



REASONS WE LOVE SEATTLE RIGHT NOW

The days may be darker and wetter during this time of year,
but there's no shortage of fantastic ways to spend them.

Whether your idea of a perfect winter activity is getting out to revel in the
chill or holing up someplace warm, you're bound to find something you'll love
in our list of hidden gems and perennial favorites

by SHEILA CAIN, JIM DEMETRE, LARA HALE, RYAN KINDEL, MADELINE LOOTENS,
A.J. RATHBUN, JESSICA YADEGARAN

photographs by JOHN VICORY



TEA TIME

ZEN DOG STUDIO

RETIRED AFTER A 27-YEAR career as a commercial architect, Larry Murphy, 72, left behind a world of high stress and deadlines and now dedicates his life to teas. Murphy lives in and works from Zen Dog Studio & Tea House in Ballard (you've likely seen the red Chinese lanterns hanging from the trees in his front yard along NW 85th Street), where he sells 75 different Chinese- and Taiwanese-sourced teas and flower blends, ranging from \$3 to \$25 an ounce. His best-seller is the Zen Dog House Roast, an oolong he hand-roasts on the premises. Murphy offers tastings (by appointment only) of three teas for \$5; an experience rich in ceremony that can last from 40 minutes to several hours, depending on your sense of adventure. Zen Dog Studio is definitely a place to unwind and relax, which means don't bring your laptop. "We're not that kind of place," says Murphy. "It's for getting your 'Zen' on." Ballard, 2015 NW 85th St.; 206.920.0721; Facebook: "Zen Dog Tea House Gallery." Zen Dog teas also sold at Ballard Market, Central Market (Mill Creek, Shoreline and Poulsbo) and all 12 PCC stores.

*Retired architect
Larry Murphy will
help you find Zen in
a cup of tea at his tea
house on 85th Street
in Crown Hill*



Gibran Hamdan in his Phinney Ridge studio, wearing one of his designs

FROM FOOTBALL TO FASHION

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MANY FORMER PRO football players go on to become coaches or commentators, but Gibran Hamdan took a different route after retirement: menswear design. The 34-year-old ex-quarterback (he played for several NFL teams, including the Seahawks in the mid-2000s), began designing clothing for his menswear line Alial Fital in 2010, shortly after retiring from a six-year career in football. Always interested in fashion, he bought a how-to book on making clothes, borrowed his wife's sewing machine and began stitching shirts for himself as a hobby, despite zero formal fashion education. His signature shirt—a short-sleeved polo with a colorful plaid or checkered dress collar—has gained a following of customers across the globe, but they're designed here, in his Phinney Ridge studio.

Hamdan's clothes are all limited editions; no more than 100 of each are made before the design is retired. Accountants may argue that this approach doesn't pencil out—especially with a homerun design—but Hamdan is more interested in creating personal relationships with his customers. Each order is shipped with a handwritten thank-you note, and lucky locals will have their orders dropped off by the Vespa-riding Hamdan himself. Phinney Ridge, 6103 Phinney Ave. N; 206.402.5396; alialfital.com