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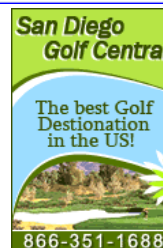
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RESORT REVIEW

Victoria's viewing spot: Hotel Grand Pacific puts Vancouver Island's wonder at your window

By *Chris Baldwin*, Senior Writer



Courtesy: Hotel Grand Pacific
Hotel Grand Pacific has a lot of windows on Victoria's Inner Harbor.

VICTORIA, B.C. - The postcard outside your window is real. The blue water glimmers in the sun. Boats pull away from the dock. Floatplanes rise from the blue stuff into the sky. And people, lots and lots of people, stroll on by.

Want to fall in love with Victoria, the biggest and most happening city on Vancouver Island?

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Just sit at your harbor view window at the **Hotel Grand Pacific** (463 Belleville St., tel. 800-663-7550) and watch the comings and goings of one of the most unique cities in North America. The Grand Pacific provides a great introduction to Victoria - and not just because it's almost right across the street from the docks of the Victoria Clipper, the high-speed ferry you can take right from Seattle's downtown.

The views are part of what sets the Hotel Grand Pacific apart. This is one of those times when spending a little extra money for the harbor view (the Grand calls them Pacific Rooms) is worth it. These aren't [Niagara Falls' far-off, "falls view" downer buys](#).



Chris Baldwin/WorldGolf.com
The drama of Victoria's floatplanes play out near Hotel Grand Pacific.

Splurge at the Hotel Grand Pacific, and you'll feel like you've been given a front row seat to the center of the harbor. One with both climate-controlled and non-climate-controlled seating (you can get a great view from your windows or from outside on your balcony).

It's the people-watching equivalent of a front row home plate seat at Yankee Stadium.

It's not the only reason to make the Hotel Grand Pacific your Victoria

hotel choice, though.

The staff is almost as big a draw as all that blue outside your picture windows, especially the front door staff. Hotel Grand Pacific is one of those places that still has its doorman wearing a big top hat (it might sound ridiculously pretentious, but trust us, in Victoria, it works and just seems to fit in with the whole historic vibe of the city). The hat doesn't set this doorman apart, though.



Hotel Grand Pacific
463 Belleville St.
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada
Web:
<http://www.golfvancouverisland.ca/worldgolf/>
Golf packages and tee times:
1.888.465.3239

Instead, it's the seamless way he'll get you directions for anything (including where you can buy a bucket of dead fish for a \$1 to feed the seals down at Victoria's Fisherman's Wharf) and the way he'll encourage couples with kids to make sure they go see the hotel's duck. (Duck man rules a two-level pond to the right of the hotel's gleaming front entrance).

The bell hops are equally impressive at the Hotel Grand Pacific. You get the idea that these guys would lug your bags halfway to Vancouver if you only asked.

During an almost three-day stay at the hotel for this story, the doorman and the lead bell hop seemed to be the same two guys, working around the clock. They were

both tall men too, providing the Hotel Grand Pacific with the most distinctive welcoming party you've ever seen.

Unless Shaq and Bill Walton decide to take up second careers running the door of a luxury hotel, Hotel Grand Pacific is probably safe in this distinction, too.

When the lead bell hop - a jovial red-headed Canadian who stretched to at least 6-foot-7 - talks of his love of playing golf at [Duncan Meadows Golf & Country Club](#) - you imagine balls rocketing down the fairways bazooka style.

Hotel Grand Pacific's Victoria convenience

Part of Hotel Grand Pacific's charm is how easy it is to get everywhere you want to go. In what's arguably North America's most walkable city, Grand Pacific sits in the heart of it all. The impressive looking Parliament building is next door across a big lawn.

You'll pass it every time you walk to Victoria's prime shopping tourist area, and if the legislature is in session (Victoria is British Columbia's capital), you'll likely witness a protest or two, too. During this visit, an anti-abortion rally was being held, which caused one wisecracking American tourist to remark, "I thought all Canadians were committed liberals."

Right beyond the Parliament, you'll find the ivy-covered Fairmont Empress hotel (721 Government St. tel., 250-384-8111). If you're of a certain age (over 60), you'll probably want to have some high-priced afternoon tea here (\$49-\$72 per person for tea varieties and various high-end snacks).

From there, it's an easy walk (almost everything in Victoria is) to all kinds of shopping and restaurants. Including plenty of hip spots where tea doesn't set you back 60 bucks.



Courtesy Hotel Grand Pacific
Hotel Grand Pacific gives you luxury in the heart of Victoria.

Good golf options are also within reach of the Hotel Grand Pacific (though you won't be walking to the courses). Olympic View Golf Club - a treat of nature where you can literally see all the way into Washington state - and Bear Mountain Golf and Country Club Mountain Course - a co-design from Jack Nicklaus and his son Steve that throws memorable hole after memorable hole at you - are both about a straight-forward, easy 30-minute drive away.

I also stayed up at Westin Bear Mountain Resort (1999 Country Club Way, tel., 888-533-2327) during this trip and found that I enjoyed being in Victoria more and making the trip out to golf and returning for dinner in the city. Of course, it helps to be staying at the Hotel Grand Pacific.

Those who want the feel of the traditional golf resort may appreciate staying out on Bear Mountain more.

At the Hotel Grand Pacific, you'll have the chance to dine at Mark's, essentially an exclusive restaurant within a restaurant - only 26 seats, a 4 1/2 hour window to eat each night and a carefully-selected choice of the dishes the chef believes in most that night.

Or you could just sit on your balcony and watch the whole pretty scene of Victoria go by below.

May 19, 2007

Any opinions expressed above are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the views of the management. The information in this story was accurate at the time of publication. All contact information, directions and prices should be confirmed directly with the golf course or resort before making reservations and/or travel plans.

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