

Canada's first Aboriginal arts and culture hotel now open in downtown Vancouver Like 7

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Canada's first Aboriginal arts and culture hotel, complete with sweat lodge and artists' workshop, has opened in Vancouver's historic downtown.

Skwachàys Lodge combines a boutique hotel with an authentic Aboriginal cultural experience, sustainable housing, and community economic development. It's owned and operated by the **Vancouver Native Housing Society** (VNHS).

The 18-suite Skwachàys Lodge preserved the century-old brick façade and designed a traditional northern longhouse atop the national heritage building. The rooftop longhouse has a 40.5-foot story pole (do not term it a totem pole), "**The Dreamweaver**".

Seven Aboriginal **artists** collaborated with six Vancouver interior design firms to create original carvings, paintings, fabric, custom furniture, and other décor for the 18 rooms. Each has a specific theme, like moon, water, or birch trees.

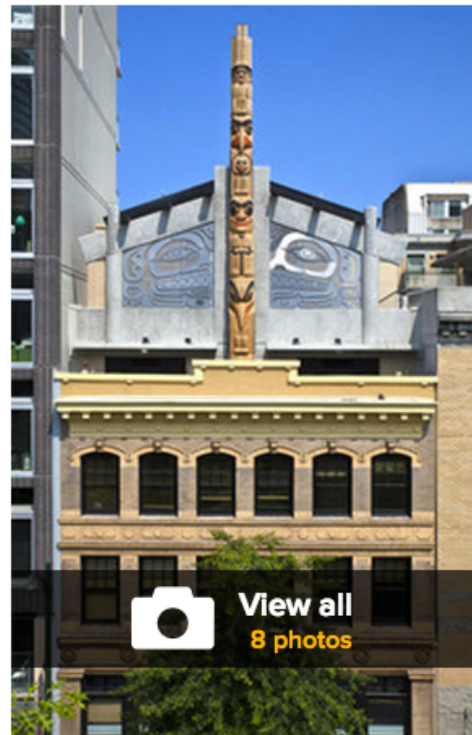
Guests can purchase original art in the hotel's **Urban Aboriginal Fair Trade Gallery**, and also attend a workshop with one of the artists who designed their room, or just observe artists at work.

All profits from the hotel and its gallery subsidize the 24 Aboriginal artists who live and work in their studios at Skwachàys -- one had been a homeless street artist. Proceeds also benefit the VNHS's efforts to improve the well-being of the city's Aboriginal people.

Vancouver Native Housing Society's CEO Dave Eddy termed Skwachàys "a truly dynamic and sustainable solution for housing that provides a positive social impact for some of the most marginalized members of Vancouver's population."

Skwachàys (pronounced "Squatch Eyes") refers to spring water marshes that once covered the area at the head of Vancouver's False Creek. The spring water marshes, a portal into the spirit realm, are sacred.

For more info: Skwachàys Lodge, <http://skwachays.com>, 29/31 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, 888.998.0797. **Vancouver Native Housing Society** (VNHS), info@vnhs.ca, Head Office, 1726 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C., V5L 1S9, Canada.



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Canada's first Aboriginal arts and culture hotel, Skwachays Lodge in Vancouver, has a story pole atop a century-old facade