



Penticton is the perfect Porsche travel adventure

Discovering the best roads, wineries and elevated dining experiences in Penticton's wine region.

Story & Photos by Edward Quan

Penticton is the perfect destination for a memorable Porsche travel adventure, especially if you want a break from the hustle and bustle of big-city life.

Situated in the Okanagan Valley in the southern interior of British Columbia, Penticton is nestled between the tranquil Okanagan and Skaha lakes. With only 40,000 residents, it radiates a simpler time, a small-town charm that is increasingly rare today.

My Porsche travel adventure begins in Vancouver and will take me 395 km, a four-and-a-half-hour drive east along Trans-Canada Highway 1 to Hope, which connects to Highway 3.

I loved the exhilarating experience of cruising along Highway 3 in my Porsche Boxster. This road is ideal for driving enthusiasts. The scenic route offers an engaging,

twisty road – including 360-degree hairpin turns – through coastal mountain valleys, melting snow-cap-fed rivers and untouched forests. Along the way, you might spot wildlife such as deer, black bears, mountain goats, and forgotten gold rush mining towns.

During my two-day visit to Penticton, I visited its brewery scene and several wineries offering elevated dining experiences. My Porsche travel adventure took me north to Naramata Bench, where I enjoyed stunning lake views, orchards, and vineyards. On the second day, I took a circular drive south to Okanagan Falls and around Skaha Lake before returning to town.

Penticton summers are sunny and hot, and the region offers various outdoor activities for all ages and families. These include relaxing on the sandy beaches, water



activities on the lake, hiking and biking along the Kettle Valley Rail (KVR) trail, and skiing or snowboarding on local hills in winter.

On my first day, I quickly noticed that the residents moved much slower than city folks. The exception was a senior woman on an electric mobility scooter barreling down the sidewalk as I stepped out of the pastry shop. Perhaps she has a Porsche, too?

Main Street is lined with mom-and-pop businesses, such as coffee shops and artist galleries. Everyone is friendly. You will find a wide range of hotels, breweries, wine-tasting rooms, and restaurants, all within walking distance. Feel free to leave your Porsche parked for the night and enjoy the small-town charm of Penticton.

Arriving later in the morning, I was excited to delve into Penticton's thriving brewery scene, which currently features eight breweries.

Cannery Brewing, located on Ellis Street in the downtown district, is a must-visit. Upon arriving for lunch, I met Patt Dyck, Co-Founder and General Manager. As we toured her facility, I quickly learned they are passionate about brewing beer. She shared with me that her business is more than brewing beer; it's about their customers and the local community.

The taproom offers 12 taps, local wine and cider, locally sourced and house-made snacks, and live entertainment on Sundays. During my visit, I enjoyed a flight of light ales and their locally famous nachos, which did not disappoint.

Cannery Brewing has a dog-friendly outdoor backyard that is open to families. Food trucks are present on weekends, or you can order delicious features from the Cannery Shack in the Cannery's Backyard. It's a

welcoming spot for the whole family.

On my first evening, I headed north on Naramata Road to Hillside Winery & Bistro for dinner. This winding road is situated on the east side of Okanagan Lake. With my Porsche top down, I passed by numerous orchards and vineyards, enjoying views of the lake and the KVR trail, which crosses the road into the mountains.

When you first arrive at Hillside, you encounter a towering structure constructed from wood and stone reminiscent of old-world European architecture.

At the Bistro at Hillside Winery, you are encouraged to relax and slow down, offering a menu of sharing plates with locally sourced ingredients. My guest and I shared the Tacos with duck confit, corn tortilla, garden herbs cherry gastrique, and blueberry labneh with housemade hot sauce, which were very good.

This was followed by the sockeye salmon paired with a 2020 Merlot. As sockeye salmon has a more robust flavour than other species, pairing it with a medium-body, fruit forward Merlot was a new and exciting taste sensation.

