

## BRIEFS



POU DU FUY THEME PARK

### Crows answer call in war on waste

A French theme park is deploying A.I. — that's avian intelligence — in its war against litterbugs. The Puy du Fou historical attraction, in the western Vendee region, has enlisted six specially trained "intelligent" crows to pick up cigarette butts, candy wrappers and tissue paper at the 23-hectare site. Nicolas de Villiers, the president of the park, said the "particularly intelligent" rooks "like to communicate with humans and establish a relationship through play."

### New Zealand launches catapult

New Zealand, which stretched the bounds of adventure tourism 30 years ago with bungee jumping, is now testing fears with a new thrill: catapulting. The Nevis Catapult — in the remote Nevis Valley near Queenstown — will see adrenalin addicts propelled in pods 150 metres out across a ravine before dropping suddenly toward the valley floor. Riders will experience speeds of almost 100 km/h in 1.5 seconds, organizers say. "In 1988, we took Bungy to the world, and put New Zealand on the world adventure tourism map," said Henry van Asch, who co-founded AJ Hackett Bungy New Zealand. "Thirty years on it's wonderful to still be pushing the boundaries globally." The Catapult uses a bespoke high-speed winch system that went through nine months of secret testing — using weighted barrels and dummies — before being unveiled. "Something like this could never have been accomplished without a combination of creativity, daring, sheer Kiwi craziness and of course investment in years of design engineering and testing," said Tourism New Zealand chief executive Stephen England-Hall.

### Great Wall B&B nixed by Beijing

No one will be sleeping on the Great Wall of China — at least not officially. Heritage officials in Beijing have put the kibosh on a plan by Airbnb to convert a watchtower on the site into temporary lodgings, saying the project was "not in line" with heritage conservation values. "We understand and respect the opinions put forth by the Cultural Commission," Airbnb said on Weibo, China's short-messaging platform, after the government agency said the project was "not in line" with heritage conservation values. Social media users feared the project could damage the ancient structure. Airbnb, which had been working with a local partner to offer competition winners the chance to spend a night on the Wall, apologized in a statement. "We have made the decision to not move forward with this event," it said, according to a report in the South China Morning Post.

Compiled by Andre Ramshaw, Postmedia News



Telus World of Science is located on Vancouver's beautiful False Creek. PHOTOS: CURT WOODHALL

# WET & WONDERFUL

Don't let Vancouver's rain get you down — there's plenty of fun indoors

MHAIRRI WOODHALL

Growing up in Vancouver I spent many summers playing in Stanley Park. Riding bikes on the seawall, ice creams in English Bay and swimming at the Second Beach pool are my go-to plans for family vacations in the city. Unless of course it pours rain. Luckily, there are plenty of options for kids indoors. On our last rainy weekend in Vancouver, we powered through most of them.

#### SCIENCE WORLD AT TELUS WORLD OF SCIENCE

On a wet afternoon, the Eureka gallery at Science World is a buzz of activity. Kids — and adults — launching whiffle balls, splashing in the oversized water table and dancing across the walk-on piano. For a calmer space, the Puzzles and Illusions exhibit puts your vision and imagination to the test, and the BodyWorks' activities gets kids thinking about the importance of healthy choices. Also plan to spend an additional hour, or two, at Science World's current feature exhibit: The Science Behind Pixar. Animated-movie buffs of every age get a kick out of posing with their Pixar heroes, like Edna Mode, Mike and Sulley, Buzz Lightyear and Dory. There's also play-based learning stations demonstrating Pixar's production process. Keep it high-level for younger children or delve deeper and learn about the technical intricacies of rigging, surfaces, simulation and animation. Building WALL-E robot models and playing around with lighting on the miniature sets from the movie Up! occupied most of our time. The Pixar exhibit, which runs through Jan. 6, 2019, is not included with regular admission and requires a separate ticket. It's well worth the money. Travel tip: for a small fee, Science World guest services will store your car or booster seat for the duration of your visit.

