

Northwest Cruising Destinations

BRENTWOOD BAY

In Sunny Saanich Inlet

By Anne and Laurence
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Photographs and
Charts by Laurence
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After the hustle and bustle of cruising in the popular Gulf Islands, Dreamspeaker and her crew look forward to savouring the quiet anchorages of Saanich Inlet and indulging in a little laid-back luxury at Brentwood Bay Lodge and Spa, where friendly service and first-class resort and spa facilities are available to marina visitors – glowing sunsets over the Malahat Ridge are complimentary!

South of Satellite Channel and the southern tip of Salt Spring Island, the protected waters and spectacular vistas of British Columbia's southernmost inlet cuts deep into Vancouver Island for twelve nautical miles. Saanich Inlet's fjordlike arm reaches as far down as Goldstream Provincial Park, located at the picturesque estuary of the Goldstream River. Towered over by the Malahat Ridge in the west and Mount Work in the



east, the inlet holds some welcoming surprises – balmy, sun-locked Brentwood Bay and lodge, a fine sand beach off Bamberton Provincial Park, the magnificent Butchart Gardens with an entrance for boaters in Butchart Cove and the peace-

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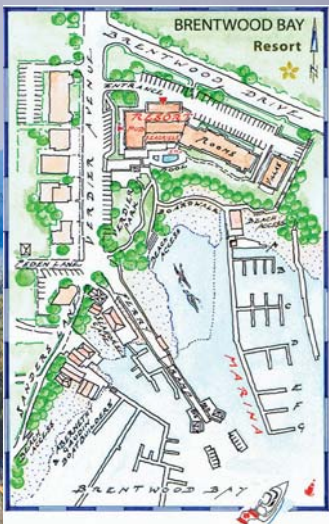


Photo left - Brentwood Bay looking north to Saanich Inlet. (Photo Brentwood Resort). Photo above - The Goldstream Boathouse at the head of Finlayson Arm, Saanich Inlet. Photo below - The endangered Purple Martins are also at home in Tod Inlet. Photo below, left - The Mill Bay Ferry provides the most beautiful shortcut across Saanich Inlet.



ful anchorage in Tod Inlet and McKenzie Bight where boaters can access the numerous hiking trails of Gowlland Tod Provincial Park.

With *Dreamspeaker* on a comfortable close reach, we made our way down Saanich Inlet, enjoying the thrill of sailing to Senanus Island before furling our sails at Slugget Point. The historic Mill Bay



Photo left - The marina at Brentwood Bay Resort and Spa.

Ferry was heading for the Brentwood Bay terminal, so we tucked around its stern, and leaving the red buoy to starboard, headed for our allotted berth at the upscale Brentwood Bay Marina - a far cry from our first visit in the late nineties when the old Brentwood Inn was a raucous biker's bar with rickety walkways and floats!

Brentwood Bay Lodge, Spa and Marina

Today the resort's first-class moorage will accommodate boats up to 120 feet with 25 visitor slips that fill up fast in the summer months, so it's best to book in advance. Backed by the contemporary West Coast architecture of Brentwood Bay Lodge and Spa and adjacent Ocean Villas, the marina is conveniently linked to the resort pool, hot tub and spa by a curved cedar boardwalk. On-dock facilities include washrooms with showers, laundry, a fitness room and wireless internet.

The dockside Eco-Adventure Centre rents kayaks, arranges eco-cruise tours, scuba-diving and snorkeling adventures as well as dive charters; it also provides a handy water shuttle service to The Butchart Gardens. The adjacent Mill Bay Ferry

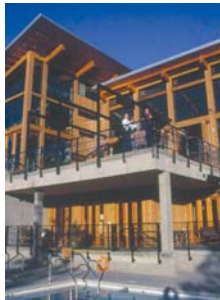


Photo above- Discerning service and contemporary West Coast architecture.

offers easy access to the Cowichan Valley wine country and makes regular crossings on a route described as "Vancouver Island's most beautiful shortcut." The friendly marina manager, who always has useful information at his fingertips, will be able to arrange car hire or a wine tour with the front desk (if you are planning to take a wine tour it would be best to let them know a day or two in advance).

