

BY LYNDA SEA  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARNIE BURKHART

# BLACK DIAMOND - TURNER VALLEY

FOR ANTIQUE SHOPPING, LOCAL FOOD OR SIMPLY AN AFTERNOON JAUNT, LOOK TO THESE TWO TOWNS IN COWBOY COUNTRY

**NO MATTER HOW** or when you traverse the Cowboy Trail, the picturesque route along Highway 22 in southern Alberta is one that never ceases to capture the fascination of locals and visitors alike. Its vast mountain views and rolling ranchlands have even been the backdrops in movies such as *Unforgiven*, *Open Range* and *Brokeback Mountain*.

Sitting at the heart of this area are the sister towns of Black Diamond and Turner Valley. Black Diamond is located at the junctions of Highway 7 and Highway 22, 52 kilometres southwest of Calgary; Turner Valley is three kilometres west of Black Diamond on Highway 22, and both are about a half-hour drive from the city's south limits.

Black Diamond got its name from the coal deposits discovered in the area during the late 1800s. Ranching activity soon followed and, in 1914, Turner Valley became the birthplace of Alberta's oil and gas industry with the famous Dingman No. 1 well that marked the province's first oil boom. That year, gas flares from the oilfields illuminated the night sky for miles in what is still known as Hell's Half Acre.

Now, much of what characterizes the two towns is the way their raw, western roots and old-town charm is celebrated and reinterpreted by a new generation. Take, for example, Black Diamond's main street where the major attraction is the false fronts, relics from the construction boom of the 1920s. These boom-town-era buildings were originally brought in from neighbouring communities and many have since been refurbished under the Alberta Main Street program. They now house a number of art galleries, boutiques and restaurants run by new and long-time entrepreneurs who are breathing life back into these old spaces.

Even while attracting a younger population to their backyards, both Black Diamond and Turner Valley have managed to preserve their small-town eccentricities and, by doing so, have become destinations in their own right. **F**

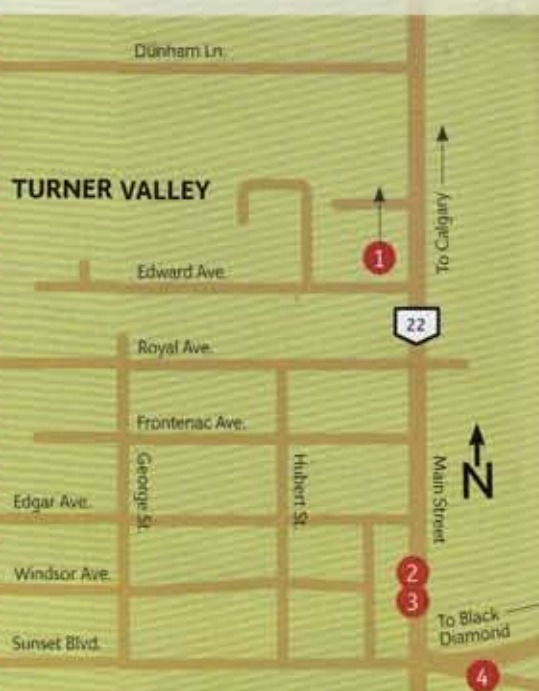
## HOT PROPERTY



**BLACK DIAMOND**  
Sold for: \$389,900  
Listing Agent: Laurelea Burritt of Re/Max House of Real Estate

## LOCAL LANDMARK

Along Centre Avenue out toward Turner Valley, passersby can spot a giant black diamond suspended above a coal wagon. The timbers underneath the cart are the original ones recovered from the McPherson mine where coal was first discovered in 1899. The diamond sculpture itself is originally from Rosetown, Saskatchewan. It was constructed in 1971, then relocated to Foremost, Alberta before it was donated by the town of Bow Island to Black Diamond in 1974. **5**



## ROUTE 40 SOUP COMPANY

Route 40 has developed an almost cult-like following among discerning foothills foodies, and rightfully so. Route 40 makes it worth the drive out to Turner Valley and back just for lunch, and owners Mark and Lanny Klaudt keep them coming with their inventive and delicious menu full of local and regional ingredients. Try any of the made-from-scratch soups, their famous road chips or the roasted turkey and highwood crossing apple curry salad wrap. Mark's daily soup creations are also available in one-litre jars to go. (146 Main St., Turner Valley, 403-933-7676) **2**

## AUTUMN EVENTS

Catch local and international musicians including Jenny Whiteley (Nov.15) as part of Turner Valley's Beneath the Arch Concert Series. (Flare & Derrick Community Hall, 131 Main St., Turner Valley, 403-933-5811) **3** Get your holiday shopping started at the Millarville Christmas Market the second weekend of November (Millarville Race Track, 20 minutes southwest of Calgary off Hwy 22 or 13 kilometres north of Turner Valley, 403-931-3411) **1** and take a stroll down Black Diamond's main street during December to see the false fronts glitter and light up with Christmas lights.

