



Sleepless in SEATTLE

By Carolyn Gerin

Flying over the pristine beauty of Puget Sound we see the majestic Mount Rainier, shot with sunbeams and clouds, its face lit up like gold bullion, startling and stupendous. As fog-bound San Franciscans, we expected more of the same: predictable precipitation, great wine, celebrity chefs, and legions of young musicians flying the flannel with requisite work boots.





We were dazzled by the brilliantly sunny weather, a zesty downtown scene, and a 5-day odyssey of aural and oral delight. The food, the music, wine, classic cocktails, venues, museums and the hotels were spectacular, but Seattle possesses an intangible quality far more sublime:

Seattle works hard to make you feel extra special.

It's a quality you can't fake, ensuring that your experience is so stellar that you can't wait to come back.

First stop: **Hotel Andra**. This bastion of Belltown cool does not disappoint: rustic distressed woods intermingle with mid-century Scandinavian sleek, rendering a warm-cool vibe. The hotel's design manifesto channels Northwest elements: 'water, wood, stone' and translates earthy into mod with hand-knotted rugs, pops of fresh lime and orange, and ultra-comfy rooms overlooking the vibrant street life. Head down for a spectacular lunch at **Tom Douglas' Lola's**: zingy Med with a Greek soul. Try their six custom spreads – Kalamata Fig is a standout - on tender homemade pita.

Fortified, it's time to go tourist: the **Space Needle**, a paean to '60s space-age mod, take a ride to the top for a breathtaking 360° view. If you are a music fiend like myself, run, do not walk to the **Experience Music Project** at the **Seattle Center**. Starting with gospel and going all the way to grunge, you see what it was like at ground zero when heavy metal and punk merged to birth bands such as Nirvana, Soundgarden and Alice in Chains. The Frank Gehry building, an undulating mass of molten metal, also houses the **Science Fiction Museum**. Costumes from *Blade Runner*, *Star Trek*, *Planet of the Apes*, and even 'Robot' from *Lost in Space* are amazing up close. Catch the monorail and head to **Pike's Place Market**; watch the workers throw fish like footballs, grab a dozen oysters and a cold beer.

We arrive at the **Icon Grill**, a proliferation of blown glass, high-end garage sale finds, and deep leather banquettes and start the evening with Deep Fried Macaroni and Cheese Bites.

Full bellied, we catch the next big thing at the **Green Room**: Rane Stone & the Dead Roots Revival: echoes of moody Northwest guitar and a serious set of pipes, it felt like 1992 all over again (in a good way).

Morning after: A quick coffee and croissant? Fageddaboutit at **Dahlia's Bakery**, where each pastry eclipses the next. With a baby coconut cream pie in one hand, and a sea salt éclair in the other, I am armed and dangerous - I take a bite of everything and head into a little slice of heaven: wood-fired and airy, with deeply



sensual toppers such as morels and pesto, boar sausage and truffle cheese - I have a serious crush on **Serious Pie**. The two delightful gentlemen at the communal table (unaware that I was on a press trip) gave us state secrets: the best white water rafting and surf spots in Washington State. Love this place!

Throw on hipster cocktail gear, head to **Pier 67** and score a dockside table at **Six-Seven**, overlooking **Elliott Bay** inside the **Edgewater**, where gigantic antler chandeliers, exposed timber, floor-to-ceiling windows, sparkling candelabra, and an overall 'mod meets lumberjack' design sensibility screams 'rustic luxe.' Enjoying gingeritas, mohitos and live music, we watch a fuchsia sunset over the Olympics. Executive Sous Chef John Roberts whips up decadent lobster mac and cheese and Penn Cove mussels. The Beatles stayed there and so should you!

The W Hotel Seattle rocks with its sleek, urban décor (and a corner room with a magnificent view of Mt. Rainier). You may opt to stay in, enjoy a glass of champagne and watch the sunset from your divan, then head downstairs to experience Chef Adam Stevenson's 'refined rustic' cuisine: artisanal smoked charcuterie and farm-direct meats, cheeses and seafood at **Earth and Ocean** restaurant. Head into the dark wood and velvet-draped **W Bar**, order a Pink Diamond cocktail and groove to live DJ's spinning for Seattle's beautiful night owls.

If you want to get your hipster on, grab a nightcap at **Shorty's**, the ever-tiki, vinyl-spinnin' **Lava Lounge**, or the **Comet Tavern** (for grunge bands in training). For classic cocktails and bartenders in ties and armbands, head over to **Tini Bigs** or the **Zig Zag**. Long night = big brecky and **Etta's** at Pike's Place has you covered: blood orange mimosas, monkey bread, corned beef hash with poached eggs. Jump on a boat ride around the **Sound** then head over to **Capitol Hill** to **Bleu** for insane grilled cheese sandwiches and signature cocktails (entertaining bartenders at no additional charge).

The perfect ending to a perfect trip is a night at the world famous **Jazz Alley**, home to Dave Brubeck, Herb Alpert, and more. Grab a table near the front and see jazz as your grandparents did in an intimate setting with consummate pros and classic cocktails.

Will we be coming back to Seattle? Without a doubt! Will we sleep? *Doubtful!*

