

Quaaot Lodge

Video Clip 1: Guest Experience

Cammeo: So, on top of the golf and the weddings, and corporate and everything else we do, I don't know if you know, but we actually also have a winter home on site. We actually have an original kekuli on site and a sweat lodge that has been rebuilt. We get a lot of bus tours from all over the world, and part of their stay when they're here, because they're here for such a short amount of time, our culture department will actually bring them out to the winter home to tell them stories, sing them songs, explain to them what a winter home is while cooking salmon over a fire.

Q: Cool. Okay.

Cammeo: So, that's something that, again, only we have. Right? So, we have had weddings go into the kekuli. We've had people do yoga in there.

Alex: So, we don't actually do the yoga in the kekulis. We do yoga on the beach, usually. But it's things like what kind of food can we eat in the winter home—like, if it's acceptable to even eat in there—what can they drink in there? So, we offer local teas now of some of the local herbs and things that we have around here. And that was an idea from an Elder because it previously was a lavender lemonade, which was also made with local things, but it wasn't necessarily Indigenous. So, we actually got that idea from an Elder. Instead of lavender lemonade, let's do a tea that's local to the area. So, we're now offering that for that experience. So, very cool.

Alex: I think that there are other places that do something similar, but this is truly traditional to Secwépemc culture, so that's what makes it really unique. Uh-huh.

Q: [What differentiates you from other hotels?]

Alex: So, I think it's just integrating that culture and going back to that again. In the spa, they use... Try and highlight local products and local traditions as well. So, I think that really separates us as well with our food and that kind of thing. It's all local, and I think that really helps in that way.

Alex: We're very family focused as well. Yeah, for sure.

Cammeo: And I think the difference is too, you know, people want something different. They want an experience nowadays. You know tourism, the big thing is that people want to experience something. And when they come here they have the culture. Everything in our rooms, to our spa, even out on the golf course, brings something from the local community to it. You know the local things that are in the rooms. The owner of Manitoba Mukluks, Carrie Armstrong, it's actually her products that are in our rooms. So, it's Canadian owned; it's Aboriginal owned, biodegradable products, and stuff. And that's actually downstairs in the spa as well. What else can you ask for when you come here, right?

Cammeo: We have daily activities that guests can sign up for or when they're booking a reservation, you know, online you can take a look to see, and we can get that all booked in for you. Like I said, we've done smudges prior to weddings. We've had the cultural activities with wedding groups. Yeah.

Q: Even if somebody just happens to stay here without knowing, they learn. They can take part straight away.

Alex: Yeah.

Cammeo: Yeah.

Alex: We have our culture department right in the lobby there, so... He's not here today, but he's usually in, and he can answer any questions. So, if anyone's just passing by and they have a question, he's there to answer. And if they want to book a tour or anything, they can do that, for sure.

Q: Do any of the local schools access the culture department?

Alex: Yes.

Cammeo: Yes.

Alex: We do school activities--

Q: Because that would be amazing for the children.

Alex: Yes. We do that as well. Uh-huh.

Cammeo: And we get a lot of people, families who will come for swimming, and they'll eat lunch. You know? They'll stay for lunch.

Q: So, they can just.. Oh, there's the community--

Cammeo: Yeah.

Q: Right. That's nice.

Q: So, obviously you have a few different customer groups. Right?

Cammeo: Uh-huh.

Q: Is there, or is it fair to say, that the cultural component is like

the main thing that you want people to know that sets you apart, that is something you would promote about. You know? Saying, "Okay. For the golfers, we have a golf course." Or maybe for the foodie, "The restaurant is great." What is the one thing that you would want people to know?

Cammeo: I think culture is huge because it is for the local community, and it is a Secwépemc--

Alex: And that is why they built it is to share their local Secwépemc culture with the public.

Cammeo: And I think that no matter which way that you look at it, whether it be the weddings or the golf, it comes back to the culture. Because, again, we go back to something unique and that experience. Right? This is a different golf course. There are no houses around it. You're in the trees. You're on the lake. You know? The views are amazing. Weddings, you know, being in the chief's room or being outside on that beach. You know? So, I think everything comes back to the culture.

Alex: Uh-huh.

Q: Does the golf course have any cultural components that set it apart from other golf courses? I know that you have golf.

Alex: They have pictographs on every hole. Right?

Cammeo: They've got the pictographs on every hole. Yeah.

Cammeo: The great thing is that when you come here for your wedding, you're here. So, I know that we look at getting them into the rooms for two nights instead of one. Reason being is because then they have their time to relax as well. So, we let them know prior to their coming that, hey, we have the spa onsite. We do a lot of golfing, obviously, with weddings as well for the bachelor

parties or even the bachelorette. They'll all come in a group the day before, what have you. Food, here--

Alex: Yeah, for discount.

Cammeo: Yeah, it's unlimited once you're here. Right? Especially for weddings. Most of the weddings are being geared towards being here for two nights. So, that's a lot of time.

Alex: Discount-wise too.

Cammeo: And that's... Yeah.

Alex: We give the bride and groom two nights free stay in any room they want. So, that's part of their wedding package. And that encourages them to stay a couple nights, so then maybe their bridal party wants to stay the two nights. And if they stay two nights, they also get a cheaper discount on the rooms.

Cammeo: On the rooms. Yeah.

Alex: So, that encourages the two-night stay. Uh-huh.

Q: [Winter or off season?]

Cammeo: So, in the wintertime, we're looking at other avenues. You know? Like I said, we do the taste series. We do a lot of Christmas parties. We do--

Q: --and cultural snowshoeing.

Cammeo: --the cultural snowshoeing. We've got that, so--

Alex: Maybe growing that. Yeah.

Cammeo: They actually go out on our golf course and snowshoe there, so--

Cammeo: And then we also work with the local snowmobilers. So, with Crowfoot and Grizzly, we actually give them discounts. So, if

they're on the way to Crowfoot or Grizzly, or on their way back, we actually... Their room rate is discounted. Yeah.

Cammeo: So, between, like I said, a lot of people doing the staycation and the snowmobilers, and then whatever events that we have going on, even our off season isn't really our off season anymore. Yeah.

Alex: No.

Q: [Any other experiences for the guests?]

Cammeo: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, that would be another thing, like painting classes or something.

Cammeo: Yeah, we do paddle painting. They do paddle painting as well. We are looking at doing beading workshops as well as the pine needle baskets is something that we're looking at doing as well.

Alex: And even that could be contracted through the community. So, a local Elder to come in and do a workshop.

Q: You have the experts here. How would you make sure that people know about that? Just off the cuff right now, if you say were putting on a workshop like this with a cultural background.

Alex: So, a lot of it we can promote through... A lot of them come through posters, the old-fashioned way in the community. Stuff we wanted to reach to community we would go to the local community businesses. So, we would go to wellness centre, the band office itself, the gas station and--

Cammeo: --Sorrento, Blind Bay.

Alex: Just got their... A lot of it is word-of-mouth for that, and then promote it on social media and through our email list as well.

Q: Okay.

Alex: Yeah.

Please note that this transcript has been slightly modified; it is not a verbatim copy of the original audio clip.