VICTORIA AND VANCOUVER ISLAND HONOURED AT CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER READERS’ CHOICE AWARDS

VICTORIA, BC – Condé Nast Traveler magazine readers ranked Vancouver Island as Top North American Island and Victoria as Number Two Top City in the Americas at a prestigious awards ceremony held last night in New York City attended by Tourism Vancouver Island President & CEO Dave Petryk and Tourism Victoria President & CEO Lorne Whyte.

Vancouver Island ranked first ahead of Nantucket and Prince Edward Island in the North American Island category. This is the fifth consecutive year that Vancouver Island has received this honour. Islands were broken down into four geographic categories: Asia/Pacific, Caribbean/Atlantic, European and North American.

“We’re thrilled that readers of Condé Nast Traveler have chosen Vancouver Island as the top North American Island for the fifth year in a row,” stated Tourism Vancouver Island President & CEO Dave Petryk. “We are so blessed by the environmental diversity of Vancouver Island from city to unsurpassed outdoor experiences, and we are delighted that the readers of this prestigious magazine have continued to acknowledge Vancouver Island as a favourite vacation destination.”

Victoria was narrowly edged out by Vancouver in the Top Cities in the Americas category, with 81.9 points for Vancouver and 81.6 points for Victoria. Quebec City followed in third place with 80.9 points. Victoria also ranked third in the Top Pacific Rim Cities category behind Sydney, Australia and Vancouver.

Cities were divided into five geographic categories: the Americas (Canada, Central America and South America), Asia/Pacific, Africa/Middle East, United States and Pacific Rim. Cities are rated on various criteria, including ambience, friendliness, culture/sites, restaurants, lodging and shopping.
"This is a very positive prestigious ranking for Victoria," noted Tourism Victoria President & CEO Lorne Whyte. "Being rated as one of the top three cities in the Americas and the Pacific Rim sends a strong message that American travellers continue to recognize Victoria as a world-class vacation destination. This recognition from Conde Nast magazine will only help to increase the destination's profile, and draw more visitors to this spectacular city."

Four island accommodation properties also were acknowledged in the awards program. Hastings House on Saltspring Island ranked third in the Top Canadian Hotels category. The Wickaninnish Inn, Aerie Resort and Delta Ocean Pointe Resort and Spa ranked fourth, fifth and ninth respectively in the Top Canadian Resorts category.

The 2004 Readers’ Choice Awards, featured in the November issue of *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine, lists the world’s top cities, islands, airlines, resorts, cruise lines and other travel related categories. The publication, with a per issue readership of two million, is considered an opinion leader in the travel field and has been conducting a Readers Choice awards program for sixteen years.

Last night’s ceremony, held at New York City’s Lincoln Centre, was attended by representatives from winning cities and organizations, 150 of the top travel specialists from across the United States, as well as many celebrities, including Christy Brinkley, Glenn Close and Donald Trump.

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