

BY KATIE KELLY BELL

Westside STORY

West Atlanta used to be Atlanta's ugly duckling. Situated just west of Georgia Tech and I-75, this orphaned, ignored and somewhat desolate location was the part of town everyone dismissed (possibly because it was home to stockyards, railroad tracks and the city waterworks). This once industrial wasteland has recently matured into an area with chic lofts that provide both an urban edge and skyline views of the city. Indeed, the Westside has become Atlanta's outpost of promise. If you seek a unique "unscene" experience in shopping, dining, music and just plain loafing around, put the Westside on your itinerary.

EAT

Located just across the street from the aforementioned waterworks (yes, they are still there) is **The Westside Urban Market**. The market is the epicenter of chefs (and husband-and-wife team) Anne Quatrano and Clifford Harrison's culinary empire, which includes two of Atlanta's most esteemed fine dining establishments: **Bacchanalia** and **Quinones**, as well as a mouthwatering gourmet market, **Star Provisions** (www.starprovisions.com). Here you can enjoy a to-go breakfast of a delicious scone and pick up some specialty cheeses and charcuterie for later.

The menus at these two restaurants change on a regular basis, and you can

expect to find local treasures (many ingredients come from the chefs' personal farm), such as the vegetables in the pickled wild ramp risotto with roasted asparagus, and Florida black grouper with rainbow chard and artichokes.

Just beyond the market is the casual, comfy and neighborly **West Egg Café** (www.westeggcafe.com). It's the type of place in which you can linger, offering all-day breakfast (including delights such as a pimiento cheese and bacon omelet), along with free Wi-Fi, a hodge-podge library and lounge area, and a bottomless cup of coffee. Before you leave, be sure to order one of the cupcakes, considered by many to be the most delicious in the city.

For lunch, grab a gourmet sandwich at the casual and eclectic **Pangaea** (www.globalgrubbin.com), where a world of cuisines come together in the form of Italian paninis, Vietnamese street food (think lemongrass barbecue pork sandwich) and Middle Eastern favorites like chicken shawarma.

A few blocks south on Howell Mill Road, the main artery running through the Westside, is a relatively new Italian deli and market, **Toscano & Sons** (www.toscanoandsons.com). Order one of the six daily paninis (the "viola" with mortadella, speck, salami, provolone and tapenade is one of the best), or browse the thoughtful and unique selection of Italian wines, beers, cheeses, cured meats, pastas and sauces.



LaCour Photography

4 FOUR MORE TASTES TO TRY

ATLANTA'S FORMER INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT IS REBORN AS A MECCA OF ALL THAT'S URBAN & UNUSUAL



FOOD STUDIO

Seasonal American cuisine and fabulous wine are served in the airy space of the King Plow Arts Center. Lit mainly by candlelight, this is one of the city's most romantic dining establishments. www.thefoodstudio.com

JCT KITCHEN & BAR

Chef Ford Fry delivers farmstead Southern food to eclectic crowds. Best bets include fried chicken with macaroni and cheese, and the oysters Rockefeller with spinach and bacon. www.jctkitchen.com

TAQUERIA DEL SOL

You will find snappy service, cheap eats, no frills, and tacos and more tacos. The battered and fried fish taco reigns supreme, or try the roasted chicken enchiladas with lemon cream. www.taqueriadelsol.com

FIGO PASTA

The fried artichoke ravioli in spicy tomato sauce is a winner, or build your own. With more than 19 homemade pastas and 11 fresh sauces to choose from, you should come away pleased. www.figopasta.com



A LOOK AT WHAT'S INSIDE: Clockwise from above: Octane, Luxe, Toscano & Sons, Bobbe Gillis Gallery



SHOP

Upscale designer duds (read: Prada, Gucci) at a fraction of the price are the theme at designer sample boutique **Luxe** (www.luxeatlanta.com). And don't miss the gorgeous handbags and belts. Shop owner Jenn Ripley pulled up roots in New York City in order to bring her retail concept to Atlanta. "I just love the Westside with its warehouse, SoHo feel," she says. "This side of town is much more earthy and organic and not as programmed."

Adjacent to Luxe is the playful **1*Five*O** (www.150atlanta.com), where all items cost less than \$150. Co-ed couture with a more urban contemporary feel shares shelf space with vintage candy, *Mad Libs* and PF Flyers. Try to make it to one

of the stores great monthly events that feature free Pabst Blue Ribbon, popcorn and live local music.

Visit **Sprout** (404-352-0864) for a unique selection of children's furniture and bedding, **No Más Productions** (www.nomasproductions.com) has it all: architectural elements, garden décor, furniture and lighting. It specializes in items and artisans that are truly unusual and not mass-produced.

The Westside's fabric warehouses have long been a trade secret for interior designers looking for wide selections of fabric at reasonable prices. The two main warehouses, **Lewis & Sharon Textile Co.** (www.lsfabrics.com) and **Forsyth Fabrics** (www.forsythfabrics.com)—a mere half-mile apart—offer thousands of



in-stock textiles. The experience can be overwhelming, so budget your time accordingly.

RELAX

A tiring day of shopping and fine dining requires winding down with a massage and pedicure. **Paul Mitchell The School** (www.pmttheschool.com) at King Plow Arts Center is a fine place to revamp your look. Partial



highlights run a mere \$25 and haircuts are only \$12. **Neem Tree Spa** (www.neemtreespa.com) in the Westside Urban Market features holistic facial treatments that begin with an all-natural steam bath for the face infused with dried flowers and herbs, as well as an Ayurvedic back massage followed by a masala spice scrub.

SOCIALIZE

The upscale urban dance club **Compound** (www.compoundatl.com)—voted best nightclub by *Atlanta* magazine in 2006—boasts a nonsmoking garden and large outdoor terrace. Opening soon is the much-anticipated **Five Seasons Brewing** (www.5seasonsbrewing.com), a restaurant and microbrewery. The Westside location of this popular Atlanta eatery will feature seasonal cuisine, custom brews and a groovy rooftop patio with sweeping views of the city.

CULTURE

Bobbe Gillis, owner of **Bobbe Gillis Gallery** (www.gillisgallery.com), specializes in showcasing local artwork. “We carry oils, pastels watercolors, photo glass and pottery, handmade jewelry soaps and lotions. Everything we have is very pleasing; nothing here is statement oriented. This is art that is meant to be loved,” he says. Also visit **Sandler Hudson Gallery** (www.sandlerhudson.com) for both established and emerging artists from Atlanta and the Southeast.

RECHARGE

Soak up some coffee culture at one of two independently owned gathering spots. **Urban Grind** (www.urbangrindatl.com), owned by a former Manhattanite, specializes in great coffee. Other offerings include pastries, free Wi-Fi and ice cream along with entertainment like local art, local music and poetry readings. **Octane** (www.octanecoffee.com) offers a similar lineup of java and entertainment, but with the added bonus of premium beers. Wrap up your urban adventure with a cold Dogfish Head pale ale and soak up the neighborly Westside, where newcomers are always welcome. ✂

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