

# JESSEL

BRIAN JESSEL MAGAZINE

2024 | FALL/WINTER EDITION



Ken Sim - A Different Kind of Mayor

Invictus Games Head to Vancouver/Whistler in 2025

Exploring the Social, Cultural and Financial Value in B.C.'s Arts Scene

Meet Axel Schuster - Vancouver Whitecaps CEO/Sporting Director

Reading Room.

# Create Where



# You Belong™

## CALIFORNIA CLOSETS®

CALL, VISIT A SHOWROOM, OR FIND US ONLINE TO SCHEDULE YOUR COMPLIMENTARY DESIGN CONSULTATION 604.320.6575

**Vancouver** 2698 Granville St  
**Burnaby** 5049 Still Creek Ave  
**Kelowna** 1217 Water St



©2024 California Closet Company, Inc. All rights reserved. Each California Closets® franchised location is independently owned and operated.



**DISCOVER MORE :**

**AMERICA**



**TURKISH AIRLINES**



- VANCOUVER
- SEATTLE
- SAN FRANCISCO
- DENVER
- LOS ANGELES
- HOUSTON
- MEXICO CITY
- TORONTO
- DETROIT
- CHICAGO
- DALLAS
- HOUSTON
- CANCUN
- MEXICO CITY
- MONTREAL
- BOSTON
- NEW YORK
- NEWARK
- WASHINGTON
- ATLANTA
- MIAMI
- HAVANA
- PANAMA
- CARACAS
- BOGOTÁ
- SÃO PAULO
- SANTIAGO
- BUENOS AIRES



SUPERMOON DESIGN GIAMPIERO TAGLIAFERRI  
MINOTTI.COM

Minotti



**LIVINGSPLACE**

1706 WEST 1ST AVE VANCOUVER 604 683 1116 [LIVINGSPLACE.COM](http://LIVINGSPLACE.COM)



EMBRACE THE BEAUTY  
OF UNIQUENESS

[STITTGEN.COM](http://STITTGEN.COM)



stittgen  
FINE JEWELRY

A WEST VANCOUVER DESTINATION FOR OVER 20 YEARS

1457 Bellevue Ave, West Vancouver | 604 925 8333

STITTGEN.COM





Find your place at Koen.

*Renderings are an artist's interpretation only. This is not an offering for sale. Any such offering can only be made with a disclosure statement. Sales and marketing by Beedie Living Realty Ltd. E. O & O.E.*

# KOEN



Spacious family homes with thoughtfully designed floorplans

Close to everything,  
far from ordinary.

Welcome to Koen, South Burnaby's most  
coveted place to call home.

Its prime location features the nearby  
Metropolis at Metrotown, Station Square,  
Royal Oak Skytrain Station, Michael J. Fox  
Theatre and the convenience of a wide  
selection of restaurants, recreation and more.

Uniquely inspired  
homes, inside and out.

From condo living to family sized townhomes,  
Koen features a serene collection of one, two,  
and three-bedroom homes surrounded by the  
calm neighbourhood, landscaped courtyard  
and lush greenery.



Rooftop deck with every townhome



Register Now

Book your private appointment today

[KoenByBeedie.com](https://KoenByBeedie.com)  
604.219.2676

Beedie/Living

# No. 1

---

# COLLISION GROUP

---

LUXURY AUTOMOTIVE BRANDS

THE COLLISION CENTER REIMAGINED

A CLASS OF ITS OWN

BEYOND IMAGINATION

At No.1 Collision Group, we specialize in providing a repair experience that is unlike any other in North America. From the Italian leather furnishings that adorn our offices to the bespoke architecture of our expansive facilities, we've meticulously curated each of our collision centers to embody the essence of the luxury vehicles that reside within them.

With certifications from prestigious manufacturers such as McLaren, Porsche, BMW, and Tesla, our expert technicians are equipped with the latest in automotive technology to ensure that your luxury automobile is fully restored to its original grandeur. Add to this an industry-leading customer service, uniquely provided by our team of client experience specialists, and together it equals an experience that is entirely bespoke to the collision repair industry.



BESPOKE  
COLLISION CENTER

BOLD AND DISTINCTIVE

UNSURPASSED COLLISION REPAIR

THE ESSENCE OF LUXURY

# A LUXURY REPAIR EXPERIENCE

REDEFINING COLLISION REPAIR

BESPOKE



[WWW.NO1COLLISION.COM](http://WWW.NO1COLLISION.COM)

# JESSEL

BRIAN JESSEL MAGAZINE

President

**Brian Jessel**

Managing Partner and CEO

**Jim Murray**

Director of Marketing and Communications

**Abdel Karim Awwad**

Brian Jessel Marketing Team

**Laure Caceres**

**Razieh Motiei**

**Nicolas Saba**

Jessel Magazine - Produced by Inkwell Media

Associate Publisher

**Harry van Hemmen**

Managing Editor

**Joe Leary**

Magazine Design

**White Canvas Design**

Contributing Editors

**Joe Leary**

**Donna Jacobs**

**Sandra Thomas**

Contributing Writers

**Joe Leary**

**Jim Gordon**

**Sandra Thomas**

**Leeta Liepens**

**Lesley Diana**

**Harris Van**

Cover Story Team

**Vancouver Mayor, Ken Sims**

**Aaron Aubrey, photographer**

**Mohammad Alsaber, photographer**

**Farrah Sanei, Hair and Make-up**

Contributing Photographers

**Aaron Aubrey**

**Said Aziz**

**Dylan Dufault**

**Shyloh Raypold**

**Jacob Couture**

**Dalia Al Ahmed**

**Shehab Oshidary**

**Mohammad Alsaber**

Hair and Make-up

**Farrah Sanei**

Translation Provided by

**Caroline Yao**

Published Twice Annually by Brian Jessel

2311 Boundary Road, Vancouver, BC V5M4W5

© Brian Jessel 2024. All rights reserved.

No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher.

The publisher is not responsible for unsolicited editorial material. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of BMW Canada Inc.

@jesselmagazine



# MESSAGE FROM BRIAN

Brian Jessel, President, *Jessel Magazine*  
Photography: Human Biography

As we transition into the vibrant fall and winter seasons, I am filled with immense pride and excitement for the continued journey of *Brian Jessel Magazine*. Over the past 20 years, we've worked tirelessly to share the stories that truly define Vancouver — from the luxury lifestyle to the booming business scene, and everything in between. With this new edition, we reflect on the incredible milestones we've achieved and the remarkable stories we've had the privilege to tell.

Our mission has always been to reach the right people, to connect with those who value the finest things in life, and to uncover the hidden gems of our city. Vancouver is a city of diverse stories and opportunities, and we are honored to be your go-to resource for everything from high-end trends to in-depth features on the people and businesses shaping our community and beyond.

We are also proud to share that our magazine has been published in both English and Chinese for some time now. This bilingual approach ensures we are able to reach the full spectrum of Vancouver's diverse and dynamic audience, fostering a deeper connection across cultural lines and making sure no part of our city is left unheard.

As always, we remain committed to delivering exceptional content, whether in our high-quality print editions or through our digital platform. With a focus on top-tier journalism, stunning visuals, and exclusive interviews, we provide the luxury, business, and lifestyle insights that are truly unique to our city.



Thank you for your continued support and for making *Brian Jessel Magazine* a trusted part of your life. It is your loyalty that drives us to excel and innovate. We look forward to the exciting stories and invaluable connections the future holds.

Here's to many more years of excellence, connection, and celebration of the best that Vancouver has to offer.

Sincerely,  
Brian Jessel, President, *Jessel Magazine*



## CITY CENTRE 4

# At the Heart of Innovation

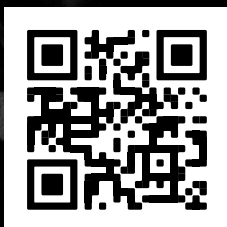
## PREMIUM OFFICE & RETAIL UNITS FOR SALE OR LEASE

Position your business in the centre of Surrey's thriving Health & Technology District.

- **354,486 SF** of AAA office and retail space
- Flexible units from **659 SF+**
- **1,887** parking stalls across four buildings
- Under construction – Estimated completion **Q4 2025**

Be a part of enterprising innovation next to one of Canada's busiest hospitals.

**Secure your spot today.**



[citycentredistrict.com](https://citycentredistrict.com)

9686 137 Street, Surrey BC



# Accelerate your opportunity.

Colliers

Maximize profits and minimize risks with data-driven decisions.

We know the ins and outs of the market and are ready to help you with your investment and leasing goals. We're excited to share our insights to help you spot strategic advantages and seize high-yield opportunities, no matter how the market shifts!

Let's discuss your next move.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Fall/Winter 2024

22

## OUR CITY TONIGHT

Cold nights call for hot takes on food, drinks and viewing.

## 24 TASTE OF SPAIN

Como Taperia brings authentic Spanish flavours to Mount Pleasant

## 28 LASTING LEGACY

Azur Legacy Collection Hotel offers an intimate and opulent experience.

13

## MESSAGE FROM BRIAN

*Jessel Magazine* continues to foster deep connections across cultural lines.



# 34

## MODERN MAYOR

No suit, no tie, no pretense for Mayor Ken Sim.

## 44 PRINCE HARRY'S GAMES

Invictus Games will inspire Vancouver and Whistler in 2025.

## 50 UNCONQUERED

Exhibit by Veterans Artist Collective at Gallery George during Invictus Games.

# 56

## FENCING FOR THE GOLD

Igor Gantsevich parried family fencing business into Olympic training grounds.

## 62 SOCCER SAVVY

Whitecaps CEO Axel Schuster brings culture and creativity to beautiful game.

## 68 SURREY SCENE

City Centre is at the heart of BC's fastest-growing city.

## 74 AI IN MUSIC?

It's possible your favourite artists are already experimenting with AI.

# 78

## FLYING HIGH!

Turkish Airlines offers three weekly flights from Vancouver.

## 84 POWERHAUS MOVES

CEO Corinne Schindler has conquered much more than the glass ceiling.

## 88 SHŌGUN WINS BIG

How a locally produced TV series set in ancient Japan, became an Emmy darling.



PAUL  
depuis 1889





## Unforgettable Flavors for Every Occasion

Discover our exceptional selection of gourmet offerings, whether you're dining in at our restaurant & café or looking for the perfect catering service. Enjoy artisanal sandwiches, delectable pastries, freshly baked viennoiseries and unique brunch options in-store, or have them delivered for your next event.

Ideal for business meetings, celebrations, cocktail parties, or grand corporate events, our catering services are designed to meet your every need.

To order or book catering,  
email us at: [orders@paul-bc.com](mailto:orders@paul-bc.com)

Visit us online: [www.paul-bc.com](http://www.paul-bc.com)

# 90

## 'NETWORKING KING'

Gary Pooni's ability to bring groups together helps build community.

## 96 TURKISH CONSUL GENERAL

Hüseyin Emrah Kurt is a true cultural ambassador.

# 104

## TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Burnaby Board of Trade CEO Angie Whitfield, is there to help.

## 109 DECODING BITCOIN

Reshaping global finance through innovation, volatility, and transformative potential.

## 114 'WOMAN OF WONDER'

Nisha Khare brings an open heart and mind to all she does.

# 119

## WIN-WIN

VGH Millionaire Lottery spokesman Todd Talbot helps raise funds — and awareness.

## 124 HAUTE STUFF

Jamal Abdourahman's Vancouver Fashion Week turns 23.



# 130

## SUSTAINABLE LUXURY

Mine & Yours' resell program makes designer pieces accessible to all.

## 134 REGENERATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Dr. Martin Braun continues to push boundaries in skin care.



# 140

## NICHE EYEWEAR

Valerie Afriat travels the world in search of fashion-forward frames.

## 146 THE ART OF GIVING

Philanthropy in the arts makes sense socially, culturally and financially.

## 156 JESSEL EVENTS

Look for yourself in the Event Pages; If there were a Master of Events in Metro Vancouver, it would be Abdel Awwad at Brian Jessel BMW.



# 172

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Lights, Camera, Action: BC remains a popular location for film and TV productions.

## 174 DISCOVERING MEXICO CITY

Embark on a luxurious journey through Mexico City, where elegance meets vibrant culture.



# OUR CITY TONIGHT

Story: Jim Gordon  
and Leeta Liepins

## THE FILM – ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE TREES

Based on Ernest Hemingway's 1950 novel, this film follows U.S. Army Colonel, Richard Cantwell (Liev Schreiber), in Italy during the closing days of WWII. Stoic, weary and haunted by what he has seen during the war, he also must face his own mortality when a terminal illness is diagnosed. Ignoring the doctor's strong recommendations to hospitalize, Cantwell instead ventures to nearby Venice in hopes of some duck hunting in the surrounding area. For Cantwell, Venice is a place full of memories, good and bad. It is also the home of a young Venetian Countess named Renata (played beautifully by Matilda de Angelis). They meet shortly after his arrival, and for the next several days, there's no duck hunting. But these two unlikely companions eat, drink and talk of love and their lives – with his, nearing its end, and hers, really just beginning. These are classic Hemingway themes: love, death, war and youth. The always interesting, Liev Schreiber, is old enough and perfectly cast as this Hemingway character. The solid supporting cast includes Josh Hutcherson (good career move for him), and Danny Huston. Director Paula Ortiz has created a visually stunning film with Venice as the backdrop and one of its stars. *Across the River And Into The Trees* is now available for home viewing.



## THE COCKTAIL – PENICILLIN

In need of a cocktail to warm us for the coming winter months, we turn to one of our “cocktail experts” for a suggestion. Martin Kovalcik, Beverage Director for Glowbal Restaurant Group, who makes his home at Glowbal Restaurant, offered us a cocktail called Penicillin. “This cocktail should not be confused with an antibiotic,” Kovalcik jokingly tells us. He knows from experience that as the temperatures drop and the days get darker earlier, his customers are often seeking different flavour profiles. “Fragrant taste of blended and peated Scotch combined with ginger, honey and fresh lemon never disappoints any of our regulars,” he says, “and this year we decided to serve the Penicillin cocktail with candied ginger and truffle smoke bubble which is perfectly emphasizing the light peated notes of whisky and ginger.” We spend the next little while enjoying this delicious cocktail, while outside, darkness arrives and it’s not even halfway through “Happy Hour.” We order another. The Penicillin contains Johnnie Walker Black Label, Domaine De Canton Ginger Liqueur, Laphroaig 10 Year, fresh lemon juice and honey syrup. [www.glowbalgroup.com](http://www.glowbalgroup.com)



Photos courtesy of  
Josh Neufeld Photography

## THE SPOT – SEASIDE PROVISIONS

Seaside Provisions, located in North Vancouver's vibrant Shipyards District at Lonsdale Quay, has recently expanded its restaurant space, enhancing the dining experience in this popular North Shore destination. The new layout blends contemporary coastal design with a welcoming ambiance, offering more seating and a new dedicated charcuterie bar. The expansion allows for larger gatherings, making it ideal for both intimate dinners and social events. We were excited to experience the new room and try some of the dishes offered, starting with a lobster roll and the wagyu carpaccio. Next up on the menu, the Golden Chicken, which serves up to four people. There were just two of us, but we had to try it! We also enjoyed the delicious Seafood Pasta. Every dish was exceptional, plus a lovely wine list to accompany each tasting. Seaside Provisions' signature seafood dishes together with craft cocktails and an extensive wine list perfectly complement the new spacious, modern setting that celebrates the area's rich maritime heritage. [www.seasideprovisions.com](http://www.seasideprovisions.com) ■





# ¿CÓMO? TAPERÍA

Story: Joe Leary  
Photography: Jacob Couture

## A Shining Star in Mount Pleasant

When Como Taperia opened its doors in 2018, it wasn't long before it quickly became one of the most talked-about new dining hot spots in Vancouver.

Their name appeared frequently in conversation on social media food blogs, often popping up on numerous "Best Of" lists.

The Spanish-inspired tapas bar on Main Street in Mount Pleasant is the brainchild of longtime local bartender Shaun Layton and business partner, Frankie Harrington.

In 2018, it was declared by Air Canada as being "Number 2 of the Best New Restaurants in Canada" and has been endorsed by the Spanish Embassy as an "Official Restaurant of Spain."

"That means a lot," says Layton.

“Even more than the accolades, when Spaniards and guests who have been to Spain, come in and say **COMO** makes them feel like they’re in Spain is an amazing compliment.”

“We never envisioned winning all these accolades when we first opened our little tapas bar. We were mostly just excited to bring something new to the city. We put a lot of energy and love into COMO and to see it received so favorably among diners is a humbling experience.

“Even more than the accolades, when Spaniards and guests who have been to Spain, come in and say **COMO** makes them feel like they’re in Spain is an amazing compliment.”

Inspired by numerous trips to the Southwestern European nation, **COMO** pays homage to the classic, standing room-only tapas bars of Barcelona and Madrid with a modern, fun twist on traditional Spanish fare.

“It’s just like being there,” he says. “Small tapas are served from the custom cases we imported from Barcelona and are filled with ready-to-eat small bites.

“It has a lively tapas bar that can be elbow-to-elbow at times, and an open kitchen with chef’s counter seating and a dining area.”

Being one of Vancouver’s star bartenders by trade, you can rest assured that Shaun Layton has the beverage program on point.

“We’ve got premium gins with unique tonics, a great selection of sherry and an ever-changing and innovative wine list.”

**COMO** also boasts Spanish beer on tap alongside a rotation of local craft beer, cocktails and Spanish vermut (vermouth) – on tap.

Shaun Layton with Chef de Cuisine Rafael Racela



“We also have many Spanish twists on classic-style cocktails and some drinks you may normally only find in Spain.”

Half a dozen years into operation and the accolades continue. COMO Taperia is one of only a handful of Vancouver dining spots to be recognized by the coveted Michelin Guide in 2022, 2023 and 2024. Not bad for Layton’s “little tapas bar.”

The Michelin certification is an honour bestowed upon very few restaurants. To achieve the prestigious Michelin status speaks volumes to COMO’s quality and level of service.

“Our front of house team is so strong and full of great talent and our Chef Rafael Racela and his crew are putting out incredible food every day. It’s so awesome to see them get the recognition they deserve.”

**COMO** pays homage to the classic, standing room-only tapas bars of Barcelona and Madrid with a modern, fun twist on traditional Spanish fare.

To stay true to brand, Layton journeys to Spain regularly to maintain the authenticity.

“We travel to Spain at least once a year and bring some of our core team members,” he says. “Seeing their faces light up when we bring them for the first time to places that really inspired Como, like ‘El Xampanyet’ in Barcelona, or ‘Sala de Despiece’ in Madrid, is an amazing feeling.

“We come back after and do a tasting menu event each January based on our trip - it’s called ‘Taste Our Travels.’ This year’s trip we are exploring the Basque Region.”

COMO Taperia, 201 East 7th Avenue at Main Street  
[www.comotaperia.com](http://www.comotaperia.com) ■





STEINWAY & SONS

THE LIMITED EDITION  
**GRAN NICHETTO**  
MIDNIGHT RED  
*Designed by Luca Nichetto*

The GRAN NICHETTO limited edition pianos were more than four years in the making, having been imagined, tweaked, honed and perfected by designer Luca Nichetto together with the master craftspeople at STEINWAY & SONS.

