



Fall's a time to play; [Final Edition]

Margo Malcolm. **Harbour City Star.** Nanaimo, B.C.: Oct 20, 2007. pg. B.10

Like a string of pearls, the sandy beaches on Vancouver Island's eastern shore lie nestled one after the other, perfect and pristine.

The warm autumn days of the Parksville - Qualicum Beach area, tease locals of an "everlasting summer," often lasting well into October.

From caves to spas, golf courses to marinas, this area has a huge variety of activities for the fall months.

One visit to the region, which also includes smaller communities such as Lighthouse Country, Nanoose Bay, French Creek and Arrowsmith Coombs Country, and you will feel relaxed, refreshed, and renewed.

After a leisurely stroll along one of the rippled beaches on an autumn day, nothing is more romantic than cozying up in front of a fireplace in one of the area's cabins, cottages or luxurious resort suites.

Whether you and your partner are the rugged-outdoor-adventure types or relax-in-the-spa people, you can find what suits you best.

The region has 33 resorts, hotels and motels, nearly 30 bed and breakfasts, and 32 vacation rental homes to choose from. And the shoulder season from October to April offers attractive accommodation rates. On the shore or by the sea, fall produces the kind of spectacular and majestic crimson sunsets worth writing home about.

While enjoying the colors of the countryside, visiting artisan bakeries, cheese makers or purveyors of exquisite culinary treasures, you'll find numerous restaurants to satisfy those tummy rumblings - from casual to gourmet, from Asian to Irish.

For revitalizing the body nothing beats a few hours at a spa such as Tigh-Na-Mara's Grotto Spa.

Nineteen kilometers of sandy beaches to stroll, the country's mildest climate and the island's lowest annual rainfall make the "Canadian Riviera" a natural for beach-combing, bird-watching, and boating.

The protected waters of eastern Vancouver Island have been rated the #1 spot in the world "for value and healthiest marine environment" by Scuba Diving magazine.

Oceanside is also a golfer's paradise with its year-round mild temperatures, ocean and mountain views, and six golf courses from 9- holes to PGA caliber. Seven more courses are within an hour's drive.

The **Horne Lake Caves**, at 1,219 metres long and containing more than 1,000 caves, are believed to be the longest measured natural caves in B.C. The park is open year round.

Cathedral Grove in MacMillan Park provides access to the forest giants. Douglas firs more than 1000 years old and ancient Western Red Cedars are easily studied from a network of trails in this park.

IF YOU GO

Oceanside Tourism Association, Phone: 1-888-799-3222. Website:
www.visitparksvillequalicumbeach.com

Tourism British Columbia, Phone: 1-800-HELLO BC. Website: www.hellobc.com