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+FIND IT

The **ST. GEORGE** Ferry Terminal serves as the north-side gateway to this neighborhood, which is bounded by Victory Boulevard on the east, Hamilton Avenue on the west and St. Marks Place on the south.



San Francisco? No, try St. George.

St. George: Thrills on hill

Stunning views, cool vibe mark Staten nabe

BY LANA BORTOLOTT
Special to amNewYork

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To rent

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Two-bedroom, one-bath, plus office apartment with harbor view. 95 Sherman Ave.

CONTACT: FRIDAY OGBEWEL, NU-CONCEPT REALTY, 917-670-1518

Unbeatable views, hilly streets stacked with Victorian houses and the prettiest commute in the city. It's not San Francisco, but St. George, on Staten Island's north shore. Tucked in a leafy tract near the ferry terminal, this neighborhood is considered a sleeper. It's a matter of time, some say, before St. George becomes another bohemia by the sea.

Low on services and high on charm, its low-key vibe attracts young homeowners and artists who are priced out of other trendy neighborhoods.

"St. George is the cool, hip place," said Leticia Remauro, chairwoman of Community Board 1. "It has everything you want in Williamsburg, at half the price."

Amy Zavatto, 41, a writer, and her husband, Dan Marotta, 43, a lawyer, moved here from Carroll Gardens seven years ago. They bought a 1929 Arts and Crafts-style house on a quiet street for \$310,000 and never looked back.



The wings of the 9/11 tribute in St. George frame the World Trade Center site. (PHOTOS: MARIE CLAIRE ANDREA)

"[We] never would have found the kind of space or home we did if we'd stayed in Brooklyn," she said. "I don't think it's an accident that I've found good friends here; it's the kind of neighborhood that seems to attract a similar kind of bird—people who love New York City, love the kind of diversity that it should represent, and want to live that way."

+Did you know?

Five boats of the Staten Island Ferry fleet make about 110 trips each weekday, transporting 65,000.

Civic association president Theo Dorian, who opened an art gallery here in 2007, lived in the West Village

before buying a home here 25 years ago and though he misses certain perks, he values living in an area he describes as diverse yet collaborative.

"There's a whole landscape of great things that are popping up, but what really draws me here and kept me is the beautiful views, a sense of our current times and also what's historic."

THE BUZZ

The most promising developments for the neighborhood will happen along the waterfront. Since its \$130 million renovation and reopening in May 2005, civic and business groups have been pushing for retail in the ferry terminal. Said civic association president Theo Dorian: "A basic array of services and retail there would unify the neighborhood and tie the hillside with the water. The retail potential is incredible." Also in the works: a waterfront greenway that would connect St. George to the Snug Harbor Cultural Center.

Michelle White tends bar at Steiny's Pub in St. George.



TO PLAY

You'll find clubs and nightlife elsewhere: Here, you'll find a couple of places to call your own.

Cargo Cafe

120 Bay St., 718-876-0539

The cafe offers nightly entertainment, including trivia night, karaoke, and movies on Mondays.

There's also a late-night happy hour, a cool pool table, and an extensive list of rotating microbrews. Barkeep Rob said "it's definitely not a wine bar" and the "Big Special" proves that: Six bucks gets you a couple of sliders, fries and a Pabst Blue Ribbon.

Steiny's Pub

3 Hyatt St., 718-442-9526

Owner Jimmie Steiny boasts his taps are the "best and cleanest" in all of Staten Island. The selection rotates often and may include Euro faves such as Radeberger. The pub has karaoke every Thursday, live local bands on weekends and a rocking jukebox in between. Monthly themed international nights include food and music that go for \$8 a head.



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Above: Wafoo, a Japanese jazz band, plays every Saturday at Tutoriso, located at 36 Richmond Terrace.



Right: Passengers ride the Staten Island ferry.

(PHOTOS: MARIE CLAIRE ANDREA)

TO SHOP

While St. George isn't quite a shopping mecca, a few spots are community favorites.

Every Thing Goes Thrift & Vintage

140 Bay St., 718-273-7139
 A maze of rooms leads you through three floors of clothing, all well organized in an old Victorian home. The store offers one-stop

shopping with shoes and accessories, and lots of choices for costume parties, including professional theatrical makeup.

