

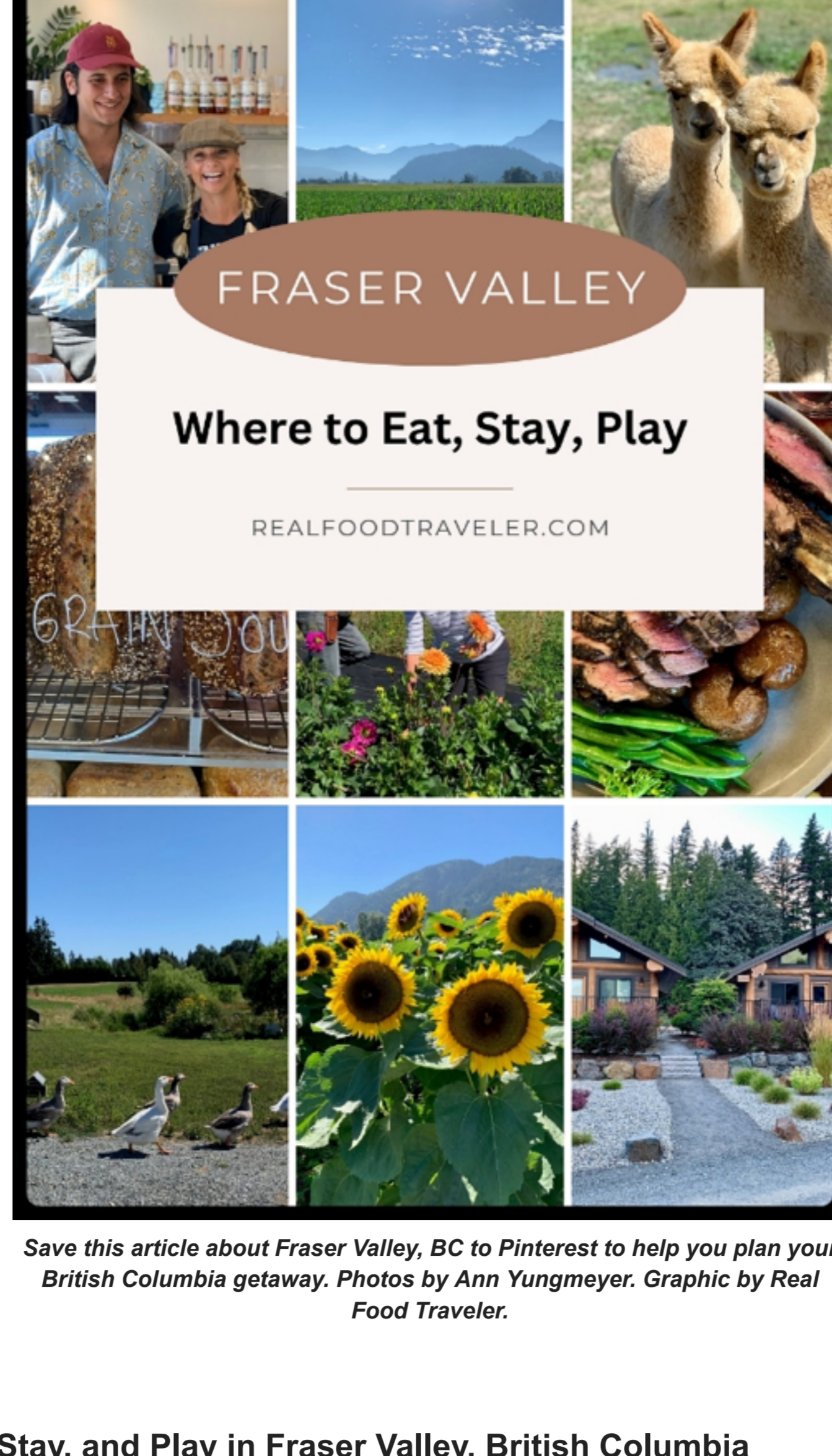
Eat, Stay and Play in Fraser Valley BC

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Ann N. Yungmeyer

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Fortunate are those who visit the Fraser Valley in British Columbia to experience the agritourism scene. Writer Ann Yungmeyer provides Real Food Traveler readers with her recommendations for where to go, what to do, and what to eat and drink so that we can experience the ultimate in "local."



