

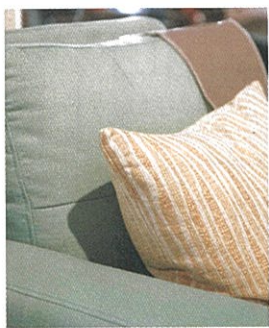
Shops

VANCOUVER'S GREATEST AND LATEST RETAILERS

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LEON'S FURNITURE

Despite the fact that a recent marketing campaign sees shoppers referring to this 110-year-old family-owned Canadian furniture company with a fancy French accent, we think that **Leon's** is chic enough to pronounce exactly as is. Proof: its new store in Coquitlam (a quick rip up the highway from Vancouver) is bursting with delights ... and we're not just talking about the stunning collection of trendy, top-quality home furnishings, accessories and appliances. The space (a relatively small one for the cross-country brand, clocking in at just 15,000 square feet) boasts tech features to make the furniture-shopping experience as smooth and seamless (not to mention enjoyable) as possible. An 11-foot video wall at the entrance allows customers to view Leon's full roster in larger-than-life style, while XL tablets and smart e-tags throughout the bright and sunny store provide even more info (and reduce paper waste, to boot). And we haven't even mentioned the sales reps: dazzlingly knowledgeable in product and design and possessing a "we'll do anything to make you happy" attitude. Don't miss the "vertical" chair gallery (it takes wall art to a whole new level) and be sure to check Leon's website on your iPhone for an augmented reality experience that makes furnishing your home a beautiful breeze! 1395 United Blvd., Coquitlam, 236-428-6812. Leons.ca NOA NICHOL



REINVENTING OAKRIDGE

Any mall that's been going strong since the 1950s is definitely overdue for a facelift, but **Oakridge Centre** is going a lot further than that. Work is underway on the shopping centre's complete transformation into a community hub by 2026 (don't panic: the mall is still very much open for business in the meantime). A new civic centre will feature Vancouver's second-largest library, a community centre, a seniors' centre and a day care. **Goh Ballet** is moving in, complete with an arts academy and a live-performance venue. A biodiverse nine-acre park will be abuzz with people walking, running and playing, enjoying picnics and outdoor concerts under the canopy of a thousand new trees. The 2,600 homes being built include 290 units of market-rental housing and another 290 below market value. And what about the shopping that Oakridge is best known for? Envision luxury brands galore, flagship stores and exclusive retailers from around the planet, all enticing shoppers to explore a million square feet of retail space. And the food! In addition to its expansive food-and-bev space, the transformed Oakridge will tempt foodies with farmers' markets, cooking classes, a rooftop garden and al-fresco dining in the park. The year 2026 can't come soon enough. 650 W. 41st Ave., 604-261-2511. Oakridgecentre.com SHERI RADFORD