

# WEST COAST express

**Delicious!**

It's a West Coast  
Christmas Tradition

Rod Prado,  
Director of Food  
& Beverage

WCSHM

## West Coast Cuisine

Rod Prado brings the  
wow factor

## Residents in Action

Harold Zelt's pooch pictures  
raise funds for BCSPCA

## Health & Wellness Report

Pandemic preparedness  
by Leonardo Monterola



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Photo by Chung Chow, copyright 2023



# Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the first edition of the West Coast Express, the quarterly newsletter of West Coast Seniors Housing Management (or West Coast as we now like to call ourselves). Our objective here is simple – to spread awareness about the great people and events happening here as well as to share some of our industry expertise, insight and relevant news.

We will introduce you to a few of our amazing team members who serve our residents with unmatched professionalism, care and passion. From time to time, we will also introduce you to some of our residents so you can see the rich and rewarding lives they continue to live. We'll bring you some news from our community relations managers, chefs, nurses and a wide range of others that make this company an industry leader.

You may wonder why we chose West Coast Express. Firstly, West Coast Seniors Housing Management Express is WAY too long and wholly forgettable. Secondly, and most importantly, we're feeling a deep need to "express" ourselves because we are genuinely interested in helping the industry develop new capacities for action – to protect our most vulnerable citizens. To provide safe and accessible housing to those that need it. And to speak up and share the good news when we see people who are doing it right. We think this will make our company better and will help improve service to seniors. So, we hope you'll take part in this communications experiment.

We will be publishing the West Coast Express four times a year—winter, spring, summer and fall. We'd love to hear from you at any time of year. If you want to discuss any topics in this forum, please direct your letters to [info@wcshh.com](mailto:info@wcshh.com).

**The West Coast Express.**  
Get yours today and enjoy the scenic ride.

Kind regards,  
Laura



Laura Stokes-Crain, Director of Sales & Marketing  
WCSHM

# From the desk of James Liebenberg, President



James Liebenberg, President  
WCSHM

First, I would like to wish you all a joyous holiday season and a happy new year.

But I'd also like to take a moment to look back at 2023 and spend some time to review the year.

## **Pandemic pressure**

Ah, yes, 2023. It was a good year as families and friends could visit our residents again – just like the good old days. The pandemic showed us clearly the importance of relationships,

and the toll social isolation has on us all, not just seniors. The truth is we are wired for social connections. We were therefore encouraged when the World Health Organization (WHO), in November of this year, designated social connection a global health priority, stressing the importance of strong social connections and functioning support systems. Nowadays, we now have a firm understanding of the negative health consequences of smoking. The U.S. Surgeon General's report, "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation 2023," puts the effects of loneliness in perspective. The report cites compelling research showing that a lack of social connection is as bad for a person's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and even greater than the negative impact associated with obesity and a lack of exercise.

During the pandemic, we quickly pivoted. Visitation and directives changed. When no visitors were allowed, we pivoted to virtual visits and window visits (we even built decorated structures to protect visitors from the weather). All of this was a direct function of our mandate to keep our residents safe at any cost. But isolation had its unintended health costs, too. Today, we are still balancing a need for safety and for human connection. The perfect formula for success is still on the horizon, but the situation is far better than it was a few short years ago.

### **CARF accreditation**

We are very proud of our BC long-term care and Alberta supportive-living teams. Both have attained a 3-year accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) an international, non-profit organization formed founded in the US in 1966. This achievement is a testament to our care teams' dedication and commitment to improving the quality of life of the people in our care. This accreditation shows that there is an established pattern of conformance to the high standards set out by CARF.

### **Inflation**

During the past year, we all experienced inflationary pressures, particularly around food costs. Our culinary teams have done a stellar job and will finish the year within budget. This was accomplished through improved kitchen and dining room processes. Education and skills training were provided to the kitchen and dining room team members. The success was further accomplished through strategic purchasing, creative menu planning and hands-on leadership.

### **Health Authority partners**

We continue to work collaboratively with our Health Authority partners and were able to do some wonderful projects. We incorporated seniors at risk of homelessness into a community, remodelled rooms for bariatric functions and booked a break that provided assisted living respite.

