



NEON (K)NIGHT RIDE (THE BARRARD)

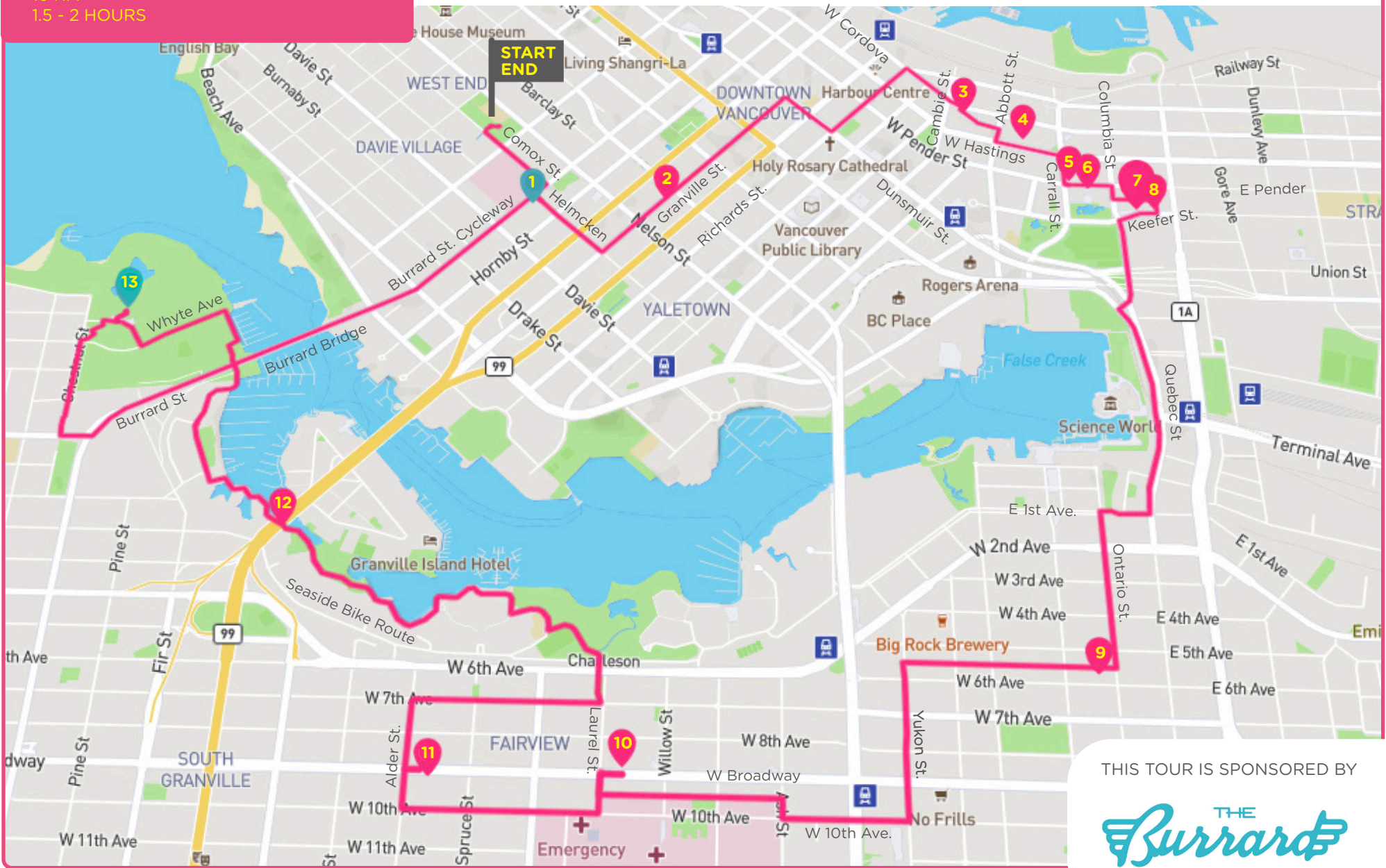
Sponsored by The Burrard

16 KM
1.5 - 2 HOURS

VANCOUVER BIENNALE VANCOUVER BIENNALE



PRESENTED BY



THIS TOUR IS SPONSORED BY





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ABOUT THE ROUTE

This cycling tour will have you riding through some of Vancouver's Downtown core, and then into Chinatown and Mount Pleasant. The tour has a focus on neon signage, which has been a somewhat controversial subject in Vancouver since neon's initial popularity in the early 1950s. Hop on your bike and get ready to light up the town!

