

## Quilchena

### Site Identification

**Nearest Community:**

Quilchena B.C., Merritt, B.C.

**Geocache Location:**

N 50°10.250'

W 120°29.111'

**Altitude:**

941m

**Ownership:**

Private Property

**Accuracy:**

3 meters

**Overall Difficulty: 2**

**Overall Terrain: 2**

**Access Information and**

**Restrictions:**

From Merritt take Hwy 5A approx 25 km to Quilchena. Continue to follow Highway 5A to Pennask Lake Road and turn right.

**Parking Advice:**

Adjacent to cache site.

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:

Gold Country Communities Society  
PO. Box 933  
Cache Creek, BC.,  
VOK 1H0

Tel: 1-877-453-9467  
email: [info@exploregoldcountry.com](mailto:info@exploregoldcountry.com)

For more site pages go to:  
[www.goldtrail.com](http://www.goldtrail.com)

Apply Sticker Here



Photo: Baillie Stewart

The Quilchena Ranch stands at the side of the Highway across from Nicola Lake after more than one hundred years. Today the Quilchena Ranch is 28,000 acres of deeded property and has about 4000 head of cattle each year. The Hotel, built in 1908, is still open for business, now next to an RV Park, a golf course, a general store, and a restaurant. Nearby development includes the Sagebrush Golf and Sporting Club, a sailing center on Nicola Lake and housing developments.

The start of this goes back to the 1870's when the Guichon brothers left France for the gold fields of California and the Cariboo. They turned successfully to pack train and supplying beef for the Gold Rush. With 10 years of experience and profit from managing cattle, the brothers turned to ranching and acquiring land in the Nicola Valley area. They settled at Mamit Lake, Chapperon Lake, and at Nicola Lake. Joseph Guichon settled at Quilchena in 1882, which was then called the Home Ranch, and by 1890 it was the largest cattle ranch of the area with 2000 head.

Joseph continued to add more land holdings to the ranch, including the property which the hotel now sits on in 1908. He built the Quilchena Hotel and it opened in July 1908, advertising "European elegance in a western setting." The hotel was an overnight stopover for stagecoaches and was a popular spot due to its location on the shores of Nicola Lake. It was considered one of the finest hotels of the Interior. Polo, rodeo, and horse racing were popular on nearby meadows.

The hotel's business declined during World War 1 and was further damaged by prohibition and the rise of the automobile. The hotel closed in 1917. It was lived in by Guichon's relatives but had no electricity until 1958. It was reopened by Joseph's (Old Joe) grandson, Guy Rose. He

turned the polo ground into a golf course and renovated the hotel. Guy and his wife have built the hotel up over the last 50+ years using the profits from the cattle operation to support the hotel business. It is now billed as a “boutique hotel” with 15 rooms and fine dining. Visitors come to the hotel for the ambience, not modern facilities. It is open from April to October for general reservations and during the winter for special group bookings. The bar features an 1884 Heintzmann Grand Piano and furnishings reflect the heritage nature of the hotel. Ask the hotel staff about the 3 bullet holes in the door.

Nearby points of interest include the junction to Pennask Lake, the road to Douglas Lake and the Douglas Lake Cattle Company, the community of Nicola, and Monck Provincial Park. Nicola Lake is known for its fine sailing with the winds picking up most afternoons. Fisherman can launch their boats at multiple stops along the lake. Rainbow trout and Kokanee are fished from April to November. The whole area has a beautiful setting of rolling hills of sagebrush and grass with treed slopes at higher elevations. Quilchena sits in the middle of this valley inviting us to explore.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

[www.quilchena.com](http://www.quilchena.com)

Shewchuk, Murphy. *Exploring the Nicola Valley*, Douglas and McIntyre, Vancouver, 1981

<http://www.canada.com/vancouver/news/westcoastnews/story.html?id=9109a6ad-a4c8-4080-a8e6-05729819ffd3>  
News story on Guy Rose.

#### **Letterboxing Clues:**

From the Hwy 5A junction onto Pennask Lake Road look for a large boulder that is on the right just after the second corner. Cache is behind boulder.