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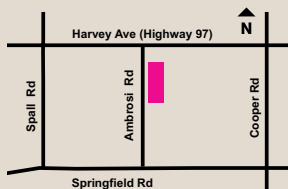


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BUILT IN 6

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SUSTAINABILITY built in

JoAnne Adamson,
development manager, Mission Group

JoAnne Adamson didn't know what she was getting into when she went to work for a developer. In 2002 she graduated from Okanagan University College with a bachelor of commerce degree and was working at a bank when Jonathan Friesen of the Mission Group was developing his vision of Kelowna's first luxury lakeside resort called the Mission Shores.

"I was in awe of his vision and passion," says JoAnne. From talking with him she knew she needed to be a part of it. She was one of the company's first hires and hasn't looked back since.

The Mission Group is responsible for several multi-family communities in Kelowna such as the Verve on Glenmore Road, Amberhill in Kettle Valley and Dwell located on Ambrosi within walking distance of Orchard Park Mall. JoAnne's favourite community to date is the Mode, an 87-unit urban condo project located in the Landmark neighbourhood and completed in 2009. She led the project from start to finish.

"The vision for Mode was to create an environmentally sustainable community," she says. "It's the first multi-family condo building in Kelowna to use solar pre-heated domestic hot water."

As development manager for Mission Group, JoAnne is responsible for planning and managing all aspects of development. What she loves most about her work is that "every day is different." She also loves the passion and drive of all the people she works with especially the three partners:

Jonathan Friesen for his vision, Randy Shier for his brilliant ideas and Gerald Heinrichs for his ability to build a strong construction team.

Today, more and more people are becoming environmentally conscientious and that means, "Builders have to be smarter," says JoAnne. She leads the company's green approach and is a LEED accredited professional through the Canada Green Building Council.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a national third-party certification system that recognizes high performance, green building solutions as does BuiltGreen, a Canadian program that certifies homes constructed to strict energy-efficiency and environmentally friendly guidelines.

Winsome Hill is the group's latest offering and a BuiltGreen community. Every aspect of the project from land selection to the choice of building materials and mechanical systems has been looked at in order to minimize



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

By Karen Slivar

New building projects are a common sight in the Central Okanagan. We decided to get to know some of the people behind the steel and concrete of today's forward thinking residential developments.



the environmental impact, says JoAnne.

For example, the location off Clifton Road and beside Knox Mountain makes it equally close to shopping and outdoor adventure. There's less of that new home smell with the builder's choice of green label carpeting and low-VOC (volatile organic compounds) paints, while drought tolerant landscaping with native plants and front-loading washing machines help reduce water usage. Further eco-friendly features include energy-efficient appliances, low-e double glazed windows, and air-source heat pumps for heating and

cooling. Built to last, the exteriors are clad with fibre cement siding made from 30 per cent recycled material.

Natural Resources Canada is about to make shopping for and comparing green homes easier for consumers. The building code that takes effect in 2012 will require new homes to have an EnerGuide rating of 80. Winsome Hill homes are ahead of the curve with a rating of 82.

For JoAnne sustainability means, "Properly managing one's resources." All resources: water, land, air, energy, financial and human. She's a strong believer in sharing her resources and has an unofficial co-op between friends and family to share things like a lawn mower.

On her days off JoAnne likes to spend time with her husband and riding her motorcycle. While the couple claims no kids of their own, they have a total of five nieces and nephews in town. "I'm a great auntie," she says. In the winter you can find her skiing and snowboarding.

Andrew Gaucher,
operations manager,
G Group of Companies

Born and raised in Kelowna, Andrew Gaucher says he got into house building “totally by accident.” When he graduated from high school he wanted to move out on his own while he attended Okanagan College to study business. He didn’t have the income to buy a home but came up with the idea of building one, living in the basement suite and renting out the top.

With the help of his dad Grant Gaucher, an established and successful developer behind the G Group of Companies, he was able to secure financing and armed with a list of contacts he set out to build his first house.

Andrew acted as the general contractor and gained a wealth of experience in construction management. He was hands-on where he could be, laying steel, stripping forms and cleaning the site. The hardest lesson

he learned was cost control. He spent more than he budgeted and had to sell the house when it was complete.

But the foundation was set. Andrew started Green Solutions Inc. in 2006 while he went to college. At 22 he knew he could build quality homes, but what he lacked was years of experience. At the time no one was doing green so he got accredited as a BuiltGreen builder to set himself apart from the hoards of other builders in the Valley. BuiltGreen is a provincial program that has become the driving force in the industry, it recognizes homes constructed to energy-efficient and environmentally friendly guidelines. On his own, he built about half a dozen houses.

After graduating from college Andrew joined his dad’s company, G Group, where he is exposed to all aspects of development from site selection and development to financing, project management and sales. The flexibility to do a little of everything is what he enjoys about his career.

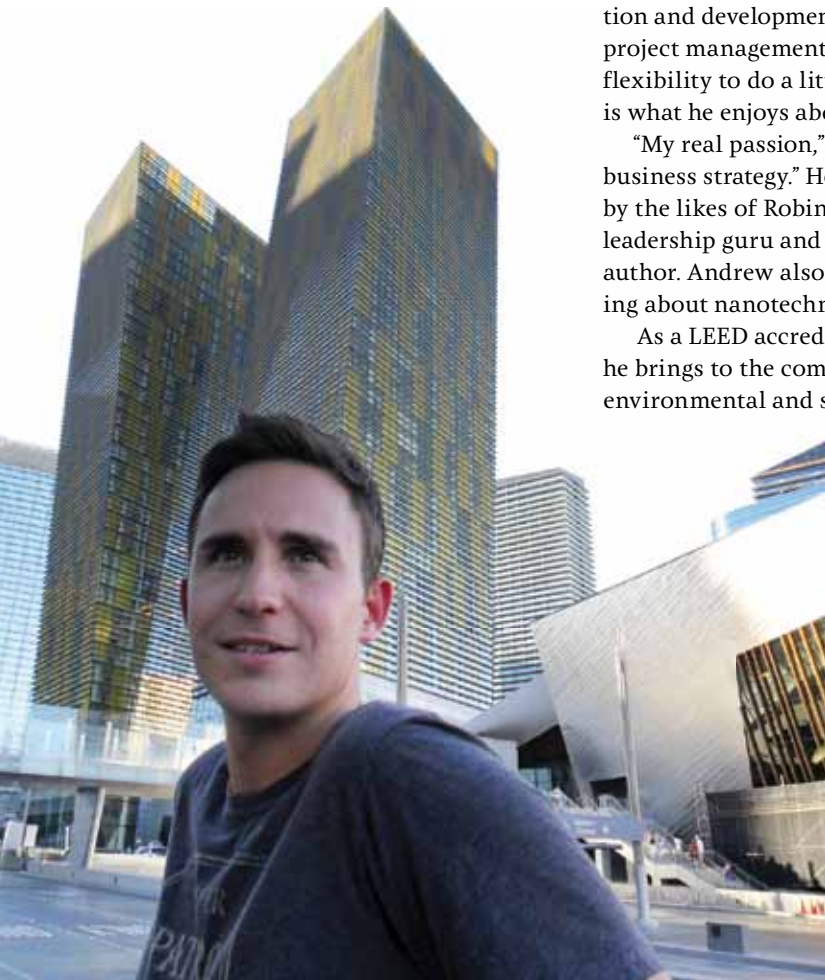
“My real passion,” he says, “is business strategy.” He is inspired by the likes of Robin Sharma a leadership guru and best-selling author. Andrew also enjoys reading about nanotechnology.

As a LEED accredited professional he brings to the company a focus on environmental and social stewardship.

A few years ago sustainable development was defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Today, sustainability takes a more integrated approach. Andrew likes the chair analogy. Sustainable development is like a four-legged chair, each leg represents a different aspect: environmental, social, cultural and economic. If one leg is neglected—shorter—then the chair won’t balance properly.

At the forefront of eco-living is one of Andrew’s current favourite projects, 555 McKay Ave., located in the South Padosy area of Kelowna. The multi-family and office-use development encourages residents to live, work and play from one location. Future projects in the G Group lineup include Ca’Solare a 23-unit condo project in the Mission and a master planned resort and wellness community north of McKinley Landing.

When he isn’t working, Andrew likes to enjoy the outdoors camping, hiking and getting close to nature. A triathlete, he lives within walking distance of the beach, can ride his bike along Lakeshore and run on the flats. “I love travelling,” he says. He married a local gal this April and on their honeymoon they visited Morocco, Spain and Portugal.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Stacey Fenwick,
marketing director,
Sopa Square

Stacey Fenwick is passionate about contributing to sustainable growth in Kelowna and is committed to the community of Sopa Square, a European inspired development, in the heart of South Pandosy.

Born and raised in Kelowna, after high school she left the Okanagan for a spell. She lived in France to learn the language, in Japan to teach downhill skiing and in Vancouver to study business. She started studying electrical engineering at Simon Fraser University but soon transferred into business. "I realized I'm a people person," she says.

After she got her degree Stacey moved back to Kelowna to help her father, Edgar Fenwick, with his development projects and kind of fell into the business. She was 23. That year she bought a lot in Rutland, moved a house onto it, lived in the basement suite and rented out the rest, which paid the mortgage.

"What I like to do is the sales and marketing of real estate projects," she says. The first project with her father was a 63-unit senior oriented building



in Rutland. The latest venture under construction is a landmark project envisioned 10 years ago: Sopa Square.

Concerned with urban sprawl and our society's reliance on the automobile her father envisioned a pedestrian friendly community like those in Europe. The idea is to bring people back into city centres within walking distance of all amenities.

"We can't keep using up our natural resources," says Stacey. "We need renewable energy sources. We need to reuse and recycle everything."

The project was designed by Vancouver architects Busby Perkins + Will and takes advantage of passive energy strategies like solar gain in winter, shading in summer, natural daylight, natural ventilation and thermal mass of concrete to even out temperature swings.

