

Hemispheres

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FASHION FORWARD

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THE HEMI Q&A: TED DANSON

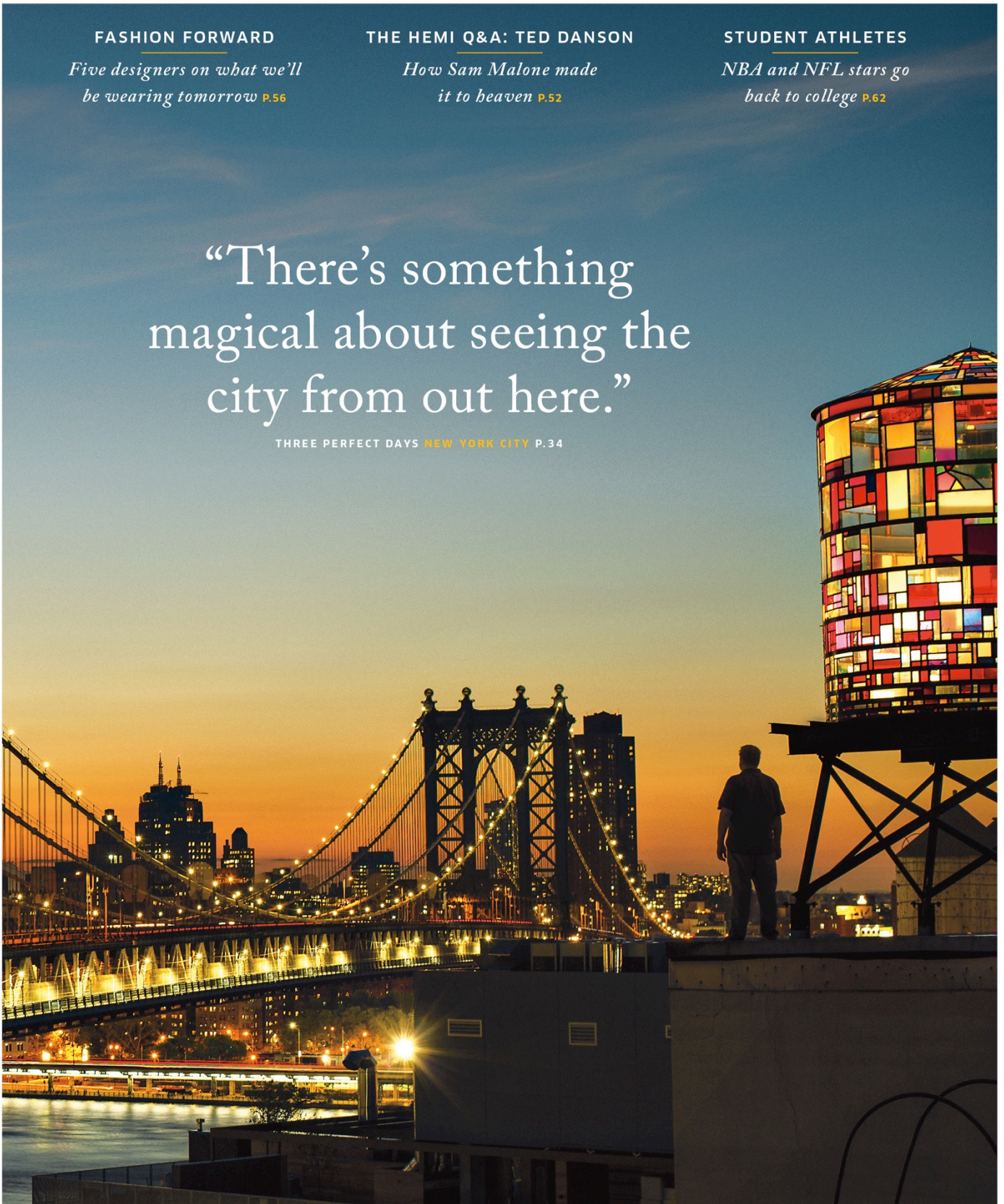
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“There’s something
magical about seeing the
city from out here.”

