

Kate & Jim's Travels with Charles

Episode #4: Trusting in Serendipity

We've been trying *not* to plan too much too far ahead. We want to leave ourselves open to serendipity on this trip.

On our way out of Victoria, we visited with friends Michael Turner and Sherry Scheideman. Among the places they suggested we might go was Coombs. "Goats on the roof," Sherry said. We probably looked puzzled (and who could blame us?). But as we headed back from the Pacific Rim, we were nearing the town of Coombs and on the tourism signs, it said "Goats on the Roof".

How could we *not* check it out?

And so ... here you go:



There's a story that goes with it. And there's a whole lot of other stuff going on in Coombs besides the goats on the roof. But most of it is very touristy and very crowded. And if you want to know the story of why there are goats on the roof, you can ask me, or you can look it up. (Believe it or not, it's kind of an odd story.)

Our trip from Ucluelet took us through Port Alberni again, but this time we decided to stop for lunch. As we walked around town to find a restaurant, we passed this sign just next to an interesting looking wooden structure, which, unfortunately I did not photograph.



Another sign outside the odd building let us know there was an important sculpture inside, depicting indigenous whaling techniques. There was no way in, but you could peer through the glass. And when you peered through the glass, you could only see some vague shapes. Just by luck, I discovered that if I put my camera right up to the glass, something magnificent appeared:



I have no idea why this incredible sculpture is presented this way. I'm just so glad I thought to put my camera up to the glass. Otherwise we would've missed it.

We went for a walk on one of the remarkable beaches in Parksville...



Two years ago, we were there for the huge sand sculpture competition, which was great fun. Obviously that didn't happen this year, but when we were walking along the beach, we came across this display of rock sculptures:



We also managed to catch the sunset just in time...



The next day, we decided to check into the ferry terminal in Nanaimo. We had been looking online to see about taking a ferry to Gabriola Island later in the week. The website had told us that the ferry couldn't handle an RV of our size, but other people had told us it shouldn't be a problem.

When we got there, not only did we discover that we were okay to go on the ferry, but the ferry was loading shortly and we could get on. We hadn't worked out a destination that day, so we decided to go, explore, and see if we could find a place to camp. As we were waiting to get on the ferry, a friendly gentleman approached and told us all the things we should do on Gabriola. Who were we to question his judgement?

He told us to go to "Malaspina Galleries". Which sounds like an art display of some sort. Well, it's art, but it's not created by people, it's sculpted by wind and waves.







A few days later, we were talking to friends who had lived in the region much of their lives and they'd never even heard of the Malaspina Galleries. How lucky were we to find out about it?

The gentleman at the ferry told us to go to the north shore of Gabriola Island, where we would find a pretty great lighthouse. Our BC friends hadn't heard of it either. It was just beyond this ridge.



I think we found Robert's Place in one of the online guides, but it was a great discovery. A delicious lunch in a very friendly environment within a beautiful garden.



We had thought about booking a camp site at the bottom of the island but our friend at the ferry dock told us to book a camp site in Descanso Provincial Park near the top of the island. Look how well that turned out:









Clearly, the glow of serendipity is shining on us and we are grateful and excited about what comes next.

