

# INSPIRED

55+ lifestyle magazine

JULY 2019

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PARSONS

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SPIRITS

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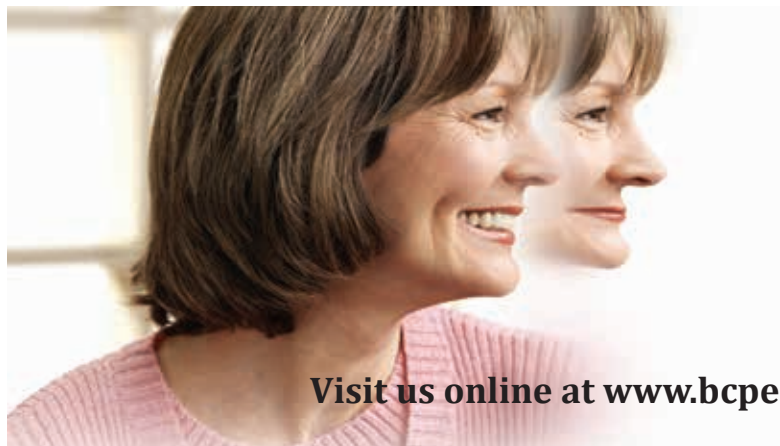
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Cover TONY PARSONS  
Being a messenger viewers could  
trust was important in his career  
as an anchor – and it still is post-  
retirement in his spokesperson role.

*Photo by Trevor Walker Photography*



## INSPIRED

55+ lifestyle magazine

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Spokesperson Tony Parsons  
*Photos: Trevor Walker Photography*

# TONY PARSONS: MY LIFE IN NEWS

by JOHN THOMSON

He didn't want to be an anchor. At least initially.

"I thought law would be my main choice. People seemed to make money from it and enjoy it, so I had my eye on that," says Tony Parsons, the man who became the voice and face of BCTV News for over 34 years. Growing up in Ontario, a career in television news, especially on the west coast, was the farthest thing from the young man's mind. Today, six years after his last broadcast, he's remembered for his professionalism and longevity.

Tony's no longer reading the news but he's still on television. He's the official spokesperson for NexGen Hearing, appearing in commercials and attending live clinics.

"They did the tests and it turned out I had bad hearing in varying degrees in either of my ears and so I was a candidate," he says. "I was surprised. I didn't think it was a problem."

He became a patient and then a spokesperson.

"It's peripheral sound that was my problem, separating sounds I want to hear from sounds that overlapped."

Everything's fine now. The issue has been corrected. But he never mentioned his hearing loss to anyone.

"He is private. Definitely," says his wife Tammy.

Tony Parsons was born Anthony Parsonage in Gosport, England in 1939. In 1948, the family immigrated to Canada and settled in Feversham (near Owen Sound), then to Kitchener and finally to Sarnia, where his high school counsellor suggested a career in broadcasting.

"I got up in class to read aloud from a history book. I read a couple of pages and he said, 'I don't know what you're planning on doing but you've got a great voice and you read well. You should think about broadcasting.' It never, never entered my mind until he said that. Then he put me in touch with Ryerson in Toronto, and that's where it all started."

Tony entered Ryerson's Radio and Television Arts program but left in first year, anxious to get some practical radio experience. He became a disc jockey and moved around southern Ontario in search of a better position and better money. First Stratford, Sarnia and then Guelph, where the program director changed his name from Parsonage to Parsons because "that's what they did at the time."

But spinning records and innocuous banter didn't cut it for the young DJ, so by the time he reached Hamilton in 1960, he asked to be moved from chatter to newsgathering.

"The thing about being a DJ is that you have to explode little bombs of happiness all through the day and I just found I couldn't do that on an ongoing basis," says Tony. "I wasn't the world's best ad-libber. I like scripts. I like structure. That was more appealing to me than going in and doing a dance. So, I went to this news director at CHML in Hamilton and I said to him, 'I really want to get on the news side of this because I don't think I'm as good a DJ as I should be.' And he said, 'I'll give you a chance, but you've got to work the late-night shift and sometimes all night just to get some grounding.' I enjoyed it and I enjoyed being out on the streets as a reporter."

It was a comfortable fit and, eight years later, he moved to Toronto and another radio reporting job. Within months, he moved again, this time to television station CFTO as an on-air reporter. Less than a year later, the weekend anchor position opened.

"Since I was there already, they said, 'are you interested in trying this out' and I said, 'yeah, sure.' It was the sort of thing I was hoping to get eventually. It just came a little earlier than I thought it would."

Tony admits to being restless. And lucky. It's a theme that has permeated his career, forever chasing "something that I thought would work for me for the long term." So, when a job offer in Halifax came up in 1973, he declined it, opting instead to become CTV's west coast bureau chief a year later in Vancouver.

# Snapshot

with Tony Parsons



If you were to meet your 20-year-old self, what advice would you give him?

*"My advice would be to be brave. Don't be afraid to say, 'I can do this.' Just make it your own and take ownership of what you know you can do."*

Who or what has influenced you the most and why?

*"I think Cameron Bell (former BCTV News Director) fell into that mentor role. He would sit down with me for lunch or something and we'd talk. 'How do you feel about this? You said this last night.' He guided me in his own way through a lot of stuff. Mostly on my delivery."*

What are you grateful for?

*"Sometimes you're fortunate to be in the right place at the right time and everything clicks into place. You look back on it and you say, 'it could have gone another way if I had of done this or that' so I always considered myself lucky to be in the right place at the right time. I never had to apply for a job. I always had them offered to me."*

What does success mean to you?

*"Peace of mind, a sense of achievement knowing that you've done it your way. I could break into song right now." |*

"I didn't know anything about Vancouver," admits Tony. But after leaving his bureau chief position at CTV, he ended up at what would become the longest position of his career, 34 years as the lead anchor at local CTV affiliate CHAN, later to be rebranded BCTV, and then rebranded again as Global BC. His calm, measured and melodious delivery captured the public's attention.

"I watched other anchors and picked some of the things I liked about them and made them my own. You could say I was self-tutored," he says.

His delivery made BCTV a ratings champ.

"Again, it comes down to the ad-lib thing. I'm not a great gregarious kind of ad-libber. There were times when I just wanted to get on with it and get the story out there. I think I was a sincere kind of guy. I still am. I kept going because I believed in what I did and if you believe in what you do it transmits, I think, to the audience."

He left Global BC in 2009 only to return in 2010 to anchor both CBC's local evening newscast and the late-night show at CHEK in Victoria. For awhile, he flew between the two cities until Vancouver supplied a proper studio.

"Flying was fine. You get used to it. I taught myself to sleep on the way over."

He finally signed off December 20, 2013.

Sincere. Unflappable. Trustworthy. Those are the qualities viewers remember; the image that Tony presented night after night. What viewers didn't know was what was going on in their favourite anchor's private life.

"They probably didn't know that I wasn't careful about relationships," he says. "I think I was selfish and self-satisfied and that I was hard to get to know. I was pretty aloof when I was first starting out. I was trying to concentrate on what I was doing."

Travel, shift work and the demands of the job took their toll. He admits to a long-standing extramarital affair. It all

contributed to three failed marriages. His fourth is solid.

He also admits to bouts of stage fright.

"Yeah and, to this day, I don't know how that happened. The initial stages of preparation and rehearsals for some reason unnerved me for awhile but as soon as I said, 'good evening,' I was fine."