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Three Perfect Days: New York City

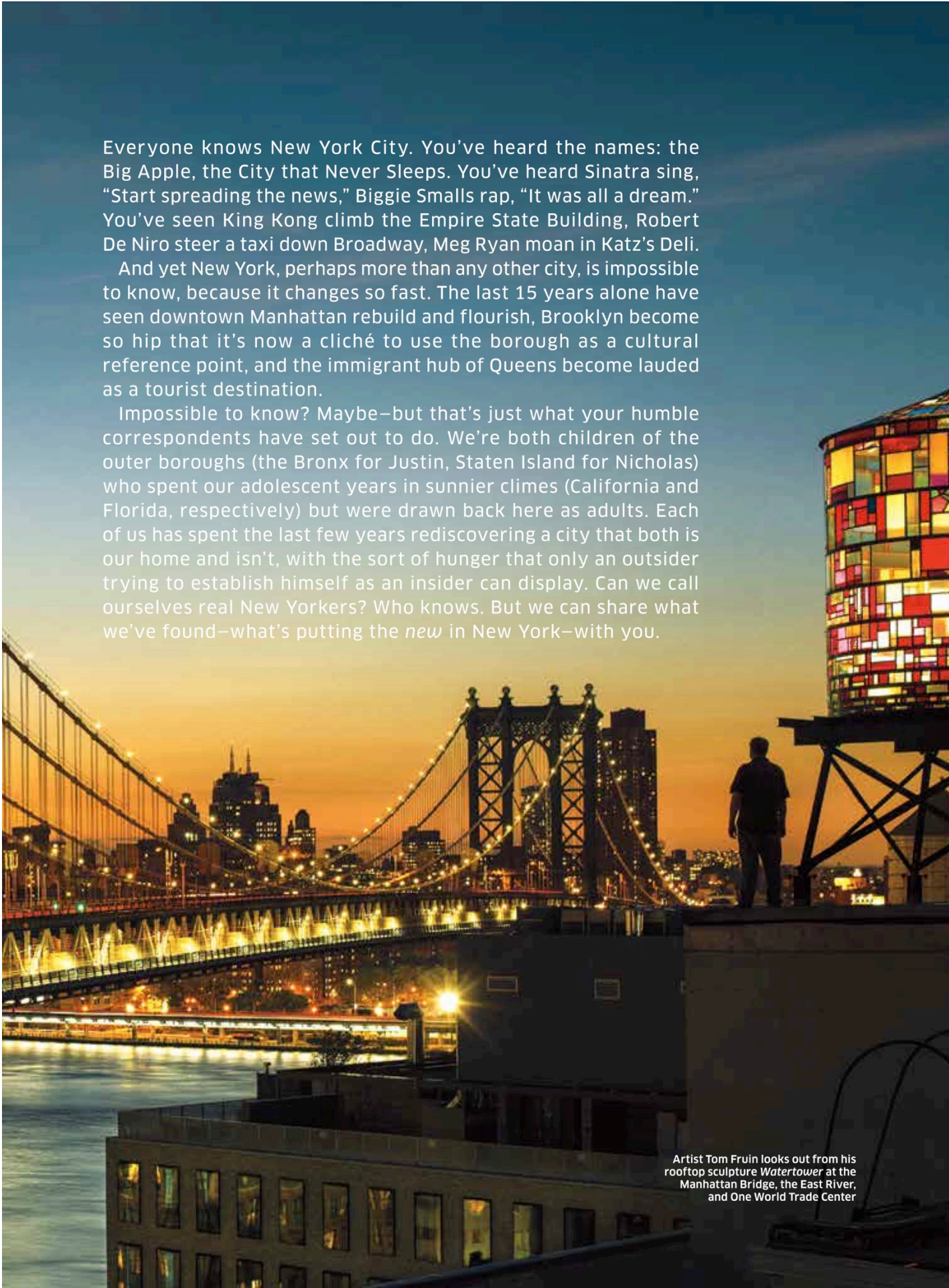
BY NICHOLAS DERENZO AND JUSTIN GOLDMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK HARTMAN



