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# LIVING *Luxe*

S E R V I N G F L O R I D A ' S F I R S T C O A S T

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## City of Perpetual Spring

*In Vancouver, British Columbia,  
cherry blossom season lasts for months*

## Island Hopping, Links Style

*Golf's great "floating" greens,  
plus THE PLAYERS Championship 2023*

## Culinary Atlanta

*Why Atlanta is the belle of the savory South*

**Plus!** *Luxury real estate, spring fashion,  
seasonal recipes and much more*







*Living Luxe* Spring 2023 Edition cover and inside spread: The North Shore Mountains — snowcapped above downtown Vancouver, British Columbia— are framed by the city's trademark cherry trees. Learn more p16.

THE PLAYERS Edition by *Living Luxe* 2023 cover: The famed Island Green of the TPC Sawgrass Stadium Course takes center stage in our coverage of this year's THE PLAYERS Championship, p28. *Photo by Alex L. Quijano.*








Some Vancouver streets become passageways of pink petals during cherry blossom season.





# *City of* PERPETUAL SPRING

*Cherry blossom season lasts for months in Vancouver, British Columbia*

*By Johanna Read*

At first, the trees blush just slightly before evolving into a rose-hued haze — a magnificent metamorphosis that welcomes the season of rebirth with open arms. After a few weeks, they are full-blown fluffy clouds of pale to vivid pink — like puffs of cotton candy. Especially for tourists, it's a magical experience as breathtaking blooms burst open and create canopies covering streets like a tunnel of flowers. Eventually, though, dots of color start to sprinkle the sidewalks like confetti and, then, depending on the winds, slowly or quickly turn into wispy snow drifts of pink petals. This is cherry blossom season in Vancouver.

Washington, D.C., and Japan — where they're called "sakura" — are both famous for their abundant cherry blossom displays. However, their seasons are short. Last year in D.C., for example, trees started to flower in earnest on March 18, and warm weather rushed their development so that the peak bloom was but a few days later on March 21. A deep freeze on March 28 followed by a wind storm ruined the experience for all, and by April 1, most of the petals laid littered on the ground. Timing a trip to our nation's capital to actually see sakura blossoms at all, let alone at their peak performance, can be rather tricky.

Vancouver, British Columbia, the Canadian metropolis known for its mild, spring-like weather through much of the year, avoids this short sakura seasonality. Branching out across its streets and parks are some 43,000 ornamental cherry trees — with several varieties beginning to flower in late February and others bursting into bloom in May, sometimes even into June. Whether witnessing the cherries in their full regalia is the primary purpose of a trip here or just a bright bonus, spring marks the ideal time to visit Vancouver and explore its abundance of outdoor beauty. Here's what it's like in the city of perpetual spring.





### The Forecast: Mild Temps

Vancouver is one of Canada's warmest cities, thanks to its location in the country's southwest corner and the moderating effects of the Pacific Ocean. Its downtown is on a peninsula that's almost completely surrounded by seawater — the parts of English Bay called Burrard Inlet, Coal Harbour and False Creek. The Pacific's Japan Current, like the Atlantic's Gulf Stream, also helps temper Vancouver's weather.

Now, it is still Canada, and Vancouver is a four-season destination. But it rarely gets too hot and rarely gets too cold and, like Seattle, the weather feels fairly springlike for much of the year. However, Vancouver, with its urban temperate rainforest, does earn the nickname of Rain City — drops fall from the sky between 125 and 190 days annually, but that's days with rain, rather than total rainouts. Trace amounts still count in the stats even if there's just a 10-minute sprinkle or if the rain falls overnight and the only evidence is happy gardens and a fresh, dewy smell the next day.

That said, dressing for success in "The Couve" means layers, including having rain gear handy

between

fall and spring.

Fleece jackets are

so ubiquitous here that

movie extras are banned

from wearing them on film

sets, lest it be obvious that Vancouver is standing in for other

locales. The peaks of the North Shore Mountains that form a

beautiful backdrop against the downtown skyscrapers are usually

snow covered from October through April. While the white stuff

does fall at lower elevations, even mere dustings of snow are

unusual at sea level, including downtown, and, when it does fall,

the rain and sun wash it away quickly.

But all that makes for consummate cherry blossom weather, as well as great conditions for exploring Vancouver's outdoor beauty, whether technically springtime or not.

