

Alaska. BEYOND»

MAGAZINE MAY 2018

SEATTLE

Enticing adventures in the Puget Sound region **PAGE 97**

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An intersection of ancient and modern **PAGE 162**



Alaskan Kikkan Randall is an inspiring Olympic gold medalist

KIKKAN'S METTLE



Ideas for sightseeing and lodging

BY MICHELE ANDROS DILL

Above: The new Fourth Avenue lobby at Columbia Center will provide an inviting welcome for people visiting the Sky View Observatory.

A 30-something tech-company manager named Piotr, from Europe, and his wife, Barbara, an administrative manager, move enthusiastically from window to window at the Sky View Observatory on the 73rd floor of the Columbia Center in downtown Seattle. “The view is beautiful,” Barbara says. “We can see so many things. We are very happy we came up here.”

Nearby, a retired couple from London point out sites below that they’ve already explored and sites they still plan to see, while a Seattle-area millennial shows a friend from California around, and they pause at interpretive panels with information such as the number of major glaciers—more than two dozen—on Mount Rainier.

The panorama visible from the observatory, at 902 feet above street level, includes Puget Sound, with its flurry of ferryboats and freighters; numerous islands and inlets; the 175-foot-tall Seattle Great Wheel; the 605-foot Space Needle; Lake Union; the Port of

Seattle’s red cranes; Mount Rainier; Mount Baker; and the Olympic Mountains on the horizon to the west.

And the vista to the east, including Lake Washington and the city of Bellevue, is now displayed in full, thanks to an expansion of the observatory last summer that provided a 360-degree view by allowing sightseers to make a complete picture-windows circuit of the 73rd floor.

Beginning early this summer, the spectacular eastward view will be what greets visitors arriving on the observatory floor via two new express elevators now under construction. The elevators will whisk guests in just 70 seconds from the Columbia Center’s Fourth Avenue lobby to the observatory, eliminating the need to make a connection between two different banks of office-worker elevators. The observatory is also gaining a new food-and-beverage option, with cocktails and bar bites complementing the view.

In addition, the Fourth Avenue

lobby itself is being completely renovated to include the observatory box office, observatory-related retail space and a grand staircase connecting the first and second levels of a three-story atrium that contains various eateries. The renovation is designed to provide an impressive welcome before people board the elevators to what is described as “the tallest observatory in the Northwest.”

“We wanted to streamline the guest experience to reach the observatory,” says Jennifer Tucker, general manager of the sky-high attraction. “And we feel like any visit to Seattle should start here. The city is at your feet. You can see it all. If you’re a visitor, you can see how everything relates, and if you’re a local, you get a good sense of how the city is being transformed. I bring my own friends and family here. I use it as a place to show off my city. It’s stunning. It’s amazing.”

For more information, see skyviewobservatory.com.

The following are some of the many other new options in the Puget Sound area:

ATTRACTIONS

- **Nordic Museum** (nordicmuseum.org): The Ballard-neighborhood museum, scheduled to open May 5 in a new 60,000-square-foot building, will provide expanded exhibit space and programming/event options featuring Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

- **SODO Track** (sodotrack.com): Expected to be completed by this August, the art project—a



public-private collaboration— features the work of 50 artists along a 2-mile street-art corridor on Fifth Avenue South between Royal Brougham Way and Spokane Street downtown. A total of 32 walls are being painted.

• **The Spheres** (seattlespheres.com): Amazon's three connected glass-domed green spaces— with thousands of plants, from orchids and passionflowers to spike moss and fan-leaved aloe, curated with the help of botanical gardens and universities across the globe— are open to visitors two Saturdays a month by reservation (available 30 days in advance).

• **State Route 520 Bicycle/ Pedestrian Trail** (wsdot.wa.gov): On this new 14-foot-wide concrete path, separated from car traffic by a barrier, you can ride or walk 2.7 miles across the bridge over Lake Washington between Seattle and Bellevue. The bridge trail includes 11 viewpoints, and connects to more than 60 miles of additional trails.

LODGING

Recent Openings/Remodels:

• **Embassy Suites by Hilton Seattle Downtown Pioneer Square** (embassysuites.com): Located near CenturyLink Field, the hotel offers amenities such as an indoor pool and a sun deck,

with an acclaimed 13 Coins restaurant also onsite.