But it's his penchant for self-medication that caused him problems.

"I had a drinking problem. I was drinking Scotch and then going to bed with cognac. My father was an alcoholic and that might have been a good thing in the sense that I watched him deteriorate. It got me off the booze, eventually, when I thought I don't want to be like that. I don't want to end up like that."

Maybe it was the job. In 1989, he was promoted to News Director and, in 1995, he became Vice President of News and Public Affairs.

"It was difficult wearing two hats," he admits. He was still anchoring three telecasts, *Early News*, *News Hour*, and *Canada Tonight* as well as taking on administrative duties. As management, he had to let 11 reporters and presenters go in a corporate downsizing. Perhaps drinking alleviated those extra pressures, but he thinks it was the result of depression.

"I've always had some form of depression. Nobody's ever told me how to control it or where it came from in the first place. I can still slip back into the crevasse on occasion," he says.

And when those darker moments materialize, he copes with a self-administered five-minute exercise.

"It's a form of meditation. I take an honest assessment of where I am and what I've accomplished and work my way through that and think to myself you're really a fortunate guy. You've got all this, you're making good money and things are going your way. What have you got to be depressed about? And that helps me through it."

Indeed, Tony and Tammy lead a rich and fulfilling life. They reside in Kelowna and winter in Palm Springs three months of the year. Tony's an avid golfer and likes to play three times a week with his friends, and more on his own.

"He's out five to six times a week hitting balls," says Tammy. "He's in his glory."



They met at a charity tournament in Kelowna in 2003. Tammy was part of his foursome. As the manager of two Okanagan area golf courses, she had already met her fair share of personalities and was unfazed by Tony's celebrity status.

"To me Tony was just Tony. I never thought of him as a celebrity. He is a little bit shy," she continues. "I think that comes from being in the spotlight all the time and constantly being recognized."

He invited her to a Global Christmas party; they started dating and married in 2005. The couple is approaching their 14th anniversary.

They share a common interest in golf and travel. And dogs. While anchoring *News Hour* in Vancouver, Tony adopted Charlie, a cocker spaniel that accompanied him into the studio and sat at his master's feet while Tony delivered the news. When Charlie passed, Jack stepped in to fill the void.

"Jack was mine," says Tammy. "When I first met Tony, I had Jack and that was Tony's big test. My dad used to say if a dog likes somebody, then it was a good sign, and Jack loved Tony."

Jack, too, accompanied Tony into the studio. The couple now share their life with Lucy and Morley, two Cuban Havanese lapdogs. Tammy says she and Tony treat them like children and, yes, they have the run of the place.

It's a good life, balancing golf, the dogs and alerting people to the possibility of hearing loss. And although nobody's approached him, yes, he would be interested in sharing his experience with depression.

"I'm all for things that will help other people and that's one of the reasons why I took on NexGen Hearing."

As for returning to the anchor desk, "I'm not sure I want to be working in the business right now after what I've watched. It's become such a bottom-line thing," he says.

He laments over the concentration of power in the hands of a few media giants and the rise of social media, which has influenced the nature of presenting content, much of it unfiltered.

"Social media has done such a job on conventional broadcasting. I knew it would. Everybody knew it would. Nevertheless, I hope there will always be a place for an anchor. I think anchors are important. I think they connect to [people]."

Of the many awards he's received over the years – such as an industry President's Award, the Queen's Jubilee Award or the Jack Webster Foundation Lifetime Achievement of 2004 – perhaps the most rewarding is the trophy Tony won year after year at the *TV Week* magazine Awards – "Most Popular Anchor."

"I think my success was based on my belief in what our viewers wanted to see and hear," says Tony. "I became partly listening post, partly messenger. I never, never spoke down to my audience. I shared the stories of the day with them, but I never preached. Keep it simple and uncomplicated but interesting. To many people, I was the ultimate messenger and that, for me, was important."

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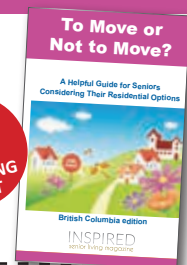
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# SCOTTSDALE SPAS: THE ULTIMATE IN RELAXATION

by KATE ROBERTSON

The morning sun was shining brightly at the rooftop spa pool of the Fairmont Princess Scottsdale, where I was stretched out on a recliner, lazily gazing at the most sharply defined clouds I've ever seen – like white construction paper cut-outs pasted on a bright blue backboard. I don't remember the last time I made time for cloud-watching. I didn't think I could get much more relaxed (turns out I was wrong), and I hadn't even had my spa treatment yet.

Founded in 1894 as a farming community, Scottsdale, Arizona's mysterious desert landscape started attracting artists and writers in the early 1900s. Since then, it's become a tourist haven and home to some of the best spa resorts in the world.

## The Well & Being Spa, Fairmont Princess Scottsdale

Whether you're staying here or just visiting for the day, you'll likely need a map to find the spa – this resort is big. It has six pools (one with a white sand beach), two golf courses, numerous restaurants, landscaped grounds filled with saguaro cacti and agave plants, and plazas with fountains that enhance the Spanish-colonial architecture of the property.

The design of the spa itself is inspired by a hidden oasis

in the Grand Canyon called Havasupai Falls and contains all of nature's elements: air, earth, water, wood and fire. Aside from the rooftop pool with private cabanas, there's a waterfall grotto, steam room, eucalyptus inhalation room, Swedish dry sauna, whirlpool, cold plunge and Swiss shower. Use of the fitness studio and some exercise classes are included with a spa booking.

My treatment: I start by deeply inhaling the earthy, sweet scent of the sage smudge that Dusty, my therapist for this two-hour Havasupai Falls Rejuvenation treatment, whisks around the corners of the treatment room and then my body, to oust any bad energy.

ABOVE | Rooftop spa pool at Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. Photo: Kate Robertson

PAGE 9 | The Phoenician Spa Treatment Room. Courtesy of The Phoenician

TOC PAGE | The pools at Omni Scottsdale Resort and Spa. Photo: Kate Robertson



Next, comes an exfoliation with an essential oil infused with desert salts. The attention to detail of this treatment is incredible, like the continuous misting of my face and hot towels on my chest and under my neck to increase relaxation. Dusty discreetly leaves the room as I shower the salt off my body and sink into the soaker jet tub filled with bubbles.

I don't want to leave this warm, liquid heaven, but if there's anything that will get me out of a tub, it's a massage. And this massage is warm jojoba butter slathered on my body with Himalayan salt stones. "These stones release tension and soothe the muscles," advises Dusty.

After that, I'm cocooned in a warm herbal wrap of hot towels and heavy blankets, as my feet are massaged. Then Dusty slowly drizzles hot oil over my scalp – letting me enjoy the sensation of it slowly dripping down my head before massaging it into my scalp and hair (let's face it, most of us love going to the hair salon for the shampoo/scalp massage). A Sedona red-clay face mask is the final touch. I'm so relaxed, I feel like I'm floating.

### Joya Spa, Omni Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Montelucia

If you're not staying at the Omni, you will still want to take a walk around to check out the pools, which are stunning with the backdrop of Camelback Mountain. There are lots of Spanish influences in the resort design, and I highly recommend a visit to Prada, their Andalusian-influenced restaurant, where they serve traditional mix-and-match wood-fired tapas.

The Moroccan-influenced spa, Joya, has kasbah décor throughout and, along with the regular treatments, they offer a hammam treatment and a Moroccan orange blossom detox ritual.