An exciting addition to the South Pandosy area, Sopa Square features underground parking, ground floor retail space with a Granville Island style marketplace, office space and 96 luxury residential suites with ameni-

ties like lap pool, fitness centre and putting green. A covered courtyard is designed to be home to art exhibits, cultural events and artisans who can rent day tables to sell their works. Stacey sees the courtyard as a meeting place where people will gather and spend time with friends.

Don't expect to find big box names in the retail mix. She has worked hard to attract local businesses to maintain the Granville Island feel and her joint venture partners are in agreement. She is a firm believer in shopping at locally owned businesses as they have a vested interest in the health and success of the community. A mix of retail is waiting to move in next summer including a bakery, meat shop, fishmonger and greengrocer.

This past April Stacey completed her masters in business administration from UBC Okanagan. When she isn't working and driving her two kids around she's riding her road bike, downhill skiing, playing soccer or learning to sail.

Jim Meiklejohn,
Meiklejohn Architects Inc.

Behind the development scene there are architects. The Meiklejohn family has been leaving its mark on the Okanagan skyline since 1953.

Born and raised in Penticton, Cal and Jim Meiklejohn grew up with architects for parents. Following in their parents' footsteps, Cal obtained his bachelor of architecture from the University of British Columbia and Jim obtained his from Washington State University. The brothers took over the family practice in Penticton in 1992, and have since opened an office in Kelowna. Today they employ 16 to 17 people.

An architect takes people's ideas and gives them shape. For Jim the joy is in watching people respond positively to the spaces he and his team create. In Kelowna the Cannery Lofts, the Cardington Apartments and the Mode all bear their signature style, as do the Osoyoos Visitor Centre, Kelowna Secondary School and the soon to be built Kelowna Yacht Club.

Jim refers to this style of architecture as "regionally-appropriate modernism." The aesthetics of the building he says are defined by the function and are a reflection of local material, culture, environment and context.

One of Jim's favourite projects is the offices of Beelineweb.com in Lake Country. The post-and-beam design is reminiscent of the area's historical rural buildings and was constructed using locally sourced timber and stone. The clients were personally committed to limit-

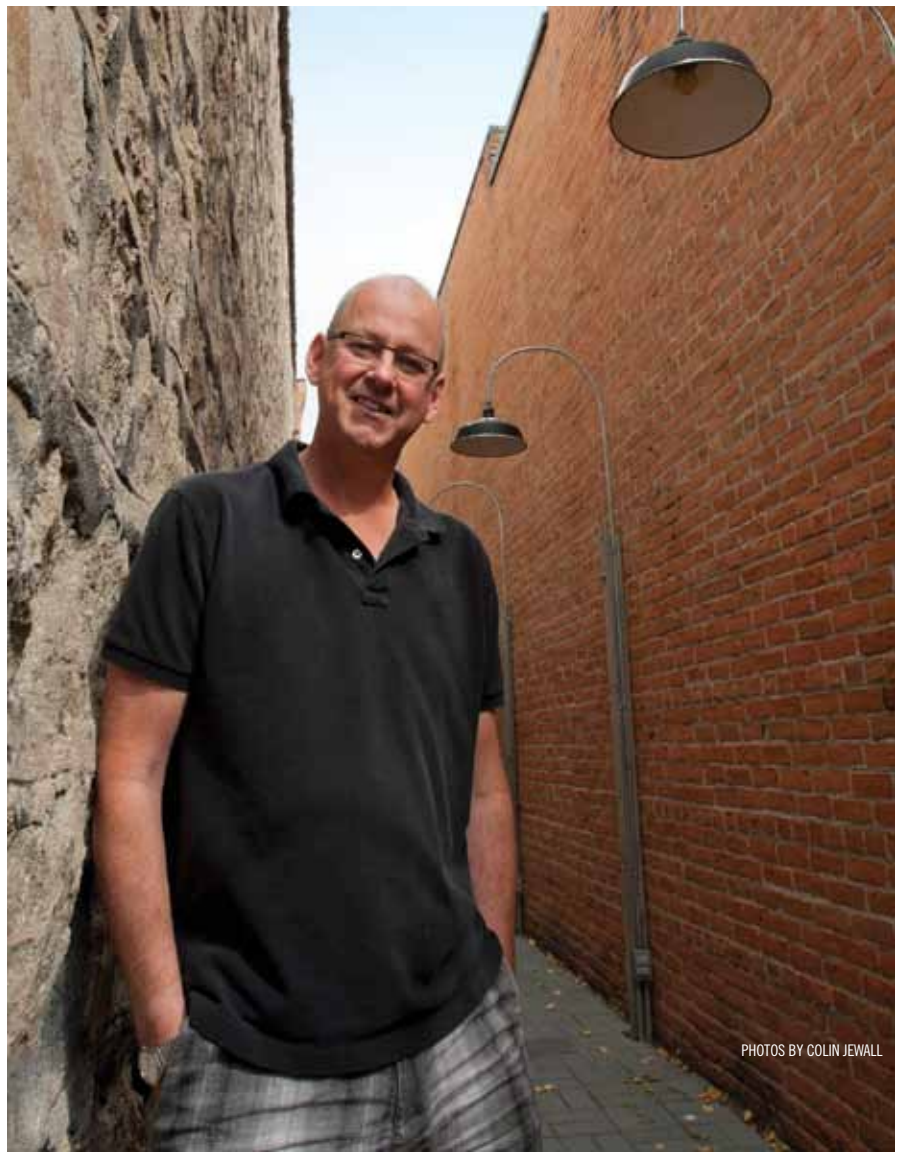
ing their environmental footprint and building green, says Jim.

These days sustainability is designed into most developments, although financial and time constraints limit application in many projects. But where there's a will there is a way. The Mode, a multi-family residence, uses the sun to pre-heat its domestic hot water. The original plan was not as simple and involved the recovery of waste heat from the neighbouring commercial buildings to pre-heat the domestic water, but the red tape involved with getting approval from the BC Utilities Commission halted the design. Without the developer's commitment to the idea the system would never have been built. The condo building went on to win the first annual Mayor's Environmental Achievement Award

for Most Sustainable Development in 2008 from the City of Kelowna.

Jim's environmental footprint is relatively small compared to most homeowners. He and his wife Shirley Ng choose to live in downtown Kelowna, close to the action and within walking distance of basic amenities and civic buildings. "We love it," says Jim. Shirley is originally from Singapore and used to living in a city of five million where everything is within walking distance or can be reached by transit. Although the couple can walk to the office they usually take their car for work related reasons like attending client meetings.

When it comes to days off—not too many of those—the couple enjoys visiting with family and friends. They also like to tour cities and look at the buildings, streets and parks.



PHOTOS BY COLIN JEWELL



Les Bellamy,
Bellamy Homes

"My work will outlive me," says Les Bellamy, custom home designer and builder. He got into the industry honestly, by working. After he finished high school in Armstrong he moved to Kelowna to take a restaurant job at Kelly O'Bryans. He was sent to work in Prince George, Williams Lake and Penticton before he finally came back to Kelowna where he became the youngest general manager at age 20. But it wasn't his passion.

So Les traded in his tie for a pair of steel toed work boots and took a construction job as a labourer. Les was no stranger around construction sites since he'd worked as a labourer for his dad who was an excavation contractor. A year later he was acting as a framing contractor and loving what he was doing.

While on the job he complained about the quality of the blueprints and was encouraged to make his own. He found he had a talent for design and hasn't looked back since. Mostly self-taught, over the years Les has designed about 200 homes and started his own company Bellamy Homes



as a custom designer and builder.

The clients set the bar for "greenness," he says. "Some have very high expectations concerning green features in their homes." The greatest challenge he sees to sustainability is cost with a price differential of as much as \$30,000 on some technologies. "We should be thinking of the environment but the price difference has to come closer before it is feasible," he says.

Les and his wife, Pat, live in Kelowna's Upper Mission,

in a house he designed on a lot that they chose for its view.

On his days off you can find him with a group of buddies playing in a band called the Zamboni Brothers. They've been together for over 18 years and entertaining audiences with their mix of rock 'n' roll, harmonies and comedy. Several years ago his wife joined the boys as a singer. Les plays bass guitar. He says, "It's a great creative outlet and helps clear the mind of our busy work schedule." **OL**

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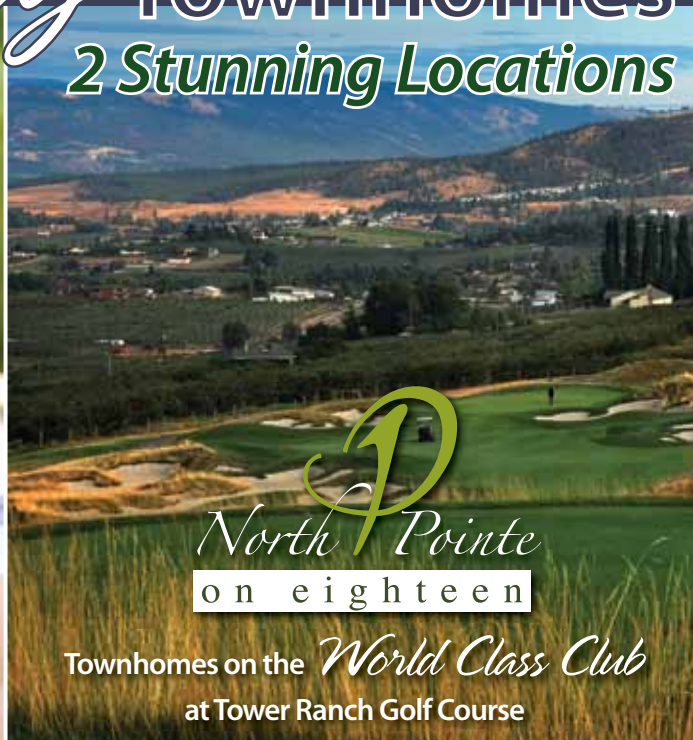
Okanagan communities fall into three loosely defined geographic regions. The Central Okanagan has emerged as the commercial and transportation hub. Kelowna has a sophisticated urban appeal while Peachland, Lake Country and West Kelowna retain more of a small-town feel. Extending into the rolling farmlands beyond Vernon at the head of Okanagan Lake, the North Okanagan is different from its southern neighbours. Life reflects the region's cattle ranching and agricultural foundations. The South Okanagan is unique in Canada with rare ecosystems and a relaxed lifestyle. Communities include Summerland, Naramata, Penticton, Oliver and Osoyoos. Beyond the Valley to the north, the Shuswap region blends agriculture, homegrown arts and a zest for outdoor recreation.



