



Bear Mountain Valley Course photo by Robert Kaufman

massage at Santé Spa led to an evening spent wandering around the mountainside village. We ended up at Jack's Place, a laid-back sports pub, for snacks and libations.

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Olympic View Golf Club marked our final stop on the Golf Trail. When we stepped on to the elevated first tee, we realized instantly the origin of the club's name. The Olympic Mountains rose majestically to the south as we sent our drives down the slope to the narrow dogleg. Boasting a variety of hole designs, a dozen lakes, a Japanese garden and a spectacular waterfall framing the 17th green, it's an eclectic track sculpted out of forest and orchards. The finisher is a knee-knocking tee shot over a huge boulder with two more shots up the steep slope.

Diners on the outdoor patio gazed down at our futile attempts to negotiate the front hole location from the back of the three-tiered green. A few minutes later we enjoyed lunch from the same vantage point as others attempted the same putts.

By mid-afternoon, we were back in Victoria with some time to explore, checking into the Inn at Laurel Point, tucked away on the western tip of the Inner Harbor and adjacent to Laurel Point Park. A Pacific Rim-inspired theme permeates the hotel's ambience, and our stunning fourth-floor suite offered inspiring views of the harbor and downtown. Since Victoria is a great walking town, we decided to stroll the downtown area and get a feel for its Britain-flavored history. Dinner came back at the hotel in the hot new restaurant, Aura, where Executive Chef Brad Horen blends Japanese and European flavors with local ingredients to present a great menu.

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Galina and I awoke early and enjoyed coffee on our balcony overlooking the harbor. We watched the float planes take off and land while the shuttle boats scuttled from point to point. We decided to pack as much Victoria-area sightseeing as possible into our last day on Vancouver Island, including a stroll through world-

famous Butchart Gardens. Designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 2004, it consists of 55 acres of exotic flowers, trees and shrubs begun on the site of a former limestone quarry more than 100 years ago.

Next up was a tour of Craigdarroch Castle, built between 1887-1890 for Robert Dunsmuir, a Scottish immigrant who made his fortune from Vancouver Island coal. Finally, we made it to the Royal BC Museum a couple hours before closing and wandered through the permanent exhibits, which feature a cultural history of British Columbia.

On the way back to the hotel, we decided to buy some wine and cheese and spend our last evening on the hotel balcony, avoiding talk of the next day's departure, the ferry ride stateside and the drive home to Portland. Instead we reminisced about the incredible scenery, great golf, friendly people, innumerable sights and activities yet to experience, and then started planning our return to couples' north-of-the-border nirvana. —Jim Rullo