appearing on the programme of a benefit concert with the Vancouver Symphony. She married prominent Seattle pediatrician Jay I. Durand after the death of her husband in 1945. While the newly-weds settled in Seattle for a time, Huntly often returned to Victoria to give concerts. The couple came back to Victoria permanently when Durand retired.

Huntly stepped down from the concert stage in 1960, but that didn't hinder her influence on Victoria's music scene. In 1964, several prominent Victorians, including Huntly, Mrs. Alix Goolden, Jack Barraclough and Otto-Werner Mueller, collectively founded the Victoria School of Music, which would later become the Victoria Conservatory of Music. The new school was desperately in need of a principal and a vice-principal, and Huntly knew just the people to call. She got in touch with Robin Wood and his wife Winifred Scott Wood, who both had promising careers teaching at the Royal Academy of Music in London, England. Huntly managed somehow to convince them to leave their comfortable positions in England and serve as principal and vice-principal of the fledgling school. Though they initially agreed to a two year trial period, they remained in their positions until 1985.

During her retirement, Huntly indulged in her other great passions: interior design, gardening, and gourmet cooking. But she never lost her touch for the piano. At the age of 96, someone asked her advice on the interpretation of Chopin's Ballade in G minor. To answer, she sat at her piano and played the piece flawlessly from memory. When she was asked how long it had been since she had performed it, she answered with a wink, "Oh, about forty years, but I knew it rather well at the time."

After a life rich with promises fulfilled, Huntly died on January 10, 1987. Little of her legacy remains. At the height of her career in 1929, she recorded Medtner's *Fairy Tale* and *Danza Festiva* for Ampico piano rolls. Unfortunately, it was not until the last eight years of her life that she made taped recordings of her playing. These reveal only a shadow of her former glory, as she was taxed by arthritis and broken fingers. In the end, we have only descriptions from admiring critics. They survive like time capsules in her scrapbook.

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STRANGER'S BLUES

by Summer & The Sinners

Originally recorded as a demo to procure live club dates, Summer and the Sinners' first foray into recording is a tight, concise blues album. Mostly covers, befitting a disc meant as an audio snapshot of the group's live show, prerequisite standards, and clever, seldom heard choices, this album bears repeated listening. Stranger's Blues



is getting substantial airplay in Canada, Europe, U.S. Australia, etc. This translates into tour and booking inquiries, so expect Summer and the Sinners to be leaving Southern Vancouver Island in the near future. Mainly R&B tracks, Stranger's Blues showcases cool Hammond organ by Chris, "the most dedicated sinner", Van De Water-blues guitar played with economy by "Buddy Love" and "Ruthy" his red Gibson ES-335, tasty sax by

Paul Wainwright, and a crazyglue rhythm section with Bob "Teflon Boots" Miron and Mike "Sammy Nova" Speer. Where do they get these names? Let's not forget Summer herself, pouting and belting it out in true blues fashion! The girl has come a long way from her Mayne Island roots. Standout tracks include "Bad Track Record," a real burner and the Sinners' unofficial theme song, and "Strangers Blues," a Sinners original, on track with the group's collective vision of "blues for blues sake." Lots more kickin' blues on this debut. Expect a new album sometime in autumn 2005. Contact: summerandthesinners.com or summerandthesinners@shaw.ca

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c/o: Don Peterson

Music Editor

Insight Magazine

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BETTER THE DEVIL YOU KNOW...

by Devil You Don't

Devil You Don't, a Southern Vancouver Island band, originally formed as Victoria Secret. I saw them a few times at Victoria's Blues House, and the thing I remember best about the group is their kick-ass rhythm section.

They still have that going on! Winners of Vancouver Island's 2005 "M" award, Devil You Don't reportedly has a not-to-be-missed live show. Their album, Better The Devil You Know, is all over the place, not necessarily a bad thing in this case. "Wrong Side Of The River" moves through Squeezish vocals and (oh my God) Rush style guitar. "Turn" is a pulsing rhythmic groove with lyrics that



weave in all kinds of imagery and effectively leave the song's meaning up to the listener. "Rope," a funk/rock send-up, is a co-write with Victoria teacher/musician Dave Augustine. "Bury My Heart" (not the Jason McCoy tradcountry hit) would make a decent single if these guys had their eyes on radio play, underground or mainstream. "Skin" gives us a twist on Neil Finn's "Into Temptation" - nice and bleak, slightly jazzy, and pretty cool. The lyrics ask the object of desire to be real and give the suitor honesty for a change - at least that's what I get out of it. "Zero" is a saga of love and love lost. C'mon, does that really still happen? "Small Talk Waltz" and "Mistress Mona" finish the set and are arguably the best of the bunch. On a lot of these tunes I found myself waiting for the hook but came to the realization that this album is really about grooves and funky group interplay. Don't get me wrong, there are hooks here, but sometimes it is truly just about the vibe. With intentionally obscure lyrics (and album art), Better The Devil You Know has a deceptive "let's throw it against the wall and see what sticks" sensibility. Quirky, eclectic, and hard to pigeonhole. Unusual but interesting. contact: www.devilyoudont.com

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WE STAY HIGH AND LONESOME

by D. Rangers

D.Rangers' "We Stay High And Lonesome," the sophomore follow-up to 2001's self-titled debut, doesn't stray much from the direction laid out on the first disc - just a little more skewed. In case you haven't heard of these guys, they hail from Winnipeg and play what some might call "alternative bluegrass." Traditional bluegrass lovers might have a few other names for it. The band has been known to play Motorhead and AC/DC covers in their live set - all with a decidedly bluegrass bent - and they make it work! All you need is an affinity for the genre and a decent sense of humor. Songs about wronged women, whiskey and blood abound. Oh yeah - I almost forgot - these guys can sing and these guys can play! Tight harmonies, quick pickin', mournful houndawg melodies - yee haw! The group is now apparently at work on a Devo cover - can't wait. contact:www.drangers.ca

SITTIN' BACK

by Jon & Roy

Jon and Roy's aptly titled album Sittin Back is essentially a man with an acoustic guitar singing his songs with laid-back percussion provided by partner Roy Vizar. This kind of music is huge these days with the likes of John Mayer and Jack Johnson - mining folksinger gold! Talk-singing, kinda reggae at times, Sittin Back borders on a kind of rootsy rap thing, like J.J. Cale going nighty-night. Nice music to play while puttering around the house and you want some non-threatening soundpaper to break the silence. Long intros. Stream of consciousness lyrics - I am particularly fond of this one - "making love is healthier than 12 grain bread." Hmm...given that theory, if you eat a sandwich while fornicating you should feel like a million bucks! Laconic, somnambulistic (yes! that is the 10 dollar word for the day- ka-ching!), very pleasant, drifting from song to song, floating down a lazy river, well performed. I hate to use the term "easy listening" with all that it implies, but it fits. Anyway, I'm going to make a sandwich. Contact: www.jonandroy.com

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NEW PRODUCTS ARRIVING WEEKLY

The Canadian Tenors

Royal Theatre,
June 04, 2005
Victoria, BC

The Canadian Tenors left the stage after their first encore and I stood with the rest of the audience, clapping enthusiastically.

"This is not your average opera crowd," I thought. Conductor Clyde Mitchell bowed and bounded off the stage. The noise surged, whistles and foot stomps elevating the ovation to a roar.

"This is not your average Victoria crowd," I thought. I was on the main floor near the front, and glanced around. We were a mix of young and old, couples and groups, even a few children – all loudly expressing our appreciation.

The Tenors came back, almost hesitantly, genuinely grateful for the raucous ovation, and Mitchell came out after them. The stunningly talented Joey Niceforo looked at Mitchell with his hands out as if to say, "What do we do for a second encore?" They huddled and Mitchell took his place in front of the orchestra. The crowd settled in anticipation.

Mitchell looked out at the audience, smiled and said, "All we could think of after all that was to play "Funiculi, Funicula" again." The crowd roared, Mitchell started up the orchestra, and thus, the concert ended as it had begun.



The Canadian Tenors are a National Treasure. I know this for two reasons: first, it says so, right there on their website, and second, I have seen them live. If you have seen them or heard their new self-titled debut CD, then you will know this too. This trio of classically trained tenors, Craig Ashton, Joey Niceforo and Leon Leontaridis, commands the stage.

Alone, each of these artists is a standout performer, and they have the resumé's to prove it. They have performed as international solo artists and individually with a wide range of opera and musical companies across North America. From onstage banter, we learned that each of these talented tenors have won competitions. The eldest, Ashton, humourously bemoaned that he did not receive as much prize money as the other two.

He described their opening piece, Denza's stirring "Funicili, Funicula," as an early PR song. "There was a funicular lift going up the side of Mount Vesuvius that no one wanted to travel on," he said, "so Denza wrote this song to get people excited about it." I don't know if the song got more people riding up the side of Mt. Vesuvius, but it was the perfect way to start the concert and the crowd. The lively song revealed immediately that these three have chemistry on stage. They are obviously happy to be performing together and that joy comes through in their music.

They followed with Ennio Morricone's "Nella Fantasia," an ode to harmony and peace that begins slowly and moves quickly into a soaring melody. Next Leontaridis' solo (and his winning song), Schonberg's "Bring Him Home," from *Les Misérables*, showcased his extraordinarily strong voice to its full extent. Under his mastery, the song haunts the heart. The trio then reunited to perform "Sempre Vicino," a quiet ride that built to a stunning crescendo, after which Niceforo left the stage to Ashton and Leontaridis. Their voices meshed beautifully on "Fantasma d'amore."

Niceforo's solo followed, and if you aren't completely sold on the idea that operatic-style music can be fun and exciting, his performance of the Neapolitan "Torna a Sorriento" would win you over in a heartbeat. Niceforo's voice may be the strongest of the three, and is one of the most robust and exciting I've heard in a long time. He is riveting; his voice pins you to the song and does not let you go until the last stirring note.

