

## TEXADA'S HOTELS

The recent welcome partial reopening of the Texada Island Inn continues the long history of hotels on Texada.

The present hotel was just part of MG Zorokin Company's 1962 proposal to build a 10-store mall. Only the pub, restaurant and the Texada Arms Hotel's 16 rooms (minimum required for a "beer parlour" licence) were completed.

Many (almost) remember 2am snacks served on weekends by cafe manager Gee Sue Lang when the bar closed. Bar patrons could legally enter the pub only through appropriate doors ("Gents" or "Ladies and Escorts"). Sometimes parking lot "fisticuffs" caused a rush outside, explaining the hotel's popular nickname - the Broken Arms!

In Texada's history the Van Anda mining boom of the early 1900's inspired Misters Lyons and Freeland to open the Texada Hotel (AKA Lyon's). After the 1912 fire it was rebuilt as the Windsor which subsequently burned in 1917. Meanwhile, the roughhousing patrons of the infamous "Bucket of Blood" Hotel, built over Van Anda Creek, helped it earn its name!

However, a few years before, "one of the finest stopping places on the coast" was built in 1897 on the hill overlooking Sturt Bay - was the Marble Bay Hotel as pictured on opening day.

"To stimulate the quick building of Texada City" Marble Bay mine owner JJ Palmer subdivided his townsite into lots and offered buyers a lottery with the hotel as prize. The raffle was cancelled when too few properties were sold.



When the hotel opened in January 1898 (cost \$5000) the *Victoria Colonist* reported that 28 furnished rooms would be available to "responsible parties." The "well-built house [was] easily approachable from the wharf by a well-graded road". It was serviced with running water via a "hydraulic ram on Van Anda Creek."

The hotel became a social hub with Saturday night dances. It hosted the New Years' Day (1900) drilling competition and tug-o-war (over 300 attended). A "smoking concert" was held with mine manager McRady "treating the house to cigars."

But it all came to an end after 1919 when the price of copper fell and the mine shut down. The hotel closed soon after and was abandoned, its furniture, fixtures and the building itself "recycled" locally.

Texada's hotels, then and now, have always played a central role in community life.