A limited edition of 50 Model B SPIRIO | r instruments are available in three inspired variations.



More Information:



728 Granville Street, Vancouver  
(604) 685-8471

*Interior Designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard's home*



Farida Sayani, Founder and Managing Director

# ***THE AZUR LEGACY COLLECTION***

Story: Joe Leary  
Photography: Mohammed Alsaber  
Architectural Photography: Citizen North  
Rooftop Photography: Lynn Zhou

## **THE AZUR LEGACY COLLECTION HOTEL IS A TREASURE TO BEHOLD**

Located in the heart of Vancouver’s financial and fashion districts, the AZUR Legacy Collection Hotel stands as testament to the vision of its founders and represents a continued commitment to excellence by the next generation.

Just steps away from high-end boutiques, the major financial hub and the scenic Coal Harbour Waterfront and Stanley Park, AZUR Legacy Collection offers unparalleled access to the city’s most exciting district.

A proud member of “Leading Hotels of the World” – headquartered in New York and representing more than 400 luxury hotels in over 80 countries – AZUR Legacy Collection offers a legacy of understated elegance and luxury, solidifying its rightful place among the most prestigious properties globally.

Farida Sayani is the founder and Managing Director of the property and it’s her passion, foresight, vision and dedication to quality that have brought this stellar boutique hotel to life.

“We bend over backwards for every one of our guests,” she says, reflecting on the core values that guide the AZUR team.

Farida’s words resonate throughout the hotel where attention to detail and personalized service create a unique atmosphere for guests in search of an outstanding experience.

The highly-dedicated AZUR team further exemplifies the commitment to ensuring that every guest feels valued.



Farida and her husband, Noordin, arrived in Vancouver in 1971. They came with a vision and a mission.

While Noordin focused on establishing a land development and construction company, Farida was a stay-at-home mother. She joined the family business when the couple opened their first boutique hotel in Richmond in 1986.

Since then, she managed multiple hotels in Greater Vancouver as the business expanded.

The AZUR Legacy Collection Hotel is the couple's final legacy project, honouring their 38 years of experience in the hospitality sector and Noordin's 53 years of experience in the development and construction sector.

AZUR seamlessly blends contemporary elements with timeless classic touches and truly connects the past with the present. Art features prominently throughout and the individual pieces symbolize their love and appreciation for local culture and artistic expression.

Sofia Sayani, (pictured above with granddaughters and with Farida) who oversees AZUR's two restaurants, shares the AZUR vision and commitment to delivering exceptional guest experiences, drawing on her extensive global travels and culinary expertise. Overseeing food and beverage, she enriches the dining experiences at Dahlia and Lavantine Restaurants with her creativity, inspiration, and a deep understanding of culinary artistry.

Granddaughters Sara and Natasha have also joined the hospitality community, ensuring the family legacy remains for years to come.

Guests enjoy the convenience of being in the midst of Vancouver's vibrant downtown core, but are treated to more than just a stay – a visit to the AZUR Legacy Collection Hotel is an encounter with a work of art.

The hotel's exterior is clad in imported stone and features a brass entry door, which sets the stage for the elegance that awaits inside. The overall design draws inspiration from Art Deco with clean lines, geometric patterns, and opulent materials.

The lobby features a crystal chandelier, and a marble-clad fireplace and plush carpeting add to the sense of luxury guests experience from the moment they enter.

Timeless design with contemporary functionality shines in each of the hotel's 104 tastefully-appointed rooms, suites, and penthouses, where guests will find marble bathrooms, integrated wireless technology, heated floors, and soaker tubs.

In the Penthouse Suites, the signature touch elevates the experience to new heights altogether and the suites offer breathtaking views of the City of Vancouver from private landscaped patios.

With features like freestanding soaker tubs, gas fireplaces, and a high-end bar, the suites provide guests with an intimate and opulent retreat that feels like a "home away from home."

**... an intimate and  
opulent retreat that  
feels like a "home away  
from home."**



When it comes to dining, locals and hotel guests of the Azur Legacy Collection Hotel can indulge in some of the city's finest culinary offerings with two exceptional dining venues: Dahlia Lobby Lounge Restaurant, and Lavantine Restaurant & Skybar, each offering its own unique atmosphere and flavours.

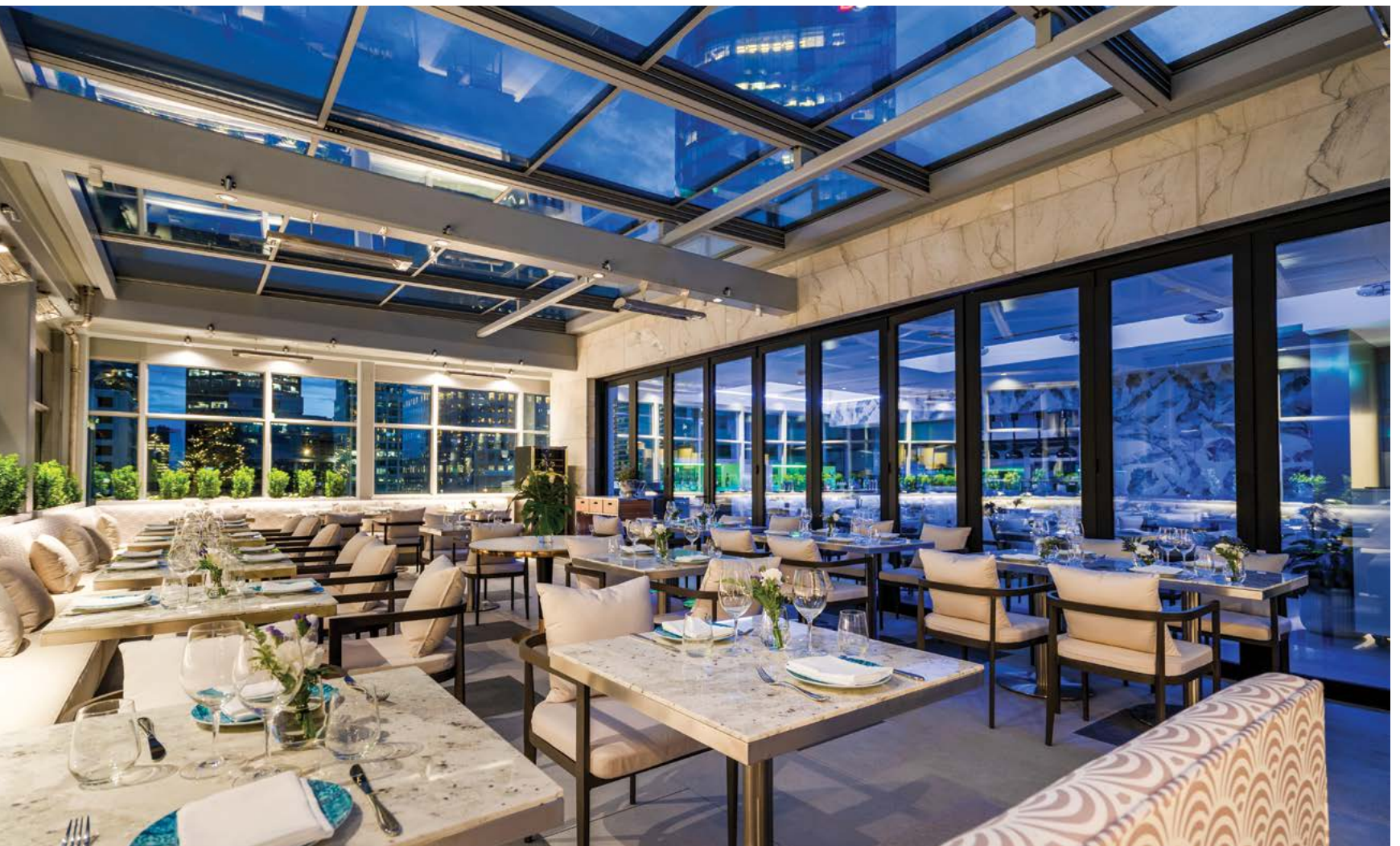
The Dahlia Lobby Lounge Restaurant menu draws inspiration from the south of France, harmoniously blending international flavours with locally-sourced ingredients.

The ambiance is characterized by rich, dark tones, fostering a unique atmosphere for gathering and enjoying cocktails, reminiscent of a charming European café, all while beautifully contrasting with the bright, open feel of the hotel's lobby.

Dahlia is the perfect destination for an intimate dining experience. Signature dishes include the tender Grilled Octopus and the vibrant Burrata & Beets. Salt Spring Island Mussels in white wine and herb butter are other highlights, showcasing fresh, local flavours.

Dahlia's cocktail program complements the cuisine with drinks like the Clarified Espresso Martini, blending bold espresso with a smooth finish, and the Lychee Martini featuring gin, melon liqueur, and citrus for a refreshing twist.

Dahlia and Lavantine's Restaurant & Skybar have quickly become favoured destinations among locals and visitors alike. Lavantine is Vancouver's first custom-designed, garden-like rooftop restaurant.





Located on the hotel's 14th floor, Lavantine offers sweeping views of the city's skyline and the North Shore Mountains.

The rooftop's lush garden atmosphere enhances the Eastern Mediterranean-inspired menu with signature dishes prepared to perfection. Everything is prepared for optimal enjoyment.

Explore Lavantine's Skybar, where the cocktail menu takes inspiration from the enchanting book, *Tales of 1001 Nights*, with seasonal creations that transport guests on a journey through exotic landscapes.

Lavantine's extensive Champagne and sparkling wine selection adds a luxurious touch to the dining experience, with future plans to offer the largest collection of exotic drinks with bubbles in downtown Vancouver. ■





# KEN SIM

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF MAYOR

Story: Joe Leary  
Photography: Aaron Aubrey  
and Mohamad Alsabe  
Hair and Make-up: Farah Sanei  
Location: Vancouver City Hall





# Ken Sim is definitely a different kind of mayor. No suit, no tie, no pretense.

Not even titles are required in personal engagement, and there is certainly no need for the requisite pomp and circumstance often afforded the position.

In fact, it's rare that you meet a political figure as "chill" as Vancouver's 41st mayor.

"Call me Ken," is the first thing he says when approached formally as "Mr. Mayor."

Simply put, Sim is a refreshing breed of political figure in a role where many take themselves far too seriously.

"It's just a job," he concedes, albeit, one that comes with immense responsibility. After all, it entails overseeing one of the world's most dynamic cities.

Elected mayor in November 2022, Sim brings a business background to council, having co-founded Vancouver-based companies, Rosemary Rocksalt Bagels and Nurse Next Door home healthcare services.

While clearly enjoying his newfound responsibility, Sim concedes politics was never actually in his purview prior to Vancouver's civic electoral process in 2018.

"We have four boys who don't see a future for themselves in Vancouver and that didn't sit right with us," he says, when asked his reasoning behind initially throwing his hat in the political ring. "In fact, up until April 13 of 2018, I had no desire whatsoever to become a politician.

"I was approached to run for a political party and I said no. Then I drove down to California with my boys and told them about the story of how I was asked to run for mayor and we all had a good chuckle. I came back home and had lunch with one of my mentors and he said, 'I hear you're running for mayor.'"

At that point I said, "Alright, I'll actually look into this and I'll give you an answer in 48 hours."

Doing his due diligence, Sim sought out the advice of former premiers, former mayoral officeholders, people who had run, and people for whom he held great respect.

"After those 48 hours I told the person, 'Thanks, I'm honoured, but no thanks.' Then I went to my physio and told him the story. He looked at me and said, 'You're going to regret this, aren't you?'"

"When I asked why, he answered that every reason I gave him for not running was selfish – I like my time, I don't want to be in the limelight, and I want to be with my kids. There were a whole host of reasons but, after that conversation, I picked up the phone and asked if that opportunity was still there."

Taking office, Sim said there was no official formal process in the transfer of power.

"You're the Mayor of Vancouver and you have the majority on council – 'We'll see you in three weeks,'" he says. "Obviously, I'm over simplifying, as the city manager and his team were great.

“...there are more people who want to live here, are going to be able to live here, and there’s going to be much more opportunity and career growth for our kids and grandkids.”

“They came and sat down with us, but there was no official transition team. We didn’t even have emails or office space until we came here and, this is not a knock on the previous administration, but there was no organized, ‘Hey let’s get together to meet and here’s how you onboard.’

“Whoever the next mayor is, we will make sure we set up that person and that council for success, regardless of party. We’re talking about the City of Vancouver here.”

Despite his initial desire to shun the limelight, Sim has come to realize that you can’t be invisible in such a high profile position.

“Oh yeah, I figured that one out quickly,” he jokes. “I absolutely love being mayor and it’s an honour and a privilege to be in this role. I know when I look back at my life, unless something else changes, this will be the most fulfilling part of my life beyond building a company. This one’s pretty special.”

Tasked with overseeing a city in major growth mode, Sim acknowledges the reshaping process is well underway.

“It’s going to transform, dramatically,” he says of the physical blueprint in the coming years. “Vancouver is a world class city and it’s growing.”

Sim notes that by 2050, there will likely be more than a million people in the City of Vancouver alone.

“What people have to realize is, just look back at Vancouver over thirty years ago, and what did the city skyline look like even back then compared to now?” says Sim. “It’s going to change even more dramatically – and that’s a good thing.

“At the end of the day that means there are more people who want to live here, are going to be able to live here, and there’s going to be much more opportunity and career growth for our kids and grandkids.”

A fact that relies largely on continued transit expansion commensurate with civic development.

“We need a lot of rapid transit,” he adds. “That’s the only way it’s going to work.”

Brian Jessel with Mayor Ken Sim



*“I know when I look back at my life, unless something else changes, this will be the most fulfilling part of my life beyond building a company.”*



MAYOR  
KEN SIM

“At the end of the day I’m just a normal dude like everyone else and I’m not going to change that.”

In his modest digs at city hall, Sim could be referred to as the “Heavy Metal Mayor,” where he routinely spins vinyl from the likes of AC/DC on his personal turntable.

“I’m kind of a heavy metal fan, but I like everything. In March I went to Skid Row and Buckcherry at the Commodore,” he says. “It was awesome, one of the top ten concerts I had ever been to.”

And yes, there are those not quite prepared to see the mayor at a rock concert.

“They are surprised to see me, especially when I go to something like Iron Maiden,” he adds. “We’re at the show and having a blast on the floor and people are looking at me like, ‘Wait a sec – this doesn’t reconcile.’ At the end of the day I’m just a normal dude like everyone else and I’m not going to change that.”

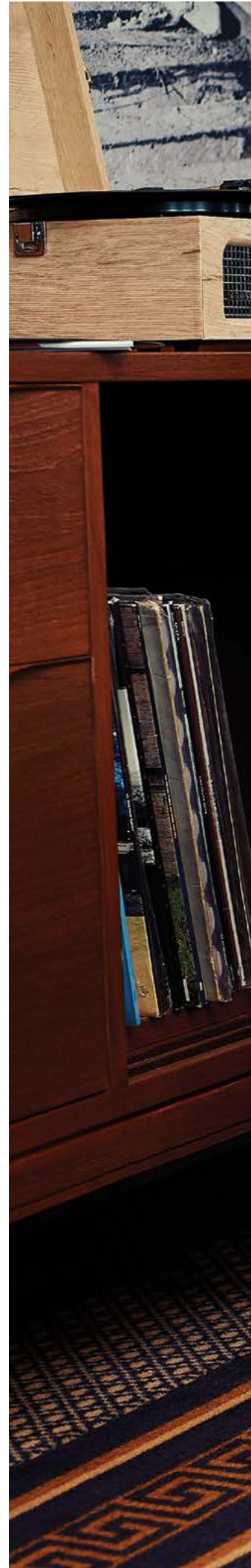
And despite his reticence to initially run for public office, Sim is most encouraging for those aspiring to follow in his footsteps.

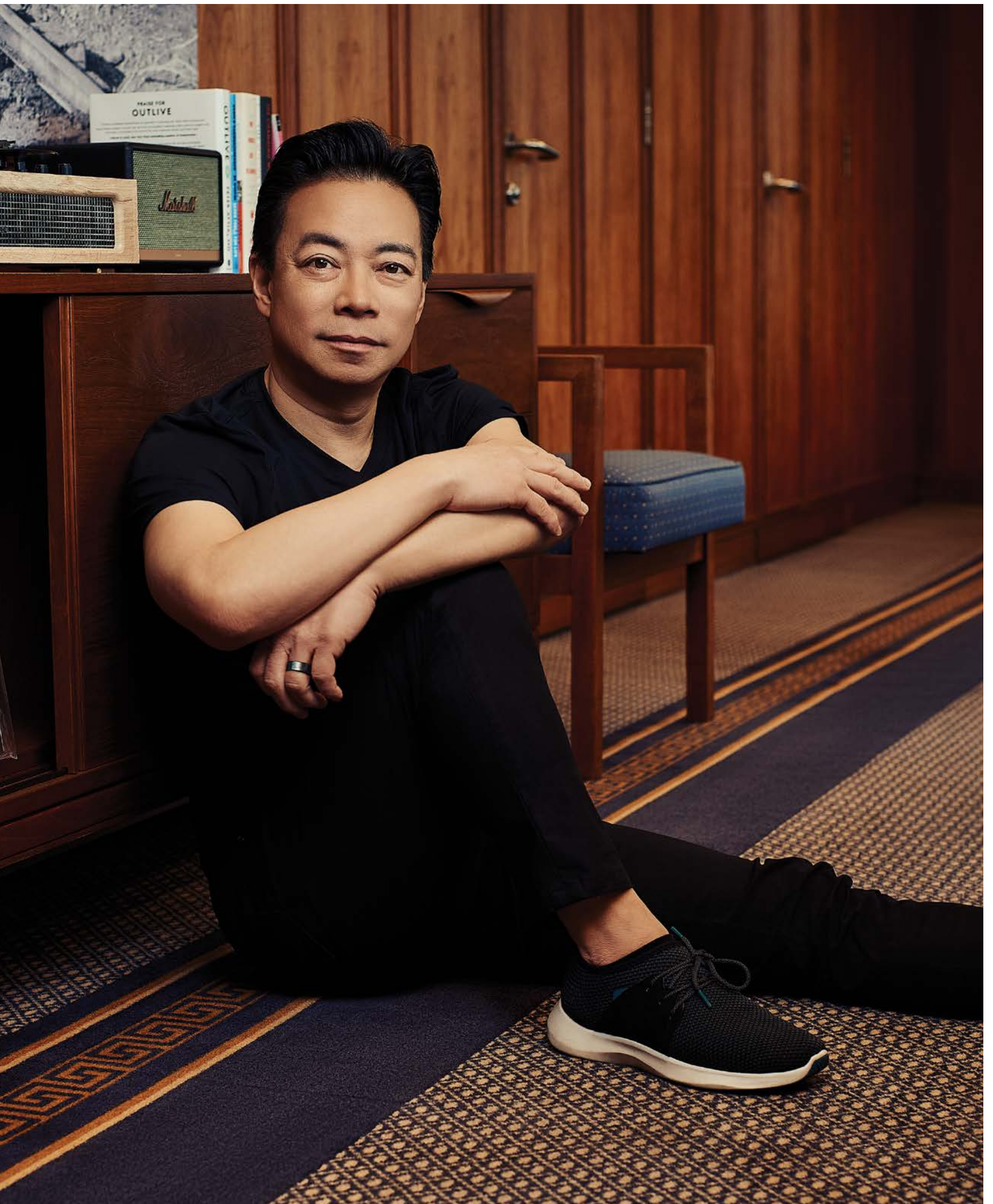
“Go for it,” he states, emphatically. “Absolutely go for it. It doesn’t matter what your political persuasion is, and I’m a great example of anything is possible.

