



Vancouver Waterfront: Washington's Newest Tasting-Room Hub

By **Northwest Travel Staff** - 11/07/2022



by Carol Pucci

The [Vancouver](#) waterfront along the north bank of the Columbia river thrived with industry in the late 1800s. Think sawmills, shipyards and, until 2006, a Boise Cascade paper mill.

Fast forward to post-pandemic 2022 where nine wine tasting rooms, a tequila bar, martini bar, whiskey bar, two brew pubs, a coffee roaster and milkshake bar surround offices, residences,

two hotels and restaurants fronting on a riverside walkway Fodor's Travel last year named one of the nation's 15 best.

Open-air patios with heaters and living-room-style sofas invite lounging outdoors year-round, while granite benches, play areas and fountains flank a half-mile paved promenade and the Grant Street Pier, an overlook suspended 90 feet over the river.

Interest by Washington wineries in drawing visitors from across the river in Oregon launched the growing food and beverage scene, says developer Barry Cain, who leads the Waterfront Vancouver project for Gramor Development.



Maryhill Winery, located near the Maryhill Museum in Goldendale, opened the first and largest tasting room, a 5,000-square-foot space overlooking the river with a menu of gourmet small plates, their broad selection of wines and an elegant antique back bar.

Above Maryhill is Oregon's Willamette Valley Vineyards' tasting room, with indoor and outdoor fireplaces, booths shaped like wine barrels, a three-course, fixed-price tasting menu and the chance for customers to play winemaker for a day by customizing their own blends.

"We'd been looking for some time to build out a tasting room and restaurant in Washington State," says development director Carissa Cook. "We considered other locations, but when we saw all the energy and the people and families walking around and enjoying the views, this spot very quickly rose to the top of our list."

Smaller wineries have carved out more intimate niches. There's Woodinville's Brian Carter Cellars with a dog-friendly patio and a menu of flatbreads, salads and sweets matched to a rotating tasting lineup. At Yakima Valley's Airfield Estates photos of World War II flight crews decorate the restroom walls, evoking a time when the family ranch was used as a training school for pilots.

The Grant Street Pier, designed by artist Larry Kirkland to evoke the billow of a passing sailboat, is the focal point for several flagship restaurants. Dosalas Latin Kitchen and Tequila bar offers weekday happy hours and tequila pairing dinners in a second-story dining room with sweeping river views. Next door, Twig's Bistro and Martini Bar mixes 16 signature martinis.

"We have the southern exposure," says Cain. "So even when the weather's not the best, it can be very nice when the sun sets."

For beer lovers, there's the 6,000-square-foot Waterfront Tap House above Twig's, and the smaller Ruse Brewing Crust Collective where craft beers brewed in Portland's Brooklyn district are served in a family-friendly taproom along with Detroit-style pizzas.

Almost everyone offers non-alcoholic alternatives. At Ruse, there's Mexican Coke and Topo Chico sparkling water. Kafiex Roasters' Gastro Cafe offers morning pastries, and features a "slow bar" where coffee is brewed siphon-style in glass pots heated by glowing red halogen lights.

Popular, even on chilly days, is the Yard Milkshake Bar. The house specialty is a \$20 ice cream confection packed into a pint jar (jar included).

Go to visitvancouverwa.com to plan your fun at the Vancouver Waterfront.