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Insider's Guide to Vancouver, Canada

With new concept shops and slick sustainable restaurants, Canada's western metropolis is upping its already ample appeal

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S largest city consistently ranks near the top of lists of the world's best cities. But unlike other places that often make the cut (Melbourne, Munich), the City of Glass has not often been accused of having its finger on the pulse of cool—until now.

Young chefs, artists and designers have been moving to town, drawn by its sophistication, ethnic diversity and natural bounty—verdant Vancouver is studded with parks and beaches, and the snow-capped North Shore Mountains are rarely out of sight. The newcomers are helping homegrown talent transform neighborhoods, replacing dilapidated storefronts and gloomy pawnshops with bars that serve local microbrews and eateries that dish up sustainable cuisine.

On an edgy Chinatown street, for instance, vegetarian restaurant Parker brings French techniques together with local produce (and claims to generate less than a pound of waste a month). Nearby Gastown, where Vancouver began, is filled with nightclubs and shops like Secret Location, a restaurant-cum-boutique where you're as likely to find a designer plastic coat as a 35mm Lomography camera.

Vancouver has a mild climate year-round, but it really shines in summer. The days last until almost 10 p.m. in July, and locals spill from restaurant patios and bars into the old cobblestone streets. While Vancouverites still obsess about ski slopes and hiking trails, separate their recyclables and wouldn't dream of honking their horns, now they also dress in designer duds for dinner.

The Experts



The Gourmand
David Hawksworth

The Fashion Maven
John Fluevog

The Artist
Martha Sturdy

The Dancer
Chan Hon Goh

The Gourmand: David Hawksworth

Chef at Hawksworth Restaurant

Landmark with a View // The Lions Gate Bridge. I love driving from Vancouver and seeing the view of the North Shore from the bridge. Interesting fact: It was built by the Guinness family [of the Irish beer fame].

Photos: What to Do in Vancouver



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Grant Harder for The Wall Street Journal
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Uncrowded Coastline // Jericho Beach. The beach stretches for miles on end, it's not crowded with people and it's located in a beautiful part of Vancouver. I like to spend the afternoon there with my family. *North side of Jericho Park at the west end of Point Grey Road, in the Point Grey neighborhood.*

Artsy Cocktails // L'Abattoir. The bar at L'Abattoir, located in the center of Gastown, is a great place to visit. I like the exposed brick and beam look, which is a signature of the city's oldest

neighborhood. L'Abattoir usually attracts an artistic and stylish crowd. The cocktail list is innovative and interesting. *217 Carrall St., labattoir.ca*

Quick Bite // Gyoza King. On my days off I usually go to Asian restaurants. Gyoza King on Robson Street serves delicious, authentic Japanese izakaya food. *1508 Robson St., gyokingroup.com*

Cookery Books // Barbara-Jo's Books to Cooks. My favorite bookstore, located in the Armoury District. It's unique and offers a great selection of cookbooks and wine books for everyone, including foodies, professionals and home cooks. *1740 W. 2nd Ave., bookstocooks.com*