

An aerial photograph of a Vancouver beach area. In the foreground, there's a sandy beach with some people and umbrellas. Behind the beach is a green park area with trees and a few buildings. In the background, the city skyline is visible with several high-rise buildings. Further back, there are mountains with some snow on their peaks under a clear blue sky.

125

Things We Love About Vancouver

In honour of Vancouver's quasiquintennial, we present 125 of our favourite things about the city. After all, 125th birthdays don't happen every day **BY SHERI RADFORD // PHOTOS BY KK LAW**

- 1 Sunning ourselves (wearing sun-screen, of course) on local sandy beaches (page 85).
- 2 The four beehives on the Vancouver Convention Centre's 2.4-hectare (6-acre) living roof.
- 3 James "Jimmy" Cunningham. The master stonemason spent more than three decades directing the construction of Vancouver's seawall. Even after retirement, he still kept showing up to the worksite almost daily, right up until his death at age 85 in 1963.
- 4 All of the movies and TV shows filmed here each year, such as *Fringe*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Smallville*, *The X-Files*, *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, *Juno* and the *Twilight* series. As North America's third-largest film centre (trailing only Los Angeles and New York), the city deserves its "Hollywood North" nickname.
- 5 Canadian pride, which still lives on more than a year after the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games filled the city with red-and-white-clad cowbell-ringing revellers high-fiving each other and belting out "O Canada."
- 6 The new and improved BC Place Stadium, which reopens this autumn. Gone is the puffy white roof that looked like a giant marshmallow. In its place is the world's largest cable-supported retractable roof, transforming the stadium into an open-air venue.
- 7 Whale watching (page 83).
- 8 Terry Fox. Despite losing a leg to cancer, in 1980 the local athlete embarked on his Marathon of Hope, a run across Canada to raise money for cancer research. He died before completing his quest, but in September every year fundraising runs are held around the world in his honour (www.terryfox.org).



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- 9 Bouncing the night away at the Commodore Ballroom (page 86).
- 10 The fact that it's a short drive from downtown to the picturesque snow-capped mountains.
- 11 Our reputation as one of the greenest cities on the planet—and not just because environmental activist David Suzuki lives here. There's more than a kernel of truth to our reputation as granola-eating, Birkenstock-wearing, planet-loving hippie freaks.
- 12 Stanley Park (page 79).
- 13 Our local sports teams, ranging from the Vancouver Canucks (the 2010-2011 NHL season's dominant team) to the Vancouver Whitecaps (BC's first Major League Soccer club) to the BC Lions (the CFL's young-

est team) to the Vancouver Canadians (farm team for the Toronto Blue Jays). We love them all, win or lose.

- 14 Soaking up the cool counter-culture vibe along Commercial Drive (page E1) and Main Street (page E2).
- 15 Bryan Adams. Long before winning international acclaim, the raspy-voiced rocker washed dishes at Tomahawk Barbecue (page 96).
- 16 The large inukshuk that sits in English Bay, welcoming the world.
- 17 Sarah McLachlan. The local singer/songwriter resurrected her hugely popular Liliith Fair tour last summer.
- 18 The abundance of restaurant patios that make the most of warm summer days and stun-

ning ocean and mountain views.

