

Understand Seattle

SEATTLE TODAY..... 190

Blink and you'll miss something. The evolution of Seattle in the 2010s continues at a blinding pace.

HISTORY 192

A short, action-packed story of yo-yoing fortunes on the way from rambunctious lumber town to high-tech city of the future.

THE WAY OF LIFE 196

A city of latte lunches, cutting-edge culture and outdoor fashion that has modestly produced numerous global brands.

MUSIC200

Seattle's greatest hits could fill a best-selling album, with Ray Charles, Quincy Jones, Jimi Hendrix, Nirvana, Macklemore and more.

Seattle Today

Ever since the pioneering Denny party felled the trees for their first log cabin on Alki Beach in 1851, Seattle has rarely stood still. Yet, even by its own roller-coaster standards, the recent pace of change has been astronomical. Currently stirring up local debate is a massive public-transportation project, the burying of a 60-year-old freeway, landmark new laws on cannabis and same-sex marriage, and a whole dynamic new neighborhood being hatched on the southern shores of Lake Union.

Best on Film

Sleepless in Seattle (1993) Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks are irresistibly adorable in this riff on *An Affair to Remember*.

Singles (1992) Attractive slackers deal with apartment life and love.

Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me (1992) David Lynch rolls his warped eye toward the dark underbelly of the Northwest.

Hype! (1996) An excellent time capsule of the grunge years.

Best in Print

Another Roadside Attraction (Tom Robbins; 1971) Robbins' wacky word carnival imagines Jesus alongside a flea circus at a pit stop.

Waxwings (Jonathan Raban; 2003) Travel writer Raban illuminates Seattle's recent high-tech boom in a novel that tells the parallel stories of two immigrants.

The Terrible Girls (Rebecca Brown; 1992) Experimental collection of short stories about lesbian relationships.

Heavier than Heaven (Charles R Cross; 2001) Moving portrait of Nirvana's Kurt Cobain.

The City that Never Stands Still

If you last visited Seattle in 2010, you could be in for a surprise or three. A number of visible changes have marked the city that never stands still in the last few years, and a couple more are well into the developmental stage. Walkers along the waterfront in the city center can't help but notice a giant Ferris wheel standing sentinel on &Pier 57, a tourist attraction that opened in 2012. Carry on through Belltown to the Seattle Center and you'll see that the Space Needle has a new neighbor, a dynamic glass museum devoted to the work of Tacoma-born artist Dale Chihuly. Also new in 2014 is a handy streetcar from Pioneer Square to Capitol Hill, while coming soon (in 2016) is a light-rail extension through Capitol Hill to the U District. Meanwhile, in the bowels of downtown, the world's largest boring machine, nicknamed 'Bertha,' is busy digging a 2-mile-long tunnel to accommodate soon-to-be-redirected SR 99. When the controversial \$3.1-billion tunnel opens in 2016 and the ugly Alaskan Way Viaduct is finally dismantled, 25 blocks between the west edge of downtown and the waterfront will be opened up for redevelopment, a move that will make the city center an infinitely more salubrious place.

A New Amsterdam?

November 2012 was a momentous month for Seattle. As well as returning Barack Obama for a second term at the White House, Washington state voters approved two new social laws by referendum: same-sex marriage and the legalization of cannabis. Both referenda were close but incisive; same-sex marriage edged through with a 53.7% majority, while the cannabis ruling garnered a slightly larger 55.7%. The effects of the first law were immediate. Scores of people started queuing for marriage licenses outside King County administration