

An Annotated Checklist of Writings by and about David Pitt-Brooke
Compiled and annotated by Ross Tyner
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Introduction

David Pitt-Brooke is a writer and naturalist who is currently based in Tofino, on the west coast of British Columbia's Vancouver Island. A former veterinarian and Parks Canada environmental education officer, Pitt-Brooke's writing draws on his years of scientific training and experience and has focused on topics related to natural history and the environment. Critical acclaim, in the form of awards and enthusiastic reviews, attests to the fact that Pitt-Brooke combines his love for and knowledge of science with the ability to write eloquent and forceful prose.

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A. Works by David Pitt-Brooke

- A1. *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. Vancouver: Raincoast, 2004.
[A month-by-month description of the author's travels in Clayoquot Sound, this book was included in the *Globe and Mail's* list of the 100 best books of 2004 (see D1, below).]
- A2. "Aloft on Langara." *Canadian Geographic* Sept/Oct 2001: 68-78.
[A profile of wildlife biologist Wayne Nelson and the colony of peregrine falcons he studies in the Queen Charlotte Islands, this article won a Science in Society Journalism Award in 2001 (see D2, below).]
- A3. "There Is a Place." *Quill & Quire* Sept 2005: 49.
[In this essay, Pitt-Brooke discusses his interest in "literature of place", and the importance of place to Canadians, as evinced in the country's literature.]

B. Reviews of works by David Pitt-Brooke

- B1. Strang, Roy. Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. *Forum* (Association of British Columbia Forest Professionals) Jan/Feb 2005: 26. Retrieved 01 Mar 2005 from <http://www.rpf-bc.org/download/forum-1201.pdf>.
[A brief, laudatory review, nearly half of which consists of a summary; it calls the book "a well-produced and well-written introspective account."]
- B2. Langer, Valerie. "Moons of Clayoquot." Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. *Alternatives Journal* 30.5 (Nov/Dec 2004): 37. Retrieved 09 Feb 2005 from http://www.alternativesjournal.ca/issues/305/review_langer.asp.
[An overwhelmingly positive review, as illustrated by the following comments: "... a beautiful and deeply interesting book." "... uses an economy of language that reflects the ecosystem. It is exquisite to experience and thrives because of thrift and a perfection of

associations.” “... reads like an intelligent conversation spoken while witnessing the most astonishing beauty.”]

- B3. Toope, Janet. Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. *Resource Links* October 2004: 40. Retrieved 11 Feb 2005 from *CPI.Q* database.
[A review aimed at school teachers and librarians that notes the book’s “superb use of imagery” and recommends the book for “higher-level academic achievers.”]
- B4. Hanlon, Michael. “Unruly Living: Some Perfect Armchair Travels, with a Crusty Loaf and a Sip or Two from the Nomad Steppes to the Wilds of Clayoquot.” Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*, and other travel books. *Toronto Star* 13 June 2004: D14. Retrieved 25 Feb 2005 from *Canadian Newsstand* database.
[A brief review that focuses as much on the political issues surrounding Clayoquot Sound as it does on the book, which the reviewer describes as “a hymn to [Pitt-Brooke’s] surroundings.”]
- B5. MacDonald, Cara. “Where Nature, Science and Mystery Meet.” Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. *The Morning Star* (Vernon, B.C.) 11 June 2004: C1.
[This longer, mainly descriptive, review, praises the author’s “thoughtful observation, scientific knowledge, ... love for his subject” and “luminous prose.”]
- B6. Streetly, Joanna. Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. *Tofino Time* June 2004. Retrieved 09 Feb 2005 from
<http://www.tofinotime.com/main.htm?articles/A-T406-12frm.htm>.
[A positive review, consisting primarily of plot summary and direct quotes from the book. The reviewer comments that “David’s writing is to the tourist industry what the slow food movement is to MacDonalds.”]
- B7. Hawthorn, Tom. “Ode to a Primeval Paradise.” Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. *Canadian Geographic* May/June 2004: 130.
[A mainly descriptive review.]
- B8. Armstrong, Bob. “Angry Prophet: Wilderness Advocate Finds Peace, Meaning in Clayoquot Sound.” Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. *Winnipeg Free Press* 30 May 2004: B8.
[In this positive review, the reviewer compares Pitt-Brooke to “the brilliant natural history essayist David Quammen” (author of *Monster of God*, *The Song of the Dodo*, *The Flight of the Iguana*, and dozens of other books and articles on topics related to ecology, zoology and natural history) and praises him for “teasing out the fascinating details of an ecosystem and then assembling them in a way that leaves you gobsmacked by the amazing interconnectedness of life.”]
- B9. Johnson, Malcolm. “*Chasing Clayoquot* a Moving Testament to the Area.” Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. *The Westerly News* (Ucluelet, BC) 27 May 2004.
[A glowing and thoughtful review that includes such lyrical descriptions of the book as “a polished and elegant piece of contemporary nonfiction,” “One-third outdoorsman’s personal history, one-third naturalist ethics text and one-third Linnaean guidebook,” and

“a wonderfully effective exploration of the natural processes of the sound.” The reviewer favourably compares Pitt-Brooke to Group of Seven painter A.Y. Jackson.]

