

Best-Kept Secrets

BY HEIKKI WALDEN

We went out to some of Toronto's best-known neighbourhoods and spoke with small business owners to find out what they love about their neighbourhoods. Here are their best-kept secrets...

Bryan of the Wine Bar in the St Lawrence Market neighbourhood says: "The best-kept secret is the North

Market: People talk about coming to St. Lawrence Market, but the North Market is the true farmers' market. On Saturdays, that's where the farmers are. We get a lot of our food from these farmers, and they've got freshly made cheeses, sausages, and produce. You can't get any fresher than that."

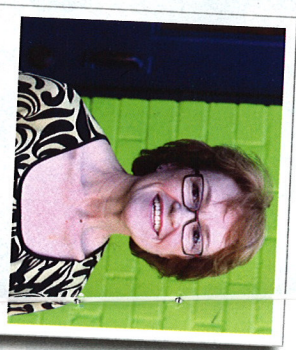
Katie and Lori at Treasure Island Toys love Greektown on the Danforth because of the convenience and sense of community. "You can walk to get everything you need. Residents shop locally, walk in the area, and are involved. There's a strong sense of community here. Young families are moving into the area and there are a lot of babies and strollers around."

Myrlene of Urban Mode in West Queen West thinks people should know about the creativity and the vibrancy of West Queen West. She

says: "There are a lot of fabulous art galleries here, and this area has become known for them. I think that's very important. The creativity is very, very strong here."

Donna at Adam and Eve Chocolatier loves the people of Church-

Wellesley Village. She says: "They're friendly, supportive, appreciative for businesses to be in this neighbourhood,



Joy from Bluebird Handmade in the Annex loves the families, the gardens, and the kids playing in the parks and on the streets. She says: "The area always feels alive to me." The best-kept secrets are: "John's and their crazy-delicious saffron risotto, fireworks at Sibelius Park, and

Bateman's bike shop on Barton for the best spring tune up."

Alessandro at Coppia Ristorante in Lawrence Park loves the attitude. He says: "There are million dollar homes right behind us, and you would never

know when you meet these people; they're all so grounded." He says the best-kept secrets are the restaurants. "I think we deserve to be recognized as a destination strip for restaurants. York Mills all the way to Lawrence, all these restaurants have elevated their game."

Ernie at Meat on the Beach loves The Beach because of its small town ambience. He says: "I think we've got it all. It's a safe area for the kids, the parks are clean, so are the beaches; it's just a great place. As soon as you walk down the street and you go from



one end to the other end, it's a good feeling."

Paul at Serpentine likes Yorkville because of the diversity.

"It's a mixture of tourists and local long-term residents. You get celebrities, you get all walks of life and every day is a different surprise and a different group of people. You really have to give it a chance. You can't just come once. It's kind of like going on a date - you enjoyed yourself, but you're just not sure. You need to come back a few times and really explore it."



that Bloor West Village is a small community within a city. She says:

"It's really a walking village, a lot of families, with a great vibe. Businesses are independently owned, which adds a nice touch. The best-kept secret is that Bloor West Village can be a fun day-activity. Pick up some fresh local fruit, go to the zoo in High Park, the Humber River trail is nearby where there's a ravine and waterfalls, and that's a really nice place to bike and take the kids."



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