BEST OF MANHATTAN 2023
NEW YORK CITY

Arts & Culture • Food & Drink • Kids • Pets • Recreation & Fitness • Neighborhood Stores

BY BRIAN BERGER
BEST NEW RESTAURANT

SUPER TASTE
1502 1st Avenue
646-283-0999
www.supertasteeats.com
Occupy the former home of the storied Cafe Loup, Cecchi's is the intriguing, unpretentious creation of veteran NYC maître-d' and restaurant industry memoirist, Michael Cecchi-Azzolina. Serving its version of American comfort food in a convivial, Art Deco-inspired setting with exceptional care, Cecchi's is both a throwback to an era of casual elegance and forward looking in the care taken to invigorate old favorites like North Atlantic swordfish and grilled Australian rack of lamb. Cecchi's burger is a favorite, likewise the off-menu martini. Enjoy the food, relish the experience.

NASRIN'S KITCHEN
35 W. 57th Street
917-261-4600
nasrin's.kitchen.com
The remarkable brainchild of Iranian-born owner-chef Nasrin Rejali, Nasrin's Kitchen brings the distinct, and relatively unknown, tastes of homestyle Persian cooking to the people of Manhattan as never before. Located on the second floor of a building, above a deli, its menu—which is halal—includes soups, stew, breads, and stunning biryani, and kebabs. Must try appetizer: a delectable egg dish called kuku sabzi.

BEST TACOS

TACOMBI
Tacombi.com
202 E 70th St
646-726-4302
While some locals may claim this or that food truck as “the best,” for great tacos in a clean, casual restaurant with regular hours, Tacombi is the spot. Founded in Yucatan in 2006, Tacombi’s genius has been a hit in New York, where it now has eight locations in Manhattan alone. As its name suggests, tacos here are king including Baja Crispy Fish, Pollo Yucateco (roasted chicken and spicy red sauce), and, should vegetarian be of interest... Black Bean and sweet potato.

BEST RESTAURANT

THEP THAI
1439 2nd Avenue
212-899-8995
thepnewyork.com
The rich, creative flavors of Bangkok burst to life at Thep—a Thai word meaning god, or supreme, god-like. If that’s a high bar to clear, Thep makes it seem easy, and without pretension too. While Thep can get busy, that’s the price of a great reputation and, though it takes no reservations, one can usually get a seat without waiting too long. Especially recommended: khao soi, a noodle soup made with bone-on chicken and crispy egg noodle; Chive Dumpling Massaman; Spicy Udon noodles; pineapple fried rice; the astonishing Purple Peanut Dumplings.

TATIANA BY KWAME ONWUACHI
10 Lincoln Center Plaza
212-875-5222
www.tatiananyc.com
Opened in late 2022 and hugely praised ever since, Tatiana is a sterling addition to the world-famous arts complex which never had an on-site restaurant of this quality before. Located inside David Geffen Hall, and named after the sister of James Beard-award winning, chef Kwame Onwuachi, Tatiana’s menu features a stunning array dishes reflecting both Onwuachi’s Afro Caribbean Bronx heritage, and the cosmopolitan diaspora. Must try: braised oxtails; short pastrami suya; brown stew chicken.

DA ANDREA
35 W. 13th Street
212-367-1979
www.deandreanyc.com
The remarkable brainchild of Italian-born chef Da Andrea, this relocated Northern Italian favorite, now with new ownership, is still happily thriving in the West Village. Quality across the board is excellent: excellent bread, an exceptional Caesar salad, pappardelle, Ravioli di vitello, zuppa di pesce—Sicilian seafood stew. Must try: Spaghetti Alla Carbonara. Prices are more expensive than they are in Italy but you more than make it up in savings on airfare.
Pack the back-to-school snack loved by generations of students.

Look for our new packaging at your local market.

POLLY-O CHEESE
MADE IN NEW YORK SINCE 1899

Find your favorite Polly-O cheeses
the ground floor of the old New York Times building but they move quickly, and attest to the deliciousness that awaits. (The same is true for their four other Manhattan locations, including Chelsea Market.) Served on flour or corn tortillas, the pollo asado (grilled chicken); adobada (marinated pork) and nopal (grilled cactus) are all notable. Chips, salsa, guacamole and excellent quesadillas are also available.

ZARAGOZA MEXICAN DELI & GROCERY
215 Avenue A
212-780-9204
Some of the city's best tacos come not from restaurants or the sometimes ubiquitous taco trucks but a place even more utilitarian: the Mexican grocery store with a grill inside. So it is with East Village standout, Zaragoza. Family owned and operated, burritos, sopes, tostadas, enchiladas. Pick hits: anything with barbacoa goat, and for adventurous palates, lengua (tongue).

BEST PIZZA
MIMI'S
217 E. 86th Street
646-861-2518
orderingimispizza.com
Unpretentious, consistent, and delicious, Mimi's thrives as both a convenient slice joint and a more than solid option for take out— which is a good thing, since there isn't much seating. The square, Sicilian-style slices are especially praised, with Grandma, margherita, denso pepperoni among other favorites. One unusual offering is a cauliflower crust, $1. Open late—and extra late on Fridays and Saturdays.

SONG E NAPULE PIZZERIA & TRATTORIA
464 Amsterdam Avenue
917-472-7561
songenapule.us
We'll admit it: rarely has the Upper West been a pizza destination. Yes, there were good slices, and good pies, scattered about, but few places that inspired one to tell their friends, “hey, come on over—for pizza!” Song e Napule, which specializes in the cuisine of Naples, Italy, changes that, dramatically. On a menu full of intriguing pastas, salads, their Neapolitan pies are a standout. Try the Diavola, topped with spicy Calabrian salami, fresh basil and extra virgin olive oil from Sicily.

JOE & PAT'S
168 1st Avenue
212-677-4992
joeandpatsnyc.com
Joe and Pat’s has been a legendary institution for decades—in the Castleton Corners neighborhood of Staten Island, which few New Yorkers even know exists. Happily, with the 2018 opening of a second Joe & Pat’s in the East Village, some of the greatest thin crust pizza in world became much more accessible. So brilliant is Joe's thin—but not crispy—crust that even their plain cheese pie is tangy and fantastic, and the pepperoni even better. Anchovies? Absolutely!

BEST BAGEL
ORWASHER’S
308 E. 78th Street
212-288-6569
Orwashers.com
Rightly legendary and beloved, Orwasher's is a destination that’s always worth the trip. Billing itself as “New York's original artisan bakery,” it must be said that Orwasher's other baked goods are wonderful: challah, rye bread, hand-filled jelly donuts, rugelach, babka, cookies, more. On the bagel side, the perfect sesame is first among equals, whether plain or as part of a sandwich. An Upper West Side location also on Amsterdam Ave is similarly great.

ZABAR’S
2245 Broadway
212-787-2000
zabars.com
Let’s be honest: for something as personal—as intimate—to a New Yorker, as a bagel, no two people will agree. Pumpernickel isn’t poppy seed; and bialys—which are a must—are another species altogether. Enter the beloved

Looking for the Best? Consider NYC’s Public Charter Schools
NYC families have spoken—1 in 5 public school students in Manhattan currently attend a charter school! Charter schools are free and open to all students and often outperform other schools in their district.

10
NYC charter schools have been named top in the country in the last 5 years.

5 of the 10 top achieving public schools in NYC have been charter schools.

