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July 17, 2007

## Dining Like There's No Tomorrow

Along with a group of fellow travelers, I'm in the splendid dining room at Victoria's Fairmont Empress Hotel.

As part of the Royal B.C. Museum's *Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition*, the Fairmont along with several Victoria hotels and restaurants is offering themed Titanic packaged and Edwardian culinary feasts.

So, just as those first class passengers did on that fateful night of April 14th 1912, we are supping on Consomme Olga, (finely sliced leeks, carrots, celery and shallots simmered in veal stock) accompanied by a pinot noir.

One of the main courses served on that unforgettable night was a Filet Mignon Lili. Served in a sauce of cognac, Madeira and red wine, seasoned with rosemary, tomato paste and bay leaf, the melt-in-your-mouth fillet is garnished with medallions of foie gras, artichoke hearts and truffles. As the rich and famous did then, we too finish our meal with a Waldorf Pudding – a crescent of creme brulee delicately garnished with slivered apple and walnuts. Have to admit it – this is truly a meal to die for!

Paul Hadfield, owner of Spinnaker's Gastro Brewpub, mourned the loss of thousands of bottles of beer and wine from the ship's hold by creating three new craft beers: The Titanic, a dark imperial stout, Iceberg, a pale ale as translucent as a shard of ice, and finally a robust roasted malt ale, The Unsinkable Molly Brown.

"Bottoms up folks!" Hadfield says with a laugh.

And what about Titanic's third-class passengers? What were their meals like? Apparently they, too, dined quite well. They were served on white star china with the shipping line's distinctive emblem, and the food was so appetizing that one passenger thought he was being offered first-class cuisine in error!