



NEWYORK
PRESS

THE
DELINQUENT'S
GUIDE
UPPER EAST
SIDE



THE NOOKS & CRANNIES
THAT KEEP THE STUFFY
NABE FROM GOING
COMPLETELY STALE

PLUS: BILL CUNNINGHAM'S CAMERA CREATES STATUS.
JAKE YUZNA ADDS NIGHTLIFE TO MAD COLLECTION.

THE DELINQUENT'S GUIDE TO THE UPPER EAST SIDE



SAPPHIRE



EASTSIDE BILLIARDS

EXPLORING THE NOOKS AND CRANNIES THAT KEEP THE STUFFY NABE FROM GOING COMPLETELY STALE BY DEB SPERLING

THERE'S NO NEED TO SET YOU UP WITH A GLOSSY DESCRIPTION OF UPPER EAST SIDE AMBIANCE

Just glance at the numbers 10021, and then try to picture a distraught, Burberry-cloaked King Charles Cavalier Spaniel scurrying about in a vain attempt to avoid certain death by Louboutin impalement.

If you have no idea what that line means, the confused look on your face only highlights the impenetrable bubble of wealth encapsulating the stretch between 59th and 96th streets, from the park to the river.

Yet even in a post-*Gossip Girl* world, some people still see fit to remind us just what a terrible place this neighborhood can be. Alex Williams' (perhaps subtly critical) profile of the Native Society in the *New York Times*' Thursday Styles section March 2 was the latest attempt to promote the set's attempt at defining their existence. An ostensibly "elite" club for Upper East Siders and other sufficiently well-connected twenty-something socialites, the Native Society is a cabal who make Facebook accounts for their dogs (but not themselves) and who say things like, "Our minds develop faster... We're international."

It highlighted the stratum lifestyles that we sometimes forget exists in the city. While just a few blocks away, a ragtag queue forms for a chance to work at the new Chipotle at 84th and Third, these uniquely special "natives"—whose education and experience levels may, in fact, not qualify them for much better than retail or food handling—flounce around the Plaza at black-tie networking parties. But guess what: There are real people who live and work and play on the Upper East Side. People who went to synagogue, but *not* private school, with these elites. People who feel closer to their doormen than their neighbors; who tip cashiers, pick up after their own dogs and don't think an elbow to the ribs is a reasonable way to shorten one's trip to the front of the line at Pinkberry.

Should you find yourself amongst the herd, it's important to know that you, too, have your own special little underground club. But be warned, even places like Auction House, which claim a "laidback" vibe, can be misleading and give you the distinct feeling that you've stepped into a scene from *American Psycho*.

Sure, there's always a risk of encountering some of those people, no matter how well you plan. But the bright side of the UES elitism is that, for the most part, they keep their distance from the hoi polloi. So we've put together a list of a few of the places that remind us that even the most well-polished loafer still has its scuffs, and that there is a part of the Upper East Side where no one gives a shit who your father is. Most of these spots will reduce your risk of jewelry-related retinal burns, some are quirky, some are dingy and a few, we admit, are flat-out obnoxious. But they all make the Upper East Side a place *almost* bearable to experience.

TOUCH YOUR JUNK AT THE UNITED ARTISTS THEATER 1629 1ST AVE (AT E. 84TH ST)

Save the installation of a single electronic ticket machine, this theater probably hasn't seen a renovation since the early '90s. Walking in the door, the smell of stale popcorn and musky nostalgia is overwhelming—even for a movie theater. And there's just one screen, two floors underground. In the middle of a weekday, careful seat-selection used to be a necessity if you wanted to avoid the Upper East Side Movie Theater Masturbator. In this neck of the woods, there are plenty of theaters to choose from, but for sentimental dark-corner-lurkers like us, the UA can't be beat. It was just the perfect creepy, dingy place to see *Black Swan*—twice.

GET DRUNK AND COMMANDEER THE JUKEBOXES AT JACKSON HOLE 1611 2ND AVE (BETW E. 83RD & E. 84TH STS)

This branch of the obnoxious chain is a welcome respite from the rest of the nabe, in everything but price. Still, a single burger (\$6–\$15, depending on how much you love bacon) at this faux-old-fashioned diner could feed an average person for about three days. Open until 3 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays (and as late as 1 a.m. the rest of the week), Jackson Hole makes a great last stop on any UES bar crawl, or a great hangover soother the following morning. Bring lots of quarters so you can hit up the juke as you navigate past a crowd of firefighters to down a cocktail or five from the full bar.

SMOKE INDOORS AT LEXINGTON BAR & BOOKS 1020 LEXINGTON AVE (AT E. 73RD ST)

With a "casual yet stylish" dress code that is "strictly enforced"—and clientele that has included De Niro and Tarantino—this is a special-occasion type of place. Expect to pay \$12–\$16 for a serious whiskey or a well-crafted cocktail, and even more for the privilege of feeling especially important as you smoke a fine Cohiba (sorry, kiddies, still no Cuban cigars) inside. There's seldom any kind of line, but you'll still need to show up recently showered and relatively sober if you want a chance at getting in the door. Official policy is that you must be over 25 to enter—a deterrent for most of the so-called Natives—but experience has shown that attitude matters more than ID.

