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Sample Vancouver Itinerary – spring 2006

This is Day Four of a two week tailored itinerary created for a young family touring around British Columbia. It was their first visit as a family (daughter 8 and son 6 years old) although the parents had been to Vancouver before. They were interested in fun activities with the kids as well as a couple of evenings out alone.

day four - sunday

overview of the day:

You'll be happy to have the rental car a day early as you'll hit a few different areas easily with that mobility. Sunday is full of something for everyone – a unique brunch, a children's festival, market exploring, outdoor activities (or indoor ones if the weather doesn't cooperate!?) and a nice evening out for Mum and Dad. There are more suggestions here than you can comfortably fit into your day so pick and choose and hopefully there will be something to suit all four interests.

morning

Hope you enjoyed your short daytrip yesterday. Given all that fresh air you likely slept in a bit this morning. Today starts with a delicious dim sum at **Sun Sui Wah**. Your reservation is for 10am, but just call if you would like to change the time. Hop in your car and drive up Howe Street from your hotel, turn left on Nelson Street and over the Cambie Street Bridge, left again on 16th Avenue and a right on Main Street. You'll see the big restaurant on the NE corner of Main Street and 23rd Avenue. You can access the underground parking off the lane. You'll quickly feel transported to Hong Kong in this big, lively room filled with lots of families enjoying traditional Chinese 'brunch'. Choose what catches your eye from the wonderful selection served on little carts. We never pass up their shrimp shumai, lotus leaf rice or egg custard tarts and their chicken feet are delicious for the adventurous. 3888 Main Street, 604.872.8822, Sunday lunch from 10am-3pm.

Across 23rd Avenue you'll find a delightful little shop called the **Regional Assembly of Text**. The artist-owners, Brandy and Rebecca, have a love of the printed word and this shop is full of unique pieces focused on all things written. We love their days of the week t-shirts and made-on-the-spot buttons. We've also included their bright iron-on letters in loot bags. Poke through the drawers to find unusual treasures. Definitely worth a visit! 3934 Main Street, 604.877.2247, Sundays from 10am-6pm, assemblyoftext.com.

You've timed your visit perfectly to hit the acclaimed **International Children's Festival**. Drive north down Main Street and turn left on 2nd Avenue until you get to Burrard Street. You'll see plenty of signage for the Festival, but parking can often be a challenge so take what you can find in this area and walk in to Vanier Park. Sunday from 11am-5pm, 604.708.5655, childrensfestival.ca. A festival guide, with detailed map, is enclosed.

If you arranged for performance tickets in advance you can pick them up at will-call. If you opted to skip a performance there is still a ton to do once you're inside the gates. There is a free outdoor stage with various musical acts, roving clowns and entertainment, the ever-popular face-painting booth, clay stations, kite-making, etc. Once you've had your fill of popcorn and cotton candy, stroll along the water's path and under the bridge to **Granville Island**. This is a must-see destination for all visitors, but especially fun for families. Sundays from 9am-7pm, granvilleisland.com. A detailed map of the island is enclosed.

afternoon

Tucked beneath the Granville Street Bridge you will find this bustling marketplace of artists' studios, specialty shops, galleries and a thriving public market situated along the waterfront. Don't miss **Hilary Morris'** gallery on Railspur Alley for accessible artwork capturing the essence of Vancouver. Over at the Net Loft, we live in the organic tees of local label Twice Shy stocked at **Halfmoon**. And we always visit the **Circle Craft Co-op** store as they carry creations of over 200 BC artists. We received a beautiful, hand-turned wooden salad bowl from here last year and always receive compliments when it comes out. Speaking of creations, you mentioned your specific interest in beads and jewelry making. There is a great bead shop on the island – **Beadworks**, also located in the Net Loft.

In addition, we've listed a few other specialty bead shops that you may want to fit in to your plans another day:

- Bead Freaks – 4412 Main Street, 604.872.2210 (a great selection from around the world)
- Country Beads – 2015 West 4th Avenue, 604.730.8056 (countrybeads.com)
- Skanda – 1520 West 13th Avenue, 604.734.2632 (for a high-end selection)

Still at Granville Island, you'll likely hear live music along the boardwalk or in the square outside the Net Loft and the kids will love the aptly named **Kids Market** housed in a 100 year old factory building. It is filled with over 25 great toy and clothing shops. We especially like Camelot Kids for the younger ones and Knotty Toys for everything wooden. There is also a shop devoted to creative stamps and card making that your daughter will like. And the popular Hairloft on the second floor is where we take our kids for their trims. Kids Market, 1496 Cartwright Street, 604.689.8447, kidsmarket.ca.