### Catch Some Color

Vancouver's 43,000 ornamental cherry tree varieties (also known as *Prunus cerasus*) — and the thousands of slightly paler plums that blossom at the same time — dot parks and line streets, giving the whole area a springtime blush of color. The first 500 saplings arrived in the 1930s — a gift from the mayors of Kobe and Yokohama to the city for honoring the Japanese Canadians who served in the First World War.

Today, at least 54 different cherry cultivars flourish here, and they're the reason sakura season lasts so long. Each individual tree blooms for only a few weeks, but some varieties begin early —

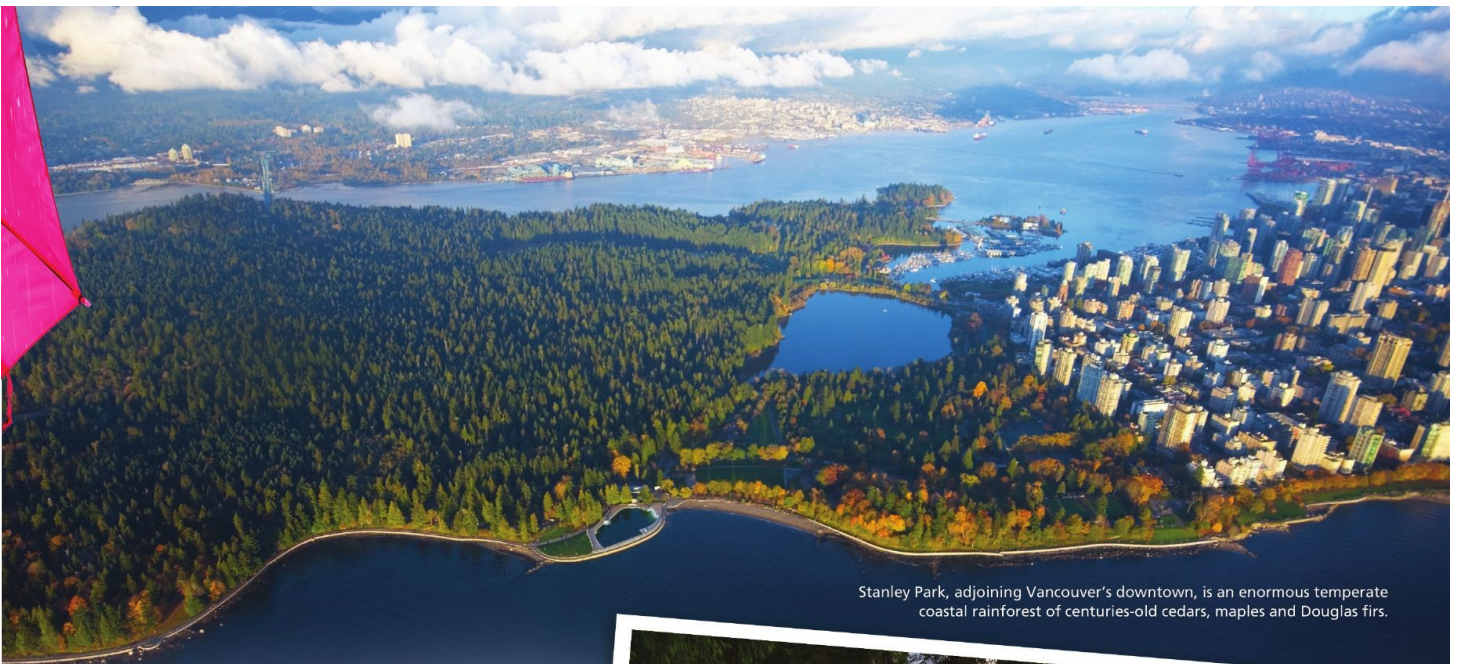
sometimes even in February — and others late. Combined with the months-long spring season's mild days and cool nights that extend the petals' power, Vancouver is the go-to destination to be sure of seeing and smelling sakura.

Vancouver blossoms with flowers every month of the year, but springtime's color makes its already-stunning outdoors even more spectacular. Residents and visitors alike



Vancouver's David Lam Park is home to hundreds of ornamental cherry trees, brightening its waterside bike paths and picnic lawns.





Stanley Park, adjoining Vancouver's downtown, is an enormous temperate coastal rainforest of centuries-old cedars, maples and Douglas firs.

enjoy walking the Seawall, a 17-mile paved footpath that starts at the downtown cruise terminal, encircles immensely forested Stanley Park, and then loops around both sides of the inner harbor called False Creek. The North Shore Mountains, deep green forests and cerulean English Bay look even prettier with spring's brightly colored blooms in the foreground.