Save this article about Fraser Valley, BC to Pinterest to help you plan your British Columbia getaway. Photos by Ann Yungmeyer. Graphic by Real Food Traveler.

Where to Eat, Stay, and Play in Fraser Valley, British Columbia

Discover the agricultural heartland just east of Vancouver, which offers a cornucopia for foodies, families and nature enthusiasts.

Vancouver is a lively city, well-loved for its outdoor vibe, international food scene and cool activities from whale watching to seaplane tours. The "City of Glass," so called for its numerous see-through skyscrapers, also makes a good base for daytrips and discovering Western Canada's natural beauty.

Teasing my curiosity, a tourism brochure for **Fraser Valley Circle Farm Tour** reads, "Escape the concrete jungle...meet local farmers...learn how your food goes from field to table." So, with a small group of friends I headed to the countryside into the verdant Fraser Valley, a favorite destination of Vancouverites for farm-fresh cuisine and outdoor activities, yet relatively undiscovered by tourists.

Framed by mountain peaks, the protected valley in southwestern British Columbia is a premier farming region that accounts for more than half of agricultural production in the province. Its rivers cut through a patchwork of fertile fields and timberland connecting four main towns – Langley, Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Harrison – all part of a burgeoning agritourism development.

These towns and other small hamlets of Fraser Valley share the land of traditional territories of numerous Indigenous communities. A social media hashtag I noted, #HandmadeandHomegrown, resonates not only with the current back-to-the-land culture, but also with the First Nation heritage of hunting, fishing, farming and crafting necessities from the land.

From Vancouver, you can make a day trip to the area or stay a few nights in beautiful, unique accommodations. Here's a short list of Fraser Valley highlights, from flowers and food to nature experiences.

Hungry for more? Read about the [Surrey Spice Trail in British Columbia](#).

Circle Farm Tour in Fraser Valley BC

The self-guided tour can be followed with a downloadable brochure and maps that show categories such as Farm Experience, Farm Store, Sips and Spirits, and Eateries, so that visitors can tailor their route to desired experiences. Think U-pick fields and orchards, artisan products, alpaca friends and goat yoga, craft beer and wine tasting, and farm-life events that celebrate the seasons.

We rented e-bikes one afternoon at **Harrison Eco-Tours** and peddled our way along the Circle Farm Tour with stops at Harrison Lavender, Back Porch – a working studio that combines pottery, basketry, and coffee roasting, and The Farmhouse Natural Cheeses. After sampling award-winning artisan cheeses, we admired their heritage cows and goats in the field as we made our way back to town, enjoying the rural cycling.

Fraser Valley farmers and producers share a passion for authentic ways and using sustainable methods in their work and craft. To shed light on this, Farmer Dan Oostenbrink walked us through the fields at his family-owned, carbon-sequestering **Local Harvest Farm** in Chilliwack, which supplies restaurants nearby and in Vancouver. He explained how they grow nutritious vegetables, herbs, fruits and legumes using only natural growing and sustainable methods (100% no-spray and chemical-free) all year round. Besides organic produce, their onsite market includes freshly prepared foods and a wood-fired bakery with bread-in-the-oven aromas that you can't pass up.