### **Leading by example**

The past year also saw the first cohort of leaders who participated in the

West Coast Leadership Academy. This Academy allows emerging leaders to develop essential leadership skills and allows more seasoned leaders to deepen their knowledge and leadership skills. We believe that investing in our leaders is a critical part of our success.



The Guildford Seniors Village team looked great during their Diwali celebration

### **Organizational transformation**

2023 was also the year we reaped the benefits of a massive organizational transformation we started three years ago. While navigating the challenges of a global pandemic, we undertook and successfully completed an organizational turnaround. Operationally, we focused on going back to the basics and focusing efforts under the mantra Simplify, Standardize and Safety. The success of the process speaks volumes to the commitment, skill and grit of the whole West Coast team. The turnaround established a new culture and leadership style, improved operations, and increased care and service quality with the residents at the centre of all that we do.

### Plans for 2024

As a management company, our plan for 2024 is to expand our services and grow by serving more ownership groups, both as a one-stop shop or through à la carte services. The same success will be celebrated with our future clients.

In 2024, we will continue our work on developing a holistic Wellness Model as well as a set of programs that support this Model. We continue to shift the paradigm from a medical sickness model to a whole-person wellness paradigm. We view the residents entrusted to us as whole human beings and don't just focus on their physical and medical needs. We continue improving the quality of care to our residents and ensuring regulatory compliance. We will further develop and automate our audit and monitoring systems. In 2024, the focus will shift to automation and interactive dashboards as we further develop our audit and monitoring systems.

### People, our most valuable asset

Our people are our strength. Our care and service is only as good as our team. Every month, we celebrate our dedicated team members for their length of service. We put real effort into appreciating their dedication and commitment to improving the residents' lives. We must be doing something right as nearly 40% of our employees have been working with us for more than five years. We even have five team members that have been with us for more than 30 years and three that have been with us for more than 35 years.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about West Coast. If you're interested in speaking to me directly, I'd be happy to hear from you.

Happy holidays!  
James

[E. jliebenberg@wcshm.com](mailto:jliebenberg@wcshm.com)



Langley Seniors Village Residents spend the day at Aldor Acres

# West Coast People

## Rod Prado, Director, Food & Beverage

ROD PRADO BRINGS THE WOW FACTOR TO WEST COAST CUISINE



Photo by Chung Chow, copyright 2023

“We are happy to be here!” exclaims Rod Prado with a smile. When you meet him in person, you can’t help but know that he means that from the bottom of his heart. Everyone knows Rod. He’s the charming, charismatic and wonderfully talented food and beverage director at West Coast. Certified master chef is probably a better title as the reviews on the food are in – and they’re great. Just ask any of West Coast’s 3,700 residents, and you’ll surely get a thumbs up. Not just for the food but for the whole dining experience.

Rod’s philosophy is simple – bring the wow factor each and every day, morning, noon and night.

“What we do is so vitally important to the people we serve. And for me, quality means exceeding expectations by paying attention to every detail. Our team lives and breathes quality and that’s where we find the “wow.”

Rod has a deep understanding that West Coast is a people company and that people means teamwork. “We are very good at analyzing and understanding the challenges of aging and moving to a retirement community,” says Rod.

“We have a huge job. It starts with understanding our residents’ needs and wants and working together to consistently deliver an exceptional experience. To me, it seems simple,” he says with a smile.



Photo by Chung Chow, copyright 2023

It may seem simple to Rod, but his philosophy is progressive and innovative. “We are changing the business here at West Coast,” he says.

“We are moving away from the idea of hospital to a more welcoming concept of hospitality. These communities are home to all of our residents. We take pride in making our residents’ lives easier – and less complicated.”

A sense of pride is apparent for West Coast’s whole food service team, from cooks to service staff. Their dress is crisp and clean, shoes look new and unworn. Servers all wear logoed black aprons with prominent nametags. It’s refreshing to see everyone working busily (and no one, we mean no one) leaning against a wall, scrolling on their cell phone. It’s just not part of the West Coast wow culture. Rod

reminds his staff at a dinner service, “This is their home, and they all deserve to be the kings and queens of their own castles. They may not remember what we say, but they will remember how we make them feel. So, let’s make them feel amazing.”

