



BRENTWOOD BAY
LODGE & SPA

FROM CALGARY HERALD

FEBRUARY 2006

Brentwood Bay Lodge a coastal getaway

The winter blahs still have a way of gripping us, despite a winter that's been more kind than cruel. You're craving a change of scenery, balmy temperatures, greener landscapes and a little humidity – if only for a few days. And a B.C. oceanside resort getaway sounds pretty appealing right about now.

Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa, located just outside Victoria, on lush Brentwood Bay, is a fine place to banish those blahs.

The five-star lodge's exterior may seem unassuming, until you realize it's likely intentional. Its laid-back look creates a tranquil atmosphere. Take in the warm sunshine, crisp ocean air and a winter-weary body and mind start to unwind instantly.

The warm, woody hues of the lodge are welcoming, as is the striking Canadian artwork and, of course, the expansive ocean views.

The lodge's management team is no stranger to high-end accommodation, or highly sought waterfront locations... The lodge opened to a full house on May 27, 2004, says Jessica Harcombe, sales and marketing manager for the lodge. Since then, the lodge has gained membership into the prestigious Small Luxury Hotels of the World -- a title that includes the top 350 luxury properties in the world. It is only one of five Canadian hotels with this distinction.

Geared primarily for singles and couples, the lodge's attention to detail is obvious. Service extras include things like complimentary calling in North America, free DVDs to watch in your room, romantic candles next to the tub, and sandals and robes in every room. The decor is in line with its West Coast contemporary ambiance. Local artisans Sandra Carr and Joseph Gelin, known for their one-of-a-kind handmade pieces, were commissioned to create the majority of the furniture in the lodge -- right down to the serving trays and candle holders.

Outside, a brisk walk by the water will awaken the senses of any land-locked Calgarian. The lodge has its own 50-slip marina, with ferry access and a water shuttle to Butchart Gardens.

Check out the marine diversity on an eco-cruise, rent a kayak to paddle across the bay or go scuba diving. Brentwood Bay is known for its diving treasures. It's home to the Glass Sponge Gardens, a spectacular sea mountain covered with a species that was thought to be extinct since the Upper Jurassic period. The bay has the largest sponges ever recorded -- some nearly four metres wide. Back inside the lodge, you can choose from the lodge's 33 suites, all with ocean views, a king-size bed and bathrooms outfitted with body-massage showers, jetted tubs and river rock flooring.

The ocean suites also have vaulted ceilings making them seem larger, though in reality, they are the lodge's smallest

suites. Curl up in the super-fuzzy bed throw and enjoy a glass of wine on your private balcony.

Or you could soak up some wine at the spa. It specializes in Essence of Life signature treatments and vinotherapies, including a vino massage or the inventive vino stomp pedicure.

"Think I Love Lucy squashing grapes with your toes in a big vat of wine grapes! You get a glass of wine to sip during your treatment, and we use grape seeds to exfoliate with a little bit of merlot in the lotions," says Harcombe.

The lodge is also home to the Arbutus Grille, which features contemporary coastal cuisine with local ingredients and regional wines. Trying out the four-course tasting menu for \$34.95 is likely the best way to sample, though the coconut prawn tempura and goat cheese tart has become a customer favourite.

IF YOU GO

The Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa is located minutes from the Victoria airport. Rates vary between seasons and range from \$119, a special offer on from now until the end of March 06 for an ocean suite, up to \$459 for a one-bedroom suite with private hot tub.

The lodge is also equipped for corporate meetings and executive retreats.

EXCERPTS FROM:

Calgary Herald
Saturday, February 11, 2006
by Colleen Seto