

# BEST HOLIDAY BETS

If you're looking to fill your scrapbook with fun holiday memories, check out our recommendations for what to do, see, wear, eat and read this winter

*By Lindsey Lewis,  
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## MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT

Nothing brightens a long winter evening—or the heart of a light-bulb salesman—like thousands of lights. At Bright Nights in Stanley Park (page 79), more than a million sparkle throughout the forest, train and Children's Farmyard, all to raise money for the BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn Fund. VanDusen Botanical Garden's Festival of Lights (page 80) features another million, plus choirs and visits with Old Saint Nick; for old-fashioned illumination, a small donation to the Make-A-Wish Foundation lets you light a candle at the shrine. Raising money for another worthy cause, Lights of Hope (page 80) glows brighter than a herd of Rudolfs; lights and stars adorn St. Paul's Hospital, and donations fund medical research and equipment. If you're in North Vancouver, take in the Canyon Lights at Capilano Suspension Bridge (shown above; page 79) while listening to carollers in historical costumes. And count your blessings that you're just admiring the lights, not paying for the electricity to power them all. —S.R.

## TAKE A HIKE

There's something wonderfully satisfying about coming in from the cold to enjoy a hot meal and good company—and even more so when you snowshoe for an hour to get there.

Cypress Mountain's Hollyburn Lodge Fondue Tours (page 83) are a festive way to pass an evening. Once outfitted with high-tech snowshoes and headlamps at the Nordic Base, adventurous types follow an experienced guide on a three-km (1.9-mi) walk through scenic terrain to Hollyburn Lodge, a rustic hideaway with a cozy vibe. Guests tuck into a comforting winter feast of cheese fondue made with emmenthal, gruyere and white wine, followed by a sweet-tooth-satisfying spread of chocolate fondue, fresh fruit and angel food cake. After a hot drink or glass of wine by the fire, it's time to walk *sans* snowshoes back to the base. Next stop? Mount Everest. —A.M.



## YOU'LL SHOOT YOUR EYE OUT, KID

All Ralphie wants for Christmas is a Red Ryder BB gun, but the adults in his life—everyone, from his parents to his teacher to Santa Claus himself—tell him he'll put out an eye. Fans of the timeless movie *A Christmas Story*, or *In God We Trust All Others Pay Cash* (the Jean Shepherd book upon which the film is based), already know whether Ralphie's eyesight remains intact on Christmas morning. Everyone else will have to wait to see *A Christmas Story*—the play based on the movie—running at the Arts Club Granville Island Stage (page 81) all month. —S.R.



PHOTOS: (B) DAVID MACKAY; LUCASTESTING AND MELISSA POLL BY DAVID COOPER.  
(ABOVE) COURTESY CYPRESS MOUNTAIN



**Then:** In 1920, Peter Pantages's brand new Vancouver Polar Bear Swim Club consisted of 10 members who took the plunge in English Bay on January 1.

**Now:** Up to 10,000 looky-loos gawk at the 2,000 foolhardy souls immersing themselves in the 5°C (40°F) water. Some swimmers do little more than get wet, while others actually swim a few strokes.

**Then:** Those taking the plunge wore sedate swimming costumes.

**Now:** Costumes of a different sort are the norm. A party atmosphere pervades

## NIPPY DIP



as folks decked out in everything from grass skirts and coconut bras to full Santa Claus outfits, complete with boots and beard, embark on the annual Polar Bear Swim (page 81). A sign of mass Vancouverite insanity, or just an unusual cure for a New Year's Eve hangover? You be the judge. —S.R.

## WINTER WEAR

Despite Vancouverites' reputation for donning dull Gore-Tex and galoshes as soon as the weather turns, many West Coast women resist relinquishing style for functionality. Feel the same way? Stop by these local companies to get decked out for dreary days.

For slick leather outerwear, head to Snowflake (page 36) and peruse the extensive "Made in Canada" selections. Standouts include the classic black jacket with zip pocket and cuff; add finesse by choosing one with a coloured cuff or inside collar.

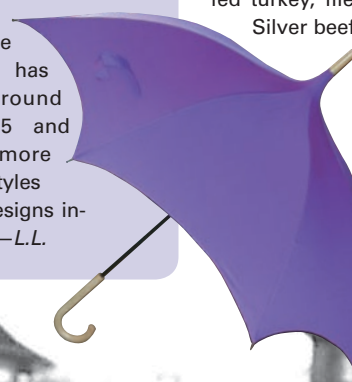
Fine-fibre carrier Mount-Cashmere (page 36) has a reputation as the best place in town to stock up on the warm, silky stuff. Snuggle into a V-neck sweater—in a multitude of colours, from diva pink to spearmint green. The lined, two-ply, knee-length skirt with back slit or two-ply drawstring pants add luxe to the lower half. Four-ply gloves and a matching Marcia scarf cover up chilly skin.