- 19 James Doohan. The actor who portrayed *Star Trek's* Scotty ("I can't push it any faster, Captain!") was born in Vancouver—then explored the universe aboard the *Starship Enterprise*.
- 20 The love and appreciation for all things local and sustainable, including food, drink and even clothing.
- 21 Watching real estate prices soar, even during a recession. No matter how bad the economy gets, people want to live on the Left Coast.
- 22 Jillian Harris. An interior designer, the Vancouver resident was the first Canadian to star on the reality TV series *The Bachelorette*. On one memorable episode, she and her beaux rode the rails on the Rocky Mountaineer (page 83).
- 23 Gay pride. Rainbow flags fly high all year long, but even more come out during Vancouver Pride (page 73).
- 24 Yoga pants by Lululemon (page 41). Chip Wilson opened the very first Lululemon store in Kitsilano in 2000, and now there are locations around the world.
- 25 Homegrown authors such as William Gibson (*Neuromancer*), Joy Kogawa (*Obasan*), Nan Gregory (*How Smudge Came*) and Douglas Coupland (*Generation X*).
- 26 Waiting in line for servings of friendly abuse alongside banana-walnut French toast and "big ass" pancakes at The Elbow Room Cafe (page 92). Don't even bother asking for a refill of coffee; just get it yourself.
- 27 The Burrard Street Bridge, which connects downtown to Kitsilano in Art Deco style.
- 28 Watching cruise ships sail into the harbour.
- 29 Mountain Equipment Co-op (page 41). Canada's largest supplier of outdoor recreation gear and clothing turns 40 this year. That's four decades of helping Vancouverites maintain a reputation as healthy, fit, active folks who'd rather compete in a running race than the rat race.
- 30 Screaming our heads off at Playland (page 76). The newest ride, Atmosfear, which opens this month, travels 360 degrees at 70 km (43 mi) per hour at 66 m (218 ft) up. Let the screaming begin.
- 31 The Grouse Grind. Nicknamed "Mother Nature's Stairmaster," it's a steep 2.9-km (1.8-mi) trail straight up the face of Grouse Mountain (page 82). Crazy intense athletes do the Grind in under 30 minutes, while mere mortals require more like 90 minutes—and perhaps CPR.
- 32 Giving the credit cards a workout on Robson

Street (page E2), shopping for brand-name clothes and shoes.

- 33 Gourmet Japanese delicacies at Tojo's (page 107)—and the welcoming, smiling face of Hidekazu Tojo himself.
- 34 Pamela Anderson. The blonde bombshell, an actress and *Playboy* model, was discovered at age 21 when shown on the big screen at a BC Lions (page 75) game.
- 35 Pixar. The Academy Award-winning com-

puter animation company—creators of *Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo*, *The Incredibles* and *Up*—opened a studio in Gastown last year.

- 36 The plethora of outdoor activities, everything from scuba diving and rock climbing to hiking and mountain biking.
- 37 The fact that something is always under construction here. The skyline just wouldn't be complete without a couple of giant cranes.