“I’m the son of an immigrant family who went to five elementary schools and two high schools growing up in this city. I goofed around a lot and today, I’m the mayor of Vancouver.”

Sim equates it to the Mike Tyson quote: “Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face.”

“So, anything’s possible”. ■







# THE ART *of* DINING WELL.

AWARD-WINNING  
CHEF-DRIVEN CATERING



**COCKTAILS  
& CANAPÉS**  
CATERING+EVENTS

## FRESH, SEASONAL INGREDIENTS & HIGHLY TRAINED STAFF

While our expertise is food, we pride ourselves on being able to provide high-level service, too.

Whether you're planning a large or small, traditional or modern event, we serve up excellence at every step. We specialize in creating distinct culinary experiences for weddings, corporate, and private functions, as well as conceptualizing, marketing, and producing memorable events of all sizes.

## VANCOUVER

686 Powell Street, V6A 3G1  
Vancouver, BC  
604.424.8788  
[info@cocktailsandcanapes.ca](mailto:info@cocktailsandcanapes.ca)

## PENTICTON

557 Main Street, V2A 9A6  
Penticton, BC  
250.493.8657  
[okanagan@cocktailsandcanapes.ca](mailto:okanagan@cocktailsandcanapes.ca)

# ***THE INVICTUS GAMES VANCOUVER/ WHISTLER 2025***

Story: Joe Leary

Photography: Mohammed Alsaber

**T**he Invictus Games is a competitive sporting event unlike any other.

Designed for active military personnel and Veterans, whether wounded, injured or made sick in the line of combat, the Games launched in England in 2014.

It was the creation of Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex – who serves as Patron of the Invictus Games Foundation.

Having witnessed, first-hand, the casket of a young soldier being loaded for transport home for repatriation alongside others who had sustained serious injury while deployed in Afghanistan, was one of the moments that inspired the Prince to form the International Invictus Games.

The name ‘Invictus’ means “unconquered.”

It is a most apt description as the word clearly embodies the courageous spirit and inherent resilience that lies within each individual competitor.

“I AM” is the motto of the Invictus Games and draws inspiration from an 1875 poem by William Ernest Henley, which is “I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul,” describing the often difficult journey of individual recovery.

At its core, the Invictus Games provide a platform for personal achievement amongst participants, competing against not just each other, but themselves as well.

The inaugural event took place ten years ago in London, England, followed by Orlando, Toronto, Sydney, The Hague and Dusseldorf in subsequent years.

2025 marks the seventh installment of the Invictus Games and Vancouver and Whistler will play host to up to 255 nations involving up to 550 international competitors.

Scott Moore is the CEO of the 2025 Invictus Games.





TO

***“For me, it was a chance to give back to a community that has given so much to our country and others around the world.”***

Few are more qualified to head such an undertaking and his impressive resume boasts more than 40 years in senior management in sports broadcast media including CBC and Sportsnet.

“I was aware of Invictus and attended some of the events in Toronto in 2017 and they were incredibly inspiring,” he says of his affiliation. “I was approached to take on the CEO role in January of 2024. My wife and I watched the Netflix documentary series, ‘Heart of Invictus’ and were sold immediately.

“For me, it was a chance to give back to a community that has given so much to our country and others around the world. Our military service members put their lives on the line for us and too often get forgotten. Those who have suffered physical or mental injuries can truly be helped by the transformative power of sport.”

The more Moore immersed himself in his new role, the more he realized the importance of the mission.

“These Games have not only the power to change lives, but to save them.”

A veteran of 11 Olympic Games and having worked for both Canadian and US Television operations, Moore has been at the helm for five network launches and served as producer and executive producer of hundreds of major sporting events and entertainment broadcasts.

From 2010 to 2018, he was President of Broadcasting and Sportsnet at Rogers Media. Under his tutelage, Rogers secured the largest media rights contract in Canadian history, a 12-year, \$5.2 billion dollar agreement with the National Hockey League.

Given his lifelong connection to professional sports, Moore finds the Invictus Games to be both unique and truly inspiring.

“These Games are not like anything else I’ve ever done and I’ve worked Olympics, World Championships, Stanley Cup Finals and everything in between.



***Under his tutelage,  
Rogers secured the  
largest media rights  
contract in Canadian  
history....***

“Those events are about competition at the highest levels not only to win, but the enormous challenge of even being on the team. They can stir your emotions and even change your life; especially if you are cheering for a particular team or individual.

“The Invictus Games is about competition and so much more; it’s about purpose, and you will find yourself cheering for every competitor, because they are all winning just by getting to the starting line.”

It’s a major undertaking to be sure.

Invictus Games Vancouver Whistler 2025, include eight venues, among them the Vancouver Convention Centre, BC Place, Rogers Arena, Whistler Alpine Venue (Blackcomb), Whistler Sliding Center and Whistler Olympic Park.

The Four Host First Nations are an integral part of all planning and staging of the games on their traditional territories.

The range of events covers activities from adaptive winter sports, including Alpine Skiing and Snowboarding, to Indoor Rowing, Sitting Volleyball, Swimming and Wheelchair Rugby.

BC Place will host the Opening Ceremony on Feb. 8 and the Games will conclude on Feb. 16 with the Closing Celebration Ceremony live at Rogers Arena.

Bell Media is the official Canadian broadcast partner of the Vancouver Whistler Invictus Games 2025, with national television coverage.

As its legacy, participation in sports recovery through the Invictus Games has proven significant with positive impact on the recovery of the wounded and injured members and Veterans alike.

Moore cites it as an experience unlike any other.

“These Games are life-changing for both the competitors and supporters,” he says. “I call it the ‘Circle of Inspiration’ – supporters will be inspired by the courage and resilience of the competitors and the competitors will be inspired by supporters who are there to cheer them on in their journey. The public can expect to be inspired.

***“Too see them compete – not necessarily to win – but to prove something to themselves will move you.”***

“To see them compete – not necessarily to win – but to prove something to themselves will move you.” ■

Tickets are on sale now at [www.invictusgames2025.ca](http://www.invictusgames2025.ca).





"Gratitude" by artist MCpl (Ret'd) Kristian W Wolowidnyk

# VETERANS ARTIST COLLECTIVE PRESENTS **‘UNCONQUERED’**

Story: Joe Leary  
Location: The Gallery George

**T**he Veterans Artist Collective is proudly gearing up for “Unconquered” to be displayed during Veterans Week this year and again in February, 2025.

The exhibition will be displayed at the Gallery George, located at 140 West Hastings Street, and will feature more than 20 serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans from across Canada, showcasing their artwork.

Revenue from the sale of the art will directly benefit the artists and support the Veteran Artist Collective. It is this collective that holds weekend retreats in both painting and blacksmithing at the esteemed Honour Ranch in Ashcroft, BC.

Just over the last three years more than 120 Veterans and serving CAF members have taken part in the workshops.

Master Warrant Officer Christopher Hennebery of the Royal Westminister Regiment is the founder of the Veteran’s Artist Collective.

“I founded the Veterans Artist Collective in 2021, as a means for creating positive pathways to mental health through art,” he says. “Our goal is to create immersive art retreats for serving and retired members of the Canadian Armed Forces and opportunities for them to show their art via exhibitions and gallery shows.”

**“It's truly inspirational to see the art that is coming in for the show from our veterans and serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces.”**



Gary Squire Rendering

## **“I founded the Veterans Artist Collective in 2021, as a means for creating positive pathways to mental health through art,”**

“While it might sound counterintuitive, Canada has a long history of connecting art to war and using it to capture and document its anguish and consequences. Some of the original Group of Seven was documenting WW1 in the trenches of France before coming back to Canada.

“While our goal isn’t to revisit our members’ trauma through art, we do provide weekend retreats where they are immersed in a new art medium, like Plein Air Painting or blacksmithing.”

Hennebery notes that by providing the tools, instruction and opportunities, their members get to break their routine and build new experiences and connections through art.

“Our attendees leave the workshops with a sense of accomplishment and the means to carry on with their art form,” he says.

“Our ultimate goal is to reduce self harm and suicides plaguing our veteran community in Canada and based on the feedback from our attendees, we are doing just that.”

Notable artists participating in the exhibition include Jodi Miller, Roger Chabot, and official War Artist, Scott Waters.

The exhibition is in support of the upcoming Invictus Games and the creation of positive mental health programs and opportunities for Canada’s Veterans and serving members of the CAF.

“‘Unconquered’ is the culmination of three years of work with the Collective,” adds Hennebery. “We have both emerging and established artists coming together in a first of its kind event in Canada.

“It’s truly inspirational to see the art that is coming in for the show from our veterans and serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces. And while practicing an art like painting isn’t a sport, the positive end result is the same.

“This upcoming show is like the Invictus Games for artists: it’s a culmination of a lot of hard work, focus and the driving need not to be conquered by our service-related mental and physical trauma. The show and the games are a celebration of the human spirit but in the end, these events will close and we’ll need to refocus our efforts on those veterans who we have not yet reached.

“The demand for our weekend art retreats outpaces our supply so we’re expanding to Ontario and Alberta in 2025. It’s our genuine hope that the legacy of the games is the continued attention and support of our veterans through sport and the arts.” ■

[vetartists.ca](http://vetartists.ca)



30  
of years  
*beauty*

Defining Aesthetic Trends



# *DYNAMO FENCING*

Story: Joe Leary

Photography: Mohammed Alsaber

Location: Vancouver Dynamo Fencing Vancouver

S

T

O

W

N



## There is no greater story than being transplanted to a new country for a better life and then achieving it.

And there is no better example than Igor Gantsevich.

At the age of eight, in 1996, he and his family immigrated to Canada.

The family was all born in Kiev, where his dad Victor was the National Fencing Coach of Ukraine – working under the Soviet system.

“I was quite sick when I was born due to Chernobyl,” says Igor Gantsevich. “We had an opportunity to defect and we moved to Israel in 1991, prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union.”

The family lived in Israel for five years, from 1991 to 1996, prior to immigrating to Canada.

“We loved it in Israel, but the safety and political drama pushed us to move to Canada for a better life.”

While his father made a global name for himself as a fencing coach for three separate national teams: Ukraine, Israel and Canada, young Igor was excelling in sports in his own right.



Left: Jim Murray with his vintage BMW Z8 visiting the Dynamo Fencing Academy  
Right: Dynamo Fencing Academy team celebrating the Olympic medal

“Growing up I was playing tennis and was one of the top players for my age in Israel when we moved to Canada,” says Gantsevich. “I transitioned to full-time fencing when I was around 12 years old due to financial implications.

“We just could not afford tennis here in Canada and fencing was free for me.”

Having been involved in the fencing family business, Gantsevich began leading the club as of 2010, after sustaining a career-ending injury on his wrist that required four surgeries.

“I never was able to recover. I went into coaching and leading the Dynamo Fencing Club right away.”

Having been the head of Canadian Olympic Fencing Team at the Paris 2024 Olympics, Gantsevich now

oversees the family’s three locations in Richmond, North Vancouver and Gastown.

It remains a family-run business and has become one of the largest and most successful fencing programs in North America.

“We have over 600 full-time students that train at the club on a weekly basis,” he adds. “I would say well over 5,000 trials – or visitors to our location on a yearly basis who put on the gear.

“We have seen countless kids become exposed to fencing over the years through our programs.”

And many of those students have gone on to achieve success in their own right and find themselves on the Olympics radar.

## It remains a family-run business and has become one of the largest and most successful fencing programs in North America

**"We have seen countless kids become exposed to fencing over the years through our programs."**

"We had Nicholas Zhang in Paris," says Gantsevich, of one such notable. "He was literally a product of our club – from beginner to Olympian. He came into the program at seven years old and is now 18. In his first year at Harvard where he got recruited."

Other Olympic names to emanate from the Dynamo Fencing programs include Shaul Gordon and Monica Pinnette.

And then there's Eleanor Harvey.

"She trained with us leading up to the 2024 Olympics. Eleanor has joined Dynamo Fencing – post Paris Olympics, as Canada's first ever Olympic Fencing Medalist." ■

[www.dynamofencing.com](http://www.dynamofencing.com)





**Vancouver**

1275 W 6th Avenue  
Vancouver B.C., Canada  
604.730.1275

**Coquitlam**

1348-C United Blvd.  
Coquitlam B.C., Canada  
604.529.6868



HERMAN SOFA BY  
**NATUZZI**  
ITALIA

**IN**spiration  
SUPREME CONTEMPORARY



# AXEL SCHUSTER

Story: Joe Leary

Hair and Make-up: Farrah Sanei

Photography: Mohammed Alsaber

Location: BC Place

## CULTURE AND CHEMISTRY ARE KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS IN ANY WORK ENVIRONMENT. NOWHERE ARE THOSE COMPONENTS MORE VITAL THAN IN PROFESSIONAL SPORT.

When Axel Schuster arrived in Vancouver in November 2019, as the newly-appointed Sporting Director of the Vancouver Whitecaps and six months later added CEO to his title, the club was at a pivotal crossroads and he felt it incumbent upon himself to change the overall approach.

“It was very clear when I came that my first priority was to fix the culture of this club,” he says. “I’m not saying that there wasn’t a culture but we had to fix the inside culture.”

“The outside culture is a different one because we already had the fan support. I came at the end of 2019 and I think it was the low of the club, even though there was still a lot of excitement around the Vancouver Whitecaps.”

**In every decision, from the players he brings on board to the outreach programs he supports, Schuster is thinking beyond the pitch.**

Born and raised in Germany, Schuster’s journey into soccer leadership started early working with some of Europe’s most

storied clubs, including FC Schalke 04. It was there that he honed his philosophy: soccer teams should not only aim to win games, but also serve as pillars of their community. Schuster’s approach to leadership reflects this mission.

In every decision, from the players he brings on board to the outreach programs he supports, Schuster is thinking beyond the pitch.

With a resume that includes stints with European football powerhouses and a passion for fostering both talent and culture, Schuster brings a distinct brand of leadership that is both strategic and deeply personal.

“My background is law. I studied it and was always interested in the technicalities of contracts in leagues,” says Schuster of his time in professional sports. “It was a different set-up in North America.”

Upon his arrival five years ago, Schuster made it clear to ownership what his short and long term goals were.

“I told them that if they want someone to win the league next year, don’t sign me,” he says. “First of all, that’s not what my strengths are and second, I had only seen select games and didn’t think I knew the MLS market well enough to build a quick, successful team,”

What he soon realized was that while club support on the outside was fine among the fan base, the problems originated on the inside.

## Schuster brings a distinct brand of leadership that is both strategic and deeply personal.

“We arrived here for the opener against Kansas City and when I saw the people and excitement in the city, it was way more than I was expecting after such a low point. It was the inside culture that was completely broken.

“There was one very interesting conversation that I had in 2019 with a player that I wanted to sign. We ended up not signing him as I realized that this wasn’t particularly a team he really wanted to be on – and I want everyone we want to want to be here.

“We have to have people who feel that they belong and who all work in the same direction. We had to change this view that other people have of the club. We can’t be satisfied with that. Our supporters always continued to show support.”

Priority number one for Schuster was to identify key elements of team success.

“One of the first things we did was paint our ‘Four Pillars’ in big font on the wall to our locker-room where we said these would be our cornerstones for everything we do in the future.

“We drafted them in all languages of the players we have on the team and we’ll add new languages if we add new players. These are the four things I will hold everyone in this organization accountable for: Work Ethic, Team Spirit, Mentality and Discipline.”

While not initially familiar with Vancouver prior to his arrival in 2019, Schuster immediately saw the potential – not just in the club but in Vancouver itself – a city known for its passion and diversity

“The Whitecaps have a rich history,” he says, adding, “I felt we could take that foundation and build something even bigger for the future.”



While fans are always eager for immediate wins, Schuster has focused on creating a sustainable model for the club, both on and off the field. This includes investing in the club's infrastructure, expanding youth academies and focusing on player development.

One of Schuster's key goals is to make the Whitecaps a top destination for emerging talent.

**“The Whitecaps have a rich history... I felt we could take that foundation and build something even bigger for the future.”**

“It's not just about who we sign, it's about who we develop. We want to be known as a club that fosters talent from within.

That means giving young players the tools, coaching, and support they need to grow.”

The development of homegrown talent is crucial for Schuster and he has made it a cornerstone of the Whitecaps' future while laying the groundwork for being a competitive team for years to come.

Under his leadership during his first five years at the helm, the Vancouver Whitecaps have seen significant success, including a winning home record across all competitions.

This includes three consecutive Canadian Championships, as a result, qualifying annually for the Concacaf Champions Cup, as well as MLS Cup Playoffs in three of the last four years.

In addition, the club set an attendance record in 2024 as they welcomed more than 500,000 fans across all competitions to BC Place.

“Building a championship team is a process,” Schuster admits. “The foundation we're laying today will pay dividends tomorrow.” ■



Nathan Vanstone, Vice President Broadcast & Communications, Vancouver Whitecaps



**Vancouver**  
1275 W 6th Avenue  
Vancouver B.C., Canada  
604.730.1275

**Coquitlam**  
1348-C United Blvd.  
Coquitlam B.C., Canada  
604.529.6868



NAPOLEON DINING TABLE BY

**cattelan**  
italia

**IN**spiration  
SUPREME CONTEMPORARY

# ***SURREY CITY CENTRE***

**GENERATING ATTENTION ACROSS  
CANADA AND 'WELL BEYOND'**

Story: Sandra Thomas

District aerial at night

As the metropolitan centre of our province shifts from Vancouver to Surrey over the next several years, the hub of that transformation is Surrey City Centre.

Home to a rapidly expanding number of post-secondary institutions, the growth of new amenities and highly attractive business hubs, including the Health and Technology District — hosting local and multinational businesses — City Centre answers the call for more best-in-class community developments demanded by the young and diverse population migrating to the Fraser region.

With the emergence of housing towers and a pre-existing large residential land base, combined with exciting sports venues, a vibrant arts and entertainment community, and a culturally rich social scene, including world-class restaurants, it should come as no surprise Surrey is one of British Columbia's fastest growing cities.

The number of active cranes across the Surrey skyline act as a remarkable visual of the growth and desire there is to live, work and play, south of the Fraser River. It's no wonder Surrey is recognized as an "invest capital city," as well as the best place to start a business in Metro Vancouver, as named by Real Estate Investment Network.

With more than 1,000 new residents moving into the city monthly, with that current and projected growth, comes incredible opportunities for new development.

The Health and Technology District, strategically located adjacent to Surrey Memorial Hospital and developed by the Lark Group and ICT Group, is a vibrant ecosystem made up of collaborative spaces where clusters of professional, health, technology and academic-based organizations have been focussing on BC's emerging health, education and technology economy.





