

THE OAK BAY BEACH HOTEL



Oak Bay Beach Hotel History

Built in an English Manor House style and nestled on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, Victoria's Oak Bay Beach Hotel is an elegant luxury boutique resort reconstructed on the same oceanfront lot where the historical hotel sat for more than 90 years.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect that the land on which the Oak Bay Beach Hotel stands is the traditional territories of the Coast and Straits Salish Peoples. Specifically, we recognize the *ləkʷəŋən* peoples known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, and that their historic connections to these lands continue to this day.

The hotel sits on land only 200 metres from Turkey Head, an area known by the Songhees Nations as *Spewhung*. A large shell-midden along this shoreline indicates that this was an ancient village site to which first peoples brought many fish, bird, mammal and plant resources. Food was gathered from *Stsnaang* and *Tlchess* (Chatham and Discovery Islands) in the distance and from *Kohweechella* Island, “where there are many fish” (Jimmy Chicken/Mary Tod Island), nearer shore.

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1927-1970

The original Oak Bay Beach Hotel built in 1927 by Major Merston, was completely destroyed in a fire on October 14, 1930. An exact replica was promptly rebuilt on its ashes, and that building, with all its old-world charm, became “the place to be, and be seen” by locals and guests alike.



1970s-2000s

In 1972, Bruce Walker and Glenn Anderson, two businessmen from Winnipeg, purchased the hotel. Bruce’s son, Kevin Walker, and his wife Shawna, decided to continue the family’s hotel legacy by purchasing it in October 1995.



2006-2012

The aged building finally reached the end of its functioning life in 2006. The doors to the hotel were ceremoniously closed and removed to be reinstalled. In 2012, the new Oak Bay Beach Hotel opened and features a number of physical elements and furnishings preserved from the original building to maintain its charm.



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Walking Tour

Our tour begins on the patio outside of FARO Handcrafted Pizza and Tasting Room, as this represents the oldest part of the new hotel. The first Oak Bay Beach Hotel was built in 1927, but was soon after destroyed by fire, and then rebuilt in 1930.

The Tudor-style peaked entry-way with its carved “Oak Bay Beach Hotel” sign, antique light fixtures, glass-paned doors and hardware served as the main entrance to the previous hotel, which stood until it closed for dismantling in 2006.

During that dismantling, these elements were carefully removed and preserved for re-installation in this newest incarnation of the Oak Bay Beach Hotel. Fittingly, this entrance was the first door through which the public were welcomed back into the new hotel, when Kate’s Café (now FARO) opened in October 2012.

FARO is anchored by its Wood Stone pizza oven and a seasonally changing menu that includes handcrafted pizzas, a variety of fresh salads and small bites, cocktails and local wines, all to be enjoyed in a stunning modern room, at the tasting bar or on the outdoor patio with fire features.



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The theme of historical re-use continues as you pass through the doors into FARO. The cabinets behind FARO's breathtaking bar is outfitted with leaded glass windows that came from the original Snug Pub. The brick wall in the back right hand corner were also saved from the old hotel, and rebuilt into what is now a sophisticated and casual part of the restaurant.

As you move through the doors at the back of FARO, to your right is the new Library, which is our boardroom for groups of up to 24 people. It is inspired by the late hotel's private dining room, also known as The Library (for some unknown reason as it never housed a single book) that adjoined one of the hotel suites.



In architecture and design, the new hotel takes its tone from the Tudor-style of the original hotel, and the took further inspiration from the great country manor-homes of England. The vision was a building which, through grandeur and elegance, would have our guests feel immediately welcome and comfortable. We want out guests to feel like they have arrived at their "home away from home". To that end, we have named our public spaces after rooms in a grand home: The Study, The Library, The Dining Room, etc.

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As you pass The Library into The Colonnade, you will notice artwork on the walls. Madrona Gallery, located in downtown Victoria, has outfitted the entire hotel with a rotating exhibition of original artwork by Canadian, Indigenous, and Inuit artists. As such, much of the art you see around the building is available for sale and inquiries can be made at our Front Desk.

Approaching on your left, you will find the David Foster Foundation Theatre, our theatre and main event space. The popular Dinner Show program became an important part of the culture in the old hotel, so when envisioning the future hotel, we included a purpose-built theatre that would be properly equipped for both stage and film shows.

The Theatre is named after the David Foster Foundation, which was founded by Victoria-born and multi-Grammy Award-winning music producer David Foster.