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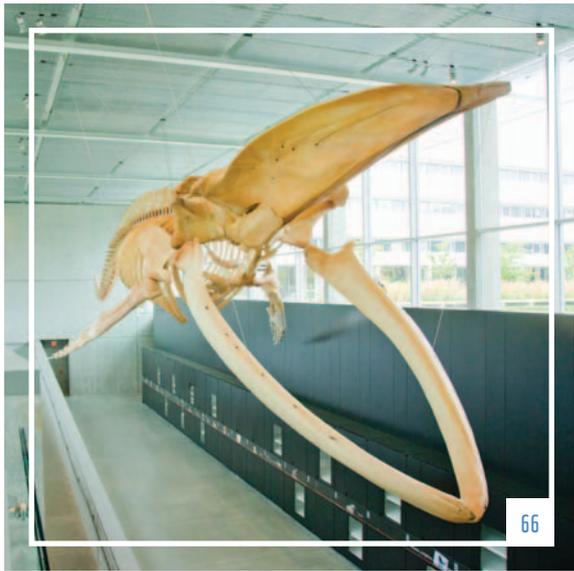
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- 38 Dal Richards. At age 93, Canada's "King of Swing" keeps his schedule jam-packed with gigs ranging from Summer Live (Jul. 8 to 10; page 72) to multiple performances daily during the PNE (Aug. 20 to Sep. 5; www.pne.ca) to 76 consecutive New Year's Eve shows.
- 39 Spectacular sunsets.
- 40 Sweeping dramatically up the grand staircase in The Centre in Vancouver for Performing Arts.
- 41 Dogs, dogs and more dogs. You'll find them in off-leash parks, in boutiques such as Barking Babies (page 38) and Fetch (page 38), and even in downtown hotels. Both the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver and L'Hermitage employ canine concierges—though we're pretty sure they get paid in doggie treats and tummy rubs.
- 42 Clothing-optional Wreck Beach. Be warned: no gawking allowed.
- 43 All the wildlife in Stanley Park (page 79), everything from squirrels and raccoons to Canada geese and skunks.
- 44 John "Gassy Jack" Deighton. You'll find his statue in Gastown, commemorating the talkative ("gassy") fellow who was an early settler and a saloonkeeper here in the late 1800s.
- 45 Botox. Vancouver physician Dr. Jean Carruthers was the first person to use Botox to smooth wrinkles—and locals have been looking fabulous ever since.
- 46 The clean streets.
- 47 Rick Hansen. The local paraplegic athlete circled the world in a wheelchair for his Man In Motion World Tour, raising money for spinal cord injury research. To mark the 25th anniversary of this achievement, on Aug. 24 a relay will begin in Cape Spear, Newfoundland, and it won't end until it reaches Vancouver on May 22, 2012 (www.rickhansen.com).
- 48 Zipping along on the SkyTrain (page E5).
- 49 Fresh local seafood—especially when it's certified Ocean Wise (www.oceanwise.ca).
- 50 Larger-than-life concerts in Rogers Arena. This month, the arena hosts Britney Spears (Jul. 1; page 74), New Kids on the Block and Backstreet Boys (Jul. 9 and 10; page 74), Katy Perry (Jul. 19; page 74), Kenny Chesney (Jul. 20; page 74) and Soundgarden (Jul. 29; page 74).
- 51 Living in a rainforest. Sure it's wet, but the undeniable upside is the lush green beauty.
- 52 Critical Mass. On the last Friday of each month, rain or shine, hundreds of cyclists reclaim city streets en masse (www.vancouvercm.blogspot.com).
- 53 Bee Bop, the smiling mascot for the Vancouver Aquarium (page 77).

- 54 The fact that the whole city (the whole province, really) is 420-friendly.
- 55 Married musicians Diana Krall and Elvis Costello, who own a home here. Other famous residents over the years: Jimi Hendrix, Bob Geldof, and too-cute-for-words couple Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell.
- 56 Quatchi, Miga, Sumi and Mukmuk. Though the 2010 Winter Games ended 16 months ago, our adoration of the Olympic and Paralympic mascots lives on.
- 57 The two kitty-corner Starbucks (page 101) at Robson and Thurlow (Map 1: B5), featured in the movie *Best in Show*.
- 58 Spending a lazy Saturday or Sunday morning wandering through a farmers' market (page 31).
- 59 Captain George Vancouver. Our fine city—along with Vancouver Island and Vancouver, Washington—is named after this officer of the British Royal Navy, who explored and charted this region in the 1700s.
- 60 Science World at Telus World of Science (page 77). Who knew learning could be so much fun?
- 61 Courting Lady Luck at the slot machines in Edgewater Casino (page 83), right down on the waterfront.
- 62 The colourful array of umbrellas on every rainy day. A savvy Vancouverite always packs both an umbrella and sunglasses.



