



SEATTLE

NOBLE NEIGHBORHOOD

Queen Anne offers majestic views and impressive variety

By Janis Segress

» It's a royal Queen Anne day—with cloud art ornamenting blue skies and the sun bestowing golden warmth on grateful faces. It's a day to embrace the outdoors in my home neighborhood, just north of downtown Seattle, so I grab the 11x17 *Map of the (Oft) Pedestrian Public Stairs of Queen Anne Hill* and head for my favorite of our community's 120 public stairways: the Comstock Grande Dame. The map, which folds to pocket size, was created by Queen Anne resident and architect Thomas Horton and the Queen Anne Historical Society.

Constructed in 1909, the Comstock has four sets of concrete stairs—for a total of 85—with three rest-stop landings before the top. The stairway also has a serpentine design and many tree branches above and around it, leading to its reputation as a great place for couples to share a kiss.

From the third landing, I look southwest to

the peaceful scene of nearby Elliott Bay, and west to see part of the spectacular Olympic Mountains. When I get to the top of the stairway, I devote a quarter hour to drinking in the water and mountain scene.

These views are possible because the charming neighborhood of Queen Anne includes a hilltop that's 456 feet in elevation, a feature that has led to the designations of “Lower Queen Anne” and “Upper Queen Anne.”

Seattle Center, with its iconic Space Needle, is at the south base of Lower Queen Anne, while historical structures, along with boutique shops and excellent restaurants, are hallmarks farther north in Upper Queen Anne. The neighborhood's main street, Queen Anne Avenue North, running south to north, connects the lower and upper sections of our community.

After visiting downtown Seattle, I often walk



Kerry Park, on West Highland Drive in the Queen Anne neighborhood, is one of Seattle's top viewpoints and photo spots. From the upper section of the park, you can see downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, The Seattle Great Wheel, Elliott Bay, cargo ships, sailboats, ferries and, in clear weather, Mount Rainier. Sunset and nighttime photos are particularly popular. The *Changing Form* geometric steel sculpture (shown above), is often used to frame photos. The park's lower section has a basketball court and a play area (seattle.gov/parks). —J.S.

HERE & NOW »

through the Seattle Center campus, created for the 1962 World's Fair, on my way to the intersection of Roy Street and Queen Anne Avenue North, from which I stroll the avenue up the hill. I indulge in many pauses along the way, stopping and turning to face the ever-widening panorama of downtown Seattle and Puget Sound.

Part of Queen Anne Avenue North is sometimes called “the Counterbalance” because in the early 1900s, a system was installed with counterweights to help pull electric streetcars up the hill and to slow the streetcars as they traveled down the hill. The system prompted further development of homes and businesses at the crest of the hill. The neighborhood was much desired for its gorgeous views as well as its convenience to downtown. And although the streetcars quit running in 1940, Queen Anne remains one of the most desirable parts of Seattle.

One of my favorite Queen Anne activities is visiting the campus of my alma mater, Seattle Pacific University, founded in 1891. The campus grounds, located near the Lake Washington Ship Canal, are open to the public, and the Tiffany Loop pedestrian walkway winds around a picturesque green-lawn gathering space—the perfect place to read, picnic or nap under the huge canopies of trees such as big-leaf maples, some of which were planted by the university's founders more than a century ago.

The university began as a seminary just 40 years after the first group of pioneer settlers—the Denny Party—arrived in what is now the city of Seattle, joining Native inhabitants who had long been in the region. Denny Party members David Denny and Louisa Boren were among the first residents of what later became known as the Queen Anne area.

David and Louisa, who got married in 1853, built their first home, a log cabin, most commonly believed to have been at the foot of Denny Way, near Western Avenue, on a bluff overlooking Elliott Bay, according to the Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI).

