

AWAYS

Even if you hit the road a fair bit, so many new resorts and lodges have opened within a weekend's reach of Vancouver in the past year that it's doubtful you've visited them all. And if you don't get out much, a whole wonderland of remarkable new properties awaits for you to plunk yourself down and spend a night or three. Spas have become almost de rigueur, and there are some very nice ones to choose among in the list that follows, but if you're a person who hates the idea of mud wraps or hot stone massages we've included a few spots that offer nothing of the sort. Except as noted, all the places are open year-round, although some are at their best in one season or another. We've also provided some suggestions of new or often-overlooked things to do next time you're desperate to get out of town.

Observatory B&B

Osoyoos, B.C.

Lots of people looking for a change of pace try running a B&B these days, but few are as starry-eyed about it as Jack and Alice Newton. In 1998, when Jack's employer, Marks & Spencer, upped stakes and went home to England, the Newtons decided to make ex-store manager Jack's hobby their new job. On a ridge 485 metres above Osoyoos Lake they built their Observatory B&B, with a Saturn Suite, an Eclipse Suite, a Moon Room and a dome housing a \$25,000 Meade LX200 40-centimetre telescope.

There are tens of millions of celestial objects to look at, from close-by Luna to galaxies that are, as Carl Sagan used to love to say, "billions and billions" of light years away. On nights when it's overcast, Jack will take you upstairs to his home theatre, which has tiered seating, a 1,600-watt sound system and a brand new 4.25-metre projection screen. Here you can watch the night sky live via remote feed from the telescope at the Newtons' winter home in Arizona.

Observatory B&B

250-495-6745, Jacknewton.com



The Observatory B&B (X2). Far right: Copper Horse Lodge.



Copper Horse Lodge

Golden, B.C.

This past winter, if you wanted to stay at the base of B.C.'s newest ski resort, Kicking Horse, you had three accommodations choices, all newly opened. But if you wanted a place with all the mod-cons and a restaurant serving top-notch food and wine, your choice was simple: the Copper Horse Lodge.

Paul and Stacey Trudeau hadn't planned to offer such gourmet fare initially, that is until Yan

Thérien, sous chef at the G8 Kananaskis Conference and at the Island Lake Lodge near Fernie, responded to their ad for a chef. Thérien convinced the Trudeaus that fine dining on a gravel road in a forest 12 kilometres from the mill-and-railway town of Golden would work. From 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. the music's turned up and Corks Restaurant and Bar caters to the après-ski or après-hike crowd, then the linen



is put back on the tables and the dinner service commences, featuring such entrées as maple-glazed wild coho salmon with

field vegetables and cedar syrup, complemented by a short, but astute, wine list.

Copper Horse Lodge

877-544-7644 or 250-344-7644

Copperhorselodge.com

Kelly House B&B

Barkerville, B.C.

Not many people know that Barkerville, B.C.'s authentic 1860s gold-rush town, is open all year. In summer its streets are full,