

## The Victoria & Vancouver Island Travel and Tourism Guide TRAVEL MAGAZINE

Over the next few months, we are going to feature articles that highlight the eastern shore of Vancouver Island and the northern half of the Island.

### Denman Is Not A Speed Bump

by Ron Kirstein, Edited by Lisa Cole and Linda Kirstein

I once heard British Columbia's Denman Island referred to as "Hornby Island's speed bump". Indeed, when you take the Ferry from Vancouver Island to Denman and then drive across Denman to catch the ferry to Hornby, everyone drives like it's the Indy 500. If you're in that pack and don't take time to see Denman Island, then you are in too much of a hurry!

Denman Island is pastoral, with lots of farms and orchards. It is a place to slow down and relax. We have not been to Denman for many years, so we're looking forward to it. My wife, Linda, and I drive past the little village, up the hill, past the unique community fence and the United Church, turning right at the Devenish House B&B sign. This is one of the newest B&Bs on Denman, so we're not sure what to expect. We are greeted warmly by Lisa Devenish and immediately establish a bond of friendship. Lisa is very welcoming and charming. She shows us to our room and gives us a guided tour. Our room is spacious and very nicely decorated. It has a wonderful en-suite bathroom with a luxurious soaking tub. We find the bed very comfortable.



Devenish B&B - Beautiful Dining Room  
Photo by Ron Kirstein

Two of the rooms have spectacular views overlooking Baynes Sound and the Beaufort Mountain Range. The house is full of stained glass and the stairwell features a huge window specially designed to frame the vista beyond. The dining room table can fit up to 12 people sitting around it, getting to know each other. This is what sets B&B's apart from other types of accommodations. We've had our best B&B visits in situations like this.

From the dining room we pass through a set of French doors to a flower-filled deck and watch the ferry crossing Baynes Sound below. We can also see the Comox Glacier from here. Lisa brings out tea and we meet her husband. Rodney is a gentle, scholarly man, who teaches and leads meditation retreats at the Hermitage, a Buddhist retreat center on the island.

While having tea, we meet Micah, who has been helping out at the B&B and is waiting for his girlfriend. Surprisingly, Elizabeth turns out to be a young lady who once worked for me years ago in Victoria! We quickly find out that getting dinner on Denman can be a bit tricky, especially during the off season, but Elizabeth invites us for dinner and it is superb. This is Island hospitality at its finest.

After a great night's sleep we're treated to a multi-course breakfast, consisting of fruit, yogurt, muffins, a delicious egg dish, bacon, juice and tea or coffee. It sets us up for a very active day exploring Denman and Hornby.

Our first stop is Boyle Point on Denman. After a relatively easy 15 minute walk, we find ourselves on a high bluff overlooking Chrome Island Lighthouse. The view is spectacular. Thanks to a tip from Rodney, we look down to the right and see an eagle's nest with two young eagles curled up inside. Not far away, the daddy watches keenly over his charges.



View from Devenish B&B over Baynes Sound and the Beaufort Mountain Range on Vancouver Island  
Photo by Ron Kirstein



Two Bald Eagle Chicks off Boyle Point  
Photo by Ron Kirstein

Afterward, we catch the ferry to Hornby Island. Once a week these small ferries schedule a hazardous materials run and they do not take passengers on these crossings--a good reminder to check the schedule for our return trip. Once on Hornby we travel directly to Helliwell Park.

We discover a spectacular trail. The 1.5 hour, 5 km walk takes us along a path through old growth forest and then high above the ocean, over steep, grassy bluffs, eroded by the strong south-easterlies that blow directly onto this shore during the winter.



The Bluffs at Helliwell Provincial Park on Hornby  
Photo by Ron Kirstein

This is one of the most beautiful walks you could ever take. It feels like Canada's Big Sur. High cliffs, full of nesting sea birds, with clear emerald green water below and nothing but blue sky above. After Helliwell, we stop by Tribune Bay, a very popular spot with vacationers. Tribune Bay almost completely empties out when the tides are low. The sand heats up and when the tide comes in, you experience some of the warmest ocean water available in BC for swimming, with white sandy beaches and a day-use picnic area. We decide to have lunch at the Ringside Market and enjoy visiting some of the funky shops. Later, a short drive down Central Road takes us to Ford's Cove where we find a marina, the government wharf, a corner store, scuba shop, art gallery and boat rentals.