## Pocket Parks and Glorious Green Spaces

Taking advantage of its notorious rains, Vancouver's streets and steel-and-glass towers are surrounded by green — from boulevards planted with color by community gardeners to formal botanical gardens to top destinations like Stanley Park.

Named for former Governor General Lord Frederick Arthur Stanley (yes, the Stanley Cup hockey trophy got its name from him, too), Stanley Park is Vancouver's thousand-acre urban forest. Bigger than New York City's Central Park, it is an oasis on the western edge of downtown with more than 16 miles of bike and walking trails that meander through centuries-old cedars and firs. Full of ferns and forest mosses, the park flaunts every conceivable shade of green. To focus on more colorful foliage, escape to Lost Lagoon and the formal floral gardens on Stanley Park's eastern side.

From bright yellow dogwoods in March to orange azaleas in May to blue and purple irises in June, Stanley Park's gardens always show off something spectacular. Most of the cherry trees are concentrated around the Japanese Canadian WWI memorial and the Rose Garden, where you'll find the large white blossoms



Stroll the popular seawall that encircles Stanley Park.

of Shirotae, shell pink Akebono, fragrant Shirofugen, and more showy perennials than you can name. The flowering of Stanley Park's 4,500 rhododendrons coincides with its cherry blossoms for a few weeks in April and May, and the rhodos' riot of color continues after the cherries have bid their farewells.

David Lam Park in Yaletown — a 15-minute walk from downtown — is one of the prettiest places for petal peeping, as well as for enjoying picnics, admiring sailboats or spotting occasional harbor seals. To celebrate the Vancouver Olympic Games in 2010, gardeners planted 100 ornamental cherries here that now cast a springtime glow against its green lawns and the bright blue backdrop of False Creek. A few blocks away, pedestrian-only Beatty Walk flaunts a pink tunnel of blossoms that's Instagram-ideal.

