



Grouse Mountain Superskyride, near Vancouver.



Shopping in China Town, Vancouver.



Cruising the Inside Passage, British Columbia.

## British Columbia

# Vancouver: the best of everything

by Dale Callingham

Vancouver—Gem of the Pacific—is cosmopolitan, prosperous, multi-racial and the largest seaport on the Pacific coast. Its beautiful seaside setting, its snowcapped mountains and rich cultural life draw visitors from all over the continent.

When did the city begin? There are many excellent museums which trace its history from pre-settler times to the present. One of the best is the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia where you can roam through an outstanding display of native art and culture in a captivating building. There's a marvellous glass room, 16 m high, which contains a magnificent collection of totem poles. The glass walls invite the outside in which creates the feeling you are standing in the midst of a beautiful forest glade close to a native village.

You can return to a verdant present by visiting famous Stanley Park where 1,000 acres (404 ha) of rain forest were set aside by the city fathers in 1889. Although much of the park is preserved wilderness, with 35 km of leafy trails for strolling and hiking, there are bicycle paths, totem poles, tennis courts, playgrounds, floral displays, swimming pools, summer theatre and facilities for other recreational activities. There you'll find the Vancouver Aquarium with daily marine shows and the Zoo.

For an incredible panoramic view of the city, its harbor and surrounding countryside, take the Grouse Mountain Superskyride, a

100-passenger tramway which will carry you to the top of Grouse Mountain (1250 m above the sea). A ski centre in winter, it has a restaurant, lounge, coffee shop and gift shop which is open throughout the summer too.

Prefer the tang of salt air? Board a passenger freighter for a day-cruise from Port Alberni, British Columbia down the Alberni Inlet and out into the open Pacific at Barkley Sound. The Lady Rose carries mail, cargo and 100 passengers from Port Alberni to ports on the coast, summer and winter. Visit Green Cove, Kildonan, Ucluelet and the Pacific Rim Islands. Bring your camera for spectacular views of mountains, virgin forests, islands and inlets.

Have more time to spare? Board one of B.C. Ferries cruises along the Inside Passage. This natural marine highway has echoed to Indian war canoes, explorers and adventurers from England, Spain and the United States.

Stop at Kelsey Bay, a small logging community on Vancouver Island; at Bella-Bella, a fishing village; and Ocean Falls, one of the oldest continuously-operating pulp mill towns on the coast. Ferries dock at Prince Rupert, a natural ice-free harbor and western port for prairie wheat. Here you can visit the Museum of Northern British Columbia and see totem poles carved by the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Sailing time is 17 hours for the 438 km trip and reservations are required.

For the truly adventurous try 10 days of ocean, lake and white water cruising, with a float plane trip and a ride on one of B.C.'s little known railways. Board the coach in Vancouver for the hop to Pender Harbor where you board the chartered cruiser for the trip up the Inland Passage. Camp the first night near Stuart Island and, next morning, cruise up the unforgettable Bute Inlet with mountains rising 2 400 m from the shoreline.

Hold your breath—here comes the float plane to carry you over mountains and icefields past Mount Waddington (3 953 m) and onto Chilko Lake. Swim, fish, hike and revel in some of the most spectacular scenery in the world for two days, then board the rafts for 32 km of white water fun down the Chilcotin. Glide on crystal water through lush valleys, then shoot the Big Creek and Farwell Canyon rapids.

Join Simon Fraser's route down the mighty river named for him and run the French Bar Rapids, the Chisholm Canyon and through the granite gorges of the Moran Canyon. From Lillooet, the train for Vancouver carries you through mountain scenery to the end of a trip you'll never forget. If you would like to receive more news about B.C. vacations write: Tourism British Columbia, 1117 Wharf St., Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Z2. □