## ALADDIN'S CAVE

Antique aficionados cannot miss this antique shop in Turner Valley. Although it's off the main road, the search definitely pays off. Aladdin's Cave is an eccentric trove filled to the rafters with old relics such as gramophones, pianos, china, pocket watches and wooden figurines. Everything here has been culled by owner Marie Pinsonneault from estate sales, auctions, storage garages and more. Open Wednesday to Sunday only. (123 Sunset Blvd. S.W., Turner Valley, 403-933-7143) **4**

## VALE'S GREENHOUSE

Green thumbs can find an abundance of hardy plants, herbs and flowers in Vale's various greenhouses. Sign up for a garden potting workshop, or just visit and stroll the beautifully landscaped garden steps from the Sheep River. The greenhouse gift shop is open year-round with fun gifts and kitchen and bath decor, but the main draw is the rare and unusual perennials and annuals grown on site. (301, 3 St. N.W., Black Diamond, 403-933-4814) **6**



## BLACK DIAMOND



## NATURE ARRANGED FLORAL BOUTIQUE

This full-service floral and gift shop may be diminutive, but it makes up for it in quaint character. Whether you're looking for exotic orchids, gerber daisies, or contemporary ceramic vases and gift sets, the shop's artsy feel makes it a destination for all occasions, especially weddings. (104 Centre Ave. W., Black Diamond, 403-933-4446) **9**



## SHAY'S TACK & FEED

See the horse whisperer herself, Shaylene Gladstone, owner of the town's new tack shop, as she waxes poetic about horses and the Western way of life. Even if you're a city slicker not looking to buy a saddle anytime soon, the sheer variety of tack, ropes, saddles and other supplies on hand is still neat to check out. There are also western-themed gifts, accessories and home decor pieces available. (2, 116 Government Rd. N.E., Black Diamond, 403-933-3456) **10**

## WILD HORSE BISTRO

This cozy bistro is always packed for lunch and dinner. Sisters Jessie and Amy Smulders run the place and serve local cuisine with fresh ingredients sourced from Alberta growers and producers, including Paradise Farms and Highwood Valley Ranch. The menu changes seasonally, but always blends local and global influences in dishes such as Mexican enchiladas. Tandoori chicken pizza and artichoke pasta. (126 Centre Ave. W., Black Diamond, 403-933-5800) **7**



## THE STOP COFFEE HOUSE AND GATHERING PLACE

As Black Diamond's best bet for an easy, laid-back hangout, The Stop has seen many bike meets, casual get-togethers between friends, special events and live music shows. Sip on all types of bevies from java to beer and other cold drinks on the cedar patio or relax indoors with healthy, homemade food, including soup of the day or light breakfast and lunch fare. (115 Government Rd. S., Black Diamond, 403-933-3002) **13**

## BLACK DIAMOND BAKERY & COFFEE SHOP

The modest storefront may throw you off, but as Alberta's only Danish bakery, this is the place in town to pop in for fresh-baked pastries, yummy cakes and all sorts of artisan breads. Owner and head baker George Nielsen opened up shop in 1985 and still bakes everything from scratch, such as loaves of Cowboy Trail sourdough and Kransekage, a Danish wedding cake. (119 Centre Ave. W., Black Diamond, 403-933-4503) **12**

## TERRA COTTA GALLERY & FRAMING

Run by potters Evonne and Robert Smulders — better known to locals as just "The Dudes" — this gallery carries pottery, fine art paintings, sculptures and crafts such as cards and jewellery. It represents more than 160 artists, mostly from Southern Alberta, including painter Eleanor Lowden Pidgeon. (110 Centre Ave. W., Black Diamond, 403-933-5047) **8**



## MARV'S CLASSIC SODA SHOP AND DINER

Take a time warp back to the '50s as servers with slick coifs and poodle skirts take your order while soda jerks make delicious ice cream malts, sundaes and sodas from old-fashioned soda fountains. Reminisce over home-style burgers (including the Elvis, a peanut butter and banana burger) and carbonated ice cream in flavours such as lemon lime and Heavenly Chocolate Brulee. (121 Centre Ave. W., Black Diamond, 403-933-7001) **11**