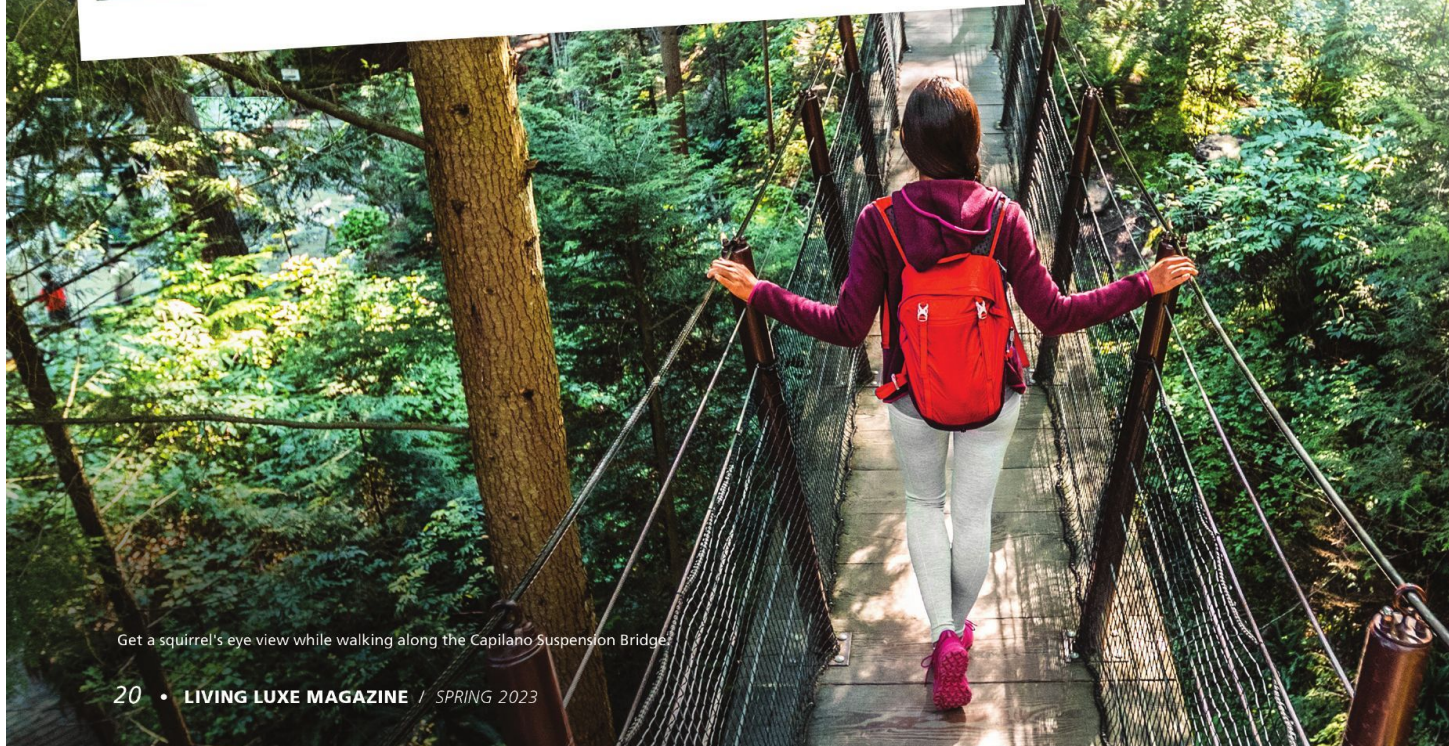
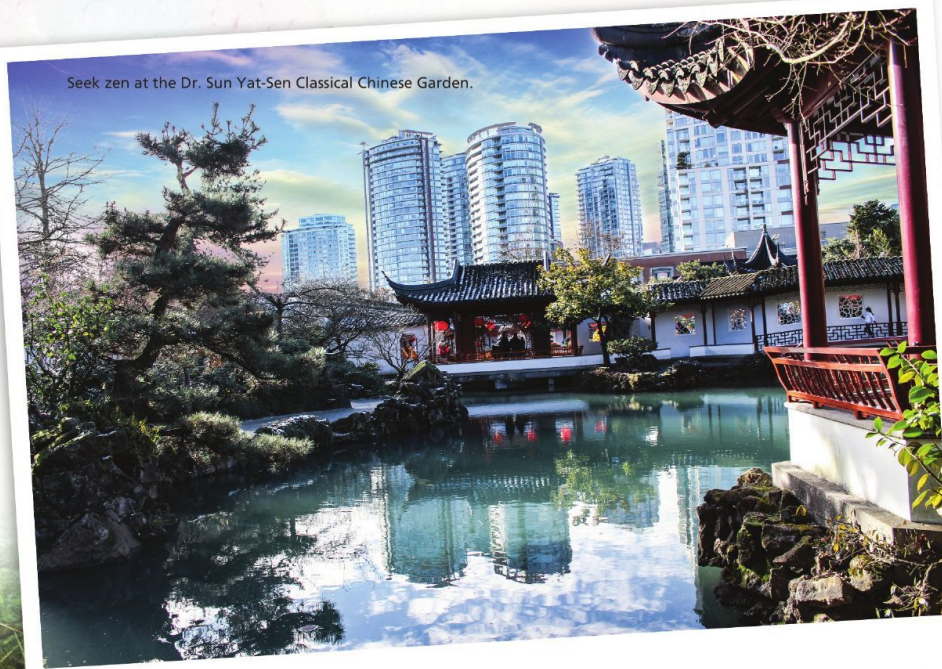


It's hard to avoid spotting splashes of springtime cerise in Vancouver, even when just getting from place to place. Two downtown subway stations are prime petal points: The park above Burrard Station displays canopies of pink, and Granville Square (near Waterfront Station, just east of the cruise terminal) is the stop for photos of Akebonos with the snow-capped mountains on the North Shore behind them. Top hotels like the Rosewood Hotel Georgia and all three downtown Fairmont properties are close to these scenic stations.

Vancouver also shows off its formal gardens. In Chinatown, the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden is festooned in pink flowers in April. It's the first full-sized classical Chinese garden outside of China and echoes Ming Dynasty design and techniques. Or drive 20 minutes from downtown to take in the 55-acre VanDusen Botanical Garden and its 100 flowering cherries. VanDusen hosts the Sakura Days Japan Fair every April with tea ceremonies, taiko drumming and theater performances.

### Into the Forests

While you won't find cherry blossoms, another can't-miss outdoor site is the Capilano Suspension Bridge. On the other side of the harbor from downtown Vancouver, those without a fear of heights can explore the temperate rainforest via bridges cantilevered off a cliff — 100 feet in the air in the mid-canopy of 1,300-year-old Douglas firs, as well as from the 450-foot-long swinging bridge that's suspended above the Capilano River.



Get a squirrel's eye view while walking along the Capilano Suspension Bridge.