Explore whether the charter school option is the right fit for your family.
Best Gym
Manhattan Plaza Health Club
MPHC is celebrating its 40th year servicing the local fitness community. There is no other club like it with every service & amenity under one roof. Known for their retractable glass atrium pool & sundeck, they’re also equipped with a huge array of cardio & strength equipment. If you’re more interested in classes, MPHC offers a variety of 60+ per week in both land & water. Designed for all fitness levels. Or, if you just prefer to chill out, they offer; massage, whirlpools, steam & sauna. From being the first climbing gym in NYC, to their most recent addition of a boutique Pilates reformer studio. MPHC truly has it all.

Best Movie Theater
Film at Lincoln Center: 145 & 165 W 65TH STREET; (212) 875-5367; filmlincc.org
This three-screen cinema is a film lover’s destination offering new releases, retrospectives, and festival programming with visiting filmmakers from around the world, including the annual New York Film Festival and New Directors/New Films. A hub of discovery, you can find your new favorite movie or director 365 days a year. The concession prices are some of the best in the city, and their popcorn is not to be missed! FLC Members receive access to discounted tickets, screenings, talks, and special events.

Best Snacking Cheese
Polly-O String Cheese, Campbell, NY: polly-o.com/product-locator
We’re bringing the parrot — and tradition — back to Polly-O. Polly-O String Cheese has a rich history, stirring up nostalgic feelings for those who remember the Polly-O parrot in their lunch box, on their after-school snack or in a television commercial. Polly-O has delivered quality and flavor to generations of loyal customers over the years. The tradition continues with this next generation of Polly-O cheeses.

Best Cemetery and Historic Site
The Woodlawn Cemetery & Conservancy: 4199 Webster Ave, Bronx, NY 10470; (718) 920-0500; woodlawn.org
Since its founding in 1863, the non-sectarian, 400-acre burial ground has had a tradition of serving New Yorkers of all cultures, religions, and ethnic heritages. Notables at rest include suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton, jazz legend Duke Ellington, Moby Dick author Herman Melville, and salsa icon Celia Cruz. Recognized as one of America’s most historically significant properties, Woodlawn was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2011. “Representing the largest and finest collection of funerary art in the country, Woodlawn is an open-air art gallery with over 1,300 private mausoleums designed by legendary architects, landscape designers and sculptors. This active cemetery offers advance planning services with in-house financing programs.

Best Dress Shop
Shari Tata: (646) 537-5877, 976 Lexington Ave, sharitata.com
Shari Rivkind, “Tata”, and daughter Morgan Weil opened Shari Tata on Lexington Ave in 2022 and it quickly has become a neighborhood favorite! Certified in fashion design by Parsons, Tata believes in fine tailoring and fabulous construction. Shari Tata offers a modern twist on classic styles, often with a bit of whimsy. Morgan’s fans will tell you they love her honesty, knowledge, and dedication to making each woman leave with a dress that truly makes her look beautiful. Stop by and you’ll also find their signature “bow berets,” hand-knitted hats, private label jewelry, and other accessories.

Best Senior Residence
Carnegie East House: 1844 Second Avenue; 212-410-0033; carnegieeast.org
Carnegie East House provides enriched housing for older adults—combining the freedom of independent living with supportive customized services. The community has 97 spacious light-filled apartments—all are fully accessible and contain custom closet systems, oak flooring, emergency call systems, and efficiency kitchens. Monthly rents include all meals, 3.5 hours per week of personal care, weekly housekeeping, and laundry, 24-hour concierge service, nursing and social support, and a full program of compelling activities. The community is a not-for-profit residence and is licensed by the NYS Department of Health. Most importantly, it’s home to an incredible body of residents.
broadway, there are also breakfast sandwiches (the sausage, egg and cheese is especially praised), snacks, salads (including a health inducing kale Caesar salad), and lunch and dinner options too. If it sometimes gets crowded, this is New York, what do you expect? Daily Provisions has three other Manhattan locations, good seating and a bathroom too—a coffee shop must for anything but take out.

**787 COFFEE**
66 Pearl Street
646-449-9200
787coffee.com
A jewel on Pearl Street, 787 Coffee is so pleasant and colorfully quirky that, upon their first visit, most people would likely exclaim “Holy moly! What a great and unique place…” Well, that’s true but it turns out, lots of other people feel the same about their 787 location—of which there are seventeen others in New York City, five in Puerto Rico. For a company that began in 2017 as a coffee farm in 2017, this is astonishing but the system works: the brew, the baked goods, the seating, the clean bathroom—they even have breakfast tacos.

**BEST COCKTAILS**

**BEMELMANS BAR**
35 East 76th Street
212-744-1600
Located inside the Carlyle Hotel, Bemelmans is an old New York drinking class landmark. Its ambiance is unmatched, from its murals by Ludwig Bemelmans—creator of the famed Madeline children’s books—to the red coated bartenders to the live jazz trio. The food is solid too. Signature cocktails include the Red Jacket, JFK Daquiri, Jackie O, and The Essayist (Drumshambo Gunpowder Sardinian Citrus Gin, Pear Liqueur, Rosemary Syrup, Lime Juice, Grapefruit Juice). Try them all.

**DA CAPO COLUMBUS**
322 Columbus Ave
www.dacapony.com
A delightful café by day, and a cocktail bar at night, Da Capo does so many things well, it’s a wonder how they manage it. On the mixology side, signature drinks like You Didn’t Say Goodbye (Gin, lemon grass syrup, lemon juice, mint, cucumber and cava) and Winter Sonata (whisky, amaro, pear liquor, maple syrup and orange bitters) rub shoulders with Big In Japan, Espresso Self, and Angels Envy Manhattan.

**APOTHEKE**
9 Doyers Street
212-406-0400
Apotheke-mixology.com
Located in the historic heart of Chinatown—literally at the bend of Doyers Street—this small, highly praised lounge is must for those on the downtown cocktail circuit. Ingredients are house-made daily and organic and its menu is divided into six categories: Health & Beauty, Aphrodisiacs, Pain Killers, Stimulants, Euphorics, Stress Relievers. For classicists who love their Homer, Siren’s Call is especially intriguing: gin, roasted seaweed, ginger, lime, smoked lava salt rim, candy pearl.
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plazajewish.org
BEST MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

GUGGENHEIM
1071 5th Avenue
212-423-3500
www.guggenheimstore.org

Located inside everyone’s favorite Frank Lloyd Wright-designed modern art museum—with ramps—the Guggenheim gift shop proffers a wide, creative selection of art and design inspired souvenirs, books, clothing, jewelry, and a plethora of other knick-knacks and doo-dads for aesthetes of all ages. Some favorites include a spiral mug and teapot; Nick Cave Soundsuit Punching Bag; Vasily Kandinsky socks and ties; and the Hilma af Klint “bum bag.”

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
200 Central Park West
212-769-5100
amnh.org

What can one say about one of the city’s most beloved institutions? Once you start, one wants to discuss it all—the elephants, the butterflies, the dinosaurs, that giant blue whale! Alas, since time and space don’t often allow us to enthuse as much as we could, souvenirs will have to do, including a huge array of outer space-themed clothing and toys; dinosaur-style onesies, t-shirts, hats, socks and pins, including a white ceramic triceratops planter; a veritable herd of elephant-themed items; even a magnetic shark bottle opener.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN
1 Bowling Green
888-618-0572
Americanindian.si.edu

One of the city’s under known treasures, the National Museum of the American Indian, operated under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, deserves far more attention than it usually gets. While the United States’ debt to Native Americans is one that can never fully be repaid, one can support their ongoing traditions by purchasing a large variety of Native-produced and themed arts, crafts, jewelry, music, and books. Admission to both the shop and its museum is free, and open 364 days a year—taking off only Christmas Day.