Then Ashton, again exercising his wit, commented on how difficult it was to follow such a performance...and proceeded to win the audience over with his solo. Before launching into Puccini's "Nessun Dorma," he described it as "the most difficult aria I could choose as an 18-year-old." He unleashed his voice, displaying his incredible range and power. Reminiscent of classic Russian tenors such as Sobinoff or Lemishev, his voice is the most mature of the three.

The first guest performer, Victoria's own Stephanie Greaves, then joined the trio to perform "We Rise Again." The line "We rise again in the voices of our song," as sung by these four, made for an unforgettable moment. Vancouver Island fiddler Daniel Lapp jumped in and joined the orchestra in an instrumental set of jigs that had the audience clapping and moving in their seats.

The set ended with the Tenors and Greaves singing the inspirational, almost martial hymn "Raise Your Voices." While

Greaves possesses a strong and wonderful voice, she paled slightly alongside the strength of the tenors, providing a soft counterpoint to the power of the three men. The blend produced several wonderful pieces.

After the intermission, the orchestra launched into David Foster's arrangement of "O Canada," and the tenors were soon back on stage, lending their power to our national anthem. The crowd instantly rose to their feet, and in a wonderful, moving moment, sang along.

The jigs with Daniel Lapp and the performance of "O Canada" really let orchestra conductor Clive Mitchell strut his stuff. Mitchell is an engaging conductor. He immerses himself in the performance, drawing the audience in and working with the performers all around. He is a joy to watch.

Following our anthem, the Tenors performed Tosti's "A Vucchella," a love song from 18th century Italy, once again displaying Niceforo's strong voice. The last guest performer, a Canadian operatic veteran, Paul Oulette, then took the stage, performing a fantastic version of "Hymne A L'Amour," in an almost classic crooner's style. Greaves and Leontaridis followed with a duet of "You Raise Me Up," highlighting Leontaridis' astonishing voice.

The tenors then slipped into Canadian folk with "Song for the Mira," breathing life into an old-fashioned folk song and making it their own. They followed with a medley of more Canadian folk songs, including "I'll Be Home for the Bye," and once again had the crowd moving, laughing and clapping along.

The second set wound down with Rita McNeill's "Home I'll Be." The Tenors then invited Greaves and Oulette to join them as they finished the set, having a grand time with Allister MacGillivray's "Here's to Song." Each had the opportunity to show off their individual voices and all five joined in an emotionally stirring finale.

That's when the ovation began, and became louder as a small troupe of little girls marched onstage to deliver a bouquet of flowers to each performer. Funny and heartwarming, the girls were unabashedly amazed at standing before such an adoring crowd. As the little ones tramped off stage, the Tenors launched into their first encore, a terrific "Oh Solo Mio." And that's about where we came in...

The Canadian Tenors are currently on tour. Visit their website, www.canadiantenors.com, to view their schedule and listen to clips of their songs. The self-titled debut CD, distributed by Warner Music, is in stores now and available online on Pacific Music's website (www.pacificmusic.net), or on amazon.ca.



Hungry for Musical Theatre?

Three Schooner Productions presents

Trey Parker's CANNIBAL: THE MUSICAL

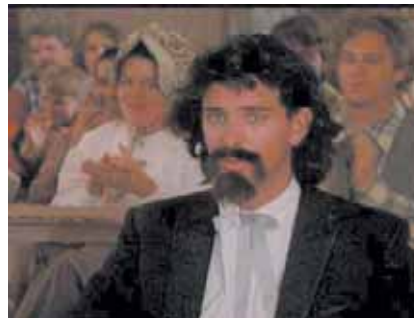
It has been nearly two years since Three Schooner Productions' co-founder Mike Vardy had envisioned bringing "South Park" co-creator Trey Parker's cult favourite to Victoria. That has now become a reality, as the curtain goes up on the Western Canada premiere of Cannibal: The Musical this July through August at The Esquimalt Community Theatre.

Before the creation of "South Park", and in the tradition of "Oklahoma" and "Friday the Thirteenth Part 2", Cannibal: The Musical was brought to life by first-time writer and director, Trey Parker using song and dance to tell the true story of America's only convicted cannibal, Colorado's own, Alferd Packer.

Nearly ten years after its original production, Cannibal: The Musical's legacy is beginning to resemble that of the "Rocky Horror Picture Show". Since Cannibal: The Musical's theatrical debut in 1998, theater groups have been embracing the staged version of this cult musical. The staged musical has been performed all across the globe including Chicago, New York, Phoenix, Seattle and even Rome, Italy! In New York, it was held over for three months!

Jason McHugh starred in the film version as "Miller", and he has been instrumental in bringing the film to stage. "Cannibal: The Musical has become kind of a cult phenomenon, and it's great to see it being embraced on stages all over the world", McHugh says.

Three Schooner Productions has landed local theatre veteran David MacPherson as director, well known for his role in "The Hobbit" and director of Langham Court Theatre's "Love & Anger" this past year. David has assembled a talent-laden cast, including the likes of Pacific Opera veteran Steve Barker, Atomic Vaudeville regular Mike Delamont, Island Music award nominee Kelly Hudson and a who's who of Canadian College of Performing Arts (CCPA) graduates. Handling Musical Director duties is UVic grad Kate Humble, known for her work with TheatreSKAM and The Belfry Incubator Project's "The Lion In The Streets". Kara McLachlan, one of the many CCPA grads working on the production is the choreographer.



"There's been quite a buzz about this project for quite some time now", according to producer Mike Vardy. "I'd been receiving emails for months about auditions, and once I knew all the details were in place, both David and I have been very excited about the prospects of the show. We've assembled a great cast and crew – and they're excitement is fuelling the production as well. It's going to be a blast!"

Joining Three Schooner Productions in promoting this event is The Zone 91.3 FM as the exclusive radio sponsor of Cannibal: The Musical.

The Esquimalt Community Theatre is located at Esquimalt High School, and Three Schooner Productions is assisting the Parks and Recreation Department of Esquimalt in promoting the space as a viable year-round venue.

Tickets will be \$10.00 in advance and for students, and \$12.00 general admission and at the door. Tickets are available at Lyle's Place or by emailing tickets@threeschooner.com. The performances begin at 8:00 pm, with dates as follows (running Thursdays through Saturdays):

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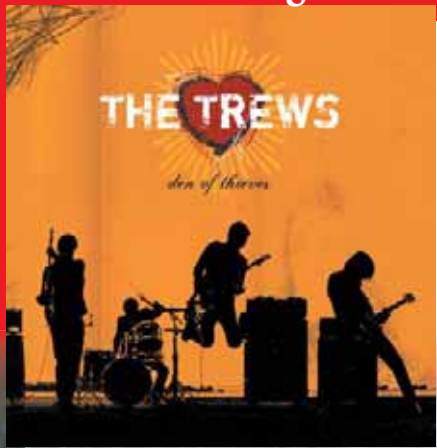
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Although he's just a few months short of his 18th birthday, Liam Titcomb is already a seasoned pro in the music businesses. Titcomb hit the stage when he was just seven years old, singing back up and playing percussion for his seminal Canadian folk father, Brent. Now, with his self-titled SONY Music Canada debut album making waves on the airwaves- the single "Counting Headlights" cracked Top 20 lists across the country - Titcomb is breaking out. Insight Victoria sat him down, to take the lead in our new interview feature, Twenty Questions.

Who are your main musical influences?

i've got so many... but i can list a few of the more known ones... Daniel Lanois, U2, Radiohead, Neil Young, the Beatles, Bob Dylan, etc. not quite as known but not less important to me, Tom Wilson, Willie P. Bennett and Rob Lamothe.

What's the last CD you bought? How come?
funeral by the arcade fire... why? because they're f-ing awesome! it's really a fantastic record from beginning to end...

How did it feel the first time you heard one of your songs on the radio?

it was an amazing feeling, kind of hard to explain. when it first came on it actually took a few seconds for me to recognize it and then i was like "hey! that's my song! that's me!" you feel like rolling down the window and yelling at people on the street to tell them. after that was the realization that right before my song they had been playing U2. unbelievable!

When writing a song, which comes first for you: the words or the music?

usually the music and then i fit words to it. occasionally a song will come with words. although the words are

extremely important to me in my songs they seem to always happen after the structure.

Your vote for greatest Canadian songwriter? Why?

oh this is so difficult. i would have to choose Daniel Lanois though instead of the typical choice of Neil Young or Leonard Cohen... even though i absolutely love their writing, Dan's writing has been more of an influence on me and my music. i also think his solo career has been severely underrated so he deserves it.

Your music is hard to label. There are elements of rock, and pop and folk. How would you describe it?

these days people are afraid of the f-word, the f-word being folk. it's become a negative description almost. so even though i would like to describe my music as folk-rock because it covers it all, i usually say i'm a singer-songwriter who plays acoustic-rock-pop. that way people don't stick me into any one particular box.

What's the first song you ever wrote?
a song called 'Just Breathe' it was about a girl who was dealing with the pressures of life - like looking a particular way and acting a particular way. she felt like a loner who could have done something drastic and the song was saying it was alright, 'Just Breathe'. since then i've heard multiple songs saying 'Just Breathe' in them. i actually wrote it about 4 years ago, i may re-work it a bit and release it some time in the future you never know...

Your vote for worst song ever?
almost every song has a time and a place where it's perfect but maybe "Love Shack" ?

What's your favourite line from a song?
one line that i really like is a Neil Young line from his new record Greendale. it goes like this "a little love and affection, in everything you do, could make the world a better place, with or without you."

