Rudolf Diesvelt



FEBRUARY 16, 2026

Rudi Diesvelt (April 3rd, 1934 - February 16th, 2026)

It is with great sadness that we announce that Rudolf (Rudi) Diesvelt, 91, of Vancouver, British Columbia, died peacefully on February 16th, 2026.

He was born on April 3rd, 1934 to Antonius Johanes Diesvelt and Gertrude Quetting in Eindhoven, Netherlands.

The upheaval of World War II saw Rudi move from the Netherlands to Belgium, France and Scotland. As a young man in Glasgow, he worked in the service sector developing a lifelong passion for fine food, quality wines, and spirits. He married Annie Lindsay in 1958, emigrated to Winnipeg, Canada and later had two children, Alison and Mark. Rudi settled with his family in Vancouver in 1962. Divorced in 1970, he was married to his second wife, Gretchen Horie, from May of 1975 until Gretchen’s passing in August of 2025.

Rudi trained extensively and worked as a chef in England and Scotland from 1950 to 1958, then as a steward for Air Canada from 1962 to1999. Alongside his travels for Air Canada, he pursued his interest in leather design, book binding and jewellery design, selling to galleries, boutiques and craft shops across North America. In 1970 he opened a boutique on West 4th Avenue. In time, he expanded his business, opening shops in Gastown and Kerrisdale. When the demands of

running the business became too great, he withdrew to a private studio and workshop to continue developing his craft. His work was initially marketed through his company, “Rare Discovery”, then “Celtic Empire”. Rudi took great pride in producing things of lasting quality with thoughtful attention to detail.

Rudi was a man of insatiable curiosity who loved travelling and meeting people. He had an avid interest in the history of Indigenous cultures, Celtic culture, art and design, stamp collecting, calligraphy, ancient weaponry, gemmology, and the natural world. A veritable creative force, he was constantly busy making or fixing things and was always eager to lend a hand. He loved dressing up for an occasion and enjoyed hosting special events for family and friends, entertaining everyone in wild and wonderful ways with his generous, dramatic, larger-than-life personality.

Rudi is survived by his children, Mark (Luz); daughter, Alison; grandchildren, Lindsay, Maxim and Luis; siblings, Heather (Al) Chuck (Sally), Martha (Frans), Ad & Alphonsine; and a great many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Gretchen Diesvelt; mother, Gertrude Duffy; stepfather, Douglas Duffy; father, Antonius Diesvelt; stepmother, Maria Diesvelt-Smits; and step-sister, Therese Hazeemans van Maanen.

Rudi did not want a formal funeral service but asked for a small, private gathering to be held with his nearest and dearest, and that wish will be granted. He will be dearly missed by a great many people. May he rest in peace.

Messages of Condolence

I will always remember Rudi with much fondness..I had the opportunity to work for Rudi when he opened Rare Discovery in Gaslight Square in Gastown. He was wonderful to work for ...and with ...as he had a keen wit and wry sense of humor.Mark and Alison you were blessed to have a dad who was not your “cookie-cutter “ type of parent... he was immensely talented in so many facets of life that he shared with the world. May his memory be a blessing.Shelley

— Shelley

I enjoyed working with Rudy over the years at AC - years after retirement I unexpectedly heard my name called out at Granville Island Market. It was so nice to connect briefly. It makes me smile to think that each time I saw him it felt as if he stepped out of a Rembrandt painting. He will be missed. Karen Shields

— Karen Shields

I worked with Rudy many times over the years to Europe. He was always a first-class In-Charge.To this day I use a leather address book he hand-crafted for me so many decades ago...and it still looks as good as new!May he now rest in peace.

— Pat Talbot-Begin

Having Rudi visit my dental office was always a special occasion for the whole staff as he was such a large personality. We still have and treasure some of his beautiful leather work. We echo what others have said, that Rudi was a very special soul.

— Dr. John and Susan Gloag

For a time in the 1980's I knew Rudy through his sister, Heather, and his lovely mother, Trudy. Rudy was a dynamo , full of life with a contagious energy. One of the last times I saw Rudy was at the wake he and his family held to celebrate his mother. Now, THAT was a time!

— Lyn Guy

Rudi crossed my mind today and I decided to google him. His obituary came up. I was so surprised, and saddened, to know that this very extra-ordinary man is no longer here.I owned a craft gallery for 23 years and for the last 10 years of the business, I purchased Rudi’s gifted leatherwork. My clients loved his work. I remember looking forward to the days when Rudi and Gretchen were booked to come by the gallery and deliver an order. I knew to book off a couple of hours because the conversation would be so enjoyable. When I retired the business Rudi created a beautiful leather journal for me which I still use and treasure today.Condolences to Rudi’s family. A very special human!

— Sandy (from Sabaka)

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https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/rudolf-diesvelt

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