

28 Apr 08

[Shake off the ghosts](#) By [Shawn Conner](#)



I'd chosen Miraloma on the Cove for two reasons. One is that, due to the nature of our assignment, I felt the girl would feel more comfortable being not too far from home. The other was that I wanted to shake off some ghosts. One ghost in particular.

I pulled up in the driveway just in time to see her perched on a red motorcycle on the ramp leading to the underground lot.

She'd ridden up from nearby Victoria, and

I'd driven from Vancouver and taken the ferry over from the mainland. The motorcycle was a surprise, but then I didn't know much about her, or vice versa. I wasn't even sure it was her until she took off her helmet and smiled. After all, we hadn't seen each other since we'd met at a party in Vancouver a couple of months previous, and even then we hadn't talked for more than a few minutes, half an hour, tops. We were virtual strangers who'd been in contact only through email since, and even our emails had been brief to the point of minimalism.

Nonetheless, we'd made this arrangement, to spend a night at this lovely resort (www.miraloma.ca) in the small Vancouver Island town of Sidney. No expectations, we'd agreed.

Our first physical contact, a hug, was awkward. We checked in and went up to the room. A spectacular view of the water greeted us: sailboats gliding past and the sun just starting to think about setting. We had a corner suite with a fireplace in the living room and bedroom, a kitchen, a large bathroom with a 2-person tub and separate bath and stone floor.

Our initial conversation, out on the wraparound balcony, was stiff, about work, a part of my mind going, "Why are you saying this nonsense?" Finally I excused myself to take a bath. A few minutes later I came out of the bathroom to find a bottle of wine waiting just inside the door.

She was reading her book on the balcony, her back to me. I came up behind her. “How thoughtful!” I said. I put my hands on her shoulders. She leaned her head back, and the top of her head grazed me. “But you really didn’t have to bring a bottle of wine.”

“I didn’t,” she said. I knew she hadn’t brought the wine—Guest Services had dropped it off. But with the smile that she returned, I saw the ice had been broken.



The rest of the weekend went too well, really. We divided our first night between the hotel’s hot tub and the Blue Peter, a nearby pub where a Turkish bartender with long dreads shared his pizza with us. Saturday for lunch we drove out to a place called the Sea Cider (pics at left: www.seacider.ca). We had the high-ceilinged, almost medieval-like room to ourselves as we sampled various ciders made in-house along with a tasting plate.



We stopped at a winery, Marley Farm (www.marleyfarm.ca), for tastes of its fruit wine, then sat out on a restaurant deck next to a marina in Brentwood Bay, on the other side of the peninsula. In the evening we returned to the Blue Peter for dinner and to play a music trivia game against the other patrons. We won two rounds. (Note to future players: the theme from Gilligan’s Island is called “The Ballad of Gilligan’s Island” and was recorded by the Eligibles.)

The next morning, as we prepared to come back to our normal lives—which for her meant a trip to South America and for me the daily grind of interview, write, interview, write—I was surprised at how sad I felt. In the period of time between our first meeting and this weekend we’d had plenty of time to form misconceptions about the other, a condition which can often lead to disaster. But we’d gotten to know each other over the weekend and any surprises, like her goofy sense of humour, had been sweet.

And so...

The first time I had come to this resort was 14 months ago. Then, I was madly in love with the married woman. Our one night in Miraloma had been the first night of our last trip together, before things had fallen irrevocably apart, and memories of that trip have been stirring up confused emotions for a long time. But, as a friend has said, sometimes “You have to make new memories.”

So thanks, Kat, for helping me make new memories. And for getting at least one answer right in the music trivia game.