The following morning, I started my day by looking for breakfast and stumbled upon Petrsek Bakery on Main Street, which is in a new, larger location that they just moved to in April. It's an artisan European bakery where everything is traditionally handcrafted and made from scratch.

A local informed me that Silvia and Jan Petrsek are famous for their chocolate croissants and fruit tarts. Therefore, I indulged in a delightful peach tart while relaxing on the front patio, observing the town slowly spring to life.

With the sun out and the top down in my Porsche,

ABOVE: Visit the District Wine Village, Canada's first and only wine village.

At Canter Cellars, you can partake in an exquisite wine-tasting experience.

The sockeye salmon entrée at the Hillside Winery & Bistro is a must-try.

The old-world architecture of Hillside Winery & Bistro towers over the vineyards.

ABOVE: Seacrest Hill Road, a picturesque route, looking south with breathtaking views of Tuc-el-nuit Lake.

RIGHT: Indulge in a refreshing flight of light ales at Cannery Brewing.





ABOVE: The Restaurant at Liquidity Wines offers a superb lunch experience.

I departed Penticton and drove south on Lakeside/Eastside Road, which hugs a windy shoreline along the east side of Skaha Lake. It was a leisurely 24 km drive, taking me about 30 minutes since I had the road almost entirely to myself. Much of the road surface is nearly level with the lake, providing an impressive view of the calm water and the hills on the opposite side, making it an unadulterated driving pleasure.

My lunch destination was Liquidity Wines, located south of Okanagan Falls, nestled on a hillside overlooking Vaseux Lake and n̄aylntn (McIntyre Bluff). Upon arriving in the parking lot, I discovered two Porsche EV chargers, a rarity these days.

Upon entering the winery, we were offered a complimentary tasting of their 2022 Estate Viognier.

At the Restaurant at Liquidity Wines, Chef Josh Mueller creates a seasonal, three-course lunch menu centred around wine, allowing guests to indulge and savour a symphony of flavours that excite their palates.

Our server, Kellen, gave us a table on the patio overlooking the infinity pond and brought us freshly baked rosemary focaccia, whipped coconut butter, and preserved lemon.

I started with the Smoked Cod on potato and ruta-baga, leek emulsion, and lemongrass. It was paired with their 2022 Estate Viognier, fresh, crisp, acidic flavours with herbal notes to complement my fish serving.

A Fraser Valley Chicken entree with coffee lentils, brown butter kale, fire morels, and black apple jus followed. The chicken had a crispy skin wrap with a rich, smoked taste, which was delightful. They paired it with their 2020 Dividend, a Bordeaux-inspired blend with aromas of juicy red strawberry and toasty notes that complimented the chicken dish nicely.

I finished my lunch with Black & Blue: blackberries, blue cheese, and chocolate for dessert, paired with the 2020 Estate Merlot, which is bright, juicy, and complex. You can't go wrong with a fine Merlot with chocolate!



Liquidity Wines was one of the highlights of my Penticton adventure. They plan to launch a dinner service starting June 21. Visit their website for further details.

After lunch, we continued south on the Okanagan Highway 97 towards Oliver for a 12 km – 12-minute drive to the District Wine Village, Canada's first and only wine village.

The District Wine Village is located just south of n̄aylntn (McIntyre Bluff) and has 11 wineries, one brewery, one distillery, and a restaurant. Each tenant is housed in individual buildings with seating areas and the full production wineries produce right on-site. The venue consists of 16 units arranged in a circle facing a central outdoor plaza, which can be used for public seating, hosting music artists, game shows, private weddings, and family events.

After a brief tour, Darcel Giesbrecht, the General Manager, introduced me to their newest winery, Canter Cellars. Canter is a horse's gait with three distinct beats, representing a winery with three founding families. With a shared history with horses, they draw parallels to them as a powerful symbol of tamed beauty—much like the process of history and winemaking in the Okanagan Valley.