My treatment: An experience is evoked as soon as I walk through the door, when my spa host (called a "Joya journey co-ordinator") leads me to the "joy of intention" room to choose from an array of precious stones. To set my intention for the day, I choose rose quartz, to open the heart chakra. The next stop is the "joy of purification" room, where the focal point is a massive, 25-kilogram Brazilian quartz crystal, which removes any negative energy and stress.

Now I'm ready for the 80-minute White Tea Tree and Ginger body experience. A delicious floral scent fills the room, as my therapist, Juliane, rubs my skin with the body polish. Next is a warm stone foot massage (like the head, I believe the feet are an overlooked part of the body) and neck massage. Then Juliane slathers me with shea and jojoba butter mixed with delicious smelling herbs like rosemary and lemon grass, to aid lymphatic drainage, before I'm wrapped burrito-like in foil.

After a shower, the treatment finishes off with a relaxing massage with more white tea tree and ginger products. My skin is so soft and moisturized, I swear a shiny new layer has been exposed.

### The Phoenician Spa, Phoenician Resort

This 250-acre resort and golf course is nestled at the base of Camelback Mountain. The Phoenician is all about wellness and, when you book a spa treatment, yoga and meditation classes are complimentary. A must-do is the morning yoga walk, which combines power walking through the large pool complex and



grounds, with stops to incorporate yoga poses at interesting spots like the historical Jokake Inn and the two-acre cactus garden, which features 250 varieties of cacti.

The newly constructed spa here is modern and sleek. Along with the usual treatments, the Phoenician has some unique offerings, like harmonic sound therapy with Himalayan singing bowls, tarot card readings and hypnotherapy.

My treatment: I arrive early to the spa to allow time for the recommended spa ritual of hot and cold-contrast hydrotherapy. After a five-minute sauna, five-minute steam, 30-second cold shower and five-minute rest, my therapist, Maureen, who has 27 years of experience with the Phoenician, whisks me away for my 110-minute Sonoran signature scrub, massage and wrap.

She starts with some hands-on energy balancing, before she gently scrubs my body with the desert sage and wild lavender smoothing body polish. Next, Maureen places a rose quartz on my mid-back ("a vital point to enhance the massage," she advises) before she massages me with hot sodalite rocks. Then, after she wraps me with a healing aloe moisturizer, Maureen pampers me with an acupuncture massage on my face and feet.

As I left Scottsdale, every part of me was polished, pampered and de-stressed. I'm already looking at my calendar to see when I can return to this desert oasis for more relaxing spa treatments. |

For IF YOU GO information, visit [www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/scottsdale-spas](http://www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/scottsdale-spas)



# DANCING INTO 50

by THELMA FAYLE

“Are you a dancer or here for the leadership program?” someone asks at the communal breakfast on the first morning of the five-day Hollyhock Dancing from the Inside Out workshop.

“I’m not really a dancer,” I stammer. “I’m turning 50 and decided to celebrate by dancing my way into it.” I considered taking the leadership program but, after 25 years of working for the government, I decided I couldn’t bear another go at facing the latest buzzwords on “leadership.” I signed up for Dancing from the Inside Out, offered at the remote “lifelong learning institute” on Cortes Island off the west coast.

I arrive at the rustic dance studio and am embarrassed (again) when I meet professional dancers, mostly half my age, who have come from England and Australia and the US. One is on a break from dancing with *Cats* in London. *CATS!* I take note. This adventure may have been a mistake.

The expansive windows and skylights reveal sunshine, lush green forest and tall fir trees – even taller than our instructor, a giant in the international world of dance. Margie Gillis doesn’t bother with introductions that normally take up the first hour of a workshop. She has five days to introduce 30 participants to their own bodies. She seems un-interested in who we are on the outside. She puts on some non-intimidating, even-tempoed music and encourages us to “just start moving around.”

As we begin to shyly move around the hall with stiff little introductory smiles for each other, Margie slowly walks around the large space and observes. She abruptly discourages eye contact. “Look inside,” she says. “Never mind anyone else. Just keep walking. Forwards. Backwards. Not too fast.”

She shifts our focus to our own internal landscape. “How do the bottom of your feet feel?” she asks, swaying back and forth on her own thick, muscular feet. “Shift your weight. Can you move back and forth on the heel and ball of your feet? From side to side? Can you feel them? Come on now. Stay with me. Don’t write the book ‘til you’ve had the experience. How do your feet feel?”

The mentoring monologue accompanies a diverse selection of music – or sometimes silence – accompanied by the slapping sounds of feet hitting the wooden floor. Walking. Bending. Stretching. Skipping. She skillfully pulls us away from the self-consciousness we all well know. She leans over and places a hand where my instep has fallen. “Let go of your knees a little. You can lift this part of your foot a bit, if you like.” Her eyes keep moving over bodies and she matches commentary to the needs of individuals and the group.

And so begins the leadership program, er, I mean dance class. I expect to be the lone crone among professional dancers, but it turns out there are others. I don’t know anybody’s name, so I privately name them. Grand Gal is 70. She started dancing at 58. I am encouraged. She’s lithe. Pro Boy doesn’t look like he has anything to learn but he says Margie is teaching him a level of internal awareness that he is humbled by. Pretzel Girl is technically the best in the class. She positions herself to show off agility. Her hair is tied back, ballerina-style. She has the saddest eyes.

I have no context for these strangers, but I learn about them from observing their dancing responses to Margie’s guidance. Giant Man, an American from “Down South” is 6’3” and 63 years old. He sports a potbelly, missing front teeth and a mild stutter. He moves with shocking grace. He gets the “dancing from within” part. I learn later this is not his first class with Margie; he is one of the most beautiful dancers at Hollyhock.

After each class, twice a day, a dozen of us race in and swim naked in the ocean. The cold water acts as a comforting compress to our awakened muscles. We even swim at night to witness the bio-luminescent shimmering colours in the black water. One classmate sits ashore singing the Beatles’ “When I’m 64” to give us a shore reference to come back to.

At bedtime, when I get into my sleeping bag, I imagine Palestinians and Israelis dancing together. Better yet, members of parliament. Yikes, maybe even my whole family. I am hilariously happy. Dancing into my 50s was a brainy idea.

On the final evening, Margie offers to dance to a reading of James Joyce for the local community. Can you imagine? Most people can barely read Joyce, let alone dance to it! The dense writing seems light when accompanied with her captivating skill. Everyone is transfixed by the stunning solo performance.

On Day Five, I dance for three hours in the morning, swim in the sea and eat lunch in the dining room. As I carry my tray back to the kitchen, a breeze blows the napkin off my plate. Two men from the leadership program stand nearby, deep in discussion. They don’t offer to pick it up.

Not wanting to leave my used napkin on the floor, I hold my food tray with both hands and reach my bare foot out and pick up the napkin with my toes and place it on my tray. My 50-year-old body utterly surprises me with the graceful response. I didn’t know I could do that.

The two men stare. “Wow, you must be a dancer,” one says. I smile. “Yes, I am.”

