

10 REASONS TO VISIT ROWENA'S INN ON THE RIVER

The rustic Rowena's Inn on the River is a dream getaway in BC's beautiful backyard.

If Rowena's Inn on the River was halfway around the world, I would hop on a plane to get there - that's how wonderful it is. Lucky for me and other Vancouverites, this charming family-owned lodge, absolutely brimming with history, is less than a two-hour drive away, located in the small town of Harrison Mills, population 79.

With television-free rustic cottages and inn rooms, a cosy, locally-minded restaurant mere steps from your front door, an award-winning golf course on property and Harrison Hot Springs just 20 minutes away, it has everything you need for a fulfilling yet intensely-relaxing holiday. And with winter room/cottage rates from \$99 to \$179, it couldn't be more inviting. Not convinced? Here are 10 reasons why you'll fall in love with Rowena's Inn.

Rustic Cottages Overlooking the River

Tucked away in your cottage, with the wood-burning fireplace roaring, all need for the outside world disappears. With a view of the river, these cosy cabins — named after the owner's nieces and nephews — have heated bathroom floors, four-poster king-sized beds, Jacuzzis, and best of all, no televisions. Upon arrival, a cheese plate and bottle of wine await your indulgence... it this heaven?

Wood-burning Fireplace

This is the real deal, complete with over two day's worth of spider-free firewood, kindling, newspaper, and two large recliners from which you can bask in the fire's glow. If you get ambitious and leave the property, chances are there will be a fire built for you upon your return home — all you have to do is light the match.

Breakfast

A hearty meal is delivered to your doorstep by golf cart each morning. Stay in your PJs, rekindle the fire and dive into your large picnic basket filled with a pot of hot coffee, orange juice, muffins, fruit, and an egg dish (we enjoyed delicious eggs benny with toast, bacon, and hashbrowns). The only thing left on your early morning agenda is to sink back into bed with a good book and the soothing sounds of the crackling fire.

High Tea

Pretty Estates' English-style manor at the centre of the grassy property is filled with history-laden antiques, hand-carved tables (once sat at by royalty), and vintage furnishings collected by the parents of owner and president Betty-Anne Faulkner. This is a perfect setting for high tea service (\$19.95), which includes dainty sandwiches, fresh

buttery scones served with Devonshire cream and jam and more. Gluten free options are also available.

River's Edge Restaurant

Just steps away (are you noticing a pattern?) from your private cottage or room, Rowena's on-site restaurant offers a West Coast menu in a warm, pub-style dining room designed by owner Betty-Anne herself. Choose from Chef Jonathan Gee's Ocean Wise seafood dishes, a slew of traditional (largely meaty) entrées, and a vegetarian curry. Many of the cooking herbs used are picked straight out of the property gardens.

Serenity

A long 150-metre driveway, lined with glowing street lamps, separates Rowena's Inn guests from the real world and its traffic noises (though in Harrison Mills it never gets too noisy). With just four private cottages and five inn rooms available for rent, the property is peaceful and will never be overrun with guests. Expect restorative calm and therapeutic quiet. If it rains, you'll only feel more snug in your surroundings.

Nature

The 160-acre waterfront estate overlooks the Harrison River, and if in-season, you'll witness the salmon completing their spawn while dozens of eagles (I once counted 30 in four trees) soar above. The river alone, however, is enough to enchant you, especially in the early morning hours while the sun is rising, casting glorious reflections off the chilly waters.

Cheese Farm Excursion

If you get the urge to explore (yes, that means actually leaving the cottage), take a short drive to The Farm House Natural Cheeses and visit with their friendly goats, cows, and horses, and then stock up on some lovely organic cheese along with a bottle of wine to indulge in back at the cottage.

Hazelnuts Farm Excursion

Take a walk through the vast field of organic nutty trees at Canadian Hazelnuts and then load up with the many nut varieties sold in-shop: shelled, in-shell, citrus-flavoured, espresso-flavoured — they've even got ice cream! Store the nuts in your freezer for a winter's worth of local-goodness-infused baking or give them as gifts.

The History

If you're lucky, you'll meet owner Betty-Anne who lives part-time on the property. Her delightful stories of the past entertain while shedding light on the history of Rowena's Inn (which was named after her mother and sister). A sampler: The bed in which she was born originally belonged to Nelly Melba, a singer so famous that Melba toast and Peach Melba were named in her honour. To this day, the bed remains in one of the manor's guest rooms.

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