

A Few Days In

# Let's Ignore the Hype: This Is the Best of the Best of Seattle

by Jessica Cantlin



Seattle's famous Pike Place Market. Photo by Sarah Brink/Unsplash

*There's one thing the tech giants of Seattle can't express deliver, recode, disrupt, or add an "i" to – the beloved and tried-and-true classic bars, restaurants, and local hangs that keep the city's heart beating.*

SEATTLE — I have spent the better part of my 43 years living in Seattle in a neighborhood just east of downtown. (I am not from the suburbs, nor will I ever be.) I have watched Seattle grow from a sleepy Pacific Northwest city characterized by grunge music and Boeing airplanes into a global metropolis transformed by Microsoft, Starbucks, and Amazon. I have experienced the explosion of Mount St. Helens, the demolition of the King Dome, the construction of floating bridges across Lake Washington, and the tear-down of elevated Highway 99, but none of this compares to watching Amazon (and others) remap the physical and cultural landscape of our city. So, when I tell you that Seattle has changed, and — oh, how it has changed — I have a lot of mixed feelings.

While I generally believe that new business and real estate development is good for this city (with the exception of the traffic and homeless population that have come with it), as a born-and-bred Seattleite, I can't help but be loyal to the people, places, and businesses that remain on my short list of favorites and continue to influence this city, in spite of all that has changed. A new Seattle has emerged where this fabric of mainstays intersects with fresh, innovative businesspeople, and this new city continues to surprise me.

As a self-anointed ambassador of Seattle, I give you the keys to my favorite old haunts, the best new spots, and the truly amazing places that are straight up awesome and cannot be missed. Even if it's raining. (And it will be raining.)

## Where to Stay

With all the development in Seattle, it should come as no surprise that there are several new hotels opening around the city. The two hot new boutique hotels a stone's throw from Pike Place Market are Palihotel Seattle and The State Hotel. I stayed at both.



The State Hotel guest room.

### The State Hotel

Around the corner from the Palihotel is The State Hotel, which opened a few months ago. The locally owned, independent, boutique hotel occupies an historic 1904 brick building, whose features the developers wanted to preserve and repurpose while adding character and creative design to the interior spaces. The result is a hotel that Seattle should be proud of. The design captures the essence of the Pacific Northwest, with strategically placed art by emerging local artists. An abundance of natural light streams through the ceiling-high windows into the lobby and adjacent restaurant, Ben Paris, where foxes and pheasants dance from above — in a beautiful hand-painted mural by local artist Kyler Martz. If you can tear yourself away from the cocktail bar, take your drink upstairs to the roof deck, where you can watch the color of the sky change as the city turns on its lights. On the way down, be sure to check out the incredible custom wallpaper by Portland artist Kate Blairstone, who used the bounty of the Pike Place farmers market as the inspiration for her amazing designs. (Feel free to press every button the elevator: Every floor is different.) Guest rooms feature leather headboards, custom case goods, and incredibly comfortable mattresses. But the most important feature of the guest rooms is the absence of street noise — a detail that does not go overlooked by this sleep-challenged traveler. Ben Paris is an energetic all-day eatery that aims to become a neighborhood gathering place. The food is excellent, and features inventive twists on classic American fare. I especially loved the fried chicken in the evening and the potatoes in the morning. Clearly, a lot of local heart and soul has gone into The State Hotel. If you want to sleep like a local, this is where to stay.