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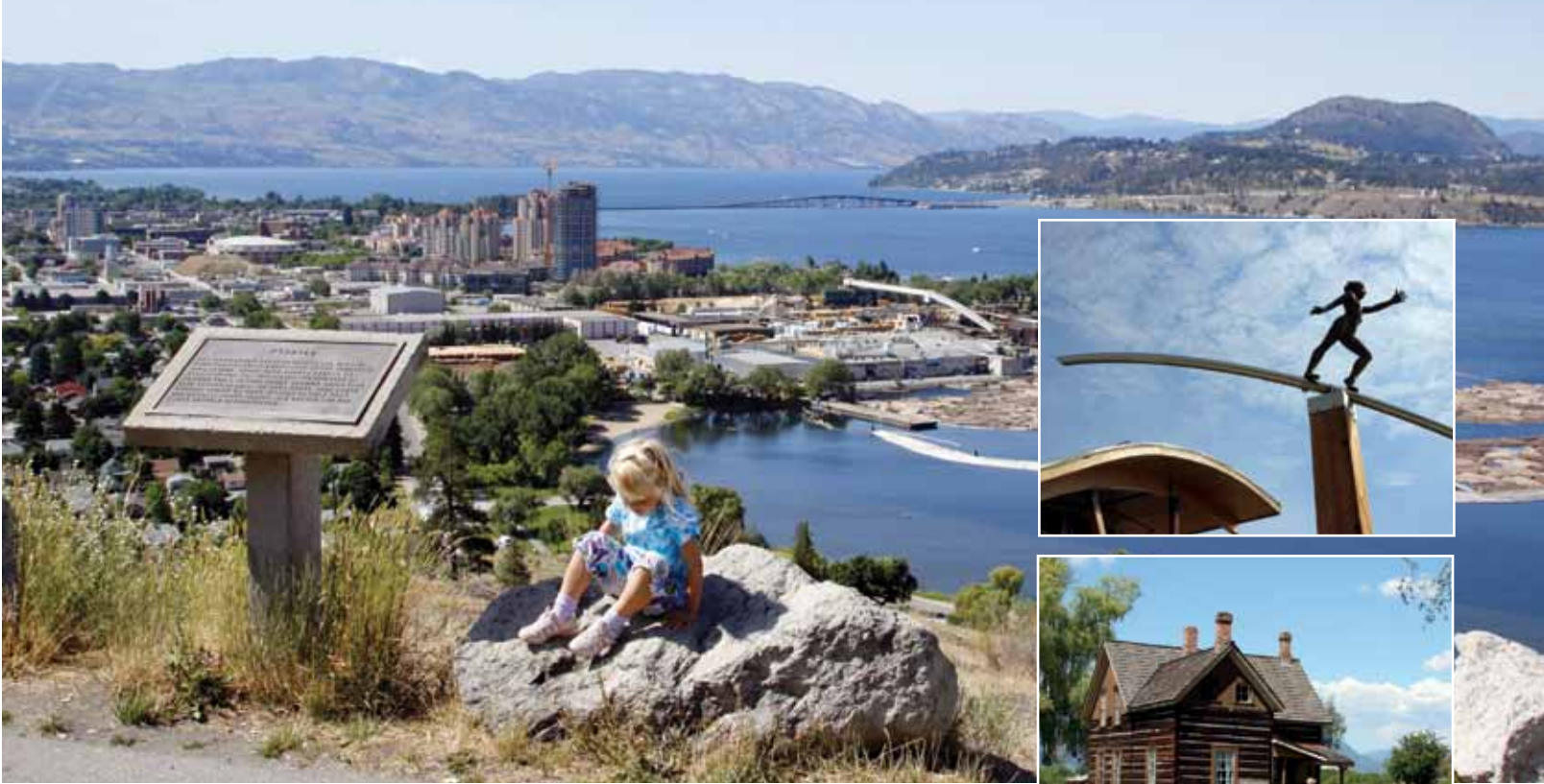


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Kelowna has also been designated a cultural capital with many events and activities focused in its vibrant downtown Cultural District. Notable venues include the Rotary Centre for the Arts, a multi-purpose facility for artistic and cultural experiences; the Kelowna Community Theatre, which hosts the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra, concerts and the performing arts; and Prospera Place, 6,000-seat home of the Kelowna Rockets hockey team

and site of performances by major touring entertainers.

Also scattered throughout the Cultural District are museums, art galleries, unique restaurants, the ornamental Kasugai Gardens and 11 intriguing sculptures on permanent display. Further afield, early European settlement is remembered at the Father Pandosy Mission and Guisachan House.

The city's fast developing culinary culture has attracted a cohort of top chefs whose restaurants are dedicated to preparing locally sourced foods and spotlighting Valley vintages.

Downtown, wine lovers head for The Rotten Grape and nibble tapas with a boggling selection of wines by the glass. Stop by the Bohemian Cafe & Catering Co. It's popular with everybody from artists to lawyers and hosts a great Sunday brunch. Bouchons Bistro presents a wine list rated by *Wine Spectator* as one of the most outstanding in the world to complement regional French cuisine. Select the daily chef's table or dine à la carte. At RauDZ the look is sleek and a little flip. The menu celebrates local bounty and offers some surprises (you won't believe the grilled salmon "blt") and you'll still find chef Rod Butters signature dishes. Stop by the Yellow House Restaurant for lunch or dinner in a 1906 heritage home. If your taste runs more to the exotic, sample authentic East Indian at Dawett Fine Indian Cuisine, Japanese at Ginza and Momo or Thai at Bai Tong.

In the Pandosy/Lakeshore Road area, Hector's Casa serves Mexican. Celebrity chef Ned Bell presides over the open kitchen at city chic Cabana Bar and Grille. Try a hand mulled Mangohito in the lounge. *Wine Spectator* magazine

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For excellent knoshing with your shopping stop by the Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market Saturday mornings. For a comprehensive list of the Valley's Best Restaurants, as selected by the readers of *Okanagan Life* magazine, log in to www.okanaganlife.com.

Wine lovers find plenty of scope for touring and tasting. Drop by the visitors centre or download a copy of the Kelowna Wine Trails brochure for maps and listings of the area's five distinct wine trails. Start with the roots of the Okanagan wine industry on the Downtown Heritage Trail with a visit to Calona Vineyards Winery, established in 1932 as BC's first commercial winery. Head north for a drive in the country through Lake Country's Scenic Sip wine route. More spectacular views and excellent wine tasting will attract your attention on the Lakeshore Wine Route, while the wineries of the East Kelowna Wine Trail display a distinctly artistic flair. Finally, cross the lake and taste the difference volcanic soil produces at wineries on the Westside Wine Trail.

The largest city in the Okanagan also offers plenty of great outdoor escapes. One of the beauties of Kelowna is the ability to go from a busy city street corner to a mountaintop experience in a matter of minutes.

One such spot is Knox Mountain Park, located at the north end of Ellis Avenue on the shores of Okanagan Lake. Covering 580 acres of environmentally sensitive ponderosa pine forest and grassland, its well-maintained trails attract hikers, joggers and mountain bike riders. Two parking lots offer easy access to the trails, with the upper lot providing the added benefit of washroom facilities next to the caretaker's residence.

You can also enter the park through points in the Magic Estates subdivision or by boat at the cove below the historic site of Paul's Tomb, built by early pioneer Rambler Paul in 1910. This area is also home to an underwater diving park, where a seven-metre model of Ogopogo lies submerged eight metres below the surface.

The Mission Creek Greenway is a popular walk/bike linear park in the heart of the city. Phase one, from Lakeshore Road to Ziprick Road, is a wide, flat and mostly shady seven-kilometre trail accessible to all. The nine-kilometre phase two is a tougher climb, taking you through canyons and over bridges as you ascend into the hills. In autumn, bridges spanning the creek are great platforms for viewing spawning kokanee salmon.

For auto enthusiasts, the Knox Mountain Hillclimb takes place every year in May, pitting cars and drivers against the winding paved road course that climbs 800 vertical feet in 2.2 miles.

Kelowna's downtown waterfront area offers a more level stroll. Parking

PHOTO BY LAURIE CARTER

is plentiful near Prospera Place, putting you right at the entrance to Waterfront Park, an amazing collection of lagoons, knolls and pathways jutting into Okanagan Lake. Walk north to a walkway through the rehabilitated Brandt's Creek wetlands where you can watch the water birds and nesting ospreys from the viewing platform. Head south past the marina and you'll soon find yourself in City Park, home to a children's water park, playgrounds and gardens. Many concerts are held in the park each year.

A short drive in any direction presents orchards and farm markets to explore, mountain trails to hike and bike and golf courses to conquer. Swimmers, boaters, water sports enthusiasts and anglers head for the sunny beaches of Okanagan Lake and for winter fun, three major ski hills beckon within a one-hour drive of downtown.

At Big White Ski Resort, the powder is deep and dry and you'll find the full cold weather experience with downhill and cross-country skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, snowmobiling and ice skating. Ride and glide forest glades and gentle slopes or attack deep powder and moguls. With 118 marked downhill trails and 16 lifts—line-ups are reasonable and the slopes feel uncrowded even at peak times. Precision riders check out the Telus Park.

The nearby Nordic Cross-Country Ski Club challenges every level of free-heeler with 68 kilometres of groomed trails. The club is located near the KVR Trail/Trans-Canada Trail. The parking area is adjacent to the heated main cabin where you'll find an overall trail map. Ski long or short loops through the forest and warm up at the Log Cabin or the Meadow Cabin. If you're up to it, climb to the summit at 1,420 metres.