You may wonder where Rod gained all of this full-service culinary expertise and insight into what he calls his “purpose.” “I learned a lot while working at Disney,” says Rod. “I’ve adapted what I learned there about great experiences, and I bring that sense of enthusiasm to our team, to our cuisine and to our service.”

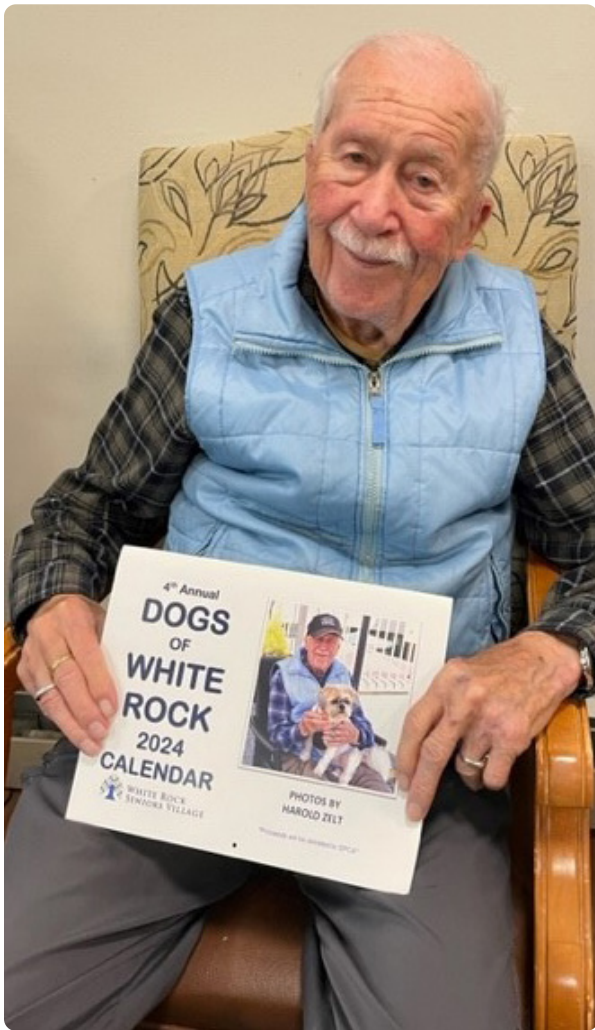
Pay attention, ladies and gentlemen. West Coast’s very own certified master chef de cuisine is making retirement living better than ever. And this Christmas Dinner will be no different.



Photo by Chung Chow, copyright 2023

# Residents in Action

## MEET HAROLD ZELT FROM WHITE ROCK SENIORS VILLAGE



Harold Zelt, Resident of White Rock Seniors Village  
WCSHM

Harold has been living large at White Rock Seniors Village for the last 4 years and has managed to achieve quite a lot in his time here as the unofficial in-house photographer. **In fact, Harold raised \$5,000 for the BCSPCA in the last two years with his fantastic “Dogs of White Rock” calendar.**

One day, on a morning stroll around the community, Harold happened upon a dog tied to a tree, and when the owner returned with his trusty camera at hand, Harold snapped a picture of the cute little pooch. And the ball continued to roll from there.

Although the idea to donate the calendar proceeds came from him, he gives all credit to the recreation manager for suggesting the idea of putting together a calendar from all his pictures and also helping him make and sell them. Now, with the calendars completely sold out, getting on the email list for all of Harold’s photos, like many of the White Rock staff and residents are, is certainly a special privilege. Harold worked at TD Bank for over 40 years and opened up locations in New Westminster, Burnaby, and Terrace, BC, before retiring in 1985. He and his wife had 4 boys, raised in the lower mainland, who visit him often. When not working on his photography, Harold enjoys making abstract paintings, his suite walls filled with his works, and collecting miniatures.

