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NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Five hot districts that you'll want to call home

By PERRI ORMONT BLUMBERG

PERCHED on a barstool at the Beach Cafe, the decidedly typical Upper East Side haunt a few years back, my friend Shalton sneered, "I didn't move 3,000 miles across the country to tell people I live in Brooklyn."

Tonight, I'm on the F train to Bergen Street Station, hauling a trio of seafood candles to toast her new Cobble Hill abode.

Even the most adamant of Shaltons have changed, and so has Brooklyn. Among its many pockets, we've zoomed in on five areas worth hanging up your hat: Red Hook, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Bushwick and Greenpoint.

"The appeal of these neighborhoods is their diverse mix of creative industries, restaurants, housing and people, which have driven the borough's emergence as an economic and cultural destination," says Randy Peers, president and CEO of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. "More people continue to move and spend time here because of Brooklyn's unmatched neighborhoods, its vibrant businesses and restaurants and access to good jobs."

Below, a taste of what makes each of these stomping grounds special.

RED HOOK

For a neighborhood in which knowing your — gasp — neighbors is paramount, set your sights on this tight-knit waterfront enclave, across from Governors Island.

"Red Hook summers feel like living in Key West, with favorites like Brooklyn Crab and Hometown BBQ easily accessible from Manhattan and other parts of Brooklyn via the wa-

terways," says Mitzi Flexer, director of brokerage at Cushman & Wakefield. "Winters remind its residents of old Northeast fishing towns minus the wood-paneled homes, replaced with large, modern lofts and outstanding views of Manhattan, New Jersey and the Statue of Liberty."

A haven for creative types, unique dwellings abound. A light-filled three-bedroom, 1,718-square-foot home at 5 Luquer St. with a landscaped roof deck is currently \$1,650,000. A 700-square-foot renovated one-bedroom at 15 Wolcott St. rents for \$2,650, and boasts a washer/dryer in-unit and communal garden.

For now, a lack of subway access has kept the real-estate market reasonably priced, although Red Hook recently got its own ferry stop, a long overdue blessing.

Resident go-tos include cult ice-cream powerhouse, Ample Hills Creamery Factory and Museum; Red Hook Lobster Pound; and the Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition, formed in 1978 by 16 artists looking for a home for their work. It now serves more than 400 members.

Let us be pursued by hordes of angry Brooklynites, be sure to stop by



COBBLE HILL

Family affair: Sahadi's deli and condiments shop.

vaunted stronghold, Steve's Authentic Key Lime Pies. Go for the "swingle" — a chocolate-covered frozen Key lime mini-tart on a stick.

And last but not least, Red Hook's greatest selling point for harried New Yorkers with a penchant for Scandinavian design: IKEA. Skål!

COBBLE HILL

If the Gilmore Girls left Stars Hollow for Brooklyn digs, this TV-ready nabe would be it. According to home search marketplace, Localize.city, Cobble Hill has the most trees gracing its streets of all NYC neighborhoods. The vibe matches: on the quieter side, and boasting brownstones and cozy coffee shops.

Just south of Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill has strong French and Italian communities, but it has recently seen an influx of families and young professionals. Celebs like the wedded actors Daniel Craig and Rachel Weisz, and singer Norah Jones, also call these peaceful streets (save for the odd stray bocce ball) home.

"There are a ton of new listings available here relative to last year," notes Nancy Wu, StreetEasy economist. "While one of the pricier neighborhoods in the borough, the abundance of new homes for sale and overall weakness in the sales market has caused its median asking price to drop since last year."

Another contributor to the area's renaissance is Fortis Property Group's residential megaproject, River Park, which will comprise of seven buildings upon completion (there are currently five). With its own private park — and a school and urgent care clinic on the way — the residences have brought hordes of Manhattanites over the bridge in search of that less-rushed Brooklyn lifestyle.



Is this Brooklyn's Key West? Judging by funky Sunny's Bar, you might think so.

BUSHWICK



Denizen Bushwick features include a pool and microbrewery.

proudly old-school and a great place to raise a family, thanks in no small part to Carroll Park.

In the '90s, Carroll Gardens also welcomed many French inhabitants, which — beyond the stellar culinary offerings — is best reflected in PS 58's noted French program and the annual Bastille Day fête each July.