The Foundation's mission is to assist the families of children awaiting major life-threatening organ transplant, by covering their non-medical expenses. This allows the families to be together during this difficult time. A portion of every ticket or event sold in the Theatre includes a donation to the Foundation.



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As you turn the corner in The Lobby, you will find the iconic Snug Pub located on your left. The Snug was Victoria's first neighbourhood pub and is a local institution. When the public heard of plans to close and rebuild the old hotel, a common response was, "Do whatever you need to do to the hotel, but don't touch The Snug!"



While we inevitably did have to "touch" it, we saved the door and stained glass window, all of the hand-hewn beams, the bricks, the light fixtures, and even the mugs which used to hang around the old bar. Our guests love the Pub, and the locals continue to flock to this legendary watering hole.



Next to the Snug is the Dining Room, our intimate fine dining restaurant, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner against the backdrop of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the soaring Mount Baker.



Continuing to your right is our Grand Lobby, which is very reminiscent of the Grand Lobby in the old hotel. With many of the hotel's original antiques, and the same copper hood in front of which generations of brides have taken their wedding photos, this room feels very familiar and maintains its feeling of inviting comfort that made the old Lobby "the community's living room."

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Passing through the glass doors onto the patio, you can gaze out to the Pacific Ocean over the Seaside Gardens and down to the Boathouse Spa.

As you make your way down the stairs to the garden path, you will cross a bridge and see a plaque that is dedicated to the memory of Mr. Inazo Nitobe, a famous Japanese statesman who stayed for an extended time at the old hotel. You might also notice some well-established rhododendron bushes, which are now nearly 90 years old, having been saved from the gardens of the old hotel and reincorporated into our new gardens.

As you continue along the garden path, you will end up on our Seaside Terrace, a rooftop garden overlooking the spa and heated seaside mineral pools below.

The main pool is a throwback to the original salt-water pool that graced a similar location on the property, only instead of cold seawater, these baths are now luxuriously warm.

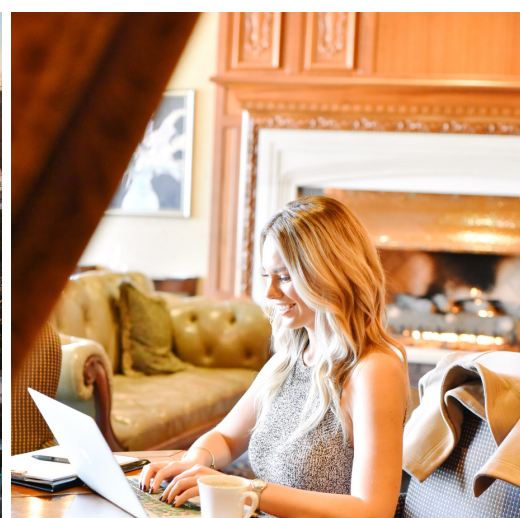
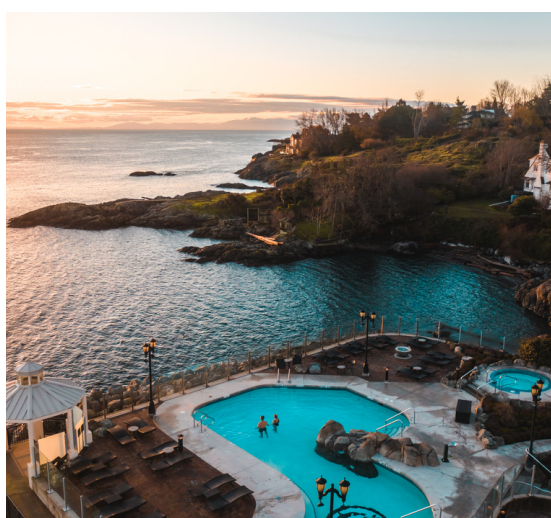
Access to the heated seaside mineral pools is complimentary for hotel guests, and can be booked at an additional fee for spa guests.



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The Boathouse Spa offers a full menu of services, from pedicures to massages, facials and full body treatments which take place in the building below you and to the building on your left. They are architecturally reminiscent of the original boathouse which had long stood on that spot throughout the hotel's history, and used to house the kayaks and marine equipment we used for the hotel's many outdoor excursions.

If you have any further questions about anything you have seen during your visit to the Oak Bay Beach Hotel, please visit any of our professional team members who would be happy to answer any of your questions.



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