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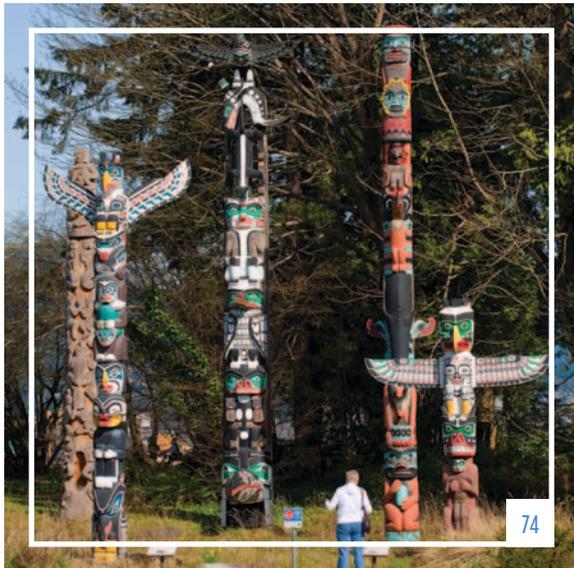
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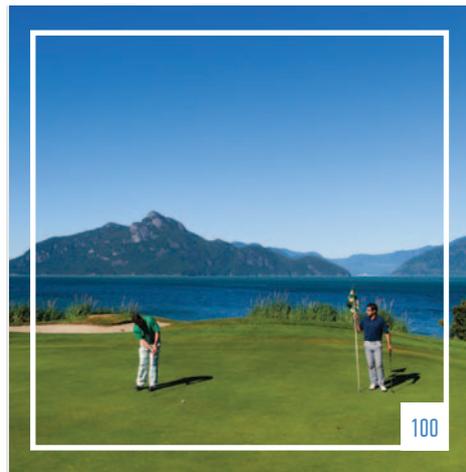
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- 63 Flying a kite in Vanier Park (page 80) on a sunny, windy day.
- 64 The friendly residents.
- 65 Bard on the Beach (page 75), which mounts four Shakespeare plays under tents every summer.
- 66 The University of British Columbia. Spend a morning wandering around the lush campus, then check out the blue whale skeleton in the Beaty Biodiversity Museum (page 78).
- 67 Shopping at Holt Renfrew (page 33).
- 68 Bike lanes downtown, which make getting around on two wheels just as convenient as getting around on four.
- 69 Spiked milkshakes at Society (page 98). Who could have guessed ice cream and alcohol go together so well?
- 70 The adorable otters at the Vancouver Aquarium (page 77).
- 71 Douglas Coupland's 8-m- (25-ft-) tall *Digital Orca*, which looks like it was built out of giant Lego blocks. Folks love to pose for photos beside this eye-catching art installation outside the Vancouver Convention Centre.
- 72 Browsing for art and antiques on South Granville (page E4).
- 73 Ross Rebagliati. In 1998, the easy-going Vancouver boy won the first-ever Olympic gold medal for snowboarding.
- 74 Totem poles.



