

Campbell River

Where there's plenty more fish in the sea

RELOCATION PRESENTS UNIQUE stresses, one such being the challenge of successful integration into a new community. When moving from B.C.'s Lower Mainland to Campbell River ten years ago, Ann Lacasse harboured such natural concerns. Upon arrival, a simple gesture assuaged her fears immediately.

"When we pulled into the gas station to refill our rented moving truck before returning it," she says, "the attendant asked if we were arriving or leaving. We told him we'd just moved to town. He threw his arms wide and with a big grin said, 'Welcome to Campbell River!' That's when we knew we'd made the right choice."

Warmth and hospitality have long been associated with Campbell River. Yet, a cordial reception from one or more of the 30,000 residents is just one feature of this appealing destination likely to beckon visitors or, indeed, permanent settlers like Lacasse.

A city since 2005, Campbell River is the third largest on Vancouver Island after Victoria and Nanaimo. It's an ideal stop for Alaska-bound cruise ships that are welcomed to the city by its most famous landmark, the iconic L-shaped Discovery Pier.

Situated around the midpoint of the east coast, facing east towards Quadra Island, this friendly metropolitan locality is most famous as the

Painters Lodge in Campbell River offers guided whale watching adventures (detail of photo by Teresa Davis: www.campbellriver.travel)



*Discovery Harbour
(Courtesy of Teresa Davis: www.campbellriver.travel)*

self-proclaimed "Salmon Capital of the World." Indeed, fishermen have been coming here in great numbers to take advantage of the year-round sport since the end of the 19th century. The catalyst propelling Campbell River to its fishing fame of today was an 1896 article by British journalist Sir Richard Musgrave, in which he related the capture of a 70-pound Chinook salmon here. As the saying goes, the rest is history.

A Chinook or Spring salmon in excess of 30-pounds is known as a 'Tyee' and has its own season each year from late summer to early fall. Since 1925, membership in The Tyee Club has been offered to anyone single-handedly hooking one from a rowboat in the Tyee pools at the mouth of the Campbell River.

It's estimated that over half a million salmon travel from the Pacific to jam Discovery Passage off Campbell River every year. This phenomenon provides not only great fishing but also the opportunity to partake in such innovative experiences as snorkelling safaris, where visitors can swim amongst the masses of spawning salmon for a unique underwater thrill.

Aquatic activities figure large in the attractions to be found in and around Campbell River; white-water kayaking is extremely popular. And the coastal waters here are so clear and dazzlingly

populated that the Jacques Cousteau Society describes them as a close second to the Red Sea for scuba-diving. The artificial reef created by the sunken HMCS Columbia provides an adventure becoming globally associated with B.C., as one of eight now placed in provincial coastal waters.

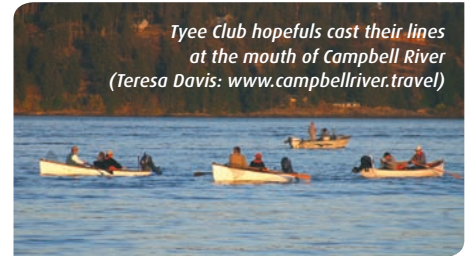
Campbell River was named for Dr. Samuel Campbell, surgeon to the British navy vessel HMS Plumper, a ship assisting with charting the coastline in the 1860s. This period of the area's fascinating bygone days, plus nine thousand years of First Nations history and the development of the vicinity over the last century, are detailed at the excellent Museum at Campbell River. The museum's grounds meet with the pretty Centennial Park and Sequoia Park. The latter boasts the elegant Torii Gate, a gift from Campbell River's sister city, Ishikari, Japan. From Sequoia Park, a stairway leads directly to a series of coastal caves, all perfectly safe for visitors to explore without a guide.

A significant historical site is the Haig-Brown Heritage House. The home of revered conservationist, author and fly-fishing fanatic Roderick Haig-Brown and his wife Ann between 1936 and 1975, the delightful premises today offers peaceful B&B accommodation. Another building of

“Transformations on the Shore” Driftwood Carving Competition is an annual event (Teresa Davis: www.campbellriver.travel)



Cruise ships stop at Campbell River's Discovery Pier (Roger McDonell)



Tyee Club hopefuls cast their lines at the mouth of Campbell River (Teresa Davis: www.campbellriver.travel)

interest—the undisputed focus of the city's peppy arts and culture scene—is the bright pink Tidemark Theatre. This heritage theatre is the setting of much of importance on Campbell River's social calendar, conventions included.

Outdoor adventure abounds here, as Campbell River acts as a portal to excitement in the wilderness it borders, especially the awe-

inspiring Strathcona Provincial Park to the west. Nature-spotting excursions are extremely popular, presenting opportunities to encounter whales, bears and stunning bird life. Dozens of hiking and mountain-biking trails also await lovers of the outdoor life, especially in the scenic Elk Falls Provincial Park.

Golf lovers have a choice of three world-class links. As this stretch of coast experiences

a generally mild climate, Storey Creek, Pacific Playground and Sequoia Springs are open year-round.

Lacasse and her husband have not looked back. They love living in the midst of this wild natural beauty, claiming it gets better every day: "Living in Campbell River means living with nature... and loving it," she says.

— David Morrison 