So far, I like being 50. This bright beginning bodes well. |

ABOVE | The author soothes sore muscles with a swim. TOC PAGE | View of Hollyhock learning centre from the water. Photos: Daryl Jones

*Thelma Fayle is a Canadian freelance writer. She was a paying guest at Hollyhock. [thelma.fayle@shaw.ca](mailto:thelma.fayle@shaw.ca)*



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# VANCOUVER ISLAND'S CRAFT DISTILLERY TSUNAMI

by KATE ROBERTSON

As the desire to know where our food comes from takes hold, it should come as no surprise that we also want to know who's making our spirits and what ingredients they're using. Nowhere in Canada is the craft distillery movement bigger than the wave hitting Vancouver Island. In fact, of the 30 or so distilleries that have sprung up in BC, one third are located on the island.

Amazingly, many of these craft spirits are already getting recognition and winning competitions for excellence. Interested? You can check them out and purchase online, but why not take a road trip through the wooded farmlands of Cobble Hill to the rugged west shoreline of Tofino to see firsthand where these high-quality products come from.

## MERRIDALE CIDERY & DISTILLERY

*What's unique? Their stunning apple-orchard setting in Cobble Hill, Vancouver Island's bread-basket region.*

As soon as you turn off the highway and onto the country road that takes you past green pastures and over wooden bridges, you know you're going somewhere special. After making cider for many years, Merridale now distills vodka, gin and brandy from their own apples, BC fruits and locally sourced ingredients, as well as a honey-fermented "rhumb."

At Merridale you can do a self-guided tour of the distillery and cidery, then stroll the orchard, before having lunch in the Merridale Eatery. The Eatery's motto is "Merridale makes," so everything is made from scratch and, to keep things unique,

dishes often include cider (like the cider-braised beef and apple stew). You can cozy up to the tasting bar to sample some mini cocktail creations, but a paired tasting flight is optimum: "We want people to understand how food and drink pair," says Janet Docherty who operates Merridale with her husband, Rick Pipes.

## STILLHEAD DISTILLERY

*What's unique? The Cask Club: purchase your own private 30-litre whisky cask and be part of the process, including tastings, as it ages and your own private label.*

Stillhead Distillery in Duncan is all about local. Even the name Stillhead is a play on the steelhead salmon that return every year to the local Cowichan River (owner Brennan Colebank is an avid fly fisherman).

ABOVE | Shelter Point Distillery's beautiful equipment. *Courtesy of Shelter Point Distillery.*

PAGE 13 | (top) The charcuterie board at Merridale Eatery. (bottom) Arbutus Distillery's new single malt whisky.

PAGE 14 | (top to bottom) The Cask Club at Stillhead Distillery. Krupnik liqueur, Wayward Distillation House's bestseller. Neil Campbell and Adam Warry, Tofino Distillery owners. *Photos: Kate Robertson*



Flagship spirits are vodka and gin. “It took Colebank 23 runs before coming up with the perfect recipe for the Prime 23 gin, a West Coast gin inspired by the London Dry classic, hence the name,” says Zack Blake, production assistant. Stillhead’s other flagship spirit – and their bestseller – is the wild blackberry-infused vodka, made with wild berries picked in season by local Cowichan tribes.

Book a tour to learn about the entire distilling process and to see behind the scenes, before sitting at the bar for a tasting or a cocktail.

#### ARBUTUS DISTILLERY

*What’s unique? There’s not only a tasting bar, but also a cocktail lounge within the distillery, where you can sit and watch the stills bubble and brew.*

Arbutus Distillery in Nanaimo was one of the first on the Island. They offer a large selection of spirits, ranging from blue gin, to absinthe, to elderflower

liqueur (they grow many of their own botanicals). Owner Mike Pizzitelli, initially a cell biologist, then studied brewing and distilling in Edinburgh, so it comes as no surprise that Arbutus’ newest addition is a three-year-aged single malt whisky. “And we’re always making new seasonal spirits to keep people coming back,” says Pizzitelli.

In season, the outdoor patio is the perfect spot to enjoy a spirit tasting, and the cocktail lounge is open evenings, Thursday through Saturday, when you can also savour stone-oven-cooked pizza.

#### WAYWARD DISTILLATION HOUSE

*What’s unique? This is the first distillery in Canada to use honey as a base for its spirits.*

At Wayward Distillation House in Courtenay, they start with honey harvested from pristine wild-clover fields in Northern BC to make mead, before distilling. Signature spirits are their Unruly



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Vodka and Unruly Gin, but they also make a Drunken Hive Rum and unique seasonal offerings, like a raspberry and ginger vodka infusion, and Krupnik, a Polish spiced honey liqueur (their biggest seller).

But Wayward is more than just a distillery – it’s a fun place to sit at the bar and try one of their innovative spirit-forward cocktails. “Courtenay residents bring their out-of-town guests here on a Friday afternoon to enjoy a cocktail,” says production assistant, Elise Caron. “Just tell the mixologist what taste you like, and they’ll concoct something sure to please your taste buds.”

### SHELTER POINT DISTILLERY

*What’s unique? The distillery’s seaside location, and the most beautiful building and equipment I’ve ever seen.*

Just south of Campbell River, on over 154 hectares of land with two kilometres of oceanfront, Shelter Point Distillery is on one of the last seaside farms on the island. Owner Patrick Evans, third generation local farmer, is one of the rare distillers that grows his own barley for their small batches of artisan whisky, vodka and specialty liqueur.

Take a tour of the gigantic cathedral-like distillery with its soaring open-beam ceilings and lovely copper stills to learn all about how the local terroir, like the underground aquifer they pull their water from, contributes to the taste of the spirits. “Even the sea breeze makes a difference,” says Evans, “it affects the aging of the cask.”

Then sit down for a tasting of Shelter Point’s signature single malt whisky, distilled using traditional Scottish methods, to see why it’s getting worldwide attention and a mention in Jim Murray’s 2019 Whisky Bible.

### TOFINO DISTILLERY

*What’s unique? They are keeping things traditional with good, old-fashioned face-to-face interaction, so they’re not on social media.*

Over on the island’s wild side, the recently opened Tofino Distillery is making small-batch jalapeno vodka (perfect for Caesars), gin and absinthe distilled from BC organic grains and, in 2019, it will become a certified organic establishment. Neil Campbell, co-owner along with Adam Warry and John Gilmour, says, “BC’s in a gin renaissance; gin’s really sexy right now, and that’s why we made West Coast gin as one of our flagship spirits.”

Tofino Distillery’s branding taps into the history of Tofino, with touches like a nautical chart on their labels. Visit the tasting room for some mini cocktail tasters or a sip of whatever constantly changing infusion they might have percolating on the bar. On the perfect summer day, when they roll up the front sliding door to let the sunshine in, you won’t want to leave. |

*For IF YOU GO information, visit [www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/vancouver-island-distilleries](http://www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/vancouver-island-distilleries)*



# INSPIRED MAKEOVER

by *INSPIRED* STAFF

After a long, dreary winter, Mary Lou Rowbotham was ready for something different when she applied for the *INSPIRED* Makeover Contest. A fresh season needed a fresh look!

"It was an amazing experience," she says.

A BC resident for more than 30 years, Mary Lou has enjoyed extensive travel throughout North America, Barbados, Japan and Tasmania, but she loves Victoria!

Since retiring, she has kept herself busy by staying involved in her community. Mary Lou volunteers at The Belfry Theatre, Dance Victoria and the Canadian College of Performing Arts and The Monterey Centre in Oak Bay. She belongs to the United Empire Loyalist Chapter and has been a member of the Single Seniors' Group since its inception two years ago.