Outdoor enthusiasts will also want to check out nearby Grouse Mountain. Most visitors take the Skyride gondola up, but very fit folks often climb the 2,830 stairs of the Grouse Grind, also known as “Mother Nature’s Stairmaster.” The incline is so steep that the hike is uphill only, and everyone takes the gondola back down. Varying by season, Grouse’s activities include skiing, snowboarding, skating, hiking, ziplining, navigating a ropes course, taking in 18 holes of disc golf, plus learning about the resident owls, grizzlies and ravens. Many simply go up for a sky-high drink while admiring the views down to the coastline and city below.

## And When the Rain Inevitably Falls

Vancouver’s spring showers are essential for bringing out flowers, but there’s no need to stay outdoors and get drenched! When the rains do get too chilly, guest can pop into the Vancouver Aquarium (near the Japanese War Memorial’s cherries) and frolic with rescued otters, seals and sea lions while learning about what lives in waters near and far.

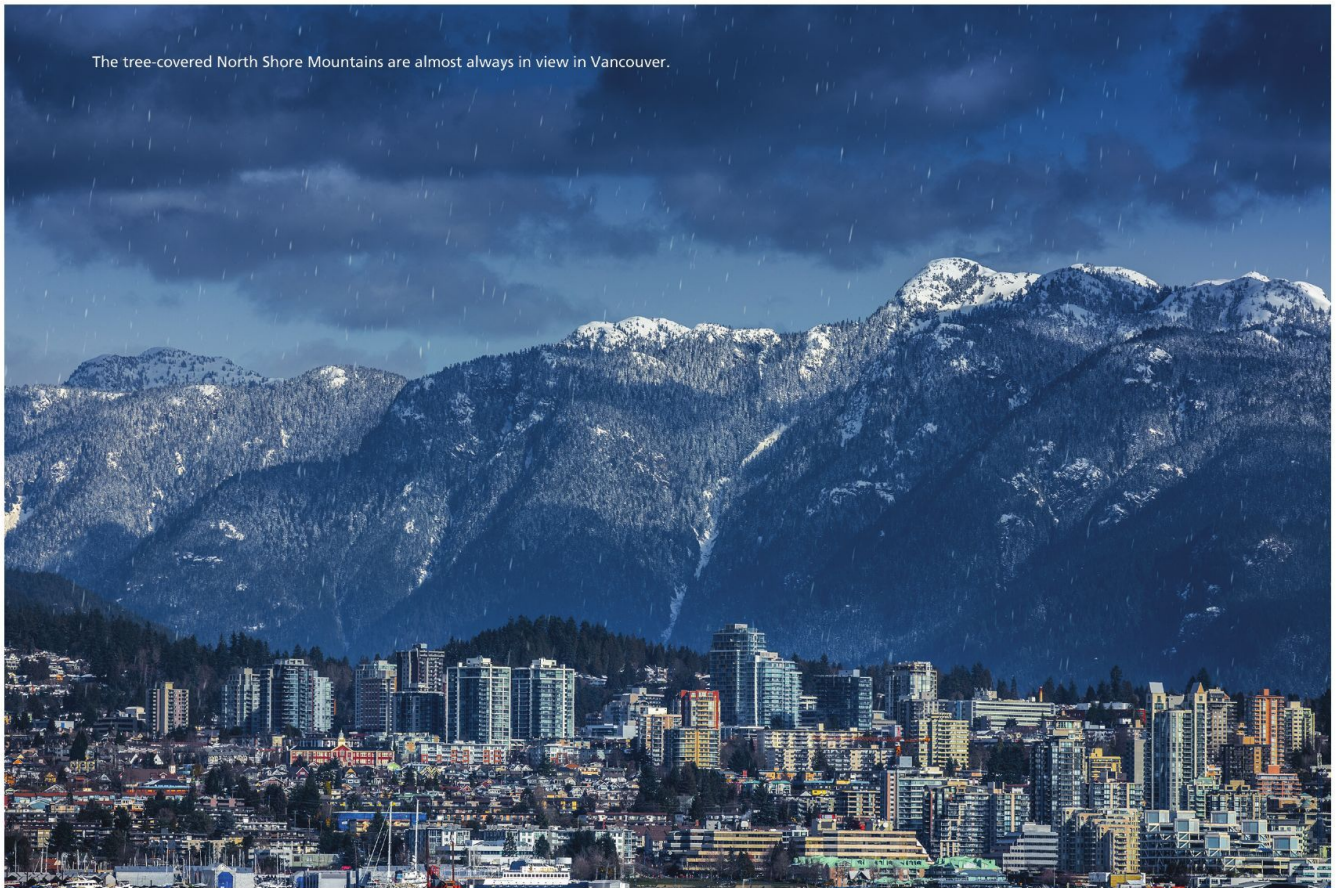
Another site with shelter from the showers is Granville Island, a waterfront hub for Vancouver’s artistic, cultural and culinary communities. Technically a peninsula rather than an island, it’s easiest to reach via tiny passenger ferries — rainbow-bedecked Aquabus or blue and white False Creek Ferries — that leave from