Everyone knows New York City. You've heard the names: the Big Apple, the City that Never Sleeps. You've heard Sinatra sing, "Start spreading the news," Biggie Smalls rap, "It was all a dream." You've seen King Kong climb the Empire State Building, Robert De Niro steer a taxi down Broadway, Meg Ryan moan in Katz's Deli.

And yet New York, perhaps more than any other city, is impossible to know, because it changes so fast. The last 15 years alone have seen downtown Manhattan rebuild and flourish, Brooklyn become so hip that it's now a cliché to use the borough as a cultural reference point, and the immigrant hub of Queens become lauded as a tourist destination.

Impossible to know? Maybe—but that's just what your humble correspondents have set out to do. We're both children of the outer boroughs (the Bronx for Justin, Staten Island for Nicholas) who spent our adolescent years in sunnier climes (California and Florida, respectively) but were drawn back here as adults. Each of us has spent the last few years rediscovering a city that both is our home and isn't, with the sort of hunger that only an outsider trying to establish himself as an insider can display. Can we call ourselves real New Yorkers? Who knows. But we can share what we've found—what's putting the *new* in New York—with you.



Artist Tom Fruin looks out from his rooftop sculpture *Watertower* at the Manhattan Bridge, the East River, and One World Trade Center



Nonino, honey cordial, chamomile bitters, peated scotch mist). They taste so good that we don't notice how strong they are until it's too late.

In need of something to sop up those drinks, we pop next door to Apothéke's Mexican-themed sister bar, Pulqueria, for roasted jackfruit tacos and tuna crudo tostadas. It would have been a great preemptive hangover remedy—except that the cantina also serves a mean mezcal Negroni. Oops.

“New Yorkers are so open-minded. It doesn't matter where they're from—they're here to explore.”

From here, it's a 15-minute stumble to our hotel, The Beekman, which debuted this summer in a 19th-century office building on the site of the theater that staged the North American premiere of *Hamlet*, back in 1761. A few drinks deep, we gaze at the night sky through the pyramidal skylight that tops the hotel's nine-story Gilded Age atrium, which is fretted with ornate ironwork. Shakespeare would have loved this place.



Day Two: Queens

IN WHICH THE GUYS SEE THE CITY IN MINIATURE, MUNCH THEIR WAY THROUGH AMERICA'S MOST DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOOD, AND MEET THE NEW METS

We start today the way millions of New Yorkers do every day: on a train. Specifically, we ride the 4 up to Grand Central Terminal, where, after a quick glance up at the famed constellation-decorated ceiling, we hop on the 7 and cross under the East River into the booming Queens neighborhood of Long Island City.

We're both flagging, so we grab brews and croissants at Birch Coffee, and then drop our bags at the Boro Hotel. The family-owned property, which opened last summer, plays up the industrial-chic feel of the neighborhood with steel beams wrapping around the building like stylized scaffolding. We pause on the balcony of our 12th-floor corner room to take in the view of the city, from the skyscrapers of Midtown to the low-slung buildings of Queens and the elevated train tracks that cut through them. Time to get back on one of those.

After 40 minutes of watching the world whip by through the 7's windows, we arrive at Flushing Meadows Corona Park. A short walk takes us to the site of the 1939 and 1964 World's Fairs. It's already hot, but the mist from the fountains below the Unisphere, a 120-foot-tall steel model of the Earth, offers a cooling respite. Three fellow parkgoers climb right in, but we restrain ourselves.