To stay physically active, she works out at Steve Nash Gym three times per week and she recently joined The Bay City Polers, who enjoy exploring James Bay every Monday morning.

While Mary Lou's daughters, sons-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are spread across Canada and the UK, she does have a niece in Victoria. Friends are never far away.

She kept her makeover under wraps until the reveal at the 55+ Lifestyle Show, so it was a surprise to those in attendance who know her. "They all loved how I looked."

For others considering applying for the next *INSPIRED* Makeover Contest, Mary Lou says go for it!

"I am so happy with how I look, and the special attention from all the businesses that helped make it happen. I'd do it again in a heartbeat! Thank you, Barbara, for picking me!"

## WHAT THE STYLIST DID:

**Hair:** Mary Lou came to me with longer hair that she had been growing out for a while. It lacked colour and was almost completely white.

To avoid a lot of post-makeover upkeep, I wanted to give her something that would grow out nicely and complement her complexion. Because her hair was white, I wanted to add some colour and depth, so I used variations of the gray tones, pearl tones and titanium tones throughout her hair. I did a more modern shadowed root, which is slightly darker on her root area while keeping her ends lighter. I used Beautiful Shades EQ gloss, which is a beautiful conditioning colour. It will keep the hair in nice condition, but it will give it a little more body because Mary Lou has very fine hair.

For the cut, I brought her up to a chin-length bob because of its classic shape and also because Mary Lou has such fine hair. The length she arrived with was too long causing her hair to lay flat. Cutting her hair to chin-length gives the appearance of more volume. And a great product she can use to keep her colour looking fresh is the new gradient shampoo and conditioner



from Redken that maintains those pearl and titanium tones.

**Makeup:** For Mary Lou's makeup, I started with the primer as I often do because it gives the surface of the skin a smoother texture, filling in any fine lines and pores. I then used foundation to do the contouring, using darker shades in the hollows of her cheeks, around her hairline and down the sides of her nose. I then used a cream blush on the apples of her cheeks and a light highlighter down the bridge of her nose.

For her eye makeup, I wanted to keep it simple and not use too much powder because it tends to fall into the lines around the eyes. I smoothed out the tone of the eye, brightening it up with a bit of yellow, mauve and charcoal shadows. For Mary Lou's lips, I went with a fresh, natural lipstick. |

## Special thanks to the entire *INSPIRED* Makeover team:

Hair Stylist – Hana Akai of Akai Hair Design 2559 Quadra St. Call Hana for details about hair and makeup 250-383-3227.

Visit online at [www.akaihairdesign.com](http://www.akaihairdesign.com). Hana is an educator for Redken; all hair products sponsored by Redken 5th Ave.

Makeup provided by London Drugs, Yates Street, Victoria.

Shiela's clothing was provided by Blue Sky Clothing Co.

Facial and nails: Shimmer Body & Nail Spa.

After makeover photo taken by Regina Akhankina of Portrait Couture.

For more information, [www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/makeover-july19](http://www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/makeover-july19)

# THE POWER OF CHOICE

by TONI O'KEEFFE

Do you have the power to choose how you age? According to Cori Ellingson, author and wellness facilitator, the answers is yes.

Cori is a self-described truth seeker committed to the promotion of healthy aging and healthy living.

Her principles centre on applying personal power, natural healing methods, natural foods, meditation, exercise and other holistic elements to achieve a balance of the mind, body and spirit, and evoke emotional wellness. She educates people, specifically woman, on their individual choices when it comes to managing health.

Cori has travelled extensively across Central, South and North America, Southeast Asia, China and Europe to learn about natural healing and healthy aging. She shares this knowledge and the wisdom in her three books: *Choosing a Vibrant Life*, *Vision Quest: A Spiritual Awakening*, and *Fasting on Golden Elixir*, and works with individual clients, hosts ceremonies and offers workshops on healthy living, aging and the power of choice.

In her latest book, *Choosing a Vibrant Life*, Cori outlines how our beliefs, thoughts and perceptions create our reality. “The power is in our hands and in our minds,” she says. “We give our healthcare providers incredible power over our bodies and our wellness when, in fact, we have other choices.”

Cori's training includes: Neuro Linguistic Programming, Body Mind Communication, Reiki Mastery, Healing Touch, Ancient Hawaiian Huna, Hawaiian Huna, Hawaiian Chanting, Laughter for Health, Medicine Wheel Studies of North and South America. She has also been a student of the shamanic path for 25 years.

“I have witnessed the power we have to manage our



health and our aging process,” says Cori. “It is inside each of us. All we have to do is claim it.”

As a teenager, Cori witnessed her mother struggle following a difficult surgical procedure and painful recovery. A conversation with the surgeon's wife, an acquaintance of the family, revealed that even she would not have agreed to such a procedure due to the potential complications. The Ellingson family was shocked as to why the surgeon and her GP had not shared this information or alternative healing methods with the family.

When Cori's sister, a clinical nurse, discovered symptoms of breast cancer, she chose to embark on a healing process based on holistic practices and, according to Cori, healed herself. As a result, her sister left the nursing practice to become a holistic healer.

These two incidents led Cori to begin a journey to encourage others to explore their options and claim the power they have over their health and well-being.

ABOVE | Author and wellness facilitator Cori Ellingson. Photo: Kim Yanick Portraits



“We think we’re supposed to live a certain way,” she says. “Societal pressure is so strong that we forget we have a choice. We submit ourselves to dangerous procedures and medications because we believe this is what we’re supposed to do. When we remember we have options, this is our power, the power to choose what works best for us.”

“Our ability to choose is more than how we deal with illness when it hits,” say the mother of three. “It’s how we live our lives, so we don’t become ill in the first place.”

Those drawn to Cori’s work are seeking to break away from mainstream lifestyles and return to a more natural way of living, including growing their own food, exercise, meditation, reconnecting with nature and exploring the power of their minds to heal their bodies.

At 67, Cori’s own daily health regime includes consuming the foods and fluids she believes will improve her health and longevity. She meditates, journals, chants, listens to her body and practices mindful gratitude.

She says daily intermittent fasting is one of the best things we can do to stay healthy. “Fasting for a minimum of 12 hours without food allows the body to rest and rejuvenate.” Regularly exercising and maintaining a balanced schedule of work, social activities and self-wellness also help her stay mentally, physical and spiritual fit.

Cori has been writing for as long as she can remember. “I have always enjoyed writing,” she says, “As a child I loved writing assignments and still enjoy writing letters.” For her next writing project, she is planning to pen a book on longevity. |

For more information on Cori Ellingson’s three books and wellness sessions, visit <https://heartproductions.ca>

Editor’s Note: This article is for information only. Please consult your health and wellness professionals for advice related to your individual circumstances.



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# GETTING READY FOR BIG MAGIC

by J. KATHLEEN THOMPSON

One of my favourite quotes is “All the arts we practise are apprenticeships, the big art is our life,” penned by M.C. Richards, an American poet and potter. While it may resonate with many readers, others – for whom art has always seemed a little unapproachable – will be unmoved. Unless I can convince them, that is, to pick up Elizabeth Gilbert’s book *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*, which reads like a love letter to the artist within us all.

In *Big Magic*, Gilbert invites us to consider that we are all capable of getting to the “big art” if we are receptive to the idea of “big magic,” i.e. the cosmological existence of creative ideas and how these ideas are brought into being by human thought. And creative ideas don’t only hang out in certain bohemian enclaves, she argues. They stalk us all, and the sooner we give them permission to enter our lives, the sooner we can get on with the richly fulfilling business of bringing those ideas to life.

