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What The World Needs Now...is More of Hollyhock on Cortes Island, BC

Tuesday, July 13th, 2010 by Cheryl MacKinnon

Through the years I have often wanted to visit this magical destination called Hollyhock. During my period of 'soul searching' in my late twenties (I'm a 70s gal); then for some reason when I became a mother, and now in the middle of my life, the programs have always appealed to my higher sense of self.

To be in the company of the founders of Greenpeace (not because I was a hippie, more because I admire their passion), to world class entertainers like Jane Mortifee and children's troubador, Raffi, I wanted to study and learn in what I envisioned to be a peaceful environment.

My wish was granted this past spring when I traveled with my beautiful daughter for an all too brief visit. And after all these years, I was not disappointed. Upon my return home, everyone from family to friends, have been curious to learn what I think. Here's my take on this special place.

The Setting

It's divine. It's peaceful. The views are magnificent, everywhere, especially across to Powell River and Desolation Sound. Before the white man landed here, the particular space that is Hollyhock was a popular gathering place for the Coast Salish. Their powerful, spiritual influence is felt throughout the entire property.

Getting to Hollyhock is half the fun! If you're coming from the

mainland, fly by float plane directly to Cortes, or drive/ferry to either Victoria or Nanaimo and onto Campbell River. BC Ferries connections are well-timed along the route, whether you stop or drive straight through.

The Structure

The 29 year old main buildings and accommodations are set in an exquisite landscape complete with pebble-stoned and bark mulch pathways winding their way to the variety of sleeping quarters. From the popular tent site-complete with its adorable and functional cedar-framed bathhouse-to family style guestrooms in the A-frame, and my personal favourite; the beach front cabins, the furnishings are dated and slightly worn, but clean and most certainly cozy and comfortable. First thought is it's 'just like being at the family cottage or cabin' where the decor is as familiar as Grandma's home. And yes,

there are no phones or clocks, nor are there standard hotel amenities like bathrobes and extra towels. This doesn't seem to matter as you bring your own. Eco-friendly right down to recycled soap and shampoo containers in each room, thoughtfully refilled as the need arises, the cute sign over the toilet also reminds guests that you don't have to flush every time!

The Sustenance

My oh my, apart from the outstanding programs offered at Hollyhock, the pantry and its adjoining kitchen has to be the resort's shining star. The talents of Chef Carpenter and her team are endless. With a garden that we urbanites might only dream of - imagine almost an acre filled with edible, organic flowers, fruits and vegetables, blended with a disciplined yet highly creative culinary prowess and you've got the picture of what is delivered to guests and staff on a daily basis. From breakfast to dinner, every single day, the purely vegetarian meals are simply outstanding! Pretty, fresh flowers adorn the dining room tables, the buffet stands and the guest rooms. In the spring the tulips have heads the size of grapefruit. Book a date to attend one of Hollyhock's Passionate Cooks series and you'll learn the secrets firsthand!

While there is no alcohol available on site, guests are most welcome to bring their own. A nightcap from your deck is almost expected!

Sipping the homemade mint and ginger tea was so relaxing from the outdoor deck of the main lodge. The views aside, we were captivated by the tranquility and the positive energies that seem to emanate from the ground up. The operation is centered on love - a deep love for the planet and its peoples. Chatting with several of the guests it was touching to know many were returning for yet another workshop, and many had been coming for ten years or more.

The Getaway

Hollyhock is noted for its profusion of workshops and week long learning experiences, from cooking to creative writing to business and community leadership to relationship building. Corporations, individuals and groups are most welcome. However, it is also a great place to just steal away to for a few days or even a week to simply relax and take in the glorious atmosphere.

All packages include accommodation, three mostly vegetarian meals, 24 hour toast/fruit and tea bar, weekly guided naturalist excursions, morning meditation and movement/yoga, hoola hoops, hot tubs overlooking the ocean, library and complimentary wireless. Bodywork, kayaking and sailing are charged separately. Room and meal packages start at **\$153 per person, per day.**

Kayaking from the shores out front, welcome dawn with an early yoga class, hoola on the front lawn or take a hot tub (clothing optional) to a pampering in the cottage spa studio where the services are first class are part of the standard offerings. Ideal for a gal pal escape, a family get together with Grandma and Grandpa, this is a destination worth visiting and soon!

For a detailed brochure call 1.800.933.6339 or go online at www.hollyhock.ca.

For float plane information visit www.hollyhock.ca/cms/Floatplane.html

For ferry schedules visit www.bcferries.com

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Relax on the shores of Hollyhock



Beachfront cabins at Hollyhock



Spring gardens at Hollyhock



Floral Designers Pamela and Marion



Grant & Lise prepare breakfast



Fresh flowers and fresh food at Hollyhock



Chelsey remembers how to hoola hoop!

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