

EXTREME HOSPITALITY

Profile of John & Melissa Lush Lush Mountain Accommodations Golden, B.C.

Written by Pauline Swanson

"Immersed in the hot tub, I watched as the stars gradually lit up the clear May sky and the mountains and conifers darkened into a solid perimeter. There was no sound but the gentle trickle of the creek 30 feet below."

Visitor to Stag's Hollow Chalet

It doesn't matter what the season, whether quiet and secluded or luxurious and lively is what you crave, Lush Mountain Accommodations will arrange the perfect vacation getaway for you. John and Melissa's greatest satisfaction comes from being able to share all that Kicking Horse country has to offer.

With twenty years of hospitality experience to their credit, five of those in the Whistler tourism industry, John and Melissa Lush decided to strike out on their own. "With child number two on the way it was time to plan for a change in lifestyle," says Melissa. "We were both caught in the seasonal employment trap."

Melissa and John envisioned owning a place of their own with some land attached. Their plan was to rent out a chalet to begin with and over time to build other cabins.

The perfect property came in the form of Stag's Hollow Chalet on a tract of land in the centre of one of British Columbia's most beautiful outdoor playgrounds. Just outside of Golden, nestled on a ledge overlooking a pond, with a magnificent view toward the Dogtooth Mountain Range, this chalet's setting has the feel of a much more remote location.

Phase one of the Lush Mountain Accommodations business plan began with some significant renovations to Stag's Hollow. The chalet now has a warm ambiance; fine, thoughtful touches; and room enough for a holiday crowd.

As for the second phase, building other cabins, "This is something that we still plan to do, but the business suddenly took on a life of its own when local property owners asked if we would manage their vacant properties," says Melissa.

John and Melissa now manage nine properties in various locations around Golden. The Lush Mountain Accommodations website reveals a stunning photo gallery of vacation settings. You can stay overlooking the Columbia Wetlands, at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, or a variety of other picture perfect spots.

With much hard work behind them, in retrospect, would they have done anything differently? "Sure," says John. "I took far too long learning how to create a website from scratch. I should have started with a very simple website and spent more time on other aspects of the business."

It also took a lot longer to make some vital business connections. "A mentor who could have shown us the ropes would have been very welcome when we were starting out." "We were very fortunate, though, to have taken the Self-Employment training provided by Service Canada. We learned a lot about business planning and got off to a very good start. We'll always be grateful for this," says John.

If you ponder the logistics of the Lush's peak season schedule it will boggle your mind. But then this is no ordinary couple. They have always been energetic and adventurous and have pushed a few limits in their time. The challenge of entrepreneurship came naturally. They have experienced life at its best and know exactly what their clients are hoping for: Extreme hospitality.