While the skeptics amongst us may feel her theory sounds too much like “if you just sprinkle it with a little fairy dust, the light will come on,” we need to remember that when songwriters, poets and visual artists tell us they have no idea where their ideas come from, that the poem wrote itself or that they were gifted with a song last night, they are alluding to this same mysterious energy.

Most of us have also been struck by those lightning bolts from out of the blue. They could be innovative solutions to a challenge at work, another way to communicate with your teenage daughter, a way to synthesize seemingly unrelated ideas, or a colour scheme for your living room you’ve never tried before. But we have been hesitant to explore our creative depths more fully because it is something that takes a lot of... courage.

Fear often stands between us and creative living. We fear we have nothing to say, that no one will be interested in what we have to say, that what we have to say is self-indulgent nonsense and has no right to be considered art, that what we say indecently exposes us. Maybe we are too old, or too young, or too busy, or too fill-in-the-blank to say anything at all.

Courage challenges these fears, furnishing us with the confidence needed to take creative risks. Courage is the voice that says, “I’m here, I am as entitled to tell my story – be it in clay, spoken word, paint, song, fabric, wood – as the next person. You may not like it or think it any good, but I do and, frankly, that’s all that matters.” We listen to Gilbert, Glen Gould and



PHOTOS | Living a creative life – no matter its form – takes courage. The rewards are a richly fulfilling human existence. Photos: J. Kathleen Thompson





others, who stress that being involved in art is all about cultivating a state of grace, transcendence, wonder and serenity. Its public purpose is secondary.

Pursuing what we love and are curious about is as essential to us as, well, herding sheep is to the border collie. Denied the opportunity to engage in constructive work would result in the collie “eating the couch” just as it would have us burrowing further into wells of self-dissatisfaction. Creating affirms our value, elevates us, and temporarily relieves us of the burden of being who we are. It allows us to experience what R. W. Emerson felt when he said, “There are no days so memorable as those which vibrate with some stroke of the imagination.”

And there will be days when nothing vibrates, and the magic has momentarily fled. Gilbert reminds us that every endeavour in life comes with some disagreeable aspect, whether it is because you need to endure the cold as a figure skater, the breathing exercises as a singer, the seclusion as a writer, or the weeding as a gardener. If you love the creative work enough, however, the discomfort or frustrations will be amply compensated by the satisfaction you gain from being absorbed in it.

So, kudos to all of you opening up your summer studios, going back to unfinished canvases, sharpening your wood-carving tools, tuning up your ukulele, or breaking ground for the water feature designed for the garden. And courage to those who want to try. Magic is in the air; rejoice, breathe in the inspiration, and pass it on! |

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# FOREVER FIT

by EVE LEES



## PAIN-IN-THE-BACK EXERCISES

Low back pain? Stay active, but cautious. Consult a Certified Fitness Instructor and/or a physiotherapist to design your back-strengthening exercise program.

Many common exercises greatly stress the lower back. Avoid, minimize or modify them while your back heals.

Hyperextending the spine (bending too far backward) puts unnecessary stress on the low back. Maintain a pelvic tuck when doing standing exercises. Keep your knees slightly bent to minimize low-back stress.

When doing abdominal exercises, always keep legs bent at the knees and concentrate on pushing your lower back into the floor. When you arch your back, the stress falls off the abdominal muscles and onto your back.

Waist-twisting exercises, done incorrectly, also aggravate the low back. Done correctly, twists involve very short ranges of motion: not a full turning at the waist. However, even short-range twists aren't recommended for some.

Seated exercises combined with lifting a weight over the head will compress the spine and may aggravate a low back problem. Stand up when pressing a weight overhead. This way the legs bear some of the pressure otherwise condensed in the spine. You can also stand with your lower back pressed against a wall, to avoid over-arching.

When doing the bench press or a push-up (chest exercises), be aware of keeping a straight back. Rest your feet on the bench while doing a bench press. This avoids over-arching the low back. And doing push-ups off the knees instead of the toes may also help maintain a straight back.

Until your back is stronger, avoid or modify these common back exercises: the bent-over barbell row, the T-bar row, the good-morning exercise, the deadlift and the back extension.

Poor technique in the seated row exercise also puts considerable stress on the low back. Avoid leaning too far

forward or backward when doing this exercise. Maintain an upright posture (knees relaxed) and feel the muscles of the upper back doing the pulling.

The squat is a lower body exercise that may irritate a back problem, especially if done improperly. It can be modified, however, to lessen the stress on the lower back.

Brisk walking, instead of jogging, minimizes stress on the lower back. Use flat terrain. On the treadmill, too: inclines and declines put more stress on the lower back. When step-training or using a stair machine, maintain erect posture – avoid stooping over.

Always stretch after exercising. Flexible muscles resist injury. Stretch your lower back and the backs of your thighs. Tight hamstrings contribute to low back problems.

Regular, moderate activity is the best way to avoid or recuperate from injury. Get moving – the right way! |

**Eve Lees** has been active in the health & fitness industry since 1979. Currently, she is a Freelance Health Writer for several publications and speaks to business and private groups on various health topics. [www.artnews-healthnews.com](http://www.artnews-healthnews.com)



# COLOUR, GLITTER AND CAPES, OH MY!

by CALLIE MARTIN

When the salty air of summer gives way to the cozy lattes of autumn, it's time to trade in our swimsuits and t-shirts for sweaters and jackets, all of which come with their own special flair this season.

## HEAD-TO-TOE COLOUR

Being too “matchy-matchy” used to be considered a fashion sin, but as seen on the runways of Max Mara, Balenciaga and Dolce & Gabbana, bright pink, strong yellow, some lighter greens and lavenders (traditionally “spring”) are the go-to colours this fall and winter. From matching a long jacket with a wide-legged pair of pants in the same hue, or pairing a chic hat with its matching purse, head-to-toe colours are no longer the fashion crime they used to be.

If you're interested in rocking this trend in the cooler months, it's important to pay attention to your textures and fabrics. Keeping them all in the same family (ex. all cotton) ensures your ensemble will not end up looking overcrowded or “busy.” Also important to note is that head-to-toe colour is not the same as head-to-toe print, which can sometimes lean to a slightly tackier look. If you're concerned about this trend being “too much,” try a muted colour such as beige or a pastel, thus allowing you to participate in the look while still staying professional and soft.

## BLING BLING!

With Christmas parties on the horizon, many of us will be looking to dazzle in those inevitable group photos. This year, standing out has never been easier with the trend of sequins, sparkles, and all that glitters. Observed on numerous runways (including that of Molly Goddard, Chanel and Michael Kors), many types and colours of clothing lit up fashion week. Though it was most commonly seen in the form of a dress, gowns aren't the only way to bring a little more “dazzle” into your life this season.

Of course, for those looking to make a splash, an all-over sparkle can be a bold and elegant statement, but keep in mind the type of glitter being used. Sequins are more popular for casual looks (such as a skirt or a bag), whereas “micro-sparkle” fabrics (fabrics where the glitter is so small it has often been woven and/or sprayed into the fabric itself) are best suited for formal events. If an all-over dazzle isn't



what you're after, consider investing in a purse (even a petite one) or a pair of shoes to add just a “pop” of light-catching pigment, without running the risk of someone requiring sunglasses to look in your direction.