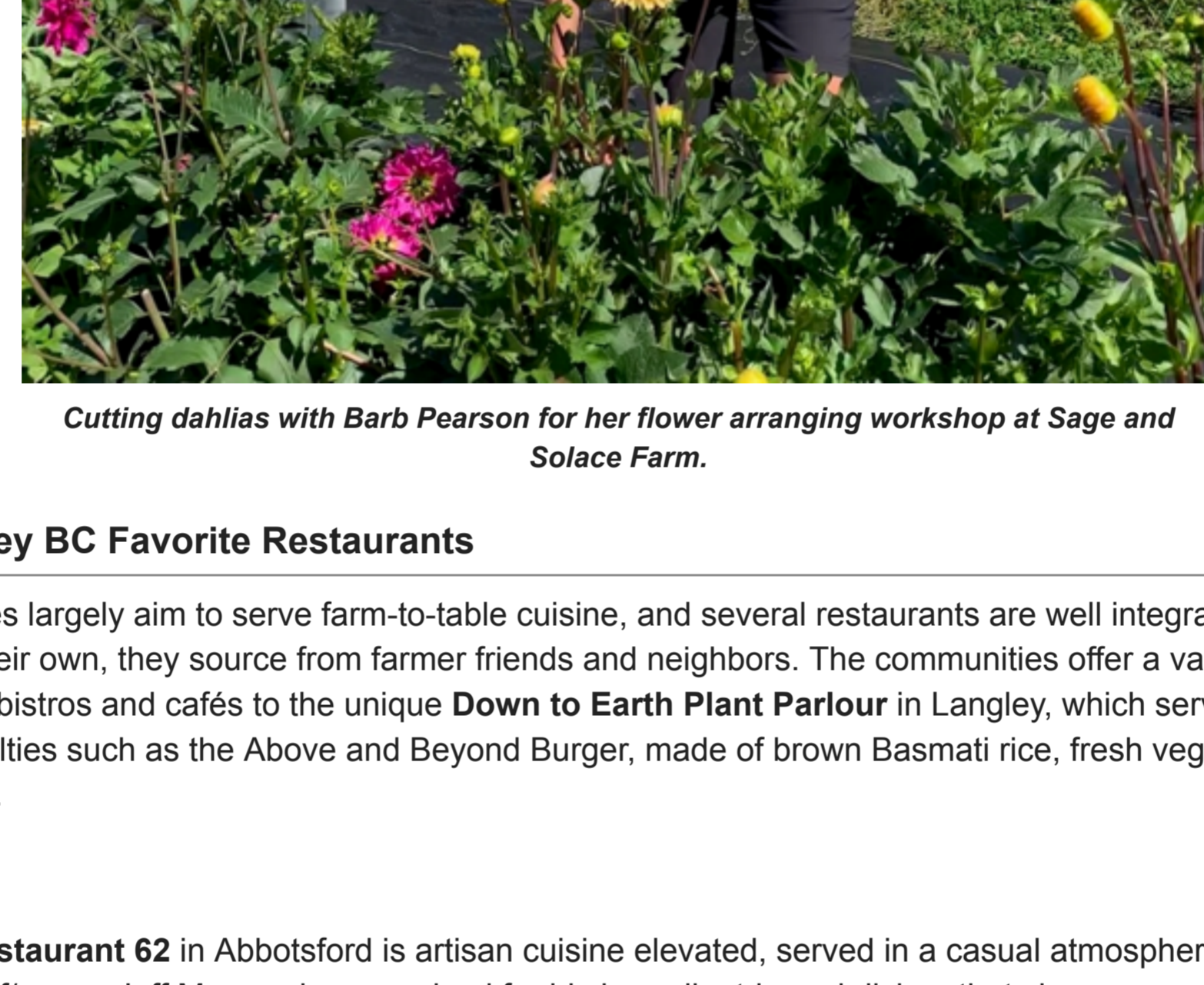


Farmer Dan explains the life of an organic potato at family-run Local Harvest Farm in Chilliwack.

Flower Gardens in Chilliwack and Langley

Flower enthusiasts will love a visit at **Sage and Solace Farm** in Langley, founded by artist-turned-gardener and designer Barb Pearson. Stroll the beautiful gardens and learn about regenerative growing practices, and with advance reservation you can experience a hands-on botanical workshop to learn technical floral and design tips in arranging fresh-cut flowers. Sage and Solace also offers lodging for a peaceful farm stay in contemporary garden and carriage house suites.