Rose of Jericho has an interesting story behind it. Can you fill us in?
i wrote that song after seeing a film about young girls and boys that were being stolen from their homes and sold into the sex trade in europe. it was a really heavy piece, and it made me want to do something. the only thing i could do was write a song. i was stuck for the chorus and started to look around, i found rose of Jericho in a book. i didn't know what it was but it fit perfectly and sounded beautiful. i went on the net later to find out and i couldn't believe my eyes, it was the perfect metaphor for the girl in my song. a "rose of Jericho" is a desert plant that can dry up like a tumbleweed and roll around the desert for years if conditions aren't right but if you submerge it in water in a matter of hours it will come back to life and bloom. my hope is that if you could give these girls a little love and some time they could come back. the last time i played in Regina a woman came up to me after the show and she was crying, she was running a home for teenage prostitutes. she asked if she could tell the girls what i had said and play the song for them when they came to the home. now that makes it all worth while.

You've written a lot with Tom Wilson, and play a number of his songs in your shows? What's the connection?

Mike Roth (sony a&r) first put us together, not knowing that when Tom was a kid (14) he used to sneak into clubs to see my dad. he says he stole every lick my dad had. when i was 14 i started to follow him around. he jokes that i've been titcomb-ized through him. i wrote a lot with Tom because we have a simpatico and he has been a major influence. some of the tunes that were written for me have ended up in his repertoire and suit him better. he's a close friend of mine and i'm just a big fan of what he does and besides that i am continuing a tradition. full circle. Daniel Lanois talks about music being born out of a place and a time. i grew up backstage at the Festival of Friends in Hamilton every year of my life, listening to Junkhouse, Dan Lanois, Colin Cripps and Bill Dillon etc. we all have roots in Hammertown but it's what happens to it after that makes it your own. a good song is a good song and can live through a lot of people.

Your dad is well known to Canadian folk music aficionados. How did he influence your career?
if i hadn't grown up immersed in music i wouldn't be half the musician i am, i might not have been a musician at all. the things i've learned through osmosis and my lifestyle as a kid really prepared me to do what i'm doing now.

If you weren't a musician, what do you think you'd be doing?
i think i'd still have my hand in the music biz in some way but because i'm still too young to get a job at a label, i'd probably be working at some cool café and going to university.

Is there another album in the works?
there is, slowly but surely i'm starting to work on it. no idea what a possible release date would be yet, far too early for that.

Is it true that you're obsessed with the Beatles?
no, i'm not obsessed with the Beatles. they're just my favourite band... ever. i own a few too many books on them but i wouldn't call that obsessed, would you?

Outside of the music, what do you do to unwind?
read a good book under a tree? oh i don't know... the things everyone else does... shoot some pool, ride my bike. i like to get out into the country, and just hang with my friends.

You seem very relaxed on stage. Do you ever suffer from stage fright?
i wouldn't say i have stage fright but i definitely get nervous right before i get on stage. it doesn't matter if there's 9 people in the audience or 9000 i still get the same butterfly's right before i go on. i think it's important to feel a little nervous going on stage because a performer uses that vulnerability to fuel their performance and make their songs and ideas come across. if you get on stage with a cocky attitude you're guaranteed to screw up somehow.

You spend a lot of time on the road. How does Victoria rank along side other Canadian cities?
Victoria is one of the most beautiful cities in all of Canada! i'm still waiting to be able to just hang out in town for a few days to really get a feel for it. last time i was in town i got to do a little walking around but not enough.

What about your personal life. Married, dating, looking...?
married!? no, i'm not married (thank god) and i'm not dating so i guess i'm looking...

Last question. Boxers or briefs? Enquiring minds want to know.
boxers... it's a comfort thing. briefs give you that pinchy line from the seam under your bum. i can't stand that!!

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**Vancouver Island's Hottest
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Hot in the Shade wasn't consciously named after the Kiss album, but the handle stuck in 1992 when Ron and Lawry Rugg formed the group with Don Peterson. The band wasn't their first association - Peterson and the Rugg brothers played together as early members of the Timebenders, and in the country group Ropin' the Wind. Peterson, well known as a guitarist's guitarist with a firm grip of the blues, country and rock, was considered by many to be the first call for a gig in any of those genres, no small feat in a city known for its great guitar players.

None of this fell into Peterson's lap. He honed his natural talent with years of dedication and practice. While working with Ken Tahouney in Ropin' the Wind, he spent countless hours woodshedding the guitar riffs of Brent Mason, Pete Anderson and Vince Gill, perfecting a demanding guitar adaptation of the pedal steel style calling for a unique skill - playing multi notes but bending only one or two. Peterson's dedication, combined with a virtuosity rivaling the top names in the biz, fine-tuned an all round excellent musician.

Like many great players, what you hear at the show is only part of the musician. In the 80's, Peterson was part of the heavy rock group Messenger. Largely a recording project, the Foreigner influenced guitar rock band played live, but opportunities for original groups were fewer then. Peterson penned all the songs on their first album, which went on to receive significant acclaim and airplay in Germany, Sweden and the UK, where they know good rock when they hear it.

They recorded a follow up album, more of a group writing effort that lacked the full effect of the Peterson input. Sadly, the album lacked the raw energy and focus of the first - and tanked. End of Messenger story. Some of the old tracks still spin

on underground radio in Europe. One enthusiastic reviewer advised readers that if they were able to find copies of the cd, "get as many as you can - it's awesome and very difficult to find."

In '92 when Hot in the Shade debuted, Steamers and other clubs had a classic rock format, and the band pumped out Clapton, ZZ Top and AC/DC to waves of adoration from appreciative crowds. Bands that followed, including the Timebenders and That 70's Band, did well taking a page from the Hot in the Shade book.

In its 10 plus years, the group has slugged out the party hits with an extensive list of players (Peterson has been known to call Hot in the Shade a home for wayward musicians), including Phil Wipper, Lou Bujdoso, Joe Kovacs and Gavin Dixon - all top-drawer artists who maintained a high level of musicianship within the group. The trend continues today, with long time member Mike Fraser on drums and Gord Miller playing bass and providing powerful vocals. Variations of the group's live show have come and gone.



In the early days, shows with backtracks could sound a little cheesy. Today, the line between live and recorded is more nebulous, and many groups have a laptop or two on stage. With the freedom to integrate tracks into a song requiring a second guitar part, Gord can switch off his bass, play the second part, and the piece flows seamlessly.

Still highly sought after in the rockin' get 'em up dance scene, Hot in the Shade continues to book months in advance for dances and parties. Peterson credits their success to a simple concept: Listen to the audience and play the tunes that make them move. Maybe that's why they're dubbed "Vancouver Island's hottest rock 'n roll dance machine."

What lies ahead for Hot in the Shade and Don Peterson? You can count on the band to serve up party tunes for a while yet - there's plenty of rock 'n' roll left in these guys. Watch for upcoming solo appearances from Peterson, where he reaches back to his original influences in a blues/rock format. With influences from Jeff Beck, Billy Gibbons, Jimi Hendrix and his years in the trenches, Don forges a new sound that promises to be stronger than ever.

by Raymond Mitchell

a freelance music and entertainment writer.

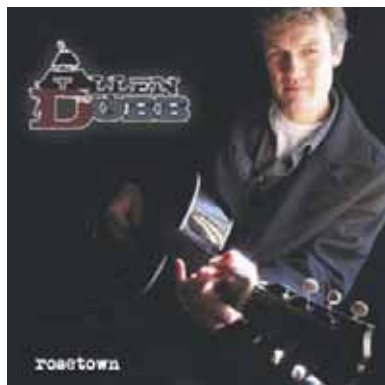
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The Apple iPod and the iTunes Music Store Magic in a small package

Just three years ago, Apple Computer introduced its first digital music players (called mp3 players because mp3 was the main digital music format). Most of these players were small, based on flash memory, and could hold only a pocketful of songs (maybe 20 or 30). These little players were ridiculously expensive, some over \$200. Then along came Apple with a small, white, round cornered box with a screen and a funny wheel. They called it iPod and it was different.



"Let me try this," he told the music industry. "It's only for Macs, you know, that tiny little corner of the computer market. We'll try it out there and see how it goes." The music industry agreed, and the rest is history.

What was this little thing? As usual, in the computer industry, it was not a piece of hardware that really made the difference. It was a piece of software. Just a small, little addition to the iTunes software called "The iTunes Music Store."

The iPod had a hard drive. You could store thousands of songs on it. It worked seamlessly with Apple's music jukebox program, cleverly called iTunes. Plug in your iPod, open iTunes, and pretty much whatever music was on your computer was nearly instantly copied to your iPod. Amazing stuff. And really expensive. Twice as much, or more, as the other mp3 players on the market. But that high-res screen! Thousands of songs! Most importantly, the iPod had a scroll-wheel navigation device that users controlled naturally and quickly with their thumbs. The damn little box was a snap to use.

The iPod caught on like wildfire. They sold like mad. Soon there was a second generation iPod that sold even more. Then the 3G (third generation) iPod. Each had a little better, bigger drive, more capacity and a slightly tuned scroll-wheel to make it even easier to operate. These things were selling so fast that Apple couldn't make enough of them. They were de rigour in Hollywood, and anywhere else you needed to say "I'm cool." It was more than just a piece of computer hardware; it was your own personal music machine, your musical identity tucked into a tiny little white plastic box.

The music industry howled. Pirates were swapping music files to put on these mp3 players, and they weren't paying anyone for the music! Treason! You could almost hear the cracking noises as the nearly 100-year-old edifices of the recorded music industry began to crumble. What would the music industry do? They were losing money for the first time! It couldn't have anything to do with the acts they promoted that were crap, and that most of the albums they trotted out were trash. Of course, it all had to do with musical piracy. (This part is a long and sordid tale, to be told in another venue.) Who could save them, what could save them?