Designed in the West Coast style with a touch of Zen the waterfront lodge's atmosphere is one of laid-back luxury. Breathe deeply and



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begin with a little self indulgence at the spa – choose a *Tropical Oasis Wrap* or *Westcoast Hot Stone Massage*. Bond with your partner and enjoy the *Vino Lovers Retreat* which includes a blissful vino scrub, rainshower and massage. They only use pure essential oils, botanicals and natural ingredients.

Relaxed and ready to savor fresh coastal cuisine and award-winning local and international wines at the *Seagrille*, request a table on the patio overlooking the marina or cosy up beside the large stone fireplace and admire the timber vaulted ceilings and dramatic local art displayed with creative flair – a glowing, watercolor sunset reflected over the Malahat Range is an added bonus.

The *Sushi & Saki Bar* with fresh, made to order platters prepared by the resort's Japanese chef offers a more casual dining alternative, as does the adjoining pub and deck – a sociable spot well frequented by island locals and visitors. The Pub is reputed for its local craft beer, diverse menu and tasty appetizers, all prepared by the chef and staff in the restaurant kitchen.

Boaters off to an early start or just taking a break from the galley can indulge in a hearty West Coast breakfast also served in the *Seagrille*. Their choice of scrumptious egg dishes and the view out to the bay are both worth a half-hour less un-

The Brentwood Inn - then and now

The original Brentwood Inn was built in the 1930's as a fishing lodge. Nearby Todd Inlet and the Goldstream River were considered 'the' ultimate fishing destination and the lodge was a favorite retreat for many well-known personalities including actor, Bob Hope and Canada's Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau. A quick visit to the city was as easy as hopping on the daily train that ran from The Butchart Gardens to Victoria. The lodge was eventually sold and turned into an inn and pub which over the intervening years became a run down biker's bar.

Today, the Brentwood Bay Lodge and Spa is a 5-Star Boutique Hotel - the personal vision, tireless planning and hard work of owners Dan and Frauke Behune, who have been responsible for the design and day to day running of the resort since it opened in 2004. They had the foresight and imagination to recognize the development potential of this shabby waterfront property and were able to purchase the inn and adjacent motel after selling Abigail's, their successful boutique hotel in Victoria. The challenge was to "start

from scratch and build their own brand" – a contemporary full-service boutique hotel with a recognizable West Coast identity.

The key to the resort's continued success is because Dan and Frauke believe that they need to keep evolving to meet the needs of their clients. In 2010 they added the adja-

cent Ocean Villas – six elegant, oceanfront and energy-efficient residences with the convenience of all lodge amenities. Plans to implement improvement and change within the village are in the works for 2011, with full support from the local community.

Photo below - Historic photograph of Brentwood Inn.



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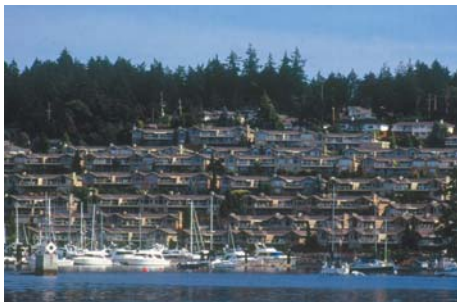


Photo left - Port Royal estates look down over Anglers Anchorage Marina.

on the patio prepared from fresh local ingredients.

der the duvet. If you plan to stay for a few days and explore the treasures of Saanich Peninsula, spend a balmy morning visiting the enclosed Butterfly Gardens filled with over 3000 exotic tropical butterflies, flamingos and rare tropical birds. The 200 species of orchids are just some of the thousands of exotic plants that make up the garden's balanced eco-system. The well established Church & State Winery and lodge is conveniently situated next door - pop in for a wine tasting, cheese platter or lunch

A self-guided Peninsula Loop Tour includes a fun mix of wineries, a cider house and fruit and vegetable farms that often have convenient road-side honey stands that display fresh produce, eggs and honey. The front desk will supply you with an easy-to-follow map and arrange transportation or car hire. Brentwood Town Centre, a short walk from the waterfront, has a supermarket, two liquor stores, a pharmacy, gift stores and many other amenities.

