

The Pender Islands

Peaceful, magical and magnificent

WITH EVOCATIVE PLACE NAMES like Magic Lake and Miracle Beach, the Pender Islands certainly sound enticing. Even Grimmer Bay summons images of piratical days of old. But the truth is that curiosity aroused by any aspect of “the Penders” is usually satisfied upon experiencing these beautiful islands first-hand.

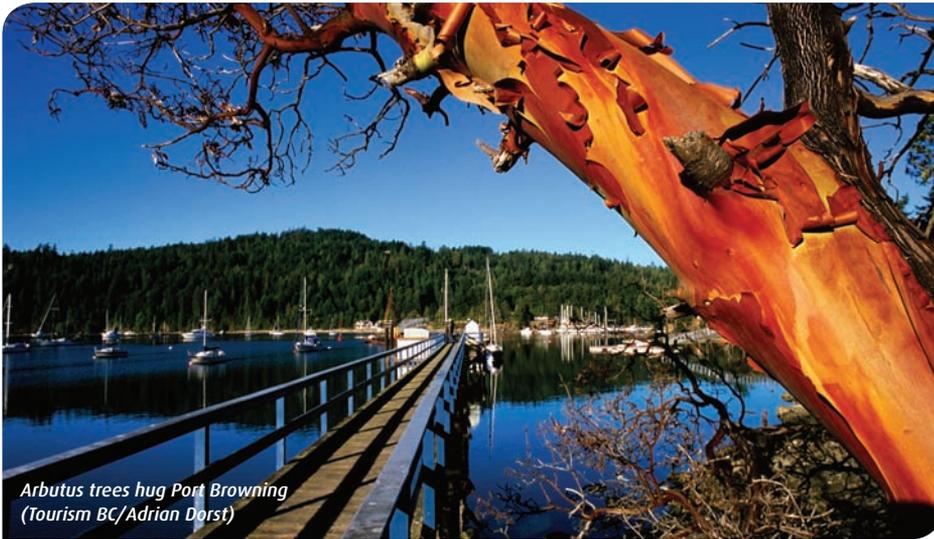
They received their name from Captain George Henry Richards in honour of Staff Commander Daniel Pender. The Royal Navy officers served

together on HMS Plumper between 1857 and 1859, the first three years of Pender’s thirteen-year stint meticulously surveying the coast of BC. At that time, the Penders were actually one island joined by an isthmus known as Indian Portage. The linking strip of land was dredged in 1902 to create a canal to ease the passage of the steamship Iroquois. It took another 53 years for North and South Pender to be joined once more, but this time with an attractive one-lane bridge.

Occupying 34 square kilometres of rural land in the Strait of Georgia and almost encircled by the islands of Salt Spring to the west, Mayne directly north, Saturna in the east and the American San Juan Islands a short distance south, the Penders are home to an artistic community of around 2,500. Constituting the second largest southern Gulf Island population, the great majority of “Penderites” are settled around Magic Lake on North Pender. South Pender is wilder with fewer roads, but plenty of unspoiled countryside, woods and coves begging to be explored.

Easily accessed from Vancouver, Victoria or Seattle, the islands possess a way of life as far removed from urban hubbub as can be imagined. Photographer Kevin Oke and his wife Cherie relocated from Vancouver and haven’t looked back. “We came in 1989 to leave the rush of the big city and enjoy a quieter and more relaxed pace,” he says. “We were drawn primarily by the recreational activities, and what at that time was the ‘funky’ atmosphere the Gulf Islands had.”

a way of life as far removed from urban hubbub as can be imagined



Arbutus trees hug Port Browning
(Tourism BC/Adrian Dorst)



THE QUEEN VICTORIA HOTEL AND SUITES

VICTORIA BC

Steps from Beacon Hill Park, downtown shopping and dining. The Queen Victoria Hotel embodies elegance with personalized service. Relax in our fitness centre...Savour West Coast cuisine in Samuel’s Restaurant overlooking Thunderbird Park.

655 Douglas St ~ Victoria, BC V8V 2P9 ~ TEL (250)386-1312 ~ FAX (250)381-4312 ~ TOLL FREE 1-800-663-7007
WEB www.qvhotel.com ~ EMAIL reservations@qvhotel.com



It's definitely relaxed here, a destination equally ideal for romantic getaways, peaceful family holidays and contemplative retreats. One popular South Pender spot is Poet's Cove Resort & Spa, a dramatic complex hugging the shoreline at pretty Bedwell Harbour. A plush venue for seminars, functions and comfy vacations, it's the perfect base from which to investigate island attractions.

To take advantage of the agreeable sub-Mediterranean climate of South Pender, two excellent hiking trails challenge fitness levels by leading uphill to Mt. Norman, or to Beaumont Marine Park by following the canal. There are many more trails, plus opportunities galore for kayaking, cycling, tennis and other open-air pursuits on land or sea. Golfers are thrilled by the impeccably manicured nine-hole Pender Island Golf & Country Club, and there's even a 27-hole 'disc golf' course for Frisbee® enthusiasts. Seven lovely parks add to the range of possibilities for outdoor exercise or leisurely meandering.

When traversing the Penders, you may encounter some of the islands' fascinating fauna. Local pods of dolphins and orcas are a common sight, as are bald eagles, seals, deer and river otters. Some of the Penders' 20 beaches may offer good vantage points for pod-spotting, three in particular being very popular. On South Pender, the Gowlland Point Park beach is arguably the most scenic of them all, but Hamilton Beach and, close to the canal, Mortimer Spit are also delightful spots to have fun or soak up the sun.

No matter what time of year, there's always something happening here: craft fairs, book



Bald eagles are a common sight
(Tourism BC/Tom Ryan)



Kayaking adventures await
(Tourism BC/Andrea Johnson)



The view from Morning Bay Vineyards & Estate Winery
(Tourism BC/Andrea Johnson)

launches, gallery tours, theatrical events, workshops, and more. The year's biggest event is the Fall Fair, held in the Community Hall every August. It features displays, floral contests, kids' activities, 4-H competitions, live entertainment, an art exhibition and a dance. The Community Hall is also host to the farmers' market held each Saturday from Easter to November.

For a dose of cultural history, head to the Pender Island Museum, located in the Roe House, built in 1908, and situated on one of the properties that now form the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve on North Pender. Another great North Pender outing is a visit

to the Morning Bay Vineyard & Estate Winery near Browning Point. Having introduced their first estate wines in the spring of 2007, this gravity-flow winery, housed in a charming barn, offers tours and tastings throughout the year. In September, the winery hosts Winestock, an excellent music festival featuring musicians from all over North America.

While the Penders are geographically stunning, it's the inhabitants that make a place what it is, a fact not lost on Oke. "Over the years, we've gained a real appreciation for the way a community can work together to achieve goals," he says gratefully, the stresses of city life long since forgotten. — David Morrison **VA**



NANAIMO | "IT'S AMAZING WHAT YOU CAN DO HERE"
VANCOUVER ISLAND



Enjoy a refreshing and relaxed atmosphere that fuels the imagination and fires the spirit. Experience a vibrant cultural scene, amazing culinary options, and fabulous galleries. Nanaimo offers a diverse range of recreational opportunities. Whether you come for a heart racing experience or to slow down to island time, you can do it here. **Nanaimo, its amazing what you can do here!**

CONTACT US TODAY FOR YOUR 2008 VISITOR'S GUIDE | 1 800 663 7337
www.tourismnanaimo.com