Tribune Bay on Hornby Island  
Photo by Ron Kirstein

Back again on Denman, we stop by MIMA Gallery and Fine Art Publishers on East Road, established in 2005 by Mitra Ghaffari and Mark Prior, with the intention of bringing the finest quality of art directly to the public. The studio displays art by Mitra and Mark and a host of other artists.

To ensure that fine art is available at reasonable prices, their company produces limited edition prints from artist originals. They do work for artists from all over the world. It's surprising to find such a sophisticated operation on such a small island.



MIMA Gallery on Denman Island  
Photo by Ron Kirstein

From here, we drive to Fillongley Park situated on the East shore of Denman Island, with its sandy beach, where low tide exposes massive amounts of shells. There are great views of Texada Island and the Coast Mountain range in the distance.

The road into Fillongley Park is bordered by old growth forest, and when we travel through this dense green corridor, we emerge into a window of blue at roads-end. The park has 10 camping sights. All facilities at this park are wheel-chair accessible and within meters of the beach. It is truly a beautiful spot.



Outdoor breakfast area  
Photo Courtesy of Heritage Cottage

Our next visit is to Gallery Deya where we meet Sudasi Gardner. In addition to being a superb artist with many talents (weaving, painting, mosaics, soap-making, and more), Sudasi and her husband Swann have created a marvelous hand-built house and a garden that has been a staple of The Denman Island Annual Country Home and Garden Tour over the years. Wonderful art, a truly original house, an incredible garden, and gracious hosts make this a memorable stop on our tour.

We proceed to visit Bentley LeBaron, another local artist, who specializes in ceramics, and is known for his intricately formed ceramic dragons. Bentley has a wide variety of art imaginatively displayed throughout his property as well as in his unique studio and gallery.

Next, we go out on the town for dinner. Since the bakery is the only place still open, that is our target. We decide it's a good night for pizza. The pizza is great and the delicious smell in the bakery prepares us for a good meal. I think I could live for several days just on the scent of a good bakery. Following the pizza, I devour a piece of sour cream blueberry pie. Well-satiated, we head back to Devenish B&B for another good night's rest.

Our research has informed us that Denman is a great place to go kayaking or canoeing and that Hornby has some great scuba diving. We've also discovered that there is a large number of artisans and galleries on both islands, so we drop in to the Denman Island Craft Shop where we view a sampler of local talent--the works of 70 local crafters and artists.



Home & Gallery of Sudasi Gardner  
Photo by Ron Kirstein



The Denman Island Craft Shop  
Photo by Ron Kirstein

Our hostess directs us to the many hiking trails on the Island and the opportunities for cycling, bird watching, and fishing. We feel a strong sense of community on Denman and see it demonstrated by the brightly painted community fence, the Buddhist Hermitage, the crafts cooperative, and numerous community events. Small as it is, Denman Village seems to have just about everything we might need while on the Island. Bambi seems to enjoy a strangle hold here so we drive the island roads with caution to avoid a new hood ornament!

On our last morning here, we're treated to another great breakfast. Reflecting back on our visit to Devenish House, it's clear that this is a great place to feel physically, mentally and spiritually comfortable. Lisa and Rodney are special people and great hosts for a B&B. Denman is a great place to get away and unwind. As far as we're concerned, the pace is perfect!



Ringside Market on Hornby  
Photo by Ron Kirstein



View from the Sun Deck at Devenish B&B  
Photo Courtesy of Lisa Devenish



Chrome Island Light Station Off Boyle Point  
Photo by Ron Kirstein



Big Dad Watching Over His Charges  
Photo by Ron Kirstein



Old Growth Forest on Road to Fillongley Prov. Park  
Photo by Ron Kirstein



The Hermitage on Denman Island  
Photo by Ron Kirstein



LeBaron Studio on Denman Island  
Photo by Ron Kirstein



Ringside Market on Hornby  
Photo by Ron Kirstein



Bluffs at Helliwell Park on Hornby  
Photo by Ron Kirstein



Starfish by the Hundreds at Helliwell Park  
Photo by Ron Kirstein



Trail to the Bluffs at Helliwell Park  
Photo by Ron Kirstein

**Gallery Deya**, Fine Arts & Craft, 3553 Northwest Road, Denman Island, BC - Open daily year round - Enjoy a 20% discount on all Gallery items. 250-335-0265 Just mention this ad.

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