



The gang feasted on the fresh local fixings presented at Mile One Eating House after they pulled their 26-foot rig into Pemberton.

# We tackled B.C.'s Coast Mountain Circle Route via RV

**ADVENTURE:** How four old pals drove a home on wheels to some of the loveliest sights our province has to offer

CATHERINE ROSCOE BARR  
FOR THE PROVINCE

The four of us let out squeals of joy after returning our 26-foot home on wheels back to West Coast Mountain Campers — without a scratch.

We'd spent five days driving the 600-kilometre Coast Mountain Circle Route from Vancouver to Harrison Hot Springs to Hope to Lillooet to Pemberton to Whistler and back to Vancouver, on only \$210 of gas.

Leslie, Nissa and Katie, my three best friends from a one-year stint in Dillon, Mon., arrived for their first visit to Vancouver and our first reunion in 15 years. We effortlessly slipped back into our easy friendship.

Exploring the Coast Mountain Circle Route was an ideal way to proudly show off my adopted province with its storybook scenery and tasty attractions, and fall was the perfect time of year to travel with its reliably gorgeous weather and reduced tourist traffic. It's also value season for RV rentals, with a package similar to ours starting from \$700.

After an orientation to the vehicle we nicknamed The Senator, we began the two-hour drive to Harrison Hot Springs with myself as designated driver, passing through Chilliwack's lush countryside on our way.

Harrison Hot Springs is easily navigated by foot and we walked to the new Laughing Goat restaurant for lunch and then to rent bikes from Jamie's Quadricycle.

We set off for a self-guided ride of the Agassiz Circle Farm Tour in the spectacular afternoon sun and pulled over at Canadian Hazelnut, an organic farm where you can buy nuts in countless flavoured, buttered and candied forms.

Next we put our kickstands down at The Farm House Natural Cheeses and excitedly filed in to meet head cheese-maker Debra Amrein-Boyes who talked us through samples of her famous cow and goat cheeses.

With loot from our farm tour in hand, we checked into Harrison



Lunch on a scenic patio rewards those who muster up their courage and cross the Fraser on the Hell's Gate Airtram.

Hot Springs RV, which was exceptionally fancy for an RV park with manicured grounds and a new spa-like facility with hot tub, pool, washrooms and showers.

After getting ready in style, we sat down for dinner at the Harrison Hot Springs Resort's Copper Room — whose vibe reminded us of Kellerman's Resort in Dirty Dancing — where The Jones Boys were provoking guests to have an old-fashioned swinging good time.

The next morning we explored Othello Tunnels at Coquihalla Canyon Provincial Park, a series of train tunnels blasted through the Coquihalla Gorge by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1914 and now reincarnated as a popular attraction.

An hour later we were at Hells Gate Airtram where we soared

high above the Fraser River by cable car, overlooking the turbulent waters and man-made fishways for migrating salmon. On the other side we checked out the fisheries exhibit and fudge factory, followed by lunch on the cafe's scenic patio.

After an exhilarating journey snaking our way along narrow Highway 12, we pulled into Fort Berens Estate Winery, Lillooet's first winery, just before the sun set behind the Cascades. We were greeted by owners Heleen Pannekoek and Rolf de Bruin who named their winery after the fort established on the site by the Hudson's Bay Company during the gold rush of 1859 — a past that's also given a nod in their label's playful design.

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