

Tourism Week 2018

Testimonial: [Merridale Cidery & Distillery](#)



Why #BCTourismMatters in Cowichan, Especially for Specialty Producers

If you think about it, every business touches tourism in some way—whether directly or indirectly. Businesses like hotels, shops, restaurants and tour operators become front-line ambassadors for their local community by interacting with travelers on a daily basis. Government and public service impacts whether or not a destination is seen as safe to visit, and even industries like construction and finance ensure that a city has the physical and economic capacity to host visitors.

As the saying goes, a rising tide lifts all ships, and, as tourism grows in BC, all businesses in the province have the potential to prosper. Overall, tourism is a sustainable economic driver that brings with it great potential to advance our province with sound environmental business practices in place. Why? Because tourists are seeking the type of unique experiences that BC offers.

Tourism has not always been seen as a huge contributor. In some cases, it has been criticized as just the opposite. The past consensus was that it was a low paying job with little contribution, but we now know that's just not true. Through the impact of effective destination marketing, people have visited Cowichan and have been so struck by its natural beauty, lifestyle, community and local offerings that they have relocated. This has brought talented professionals, creative minds, and entrepreneurs who are willing to invest, leading to an abundance of dedicated business owners in the area. This, in turn, has created lucrative job opportunities for residents. From business owners to front-line staff, these people are proud of where they live, and can't wait to share the wonders of Cowichan with visitors.



For local producers like Merridale Cidery and Distillery, this growth has been observed over the past 19 years and is continuously celebrated as a huge win. The region has gone from a relatively unknown food and beverage producer to one that has been noticed internationally. Indeed, in the past, few people even knew where Cowichan was. Now it's not only on the map, but acknowledged as a fantastic destination for local cider, spirits, wine and cuisine, among other offerings. The direct impact on Merridale is that we have grown from two employees to over 50 in the high season. It means that we can continue to produce and distribute high-quality products, and it has meant a very good lifestyle both for our immediate family and for the extended family that are an important part of our team.

On behalf of the team at Merridale Cidery and Distillery, thank you for continuing to support the tourism industry in BC and allowing us to share our passion with visitors from around the world.

Janet Docherty

President and Co-owner, Merridale Cidery & Distillery