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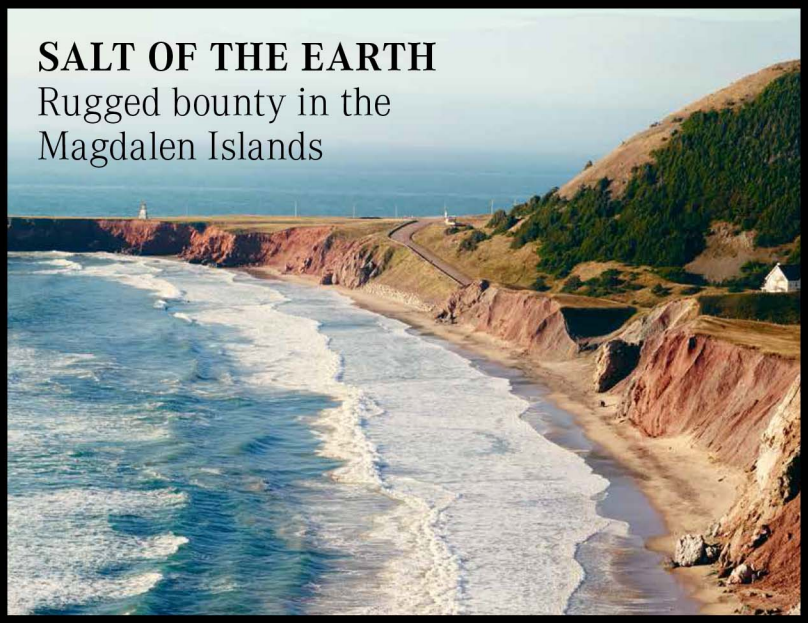
MERCEDES-MAGAZINE.CA CAD$12.95
15·SPRING/SUMMER

