

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

West Coast Getaways combine Artist Studios Tours and the Pleasures of the Countryside

Saanich, April 17, 2009 For three weekends in May, Saanich, BC turns into a haven for art-lovers as local artists display their talent at weekend-long studio tours, making Saanich and its surroundings a spring getaway destination that promises to engage all the senses.

In spite of being a stones-throw away from BC's bustling provincial capital, [Saanich](#) has retained its rural charm, complete with farmers markets, country B&B's, historic trails, beaches and breathtaking vistas in little-frequented parks. One of the oldest agricultural settlements in the province, Saanich is also home to a diverse community of artists and artisans who surprise and delight visitors to their studios.

Artists Studio Tours in May

Kicking off the studio tour series is the "[Gordon Head Studio Tour](#)" on Saturday, May 2nd and Sunday May 3rd, 2009, where artists answer questions, share techniques and give demonstrations to studio visitors.

On Saturday, May 16th and Sunday, May 17th, the "[Artists in the Country](#)" Saanich West studio tour invites visitors to drive, jog, hike, bike or ride through lovely country side and stop by the artists' studios to browse and be inspired.



"She Bowled Him Over I" by Jenny Waelti-Walters

On Saturday, May 23rd and Sunday, May 24th, twenty-three studios scattered around scenic Cedar Hill Golf Course form the "[Saanich Scattered Artists Studio Tour](#)". Visitors to [Cindy Gibson's](#) display of finely crafted and delicately painted pottery are guaranteed to find the perfect gift for garden-lovers. [Hermann Edler](#) entertains with colourful wooden folk art. Internationally-known painter and print-maker [Jenny Waelti-Walters](#), whose original themes include crowds, crows and poppies-with-attitude, surprises with colour and shapes. Others entice visitors with displays of hand weaving, glass work, photography and paintings in oil, watercolour and acrylic.

Attractions and Recreation

While in and around Saanich, garden-fanatics will enjoy a visit to the well-known [Butchard Gardens](#), or venture into nearby Fairfield to discover the charming [Abkhazi Gardens](#), owned by the Land Conservancy of BC and famous for its majestic trees and dramatic site. Cyclists and hikers will want to discover sections of the [Lochside Regional Trail](#), a 29-kilometre former railway line which winds through wetlands and woodlands, farms and fields from Saanich to Sidney. Well off-the-beaten-track, Saanich parks combine stunning vistas of the Georgia Strait and Haro Strait with the subtle enjoyment of

protected Garry oak ecosystems and impressive Douglas fir and Cedar trees. [Bear Hill Park](#) covers nearly 49 hectares of hilltop landscape and erupts in a profusion of wildflowers in the spring. [Francis/King Regional Park](#) is a quiet old growth park of gentle woodland trails, wildflower meadows and boardwalk trails. Ambitious hiker will want to climb [Mount Work](#) and enjoy vistas from Vancouver Island over Juan de Fuca Strait to the Olympic Mountains.



Where to Stay

A range of unique accommodations invite those seeking a weekend away from the hustle and bustle - alone, with company, even with children and pets.

A stay at [Dayspring Farm Bed & Breakfast](#) promises rhododendron gardens, spacious suites and warm hospitality. The hostess, herself a quilter and participant in the Saanich West studio tour, encourages her guests to put their creative talents to work in the B&B's sewing room, or even organize a quilting retreat.

[Culinary Acres](#) offers a choice between Bed and Breakfast service as well as self-contained rental accommodations. Guests not only enjoy a plentiful garden with culinary herbs, fruits and vegetables; they can also learn how to use them in cooking classes with European-trained Master Chef Uli.

[Wintercott Country House Bed and Breakfast](#) in adjacent Saanichton evokes images of an elegant English manor house surrounded by idyllic scenes of sheep, horses and roadside markets. Wintercott Country House offers affordable rates and welcomes children and pets.

Planning your Trip

www.GoBC.ca offers detailed information about the Saanich Studio Tours and participating artists, along with accommodations, parks, attractions and travel tips. Saanich is located within 20 minutes of [BC Ferries'](#) Swartz Bay terminal, the Victoria International Airport, the Victoria [Clipper](#) ferry from Seattle or San Juan Island, and the [Coho](#) ferry terminal for guest arriving from Port Angeles.

GoBC Arts and Cultural Tourism Inc. is a Victoria-based independent business. GoBC's website at www.GoBC.ca invites visitors to discover BC's diverse artists, artisans and the province's rich cultural and natural heritage.

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