The music industry's salvation came from...you guessed it, Apple Computer. CEO and Reality Distortion Field manipulator Steve Jobs went after the music industry and, perhaps, beat them at their own game.

It was a testing of the waters. Put some feelers out to see if people would buy music online (for 99¢ a track, or \$9.99 an album) instead of just sharing and trading. It might work. Maybe sell a million tracks in six months. The store went online and the millionth song sold just under a week later. A few months rolled by and Apple did something it had never done before. It released iTunes and the iTunes Music Store for the Windows operating system. You were no longer tied to the Macintosh platform to get the full fix of iPod, iTunes and the iTunes Music Store. Now it was available to the other 97% of computer users.

You might think that Apple would rest on their laurels. Ha! Soon came the next thing - the iPod mini. The original iPod had grown larger and required larger hard drives, and the starting price point was a tad too high. The iPod mini was \$50 cheaper, much smaller (about the size of a pack of smokes), but held fewer songs. Oh, and it came in 5 designer colours as well. Guess what happened? Yup. Couldn't keep the damn things in stock. They sold even faster than the originals.

It took Mr. Jobs and company a while, but eventually, iTunes Music Stores began to pop up in other countries. First the UK, France, and Germany. Much of Europe followed, and eventually (after what seemed to be an eternal hold out by a few Canadian companies), Canada got the iTunes Music Store. Now available almost worldwide, in a few months iTunes plans to localize in Japan.

How did Apple's rivals do? Well, Napster came back as a paid service and said they'd kick the crap out of Apple. Real Networks said similar things when they rolled out Rhapsody. Wal-Mart, Sony, Coke, Virgin, you name the company, they rolled out a new online music store with the express purpose of whipping Apple's tail. It hasn't happened yet, and nobody sees it happening for a while.

The CEO of Dell Computers said the iPod is just a "fad." Bill Gates of Microsoft said that iPods will soon be supplanted by

mobile phones that can play music. There is little sign that their words are true (at least yet). The most recent market share statistics show that Apple commands 70% of the overall digital music player market (all kinds). One month after introducing the iPod Shuffle into the Flash Player market, Apple had over 58% of the market. That share has risen in the last few months. The iTunes Music Store has now sold close to 500 million (yes, half a billion) songs and commands over 80% of the online digital music market. A new study shows that the iTunes Music Store is now more popular than most file sharing sites.

And that's not the half of it. There are iPod models running the price range (in \$50 increments) from \$100 US to \$600 US. With a plethora of models and features to choose from, the range remains unmatched by any other maker, and has a coolness and style that can't even come near to being PSP (Playstation Portable), succumbed to the iPod style and included white (white! with a black player) earbuds with the machine. I guess they want their users to look like they have iPods. The cool factor is so high that an entire industry has arisen to complement the sale of iPods. I'm talking, of course, about iPod accessories. There are over 400 products available to go with your iPod, and more coming almost every day. You can buy protective "socks," hard cases, soft cases, carrying cases, car tuners, voice recorders, photo card readers, boom boxes, special headphones - even the "iGuy," an iPod case with little arms and feet that you can bend and pose - talk about anthropomorphizing a piece of technology! These things are pure magic.

Look around next time you're out in your car, or on a walk, or a bike ride. Look at the people on the street. See how many you can spot with white cords running from their ears to their pockets. These people are iPodding. These people are "in the groove," "with the scene," they are hip cats, and they might just be taking over the world. In the 50's we were scared that "pod people" might come from outer space and take over, but we were wrong. The pods didn't come from outer space. They came from Cupertino, California.

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Conveniently located on the edge of downtown in a lovely turn of the century character building, easily accessible to commuters, and those that live east, west, north and south! North Park offers FREE: air, oil, test rides, street parking, and advice. Need a tune-up and work downtown? Drop your bike off on the way, and pick it up as you're headed home.

On offer are new and used bikes ranging from Tricycles to Downhill machines and whacky Choppers to featherweight custom Road Bikes. A favourite project for the staff at North Park is a custom build of any kind, having a unique bike is exciting for both the builder and owner. Also they won't stop taking care of you once you're out the door, they have a reputation for attending to customers' needs long after the initial purchase.

City bikes, cruisers, choppers, road bikes, hybrids, mountain bikes, touring bikes, kids' bikes and trail-a-bikes - from sedate to swish, they'll get you there! The brands of bikes they carry are: Electra, Jamis, Miele, Oryx, Mikado, Ellsworth, Surly, Marinoni and, just in, jorg & olif city bikes.

I test rode the Electra Townie 21 - a supreme blend of cruiser and hybrid. It was stupendously comfortable and incredibly easy to handle! It is a unique bike as it lets you keep your feet flat on

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the ground while still achieving full leg extension for maximum pedal power. It is not a head turner like the rockin' chopper, the Rat Fink, but it has a certain subtle coolness to it that can't be refuted! A style all their own, the cruisers (simultaneously practical and stylin') need to be experienced first hand!

Next I rode the Aragon by Jamis, a hybrid (a cross between a mountain bike and a road bike, meant mostly for pavement), a middle-range steed that combines comfort with speed. It has a suspension seat post to take out the little bumps in the road and a small suspension fork to make curb jumping on your way to work a bit more fun. It sure was a lot more efficient than my mountain bike; I was surprised at how much faster I could go!

I spent quite a bit of time at this great little bike shop. I saw lots of regulars come and go, and some just stayed. It seems this place is a bit of an oasis for those with the bug for bikes. Everyone, newcomer or old-timer, was greeted with a warm smile and genuine interest for whatever brought them in.



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SIMBS

South Island Mountain Bike Society

Once a sub-culture on Vancouver Island, mountain biking has quickly become a major attraction. Originating in the mid 80's, the sport has seen an 80% increase in participation over the last 10 years. With its ideal landscape and a climate that allows year-round cycling, the island has gained international recognition as a venue for professionals. Listing the names of all the world-class riders maintaining local residences would render this article into an extensive index. Most members of the Canadian national teams (representing both mountain and street bike racers) call the island home and local riders number between 5 and 10 thousand.

Some of the credit for the island's international hype goes to a natural tour recognized throughout the mountain biking world. Starting on the mainland's Sunshine Coast, the trail continues in Victoria, progresses to Sooke, Jordan River, on to the Comox Valley, (including Mount Washington, where lifts are open to bikers from June until October), and to Port Alberni before crossing back over the pond to Whistler.

Lorien Arnold, owner and operator of Sooke Cycles, leads the group of enthusiasts supporting Sooke as the fastest growing area dedicated to mountain biking. Sooke has gained global notoriety as the northern gateway to the island's cycling tour, drawing riders from all corners of the world. CRD's newly acquired Harbour View Park is earmarked to become the next park legally approved for mountain biking. Cyclists seeking recommendations on local routes and rides are encouraged to drop in at Sooke Cycles.

Victoria's prime offering and most well known location for technical riding is Mount Work-Hartland park, the only CRD park currently deemed legal for riding. The trails attract nearly 90,000 visitors annually. Maintained and operated by SIMBS (South Island Mountain Bike Society), the site hosts a segment of the Island Cup Race Series known as the "Down and Dirty at the Dump" race. Hartland would easily become more highly recognized and host to more major events if blessed with additional spectator and parking capacity, issues SIMBS is currently advocating. SIMBS offers information on the area, including trail maintenance instruction and site maps, sold at almost every bike shop in town.

The finals of the Island Cup Race Series take place at Mount Washington in August. The cross-country final, a grueling event of endurance and dedication, is scheduled on the 13th, and the most popular spectator event, the downhill, on the 14th. For the downhill, a timed race, competitors sport body armor and under their own free will, not only descend impossible slopes but do the unthinkable. They pedal, hard.



Photos: James Brown



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As ideal a location for amateurs as it is for professionals, the island is a hot bed for training. Suitable for all ages, mountain biking is a great sport for families. "Suqoi" offers a two-day women's dirt camp with small group instruction, group rides and gear demos. If you're looking for something for the kids, check out "Sprockids" (HYPERLINK "<http://www.canadian-cycling.com/sprockids>" www.canadian-cycling.com/sprockids), offered at the Seapark Recreation Center in Sooke. Their course focuses on the four main elements of cycling: safety, etiquette, riding, and bike maintenance. Teaching proper nutrition, hydration, pedal stroking, climbing/descending and "laying the bike down" (a.k.a. crashing properly), the course builds self-confidence, endurance, athletic ability, decision-making skills and respect for nature. For adults already involved in the sport and wishing to do more, there's the Canadian Mountain Bike Instructor Certificate. With the increased popularity in the sport, there is a demand for certified trainers, presenting an opportunity to further your involvement while encouraging others. For more information, see www.wcsmb.com (West Coast School of Mountain Biking).

We live in one of the world's best venues for mountain biking. So whether you're young or old, pro or just interested, consider mountain biking as a hobby or as an opportunity to become involved in sporting events. Don't pass up the chance to be part of something in which the island is leading the world. Gear up.



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GARY FISHER

ARGON 18





Langford

Much more than big box stores.

I was just a little bit late getting to the old man's house in Fernwood that day. I had been out at the Costco store, got sidetracked at Future Shop looking for some iPod gear and couldn't help walking across the parking lot to grab a double double at Tim Horton's. As I drove away, I looked around at the Home Depot, A&W, McDonalds and the PetroCan station, and wondered what this had been like around the turn of the twentieth century and earlier. The old man's tales of Fernwood had whetted my appetite for history, so I made a command decision and dropped by the cold beer and wine store at the Station House to pick up a six-pack before our meeting.