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SOME QUEEN ANNE FAVORITES

- **Betty Restaurant & Bar** (eatatbetty.com): Seasonal ingredients are used in many of the restaurant's bistro-style comfort-food dishes.
- **Blue Highway Games** (bluehighwaygames.com): This locally owned independent game store has classic board and card games, and hosts special events such as learn-to-play gatherings and game-night meetups.
- **Bounty Kitchen** (bountykitchenseattle.com): Diners enjoy imaginative salads, and food bowls featuring layers that represent cooking techniques such as pickling, fermenting, roasting and grilling, as well as including raw ingredients.
- **Counterbalance Park: An Urban Oasis** (seattle.gov/parks): An evening light show with changing colors (below)



enlivens concrete walls in this pocket park at the corner of West Roy Street and Queen Anne Avenue North. Metal tables and chairs provide a place to sip hot or cold drinks from nearby coffee shops such as Caffe Ladro, which has its own coffee-roasting division.

- **Eden Hill** (edenhillrestaurant.com): This cozy restaurant, owned by a neigh-

borhood husband and wife, is known for the creativity and quality of its varied and ever-changing menu, which includes a 15- to 20-course Grand Tasting option (advance reservation and payment required). Chef/co-owner Maximilian Petty was a 2016, 2017 and 2018 James Beard Rising Star Chef semifinalist.

■ **Hilltop Ale House** (seattlealehouses.com/hilltop): All the food is prepared on the grill here, while the beers are from craft breweries in Western Washington and other parts of the country.

■ **How to Cook a Wolf** (ethanstowell-restaurants.com): The name of this restaurant (shown above), owned by Seattle chef Ethan Stowell, whose parents live in Queen Anne, pays tribute to a book by renowned food writer M.F.K. Fisher (1908–1992). Stowell's Italian small plates feature simple ingredients innovatively prepared.

■ **Meadow** (meadowseattle.com): Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the Meadow boutique offers a hand-curated selection of stylish apparel, accessories, gifts and home decor.

■ **Mezcaleria Oaxaca** (mezcaleriaoaxaca.com): In 2013, *Travel + Leisure* listed this as one of the best Mexican restaurants in the United States. Dishes range from *cabrito* (goat) to *Caldo de Mariscos* (spicy seafood stew).

■ **Queen Anne Community Center** (seattle.gov/parks): A gym, game room, weight room, pottery room, kitchen, outdoor children's play area and athletic fields, along with numerous programs and special events, have made this a popular gathering place. —J.S.

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The site was part of David's land claim, which included the land on which Seattle Center now sits.

The area began to be called Queen Anne in the 1880s. Its "majesty" came from the ornate "Queen Anne" architectural style of some of the houses on the hill, with features such as steep-pitched roofs, towers, domes, bay windows and large, often wrap-around porches. Today, however, only a few Queen Anne-style homes remain.

Neighborhood attractions include shops such as Stuhlbergs home-accessories and Simple & Just clothing and accessories, both known for their unique gifts. My go-to bakeries include Le Rêve, where my favorite pastry is the *chausson aux pommes* (apple turnover), while at Koku Cafe + Market, my must-have is the AmaLatte, a delicious mix of coffee, amazake and milk.

Our community also has treasures such as The Seattle Public Library system's 1914 Queen Anne Branch, in the Late Tudor Revival architectural style; the 1930 Bethany Presbyterian Church building, known for its red bricks and stained glass; and the City of Seattle's 1956 Parsons Gardens green space, with lovely plants such as rhododendrons and hydrangeas.

In 2013, my love for my neighborhood inspired me, along with my like-minded business partners, Judy and Krijn de Jonge, bolstered by an enthusiastic team of great bookseller employees, to open the Queen Anne Book Company, which continued a 25-year tradition of an independent bookstore presence in Queen Anne.

It is our daily joy to offer our space for personal connection through conversation around books, and we love greeting locals and visitors alike at author readings and other events. It is also an honor, and a gift, for us to be part of this small neighborhood in a big city—a neighborhood that welcomes all. ✨

Janis Segress, a poet and co-owner of Queen Anne Book Company, has dreamed since childhood of having her own bookstore.