PAY LESS THAN \$7 FOR LUNCH AT GREAT WALL 1244 LEXINGTON AVE (AT E. 84TH ST)

If you want to eat well and cheaply on the Upper East Side, hang with the people who work there, not the people who live there. Your average pure-bred Upper East Sider wouldn't dream of tarnishing his tassels by setting foot in this place, sparing you the frustration of interacting with the worst of the locals. Instead, this delicious, slightly dingy-looking Chinese hole-in-the-wall is packed to the brim with hot boys in blue collars (especially when it's time for the \$5.75 lunch special), yet the service is always quick and polite. For a Chinese place, they also make some pretty damn



HEIDELBERG RESTAURANT

serious fried chicken, French fries and—oddly enough—fried plantains.

BELT IT AT BRANDY'S PIANO BAR
235 E. 84TH ST. (BETW. 2ND & 3RD AVES.)

Thought you had to head to the West Side (or The Townhouse) to sing show tunes with your besties? Think again. Rather than slumming it with the typical karaoke scene, this out-of-the-way spot has been pleasing theater queens and their girlfriends for years. Just watch out: The bartenders (especially Justin Lopez) and waitresses also sing while waiting for that next audition, so you may need to practice before belting it.

MAKE AN IRISH ENTRANCE AT RYAN'S DAUGHTER
350 E. 85TH ST. (BETW. 1ST & 2ND AVES.)

The second you walk into Ryan's Daughter, even when it's crowded, the friendly Irish bartender introduces himself (Mick!), asks your name and actually remembers it. On a cold day, he'll offer you an Irish Coffee or Hot Toddy before you've even had time to self-check your coat in the free closet. Leave your purse on your bar stool, and it'll be there when you get back from your smoke break. A strong cocktail averages around \$6, and comes with an unlimited free supply of potato chips, in at least three flavors. You'll make fast friends in the uncharacteristically friendly and diverse crowd (occasionally including young children and actual people of color), which tops off the *Cheers-y* charm.

GET YOUR JERSEY SHORE ON AT STIR LOUNGE
1363 1ST AVE. (BETW. E. 72ND & E. 73RD STS.)

Sometimes you need to slip on a pair of heels, sip something that costs more than your hourly wage and fist-pump with a bunch of self-important jerks. And for about a tenth of the price of the cheapest clubbing options in the Meatpacking district, you can get a sweet corner table at Stir, in prime view of the bizarre crowd of *Jersey Shore*-types who look like they got lost searching for Pacha, and aged about 10 years in the process.

EAT A WEINER AT HEIDELBERG RESTAURANT
1646 2ND AVE. #1 (BETW. E. 85TH & E. 86TH STS.)

Want to see a granny in a dirndl? You got it. This is the spot that people end up

at when looking for authentic German food, and they ain't joking. One of the gimmicks is drinking Das Boot—meaning you drink beer from a boot—but you don't have to pay \$30 for such a silly experience. Just split the sausage platter, and you'll be fine. As one online reviewer pointed out, it was his "first encounter with mean German women with bigger wrists than me." We get the point.

GO DEEP INSIDE THE TOOL BOX
1742 2ND AVE. (BETW. E. 90TH & E. 91ST STS.)

The ownership and management have changed at this long-lasting UES gay bar, but The Tool Box remains. With the tagline "Where everything fits," The Tool Box emphasizes acceptance and diversity of clientele. There's never a cover charge, but any time you pay for something at The Tool Box, you can rest easy with the knowledge that your cash may be funneled into the many charitable organizations the bar supports. Formerly an orgy dungeon, the downstairs level is now billed as "a place to relax" if the upstairs *Glee* Night or go-go session gets too loud. But we suspect any relaxing that happens in this space is still of the post-coital variety.

CUE UP AT EASTSIDE BILLIARDS
163 E. 86TH ST. (BETW. 3RD & LEX AVES.)

Remember when pool halls ruled as the thing to do with your pals on any night of the week? With similar places closing all over the city, this ol' standby remains an oasis of shady fun. Although you may have to get over the prison-like décor—are you really worried about the way it looks (or smells) in a pool joint?—the tables and equipment are still in excellent condition, and there's enough of a pool shark scene to keep it lively. Try it out during happy hour for great beer deals.

COMPENSATE FOR YOUR FAILING SEX LIFE AT SAPPHIRE
333 E. 60TH ST. (AT 2ND AVE.)

Confession: We haven't actually stepped inside Sapphire, and we can't make any claims about the clientele, but it perks us up to be reminded that you can never really "clean up" a neighborhood. It further warms our hearts to know that no matter how rich or well-connected they may be, some people still have to pay for it. And by it, we mean the sight of boobies. ☹

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