"You're late," he said, opening up the screen door to his little house in Fernwood. Then he spied the beer in my hands and a little smile crept over his face. "Okay," he said, "I guess that makes up for it. A little." He ushered me into his front room and I settled on the couch while he went into the kitchen to crack the beer. His voice slightly muffled, I heard him say to himself, "Oh a little beer won't hurt you none, I reckon." Then there were

the sounds of cupboards opening, caps being pulled and cool refreshing liquid being poured. "So, I suppose you want to hear more about Fernwood, eh?"

I shifted a little uncomfortably, "Um, no, not today."

The old man reappeared from the kitchen with a quizzical look on his face. "Not Fernwood? Well, then why are you here?"

"Well... you worked at the Archives, right?"

"Yeah. I believe I mentioned that." He put the beers down on the table between us. I reached out for mine, then slowly withdrew my hand.

"I was out in Langford, shopping the big box stores, and I got a little curious..." The old man suddenly laughed.

"Oh that's wonderful! You're becoming a right history buff now, ain'tcha?" I nodded, a little reluctantly. "Oh, that's fine. I don't mind. I think history is what we have to look at in order to figure out where to go next. But anyway, Langford, eh?" I nodded again. "Well, that's a very different kettle of



Florence Lake was a popular picnic spot in the early days of Langford. Langford Lake afforded many good times, and coupled with the Goldstream Hotel, Langford was a popular resort area around the turn of the twentieth century.

fish than Fernwood, you know. Very different. Fernwood was because of the water and I suppose Langford is there because of the Yankees."

"The baseball team?" I asked before I realized how stupid that sounded. I quickly took a gulp of beer to hide my embarrassment.

"Course not." The old man harrumphed. "The Americans. The US of A. Remember that the HBC was given dominion over all the lands west of the waters that flow into Hudson Bay, or something like that, and if it wasn't for the speed of the westerning Yankees, most of North America might still be British-like. They'd just started the little fort that was Victoria, but the main centre for the fur-trade in the Pacific Northwest was Fort Vancouver - down near Portland." I looked up in surprise. "Yeah, that's why there's a Vancouver, Washington, and a Vancouver, British Columbia. In 1846, the 49th parallel was declared as the border between the two countries, and though the HBC continued to run out of Fort Vancouver, they soon moved their main operations to Fort Victoria." The old man picked up his beer and took a sip. I looked at mine and realized I'd already drunk half. "The pressure was on. The Brits had the rights above the 49th but there were a lot of colonists streaming into Washington and Oregon. For a time, some people thought that Vancouver Island would be split too. So the Brits acted to bring colonists to the southern island. One of the first was Captain Edward Edwards Langford."

"Well, I suppose he settled around the Langford area, then?"

"Yup. It was the Esquimalt District then. They broke up the area into four big farms, each with what they called a bailiff, hired by the Puget Sound Agricultural Company. Langford was one of the first to sign up, over in England, once they advertised." Here the old man paused for a moment and took a long draught of his beer. "I guess the advertising laws weren't as strict then. The good ol' HBC made things seem like it was a paradise on earth, and their ads tended to exaggerate the amenities of the Fort - no doubt to attract a better quality colonist. Now Langford was pretty slick, and he negotiated a good deal for his farm. He and his family hopped a ship, the 'Tory' I think it was, in 1850. We're pretty used to flying back and forth to Europe in a matter of hours - back then, it was a six-month trip around Cape Horn." He shook his head again. "I can't

imagine packing up and loading your family onto a cargo sailing vessel for six months to get somewhere, but there you are."

I thought about that for a moment and couldn't wrap my mind around it either. But the old man was continuing. I took another swig of beer. "Now Langford, by all accounts, was not the man to run a farm, or at least, that's what the HBC would have you think. After being billeted for a time near the fort in pretty bad conditions, they finally moved into their 'country home', called Colwood, around 1852 or 53. It was the second house built up there, as Langford was quite displeased with what the HBC originally offered to build. He put up a much grander building, and Douglas had his Canadian carpenters pulled from the task. I guess English labourers finished the deal. In the end, Colwood was a grand, 6-room house with 5 fireplaces, and soon became quite the centre of social life in the area. The Royal Navy had easy access through Esquimalt Harbour, and many a captain and his crew were entertained by the Langfords."

"You said he had troubles," I ventured.

"Oh yes, many. He had imported 86 cows, which immediately bolted on landing and were never seen again. Then the sheep became a problem, as they were delivered before their pens were completed. To top it all off, the land was not really suitable for any real farming. Langford had some problems, but his biggest problems were of his own making." The man paused again in his tale, took another sip of beer and looked out of his window for a moment. "You see, the man was extravagant. Some would say wildly extravagant. He ran up a huge debt at the HBC company store, most of it in wine and spirits, and his farm never did pay off. He was just about sacked in 1855, but strangely, he was kept on, due to a glowing letter from none other than Governor Douglas, who was said to be his greatest foe."

The old man looked across at me. "You've finished your beer already. Hmph. Well, I suppose I'd best get you another." He rose and grabbed my glass, heading for the kitchen. I saw that the old man's beer was barely touched. I shrugged. The old man continued as he poured me another beer.

"Langford lasted until 1861, then he was pretty much run out of town. He tried for politics, but Douglas blocked him in that. The man was even brought up on charges, and there's a note that

BUSINESS PROFILE

Love Den Romantic Accessories

Amanda Stacey

In her own words:

I was born and raised in Calgary, Alberta. My husband is a native Victorian.

At the age of 19, I began traveling and lived in many cities across Canada as well as Sydney, Australia and Los Angeles, CA, where I became schooled in the art of goldsmithing.

After arriving in Victoria in 1987, I felt very much "at home" and decided to call this wonderful city 'home.'

I was married in 1991 and decided to pause my goldsmithing career to raise my children first-hand, here in Langford. In 1996 I initiated a licensed in-home day care to supplement our family income. I found this venture to be both lucrative and fulfilling.

In June 2004, my husband made a career change and began working here full time. I've never seen him happier! Now after 2 and a half years in business, I can honestly admit there could be no better career choice for me and my husband! We love the interaction with such a wide variety of people and interests. When a customer can speak candidly, we all benefit from shared perspectives. Whether supplying ladies with staggette supplies, or aiding a customer suffering from health issues, I always feel fulfilled. I've discovered there is indeed a specific personality type that suits this industry. Our customers need to feel comfortable and at ease. Many people like to have fun shopping, while others are shy. I like to think that we are intuitive enough to make everyone's shopping experience positive - after all, walking into a sex shop for the first time is a bit different than shopping for shoes!

says he was tossed in the slammer, amongst the 'felons, Indians and maniacs.'"You could just hear his low chuckle. "I like that. Sounds like a typical prison to me." He returned from the kitchen and placed my beer back on the table. "Never was much of a farm area. The Canadian government got some servicemen to invest in farms out that way after both world wars, but nobody really made much out of them. It just wasn't cattle or sheep country. The only farm animal that anybody seemed to have any success with was chickens."

"Chickens. Okay. So why are all those people out there? Just pressure to get away from the city?"

"Oh no. We're not done yet. There's the only gold rush on Vancouver Island." I sputtered a little into my beer.

"Gold rush? Wasn't that on the Fraser?"

"Yes, but why do you think they called the damned river 'Goldstream'?" I blushed a little. Sometimes the obvious eluded me. "Remember, Victoria was the staging point for that gold rush, and prospectors and miners came from all over. Victoria burst wide open with a huge tent city and prices skyrocketed. Of course, it wasn't such an easy trip to get to the Fraser, and when some reports came down around 1858 that gold had been found just away from Langford's farm, it seemed pretty attractive. There are stories of 500 prospectors at a time tramping across Langford's fields, frightening the heck out of Miss Langford's All-Girls Academy, but I reckon those figures are a little exaggerated." The old man finally took another sip of beer. "Oh they tried; they tried for a few years, and a whole bunch of companies sprang up trying placer mining and digging shafts, but not much ever came of it. It was really truly over in 1865 when they shut down the Goldstream Quartz Crushing Company. Not much more mining until they started mining copper on Mount Skirt in the 1890's."

"Well, there must be more to it than that," I challenged him.

"Oh yeah. There is. I guess the only good thing that came from the gold rush was the fact that the government improved the roads out to there. Up until then, it was mostly walking trails and terrible wagon tracks. I can't imagine how old Captain Langford got his wife's piano out there." He chuckled again. "So at least there were better roads after that, and it opened things up and people began to come, at least for the day during the summer." Another small sip of beer. The old man was amazing. He was stretching one beer out to last a whole afternoon it seemed, while in comparison, I was simply swilling the stuff down.

BUSINESS PROFILE

Shades of Green Flower Shop

Sandra and Arthur Brum came to Victoria a couple of years ago from their native London, England, where they also worked in the floral industry. Arthur quips "What we don't know about flowers, you don't need to know," with a big smile on his face. He then quickly adds, "But we learn something new every day."

You look around their shop, and the first thing you notice is that they don't have any coolers, like most florists in Victoria. "We don't use coolers," explains Arthur, "because flowers can't take it. We keep them in water with food so they stay vibrant. We think that flowers should be fun, you should touch them, smell them, enjoy them."

Sandra got her start in the floral industry by taking the "classic" floral design training in England. The two have been in flowers now for 35 years, and they've been married for 40 years. No matter how you look at it, those are very impressive numbers.

Arthur talks a little bit about the kind of person that it takes to be a successful floral designer, "You have to be artistic, and you have to listen to people." He continues to say that it's best if you are intuitive, as well, so that you can "get inside a customer's head," in order to understand what they need. He then adds, "You really have to love what you do." Of course, that's great advice for any career or job.

When we asked who influenced them, Arthur talks about Constance Spry, an "old floral designer from London," whose style of work he really likes, and Ken Turner, who introduced new concepts into floral design. "He used cabbages and brussel sprouts - brilliant."

