

TRAVEL NEAR

CLIMBING THE half-dozen steps to the imposing entryway of the Jefferson County Courthouse, this thought crosses my mind: *I'm in a different country for sure, but I could be in a different century as well.*

Solid wood and glass doors slide open as we step onto the threshold of this massive, red-brick building that watches over Port Townsend, Washington, with its turrets and 30-metre clock tower.

Inside, courthouse employees go about their business as we walk the tiled hallways and peer into wood-panelled offices. They're used to visitors who come to marvel at a wonderfully preserved Victorian-era building in one of the most Victorian of American towns.



PORT TOWNSEND

A GREAT SEASIDE GETAWAY FOR SHOPPERS, MARITIME BUFFS AND MARKET-GOERS

BY SUZANNE MORPHET

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BETH CAMPBELL



Find historic homes and heritage buildings, seaside views, and good food in Port Townsend.

Port Townsend is on the other side of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, just a short ferry ride from Victoria (about 90 minutes on the MV *Coho*) plus an hour's drive east from Port Angeles. It was founded just eight years after the Hudson's Bay Company built Fort Victoria in 1843. But instead of becoming the New York of the West Coast, as anticipated, the town shriveled up when Tacoma/Seattle was chosen as the terminus for the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1890.

Maybe it was for the best. Today, Port Townsend is an upbeat seaside getaway where you can sense the collective willpower of its small but determined populace (only 8,500 people) pulling the city into yet another century.

Our fun begins when we check into the elegantly restored Bishop Victorian Hotel (rainshadowproperties.com) with its William Morris-themed floral wallpapers and a replica of the Titanic's first-class cabins in the lobby. Ironically, the Bishop was completed almost to the day the highly anticipated railway announced it would by-pass the town.

From here my group of friends splits up: Julie and I to shop and sightsee; Doug heads to the Boat Haven shipyard to ogle sailboats; and Shawn hits

