

BRITISH COLUMBIA



Cruising the inside passage

by Krystyna Pottier

When the hardy Spanish and English adventurers charted the spectacular, labyrinthine ocean trail of British Columbia's "Inside Passage" they were intent on finding the fabled Northwest Sea between Europe and China.

Thanks to these intrepid sailors — and the captain and crew of BC Ferries' Queen of Prince Rupert — today's vacationer can relax and absorb the spectacular scenery aboard a floating hotel. The Queen of Prince Rupert plies the 528 kilometres between Kelsey Bay at the northern end of Vancouver island and Prince Rupert on British Columbia's mainland in 20 hours, year round. It provides an overnight pleasure cruise.

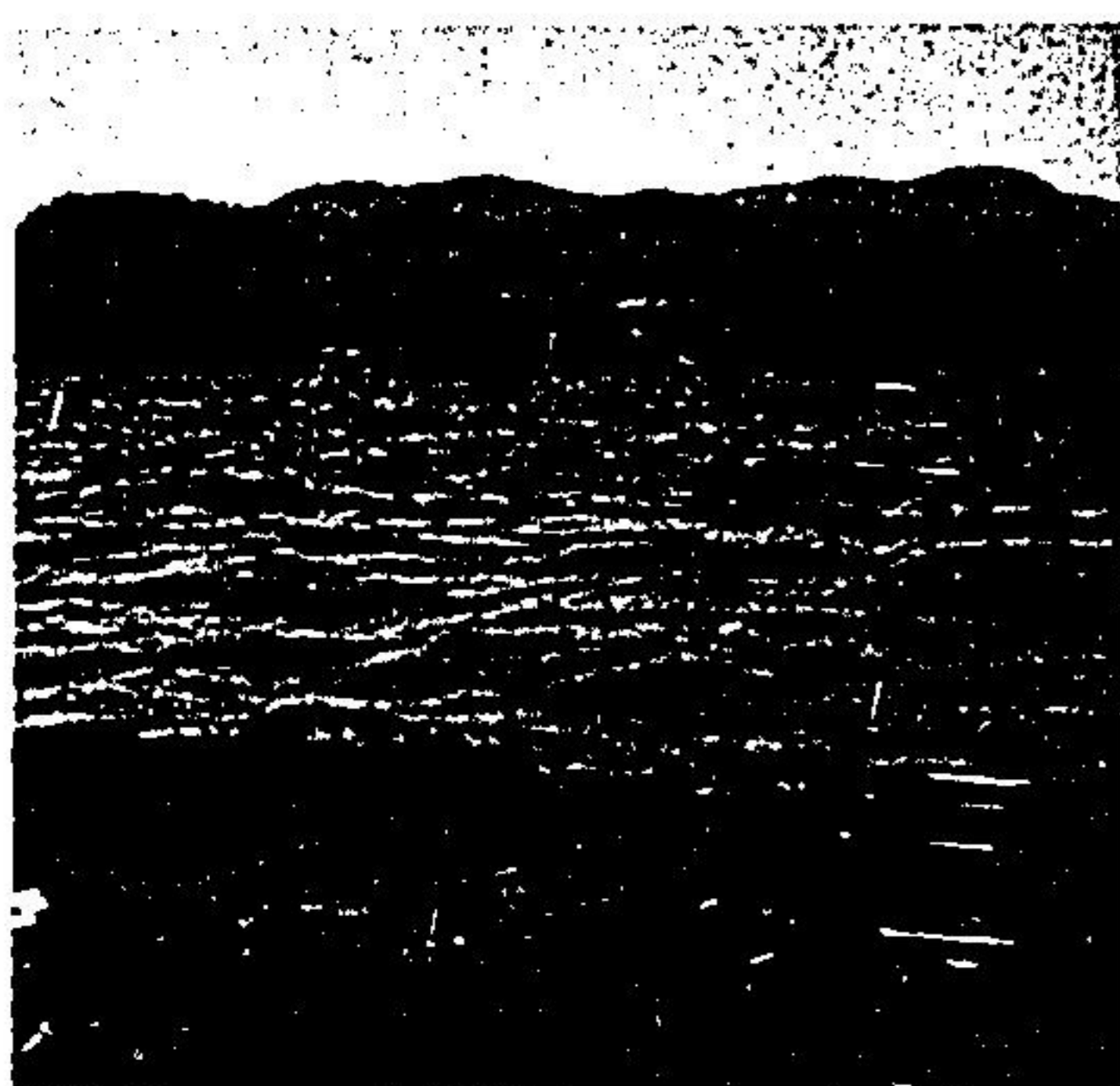
A deck chair or a picture window in the ship's licensed lounge are equally good vantage points for enjoying the mystic beauty of the northern B.C. coastline. Russian sealers, Boston whalers and Scottish fur traders sought year round safe harbour in the smokey fjords that snake off from the main channel of the passage. Coastal Indian tribes found inspiration for their totem poles in the soaring peaks, glaciers, waterfalls and forest clad islets that remain virtually as they knew them centuries ago.

The narrowest passage on the route is the Grenville Channel, between 480 and 600 metres wide (1,600-4,800 feet) and 24 to 25.6 km long (15-16 miles). The big ship sails this stretch in the tranquil shadows of snow-capped mountains and the roar of precipitous waterfalls. Along the way you'll see Indian fishing villages and log booms — the past and present of British Columbia's coastal life. It's not uncommon to see log barges working their way south to Vancouver and freighters bound north to Alaska. Passing through

Queen Charlotte Sound, islands give way to open sea.

The Queen of Prince Rupert can accommodate 430 passengers in staterooms ranging from two-berth deluxe to four-berth standard. All staterooms are equipped with a private bath or are adjacent to washrooms. She carries up to 90 automobiles and can accommodate pickups and campers. Car deck clearance is 5.2 m (14 ft. 8 in.), but reservation requests should include vehicle height if it exceeds 1.9 m (6 ft. 5 in.).

During the summer season, from early May to the end of September, there are alternate daily departures from Prince Rupert and Kelsey Bay. Reservations can be made by writing British Columbia Ferries, 1045 Howe Street, Vancouver, B.C., V6Z 1P6. For general information about Canada as a travel destination, write the Manitoba Government Travel, 200 Vaughan Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1P5. □



ARCTIC TREASURES

Exciting Inuit art

by Gabriella Goliger

There's an Inuit hunting camp on the vast, rugged coast of the Canadian Arctic. A hunter sits on the tundra in front of his summer tent at work on a soapstone carving. With axe, file and sandpaper, trained eyes and skilled hands he creates an image of life from the rough stone.

With the visit of Canadian artist James Houston to villages in the north in the 1950s the modern history of Inuit art began. It was a time of economic hardship for the hunters who were then dependent on a declining fox fur trade. Houston saw great potential in the imaginative carvings of stone, bone and ivory.

He collected 1,000 of these which he sent for exhibition in Montreal. Within a few days every piece was sold and the reputation of Inuit art firmly established. Today, arts and crafts is the largest industry in the North contributing to the income of 50 to 80 per cent of the native population.

Most Inuit arts and crafts are marketed through local co-operatives owned by village shareholders. The artist sells his or her work to the co-op which in turn sends it to a wholesale agency, such as Canadian Arctic Producers, in the south. The piece may then be sent to a craft store in Montreal, a gallery in New York or a private collector in Europe. The village co-op has often been the salvation of Arctic communities adjusting from a hunting to a cash economy. The revenue from carvings

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