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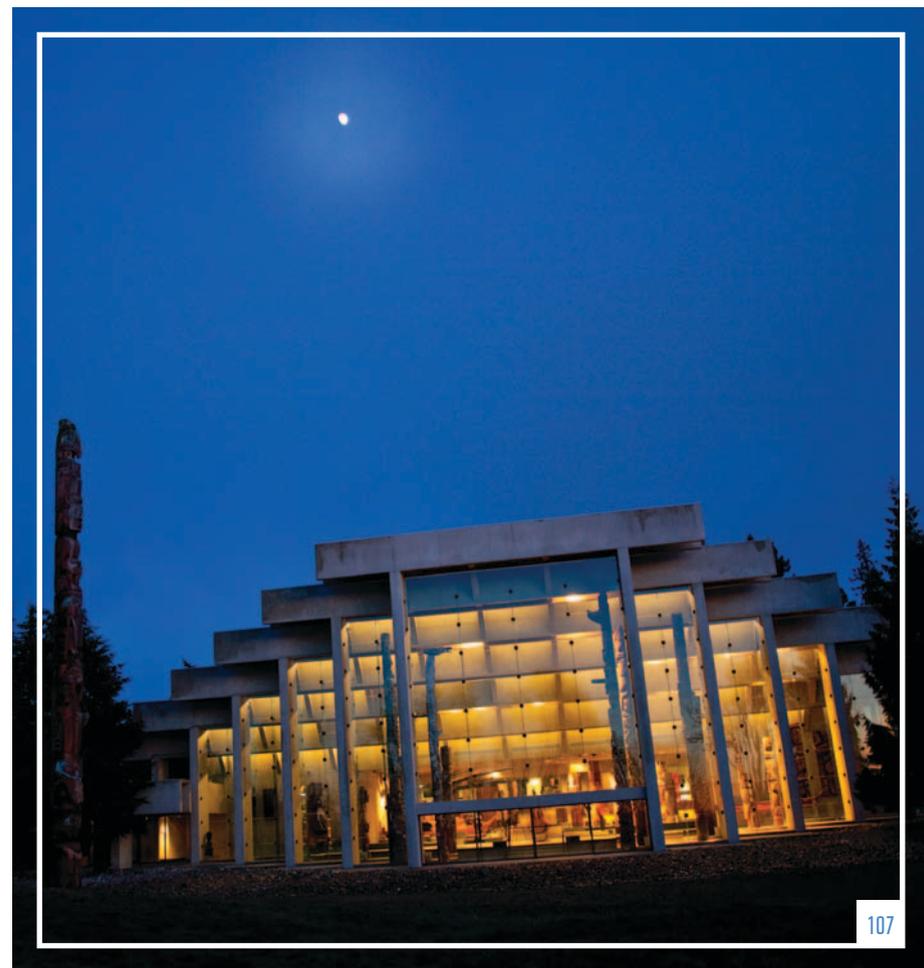
- 75 Travelling to Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands or the Sunshine Coast with BC Ferries (page E4).
- 76 Shoes by John Fluevog (page 34). The local designer creates unique soles for unique souls.
- 77 Raymond Burr. It's a fact: Perry Mason was born here, in New Westminster. Case closed.
- 78 Greenpeace. The environmental organization started in Vancouver in 1971, further contributing to our hippie-dippie reputation.
- 79 The Art Deco details of the Marine Building (Map 1: B5).
- 80 Taking in the scenery on a 12-minute "cruise" to the North Shore via the SeaBus (page E5).
- 81 Jack Poole. The Vancouver businessman was responsible for bringing the 2010 Winter Games here. To honour his memory, the Olympic cauldron sits in Jack Poole Plaza.
- 82 Munching on Triple O burgers at White Spot (page 98).
- 83 Expo '86. This five-month-long world exposition really put Vancouver on the map.
- 84 Working up a sweat in the Richmond Olympic Oval (page 77).
- 85 Emily Carr University. Located on Granville Island, it's named after the beloved West Coast painter and writer.
- 86 The exquisite art collection at Cactus Club Cafe (page 96). Admire works by Warhol, Basquiat and Sir Anthony Hopkins while sampling "Iron Chef" Rob Feenie's eclectic fare.
- 87 Vancouver International Airport, which keeps racking up accolades: for the second year in a row, YVR has been named North America's best airport by the 2011 Skytrax World Airport Awards.
- 88 *The 100-Mile Diet: A Year of Local Eating* by Vancouverites Alisa Smith and J.B. MacKinnon. After reading it, you'll never look at the choices on your dinner plate the same way again.
- 89 Joshua Jackson. Born in Vancouver, the star of *Dawson's Creek* has spent much time here recently, filming the addictively watchable sci-fi TV series *Fringe*. (Or is it really Joshua Jackson's doppelganger from a parallel dimension...?)
- 90 Shopping for fresh produce and seafood in the public market on Granville Island (page E2).



- 91 Celebrity spotting. See someone who looks like Reese Witherspoon? It most likely is Reese Witherspoon. (She was in town recently, filming *This Means War*.)
- 92 Michael Bublé. Born in Burnaby, the debonair jazz and swing crooner keeps scooping up Grammy and Juno awards.
- 93 Passing through Millennium Gate to all the exotic sights and smells of Chinatown (page E1).
- 94 The fact that, unlike in many major cities, no freeways run through downtown.
- 95 Watching toe-tapping musicals under the setting sun at Theatre Under the Stars (page 76) in Stanley Park.
- 96 Sushi.
- 97 Riding on False Creek Ferries (page E4) or Aquabus Ferries (page E4) and checking out the charming houseboats in False Creek.

