

CRUISING THE GULF ISLANDS

May 14, 2023 – 6 Days

4 nights at Poets Cove with 2 days cruising

Poets Cove is the premier luxury resort in the Gulf Islands. Nestled in Bedwell Harbour on South Pender Island, the resort has every amenity you could wish for. The main building has 22 beautifully appointed bedrooms, all with a balcony and spectacular ocean view. Spa treatments are available in the Susurrus Spa and there is leisure time for you to enjoy this service. This tour features two full days of cruising in the Gulf Islands on Orca Spirit's *Pacific Explorer*. She is equipped with hydrophones to enhance the underwater experience and a certified marine naturalist with great knowledge and passion for Vancouver Island's marine wildlife is on board. We ride a water taxi over to Salt Spring Island with a drive to the top of Mount Maxwell and free time in Ganges. New for 2023 is a visit to historic Roesland, part of Gulf Islands National Park. Come and explore the Gulf Islands with the benefits of small vessel cruising and a luxury resort for home base.

Activity Level: 1



9 Meals Included:

3 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 4 dinners

Fares per person:

\$3,055 double; \$3,105 twin; \$3,635 single
Please add 5% GST.

Early Bookers:

\$100 discount on first 10 seats; \$50 on next 6

Experience Points:

Earn 71 points on this tour.

Redeem 71 points if you book by March 8, 2023.

Departure from: Lower Mainland



ITINERARY

Day 1: Sunday, May 14

We meet the BC Interior travellers and take the 5 pm ferry from Tsawwassen to Swartz Bay. We stay overnight in **Victoria** at the Coast Harbourside Hotel overlooking the Inner Harbour.

Accommodation: Coast Harbourside Hotel

Day 2: Monday, May 15

We board the *Pacific Explorer* in the marina beside the hotel and cruise out of the Inner Harbour. The cruise route is flexible and depends on sightings of **Orca whales** or other marine creatures. We may cross the border to the San Juan Islands (no passport needed, since we don't land). We may cruise along **Spieden Island**, a privately-owned island with a collection of exotic animals. A marine naturalist is with us on board today and tomorrow to spot wildlife and provide commentary about the islands. A box lunch is served on board. After about six hours of splendid Gulf Islands scenery, we enter peaceful Bedwell Harbour and dock in front of **Poets Cove Resort** on South Pender Island. Settle into your luxurious lodge room with a view of the harbour for the next four nights. Following an excellent dinner in the Aurora Room, enjoy music in Syrens, a walk on the extensive grounds, or relaxing on your deck watching the sunset across the bay.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Poets Cove Resort

Day 3: Tuesday, May 16

Back on board the *Pacific Explorer*, a six-hour cruise is offered which may explore the shorelines of **Saturna, Mayne, or Prevost Islands**. The captain continues to watch for whales, seals, sea lions, and other marine life. Lunch is served on board. An afternoon stop is made at Roesland,



once a popular beach resort that closed in 1990 and is now part of **Gulf Islands National Park**. Here we visit Pender Islands Museum and enjoy a walk among the arbutus trees to the tip of Roe Island.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

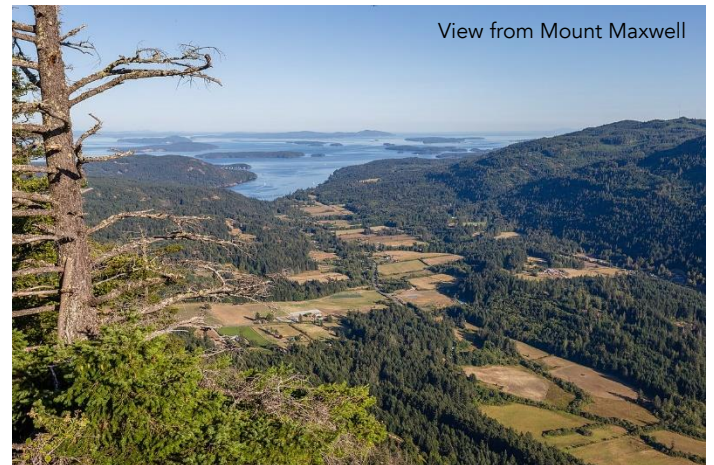
Accommodation: Poets Cove Resort

Day 4: Wednesday, May 17

The Gulf Islands water taxi picks us up at the marina and takes us over to **Salt Spring Island** and the town of Ganges. We ride in vans up the winding road to the summit of **Mount Maxwell** and enjoy a panoramic view over Salt Spring Island, the other Gulf Islands, and the Sansum Narrows. There is free time in Ganges, then we ride the water taxi back to Poets Cove in mid-afternoon.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Poets Cove Resort



Day 5: Thursday, May 18

The morning is free time and an appointment at the Susurrus Spa is recommended. During an afternoon tour of **Pender Island**, there are short walks at Brooks Point, along Mortimer Spit, and across the bridge between the two Pender Islands.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Poets Cove Resort

Day 6: Friday, May 19

We drive to the ferry terminal on North Pender Island and take the ferry to Tsawwassen with short stops at Mayne and Galiano Islands.

