

Peter. R.B. Armstrong -Biography

Executive Chairman & Founder of the Armstrong Group

January, 2010

Peter. R.B. Armstrong is the Founder and Executive Chairman of Armstrong Group, owner and operator of Rocky Mountaineer, Gray Line West and other associated tourism and hospitality businesses.

Mr. Armstrong was born in St. John, New Brunswick. He graduated from St. George's School in Vancouver and then attended the British Columbia Institute of Technology's Hotel Management Program as well as the University of British Columbia.

His entrepreneurial spirit became evident when, as a 21-year-old doorman at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, he formed Spotlight Tours, a small specialized sightseeing bus company. This was the beginning of Mr. Armstrong's career in the tour industry and clearly an indication of things to come. In 1979, he initiated the privatization of Gray Line, a provincial crown corporation, the first such privatization of government assets in BC and became a partner and President of the company.

In 1990, the Federal Government decided to cut VIA Rail's (Canada's national passenger rail service) heavily subsidized operation and privatize the daylight tourist service between British Columbia and Alberta that had been introduced in 1988. Mr. Armstrong sold his shares in Gray Line and assembled a team to bid on the fledgling Rocky Mountaineer. In the tough competition that followed, the newly established Great Canadian Railtour Company (GCRC) was announced as the successful bidder.

With over 120 years of combined railroad experience, Peter Armstrong and a select group of former railroad Executives and leading tourism experts developed a visionary plan for the *Rocky Mountaineer*, a two-day all daylight rail journey between Canada's West and the Canadian Rockies. The plan was successful and the business has enjoyed significant growth over the past nineteen years. The company's turnaround and subsequent success has been achieved without government subsidy.

In 2005, Armstrong Group replaced GCRC as the parent company and acquired Gray Line West, a motorcoach operation based in Banff, Alberta, and Victoria, British Columbia. The company's number of direct employees doubled to over 1100. In April of that same year, the company unveiled a 20,000 square foot train station, which services the arrivals and departures of the *Rocky Mountaineer* in Vancouver. The former CN locomotive repair shed, which was built in 1954, was remodelled at a cost of \$4 million (CDN). It has become one of the most popular event venues in the city.

In 2006, the organization set its wheels in motion once more with the launch of two new rail routes. The Rocky Mountaineer "Whistler Sea to Sky Climb" train provides a daily experience between North Vancouver and Whistler, BC while the Rocky Mountaineer's "Rainforest to Gold rush" (formerly the Fraser Discovery Route) travels between Whistler and Jasper, Alberta with an overnight stop in Quesnel, BC.

In 2007, Rocky Mountaineer was honoured with the World Travel Award as "World's Leading Travel Experience by Train" for the third consecutive year.

Most recently, RMV ranked as one of the *50 Best Employers in Canada for 2007 & 2008* by the Globe and Mail's Report on Business magazine. Armstrong Group has grown from a small entrepreneurial dream into one of Canada's leading tourism providers.

Mr. Armstrong sits on the Board of Directors of many organizations in the tourism industry as well as educational institutions, private and public companies and charities. He is a past-member of the Executive Committee of the World Tourism and Travel Council, a past Chair of Tourism Vancouver, the Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Task Force, and past Vice Chair of Tourism British Columbia. He has also served on the Board of the Canadian Tourism Commission and the Vancouver 2010 Olympics Bid Committee. Currently, Mr. Armstrong is on the Board of St. George's School (was previously Chairman), and the Vancouver Police Foundation (Chairman). He is also a Fellow of the Sauder Business School. Mr. Armstrong is a recipient of the Canadian Venture Capital Association's Entrepreneur of the Year Award, Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year Award for Tourism and Hospitality, and the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for contribution to Canadian communities. He has also been inducted into the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame, was named the 2007 Tourism Leader of the Year by Tourism BC and was inducted into the Canadian Tourism Hall of Fame in 2008. Mr. Armstrong most recently received his ICD.D designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors in October, 2008.

Mr. Armstrong is married and has three adult children. He resides in Vancouver.

Rocky Mountaineer Routes:

First Passage to the West (Vancouver – Kamloops – Banff – Calgary)

Journey through the Clouds (Vancouver – Kamloops – Jasper)

Rainforest to Gold Rush (Whistler – Quesnel – Jasper)

Whistler Sea to Sky Climb (Vancouver – Whistler)