In springtime, the annual **Chilliwack Tulip Festival** showcases millions of blooms of more than 25 tulip varieties and various types of Double Daffodils. If you travel during July and August, the **Chilliwack Sunflower Festival** is a must-see for the millions of cheerful blooms on display. More than 50 varieties of sunflowers are planted in several display gardens alongside multiple varieties of dahlias, gladiolas and zinnias. Visitors are free to roam more than three kilometers of pathways through the fields, which are planted in stages so that flowers can be enjoyed throughout the season.



Cutting dahlias with Barb Pearson for her flower arranging workshop at Sage and Solace Farm.

Fraser Valley BC Favorite Restaurants

Valley eateries largely aim to serve farm-to-table cuisine, and several restaurants are well integrated; if they don't grow their own, they source from farmer friends and neighbors. The communities offer a variety of dining options from bistros and cafés to the unique **Down to Earth Plant ParLOUR** in Langley, which serves plant-based specialties such as the Above and Beyond Burger, made of brown Basmati rice, fresh vegetables, spices and toppings.

Top-rated **Restaurant 62** in Abbotsford is artisan cuisine elevated, served in a casual atmosphere with an open, airy feel. Chef/owner Jeff Massey is recognized for his ingredient-based dishes that change seasonally and also for his award-winning wine list. He often features West Coast fish including halibut, cod, octopus and char, and house-made pastas such as pappardelle with foraged morels, paired with simple salads of heirloom tomatoes and greens.



Fraser Valley wines pair well with homemade pappardelle pasta and foraged mushrooms from Restaurant 62.

Breakfast at **Krause Berry Farm** in Langley is legendary with the star attraction its famous mega-waffle topped with whipped cream and cascading berries. The family-friendly estate also offers farm-to-table events, a home/garden market and winery. You'll find sumptuous fresh berries in season (U-pick or pre-picked) and home-baked treats from their Harvest Kitchen featuring farm-made ice creams, fudge, donuts, smoothies and more. The winery tasting room offers table and dessert wines, Port, and sparkling.



Krause Berry Farms' famous waffle.

Saba Bistro in Langley is a locals' favorite, a lively gathering spot and a menu, says San Francisco owner Simone Hurwitz, who has lived in Israel, Italy, the U.S. and South Africa. Her menu offer a touch of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern influence, and a carefully crafted balance of local, seasonal flavors. A family business (with Hurwitz's three daughters helping at times), the bistro emanates a community spirit with the philosophy, "There is no greater joy than to come together and enjoy a meal with those you love."