John Fluevog's (page 40) eponymous shoes couldn't be more different from galoshes. Coveted by creative

souls, each pair has flair. Choose ladylike black leather boots designed with little fuss. The Teapot English Breakfast ankle boot and Fellowship Bev knee-high boot both work with pants or a skirt.

Top it all off with an unusual brolly from The Umbrella

Shop (page 75), which has been around since 1935 and carries more than 20 styles and designs in-store. —L.L.



## FESTIVE FEASTS

A delicious home-cooked or guaranteed-to-gratify Christmas Day dinner is often the stuff of fiction. Lucky for you, Eric Pateman and Cecilia Yong of Edible British Columbia (page 38) gave us the facts on gourmet C-Day dining:

♦ Five Sails (page 99) offers a five-course menu including your choice of grilled wild BC salmon, traditional roast turkey or prime Alberta beef tenderloin, plus a view of carol ships and harbour lights (\$115 to \$130).

♦ Sink into velvet-covered, high-backed chairs at plum-tinged Bacchus Restaurant (page 92), then choose from roasted grain-fed turkey, filet of BC salmon or Alberta tenderloin Sterling Silver beef (\$130).

♦ At Herons (page 99), classic comfort-food choices such as roasted turkey, mustard-roasted rack of veal and pan-seared arctic char (\$82) belie the clean, modern décor. —L.L.





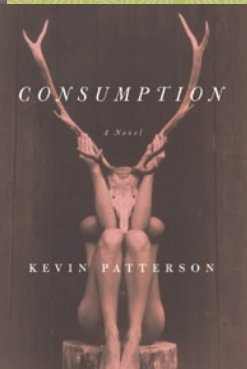
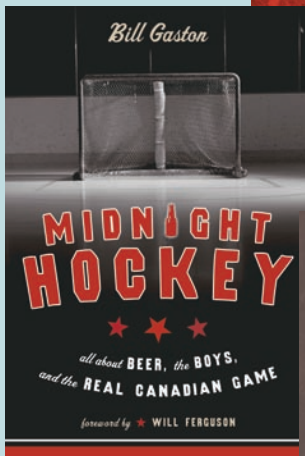
# WINTER PAGE TURNERS

Whether you're crossing someone off your holiday list or indulging yourself, these titles from BC authors are sure to bring on the warmth.

Experience the Canadian north without donning a parka. In *Consumption* (Random House, \$32.95), Kevin Patterson

tells the fictional story of Victoria, an Inuit girl whose life is uprooted when she must move away for tuberculosis treatment, leaving the only way of life she knows. Years later, she returns to find herself disconnected from her old home. Patterson, a Salt Spring Island-based doctor, shares Victoria's journey as she marries, raises children and struggles to mend her wounded spirit.

Whether your soul needs mending or not, feed it—and your appetite—with the flavours of India. (Mom's chicken soup will have to take a back seat, but we won't tell.) Hailed by foodies for its inventive cuisine, Vancouver eatery Vij's (page 95) has received praise from the likes of Jamie Oliver and *The New York Times*. Owner Vikram Vij has translated his passion into *Vij's: Elegant & Inspired Indian Cuisine* (Douglas & McIntyre, \$40), an exquisitely photographed cookbook. Included are recipes for basics such as Garam Masala and Vij's signature dish, Marinated Lamb Popsicles. Where to start? Follow the recipe for Vij's Chai, then sip while



deciding which tempting dish to whip up first. Though a mug of tea is fine for some, to many Canadians there's nothing sweeter than the sound of a hockey puck hitting the ice—unless it's that first sip of post-game brew. In his memoir *Midnight Hockey: All About Beer, the Boys, and the Real Canadian Game* (Random House, \$29.95), Giller-nominated Bill Gaston chronicles the swan song season of his hockey career, reflecting on the glory days of his youth in Winnipeg, a stint playing pro in Europe and his years in the Canadian beer leagues. Victoria-based Gaston spares no details on everything from late-night games and on-the-road dalliances to his appreciation for stinky hockey gear. We'll take his word for it. —A.M. **W**



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