

SELF – GUIDED TOUR OF NARAMATA

The tour can be done by bike or car and will take a half or full day depending on how long you stop at each site along the way. You'll visit parks, heritage sites, points of interest, orchards, farms, and local artisan shops. The tour starts at Creek Park, located at the intersection of Naramata Rd. and Robinson Rd.



1. Creek Park

Start your tour here! Creek Park is located on Naramata Rd. just slightly south of the intersection at Robinson Rd. There's ample parking in the parking lot if you want to jump in with friends and park a vehicle here. Before you start your tour why not stretch your legs and go for a short jaunt up the creek. It's an easy walk alongside a well marked trail running beside Camp Creek. Picnic tables are situated at various points along the way so you can rest and enjoy the beauty of the creek and the sound of the rippling water. Bring your dog along but please make sure it's on a leash as this is a popular spot for dog walking.

From Creek Park turn left on Naramata Rd and proceed 1 km south until you come to Aikens Loop Rd on the right hand side. Turn right and go .5 km to Elephant Island Winery.

2. Elephant Island Winery

Owned and operated by Del and Miranda Halliday, Elephant Island is a unique winery that utilizes fresh Okanagan fruit in the making of their fine wines. Pears, cherries, black currants, apricots, and apples are just some of the fruits that they use in their generations-old recipes. They have been refined under the careful guidance of their Bordeaux trained winemaker Christine Leroux. During the summer season the winery is open to visitors from 10:30 – to 5:30 (call 250-496-5522 to confirm). Elephant Island was recommended by Wine Spectator Magazine as one of five 'must tastes' on an Okanagan wine tasting tour.

From either of the two driveways leaving Elephant Island turn right on Aikens Loop and drive along until you come to Old Main Road. Turn left and head down the hill. This is one of the prettiest roads in Naramata. Apple orchards grace the hills on one side and wind carved clay cliffs tower beside you on the other. The road narrows and winds through a pine forest. Drive slowly. On your left you'll see the beautiful stone mansion built by Carroll Aikens.

3. Stone Mansion

One of the original settlers of Naramata Carol Aikens purchased his property in 1909. It was known as the Rekadom Ranch and was the largest land holding at that time. Aiken's was one of the earliest orchardists. He started to build the stone walls and house at this spot by the lakeshore by hauling the rock blasted by highway crews to improve Naramata Road. The land was passed on to his son, CC Aikens, who is one of only 2 or 3 early settlers that still live on and manage their original

land holdings. After you pass the mansion, Old Main Road turns to the right and Manitou Bay comes into sight. Drive along the water and you come upon Manitou Park. Continue driving past the ball diamond, the road turns to the left, to the large parking lot for a visit to Manitou Park.



4. Manitou Park

A very popular spot for visitors and locals alike. The park features a wonderful sandy beach, baseball diamond, volleyball court and play areas for children. There is even a BMX track in the woods on the west side of the park. Throughout the spring the very popular Naramata Slowpitch League play evening games each night of the week. During the summer the men's fastball league games are scheduled and various ball tournaments are held.

During the cherry picking season in early July the park fills each afternoon with youthful "pickers" who come to cool off after a hard days work in the orchard. A menagerie of colourful characters can be seen swimming, drumming, juggling, or playing guitar as they relax and enjoy the park. Many travel from Quebec to find work harvesting fruit in Naramata's orchards.

There is a large osprey nest on the pole at the end of the pier and if you can often see them fishing in the bay.

Please note, no dogs are allowed in Manitou Park.

Before you get back in your car and leave the park visit the Labyrinth which is located directly across the street from the parking lot. Cross the street and walk through the small cherry orchard, veering towards the trailer you see at the back of the orchard on your left. Very quickly you will come upon the



5. The Labyrinth

The labyrinth is a walking meditative pathway and is open to the public. The beautiful wood, glass and concrete building beside it is Chalmers Chapel – A Quiet Place. These facilities are owned and operated by the Naramata Centre, a conference and retreat centre affiliated with the Anglican Church. People of all faiths are welcome at the chapel as a sign on it's front door says: "This simple quiet space at Naramata Centre is for all people who are open to the presence of God's spirit, to find sanctuary, renewal, and re-creation, alone or in community."

