

TOP 5 WAYS TO BE A TOURIST IN YOUR OWN CITY

Stay at home, see the sights on a budget

BY CHERYL CHAN
STAFF REPORTER

Travel experts predict last year's "staycation" trend will stick around this year, thanks to a full-blown recession and a global flu outbreak. But ignore the doom-and-gloom for a second and consider these five fabulous reasons why you should stay in town.

A backyard Shangri-la

Step into the chic lobby of the Shangri-la Hotel, Vancouver's tallest tower, and you'll be whisked away to your room for private check-in over traditional Chinese tea (standing in line at the check-in counter is so passe). The Experience Shangri-la package includes a \$100 credit towards anything in the hotel, so take your pick: dinner at Market or spa at Chi? The package also includes a 4 p.m. late check-out, local calls and internet access — the better to call all your friends and say "wish you were here!"

■ *Experience Shangri-la, \$345 per night. 1128 W. Georgia Street. www.shangri-la.com*

Don't miss Les Mis

It's not New York, it's not London, but *Les Misérables*, one of the world's longest-running musicals, takes centre stage at the Stanley Theatre in South Granville starting this week. Limited view front seats are a steal at \$25, but



Check out the Arts Club's production of *Les Misérables*. — THE PROVINCE

bring a neck pillow. Pair it up with a specially priced three-course dinner at one of the neighborhood restaurants, including Cru, Ouisi Bistro, Red Door, and Sandbar.

■ *Tickets \$25 to \$75. Until July 19. 2750 Granville St. www.artsclub.com.*

Dinner packages \$26 to \$45. Except May 17. To reserve, call 604-687-1644.

Sins of the City

First stop of the day? Brothels. Second stop? An opium den. So goes this naughty two-hour walking tour that delves into Vancouver's seamy, seedy side. Learn about bootleggers, racial riots, murders, gambling dens, and the evolution of narcotics laws and the sex trade into what it is today. Friendly, knowledgeable guides, new routes, fascinating stories. After the tour, visit the Vancouver Police Museum at no additional cost.

■ *Tix \$15 adults, \$12 for both students and seniors. 240 E. Cordova. Online at www.vancouverpolicemuseum.ca*

A brush with greatness

Going Dutch has never been more fun than with the Vancouver Art Gallery's current exhibit of 17th-century paintings, drawings and decorative arts from the Dutch Golden Age. "Vermeer, Rembrandt and the Golden Age of Dutch Art" comprises over 120 items on loan from the famed Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, currently undergoing renovation. See a Johannes Vermeer painting, not viewed in Canada since 1954, on display, as well as three priceless Rembrandts, three Frans Hals, and rare Delft porcelain.

■ *Tickets \$20.50 adults, \$15 students, \$7 kids aged 5 to 12. 750 Hornby St. www.vanartgallery.bc.ca.*

Walk like an Olympian

The condos are still under construction, but the Olympic Village's seawall is already open. Take a stroll from Science World to the Cambie Bridge, and check out the pedestrian-only seawall bridge with its metal swivel chairs and loungers. For a longer walk and a ready-made itinerary, the city has mapped out a three-kilometre rambling route around False Creek that'll take you to B.C. Place, site of the opening ceremonies, and the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame.

■ <http://vancouver.ca/parks/activecommunity/walks.htm>

chchan@theprovince.com



The 2010 Olympic athletes village can be a picturesque stroll to take, especially at sunset. GERRY KAHRMANN — PROVINCE FILES



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