

Malcolm Parry: Gastown tavern with party past provides backdrop for TV series

Town Talk: Indie series shoots scenes, portraying Anchor Hotel as an illegal escort bar

BY MALCOM PARRY, VANCOUVER SUN COLUMNIST AUGUST 7, 2015



When salmon spawn, you could put a walking stick or umbrella between them and it would stay upright, Parry's teacher proclaimed.

Photograph by: Vancouver Sun Files

UP ANCHOR: Gastown's Anchor hotel replaced one 29 years older in 1912. CPR locomotives doubtless disturbed guests' sleep by running on tracks close beside the building's necessarily lopped-off southeast corner. Partiers and bands renewed the racket in the hotel's rambunctious pub and subsequent Club Elite. Brothers Damon and Jason Sugar spiffed it up as sugarandsugar lounge, which became the Canvas lounge and then the Brooklyn Gastown bar where five men were stabbed in a 2014 fight. Now named Alexander Gastown, its open-well two-floor layout still echoes Anchor pub days.

The joint may never have housed an illegal escort bar. But it did recently, fictionally at least, when Winfield-raised Mark Lewis directed Lochlyn Munro and others in additional scenes for his drolly dark *School of Fish* (school-of-fish.com). Lewis said the independent, six-episode TV series might have been a feature film like his Okanagan-shot *Ill Fated*. But he heeded brother Michael's advice that "nobody will watch it other than at film festivals." Now, with "Season 2 broadly mapped out," the indie series needs a network — HBO Canada comes to mind — to sign on.

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HURRAH FOR: Actress and sometime School of Fish promoter Alexandra Staseson co-produces the Celluloid Social Club with founding producer Paul Armstrong. The club has screened independent movies monthly since 1997. In L.A. on Friday, Armstrong saw the \$500,000 movie *Lawrence & Holloman* that he produced begin a week's run at the Downtown Independent Theater. Directed and co-written by Matthew Kowalchuk, from Morris Panych's same-name play, the dark and hilarious picture, starring Ben Cotton and Daniel Arnold, will release on VOD in the U.S. Aug. 11, and air on OutTV next spring.

WATER MUSIC: It looked momentarily as though a golden fountain might resolve VanDusen Botanical Garden's water woes. Sadly, it was just a closed-loop cascade from a tuba Ron Simmer had rejigged for the Sculptors' Society of BC's 8th annual exhibition. What the Oak-at-37th oasis certainly doesn't want are giant dandelion seed pods. Still, sculptor Anyuta Gusakova put one on the head of an ultra-skinny, elongated work that possibly reflected her three years as a Moscow fashion model. The Vladivostok native studied concurrently at Stroganov University, whose earlier alumni carved stockier statues of Soviet-era comrades Vladimir Lenin and Josef Stalin.

and find|: Douglas Coupland had barely completed an artist's residency at Google's Cultural Institute Lab in Paris then out came the book search|. Each of the hardcover's 1,000 pages lists the 100 top English-language searches made in February related to a keyword or phrase, all in Google-mandated lowercase. hide, for instance runs from "hide my ass" to "how to hide man boobs." how: from "how to get away with murder" to "how to make cake." Other page toppers: "50 ways to leave your lover;" "women in control;" "best meal replacement shakes;" "losing my religion." "worst tattoos ever." You get the drift.

As for Coupland's 1991 first book, "generation x" ranks seventh in searches between "motorola g 2nd generation" and "first generation college student." The book is hard to put down despite being as heavy as sin — a keyword not among its searches.

THE BEET GOES ON: Australia's Mallee Rock Shiraz-Cabernet and Pinot Grigio wines were launched recently on the PAL Vancouver building's verdant rooftop patio. Wild Rice restaurant's Brisbane-émigré executive chef Todd Bright provided such Aussie fare as meat-and-bacon pies and larger-than-sliders hamburgers called the works. He topped their patties with "beetroot" — sliced beets — and fried quail eggs. No Vegemite, though.

SARS BREAKS OUT: Former Ironworks co-owner Astrid Sars has managed PAL Vancouver's patio and 120-seat, sprung-floor studio theatre since 2013. Nathan Hoffman is technical director. Surprisingly, smashing sax player and singer Sars has never performed in the ever-busy complex. That'll change Aug. 23, when son Tim's jazz trio entertains Coal Harbour Residents' Association partiers with mama sitting in.

PROMISE FULFILLED: The threat warmer rivers pose to spawning salmon would have disturbed one 10-year-old British schoolboy. He'd heard a teacher speak of fish that, after years at sea, fought upstream to their exact B.C. birthplaces, then spawned and died. At those shallow sites, the teacher said, "salmon are so close together, you could put a walking stick or umbrella between them and it

would stay upright.”

At lunchtime, the boy told his mother: “When I grow up, I will live in British Columbia.”

Like Peter Pan, he skipped that opening proviso. But, 10 years later, now residing in B.C., he saw the teacher’s words come true. Two subsequent generations have witnessed the same thing with him and — cross fingers — so may a third.

Last weekend, we celebrated B.C.’s gifts. They included the millions of salmon now facing yet another adversary while struggling toward certain death so that their species may live. That miracle doubtless changes some 10-year-olds’ lives still today.

DOWN PARRYSCOPE: With yogawear maker Lululemon now producing full-strength Curiosity Lager, batches brewed thinner could be called sheer beer.

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Exhibiting in VanDusen Botanical Garden, sculptor and former Moscow fashion model Anyuta Gusakova never matched her self-portrayal.

Photograph by: Malcom Parry

