

Richmond News

At a glance
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Richmond News
 YOUR SOURCE FOR LOCAL SPORTS, NEWS, WEATHER AND ENTERTAINMENT WWW.RICHMOND-NEWS.COM

RACISM
Nazi stickers alarm residents
 Couple disturbed by 'White Pride' symbols stuck on benches

Photo: Richard News

Richard News photo shows a couple sitting on a park bench in Richmond. The couple is looking at the camera. The bench has several stickers on it, including one that says 'White Pride'.

A couple with the couple's car parked on the street in front of their home in Richmond. The couple is looking at the camera. The car has several stickers on it, including one that says 'White Pride'.

Photo: Richard News

Richard News photo shows a couple sitting on a park bench in Richmond. The couple is looking at the camera. The bench has several stickers on it, including one that says 'White Pride'.

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 THE RICHMOND NEWS
Travel
 INTERIOR

Weekend of culture, pampering in Osoyoos



The NK'Mip Wine vineyard surrounds the Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa, located in the scenic Okanagan Valley.

CORRECTION NOTICE
 On Wed Jan 26/2011 on Page 2 of the Richmond News an ad ran for Kia Richmond. This ad titled Winterfest is incorrect. Winterfest was a December offering and is no longer valid. Kia Richmond and the Richmond News apologizes for any inconvenience to our customers.

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A18 January 28, 2011 The Richmond News

THE RICHMOND NEWS

Travel

INTERIOR

Weekend of culture, pampering in Osoyoos

By Michelle Hopkins
 mhopkins@richmond-news.com

We are driving up a winding road through vineyards. The first thing we notice atop the ridge is a sculpture of a First Nations warrior in full regalia sitting astride a magnificent horse.

As we pass the chief, we enter into the home of the first Aboriginal winery and resort in Osoyoos, in the Okanagan Valley. Framed by lush vineyards, desert mountains and Lake Osoyoos' blue waters, the sprawling Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa includes 130 villas and condos, the Sonora Desert Spa, the Nk'Mip Wine Cellars and Passa Tempo Restaurant.

Spirit Ridge is built on land owned by the NK'Mip, one of the Osoyoos First Nation's five tribes. The architecture is an eclectic mix of hacienda-style abodes coloured in warm earthy clay tones.

For us, this weekend getaway was a chance to unwind, relax and indulge. It's already getting dark when we arrive. We head into the reception area to check in and we are im-

mediately welcomed out of the cold by friendly staff offering us a hot cup of apple cider.

After settling into our condo, we venture outside for a walk of the property. The air is pungent with the scent of damp leaves and of freshly tilled earth. We stand for a moment to breathe it in. You feel so alive in this cool desert landscape.

Most visitors think of the Okanagan as a summer destination. For those like me, who prefer the fall and winter — when it's not as crowded and the temperatures cool down considerably — it offers endless opportunities.

The following day, we head over to the Spirit Ridge Market Café to plan our day over a fresh-baked muffin and cup of java.

Then, ready for some exercise, we discover there are a number of hiking paths that wind into the Great Basin Desert, leading visitors to a realistic mock-up of a traditional Okanagan village, and to the Chief's Lookout.

There are signs to remind us to keep an eye out for snakes, but at this time of year, there is no need to

worry, thank goodness! (It is actually highly unlikely you will meet up with the Western rattle snake if you keep on the marked trails.)

Later that day, we decide to soak in a little local culture.

I have always been fascinated by the First Nations history — it might have something to do with the fact that my first crush in high school was Aboriginal on his mother's side.

During that summer, he would head up north to visit his relatives on the reserve and write me letters, which sparked an interest in the history and culture. But I digress.

If you are like me and want to explore the rich heritage of the Okanagan's Aboriginal population and their cultural impact, a visit to The Nk'Mip Desert & Heritage Centre is a must.

We meander through the interpretive centre for a few hours, checking out First Nations artifacts, the traditional pit house and sweat lodge and an 1892 log building. You can really immerse yourself in what life must have been

see Spa page 19

The Nk'Mip Wine vineyard surrounds the Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa, located in the scenic Okanagan Valley.

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Travel

Spa: Blissful experience



PHOTO SUBMITTED

A view of the rolling hills and Osoyoos Lake from the outdoor hot tub at the Spirit Ridge Resort & Spa.

Continued from page 19 in the harsh Okanagan Valley a century ago. (It is closed for the winter and reopens in March.)

The next morning is bright and sunny. My partner Dennis heads off with a good book to the outdoor hot tub as I head to the Sonora Desert Spa. I am about to enjoy of few

ingredients are organic and purchased locally.

At the helm is executive chef, Jeremy Luypen. He brings a passion and strong focus on regional cuisine. The inventive gastronomy marries well with some of the best of South Okanagan wines offered on the menu.

We then go back to our

condo, light the fireplace, pour a glass of B.C.'s finest and settle back. Who wants to leave this quiet retreat?

The Spirit Ridge Resort & Spa is a 4.5-star resort located in Osoyoos, B.C.

For more information, visit www.spiritrIDGE.ca or call toll free, 1-877-313-9463.

hours of pampering. My hedonistic journey starts with a Monticelli Mud Wrap. My aching, tired muscles benefit from the vigorous massage, which follows my soothing herbal body wrap. It was just what I needed to feel re-energized.

But it isn't over. I am about to indulge in a Desert Glow facial. Sixty minutes of blissful rehydration of the skin, complemented by a hand and head massage, left me on cloud nine for the rest of the day.

After a late afternoon leisurely stroll through the rows upon rows of vineyards, we get ready for dinner.

A few minutes walk and we are back in the main building of the Spirit Ridge Resort. This is where you will find the Passa Tempo Restaurant (Passa Tempo is Latin for passing the time). Passa Tempo is inviting and there's a real nice, warm rustic feel to it. The fare is designed to evoke the flavours and Okanagan culture that is beginning to gain an international reputation. Many of the seafood choices are Ocean Wise (certified sustainable seafood) and many of the