



COME JUNE, TALENTED STALWART TOFINO BREWING DOUBLES ITS WAREHOUSE SPACE TO ADD A TASTING LOUNGE. SAMPLE JUST-TAPPED SPRUCE TREE ALE OR, IF THE DATES ALIGN, THE FULL BOARD AT ITS ANNUAL BREWBO (Tofinobrewingco.com)

From Here to Eternities

Luxe beachside resorts entice from both sides of the border BY JOHN BURNS

I DO LIKE ME SOME MILES OF TRACKLESS strand, shorebirds in the swash, not a soul in sight. Not always easy to find, but locally we're blessed with (admittedly chilly) beaches of awe-some beauty. Six hours west, including ferry, will get you to the end of Hwy 4 and Tofino. Six south, and you're into Oregon—Cannon Beach, specifically, that weekend destination for Portlandians who still drive. Both locales offer mammoth stretches that, outside high season, are splendid places to play chicken with ocean rollers. True, they're similar—tourist dependent, steeped in history, en route to nowhere—but in the end one major difference decided the contest.



CANNON BEACH Oregon

PLAY Six-and-a-half kilometres of townside sand draw 750,000 visitors a year. The heart is state-protected **Haystack Rock**, a hulking megalith just south of Main Street, made all the more dramatic because if you stand anywhere nearby and look out to sea, next stop is Japan. Dune stretches invite contemplation of the infinite—just as well, because actual beach services are few. Pick between sand tricycling (but don't), chilly surfing, and days of self-guided hiking on the beaches and through the nearby **parks** (Oregonstateparks.org). Chief among them, 1,023-acre **Ecola State Park** (just off Hwy 101) is the southernmost coastal spot explored by Lewis and Clark. With 15 kilometres of beach and tide pools, it's a nature bonanza.

FIELD NOTES

CANNON BEACH
550km
Take I5 to Olympia, then dogleg west. Or head to Portland, then tack back on Hwy 26. I elected to fly to Portland (Alaskaairlines.com), rent a car, then come back by Amtrak.

TOFINO
280km
Ferry to Nanaimo, then drive into the sunset. Again I flew (Orcaair.com), which got me to dune town in 45 minutes. Car rental (Budget.ca) is at the Tofino airport.

STAY The region's charm is in its sun-faded Americana of (mainly family) motels off a main drag big on novelty Ts and ice cream parlours. **The Stephanie Inn** (2740 S. Pacific St., 503-436-2221; from US\$460 a night) is the glorious exception. Its 41 rooms are pretty (those with spacious decks overlooking the beach are killer), and hospitality means afternoon wine in the library, catered s'mores on the beach by moonlight. For families (the Inn is ages 12 plus), the same group owns downtown's **Surfsand Resort** (148 W. Gower Ave., 800-547-6100). **EAT** The Inn will shuttle you into town, but pickings are lean. **Ful-tano's Pizza** (200 N. Hemlock St., 503-436-9717) is fine, and there are steakhouses and fish 'n' chips stands. Town boasts one seasonal

distillery (closed when I visited); instead, head north to Astoria, location of *The Goonies* and **Fort George Brewery** (1483 Duane St., 503-325-7468). Summers, Inn chef Aaron Bedard will take you to the downtown **farmers market** (Cannonbeachmarket.org), introduce you around, then cook up your finds for that night's dinner.

TOFINO British Columbia

PLAY A generation ago, Tofino was another end-of-the-road summer draw. No more. With 16 kilometres now protected as the **Pacific Rim National Park Reserve** (Pc.gc.ca), it welcomes 750,000 visitors (most in warm months) each year. Hiking trails and self-guided interpretative walks are everywhere. After