BEST FLORIST SHOP

ROSA ROSA
831A Lexington Avenue
212-935-4706
Rosarosaflowers.com

As the genius writer Gertrude Stein observed, “a rose is a rose is rose,” and what Rosa Rosa lacks in repetition, it more than makes up for in affordable floral excellence. Opened in 1987, their specialty is, as their name suggests, roses, of which they receive fresh deliveries daily. A vast selection of arrangements and centerpieces are available in sizes from small to “monster.” Orchids, calla lily, tulips, and peonies are also popular. Friendly staff and reliable delivery make Rosa Rosa a business to return to.

WHY WAIT?

Find your place.
Find your passion.
ninth & tenth grade,
then college early.
THE SECRET GARDEN
621 Amsterdam Avenue
212-362-8188
secretgardenuws.com

Secret Garden has been an Upper West Side favorite since the 1990s. Operating under the slogan, “Where flowers bloom so does hope!” owner and manager Monique Lee draws on her Asian heritage to offer Ikebana and Korean style arrangements, in addition to all the expected Western floral and plant offerings. Orders for weddings, birthdays, holidays and all other occasions are happily accepted. Same day delivery is often available on the Upper West Side.

SCOTTS FLOWERS
15 W. 37th St
scottsflowersnyc.com
347-309-4103

Owned and operated by the Palliser family since 1982, Scott's isn't the cheapest flower shop in town but when, one hears the horror stories about certain other florists who got it wrong (withered flowers, wrong colors, wrong deliveries)—you'll be glad to pay the price for quality. Working with growers from Alaska to New Zealand, Scott's creates designs of all kinds for every possible event, from baby showers to bar/bat mitzvah, bridal showers and beyond.

BEST HARDWARE STORE
NEW YORK PAINT & HARDWARE
1668 1st Avenue
212-249-1614
nypaintandhardware.com

Opened by a Michael Gorelik, an immigrant from Belarus, in 1986 and run today by his sons, Frank and Shawn, New York Paint & Hardware is the American dream exemplified. In addition to being a Benjamin Moore paint store, they sell everything you’d expect a hardware emporium to carry while providing expert lamp repair also. A nearby sister store, the First Avenue Supply Houses, offers a wide range of plumbing, heating and electrical materials.

GARTNER’S HARDWARE
162 West 72nd St
212-873-1050
gartnershardware.com

The proverbial store with “everything,” Gartner’s has been an independently owned mainstay for six decades, predating big box stores, online shopping, cell phones and the internet. Indeed, the store is so old, few people remember who the namesake Gartner was. Leave such worries to the historians, however. The great selection and service of the store is legacy enough. Tools, locks, keys, mousetraps, lightbulbs, air conditioners and professional a/c installation—Gartner’s got it.

BARNEY’S HARDWARE,
467 6th Avenue
212-675-3846

First opened in 1929 by a Barney lost to time, today’s iteration, occupying the ground floor of a four story rowhouse, is jammed, floor to ceiling, with what the West Village needs to keep its apartments and shops in order: tools, paints, nails, weather seal, lights, insect traps, work gloves, keys, and a million other things, give or take. The staff is pleasant, knowledgeable and so often inspired you might find yourself taking on more work than intended just for the pleasure of their company.

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people to choose how they live as they age. Learn how you can put your time, knowledge, and talent to good use with AARP in New York.

AARP New York is gearing up to offer more events, activities, and programs across the state, and we need your help!

We’re looking for talented people who want to make a difference in the lives of others, not only people age 50 and older but all New Yorkers.

Learn more at aarp.org/VolunteerwithAARP
Afford everyone a smoke-free start

Secondhand smoke is a known cause of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, ear infections and asthma attacks in infants and children. While many luxury apartment buildings are now smoke-free, affordable housing residents often endure daily exposure from neighboring apartments.

It is critical that affordable housing go smoke-free so that all, including the youngest and most vulnerable, can live healthy lives free from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

To learn more about implementing smoke-free protections, visit nycsmokefree.org

NYC SMOKE-FREE
BEST LOCAL THEATRE GROUP

YORK THEATRE COMPANY
150 E. 76th Street
212-935-5820
yorktheatre.org

If you have any interest in musicals—and, given their immense importance to 20th century American culture, everyone should have at least some—you have to love the York Theatre Company—where musicals come to life. Founded in 1969 by Janet Hayes Walke, York is dedicated to producing new musicals in their Mainstage series and reviving, lost jewels of the past in their Musicals in Mufti series, which are performed in street clothes. Among York’s recent Mainstage productions have been Hoagy Carmichael’s Stardust Road and The Jerusalem Syndrome: A Musical Comedy of Biblical Proportions, with A Sign of the Times opening in February 2024. To bolster the future of the art form, York has both an active Developmental Reading Series for new works and a Musical Theatre Training Program which brings professionals and students together to further each other’s craft.

NEW YORK CITY CENTER
131 W 55th Street
212-581-1212
www.nycitycenter.org

A mainstay of Manhattan cultural life since 1943, the New York City Center continues to offer vibrant ballet, dance, and theater programs to the masses. Fall and winter 2023 saw the Lyon Opera Ballet, a collaboration of Lucinda Childs, Philip Glass, Sol LeWitt; a revival of Rodgers and Hart’s “Pal Joey” co-directed by Tony Goldwyn and Savion Glover; and a month of performances by the Center’s resident dance company, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Upcoming in 2024: “Jelly’s Last Jam” about jazz genius Jelly Roll Morton, Flamenco Festival with the National Ballet of Spain, Martha Graham Dance Company.

LA MAMA
66 East 4th Street
212-254-6468
www.lama.org

Founded by Black designer Ellen Stewart in 1961, La MaMa is a legendary and justly venerated name in experimental theatre. The legacy of Stewart, who received a MacArthur Foundation “genius” grant in 1985, and died in 2011, at the age of 91—carries on with a wide range of multi-cultural, inclusive, boundary-pushing productions. To view their calendar is to gaze upon a world of possibility—and fun—that few others have imagined. Recent shows have included Rafaelia Braga: The Birds Told Me Your Lies; Ashley Chen, Unisson, Rush, Distances & more, and Sasha Velour’s The Big Reveal. LaMaMa also offers rehearsal studios and numerous programs for kids.

BEST LIVE MUSIC

TOMI JAZZ
239 East 53rd Street
646-497-1254
tomijazz.com

Not just a music venue, Tomi Jazz combines Japanese food, cocktails and of course, jazz—a musical form which Japan has long held dear. This isn’t just rhetoric, either, as that nation consistently treats American jazz artists with a reverence they are rarely afforded at home. This same passion for excellence suffuses what can only be called the Tomi Experience—which is a good thing since they don’t take reservations and the lines can be substantial. Once you’re in, however, wow! The Japanese curry rice, the yaki udon, the okonomiyaki are all recommended, likewise sake, cocktails or other, non-alcoholic beverages to taste.