The calendars are available for pick up at White Rock Seniors Village from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, 7 days a week. The calendars are \$20 each (cash only), and all proceeds go to the BCSPCA.

Keep up the great work, Harold.

### **White Rock Seniors Village**

1183 Maple St.  
White Rock, BC V4B 5K9  
T. 604.541.4663



# Health & Wellness Report

## WEST COAST'S PANDEMIC RESPONSE *BY LEONARDO MONTEROLA*

In 2020, the world faced unprecedented challenges brought on by the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). It was a global crisis that caught everyone off guard, and very little information was initially available to combat its rapid spread. The lack of a vaccine further exacerbated the situation, leaving everyone vulnerable, especially older adults and immunocompromised individuals.

The world experienced panic as this highly contagious virus spread rapidly across borders, overwhelming even the most robust healthcare systems. In light of these circumstances, we at West Coast recognized the magnitude of this challenge and took immediate action to address it head-on.

Our organization swiftly mobilized resources and implemented comprehensive measures to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents, staff, and community. We established rigorous protocols based on evolving scientific knowledge and guidelines from different health authorities within BC and in Canada as a whole. These protocols included enhanced infection control measures, strict screening processes, and proactive communication with residents and families regarding preventive measures.

In addition to prioritizing resident care during these challenging times, we also focused on providing accurate information and educational resources to combat misinformation. Our dedicated

team worked tirelessly to disseminate reliable information through various channels, including online platforms (ITACIT) and in-person and virtual town hall meetings.

Recognizing that effective communication is key in times of crisis, we ensured that our lines of communication remained open for our residents, their families, our staff, and external stakeholders. Our team was readily available to address any concerns or questions they may have had. We believe that transparency fosters trust between healthcare providers and residents – an essential component in navigating through such uncertain times. The organization has created a robust Emergency Response Team composed of clinical, IT, HR and operations team members. The Emergency Response Team is available to all communities 24/7 for anything they need – from clinical guidance and direction to bringing in additional supplies, sourcing out additional manpower, to supporting our ill team members. No community was left behind or fending for themselves.



To address the challenges with staffing, we have ramped up our recruitment campaign. We partnered with different colleges and universities by offering our communities as hosts during practicums. By doing so, we were able to showcase the work culture in our communities. We also ensured that every employee felt supported and appreciated through our employee appreciation program. The organization also created a deployment team composed of multidisciplinary team members. Every member of the team is equipped with knowledge and skills to deliver key objectives as they support the team at the community level. Some of our other initiatives include –

- Centralized regional PPE stores to support the demand for PPE and related supplies
- Secured contractors for various disciplines to ensure business operations were not impacted
- Used Work Place Safety (WPS), an emergency preparedness program, as a platform to communicate with all team members, residents and families on a daily basis
- We created contingency plans for each discipline to support any disruptions in staffing
- Established an Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) to support teams during COVID-19
- Daily Emergency Response Team calls were initiated (7 days per week) to support communities with outbreaks
- Purchased Electronic Screener stations that were placed at the entrance of each community to reduce the risk of

infection, and every visitor received an individually printed ID tag with their picture on it

- Created COVID-19 safety plans for our 24 communities
- Created a COVID-19-in-a-Box playbook that we used to navigate teams through the pandemic successfully

As we move forward into 2024 with cautious optimism due to recent developments in vaccine availability, we remain committed to adapting our strategies as needed while continuing to provide exceptional care for all our residents. We are closely monitoring the situation and working collaboratively with local health authorities to ensure that we stay ahead of the curve.