City Centre 4/5 facing WEST



North Surrey Growth Aerial

Slated for completion in 2025, the Lark Group and ICT Group have sold 80 percent of City Centre 4, the largest phase within the District to date, which includes 24 storeys and more than 350,000 square feet of retail, office and hotel space.

Meanwhile, City Centre 5 is slated to break ground in spring of 2025. That project is also 24 storeys with 200,000 square feet of student residences and retail. These two towers are joined by new restaurants, a boutique grocer, outdoor water features and a social plaza elevating both the student and business amenities in the area.

Jo Delesalle, CEO and Co-founder of Vancouver-based ICT and partner to the Lark Group, which located offices to Surrey’s District in 2023, says Western Community College has already created a full campus at the district with classrooms in City Centre 3 and City Centre 4.

“And is establishing nearly 600 student and faculty residences in City Centre 5, while City Centre Surgery has also purchased a large footprint for a surgical centre, estimated to be similar in capacity to Peace Arch Hospital,” says Delesalle.

Kirk Fisher, CEO of Lark Group and Board Chair, Health Tech Connex, adds the District has become an attractive location for medical, technology, business, investment, amenities and attractions.

**“LOOKING FORWARD,  
WE SEE SURREY TRULY  
BECOMING AN ECONOMIC  
DRIVER FOR THE  
ENTIRE PROVINCE.”**

“Looking forward, we see Surrey truly becoming an economic driver for the entire province.”

The District upon completion will represent a \$2 billion investment in the city, with more than \$1.1 billion contributed annually back into the region, while generating more than 20,000 skilled jobs.

Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association CEO Elizabeth Model, says Surrey City Centre is drawing regional and national attention for a number of the development projects, which already have, and are being, built in the District.

**“SURREY IS REALLY STARTING  
TO DEVELOP ITS OWN UNIQUELY  
ATTRACTIVE ESSENCE.”**

“We are extremely excited that the first new medical school in more than 50 years in Western Canada is being built here in City Centre,” she says. “The partnership between Simon Fraser University, Fraser Health and the First Nations Health Authority, represents a historic opportunity for innovation and we are very proud to be home to this incredible new facility.”

Rowena Rizzotti, Strategic Advisor for Healthcare and Innovation for the Lark Group, says the District’s unique ecosystem and amenities are attractive to not only Surrey’s diverse population.

“So many international professionals are accustomed to living in culturally rich cities around the world,” she says. “Surrey is really starting to develop its own uniquely attractive essence.”





District Social Lounge

District Student Plaza

With more than five university and college campuses, education is also a big draw for young people, which means a youthful demographic and future talent pool. More than 30 per cent of Surrey’s population of just over 600,000 is under the age of 19.

In 2022, the University of British Columbia invested nearly \$100 million into the District and purchased space within its HealthTech Innovation HUB, which has since become home to its Master of Physical Therapy program in the Fraser region, with other programs to follow.

Plans for Surrey’s Health and Technology District also include a new luxury nine-storey hotel with a total of 166 guest rooms. The hotel will accommodate the continued demand for continued growth within and around the region.

Rizzotti adds this increased academic and professional business presence, along with a new hotel and social amenities, are bringing a culturally enriched lifestyle to Surrey’s downtown core, which is generating attention from across Canada and well beyond. ■





SFU expanding campus in Surrey





# OMG! AI in Music?

Story: Paul “Bad Basil” Claxton

**AI has been around music longer than you’d expect.**

Artificial intelligence has been sneaking up on us for years, but now it’s been emboldened and going mainstream! As a songwriter and producer, I’ve been struggling to get a grip on this. The fear from my colleagues in music is palpable and strikes fear into the heart of every creative musician I know. I’ve been trying to keep an open mind though, and let you, the reader, decide for yourself as I try to come to terms with it all.



## ‘The trend is cashing in on those wanting to write songs’

OMG! An acronym for “Oh My God” has been around for a while too and wasn’t invented by Gen Z, Millennials or even Boomers. It was first coined in letters written by former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Those reading who aren’t familiar, please reference the recent portrait of the Roaring Lion, stolen from Rideau Hall and returned by an amicable Italian. A wartime prime minister never faced such a foe as this.

The trend is cashing in on those who wanted to write songs, but had little imagination or enough skills to carry their dream to fruition. It’s most controversial among musicians, especially those who take the art of songwriting seriously. So, I wanted to include a tale involving two of my close friends – but when they heard I might be using their names regarding music and AI, one of them was afraid they’d get hate mail! For their benefit, I am leaving them out of this conversation.

Most recently I was set up on a blind date who, I discovered, was a lyricist. This was almost as exciting as discovering an animator who still draws every frame. After our brief date she was kind enough to send me her vast collection of more than 100 produced songs.

I was impressed by her body of work (no you don’t!) and I started to comb through the various demos which were well-produced with superb vocals and musicianship.

I wanted to say a specific song was my favourite, but after thirty or so, I couldn’t find one that stood out. Her lyrics were quite good but the melody and feel of each song were mundanely similar. She had paid her Nashville partner for all of her many demos, but it did seem that he wasn’t interested in creating a melody or song that would wow her listeners. It was purely a job for him.

My Trisektor Projekt band member friend, a technical scallywag, had already taken the liberty of running two sets of her lyrics

through an AI site called Suno.com. The results shocked me. The songs' two variations were quite good, I enjoyed them. I felt horrible for liking them. I tried my own at the Suno site; I typed in "Playing Piano in Kitsilano" and got a seven-minute perfectly produced song demo with killer vocals in just a couple of minutes. "@###&!!!" I said to myself.

## 'Humans need to express themselves

My musician friends swore out loud something I can't repeat here when they heard my faux song. So, when I suggested to the lyricist that she might listen to something "disturbing but interesting," her curt response was, "How Dare You!" and my love affair was dust.

"I wasn't suggesting you use AI!" I tried pathetically to explain, but it was too late. And it's too late for us all – AI in music is quickly becoming our new reality.

Artificial Intelligence like music streaming, death, taxes, gyros, but maybe not black velvet paintings of Smurfs, are here now and there's no place to hide. My Techno-Nerd friend is perhaps more delighted than I am, but there is a truth I want to share and, perhaps, it will help to alleviate some unnecessary fear.



## Expression

Humans need to express themselves, as I am now. This helps to quell my own fears as well as I write this. We don't have to stop writing songs or painting masterpieces. Great human music and art will continue. I pledge not to stop and I probably have up to 12.5 listeners by now. It's not about the money or the competition. We are still bound to create and share with other humans. AI is just another tool.

I thought I'd warn you today, but I want to ask everyone not to be afraid. Neil Young won't be using AI and Hell won't freeze over. Perhaps maybe, any bad music is going to get just a little better? ■



# TURKISH AIRLINES

78

JESSEL FALL/WINTER 2024

**WE FLY TO MORE  
COUNTRIES THAN  
ANY OTHER AIRLINE  
IN THE WORLD**

Renowned for its premium travel experience and unparalleled connectivity, Turkish Airlines today leads the industry, flying to more countries and international destinations than any other airline in the world. Its network includes 298 international and 53 domestic destinations, totaling 351 destinations in 130 countries across six continents.

Turkish Airlines connects the Canadian travellers to its network via three gateways and continues to expand in the North American market as well as around the world. The airline also welcomed new aircrafts to its fleet recently, making 489 aircrafts in total.



Turkish Airlines' steady success and growth is crowned by Skytrax. The airline is named as the "Best Airline in Europe" for the ninth time, along with being awarded in the "World's Best Business Class Catering" category.

Key to its continued success, the airline welcomed a new era of Turkish aviation with the opening of the state-of-the-art Istanbul Airport in 2019. As the world's largest international hub, the modern facility is the biggest built-from-scratch airport terminal in the world and offers a smart and innovative travel experience, with Turkish Airlines serving as its flag carrier and providing excellent connectivity to more than 90 destinations within a three-hour flight time.



The airline is named as the “Best Airline in Europe” for the ninth time, along with being awarded in the “World’s Best Business Class Catering” category.

While travelling through the stunning hub at Istanbul Airport, Turkish Airlines or Star Alliance Airlines Business Class passengers can relish comfort and luxury at Turkish Airlines’ Business Class Lounge. Situated within an elevated mezzanine space, the lounge features ample room to relax, coupled with a huge assortment of food, beverages, and entertainments.

A rich variety of chef-prepared culinary options greets guests with Turkish and international fare for every taste. Guests can discover varieties of Turkish and world cuisine, while enjoying a glass of Turkish tea. A myriad of entertainment is part of the elevated experience, from piano performances to a golf simulator. The lounge also houses a gallery space with a rotating selection of Istanbul’s most notable exhibitions, from sporting displays to contemporary artwork.

For travellers looking to discover Istanbul and its unique wonders during their six-to-24-hour layover, Turkish Airlines offers a complimentary sightseeing service, “Touristanbul.” The airline also offers a complimentary Stopover Program to its passengers with a layover time of 20 hours or more in Istanbul, where Business Class passengers have the option of enjoying a three-night stay in a 5-star hotel, while economy passengers can enjoy two nights in a 4-star hotel. ■

*For more information, please visit [www.turkishairlines.com](http://www.turkishairlines.com).*



A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

# WE ARE ALL CONNECTED

We connect more countries than any other.



**TURKISH AIRLINES**



WAYPOINT

PRIVATE CLIENT SOLUTIONS

# Luxury Home Insurance.

When your opportunities grow, so do your risks.

Our team of expert risk advisors understands the effort behind building your portfolio. We're here to ensure it stays fully protected.





[waypoint.ca](http://waypoint.ca)  
604-306-3258





# POWERHAUS MORTGAGE EXPERTS

84

JESSEL FALL/WINTER 2024

**Story:** Joe Leary  
**Photography:** Mohamad Alsabe  
**Hair and Make-up:** Farrah Sanei  
**Location:** Powerhaus Mortgages

Corinne Schindler's journey from humble beginnings to founder and CEO of Powerhaus Mortgage Experts is a testament to perseverance, empowerment, and the belief that anything is possible.

Her story, spanning four decades, showcases not only her professional achievements, but also a relentless determination to overcome personal adversity while maintaining a clear focus on her core values.

Schindler began her work in finance in 1985, at the very bottom rung of the corporate ladder at Canada's largest financial institution, remaining loyal there for the entirety of her career.

As a young aspiring banker, she encountered enormous challenges, both in her personal life and as a woman advancing through a male-dominated, financial industry. Believing all were equal, she saw beyond the gender challenge and fought to earn her way to the top.

Facing the realities of mental health and addiction problems in her first marriage, Schindler navigated the challenges and opportunities of raising two children as a sole parent in every aspect — all while advancing her career.

“I was working full time, parenting, and studying in the evening,” she says, noting the corporate culture of the time was not conducive to her responsibilities as a mother.

“In those days, remote work didn’t exist and being a parent was often viewed as a distraction from professional commitment.”

Back in the early 90’s work/life balance wasn’t at the heart of the corporate vision as it is today.

She recalls juggling two different daycare pickups, while serving as a Girl Guide leader and Little League coach, all while balancing a hectic work schedule and continuing her education.

Despite the hurdles, Schindler’s work ethic never wavered and through the years of hard work and dedication, she carved through the glass ceiling after securing a series of prominent roles within the bank.

She rose through the ranks to head office, where she led South Asian and Jewish Strategies, managed Human Resources, and directed Strategic Planning for BC. As a Certified Financial Planner, she thrived as an Investment Advisor and successfully managed multiple branch locations. Her dedication

earned her the prestigious Fellowship from the Institute of Canadian Bankers at Dalhousie University.

The crowning achievement came when she became the number one Mortgage Specialist out of more than 50,000 professionals in Canada.

As the first woman to ever achieve this distinction, she consistently ranked in the top one per cent nationwide spanning two decades, proving her mettle in an industry that was not always welcoming to women.



Her story...  
showcases not only  
her professional  
achievements but  
also a relentless  
determination to  
overcome personal  
adversity....

“My work has never been about maximizing commissions, but about providing genuine value to my clients.”

Schindler’s success is fuelled by resilience and her unwavering focus on client relationships.

“My work has never been about maximizing commissions, but about providing genuine value to my clients. If it’s in the client’s best interest to go with a competitor, I will advise them to do so, even if it means I don’t close the deal.”

This level of integrity has earned her a reputation as a trusted advisor who always puts her clients’ needs first, building trust one mortgage at a time.

Her approach was, and remains, about more than just numbers — and rather about

building lasting relationships based on mutual respect and transparency.

In 2024, following a distinguished and decorated career, she launched Powerhaus Mortgage Experts, a Mortgage Brokerage that reflects her enduring commitment to a client-first philosophy. As the largest brokerage in Canada, she chose to be backed by Dominion Lending Centres and has never looked back.

Seeing gaps in the mortgage industry, Schindler built Powerhaus to provide more autonomy, flexibility, and a return to the trusted broker-client relationship.



Unlike many models, Powerhaus allows advisors to manage mortgage renewals, preserving the relationships they have built. Her mission is to offer seamless, end-to-end guidance on clients' largest purchases. This is the Powerhaus Difference.

Schindler saw an opportunity to create a brokerage where clients were empowered to drive their financial journeys and where home buying became a more meaningful, informed process.

"I listen, I empathize, and it is their goals and plans that start the entire process," she says adding, "without this continuity of care, the client's visions get lost in the renewal process."

To that end, she approaches all her client interactions with the same guiding principle, "I strive to create an experience for my clients that mirrors the care and attention I would expect for my loved ones."

Beyond her professional endeavors, Schindler is deeply committed to inspiring others, especially single parents as she's experienced firsthand the beauty and growth in walking alongside those facing personal challenges.

"I want them to know that success is possible even when the odds seem insurmountable."

Her own story is a beacon of hope — a living example of how perseverance and values can drive success, with the right mindset and support. Through Powerhaus, Corinne Schindler continues to impact the lives of her clients, many of whom she has built lasting relationships with over the years.

Despite her success she remains deeply connected to her roots and describes her work as "incredibly meaningful." She lives many full circle moments — the culmination of a trifecta of family, an amazing Powerhaus community and her personal vision all in balance.

"Building relationships with my clients is truly a privilege," she adds. "It is in my DNA." ■



"I want them to know that success is possible even when the odds seem insurmountable."



Helen Jarvis, Chris Beach, Lisa and Jonathan Lancaster pose with their Emmy®. Photo credit: Mark Von Holden/Invision @ATAS/NATAS]

# BEHIND THE SCENES

## BC *Shōgun* production teams win big at the 76th Emmy® Awards. — Story: Lesley Diana

The FX series *Shōgun*, set in 15<sup>th</sup> Century Japan, became the most honoured single season of any show in Emmy® history. A talented group of local artists and creators collaborated with the Japanese experts in every department to bring this unique series to life. We highlight British Columbia's costumes, makeup, set design, special effects, and visual effects departments' Emmy® Awards.

They all agree, "Winning this award feels like an award for our entire BC industry. We make award-winning, record-breaking shows that compete on a global stage. Walking up on the stage and receiving the Emmy® was an

extraordinary moment in life, representing all the hard work and dedication everyone gave to the show."

*Shōgun* is set in the Sengoku Period (1467-1600). This 2024 adaptation of James Clavell's bestselling novel is told from the perspective of Japanese characters who at the height of the century-long civil war, discover a mysterious European ship and its English pilot, John Blackthorne.

Set decorators Lisa and Jonathan Lancaster's detail, authenticity, and work volume were... well... Emmy® worthy! Months of prep time helped with accuracy.

"The show's extensive group of advisors from Japan were a tremendous asset. Our research came from 1500s scrolls and museums and was cross-checked through our show producers. Production designer Helen Jarvis supported what we could bring to the sets and direction for her design vision."

The main cast costumes were custom-built, and the fabrics were sourced from Japan. *Shōgun's* costume designer, Carlos Rosario, had to design new outfits until the last episode, with 125 in the costume department and another 100 in other time zones.



Carole Griffin, with the team of SIAM Costumes, is in Bangkok, Thailand. Photo credit: Chris Kasianchuk

The costume supervisor, Carole Griffin, was tasked with 356 cast, 825 background actors and 78 stunt fittings! They had to rely on historical sketches and paintings to make the costumes accurate under the guidance of historian Frederik Cryns, “It was a constant juggling of timelines, actor availability, shipping, and weather conditions. We had to learn a new language, as there were Japanese names for every piece of clothing and accessories.”

Emmy® winner Rebecca Lee, makeup designer, says, “Fortunately, historic Illustrations exist with depictions of the time that helped determine which cosmetics to use and how to style men’s facial hair. The show’s producers were adamant about authenticity. We had custom-blended products to achieve the finish and colours in the Sengoku period. Making 100-plus background samurai and villagers bald every morning was the biggest challenge in addition to the 15-20 lead cast and 200-plus background actors.”

VFX aims to create digital effects that enhance what was filmed and further the story. Emmy® winner Melody Mead, associate visual effects producer, managed global artists working around the clock on the stunning VFX for this series. They had the challenge of altering locations to look like Japan in 1600.

Ivona Kolic, the special effects on-set supervisor, worked with SPFX coordinator and Emmy® winner Cameron Waldbauer. “We work hand in hand with the director of photography to make anything we’re shooting more realistic. Special effects are as simple as making trees and leaves move with the wind or as big as burning a huge set multiple times in one night.”

*Shōgun* is a multicultural project that brought together hundreds of fantastic talents worldwide and is available to stream. ■

“Winning this award feels like an award for our entire BC industry.”



Rebecca Lee & team. Photo credit: Invision Agency



SPFX On Set Supervisor Ivona Kolic with Emmy®. Photo credit: Alexandre Herve

# GARY POONI

Story: Joe Leary

Photography: Dylan Duffault

The name Gary Pooni is synonymous with planning and development projects, both local and across Canada.

As evidenced by the work of his namesake non-profit foundation, he is also a strong advocate of building stronger communities.

Gary Pooni heads the eponymous Pooni Group and has worked with some of the region's biggest real estate developers such as Westbank, Beedie and Bosa.

Yet while considered a titan of power – the man is relatively low-key and generally flies below public radar in social circles.

His uncanny ability to enlist and align prospective clients to collectively work together in an effort to get developments done – is remarkable.

He's generally regarded as "The Networking King."

Pooni's early life took shape in the New Westminster neighbourhood of Queensborough, where his family lived and worked the farmland.

"My father was a dump truck driver for Southwest Contracting Ltd., while my mother took care of myself and my brother and sister," he says.

It was there that a young Gary Pooni would become aware of the concept of urban development.

It clearly resonated early on.

The nature of urban planning is about shaping an existing environment and developing it further with the public in mind.

It's a balance of economic development, urban growth and social infrastructure amid changing demographics.

"Planners try to balance all of those things, like juggling multiple objectives," says Pooni.

Urban planners create and recommend policies and frameworks and/or facilities to better utilize the land and prepare for future livability, providing necessary services to neighbourhoods in both rural and urban areas.



LIVE  
WORK  
CREATE





Techniques include estimating potential population growth, identifying transportation needs, healthcare requirements and social services, amid supply chain demands.