various points along the Seawall, including David Lam Park. On sunny days, Granville Island offers whale watching trips and sailing charters. Some opt to take a leisurely stroll through the Artisan District to the little community of houseboats to admire the Kanzan, Shirofugen and Akebono cherries that bloom from March into May. Wet days are better suited for theater performances, exploring the deliciousness of the Public Market (there’s always a line-up for Lee’s Donuts and Oyama Sausage Co.) as well as perusing the boutiques, galleries and artists’ workshops.

Rain City’s museums are also ideal for precipitation pauses. Kids love the geodesic dome and interactive displays of Science World, and everyone enjoys the museum’s anthropology displays, natural and maritime history sections and Canadian art. For example, the Beaty Biodiversity Museum has more than two million specimens from across the province, country and the planet, including an 85-foot-long skeleton of a blue whale. For a little indoor shot of adrenaline, try downtown’s FlyOver Canada adventure where you’re suspended in front of a 20-yard spherical screen for a journey to see Canada from coast to coast to coast (that’s the Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific oceans, and all that lies in between).

Of course, drizzly days are also prime times for shopping excursions, and Vancouver boasts everything from luxury international brands like Hermès and Jimmy Choo to boutiques

The tree-covered North Shore Mountains are almost always in view in Vancouver.







Vancouver's oldest neighborhood, Gastown, boasts Victorian architecture, cobblestone streets, and cutting-edge shops and restaurants.

with one-of-a-kind clothing and home decor. At her namesake store, Erin Templeton designs handbags from recycled leather, local elk and bison hide. On Granville Island, Yookyong Yong Ceramics' clay tableware will enhance your next at-home brunch or choose an Inuit or First Nations work of art from Eagle Spirit Gallery. And this nature-loving city sports more yoga and outdoor clothing shops than you'll ever need — brands like Lululemon, Arc'teryx and Herschel were born here — and, yes, yoga wear is also banned from Vancouver's film sets.

Culinary travelers will want to time their Vancouver visit for May when there's a good chance of being here for both cherry blossoms and the much shorter spot prawn season. Imagine a perfect evening of noshing on sustainable pink shrimps while sitting on a patio framed by sakura trees in matching hues. Michelin's first guide to Vancouver, released in October 2022, features 60 stand-out city restaurants to visit at any time of the year. Eight received their first Michelin stars, including Kissa Tanto with its Japanese-Italian fusion and AnnaLena's unassuming-yet-polished contemporary cuisine. Profiting from the produce (and even proteins) that change from month to month, menus in Vancouver are rarely static but usually feature local sablefish, albacore tuna, lingcod, oysters, mussels, and fruits and vegetables currently in season. Dark red cherries are a highlight of summertime meals, though they come from British Columbia's interior rather than from Vancouver's ornamental trees.

## Pair a Blossom Holiday With an Alaskan Cruise

You could also visit Vancouver via a springtime cruise. Between mid-April and the end of October, more than 300 ships stop beneath the dramatic white sails that mark the downtown cruise terminal on their way to see the 49th U.S. state. Many begin or end — sometimes both — their voyages here, and adding a few extra days to your April or May cruise vacation brings a beautiful bonus of the possibility of seeing cherry blossoms.

Vancouver bookends Windstar Cruises' 12-day sail to Alaska's fjords, waterfalls and glaciers aboard the 156-suite Star Breeze, for example. Or see sakura in both Japan and Vancouver with Viking Cruises' 37-day spring cruise from Hong Kong to Canada. It stops in Taipei, eight Japanese ports and Alaska before its mid-May Vancouver arrival, just before the cherry blossoms are finished for the year and just as spot prawn season is starting.

Celebrity Cruises offers two ships that sail from Vancouver to Alaska: Celebrity Millennium and Celebrity Eclipse. Guests seeking to explore the interior of Alaska have the option of doing so by extending their Celebrity Millennium 7-night cruise with a 2- to 6-night immersive cruise tour, an exciting land component taking voyagers deep into the heart of the Last Frontier.









