

GO EXPLORE

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Chinese New Year comes early at banquet, gala

The lunar new year ticks over next week, but Victoria's Chinese community celebrates the Year of the Rooster early with two events this weekend.

The Victoria Chinatown Lioness Club is hosting its annual Chinese New Year Banquet on Saturday.

The authentic eight-course Chinese banquet includes tea pairings, music and entertainment.

The event starts at 6 p.m. Saturday at Golden City Restaurant, 721 Fisgard St. Tickets are \$48 and can be purchased from Pei Mei Chia at chiamp@shaw.com or call

or text 250-514-1928. Details at victoriachinatownlioness.com or Facebook.

More than 1,000 people are expected to celebrate the new year at the 2017 Victoria Chinese New Year Gala, an evening of music, dance, songs, comedy and drama,

Sunday at the Royal Theatre.

The show is the largest Chinese New Year festival locally, with modern and traditional performances by Chinese community artists, groups, societies and individuals.

The event is organized by the Victoria Chinese Commu-

nity Association and Victoria Chinese Students and Scholars Association.

Tickets are \$20 to \$99. The event starts at 7 p.m. Sunday at the Royal Theatre, 805 Broughton St. For information, go to rmts.bc.ca/events/chinese-new-year-gala-2017-royal-theatre.



Ken Winchester of deVine Spirits, Leon Webb of Victoria Distillers and Devon Greenway of Shelter Point Distillery will take part in the 12th annual Victoria Whisky Festival at the Hotel Grand Pacific today through Sunday. DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

Victoria celebrates the Son of Scotland

Raise a wee dram to celebrate the birthday of Robert Burns, Scotland's most famous poet and lyricist, at several events held in his honour across the region, Friday until Wednesday.

The Cook Street Village Activity Centre kicks things off Friday with a night of Scottish cuisine and music.

Members of the Victoria chapter of the Sons of Scotland will pipe in the haggis and tell stories of famous Scots.

A limited number of tickets remains: \$12 for members and \$15 for non-members. The event runs from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. on Jan. 20 at the centre, 380 Cook St. For details, email info@cookstreetvillageactivitycentre.com or call 250-384-6542.

Diners at Saturday's Robbie Burns Dinner at Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney will be serenaded by the host, the Greater Victoria Police Pipe Band and Guests.

There will be a bar and whisky-tasting to wash down the haggis.

Tickets are \$55, with proceeds supporting the band's community and cultural initiatives. Doors open at 5, with dinner served at 6 p.m. at the centre, 2243 Beacon Ave., Sidney.

Tickets are available from Charlie Bates (250-884-9029) or Jim Maxwell (250-598-0120). For more information, go to marywinspear.ca.

On Sunday, members of the Saltire Society invite the public to a remembrance ceremony at the Burns statue in Beacon Hill Park (across from the petting zoo).

Following the ceremony, members of various Scottish organizations will host a concert of Scottish music and dance, followed by a light tea.

Admission is by donation. The ceremony starts at 2 p.m. at the Burns statue in Beacon Hill Park. The concert and tea runs from 2:30 p.m. at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Kirk Hall, 680 Courtney St. For information, call 250-385-8744.

Scotland's bard will be remembered at Craigdarroch Castle, former home of the Dunsmuirs, one of Canada's most prominent Scottish families, on Wednesday, Burns's birthday.

The haggis will be piped in and the traditional Address to a Haggis delivered, followed by an opportunity for guests to sample the Great Chieftain of the Sausage Race.

Guests will be treated to a reading of Burns's celebrated poems and entertained by Celtic music provided by Cookielidh.

Activities are included in the price of regular admission. The event runs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Craigdarroch Castle, 1050 Joan Cres. For information, go to thecastle.ca.

Spotlight on B.C. craft distillers



CHECK IT OUT

Sample the best whiskies from Canada and around the world at the Victoria Whisky Festival, today through Sunday at the Hotel Grand Pacific.

This is the 12th year for the event, which sees whisky enthusiasts from around the world make a pilgrimage to Victoria to dis-

cover what's new in the world of whisky.

This year's version highlights B.C. craft.