“It was kind of a confluence of inspirations,” he says of his chosen career path. “I watched my dad work on several construction sites in Greater Vancouver and when I was in high school our land was re-designated to ‘Multi-family’ in the Community Plan. That piqued my interest in the urban planning process.”

Pooni cites specific experiences on his pathway to success.

“There are a few things that come to mind,” he says. “Making it into grad school for urban planning was one hurdle.

“I moved to Calgary at that time and it was a new, insecure experience for me. When I was hired by Greg Brown at his Alberta firm [after a stint with the City of Calgary], I was elated.”

He has always maintained an interest in the private sector side of industry and experienced one of life’s full circle moments in the process.

“When I returned to Vancouver a few years later, I was working on Fraser Mills with Ryan Beedie. That was a huge moment early in my career,” he says. “My father had worked at Fraser Mills when it was a lumber mill site and there I was, 40 years later, working on its redevelopment.

***His uncanny ability to enlist and align prospective clients to collectively work together in an effort to get developments done is remarkable.***

“Working with the Beedie, Bosa, Gillespie and Ilich families the past 20 years has been a wonderful experience for me.”

In business circles, Pooni has a knack for being able to bring people together on projects, rally support and bypass hurdles.

So what is his secret to getting things done?

“I don’t think there is a secret,” he states. “My parents had an incredible work ethic, which I respect immensely. My mom is the kindest person I’ve ever known and hard work and kindness is an incredible combo.”

“I also played soccer for almost 30 years and have a very competitive side. Playing on a team with 11 people on your side has helped me learn about human nature and different styles of leadership.”

Not one to rest on his laurels, Gary Pooni continues to strive for ongoing success in an ever-changing world.

“To be honest, I am always going to chase that ‘path to success,’” he adds. “I am the son of Indian immigrants and perhaps have an imposter syndrome.”

“This era is the most difficult I’ve seen in my career: a global pandemic, a difficult market, high interest rates, escalating costs, and civic unrest. Land development is a very dynamic industry and needs to adapt quickly.”

“Unfortunately, our regulatory environment is static and with this amount of tension, it is very difficult to bring people together and align everyone’s thinking.”

And despite being at the helm of such a successful enterprise, Pooni is thankful and grateful to be where he is today – on just a personal level, alone.

“I survived a massive heart attack and cardiac arrest in 2019 and I barely survived. Recovering, and just being alive — that’s my greatest accomplishment.” ■

***“To be honest,  
I am always  
going to chase  
that path to  
success. I am  
the son of Indian  
immigrants and  
perhaps have  
an imposter  
syndrome.”***



# FAITH WILSON

Faith Wilson, founder of faithwilson | Christie's International Real Estate, is a renowned REALTOR® with over 30 years of experience. A Lifetime Member of the Medallion Club, Faith's long-standing success places her among the top 10% of Realtors® in Vancouver for over 20 years.

With more than \$2.15 billion in residential sales, including British Columbia's most expensive home in 2018, Faith's expertise in luxury real estate is unmatched. She began her career in 1993, becoming a top Vancouver Realtor®, and later launched her own brokerage in 2011. In 2017, she partnered with Christie's International Real Estate to offer clients both local expertise and global reach.

Faith is deeply connected to the Vancouver community, with her firm actively supporting local charities. As Christie's says, "who you work with matters," and to Faith, luxury means exceptional service while fostering long-term relationships.



"This business is all about the relationships we create with the people we serve, and we are very much a part of their lives for a time, so although it is business, it is also personal; it is full circle," says Faith Wilson.



Best International  
Property/Agency  
Consultancy Website



Best Real  
Estate Agency  
Canada



Christie's International  
Real Estate  
Masters Circle



Affiliate Advisory  
Board Member



Lifetime  
Member



Lifetime  
Achievement Award

# Local Knowledge, *Global Reach*

faithwilson | CHRISTIE'S  
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

Faith moves houses<sup>®</sup>

[www.faithwilson.com](http://www.faithwilson.com) | 604.224.5277





# ***TURKISH CONSUL GENERAL***

Story: Sandra Thomas  
Photography: Razieh Motiei

**H**üseyin Emrah Kurt says his role is to promote Türkiye’s economy, culture and history.

The Consul General for Türkiye, who represents his country in Western Canada, says one of his main roles is to promote his country’s deep cultural and artistic heritage and history.

“In these efforts, we work in collaboration with associations of the Turkish-Canadian community, which carry out various cultural and social activities throughout the year,” says Turkish Consul General Hüseyin Emrah Kurt. “We attach utmost importance to these activities, which helps to increase the visibility of our county, as well as strengthens the unity and solidarity among the members of the Turkish-Canadian community and the dialogue with other communities in Vancouver.”

Emrah Kurt moved to Vancouver in September, 2023, after working for almost 20-years at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, serving in several departments of the Ministry and in Turkish missions in Iran, Germany, Greece and Pakistan. The Turkish Consulate in Vancouver first opened in September 2015. Previously, Turkish citizens residing in Western Canada had to travel to Toronto for consular issues.



***Emrah Kurt also wants to help raise awareness of Türkiye's robust economy and the many investment and trade opportunities it offers.***

#### **Strong Economy**

Emrah Kurt also wants to help raise awareness of Türkiye's robust economy and the many investment and trade opportunities it offers.

He adds, Türkiye stands out in terms of both international trade and investment due to its favorable geographical location for international trade, large domestic market, young and dynamic population, qualified and competitive workforce and liberal investment environment.

#### **Türkiye has one of the fastest growing economies in the world**

Emrah Kurt says Türkiye's strategic location provides business people easy access to large markets. Türkiye is the only non-EU country in the Customs Union of the EU, which has a market of 449 million population. As well, free-trade agreements with 30 countries provides access to populations equalling 488 million.

"Therefore, investors in Türkiye have the ability to easily reach almost one billion consumers," says Emrah Kurt. "Turkish exports climbed to \$256 billion US, in 2023, the highest annual merchandise exports figure in the Republic's history."

Emrah Kurt notes, they observe a growing mutual interest in enhancing cooperation in the areas of bilateral trade and a much bigger potential in various sectors, including the metal industry, construction materials, textiles, energy and mining, machine and automotive industries, furniture, shipbuilding, processed foods and fresh produce, health tourism and IT.

### **Sustainable Tourism**

In 2023, Türkiye hosted 56 million visitors and Istanbul topped the list for the number of international arrivals, while the city of Antalya became the fourth most visited city in the world.

“Our guests have the chance to go beyond sun and sea tourism and explore the incredibly rich history, culture and natural beauty of our country,” says Emrah Kurt, who notes sustainable tourism is a growing industry in the country.

Through the Sustainable Tourism Program, which launched in 2022, Türkiye offers a vast range of experiences for visitors who are sensitive about environmental concerns and

care about recognizing and protecting local cultures. In this framework, Türkiye offers endless opportunities in every region of the country for outdoor activities, including hiking, cycling, kayaking, paragliding and rafting.

As well, visitors interested in history, can explore 19 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and another 84 cultural treasures, which are on the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites

“And of course, gastronomy is also a very important component of tourism in Türkiye,” says Emrah Kurt. “Every year millions of visitors travel to Türkiye to discover famous Turkish cuisine, which is a rich and diverse blend of flavours influenced by the country’s location at the crossroads of different civilizations and cultures.”

### **Turkish Airlines Helps Unite Canada and Türkiye**

Emrah Kurt says it’s important to emphasize that the direct flights offered by Turkish Airlines between Istanbul and Vancouver, which started approximately three-and-a-half years ago, makes travel to Türkiye easier than ever.





“This direct connection plays a crucial role for our endeavours to facilitate and promote economic, touristic and cultural relations between our country and Western Canada. Turkish Airlines currently operates three weekly flights of from Vancouver and in less than 12 hours you can reach Istanbul Airport, which is an international hub,” says Emrah Kurt. “That means, BC residents also have the opportunity to easily reach to 342 destinations in 129 countries via Istanbul Airport. We hope that this connectivity will further develop with increasing flight frequencies in the future.”

#### Family

Emrah Kurt is joined in Vancouver by his two children and wife, Şirin Kurt, who has a professional background in international organizations working with refugees, including the UNHCR and ILO, and also as a mosaic artist.

“Before I arrived, I saw from various sources that Vancouver is among the cities with the highest quality of life in the world,” says Emrah Kurt. “In the last year, my family and I have been pleased to observe this fact firsthand.”

The consul general says, he and his family enjoy exploring Vancouver’s multicultural, social and artistic life and the natural beauty in and around it, as much as possible.

“We like to spend time at the beautiful national parks and lakes. We also enjoy discovering the restaurants in the city from a wide range of world cuisine.”

And, while Emrah Kurt is enjoying sports, Şirin Kurt is also pursuing her passions.

“My wife can dedicate more time in Vancouver to her art work in the field of mosaic.

She recently presented her art work for the first time in Vancouver in a joint exhibition with a painting artist,” he says.

Emrah Kurt notes the family takes every opportunity to explore B.C. and adds, trips taken through the Rocky Mountains and Alberta were remarkable. The family also spent their last summer holiday visiting other provinces in Canada. Emrah Kurt acts as consul general for Alberta, Saskatchewan, Yukon and Northwest Territories.

“I can say that we, as a family, are very impressed by the beauty of the nature and geography of British Columbia and Canada.” ■

***“Before I arrived, I saw from various sources that Vancouver is among the cities with the highest quality of life in the world.”***



ISTANBUL  
IS THE  
NEW COOL



istanbul.goturkiye.com



@goturkiye

f/GoTurkiye

X/goturkiye

yt/GoTurkiye

dgoturkiye



REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM



goturkiye.com



BQ6882 - Esmeralda

## Biophilic Finishes: Inspiring the Next Generation of Interiors with Vicostone Quartz

BIOPHILIC. adjective : of, relating to, or characterized by biophilia: relating to, and showing the inborn affinity human beings have for other forms of life within the natural world and environment.

In the ever-evolving landscape of interior design, a new trend is emerging—biophilic finishes that evoke a sense of tranquility and elegance. Among the forefront of this movement is Vicostone Quartz, a leader in the stone industry known for its innovative designs and sustainable practices. As homeowners and designers seek to create spaces that reflect their individuality, Vicostone's ethereal finishes are setting a new standard for what modern interiors can be.

### THE ALLURE OF BIOPHILIC DESIGN

Biophilic finishes are characterized by their light, airy appearance, often featuring soft colors and delicate patterns that mimic the beauty of natural elements. Vicostone is proud to present four new colours in 2025, all which evoke a calm, yet dynamic mood for any interior. With the rising popularity of minimalism and diaphanous design, the demand for materials that provide both aesthetics and functionality has never been higher.

Vicostone's latest collection embraces this ethos, offering a range of quartz surfaces that capture the essence of ethereal beauty. With hues inspired by nature—think soft whites, gentle warm greys, and muted pastels—these surfaces transform ordinary spaces into serene sanctuaries.



BQ6881 - Adamello

## INSPIRING CREATIVITY IN INTERIOR DESIGN

Interior designers are increasingly turning to Vicostone Quartz to bring their visions to life. The versatility of the material allows for endless creative possibilities—from elegant countertops to striking accent walls. Designers can pair exquisite finishes with complementary textures, such as wood or metal, to create a harmonious balance in any space.

Moreover, these surfaces can be used in a variety of styles, from contemporary to transitional making them a perfect fit for a wide range of design preferences. This adaptability has positioned Vicostone Quartz as a go-to choice for savvy designers and homeowners who are eager to experiment with new trends while maintaining a sense of timeless elegance. With Vicostone Quartz at the helm, the next generation of interiors is poised to inspire, uplift, and connect us to the beauty that surrounds us. ■



BQ6880 - Nuvolato

## INNOVATION MEETS SUSTAINABILITY

What sets Vicostone apart is not just their design aesthetic but also their commitment to sustainability. Each slab of quartz is engineered with a blend of natural materials, ensuring that the beauty of nature is preserved while also minimizing environmental impact. The company's innovative manufacturing processes utilize recycled materials and reduce waste, making it a responsible choice for eco-conscious designers and homeowners.

Vicostone's four new biophilic finishes are not only visually stunning but also durable and lowmaintenance, making them ideal for high-traffic areas such as kitchens and bathrooms. This combination of beauty and practicality is what modern consumers seek, and Vicostone delivers in every slab.



BQ6803 - Lacus

# ***BURNABY BOARD OF TRADE***

Story: Sandra Thomas  
Photography: Mohammed Alsaber  
Locations: Earls Station Square  
WeWork Station Square

## **AS NEW CEO OF BBOT, ANGIE WHITFIELD IS ALREADY HARD AT WORK SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS**

When Angie Whitfield took over the reins of the Burnaby Board of Trade (BBOT) as President and CEO this past August, she arrived with three goals — creating a fresh vision for the organization, speaking on behalf of and advocating for local businesses, and offering community support.

“One of my top priorities is to shape our organization into a powerful resource for our business communities,” says Whitfield, who previously served as the Executive Director of the New Westminster Chamber of Commerce.

To that end, the BBOT partners with various business leaders and government agencies to keep current on what’s impacting business and the economy locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally. Their members look to them for guidance and resources to help them

remain resilient, as they aim to be a space where businesses of all sizes find support, especially as they address sustainability and workforce development issues.

“We learn from our partners and vice-versa, listening carefully to understand their concerns,” says Whitfield. “This approach allows us to prioritize our resources in the most impactful way.”

She explains the Burnaby Board of Trade maintains a close strategic alliance with the BC Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce by holding memberships with both organizations. Whitfield recently attended the Canadian Chamber of Commerce national convention and annual general meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia.





“The convention brings together CEOs, Executives, and Board Directors from across the country who are all doing grassroots work in their local communities and listening to businesses. Meeting in person allows us to align on issues and amplify our voices,” says Whitfield. “That’s a powerful network from a business perspective, it means independent businesses can have their voices heard at the highest levels. For me, having a network of peers across the country doing similar work is incredibly valuable.”

Whitfield says the convention was also a unique opportunity to discuss the common issues communities across the country are dealing with and discuss possible solutions. At the top of that list of challenges is the cost of doing business and an ongoing labour shortage.

“The Burnaby Board of Trade is committed to addressing the workforce development challenges facing our

community,” says Whitfield. “Through strategic partnerships with educational institutions and targeted programs, we’re building pathways that meet emerging industry needs. These initiatives support our members by creating a talent pipeline and strengthen Burnaby’s economic future.”

She notes that rising housing costs are creating significant challenges for businesses and local economies. She also draws attention to the growing numbers of unhoused individuals, and the lack of accessible mental health and addiction support. Whitfield says these are issues being experienced across the country.

Whitfield is hopeful the recently elected NDP provincial government is going to step up and help solve some of those issues. If not, she says, the Board of Trade is ready to advocate on behalf of Burnaby business owners.



**“The Burnaby Board of Trade is committed to addressing the workforce development challenges facing our community....”**



## “We want every business to feel and know that they truly belong with the Burnaby Board of Trade.”

“As a network, we’re reminding the government that addressing public safety and housing issues requires a strong business community to support it,” says Whitfield. “The employer tax base is essential, so when policies are crafted to tackle other issues, it’s critical that they are considered through a business lens. Businesses are the heartbeat of our community and policies must reflect that. We need to ensure these policies are crafted thoughtfully to avoid unintended consequences that could raise the cost of doing business.”

Another goal of Whitfield’s is to reach businesses that may not even be aware of the helpful resources the Board of Trade offers. She adds, with that in mind, equity and inclusion are cornerstones to any programs

and initiatives moving forward. The board is committed to building an environment where all businesses feel seen, supported, and empowered to succeed.

“We want every business to feel and know that they truly belong with the Burnaby Board of Trade — that they’re part of something bigger,” says Whitfield. “So, when times get tough, and challenges arise, they know they have the support they need. By focusing on this now, we’re building a solid foundation and positioning ourselves to be there for businesses when they need it most. The best way to weather difficult times is together. We’re committed to creating that sense of belonging because, let’s face it, challenging times are ahead. But we can get through them — together.” ■

# MICHAEL TUDORIE

## REAL ESTATE ADVISOR



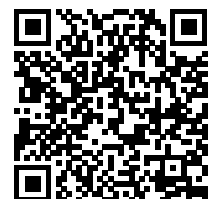
3D rendering for illustration purposes,  
buyer to conduct due diligence at it's own accord.

## PRIME DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY IN SHAUGHNESSY

Unlock the potential of 1375 W Kind Edward Ave as an exceptional opportunity located in prestigious **Shaughnessy**. This expansive 20,000 sq ft lot is ideal for visionary investors and developers looking to create multi-dwellings in one of central area of Vancouver.

604-910-7777 | [MICHAEL@MICHAELTUDORIE.COM](mailto:MICHAEL@MICHAELTUDORIE.COM)

[MICHAELTUDORIE.COM](http://MICHAELTUDORIE.COM)



# BITCOIN: THE CRYPTOCURRENCY THAT MAKES YOU QUESTION EVERYTHING

Story: Harris Van



# WELCOME TO THE WILD WORLD OF BITCOIN, WHERE THE ONLY CONSTANT IS CHANGE—AND THE OCCASIONAL EXISTENTIAL CRISIS.

If you've ever wondered whether Bitcoin is a revolutionary currency or just a glorified game of Monopoly, you're in good company. Let's dive into this digital rollercoaster ride, filled with highs, lows, and a few questionable decisions along the way.



## THE BIRTH OF A DIGITAL REBEL

Once upon a time in the mysterious land of the internet, an enigmatic figure named Satoshi Nakamoto decided that traditional banking was just too mainstream. “Why not create a currency that no one can control?” they thought. And thus, Bitcoin was born—a currency that’s as real as your uncle’s conspiracy theories about aliens controlling the government.

## IS IT REAL MONEY OR JUST A BUBBLE?

Ah, the classic debate: Is Bitcoin a legitimate currency or merely a bubble waiting to burst? In 2017, Bitcoin shot up to nearly \$20,000 faster than you can say “irrational

exuberance.” Critics were quick to label it a bubble—because who doesn’t love a good bubble story? But for every skeptic, there’s a die-hard fan ready to defend their digital gold like it’s the last slice of pizza at a party.

The truth? Bitcoin is like that friend who shows up uninvited but somehow becomes the life of the party. It’s here, it’s loud, and it’s definitely making people question their life choices.

How Bitcoin Actually Works (Sort Of). Imagine if gold had a digital cousin who was really into tech and social media. That’s Bitcoin! It’s scarce—only 21 million will ever exist—making it more exclusive than your high school clique. Transactions happen directly between people without banks or middlemen. Sounds great, right? Until you realize that your transactions are recorded on a public ledger that everyone can see. Privacy? Who needs it!

## LET’S TACKLE SOME OF BITCOIN’S BIGGEST CRITICISMS:

**Energy Consumption:** Yes, Bitcoin uses more energy than your average small country. But hey, at least it’s not as wasteful as your neighbour’s Christmas lights! Supporters argue that this energy is necessary for securing the network—like hiring bouncers for an exclusive club. Just don’t ask how much they’re charging for drinks.

**Volatility:** If you enjoy living on the edge, Bitcoin is for you! Its price swings more than a toddler on a sugar rush. One day you’re rich; the next day, you’re contemplating whether to sell your kidney for rent money.

