



Granville Island

Granville Island: Secret Service

Weave through the curb-free streets of Granville Island, over rail tracks from decades gone by, and poke your head into the once-empty sheds to discover studios, stages, and galleries. Keep your camera ready. Granville Island is the best place to capture the diversity of Vancouver. Around every corner lurks an exciting photo opportunity, from the brilliantly-coloured corrugated factories to moored yachts and fishing boats that ring the island, to the views of all three downtown bridges, to working artists.

Ocean Art Works is one such place where visitors can observe art in progress. Under the covered space of rough-hewn cedar timbers in the style of a First Nations carving shed or longhouse, you might find an artist carving a canoe or a totem pole. If it's Chinese New Year, you might experience Chinese dragon dancing.

At the other end of the island, the Granville Island Hotel has been touted as a secret hideaway. The boutique hotel has been everything from a "boatel" to a 1980s yuppie bar. Now, the 82-room hotel is known for its dreamy waterfront setting, award-winning in-house brewery, marble floors, Persian rugs, beamed ceilings, and plush soaker tubs. Their Dockside Restaurant was voted the best patio in Vancouver.

Some Vancouver residents have taken to living on the water instead of just looking at it. Sea Village is Granville Island's aquatic cul-de-sac with thirteen floating homes, each one charming.

Next door to the houseboat community is the Emily Carr University of Art + Design, the province's leading educational institution for artists. To the right of the main entrance is the Charles H. Scott Gallery, an internationally recognized art gallery that showcases progressive work from new generations of artists. Located within the gallery, Read Books, an award-winning bookstore, stocks an impressive array of artist's monographs and editions, magazines, critical theory, exhibition catalogues, and textbooks.

Keep a look out for Granville Eyeland, where former owner, German-born Klaus Sëbok has hand-crafted lenses for Robin Williams and Elton John. After more than four decades of making eyeglasses from wood, horn, gold and silver, Sëbok retired. Sara Moshurchak, the current owner, carries some name brand frames, but most of the designs are by Sëbok and other Granville Eyeland artisans.

Nestled between a goldsmith and a potter is the home of Canada's first sake winery, Artisan Sake Maker. Sake maker Masa Shiroki brews three handcrafted sakes from top-of-the-line Japanese sakamai (rice), then hand-presses and hand-bottles the liquid gold.

Edie Hats is one of twenty-four unique shops in the Net Loft. Tucked among the hats and gloves is a gorgeous selection of hand-embroidered silk shawls from Spain. Edie imports these Mantons de Manila directly from Seville.

At the sea-oriented Maritime Market, boaters can build their dream boat, buy or sell their yacht, charter a fishing boat, rent a kayak, take a sailing lesson, or sign up for scuba diving lessons.



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During the sixty days of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and Paralympics, a modern streetcar will operate free of charge along the "Olympic Line", a rebuilt stretch for the new trains between Granville Island and the Olympic Village.

The Aquabus and Granville Island Ferries, friendly fleets of little bum boats, shuttle people around False Creek every fifteen minutes all day. Set to coincide with the 2010 Olympics, Aquabus is introducing two new thirty-passenger vessels and the use of high-tech submersible cameras and special LED screens to bring the secrets of the underwater world around Granville Island to the surface.