## IT TAKES TWO
Spirit and strength in the new GLE Coupe



## SALT OF THE EARTH
Rugged bounty in the Magdalen Islands

## WALL TO WALL
Canadian-made coverings

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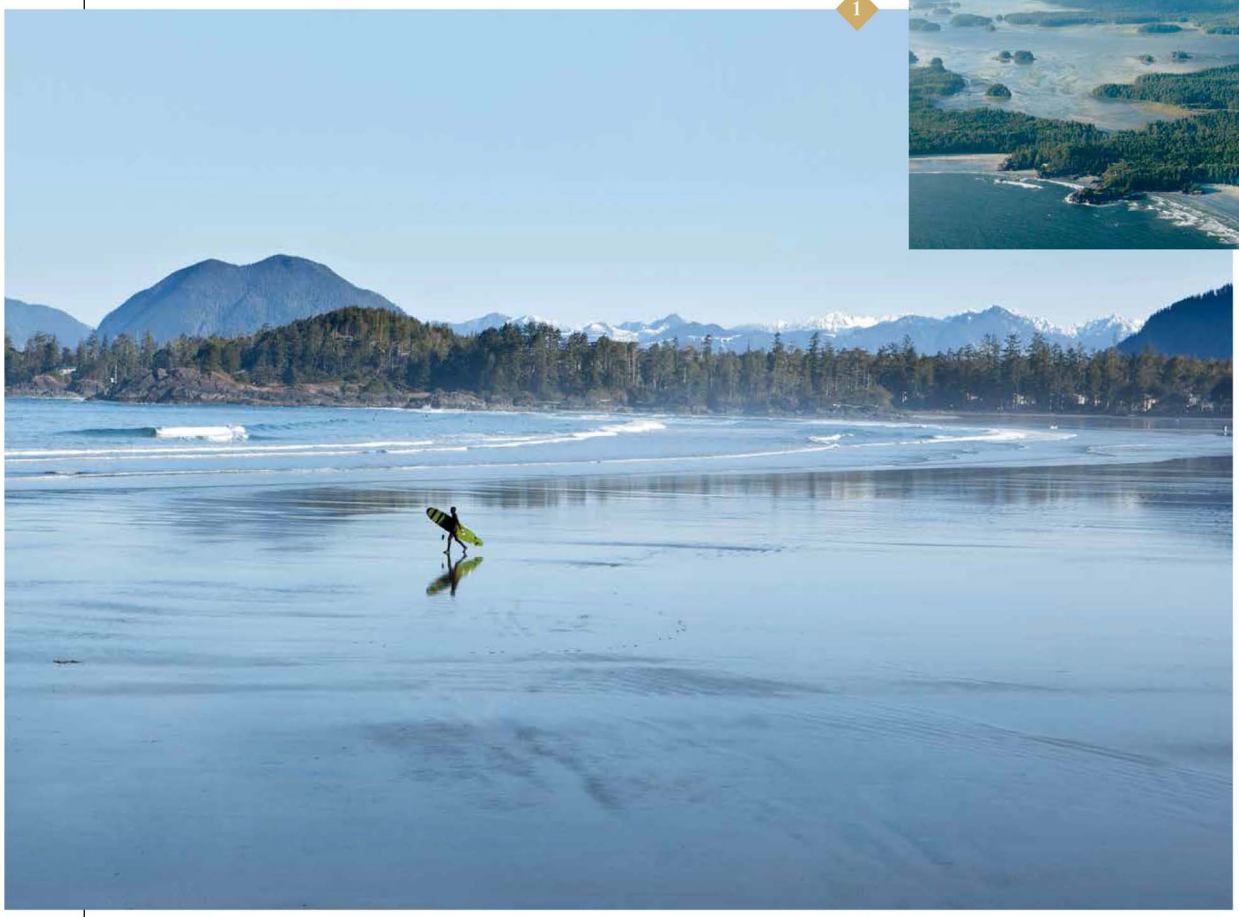
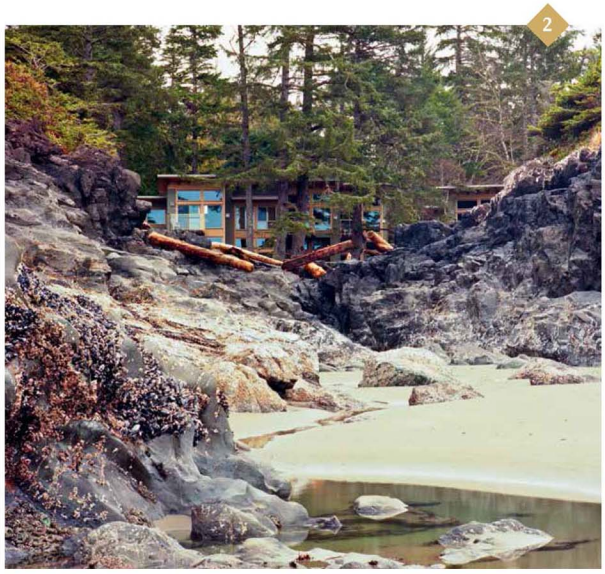
## CULINARY COPENHAGEN
Taste the future of food in the Danish capital



# Tofino 2.0

What to see and do in the Pacific Northwest's coolest town.

WORDS **NATASHA MEKHAIL**



TRAVEL

## THE SCENE

It's not your typical beach vacation. Tofino, on Vancouver Island's west coast, sees more days of rain than sun per year, and its summer highs sit closer to the teens than the thirties. But the draw of this chilled-out surfer town lies in its misty beaches, ancient rainforests and moody seascapes. Most notable is how this remote outpost caters to a diverse clientele of wave chasers, artists, outdoorspeople and holidaying urbanites with a brand of hospitality that both respects the local environment and raises the bar for service across Canada. We take a look at what's new – and what they've always done right – in the Pacific Northwest hot spot.