**Regulatory Uncertainty:** Governments are still figuring out how to deal with Bitcoin like it’s an awkward family reunion. Some embrace it; others treat it like that weird cousin who shows up unannounced and eats all your snacks.

Imagine if gold had a digital cousin who was really into tech and social media. That’s Bitcoin!





## Bitcoin isn't just for tech geeks and daydreamers; it's also appealing to those living in countries with unstable currencies.

### REAL-WORLD UTILITY (KIND OF)

Bitcoin isn't just for tech geeks and daydreamers; it's also appealing to those living in countries with unstable currencies. Imagine trying to buy groceries with money that loses value faster than you can say "hyperinflation." In these cases, Bitcoin offers hope—or at least an alternative way to buy that overpriced avocado toast. Who's Investing? Surprisingly, Bitcoin has attracted big-name investors like Tesla and MicroStrategy—because nothing says "trustworthy investment" quite like companies run by eccentric billionaires. Even traditional investors like Paul Tudor Jones have jumped on the bandwagon. Just remember: if your financial advisor starts talking about Bitcoin at dinner parties, it might be time to find a new advisor.

**How to Get Started?** Thinking about diving into Bitcoin? Start small—like "I bought one lottery ticket" small. You can purchase fractions of a Bitcoin through exchanges like

Coinbase or apps like Cash App. Just remember: investing in Bitcoin is like playing poker with your life savings—exciting but potentially disastrous.

### THE BIGGER PICTURE

Bitcoin isn't just a currency; it's a statement about our relationship with money and technology. It challenges everything we know about finance while simultaneously making us question our sanity. Looking Forward; As we peer into the crystal ball of Bitcoin's future, one thing is clear: it will continue to be both fascinating and frustrating. Whether it becomes the dominant currency or fades into obscurity like your favourite childhood toy remains to be seen. So buckle up, folks! The ride is far from over—and who knows? You might just find yourself laughing all the way to the bank—or crying into your coffee when things go south! ■

WIN 1 of 9 Grand Prize Home Packages worth over \$3 Million each or choose \$2.8 Million Tax Free Cash!

Choose Your Home in South Surrey | Langley | Burnaby | Courtenay | Sooke | Richmond | Vancouver | Vernon | Kelowna




SUPPORTING  
**VGH+**  
**UBC** hospital  
foundation

**CARRINGTON**  
COMMUNITIES

**VISTA** | CONDOMINIUMS AT  
PREDATOR RIDGE



# Are You BC's Next Multi-Millionaire?

 Brian Jessel BMW



## PREDATOR RIDGE GRAND PRIZE PACKAGE

Vista Condominiums at Predator Ridge Sub-Penthouse

**\$860,000 Cash**

BMW X5 x-drive50e

\$50,000 Travel Gift Card

Hyundai Tucson Ultimate PHEV

**WORTH OVER \$3 MILLION**

Over 3,000 Prizes to Win Worth Over \$3.9 Million

PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS TODAY

PURCHASE IN PERSON AT



**millionairelottery.com**  
**604-602-5848** TOLL FREE **1-888-445-5825**

**2024 MILLIONAIRE LOTTERY TICKETS**  
2 for \$100 | 5 for \$175 | 10 for \$300 | 25 for \$600  
**50/50 PLUS<sup>®</sup>** 2 for \$20, 6 for \$35, 16 for \$70, 32 for \$100  
**DAILY CASH PLUS<sup>™</sup>** 2 for \$30, 6 for \$55, 12 for \$80



Winner will choose one prize option; other prize options will not be awarded.

BC Gaming Event Licences #154087, #154086, #154085

19+ TOPLAY | KNOWYOURLIMIT,PLAYWITHINIT | PROBLEMGAMBLINGHELPLINE 1-888-795-6111 | WWW.BCRESPONSIBLEGAMBLING.CA

# NISHA KHARE: A Journey of Gratitude and Shared Inspiration as a 'Woman of Wonder'

Story: Sandra Thomas

Photography: Aaron Aubrey

Nisha Khare is the first to admit that life can be extraordinary alongside her husband and business partner, Sharad Khare, and their two young children, son Soran and daughter Nola.

Khare is dedicated to leading a life centred around making a positive impact.

"As I reflect on our life, I feel a deep sense of gratefulness being able to learn from fascinating humans while contributing to a better world while having fun along the way," Khare shares.

Khare's commitment extends to her work with 'Women of Wonder Global,' an initiative she co-founded with Karly Neveu. This movement aims to empower women to tap into their superpowers, connect authentically with others and foster global transformation.

"I am deeply grateful to have Women of Wonder in my life. When women embrace self-love and support each other, it leads to authentic, connected communities that uplift everyone, including their partners and children. There's a special, almost magical quality to that," she notes.





"I have hope for the future. I wish to help people see their own potential and I believe that when we share energy with an open heart, the world in return can offer them a powerful, happy life."

Khare's remarkable resume also includes speaking at the United Nations in New York City, on Powerful Partnerships. Her diverse career includes roles as a registered clinical counsellor, motivational speaker, TV host, teacher, director and model.

Then there's Human Biography, an award-winning media company she shares with her husband, Sharad, which sees Khare working with notable figures, including actor Helen Mirren, singer Katy Perry, spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and visionary Oprah Winfrey.

"I think we just started off asking, what is it we were meant to do? And, how can we help? And how can we help the world by using our strengths?" says Khare of Human Biography. "And when we started doing that and interviewing people, the universe started connecting us with interesting people."

Khare has come a long way from small-town Prince George, where she worked in a pulp mill as a power boiler

fire-person while attending university at UBC. "It was hard work, but I feel I learned so much and it really grounded me. It helped me connect with people for who they are. I loved it."

Khare's father was the first immigrant from India to settle in the town, which is located in Central B.C.

"I plan to direct a comedic short film about my father's journey, honouring his significant impact on our community as a pioneer," she says.

Khare also helps others heal through her counselling work.

"Counselling allows me to support individuals on their healing journeys, which is incredibly fulfilling. I feel honoured to be on a path supporting growth, learning, transformation and love," she says.

Khare's presence also extends to the stages of influential events she continues to host for various organizations.

"Having the opportunity to introduce legends like Brian Adams and Blondie, while raising money for an important cause is a dream come true," notes Khare.

Her ability to captivate and inspire audiences is a testament to her commitment and expertise. But of all her accomplishments, Khare is most proud of her young children and their budding commitment to making the world a better place.

"I believe my purpose is to help the next generation shine brightly. I learn as much from my children as they do from me. They are my greatest motivators."

When it comes to their children, this power couple both embrace "conscious parenting."

"Part of my purpose is conscious parenting and encouraging conscious families," says Khare. "There's so much potential and, if we do the work on ourselves, then the next generation has so much available to them because then they're surrounded by positive energy. And then they can be their best selves and they can go and help the world in a really deep way."

"I have hope for the future. I wish to help people see their own potential and I believe that when we share energy with an open heart, the world in return can offer them a powerful, happy life." ■

# PANERAI MARKS A NEW ERA



IN ITS LUMINOR AND LUMINOR DUE COLLECTIONS WITH A NEWLY DESIGNED METAL BRACELET



PAM1508



PAM1539



PAM1387

Luminor Due Metal Bracelet  
Automatic Mechanical, P.900 Calibre

Panerai introduces a new metal bracelet capsule in its Luminor and Luminor Due collections, with the launch of six new creations, marking a new era in the design of its most emblematic lines. The first Panerai metal bracelets traces back to 1999, beginning a continuous journey of innovation in functionality, comfort, and aesthetics, that progressed with a new improved version in 2008 and in 2017, a lighter, screwless one, combining the best elements of its previous designs to enhance both form and function.

This year, the new metal bracelet features a progressive “V-shape” design that tapers from the case to the buckle, offering enhanced comfort and a lighter feel, perfect for everyday wear. Its aesthetic is characterized by a combination of different finishes – brushed on the larger links and polished on the edges and central links – creating a three-dimensional effect as the light hits the bracelet in different ways. The 38mm Luminor Due features a sleek transition from 20mm at the case to 16mm at the buckle, while the 42mm model narrows from 22mm to 18mm.

New models, in a range of styles across 38mm to 42mm sizes, join the Luminor Due family, which is known for its lighter and slimmer iterations of Panerai’s emblematic design, without compromising on mechanical integrity. Embodying the collection’s sporty and functional essence, the Luminor series sees the introduction of the Quaranta BiTempo with a steel bracelet, now equipped with a GMT function, making it the ideal companion for casual globetrotters.

Complemented by the PAM Click Release System™, a standout feature that allows for effortless switching between metal bracelets and straps without using any tool, the new timepieces speak of increased comfort, improved durability and versatility afforded by the interchangeability options. ■

Panerai Boutique | 1008 Alberni Street Vancouver, BC | (604) 207-5528



Todd Talbot; The Passive House Project

# WIN-WIN:

Story: Joe Leary  
Photography: Mike Bradley  
Location: South Surrey Grand  
Prize Home

## SUPPORT HEALTHCARE IN BC AND WIN BIG WITH THE VGH & UBC HOSPITAL FOUNDATION MILLIONAIRE LOTTERY

It is the biggest ever tax-free cash prize, at \$2.8 million, in British Columbia Home lottery history!

That's among the incredible Grand Prize packages available to win as VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation presents the "VGH Millionaire Lottery."

Proceeds support VGH & UBC Hospital Foundations.

"Money raised goes to funding innovative research, advancing specialized adult health care and purchasing critical medical equipment at Vancouver General Hospital, UBC Hospital, GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre, Vancouver Community Health Services and Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute," says Angela Chapman, President and CEO of VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation. "People living in British Columbia who face serious



illness or injury have the best chance of recovery thanks to our hospitals, which are equipped to tackle the most complex and rare conditions.

“VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation Millionaire Lottery contributes to this success as funds raised directly fuel groundbreaking research, cutting-edge technology, advanced medical equipment, and essential patient care improvements across Vancouver Coastal Health and the entire province.

“VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation Millionaire Lottery is an important contribution in ensuring that everyone in BC continues to receive world-class healthcare.

“We are profoundly grateful to our lottery supporters for empowering our exceptional researchers.”

Longtime VGH Millionaire Lottery Spokesman, Todd Talbot has seen what’s on offer and is suitably impressed.

“Among the prizes is a stunning home in South Surrey, valued at over \$3.3 million — the most luxurious grand prize ever offered in VGH Millionaire Lottery history,” he says. “This contemporary 4,456 square-foot home boasts five bedrooms, six bathrooms, a gourmet chef’s kitchen, a private patio, and includes \$100,000 for furnishings and accessories.”

# “Buying a ticket is a win-win situation... You’re supporting health care for all of British Columbia and giving yourself a chance to change your life.”

Talbot knows plenty about housing construction, as the Canadian actor and television personality is known as the co-host of HGTV’s *Love it or List it Vancouver*.

His latest is an eight-part docu-series called *Todd Talbot Builds: The Passive House Project*, now airing on Cottage Life Canada.

The series chronicles his endeavors and follows the four-year construction it took to turn an Okanagan Lake property into their summer home.

A “Passive House” is a certification that spotlights the focus on a dramatic reduction of energy use with respect to space heating and cooling.

Its goal is to maximize energy performance, while also constructing more efficient buildings.

Ultimately disaster struck and in August, 2023, the McDougall Creek wildfire wiped out the property, along with 190 other homes and displaced some 10,000 people in the process.

“Sadly, we were building in order to address resilience in the construction industry,” he says. “The principles that we were utilizing convince me now, more than ever, that it’s the direction we need to take going forward.”

Tickets for the Millionaire Lottery are on sale until midnight Jan 10, 2025 at [millionairelottery.com](http://millionairelottery.com).

“Buying a ticket is a win-win situation,” says Talbot. “You’re supporting health care for all of British Columbia and giving yourself a chance to change your life.” ■



# WEST COAST CONTEMPORARY LINE



**VANCOUVER** 1480 Kootenay Street 1-877-606-1166

**CHILLIWACK** 8104 Evans Road 1-877-606-1166



## DREAM BIG PRODUCTS FOR ALL SIZES



## EMBRACE THE PATIO

### EXPERIENCE INDOOR/OUTDOOR LIVING

A custom home build is quite often the single largest investment in one's life. This is a tremendous responsibility to entrust to the construction community.

Understanding this concept and exceeding customers' expectations are what Westeck strives for and is at the core of the Westeck culture.

# VANCOUVER FASHION WEEK

— Story: Joe Leary



**O**n the local fashion front, Jamal Abdourahman is somewhat of a pioneer.

Immigrating to Canada from East Africa in 1990, he landed in Toronto but was soon lured to the idyllic West Coast, enchanted by the environs.

Three years later, he made Vancouver his permanent home and, with a background in fashion shows to make money as a student, Jamal began jet-setting to the various fashion capitals of the world for inspiration.

These included Hong Kong, New York and London.

In 2000, he collaborated with a friend to create the first International Fashion Week. He would continue the event on his own and rebrand it as Vancouver Fashion Week in 2002.

Now in its 23rd year, VFW ranks as the fastest-growing fashion week in the world.

“I am incredibly proud,” he says, of this major accomplishment. “It took a long time and it’s been a slow and extensive process and really made me want to help local and international, emerging designers.

“Because it took me so long – I understand how challenging it is. It makes me even more determined and driven to open doors for others.”

The Jamal Abdourahman story is clearly one of drive, determination and unparalleled success.

Fluent in three languages and able to converse in 25 others, Jamal initially attended college with the plan to work for the United Nations and travel the world.

Instead, Vancouver Fashion Week created the stage for him to showcase talented local and international designers to reach global markets, fashion media types and industry buyers.

“I am incredibly proud. It took a long time... and really made me want to help local and international, emerging designers.”

Sara Murray, VCC Program Coordinator





Jason Mackay, VFW Director of Global Partnerships



St. George's Junior Class of 2036 parents: l-r Julia Nortan, Sabine Martz, Maggie Aron, Pilar Wong, Aileen Iloreta

It also opened the worldwide doors to designers who can't show at the big events, such as London, Paris, Milan and New York.

Abdourahman recognized the immense potential of Vancouver's diverse fashion landscape and determined he wanted to create a platform to support these talented local individuals.

"Vancouver is on the fashion radar because of the multiculturalism of the city," he notes. "Vancouver is so international and is recognized for its influences by diverse cultures bringing creative dynamism."

"This has built a vibrant fashion ecosystem pushing Vancouver onto the fashion radar. If you look around the city, the signals are there: Gastown, Main Street and Fourth Avenue in particular host so many independent fashion boutiques, showcasing our city's love and understanding of fashion."

"Also, VFW is the largest fashion showcase in North America, following only New York Fashion Week. The city is evolving in the fashion industry and onto the global stage."

Locals who have made their name and built a following through Vancouver Fashion Week, include Alex S. Yu, who celebrated his brand's 10th anniversary on the stage where he started, marking his return from his recent showcase at New York Fashion Week.

"I explore the fine line between reality and fantasy," says Yu, who made his Vancouver Fashion Week debut in 2014, after graduating from the London College of Fashion.

His 2024 showcase marked exactly 3,688 days since his brand's debut, which "rolics the happy emotions of childhood, nostalgia and wanderlust."

"I ponder the very definition of femininity in a modern and quirky way through garments," he adds. "The Alex S. Yu girl loves to have fun and isn't afraid of trying new things."

Peggy Morrison has had a long affiliation with Vancouver Fashion Week, having spent the last four decades evolving her role to the summit of Executive Program Director, at the Blanche Macdonald Centre.

**"Vancouver is so international and is recognized for its influences by diverse cultures bringing creative dynamism."**



As a trailblazer in the fashion community of the Pacific Northwest, Morrison teaches Fashion Elements and Awareness and is now in her fifth decade of ushering Blanche Macdonald graduates into the heart of the local industry.

“I’ve been a regular attendee at Vancouver Fashion Week for many years,” she says. “For the most part this has been in support of students and grads of BMC who have chosen to show their collections.”

Noting how she has witnessed firsthand, to seeing the annual event grow, venues changing and participants increase.

“It’s become a huge draw and this year was amazing. It’s exciting and certainly an important opportunity and show space for aspiring designers and others,” she says. “And I must add that I’m personally grateful for the two awards they’ve given to me in recent years.”

“It’s exciting and certainly an important opportunity and show space for aspiring designers and others.”

Jamal Abdourahman is already teeming with ideas and concepts for future Vancouver Fashion Week events; while racking up more than 1,000,000 air miles in global promotion of Vancouver’s thriving complement of designers.

“We have finished another exciting year, culminating in our recent Spring/Summer 2025 showcase that occurred in October of this year,” he says. “We hold our six-day Fashion Weeks twice a year during Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter seasons at David Lam Hall.

“Here we showcase numerous designers ranging from local to global talent.” ■



Right Top: J. Andrew Jackson with Julie Berg from LaSalle College  
Right Bottom: Designer, The Cut

TRUSTED  
FINANCIAL ADVICE,  
TESTED BY TIME

ZLC  
FINANCIAL



Garry Zlotnik  
Chairman & CEO

E: [gzlotnik@zlc.net](mailto:gzlotnik@zlc.net) T: 604.688.7208  
1200 - 666 Burrard Street, Vancouver



# ***MINE & YOURS***

## ***Redefining Sustainable Luxury Fashion***

**Story:** Rana Akkari  
**Photography:** Mohamed Al Saber  
**Location:** Mine & Yours

Mine & Yours, owned by Courtney Watkins, is a leading Canadian designer resale business that champions sustainable fashion. This woman-owned brand has grown over the past decade from one to three stores between Vancouver and Toronto, offering curated collections and fostering a community that embraces eco-friendly style.

Focused on circular fashion, Mine & Yours empowers customers to make sustainable shopping choices through its “Sell to Us” program, making pre-loved designer pieces accessible and stylish. The brand has cultivated a thriving online

store [mineandyou.com](https://mineandyou.com) and social media community with more than 68,000 Instagram followers on @mineandyouSCO, where like-minded individuals connect, celebrate sustainable fashion, and shop luxury collections conveniently online.

By combining quality with environmental consciousness, Mine & Yours is reshaping the fashion industry.

**Brand Mission:** *To empower a community to invest in themselves, their closet and the environment by making high-end fashion accessible and sustainable.*

## Q&A WITH COURTNEY WATKINS, OWNER OF MINE & YOURS

**Q: What makes Mine & Yours stand out?**

**Courtney Watkins:** I think what makes us stand out is the luxury shopping experience we offer to our clients, when you walk into one of our boutiques or even when you shop online you get that first-hand shopping experience, some shoppers don't even realize they are shopping pre-loved!

**Q: Tell us about the new Kitsilano location.**

**Courtney:** We're super excited about opening in Kitsilano! It's such a stylish, eco-conscious neighborhood and the response has been amazing. It's helped us connect with even more people who care about sustainable fashion.

**Q: Are more people choosing to shop secondhand this holiday season?**

**Courtney:** Yes! People are rethinking how they buy things, and sustainable gifting is perfect for those who want to give something meaningful and unique. It's also an accessible way to gift luxury without the price tag.

