

Okanagan Tour - May 20/23, 2011



The 2011 tour was a short one; a trip to the Okanagan over the long weekend in May. The bus (luxury motor coach) left promptly with 43 passengers at 2:30 on Friday afternoon. A good start aided by the threat of a \$1.00 per minute fine for being late which, from previous tours, is known to be applied!

Our accommodation for the three nights was the Coast Capri Hotel in Kelowna. Very pleasant, aided enormously by the shirt sleeve weather which was considerably warmer than anything we had experienced in Vancouver this year. Not that the swimming pool was used much – few, if any, came prepared.

Saturday during the day was a free to “do” Kelowna. The hotel was conveniently located a fifteen minute walk from the lakefront and the attractions in that vicinity. Walking was on most people’s agenda for the evening was for the only full concert. That was given at the Kelowna First United Church. The audience was not large – 100 would be a generous estimate – but the choir was in top form. No major work but a blend of music that ranged from madrigal to opera to Broadway. Maybe a comment (in part) from a friend of a choir member - *The music was absolute soul food! What a magnificent sound your choir makes, and what beautiful music you sang. I wish the concert had been 3 hours long. We rarely get a choir of your calibre in Kelowna.*

Sunday started with participation in the 10:00 service at Kelowna First United. Many more people were here including the person who wrote - *I enjoyed your concert so much that I came to hear you sing on Sunday morning before heading off to our church for the 11:00 service.* A quick lunch and off on the bus to the Mission Hill Winery. The first half hour mini-concert was in the open under the blazing sun in front of the clock tower. Interesting acoustics – or lack of!. For the second concert we moved into the Loggia and this covered area provided a much better experience – or did the wine tasting opportunity between mini-concerts make us more relaxed? Then it was off to the tour dinner at the Summerhill Winery where those who had put in a lot of hard work to make the tour a success were recognized.

Monday was the day to go home, but not before a couple of diversions. First the Carmelis Goat Cheese Farm, a small family business, or boutique dairy as they like to call it, that produces a wide variety of cheeses as well as goat’s milk Gelato - popular on another hot day. And on to St. Hubertus Winery, the smallest of the ones we visited and one of the oldest wineries in BC magnificently located above Lake Okanagan. Then, back on the bus for the drive home.

A short tour compared to the European adventures but satisfying and rewarding.