Just past the Unisphere, we find the Queens Museum, in a building that was constructed for the 1939 fair and underwent a

\$69 million renovation a few years ago. The centerpiece of the collection here is the *Panorama of the City of New York*. Championed by controversial city planner Robert Moses, the *Panorama* is a detailed rendering of the five boroughs built to a 1:1,200 scale (so the Empire State Building is only 15 inches tall). We circle the glass walkway above the model, pointing out personal landmarks—the Bronx and Staten Island neighborhoods where we were born, our current Brooklyn homes—punctuating most sentences with, “This is awesome.”

For lunch, we take a short train ride to Jackson Heights. This is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the country—167 languages are said to be spoken here—and with that diversity, of course, come great eats. To help us sift through those offerings, we’ve enlisted Jeff Orlick, a CBS news production crewman and restaurant beverage director who organizes an annual Tibetan dumpling tasting contest here.

“I moved here because of the food,” Orlick says as we stroll along Roosevelt Avenue, his home of nine years. He pauses as a train rattles overhead. “Food is the best way to put yourself into another culture.” The first culture we encounter is Filipino, in the one-block Little Manila. We stop at Fiesta Grill, a *turo turo* (Tagalog for “point point”) counter, named for how you order. First we point at the *turon*, a sweet banana and jackfruit eggroll, then we point at the *bopis*. “That’s for the adventurous,” the guy behind the counter says as he spoons a hash of pig heart and lung into a bowl. It turns out fortune does favor the bold, because the chopped offal is actually delicious.

From there, we pass a clutch of Thai spots and cross Diversity Plaza, the storefronts now bursting with colorful Bangladeshi signs. We grab a *jhal muri* (puffed rice, chickpeas, spicy mustard oil) from an 87-year-old street cart vendor and eat as we walk, the signage around us changing



Storefronts in Jackson Heights's Little India



“
Everyone in the world wants to come to the United States. Where do you go in the States? New York. There’s nothing like Queens’s Roosevelt Avenue in the world. It’s so intimidating. Everyone’s speaking a different language, and it’s just so much. But the people are really open.”

JEFF ORLICK
BEVERAGE DIRECTOR,
LITTLE TIBET;
ORGANIZER,
MOMO CRAWL

to Tibetan and Nepali. We eat Tibetan beef dumplings, or *momos*, while leaning against the Amdo Kitchen food truck, the winner of last year’s Momo Crawl, then cross the street to Bhanca Ghar, where we eat *sel roti*, a sort of cross between naan and a doughnut. “This is like the food you get in Kathmandu,” Orlick says. “Meeting the people here inspired me to go there. It was incredible.”

Across 75th Street, Spanish signs prevail. Roughly half the people on the street are wearing Colombian soccer jerseys. “During the last World Cup, Colombia was doing well, and the street was going crazy,” Orlick recalls. “People were throwing bags of flour and stuff.” We stop into the Arepa Lady restaurant, which grew out of an immensely popular street cart, and we have *arepas de queso* and *chocolo*, two preparations of the fried corn and cheese staple, which we wash down with the juice of the South American *lulo* fruit.

We’re done, right? Nope. Orlick steers us into a bodega, and we squeeze down a narrow aisle to a seafood counter, La Esquina del Camarón Mexicano, for shrimp and octopus cocktail in a sweet tomato sauce. Then we all agree to never eat again.



A barista at The Lot Radio

Understandably, we need to sit for a while, and we've got just the place: Citi Field, the Flushing home of the New York Mets. The Yankees may be the iconic local baseball team, but the Mets have recently surpassed the Bronx Bombers in popularity thanks to their superior stadium—which was inspired by Ebbets Field, the long-ago home of the Brooklyn Dodgers—and their exciting squad, which made it to the World Series last year. Today, the Mets have a Fall Classic rematch with the champion Kansas City Royals, and they win 4-3 behind Noah Syndergaard, a 24-year-old pitcher nicknamed Thor for his long blond locks, 6-foot-6 frame, and 98-mph fastball.

