

# finding nimmo

A lodge owner makes his small resort—  
and family legacy—bigger and better.

Descending from a Canada goose's vantage point above the coast of British Columbia, Craig Murray's pilot deftly landed an A-Star helicopter. Fishing gear unloaded, it took Craig less than 20 minutes to reel in a pair of steelhead and just an instant for him to see his future. He envisioned turning his nearby lodge into a luxury getaway with aerial access to 30 river systems.

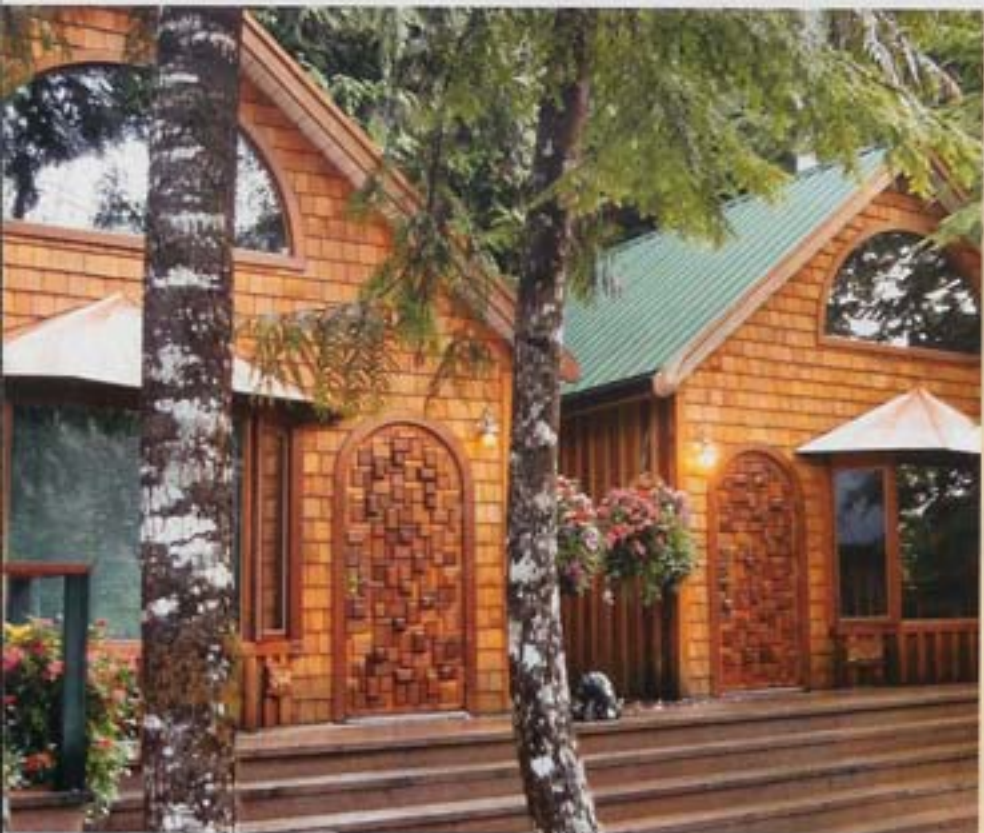
"Once I saw the combination of helicopters and fishing, I knew it was a winning idea," says Craig, who fulfilled a dream to live on the water by moving to British Columbia from his native Ontario. In 1980, with his wife, Deborah, he built Nimmo Bay



Secluded on British Columbia's coast, Nimmo Bay Resort provides helicopters for excursions across the region. Flights cover a 30,000-square-mile zone, from sea level to 7,000 feet. Top: Owner Craig Murray's oldest son, Fraser, serves the business as the retreat's general manager.

TEXT BY JUDY ALEXANDRA DIEDWARD





## luring guests

Craig shares his experience building a thriving coastal business.

**Develop a one-of-a-kind niche.** The Murrys pioneered the use of private helicopters in their area, and took a chance by providing luxury services.

**Go green.** "Many travelers choose where they go based on how the destination affects the environment," Craig says. "Operators must make environmental sustainability their highest priority."

**Market creatively.** "Look for out-of-the-box ideas," says Craig. Nimmo Bay has appeared on the TV show "Boston Legal" and in a Visa commercial.

**Pick good teammates.** Partner with complementary groups for win-win opportunities. Nimmo Bay and U'mista Cultural Centre & Museum together created a unique Native American First Nations adventure.

Resort, a wilderness-adventure lodge catering to sportfishers.

Today, the Murrys offer excursions made possible by their fleet of choppers. From May to October, three- and four-day packages feature ocean kayaking, river rafting, whale watching, beachcombing, spelunking, heli-fishing, and heli-hiking on mountains or glaciers. Nimmo Bay has grown to include a floating main lodge and nine two-bedroom cedar chalets. "We were living a dream and enjoying raising our family in such a beautiful, pristine place," says Craig. "The introduction of heli-fishing made it that much better."

The Murrys provide entry to isolated areas while still conserving the surrounding natural resources. An adjacent, glacier-fed waterfall supplies all the resort's drinking water and 90 percent of the lodge's power. To protect the falls, Craig and Deborah use only environmentally friendly soaps and cleaning products,

compost all organic garbage, and fly nonbiodegradable waste off-site. In 1999, their efforts earned the resort British Columbia's Environmental Award for Industry, Business and Labour.

As he prepares to hand over the reins to oldest son Fraser, 28, Craig feels proud of Nimmo Bay's legacy. "Deborah and I know that we have given our children a great gift by exposing them to this magnificent

wilderness," says Craig, whose other two children, Clifton, 26, and Georgia, 21, are pursuing careers in acting and singing.

"Continuing the tradition begun by my parents is an enormous challenge," says Fraser, whose influence has already been felt: He placed iPods in all the helicopters and made plans for a yoga studio

and larger hot tub. "But I have had excellent role models," he adds with a smile, "in business and in life." 🍀

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Fraser, Deborah, and Craig Murray share Nimmo Bay Resort's philosophy: "To fly is human ... to hover divine." The lodge's ocean-view or streamside chalets include two bedrooms, a full bath, and a living area.