



# Navigator News

Updates on cruise activity along Canada's West Coast



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## BRITISH COLUMBIA READY FOR 2007 CRUISE SEASON

**Ports anticipate banner year  
for cruise visits to BC  
destinations...**

Canada's West Coast has never looked so attractive for cruise lines and, more importantly, for cruise passengers. Cruise BC partners – Campbell River, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, Prince Rupert, Vancouver and Victoria have worked hard over the winter to streamline logistics and operations, offer new facilities and prepare for an exciting cruise season that now includes BC-only itineraries.

**Campbell River** – Starting with the biggest development, Campbell River's Terminal, Wei Wai Kum Cruise Ship Terminal, is ready to welcome its first cruise port-calls in the 2007 season. The Regent Seven Seas Mariner will be making four stops this season, with the inaugural docking scheduled for June 5, 2007.

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[www.cruisebc.ca](http://www.cruisebc.ca)

## 2006: ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SEASON FOR BC CRUISES



**Unique experiences, friendliness and cleanliness contribute to high passenger satisfaction**

Celebrity Cruises followed up its successful 2005 fall cruise season in coastal British Columbia with three- and four-night cruises aboard the *Mercury* during September and October of 2006. Eight sailings were offered featuring the BC Inside Passage and four BC ports – Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, and Prince Rupert.

Passenger survey results demonstrate that British Columbia is an up-and-coming cruise destination: Nearly nine out of ten passengers rated their overall cruise experience a "4" or "5" on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 as poor and 5 as excellent).

The beauty of the Inside Passage, the wilderness and wildlife experiences and the clean and friendly ports were frequently mentioned as highlights of the passenger experience. Each port offered something unique, from the urban to the wilderness, from shopping to bear watching:

- In **Vancouver**, passengers enjoyed the cosmopolitan city, with Stanley Park topping the list of memorable sights and attractions.
- In **Victoria**, passengers were captivated by the beauty, the culture and history of this capital city. Favoured sights and attractions included the renowned Butchart Gardens, the museums, and tea at the Empress Hotel.

*Nine out of 10 passengers agree –  
cruising in British Columbia is a great  
experience.*

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## CRUISE BC – ACTIVITY UPDATE

Cruise BC has worked hard over the past year to continue building the momentum that defined our initial years of operation. While 2006 was a fantastic year for cruise lines visiting Canada's West Coast, behind the scenes work on marketing, communications and research were the cornerstone of preparation that allowed us to work seamlessly with cruise line representatives. And we expect an even more successful 2007 as Cruise BC partners work even closer together.

Checklist of activities:

- In a unique partnership that was very successful on a number of levels, Cruise BC partnered with Celebrity Cruise Lines and Tourism BC to generate bookings on Celebrity's *Mercury* vessel during the 2006 fall season to BC ports in September and October. Not only did the initiative provide an opportunity to market to consumers and travel agents but also to develop a key relationship with one of the most active cruise lines on the West Coast.

A total of eight three and four-day sailings of the *Mercury* to BC destinations were offered between September 15<sup>th</sup> and October 9<sup>th</sup>. Starting in Seattle, BC ports of call included Victoria, Nanaimo, Prince Rupert, Vancouver and cruising BC's Inside Passage. Direct marketing and consumer advertising results were impressive and average occupancy was above 95% for all sailings.

Conducting research has always been a strong component of Cruise BC's mandate and 2006 was no different.

- Building on an Economic Impact model developed especially for Cruise BC, the association was able to determine that the 2006 cruise season in BC contributed more than \$1.3 billion to the BC economy and almost \$100 million in direct and indirect taxes. Import-



## PASSENGER SURVEY (CONT'D)

- Passengers enjoyed the warm welcome they received in **Nanaimo** from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the shopkeepers and the townsfolk lining the dock for the *Mercury's* morning arrival. Passengers took in the numerous tours and sightseeing opportunities extending from Nanaimo to the heartland of Vancouver Island.
- Prince Rupert**, BC's northern-most port of call, offered unexpected beauty and wilderness to passengers experiencing this Northern British Columbia gem for the first time. Passengers said the scenery, tours, and attractions were unforgettable.

Most BC cruise passengers in 2006 were from the U.S., with the western United States producing 85% of all passengers. Washington State was the largest source of passengers, with 52% of the total. California (12%) and Oregon (11%) were also good producers. The other regions of the U.S. produced only 7% of all passengers. Canadians also made up 7% of the total passenger volume.