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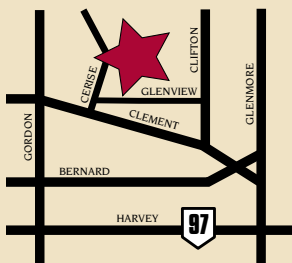


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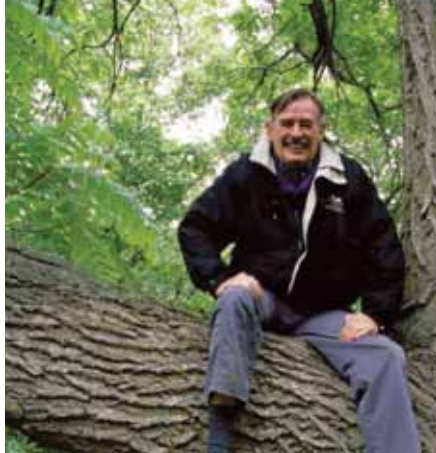
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West Kelowna

Vineyards and high-country lakes, housing tracts and burgeoning commercial space—there seems to be room for it all in this fast-changing area. Rich in culture and history, from the Westbank First Nation (WFN) to the early pioneers, today West Kelowna is home to over 28,000 people with another 8,000 native and non-native residents on band land.

New residential neighbourhoods are popping up everywhere—at golf courses, on the lakeshore and in the woods. Commercial complexes along Hwy 97 provide big box store shopping and places to meet for coffee or gather for dinner without crossing the bridge to Kelowna. Meanwhile, traditional orchards still dot the landscape and offer fresh fruit in season at roadside stands. And the community hosts the Mount Boucherie wine region where long established names like Quail's Gate, home of the renowned

Old Vines Restaurant, and Mission Hill, with its iconic 12-storey bell tower and carillon, are joined by newcomers such as Kalala, Rollingdale, Little Straw and Beaumont Estate.

West Kelowna and the west side of Okanagan Lake provide a wide range of activities for outdoor enthusiasts. Hikers can take their pick from a leisurely stroll along the waterfront to a mountain trek. Recommended trails include Rose Valley, Glen Canyon, McDougall Rim, Kalamo and the flanks of Mount Boucherie, the remnant of a dormant volcano. At Bear Creek Provincial Park, the attractions include waterfalls, looping trails, fabulous views and spawning kokanee salmon spotting. For downhillers and boarders, Crystal Mountain Resort is only 15-minutes from town. Nearby, the Telemark club offers extensive cross-country ski and snowshoe trails, also used by mountain bikers and hikers in summer.

Gellatly Nut Farm is a unique heritage park. Over 100 years old, it was the homestead of one of the area's earliest pioneer families. In the fall visitors can buy nuts by the pound or harvest them from the ground. Nearby, the Gellatly Heritage Regional Park features historic buildings, an interpretive walking trail, century-old family cemetery, picnic area and a very close view of the aftermath of the 2009 Glenrosa wildfire.

Country meets city in West Kelowna.



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Vernon

Strongly connected to its deep historic roots, this city maintains a sense of time and place that anchors a vibrant and growing community. Vernon nestles between Swan, Kalamalka and Okanagan lakes on Hwy 97 in the North Okanagan. Incorporated on Dec. 31, 1892, Vernon was settled by gold miners and cattle ranchers during the 1860s and '70s. The agricultural tradition continues and evolves, with popular attractions like Davison Orchards and Planet Bee providing a fun way to connect with food production.

The city of about 38,000 celebrates its past with preserved heritage buildings, a comprehensive museum, the popular O'Keefe Ranch historic site and a collection of 25 outdoor murals. Vernon also embraces the future with destination golf courses, stellar resorts and lakeview developments.

Vernon hosts a variety of annual events ranging from the Funtastic slo-


pitch tournament and Creative Chaos arts and crafts show to the family-centred Vernon Winter Carnival. The city supports an active cultural community with concerts by the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra, shows by touring performers at the Wesbild Centre, a multi-purpose facility that also hosts the Vernon Vipers hockey team, and shows at the artist-run Gallery Ver-tigo. The dining scene encompasses a broad range of styles and cuisines with

perky Tex-Mex, traditional steak house fare and a choice of Italian eateries.


And there is even more to this community than its active urban centre. Vernon offers outstanding parks, sandy beaches and extensive hiking trails. Silver Star Mountain Resort is known for superb skiing, boarding, snowshoeing, mountain biking and hiking to wildflower carpeted alpine meadows. The adjacent Sovereign Lake Nordic Club adds still more winter trails.



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Lake Country

Bountiful orchards, reflective lakes and hikeable hillsides—so much inspiration, you may just find your inner artist. Lake Country, a municipality of just over 11,000 people formed by the amalgamation of the formerly independent communities of Carr's Landing, Okanagan Centre, Oyama and Winfield, is forging a new identity of its own.

Orchards and vineyards fill the Valley floor and climb the lower slopes of the ridges between the area's three defining lakes: Okanagan, Wood and Kalamalka. Continuing its long agricultural tradition, fresh produce is sold at roadside stands and a farmers' market that runs Friday evenings from June to September in Swalwell Park.

There's no need to travel far for the finer things in life. Lake Country boasts a flourishing arts community along with a number of wineries and notable eateries including the Grapevine Restaurant at Gray Monk Estate

Winery, home of Chef Willi Franz the 2010 Canadian Chef of the Year.

The annual Spring Splash art exhibition and sale runs in May, while Lake Country hosts Art Walk each September. Many artists call Lake Country

home and invite visitors to their studios. Public parks host public art and the performing arts take centre stage at the Creekside Theatre. Golf, hiking, birdwatching and water sports round out the good life in Lake Country.



Peachland

Life's a beach...and with one of the best waterfronts in the Valley, this town has the life. But it was actually a peach that gave developer John Moore Robinson the idea to buy ranch land, develop it into orchards and sell it to

easterners. The municipal district was incorporated in 1909. Today it counts more than 5,000 permanent residents and many more in the summer.

Being sandwiched between Okanagan Lake and the mountains,

many homes come with a view. The winery comes with a view...even the golf course (currently under development) has a panorama from its plateau a mile from the lakeshore.

The Beach Avenue waterfront attracts sun worshippers, swimmers, boaters, picnickers, shoppers and diners who want to watch the show from sidewalk tables or patios. History stands still at the eight-sided Baptist Church, built in 1910, that now houses the Peachland Museum, while Hardy Falls, at the south end of town, is an easy-access, stroller friendly park with spawning kokanee salmon and waterfalls.

Peachland hosts the annual World of Wheels classic and antique car show and the seven-kilometre Rattlesnake Island Swim. During the growing season, buy fresh produce at the Peachland Farmers' and Crafters' Market on Sundays at Heritage Park.



Penticton

Tucked between Okanagan and Skaha lakes and framed by dramatic bluffs and scenic slopes, Penticton is the economic and cultural hub of the South Okanagan. At some 33,000 residents, this community is big enough to provide loads of amenities, but avoids the breakneck pace of large metropolitan centres.

The waterfront on Okanagan Lake is known for its wide sandy beach, walking paths, Ikeda Japanese Garden, public art gallery, casino, varied restaurants and the historic S.S. Sicamous sternwheeler. Skaha Beach is home to muscle and bikini contests, sandcastle-building competitions, water parks and playgrounds.

Penticton also hosts a diverse array of events like the Okanagan Fest-Of-Ale in April, Peach City Beach Cruise and Elvis Festival in June, Penticton Peach Festival in August and the Pentastic Hot Jazz Festival



in September while ultra-athletes from near and far converge on the city every year for the popular Ironman Canada Triathlon.

Shoppers can take a break from the chains with a stroll downtown and among the trendy shops of Colourful Front Street. This vibrant section of town takes full advantage of the brick exteriors and distinctive architecture of the city's early 19th century architecture. Today the brightly painted facades, banners, murals,

trees and flowers decorate popular cafés and restaurants, galleries, bookstores, clothing boutiques and gift shops. Around the corner, the foot of Main Street shuts down for the Penticton Farmers' Market on Saturday mornings from May to mid-October.

Diversity is the key to this appealing town. With cultural events and international hockey schools, fruit orchards and manufacturing plants, great beaches and a world-class ski resort.

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Summerland

This town earns its name with summertime abundance and sleepy ambience. Known for its orchards and vineyards, beaches and Tudor style, Summerland's agricultural roots date to the late 1800s. Fresh fruits and vegetables are as close as the nearest stand. And the latest evolution of the fruit industry is turning this quiet burg into a happening wine region known as the Bottleneck Drive.

Summerland is home to the Pacific Agri-Food Research Station where the first orchard and ornamental gardens were planted in 1916. You're welcome to wander through the gardens and museum. Other heritage attractions include the Kettle Valley Steam Railway and Trout Creek Trestle Bridge.

The district claims over 11,000 who enjoy its lakeshore, hiking trails and golf courses. Summerland boasts

one of the best beaches in the Valley at Sun-Oka (for Sunny Okanagan) Beach Provincial Park. Downtown, chic restaurants take their place next to art gallery and museum while specialty boutiques surprise savvy shoppers.

Take in all the sights from the summit of Giant's Head Mountain, an extinct volcano with a 360-degree panorama. This is a great place to feel the spirit of Summerland.

Naramata

In many ways time stands still in Naramata and locals like it that way. More than a century after the settlement began, this place retains the quiet charisma that earned it certification by the international Cittaslow movement (think Slow Food on a community level). The village first bloomed as a cultural centre when lake steamers brought visitors. The opening of the Kettle Valley Railway along the ridgeline above the village in 1914 forged an even stronger link. Ironically, the age of the automobile left Naramata an isolated enclave—and that's not a bad thing.

To get home, village residents (some 1,800 of them) must drive the scenic route among orchards and vineyards above Okanagan Lake, resisting the temptation to stop at too many of the Naramata Bench wineries.