CLUB DIZZY / JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
10 Columbia Circle
212-258-9973
jazz.org/dizzys

Named in honor of trumpet titan Dizzy Gillespie who, in the early 1940s, was one of the architects of the revolutionary modern jazz form called be-bop, Club Dizzy is one of the world’s most scenic jazz venues. Located on the 5th floor of Time Warner Center with giant glass windows overlooking Columbus Circle, its awe-inspiring view is matched by the quality of its booking. Recent performers have included Ulysses Owens Jr Big Band; the Julliard Jazz Ensemble performing the music of Ornette Coleman; and Mary Stallings and the Emmet Cohen Trio. While one should certainly check other venue’s jazz
calendars, if anything at Dizzy’s is of interest, go. Food is pretty good too, not something one can always say about jazz clubs.

**VILLAGE VANGUARD**
178 7th Ave South
212-255-4037
villagevanguard.com

Opened by the Lithuanian-born Jew Max Gordon in 1935, and carried on by his wife, Lorraine until her death, at the age of 95, in 2018, the Village Vanguard is a venue of such world-historical importance, calling it ‘storied’ doesn’t even begin to do it justice. Among the artists who’ve recorded legendary albums here are Sonny Rollins, Bill Evans, John Coltrane, Geri Allen—and that’s just for starters. Run today by the Gordons daughter, Deborah, the Vanguard thankfully survived the uncertainties of early COVID closures to thrive again. Recent performers include Christian McBride’s Inside Straight; Kenny Barron Quintet; and the Kris Davis Trio. Every Monday night, unless they’re touring, Vanguard Jazz Orchestra performs. A must-visit for any New Yorker or jazz-inspired visitor.

**BEST COMEDY CLUB**

**COMIC STRIP LIVE**
1568 2nd Avenue
212-861-9386
Comicstriplive.com

Opened in 1976 as the Comic Strip, venues like Comic Strip Live is one of the reasons to

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GREAT BARRINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS
simons-rock.edu
live in New York City. Nearly every great comic of the last 50 years—Richard Pryor, George Carlin, Gilbert Gottfried, Chris Rock and dozens more—have taken the stage here. Recent performers have included Reg Thomas, Jason Choi, Marla Schulz, Craig Gass, performing a set of jokes all about the legendary New York City rock band, KISS. For aspiring legends, the club offers its well-known Gladys Open Mics, workshops, and comedy classes.

WEST SIDE COMEDY CLUB
201 W. 75th Street
646-973-1300
www.westsidecomedyclub.com

Run by Felicia Madison, herself both a comic and a manager of comics, the West Side Comedy Club consistently brings the funny to a neighborhood whose hilarity extends well beyond the beloved Seinfeld. Among the club’s recent performers have been Aditya Shankar, Janice Maffei, Sharief Johnson, Linette Palladino, Ophira Eisenberg, and Chase DuRousseau, Houston’s Funniest Person in 2008. (That’s Texas, not downtown Manhattan.) Frequent open mics provide opportunities to catch tomorrow’s jokes today.

COMEDY CELLAR
117 MacDougal Street
212-254-3480

Located in a narrow basement in the heart of Greenwich Village, this renowned venue is iconic for a reason—many reasons, in fact, and stands as a beacon for the neighborhood’s historic cutting edge cultural reputation. No promises but unannounced, big-name drop-ins are frequent, while the regularly scheduled performers are the cream of the crop. Reservations are recommended though standby is possible. For further laughs, check the calendars of the Comedy Cellar’s two other nearby venues, Village Underground and Fat Black Pussycat.

BEST BOOKSTORE
CORNER BOOKSTORE
1313 Madison Avenue
212-831-3554
cornerbookstoreny.com

A beloved Carnegie Hill institution since 1978, The Corner Bookstore is pretty much the ideal independent local bookstore. Besides the abundant praise its customers heap upon the store, another indication of its quality is its long-term employees—that it even has long term employees distinguishes it. If the Corner Bookstore doesn’t have it, they’ll happily order it, and they even offer delivery to doormen buildings from 59th and 110th Street. There are frequent readings and an excellent kids section too.

BOOK CULTURE
536 West 112th Street
212-865-1588
646-403-3000
www.bookculture.com

One of New York’s great bookstores is actually two stores, just two blocks apart in Morningside Heights. How did the neighborhood get so lucky? Its proximity to Columbia University helps, of course, but that’s no guarantee. What Book Culture has done so well is foster a wide-ranging bibliophilic mecca that ranges across all interests, ages, and needs, not just academic, though their attention to university press titles rarely stocked by other stores is exceptional. Between the two stores, Broadway is more geared towards Columbia, while 112th Street has a dedicated children’s department.

MCNALLY JACKSON
4 Fulton Street
www.mcnallyjackson.com

One of the great success stories in independent bookselling, McNally Jackson has three Manhattan locations (the others are at 134 Prince Street in Soho and 1 Rockefeller Center) and two in Brooklyn—all are great, and all have top-notch kids’ sections too. The Fulton Street store has the most exceptional sitting, nearly at water’s edge at the South Street Seaport and functions as a much-valued cultural nexus in a neighborhood which is a tourist mecca, commercial center and an increasingly dynamic residential area all-in-one. Seaport-only bonus: Morgan & Enzo’s Batshit Book Club (that’s really its name), dedicated literature that’s “decadent, debased, degenerate” and McNally Jackson After Hours, a book club for readers who can “read, flirt, sip” at the store’s beer and wine bar.
Woodlawn Cemetery continues to offer families a one-of-a-kind opportunity to celebrate their lives and the lives of loved ones. With meticulously maintained grounds, Woodlawn is the choice of those who want utmost quality and the peace of mind of knowing that they and their loved ones will be cared for with respect and dignity. Planning final arrangements in advance is a loving gift to your family.

Woodlawn is notable as the final resting place of some of the most influential and well-known Americans, including pioneer of the five-and-dime store F.W. Woolworth, prolific writer Dorothy Parker, jazz giant Duke Ellington, and *Moby Dick* author Herman Melville. It is a natural human impulse to want to leave a mark and you can in the company of America's greatest. At Woodlawn, you can create a memorial that celebrates the details that make you unique.

Woodlawn is easily accessible via car, NYC Subway, and the Metro-North Railroad, and ample parking is provided on premises. Our concierge service is second nature to our staff and offered at no cost to you.

How may we help you create a lasting legacy? Call us today.
If no single gym is the best for everyone, but the years have proven that Equinox, in its many city locations, meets the needs of many Manhattanites. Sleek and modern, the East 92nd Street Equinox, in the heart of Carnegie Hill, includes five different studios, covering everything from yoga to pilates to cycling to dynamic movement and more. On any given week, there are hundreds of scheduled classes, including boxing and martial arts, as well as personal trainers available for more personal instruction. Hit the steam room afterwards for a winddown.

MOMENTUM FITNESS
246 Columbus Avenue
917-426-3492
Momentumfitnessnyc.com
Founded by owner and personal trainer Marco Guaino in 2010, Momentum prides itself on being a locally owned, “Mom & Pop” personal training and group fitness studio. To distinguish themselves from the big fitness chains, they take a
holistic approach towards its members’ health, going beyond just getting in shape and consider diet and nutrition. Its small group classes (8-10 people max) include Sandbags & Kettle balls, boxing, yoga, pilates and cardio dance, while one-on-one personal training is available in a wide variety of styles including weights, TRX band and calisthenics training.

