

British Columbia's Sunshine Coast

A beautiful sunset over the Lund
Harbor in British Columbia, Canada.

When you live in a temperate rainforest such as the West Coast of Canada, sometimes it can all be about those extra rays. Located a scenic 40-minute ferry ride north from West Vancouver, the Sunshine Coast lives up to its title with milder winters, less rainfall, and more annual hours of sunshine than the big city. It also boasts some of the most breathtaking vistas this side of the country with coastal forests, highlands and far-reaching

seascapes. From a morning stroll along its pristine waterfront to a full day of hardcore outdoor adventure, this area has no end of ways to pursue bliss.

The Sunshine Coast is a peninsula attached to British Columbia's mainland, but as there is no road access people rely on ferries, water taxi and a seaplane service from Vancouver International Airport to reach it.

The first point of entry – and the ferry terminal – is the town of Gibsons – home to the famous Molly's Reach >>

Did you know?

Molly's Reach restaurant was the film set for the Beachcombers TV show



Above: Smitty's Marina - crammed with yachts



Below: Seaplane waiting for takeoff

restaurant that provided part of the film set for the popular Beachcombers TV series that ran from 1972 - 1990.

SECHELT

Just 15 miles north of Gibsons is the town of Sechelt - the largest municipality in the area. It offers a waterfront community of around 9,000 residents and provides inspiration and a home for sculptors, writers, musicians - Joni Mitchell was a one-time resident - potters, divers, cyclists, sailors, birdwatchers, and skiers. It features arts and cultural opportunities, ample recreation, and many modern amenities. As a service and retail centre for the Sunshine Coast area, it boasts a thriving business community with opportunity for expansion and innovation, all set amid the beautiful backdrop of Sechelt Inlet.

Sechelt was originally occupied by the aboriginal people of the Sechelt Nation, who hunted, fished and traded here for centuries. Its name is derived from the First Nations word for "the land between two waters". Indian legend has it that the creator gods were sent by the Divine Spirit to form the world. They carved out valleys, trees and formed pools of water that now combine with beautifully cobbled beaches containing driftwood and many coloured pebbles. The treed mountains, cascading creeks and waterfalls create a spectacular coastline that makes this community a

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photographer's delight all-year round.

Its population began to grow when European settlers arrived in the 19th Century. By the early 1900s, Sechelt had a hotel, general store, wharf, and other amenities with an economy that was based on logging, fishing, and tourism from the guests that came via the Union Steamship Company's regular runs along the Sunshine Coast.

A BEAUTIFUL PLACE

In the 1950s, Sechelt's world opened up again due to two new transportation developments: a regular ferry service between Vancouver and Gibsons, and the paving of Highway 101 along the 110-mile length of the Sunshine Coast. There is another ferry terminal at the north end of the highway that connects the east side of Vancouver Island with this stretch of the mainland.

The reason for Sechelt's immense attraction for visitors and residents alike? A seamless integration of modern amenities with a blissful mix of water and land activities, suitable for all ages and ability levels.

One of the more popular sea-based excursions is to >>>

Molly's Reach

welcome back!



Above: ??????????????





Above:
Cold water Diving

Did you
know?

Famous singer Joni Mitchell
once lived on the Sunshine
Coast

>> rent a kayak or canoe and paddle around nearby Smuggler's Cove - with its rich history of bootlegging during the Prohibition years - or up Sechelt Inlet to view dolphins and deer. Local islands, Keats and Gambier, provide a focal point destination that are well within paddling distance and provide great summer swimming.

Throughout the year, the ocean around Sechelt offers

The ocean around Sechelt
offers prime salmon fishing
due to an abundance of fish

prime salmon fishing due to its abundance of Coho, Chinook, Chum, Pink, and Sockeye salmon. Anglers love the trout fishing at Trout Lake, Sakinaw Lake, and Ruby Lake and fishing charters and equipment rentals are all available in Sechelt.

For the more adventurous, Sechelt is home to a National Geographic-lauded dive centre that offers lessons, equipment, and rentals. Divers can enjoy some of the world's best cold-water diving on the Sunshine Coast, and there is even a wreck to explore: HMCS

Chaudiere in Sechelt Inlet, plus the foaming rapids of the Skookumchuk Narrows up Highway 101 near Egmont.

For those who prefer more land-based enjoyment, the selection is equally plentiful. There is a par-72, nine-hole championship golf course at the Pender Harbour Club, as well as public 18-hole courses at Sechelt Golf and Country Club and the Sunshine Golf and Country Club in nearby Roberts Creek.

With such magnificent scenery, visitors can enjoy the numerous trails in both the regional and provincial parks that offer excellent viewpoints and bird-watching opportunities.

A WEALTH OF ENTERTAINMENT

While summer is the most popular time of year to visit the Sunshine Coast, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing on groomed trails bring winter sports enthusiasts to the Dakota Ridge Winter Recreation Area.

If less active pursuits appeal, there are a number of notable museums, art galleries and a ton of festivals throughout the year, to satisfy cravings. The House of Hewhiwus (House of Chiefs) museum in Sechelt and the Sunshine Coast Museum in Gibsons both give a detailed history of this colourful area. The world-class Sunshine Coast Festival of the Written Arts, the

>> Hackett Park Crafts Fair, and the Sechelt Arts Festival, all attract large and enthusiastic crowds. Nearby Pender Harbour lays claim to the internationally renowned jazz festival and also puts on other festivals dedicated to blues and chamber music.

Accommodation ranges from cosy to chic with B&Bs, luxury resorts, cottages, and camping providing the usual selection.

