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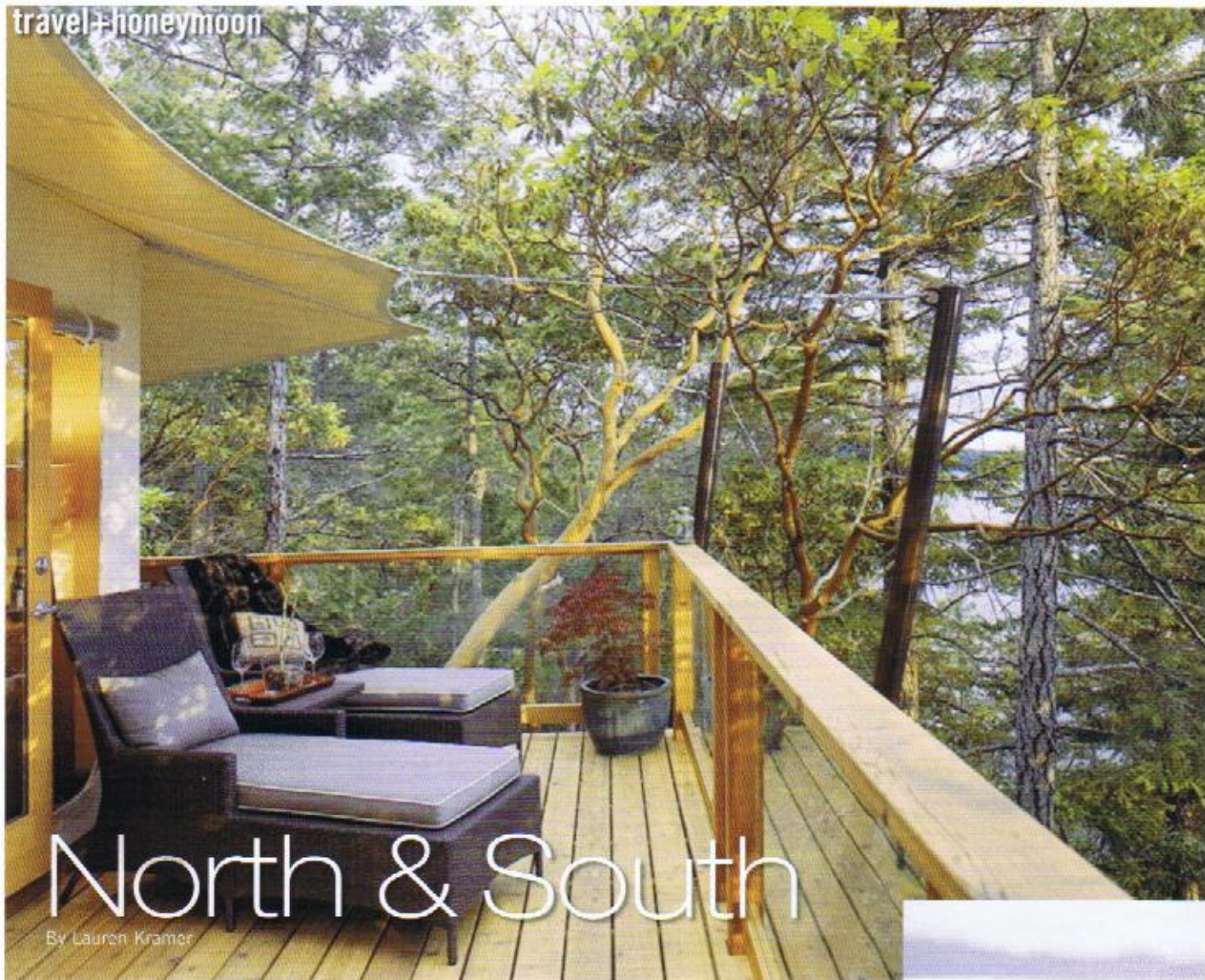
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North & South

By Lauren Kramer

WHETHER YOU BRAVE THE PEACE ARCH BORDER TO VENTURE SOUTH, OR BOARD A FERRY FOR the Sunshine Coast, both destinations offer honeymooners luxury, serenity and proximity to the elements. The only question is this: how close to those elements do you want to get?

The evening we arrived on the Sunshine Coast, the rain was pounding down and the surf was thrashing against Ole's Cove, a quiet inlet 45 minutes from the ferry terminal in Langdale.

It couldn't have been more perfect for a honeymoon.

Surrounded by the majesty and power of the elements, we were to spend the night sequestered in a tenthouse suite at **Rockwater Secret Cove Resort**. Sure, sunshine and blue skies are pleasant. But to really appreciate how close you are to nature, there's nothing like a good storm.

Kevin Toth and Peter Rubin purchased the resort previously known as Lord Jim's in 2004, knowing all too well that with its tired seaside cabins, it needed a new lease on life if it was to survive far into this century. One of its best vantage points was the peninsula. This rocky outcropping, where old growth trees, their roots covered with reindeer lichen, cling defiantly to the hillside, offers an extraordinary view of the cove.