CHELSEA PIERS
Pier 60, Hudson River Greenway
212-336-6000
fitness.chelseapiers.com

Sometimes bigger is better and if you’re looking for one place where you can do nearly anything, Chelsea Piers—which dominates six blocks of the Hudson River waterfront—is an unrivaled destination. Here, in addition to all the usual fitness gym offerings, one can also swim, rock climb, hit the baseball batting cages or golf driving range, play basketball, soccer, tennis, sand volleyball, even the ever popular—and controversial!—game of pickleball. There are abundant options for kids sports, camps, and classes too.

BEST PHYSICAL THERAPY

SPEAR PHYSICAL THERAPY
245 East 84th Street
646-841-1414
spearcenter.com

Starting on the Upper East Side in 1999, Spear has grown into a metropolitan-area powerhouse, with more than twenty locations in Manhattan alone. Such a success story doesn’t happen by accident. It’s a system that works. Among Spear’s services are general physical therapy, occupational therapy, hand therapy, pelvic floor therapy, balance, golf swing and running form analysis, and massage therapy. Private pilates sessions are available at the E. 56th Street location.

MICCASS PHYSICAL THERAPY
246 Columbus Avenue
212-985-4500
miccasspt.com

Whether it’s a shoulder impingement, a strained hamstring, plantar fasciitis or a whole host of other neuro-muscular ailments, Micass—a small practice that values personal attention—can almost certainly help you. Owner Jenny Chamoun is experienced in treating a wide range of post-surgical, degenerative, sports and orthopedic conditions. Among her current staff are Dr. Ogechi Nwaneri, a former All-American track athlete at Virginia Tech and Dr. Elizabeth Li, who knows not just the body but, as a LaGuardia High School graduate, the Upper West Side also.

MANHATTAN SPORTS & MANUAL PHYSICAL THERAPY
10 E. 33rd Street
646-487-2495
Msmpt.com

Nestled on the eastern edge of Koreatown, this impressive facility—which is part of the Hospital for Special Surgery rehabilitation network offers a wide range of services in an exceptionally caring environment. Open since 1998. Co-owners, Tsahti (Zack) Niv and Rami Jazrawi both have doctorates, and Jazrawi is a Board Certified Orthopedic Specialist by the American Physical Therapy Association, so the knowledge here starts at the top. Don’t let the “Sports” in their name be intimidating. Although their practice treats many athletes—including golfers, runners and tennis players—that same passion extends to other rehabilitation and pain management needs too.

BEST BIKE ROUTES

EAST RIVER GREENWAY
If you like a little urban grit—and adventure—while you’re shifting gears, the East River Greenway can’t be beat. Accessible at numerous points on the East Side, it extends, with great views, along the East and Harlem Rivers up to 125th Street. From here, intrepid riders can cross over the nearby Willis Avenue Bridge into the Bronx. For a shorter but still exciting jaunt, take the bike and pedestrian only Ward’s Island Bridge to Randall’s Island, a wonderland for exploration.

HUDSON RIVER GREENWAY
Pick it up wherever you like, the earlier in the morning—or further north—the better if you wish to avoid weekend crowds. While many cyclists use greenway as a funnel to Riverside Drive and/or the George Washington Bridge to
New Jersey, we recommend continuing north where one can explore Fort Tryon, The Cloisters, and Hamilton Heights, while those who crave even more climbing can tackle the steep hills of Washington Heights, or even cross the Broadway Bridge into Marble Hill and the Bronx.

EAST RIVER GREENWAY TO BROOKLYN
Just as many Brooklynites commute to Manhattan for work, so downtown cyclists should count Brooklyn among their regular cycling destinations. The ways to get there are manifold. The Brooklyn Bridge has a new dedicated, street level bike lane. The north side of the Manhattan Bridge also has its own bike path, though it can sometimes get crowded. The Williamsburg Bridge has a wide, shared bike and pedestrian path that’s sometimes anarchic but usually fine. All offer spectacular views and connect with the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway. For variety, and more great views, the bike-friendly East River ferries at Pier 15 are another option.

BEST WALKS

CENTRAL PARK RESERVOIR, 5TH AVENUE AND 90TH STREET
Located between 86th and 96th Streets, what’s formally named the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Reservoir is an oasis within an oasis. Originally built between 1858 and 1862 as part of the Croton Aqueduct system, it was formerly known as the Upper Reservoir and operated in conjunction with the nearby Lower Reservoir—site of today’s Great Lawn and Turtle Pond. Decommissioned in 1993, the reservoir’s perimeter features a 1.58 mile gravel running and walking track upon which every stride or step is a crunchy joy.

WEST END AVENUE, 57TH TO 108TH STREETS
While nearly all street have their virtues, the glories of West End Avenue are little under known. Maybe it’s confusion. On the south end, it begins were 11th Avenue ends; on the north, it merges into Broadway. In between those two points are some of the city’s most picturesque apartment blocks, especially between the 70s and 90s, an area which includes four designated historic districts full of stunning, yet utilitarian architecture from the late 19th century through the early 1930s. Literary Fun Fact: the late Marshall Berman, author of the classic urbanist memoir/meditation, All That Is Solid Melts Into Air (1982), lived for many years 838 West End Avenue. And since this is the holiday season, it is worth noting that Virginia O’Hanlon, who inspired the famous “yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus” editorial in the New York Sun lived at 115 W. 95th St. when she posed the question as an eight-year-old in 1897. Today’s it’s the site of a public school.

PEARL STREET FROM BATTERY PARK TO CENTRE STREET
If they don’t work or live there, it’s fair to say that most Manhattanites don’t spend much time far, far downtown. What is there in the Financial District or around the Civic Center I can’t find elsewhere, besides ferry terminals, courts, bureaucracy and a jail? Plenty, including the unrivaled, deeply layered view of New York’s rich history, including numerous mid-19th century buildings, one can find in the twists and turns of Pearl Street. Among its many points of interest: the birth site of Herman Melville; Fraunces Tavern museum; Hanover Square; 76 Pearl Street, from which one one of city’s most vexing murder mysteries—the 1997 vanishing of artists Camden Sylvia and Michael Sullivan—arose; the site of the old Manhattan slave market, at Pearl and Wall Streets (its memorial plaque is at Water Street). Pearl continues its northerly course until past the Brooklyn Bridge, when it veers west, where it veers sharply west towards the state and federal court buildings and Thomas Paine Park.
Best Early College
Bard College at Simon's Rock
Bard College at Simon's Rock is the only 4-year college in the country specifically designed for students ready to enter college after the 10th or 11th grade and begin working on their Bachelor’s Degree two years early. Simon’s Rock is tied for No. 2 for Most Innovative School and tied No. 1 for Best Undergraduate Teaching by U.S. News and World Report (2023-2024) and The Princeton Review ranked Simon’s Rock among the Best Colleges in the Northeast. Simon’s Rock was named a Fulbright Top Producing Institution for U.S. Scholars for the 2022-23 Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program.

Candlelight Carol Festival
Riverside Church: trcny.org/candlelight2023
This longstanding tradition at The Riverside Church has become an essential part of Christmas in New York City. This service of music and light combines carillon, organ, harp, and all of the choirs of The Riverside Church, culminating in a ritual sharing of candlelight illuminating the Nave. Join us on Sunday, December 17th at 4PM; musical prelude begins at 3 PM.