The village centre is the quietest in the Valley with just a few shops

and eateries. Stroll the elm-lined avenues and explore the Naramata Heritage Museum. Manitou Park hosts May Day and Naramata August Faire festivals, and Wharf Park hosts the farmers' market on summer Wednes-

day afternoons. The labyrinth at the Naramata Centre is perfect for meditation, while the Trans Canada Trail on the abandoned Kettle Valley Railway (KVR) provides an easy route to signature views. Now that's the slow life.





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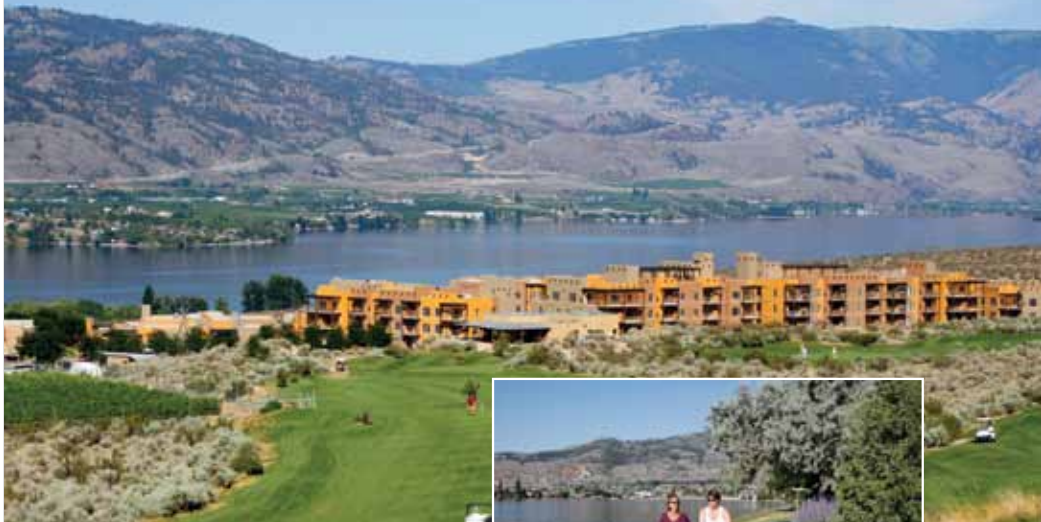
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Oliver

Oliver calls itself the Wine Capital of Canada. A significant proportion of Canada's grape-growing acreage surrounds this town and two of the Okanagan's best known wine routes, Black Sage Road and the Golden Mile, run south between Oliver and Osoyoos.

And there's plenty of other action for the seriously sports minded. The hot summers and mild winters make this an outdoor enthusiast's paradise. The area has two 18-hole golf courses; nearby lakes to drop a fishing line; and kilometres of hiking, biking and walking trails. The multi-use International Bicycling and Hiking Trail runs for 18 kilometres

alongside the Okanagan River Channel. Forbes Marsh and nearby Vaseux Lake are great places to bird watch.

Located in the arid region known as Canada's only desert (part of the Great Basin Desert), the area is home to many unique species. Beyond the orchards and vineyards look among the sagebrush and cactus for lizards, snakes, bats, toads, deer, coyotes, bighorn sheep and rare birds like the burrowing owl.

Oliver is a small town with a population around 4,500, but there's lots going on. Throughout the year events includes concerts, holiday celebrations, festivals, art shows and dances.

Osoyoos

Extending "Canada's warmest welcome," this desert gem boasts the warmest lake, about the lowest rainfall and highest temperatures in the country. This arid zone is part of the huge Sonoran Life Zone, which stretches all the way to Mexico. The climate makes Osoyoos a warm weather playground and a winter nesting spot for snowbirds.

The main drag of this relaxed community of about 5,200 takes you through the commercial section of town. Cross over to the east side of Osoyoos Lake, the warmest fresh water lake in Canada, and you're in holidayland where the beaches are lined with campgrounds and hotels.

Local residents also have close ties with the Osoyoos Indian Band, one of Canada's most financially independent and business savvy aboriginal communities. The band's Nk'Mip complex includes a winery and the renowned Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre where you can learn about the Okanagan People and the flora and fauna of the desert. For a different take on the local environment, stroll the boardwalk at the Osoyoos Desert Centre, the wetlands of Haynes Point Provincial Park or the Osoyoos Oxbows.

Agriculture is big in this area with many roadside fruit stands and award-winning wineries offering local wine tours and tastings.

PHOTOS BY LAURIE CARTER

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RED ROOSTER WINERY (Laurie Carter)

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OKANAGAN WINE TOUR GUIDE

John Schreiner, 2010

Must-have guide to wineries, owners and winemakers.

MENUS FROM AN ORCHARD TABLE

Heidi Noble, 2007

Menus and essays that highlight Okanagan wine country cuisine.

JUDE'S KITCHEN

Judie Steeves, 2011

Celebrates BC's seasonal abundance. Includes wine pairing notes by John Schreiner.

■ The Okanagan Valley entered my consciousness around Grade 5 in a social studies

class where I learned to associate the name with fruit growing. Living in the rolling farmland of eastern Canada, I had no idea of the forested mountain ridges and string of lakes that moderate the climate and store water to irrigate the dry but rich glacial and volcanic soil. I simply learned that this was one of the few places in Canada and the only region in BC where peaches and apricots will grow along with other tree fruits like cherries, plums, apples and pears. Back then nobody was paying much attention to grapes.

From the beginning of human habitation, this land has been a good provider. The Okanagan People have harvested its bounty for thousands of years and from the time of European contact, agriculture in one form or another has drawn settlement. Cattle ranching has largely given way to fruit growing and the industry continues to evolve as orchards of tall fruit trees morph into neat rows of dwarf varieties with their branches strung along wires for maximum sunlight and easy picking. These modified orchards look remarkably similar to the acres of new vineyards that signal yet another development in the industry.

In a time of increasing concern over the who, where and how of our food production, visitors to the Okanagan can meet the people and see the places for themselves. Along

with the traditional roadside stands and U-pick operations a number of farms have developed extensive visitor-friendly experiences.

Some are specifically geared to families with attractions like farm-themed playgrounds, tractor pulled wagon rides, places for kids to interact with goats, sheep, chickens and other barnyard critters, corn mazes to explore and activity-centred apple and pumpkin festivals. Adults are more interested in cheese making, lavender harvest, vinegar works and production of syrups, jams, jellies, ciders and distilled spirits, while everybody seems to get buzzed about peeking into a working bee hive.

Weekly farmers' markets in every community bring producer and consumer together at stalls filled with fresh fruits, vegetables, baked goods, meats, cheeses, honey,

WINE TRAILS

KELOWNA WINE TRAILS AND NORTH OKANAGAN

Many Kelowna wineries enjoy the sunshine on slopes south of the city. Further north, new vineyards are joining the long established in Lake Country and even Vernon. Cooler conditions favour white wines. Well-know wineries include Calona, Gray Monk and Summerhill. Kelowna's VQA shop offers one-stop tasting.

KELOWNA WINE TRAILS AND PEACHLAND

In West Kelowna wineries mostly cluster around Mount Boucherie. Varietals like Pinot Noir and Riesling do well here and some reds are successful as well. One block of Marechal Foch vines goes back to the 1960s. Regular tasting stops in this area include Quail's Gate, Mission Hill and Mount Boucherie.

BOTTLENECK DRIVE Summerland

Most wineries on this tour route are relative newcomers. They're taking advantage of the predominantly cool climate conditions and volcanic soil around Giant's Head Mountain to make whites like Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc. Popular stops are Sumac Ridge, Dirty Laundry and 8th Generation.

NARAMATA BENCH AND PENTICTON

Plan extra time to tour this compact area, home to some 30 wineries. Merlot, Bordeaux reds, Pinot Noir and Syrah plus a variety of whites love the long growing season. Red Rooster, Poplar Grove and Lake Breeze feature on many tours. For one-stop shopping, drop by the VQA store in the Penticton Visitor Centre.

FARM FRESH

Farmers' Markets, Valleywide:

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Locations, dates and times at www.bcfarmersmarket.org

Davison Orchards, Vernon: Orchard tours, playground, farm market, food service, family festivals. www.davisonorchards.ca

Planet Bee, Vernon: Demonstration hive, education sessions, bee products. www.planetbee.com

Okanagan Lavender Farm,

Kelowna: Self-guided tours, U-pick, products, events.

www.okanaganlavender.com

Carmelis Goat Cheese Artisan,

Kelowna: Goat farm, tasting room and cheese shop plus gelato.

www.carmelisoatcheese.com

Vinegar Works at Valentine Farm,

Summerland: Tasting room and shop. www.valentinefarm.com

Summerland Sweets, Summerland:

Fruit syrups and preserves, observation window and shop. www.summerlandsweets.com

Covert Farms Organics, Oliver:

Self-guided tours, U-pick, market, winery, restaurant, events. www.covertfarms.ca



NARAMATA BENCH (Laurie Carter)



FARM FRESH (Laurie Carter)



PENTICTON FARMERS' MARKET (Laurie Carter)

salad dressings, relishes, antipastos, pickles and preserves.

Interest in food has also been sparked as an indirect result of explosive growth in the wine industry that has now planted well over 100 wineries in the Valley landscape. Sophisticated wine tourists expect equally sophisticated dining options. A bevy of talented and award-winning chefs who have gravitated to the Okanagan in answer to the call are creating a distinctive wine country cuisine that spotlights fresh, often organic, locally sourced products paired with just the right Okanagan vintage. Wineries such as Quail's Gate, Gray Monk, Summerhill, Sumac Ridge, Nk'Mip, Hester Creek, Tinhorn Creek and Burrowing Owl offer visitors excellent on-site dining.

The Okanagan also hosts a number of venues with extensive cellars that feature labels from this region and beyond available by the glass for sampling. Not that wine is the only highlight of Okanagan eateries. The Valley boasts a wide range of ethnic cuisine reflecting the diverse heritage of its residents and many restaurants are famous for waterfront decks, sunny patios and signature views.

