

November 13, 2008
Nanaimo, BC

Self-Guided Country Christmas Craft Tour

For immediate release: The Self-Guided Country Christmas Craft Tour, organized by the Cedar & Yellow Point Artisans' Association, is celebrating its 20th year, with the largest number of participating artisans to date. From 10am to 5pm between November 20th and 23rd 2008, visit some of the regions' most unique and celebrated artisans as they welcome you to enjoy the wonderful settings that they have created at their studios, shops and farms in Yellow Point & Cedar on Vancouver Island. Beat the shopping centre crowds and purchase original works from more than 24 individual artisans.

Sponsored by the Southgate Branch of the Coastal Community Credit Union, the tour remains an integral event for the community as well as for its local artisans - many of them are only open to the public for this spectacular tour. They will display their work, discuss and demonstrate techniques, answer questions and serve light refreshments. This scenic Christmas road trip will showcase various forms of art including woodwork, textile art, Native art, jewellery, painting, prints, hand-painted furniture, stained glass, mosaics, pottery, digital art, Christmas crafts and much more. In addition, visitors will be able to sample many of the homemade kitchen, bath and beauty products at the herbal gardens and cranberry fields.

The Cedar & Yellow Point Artisans' Association provides free maps which highlight the location, name of the artisan and products to be sold at each studio. Maps are available at all 49th Parallel Grocery Stores and Libraries in Ladysmith and Nanaimo, all mid-island Visitor Info Centres, the Bean Time Café in Ladysmith, Art 10 at the Port Place Mall in Nanaimo and at participating businesses in Cedar. The map can also be downloaded at www.cyartisans.com.

One of this year's artisans is Noel Brown, whose carvings can be found in galleries and homes around the world. The art of carving has been practiced by his family for more than four generations with Noel carving for 13 years. Noel prefers to carve metal or wood sourced from beaches or select forests to create traditional pieces inspired by songs and stories told to him by his father. His pieces range from jewellery to carved and painted totems, ceremonial drums and masks.

Another popular artisan is Gerda Tomm, who creates detailed fretwork using her scroll saw and prefers to work with hickory, walnut and maple wood. She begins her creative process by selecting a pattern and then choosing a piece of wood that brings the image to life using its natural aspects - color and grain. While she often creates pieces that focus on angels, natural themes and mystical creatures, new themes this year include seaside portraits, sailboats as well as personal favourites such as horses and dragons. Last year, Gerda had 900 people through her workshop during the Country Christmas Tour.

The rural coastal area of Yellow Point and Cedar is located in the peaceful and charming countryside just north of Ladysmith on a forested peninsula complete with pastoral rolling landscapes. The area is located just east of the Island Highway, approximately 20 minutes south of Nanaimo and less than 90 minutes north of Victoria.

Vancouver Island continues to be recognized as a premier vacation destination. Since 2000, Vancouver Island has been rated as the Best Island in North America by the readers of Condé Nast Traveler. This prestigious travel magazine with a per issue readership of 2 million has been conducting a Readers' Choice award program for 20 years.

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