For something more permanent, however, the opportunities to buy into Sechelt are few and far between. But all that is set to change with the building of a new condo development on a prime beachfront location that capitalises on both proximity to Sechelt's town centre amenities and glorious far-reaching oceanic views.

HIGH WATERMARK

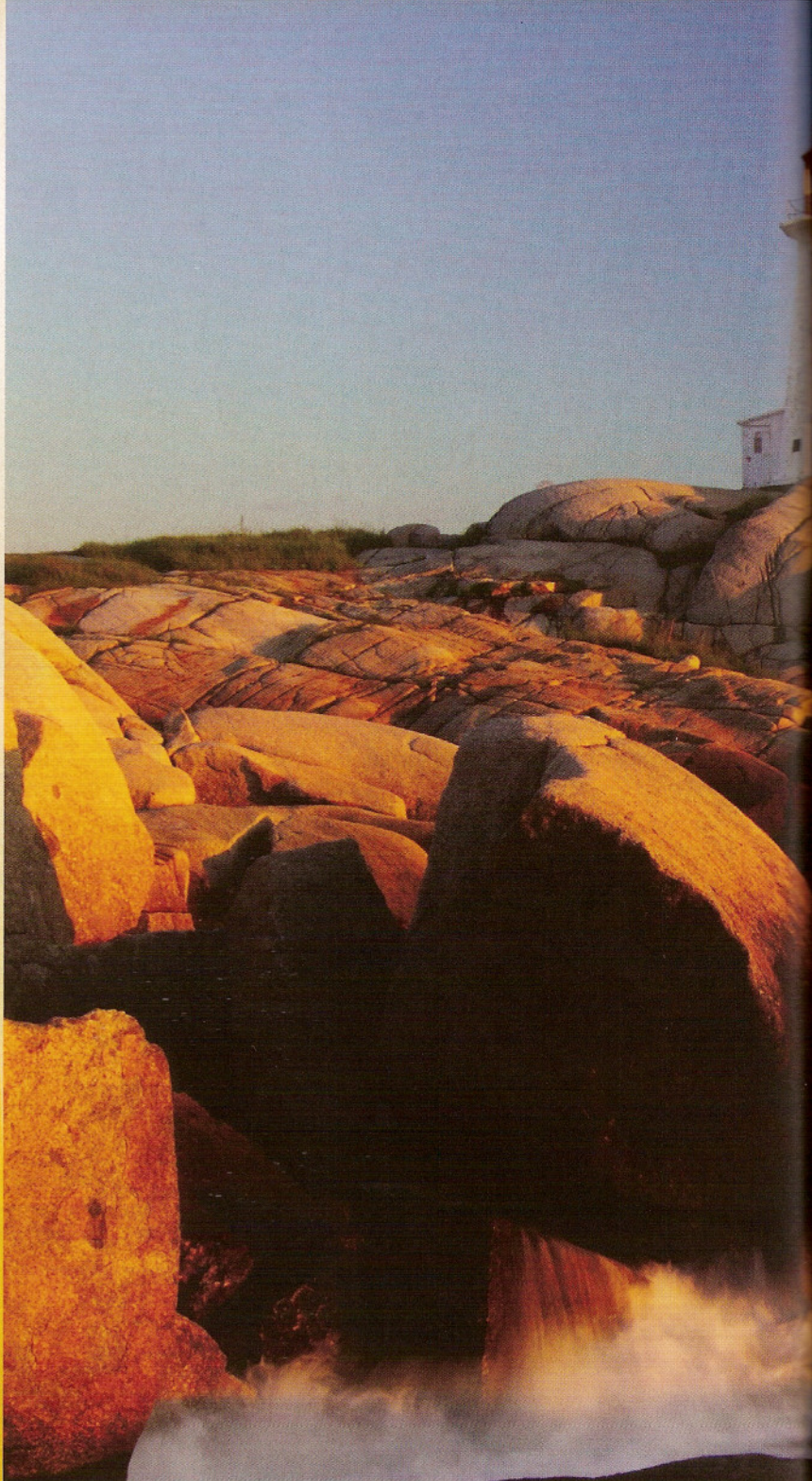
The Watermark (www.thewatermark.ca) is due to be completed towards the end of 2012 and comprises two six-storey buildings that will feature 104 luxury suites, a café-bistro and commercial space. It possesses a unique terraced architecture with large, south-facing balconies that maximize the panoramic views of the vast ocean punctuated with forested islands, sailboats en route to Desolation Sound, and cruise ships bound for Alaska. At the end of a day of outdoor adventure, Watermark has such a blissful location that residents can fall asleep to the ocean's lullaby at their windows.

This contemporary concrete construction pairs with natural elements of river rock and driftwood to create a structure that is distinctive, proud and authentically Sunshine Coast. The suites range from one to three bedrooms - some with home office areas - and prices vary from \$249,900 Cdn to \$963,900 Cdn (£161,500 to £623,000) and offer amazing value for this waterfront location.

One of the major attractions of this new project is its ability to provide year-round residence with lock-and-leave capability for those owners who prefer to keep their Sunshine Coast home as a weekend or holiday retreat.

The convenience factor that it presents is huge: right across the street from Watermark is Sechelt's main shopping area, with grocers, bakeries, banks, and a liquor store. A little further down the road is the new Aquatic Centre, with a lap pool, steam room, waterslide, lazy river, gym, and fitness studio. On Saturdays, April through September, residents can fill their baskets at the popular Sechelt Farmers Market and St Mary's hospital is just minutes away.

With the charm of a village, but all the amenities of a town, Sechelt really does enable life to slow down to soak up the sun and listen to the sea.



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