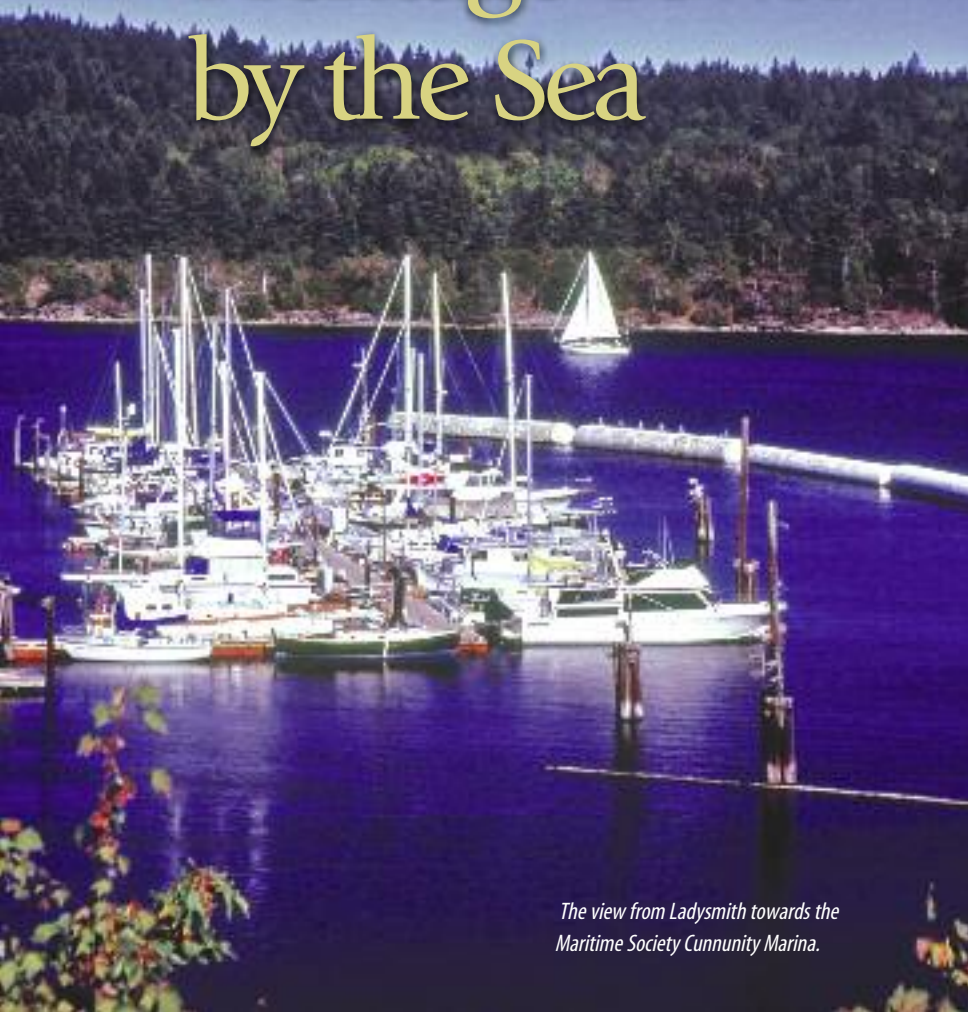


# Welcoming Ladysmith Heritage Town by the Sea



*The view from Ladysmith towards the Maritime Society Community Marina.*



we feel an overwhelming desire for terra firma. Sampling new restaurants & café's and exploring the shops & galleries of a historic small town for a day or two seems like a grand idea. The added bonus of a full-size bed and a peaceful retreat set amidst kiwi vines would complete the indulgence.

Exiting Sansum Narrows, Laurence pointed *Dreamspeaker's* bow north into Stuart Channel and headed for the historic Port of Ladysmith on the east coast of Vancouver Island. Straddling the 49th parallel and approximately two nautical miles from Slag Point to the shallows at its head, this is still a working harbour with multiple log booms being manoeuvred daily by nifty, mini-tugs. Perched on a steep escarpment, the picturesque Town of Ladysmith overlooks the harbour with magnificent views to the necklace of Gulf Islands on the horizon.

On our arrival we were pleasantly surprised to find a newly renovated and well-maintained Community Marina with its award-winning floating Maritime Museum, volunteer-restored

**"T**he recently upgraded Maritime Society Community Marina in Ladysmith Harbour is proud of its 900-foot, designated visitor dock. The Society welcomes cruising boaters to stay awhile and enjoy the hospitality, maritime history and preserved old world charm of Ladysmith's colourful First Street – just a trolley-ride or short walk via the Waterfront Art Gallery".