### Wanting to Add a Little Winter?

A two-hour drive up the Sea to Sky Highway from Vancouver finds the mountain town of Whistler and the Whistler Blackcomb Ski Resort. Spring marks the shift from white to green season as ski slopes turn into mountain bike trails, but you can usually ski and snowboard in Whistler until mid-May.

June visitors are treated with a unique experience — hiking between Whistler's white snow walls. After a snow tractor clears a path through what was a ski slope just days before, hikers gain access to walk on the mountain's rocky surface next to tall embankments of packed snow. The walls can start as high as 50 feet, though they melt a little every day under the alpine sun.



## Vancouver's Swankiest Stays

Most of Vancouver's visitors stay in the downtown peninsula with its walkable neighborhoods. Downtown proper is a short stroll to the cruise terminal, the theaters and clubs of the Granville Street entertainment zone, sports and concerts in the Stadium District, and the Robson Street shopping precinct. Next-door neighborhoods include Vancouver's oldest — Gastown, chic Yaletown, plus the West End which borders Stanley Park. Green spaces thrive throughout the region.

The Fairmont Pacific Rim is a lavish downtown hotel for a "Pink City" spring vacation with unobstructed views of the harbor plus a rooftop pool and sundeck. Within walking distance of Stanley Park, guests get to carry a bit of cherry blossoms in their pockets. Be sure to book at least one meal at the hotel's lauded Botanist restaurant. Using ingredients from all over British Columbia, Botanist boasts its culinary and cocktail programs. Toast Vancouver's colorful flora with What the Flower — cherry blossom tea, gin, spices and tongue-tingling electric daisies — by Michelin-recognized head bartender Jeff Savage and creative beverage director Grant Scency before seeing which ingredients chef Hector Laguna is profiling for the day.

Fairmont Pacific Rim is the most luxe of Vancouver's three downtown Fairmont hotels, but great stays are on offer at all three. Sophisticated Fairmont Waterfront spotlights views of Burrard Inlet and the North Shore Mountains from its outdoor pool, just a short stroll to Granville Square's spring blossoms. Or, choose the elegant Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, also known as "Castle in the City," with its copper roof and proximity to downtown's luxe shopping neighborhood.

Also downtown, the Rosewood Hotel Georgia sits across the street from the stately Vancouver Art Gallery and its public

square. First opened in 1927, the landmark lodging facility has always been popular with celebrities from Laurence Olivier to Elvis to today's stars of whatever's being filmed in Hollywood at the moment. A stay here means you're just upstairs from one of Vancouver's best restaurants: Hawksworth is known for its exquisitely prepared plates with local ingredients like duck breast or ribeye from nearby Fraser Valley, served with yellow foot chanterelle or bluefoot mushrooms.

The sleek Shangri-La hotel, within one of Vancouver's tallest buildings, features sweeping views over the treetops to the North Shore Mountains and the waters that surround the city's core, not to mention a nice look down to the prime shopping streets below. Shangri-La's CHI, The Spa provides an indulgent sense of peace with flower nectar soaks in an infinity bath plus marine mineral thermal mud wraps, perfect for relaxation after a day of exploration.

For a mix of downtown's towers plus red brick warehouses converted to lofts, boutiques and restaurants, Yaletown fits the bill. The best Yaletown hotel choice is the hip and colorful Opus Vancouver, right across the street from the Skytrain station with the fastest transportation to and from the airport. A five-minute walk gets you to David Lam Park's pink Akebonos and then to the passenger ferry over to Granville Island. Opus includes lavender-scented towels that are warmed in winter and chilled in summer, plus some rooms showcase fireplaces and soaker tubs for two with views out into the neighborhood. Opus Vancouver's 96 rooms feature the bright colors of flowers with several even glowing with cherry-hued palettes.

Ahhh, Vancouver — with its mild temperatures, its spring season stretching almost to forever, and its spectacular showing of cherry blossoms galore. Explore the abundance of outdoor beauty with a Vancouver vacay. ☾



The Garden Suite at the Fairmont Waterfront overlooks Vancouver's bustling harbor. Photo courtesy of Fairmont Waterfront.



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In our pages you will come across the term the “Golden Crescent™.” That’s the label we give our primary market of the Jacksonville Beaches, Ponte Vedra Beach and Nocatee, which together form a crescent shape.