Best Public Health Advocate
Public Health Solutions: 40 Worth Street, 4th Fl., New York, NY 10013; healthsolutions.org; 646.619.6400
Public Health Solutions is the largest public health nonprofit in New York City, driven by a mission to uplift underserved New Yorkers and their families. With over 60 years of unwavering commitment, PHS has been a catalyst for improved health outcomes through a strategic blend of community engagement, administrative collaboration, and healthcare partnerships. PHS’ diverse services encompass health insurance enrollment, WIC and SNAP benefits access, maternal and child health programs, and the provision of sexual and reproductive health clinics. In 2022 alone, PHS’ services reached over 125,000 New Yorkers.

Looking for the best?
NYC Charter School
New York City has many types of public schools, including free charter schools. Charter schools never require any admissions tests and are open to all NYC students, including students with IEPs and English language learners. Charter schools in all 5 boroughs are currently accepting applications for all grades, including middle and high school, for the 2024-25 school year. Learn more about charter schools in your community, attend an open house and easily apply to multiple charter schools at once by visiting CharterNYC.org. Consider all your options as you make the best choice for your family. Apply today!

Best Rescue and Adoption Services
North Shore Animal League America
For nearly 80 years, North Shore Animal League America has been saving the lives of dogs, cats, puppies and kittens — over 1.1 million to date — in the tristate area and beyond. Our NO-KILL commitment to Rescue, Nurture, Adopt and Educate means we work tirelessly to bring animals to safety, give them the care and respect they deserve, and find them responsible, loving homes. Our work depends on the generous support of friends and donors; please consider a gift so we can continue changing lives and creating stories of rescue, adoption and new beginnings.

Best Photography Classes In NYC
Art of Intuitive Photography: ArtOfIntuitivePhotography.com; 646-397-8138
Embark on a transformative photography journey! Whether you’re a beginner or an enthusiast, our in person small group, hands on, immersive classes for adults and kids are held in iconic NYC locations and are crafted to elevate your skills, spark inspiration and help you see the world better. In our popular and convenient single session classes you can learn the technicalities of how to use a camera or unlock your creative expression using a camera or smartphone. Private lessons, online and hybrid courses also available.

Best Car or Train Getaway
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY
Justly famed for the Ivy League university there, the town of Princeton has much to offer in addition to academics. In downtown Princeton, along Nassau Street and its side streets, are a remarkable array of restaurants and shops, including, for music lovers, the world-renowned Princeton Record Exchange. Princeton has a vital art scene as well, both within the University and the town. For outdoors enthusiasts—walkers, runners, cyclists, even kayakers—the largely dirt and gravel Delaware and Raritan Canal path is a delight in all seasons.
By train, take NJ Transit to Princeton Junction, which is literally adjacent to the campus of Princeton University.

RHINEBECK, NEW YORK
An unpretentious and historic jewel of the Hudson Valley, almost equidistant between the city and Albany, Rhinebeck—population 8,000 or so—has much more to offer than great views of the Hudson River and Catskills. Oblong Books is an acclaimed book store that also has a wide music selection; Café con Leche offers Puerto Rican restaurant fare as fine as any in Manhattan; Le Petit Bistro is a decades-old favorite for fine, American and French fare. History buffs must visit—The Beekman Arms Inn, which dates back to the mid-1700s, while the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome, is a living museum of vintage airplanes.
By train, take Amtrak to Rhinecliff. From there, a very short taxi ride will bring you to Rhinebeck.

NORTHPORT, LONG ISLAND
Northport, located on the north shore of western Suffolk County and with a population 7300, is one of Long Island’s most interesting towns. Originally inhabited by Matinecock Indians, by the mid-19th century, it was an important shipbuilding center, and would remain so early into the next century. Jack Kerouac, seeking refuge from the unexpected celebrity that On The Road (1957) brought him, lived with his mother, Gabrielle, in three different Northport homes from 1958-1964. Later, Aesop Rock (Ian Bovitz), the acclaimed rap artist with an immense vocabulary, grew up here. Attractions today include Cow Harbor Park—and every September, the Great Cow Harbor 10K Run—the Northport Historical Society, Pumpernickel’s Restaurant (German cuisine), and Tim’s Shipwreck Diner. There is also Gunther’s Tap Room, which opened in 2018 after it was gutted by a fire in 2017. The current owners bought in 2016 after previous owner Pete Gunther passed. They managed to salvage the bar top after the fire to give it the same feel as during the Kerouac era complete with the orange and brown walls.
By train, take the Long Island Rail Road Port Jefferson Branch to Northport.
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At BASIS Independent Manhattan, students in grades PreK–12 are inspired to learn at the highest international levels in a globally benchmarked curriculum with proven results. Our liberal arts and advanced STEM offerings and expert teachers unite to foster curiosity and ingenuity in every student.

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manhattan.basisindependent.com

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Best Gourmet Chocolates
Li-Lac Chocolates: 6 locations in NYC; LiLacChocolates.com
Whenever you’re looking for the best chocolate and gifts, Li-Lac Chocolates is the place to go. Serving the community for 100 years (Since 1923), Li-Lac Chocolates is an artisan chocolate company specializing in small batch, hand-made chocolate and gifts with exceptional quality and superior taste. Chocolates are expertly crafted using the founder’s original recipes, cooking techniques and quality ingredients. Their selection of chocolate is one of the largest selections of fresh gourmet chocolate in America. Every delicious item is made by hand, locally in New York City, kosher certified, and guaranteed for freshness.

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Best Place to Help Neighbors in Need
Xavier Mission: 55 W. 15th Street - 212-627-2100; xaviermission.org
Xavier Mission is a non-profit, FOR-IMPACT organization celebrating 40 years of service to NYC. We address hunger, homelessness, and poverty through 5 programs. Our soup kitchen serves 1,000 meals each Sunday, our Food Pantry provides groceries for 400+ low-income households, and our Clothing Room offers essentials to all in need, including migrant families. Our Life-Skills Empowerment Programs assist those recovering from trauma and our Eviction Prevention Program helps families avoid eviction and stay in their homes, saving millions in shelter costs. We rely on volunteers and donors to help us welcome, serve, and empower our guests with dignity and compassion.

The Only Not For-Profit Jewish Funeral Chapel in NYC
Plaza Jewish Community Chapel: 630 Amsterdam Ave; Phone: 212-769-4400; Website: plazajewish.org
Established in 2001, Plaza Jewish Community Chapel is the only communally owned and operated Jewish Funeral Chapel in the NY Metro area. Dedicated to the belief that the process of grief is not a business proposition but rather an emotional, human passage to be treated with dignity and conscience. Plaza is governed by a board of directors compromised of clergy from all denominations, community leaders and executives of social service agencies. We take pride in giving back to the community in a variety of ways and provide educational programs as well as support to those working in end of life. Tune in to Plaza’s podcast “Exit Strategy”. Find where ever you find your podcasts.

Are you aspiring to achieve excellence?
Broome Street Academy (BSA)
Discover the path to success at Broome Street Academy (BSA), a tuition-free public charter high school in SoHo. BSA provides a vibrant environment tailored to each student’s unique needs. Co-located with The Door, BSA offers comprehensive holistic resources, ranging from arts, college, and career programs to no-cost health services. Individualized support is ensured by BSA’s social workers, while teachers are dedicated to guiding students towards graduation and daily life skill development. BSA also provides opportunities for athletics, afterschool clubs, AP courses, and membership in the National Honor Society. Applications for the 9th-grade lottery for the 2024-2025 school year are now open until April 1, 2024. Additionally, limited seats are available for 10th, 11th, and 12th-grade students who are encouraged to apply. For more information, contact Admissions@broomestreetacademy.org or call 646-969-6797. Join us on the journey to excellence!
Sunday, and whose second floor children's section is among the best in city.