POETS COVE RESORT

Poets Cove is the luxury resort of the Gulf Islands. Nestled in Bedwell Harbour on South Pender Island, the resort has every amenity you could wish for. It was built in 2004 at a cost of \$30 million. The main building has 22 beautifully appointed bedrooms, all with ocean view and a deck. There are also spacious 2-bedroom cottages and villas with living room and 2 bathrooms which are suitable for 4 double/twin guests sharing or 2 single guests sharing at the same fares (please request availability). The Aurora Dining Room serves our breakfasts and dinners, and Syrens Bistro offers a pub atmosphere for casual evening get-togethers. Spa treatments are available in the Susurrus Spa and there is leisure time to enjoy this service. An outdoor pool and hot tub are tucked into the hillside above the lodge. This tour was first offered as the 2010 Mystery Tour and everybody was impressed with the luxury of Poets Cove; the tour has been offered nine times since then and is consistently a sell-out.




PACIFIC EXPLORER

Our charter vessel, *Pacific Explorer*, is licenced for 70, but this tour carries only 30 passengers for comfort. She has full-length tinted windows, indoor nook seating for everyone, washrooms, bar service, and an open-air viewing deck with bench seats and awning. She is 15.5 metres long and travels at up to 22 knots. The vessel is equipped with hydrophones to hear what is happening underwater and a certified marine naturalist is on board.



WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation to Victoria and Pender Island to your pickup point
- 5 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Ferry from Tsawwassen to Swartz Bay
- 2 days of cruising on *Pacific Explorer* around the Gulf Islands and San Juan Islands
- Marine naturalist for 2 days on board
- Pender Islands Museum at Roesland
- Gulf Islands National Park
- Water taxi from Pender Island to Salt Spring Island and return
- Van transportation to top of Mount Maxwell
- Driving & walking tour of Pender Island sights
- Ferry from Pender Island to Tsawwassen
- Gratuities for crew on *Pacific Explorer*, water taxi, and Mount Maxwell drivers
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **9 meals:** 3 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 4 dinners

 **Activity Level 1:** Light activity including short distances to walk and some stairs, mostly getting on and off *Pacific Explorer* or the water taxi. The ramps to the boat docks can be steep at low tide. There is a short walk from the hotel along the dock to the vessel. The coach cannot access the Poets Cove lodge building due to a narrow driveway, so there is a short uphill walk from lodge to coach on May 18 and 19. Getting into the van to go up Mount Maxwell could be challenging for some people and road may be rough. The nature walk at Brooks Point and the walk onto Mortimer Spit are optional. The coach and vessels cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. If Activity Level 1 could be challenging, you are urged to bring a companion to assist you. The tour director and driver have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$300 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due March 8, 2023. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined. Payments can be made by online banking, cheque, Visa or Mastercard.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$100 discount on first 10 seats and \$50 on next 6 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after March 8, 2023.

Cancellation Policy: Up to February 8, 2023, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From February 9 to March 8, the cancellation charge is \$200 per person. From March 9 to April 6, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. After April 6, there is no refund.

Itinerary and Fare Changes: As the world emerges from the pandemic, many of our suppliers such as hotels, restaurants, attractions, and transportation providers are struggling with shortage of staff, inflated costs, and supply line challenges. Sometimes we are notified about changes to the itinerary prior to departure and sometimes during the tour. We do our best to substitute a similar service if something cancels, but occasionally the only alternative is to provide a refund for the missed activity. Please note that if we are forced to cancel a tour component due to an issue beyond our control, the current penalties still apply if you choose to cancel the entire tour. Fuel surcharges and changes to taxes or other tour costs can occur at any time, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up to departure.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. Restaurants on the Gulf Islands may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. As restaurants recover from two years of pandemic restrictions, many facing severe labour shortages, we have been informed that food allergies should be honoured, but it is impossible to handle everybody's requests for food preferences. (An allergy causes medical distress, a preference does not.) For some allergies, please consider bringing your own snacks or food items so you are not dependent on what restaurants are able to serve.

Home pickups are available within Greater Vancouver for an additional charge of \$75 per person round trip. Transfer is to and from the coach route along Highways #1 and #17 to Tsawwassen. Please request no later than at final payment.

Photo Credits: Poets Cove Resort (page 1 and 3), Adobe Stock (Salt Spring), Marion Wienhold (Poets Cove sunset), Pender Islands Museum (Roesland), Wikimedia (Mt. Maxwell), Orca Spirit (vessel)

Experience Points: This tour earns 71 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until March 8, 2023.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

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