The Neon (K)Night Ride is brought to you by The Burrard, the perfect downtown Vancouver hotel to base yourself at while exploring the city. Locally-owned and independent, The Burrard is a converted Vancouver motor hotel from 1956, exuding character from every joist, railing and sightline. And with extras like free WiFi, Nespresso machines in all 72 rooms, a lush palm tree-filled inner courtyard to lounge in, and free bike rentals, you'll stay inspired here, every time. Located at the corner of Burrard and Helmcken streets, The Burrard is right in the middle of everything you want to explore when you're in the city.

Don't forget to share your journey with us: tag us in your photos and social-media posts with #VanBiennale and @TheBurrard / #TheBurrard!

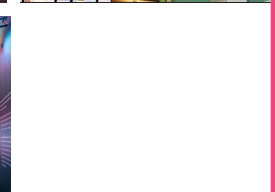
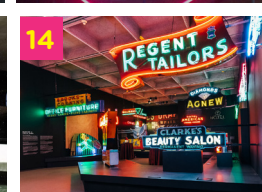
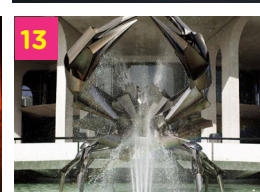
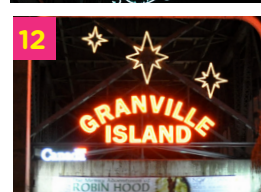
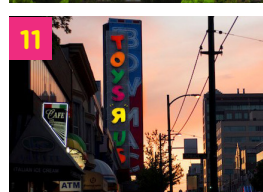
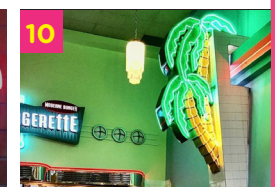
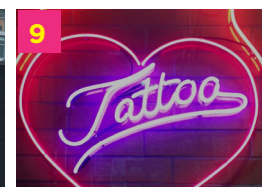
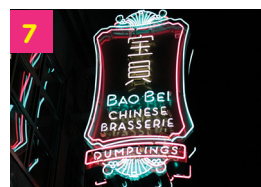
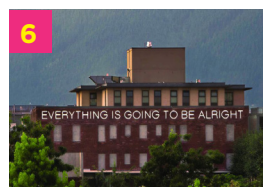
Bike Ride Safety

- Use bike lights and wear a helmet.
- Use designated bike lanes and routes, whenever possible.
- Ride at a leisurely pace and yield to people walking.
- When passing on the right, ring your bell or yell "ON UR LEFT"

Follow rules of the road. The Motor Vehicle Act and city by-laws apply to cyclists.

ROUTE STOPS

1	THE BARRARD	1100 Burrard St.
2	GRANVILLE STREET NEONS	918 Granville St.
3	WOODWARDS SIGN AT WOODWARD'S 43	333 Abbott St.
4	SAVE ON MEATS + POTLUCK CATERING	43 W Hastings St.
5	SAM KEE BUILDING (JACK CHOW INSURANCE)	1 E Pender St.
6	EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALRIGHT - MARTIN CREED	51 E Pender
7	BAO BEI CHINESE BRASSERIE	163 Keefer St.
8	let's heal the divide - TONI LATOUR	133 Keefer St.
9	SACRED HEART TATTOO	25 W 6th Ave.
10	MODERNE BURGER	4141 Dollarton Hwy
11	BOWMAC SIGN	1154 W Broadway
12	GRANVILLE ISLAND NEON SIGN	1602 Anderson St.
13	MUSEUM OF VANCOUVER	1100 Chestnut St.
14	NEON VANCOUVER UGLY VANCOUVER EXHIBIT	1100 Chestnut St.