## THE STAY

Tofino may have a Main Street, but the real action is at Cox Bay. It's here that surfers take to the waves and locals stroll the bull-kelp-strewn beach. It's also home to Pacific Sands Beach Resort. For a defining Tofino stay, look no further than its three-level beach houses. Great pains were taken to ensure unimpeded ocean views, which you can take in from the four-metre windows, glass balconies and, best of all, the master bedroom's double soaker tub (there's room enough for two). Hang out with a book and a glass of wine, and when you're ready to hang 10, let the Pacific Sands team book you a surf lesson.

**PHOTOS** JEREMY KORESKI/TOURISM TOFINO (SURFER); CHRISTOPHER POUGET (WOLF IN THE FOG)

1. A landscape of mountains, coastline and forests converge in Tofino. 2. Beach houses at Pacific Sands Resort nestle right into Cox Bay. 3. Wolf in the Fog staff, including Chef Nutting (second from right) prep a West Coast meal best washed down with the restaurant's signature Cedar Sour. 4. Chocolate Tofino's master chocolatiers tap the flavours of the Pacific Northwest for their confections. 5. Local jeweller Christy Feaver draws inspiration from the ocean. 6. "Absolutely Oystercatcher 2012" is made up entirely of marine debris collected by artist Pete Clarkson.

DINING

## THE MENU

Opened last June, chef Nicholas Nutting's Wolf in the Fog has already carved out a presence on the Canadian culinary scene, topping *enRoute* magazine's 2014 Canada's Best New Restaurants list. But aside from his skillfully prepared dishes, the beauty of this restaurant is how much fun Nutting and his "pack" have with food. The fruits of their foraging excursions regularly end up on the nightly menu, and there's no shying away from experimental cuisine (think merguez sausage with Humboldt squid and quinoa-crusted sweetbreads). Meanwhile, mixologist Hailey Pasemko's drinks menu, including shareable punchbowls and a section devoted to beer-based cocktails, is as full of flavour as it is inside jokes (try the restaurant's signature Cedar Sour and ask about Jamie's Tears). Also new to Tofino are two raw bars. At the Fish Store & Oyster Bar, the intimate counter is the only place in town to sample the locally farmed Clayoquot Climax bivalves. For more oysters with a view, look to Ice House Oyster Bar, which took over a former fishing pier. Tofino's culinary old guard also has *nouveautés* on offer. Locavore restaurant Shelter introduced a four-season terrace with chill-chasing gas fires at the table, while pescatarian bistro SoBo released a cookbook, with foreword by longtime customer (and big-time fan) songstress Sarah McLachlan.

GOODS

## THE SHOPS

The potentially habit-forming Habit boutique stocks beachcomber-chic gear like hand-knit Wooden Ships sweaters and a spectrum of rain boots. A few streets over, metalworker Christy Feaver makes fun statement jewellery like reversible rings and "Traveller's Coin" necklaces – stylish talismans for frequent flyers. On Industrial Way, beer aficionados will love the newly expanded tasting room of the Tofino Brewing Company. Try a flight of its popular brews (including the bestselling Fogust Wheat summer ale), and take home a refillable growler. For kids, Chocolate Tofino's milk-chocolate bears, filled with a secret stash of choco-fish and sea creatures, make a sweet souvenir.

CULTURE

## THE ARTS

Pacific Northwest art draws on a colourful, symbol-steeped artistic tradition often associated with totem poles. In Tofino, find modern examples at the Eagle Aerie Gallery of Roy Henry Vickers, whose poignant, almost cartoon-like paintings of native legends contain hidden images only visible from certain angles. Drawing inspiration from First Nations artwork is Pete Clarkson, whose sculptures and wall hangings are created from marine debris, including driftage that washed up from the Japanese tsunami. Sol Maya, meanwhile, produces Chihuly-like glassworks. Find him in his Spirit of the Fire gallery – a charming hobbit-hole of a workshop – on the south edge of town.



**Pacific Sands Beach Resort**
Spring / Summer 2015 Issue – Mercedes-Benz Magazine