



## BELLINGHAM BAY



# Bellingham, Washington

Arts and attractions rise to new heights in B'ham | **By Leslie Forsberg**

▶ On our way to Bellingham Cider Co. in the former Cascade Laundry building, my daughter and I sidestepped actors rehearsing at the Maritime Heritage Park amphitheater. Over a remarkable hyper-local dinner, I marveled at how Bellingham has transformed from a laid-back college town known for its hippie history and outdoorsy vibe into a place where you can dine at sophisticated restaurants, immerse yourself in the arts, explore newly reclaimed waterfront, hike or bike on a burgeoning network of trails and enjoy sunset views over Bellingham Bay from gorgeous parks. Even more exciting — all this is just a start.

## ACID BALL AT WAYPOINT PARK



## REWARDING RENEWALS

A historic industrial piece reincarnated as art is swiftly becoming a landmark in Bellingham's new Waypoint Park on Whatcom Creek. The spherical Waypoint sculpture, affectionately called the Acid Ball by locals, was a digester at the pulp mill that occupied this site for nearly a century.

Today it overlooks a new 1.5-acre park with restored beach, a playground and the renovated Granary Building. A yoga studio has already opened in this striking, historic building, which will have a ground-floor food hall with local companies Good to Go Meat Pies and Artizem, a meadery, signed up to be among the first tenants (check online for updates before you go). >>>



**THE GRANARY**

A few blocks from the Granary, Hotel Leo opened this year in the historic 1929 building that was originally the city's grand hotel. Renovations revealed elegant terrazzo floors, adding to the Moorish tilework and a vast, chandeliered ballroom. The project includes apartments, 40 hotel rooms, a restaurant and gathering spaces.

**WHATCOM MUSEUM**



**ARTS INCUBATORS**

More than cider is fermenting in the renovated Cascade Laundry building.

Ideas bubble up to the surface regularly at Sylvania Center for the Arts, which opened a mainstage and lobby art gallery last year supplementing its smaller studio theater. The play whose set we walked through, "Briseis" (based on "The Iliad"), was written by the center's artistic director, Glenn Hergenbahn-Zhao. Nearly all of the works produced at Sylvania are original — just

one illustration of the immense artistic talent in this arts-fueled town.

B'ham's historic Mount Baker Theatre remains a key arts influencer, drawing regional and national talent, and the Whatcom Museum's spectacular Lightcatcher building is home to exceptional exhibitions.

But the newest arts entrant is awe-inspiring in both its brilliance and its lovely forested setting. Sculpture Woods, a 14.5-acre park on nearby Lummi Island, features larger-than-life, myth-inspired bronzes by sculptor Ann Morris. Gifted to Western Washington University, the site is open to the public the first Saturday of each month.

**SIPS, SAVORIES AND SWEETS**

With 14 breweries, Bellingham's suds scene is hopping, but some are taking it to the next level.

Twin Sisters Brewing Co. opened last year with a huge restaurant and extensive outdoor spaces that draw families. And Bellingham Cider Co., an eco-conscious cidery and restaurant, features upscale bistro fare in a chic space with apple-box lighting fixtures. The restaurant is 100 percent solar, gets kale for its salads from a backyard farm just blocks away, and donates its used cooking oil to a local farmer who uses it as biofuel for his machinery and sells vegetables back to the restaurant.

Among notable new dining options, Saltine yields refined and memorable New American cuisine in a contemporary space with crisp design details. The owners are Craig Serbousek — who operated Crow and Betty restaurants in Seattle before moving north — and his wife, Valerie Markus.

Evolve Chocolate + Cafe, newly installed inside Fairhaven's Village Books, offers creative meals with complex flavors and overlooks Fairhaven Village Green. With a no-waste kitchen and monthly book readings featuring drinks and dishes inspired by characters, Evolve is a community favorite.

Fairhaven's Iron Rooster Bakery & Café rules the roost when it comes to European-inspired pastries. Their Mama Hen's Nest, made from croissant dough and pastry cream, is a delight — one of many new treats and renovated treasures — found today in Bellingham. ❶

**VILLAGE BOOKS, FAIRHAVEN**



PHOTOS TOP TO BOTTOM: NICHOLAS GRAVES, BENJAMIN BENSCHNEIDER, BEAU GAUGHAN