The couple also think that floral design can be a good choice for a career, but they stress that the aspiring florist must be artistic and like it. If that is the case, then it's a great career choice. When asked why, Arthur again stresses that the best thing is "customer satisfaction, and, of course, the beautiful products that we work with." He comments that it's great to work in this field in Victoria, because "people are so appreciative, so much more so than in London." When pressed, he notes that the coolest thing he's ever seen as a florist is when he (or Sandra, of course) find new products - for example, a flower that's never been used before, or even seen before.

Since we were on the subject of careers, we asked Arthur what he would recommend for any younger person who might be interested in a career in flowers, and his answer surprised us a little, "go to Europe and work there for a couple of years. All the new innovations come from Europe. North America follows European trends."

We finished off by asking how they felt the business was progressing. Arthur was effusive, "From day one the response from the locals has been phenomenal. We took a risk coming here with the area [Goldstream Station] unfinished, but it just keeps getting better."

Without a doubt, if you have a question about flowers, or need the best you can find, then make sure you stop in at Shades of Green. You won't be disappointed.



Shades of Green
FLOWER SHOP

391-6928

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BUSINESS PROFILE

Surface Boardshop

Brad Patterson

We generally start off our business profile interviews by asking the people what their hometown is, and how long they've lived in "Victoria." Brad Patterson of Surface Boardshop was one of the few we've talked to who can claim to actually be a native. A true local, Brad was born in Langford 33 years ago, and spent many years working in Recreation and with youth. In these capacities, he saw and noticed the growing "board sports" market, which, he feels, had a big influence on starting up the shop. When he coupled his observation of a growing market with the growth of Langford and the fact that there was no one servicing that market, the decision seemed easy.

Brad comments that he really has no special training for his job, but he notes that the previous jobs he's had have certainly contributed essential skills, such as marketing, budgeting and management skills. He says his golden rule is, "You make a mistake once, it's a lesson. Make the same mistake again, and it's a failure." With those words to guide him, one can't help but think that anything this man tries will be successful in the end.

When we asked him about what kind of person you need to be to run a board shop, he answered immediately, "You need to be patient and a real work-a-holic. If you can't handle stress and adapt to change quickly, you'll really struggle." Brad goes on to praise his family and friends for being such a positive influence on this business, "they supported the idea from the beginning and are the ones who see and appreciate the long hours, hard work and sacrifices I've had to make. I think that this kind of business is a good choice for the right person. I've certainly had no regrets."

Brad goes on to praise his customers "the customers are the best thing about this business - hands down. They pay the bills." He laughs, then continues "You have to develop a strong business-customer rapport, and when you do, it's very satisfying. Knowing the customer likes the product and the service they get is very rewarding." We wondered what he thought was the coolest thing he's seen on the job so far.

"Well, we've only been open for six months, so there hasn't been too much just yet." Then he grins. "But, the wet T-Shirt contest we sponsored over at the 'Blue Pearl' was pretty cool." Uh huh. I'm certain that it was.

Brad had one thing to say to people that might be interested in this line of work, and his answer applies almost universally to every new business, "Do your research, ask lots of questions before you make a decision. If you're confident, then just jump in and hold on..."

Got a board and need some advice? Need a new board? Try out Surface. Brad'll make sure that you're done well by, that's for sure.



Langford
Much more than
big box stores.

"Okay, why did they come?"

"Well, let me see if I can remember Dr. Helmcken's words... um... oh... um..." he took another little sip of beer. I smiled just a little. "... it was an awfully pretty place, covered with grass and wild flowers, and red-winged starlings flitted about in the willows - there were no trails in the bush then..." They came, for picnics and outings around Langford Lake, originally, and then of course, there was the Goldstream Hotel."

"You mean the Goldstream Inn. Ma Miller's," I said.

"No, I said, and I mean, the Goldstream Hotel. Ma Miller's came after that. Same location, different place. The hotel burned down in 1923. It was built in 1885 or 86 and what a brilliant idea it was. You see, the Esquimalt and Nanaimo railway was brand new and Goldstream Station was a short walk away. It was all because of the broken promise of the Canadian government, the richness of Mr. Dunsmuir, and the entrepreneurial gifts of James Phair."

"Broken promise? Which one?"

"Well, Sir John A. promised the colony of British Columbia that they would build a railway across the country as part of the lure to get them to join the Dominion. They reneged, truly, when they decided to end the line at the dirty little collection of ramshackle mills at the mouth of the Fraser River. It was decided that they just couldn't afford to build the fixed link across the Strait and down to Victoria, the only real city in BC at the time."

"You're talking about Vancouver," I said.

"Right the first time. It would become Vancouver, and of course, far eclipse Victoria in terms of population. But remember, in the 1800's, Victoria was the place. The HBC fort came down in 1864, and Victoria was called 'The San Francisco of the North'. So, the government talked Dunsmuir into building the Esquimalt and Nanaimo railway. Of course, it would only help the rich bastard get his coal down from up-island, but it was a great PR coup, and that sneaky Irishman Phair had the foresight to buy 1000 acres of land between the railway line and Goldstream River. The land also included a little run-down coach house at Humpback Road. By 1886 the railway was completed and Phair had converted the little coach house into a grand country resort, that, with a little imaginative PR and good business sense, became the resort stop for family picnics and Sunday excursions. There are mentions of as many as 1000 visitors on a Sunday out to the hotel." He stopped again, and drank a little more beer. Mine was long gone, but he didn't seem to notice. I

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moved to the kitchen. He eyed me, then nodded. "Of course, it wasn't just picnics and walking trails. There was so much game out that way in those days that the Goldstream Hotel was a favourite stop for huntsmen. Phair, a strapping young man, was more than willing to go out and hunt grouse and deer with the hunters in the fall. And of course, he made the deal with the militia to use the land as a firing range, so when they were out there, the English-style pub he built was very popular after the shooting was done."

I soon located the fridge and grabbed a third beer. My head buzzed just a touch from the speed of my consumption, but my hand was steady as I poured. The old man continued. "As I said, the place burned to the ground in '23. Of course, Phair had sold the 1,000 acres or so to James Pooley in 1909, and Pooley sold 33 acres of land and the hotel to William and Mary Miller in 1910. Miller died in an auto accident in 1915, and Ma kept the place running with the help of her niece, Daisy, until the fire in '23." I returned from the kitchen and settled back down. I noticed the old man's beer had been reduced by about half. I took a sip of my third. "Miller also owned the Colwood Hotel, which she ran for a few years after the fire, then sold it to George Quincy, and used the earnings to rebuild the Goldstream as a beer parlour in 1930."

He paused and took a long draught of his beer staring out the window. I took a drink and looked too – there was a young couple walking hand in hand up the street. I turned back and caught a smile on the old man's face. He caught me looking at him and grinned. "I had my first beer in a pub in Ma Miller's, just so's you know. She was a right great old dame, always paid her bills, and kept the customers coming back. But her first application for the new Goldstream Inn was not without opposition. Logging companies wrote some letters to the Liquor Control Board, suggesting that a beer parlour so close to logging operations might be too much of a temptation, and reduce the quality of work." He chuckled again. I was beginning to understand that this was the height of his mirth these days. It was like he was afraid to laugh out loud. I began to wonder about his underlying health. "But no matter. Mary, or Ma as she was known, submitted her own brief to the Board, signed by all but one of the local residents. She got her license on, let's see..." there was a short pause as the old man ticked dates or days off on his fingers, "oh, it was December 16, 1930." He raised one finger in triumph and continued, "Ma Miller kept running the place for 15 years, and then she retired. The place, of course, although still officially called the Goldstream Inn, is known as Ma Miller's. Ma herself died in 1966. She was 90. Quite a lady. Well respected, but fair, that's for sure. Some



Above: The Goldstream Inn and Ma Miller's Pub stand where the Goldstream Hotel sat at the end of Humpback Road. Right: looking at the road today, it's easy to see the challenges that faced road builders when they set out to lay down the Malahat drive.



people say now that there's a ghost out there, but no one's ever seen it, just a few things happened, mostly when renovations were happening. I expect that Ma is still out there, watching over things."

"So I guess you could say, 'All's Phair...'"

"Don't finish that sentence, sonny," he chided me. "Well, speaking of Phair, there was one other thing...oh yes, the generating plant." He took the long last pull of his beer, and swirled the last dregs around the bottom of his glass before setting it on the table. I motioned to the kitchen, but he shook his head. "Victoria, of course, was a swank place around the turn of the century, and had electric streetlamps. Only one problem, though, not enough power." For some strange reason, a line of John Lithgow's in "Buckaroo Banzai" went through

my mind. "It was the British Columbia Electric Railway Company, or BC Electric Company, that got things started. The little 25-horsepower steam and coal generator they used couldn't power the electric streetcars, so in 1897, the Electric Company started building a real power plant, out Goldstream way."

"The Company got the use of water from Cabin Pond, off Waugh Creek, and had the first building finished in 1898. That must have been quite a job. No power tools, no caterpillar tractors, just main force from men and horses. I guess they shipped the building materials up the E&N to Goldstream Station, and hauled from there. To start, there were two 360 kilowatt generators."

I did a mental calculation in my head. This one I knew. "Um, that'd be around 600 horsepower."

BUSINESS PROFILE

Westshore Insurance Amanda Bates

Amanda Bates is another of those seemingly rare Victorians – she was actually born and raised here, and has lived her entire life on southern Vancouver Island. She was working for the government, but 17 years ago decided on a "change of scenery," and moved into the insurance business. She wrangled a training program out of manpower, and took a 6-week start-up course to get started. She says however that, "The training never really ends. There is ongoing training that moves you up and through different levels and technologies. You need to keep upgrading and extending your professional credentials about every two years."