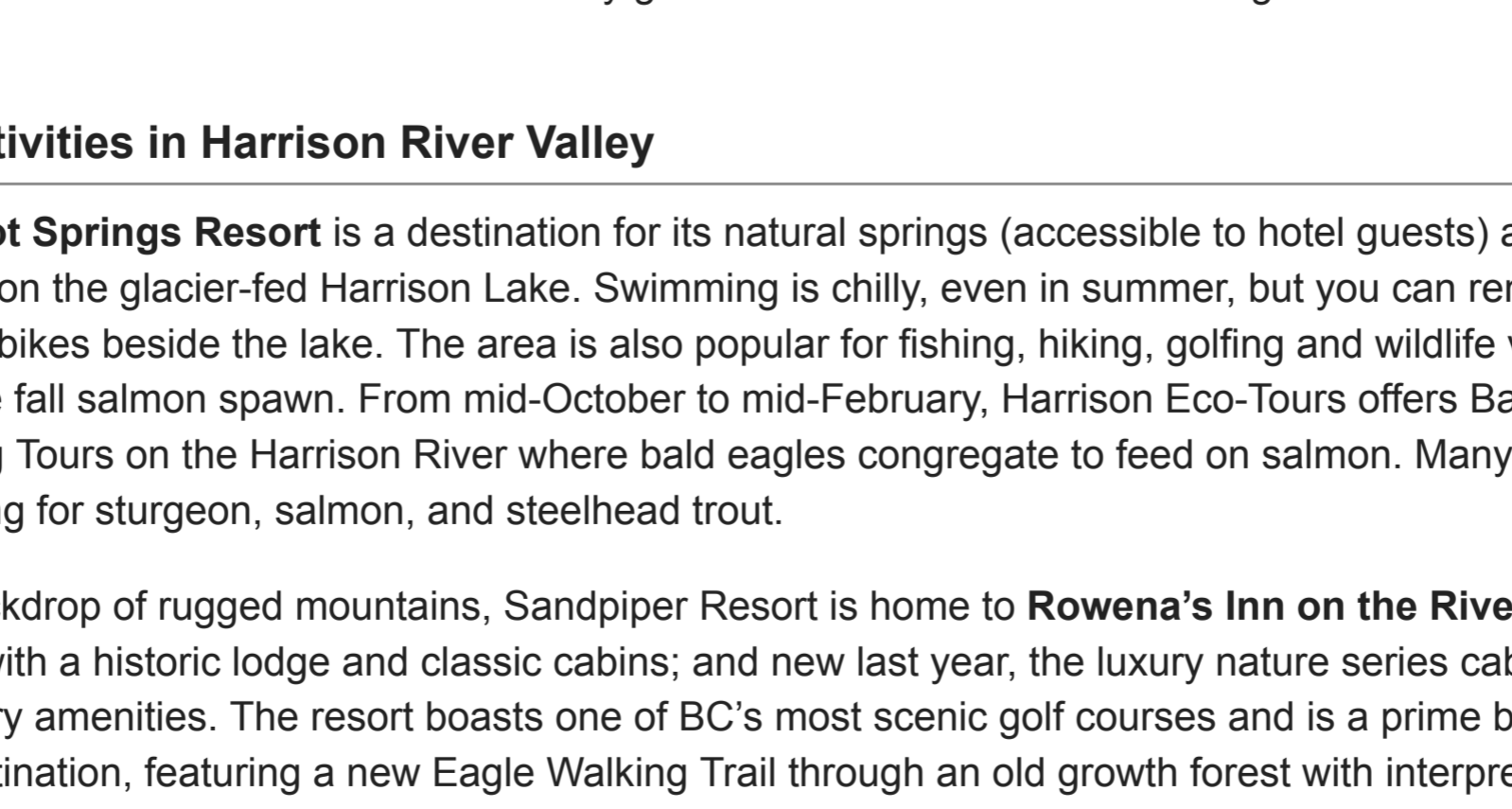
Hungry for more? Ann shows how to eat like a local in [Menorca](#).

Wineries and the BC Ale Trail

The Fraser Valley is blessed with a mild coastal climate favorable for growing many grape varieties including Pinot Noir, Bacchus, and Sauvignon Blanc. The Langley area is the premier wine and libations destination where the majority of vineyards are located. Wine tasting itineraries can be followed on the Circle Farm Tour or by hiring a local tour operator such as Beyond Bubbles or Vine & Hops.

Many wineries produce wines solely from their estate-grown grapes and some complement blends with grapes from the neighboring Okanagan Valley. A new tasting room at **Valley Commons Bistro** in Fort Langley features wines from its Valley Commons Okanagan vineyards, an area that boasts the province's finest wines. French-born Luc Duval conducts an informative tasting featuring their best-selling Rose, Pinot Gris, Cabernet Sauvignon and a Harvest Table blend of Pinotage and Pinot Noir.

The valley also has a long history of growing hops, and beer lovers flock to the area for its lively brewpub scene and several craft breweries that are part of the larger BC Ale Trail. **Farmhouse Brewing** in Chilliwack is one of the newest, opened in 2020, when owners Colleen Neals and her husband bought an old goat farm. "This endeavor was born out of our passion for beer and hobby farming," she tells me as I sampled a flight with their specialty wood-fired pizza. They offer 12 craft beer varieties as well as cider on tap. You can wander through their fields of hops and enjoy the scenery from comfortable seating areas on the patio and lawn.