#1 - THE BURRARD

When it originally opened as a “motor inn” back in 1956, The Burrard announced itself with a landmark neon sign right at the corner of Burrard and Helmcken. Back then, Vancouver was the neon capital of the world, with more than 19,000 of the signs lighting the city’s streets.

While the property itself has undergone renovations since then (including a full overhaul in 2011 to upgrade it to “hotel” status), it still maintains its mid-century modern charm, including the neon sign. Stretching out from the side of the building and forming a geometric star pattern with the paintwork, the sign’s structure and shape remain essentially unchanged from when the property opened, except for updating from “motor inn” to “hotel.”



#2 - GRANVILLE STREET NEONS

Granville Street was once populated with neon signs, many of which still exist today. Among them are the signs at the Vogue Theatre, Movieland Arcade, and Commodore Lanes.

The Vogue Theatre: This Art Deco/Modern building, originally intended as a movie house, is one of the last remaining theatres from Vancouver’s famed Theatre Row. Originally built in 1941, it has hosted innumerable festivals, concerts, and shows. In 1990, it was designated as a National Historic Site of Canada.

Movieland Arcade [18+] (just a couple of doors down): Movieland Arcade is truly like stepping into a time machine. An old-school arcade, it is known to be the last place in the world to watch 8-mm peepshows at a rate of \$0.25 per minute.

Although Movieland is temporarily closed, the neon sign and storefront serve as a reminder of a very different time.

The Commodore Lanes (just a couple doors past Adidas in the next block: 838 Granville Street): Having opened in 1930, Commodore Lanes is considered to be Canada’s oldest bowling alley. Upon entering, you’ll head down a set of stairs to enter the underground bowling area.

Did you know . . . that Commodore Lanes was one of the first bowling alleys that allowed women to play what was considered “a gentleman’s sport”?



#3 - WOODWARD'S SIGN AT WOODWARD'S 43

The Woodward's building was constructed in 1903 for the Woodward's Department Store. During that time, this area of Vancouver was the premiere shopping district and always full of city life. Woodward's pioneered the idea of "one-stop-shopping," as the store included a food floor (the supermarket was North America's largest supermarket), household items, men's and women's fashion, and even cheque cashing and travel bookings!

In 1944, the sign was originally erected atop a 25-metre replica of the Eiffel Tower. This sign now resides on the ground outside The Charles Bar, the original site of the Woodward's building.

In 2010, a replicate of the sign was created and installed atop the new Woodward's building.



#4 - SAVE ON MEATS + POTLUCK CATERING



Check out the signs at both Save On Meats (43 W Hastings St.) and, across the street, at Potluck Catering (30 W Hastings St.).

Save on Meats: What began as a full-service butcher shop in 1957 later acquired a lunch counter (housing a legendary cheeseburger) and a grocery store. The establishment quickly became a neighbourhood gathering place. The iconic flying pig neon sign, created by Wallace Neon's art director Frank Dunlap, was one of hundreds of neon signs lighting up Hastings Street. Now, it is one of the few that have survived the anti-neon campaigns of the 1970s.

Potluck Catering: Encompassing the definition of a social enterprise, Potluck Café has a mission to transform lives by creating jobs and providing healthy food for people living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. A registered charity, the Society owns and operates Potluck Café & Catering, which employs neighbourhood residents and invests a portion of operating revenue into the Society's ongoing programs.



