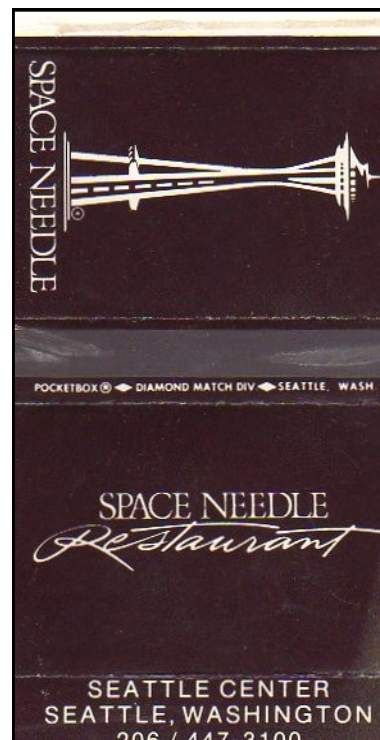*An American Tour: 40*

Seattle's *Space Needle Restaurant*

   "The **Space Needle** is a tower in Seattle, Washington, and is a major landmark of the Pacific Northwest region of the United States and a symbol of Seattle. Located at the Seattle Center, it was built for the 1962 World's Fair, during which time nearly 20,000 people a day used the elevators, with over 2.3 million visitors in all for the World Fair. The Space Needle is 605 feet (184 m) high at its highest point and 138 feet (42 m) wide at its widest point and weighs 9,550 tons. When it was completed it was the tallest structure west of the Mississippi River. It is built to withstand winds of up to 200 mph (320 km/h) and earthquakes of up to 9.1 magnitude. (which would protect the structure against an earthquake as powerful as the 1700 Cascadia earthquake). The tower also has 25 lightning rods on its roof to prevent lightning damage.

   The Space Needle features an observation deck at 520 feet (160 m), and a gift shop with the rotating SkyCity restaurant at 500 feet (152 m). From the top of the Needle, one can see not only the Downtown Seattle skyline, but also the Olympic and Cascade Mountains, Mount Rainier, Mount Baker, Elliott Bay and surrounding islands. Photographs of the Seattle skyline often show the Space Needle in a prominent position, even appearing to tower above the rest of the city's skyscrapers, as well as Mount Rainier in the background. This occurs because the tower, which is equivalent in height to a 60-story building, stands roughly four-fifths of a mile (1.3 km) northwest of most downtown skyscrapers.

   Visitors can reach the top of the Space Needle via elevators that travel at 10 mph (16 km/h). The trip takes 43 seconds, and some tourists wait in hour-long lines in order to ascend to the top of the tower. On windy days, the elevators are slowed down to a speed of 5 mph. The Space Needle was designated a historic landmark on April 19, 1999 by the City's Landmarks Preservation Board."

[h t t p : / / en.wikipedia.org/ w i k i / Space_Needle]