Bamberton Provincial Park

On the west side of Saanich Inlet, just down from Mill Bay, a fine sandy beach and delta are just waiting to be explored. This perfect picnic spot and day anchorage has the added advantage of warm-water swimming, and you can anchor quite close in, as there is a steep drop-off beyond the shallow ledge. To be safe, anchoring on a rising tide is advisable - the holding is moderate over eelgrass and sand.

The view east stretches across the Saanich Peninsula to the Gulf Islands, with Mount Baker beyond.



Photo above - Anne enjoys a tasty lunch at Blue's Bayou Cafe.

Rising sharply to the west are the mountains of south Vancouver Island. Picnic tables are dotted in the grassy meadow backing the beach where you will also find a change house with toilets. The park has some fine examples of large arbutus trees; in the interest of protecting the park's ecology, rock collecting is not permitted.

Tod Inlet and Butchart Cove

Approach Tod Inlet from the west via Brentwood Bay's southern shores, north of Willis Point. Butchart Cove has a small boat entrance to the west side of Butchart Gardens where you will find mooring buoys, metal rings for stern lines,

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and a dinghy dock which is also used by floatplanes on its north side. Spectacular Butchart Gardens, a National Historic Site, is open year-round and artistically landscaped with over 5,000 varieties of flowers, shrubs and trees with an extensive seed catalogue available at the Seed & Gift Store. There are two restaurants and a café (a traditional afternoon tea is served daily), and in July and August they provide musical entertainment and fireworks on Saturday evenings at dusk, which makes this a busy spot for the boating crowd. The shuttle from Brentwood Bay Marina offers a convenient round-trip to The Gardens, which makes it possible to enjoy a stress-free evening.

Captivating Tod Inlet, with its steep-sided cliffs affords tranquil anchorage in the lower reaches of the inlet where good all-around weather protection can be found; to enjoy the extended evening light, drop your hook near the head of the inlet. Gowlland Tod Provincial Park's shady Creek trail is accessible from the north shore where you will find a small dinghy dock and nature house.

McKenzie Bight

Approach the bight from the west. It is difficult to spot from a

The Seahorses and Blues Bayou Cafés

Seahorses Café

Adjacent to the ferry jetty, a series of wooden steps lead to the relaxed and cosy Seahorses Café. The refurbished glass garage doors let in the light on a rainy day and open onto a large patio deck dotted with colourful umbrellas when the sun shines. A favourite with ferry passengers and locals, owner Sandi Harte makes her hearty chunky Clam Chowder and rich French Onion Soup from scratch. The menu is a hit with both adults and kids, offering a good choice of tasty fare including three varieties of homemade burgers that will keep you going for the rest of the day. Call 250-544-1565

Blues Bayou Café

Casual dining in a jazzy atmosphere with a little bit of Bayou where you would least expect it! This is a great place to watch The Butchart Gardens Saturday night fireworks from the large outdoor heated patio. Feast on their Creole

Queen Crab Cakes, Ragin' Cajun (real) Alligator Sausage, fresh Bayou Salad or a wholesome Jambalaya – a melange of Creole tomato sauce, jumbo shrimp, chicken and Andouille sausage accompanied by a chunk of homemade corn bread.

Owner Blue and Lorill will tempt you with their scrummy Bread Pudding topped with Bourbon-style Cream Sauce – and you will find it hard to resist! Reservations essential – 250-544-1194 www.bluesbayoucafe.com.



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distance, however deep water extends close to shore. Anchor on a rising tide on the edge of the sand shelf that extends out from the creek, keeping in mind the drop-off into deep water.

Surrounded by steep cliffs this temporary anchorage provides fine swimming and snorkeling opportunities as the tide begins to cover the sun-warmed sand. Numerous energizing trails into Gowlland Tod Provincial Park lead from the head of the bight and include the Cascade Trail with a view point to Cascade Falls, and the Timberman Trail with su-

Photo right - Tod Inlet is the best all-weather anchorage in Saanich Inlet.



