

TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

SEEKING OUT SONORA

Tourism and Hospitality Management students tour Canada's top luxury wilderness resort

NIC's Tourism and Hospitality Management diploma students took their classroom to the ocean this month, as part of a class field trip to the remote Sonora Resort.

Students spent the day on a 35-foot boat exploring isolated ocean passages north of Campbell River and getting a behind the scenes tour of one of Canada's top-rated luxury wilderness destinations.

Located on Sonora Island at the mouth of Bute Inlet, the resort is a 75-minute scenic water taxi ride from Campbell River.

The opportunity was made possible by instructor Harley Elias who organizes three field trips for tourism and hospitality management students throughout their program.

"Sonora is a member of one of the most exclusive resorts and small boutique hotels affiliations around the world," said Elias. "It's at the top end of the top end. If there were a seven- or eight-star resort, this would be it."

Only three other BC resorts have the Relais and Chateaux affiliation, including the Wickaninnish Inn, the Wedgewood Hotel & Spa, and the Hastings House Country House Hotel on Saltspring Island.

The resort's wilderness experience and services have become a favourite vacation spot for some of the world's top influencers.

"A resort like this is a real eye-opener for students," said Elias. "Especially those with some experience who know what it takes to logistically truck, ferry, or helicopter in everything from food to guests."

For students, the trip brings their classroom learning to life.

"My instructors were always telling me 'You should make each and every moment



North Island College instructors Harley Elias and Murray Erickson travel with first-year tourism students to Sonora Resort for a behind the scenes tour of resort operations.

memorable for guests so they are forced to come back," said Hardev Ahluwalia, who wants to focus on human resources management. "I learned how to do that on this trip."

For general manager Sean Ross, working with NIC students is a great way to show the resort in full operation.

"Most students haven't had the opportunity to work in a hotel or resort," said Ross. "When you operate a resort in a remote location with five-star service you have to have everything in place when the guest wants it. It makes operating a hotel in Vancouver look like a cakewalk."

The trip was also an opportunity for Ross to meet future employees.

"We want to get them interested in coming to work for us," said Ross, adding that

professional students with well-thought out questions often stand out when their name reappears on an application.

North Island College business and tourism students complete co-op placements at Sonora, as well as resorts and businesses here and across Canada. The hands-on, paid work experience gives them industry connections, working knowledge, and job-ready skills they can include in their résumé.

Students can be a great asset to a luxury resort operation like Sonora.

"They understand the ins and outs of getting to places, that there is ferry traffic and water taxis and float planes, and they can talk about the area," said Ross.

Find out more: www.nic.bc.ca/tourism

ADVENTURE GUIDING

LEARNING FROM INDUSTRY LEADERS

NIC Adventure Guiding students are used to learning from the best. Instructor and West Coast Expeditions managing owner Dave Pinel has been actively involved in the industry since 1985, and has been featured in numerous newspapers, and magazines across Canada. This fall, his business earned a new accolade. His company was endorsed by the Canadian Tourism Commission as a once in a lifetime Canadian travel experience.

At NIC, Pinel is just as passionate about leading the Adventure Guiding certificate, an eight-month program that trains guides to work in amazing settings.

"You can watch phenomenal video of sea otters or whales but to be there, lying in your tent at night listening to whales or to float and pause with sea otters, that's the wow factor," said Pinel. "With students I share that, combine it with an appreciation for nature, and the skills to work with people in new situations."

Applications are now being accepted for September. Students graduate in May just in time for peak guiding season.

Find out more: www.nic.bc.ca/tourism

GLOBAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

HIRE A BUSINESS INTERN

Are you looking for educated employees to help with special business projects or busy periods this year? North Island College's new internship program is looking for you.

This year, 28 post-degree diploma students in Global Business Management are looking for four-month internships to help with your business' marketing, finance, project management, human resources, or sales needs.

Find out more: www.nic.bc.ca/business
Or, call Avry at 250-334-5000 ext 4125