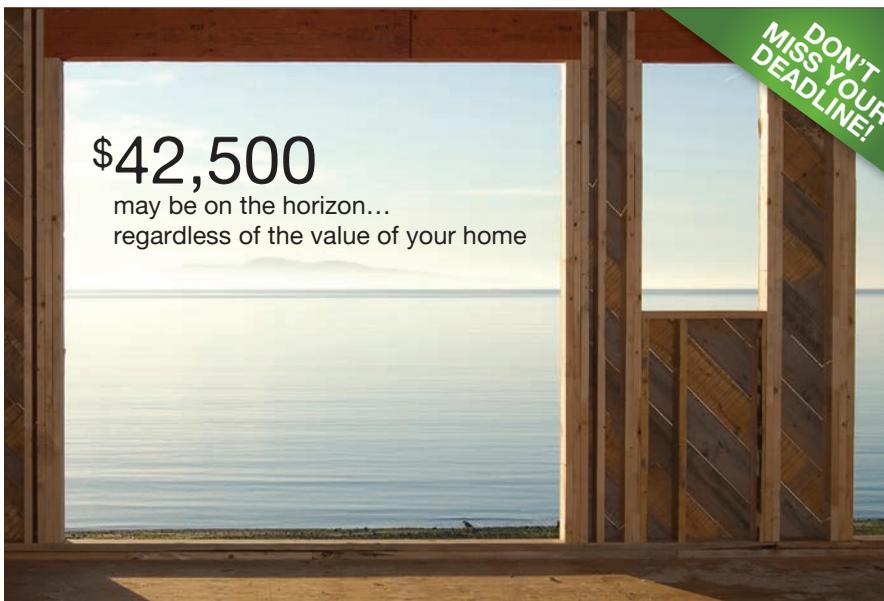
- **MAKE PEACE**
Ride the waves at Cox Bay, Tofino
- **SHORES OF PERCEPTION**
Enjoy a smorgasbord of nature at Ecola State Park
- **REGAL REFUGE**
Nothing beats dinner at The Pointe at the Wickaninnish Inn
- **CAMPFIRE SONG**
S'mores and bonfires at Cannon Beach
- **THE DISH**
Mex it up with pork gringas at the original TacoFino
- **SWEET DREAMS**
Restore yourself at the Pacific Sands Beach Resort

Surfer: Josh Lewis/Tourism Tofino; TacoFino: Laura McGuire; The Pointe: Ivan Hunter

an obligatory cartwheel down the closest beach, drive south toward Ucluelet and the **Nuu-chah-nulth Trail**, with 2.5 kilometres of hushed forest tracks from Wickaninnish Beach to pristine Florencia Bay, home to an 1861 shipwreck and terminus of the West Coast Trail (\$8 park admission). Then it's time to get wet. Year-round, hit the waves with local standard-

bearer **Surf Sister Surf School**; daily group lessons (625 Campbell St., 877-724-7873, from \$69) will get you into the chuck and—hopefully—up on a longboard. For the more sedentary, stick to a **guided boat tour** (Browningpass.com) with Capt. Mike White, a Tofino lifer (and former Coast Guard) who will tour, and storytell, you around the nearby islands in

search of bear and wolf sightings. **STAY** **The Wickaninnish Inn** (500 Osprey Ln., 800-333-4604)—a four-star Relais & Chateaux on North Chesterman Beach—is Tofino luxury HQ; with two buildings (and a third in the offing) it has grown impressively alongside the town. (Owner Charles McDiarmid, on site every day, remembers clearing the scrub for his folks



\$42,500

may be on the horizon...
regardless of the value of your home

Have you purchased or built a new home or done a substantial renovation to an existing home or condo between July 2010 and March 2013?

You may be entitled to a government rebate of up to \$42,500!

**CANADA'S
RENO REBATE INC.**

1267 Fairfield Road, Victoria
renorebate.ca



Contact us today: 250-889-2789 info@renorebate.ca

*Le Dîner en Blanc™
Vancouver*

THE MAGICAL NIGHT RETURNS
THURSDAY, AUGUST 21ST 2014

PRE-REGISTER NOW AT
VANCOUVER.DINERENBLANC.INFO/REGISTER



before construction began.) The rooms are West Coast royal, the hand-adzed architecture stunning, the views from the storied round dining room peerless. Less known but equally indulgent is **Pacific Sands Beach Resort** (1425 Pacific Rim Hwy, 800-565-2322) on adjacent Cox Bay. No onsite amenities, its 77 suites and beach houses (ranging from family utilitarian to just-married indulgent) are the launchpad for area adventures—though the lobby does sell frozen Vij's curries, and continental breakfasts can be delivered. Views from the master bed of the 1,350-square-foot beach houses (from \$430 a night) are immensely restoring.

EAT Sorry, Cannon Beach. Your sand is soft, your vistas sweeping. But Tofino's fine-dining options—all year—are next-gen. Lunch is fish tacos from the original **Taco-Fino** truck, or equally delicious **Wildside Grill** in the same plaza as must-visit **Chocolate Tofino** (the housemade gelato is exemplary) and the **Tofitian Café** (1180 Pacific Rim Hwy). Note: everyone shuts early to surf. Dinner, your options are massive. **Sobo** (311 Neill St., 250-725-2341) recently revamped its space; the menu is still top-flight on local produce and proteins intelligently prepared. Reservations essential. **Shelter** (601 Campbell St., 250-725-3353) has a more après-surf vibe with actual locals at the bar and our surf sister waiting tables. (It's part-owned by Cactus Club's Richard Jaffray, and feels it.) But dinner at **The Pointe at the Wickaninnish Inn** is the ultimate option. Surrender to wine flights, inventive high-molecular cooking, and the utter relief of knowing you've hit the end of the road, and it's nirvana. **VM**