BEST KID FRIENDLY MUSEUM – HANGOUT

EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO
1230 5th Avenue
212-831-7272
www.elmuseo.org

Located at the northern end of the Museum Mile, El Museo del Barrio celebrates both New York's rich Puerto Rican heritage and that of all Latin Americans in the United States. Part of this mission includes an extensive array of programs for families and children: free weekend exhibition hours, storytelling and art-making workshops, concerts, a bilingual Coqui Club (named after the Puerto Rico's beloved frog mascot) for children 3-5 and more.

DIMENNA CHILDREN'S HISTORY MUSEUM
170 Central Park West
212-873-3400
www.nyhistory.org

While the greatness of the American Museum of Natural History goes without saying, the wonders of its neighbor just one block to the south, the New York Historical Society, are sometimes overlooked. Among its many highlights, the DiMenna Children's History Museum—it's a museum within a museum—stands out. Opened in 2011 as part of an extensive building renovation, it's exhibits are unique in that they are not just for children but about them as well.

COLOR FACTORY
251 Spring Street
347-378-4071
colorfactory.com

Somewhere in between a museum or art gallery and a play space, sits the New York branch of the Color Factory. (There are also unique locations in Chicago and Houston.) Consisting of a series of bright, playful and interactive exhibit rooms, each designed by different artists, the Color Factory offers an intensely sensory experience to delight kids of all ages. For social media minded adults, there are photo kiosks within each room that will take your picture and e-mail it to you for free. For actual children, the ball pit, confetti room and conveyer belt snacks are especially compelling.

BEST KIDS BOOK STORE

BARNES & NOBLE
1550 3rd Avenue at 87th Street
Barnesandnoble.com

Part of the legendary—and legendarily busy—Strand Book Store headquartered on Broadway at 12th Street, this Upper West Side location offers a neater, less hectic, but still satisfying version of the classic Strand experience. Though not a children's bookstore per se, their kids' section is well-designed and well-stocked. Further, the attractive presentation of so many other categories of books, as well as other gifts and souvenir knick-knacks, can only benefit curious young minds. As any children's bookstore should, there is a clean bathroom.

BOOKS OF WONDER
42 West 17th Street
www.booksofwonder.com

For a children's book specialty shop, Books of Wonder is simply the best. Their selection includes books for all ages, from infants to teens, and includes nearly any categories, and style of book you can think of, both new and old. For serious bibliophiles, there's always an

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intriguing selection of collectible, vintage books for sale. A smart selection of art prints suitable for kids rooms and their parents also impresses. Unlike at some other bookstores, the staff are exceptionally engaged, the aisles are all stroller friendly and the bathrooms are welcoming.

BEST KID FRIENDLY RESTAURANT

EJ’S LUNCHEONETTE
1271 3rd Avenue
212-472-0600
Ejsluncheonette.com

Kids—and parents—love diners and EJ’s is a wondrous example of why: a wide menu selection, all day breakfast, long hours, a happy commotion at busy times, and a good bathroom always. The attractive 1930s-style décor—minus that era’s Depression-related travails—is another plus. Quality bagels come from the classic Ess-A-Bagel, although children of our acquaintance favor the Belgian waffles and challah French toast.

HOLY SCHNITZEL
654 Amsterdam Avenue
212-362-HOLY

Holyschnitzel.com

If you have to ask yourself, “is this restaurant kid friendly?” forget it. They’re doing it wrong. At Holy Schnitzel, there’s no question that kids are as welcome anyone. Operating under the franchise slogan, “Keepin’ It Kosher,” it should be noted that gourmets of all faiths will enjoy burgers, schnitzel (of course, in chicken or veal), salads, wraps. For children, try the chicken fingers, hot dog or the Holy Kids Meal In A Box. Six other locations across Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and Long Island offer a familiar refuge on family day trips.

COWGIRL
519 Hudson Street
212-633-1133
www.cowgirlnyc.com

This Texas themed southern restaurant isn’t just for kids—they serve quite spicy dishes and alcohol too—but its attractive, kitschy Southern decor and broad, playful menu make it a popular family destination. The weekend-only brunch menu with Paris, Texas French toast; The Ranch Handler plate (2 eggs, 2 flapjacks, chicken apple sausage or bacon) and a whole “KIDDOS” section for children 11 and under are sure to please.
BEST TOY STORE

MARY ARNOLD TOYS
1178 Lexington Avenue
212-744-8510
www.maryarnoldtoys.com

The legend is true: though its changed location a number of times over the last nine decades, this is the oldest continuously operating toy store in New York City. Such longevity is no accident. With a helpful staff clearly devoted to their trade, here one can find not just something for any kid, but more remarkably, lots of toys, games, art projects and youth-friendly items that chain stores simply don’t carry. Pick hit for musical toddlers: DJECO brand, four-string Animambo Banjo, $45.

KIDDING AROUND
60 West 15th Street
212-645-6337
kiddingaroundtoys.com

Opened in 1989 by owner Christina Clark, this independent, family-run West Village favorite has only gotten better—and bigger through the years. Noted for their exceptional customer service, it’s almost as much fun to ask for help to hear an unexpected suggestion as it is to explore one’s own. Books, dolls, games, puzzles, puppets, playsets and much, much more—Kidding Around will have something—usually many things—of interest to even the most jaded customer. Their selection of wooden toys is exceptional.

WEST SIDE KIDS
201 W. 84th Street
212-496-7282
www.westsidekidsnyc.com

No kid ever has enough toys—or so kids think! Parents might disagree but usually give in. Enter West Side Kids, a neighborhood favorite since their opening in 1981, though they only moved into their current location in July 2023. Rest assured, it’s the same clean, friendly store, with a larger-than-you’d-expect selection of games, puzzles, arts and crafts projects, stuffed animals, books, balls, building blocks and more—basically, everything a child needs to fill—or overfill—their home with fun.

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The Gingerbread City Pop-Up Experience at the Seaport

The Seaport: theseaport.nyc/events/the-gingerbread-city-experience

Childlike wonder. A creation of confection. This holiday season, The Seaport and Museum of Architecture invite you to visit The Gingerbread City, a magical metropolis made from gingerbread, candy, and frosting. This is no amateur feat — more than 50 architects and designers are involved in The Gingerbread City’s creation, which will feature its own skyline of ginger buildings, moving trains, and twirling parts that will wow visitors of all ages. Learn how architects tackle global challenges such as climate change, as you indulge your sweet tooth and feel inspired by the city before you. Sign up for a workshop in the art of gingerbread, and take home your masterpiece, made from gingerbread by Balthazar Bakery.

Expert help enrolling in the World Trade Center Health Program

9/11 Environmental Action; 911ea.org; 212.330.7658; info@911ea.org
9/11 EA is an outreach and education partner of the World Trade Center Health Program. We provide free personalized enrollment assistance to people who lived, worked or went to school in Lower Manhattan during the time period of 9/11/01 - 7/31/2002 and think they developed an illness related to 9/11. If this applies to you, get in touch with us. You may qualify for medical benefits through the WTC Health Program. Common health conditions are asthma/breathing problems, digestive issues, GERD, cancer, anxiety, depression and PTSD. We are happy to provide information and answer any questions you may have.