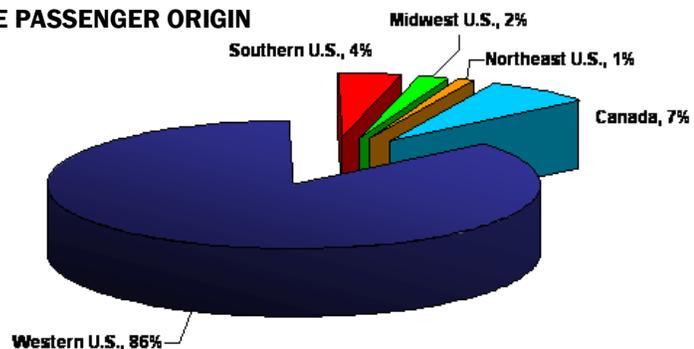
The profile of BC cruise passengers shows that they were experienced cruisers, with

62% having taken at least one cruise in the past, highly educated and affluent, with an average household income of \$78,000 USD. The average age of passengers was 53 years.

"The BC cruise product has proved popular again among Celebrity Cruises passengers. BC ports are providing unique, high quality experiences for passengers and gaining more and more experience accommodating large cruise ships. We will use this passenger research at Cruise BC to continue to support development of cruises featuring British Columbia and to assist BC ports in understanding this cruise market. We have made steady progress toward our goal of building a BC-based world class cruise destination. However, we still have much work to do in building additional market demand and destination capacity. This research will guide us in our efforts." said Greg Wirtz, Chair of Cruise BC and Manager, Trade Development, Cruise for Vancouver Port Authority.

Celebrity Cruises will continue to offer British Columbia cruises aboard the *Mercury*, increasing from eight sailings to twelve sailings for fall 2007.

**BC CRUISE PASSENGER ORIGIN**



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## 2007 CRUISE SEASON (CONT'D)

“Passengers will be greeted in traditional Wei Wai Kum manner,” said Campbell River Indian Band Economic Development Officer Jodee Dick. “Passengers will embark at a traditional First Nations Themed Village showcasing art, crafts, souvenirs and traditional foods.”

Dick goes on to describe the wide variety of attractive shore packages, all available through “As Wild as You Like Adventures”, the one window booking agent for shore excursions in Campbell River. As Wild as You Like can provide capacity of over 1,000 seats for a four-hour port call; over 2,250 seats for a six-hour call and over 3,100 seats for an eight-hour call.

**Vancouver** – The Port of Vancouver continues to offer cruise passengers more ships and departure dates to choose from than any other port. The Port will welcome 33 ships in 2007 at its two cruise terminals, Canada Place and Ballantyne. With the U.S. Direct Program now in its third year of operation, Vancouver reps anticipate more passengers will opt for the quicker and easier transfers between Vancouver Airport and their cruise ship.

**Victoria** – Victoria continues to be a leading cruise ship service centre. This is evidenced by the five large cruise ships that will be going into local area dry-docks, and the 14 pocket cruise ships scheduled to visit the spectacular Inner Harbour. The Greater Victoria Harbour Authority is anticipating an estimated 324,000 visitors on 20 different cruise ships making 163 calls to the Ogden Point Terminal during the season.

**Prince Rupert** – Prince Rupert Port Authority is projecting more than a 75% jump in cruise passengers and nearly 50% in cruise ship calls in 2007. Not only are new ships scheduled to make port calls on more days, the average length of their visit will be longer. “In 2007, ships will be calling consistently on two days a week compared to one day last year,” noted Vice President Business Development Shaun Stevenson. “The average time in port will increase to



*The new Wei Wai Kum Cruise Ship Terminal in Campbell River.*

nearly eight hours – some ships, such as Royal Caribbean’s *Vision of the Seas*, are planning 10-hour visits.”

**Nanaimo** – The Port of Nanaimo continues to be an attractive destination for cruise ships travelling Canada’s Inside Passage. Increases seen in the past few years will continue in 2007 including (as noted in our profile of Nanaimo on Page 4) 15 sailings.

**Port Alberni** – Although Port Alberni has yet to be included as a regular port of call for cruise ships, the community is benefitting directly from the Port of Nanaimo’s success. During the last season, one of the most popular shore excursions for cruise visitors to Nanaimo was Port Alberni’s McLean Mill National Historic Site and the Alberni Pacific Steam Train ride. The popular steam train ride and steam-powered heritage sawmill hosted seven shore excursions last year and that total will climb to 14 for the upcoming year.

