



## X Marks the Spot

The arrival of chic 30-something professionals kicks Kirkland into gear

Clockwise from left: fizzy bath bombs at The Bath Bar; a whole lot of surfin' goin' on at Kahili Coffee; Simplicity Decor's hip home furnishings; coffee too good for to-go at Kahili Coffee; whip up a luxurious soak at The Bath Bar; the denim bar at Promesse; neighborhood newcomer Wilde Rover Irish pub and its generous offering of draft ales; designer togs at Promesse

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKE HIPPLE

**PICTURE PERFECT ON** the shores of Lake Washington, downtown Kirkland is a pedestrian-friendly village with all the makings of a quaint resort town. Summer is Kirkland's busiest season, when vacationers alight from boats and cars to throng the junction of Central Way and Lake Street near the water.

But Kirkland is attracting a more permanent following, too. Liberty Hanson, co-owner of home décor mecca Liberty 123 (123 Park Lane, Kirkland; 425.822.1232; liberty123.com), notes the community has changed since she opened her store five and a half years ago. "There's a younger, trendier crowd who wants the downtown [Seattle] feel without living downtown."

To keep up with the shifting demographic, a bevy of stylish restaurants and boutiques and a host of cultural attractions are popping up in the neighborhood. Throw in dramatic views of sunsets, skylines and mountains, and it's no wonder Kirkland has struck a chord with the generation formerly known as X.

### EAT AND DRINK

Eat your way around the globe, stopping first at novo-Andean Mixtura (148 Lake St. S, Kirkland; 425.803.3310; mixtura.biz) for (what else?) Peruvian-style mixturas, or appetizers, which range from fresh shellfish and finfish seviches to the more exotic anticucho corazon (beef heart skewers). At Wilde Rover (111 Central Way, Kirkland; 425.822.8940; wilderover.com), a newcomer to the downtown dining scene, you can dine on Irish delights such



as Guinness lamb stew or shepherd's pie in the Irish Writer's Room, lined with wainscoting and bookshelves that groan with Irish literature. For coffee made from beans caressed by tropical island breezes, **Kahili Coffee** (105 Lake St., Kirkland; 425.576.5600; [kahilicoffee.com](http://kahilicoffee.com)) is your spot. Pair your coffee—made with 100 percent Kona coffee beans—with Parisian Star bakery's Raspberry Tower, luscious chocolate mousse studded with fresh raspberries cloaked in chocolate. Hungry sailors can hop right off the boat and head to **The Slip** (80 Kirkland Ave., Kirkland; 425.739.0033), a casual family restaurant with adult appeal (yup, there's a full bar for the big kids). The Slip's two outdoor patios are hopping in summer when the restaurant's best seller, the peanut butter bacon burger, flies out of the kitchen.

●●● SHOP

The **Kirkland Wednesday Market** (10 a.m.—4 p.m.; Park Lane E, Kirkland; 425.893.8766; [KirklandWednesdayMarket.org](http://KirklandWednesdayMarket.org)) is a great

venue for fresh produce, artisan wares and eclectic gifts. At the other end of the shopping spectrum, year-old **Promesse** (128 Central Way, Kirkland; 425.828.4259; [shop-promesse.com](http://shop-promesse.com)) features edgy yet timeless attire and accessories by up-and-coming designers such as Malene Birger and Madelene Press, plus a denim bar piled with layers upon layers of blue jeans. Contemporary home décor and furnishings boutique **Simplicity Decor** (126 Park Lane, Kirkland; 425.803.0386; [simplicitydecor.com](http://simplicitydecor.com)) opened its doors barely six months ago. On the first level you'll find Marimekko bath products, Sitcom furniture and Robert Abbey lamps; but the second floor, dedicated to items imported from owner A. Liengboonlertchai's native Thailand, is where the treasure's at: chocolate-colored mango wood benches, knotty rattan chandeliers, a "leatheresque" palm-leaf side table and Thai silk "seahorse" lamps. Next, follow the bubbles to **The Bath Bar** (128 Park Lane, Kirkland; 425.822.9787), where body butter, bath whip, silky lotions and handmade soaps invite you to touch and smell.

●●● EXPLORE

"Lower-key and not as hectic" is how gallery owner Patricia Rovzar compares the Kirkland Art Gallery Walk (6–9 p.m.; 425.889.8212; [explorekirkland.com](http://explorekirkland.com)) to Pioneer Square's version. The second Thursday of the month, Kirkland's eight downtown galleries stay open until 9 p.m., often hosting exhibit openings and artist's receptions. The **Patricia Rovzar Gallery** (118 Central Way, Kirkland; 425.889.4627; [rovzargallery.com](http://rovzargallery.com)) will unveil Northwest artist Tyson Grumm's acrylic paintings on August 10. Nearby Marina Park offers a sandy beach and a public marina, plus a chance to enjoy by-the-lake entertainment during the **Concerts at Marina Park Pavilion series** (through August; 7 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday; 10 a.m. Wednesday; 425.587.3350; [ci.kirkland.wa.us](http://ci.kirkland.wa.us)). Bring your blanket and a picnic to the beach, and groove to sultry Latin favorites—the Alma Villegas Quintet on August 10—or take the kids to Captain Bogg & Salty for mermaid lullabies and pirate jigs on August 2. ●