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GIRLS WEEKEND

IN VICTORIA ON VANCOUVER ISLAND, CANADA



I have come to learn that weekend getaways are a necessary ingredient for sanity. A few days stolen from the chaos of everyday living. Somewhere not too far away and with someone you love spending time with.

A few months ago, I spent a weekend in Victoria, BC on Canada's West Coast, with my very good friend, Dana. Together, we planned the perfect retreat that included a lovely boutique hotel, amazing locally sourced dining, sightseeing, spa time and of course, shopping!

With the mildest weather in all of Canada, and pretty as an English postcard charm, Victoria is a wonderful island city that hums with tourist activity pretty much all year. The historic downtown core hugs up against the beautiful inner harbor and almost everything is within walking distance.



Dana and I were searching for a boutique hotel property that could live up to our much anticipated girls weekend. We chose Magnolia Hotel & Spa, located at 623 Courtney Street in the downtown center, just one block from the water. It is a 64-room boutique hotel that offers elegant and spacious updated suites, on-site dining, a full-service spa, and genuine hospitality that did not go unnoticed. For the last four years, The Magnolia Hotel & Spa has been named *Top Luxury Hotel in Canada* by TripAdvisor's® Travelers' Choice® awards - we were obviously in good hotel hands!

It's the little things...

We each had our own hotel rooms (one of us is a night owl and one of us snores!). Our 7th floor rooms overlooked the city and had a refined mix of dark wood furniture with modern touches, and raw silk inspired walls. The bathroom, which offered L'Occitane toiletries, was truly spa-like with a huge soaker tub and separate glass shower. The room details like the oversized plush "curl up with champagne for a girls talk marathon" armchairs, cozy gas fireplace and evening views of the twinkling lights on the BC Parliament buildings made our stay that much more memorable.





Staff always remembered our names and nothing was overlooked; we reveled in being made feel special with nightly turn-down service, handmade chocolates on our bedside tables, fresh fruit and in-house filtered water.

Hot breakfast was included, and Catalano's Restaurant on the hotel's main level, serves up a lovely morning menu with specialty coffees and eggs Benedict.

Of course, a girls weekend is not complete without an indulgent trip to the spa and it was awesome that we didn't have to leave the building to get pampered! We both opted for the Transformation Pedicure, which began with a luxurious foot soak, followed by customized exfoliation, nail shaping, cuticle grooming, lotion and polish. Feeling like royalty, Dana chose ruby red and I chose sapphire blue for our polish colors.



We were relaxed, polished and ready to take on the city!

Dana and I both appreciated that the Magnolia staff were so knowledgeable about Victoria, and provided us with insider tips on the best places to visit, suggestions on where to eat dinner, and even pointed us in the direction of a



local pop-up trunk show and sale that featured a collective of three local fashion shops, happening the weekend of our visit. Although, I'm still not sure if we should thank the concierge for that last tip - Dana and I definitely did our fair share of designer bargain shopping!

The Magnolia has custom local shopping and walking guides, curated bike trails and our favorite was the Tea-Riffic Trail which teaches you about Victoria's unique tea culture and gives you a handy map in case you want to go on a tea crawl. We did.

Our favorite of the day was Silk Road Tea. We popped in (624 Government Street) for a workshop and made decadent chocolate and matcha tea truffles - they were delicious! Silk Road also has a retail store filled with wonderful tea, body and lifestyle products.

Dana and I had a few other favorite stops and shops including North America's oldest Chinatown (Fisgard Street), Lore General Store (1322 Government Street), Violette Boutique (1303 Government Street), Little Gold (Market Square/Johnson Street), Papery (669 Fort Street) and The Milkman's Daughter (1713 Government Street).

