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Tourism Kelowna board brings new look

Marketing the city to tourists and visitors the main focus of organization

By STEVE MACNAULL
The Daily Courier

When Stan Martindale first got involved in the Kelowna hotel business 20 some years ago, the busy season was July and August — period. “Those obviously are still our busiest two months — it’s summer,” said Martindale, the manager of the Ramada Hotel.

“But Kelowna has done a very good job of making the season last longer with golf and wine, arts and culture and the new farm to table program. And, of course, winter is about skiing.”

Martindale is the vice-chair on the newly-elected 2013 Tourism Kelowna board.

It’s Tourism Kelowna’s job to market the city as a year-round destination for tourists, conventions and sports teams.

While great strides have been made in luring tourists here in non-peak seasons fall, winter and spring, Martindale said there’s certainly a lot more work to do.



Daily Courier file photo

Brad Sieben, manager of the Hotel Eldorado, is back for the second year of his two-year term as chair of Tourism Kelowna.

That’s where Tourism Kelowna’s annual \$2.6 million budget comes in.

Most is spent on marketing the city to the world, with a big emphasis on Kelowna’s key markets of Vancouver and Alberta, where the majority of tourists come from.

But there’s also potential in Toronto, Seattle, Las Vegas, Phoenix and Los Angeles because those cities are served by non-stop flights from Kelowna and are therefore natural two-way tourism corridors.

Narrowly targeted



Daily Courier file photo

Ramada Hotel manager Stan Martindale is vice-chair of the newly-elected Tourism Kelowna board.

European and Asian markets, who like to come here as independent and tour bus travellers respectively, are also important.

Tourism Kelowna’s \$2.6 million-a-year budget is made up of about \$1.5 million from a two per cent surcharge hotels collect from guests, combined with money from the City of Kelowna, to operate the Visitor Info Centre and market the city.

Tourism Kelowna also leverages its funds to split the cost of advertising campaigns with tourism businesses.

There are about 300 tourism businesses that partner in one way or another with Tourism Kelowna.

With 1.5 million visitors a year, spurring more than \$600 million in economic activity, tourism is integral to the city’s economy along with retail and services, healthcare, construction, manufacturing, forestry and transportation.

Tourism Kelowna’s goal is to make the city as recognized and visited as international destinations such as Napa Valley and Palm Springs, California and the Tuscany region of Italy.

The new board is:

Chair: **Brad Sieben**, Hotel Eldorado

Vice-chair: **Stan Martindale**, Ramada Hotel

Secretary: **Steve Stintson**, Keg restaurant

Treasurer: **Ian Robertson**

Past-chair: **Roger Sellick**, airport consultant

Michael Ballingall, Big White Ski Resort

Daniel Bibby, Delta Grand hotel

Andre Blanleil, Andre’s Electronics Experts and City of Kelowna councillor

Nathan Flavel, Kelowna Actors Studio Dinner Theatre

David McFadden, Okanagan Lavender Farm

Gavin Parry, Coast Capri Hotel

Rosemary Paterson, Best Western Inn and Kelowna Hotel Motel Association

Rita Pluta, Abbott Villa

Sam Samaddar, Kelowna Airport

Tony Stewart, Quails’ Gate Winery

Kelly Watt, Sandman Hotel

Fun times abound at indoor play space

There’s a great place on the Westside for you to take the kids for a play date or for a party. **O-go Play Family Entertainment Centre** offers hosted birthday parties, private party packages, and daily drop-in playtime.

O-go Play includes a three-storey indoor soft playground with three slides, climbing obstacles and tubes. They offer a large separated area for children three and under, with plenty of seating for moms and dads. They recently opened up their customized bouncy castle, which is a hit with the kids.

With three children of their own, owners **Aletheia and Dion Larocque** know how important it is to have a fun place to take the kids. “Our goal in opening O-go Play was to provide families with children a fun and memorable leisure experience. We know an indoor playground can be a life-saver.”

O-go Play is located at 105 - 2374 Bering Rd., behind the old Zellers building. They are open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday to Thursday, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sundays. Closed Monday, except holidays, when they are open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, check out ogoplay.ca, or call 778-754-5866.

Healthy beverage

Many of us start the day with a cup or two of coffee. **Debbie Galpin** loves coffee so much she made a business out of it and now sells it under the **Organogold** label.

“Coffee has become a much-wanted friend, always around in times of trouble and in time of celebration — something to rely on,” said Galpin. “I choose to drink and sell this coffee because I do not want to give up an old friend because of



Photo contributed

Olivia Larocque has fun at O-go Play Family Entertainment Centre.

health infractions.

“And as the baby boomers start to retire, we find out about 60 per cent (of us) are being diagnosed with at least one chronic medical condition,” said Galpin. “If drinking a healthier coffee can ward off some of these health problems, I am very much for it.”

The coffee she sells is an instant beverage containing ganoderma, a Chinese mushroom. Normal coffee is acidic, with a pH of about 5.5, but when mixed with the alkine ganoderma lucidum, it makes for a healthy alkaline drink. You can find out more at mochabreak.organogold.com, contact Galpin directly at 250-801-4764, or email her at debbiegln1@gmail.com.

Business boost

How would you like to get up to \$1,500 for training to improve the efficiency or productivity of your business? The **B.C. Chamber of Commerce Micro Business Training (MBT) Program** is completely funded by the provincial government and offers courses in bookkeeping, marketing and sales, management, computing, the Internet and social media.

For more info, check them out online at BCMicoBusiness.com.

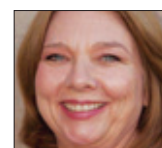
Moving along

The **Kelowna Community Development Society** has moved its administration offices and **Seton Centre Program** and they are having an open house today to celebrate. Doors will be open 1-3 p.m. at 2-1441 St. Paul St., off the alley between St. Paul and Bertram Streets. Parking can be found on St. Paul, and then just walk through the courtyard to find the entrance.

A taste of Asia

Now you can create authentic Asian food in your home that is healthy, versatile, and economical. **Shu Gardner** of **Shu’s Cuisine** was born in Singapore, grew up in Malaysia and travelled widely throughout Asia. She emigrated to Canada, settling in Peachland.

Now, she teaches the authentic way of cooking and presenting Asian food, sharing recipes passed down from generations. You can get four to six friends or co-workers together



D A R C Y

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Shop Talk

and Gardner will come right to your kitchen with printed recipes, the basic ingredients needed and where to buy them. If you prefer, you can go to her home and enjoy a great lake view while you learn.

For more info check out Shu’s Cuisine on Facebook, phone her at 778-479-2846, or email shuscuisine@yahoo.ca.

Hot RauDZ

Co-owners chef **Rod Butters** and **Audrey Surrao** of the popular **RauDZ Regional Table** are coming out with a small package; a 900-square-foot package to be exact, with a new concept they’ve christened **Micro Bar - Bites**.

Just steps from RauDZ location on Water Street, just south of Bernard Avenue, **Micro Bar - Bites** will open in March. The space will remain true to the period of this historic block of Water Street, while giving a nod to a modern interpretation of the space. Chef Butters says the menu at **Micro Bar - Bites** will follow a simple formula based on the number 10: 10 wines, 10 cocktails, 10 different beers and 10 bites.

Micro Bar - Bites will be located at 1500 Water St.

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Favourite Thing #11

I love living at Westwood. I have found friends here with the same interests in fishing and the outdoors... and all of them tell me that my homemade flies catch the biggest fish!

Cpt. Bob Alton, Westwood Resident

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