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VANCOUVER SUN SATURDAY, JULY 21, 2018 SECTION H



Located on the shores of Pender Harbour, Painted Boat Resort, Spa and Marina offers a tranquil getaway. PHOTOS: MARK SISSONS

LONG WEEKEND GETAWAYS

# GOOD DAY, SUNSHINE

Looking for a laid-back weekend getaway?  
 Hop on a ferry to the Sunshine Coast

**MARK SISSONS**

It has been called the most beautiful anchorage in the world. Sheltered by sheer granite walls rising over 2,000 metres from the ocean's edge and lined with more than 60 waterfalls sending snow-melt water cascading down its tree-lined walls into the sea. No, this isn't the Norwegian coastline. Nor is it Alaska or Patagonia. I'm in Princess Louisa Inlet — swivelled in the language of the Sechelt First Nation — one of the West Coast's most spectacular glacier-cut fjords. And easily accessible on a weekend getaway

from Vancouver to the Sunshine Coast. Nestled at the northeast corner of Jervis Inlet, Princess Louisa Inlet and its most famous attraction, Chatterbox Falls, can be reached via a 45-minute float plane ride, a three-hour drive, or by way of a scenic four-hour boat cruise offered by West Coast Wilderness Lodge, one of the Sunshine Coast's most luxurious properties. Perched on an oceanfront cliffside on the outskirts of the historic village of Egmont, it may not boast Tofino's big surf or Whistler's adventure activities and nightlife options, but if

you're seeking a relaxing, nature getaway, West Coast Wilderness Lodge fits the bill. Halfway into our cruise to Princess Louisa Inlet we pass Young Life's luxurious Malibu Club, a popular Christian summer camp. In the 1940s it was a secret hideaway for Hollywood royalty like John Wayne and Bob Hope. Today, Camp Malibu invites thousands of Canadian and American teenagers to accept Jesus into their hearts while having the time of their impressive young lives water-skiing, canoeing, hiking, swimming and socializing. SEE SUNSHINE ON **H2**



Award-winning Inlets Restaurant at West Coast Wilderness Lodge offers gourmet dining along with gorgeous views.

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West Coast Wilderness Lodge boasts some of the finest ocean views in the province.

# Chill out and savour sea life, serenity and stellar views

SUNSHINE FROM H2

My goal is Skookumchuck Rapids, reachable by an easy four-kilometre hike along a well-groomed trail beneath a canopy of towering alders and maples. The entrance to Skookumchuck Narrows Provincial Park is just a 15-minute walk from the resort.

A white-water tidal cataract, Skookumchuck — which means strong or turbulent water in Chinook, an Indigenous language once common in the Pacific Northwest — easily lives up to its name. Its frothing, churning currents and treacherous whirlpools threaten and delight a small band of extreme kayakers practising pivoting and underwater rolls.

I arrive at West Coast Wilderness Lodge in time for a three-course gourmet dinner on the patio of the resort's award-winning Inlets Restaurant. From the deck I watch as eagles and cormorants soar overhead; below, snorting sea lions flop on the rocks.

Pacific Yachting magazine called Inlets "the best waterfront restaurant in this part of the world." I have the seafood chowder, followed by P.E.I. mussels in classic French white wine and garlic style, and a main of perfectly prepared Thai coconut halibut. The wine list features some of the best labels B.C. has to offer.

And the company — mostly Europeans awestruck by the gorgeous setting — is most agreeable. A storm is brewing, however, and I soon evacuate the patio just before sheets of rain hammer the harbour. Moments later, the mini maelstrom has passed, leaving in its wake a rainbow arcing across the evening sky, perfectly framed in the Inlets Restaurant's massive picture window.

The silence here is as golden as the setting sun, and the sea and cedar smells mingle and awaken the senses.

