

**World Class Attraction
Indeed!
A Visit to the Royal BC Museum
By Ron Kirstein**

Edited by Lisa Cole
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The Royal BC Museum and National Geographic IMAX Theatre

Many people ask me this question. I am only in Victoria for 2 or 3 days, what should I do? Well, I tell them that Victoria has 4 world class tourist attractions, so why not try fitting them in. The most highly promoted of these is Butchart Gardens. It is truly world class and will take half a day to see it all. Our area also has resident Orca (Killer) Whales living in our waters from May to September. This is one of the best opportunities to see whales. Victoria has often been cited for its world class environmental ambiance. It is worth taking one of the Victoria tours. If you get good weather, then be sure to ride in a double-decker open air bus, so you can soak it up. To the east is beautiful Mount Baker, to the South is Juan de Fuca Strait and the Majestic Olympic Mountains and to the west is the Sooke Hills wilderness area. Viewing is spectacular and certainly world class. The fourth attraction is the **Royal BC Museum** and National Geographic IMAX Theatre. That's where we're off to today.



The Pit House



Totems outside the Big House

When you enter the Museum, there always seems to be some kind of great display in the main lobby. There is a car visible. It has a weird design and a great history. Check it out. As we go through the doors to the left, we find a large 3-D map of BC that puts on an incredible show. It is well worth the time to watch it, especially for visitors to our province.

There is also an incredible gift shop and a good quality café here as well. We are excited to see the Museum, so we head up to the third floor, doing the plan in reverse. We enter the **First People's Gallery** and become quickly absorbed by the tremendous history of our native population. We are amazed by the Pit house and then the incredible poles outside the big house. All the way through the gallery there are incredible displays. Be sure to have lots of time so you can properly view them and read what has been prepared. It is an amazing adventure. There is a mask display with an audio-visual presentation also worth watching in the First People's Gallery.

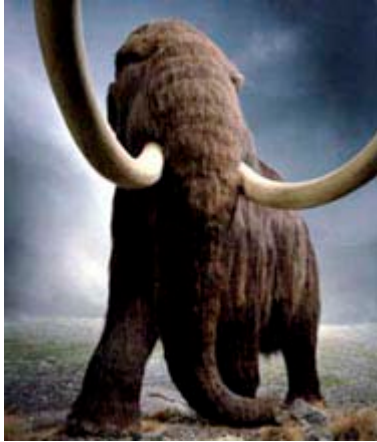


Toys in the Modern History Gallery



A Bob Cat in the Modern History Gallery

Next, we go through the Modern History Gallery. Many of the displays are early in the century and truly amazing. There is part of old town Victoria, China Town, a cannery and the HMS Discovery. There is an incredible bright red leisure suit in a clothing display and a bob cat. The hills surrounding Victoria have bear, cougar, and other critters. It was not long ago that a cougar was discovered in the parking lot at the Empress Hotel, just across the street!



The Ice Age Mammoth

Photo courtesy of the Royal BC Museum
All images © The Trustees of the British Museum.



The Ocean Station is really hands-on

Then we are off to the Living Land, Living Sea Gallery. We are soon greeted by a life size Ice Age Mammoth. Next is an incredible life-like display of sea lions in a coastal setting. This floor also contains a forest diorama which has incredibly lifelike trees, deer, etc. The Ocean station is amazing. Young children are working the stations and learning amazing things about our undersea life. You would swear you are 30 feet under the sea in this display. The other displays in this area are truly amazing. In fact, all the displays are amazing. Each has its own interesting story. I certainly find my favourites, and you will, too.



A mother sealion protecting her young (display)



A bird marsh display - it looks so real (display)

Then we are off to catch the noon show at the IMAX theatre. It is all about extreme sports and very exciting. I have taken in a good number of IMAX shows and have never been disappointed. Watching shows on such a large screen makes you feel like you are there. However, I did find Keith Richards of

the Rolling Stones a bit scary at 40 feet tall. Don't miss taking in at least one show. There is a special rate deal if you take in two shows. Most shows last about 45 minutes.

The National Geographic IMAX theatre also has an outstanding gift shop. Be sure to check it out; you will not be disappointed.



Lisa could not miss the photo op at the National Geographic Store



The National Geographic Store

Then we take time out to peruse the Museum Gift Shop. Some of the First Nation art works are beautiful. There is something for everyone in the gift shop, from T-shirts to jewellery and a whole lot more. Since we've filled up on popcorn, we skip the café this time around.

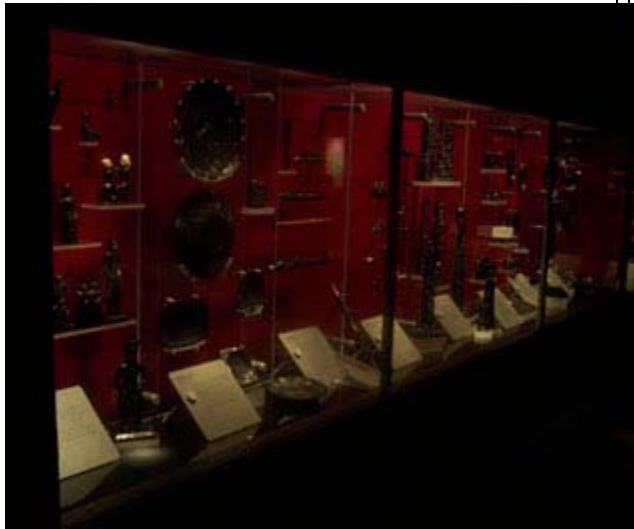
Outside, we take a short walk through Totem Park and the historic buildings surrounding it. This is such an amazing package. Be sure you have a good half day or more to take in this attraction. As a resident I have had the opportunity to come to the Museum over the years and it has changed over that time. It has also had some incredible shows. The Leonardo Da Vinci exhibit, Genghis Khan, and the Titanic were spectacular.



The Historic Village featuring Helmken House (outside)



Totem Park and Long House Outside the Museum



Artifacts in the First Nations Gallery



A Pine Beetle Display - they have desimated BC Forests



First Nation Women Picture in Gallery



First Nations Village BC Interior Display



The Museum Gift Shop



A Whale Skeleton



British Museum Display - chair made from weapons
Photo courtesy of the Royal BC Museum
All images © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Starting May 1st and running until September 30th, an exhibition titled: "Treasures: the World's Cultures from the British Museum" will be in town. This exhibit will display over 300 artefacts from the collection of the renowned British Museum. Included are an Egyptian mummy, a shield from the Bronze Age, works from Picasso and Rembrandt, and a whole lot more. I would suggest that you take this in if you are going to be around. Most of these exhibits have drawn people from all over the world, so don't miss out. They do not go to very many museums. Victoria is on the "A" list because they do such a good job.

Once you are done, you will know why I call this a World Class Attraction!

[CHECK OUT THE ROYAL BC MUSEUM](#)

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