

TRAVIS N. WARD

From Wednesday's Globe and Mail

Published on Tuesday, Apr. 13, 2010 4:14PM EDT

Last updated on Wednesday, Apr. 14, 2010 2:41PM EDT

City Travel

Atlanta's Westside went from meat to chic



This stylish neighbourhood has left its meatpacking history behind

Atlanta has long been referred to as a driving city, where having your own wheels is considered a must if you want to cruise from gourmet restaurants and high-end shops to hipster bars in one outing.

But in the past six months a neighbourhood called the Westside Provisions District has begun to boom along streets that once housed the gritty meatpacking district, offering the best of everything to well-heeled travellers interested in hoofing it.

When it comes to style, the WPD proudly compares itself to New York's Chelsea neighbourhood or Vancouver's Granville Island. It has attracted a slew of the city's top interior designers, chefs and fashionistas, who have opened ultra-stylish locales sporting something distinctly different from the mainstream.

The district is divided into two sections, the Westside Urban Market and White Provisions (named after the historic building built in 1910 where meat was smoked and salted), with most of the 30-plus hot spots, including art galleries, spas, shops and eateries, in modern low-rises and aged brick-and-concrete complexes spanning three blocks along Howell Mill Road in midtown. The two sections are conveniently joined by a footbridge above the 14th Street railway tracks, and all are within short driving distance of the city's largest art museums, theatres and Piedmont Park.

HOUSE PROUD Visitors with a bent for modern and traditional furnishings will be hard-pressed to resist the urge to ship things home. Smaller furniture shops tend to sell one-of-a-kind wares designed by their owners or imported from abroad. That's definitely true at Bungalow Classic, where the husband-and-wife owners/designers offer pieces that have graced the pages of House Beautiful magazine, among others. If you don't know what "transitional" design means, you will when you see their fresh twists on Old World favourites. 1197 Howell Mill Rd.; 404-351-9120; bungalowclassic.com.

TREASURE HUNT At Savvy Snoot – "snooty brands at savvy prices" – interior designer/owner Marty Mason is peddling an unusual treat: artwork and home furnishings on consignment from estates in Buckhead, Atlanta, which is one of the wealthiest neighbourhoods in the United States. From affordable but chic tabletop sculptures and chandeliers to big-ticket antiques, this store has something for any treasure seeker. 1187 Howell Mill Rd.; 404-355-1399; savvysnoot.com.

CHILD'S PLAY The newly opened Seed Factory is a "lifestyle boutique" for newborns to 12-year-olds (and moms) where they can dress up in colourful clothing by brands such as Petit Bateau, Tea Collection and Deux par Deux. At the rear, let the tots play while you peruse hand-sewn nursery decorations, Paul Frank notecards, wooden toys and sumptuous bedding by Dwell Studios. Then stroll across the bridge to B. Braithwaite, an upscale children's boutique where furniture by Manhattan designer David Netto and fashions from Marie-Chantal set the tone. Seed Factory, 1170 Howell Mill Rd.; 404-355-2043; seedfactoryatlanta.com B. Braithwaite, 1198 Howell Mill Rd.; 404-605-0963; bbraithwaite.com.

FAIR GAME Abattoir Restaurant is the newest brainchild of Anne Quatrano and Clifford Harrison, two of the most renowned chefs in the U.S. They started in the Westside by opening Bacchanalia around the corner, and are known for using locally grown ingredients. Here they have beefed up the slaughterhouse motif and executive chef Joshua Hopkins to spin out American chophouse fare using locally raised, freshly butchered meat and game. He has done such a good job that Abattoir was named best restaurant of the year in 2009 by local magazines, just months after it opened. Grab a leather banquette indoors or a table on the outdoor patio beside the wood-burning fireplace. Open Tuesday through Saturday, only for dinner. 1170 Howell Mill Rd.; 404-892-3335; starprovisions.com.

STAR ATTRACTION Part gourmet deli-café, part home decor shop, Star Provisions is a feast for the eyes and belly. Owned by the same husband-wife team as Abattoir, it has everything from single-portion Valrhona chocolate cakes and asparagus-feta cheese muffins, to \$40 half-bottles of Champagne, jars of mango pineapple chutney and beautiful imported pottery and table linens. 1198 Howell Mill Rd.; 404-365-0410; starprovisions.com.

EGG-STATIC Situated on a corner near White Provisions, local favourite West Egg Café relocated here in February. Hang out at the lounge or bar and surf the Web using the free Wi-Fi connection, or order a meal (now including dinner) in the loft-like restaurant known for its delicious cupcakes and breakfast. Outside, you can perch at one of the street-side tables and enjoy the sun, as well as locally roasted coffee by Batdorf & Bronson. *Open daily until 10 p.m. 1100 Howell Mill Rd.; 404-872-3973; westeggcafe.com.*

GEE WHIZ For women's jewellery and fashions you won't find elsewhere in the city, head to G. Gilbert, where owner Ginna Gilbert has carefully selected clothing from high-end brands such as Hannoh (from France), Gunex, PierAntonio Gaspari, Moschino and D. Exterior. [Shoes](#) are equally enticing and include lines such as Bettye Muller and Italy's Attilio Giusti Leombruni. As Gilbert puts it: "sophisticated and current but not necessarily trendy." *1198 Howell Mill Rd., Suite 112, 404-355-3713*

ART SMART To get a great sense of Atlanta's top local art scene, start perusing the many galleries here by heading to Astolfi Art, located in the White Provisions building. Owner Alessandra Carter was a long-time principal in a gallery across town before opening this, and she has brought with her some of the city's best artists, including painters Todd Murphy and Tony Hernandez. *1170 Howell Mill Rd.; 404-307-0215; astolfiart.com.*