For wine lovers and foodies who want the full immersion experience, the Okanagan offers a range of accommodations specifically tailored to enhance the field to table experience. Choices include orchard B&Bs, winery guest houses, a heritage inn and luxury resorts complete with spa amenities located in the heart of working vineyards.

It's easy to develop a taste for the Okanagan. —LC



CORKSCREW DRIVE

Okanagan Falls/Skaha Lake

This wine route features stops along the shores of Skaha Lake and around Okanagan Falls including the highest elevation vineyards in the Valley. Varied growing conditions produce a broad range of varieties and blends. Well known wineries include See Ya Later Ranch, Blasted Church and Blue Mountain.

GOLDEN MILE

Oliver

The clay and glacial gravel on the west side of the Valley between Oliver and Osoyoos favour white wines like Riesling and Gewurztraminer and powerful, fruity reds. Touring this area is rewarding with 13 wineries closely spaced. Popular choices include Tinhorn Creek, Road 13 and Inniskillin.

BLACK SAGE ROAD

Oliver

On the east side of the Valley, across from the Golden Mile, vines grow in a deep layer of sand and bask in sunshine for considerably longer each day. These conditions produce big reds and flavourful whites. Burrowing Owl, Quinta Ferreira and Sandhill are among the best known of the wineries located in the area.

OSOYOOS LAKE BENCH

Osoyoos

At the foot of the Valley, the area around Osoyoos is known for reds like Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Pinot Noir. You'll also find Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier. Many Okanagan wineries use grapes grown in this area. Wineries to visit include Nk'Mip Cellars, Moon Curser and LaStella.



BROWSING AN OKANAGAN ART GALLERY (Laurie Carter)

SUMMERLAND MURAL (Laurie Carter)

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Lake Country Art Walk:

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Concert Tours:

Top name touring artists make stops at Prospera Place in Kelowna, the Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre and the South Okanagan Events Centre in Penticton.

- Culture blooms in a fertile landscape and the Okanagan Valley provides inspiration for every facet of the arts. Local creators and performers channel their talents into painting, photography, sculpture, crafts, music, dance, theatre, poetry and prose. Much of this work is displayed as public art, while a host of private and public studios and galleries welcome visitors.

I've chatted with artists who create their works in studios at Kelowna's Rotary Centre for the Arts, listened to authors read from their latest releases at a bookstore in Penticton, learned about firing techniques from a potter near Naramata and talked with the lead artist as she painted one of Vernon's heritage murals.

The Okanagan inspires creativity you can see on stage in community theatre productions throughout the Valley. And how about a company of professional actors that leads the audience around a farmer's field near Armstrong. And speaking of farmers, hit any of the weekly farmers' markets held in communities up and down the Valley during summer, and you'll get an eyeful of creativity crafted into the likes of deer skin moccasins, wooden bowls, funky jewelry and tie-dyed fabrics.

We've got amazing musicians writing and performing everything from country to classics. I never miss the symphony, love hearing our rising young stars at community events and cheering on some very cool weekend warriors as they light up the stage at cafés and coffee houses. Take your pick. —LC



CULTURE TRAIL

KELOWNA CULTURAL DISTRICT

Six square blocks in downtown Kelowna packed with museums, galleries, performing arts venues, trendy shops, eclectic eateries and an eye-popping collection of public art. Take a break with a stroll on the boardwalk, lay out a picnic in the park or soak up some sun on the beach. Very uptown.

PENTICTON ART GALLERY

This public gallery near the Penticton waterfront looks sophisticated but retains an intimate feel. Exhibits of holdings from the permanent collection and specially mounted shows highlight the talents of artists from the Okanagan and beyond. The gallery also hosts a variety of community events.

VERNON HERITAGE MURALS

Vernon wears its history on its walls with 25 larger than life depictions of the people, events and institutions that formed the community of today. Maps are available for self-guided tours but it's more interesting to drop by the old train station and join a conducted tour or rent an MP3 player and get the full story.

NK'MIP DESERT CULTURAL CENTRE

The heritage of the Okanagan People is masterfully interpreted in this stunning desert centre, created by the Osoyoos Indian Band near Osoyoos. Multi-media presentations, wildlife demonstrations, nature trails and a recreated village contribute to a unique cultural experience.



MARMOT AT ALLAN BROOKS NATURE CENTRE (Laurie Carter)



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BOOKWORM'S BACKPACK

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OKANAGAN GEOLOGY

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Parish, Coupe, Lloyd, 1996
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- An unusual array of ecosystems ranging from Canada's only desert to the Interior Rainforest coexist in and around the Okanagan Valley. Elevation, aspect, latitude and availability of water are the major factors determining the characteristics of plant and animal life in any given area.

I've found one easy way to experience this remarkable diversity is to take a drive from Osoyoos to the summit of Mount Kobau. On the Valley floor, the narrow leafy riparian zones bordering Okanagan River and Osoyoos Lake immediately give way to the semi-arid antelope brush ecosystem. Gaining elevation on Hwy 3 west of town, you'll pass through grasslands, then higher up, on the gravel forest service road that climbs the mountain, you'll see the grasslands give way to zones of ponderosa parkland, Engelman spruce and lodgepole pine before emerging on subalpine meadows.

At the north end of the Valley, a drive from Vernon to Silver Star Mountain Resort highlights many of the same eco characteristics, but you'll notice that slightly cooler temperatures and a little more moisture produce more grassland instead of sage and antelope brush. Ride the chairlift to the summit on your own or join a guided nature tour. From the top you can see the edge of the Interior Rainforest just to the east before hiking down through oceans of wildflowers.

Many of the Okanagan's fragile ecosystems are under serious pressure from agriculture and development. Only about nine per cent of the antelope brush habitat remains undisturbed and residents like the burrowing owl, spadefoot toad, tiger salamander and mariposa lily are either threatened or endangered. Fragile grasslands are also in trouble and while conservation efforts are under way, it's a tough battle.

But there are still loads of ways to enjoy and learn from this unique environment. Look for interpretive signs on many trails, settle in a birdwatching blind at Haynes Point or Vaseux Lake, watch spawning salmon in creeks and rivers in the fall, join a tour during the Meadowlark Festival in May or take an in-depth look at various aspects of the ecology, flora and fauna at one of our interpretive centres. It's all natural. — LC

ECO ATTRACTIONS

ALLAN BROOKS NATURE CENTRE, Vernon



Located in former hilltop weather station. Hands-on exhibits of North Okanagan ecology, weather and water. Panoramic views. Naturescape garden and grasslands nature trail with Marmot City. May–October.

MISSION CREEK GREENWAY, Kelowna



Linear park borders salmon spawning creek in midtown Kelowna with 17 km of nature trails (one section flat, one section more challenging), interpretive signage, environmental education centre, xeriscape garden, playground.

DESERT CENTRE

Osoyoos



Interpretive centre with 1.5 km elevated boardwalk providing access and protecting the delicate antelope brush ecosystem. Self-guided and guided tours. Indoor exhibits, native plant garden, bird boxes. April–October.

VASEUX LAKE, Between Okanagan Falls and Oliver



Excellent birdwatching area off Hwy 97 at Vaseux Lake Migratory Bird Sanctuary. Boardwalk and bird blinds to look for more than 220 species. Also keep an eye out for mountain goats and California bighorn sheep on the cliffs.

level, easy path

moderate climb

birdwatching

prominent wildlife

abundant flora

spawning salmon



hiking | biking

VIEW OF KELOWNA FROM MCDUGALL RIM (Laurie Carter)

BOOKWORM'S BACKPACK

CYCLING THE KETTLE VALLEY RAILWAY

Dan and Sandra Langford, 2009
A kilometre-by-kilometre guide to everything along the line.

GRANDMA WEARS HIKING BOOTS

Laurie Carter, 2010
Hiking and biking adventures plus wine, food, history and family fun.

HIKING TRAILS

Vernon Outdoors Club, 2009
Detailed guide to day hikes in and around the North Okanagan and Monashees.

- The Okanagan is hiking and biking paradise.

Hiking trails range from easy strolls along paved, boarded and gravelled walkways to calorie burning climbs. The network of paths will take you through grasslands, old forests, broadleaf woodlands, coniferous woodlands and riparian zones. Plant guidebooks help you identify all that you see.

From spring through autumn a riot of colour flourishes in this seemingly harsh environment. Lupine, arrow-leaf balsamroot and showy phlox make big splashes against the landscape. While prickly pear cacti, shooting stars and mariposa lilies will have you crawling on your knees to take a closer look.







If waterfalls make your heart beat faster then you are going to enjoy some time exploring the many creeks. I recently discovered one little treasure on Mill Creek near the Kelowna airport. It's not rip roaring like Shorts Creek Falls, in Fintry Provincial Park, more like a muted tumble over a half-flight of stairs. Still, it's just as photogenic.

If the very idea of hiking in forests and grasslands where the bear, coyote and rattlesnake play, makes you nervous, don't be. I've been hiking and biking in this Valley for 20 years and have never heard, let alone seen, a rattlesnake. Spotting a coyote in the bush is a pleasure not a frightening experience. Bears on the other hand — I've seen my share from the ground and on two wheels.

On one memorable occasion mountain biking with a friend in Okanagan Mountain Park, we came upon a bear blocking our path at the top of a rise. We stopped and waited for it to see us, obviously he hadn't heard us huffing and puffing up the hill. When he finally took notice he reared up onto his hind legs, pawed and sniffed the air. I froze in my tracks with surprise, but my friend remembered to shout and clap his hands, whereupon the bear dropped down and took off into the bush — running. That's my closest encounter, usually I only hear them thundering through the brush away from me—yeah, I smell and sound scary.

Still not convinced. Then you might want to consider joining a hiking club like the Vernon

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

-  level, easy path
-  moderate climb
-  most difficult climb
-  scenic views
-  prominent wildlife
-  abundant flora

ENDERBY CLIFFS

Enderby (9km)
   720 metre elev. gain

A gasper. Trail takes you to the top of the cliffs and continues north along the edge to the ultimate summit. In June the top is flush with wildflowers. Caution: there are ropes on the steepest sections of the trail to help you stay on your feet.