On the main boulevards, Smith and Court streets, there's a mix of chic chains (Lululemon, Lucky) and community standbys that bring the quirky or quaint (Loot Comic Shop for the former; Brooklyn Pharmacy & Soda Fountain for the latter). If you've satiated your brownstone-lust for the day, dip into Lucali, a BYOB pizza

CARROLL GARDENS

Neighboring Cobble Hill, this thriving Italian district is

Best of Brooklyn 41

RED HOOK

GREENPOINT

Greenpoint's murals make it stand apart.

joint, or Clover Club for a refined tipple, then get your sugar rush at authentic Italian bakeries like Pasticceria Monteleone BK or Mazzola Bakery.

Looking for a rental? "It's on the pricier side of Brooklyn, with one-bedrooms starting at around \$2,500 and two-bedrooms at around \$3,300," says broker Louis Adler, co-founder of Real New York, who loves Carroll Gardens' small-town feel and its "Cheers" factor, whether in a barbershop or bar.

On the sales front, broker Lindsay Barton Barrett of Douglas Elliman says buyers can benefit from a larger variety of townhouses on the market. "There are more three-story houses here, as

opposed to four-stories, than in Cobble Hill, so the entry point for a townhouse can be lower; potentially \$2.5 million for a fixer-upper, or \$4.5 million for something newly renovated."

GREENPOINT

A quick stroll from Long Island City, this Northern Brooklyn locale boasts primo waterfront real estate. Don't worry, developers have noticed. New builds are transforming Brooklyn's homiest neighborhood with One Blue Slip, a 30-story luxury tower (studios from \$2,800) and the Greenpoint condo-rental hybrid, a 39-story property (studios from \$2,950; all 95 condos have sold, priced up to \$3 million).

CARROLL GARDENS

Head to this family-friendly locale for a taste of the 1920s at Brooklyn Pharmacy & Soda Fountain.

In October 2018, 197 units in the eight-story Otto building with studios through two-bedrooms hit the rental market (studios from \$2,900). There's even a rooftop infinity pool and hot tub to ensure Greenpoint 2.0 has the most chlorinated panoramic views per capita.

Other exciting developments include the Greenpoint Library and Environmental Education Center, where the former library stood. It boasts a green roof and gardens, outdoor classrooms and a public plaza, and is slated to open in early 2020.

The 155-room Greenpoint Hotel, re-envisioned from a one-time rope factory, is also coming next year.

Along with one of the largest Polish populations in the country, Greenpoint offers a mishmash of free spirits with a hipster slant. Your college ex who moved to Santa Fe, NM, and who extols the benefits of ayahuasca brews but works in software sales would fit right in. (If he's not hanging in the communal library/co-working space at Otto already, that is.)

Despite all the development, it's still approachable. "Greenpoint is big enough that you can always discover something new, but small enough where you know the name of your mail person and barista," says Caroline Bell, co-founder of the popular hangout Cafe Grumpy. "Where else can you have a quiet dinner between bookshelves [Archestratus] then head to a rock show a few blocks away [Saint Vitus]?"

For weekend r'n'r, find us at Sunshine Laundromat, a speakeasy bar and arcade which doles out craft brews and Roberta's pizza (as the

name implies, you can wash your clothes here, too). Or, unwind with a workshop at Wilcoxon Brooklyn Ceramics and make homewares like mugs, dishes and planters.

BUSHWICK

The millennials, ahem, muralists have arrived. As youngsters flee from pricey Williamsburg, Bushwick has evolved into a bohemian scene that would make Don

DeLillo proud. Southeast of Williamsburg, this deep Brooklyn nabe also has a flourishing Latin community that seeps its way into the area's musical, artistic and culinary offerings.

Have a whale of a time at House of Yes, a scintillating theatrical experience; El Cortez, a funky Tiki bar and Mexican eatery with dancing; and the BogArt, a converted factory turned

into four floors of studios and galleries.

When it's time to recover from all the untzing at Elsewhere Rooftop, a warehouse-turned-music venue with rotating art exhibits, consider Denizen Bushwick. Here, 1.2 million-square-feet of apartments have amenities including a climbing wall, dog groomer, pool and microbrewery, and a public park has taken over the original grounds of Rheingold Brewery. (Studios rent from \$2,352.)

If the 15 massive murals and Portlandia life don't do it for you and you prefer to buy, a pristine two-bedroom condo with oversize windows at 1189 Jefferson Ave. is a steal at \$749,000.

Either way, celebrate your new place with a meal at one of restaurateur Daniel Cipriani's epicurean dens. There's Sea Wolf, which tips its hat to surf, fishing and skate culture and Italian-leaning Gemelli and the Ledge, adjacent 2019 arrivals. Go big and make aperitivo hour one for the books.

After all, Shallon didn't move from LA to tell people she lived in Manhattan.

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