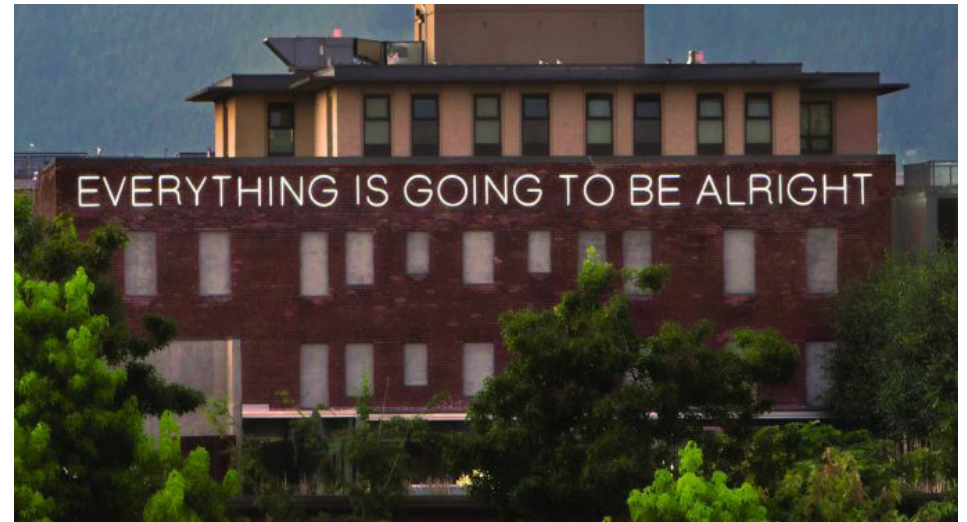
#5 - SAM KEE BUILDING (JACK CHOW INSURANCE)

Sam Kee Building
Architects Brown and Gillam
1913

At 4 feet, 11 inches wide, the Sam Kee building holds the Guinness World Record for being the “narrowest commercial building in the world.” Designed by architects Brown and Gillam, the building was constructed in 1913, after the original lot owed by the Sam Kee Company had been substantially narrowed by an expansion of Pender Street by the City of Vancouver. The owner of the Sam Kee Company was a wealthy merchant named Chang Toy, known in the Caucasian community as Sam Kee.

The building houses Jack Chow Insurance and serves customers at several walk-up windows.

As you pass, be sure to say hello to the goldfish in the window!



#6 - EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALRIGHT - MARTIN CREED

Everything Is Going To Be Alright
Martin Creed
2009

Standing at the entrance of David Lam Hall at the Chinese Cultural Centre and looking northward, try to catch a glimpse of Martin Creed’s *Everything Is Going To Be Alright* installation on the top of the Rennie Museum at the Wing Sang Building. Formally titled Work No. 851 (2008), this seventy-five-foot neon artwork offers viewers an optimistic sentiment, which has been especially poignant during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vancouver has a bit of a complex relationship with neon signage. At one point, Vancouver boasted the second largest number of neon signs in the world, and at another time, neon signs were essentially outlawed!

Today, neon is making a resurgence—from public art installations to restaurant and shop signage. Along Hastings Street you can also find some of the city’s historic neon signs, such as the Save on Meats sign. There’s also a replica of the iconic red W sitting on top of the Woodward’s development. (For you history buffs, the original W is displayed nearby in the public plaza.) If you’re a fan of neon, check out the Museum of Vancouver’s exhibition entitled Neon Vancouver – Ugly Vancouver (until spring 2022).



#7 - BAO BEI CHINESE BRASSERIE

This sign is a bit different: it's new!

The sign was a collaborative effort by the creative team at Glasfurd & Walker and Bao Bei's owner, Tannis Ling.

"There were a lot of neon signs before in Chinatown and I wanted to bring that back. . . . I always wanted the sign to say 'dumplings.' You know how the old signs used to say 'cocktails' or something with an arrow . . . you know . . . pointing at the restaurant."

- Tannis Ling



#8 - let's heal the divide - TONI LATOUR

let's heal the divide

Toni Latour

2020

Look up! *let's heal the divide* was originally installed on the façade of Vancouver Community College for the 2015-2017 Vancouver Biennale. It marked the physical and perceptual divisions between the Downtown Eastside, one of the most impoverished postal codes in Canada, and one of the wealthiest commercial and financial districts.