## REFRESHING UPDATE TO CRUISE BC BRAND

**New Pavilion at Seatrade the latest initiative in evolution of Cruise BC**

Breathtaking scenery and diversity of shore product play a large part in the theme of this year’s newly updated West Coast Pavilion at the Seatrade Convention in Miami this March. “Cruise BC continually finds fresh and exciting ways to communicate the attractiveness of British Columbia as a cruise destination,” said Cruise BC Communications Chair Doug Peterson. “Canada’s West Coast is unique and we are proud to be able to demonstrate this at a venue such as Seatrade. And recognizing that cruise representatives want substance as well as looks, this year’s Pavilion provides greater detail on tourism opportunities and port logistics.”

While a refresh of the brand may be the first noticeable difference to the Pavilion, visitors will also be pleased to find more in-depth information available about the six destinations that make up Cruise BC – Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, Prince Rupert, Campbell River and Port Alberni.

When visiting Cruise BC representatives at Seatrade (Booth 329 in the Destination Section), be sure to request an updated *Port Profiler*, containing detailed information on each destination.





## PORT PROFILE

## ACTIVITY UPDATE (CONT'D)

Following their most successful season yet, the community of Nanaimo is planning for a future as one of the premier destinations for cruise ships on the West Coast. Nanaimo began development of their cruise initiative in 2001 and provides a text book example of how to grow an industry. While having been strong in the pocket cruise ship market (i.e., ships with under 500 passengers) for the last 10 years, Nanaimo's gains in attracting larger vessels has been nothing short of spectacular. "We saw seven ships visit Nanaimo in 2005, 10 in 2006 and we're anticipating 15 visits in 2007," said Bill Mills, Nanaimo Port Authority's CEO. "To allow for this level of continued growth, the Port has developed a plan for the construction of a facility that will allow cruise vessels to dock alongside a berth and do away with the current practice of tendering passengers to shore."

Based on market research, Mills anticipates that Nanaimo could achieve between 30 and 50 cruise visits per year. "This would generate a range of between \$7.1 and \$11.8 million in direct spending alone and doesn't take into account indirect economic activity that is generated by the creation of new jobs and other indirect spending."

The new dock would be almost 300 metres in length and able to accommodate two ships at once. Currently, Nanaimo Port Authority is in discussion with federal, provincial and regional government agencies to gain support for the initiative. If approval of the project proceeds on schedule, construction would be completed in time for Fall, 2008. "A cruise facility is in keeping with City of Nanaimo economic development initiatives and would serve as a catalyst for regeneration in the downtown area in conjunction with the new Nanaimo Conference Centre currently under construction," said Mills. "It's a very exciting time for Nanaimo."

tant benchmarks were set for several BC cruise destinations, including the Port of Nanaimo with a 28% increase over 2005 numbers.

- Another success story for Cruise BC in 2006 was the high satisfaction levels achieved in the Passenger Survey conducted during Celebrity's Mercury sailings (see story, page one of this newsletter). Nine out of 10 passengers rated their overall cruise experience as very good or excellent.

Cruise BC's other initiatives aimed at promoting cruise in British Columbia included:

- Hosting a government networking session in Victoria in conjunction with the Union of BC Municipalities Convention and Cruise BC's Annual General Meeting.
- Promoting and gave away a cruise for two at the UBCM Convention in partnership with Vancouver Port Authority.
- Refreshing the Cruise BC branding and produced a new *Port Profiler* and a new website – both containing updated and more detailed information than previous versions.
- Undertaking a aerial photo and video shoot of Celebrity's *Mercury* against the setting of the Inside Passage.

Cruise BC has just completed an updated Business Plan, taking the association through to 2010. While communications, marketing and research continue to be the focus, some of the initiatives planned over the next three years will provide for additional leveraging of resources with key partners as well as providing leadership and guidance to emerging destinations that are currently reviewing their own community plans to include cruise activity.

### Cruise BC Association

**Chair:** Greg Wirtz, Vancouver Port Authority  
**Vice Chair:** Shaun Stevenson, Prince Rupert Port Authority  
**Secretary/Treasurer:** Doug Peterson, Nanaimo Port Authority

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#### Directors-at-large:

Darryl Anderson (Greater Victoria Harbour Authority); Mike Carter (Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce); Teresa Davis (Tourism Campbell River and Region); Jodee Dick (Cambell River Indian Band); Jennifer Ford (City of Nanaimo); Helen Glavinic (Western Economic Diversification Canada); Richard Hartigan (Port Alberni Port Authority); Norman Lee (BC Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts); Richard Lewis (Tourism BC); Dayna Miller (Tourism Vancouver); Tracey Webster (Tourism Victoria)