BX CREEK & FALLS

Vernon (6km)
  


Cool retreat in summer. Discover an oasis filled with birch and cedar trees, devil's club and horsetail as you walk along the creek. Stairs at top end give you a view of the falls. Two access points: Star and Tillicum roads.

SHORTS CREEK CANYON RIM

near Fintry (9km)
   265 metre elev. gain

Colourful lichens on the sheer cliffs at the end of this trail are the star attraction. Well-maintained trail crosses a couple of creeks before it follows the canyon rim, climbing steadily. Access point: Beau Park Road off Westside Road.

MYRA CANYON TRESTLES

Kelowna (12km one way)


Great escape from the city. Walk or bike the stretch between Myra and Ruth stations. Cross 18 trestles and pass through two tunnels. Discover a rock oven used by workers to bake bread during the construction of the railway (1910-1915).

OUTSIDER TIPS

Bike helmets are mandatory in BC.

Share the trail. Cyclists should yield to everyone and hikers yield to horses.

Stay on designated trails. Many plants are sensitive to bike, foot and hoof traffic.

Respect private property. Ask for permission and do not trespass when asked not to.

Bring plenty of water. Summer temperatures often exceed 30 C. Also bring a hat and sunscreen.

Don't pick wildflowers.

Let nature flourish.

Give rattlesnakes space. Any bite should be regarded as life threatening and requires immediate hospital treatment.

Beware of ticks. After finishing your outdoor activity, check your clothing and your entire body for any attached ticks. If you find a tick attached to your skin, use tweezers to remove it. Grasp its head and mouthparts as close to your skin as possible and pull slowly until the tick is removed.

Bear aware. Bears usually avoid people. Travel in groups. Make lots of noise by talking or singing.



CATHEDRAL PROVINCIAL PARK (Laurie Carter)



GOLDEN MILE SOUTH OF OLIVER (Laurie Carter)



KVR TRAIL (Laurie Carter)

MYRA CANYON TRESTLES (Karen Slivar)

Outdoors Club, safety in numbers. The club maintains a list of trails and leads group hikes and bikes. Beware though, if you imagine hiking with a group of retirees will be easy, think again. The Sunday hikes are long and gruelling. Many of its members are twice my age and think nothing of a nine-kilometre hike with a 700-metre elevation gain.

Skinny- and fat-tire riders, you're going to think you've died and gone to heaven. The Valley's picturesque roadways offer hours of riding. A favourite is Westside Road from Kelowna to Okanagan Lake Resort, where you can take a break on the patio, order up a cold drink and dig into a calorie dense meal before you head back. And for easy, scenic riding, nothing beats the KVR Trail.

Mountain bikers can test their skills on logging roads and miles of single track. If you like getting together with a group to ride hard, often, then check out the Mountain Bikers of the Central Okanagan or the nearest bike shop.

You'll find Silver Star Mountain Resort, in Vernon, is just as busy in summer as it is in winter. When the white stuff melts and the alpine meadows bloom, the hill is transformed into a hiking and biking mecca. The best part is you don't have to catch your breath, just the chair. Beginners can cruise the wide paths until they work up to the challenge of tackling sky bridges, jumps and stumps (body armour recommended).

Lace up your boots or mount your bike and take off on a trail to explore the Valley for yourself. — KS

HIGH RIM TRAIL

Kelowna (8km)



460 metre
elev. drop

All downhill — mostly! Trail wanders through forest, brush and grassland. Wildflowers galore. Bring a compass and detailed map. Keep eyes open for old trail markers. Bring two cars: park one at Goudie Road trailhead and other at Philpott Road exit.

PINCUSHION MOUNTAIN

Peachland (5km)



245 metre
elev. gain

Steep climb. Rest stops along the way give you a chance to catch your breath and admire the view. Watch for deer and grouse. Warning: it is easy to lose your footing on the gravel going down. Trailhead at end of Ponderosa Drive.

KETTLE VALLEY TRAIL

Chute Lake to Penticton (31km)



Walk or cycle downhill through forest and grasslands, among orchards and vineyards. Pass through a tunnel, view a rock oven, stop at an orchard store or take time out for wine tasting or a winery lunch. Trailhead at Chute Lake Lodge.

TESTALINDEN TRAIL

Osoyoos (5km)



A loop. Trail circles the summit of Mount Kobau through mixed sub-alpine forest and open grassland. In spring the wildflowers put on a show. Sign marks detour to the abandoned forest lookout and more views. Access: Mt. Kobau Forest Service Road.

road trips

HWY 97 AND VASEUX LAKE (Laure Carter)

BOOKWORM'S BACKPACK

ROADSIDE NATURE TOURS THROUGH THE OKANAGAN

Richard Cannings, 2009

His favourite road trips describing geography, historic landmarks, flora and fauna.

DESTINATION HIGHWAYS BRITISH COLUMBIA

Brian Bosworth and

Michael Sanders, 2006

A motorcycle enthusiast's guide, available at motorcycle dealers.

OKANAGAN TRIPS AND TRAILS

Judie Steeves and

Murphy Shewchuk, 2006

Must have guide to backroads and hiking.

■ While Highway 97 provides some stunning views, a great way to take in the Valley is to travel on some of our scenic byways. I'm always ready to jump in the SUV and explore a logging road to see where it takes us. Many years ago we took the outlaws on a road trip and spent a great deal of time moving fallen trees out of our path. The next day my father-in-law went out and bought us a sturdy axe and a collapsible saw, which we still carry around today. But you don't have to leave the pavement to explore the Valley. Here are some of our favourite jaunts; you can pick up detailed maps at any tourism info centre.

TRINITY VALLEY

Enderby to Lumby

Travel time 1 hour. Distance 53 km

Sit back and enjoy the scenery on this quiet drive through verdant farmland and Douglas fir forest. In Lumby you can stretch your legs with a stroll along the Salmon Trails, which are wheelchair-, stroller- and bike-friendly. In late summer to early fall Bessette and Duteau creeks along the trails are filled with spawning coho and chinook salmon that have made the 1,000 km swim from the Pacific Ocean to complete their life cycle. Directions: from Enderby head east on Enderby Mabel Lake Road until you reach Ashton Creek, turn south onto Trinity Valley Road and continue south on Lumby Mabel Lake Road and follow the signs to Lumby.



scenic views



point of interest



prominent wildlife

WESTSIDE ROAD

West Kelowna to Vernon

Travel time 2 hours. Distance 80 km

You'll soon discover why we picked this road as you twist and turn your way alongside Okanagan Lake. This scenic drive is definitely not for those who suffer from carsickness or feel the need for speed, as much of the posted limit is 50 kilometres per hour. Keep an eye out for California bighorn sheep on the rocky outcroppings along the way. A must stop is Fintry Provincial Park, a heritage site with some interesting history. Discover the Laird of Fintry, check out the funky octagonal dairy barn, manor house and climb the stairs to Shorts Creek Falls. Driver's warning: watch for cyclists, obey the posted speed limit around bends and please stay in your lane to give room to oncoming vehicles.

DID YOU KNOW?

CALIFORNIA QUAIL

These plump birds were introduced into the Okanagan in 1912. What's not to love about them — except maybe the heart attack they give you when they run, usually right in front of your vehicle, rather than fly, although these goofballs will explode into a short fast flight when startled. In winter these social birds gather in small flocks or coveys and forage on the ground calling “chi-ca-go” to alert each other of their location.

OKANAGAN LAKE

A long deep lake, it stretches 135 kilometres and is 230 metres deep. It is connected to Kalamalka Lake in the north via Vernon Creek and to Skaha Lake in the south via the Okanagan River, which flows through Skaha Lake, Vaseux Lake and Osoyoos Lake, joining the Columbia River near Brewster, Washington. Over 13 species of fish are known to live in the lake including trout, kokanee, carp, sucker and sculpin.

LAKE MONSTER

Every year there is at least one sighting of the mysterious lake monster that lives in Okanagan Lake and goes by the name of Ogopogo. First Nations legends support a monster living in the lake before European settlers arrived in the Valley. It has been photographed and even been caught on film, but alas all the footage is blurry. It is rumoured to live off Squally Point across from Peachland.

WILDFIRES

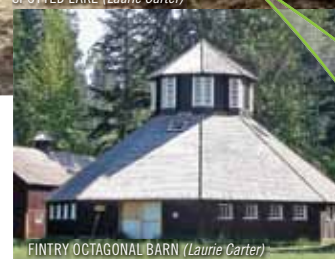
The Okanagan is no stranger to wildfires. The Okanagan Mountain Park fire in 2003 was the worst forest fire in BC's history. It was started by a lightning strike in the park near Rattlesnake Island. The blaze forced the evacuation of over 33,000 people and burned 238 homes in Kelowna. It also claimed 12 wooden trestles and damaged two steel trestles in the historic Myra Canyon. The trestles have since been rebuilt.



CALIFORNIA BIGHORN (Laurie Carter)



DOMINION RADIO ASTROPHYSICAL OBSERVATORY (DRAO)



FINTRY OCTAGONAL BARN (Laurie Carter)

HIGHWAY 3 (WEST)

Osoyoos to Mount Kobau

Travel time 1 hour. Distance 30 km

As you climb out of the Valley through rolling grasslands dominated by big sagebrush you will soon pass Spotted Lake (Klikuk) on the south side of the highway. The lake contains high concentrations of minerals including magnesium sulphate (a.k.a. Epsom salts), calcium and sodium sulphate. As the lake dries out in summer, white, yellow, green and blue spots form in the mud. The lake is sacred to Okanagan First Nations, who prize its healing mud and waters and its spiritual value. Continue west along the highway to Richter Pass and turn north onto Mt. Kobau Forest Service Road, the gravel road winds its way through grasslands and Douglas fir forests. At the top spectacular views of the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys await you. Driver's warning: watch for free-range cattle en route.