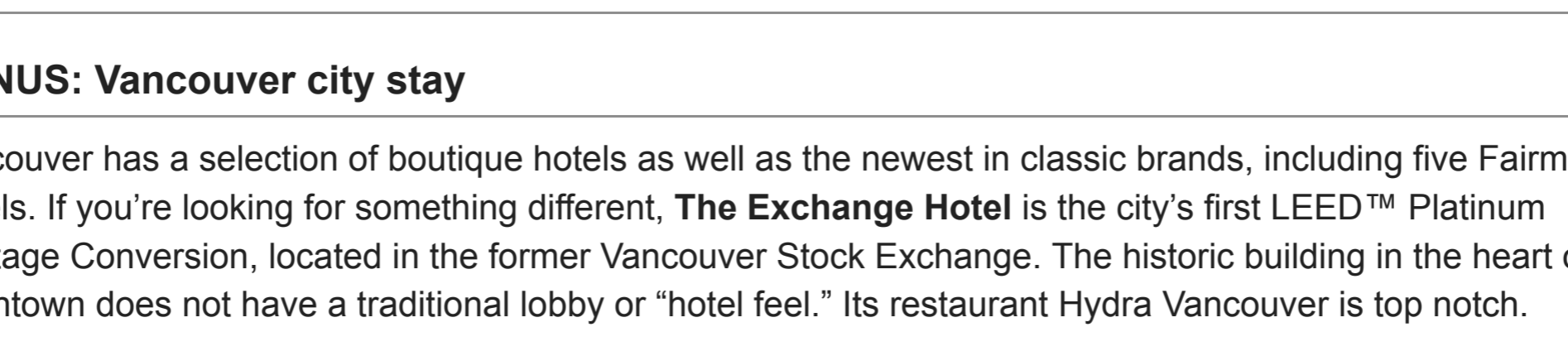
Fresh-from-the-farm ingredients make the wood-fired pizza a standout at Farmhouse Brewing.

Field House Brewing in Abbotsford and its sister location in Chilliwack are also popular for the full craft beer and farm-to-table experience, coupled with occasional live music and wonderful views of Mount Baker from the lawn. Field House has its own farm where they grow most of their own fruit and vegetables featured in menu selections.

Nature Activities in Harrison River Valley

Harrison Hot Springs Resort is a destination for its natural springs (accessible to hotel guests) and for watersports on the glacier-fed Harrison Lake. Swimming is chilly, even in summer, but you can rent kayaks, canoes and bikes beside the lake. The area is also popular for fishing, hiking, golfing, and wildlife viewing, including the fall salmon spawn. From mid-October to mid-February, Harrison Eco-Tours offers Bald Eagle and Fish Viewing Tours on the Harrison River where bald eagles congregate to feed on salmon. Many outfitters offer guided fishing for sturgeon, salmon, and steelhead trout.

With the backdrop of rugged mountains, Sandpiper Resort is home to **Rowena's Inn on the River**, a lovely compound with a historic lodge and classic cabins; and new last year, the luxury nature series cabins with contemporary amenities. The resort boasts one of BC's most scenic golf courses and is a prime bald eagle sighting destination, featuring a new Eagle Walking Trail through an old growth forest with interpretative signage and a viewing gazebo.



The new nature series cabins at Rowena's Inn on the River.

To learn more about Fraser Valley, visit [this website](#). And enjoy some more sites from Fraser Valley in the [YouTube video](#) below.

BONUS: Vancouver city stay

Vancouver has a selection of boutique hotels as well as the newest in classic brands, including five Fairmont Hotels. If you're looking for something different, **The Exchange Hotel** is the city's first LEED™ Platinum Heritage Conversion, located in the former Vancouver Stock Exchange. The historic building in the heart of downtown does not have a traditional lobby or "hotel feel." Its restaurant Hydra Vancouver is top notch.

-Story and photos by Ann Yungmeyer