# Festive Recipes

*From your friends at West Coast  
Courtesy of Rod Prado*

## Appetizer

Shrimp bisque with bacon and parsley crumble

## Entrée

Braised brisket wellington with ancient mustard au jus

## Dessert

White chocolate and cranberry bread pudding  
with white chocolate and spiced rum sauce

*Special festive menu, all recipes serve 6-8 people*

# Shrimp bisque soup with bacon and herbs crumble

## INGREDIENTS

### *For the Shrimp Bisque*

1-pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined, shells reserved

1 onion, chopped

2 carrots, chopped

2 celery stalks, chopped

4 cloves garlic, minced

1/4 cup tomato paste

1/2 cup brandy or dry sherry

4 cups fish or shrimp stock

1 cup heavy cream

1 bay leaf

1 teaspoon paprika

Salt and black pepper to taste

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons butter

### *For the Bacon Crumble*

6 slices of bacon, cooked and crumbled

### *For Garnish*

Chopped fresh parsley

Extra bacon crumble

*Feel free to adjust the seasoning and consistency to your liking. This soup makes for a comforting and indulgent dish with the added touch of bacon crumble.*

## INSTRUCTIONS

1.

### **Prepare Shrimp Stock**

In a large pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add shrimp shells and sauté until they turn pink.

Add chopped onion, carrots, celery, and garlic. Cook until the vegetables are softened.

Stir in tomato paste and cook for an additional 2 minutes.

Pour in brandy or sherry to deglaze the pot.

2.

### **Cook the Shrimp Bisque**

Add fish or shrimp stock, bay leaf, paprika, salt, and black pepper. Bring to a simmer and let it cook for about 20–30 minutes to develop flavours.

Strain the liquid to remove solids, pressing down on the solids to extract all the flavour.

3.

### **Prepare Shrimp**

In the same pot, melt butter and cook shrimp until they turn pink and opaque. Remove a few shrimp for garnish if desired.

4.

### **Blend and Finish**

Transfer the remaining shrimp to a blender along with a cup of the strained stock. Blend until smooth.

Return the blended mixture to the pot, add heavy cream, and heat through. Adjust seasoning as needed.

5.

### **Cook Bacon**

Cook bacon until crispy. Crumble it into small pieces.

6.

### **Serve**

Ladle the creamy shrimp bisque into bowls.

Garnish with the reserved whole shrimp, bacon crumble, chopped fresh parsley, and extra bacon crumble.

7.

### **Enjoy.**

Serve the shrimp bisque hot and enjoy the rich and flavorful combination of shrimp, creamy soup, and bacon crumble.



# Braised brisket with ancient mustard au jus

## INGREDIENTS

### *For the Brisket*

- 3-4 pounds beef brisket
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 cups beef broth

### *For the Wellington*

- Puff pastry sheets (enough to wrap the brisket)
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 egg (beaten for egg wash)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1.

### **Prepare the Brisket**

Preheat the oven to 325°F (163°C).

Season the brisket generously with salt and black pepper.

In a large oven-safe pot or Dutch oven, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Sear the brisket on all sides until browned. Remove the brisket and set it aside.

In the same pot, add chopped onions and garlic. Sauté until softened.

Stir in Dijon mustard, Worcestershire sauce, and chopped thyme. Cook for an additional 2-3 minutes.

Place the seared brisket back into the pot. Pour beef broth over the brisket.

Cover the pot and transfer it to the preheated oven. Braise the brisket for about 3-4 hours or until it's fork-tender.

Once done, let the brisket cool, then refrigerate for at least 2 hours (this makes it easier to wrap in puff pastry).

2.

### **Assemble the Wellington**

Preheat the oven to 400°F (204°C).

Roll out the puff pastry sheets on a floured surface. Spread Dijon mustard over the pastry.

Place the brisket in the center of the pastry. Fold the pastry over the brisket, sealing the edges.

Brush the pastry with the beaten egg for a golden finish.

Place the wrapped brisket on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Bake in the preheated oven for 25-30 minutes or until the pastry is golden brown.

Let it rest for a few minutes before slicing.

*Serve your Brisket Wellington slices with your favourite sides. This dish is a showstopper and perfect for special occasions! Adjust the seasonings and cooking times according to your preferences and the size of your brisket.*

INGREDIENTS

*For the Mustard Au Jus*

2 cups beef broth (same broth used to braise the brisket)

1/2 cup red wine

2 tablespoons ancient-style mustard (grainy, coarse mustard)

1 tablespoon honey

1 onion, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 sprigs fresh thyme

Salt and black pepper to taste

2 tablespoons butter (optional, for richness)

TIPS

**Mustard Choice:** Choose a good-quality ancient-style mustard with visible mustard seeds for an authentic touch. Dijon mustard can be used as a substitute.

