

DISTRICTS FOR DESIGNERS



FAITH'S FASHION FOCUS:

Brooklyn Boasts Cobble Hill

Once an independent city, Brooklyn remains a somewhat iconoclastic shopping scene, with each neighborhood having a distinct point of view. Perhaps no neighborhood better displays that individuality than Cobble Hill, which dates from the 17th century, but has a decidedly contemporary mix of shopping and dining.

VISIT THE HILL

Located just south of posh Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill is bordered by Atlantic Avenue on the north, Hicks Street to the West, Smith Street on the east and Degraw Street to the south. Much of the neighborhood is a historic district, protected by the Landmark Preservation Commission.

Originally settled in the 1640s by Dutch farmers, the neighborhood was named for the cobblestones dumped in the area after being used as ballast on trading ships from Europe. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries,

Cobble Hill developed along with the rest of the borough, eventually becoming dominated by row houses. The result is a brownstone-laden neighborhood that combines 19th century architecture with contemporary boutiques and restaurants along its major shopping boulevards, Smith Street and Court Street. A revitalization began in the 1990s as professionals priced out of Manhattan and Brooklyn Heights moved southward – and the Middle Eastern shops and restaurants that kicked off the commercial renaissance has continued with trendy stores and dining of all types.

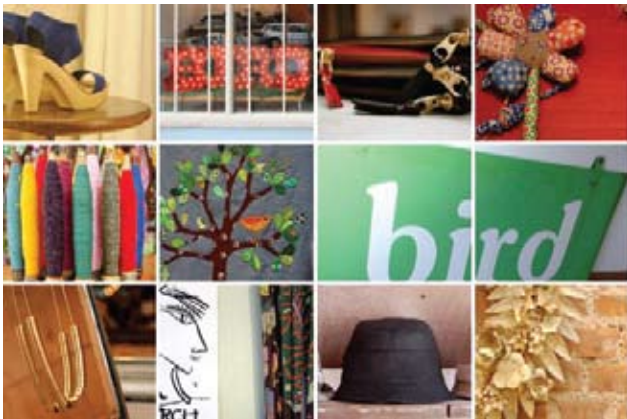
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SHOP THE HILL

Nor surprisingly, then, given the architecture of the area, Cobble Hill is home to the unique boutique, offering home furnishings, apparel, nibbles and often run by a local resident.

The neighborhood is abuzz with reports that Barneys New York is looking for a local site for its first Brooklyn Co-Op, but there's already plenty for the fashionistas. Burlap at 385 Henry Street in Cobble Hill received rave reviews in the New York Times for its service and beautifully edited, unique combination of merchandise – from stiletto heels to perfumes, and casual clothing. Nearby, Jonathan Adler offers home accessories at 378 Atlantic Avenue,



“*[Cobble Hill is] one of New York’s most architecturally interesting, loveliest and liveliest neighborhoods.*”

the major thoroughfare that separates Cobble Hill and Boerum Hill. Diane T (174 Court Street) offers European and U.S. designers in an art-deco showplace.

Bird, at 220 Smith Street, offers apparel made from unique prints and textiles – it’s run by Jennifer Mankins, the former head buyer for Steven Alan, another merchant in the neighborhood. Also on the textile front, a new entry is La Casita, which combines a yarn shop and café at 253 Smith Street. More modern apparel can be found at Dear Fieldbinder at 198 Smith Street.

Home goods and accessories can be found at Classic Impressions (296 Court Street), which stocks everything from martini glasses to jewelry. Artist-owned N.C.H. Studio (201 Court Street) carries handcrafted glassware, jewelry, clocks and cards. Contemporary furniture from up-and-coming designers can be found at Home Court (286 Court Street) – the owner has made sure that the pieces will actually fit in the narrow doors of brownstones!

Stationery mavens will want to check out Papel (225 Court Street), which offers gift paper, note cards and other

niceties that might revive actual letter-writing. Shakespeare’s Sister (270 Court Street) supports original artists and artisans, selling everything from candleholders to switchplates. Want to meet your favorite author? It’s not unlikely at BookCourt (163 Court Street), an independent bookseller that offers regular readings.

DINE ON THE HILL

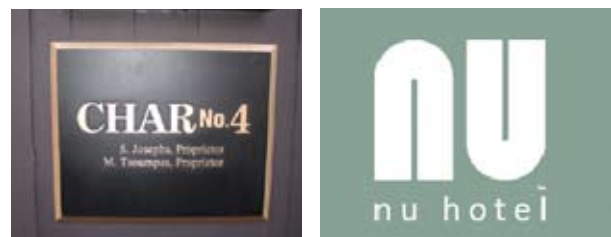
The Smith Street revival began with an incursion of Middle Eastern restaurants, but Cobble Hill today features just about every cuisine and food store. Char No. 4 (196 Smith Street) lives up to its name, with smoked meats accompanied by an amazing selection of 300 whiskeys.

Mile End, a Montreal-style deli has recently opened at 97 Hoyt Street. Not a restaurant, but a local legend, Staubitz Market (222 Court Street) remains a family-run butcher and gourmet market after nearly a century. That’s because they offer the freshest meats and unusual specialties (Ostrich, anyone? You’ll find it here.). Palmyra is a new Mediterranean restaurant at 316 Court Street, while Cody’s Bar & Grill (154 Court Street) offers a typical Irish sports bar experience. Have a sweet tooth? Blue Marble Ice Cream has a new location at Court St. and Wyckoff.

Coming soon is Strong Place, also on Court Street, which plans over 20 beers on tap, enhancing a bistro menu.

STAY ON THE HILL

This is a true residential neighborhood; so don’t look for groups of large hotels. The Sheraton Brooklyn at 228 Duffield Street in Clinton Hill and the Marriott at the Brook-



lyn Bridge will serve those looking for a major chain. The Holiday Inn Express at 279 Butler Street sites between Cobble Hill and adjacent Park Slope, while the Nu Hotel offers what it calls an environment-friendly, contemporary environment at 85 Smith Street.

The above is just a sampling of the shopping and dining adventures a visitor can have in one of New York’s most architecturally interesting, loveliest and liveliest neighborhoods. Cobble Hill is just a short subway ride away from Manhattan – and not far from the Long Island Railroad station at Atlantic Avenue. Take a day and see boutiques and merchandise you’re unlikely to find anywhere else. Happy shopping! ■