Evening is coming on as we file out of the ballpark, surrounded by happy throngs in blue and orange. We head back to the waterfront and Socrates Sculpture Park, home to a collection of inspired installations, highlighted by Jessica Segall's *Fugue in Bb*, which transforms an upturned piano into an active beehive.

We watch the sun dip behind Manhattan's snagged skyline, then head off to break our halfhearted fast. Dinner is at Long Island City's Mu Ramen, a 22-seat space that reflects the area's avant-globalism. South Korean-born, Orthodox Jewish-raised, Per Se-trained chef-owner Joshua Smookler tweaks the noodle-bar formula on his menu, which includes foie-gras-and-brioche-stuffed chicken wings and a nontraditional cornmeal and scallion okonomiyaki with smoked trout, tobiko, and foie maple syrup. Under wooden slats that call to mind the ribs of a ship, we tuck into bowls of oxtail-and-bone-marrow broth served with corned beef and addictive "crack kimchi," washed down with a few green-tea-and-wasabi-infused Baird Wabi-Sabi Japan Pale Ales.

In search of a nightcap, we walk across Long Island City to Dutch Kills, a speakeasy



By the Numbers

8.5 million
Population of New York City (larger than 40 U.S. states)

2.6 million
Population of Brooklyn, which would make it America's fourth-largest city (at 2.3 million, Queens would be fifth)

1 million
Estimated pigeon population of NYC

800
Languages spoken (approximately) in NYC, according to the Endangered Language Alliance

520
Miles of coastline in NYC (longer than the coastlines of nine states)

846
Miles of track that link the MTA's 469 subway stations (the distance from NYC to Birmingham, Alabama)

879
Shoe size of the Statue of Liberty

9.5
Width, in feet, of NYC's narrowest house (pictured), at 75 1/2 Bedford Street in the West Village

from the team behind Milk & Honey, the now defunct lounge that spurred the city's cocktail revolution. Outside, there's simply a sign that says "BAR." Inside, it's all atmospheric candlelight and dark wood booths shrouded by heavy red curtains. As we're ordering Tiger Chilled Coffees (rum, cinnamon syrup, allspice liqueur, cold-brew coffee, whipped cream, absinthe) we notice that the menu offers meat pies from M. Wells, the acclaimed Québécois steakhouse nearby. We've already consumed 10,000 calories today, so what are a few more? Bring us the pies.

Day Three: Brooklyn

IN WHICH THE GUYS SEE THE CITY'S BRIDGES FROM ABOVE AND BELOW, YUK IT UP WITH AN SNL CAST MEMBER, AND FIND A BAR AT THE END OF THE WORLD

We shouldn't have had the pies. Lumpenly, we make our way across the Pulaski Bridge and down into the world's trendiest neighborhood: Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Our first stop is the William Vale Hotel, a 22-story angled white tower that opened this summer. Situated across the street from Brooklyn Bowl and the Brooklyn Brewery, two early harbingers that "cool" could cross the river, the hotel is a symbolic final step in the Manhattanization of the neighborhood. But it's hard to find fault with this when you're standing on the hotel rooftop, with no other building to obstruct your view, the whole of the city at your feet.

To get our wheels turning, we walk along the edge of McCarren Park to the most "Brooklyn" coffee shop imaginable. The Lot Radio is a black shipping container plunked down in a flamingo-studded, triangular gravel lot. One side of the container sells coffee from Brooklyn roaster Luft; the other has a booth where a rotating cast of DJs spin records.

For breakfast, we head up Bedford Avenue and cross into Greenpoint, a Polish neighborhood that has seen its own cool quotient rise in recent years. (HBO's zeitgeisty *Girls* films here.) At the corner of Manhattan Avenue, across from a graffiti mural of *The Simpsons* sax player Bleeding Gums Murphy, we find Frankel's Delicatessen. The restaurant is the work of two Jewish brothers from the Upper West Side—one a chef, the other an indie pop musician—who wanted to recreate the classic