- B10. Julian, Barbara. “Anguish and Joy: Where Humans and Nature Collide.” Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac* and other books. *The Times Colonist* (Victoria, B.C.) 9 May 2004: D10. Retrieved 25 Feb 2005 from *Canadian Newsstand* database.

[A positive review that sees the book’s central theme as the idea that “humanity seems to be the enemy of everything else in nature.” The reviewer praises the book’s “vivid description” and admires Pitt-Brooke’s ability to “make the mosses, berries and organisms of decay ... as interesting as the whales and bears.”]

- B11. Hanna, Deirdre. Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. *Quill and Quire* May 2004:36.

[A mainly descriptive review that notes Pitt-Brooke’s “distinctly poetic analysis” and that compares the book’s 12-part structure to that of Barry Lopez’s *Arctic Dreams*.]

- B12. Herriot, Trevor. “A Thoreau for Clayoquot.” Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. *The Globe and Mail* 24 Apr. 2004: D10. Retrieved 09 Feb 2005 from *CPI.Q* database.

[A positive review that begins by providing context for the book by outlining the history of environmental conflict in Clayoquot sound; the reviewer applauds the author’s and the book’s “compelling voice,” “depth of ... compassion,” “unwillingness to default to simple conclusions,” “sonnet-like symmetry,” and “lyric voice.”]

- B13. Varty, Alexander. Rev. of *Chasing Clayoquot: A Wilderness Almanac*. *The Georgia Straight* 22 Apr. 2004. Retrieved 09 Feb 2005 from <http://www.straight.com/content.cfm?id=2186>.

[A mixed review that admits “[t]here is beauty here,” but which wishes for a “less calendrical” and “more transporting” narrative.]

C. Biographical works about David Pitt-Brooke

- C1. Brady, Cara. “Writer Rooted in His Sense of Place.” *The Morning Star* (Vernon, BC) 25 May 2005: A26.

[The article includes an interview with Pitt-Brooke and a description of the Writer-in-Residence program co-sponsored by the Mackie Lake House Foundation and the Kalamalka Institute for Working Writers.]

- C2. Pitt-Brooke, David. Interview with Sheryl MacKay. *North by Northwest*. CBC Radio. Vancouver. 12 Dec. 2004. Retrieved 13 June 2005 from

http://www.cbc.ca/nxmw/media/20041212DAVID_PI.ram.

[In a 10-minute interview, Pitt-Brooke discusses life and environmental conditions on the west coast of Vancouver Island and *Chasing Clayoquot*.]

- C3. Langer, Shirley. “Tofino Profile: David Pitt-Brooke.” *Tofino Time* Aug. 2004. Retrieved 09 Feb 2005 from <http://www.tofinotime.com/main.htm?articles/A-T408-20frm.htm>.

[A report of an interview with Pitt-Brooke, conducted by the author, the main topic of which is *Chasing Clayoquot*. Pitt-Brooke states that his goals in writing the book were to

“express his great affection for Clayoquot Sound” and “to make the area better known to people the world over.”]

C4. *David Pitt-Brooke*. Raincoast Books web site. Retrieved 09 Feb 2005 from <http://www.raincoast.com/david-pitt-brooke/>. [Publisher’s promotional web page]

D. Awards, prizes and honours

D1. Levin, Martin, and H.J. Kirchhoff. “The Globe 100.” *The Globe and Mail* 27 Nov. 2004: D3- .

[*Chasing Clayoquot* is included in this year-end list of “the books our reviewers liked best.”. An excerpt from Trevor Herriot’s review (B12, above) is reproduced on page D9.]

D2. 2001 Science in Society Journalism Award.

<http://www.sciencewriters.ca/awards/archives2000.html#2001>.

[“Aloft on Langara” (A2, above) won this prize, awarded annually by the Canadian Science Writers’ Association, in the *Natural Resources, Nature, the Environment, and Related Technologies* category. The award was accompanied by a \$1,000 prize.]