#### FLYOVER CANADA

Having experienced — and loved — Disney California Adventure's aerial attraction Soarin' Around the World, FlyOver Canada was a must see. The 25-minute flight simulated-ride is located at Canada Place, in Vancouver's stunning downtown harbour. First up is the beautiful and inspiring preview film Uplift on a 360-degree floor-to-ceiling screen. It's an action-packed piece featuring quintessential Canadian pastimes and places. Then it's time to move into the FlyOver theatre, with its 20-metre spherical screen, for takeoff. Securely fastened, with our feet dangling in the air, we eagerly embarked on the 6,000 km coast to coast journey across the nation. During the adrenalin-packed adventure, we soared above the Maritimes, crested Niagara Falls, floated across the prairies and navigated the Arctic. For eight thrilling minutes, our



Wander the stalls at Granville Island public market for fresh produce, goodies and giftware.

eyes sparkled with joyful tears while butterflies danced in our tummies. If we find our way back to Vancouver in December, we'll return for the FlyOver Christmas Experience and join Santa and the gang on their magical flight to the North Pole. Insider tip: buy your tickets in advance at flyovercanada.com for reduced pricing. Minimum height to ride is 40 inches.

#### VANCOUVER AQUARIUM

Another rainy-day favourite, the Vancouver Aquarium in Stanley Park, offers entertainment for every age group including parents. For younger kids, the play-based learning activities in Clownfish Cove are a hit and we spent almost an hour playing dress-up veterinarian in the animal rescue centre. Top creature exhibits for our family were the sea lions in Stellar Bay, the sleepy sloths in the Amazon gallery, the wild coast sea otters and the glowing jellyfish tanks. Unfortunately, we just missed the public unveiling of Lakina and Balzak, a pair of two-year old walrus that are part of the aquarium's marine research program. Swing by the Research Outpost exhibit at Steller Bay for a chance to see the portly, whiskered duo. Another highlight is the new BBC production Shark: A 4D Experience. Expect a larger-than-life, all-senses spectacle, complete with splashing water droplets, ocean scents, shaking seats and up-close encounters with razor-sharp teeth. Although it surpassed our expectations, I don't recommend the film for children four and under — or anyone who scares easily — as there are startling scenes that had us jumping out of our seats. Visitor tip: the aquarium's on-site lockers fit backless booster seats if you plan to travel by taxi.

#### GRANVILLE ISLAND

Spend a morning wandering through Granville Island's market stalls. Arrive early to avoid the crowds and enjoy freshly-baked treats, like Terra Bread's buttery, flaky croissants and the warm honey dip doughnuts at Lee's. Burn off the sugar rush at Adventure Zone in the Kid's Market. The multi-level playground features a jungle gym and ball pit, and as it's fully enclosed with only one entry/exit point, we felt comfortable relaxing with a coffee while our daughter climbed, bounced and played. There's also a mini arcade that pumps out prize tickets for trinkets. If you have children five and under, the neighbouring False Creek Community Centre has a parent and tot gym time that's awesome and inexpensive. In addition to a bouncy castle you'll find toy cars and kitchens, soccer balls, blocks and books. The gym is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings and the cost is just \$1 per child. Before leaving Granville Island, stop by Kaboodles Toy Store for high-quality wooden toys, plush stuffed animals and family board games. Travel tip: catch a scenic ride across the water on False Creek Ferries.

#### EAT ALL THE FOOD

Vancouver's eclectic dining scene is big draw for our foodie family and we try to seek out new restaurants on every visit. Seafood and sushi are usually our preference, and we always dine during Happy Hour (if available) as the more casual atmosphere tends to be appropriate for children. Coquille in Gastown offers a bar snack menu, half price oysters and \$6 glasses of house wine between 3-6 p.m. The Dunge-ness crab cake starter and lobster risotto on the dinner menu are life changing, and our daughter

#### IF YOU GO

Trump International in the heart of downtown is bliss for families and it's my top choice city hotel to date. Service is exceptional, and the staff are brilliant with kids — the bellman especially goes above and beyond, entertaining little ones while parents are checking-in. The property also has an indoor pool and is just a short walk from Robson Street and the SkyTrain and Canada Line, which makes it easy to explore the city on foot or by transit. Book the family package for inclusions like breakfast for two (kids five and under eat free), a kid's amenity package (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, etc.) and personalized welcome cookies. To follow Mhairri's family travels visit: [www.arrivalstravel.com](http://www.arrivalstravel.com)

devoured almost an entire bowl of mussels by herself. In Yaletown, we tried Minami for the first time and the Oceanwise King Salmon sashimi is melt in-your-mouth perfection. As is the flame-seared Japanese Wagyu and Albacore Tuna Oshi sushi. However, our most memorable meal was at Mott 32 — a Cantonese style Chinese fine dining restaurant. My husband — and daughter — still rave about the hot and sour pork soup dumplings, crispy roasted pork belly and fresh mango and coconut rice roll. I'd fly to Vancouver just for an order of the Maine lobster fried rice.