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## **Tourism Victoria helping showcase our region to global travel industry buyers**

**This week's Canada's West Marketplace is the realization of a deliberate strategy to showcase our renewed destination on the international stage**

VICTORIA – Greater Victoria's tourism industry continues to gain momentum as our region enjoys a renaissance as an in-demand destination. This week, Victoria hosts the 30th annual Canada's West Marketplace, a dynamic forum for promoting Western Canadian tourism products to tour operators and wholesalers from around the planet.

Greater Victoria is enjoying its moment in the sun, benefiting from major hotel renovations, including a \$60 million upgrade to the Fairmont Empress, as well as prestigious [international accolades](#) and a fresh inventory of [experiential tourism products](#) that make Greater Victoria a must-see destination for travellers. Improved access, a modern air terminal in the Inner Harbour and new passenger ferry services have also made it easier for people to choose to visit our region.

This year's Canada's West Marketplace attracted a record number of buyers. Hosting the event is part of a plan to better promote Greater Victoria to key segments of the international tourism industry. Three years ago, Tourism Victoria chose a deliberate strategy to compete for major trade shows that target vital sales channels, including leisure travel, the meetings industry and travel media. Tourism Victoria won every bid.

"We're thrilled to be hosting Canada's West Marketplace," says Paul Hawes, Chief Marketing and Distribution Officer of Tourism Victoria. "A record number of tour operators want to experience our destination and see first-hand what we're about. We are showcasing five familiarization tours, specific to Victoria, to almost 100 travel trade decision makers. Tourism Victoria also hosted the opening reception where we delivered the sights, sounds and flavours of the destination, including a 10-foot high doughnut wall, and music from local buskers.

"On Wednesday night we are set to deliver a very special dinner at Harbour Air Terminal for our top VIP clients. The Butchart Gardens have helped us activate the airport with four truckloads of trees, plants and décor. We know that showcasing the destination to these qualified decision-makers will help further grow our year-round visitation numbers."

After Canada's West Marketplace, Greater Victoria will host influential travel writers at the Travel Media Association of Canada in May 2018, followed by the Professional Convention Management Association Canadian Innovation Conference in November 2018.

"Hosting Canada's West Marketplace is the first step in a three-pronged strategy to host all of the major Canadian Business to Business Conferences that Victoria can host, in all possible channels with the objective of showcasing our renewed and rejuvenated destination," said Paul Nursey, President and CEO of Tourism Victoria. "In the coming year, Victoria will have an unprecedented opportunity to showcase itself in all major influencer channels: leisure, travel media and meetings and conventions by hosting flagship events right here in Victoria.

“Tourism Victoria is delighted to have had a 100 per cent closing ratio on all the major business to business conferences that it strategically targeted. Our focus now is to execute brilliantly to leverage the opportunity to showcase our refreshed Victoria product.”

**About Tourism Victoria:** Greater Victoria’s official, not-for-profit Destination Marketing Organization works in partnership with nearly 1,000 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria.

**About Canada's West Marketplace:** Established in 1989, *Canada's West Marketplace* is a partnership between Travel Alberta and Destination B.C. that enables tourism suppliers from Alberta and British Columbia to meet international tour operators and wholesalers from across Europe, Asia Pacific and North America. To learn more, visit [canadaswestmarketplace.com](http://canadaswestmarketplace.com).

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