In the summer of 2009, it was time for *Dreamspeaker* and her crew to rediscover the Gulf Islands, perhaps British Columbia's most favourite cruising region for the recreational boater. We spent a sunny three weeks on the water hopping from one beautiful anchorage to the next, recording our adventures and updating guide information.

There comes a time, however, when



*A trolley bus ride around town adds to Ladysmiths historic flavour.*

heritage boats, a tented picnic and BBQ area filled with flowers, an intertidal viewing pool and well-placed teak 'lounging chairs' – perfect for a happy hour get together or boating rendezvous. The new marina now creates a convenient link from the harbour waterfront to the inviting small Town of Ladysmith with its preserved, turn-of-the-century architecture, vibrant shop fronts and excellent amenities.

For an energetic walk into town or to board the scheduled red trolley bus, pick up a map and trolley schedule from the wharf manager's office and take the timber-stepped trail from the marina car park past the Waterfront Art Gallery – worth a visit and filled with local artists – and across the railway tracks to Ladysmith's pocket-sized station and Waterfront trolley stop – the E & R Dayliner to Victoria and Courtenay stops here by request! The lights at the main highway have to be navigated before reaching Roberts Street and the uphill hike to First Street. If provisioning at a supermarket is top of your list, head down to the 49th parallel to Grocery on Warren Street and stock up – they will then deliver you and your bags back to the marina.

The waterfront trail leads west to Fishermans' Wharf and the boat launch

and east to Slag Point and the green, shady lawns of Transfer Beach Park. This is a family-friendly spot with a waterpark, volley ball nets, kayak rental and an off-leash dog park. On a sunny day, stretch out on a large beach blanket under the cool of a willow tree, read a book, nibble on a picnic lunch

and take a refreshing swim in the sand-warmed waters of the harbour. The park's unique beach front amphitheatre hosts excellent Sunday night concerts and is a popular venue for summer weddings that adds a touch of romance to the day.

We began our morning with a good coffee, yummy pastry and the daily papers at bustling In the Beantime Café; they win hands down for the longest chalkboard list of scrumptious fare and blended beverages. This is a fashionable place to meet during the week and you will see regular clientele working on their laptops, conducting business meetings or lounging on the comfy sofas just chatting and reading. Weekends are for the whole family.

The next few hours were spent popping in and out of the one-of-a-kind shops and galleries while following the Ladysmith Heritage Artefact Route. (Pick up a map at the friendly Chamber of Commerce desk.) These preserved pieces of historic industrial machinery – when Ladysmith was a mining, logging and busy port town – have been carefully renovated and painted and are now on display along the downtown streets. Two of our favourites are the Knight's Clock on First Avenue and the Fairbanks water pump below City Hall.

## Fun Facts

**Antique Addict** – A Place for Finds – Post Office Antique Mall

**Bayview Framing & Art** – Excellent Art and Quality Framing. 1st Ave. [bayframing.ca](http://bayframing.ca)

**Black Door Décor** – Experience the Lifestyle. 1st Ave

**Ladysmith Health Food Store** – A Comprehensive Health and Wholeness Concept. 1st Ave.

**Olivia's** – Fashion & Furnishings – For the Way You Live Now. 1st Ave. [olivias.ca](http://olivias.ca)

**Sweet Pea Quilting** – Selection of Top Designer Fabrics. Roberts St. [sweetpeaquilting.ca](http://sweetpeaquilting.ca)

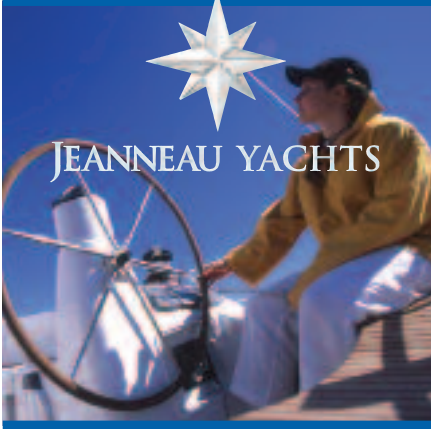
**The Top Drawer** – Where Fashion Only Looks Expensive. 1st Ave.

**The Worldly Gourmet** – Kitchen Tools & Gourmet Foods. 1st Ave. [worldlygourmet.ca](http://worldlygourmet.ca)

Shopping on First Street is my 'cup of tea' – no big box stores, just interesting, individual shops with a good few finds in every one – even at the local Thrift Store. Olivia's had a great sale on their summer stock which they displayed with panache; I coveted the elegant replica Art Deco tea pot and sugar bowl. A few shops down, The Top Drawer's eye-catching window display pulled me in instantly – they arrange their eclectic selection of consignment clothing by size/type/colour which made it easy for



*Ladysmiths Victorian era facades creates character, while Bean Time comes in handy for good coffee.*



For more information, contact one of the following Canadian dealers in your area!