EASTSIDE ROAD, MCLEAN CREEK ROAD

Penticton to Okanagan Falls

Travel time 30 minutes. Distance 20 km

Time to slow down and smell the pines with this leisurely drive. Following the edge of Shaka Lake, the winding, picturesque two-lane road keeps you right down at shore level until you reach the turnoff for McLean Creek Road, which will take you through a scenic valley dotted with hobby farms. Along Skaha Lake you might see California bighorn sheep on the rocky outcroppings. Directions: in Penticton follow Main Street south and continue onto Lakeside Road, which continues into Eastside Road and turn east on McLean Creek Road. Driver's warning: watch for cyclists.

GREEN LAKE ROAD, WHITE LAKE ROAD

Okanagan Falls to Oliver

Travel time 40 minutes. Distance 30 km

Get off the highway and travel a well-paved backcountry road. Along the way you'll see rocky hills, pine forests, farmland and dry plateaus. Drop in at the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory (DRAO) for a tour. The staff is very enthusiastic and happy to answer your questions. To get up close and personal with the dry grasslands and big sagebrush habitat take a stroll in White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch home to many species at risk like the badger. Directions: take Green Lake Road and follow it as it turns south into Fairview White Lake Road to Oliver. — KS

VOLCANOES

About 50 million years ago the Okanagan Valley was a hotbed of volcanic activity. Many well-known landmarks are made of volcanic rock including Layer Cake, Knox and Dilworth mountains in Kelowna, Mount Boucherie in West Kelowna, Giant's Head in Summerland and Munson Mountain in Penticton. Layer Cake is a unique feature made up of over 30 distinct layers and can be seen from Mission Creek Greenway.

MOUNT KOBAU

Its high elevation (1,863 metres) and clear dark skies make Mount Kobau an ideal location for stargazers. In fact, in the 1960s plans were in the works to install a major national telescope at the site, but the project was cancelled and the telescope was eventually located in Chile. However, amateur astronomers gather every August for a weeklong star party. For more information visit www.mksp.ca.

WILD HORSES

Wild Horse Canyon, a short, steep walled canyon in Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park, was used by First Nations people to trap and catch wild horses in the 1890s. At the time, farmers and ranchers considered the escaped horses a nuisance and the government paid a \$2 bounty for every pair of ears turned in. Over the years beasts were rounded up, sold or killed. By the 1940s the wild horses were gone.

OKANAGAN

The name Okanagan has the distinction of no less than 46 different spellings. Lewis and Clark spelled it Otchenaukane in 1805; explorer David Thompson wrangled with three different versions: Teekanoggin, Oachenawawgan and Ookanawgan. For the record it is Okanagan in Canada and Okanogan south of the border. First Nations origins of the name are no less fanciful, including "Big Head peoples" and "men with short hair."

golf



FAST GREENS (Laurie Carter)



SCENIC HOLES (Laurie Carter)



PLENTY OF CHALLENGE (Laurie Carter)

TOP RATINGS

Predator Ridge Golf Course, Vernon — 7,144 yd, 18 hole, par 71, **Les Furber design:** Two PGA Skins Games, ranked among *Score Golf's* top 25 courses in Canada and a 4+ star rating from *Golf Digest*. New 18-hole Ridge Course (Doug Carrick design) opened August 2010.

Fairview Mountain Golf Club, Oliver — 7,030 yd, 18 hole, par 72, **Les Furber design:** Consistently rates as a *Golf Digest* 4 star course. *Score Golf* has placed it in the Top 100 golf facilities and the BCPGA has twice named it facility of the year.

Gallagher's Canyon Golf & Country Club, Kelowna — 6,802 yd, 18 hole, par 72, **Bill Robinson design, plus 9-hole executive course:** Ranked among the top 50 courses in Canada by *Score Golf* and a *Golf Digest* 4 star course.

Sunset Ranch Golf & Country Club, Kelowna — 6,500 yd, 18 hole, par 72, **J. Bruce Carr design:** A *Golf Digest* 4 star course.

Harvest Golf Club, Kelowna — 7,109 yd, 18 hole, par 72, **Graham Cooke design:** A *Golf Digest* 4 star course.

- Just when you think you've finally managed to tackle every challenge the Okanagan can throw at your drivers, wedges and putters, another course opens up. In little more than a decade, the Valley has evolved from a good place to work in a round during the family beach vacation to a full-fledged international golf destination.

Course designers must think they've died and gone to heaven with the wealth of varied terrain. I personally wish they'd stick to wide flat fairways on the Valley floor, but it's easy to see why they can't resist the potential for elevated tee boxes, tumbling water hazards, pine forest or sagebrush roughs and accuracy-testing approaches dog legging around rocky outcrops and canyon walls.

Fabled names like Nicklaus, Furber, Cooke and Trent Jones are linked with our links and they've tested the best in the sport. I can still feel the thrill of seeing Garcia, Couples, Mickelson and Weir tee up for the first of two PGA Skins Games hosted by one of the Okanagan's premier venues.

Options for play are as varied as the landscape with enough friendly 9-hole layouts and tee placements on even the toughest championship courses to give us high-handicappers a chance to save a little face.

The Okanagan's hot, dry summers and relatively mild overall climate make for a long season. Locals face tough choices in March and mid-November when the links are open and there's snow in the alpine. Decisions, decisions! — LC

SIGNATURE VIEW HOLES

THE GOLF CLUB AT THE RISE, Vernon HOLE #17

The best view on this course is a tough call, but we're picking the 17th. When you tee up for this beauty, it feels like you're driving at the biggest water hazard in the Valley, Okanagan Lake, 400 metres below. Fred Couples took full advantage of the terrain on this design.

THE HARVEST GOLF CLUB, Kelowna HOLE #2

Be careful not to hold up play while you ogle this wide-angle view of Kelowna, Okanagan Lake and the mountains. It's even more amazing with the orchard trees in fall colours. Now pay attention. If you're shooting from the black tees it's 579-yards to a par 5.

OKANAGAN GOLF CLUB BEAR COURSE, Kelowna HOLE #3

Take in the sweeping view of the Okanagan Valley from the extremely elevated tee on this 453-yard, par 4 hole, then get ready to concentrate. Driving accuracy is a must to negotiate the heavily tree-lined fairway leading to a small sloping green.

SONORA DUNES, NK'MIP RESORT, Osoyoos HOLE #8

The view from this tee is awesome and awful. Look to the side beyond the 7th green and see a panorama of desert, vineyards, lake and mountain. Look straight ahead and start figuring out how to hop the pond to land your shot on the par 3 green.

winter sports

PEACHLAND TRAILS (Laurie Carter)

BACKSEAT TIPS

Snow tires or carry chains. Travelling on our snow-covered roads you will need a good set of snow tires or chains for your vehicle. All season tires—better known as spring, summer and fall tires—are not designed for snow-covered roads.

Be kind to snowplow drivers. They're up when you're asleep, work in conditions you avoid driving in, all in order to clear the path for you. Give them plenty of space. Keep your beams low. Be patient, the driver will allow you room to pass when it is safe.

Emergency equipment. In winter drivers should carry emergency equipment in their vehicle in the event they get stuck. Important items include warm clothing, blanket, shovel, sand, ice scraper, first aid kit, flashlight, candle and matches.

Bus service from town. Don't want to drive—a shuttle runs from town to Big White Ski Resort with pickups in West Kelowna, Kelowna and Lake Country. For schedule visit www.bigwhite.com.

Slow down. Four-wheel drive vehicles have no more traction on ice than any other type of vehicle.



MINI RIDER (Laurie Carter)



TUBING FUN (Laurie Carter)



STEEP SLOPE SNOWSHOEING (Laurie Carter)

- I've met people who retired and moved here from the prairies not because of our summer reputation but for our skiing. Okanagan mountains are legendary for deep champagne powder and snow ghosts (trees encased in white stuff).

The region offers up three world-class ski-in, ski-out resorts in the three major centres: Big White Ski Resort in Kelowna, Silver Star Mountain Resort in Vernon and Apex Mountain Resort in Penticton.

Expert skiers and boarders—definitely not me—find Big White has numerous challenging black-diamond runs off the Gem Lake Express. Open glades and mixed terrain allow families and groups of sliders and riders of different levels to stay together. Silver Star with its jelly bean coloured Victorian inspired faux-mining village is my personal favourite because it has some of the best long, gentle runs in the Valley. Skier friends tell me Apex is where diehards go for an extreme challenge. I'll have to take their word on that. In addition, there are two small-scale family operations: Crystal Mountain Resort in West Kelowna and Mount Baldy in the south.

All the resorts offer a range of lodging from luxurious self-contained vacation homes with hot tubs to cozy condos and hotels. Dining, shopping and entertainment ensure your days and nights off the slopes are just as perfect. Your kids can test their skills on the double-black diamonds while you play on the easier stuff, afterward meet up with the gang for a sleigh ride. The season generally runs mid-November through April. — KS

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

TERRAIN PARKS

For riders and skiers, Big White, Silver Star and Apex offer the ultimate experience. From beginners to world-class champions, the terrain parks and rail gardens lay on an assortment of tabletops, step up jumps and spines. For a good mix of metal to grind, you'll also find minis, flats, rainbows, kinks, wide rails and boxes to satisfy your park cravings.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Gliders, take your pick. The Okanagan has four Nordic clubs: Sovereign Lake (Vernon), Kelowna Nordic (Kelowna), Telemark (West Kelowna) and Nickel Plate (Penticton), which boasts 65 kilometres of groomed trails for both classic and skate skiing. Beginners will enjoy the gentle terrain (skin tight attire optional).

SNOWSHOEING

Snowshoes have come of age. High performance lightweight gear with easy to use bindings make learning the sport a breeze. A little tip, breaking trail is more work than following. Ski resorts offer guided adventures. Discover the natural wonders of winter following wildlife tracks and historic trails. Don't forget to bring your camera.

TUBING

Can you spell fun—tubing. I don't know about you but for me tubing brings back fond memories of childhood sliding down the molehill in the neighbourhood. At the local ski resorts tubing is bigger and better. Tube lifts let you make run after run without having to hike back to the top of the hill, or ever having to carry your tube.

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