



Tourists certainly seem to enjoy the reenacted tales from Canada's past at Storyform. Dina Goldstein photo.

## Gastown's a Blast for Locals, Too

BY MAUREEN NICHOLSON  
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**T**hough Gastown is almost Vancouver's oldest neighbourhood, it's still in transition. Recent changes include the opening of restaurant-friendly Storyform, increasing numbers of street-level dining, and the start of *Foodcity*, with parts of West Street looking like a fabricated scene from a film shoot. But look past the inflated fortunes reeked on by handballing and wide-eyed real-estate owners ("Look, don't it's Spoke Street with cars"), and there's much in Gastown for local folks to admire and enjoy.

### Best shop for foot fatalities

**Livestock**  
239 Abbott Street  
604-685-1433  
Street is a recent opening, this store has served as an adopted home for local and visiting shoe collectors, carrying as it does only the rarest (and priciest) of athletic kicks. How deep is the sneaker closet beneath? Hope enough to fawn a congregation of stalkers and hip-hopsters into rabid foot fetishes. The consumption habitable doesn't seem likely to end anytime soon, which should make the owners of Livestock very happy given its sales.

### Best fashion for collar-from-men

**Pigeon**  
227 Carrall Street  
604-679-6020  
If you're a male, you're into fashion, and you refuse to wear collared shirts, Pigeon's the place for you. With stock from both local and international designers, this handsome shop caters to the pervasive influence of hip-hop on one city's style. When hanging graffiti in art galleries always seemed sad, Pigeon proves that wearing those same images on a T-shirt is entirely appropriate, because it turns each new customer into a walking billboard for independent art.

### Best buttons of all sorts

**Button Button**  
622 West Cordova Street  
604-682-9867  
Owner Colleen Miller opened her "amusing little button shop" over five years ago. It now carries more than a million buttons in materials ranging from bone and antler to ivory and metal to enamel and porcelain. Miller is expected by *Sassy* with a current collection

of resin buttons made by artisan Gill Hagler. Unique in Canada, Button Button also supplies Native craftspiece with just what they need for their button business.

### Best transformation of parts into functional art

**Industrial Artifacts**  
404-874-7757  
www.IndustrialArtifacts.com/  
Designer-owner Ross MacMillan takes patterns once used in his family's foundry, Progressive Engineering, and from their crafts functional and barely household items, including mirrors, candle holders, vases, bookcases, and more. Affordable items in the showroom include picture frames (\$38 made from sticks once wind-bled by the Powell River Hockey Team) and candleholders (also \$35) based on patterns used to cast steel components for Vancouver Waterworks. More astute customers can select their own industrial artifact for customized transformation.

### Best sandwiches for locals and tourists alike

**Sally Tongue Urban Deli**  
213 Carrall Street  
604-931-2255  
http://www.ubandeli.com/main.html  
Open for about a year, this deli is run by the Heather family and located snugly beside their fish-restaurant. They in and you'll immediately recognize the shop's family atmosphere: The hubby's upstairs, regaling in the gallery with mother, and "Sean Heather" is regularly called on to check the deli food baskets under construction. The menu's best option is the design-your-own sandwich with preservative-free meats. For the locals, there's Extra bread delivered daily, and—especially for those longing for the old country—a well-stocked with deli items.

### Best history lesson held underground

**Storyform**  
142 Water Street  
604-687-8142  
www.storyform.com/  
In a series of underground theaters, Storyform offers reenacted tales from Canada's past. What's odd, though, is there's no significant retelling of the history of Gastown. Still, it's a brave venture. In its opening season and it's giving tourists more to do than bar, it, now, visit shops. They seem to like it. As for the locals, who know?

### Next-best history lesson held underground

**Shine**  
364 Water Street  
604-608-4321  
The fact that this subterranean nightclub is still the city's hottest is cause for either despair or admiration, or maybe a bit of both. Like so many clubs in Vancouver, Shine, once look-alike to a nearby cinema, only to shift its emphasis to dedicating music lanes to new appeal competitors (like Skabba) instead of *Ray*. This is cause for celebration among Vancouver City locals, most of whom will agree that Shine hosts two of our best nights: Sunday's Soul Good and Wednesday's Breakout. Given the club's low ceilings, poor ventilation, and sledge-wound, Shine's enduring popularity seems the nothing short of a miracle.

### Best weekly lineup

**LampLighter**  
212 Abbott Street  
604-681-6666  
Long the preserve of rock-cum-cover bands and acoustic muckers, the LampLighter is now taking in a new, hipper clientele. For good, look no further than Viper Ribick's new Tuesday night, *Home*, which offers Vancouver's oldest skaters a chance to revive their glory days. Other weekly highlights include Saturday's The Good, a 1950s-themed funkathon hosted by veterans Dana D and Luke McConkey, and Friday's Cashah, a weekly night dedicated to discussing the city's punk scene. If music isn't your bag, don't fear: the LampLighter also hosts spiffy ball-and-wide-screen TV parties that make even a baseball broadcast seem like high art.

### Best party place in the hood

**Sugar and Sugar**  
99 Powell Street  
604-609-9939  
Gastown abounds with unique venues, none slicker than Sugar and Sugar, the multifunctional gallery currently hosting the city's hottest parties. Operated by brothers Damon and Jason Sugar, S&S is the city's only full-service event designer, hosting corporate functions, magazine launches, and weddings within the confines of its distinctive home base. With its minimalist furnishings and monochromatic colour scheme, the space wears its New York influence rather proudly, making all S&S revellers feel like they've been temporarily teleported across the continent. Pass through these doors and you may never want to leave. ■

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