• **The Even Hotel and Staybridge Suites** (ihg.com): Sharing a bar, lounge and outdoor patio, the side-by-side hotels in the South Lake Union neighborhood promise style and serenity.

• **Hotel Interurban** (hotelinterurban.com): An indoor saline pool, the Waterleaf Restaurant & Bar, a robot that makes deliveries to guestrooms, and views of Mount Rainier will be among the amenities at this hotel expected to open before the end of May in Seattle's Southside.

• **Hotel Theodore** (hoteltheodore.com): This upscale hotel in a historical building downtown features photography and drawings from Seattle's Museum of History & Industry that pay tribute to Seattle innovators. The onsite restaurant, Rider, celebrates forest and ocean.

• **Hyatt Regency Lake Washington at Seattle's Southport** (lakewashington.regency.hyatt.com): Guests enjoy water and Seattle-skyline views at this lakefront hotel in Renton, south of Seattle. Water's Table restaurant features alfresco dining and sea-



sonal, Northwest-inspired cuisine.

• **Loews Hotel 1000** (loewshotels.com/hotel-1000-seattle): A multimillion-dollar renovation, completed this past fall at the downtown hotel, updated guestrooms, meeting spaces, the lobby and the restaurant, which now has a strong seafood focus as the All Water Seafood & Oyster Bar.

• **Motif Seattle, A Destination Hotel** (destinationhotels.com/motif-seattle): A \$10 million renovation of all the guestrooms in the chic, boutique downtown hotel— which has a popular fifth-floor rooftop lounge and deck— included significant investment in local art pieces.

• **Salish Lodge** (salishlodge.com): A \$12 million remodel of this property, known for its views of Snoqualmie Falls, includes expansion to 85 guestrooms, and redesign of all guestrooms, with features such as gas fireplaces.



This page, clockwise from top left: The Spheres green spaces; Water's Table restaurant at the Hyatt Regency Lake Washington at Seattle's Southport; the Embassy Suites by Hilton Seattle Downtown Pioneer Square; and a section of Andrew Hem's SODD Track painting, Underwater Squad.

FACING PAGE: BERNHARD B. MESSNER; THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SHUTTERSTOCK; EMBASSY SUITES BY HILTON SEATTLE DOWNTOWN PIONEER SQUARE; MESSNER



SKILLET RENDERING COURTESY PORT OF SEATTLE

NEW AT SEA-TAC

• **At Seattle-Tacoma International Airport** (seatacshops.com), new attractions include the Terminal Getaway Spa, and dining options such as Alki Bakery, Floret by Cafe Flora, Qdoba, Re'Lish Burger Lounge and Starbucks Evenings, with

more additions anticipated this year, including Poppa Woody's, Stonehouse Cafe, Camden-foodco., Le Grand Comptoir, Capitol Hill Food Hall and Ballard Brew Hall. Restaurants expected to open next year include Skillet and Sunset Fried Chicken Sandwiches.

• Sheraton Seattle Hotel

(sheratonseattle.com): The downtown hotel has completed most of a \$53 million renovation, creating a more contemporary feel in spaces ranging from the guestrooms to the lobby.

building in the University District, the hotel is expected to open this fall. Decor will pay tribute to local scenery, music and business, and to famous University of Washington alumni.

• Hyatt Regency Seattle

(hyattregencyseattle.com): Expected to be the region's largest hotel, with 1,260 guestrooms, it is scheduled to open this fall in the Denny Triangle area. The hotel is seeking LEED Gold certification.

Upcoming Hotel Openings:

• The Charter Seattle, Curio

Collection by Hilton (curiocollection3.hilton.com): Scheduled to open downtown in third-quarter 2018, the hotel includes a 16th-floor rooftop lounge, and an Argentina-inspired restaurant, Patagon.

• **The State Hotel** (statehotel.com): Scheduled to open this summer in a 1904 building downtown, the boutique hotel will have amenities such as an eighth-floor rooftop terrace overlooking Pike Place Market. ■

• Graduate Seattle

(graduatehotels.com/seattle): Located in a 1930s Art Deco