## HEROINE CHIC

It's no secret that in the last decade (and last few years in particular), superhero films have flooded our cinemas. Well, many designers have taken notice of this, and now are translating the fashion of our favourite heroes and heroines onto their runways in a wearable way with capes. As spotted on the runways of Burberry, Oscar de la Renta and Dolce & Gabbana, many models sported an elegant capelet on their coats for the colder months. Far from the costumed version seen on the big screen, these capes are subtler and closer to the modern poncho (which became very popular around 10 years ago) than they are to a Halloween costume. Oftentimes styled as long coats that nearly touch the ground with modern slits for your arms (sometimes with a loose sleeve), these capes serve as an elegant way to keep warm and stay chic in the cozier months.

Wearing this look, despite seeming daunting, is incredibly simple (especially for a working professional). If purchased in a neutral colour (like brown, grey or black), they can be worn over virtually any outfit to keep you warm and contemporary. Like with any form of outerwear, a scarf can be used both as an accessory or as a means of staying warm. A fashionable pair of boots with matching gloves gives a polished finish. Because the cape-jacket is so loose, it should be paired with items that are more fitted to the body (such as pants) to avoid appearing too bohemian.

The weather outside may get frightening but fall and winter 2019 will be so delightful (and chic) with these new trends for any age. |



# HAPPY TOWN

by JOHN THOMSON

The sun is shining, the temperature is a perfect 25 degrees and there's a warm breeze coming off the Pacific Ocean. I'm in Santa Monica, California, LA's waterfront cousin, 40 minutes west of the city and halfway up the coast between Santa Barbara and San Clemente.

The official city motto is "happy people in a happy city," and I'm one of those happy people darting in and out of the water. The iconic Santa Monica Pier with its carnival amusements is nearby. The ferris wheel, admittedly no London Eye but big enough to offer an impressive view of the sea and sand below, grinds away silently while youthful screams of delight come from the nearby roller coaster. In front of me, a gaggle of wannabe surfers are taking lessons. (US\$130/2 hours, if you're interested). Life is good.

No longer dismissed as a jumping off point to Los Angeles, Santa Monica is a destination spot in its own right. Sure, the beach vibe is still strong, but the high-tech workers have moved in – the area is now called Silicon Beach – and that means boutiques, high culture and fine dining. Grunge meets glamour.

Walking past the original Muscle Beach on my way to lunch illustrates its split personality. Bodybuilders

gathered here in the 1950s but, 20 years later, the city chased them away to nearby Venice – too unsightly they said.

Very déclassé. The sweaty bodies have returned, albeit on a smaller scale, a moment's throw from Shutters on the Beach, one of the most exclusive hotels on the waterfront. I can see them grunting and groaning from my beachside table as I savour my grilled Mediterranean branzino with green pea pesto and crushed potatoes. Delicious. Ah, the yin and yang of Santa Monica.

My home base is the midtown Japanese-inspired Ambrose Hotel. Mellow is the byword here. The secluded patio and restful beige and blue interiors convey a Zen like tranquility.

"We keep it kind of old school," says General Manager Matt Bernard. "We still have a little piece of paper guests sign and fill out. We do have great tech here, but we don't push

ABOVE | Santa Monica Pier 1.

PAGE 24 | (top) Surfers on Santa Monica Beach. (bottom) The original Muscle Beach. Photos: John Thomson



it in everybody's face." The hotel emphasizes the personal touch.

The next morning, the complimentary shuttle takes me to nearby Montana Avenue, a 10-block stretch of 150 high-end boutiques and interesting eateries. Sandwich boards tout expensive perfumes and jewellery. I stop in for a cup of honey almond crunch at Rori's Artisanal Creamery. It's the best ice cream on the planet.

If Montana Avenue is high end, Main Street is the older, funkier part of town, the original home of surfer dudes and skateboarders. I grab a Turkey Bomb Burrito – turkey, caramelized onions, cheese, and arugula at Dogwood Coffee. The note on the wall says the surfboard above my head can be mine for a cool \$700.

Jadis, a nearby curiosity shop attracts my eye. It's steam punk light. Long-time resident Susan Lieberman manages a wonderful collection of gadgets and constructions made of valves, tubes and sheet metal.

"[My husband] was inspired by the Young Frankenstein movie and he began to construct things," she says. He passed away in 2010 but Susan presses on, renting out props to the movie industry and entertaining shoppers with innovative paraphernalia.

I walk over to the Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica's downtown spine, a four-block pedestrian mall anchored at one end by Bloomingdales and Banana Republic at the other. The street is alive with shoppers and buskers. I stop for dinner at Tar and Roses and order a succulent duck breast with collard greens, kumquat chutney and a corn cake. I've had varied success with duck; it's either been too dry or too gamey. This serving is melt-in-your-mouth superb. And for a nightcap? Where else but at Chez Jay, a notorious dive bar.

"I prefer the word joint not dive bar," laughs Mike Anderson, the current owner. The place looks like it did when it opened in 1959: simple, shabby and cozy. Mike tells me Chez Jay was a hangout for the Hollywood elite back in the day because it was so far removed from the LA paparazzi. Burt Reynolds, Angie Dickenson and their ilk could disappear and let their hair down. He takes me to table 10 at the back of the room, an unassuming alcove with torn red vinyl seats.

"Julie Andrews and Blake Edwards had their first date here," says Mike. "It makes me proud to be part of that history."

Santa Monica agrees. Once slated for demolition, the city declared Chez Jay an historic landmark in 2012. Table 10 isn't going anywhere soon.

The next day, I take an Uber to Bergamot, a collection of 25 commercial art galleries housed in a former railway depot. Paintings from contemporary artist Ed Moses, prints from Hockney, Miro and Warhol, and photos from Dorothea Lange are on display. It's a grab bag of styles and media, and I find it invigorating.

As for live theatre, I visit the Eli and Edythe Broad Stage downtown, the largest of the city's seven venues. The Broad (pronounced Brode) serves up theatre, dance, opera, sym-



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phony and chamber music in its modern 500-seat performance hall. The Westside Comedy Theatre just off the Third Street Promenade specializes in improv and prides itself on spring boarding the careers of superstars Kevin Pollack, Aziz Ansari and Zach Galifianakis.

Did I say Santa Monica is peppered with innovative restaurants? I choose Tallula's, located on the western edge of the city, for its unique take on Tex-Mex. The turquoise walls, tile floor and wooden tables scream "cantina," but this bright and cheery eatery is no hole-in-the-wall and the prices aren't cheap. I try the fish taco, two blue corn tortillas topped with grilled chunks of rock cod and a creamy, malt aioli. The aioli smacks of a small amount of malt vinegar, the kind you put on traditional fish and chips. Britain meets Mexico. What a concept. In fact, at one point there were so many Brits in town that Santa Monica used to be called Little Britain.

Their numbers have dwindled but downtown's Ye Olde King's Head remains ground zero for the city's ex-pat population. I forgo Afternoon Tea, complete with finger sandwiches and scones with clotted cream, in favour of fish and chips and imported English beer before heading next door to check out the pub's gift shop. Cornish pasties, Peak Frean biscuits, Cadbury's chocolates – it's all here. Little Britain lives on.