Retracing my route the next day back along Highway 101, I approach Pender Harbour's laby-

rinth of bays, sloughs and islands, just five kilometres long from its entrance to its head at Oyster Bay. A principal part of the Sunshine Coast's main marine highway before a regional road system was completed in the 1950s, this intricate body of water has been called "the Venice of the North" by the eclectic collection of loggers, fishers, artists and escapees who have called Pender Harbour home over the past century.

My destination is Painted Boat Resort, Spa and Marina, a collection of 50 luxury two-bedroom villas adjacent to the tranquil village of Madeira Park about 30 kilometres from Sechart.

Set on five acres overlooking Gerrans Bay, the family-friendly villas feature open floor plans, large kitchens, tasteful West Coast furnishings and come equipped

with all the conveniences of home. The resident spa offers a range of facial and massage therapies, as well as water and bath therapies and anti-aging wraps and scrubs. And the on-site Lagoon Restaurant serves a selection of seafood.

Like West Coast Wilderness Lodge, the emphasis at Painted Boat is firmly on taking it easy. Kayaks and standup paddle boards are available to rent, but after dinner I opt instead to spend my time relaxing on my villa's enormous deck, watching the harbour's teal waters subtly shift shades as the June sun elongates the evening. I'm in a mellow Sunshine Coast state of mind.

The writer was hosted by West Coast Wilderness Lodge and Painted Boat Resort, Spa & Marina. Neither property reviewed this story prior to publication.



The magnificent Princess Louisa Marine Park has been called the most beautiful anchorage in the world. PHOTOS: MARK SISSON/5

## IF YOU GO ...

### Getting there

■ B.C. Ferries offers numerous daily sailings from its Horseshoe Bay terminal to Langdale on the Sunshine Coast. Sailing time is 40 minutes. Reservations are recommended on weekends. From Langdale, it's a 90-minute drive along scenic Highway 101 to Egmont. bclferries.com

### Where to stay

■ The West Coast Wilderness Lodge is open from May to October. A two-night getaway package includes two nights' accommodation in a cliffside suite, two gourmet dinners at Inlets Restaurant, full breakfast daily and a hike out to the Skookumchuck Rapids. wcvl.com

■ Painted Boat Resort & Spa is located on the Pender Harbour waterfront near Madeira Park and open year-round. paintedboat.com

Visit Sunshine Coast Tourism's website at [sunshinecoastcanada.com](http://sunshinecoastcanada.com)

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<p><b>PRINCESS CRUISES</b> Limited Special</p> <p>Sep. 08, 2018 \$498 + \$288 taxes</p> <p>3 nights Coastal Cruise + 3 nights Las Vegas</p> <p><b>Golden Princess:</b> Sails Vancouver - Los Angeles Coach transfer Port to Las Vegas</p>	<p><b>Celebrity Cruises</b> Limited Special</p> <p>Sep. 21, 2018 \$1,198 + \$688 taxes</p> <p>10 nights Hawaii Cruise + Return Air</p> <p><b>Celebrity Solstice:</b> Sails Vancouver - Honolulu - Vancouver - Hilo, Kona, Maui, Honolulu</p>
<p><b>Feb. 18, 2019 \$2,898</b> + \$688 taxes</p> <p>3 nights Tokyo + 8 nights Circle Japan Cruise</p> <p><b>Diamond Princess:</b> round trip Yokohama - Yokohama, Nagoya, Osaka, Okinawa, Taipei, Naha, Okinawa (with Transfers)</p> <p>(15 day Tokyo city tour + 1 day Mt. Fuji tour)</p>	<p><b>Oct. 10, 2018 \$3,398</b> + \$788 taxes</p> <p>Air + 2 nights Tokyo</p> <p>14 nights Japan, S. Korea &amp; China Cruise + 2 nights Shanghai</p> <p><b>Celebrity Millennium:</b> Sails Yokohama - Shanghai - Yokohama, Shenzhen, Kobe, Kona, Honolulu, Kigali, Guangzhou, Nagasaki, Busan, (China city, Seoul, Shanghai)</p> <p>*Include half day tour in Tokyo &amp; Shanghai</p>

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