



Christmas Spirit

Don your best gear—your best Old Saint Nick gear, that is—and head to Whistler Blackcomb for the annual Dress Like Santa Day, when the **first 50 folks outfitted like Mr. or Mrs. Claus can ski for free** (Dec. 17; page 52). The jolly old elf always makes a grand West Coast entrance for Christmas in Steveston, arriving in a whale watching boat (Dec. 3 to 23; page 51). Winter Harp celebrates the season with a concert of harps and rare medieval instruments in St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church (Dec. 17; page 54). Goh Ballet brings to life Clara, the Mouse King and the rest of the beloved characters in Tchaikovsky's Christmas classic *The Nutcracker* at The Centre (Dec. 15 to 18; page 52).

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, at (clockwise from top left) Dress Like Santa Day at Whistler Blackcomb, Winter Harp, *The Nutcracker* and Christmas in Steveston



92ND ANNUAL POLAR BEAR SWIM

Vancouverites know the cure for a New Year's Eve hangover is an **icy dip in English Bay on New Year's Day**. A handful of hardy locals first took the plunge in 1920, and that number keeps

growing, now topping 2,200 despite ocean temperatures as low as 3°C (38°F). Most of the swimmers show up in costume, undaunted by the cold. Join the insanity Jan. 1 (page 54).