I head back to the Pier and the Marvin Brande Bike Trail, also called the Strand, to work off my midday meal. The Strand is a 35-kilometre asphalt road that hugs the waterfront. I pick up a rental bike (US\$20 for anything over three hours) and ride two-and-a-half kilometres north to the Annenberg Community Beach House. The Beach House is actually a public playground comprised of picnic tables, a café, a swimming pool and beach volleyball courts. The complex is built on land formerly owned by William Randolph Hearst and, although the original structures were torn down make way for the park, the beach house Hearst built for his mistress Marion Davies, remains. Tours of the house, a mansion really, are free.

I end my visit with a trip to the Museum of Flying on the outskirts of town. I'm a history buff and I was told the Douglas Aircraft Company was founded here in 1921. Sure enough, there are plenty of Douglas references among the displays. A nearby flight simulator catches my eye. It pitches and yaws and completes several 360-degree spins. Two young boys get out apparently none the worse for wear. I'm dizzy just looking at them. Mind you, it would be a great ride if I had kids or grandchildren in tow.

I find solace at Onyx, the rooftop bar atop the Shangri La Hotel on Ocean Avenue. I reflect on my visit to Happy Town. Funky yet sophisticated? Check. Physical pursuits yet cerebral ones, too? Check. Fine dining or casual? Check. I have an unobstructed view of the ocean and the boulevard below. The sun is setting, casting the room in a warm orange glow. Am I happy? You bet. How can one not fall in love with "the happy city for happy people"? |

*For IF YOU GO information, visit [www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/santa-monica](http://www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/santa-monica)*







DON STEWART, a long-time performing Vancouver-based jazz musician with an unusually high octave range of 4.5, was recently made the focus of an award-nominated 2019 documentary film titled *The Day Don Died*. As a resident of Performing Arts Lodges Vancouver (PAL), he became both the subject and the object of a building-wide concerned message that he had unexpectedly succumbed to at least 15 possible causes of death.

The film addresses the many communications – and miscommunications – that can quickly spread in a tight-knit community. Don, however, had not died! Alive and well, and with his naturally positive outlook, he viewed the event with a sense of humour.

“It gave me another drive,” he says. “If that hadn’t happened, I’d have stayed in my comfort zone, but instead, I am now singing stronger and I appreciate the fact that I’m alive! It definitely opened me up to living life more. I’m here and I’m getting things done.”

That includes writing new songs for a fall CD release, *Midnight Hour*, with Vancouver’s jazz great, Miles Black.

For a link to the documentary, *The Day Don Died*, visit [www.seniorlivingmag.com/reboot-july-2019](http://www.seniorlivingmag.com/reboot-july-2019)

LIN BENNETT, an original founder of Vancouver’s award-winning Axis Theatre and then Communications Manager at Vancouver’s Arts Club Theatre, relocated to Kingston,



Ontario, when playwright husband, John Lazarus, joined Queen’s University drama department in 2001. She continued to actively work in her new theatre and arts communities, including being marketing manager for The Thousand Islands Playhouse, teaching mime and creative drama to students with developmental disabilities, and presiding over the Kingston Arts Council.

On retiring, Lin acknowledged, “I wanted to find the artist inside me; it was time to find the creative force that I was always admiring in others.”

“Art balances out the brain after all those years of strategizing, budgeting and timelines,” she says. “It necessitates more moment-to-moment living.”

Lin, through her personal painting and writing projects, consciously pulls back and slows down to “notice” and to “absorb” the flow that is now her life. “I didn’t want to be a mover or shaker anymore,” says the grandmother of several. “I want to be moved and shaken.” |



# Siblings Sharing the Care

By Wendy Johnstone

When caring for a family member, established family dynamics and unresolved or new conflicts tend to be common pitfalls. How can we “share the care” without creating unnecessary struggle? It all comes down to family members making key decisions together; reaching consensus on dividing the caregiving tasks; and working as a team.

Here are six tips to minimize family conflict when caring for aging relatives:

1. **Stay on Equal Footing:** Siblings who are the primary caregiver for their parents often become the “experts” and this can feel intimidating for long-distance siblings or for those working full-time or raising a family. This lack of confidence may manifest as criticism simply because that sibling “doesn’t know.” The primary caregiver can be so used to “doing it all,” they may have difficulty letting go of the reins. Be honest about what each sibling needs; inviting each other into a dialogue around problem solving puts everyone on level ground.

2. **Be Careful How Competent You Are:** Caregivers become highly competent when it comes to caring for elderly parents. Sometimes, siblings don’t realize the primary caregiver needs a break because they make it look so easy. Caregivers, be open and willing to share your feelings of burnout and ask for help. And siblings, always assume the primary caregiver needs a break!

3. **Give Yourself Extra Time:** One of the best ways out-of-town siblings can pitch in is to help in person. If it’s a respite situation, allow time to talk before relieving the primary caregiver so that person doesn’t feel rushed or stressed about getting all the information down. If you’re the primary caregiver, be specific about the type of help needed and give yourself enough time to write a detailed list.



4. **Don’t Forget About Each Other:** Spend time with your brother or sister; nurture the bond and relationship you have. Keep the lines of communication open not just as it concerns parents but with your own lives. Your relationship with your sibling will continue long after your parents have died and it’s important to maintain those family ties.

5. **Know what you want:** If you’re the main caregiver, be clear. Do you want a sibling to relieve you at some point? Do you want whoever can afford it to hire someone to come in and help you? Or do you prefer to oversee everything, but want to be acknowledged and thanked?

6. **Be part of the solution:** If you find yourself in conflict with a family member, step back to gain some perspective. Consider your role in the conflict and ask yourself if you’re acting out an old family role or resentment. Avoid talking when angry and seek support and insight from a trusted third party. |



*Wendy Johnstone is a Gerontologist and a consultant with Family Caregivers of British Columbia in Victoria, BC.*

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# RETHINK RETIREMENT

by PAT NICHOL



## COURAGEOUS & OUTRAGEOUS

Sixty-five was set as the age for retirement 50+ years ago because most people did not live much beyond that age.

All these years later, we still hold the idea of having “time off” when we complete our career or job. However, many Westerners can expect another two or three decades of mostly good health. And who wants a 20- or 30-year vacation?

We need to consider the financial impact of a longer retirement, too. I know I cannot afford it – could you? Besides, it would get SO boring after about year two or three.

The opportunities out there are boundless! There are ways to create income that did not exist when we first began our working lives.

Thinking about an “encore career”? What is your niche? What have you always wanted to do, but didn’t

have the time to do it? What have you promised yourself you would do – when you had the time?

NOW is the time.

What difference do you want to see in the world? How can you make it happen? Do you sometimes despair for those coming behind you? What about becoming a mentor to someone younger?

A friend recently shared that she had taken a one-year course to become a life coach. Way to go, Melanie! I often read about people who get involved with youth that need help finding their way. Could that be for you?

Time to rejuvenate yourself. Take that course you have been thinking about. Attend lectures on subjects you would like to delve deeper into. Do you play a musical instrument? Maybe it’s time to step out of your comfort zone and look for a group to play with. Do

you like to sing? In Victoria, there are at least half a dozen choirs always looking for singers.

I belong to a couple of groups whose members are stepping out of their comfort zones: some are baby steppers; others are giant leapers. Which are you? It doesn’t matter. What does matter is that you have something to share with the world, and now is the time to share it. For your sake and for the sake of those waiting to meet you and your talent, rethink retirement. |

**Pat Nichol** is a speaker and published author. Reach her by email at [mpatnichol@gmail.com](mailto:mpatnichol@gmail.com)

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