We wondered what kind of person it takes to be a successful insurance broker, and Amanda was brutally honest. "You have to have good customer service skills and a natural ability to problem-solve. You have to know how to handle inventory, money, and all the stuff that goes with business. The government audits you once a year." With that kind of pressure, the business skills must be very important, indeed.

Amanda credits her first boss, Andy Vos, as being a big influence on her current career. "He was very supportive and encouraging - he gave me the confidence to continue." For Amanda, Insurance was a good choice. "I like dealing with people one-on-one. The insurance game stretches my mind and ensures that I'm always learning something new. Without a doubt, it's not a mundane job like some might think." She continues, excitedly, about her current business, "I think the best thing is seeing the business grow. We've only been here a year now, but our last location grew hugely in the five years that I was running it. I'm hoping for the same here, and so far, it's doing great."

We asked Amanda what she considered the neatest thing she's ever seen on the job. Her answer was very quick. "A client rebuilt a 1940's roadster, candy-apple red. I saw the car in pieces, and then later, I saw it again once it was finished. It was just beautiful. The worst thing, however, was the one time I was threatened with a semi-automatic rifle." We decided that we wouldn't press her on that issue.

When we asked Amanda about whether she would consider the insurance business a good one for young people, she answered without hesitation, "Most young people I've met aren't committed enough. I've found that the best people for this job are more mature, people in their 30's and older. One needs to have a professional attitude and be willing to develop a clientele. It seems difficult to find the stars in young people." Interestingly enough, that sounds exactly like Amanda's career path.

BUSINESS PROFILE

Cascadia Pure Water Company Bev and Al Jung

Bev and Al have always been a husband and wife team, and Bev says that her husband is her greatest business influence. She says, "We've always done it together." The two hail from Summerside, PEI, and have resided locally here for about 10 years.

When asked, Bev thinks that it takes a "different" kind of person to get into the purified water business, but emphasizes that in her mind, it's one of the best businesses for the future, "as awareness of water quality increases." Perhaps that includes the fact that the business will be great as the quality of our tap water decreases, and threats to local water supplies from pollution, etc. increase as time goes on. One can even suppose that the threat of terrorist attack on water supplies will increase the purified water business.

Bev's training for this company was pretty much the standard business training, with courses in running a business, years of meetings and business experience to forge that training into hard and fast business knowledge and expertise. She also did much personal research before choosing to enter into the water business. She feels that the most important personality traits for this business are "being friendly, hard working, and being able to prioritize customer service."

She and Al both think that the best thing about their business is "feeling really good about our product and how it positively affects people's lives." When pressed to go further, Bev points out how cool it is to "compare tap water to our purified water. How different the colour, taste and smell is!" Of course, their purified water stands alone in the crowd, at least in their eyes, and probably, to your taste buds as well. As I'm typing this, I have a small bottle of purified water beside me, and let me tell you, it's so much better than tap water.

As they said, both believe that this is a great business for the future, and so far, Cascadia Pure Water Company is "an awesome business." After sampling their product, I would have to venture that their product is pretty awesome, as well!

If you haven't tried purified water yet (if you are still one of those that drinks tap water), you really owe it to yourself and your health to venture out to Cascadia and sample their product. I can almost guarantee that once you've tried their water, you won't want to drink anything else!

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"Mmm. A might better than the 25-hp jobbie in the city. Anyway, they soon added a 500 kilowatt, and in 1904, a 1,000 kilowatt generator was installed. The Goldstream plant is thought to have been one of the very first, 'high head' generating plants on the Pacific Coast. They had a static head of 700 feet that got them 285 pounds per square inch of water pressure. Not too bad for a little stream, eh?"

"And Phair?"

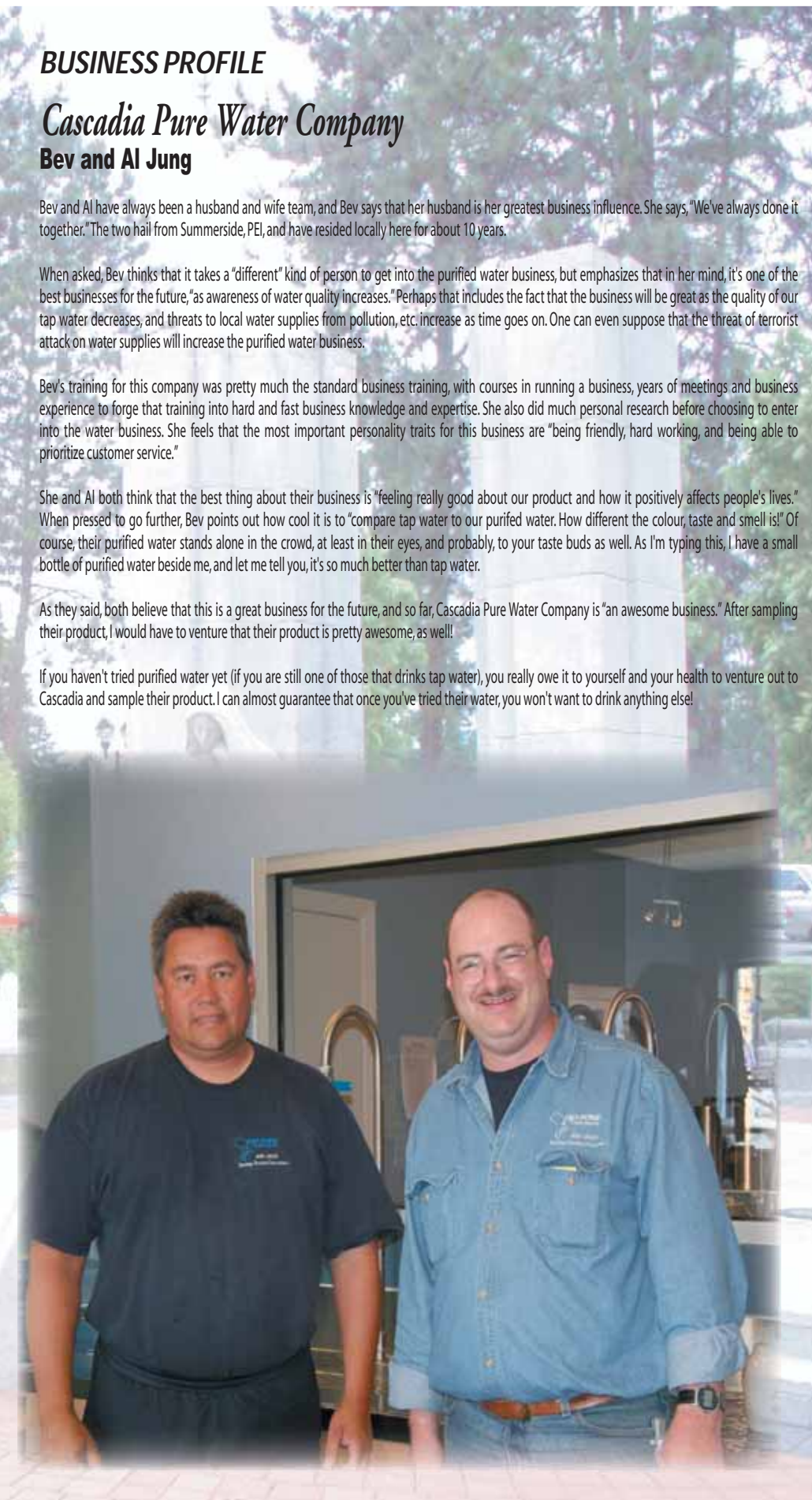
"Oh right. Well, the BC Electric Company was buying up and securing rights-of-way to deliver power, but Phair refused to let them cross his land. Too bad for him, because it was the BC Electric that set up an amusement park on the Gorge in 1905 at the end of a streetcar line. That led to a serious drop in visitors to the Goldstream Hotel." The old man shrugged. I pointed again at his beer, and this time he nodded. I grabbed my glass and his, and returned to the kitchen. The old man paused for a moment or two before continuing. "You know, though, the people out here had it pretty bad at times, particularly about roads."

"Roads? What do you mean?"

"Well, in the heart of Victoria, there were streetcars and paved roads and fancy sidewalks (I remembered his discourse on the Fernwood sand pits), but out a little ways there was hardly anything. Sure, the gold boom there helped things, but making a 4-rut wagon track out of a 2-rutter is not really much improvement. And I would have hated to try and travel up-island by road, at least back then." I returned with our two beers and set them on the table between us. The old man was gazing out at the flat, paved street with 'fancy sidewalks' out front of his home. "You see, the folks up in the Cowichan Valley longed for a road, as the only way they got supplies way back was by a weekly steamer. There was the inland route that basically followed the E&N, but that wagon cart took up to four days. A few voices got some initial surveying done; one in 1874 and another in 1875, but they recommended the inland route, saying the route to the west of the Malahat Mountain was no good. It was, typical of Vancouver Islanders, I guess, one man that really got things going, oh, about 30 years later. MacFarlane was his name, an ex-artillery man who had a 100-acre farm at Cobble Hill. He really wanted a shorter, easier route. In 1903 or thereabouts, he set out and did a one-man survey of the route along the eastern coast of the Saanich Arm. Nothing would have happened, I suppose, if it weren't for politics."

"Politics?"

"Oh yeah. It was provincial election time."



MacFarlane collected hundreds of signatures and took a 10-foot long petition down to the Legislature. This got things moving right smartly, as no politician is willing to turn his back on that many votes." That low, dry chuckle again. "They completed a one-lane gravel road in 1911, and it's believed that MacFarlane himself was the first to drive it, using a team of horses." The old man reached out and took another small sip of his beer "Early on, of course, you didn't drive the Malahat Road like we do today. It was a gravel track, no guardrails, steep inclines, hairpins, you name it. I would guess that not a few people died getting over that hump." He seemed to be flagging just a little, but he wasn't done in yet. "It wasn't really until after WWII that the road was brought up to snuff - straightened out in places and paved and whatnot. It must have been quite the trip back then. Sure is a nice view from up there now."