My tasting started with a Rose 2023 Cabernet Franc, an outstanding summer patio wine. Bright and attractive, it has pink grapefruit and raspberry aromas and sea minerals. I then tried their Field Blend 2022, an unoaked chardonnay with subtle tropical fruit notes. Both were delightful, and I highly recommend Canter for your next visit to the District Wine Village.

My route back to Penticton would be primarily on two-lane paved country roads on the west side of Vaseux Lake. As I exited the District Wine Village, I turned south onto Highway 97 and travelled about 2 km before turning right onto Seacrest Hill Road, which leads me up into the hills and offers beautiful views of Tuc-el-nuit Lake.

Seacrest Hill Road eventually connects to Willowbrook Road, only 4 km—5 minutes. I kept to the right and headed northbound on Willowbrook for 4 km—4 minutes. I turned right onto Green Lake Road, which offers a winding, narrow drive through wooded forest and cattle fields with varying elevations, providing an enjoyable drive.

Along my route, I passed Mahoney Lake, Nighthawk Vineyards, Green Lake, and See Ya Later Ranch, which are lovely wine stops if you have the time. At the end of Green Lake Road, you take a left to head north on Highway 97, which brings you along the opposite side of Skaha Lake, past small town Kaleden, and back into Penticton.

My final evening dining experience was at The Restaurant at Naramata Inn, a 16 km—20-minute drive north of Penticton. They offer a seasonal dinner menu with a sommelier-curated wine pairing. Their restaurant wine list features primarily local wines, but many international wines are available.

I selected Naramata Bella Buddha's Blend Rose sparkling wine to celebrate my two-day visit. It has a candied apple nose with a pale pink hue, tart strawberry-apple and white graphite pith on the palette.

I began with the Cauliflower soup with toasted seeds, brown butter, and green oil. It was thick, creamy, and full of flavour.

Followed by the slow-braised BC Grass-Fed Beef Short Rib for my main course with celeriac potato puree, spring vegetables, and old-fashioned mustard. Each morsel melted my taste buds, so it was well worth the drive.

To finish, I ordered the house-made chocolate dessert with Plot Twist Serrano Ice Cream, Coco Nib Glace, Port Jelly, and Walnut Crumble. The dessert was divine.

During my visit, I stayed at the all-new Four Points by Sheraton Penticton at the Convention Centre, which just opened at the beginning of the year. Aditya Bhardwaj, Operations Manager, welcomed me upon arrival and ensured my check-in was smooth and efficient.

The Four Points hotel caters to business and vacation travellers and is a 20-minute walk to downtown. Throughout my stay, I noticed a substantial presence of staff on duty, underscoring the property's unwavering commitment to exceptional guest service.

A must-do is to visit the Four Points rooftop bar, the Rooftop at Palmer, which offers panoramic views of Okanagan Lake and the giant Penticton sign on Munson Mountain. On the ground floor, Palmer Casual Steakhouse, with its outdoor patio, serves delicious breakfasts, lunches, and dinners next to the lobby. I highly recommend the Banana Bread French toast on the breakfast menu; it was marvellous.

Discover the charms of Penticton, a wonderful town that is the perfect starting point for an unforgettable Porsche travel adventure. It is surrounded by exceptional wineries that offer elevated dining experiences, so you won't be disappointed.

On my last evening, while driving my Porsche from Naramata, I gazed through the front windshield at the vineyards spreading across the lush, rolling landscape of the Penticton wine region. It was tough to say goodbye, but I knew I was soon heading back to the hustle and bustle of big city life, anticipating the congestion on Trans-Canada Highway 1.



ABOVE: Four Points by Sheraton Penticton at the Convention Centre.



LEFT: The Restaurant at Naramata Inn offers outstanding dining and boasts one of the most extensive wine selections in the region.

You must try the slow braised BC grass-fed beef short rib.



BOTTOM LEFT: Enjoy a banana bread French toast breakfast at Palmer Casual Steakhouse.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Petrasek Bakery, a local favourite, is renowned for its delectable fresh fruit tarts.

