

KELOWNA

RIPE WITH SURPRISES

[BY JOE LEARY AND JIM GORDON]

▲ PHOTO: DELTA GRAND OKANAGAN RESORT AND CONFERENCE CENTRE

Situated in the picturesque Okanagan Valley sits Kelowna, the largest community in the BC interior with a population of 115,000.

Hailed as the birthplace of the ever-growing British Columbia wine industry—which dates back to 1932—Kelowna remains at the forefront of the wine scene with twenty wineries in the immediate vicinity alone and another hundred or so within a day's journey.

But Kelowna is much more than just wine. With a cosmopolitan vibe that offers visitors activities from a blossoming dining scene to seventeen golf courses accommodating all skill levels and abilities to great shopping and an artistically diverse landscape of galleries, museums, theatres and studios, to the district's numerous beaches and parks—all showcasing the beauty and splendour of the sparkling 110 kilometre, Okanagan Lake shoreline—this area has all the bases covered.

As the tourism slogan proclaims: the city is “Ripe with Surprises”—not to mention proudly laying claim to more than 2000 hours of sunshine each year!

Just 50 minutes from Vancouver by air, a one hour flight from Calgary and Seattle and under five hours from Toronto, one can't help but be taken aback by the sheer expanse and magnificence of the area.

ACCOMODATIONS

A 20 minute cab ride took our party to the spectacular **Royal Private Residence Club at the Delta Grand Okanagan Resort and Conference Centre**. This stately waterfront resort is spread over seven acres in a parkland setting conveniently located just minutes from downtown Kelowna.

An abundance of luxury awaits guests within the rich decor of the 70 elegantly appointed one-, two- or three-bedroom villas—tastefully designed with warm Mediterranean colours and textures, leather furnishings, fine linens and marble countertops—and all possessing breathtaking lake views from private terraces.

Opened in 2006, the Royal Private Residence



▲ PHOTO: ARAUDZ REGIONAL TASTING TABLE

Club has become the resort of choice for the discerning traveller. While the villas are geared for entertaining—providing spacious kitchens that can handle each guest's specific dining requirements from intimate to casual—there are exquisite culinary offerings within the Delta Grand Okanagan Resort as well.

Located just off the main lobby is the Grand Bay Café. This lakefront dining room offers a menu focused on local, seasonal ingredients and is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner and a fabulous Sunday brunch as well. For lighter fare or evening drinks and appetizers, visit Vines Lounge—the perfect compliment to a Kelowna evening.

1310 Water Street, Kelowna, BC
www.deltahotels.com

AMENITIES

In addition to a full slate of annual events—from year-round **Okanagan Wine Festivals** that showcase the region's best winemakers and their harvests to the **Fat Cat Children's Festival**, where more than 15,000 adults and children converge each June for a themed parade through the downtown corridor—there's always a celebration in Kelowna and most certainly a bit of something for everyone.

Kelowna Actor's Studio

Home to both the Kelowna Rockets of the Western Hockey League and the acclaimed Okanagan Symphony Orchestra, the city is also fortunate to boast a wonderful licensed dinner theatre: the Kelowna Actors Studio—voted 'Best Theatre Company' eight years running by the readers of *Okanagan Life*.

Celebrating its ninth successful year as a performing arts school, the studio produces culturally enriching live musical theatre and drama. Maintaining a subscription audience of more than 2,000, annual attendance in excess of 25,000 and an intimate, acoustically-rich performance space, they offer patrons a three-course dinner and



▲ PHOTO: KELOWNA ACTOR'S STUDIO

cocktail service, followed by top-quality live theatre productions that range from Broadway standards like *Annie* to more sombre fare—such as the provocative Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning *Angels in America*—all performed by members of the area's multi-talented acting community.

1379 Ellis Street, Kelowna, BC
www.kelownaactorstudio.com

DINING

Raudz Regional Tasting Table

Great dining abounds throughout the Kelowna area. Among the downtown core's most notable restaurants is Raudz Regional Tasting Table, where local chef Rod Butters is committed to working in tandem with regional farmers, ranchers and artisan growers.

This ultra-chic spot plays a leadership role in the use of organic, sustainable and naturally-raised ingredients, while focusing on pure, simple flavours in a fun presentation. Long-time Vancouver mixologist Gerry Jobe plays the role of perfect host, offering his spin on unique cocktails and suggesting some of the more popular varietals from local wineries.

1560 Water Street, Kelowna, BC
www.raudz.com

Old Train Station Public House

The Old Train Station Public House is one of Kelowna's most unique places to eat and drink. With a custom-designed menu tailored by head chef Dan Halter, this newly opened pub is actually one of the city's oldest structures and was once Kelowna's Grand Central, where CN Trains would transport passengers and local goods loaded up from the nearby packing house.

The building was completely refurbished—maintaining the unique architectural features and nuances of a heritage railway station—and reopened recently to rave reviews.

Pub manager Tracey Duquette is an absolute treat to sit and chat with and offered our touring party a sampling of the Old Station's tantalizing menu. The spectrum of dishes sampled ranged from their traditionally inspired homemade shepherd's pie (with ground lamb and root vegetables) to an assortment of popular items such as the mouthwatering baked four-cheese mac (made with gruyere, mozzarella, smoked cheddar and jack), the



▲ PHOTO: OLD TRAIN STATION PUBLIC HOUSE

fresh Angus beef TS burger and an incredible peppercorn-roasted beef dip.

1177 Ellis Street, Kelowna, BC
www.oldtrainstationpub.com

THIRSTY?

Tree Brewing Company

In addition to the well-documented local wine industry, Kelowna is the home of Tree Brewing and Urban Distilleries, makers of ultra-premium Spirit Bear Vodka and Okanagan Gin.

Brewing memorable and flavourful beers in a number of styles, Tree Brewing offers a selection from various seasonal quaffs to their Brewmaster's Reserve Series.

1083 Richter Street, Kelowna, BC
www.treebeer.com

Waterfront Restaurant and Wine Bar

The Waterfront Restaurant and Wine Bar is a 'sophisticated-casual' award-winning spot that's known for great wines and martinis—along with internationally influenced, locally sourced comfort food—under the leadership of executive chef, sommelier and partner Mark Filatow. It certainly ranks as one of Kelowna's most-recommended spots.

104-1180 Sunset Drive, Kelowna, BC
www.waterfrontrestaurant.ca

Urban Distilleries

On the spirits side you'll find this small batch micro-distillery, makers of ultra-premium gin, vodka, rum and whiskey. Each batch is handcrafted in an artesian copper still from premium grains and filtered spring water.

www.urbandistilleries.ca

Visit Tourism Kelowna online for information about more surprises in this fantastic city. www.tourismkelowna.com or call 1-800-663-4345