



Top Indigenous experiences and operators celebrated at the International Indigenous Tourism Conference

November 14, 2019, (Kelowna, Syilx Territory, BC (IITC)) – The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) recognized organizations and Indigenous entrepreneurs for outstanding achievements in tourism, both local to BC and national. The award ceremony took place during the culmination of the 8th annual International Indigenous Tourism Conference (IITC) on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Nation (Kelowna, BC).

“This year it was so gratifying to see so many of our stakeholders nominate their peers across the country,” says Keith Henry, CEO and President of ITAC. “As we grow, we hope these awards serve as examples of best practices and we encourage our stakeholders to share and learn from each other.”

“Congratulations to all the winners tonight,” shared Brenda Baptiste, Chair of Indigenous Tourism BC. “Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in British Columbia, with Indigenous tourism businesses contributing \$705 million each year to the Provincial economy. We are proud of our communities and stakeholders who have dedicated their time to bring Indigenous cultural experiences to life for visitors.”

About the awards

Each year, nominees must be majority Indigenous-owned and controlled and provide tourism experiences or tourism-related services.

The recipients were presented with an award created by Janine Lott, an Indigenous Syilx artist based in Westbank, BC, the lands of her ancestors. She uses gourds as her canvas to craft stunning pieces of art we are proud to share with the winners.

Here are the nominees and winners of this year’s awards:

National

Best Marketing Campaign

An Indigenous tourism business or organization that has planned and implemented an effective marketing campaign or program showing real results and leveraging paid, earned, shared, and/or owned media.

- [Vacances Essipit](#), QC - Winner
- [Aurora Village](#), NT
- Gwich’in Pride - [YFNCT](#), [Travel Yukon](#) and [Air North](#), YK



Most Improved Business

An Indigenous tourism business that has significantly improved its market or export readiness allowing for a stronger business opportunity and who professionally demonstrates Indigenous tourism's ability to meet and exceed consumer and travel trade expectations.

- [Site Interpretation Micmac de Gespeg, QC](#) - Winner
- [The Lund Resort at Klahmen](#), BC
- [Homalco Wildlife & Cultural Tours](#), BC

Most Inspiring Cultural Ambassador

A representative of an Indigenous business or organization who inspires those around them in the way they represent their culture to visitors. The recipient leads by example and provides guidance and mentorship to those who are finding their path to represent their culture.

- [Levy Uttaq, Igloo Tourism](#), NU - Winner
- Sierra Hall, [Spirit Bear Lodge](#), BC
- Matricia Brown, [Warrior Women](#), AB

Indigenous Adventure Award

This award is presented to a business that recognizes best practices in Indigenous adventure travel with a focus on responsibility and sustainability. The business must demonstrate effective sustainable management, provide social and economic benefits to the local community, respect cultural heritage, and minimize environmental impacts.

- [Wikwemikong Tourism](#), ON - Winner
- [Fishwheel Charter Services](#), YK
- [Wapusk Adventure](#), MB

Inspiring Indigenous Culinary Award

This award recognizes a business or an Indigenous operator who is significantly raising the profile of Indigenous cuisine and food experiences.

- [Buffalo Point Lodge](#), MB – Winner
- [Han Wi Moon Dinner](#), Wansukewin Heritage Park, SK
- [Hiawatha Catering](#), ON



ITBC Awards

Remarkable Indoor Cultural Experiences

Exceptional delivery of cultural knowledge and guest experience at Indigenous Cultural Centres, Museums, Galleries, Retail Stores, Food Establishments, Entertainments Centres and Spa/Retreats.

- [St. Eugene Resort & Casino](#) - Winner
- [Rain Wellness Spa](#)
- [Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre](#)

Exceptional Outdoor Cultural Experiences

Exceptional knowledge and delivery of an Indigenous cultural experience and/or adventure in an outdoor environment. Outdoor Adventure, Wildlife Viewing, Outdoor Guided Tours.

- [Homalco Wildlife and Cultural Tours](#) - Winner
- [Haida Style Expeditions](#)
- [Kiixin Tours](#)

Outstanding Indigenous Accommodations

Providing an excellent lodging experience for guests while incorporating Indigenous themes, design elements, and/or cultural experiences. Hotels, Motels, Accommodations, Cabins, Campgrounds, Lodges.

- [The Lund resort at Klahmen](#) - Winner
- [St. Eugene Resort & Casino](#)
- [Chims Guest House](#)

Customer Service Award

This award recognizes frontline team members in Indigenous tourism in BC, whose exceptional customer service has contributed to an outstanding travel experience for visitors.

- Sierra Hall, [Spirit Bear Lodge](#) - Winner
- Allison Burns Joseph, [Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre](#)
- Greg Froh & Frank Antoine, [Moccasin Trails](#)

About the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) works to improve the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous people within the 13 regions; 10 provinces and 3 territories of Canada. They provide



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economic development advisory services, tourism conferences, capacity development training and workshops, and industry research and information for Indigenous tourism operators and communities.

ITAC develops relationships with groups and regions with similar mandates, uniting the Indigenous tourism industry in Canada and working to enable collective support, product development, promotion and marketing of authentic Indigenous cultural tourism businesses in a respectful protocol. To download the full 2018/19 Guide to Indigenous Tourism in Canada go to <https://IndigenousTourism.ca/corporate/indigenous-tourism-experience-guide/>.

The ITAC Board is made up of Indigenous tourism industry representatives from each of the provinces and territories. For more information, visit www.IndigenousTourism.ca.

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Media contacts:

Jenna Hickman
Beattie Tartan
Office: 250-592-3838
Cell: 250-215-8425
Jenna.Hickman@beattiegroupp.com

Keith Henry
Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
Office: 604-639-4408
Cell: 778-388-5013
Keith@indigenoustourism.ca