If you exit out the back door of Kids Market you'll come across a duck pond and further along a playground and water park. This will be the opening weekend for the water park so if it's warm enough your kids might enjoy a frolic in the spray or a trip down the waterslide. Open from 10am-6pm, no charge.

The graduation exhibition at the **Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design** will be on this weekend. This Institute was founded in 1925 and is named for one of BC's most well-known artists. It is quickly establishing itself as a prominent international institution with students from over 40 countries. Wander through the four floors to check out the works of 300 recent grads – we always find a piece or two that we fall in love with and often at reasonable prices. 1399 Johnston Street, 604.844.3075, Sundays from 10am-6pm, eciad.ca.

We believe Vancouver is best seen from the water. One fun way to get that perspective, if you've got some energy to burn, is from a kayak. You can rent doubles (with the kids in front) for \$45/2 hours at **Ecomarine Ocean Kayak Centre**. They will outfit you with all that you need to hit the water for a short and gentle paddle along the shoreline. 1668 Duranleau Street at the SW end of the island, 604.689.7575, ecomarine.com. A brochure is enclosed.

If you are feeling peckish, there are food stands in the public market to suit every taste (sushi, pizza, souvlaki, noodles, fish n' chips, etc.). We often crave the authentic perogies from The Perogy Place. If you decide to eat out on the boardwalk watch out for the seagulls as they are particularly 'friendly'! Or grab picnic fixings to take with you to the park. You'll be tempted by the many great market stalls, but be sure to stop at Oyama's for the best sausages, sliced meats and cheeses. The friendly staff are always very willing to make suggestions and share samples from their vast selection.

If you decided to skip the paddle today, hop in your car and head over to **VanDusen Botanical Garden** this afternoon. This is a 55 acre gem in the heart of the city and today they have a great Creepy Crawlers family tour that your kids are sure to love (pre-registration is required 604.878.5860). You'll also see turtles sunning themselves on the rocks and ducks splashing in the ponds. There's even a fun maze in the middle of the garden for a family race. Don't miss the famous Rhododendron Walk which should be in full bloom. If it's time for a snack the Great Lawn is perfect for a mini-picnic. 5251 Oak Street @ 37th Avenue, 604.878.9274, Sundays from 10am-8pm, family admission \$18.50. A Garden map is enclosed.

Alternatively, if the weather isn't cooperating you can take shelter at the **Vancouver Art Gallery** housed in the former law courts and very close to your hotel (it's worth dropping your car off back at your hotel rather than finding and paying for additional downtown parking). Today the Gallery is hosting *SuperSunday – Art For Families*. You can all create a masterpiece together in an inspiring setting (drop-in from noon until 5pm, suggestion donation of \$2 to cover materials). While you're visiting, be sure to view some of Emily Carr's work in the permanent collection. 750 Hornby Street @ Robson Street, 604.662.4719, family admission \$40, vanartgallery.bc.ca. A Gallery brochure is enclosed.

evening

As requested, we have enclosed the babysitting service information we discussed. We personally use their services and cannot recommend them more highly! Please call them directly to confirm your booking, receive your sitter's bio and review payment details. We will assume that your sitter will arrive at your hotel for 6:45pm. She will call up to your room from the lobby to ensure you are ready for her. Most sitters from this agency are very familiar with your hotel as they regularly receive bookings for guests.

Once you have introduced the children, detailed any specific instructions and feel comfortable to leave, hop in a cab to your 7:30pm dinner reservation at a perennial local favourite, **Bishop's**, in Kitsilano. Bishop's loyalty to seasonal, local ingredients produces remarkable dishes and the soft-spoken John Bishop is likely to roam the intimate room to personally welcome his guests. The menu changes daily, but we love the Salt Spring Island goat cheese salad and are never disappointed by their freshly prepared salmon. You're in luck if their rhubarb upside-down cake is on the menu! Take your time to savour the local wines and the best of modern, west coast cuisine. John Bishop has also written several wonderful cookbooks which may make for a practical souvenir to take back home. 2183 West 4th Avenue, 604.738.2025, Sundays from 5:30pm-10pm, bishoponline.com.

After dinner ask your host to call a taxi to take you to the Wedgewood Hotel where you can enjoy drinks in the parlour-like **Bacchus Lounge** before strolling back to your hotel down Hornby Street. 845 Hornby Street, 604.687.7777, Sundays until 11:30pm.

Hopefully the kids are in a deep sleep when you arrive back at your suite. Tomorrow you will be off for your adventure in the sunny Okanagan Valley.