Information

Brentwood Bay Marina, (250-652-3151), VHF Channel 66A, www.brentwoodbayresort.com

Goldstream Boathouse, (250-478-4407), VHF Channel 66A, www.goldstream-boathousemarina.com

Butterfly Gardens, (1-877-722-0272), www.butterflygardens.com

Church and State Wines, (250-652-2671), www.churchandstatewines.com

perb view points to Saanich Inlet, Malahat Ridge and Squaly Reach.

Established in 1994, Gowlland Tod Provincial Park protects a significant portion of the Gowlland Range, one of the last remaining natural areas in Greater Victoria. Visitors are asked to stay on marked trails and to show respect for the cultural and natural environment. This area is home to dozens of rare and threatened plant species, and the diverse wildlife includes the Peale's peregrine falcon, river otter and red squirrel.

Finlayson Arm

The trip down from McKenzie Bight is truly awe-inspiring, much like the scenery from an epic motion picture. Seals, bald eagles and the occasional pod of killer whales frequent the waters of Saanich Inlet, and an eerie peacefulness hangs over this quiet stretch of water. Goldstream Boathouse, situated at the delta of the Goldstream River, has transient moorage available for boats up to 49 feet. They also have fuel, a small store and chandlery, and a complete haul-out and boat repair facility. The popular Goldstream Provincial Park, with its preserved rainforest, is within easy walking distance from the marina, although the Goldstream River is now a nature sanctuary www



Regular contributors to Northwest Yachting Magazine, Anne and Laurence Yeardon-Jones are also the authors of the popular Dreamspeaker Cruising Guide Series - www.dreamspeaker.ca Published by Fine Edge in the US and Harbour Publishing in Canada.

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58 Hatteras MY 1979



250 Chaparral 2008

The Butchart Gardens

Robert Pim Butchart and his wife Jennie Butchart came to the west coast of Canada because of rich limestone deposits necessary for cement production. In 1904, they established their home near their quarry on Tod Inlet at the base of the Saanich Peninsula.

In 1907, 65-year-old garden designer Isaburo Kishida of Yokohama came to Victoria, at the request of his son, to build a tea garden for Esquimalt Gorge Park and Jennie Butchart commissioned a Japanese garden from Kishida for their estate.

In 1909, when the limestone quarry was exhausted, Jennie set about turning it into the Sunken Garden, which was completed in 1921. They named their home *Benvenuto* (welcome in Italian), and began to receive visitors to their gardens. In 1926, they replaced their tennis courts with an Italian garden and in 1929 they turned their kitchen vegetable garden into a large rose garden to the design of Butler Sturtevant of Seattle. Samuel Maclure, who was a consultant to The Butchart Gardens, reflected the aesthetic of the English Arts and

Crafts Movement.

In the early days, weekly symphony concerts were hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Butchart. In 1977, fireworks on summer Saturday evenings were introduced (July and August) and include a wide range of local entertainment, from jazz to classical music. In 2004, two 30-foot totem poles were installed to mark the 100th anniversary, and The Gardens was designated as a National Historic Site. Ownership of The Gardens remains within the Butchart family.

In 2009 the Children's Pavilion and Rose Carousel were opened to the public. The Rose Carousel, crafted by Brass Ring Entertainment of Sun Valley, California is the only carousel on Vancouver Island. The menagerie includes thirty animals ranging from bears, to horses, to ostriches, to zebras, to cats and mirrors the world from which The Gardens draws its visitors. The carvings were done by some of the few remaining carvers of

carousel art. Each animal is carved from basswood and took many months to complete.

Each year over 1,000,000 bedding plants in some 700 varieties are used throughout the 55-acre gardens to ensure uninterrupted bloom from

March through October. Close to a million people visit each year, enjoying not only the floral beauty, but the entertainment and lighting displays presented each summer and Christmas. 250-652-5256 or 888-824-7313.



Photo right - Anne takes a ride on The Rose Carousel at the Butchart Gardens.

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