

BUSINESS AND PLEASURE

THE SMART RETREAT COMBINATION

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From adventure outings to culinary excursions, businesses are busting out of the boardroom with corporate retreats that inspire their teams to think about challenges from new perspectives. And Vancouver Island is the perfect place for it.

When it comes to planning corporate retreats, take a page from Apple and “think different.” Paul Drummond, general manager of Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort near Parksville, does. Recently, he was approached by a corporate client who, after seeing how popular the resort’s sandcastle competition was with families, wanted to create a sandcastle competition for corporate teams.

No problem, says Drummond, whose event team likes to be challenged to bring new ideas to the corporate sector. Case in point: Tigh-Na-Mara’s Cook like a Chef program, a corporate team-building challenge similar to Top Chef Canada. Each team is provided with its own kitchen and a host of secret ingredients to compete for the winning dish.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Drummond observes that the overriding theme these days is making connections “with each other, with nature or whatever we’re engaged in, and with ourselves.” And corporate retreats

are increasingly being designed to foster those meaningful connections. It’s not that these retreats are all play and no work — Tigh-Na-Mara has 10,000 square feet of meeting space with all the technological accoutrements — but its expansive beachfront, 22 acres of trails and forest, and its spa make it easy to blend business and pleasure. “There are no distractions here — unless you want them!” says Drummond.

Kathy McAree, owner of South-Island-based Travel with Taste, which offers culinary tours and cooking classes to corporate clients, has also observed the power of blending business and pleasure. Whether McAree is hosting foodie walking tours or winery outings, or leading cooking-class excursions to the kitchens of local

Getting beyond the office walls allows people to tackle issues from fresh perspectives.



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