"What about other roads?" I just couldn't help myself.

"Well, like I say, Langford and the outlying areas had it pretty bad. Take Millstream Road, for instance. I remember, back in the 80's, my son took me for a drive out that way. I wanted to see the old Yew Tree Farm. That's what the Highlanders call Caleb Pike House. It's a historical place now, nicely restored, by the way, but oh, Nelly, what terrible roads. Well, the first mile was alright, paved, two lanes and all, up to Western Speedway, but up past that, it was still pretty much a wagon track. Bad corners, no pavement, just tar and pea gravel, barely could fit two cars side-by-side." He paused for a moment, reflecting. "Still had some gravel roads up there then, too. It wasn't until the 90's that serious road improvements took place up in that area, and that's what much of it was like for a long time. Not that that stopped the cars or anything, nor the growth."

"The Speedway. Man, I haven't been there in a while. How old's that?"

"Well, Western Speedway was put up in 1955, but there was auto racing in Langford from about 1936 at the Langford Speedway. It was on the Old Island Highway, near to Langford Elementary School. It was Jack Taylor that started all that. He had a garage, and put up the oval and the stands himself. I guess it was an oval about 3/10 of a mile, and there are stories that for the first race, some 3,000 gallons of oil were poured on the track to try and keep the dust down." That dry chuckle again, I took a short drink. "I guess there were about 2,000 people went out to those early races, and they had blacktopped and installed lights by the '37 season."

"Must have been pretty exciting."

SPECTACULAR SERVERS



How did you get involved in the hospitality industry?

Joanne Mahoney: When I was 16 I started out bussing tables at a steak house in St. John's and I've worked at a pub or restaurant ever since.

Brandy Ingham: From the time I was 13, I knew the service industry was for me. Fast pace, high energy, lots of volume. Very much my style.

Jen Fisk: I had been working on the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail for 2 years prior in the mud & rain. When a new restaurant opened in my town, all my friends got jobs there and I opted to follow suit and try something new and I loved it.

Heather Riopel: I went to a restaurant as a kid and had great service. I thought it would be fun and I'd be good at it.

Rheanna Drennan: At 18 I started working in a country bar. But after a year of Wranglers and Cowboy Hats, I left and went to Boston Pizza. 3 years and 4 stores later, I made it to the Station House.

Jen Young: I found myself in the nightlife centre of Australia, low on cash and ready to work. I was basically thrown into it and fell right into place!

What do you do on your time off?

Joanne Mahoney: I try to get outdoors lots.

Brandy Ingham: I have a two year old son named Dylan. I love to chase him around the house, the park. I chase him everywhere. Once again, fast paced.

Jen Fisk: I spend most of my time with a pen in my hand, either drawing or writing. I do freelance design & portraits on commission. Outside of work, I'm a bit of an introvert.

Heather Riopel: I spend a lot of time at the beach with my friends and I like to drive around in my brand new car!

Rheanna Drennan: Anything outdoors. Kayaking, Surfing, Hiking. With summer coming, the beach is where you will find me.

Jen Young: I love the outdoors and that's why I live here. I snowboard, hike, rollerblade and garden. I'm always in for a little four-by-fouring!

We all know that a great smile and a friendly attitude set the stage for a memorable time out. What is the most important thing you do to make people welcome?

Joanne Mahoney: I always try to treat all my customers how I would want to be treated when I go out. I do whatever I can so that they have the best experience possible.

Brandy Ingham: Remember their names, but more importantly what they drink. A big friendly smile goes a long way as well.

Jen Fisk: It's important to make each customer feel special, whether it be remembering their name, where they like to sit, what they drink, etc. It is equally important as a server to express one's individuality by revealing small personal aspects of oneself as it humanizes the server to the customer - you become a friend, instead of just someone who drops dinner off at a table.

Heather Riopel: Read the tables - have fun and relate to people as fast as possible. People love it when I can remember what they drink before asking them.

Rheanna Drennan: Get to know your customers, so that repeat customers feel that they are coming in to see a friend. Engage the people in conversation about the life outside the pub! Ask questions!

Jen Young: Smile, smile, smile. I use my humor and give service that I expect when I go out.

When people ask you what is the best thing on the menu, how do you answer them? Do you have set favorites or is it more dependant on what's happening in the kitchen?

Joanne Mahoney: The kitchen is always so creative with their specials and go way beyond the regular pub fare. As for a favourite, it would probably be Master Chu's Chicken Noodle Salad.

Brandy Ingham: I love to sell the specials. The chef is always cooking up new & wonderful entrées. I like to show that we have a higher standard of "Pub Food".

Jen Fisk: I try to identify with each customer differently, as everyone wants something different and there are many factors to consider including time of day, occasion, etc. Nothing is ever cut & dry. I ask questions to get a better feel for a specific customer and then offer suggestions based on what I think they would enjoy.

Heather Riopel: My favorite item on the menu is the Steak Neptune. Our specials are always Amazing. Our kitchen is solid - I never worry about recommending anything.



Rheanna Drennan: I mention a few of my fav's. Usually an appy, salad and entrée, and then describe how delicious the specials are looking tonight.

Jen Young: I always go with our mouthwatering BBQ entrées because that's what I know I would have.

Work is work and sometimes it's hard to be "up". How do you stay motivated to give your best all of the time?

Joanne Mahoney: Leave everything at the door and remember I'm here to do a job. There is nothing worse than a cranky server.

Brandy Ingham: I have a very busy home life. I love to be at home, but I've learned to use work as my getaway. My chance to be Brandy not mom. So anything that's on my mind stays outside the doors of my getaway.

Jen Fisk: I love my job and although some days are harder than others, I find that the more positive energy I put out - the more people smile, and I feed off the energy I create. I am also lucky to be a part of a team who genuinely care and I look out for each other. I am always amongst friends.

Heather Riopel: A great big smile is contagious! Everyone I work with is so positive, you can't help but have fun as soon as you get here.

Rheanna Drennan: Quality "Away" from work time, so that I'm recharged when I show up. Joking with the staff and customers keeps the mood light and leaves you smiling all night.

Jen Young: I always keep in mind that work and personal are kept separate. If somethings bothering you, it helps to be at work to put that out of your mind. It's an escape.

Can you tell a story about your favourite shift or customer that you can remember? What made it that way? Humor, famous guests, wild party?

Joanne Mahoney: New Year's Eve two years ago when I was the only person on the floor because we didn't think it would be busy until the evening. All 150 seats filled up with just me working. there were no major problems and I had my highest sales ever, which meant my highest tips ever. It was insane, but all worth it in the end.

Brandy Ingham: My best night at work was a friday night. We were short of staff. Only myself and another server. We had such a busy night, not an open seat in the house. I didn't know if I should laugh or cry, so I just had fun and went with it. The rush was great, I really earned my after work beer that night.

Jen Fisk: Quite often we have live venues at work, and I like to go out of my way to add to the ambience. I wear costumes and get into the role for whatever the night may call for I am usually the only server to do so. The look on my boss's face the first time I came in costume was priceless.

Heather Riopel: Mechanical Bull Nights are my favorite at the Station House Pub. They're packed and everyone is having such a good time.

Rheanna Drennan: Weekends when the Pub needs a little "spicing" up, me and a fellow co-worker jump up on the bar and kicked up our heels. This gets the room going!!!

Jen Young: I served a few guys all night one night, then ended up joining them after my shift. Only much later did they reveal they were a famous band "Alien Ant Farm". It was great meeting them on a natural level.



"Oh yeah. Choking dust, flying rocks, cars crashing through the fence right by the school, I'll bet it was pretty exciting. Well, they raced there up until 1942 or so, when people really started frowning on auto-racing using up all that precious fuel that was needed for the war. It all ended in 1949 when the land was sold to the Sooke School District. It wasn't until Andy Cottyn almost single-handedly put up Western Speedway in '55 that racing continued. But I tell you, racing is pretty important out there in Langford. I remember quite a few Saturday nights out there at the Speedway." The old man's voice trailed off, and he looked out his front window again. A brand-new shiny Honda with a ridiculous sized rear spoiler slowly toiled down the street. A smile crept onto the old man's face. "Yep. Cars. Cars and girls. They sure go together in a young man's fancy."

I sensed that would be about all for today, but I wanted more. This area has so much deep history. I'd done just a little checking, and Victoria is the oldest city in Western Canada, even if it is less than two-hundred years old. Not so old by European standards, but in a place where history was made by horse-drawn wagon and pioneers with more spirit than brains at times, she was a grand old dame. I got up to take my leave.

"You'll be back?" There was more than just a little hope in the old man's voice.

I grinned a deep grin. "Wild horses and gold rushes couldn't keep me away." I tossed off the last few dregs of my beer, took the glass into the kitchen and rinsed it out. As I passed through the living room, the old man silently gazed out of his window, holding his beer near to his chest. As I reached out to take the glass, a soft snore drifted up to me and I looked in the old man's face. There was a serene and happy smile on it. I took the glass and placed it on the table, and took a wool comforter from the back of the chesterfield, laying it over the old man's legs. As I locked the door and closed it, I looked at my vague reflection in the glass and noticed that there was also a smile on my face. Oh yes, I would be back.

The old man and his house in Fernwood are fictitious. However, the stories he tells, as best we can discern, are factual, if not 100% correct. Any errors or omissions are the fault of this author, who is indebted to the amazing research done by Maureen Duffus and her very interesting "Old Langford," which is available in better bookstores throughout the region. We here at InSight Magazine heartily recommend this book. Remember, history is real, reality is transient.

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