Turn left out of the parking lot of Manitou Park and at the first stop sign turn right onto 4th St. Then, at the next stop sign, turn left on to Gwendolyn St. Pass through 3rd St. and turn with the road onto 1st Street. The stately white building with spacious grounds on your right is part of the Naramata Centre, as are the park and beach on your left.

6. Camp Creek Spawning Grounds

The little bridge up ahead runs over Camp Creek. In the fall you can view the bright red Kokanee as they head to their spawning grounds in the stream. Kokanee is a land-locked sockeye salmon species that was nearly extinct. Efforts have been launched throughout the interior to try to revitalize this species. Please do not disturb the spawning Kokanee – view fish from the road level only. The creek restoration is a project of the Naramata Citizen’s Association.

7. Little Beach

Continue along 1st Avenue to the small park and boat launch on your left, approximately .5 km from the bridge. This place is known locally as ‘Dog Beach’, although dogs are no longer allowed to play here! It’s a great place to watch the sun go down in the evening. In late summer it sets behind Giants Head Mountain across the lake in Summerland. Can you see the rest of the giant’s body?

Before you go, have a look at the beautiful fruit, flower, and vegetable garden directly across the street.

8. Naramata Heritage Inn & Spa

Continue down 1st street and you will almost immediately come upon the Naramata Heritage Inn & Spa. This impressive building was built by John Moore Robinson, the founder of Naramata. He made his fortune in the newspaper business in central Canada before deciding to head west in search of gold during the Klondike gold rush in the late 1800's. Stopping briefly in the Okanagan Valley he succumbed to the serene beauty and idyllic climate and quickly realized the agricultural and development potential of the area. After surveying and developing the townsites of Peachland and Summerland, as well as many fruit bearing orchards, he set his sights on what he believed was the ideal location for the “Perfect Community”.

The “Hotel Naramata”, resting on the shores of Okanagan Lake, was his crowning achievement in land development. Over the years this building has functioned as a hotel, a private girls' school, and as the home of the Robinson Family. In 2002 it was lovingly restored and is now operated as a commercial inn. The Cobblestone Wine Bar and Restaurant is open daily from 11am – 11pm, (till 12pm Fri and Sat), and the Rock Oven Dining Room is open daily from 10 – 1am, reservations are advised, (496-6808). The Inn also has an Aveda Concept Spa.

As you leave the Naramata Heritage Inn turn right onto Robinson Road and drive one block up until 2nd St. The General Store is on your left. It stocks the basics and has a deli counter, video store, liquor store, and post office. Most importantly, it serves delicious ice cream. Check out the beautiful cards featuring the local photography of artist Lone Jones. They make great post cards and souvenirs.

Across the street from the General Store is the Naramata Museum.

9. Naramata Museum

The museum was created and is run entirely by volunteers. It has many delightful items and features a kitchen exhibit and blacksmith exhibit. During the summer it is open Fri., Sat., and Sun., from 2 – 4 and Thurs. eve 7-9.

From the museum turn left at St. Peters Church on 3rd St and continue until the stop sign at Anna St. Turn left and continue along until you see Wharf Park.



10. Wharf Park

This is the site of the original government wharf built around the turn of the century when the fruit industry was in its infancy here in Naramata. Then in 1908 Canada Pacific Railway (CPR) built a larger wharf to make it possible for the sternwheelers to dock at Naramata. The SS Sicamous was one of them and it was mainly a passenger boat that went from Okanagan Landing to Naramata and Penticton every day. It is one of only two Okanagan Sternwheelers that have been preserved and it can be seen at the Marine Heritage Park at Okanagan Beach in Penticton. Later the wharf became a train dock so that refrigerated rail cars loaded with Naramata fruit could be sent to Kelowna. Each rail car could hold 700 boxes of apples. The fruit was kept in cold storage in the packing house and the rail cars were pulled by a cable and winch along tracks right up to the doors of the packing house. A heavy duty truck was used to push the rail cars back to the dock and onto a barge that was pulled by tugs such as the the SS Naramata. It too can be seen at the Marine Heritage Park in Penticton. The old posts of the train dock were a favorite swimming spot for many years and but were dismantled in 2002 when the new dock and Wharf Park were made.

The long, low white building on the waterfront is an old fruit packing house. The current packing house is in the large building across the street. The local orchard's bring their fruit for sorting, storage and delivery to market. You can make retail fruit purchases at the packing house when fruit is in season.

11. Farmer's Market

Wharf Park is the site of the weekly Naramata Farmer's Market where you can purchase local fruit, produce and artiana. It is held every Wednesday from 4pm to 7pm.