**British Columbia**  
Fraser Yacht Sales  
1818 Maritime Mews  
Grandville Island V6H 3X2  
Tel: (604) 734-3344  
www.fraseryachtsales.com

**Ontario**  
Navy Point Marine  
One Port Street East  
Mississauga L5G 4S2  
Tel: (905) 271-2222  
www.navypointmarine.com

**Quebec**  
Marina Gagnon et files Ltée  
50 62nd Avenue  
St. Paul de l'île aux Noix J0J 1G0  
Tel: (450) 291-3336  
www.marinagagnon.com

*Step aboard a Jeanneau at the Annapolis Boat Show Oct. 8-12!*

## LADYSMITH, BC

me to find an extra small tank top in orange! They also carry a colour-coded selection of hats, bags and baubles.

The Worldly Gourmet is well stocked with quality kitchen tools and unusual European gadgets and it's hard to leave without something 'useful' tucked into your purse. For something completely different, visit McFrugals stocked from floor to ceiling with hardware, gifts and anything you think you might or might not need. As the name implies, this emporium is filled with bargains!

Boma Meats Butcher Shop is a must-visit. After fifty years in business, customers will travel from all parts of the island to stock up on their homemade sausages, buffalo being a new favourite. They also carry locally made meat pies, and Cornish pasties – perfect picnic treats. For dessert, nip into the Old Town Bakery for sticky cinnamon buns to go.

The Old Town Bakery carries more than just buns and is a lunchtime favourite. Service is fast and efficient and the small store is filled with hungry-making aromas. Customers line up outside the door while others squeeze around the café tables to enjoy a well-filled sandwich and bowl of homemade soup.

Before retiring to Dreamspeaker at the Community Marina, we treated ourselves to a cosy meal at the locally renowned and family-owned Transfer Beach Grill on Esplanade. Georgios, the passionate owner and chef prepares food made from scratch with fresh, sea-



*The harbour tour is a great way to appreciate Ladysmiths maritime heritage.*

sonal ingredients. His favourite southern Greek Island dishes are directly influenced by his grandparents who used the plethora of fresh seafood and farm produce to create simple, tasty dishes. We weren't disappointed and ended our scrumptious, piled-high seafood platter with homemade Baklava dripping with Greek honey.

Alternatively, experience the exotic flavours of the Royal Dar, a vibrant family-run restaurant on Roberts Street serving authentic Indian cuisine created by their chef from India – hard to get more real than that. My stuffed jumbo prawns were gigantic and flavourful; Laurence's slow-baked lamb shank in a mild curry sauce was first-rate. Our shared dessert of shaved mango ice layered with vanilla ice cream was heavenly.

The following morning, a blustery northwesterly kicked up whitecaps in the harbour but the clear blue skies and sunshine made it the perfect day for a Harbour Tour aboard the Maritimer, a restored deepsea life boat with a bright blue awning. Snug in our red PFDs and well balanced with five aside, our volunteer captain took the wheel, turned our sturdy boat into the waves and guided us on a scenic and informative tour of



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## LADYSMITH, BC



*The author has been delivered.*

the harbour and its islands. He was chatty, friendly and funny, and well versed in Ladysmith's maritime history and the antics of the local wildlife – harbour seals, bald eagles and oyster catchers to name a few.

After an hour at sea, we were all ready for lunch at Jimmy O's Grill on the patio deck of Page Point Marina. Under shady umbrellas with a glass of something cool in hand, we savoured its signature seafood chowder filled with chunks of halibut, salmon and potato and topped with clams, mussels and scallops – a meal in a bowl. Laurence couldn't resist their very fresh halibut (brought in from a local fish boat that morning) and hot, homemade chips. From his contented smile, I knew that they had been given a gold star.

The wind had dropped and our trip back to the marina was smooth. Laurence and I packed our small overnight bag. With secure moorage we checked Dreamspeaker's lines before heading off to Kiwi Cove Lodge to picnic in the shade of the vines and indulge in a little rest and relaxation. ↵

### Fast Facts

**Ladysmith Maritime Society Community Marina**

250-245-1146

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

- Water and power on the dock.** Separate washrooms, showers and laundry facilities. Wharf Manager available 7-days a week in the summer months
- Wireless internet
- Kid-sized PFDs on loan
- Endangered Purple Martin nest-cam
- Harbour and Maritime Museum tours – fun for the whole family