Reinstalled in December 2020, the artwork is now located in Vancouver's Chinatown, a neighbourhood confronted with gentrification, class inversion, and the threat of cultural displacement from urban developers and city rezoning.

From a broader perspective, the artwork also resonates beyond its physical surroundings. Globally, we have witnessed institutional and systemic racism and violence, intense political conflict, the rise of the Black Lives Matter and Me Too Movements, the fight to end targeted transgender violence and discrimination, the continued struggle for Indigenous rights and environmental justice, and of course, a worldwide pandemic.

What does *let's heal the divide* mean to you? How does it touch on your experience and in what ways do you think we can reconnect and repair? Take a photo or video sharing your thoughts on the subject, tag it with #VanBiennale so we see it!



#9 - SACRED HEART TATTOO

Amidst Vancouver's currently flourishing tattoo scene, Sacred Heart has the distinction of being one of the longest standing shops in town.

The neon sign, a heart on fire, is a great illustrative example of neon, and we are glad that Sacred Heart has been able to preserve it so well through multiple moves.



#10 - MODERNE BURGER

With a retro-esque aesthetic, including a fantastic palm-tree neon, Moderne Burger serves up burgers, fries, and shakes. The restaurant was formerly located in Kitsilano, and its storefront (including the palm tree) can be spotted in several movies and TV shows such as Legends of Tomorrow.

Did you know . . . that diners are thought to have originated from wagons serving lunch food late at night? Dubbed "night owls," the wagons evolved into restaurants catering to the working class and quickly developed a recognizable appearance for all to spot.



#11 - BOWMAC SIGN

The BowMac sign is a towering 29 metres high and includes 1,200 incandescent bulbs. It was installed in 1958 by the Bowell McLean (BowMac) car dealership, located at the time on a street considered to be Vancouver's Auto Row. The sign, meant to outshine any nearby competitors' signage, was the largest illuminated structure in Vancouver (other than the BC Electric Building downtown) and acknowledged as the largest freestanding sign in North America.

With its appearance and size, the sign has created controversy over the years.

For a blast from the past, check out the photos above to see what West Broadway and the Bowmac Dealership looked like!



#12 - GRANVILLE ISLAND NEON SIGN

The Granville Island neon sign provides a friendly welcome at the entrance to Vancouver's famous public market. Installed around 30 years ago, the sign was recently refurbished in 2020.

Granville Island has had many lives: a sandbar, then an industrial area, and eventually today's identity as a public market, which opened in 1979.



#13 - MUSEUM OF VANCOUVER

The Museum of Vancouver (MOV) connects Vancouverites to each other and connects the city to the world. An enthusiastic civic advocate, MOV is dedicated to encouraging a deeper understanding of Vancouver through stories, objects and shared experiences. MOV is an independent, non-profit organization that seeks partners to support the evolution of the Museum's visitor experience.

NEON VANCOUVER | UGLY VANCOUVER - EXHIBIT AT MOV

In the museum's exhibition titled Neon Vancouver | Ugly Vancouver, you'll enjoy the big city lights of Vancouver and catch a glimpse of the city from the 1950s (when the city boasted approximately 19,000 neon lights) through the 1970s.

The remarkable signs, some lit for the first time since they were rescued from the junk yard, are accompanied by the tale of how the city went through a war of aesthetics that resulted in a transition of how Vancouver imagines itself.



#14 - FINISH - NEON K(NIGHT) RIDE / THE BURRARD

That's it! We hope you found the Neon (K)Night Ride enLIGHTening and learned something new. If you snapped any fabulous photos or videos, we would love to see them! Share them using #VanBiennale and #TheBurrard.

Thanks to The Burrard for sponsoring this tour. Head on over to their website to save up to 30% on room rates this summer. Along with complimentary bike rentals, all guests also receive free BIKEnnale / WALKEnnale registration. So if you had fun exploring your route today, tell your family and friends!