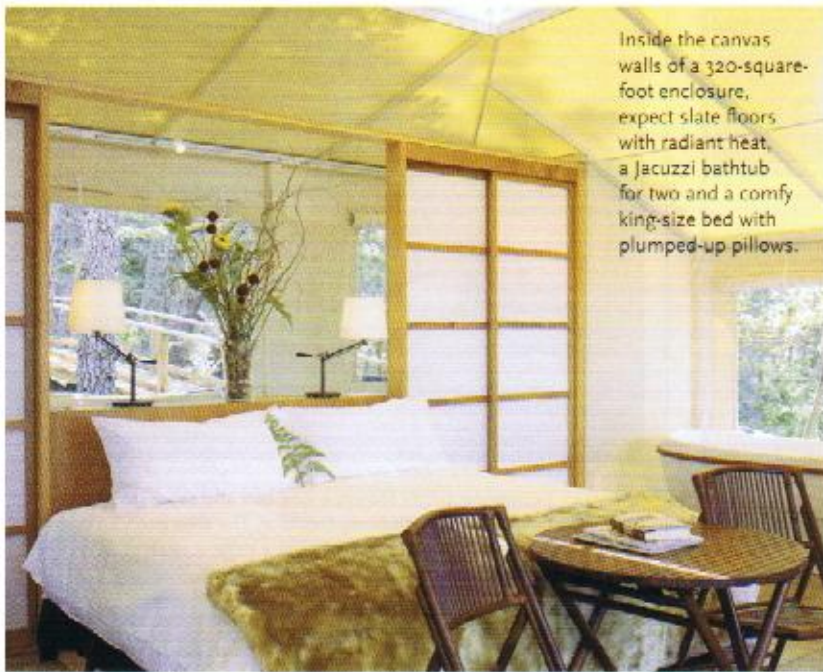
Worried about the destructive environmental impact of building hillside cottages, they came up with the idea of accommodating guests in tenthouse suites. Deluxe-style camping, the 13 suites offer a tent-like experience, but without the penalties of having to 'rough it,' even for a



(top) Though you're ensconced in the lap of luxury, a night in the Tenthouse Suites, Rockwater Secret Cove Resort feels like an exciting adventure, a grand gesture of defiance against the elements.

(above) Experience a massage in the privacy of your room or in the open air overlooking the ocean.

Inside the canvas walls of a 320-square-foot enclosure, expect slate floors with radiant heat, a Jacuzzi bathtub for two and a comfy king-size bed with plumped-up pillows.



second. Inside the canvas walls of a 320-square-foot enclosure, expect slate floors with radiant heat, a Jacuzzi bathtub for two, flush toilets, a comfy king-size bed with down comforter and plumped up pillows and securely locked doors.

There's a coffee maker and kettle for a hot drink in the morning, a propane fireplace to warm the cozy room, hot water in the slate-tiled shower and every luxury – thankfully with the exception of a television—you'd anticipate from a five-star hotel, even down to the room service.

Only thing is, you're in a tent—sort-of. That means, when the rain comes down, as it did the night we slept in the cove, you hear every last drop. Between the downpour, the wind and the pounding surf, there was an orchestra of sound that night, which adds dollops of romance to an extraordinarily cozy, intimate accommodation.

The tenthouses are accessed by a treetop boardwalk, surrounded on both sides by forest. The wet bark of Arbutus trees gleams in the early evening, and the branches of old Douglas Firs are heavy with moisture, releasing a fresh, invigorating scent into the air.

The boardwalk is your passage to and from the real world. Back at the resort, the white tablecloth restaurant hums with activity as Chef

Steven Ewing prepares such delicacies as sesame crusted Pacific albacore tuna with wasabi kewpie aioli, followed by caramelized lemon sahayon tart.

There's no urgency to go anywhere once you arrive at Rockwater. A game of Scrabble, a good book and a pair of binoculars are all you need to pass the time. But if you feel the need to get up and go, the resort can arrange a variety of activities, from Scuba lessons in the swimming pool, and later a dive in the cove, to spa treatments. On calm days, you can rent a kayak and paddle around the perimeter of the rocky island, or hop in the car to explore some of the neat galleries and stores that pepper the coast.

But it's hard to resist the temptation of curling up with your new spouse beneath the comforter, especially when you find yourself in the

midst of a winter storm. The fireplace crackles, the wind whips the canvas, and though you're ensconced in the lap of luxury, you can't help but feel like in the tenthouse suite, you're on an exciting adventure, a grand gesture of defiance against the elements.

Semiahmoo Resort in Blaine is a somewhat different experience. You approach on a road that winds and curves, with thick tracts of forest on both sides. You wouldn't know there was a resort this way until you climb a hill and see before you a long, narrow strip of land that extends like a cheeky tongue into the ocean. There, right at the tip of that tongue lies the Semiahmoo Resort.

Only an hour from Vancouver, the resort is a world apart from the city's rush and bustle. The Pacific Ocean is the year-round star attraction. In winter, guests watch the rolling waves from rain-spattered windows as loons and cormorants bounce on the choppy waters. In summer, the beach is a treasure-trove of stones and shells.

The Semiahmoo Resort is a decadently comfortable backdrop for these inspiring views. In nasty weather there's a lot to keep a couple occupied without ever having to leave. The resort boasts a movie theater, full spa and a health and fitness club with indoor tennis and racquetball courts, regular yoga classes and heated outdoor swimming pool. Crackling fireplaces invite a long game of Scrabble, and two on-property restaurants cater to fine dining and bar fare.

In good weather, guests dine on the patio of Packers Bar & Grill, watching children play on the grass and graceful heron pick their way through the shallow water. With its rich hardwood floors and majestic wood columns, the resort is at once grand and homey, with a friendly, unpretentious ambience.

When you've had enough serenity, Birch Bay and Blaine are conveniently close. On summer weekends, hop aboard the historic plover ferry which runs between Semiahmoo and Blaine harbor every hour. Join a

Follow a long, winding road on a narrow strip of land that extends like a cheeky tongue into the peninsula. Right at the tip of that tongue lies the Semiahmoo Resort.

Luxury, serenity and proximity to the elements.