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*Living Luxe ~ Serving Florida’s First Coast* magazine is printed four times a year. For a yearly subscription (four quarterly issues), please send a check in the amount of \$26 made payable to Luxe Publishing, along with your name, email address, and mailing address, to:

**Luxe Publishing LLC**  
**PO Box 1412**  
**Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32004**

**luxepub.com**  
**Spring 2023 / Volume 6, Issue 1**

**Proudly printing with The Hartley Press.**



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Mark Krancer of Kram Kran Photo moved to Jacksonville in 2014 and was immediately taken by the fair city, capturing its unique beauty through his passion for photography. In spite of his newcomer status, Mark's photos of the First Coast were soon displayed in public exhibitions and private collections, both locally and worldwide, earning him "Best Photographer" in the 2018 Bold City Best competition. One of his images taken in Memorial Park during Hurricane Irma, known as "Life in the River," is considered to be one of the most famous photographs ever captured of Jacksonville.

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Tina possesses a Bachelor of Journalism and specializes in entertainment, beauty, fashion and lifestyle content. After eight years working various gigs in New York City from magazine publishing to digital marketing, Tina joined the world of freelance and has written and reported for notable publications and online platforms such as *Glamour*, *Seventeen*, *Us Weekly*, *MTV News*, *Entertainment Tonight*, *WEtv.com*, *truTV.com* and more, as well as the local JacksonvilleMom.com. She loves a good coffee shop — a necessity for keeping pace with her husband and two young sons.

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Having studied photojournalism at the University of Minnesota and later receiving tutelage under master photographers Hector Herrera and Art Smiley, Alex bought Art Smiley's business in Ponte Vedra Beach in 1999 and aptly named his new shop Art & Alex Photography in honor of his mentor. While his mainstay is portraits, Alex enjoys an impressive track record in corporate, event and golf photography and has photographed some of the world's best golfers. His client list includes the PGA TOUR, the NFL, Hilton Worldwide, MetLife, Pepsi and Allstate.

## Johanna Read

Johanna balances life as a freelance writer and photographer specializing in responsible tourism, and as a management consultant helping create healthy workplaces. Her bylines include *National Geographic*, *Travel Leisure*, *TIME*, *Lonely Planet*, *Fodor's*, *Forbes*, *Insider* and *Canadian Traveller*. She aims to encourage travel that is culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable.

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Hannah is a journalistic storyteller who loves weaving seemingly disparate elements into sharply focused and revealing profiles of individuals, nonprofits and events. After a decade teaching high school English, and another as a one-on-one writing coach, telling tales for a living was a natural fit. Hannah serves as a regular contributor for a variety of luxury lifestyle publications in the U.S., having also now joined Luxe Publishing. When not writing, Hannah enjoys hanging with her two teenage daughters — exploring new places, hiking, and concocting obscure vegetarian dishes.



# Letter

FROM THE

## EDITOR

Spring has sprung! And with the warmer weather comes the most anticipated annual event of the First Coast: THE PLAYERS Championship at TPC Sawgrass. For the past six years, not only have we covered this tournament so important to the Golden Crescent, we've endeavored to explore related topics of interest to our golf devotees, from other famed links built by golf course architect Pete Dye to the all-time greats of golf, and, this year, that perspiration-inducing, water-surrounded target with which golfers have long had a love-hate relationship: the Island Green. We'll take you on a visually lush journey to some of the most renowned courses boasting this feature, concluding with the 17th hole at TPC Sawgrass Stadium Course. And don't miss the schedule highlights for this year's THE PLAYERS Championship on p28.

Another bellwether of spring in many locales is the blooming of beautiful cherry blossom trees, and no city in the world boasts a longer cherry blossom season than Vancouver, British Columbia. Come with us as we venture to this cosmopolitan city known for its mild, spring-like weather much of the year and neighborhoods covered in canopies of pink petals.

Did the winter freezes decimate much of your prized gardening? Ours, too. Fear not, we've curated a stellar selection of fresh ideas for creating curb appeal and lush landscaping to spruce up your home, just as natural as spring cleaning (also another topic presented this issue!).

Our luxury travel content covers Atlanta, Georgia, and its rising celebrity status in the culinary world. Seasonal recipes (custom crafted for *Luxe* readers by our talented chef), spring fashion, at-home candle-making, and even the latest Pantone Color of the Year all conspire to make this a delightful, and certainly spring-centric, issue for your enjoyment.

*Living Luxe* is direct-mailed and distributed for free throughout the First Coast. Please thank the advertisers celebrated within these pages for their gift of reading and relaxation.



*Pam Anderson*

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