



RED TRICYCLE

See Seattle from a Different Angle at the Remodeled Smith Tower

2016/09/08 | [Kristina Allen Moy](#)

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When looking for picturesque places to take out-of-towners, nothing beats the views from the Space Needle or Columbia Tower on a clear, sunny day. But Seattle's first skyscraper (and once the tallest building west of the Mississippi), has recently completed a two-year renovation and is winning families over with its new first-floor amenities, interactive history tour and rebranded 360-degree view observation deck. If you're ready to explore this local icon and see the Emerald City from a different angle, read on for the inside scoop.



photo: Kristina Moy

Gifts and Groceries and Ice Cream. Oh my!

Located on the street level (on the corner of Second Ave. & Yesler Way), Smith Tower Provisions is the new general store at the foot of the Smith Tower. This new-old store is outfitted with a nostalgic soda fountain that serves Full Tilt ice cream, a marbled deli counter featuring fresh salads and sandwiches, a gift shop with locally inspired and curated art, apparel and accessories, as well as fresh grab-and-go items like milk, cheese and bread and dry goods including candy, chocolate, sauces and savory snacks. You will also find a host of Smith Tower branded gifts, including typewriter-themed souvenirs—a nod to typewriter tycoon and building namesake Lyman Cornelius Smith.



photo: Kristina Moy

An Interactive History Tour

Once you've grabbed a coffee or an ice cream treat from Provisions, it's time to experience Seattle's rich history told through the eyes of the Smith Tower. *The Legends of Smith Tower* tour combines interesting facts and lore, through the past 100 years of the tower's existence, with bits of humor and intrigue, making it a great experience for any age.



photo: Kristina Moy

The building's new owners along with historians created the self-guided, interactive tour to educate kids and adults alike about the building's unique past. Visitors can immerse themselves into the roaring 1920s and beyond and peek into a time when Seattleites were coming to terms with the early prohibition and technology that would soon transform the city. During the 40-minute tour, you can explore the radio operations that took place in the Smith Tower and learn how they played into the bootlegging operation of Roy Olmstead; learn why the Smith Tower became a popular place for attorneys to set up shop; see how the Smith Tower in-house switchboard connected folks to the outside world; and learn how the original Chinese Room came to be on the 35th floor.



photo: Kristina Moy

A Journey to the Top

Once you've finished the ground level tour, you'll be ready to take your 40-second trip up to the 35th floor on a historic Otis elevator. These conductor operated elevators have the modern workings of today's elevators, but have retained their original copper and brass and design elements of the original elevators operated here over 100 years ago. Psst... only six passengers are allowed in the elevator along with the conductor, so if you have a big group be prepared to split up.



photo: Kristina Moy

An Open-Air Observation Deck

When you reach the 35th floor, you will find yourself immersed into the newly renovated and rebranded Smith Tower Observatory (formerly known as the Chinese Room). The rebranding has retained the charming details of the room, including its ornate ceiling tiles, carved wood Wishing Chair (which legend has it, brings marriage to unmarried women who sit in it) and stunning wrap-around, open-air viewing deck. You will also find more historic exhibits to explore and several spots to sit back and enjoy the view.



photo: Kristina Moy

A Speakeasy-Inspired Café & Bar

In addition to the stunning 360-degree views, this 35th floor hot spot is also home to Temperance Café and Bar. The speakeasy-inspired café and bar pays homage to the Smith Tower's rum-running roots and Chinese Room history, so you can expect to find Prohibition Era-inspired craft cocktails on the menu like the Rum Runner, made with rum, black tea, caramelized pineapple and coconut or the "Big Boy," named after lieutenant-turned-bootlegger Roy Olmstead; it's made with house bourbon, ginger beer and Rainier cherry. Light bites are also on the menu and you can probably guess... they're inspired by the roaring '20s, Prohibition and the tower's Asian influence. Menu items include freshly shucked oysters, salmon poke, banh mi sandwiches and other Asian small bites and sandwiches, as well as Chinese dumplings. The café and bar is open daily for breakfast, lunch and happy hour.

Smith Tower
506 Second Ave.
Seattle, Wa 98104
206-624-0414
Online: smithtower.com

Tickets:

The Legend of Smith Tower Tour: \$19.14/Adults; \$14/Child (5-12); \$17/Seniors (over 65) & Military; 4 & under Free

Straight Up: \$10/person; under 5 Free. Straight Up tickets are available every ten minutes beginning at 9 a.m., with ticket sales ending at 5:30 p.m.

Have you visited the newly remodeled Smith Tower? What was your favorite part? Tell us in the Comments below!

— Kristina Moy