**Q: Who's your target customer?**

**Courtney:** Our customers range from luxury shoppers at places like Holt Renfrew or Louis Vuitton looking for sustainable options, to younger people wanting their first high-end item on a budget. They care about investing in their style and the planet. We also see the full three generations shop together in our stores — mothers, daughters, and grandmothers — all finding something special to take home.

*“...What makes us stand out is the luxury shopping experience we offer to our clients...”*





***“When clients walk into the stores we want them to feel like we are welcoming them home!”***

**Q: What’s the role of the “Sell to Us” program in the customer experience?**

**Courtney:** It’s a huge part of what we do! It lets customers swap items they no longer need for something they really want — like a Chanel bag. It’s simple, sustainable and helps people keep their wardrobes fresh without adding to fashion waste.

**Q: Who would you like to thank for some of your success today?**

**Courtney:** Sophia Koumbis, our current Director of Brand. I knew when I hired her to be my right hand, that she would help me elevate Mine & Yours through her great connections, partnership opportunities and overall wonderful personality!

**Q: Sophia, can you let us know what you love most about working at Mine & Yours?**

**Sophia Koumbis:** I love that Mine & Yours offers a luxury resale experience with the feel of a high-end boutique, complemented by exceptional and friendly customer service. I love that the team provides personalized shopping experiences, including private “sip

and shop” events and tailored home buys, when clients walk into the stores we want them to feel like we are welcoming them into our home! Last but not least I love that the store feels like a treasure hunt, featuring everything from vintage finds to new designer pieces, making luxury accessible to everyone.

**Q: Sophia, what does a day in the life of a Director of Brand look like at Mine & Yours?**

**Sophia:** My day involves engaging with all our locations to ensure everything aligns with our high standards. From the displays and the overall feel of the stores to delivering exceptional customer service, every detail matters. I focus on maintaining cohesiveness across all aspects of the brand, whether it’s working with staff, refining in-store experiences, or ensuring that every element reflects the quality and attention to detail our customers expect. ■



# BEAUTY, BRAINS, & BRAUN: The Next Generation

Story: Sandra Thomas  
Photography: Mohammad Alsaber  
Creative Direction: Aeron Avinou & Amanda Coleman  
Location: The Vancouver Club







THE  
VANCOUVER  
CLUB

Dr. Martin Braun, founder of Vancouver Laser & Skin Care Centre



In a field where development doesn't always make friends, Dr. Martin Braun, founder of Vancouver Laser & Skin Care Centre, embraces a philosophy that challenges the status quo.

*"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world. The unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man."*

This quote by George Bernard Shaw captures Braun's approach to innovation. His willingness to push boundaries and question established norms has positioned him as a global leader in both aesthetic and regenerative medicine in Canada, forging a path that redefines wellness from the inside out.

## With Dr. Braun at the helm, Vancouver Laser & Skin Care Centre continues to push the boundaries of aesthetic and regenerative medicine.

With decades of experience and a track record as Canada's first provider of laser hair removal, Dr. Braun now turns his focus toward the vast possibilities of regenerative medicine — a field he believes will transform health optimization on a global scale and become a trillion dollar business.

"Stem cells, exosomes, growth factors, peptides, and hormones will all be a part of this new paradigm," he says. "Beauty truly is more than skin deep. By optimizing our internal health, we enhance our youthfulness — who doesn't want clear, glowing, radiant skin?"

At Vancouver Laser, Dr. Braun and his team — many of whom have been with him for more than 20 years — are delivering visible, lasting results by integrating advanced technologies like lasers, radiofrequency, microneedling, and ultrasound with cutting-edge cellular biostimulants. While combination therapies are highly effective, pairing them with regenerative medicine elevates results to an entirely new level.

Dr. Braun's forward-thinking approach extends to cutting-edge treatments involving exosomes and stem cells. Exosomes, tiny particles that cells use for communication, are a game-changer in regenerative aesthetics, especially when paired with laser treatments to maximize anti-inflammatory effects.

"I recently underwent two stacked energy-based treatments that should have left me red and swollen for days," explains Dr. Braun. "But with exosome infusion, swelling vanished, and redness faded instantly. These regenerative technologies are truly remarkable."

In his practice, Dr. Braun uses exosomes derived from stem cells, which can transform into multiple cell types, producing cells necessary for tissue repair and regeneration. While current regulations in Canada limit stem cell therapies to clinical trials, Braun sees vast potential in regenerative treatments that responsibly harness these cells.

“Beauty truly is more than skin deep. By optimizing our internal health, we enhance our youthfulness — who doesn’t want clear, glowing, radiant skin?”

To continue his cutting-edge work, in 2021, Dr. Braun founded R-MEDY<sup>MD</sup>, a hub for innovation in maintaining and supporting optimal health and achieving complete body confidence. Derived from the word “remedy,” meaning to cure, put right, or correct, R-MEDY<sup>MD</sup> values an enhanced patient experience and focuses on providing quality services and expert care.

The team’s highly personalized and customizable approach to health and beauty allows each patient the opportunity to discover what works best for them. Today, R-MEDY<sup>MD</sup> has three main branches across the Lower Mainland, including R-MEDY<sup>MD</sup> Functional Medicine, R-MEDY<sup>MD</sup> Executive Health, and R-MEDY<sup>MD</sup> Aesthetics Centre.

Braun’s dedication to this emerging field has earned him invitations to speak at prestigious global

conferences, showcasing Vancouver Laser as a leader in integrative and preventive health.

He advocates for ethical practices and patient autonomy, noting other countries, including South Korea, have successfully advanced regenerative therapies through physician-government collaboration. At the recent Regenerative Aesthetic Exosome Summit in Seoul, where Braun was a guest speaker, he observed the role of South Korea as an epicenter for innovative aesthetics, exporting their advancements globally.

“Many of our diseases have an inflammatory root, and addressing inflammation is essential for healthier tissues,” says Dr. Braun. “Conventional medicine often relies on corticosteroids and immunosuppressants, which can carry severe side effects. Regenerative medicine, on the other hand,



Trish Bondoc  
Corporate Health



Jessica Vance  
Medical Assistant



Mikela Hamilton  
Laser Technician



Wesley Carbonel  
Medical Assistant



Kaitlyn Wood  
Clinical Educator, RN



Lisa Li  
Operations Manager



Baneet Khun Khun  
Clinical Educator, RN



Harmen Chahal  
Laser Technician



Amanda Coleman  
Marketing

introduces biological anti-inflammatory agents that aid in true tissue regeneration.”

With a team of skilled professionals, Dr. Braun’s focus is on making “aging gracefully” a reality. His holistic, future-focused approach underscores the importance of enhancing “health span,” not just “life span,” and using the latest in regenerative medicine to support well-being at every stage of life.

“There are multiple ways to enhance health with the goal of a more fulfilling and energetic life,” he says. “The first rule in longevity medicine is to stay alive — to make use of every available resource to keep your body systems in peak condition so that they can take advantage of the next breakthrough around the corner.”

With Dr. Braun at the helm, Vancouver Laser & Skin Care Centre continues to push the boundaries of

aesthetic and regenerative medicine, proving that Vancouver has the potential to become a global hub for transformative, integrative health solutions.

His holistic, future-focused approach underscores the importance of enhancing “health span,” not just “life span.”

Dr. Braun’s work and vision embody a belief that with regenerative technologies like stem cells and exosomes, people can genuinely take control of their aging process, redefining what it means to grow older in a world where science and beauty converge. ■



# NICHE EYEWEAR

Story: Joe Leary  
Photography: Mohammed Alsaber  
Location: Niche Eyewear

*Stylish and trend-setting eyewear is the perfect accoutrement for the fashion-forward.*

In Vancouver, Niche Eyewear is the go-to, and Valerie Afriat travels the world to source the very best in artisanal, independent, hand-crafted eyewear selections.

Her connection to her craft was formed early on, hanging out with the fashion designers and seamstresses at her parents' Montreal clothing factory.

"I was captivated by the magic of transformation," she recalls.

"Watching designers take a simple piece of fabric and turn it into something extraordinary sparked my imagination.



“It wasn’t just about the creation of new garments; it was about the journey of turning an idea into reality and I was most fascinated by the emotion that accompanied wearing something crafted uniquely for me.”

She discovered that selection of colours, textures, and finishes to create one-of-a-kind pieces proved exhilarating.

“The transition from ordinary to exceptional in what I wore made me feel like a million bucks.

“Even at a young age, I relished that sense of individuality and specialness.

“The joy of crafting something that could transform ‘blah’ into spectacular was both invigorating and addictive, and it left a lasting impression on my love for design and creativity.”

As someone who started wearing glasses as a child and having to come up with her own outfits, she found it frustrating to have to wear boring frames.

“I hated that we all looked the same back then,” she recalls of her childhood eyewear options.

Growing up, finding eyewear that reflected her personality became an obsession.

“There was a freedom in being able to make something that fit properly, and in the colours and textures I liked.”

Valerie soon came to discover that the eyewear business incorporates significant handmade aspects.

Upon graduation, she moved to Toronto and toiled in all levels of the fashion industry, from retail to wholesale.

In 2018, Afriat moved across the country and opened her first Niche Eyewear Boutique in Vancouver’s Main Street neighbourhood.

Today, Niche Eyewear has three Lower Mainland locations.

Valerie Afriat designed and built out the locations’ interiors herself, right down to the furniture.

The clean, linear look and all-white background keep the emphasis on the frames while remaining welcoming and “not too medical.”

“Watching designers take a simple piece of fabric and turn it into something extraordinary sparked my imagination.”

She exudes appreciation with the company's growth.

"Growth in a niche market like eyewear often reflects hard work, creativity, and a deep understanding of the customer's needs and trends," she says.

"It's been six years since I opened my first location.

"I look at it like a labour of love and can't believe where I am.

"I sometimes have to pinch myself."

And whether the glasses are by prescription or merely a fashion accessory, Afriat assures that there is a frame to fit every face.

"Yea, there is," she declares, adding, and it's not always by following any standards set out by the industry.

"While individual preferences play a significant role in choosing eyewear, there are general frame styles that tend to complement specific face shapes: but some of our designs do not follow any of these rules.

"I suggest you come in and give us one to two hours to set out for a complete makeover.

"Relax and have fun while we go through a selection of different shapes and styles and colours to finally find that one frame that illuminates who you are and truly makes you smile." ■



"The transition from ordinary to exceptional in what I wore made me feel like a million bucks."

Eyewear you Love - Service you Deserve  
[www.nicheeyewearboutique.com](http://www.nicheeyewearboutique.com)

South Granville - 1493 W. 12th Ave,  
Vancouver, BC (604)871-8700

Kitsilano - 1965 W. 4th Ave,  
Vancouver, BC (604)734-4499

Ambleside - 1370 Marine Dr West  
Vancouver, BC (604)913-6650

# NICHE

eyewear boutique





# We Have Your Style Covered

YOUR TAILORED KITCHEN AWAITS



CLASSIC ▲  
*Chic Casual*

**MERIT**   
KITCHENS  
CRAFTSMANSHIP EXCELLENCE SINCE 1971

Beauty on the inside. And out.



# ART OF PHILANTHROPY

Story: Matt Currie

## EXPLORING THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND FINANCIAL VALUE IN B.C.'S ARTS SCENE

Philosophically opposed though they may seem on the surface, art and business have always had a symbiotic relationship.

In 15th-century Italy, the Medicis devoted a sizable chunk of their banking fortune to fund such Renaissance men as Da Vinci and Michelangelo. Over the years, that tradition has continued far beyond Florence — a partnership between money and artistry that forms the cultural bedrock of communities across the globe.

B.C. is no exception.

The “arts and culture grants” page on the City of Vancouver’s official website ([Vancouver.ca](http://Vancouver.ca)) sports a quote from Canadian artist Douglas Coupland: “A city without strong, consistent arts funding is basically a parking lot.” And though the city and Vancouver Park Board award upwards of \$11 million annually in grants to artists, in order to keep the arts scene from being paved over, more is required.



Brandt C. Louie, CEO London Drugs by H.Y. Louie



Van Dop Gallery, by Trudy Van Dop

The galleries, theatres and museums of our province rely on donations from all corners of the community. That includes nonprofits, such as the Vancouver Foundation and local businesses, including Anna’s Cake House and London Drugs — a billion-dollar retail chain that started out as a single pharmacy on Main Street in 1945.

“The arts are woven into the fabric of our communities,” says London Drugs CEO Brandt C. Louie, “and we take pride in supporting this sector . . . Giving back and making an impact in the local communities we serve is important to London Drugs, which is what led us to create the London Drugs Foundation more than 20 years ago.”

Among the beneficiaries of their philanthropy is the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (VSO). Angela Elster, president and CEO of both the VSO and its School of Music says, “The financial support which London Drugs provides, and our shared commitment to fostering youth development through access to music and music education, continue to enrich the lives of thousands of students participating in the VSO’s educational programs each year.”

Of course, giving back is not an entirely selfless act.

As business gives to the arts, the arts give to business, in often-underappreciated ways.

“The bigger sponsors, they do it for a variety of different reasons,” says Trudy Van Dop, founder of New Westminster’s Van Dop Gallery, and CEO of Van Dop & Associates — a cultural marketing and art consulting firm. “Some of [the donations] are for tax benefits and some of them are for personal satisfaction.”

She notes, the networking opportunities are also huge.

“Organizations that are supporting organizations like [local youth arts initiative] Arts Umbrella in a financially big way are doing it also for their business reputation, and to gain respect in the community — and hopefully gain some clients through that sponsorship.”

Meanwhile, when it comes to businesses in smaller communities, donating to the arts is an investment of a different sort.



Antibalas, Afrobeat Band May 27, 2024



15th international festival theatre of music and dance Mezzo-soprano Alessandra Volpe

“It’s important, even to their own staff, that an arts council or a local theatre exists,” says Van Dop. “Who would want to move to a community that does nothing? It’s a draw for employers to bring employees in. I think most families want to have that access to creative programming.”

Uniquely positioned at the intersection of art and commerce, Van Dop’s official title is “cultural entrepreneur,” but she also sees herself as a philanthropist — donating time and expertise on a grassroots level, largely by publishing BC’s Guide to Arts & Culture and its online platform, Art-BC.com.

“I sort of look at what I do as helping organizations facilitate their marketing efforts in an affordable manner, because a lot of them are dependent on government funding,” she says. “And government funding is not sustainable. The money’s here today and it’s gone tomorrow.”

As a gallery owner herself, Van Dop is well-versed in all of the arts scene’s tricky economic realities. She cites the public’s ongoing, post-COVID wariness of gathering in crowds, the rising cost of living, the ever-changing economics of marketing via social media and the lack of affordable venue space as key pitfalls for struggling artists.

And unless a gallery, theatre or museum is a registered nonprofit organization, there is no opportunity to apply for government grants.

While we’re on the topic of “nonprofits,” Van Dop takes issue with the term. She believes a redefinition is in order — to recognize how those organizations function and the return on investment they yield.

“A city without strong, consistent arts funding is basically a parking lot.”

“Art stimulates and frames our views of nature, civilization and generally improves our understanding of ourselves and our surroundings.”

“I have, over the years, realized that there is no such thing as ‘nonprofit,’” she says, “because every nonprofit needs cash flow in order to survive. They’re actually ‘social profit’ organizations that benefit the fabric of their community. If someone’s knocking on your door looking for a donation or a sponsorship, and you look at it from that standpoint, it changes the mindset.”

All told, whatever mix of economic upside and charitable spirit that may factor into the decision to donate, any burden of supporting the arts is a small one to bear when you consider the consequences — financial and cultural — of letting them wither.

“Art stimulates and frames our views of nature, civilization and generally improves our understanding of ourselves and our surroundings,” says Van Dop. “Shared humanity allows us to see that we are often facing the same issues, no matter who we are.” ■





# VERSA HOMES

FINE BUILDING



# Your Custom Home Builder

*Building luxury homes in greater Vancouver*

## CUSTOM HOMES

A Versa custom home is carefully crafted using the industry's best-rated materials and construction practices. We carefully assemble your home, looking out for every detail inside and outside of your walls. Construction science is very important to us, making the strength and energy efficiency of your home outperform most homes in the industry. It wouldn't be custom if we used basic materials and adopted construction practices.



## CUSTOM ESTATES

There's nothing quite like the privacy, feel, and smell of a fresh new luxury estate home that is built to your exact specifications. Versa layers its systems and expert craftsmen to keep track of every detail in these intricate homes. We have the sharpest eye in the industry for elegance and details that in your unique custom estate project at Versa. Enjoy every room and amenities like Kings and Queens. From relaxing in your spa and swimming in your pool to hosting epic parties, playing tennis, and even riding horses in your backyard. Want to land helicopters in your estate home? Indulge in the luxury of a Versa Homes custom estate. Experience regal amenities like a spa, pool, tennis court, and horseback riding. Host epic parties and even land helicopters in your backyard. We'll make your home a reality of opulent living.

## ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Tailored to Perfection. At Versa Homes, we specialize in creating architectural designs that define luxury. Every aspect of our custom home architectural design is meticulously crafted to reflect your unique vision, ensuring that no detail goes unnoticed. From the grand entrance to the smallest architectural features, our expertise ensures that every element is executed to the highest standards of quality and craftsmanship. Our commitment to excellence means that each home is a masterpiece, tailored entirely to your lifestyle and preferences. Whether it's a sprawling estate or a modern sanctuary, we take pride in delivering homes that are truly one-of-a-kind, designed with unparalleled attention to detail and top-tier finishes that set the benchmark for luxury living. ■



**184 KINSEY DRIVE**  
**PRICED AT \$7,688,000**

Ideal Family Retreat. This is the finest contemporary home to come on the market in Anmore. No expense has been spared; this residence is equipped with every imaginable feature, including an outdoor infinity pool nestled within an incredible outdoor living area.

# DISCOVER ANMORE

Uncover the charm of Anmore and find out why it has become the most desirable destination in the Greater Vancouver Regional District. Anmore boasts an enticing mix of amenities that enhance its rising popularity, including highly rated public and private schools, the stunning natural beauty of Buntzen Lake, Eagle Mountain, and numerous nearby parks. These locations offer plenty of hiking and biking trails, as well as community-organized outdoor events—all conveniently located in your backyard.

Give Glen Bohnet a Call for an Anmore Tour or to view any of these stunning homes.



Glen Bohnet - Your Anmore & Tri-Cities Specialist  
 Team Bold Real Estate Strategies  
 Royal LePage West Real Estate Services



**2057 RIDGE MOUNTAIN DRIVE**  
**AVAILABLE SOON**

This classic executive residence is situated on a scenic lot in the esteemed Pinnacle Ridge Estates. Contact us for more information.



### 3299 BLACK BEAR WAY

**PRICED AT \$6,999,000**

This private estate boasts an expansive carriage house and is priced significantly below construction costs, having just undergone a \$1,000,000 reduction. It features 2 elevators, RV parking complete with its own dump station and a 50 amp plug-in. With countless amenities to discover, please call for further information.



### 2911 FERN DRIVE

**PRICED AT \$3,888,000**

This stunning property boasts over \$700,000 in recent luxury upgrades, featuring one of the largest spa pools available. Offering exceptional value, it sits on over an acre of land with 5,600 square feet of living space. Ready for you to move in!



