

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.

Hardy-A Day Goes By

by Ron Kirstein, Edited by Lisa Cole and Linda Kirstein

We arise early knowing that we have to be in Port Hardy by 2 pm in the afternoon. It's approximately 6 hours north of Victoria. The weather forecast is bleak, to say the least, and the prognosis is for it to get worse.

This isn't comforting information as we're on our way to the North End of Vancouver Island to begin a week long tour, starting with a wedding at the end of the earth! Well . . . not exactly. Hurst Island is about 10 kilometers from the end of the earth.



Port Hardy Waterfront Welcome Sign
Photo by Ron Kirstein

The weather is fine in Victoria and as we travel over Malahat Drive we can see the fantastic view from the lookout at the summit. We stop at Tim Horton's for a quick "on-the-fly" breakfast and then keep the pedal to the metal. Duncan, 50 km north of Victoria, has lots of traffic lights and is slow to pass through. Once by Duncan, Highway 19 bypasses Nanaimo, Parksville, Qualicum Beach, Courtenay and most of Campbell River. After Campbell River, it passes Sayward, Port McNeill, and then you cruise right into Port Hardy.

When we pass the turnoff to Sayward, we go through an 80km speed zone and a police cruiser flashes its lights at us, warning us to slow down. We find out later that we were lucky. Many of the wedding party guests received speeding tickets.

Once in Port Hardy, we proceed to our home for the next two days: the Glen Lyon Inn. A very congenial desk clerk greets us, signs us in, and directs us to our room on the second floor. We find a spacious room with numerous amenities, including a king-size bed, fridge, microwave, coffee machine, and a desk with a real office chair. In addition, there's a heart-shaped Jacuzzi, fireplace, stereo-system, and bar counter. The room also has a nook with a bunk bed in it. They are well prepared for families and business people.

The Glen Lyon Inn almost hangs over the water. The large patio windows and balcony provide incredible views of the marina, ocean, mountains, and incredible sunrises. While standing on the balcony, I notice something unusual in the trees on the other side of the marina. A bunch of large birds seem to be fighting with each other. Upon closer inspection through my telephoto lens, I see there are 20 or more eagles in one tree. We surmise that there must be a food source nearby.



Port Hardy Waterfront
Photo by Ron Kirstein



View of Marina from the Hotel Looking towards coastal mountains
Photo by Ron Kirstein

After getting settled in, we set out to find the wedding party. They're all in the hotel restaurant, so we join them for lunch. It's time to renew some old friendships and, for me, meet the other half of the wedding party.

Later that afternoon, we're off to the wedding destination, a scuba diving resort called "God's Pocket," about 45 minutes north of Port Hardy by water taxi. Captain Bill loads us aboard and off we go. Captain Bill has lots of hair and is large in stature. I am told "jokingly" that he's living proof that a Sasquatch could be trained to drive a boat. As it turns out, he is very good at his job.

God's Pocket Resort is on Hurst Island, a small island near Baynes Channel, where the diving is among the best on Vancouver Island. As we approach our destination, we can actually see the end of Vancouver Island on the most northern tip. We travel through numerous islands on the way there. The scenery is very beautiful.

We disembark at the resort and meet the owners, Bill Weeks and Annie Ceschi. They prove to be super hosts. The evening meal is served on a large patio area outside the kitchen and dining area. It's a buffet to rival anything you could find in restaurants anywhere on the island. Later that evening we catch the water taxi back to Port Hardy and walk back to the Glen Lyon Inn.

In the morning we head into town to find a place for breakfast. Captain Hardy's looks interesting and is full of people. Always a good sign. We have a great breakfast and then do some exploring. Right next door is the West Coast Community Craft Shop. Bill and Annie had suggested we stop there. David Hudson greets us, and later, his daughter Davida arrives. She is the director of the shop. Over 125 local artists have their work displayed and sold here.



God's Pocket Resort on Hurst Island
Photo by Ron Kirstein



Annie and Bill the Owners of God's Pocket
Photo By Ron Kirstein

In the afternoon, we return to God's Pocket for the wedding. The wind is up on the way there, providing us with a unique experience. Our water taxi occasionally surfs the curl of a wave. A few times, the wave goes right over us. The crossing is a bit of a nail-biter.

Captain Bill does a very good job, but everyone is glad to put their feet on land. The wedding goes off without a hitch. The weather starts to cooperate and the ride home is smooth. This is indeed a very unique place to hold a wedding. The wedding party has plans to go diving the next day.



Hummingbirds at God's Pocket
Photo by Ron Kirstein

The Southern Kwakiutl First Nation has the Copper Maker Gallery located on the Fort Rupert Reserve, featuring native paintings, carvings, bowls, masks, and totem poles. There are totem poles and chain saw carvings throughout the reserve and at locations around the community. Murals depicting local history are on the outside of some buildings and the inside of others. The Port Hardy chamber of commerce can give you directions to all these sites.



Lewis the Lab Greet Everyone at God's Pocket
Photo Courtesy of Ron Kirstein

One great spot to visit is Storey Beach. This sandy beach gets really big during low tides. Years ago, we camped in the parking lot next to the beach (can't do that now), harvested geoduck clams, and made clam chowder. These are fond memories. This is a popular place to build sand castles, swim, beach comb, kayak, and to watch for eagles. The picnic site has a covered pavilion. The views are impressive with a backdrop of the coastal mountains on the mainland.

To learn more visit [Rip Tide Grizzly Tours](#)

Port Hardy is an outdoor recreation haven with lots of trails, nearby golfing, scuba diving, kayaking, fishing, and whale watching. Shellfish harvesting is good in the area with crabs, clams, mussels and oysters being the mainstay. There is world class wilderness hiking at Cape Scott Provincial Park.

Port Hardy is where you catch the BC Ferry to Prince Rupert through the Inside Passage. This is a superb trip and well worth the time. For most of the voyage you are close to land and the scenery is spectacular. It may seem like it is a long way from most of the major cities, but it's well worth it to travel to the northernmost town on Vancouver Island and enjoy all there is to enjoy.



Spectacular Views from the shores of Port Hardy
Photo by Ron Kirstein



The docks at Port Hardy
Photo by Ron Kirstein



Eagles by the dozens in a Tree at Port Hardy
Photo by Ron Kirstein



A Heron viewed from the balcony at Glen Lyon Inn
Photo by Ron Kirstein



The Glen Lyon Inn Port Hardy
Photo Courtesy of the Glen Lyon Inn



Linda & Rebecca on the Marina Docks
Photo by Ron Kirstein

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