Leaving Wharf Park drive on 1st Av. past the old packing house on the waterfront. The large home on your right used to be the renowned Country Squire Restaurant which unfortunately is no longer in operation. The former proprietors have started The Cannery Micro Brewery and now make delicious products such as Anarchist Amber Ale and Narmata Nut Brown Ale at their facility in the old cannery building in Penticton.

Continue on 1st street as it turns to the right. Pass Gladys Lane and come to the stop at Mill Bay Rd. Turn left.



12. Mill Bay Road

This is another of Naramata's most scenic roads. It is quite narrow so do drive slowly and give room to oncoming motorists. View the spectacular clay cliffs that loom overhead. These wonderful clay formations are evidence of a large glacial lake that once covered the entire Okanagan area during the Wisconsin Ice Age approximately 10,000 years ago.

Smith Brother's Lumbering Co. Of Vernon established a sawmill on Mill Creek Point around 1906 and thus the name Mill Bay. After passing the homes and cottages on your left you will see a 'pullout' on the left side of the road. This is a **good place to turn around** as the road narrows considerably from here and it is not possible to turn around without using a private driveway.

Head back towards the village on Mill Bay Rd. until you come to Boothe Rd. Turn left and head up the hill. There are several places of interest along this road.

Motif Antiques, on your right at 530 Booth Rd, offers decorative antiques that are representative of distinctive artistic periods such as art nouveau. The shop features decorative furniture, metalware, ceramics and glass. Open by chance in the high season (496-0004) and Thurs to Saturday 1 – 5 pm in the off season.

A Country Hideaway Gift Shop at 970 Boothe Rd. is a unique shop with treasures that inspire a sense of the past. Owner Peggie Collins gives new life to many old and found items from furniture to linens. The shop has mosaic pieces, painted furniture, home furnishings, copper cards, original wild flower photography, watercolours, and beadworks. Open daily 11 – 5, May through September and by chance or pre-arrangement (496-5205) at other times of the year.

Continue up Boothe Road until you come to Partridge Road. Now you have two options:

1. head for the local pub for a cold drink (unfortunately license does not allow children), or
2. continue on to the Little Tunnel for a spectacular view of Okanagan Lake and the entire valley.

13. Camp Creek Station Neighbourhood Pub

From Boothe Rd. turn right onto Partridge Rd passing King Rd., then passing Salting Rd. Head down the hill to the neighbourhood pub – Camp Creek Station located at the corner of Partridge and Robinson Rds.

A favorite meeting place for 'Naramatians'. You'll usually find local farmers and orchardists gathered here for a cold drink at the end of the day. Larry and Esther, the proprietors, are always ready to

extend a warm welcome to one and all. Have a cold Naramata Nut Brown Ale or one of the delicious food items on the pub menu. Play pool (tournament 1st Saturday of each month, 7 pm), sing Karoake (2nd Saturday of each month, 9pm), or hear live music (3rd Saturday of each month, 9pm). Stop and see why Camp Creek Station is the heart of Naramata. (Unfortunately the pub license does not allow for children inside the premises.)

From the pub turn left on Robinson road and proceed up the hill to Naramata Rd. Turn right and you will see Creek Park on your left, where we started our tour. I hope you've enjoyed your tour, met some friends, and made some memories to last a lifetime.....

14. The Little Tunnel

From Boothe rd. turn right onto Partridge Rd and then turn left onto King Rd. At North Naramata Rd. turn right. Drive along until you come to Smethurst Rd and turn left onto Smethurst. Drive up Smethurst Rd until it flattens out and there is a large parking area. You can park your car and walk out to the tunnel but it is about 4 - 5 km walk. You can also drive out to the tunnel. It is a narrow road so stop and pull over to let oncoming cars pass. When you get to the tunnel drive through it to turn your car around as on the far side of the tunnel there is ample room to turn a car around and park. Enjoy the magnificent vistas!

Return to Smethurst Rd. and turn right to take Smethurst down to N. Naramata Rd. Turn left onto N. Naramata Rd. and pass Robinson Road to return to Camp Creek Park where our tour started.

I hope you've enjoyed your tour, met some friends, and made some memories to last a lifetime.....

Schuyler

Many thanks to Phil Rounds for his good memory, delightful stories and invaluable assistance in providing historical information.