

SWEAT EQUITY

Seattle's high-end gyms are transforming into social hubs, offering much more than treadmills and weights to attract affluent members in a competitive market.



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Tucked amid bustling pedestrians, towering skyscrapers and honking cars along Sixth Avenue in downtown Seattle lies an oasis hidden in plain sight.

Beyond the glass doors that separate the Washington Athletic Club from street-level commotion, a lobby with a marble floor, plush carpets, chandeliers and a gold water fountain provides a gateway to luxury. An elevator takes members to floor after floor – 21 in total – of high-end fitness blended with luxury services.

There's a basketball court adorned with championship banners from the North American Association of Club Athletic Directors basketball tournament and a pool with windows dotted by skyscrapers in the background. Another floor has a gym with free weights, Bosu balls and treadmills.

Next door is the spa that offers massages and manicures and facial lifting and scented lotions, scrubs and candles that range from orange blossom to black pepper, coconut sugar, Mediterranean lemon, Kalahari watermelon or Santiago huckleberry. The 30-minute "quick escape" massage, which includes a facial and a manicure, costs \$187 per member. There's a cryotherapy room controlled by an iPad. There's a chromotherapy room with 11 different colors of



Henry's Gymnasium's aesthetic can be described as edgy-stylish, with 300 pieces of framed art and a dozen murals at its Uptown location.

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light meant to induce different physical benefits. It has three variations of blue that profess to calm breathing, helps with headaches, reduce stress, lubricate the joints and reduce eye inflammation and ocular fatigue.

As Seattle companies continue to draw and generate wealthy transplants, luxury gyms in the area are in an amenities race to attract new members. Winning these clients requires an ever-changing formula in a post-Covid world where social fitness is key.

The WAC, which is tight-lipped about its membership rates, is a prime example, offering an array of services not found at a typical gym. Key among them are opportunities for young professionals to network and build community while they build muscle.

Members can get manicures and pedicures, or a "dazzle-dry manicure," which the club describes as "a revolutionary lacquer manicure system that's vegan." The club has a naturopath in-house on Mondays.

There's an event space with even more chandeliers, massive, floral-print curtains, a dance floor and tables covered in white tablecloths.

There's a barbershop that offers hot lather shaves and a service to dye gray hair back to its "natural shade." There's a golf simulator room where a handful of friends were taking turns next to pitchers of drinks.

There's food for every eater. The WAC Cafe is for those on the go, providing everything from protein shakes and coffee to honey breakfast biscuits and a Hawaiian brown rice bowl. Hagerty's Sports Bar is for those who want traditional pub fare but with the option to order the signature Dungeness crab bisque, a recipe that has been with the club for 80 years. A sports memorabilia case houses bibs and hats from the

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