Interest in whisky has grown, with Canadian whiskies gaining popularity abroad and at home. "Canadian whiskies are beginning to receive the same acclaim from connoisseurs as those from Scotland, the U.S. and other countries," said Davin de Kergommeaux, chairman of the judges. "The rest of the world has discovered our whisky and now that recognition is coming home. B.C.'s micro-distilling industry is very new and we are only beginning to see their whiskies available for people to taste and buy. It's excit-

ing to watch the industry develop and see how all distillers, large and small, are working to create world-class whiskies."

Medals will be awarded in several categories. The awards ceremony will feature internationally recognized whisky writer Lew Bryson as the keynote speaker.

More than 50 distilleries will be on hand, from Scotland, Ireland, England, Canada, United States, Japan, Taiwan, India and France. Collectively, they will present more than 250 whiskies in a variety of styles and flavour profiles.

The festival hosts three days of events, including master classes, consumer tastings

and a Grand Tasting event.

Canada's presence at the festival has been growing over the past few years, with B.C.'s distilling industry making its strongest showing to date this year.

Proceeds from the volunteer-run festival are donated to charitable organizations.

While most of the events are sold out, tickets may still be available for tonight's Canadian Whisky Awards.

Tickets for the events run from \$30 to \$185. The events are scheduled for today through Sunday at the Hotel Grand Pacific, 463 Belleville St. For information, go to victoriawhiskyfestival.com.

A fun forest adventure

Unlock the mysteries of trees in the area — from sun-lovers to shade dwellers — at Tree-mendous Trees, a guided walk at Francis/King Regional Park on Saturday.

This is a fun forest adventure, suitable for children ages five and older, led along a trail by a CRD Regional Parks naturalist. Participants will be tasked with following clues and solving riddles on the way to meet the park's giants.

There is no cost to join the group. The event runs from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Saturday. Meet at the nature centre (off Munn Road) at the Francis/King Regional Park in Saanich.

Participants are advised to wear sturdy footwear and dress for the weather, as programs take place rain or shine. Arrive 10 minutes before the start of the program and please leave pets at home. For information, go to crd.bc.ca/parks.

Browse your way to a healthier life



CHECK IT OUT

Looking for the best products and services for a healthy lifestyle? The Victoria Health Show is a two-day event geared for the

health-conscious individual, Saturday and Sunday at Pearkes Recreation Centre.

Exhibitors at the show include vendors promoting health products, services and health experts. There will also be demonstrations, seminars and food sampling.

Discover the latest health products or find an expert to address a specific problem. Products at the event range from nutritional supplements to alternative therapies.

Day passes are \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors or students, weekend passes are \$12 for adults, \$9 for seniors or students. Children 12 and under are free.

The show runs from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday at Pearkes Recreation Centre, 3100 Tillicum Rd. The first 100 people in the door on both days get a goodie bag. For information, go to healthshows.com/victoria-info.

Turn those resolutions into habits

Did you make a New Year's resolution and now find it hard to follow through? Learn what you can do to exercise your way to a healthier and happier life at How Do I Do It? Transforming My Resolutions Into Exercise Habits, a free seminar at the University of Victoria on Wednesday.

The lecture program will be

led by Dr. Ryan Rhodes, an expert on the intention-behaviour gap. His studies include how people can develop better levels of fitness and what that means for families and their lifestyles.

Rhodes is the director of the university's behavioural medicine laboratory and associate director of the Institute on Aging and Life-

long Health. He has been named as the Faculty of Education Research Excellence award winner for 2016.

The event is free to attend. It runs from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Jan. 25 in the David Lam Auditorium, MacLaurin Building at the University of Victoria. Details at uvic.ca/education.

BACK FOR 2017!
NEW FARM TO TABLE
3 Course Dinner – \$25

3 Course \$25 Dinner Menu
entrée choices

Moroccan Beef Tagine ^(GF)
Braised with olives, orange, almonds, and dates, cardamom rice pilaf

Pan Seared Brome Lake Confit Duck Leg ^(GF)
Kennebec potato nest, duck egg, pickled carrots, micro greens, sour cherry demi

Arctic Char ^(GF)
Roasted sunchoke, zucchini and shiitake mushroom, buttered spinach, Japanese yuzu béarnaise sauce

BRUNCH | LUNCH | DINNER | LOUNGE | Open 7 days a week | 4509 W. Saanich Rd, Victoria | Ph: 250.479.1222 | firesidegrill.com