**Wine Selection:** Use a red wine that complements the richness of the beef. A Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot works well.

**Adjust Sweetness:** Feel free to adjust the honey to your taste preference. Add more for a sweeter au jus, or reduce for a more savoury flavour.

**Personalization:** This recipe serves as a base. Experiment with additional herbs or spices like rosemary or bay leaves to add your own twist.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Prepare the Au Jus Base**  
In a saucepan over medium heat, combine beef broth and red wine. Add chopped onions, minced garlic, and fresh thyme sprigs to the mixture.
- 2. Simmer and Infuse Flavors**  
Allow the mixture to simmer and reduce by about half to intensify the flavours.  
Stir in ancient-style mustard, honey, salt, and black pepper.
- 3. Adjust Consistency**  
If the au jus is too thick, you can add more beef broth to reach your desired consistency.
- 4. Finish with Butter (Optional)**  
For a richer flavour, stir in butter just before serving. This step is optional but adds a luxurious touch to the au jus.
- 5. Strain (Optional)**  
If you prefer a smoother au jus, strain the mixture to remove onion, garlic, and thyme. However, many classic au jus recipes keep these elements for added flavour.
- 6. Serve**  
Serve the ancient-style mustard au jus alongside roast beef or your preferred meat.  
  
*This ancient-style mustard au jus adds a delightful depth of flavour to your roast beef or other meats. Adjust the quantities based on your needs and taste preferences.*



# Cranberry and white chocolate bread pudding with white chocolate and spiced rum sauce

## INGREDIENTS

### *For the Bread Pudding*

6 cups of day-old bread, cut into cubes (challah or brioche work well)

1 cup dried cranberries

1 cup white chocolate chips or chunks

4 large eggs

1 cup granulated sugar

2 cups whole milk

1 cup heavy cream

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon almond extract

1/4 teaspoon salt

For the White Chocolate Sauce:

1 cup white chocolate chips or chunks

1/2 cup heavy cream

1/4 cup spiced rum

## INSTRUCTIONS

1.

### **Prepare Bread and Fruits:**

Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C).

Cube the day-old bread and place it in a large mixing bowl.

Add dried cranberries and white chocolate chips. Toss them together.

2.

### **Prepare Custard Mixture**

In a separate bowl, whisk together eggs, granulated sugar, milk, heavy cream, vanilla extract, almond extract, and salt.

3.

### **Combine Mixture**

Pour the custard mixture over the bread and fruit mixture. Gently toss to coat the bread evenly and allow it to soak for about 15-20 minutes.

4.

### **Asemble**

Transfer the soaked mixture into a greased baking dish.

5.

### **Bake**

Bake in the preheated oven for 45-55 minutes or until the top is golden brown and the center is set. It should be slightly firm but still moist.

6.

### **Prepare Sauce**

In a small saucepan, heat the heavy cream over medium heat until it just begins to simmer.

7.

### **Melt White Chocolate**

Remove from heat and add the white chocolate chips. Let it sit for a minute, then stir until the white chocolate is completely melted and the sauce is smooth.

Add Rum: Stir in the spiced rum.



TIPS

*Optionally, garnish with additional cranberries and white chocolate chunks for a decorative touch.*

*This bread pudding is a delightful blend of flavours and textures, making it a perfect dessert for special occasions or holiday gatherings. Adjust the sweetness and white chocolate sauce to your liking.*

*Enjoy!*

INSTRUCTIONS

- 8. Serve**  
Drizzle the white chocolate sauce over the warm bread pudding when serving.
- 9. Serving**  
Serve the cranberry and white chocolate bread pudding warm, drizzled with the white chocolate sauce.





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West Coast provides seniors home management services to 24 retirement communities in western Canada and Québec. Our team is primed and ready for growth. If you think we might be a good fit for your own retirement community, contact us today. We can make your life easier and your business more profitable.

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