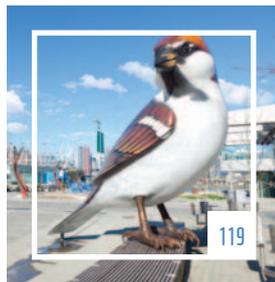
- 98 Sanctioned graffiti areas. Why try to stop graffiti when so much of the artwork is absolutely stunning?
- 99 All the neon signs lining Granville Street.
- 100 The cliché that's true: you can indeed ski, sail and golf all on the same day here. Golfing and sailing are year-round activities, and even in July you can ski Blackcomb Mountain's Horstman Glacier.
- 101 Eco-friendly West Coast fare at Bishop's (page 114) and Raincity Grill (page 114).
- 102 Spending a leisurely afternoon meandering through the Vancouver Art Gallery (page 46).
- 103 Lions Gate Bridge. This often-photographed suspension bridge, which links downtown to the North Shore, was built by the Guinness family back in 1937. Yes, *that* Guinness family, of Irish beer fame.

- 104 The Eye of the Wind. Scaredy-cats and acrophobics avoid it, but everyone else loves this wind turbine on Grouse Mountain (page 82). Ascend to the pod suspended beneath the turbine's massive blades, and your breath is taken away by the sweeping 360-degree views.
- 105 Coffee culture.
- 106 Ryan Reynolds. Born in Vancouver, the star of *Green Lantern* and *The Proposal* was named *People* magazine's "sexiest man alive" for 2010.
- 107 Learning about First Nations culture at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC (page 46).
- 108 The seawall.
- 109 The cement factory on Granville Island—which reminds visitors of the area's roots as an industrial zone. Keep an eye out for cement trucks decorated as a strawberry and as a bundle of asparagus.





- 110 The tranquillity of Lost Lagoon in Stanley Park.
- 111 Exploring Gastown (page E2), the oldest part of Vancouver.
- 112 The quantity (and quality!) of food carts on city streets.
- 113 Breathtaking views from the top of the Vancouver Lookout at Harbour Centre (page 78).
- 114 Doing yoga on the beach. It's a cliché, but we love it anyway.
- 115 Glass. Author Douglas Coupland gave Vancouver the nickname "City of Glass," thanks to all the glass condominium towers dominating the city's skyline.
- 116 Watching dragon boats glide along False Creek.
- 117 Arthur Erickson. The celebrated architect and urban planner was born in Vancouver. His designs include Simon



- Fraser University, Robson Square and the Museum of Anthropology at UBC.
- 118 Seth Rogen. The *Knocked Up* star, along with his friend Evan Goldberg, wrote the movie *Superbad* about attending Vancouver's Point Grey Secondary School.
- 119 Giant public art outdoors all around the city.
- 120 Fleece. It's pretty much every Vancouverite's fabric of choice.
- 121 Lining up at Vij's (page 104) for lamb "popsicles." No reservations, but worth the wait. Rumour has it that actor Harrison Ford had to stand in line just like the rest of us.
- 122 Michael J. Fox. Best known as the star of *Family Ties*, *Spin City* and the *Back to the Future* movies, the local actor

- and author is also an activist for Parkinson's disease research. He was diagnosed with the disease in 1991.
- 123 The central branch of the Vancouver Public Library (page 78), right downtown. Reminiscent of the Roman Coliseum, this striking building often appears in movies and TV shows.
- 124 Living in an earthquake zone. It makes every day an adventure.
- 125 The fact that it's impossible to take a bad photograph here. Just point your camera at all that natural beauty and click.

Did we miss one of your favourite things about Vancouver? Let us know at www.where.ca/vancouver and we may print your suggestion in an upcoming issue. [W](#)



the drive

The 22 blocks of Commercial Drive from Venables to East 13th are home to 329 unique shops and restaurants. With most of them owner-operated, single-locations you'll savour dishes and discover treasures you won't find anywhere else in the city. thedrive.ca



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