### 1975 NORTH CHARLOTTE ROAD

**PRICED AT \$2,499,000**

An exceptional opportunity awaits. Any prospective buyer stands to save millions on the purchase price. The home is prepared for framing. Contact us for exclusive details about this luxury residence.



### 2668 FERN DRIVE

**PRICED AT \$3,888,000**

A luxurious home featuring significant recent upgrades, situated on a premium half-acre lot in a private, gated, park-like environment.



# JESSEL EVENTS

## Drishti Award Gala

**B**rian Jessel was the title and presenting sponsor for the 10th Annual Drishti Awards Gala dinner held at the Aria Banquet Hall.

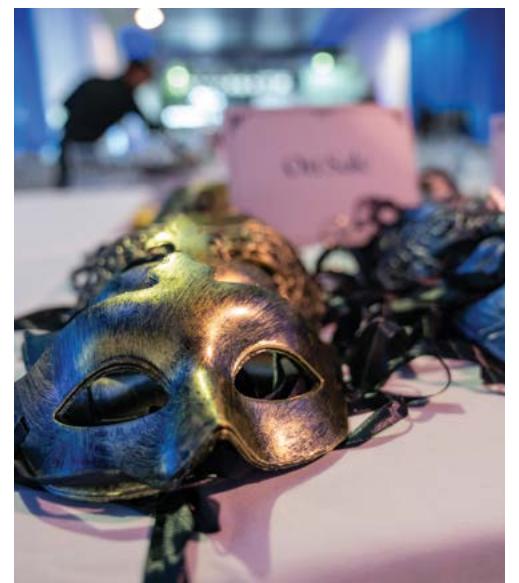




# EVENTS



**Venetian Night at Brian Jessel BMW**





# EVENTS

**B**rian Jessel BMW, Foundation and Magazine hosted their annual luxury holiday party to celebrate their employees.

**Brian Jessel BMW  
Staff Holiday Party**



**Webster awards**

Jessel Magazine proudly sponsored this prestigious media award. As an elite publication in BC for over 20 years, we were honoured to support such an important event, celebrating the exceptional achievements of BC's finest journalists.



**Diwali Event**

At Brian Jessel, we are proud to support and celebrate the diverse communities that make British Columbia thrive. Recently, we had the honor of sponsoring the 10th Anniversary Gala Dinner of the British Columbia India Business Association Diwali Gala Dinner.

At Brian Jessel, we believe in giving back to every community in our beloved province, and we are inspired by the shared values of collaboration, respect, and unity.





## A Masterpiece in the Making – The Dalmore Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky



For nearly two centuries, **The Dalmore** has been a beacon of excellence in the world of single malt Scotch whisky. Founded in 1839 and located in the Scottish Highlands, the distillery is renowned for its rich heritage and commitment to producing luxurious, complex whiskies. At the heart of The Dalmore's success is its innovative aging process, which involves maturing its whisky in a combination of rare casks, including Matusalem sherry, Madeira, and Port wine barrels. This meticulous cask selection and the influence of master whisky makers, Richard Paterson and Gregg Glass, have solidified The Dalmore's reputation for producing single malts with exceptional depth and a distinct house style marked by dark chocolate, coffee, and spice notes.

As we enter the holiday season, The Dalmore 21 Year Old stands out as an exceptional gift for whisky aficionados. Aged in American white-oak, bourbon casks and finished in hand-selected, 30-year-old Matusalem

Oloroso sherry casks from Gonzalez Byass, this expression embodies The Dalmore's signature style of indulgent richness and layered complexity. The Dalmore 21 Year Old presents an exquisite bouquet of orange marmalade, ginger spice, and treacle on the nose, leading to a palate filled with hints of marzipan, cinnamon, and ripe figs. The finish is long, smooth, and satisfying, with whispers of dark chocolate and coffee lingering on the tongue. Housed in a sleek, elegant bottle adorned with the iconic 12-point royal stag emblem, it embodies both tradition and modernity — a timeless gift, which promises to be treasured.

The Dalmore's legacy of craftsmanship, attention to detail, and use of rare-cask finishes make its whiskies a symbol of sophistication and excellence. This holiday season, elevate your gift-giving experience with The Dalmore 21 Year Old, a true masterpiece that captures the essence of Highland whisky-making at its finest.

# Fettercairn Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky: A Hidden Gem of the Highlands



Tucked away in the heart of the Scottish Highlands, **Fettercairn Distillery** is one of Scotland's most storied and distinctive whisky makers. Established in 1824, Fettercairn has built a reputation for producing single malt whiskies with a unique and refreshing character, shaped by both tradition and innovation. The distillery's picturesque setting, surrounded by lush forests and clear mountain streams, plays a vital role in crafting its distinctively smooth and tropical style, making Fettercairn a hidden gem in the world of Highland Scotch.

A defining feature of Fettercairn is its innovative copper cooling ring, a hallmark that sets the distillery apart. This unique device, which fits around the neck of the stills, allows cold water to cascade down, rapidly cooling the copper and maximizing condensation. The result is a lighter, purer spirit that retains the signature fruity, tropical notes Fettercairn is known for.

The distillery's focus on sustainability is evident in its efforts to reduce its carbon footprint and its proactive approach to water conservation. Fettercairn sources its water

from a nearby natural spring, harnessing the purest quality without depleting local resources. In recent years, the distillery has also initiated several projects to enhance biodiversity around its estate, planting native trees and working with local farmers to source 100 per cent of their barley. These initiatives reflect Fettercairn's forward-thinking vision and dedication to preserving the environment for future generations.

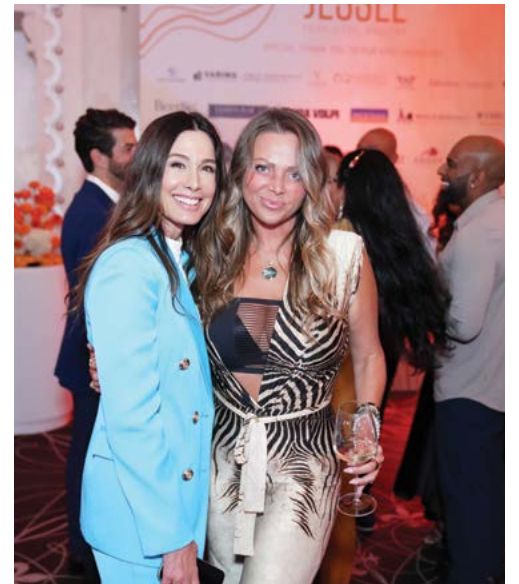
The **Fettercairn 18 Year Old**, in particular, showcases the distillery's commitment to craftsmanship and sustainability through its unique maturation process. The whisky is aged in a combination of American white-oak, bourbon casks and finished in specially selected Scottish oak casks. Sourcing local oak not only reduces the carbon footprint associated with importing casks but also imparts distinctive flavours to the whisky. Scottish oak casks contribute a rich, earthy character, enhancing the whisky with notes of roasted nut and spice, which complement the tropical and fruity profile characteristic of Fettercairn's spirit.



# EVENTS

The spring edition of *Jessel Magazine*, featuring Chef Rob Feenie on the cover, was unveiled at the elegant Rosewood Hotel Georgia, an ideal venue that perfectly complements the magazine's celebration of luxury, refinement, and prestige.

## Launching the spring edition 2024 of *Jessel Magazine*





# EVENTS

We were delighted to host and sponsor the 50th anniversary gala dinner of HAVAN (BC Home Builders Association). Over 700 guests experienced an evening of exceptional luxury hospitality.

## 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner of HAVAN



## Annual Final Cup and Gala Dinner for Dynamo Fencing

We had the pleasure of hosting and sponsoring the Annual Final Cup and Gala Dinner for Dynamo Fencing. Supporting young talent and fostering youth development are core values of our foundation.



## Women & Wealth Event

The Women & Wealth Event, hosted and organized by Brian Jessel BMW brand ambassador Linda Mah, CEO of BIIG Financial Services, attracted over 20 successful women in business.



# EVENTS

## German Canadian Business Association Gala Dinner





**BC Diplomatic Consular Corp Gala dinner**





ALH DESIGN BUILDERS LTD.

# Made With Love By A Master Builder

Planning and Design

Preconstruction

Demo and Construction

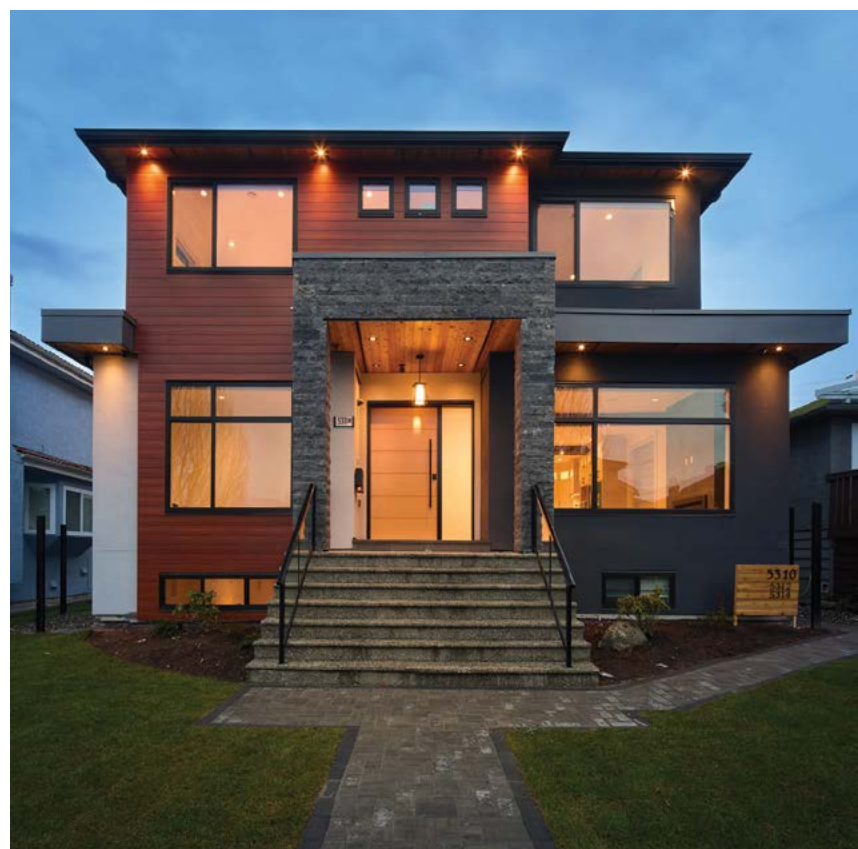
Construction Management

Located in Delta servicing Delta,  
Vancouver, White Rock and  
surrounding areas

(778) 320-5471

[alleylanehomes@gmail.com](mailto:alleylanehomes@gmail.com)

[alleylanehomes.com](http://alleylanehomes.com)







*Murder in a Small Town* - Photo credits: Global

# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Story: Lesley Diana

British Columbia attracts film, TV producers – and fans – worldwide. The following productions were shot in locations throughout BC and are available for you to enjoy.

Season 3 of *Fire Country* stars Max Thieriot, Stephanie Arcila, and Kevin Alejandro. Bode Donovan, a young convict seeking redemption, joins an unconventional prison release firefighting program, where he and other inmates are partnered with elite firefighters to extinguish massive, unpredictable wildfires. It's a high-risk, high-reward assignment. Global and STACKTV.

*Murder in a Small Town*, starring Rossif Sutherland and Kristin Kreuk. 'Karl Alberg' moves to the idyllic coastal town of Gibsons to become the new police chief and soothe a psyche battered by big-city police work. Karl needs to call upon all the skills that made him a world-class detective in solving the murders that continue to wash up on his shore. Global TV and STACKTV.

With the runaway success of the first season of *Tracker* on CBS/CTV, Season 2 sees Justin Hartley's return as Colter Shaw, a lone-wolf survivalist who roams the country as a reward seeker using his expert tracking skills to help private citizens and law enforcement solve mysteries. Colter contends with a fractured family — and a potential conspiracy involving his late father. CTV.

*Backroad Truckers* crisscross the unforgiving terrain of Western Canada with bigger jobs and feuds. Armed with an arsenal of troubleshooting skills and attitude, the cast battle each other and Mother Nature to get the job done. Whether hot shooting vital cargo for big money or wheeling and dealing, they are tested at every mile. HISTORY®/STACKTV.



*Fire Country* - Photo credit: CBS, Global



*Tracker* - Photo credit: CTV



*Allegiance* - Photo credit: CBC



The high-octane police drama *Allegiance*, CBC's most-watched new series, stars Supinder Wraich and Enrico Colantoni. The series focuses on identity and belonging, policing and politics, and finding truth within the heart of a flawed justice system. Season 2 will be rooted in a powerful set of engaging and topical storylines, including online gambling, tech janitors and international schools. CBC/CBC Gem.

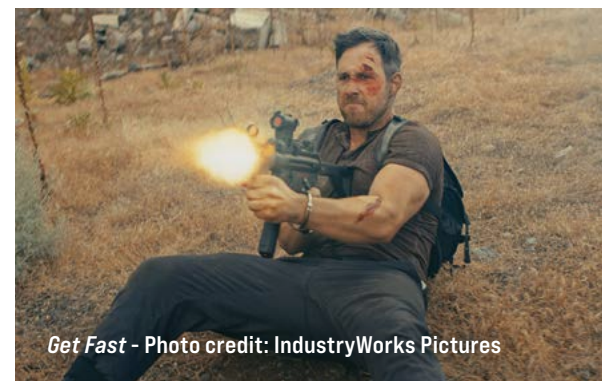
*Wild Cards* is a crime-solving procedural with a comedic twist that follows the unlikely pair of by-the-book cop Cole Ellis (Giacomo Gianniotti) and clever con woman Max Mitchell (Vanessa Morgan). As partners, Ellis does hard-boiled police work while Max uses disguises and schemes and befriends everyone in sight – driving Ellis nuts while simultaneously charming him. CBC/CBC Gem.

Tyson Media's heartfelt original series *Pets & Pickers* reveals how the Regional Animal Protection Society (RAPS) Animal Hospital in Richmond, BC, works tirelessly to offer pet families affordable access to top healthcare with a unique solution to fund these treatments: their thrift store. A group of "pickers" comb through donated abandoned storage locker items. CRAVE.

*Rust Valley Restorers*, filmed in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, is one of the most unique car communities in the world. It features acres of old, abandoned cars and junkyards and Mike Hall's crew revives automotive relics by creating dream cars that ordinary people can afford to drive. HISTORY® Channel and STACKTV.

Writer/Director Ben Immanuel's new film *Are We Done Now?* stars Gabrielle Miller, Favour Onwuka, and Jennifer Spence. A therapist (Miller) and her diverse young clients participate in a (fictionalized) documentary exploring the impact of global crises on mental health, which will be released next year.

*Get Fast* is the sequel to *Bullet Proof*. When a thief's partner is kidnapped after stealing millions in cash from a ruthless drug lord, he reluctantly teams up with an angst-ridden orphan to rescue him — starring James C. Clayton, Lou Diamond Phillips, Lee Majdoub, Fei Ren, Phil Granger and Suleiman Abutu. Guns, cars, and explosions will give the newfound partners a head start, but for how long? ■





# ***DISCOVERING MEXICO CITY***

## **A JOURNEY INTO ELEGANCE & CULTURE**

Story: Jim Murray

As seasoned travelers with a taste for the exquisite, my wife Linda and I recently embarked on a luxurious escapade to Mexico City. Drawn by the thrill of the Formula 1 Grand Prix and the city's vibrant culinary offerings, we were eager to explore this cosmopolitan gem. Often compared to European capitals, Mexico City is a rich tapestry of culture, history, and gastronomy.

### **ACCOMMODATION: POLANCO'S OPULENCE**

Our journey began in Polanco, Mexico City's equivalent of Rodeo Drive, renowned for its upscale boutiques and top-tier restaurants. We chose The Alest Hotel in Polanco; this sophisticated boutique hotel served as the perfect sanctuary due to its prime location and private setting, offering an intimate and cozy atmosphere. It provided a tranquil escape from the bustling streets outside. The W Hotel is also nearby in Polanco.

**Each moment spent here is a brushstroke on the canvas of your journey—an exquisite blend of flavors, sights, and sounds that linger long after you leave.**

### **CULINARY DELIGHTS: A GASTRONOMIC ODYSSEY**

Mexico City’s dining scene is nothing short of spectacular. Our culinary adventure commenced at Pujol, helmed by Chef Enrique Olvera, renowned for his creative reinterpretations of Mexican classics. The “Mole Madre,” aged for over 2,000 days, was an unforgettable highlight. We also dined at Quintonil, led by Chef Jorge Vallejo, who emphasizes sustainable practices and farm-to-table philosophy. Each dish showcased the richness of Mexican produce, beautifully presented and bursting with flavor.

### **EXPLORING NEIGHBORHOODS: ROMA CONDESA AND BEYOND**

Beyond Polanco, we ventured into Roma Condesa, celebrated for its bohemian vibe and an abundance of luxury hotels and dining options. The area is perfect for leisurely strolls along tree-lined streets filled with vibrant cafes that capture the essence of Mexico City’s eclectic spirit.

### **CULTURAL EXCURSIONS: A BLEND OF HISTORY AND MODERNITY**

Mexico City offers more than just culinary delights. We visited cultural landmarks like the Museo Frida Kahlo and the historic Zócalo, where colonial splendor meets modern innovation. The city’s historic center is a treasure trove of art and architecture that speaks to its rich past.





## AN ENCHANTING TAPESTRY OF EXPERIENCE

In this vibrant metropolis, luxury intertwines seamlessly with culture and adventure. Mexico City invites you to savor its culinary masterpieces while immersing yourself in its rich history and artistic spirit. Each moment spent here is a brushstroke on the canvas of your journey—an exquisite blend of flavors, sights, and sounds that linger long after you leave.

## WHERE TO STAY

- The Alest Hotel in Polanco: A boutique luxury hotel offering privacy and elegance.
- The Ritz Carlton: Located near Roma Condesa, favored by F1 teams for its helipad and ultra-luxury settings.
- The Four Seasons: A few blocks from the Ritz, featuring an amazing courtyard.

## WHERE TO EAT

- Quintonil: A 2-star Michelin restaurant ranked #7 on the world's top 50 list for 2024.
- Pujol: Another 2-star Michelin establishment, consistently among Mexico's best.
- Rosetta: A 1-star Michelin restaurant also in the top 50 globally.
- Contramar: A hotspot known for its packed lunch and dinner services.

**Often compared to European capitals, Mexico City is a rich tapestry of culture, history and gastronomy.**

- Hacienda de los Morales: Offers authentic Mexican cuisine with excellent value.

Whether you're indulging in world-class dining or wandering through its storied streets, Mexico City promises an unforgettable experience that resonates with sophistication and charm, leaving you yearning for your next encounter with this enchanting destination. ■

# BANDA VOLPI

## IN BOCCA AL VOLPE



SAVIO VOLPE

Lepino's



Elio Volpe

BANDAVOLPI.COM

# PANERAI



L U M I N O R  
M A R I N A  
A N I T A L I A N L E G E N D

Vancouver – 1008 Alberni Street – (604) 207-5528