Best Small Performing Arts Center

The Sheen Center for Thought and Culture; 18 Bleecker Street; sheencenter.org
Tucked into the vibrant fabric of NoHo, The Sheen Center for Thought and Culture stands out as a truly inviting venue, graced recently by the likes of Chita Rivera, James Taylor, Vanessa Williams, Mark Wahlberg, Kevin James, and Harry Connick Jr. With two distinctive theater spaces, including the gorgeous 273 seat Loreto, flexible 80 seat Shiner, Janet Hennessey Dilenschneider Art Gallery, and several rehearsal rooms, it showcases a diverse range of music, theater, dance, film, talks and live recordings, captivating audiences with its delightfully thought-provoking programming. The Sheen embodies the essence of an intimately sized arts center on a human scale.

Best Volunteer Opportunities

AARP New York: 750 Third Avenue 31 Floor, New York, NY 10017
AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people to choose how they live as they age. Our volunteers helped advance AARP’s efforts to ensure that towns, cities, and communities nationwide are livable for people of all ages. They might lend a hand at food drives around Thanksgiving. Or they may travel to Albany to make sure the governor and state legislators are aware of vital issues, like caregiving support and unaffordable prescription drug prices. Some volunteers lead discussions with local influencers; others share helpful information among their networks. Learn more at www.aarp.org/VolunteerwithAARPNY.

Best Spanish Language School in Manhattan

Cervantes Institute of New York: 211 East 49th Street, New York, NY 10017; Phone: 212-308-7720 ext. 3; Email: classprogram@cervantes.org; Website: www.nyork.cervantes.es
We are the largest international Spanish teaching and cultural organization in the world. Our internationally recognized curriculum is taught at over 90 centers all over the globe. We are a non-profit organization, founded by the Spanish government in 1991. We promote the Spanish language, its study and use, and the culture of Spain and all Spanish-speaking countries. We offer a wide range of Spanish courses at all levels, as well as tailored and continuing education courses for teachers. All this enriched with a variety of artistic and cultural events in our beautiful venue in Manhattan.
of Art and the Bronx Zoo, among other projects. If out with children, the nearby Twenty-Four Sycamores Park is a bonus, though of course there all dogs must remain leashed.

WEST 87TH STREET DOG RUN
West 87th Street at Riverside Park
The middle of three dog wonderful runs marking this stretch of Riverside Park—the others are at West 72nd and West 105th Streets, respectively—is a such a pleasurable spot to visit, even dog-less walkers and runners are delighted when they come by. As for the pups themselves, both small and large varieties delight in the dirt and, if their parents are somewhat less excited when rain makes mud, such are the burdens our rambunctious fur babies place upon us.

STUYVESANT SQUARE DOG PARK
2nd Avenue and 17th Street
While Washington Square and Tompkins Square Parks are both justly popular, they can sometimes be a little stressful for people and pooches alike. If you can get to Stuyvesant Square, things are usually quieter and more bucolic feeling. It should be noted that the surface here is pavement and cobblestone. This has advantages for cleanliness, and disadvantages for sliding, rolling and kicking up a dust storm in general. Complementing the general good spirits of this padded paws paradise is the park’s statue great Czech composer, Antonín Dvořák, who in the mid-1890s lived at 327 E. 17th Street and wrote both his cello concerto and 9th (New World) Symphony there.

BEST VETS

AT HOME VETERINARY
646-688-3087
Athomevet.com
While there are any number of respected veterinarians on the Upper East Side, for certain people and certain pets, the advantages of a vet who makes house calls are manifold. It takes less time, there’s a lot less stress and the cost is usually only slightly more than going to an office. Enter Dr. Jonathan Leshanski, who’s been zig-zagging the neighborhood—and other parts of Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens—caring for cats and dogs since 1997. With his bag of equipment and the experience of treating more than 15,000 animals, Leshanski can perform wellness and illness examinations, diagnostic testing, vaccinations, and microchipping. For treatment, Leshanski offers both western and alternative medicine.
YOU READ IT HERE FIRST

Aug. 28, 2023
11:25 a.m.

RUN DMC URGED COUNCIL TO RENEW ARENA’S PERMIT FOREVER, NOW VOTE HEADS TO FULL COUNCIL

Aug. 28, 2023
7:48 p.m.

NYC Council committee allows MSG to stay put for five more years

Aug. 17, 2023

BIG PORN SITE IS TRYING TO FORCE EAST VILLAGE RESTAURANT DONER HAUS TO CHANGE ITS LOGO

Aug. 19, 2023

East Village restaurant faces legal battle with Pornhub owners

Jul. 24, 2023

The New York Times

Jul. 25, 2023

 BODY ARTIST ANDY GOLUB ANNOUNCES FAREWELL TO NYC’S BODY FEST AFTER DECADE-LONG RUN

based on traditional Chinese medicine, including acupuncture and herbalism.

WESTSIDE VETERINARY CENTER
220 West 83rd Street
212-580-1800
westsidesvetcenter.com

Opened since 1985 and located in a cute, inviting two story building, the Westside Veterinary Center is a highly praised full-service pet care medical facility and an accredited member of the Animals Hospital Association.

It’s not just dogs and cats here either—birds, rabbits and other, more exotic pets are also welcome. (Not even a baby elephant would fit through the door, however.)

Hospital director Karen Cantor is a member of the Association of Avian Veterinarians; while others on her staff include an acupuncturist, a surgeon, and a specialist in internal medicine.

THE CAT PRACTICE
145 West 24th Street
212-677-1401
twecaatpractice.com

It’s called The Cat Practice because that’s exactly what it is: not just the first cats-only veterinarian in Chelsea, or Manhattan, but the entire country. Founded in the 1970s, its medical director is Dr. Eric Daughtry, a Brooklyn-native who’s been with the practice since 2001. For cats and cat owners who consider themselves peculiar or both, there is no better destination. For those who need it, the Cat Practice also offers boarding and prescription diet food for felines.

BEST RESCUE

ASPCA
424 East 92nd Street
212-876-7700
aspca.org/nyc

Founded in 1866 by Henry Bergh—who’s pyramid-shaped tomb with attendant animal sculptures is among the most impressive burial sites in Brooklyn’s historic Greenwood Cemetery—the ASPCA remains a standard bearer in the animal advocacy movement. In New York, this means several things, including mobile adoption events and a dedicated pet adoption center in Yorkville. Visits to the 92nd Street location are by appointment only, so call or e-mail first.

MUDDY PAWS RESCUE
646-598-7297
www.muddyfowsrescue.org

Founded by Rachael Ziering in 2016, Muddy Paws is a non-profit, fostering-based dog rescue operation with no single shelter location. While this does mean that Upper West Siders can’t just walk into a building for a bounding, barking meet and greet, regular adoption events held at a PetSmart store in Flatiron and the organization’s reputation is such that any prospective foster pet parent or adoptee should talk to the Muddy Paws team and see what’s going on. Ample volunteer opportunities for dog lovers are also available.

BIDEWAEE

152 West 24th Street
866-282-8133
bideawee.org

Founded in 1903 by Mrs. Flora D’Auby Jenkins Kibbe, Bideawee—which means “stay a while” in Scottish—is among Manhattan’s most highly regarded no-kill animal shelters. Dogs and cats are available for both adoption and fostering. For those who adopt certain dogs who have been difficult to place because they are shy or were reactive to an adoptee’s other pets, Bideawee offers a free training package they call the Oh, Behave! Training Academy. For those who spend time on Long Island, Bideawee also has operations in Wantagh and Westhampton.
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