Every Thing Goes Book Café

208 Bay St., 718-447-8256
 Expect a more-than-ample supply of used and rare books and records, as well as other media. If you're not in the mood to browse, hang out in the cafe and take advantage of the free

Wi-Fi and the organic teas, juices and coffee. Readings, art openings and other performances make this a community hangout shared by St. George and neighboring Tompkinsville.

Rispoli Pastry Shop

29 Hyatt St., 718-273-5224
 It's the first and foremost Italian pastry shop in the nabe. This location is only four years old, but the family has been in the business for 70 years. Come here for

traditional Italian cookies, including biscotti and pignoli, or scoop up fresh fruit strudel and delicious homemade carrot cake.

St. George Greenmarket

St. Marks and Hyatt Streets
 About 15-20 vendors populate this community market every Saturday from May through November, offering fresh produce, baked goods, organic meats, fresh seafood and, of course,



artist's rendering

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TO EAT

St. George has a small but highly diverse restaurant scene within walking distance of the ferry terminal.

Beso
11 Schuyler St., 718-816-8162

Beso is a cozy neighborhood spot with good sangria and tapas. You'll find chorizo, ajillo and paella, but try other Spanish-inflected dishes such as seared guajillo-crusted tuna and cava mussels.

Enoteca Maria
27 Hyatt St., 718-447-2777

Every night one of eight grandma chefs takes over this kitchen serving authentic Italian regional food. You might try capuzzelle della casa — half a sheep's head stuffed with herbed bread crumbs — or other real-deal dishes such as rabbit and tripe. Cash only.

Ruddy & Dean
44 Richmond Terrace, 718-816-4400

Known for its aged, hand-cut steaks and waterside views, the menu also has unexpected twists such as juniper-smoked New Zealand rack of lamb with chocolate fusion grenache syrup, or for lunch, the seared scallop and basil aioli sandwich. A small, but well-selected, wine list rounds it out.

St. George Parish Grill

100 Stuyvesant Pl., 718-556-5355

The neighborhood's newest upscale eatery features Louisiana standards: blackened chicken and seafood, po'boys and jambalaya.

Tutorisio

36 Richmond Terrace, 718-273-7644

Owner Helen Albanese created this organic, gluten-free cafe so foodies with celiac disease could enjoy grainless Italian, but it's a hit with the gluten-tolerant crowd, too.

TO SEE

St. George packs a lot of treasures into a small area, with the North Shore Waterfront Esplanade serving as the gateway.

SHOW Gallery
156 Stuyvesant Pl., 718-524-0855

Staten Island's only Manhattan-style gallery



Valarie Delsante, originally of Sicily, is one of the rotating chefs at Enoteca Maria.



Diners enjoy an authentic Italian meal at Enoteca Maria, a St. George favorite. (PHOTOS: MARIE CLAIRE ANDREA)



The St. George Theatre opened in 1929.

doubles as a community performance space with "how to" workshops in the applied arts and Thursday cinema nights.

Staten Island Museum

75 Stuyvesant Pl., 718-727-1135

See more than 2 million objects of science, art and history packed in this historic house. Focusing on the island — and in particular, the Lenapes, NYC's American Indian tribe — the

collection also includes other American and European works, items from the ancient world and a rotating contemporary art exhibit.

Staten Island 9/11 Memorial

North Shore Waterfront Esplanade

Architect Masayuki Sono created two walls of postcards that pay tribute to each of the nearly 270 Staten Islanders who lost their lives on 9/11. Cast in granite, each person is commemorated with a silhouette, name and date of birth.

St. George Theatre
35 Hyatt St., 718-442-2900

Opened in 1929, this theater boasted an enormous cantilevered balcony, velvet seats, gilded balconies, grand staircases and a \$25,000 Wurlitzer organ. Gorgeously restored, the Rococo stage once again features talent shows, concerts and revues with star power such as the Alvin Ailey dance troupe, Tony Bennett and Don McLean.

Celebrating the life on the island

Amy Zavatto is a food and spirits writer who lives in St. George.

What's the best part of living in St. George?
Practically speaking, it's affordable. And I'm still in NYC.



Any downside to life here?
Sometimes you start to

feel like the main city government forgets that Staten Island exists.

What changes would you like to see?

A decent grocery store in walking distance, or delivery from FreshDirect. A nice little wine shop.

What would you like to remain the same?

The true sense of community and great diversity of the residents.

What would you recommend to visitors?

Take in a ballgame at the Staten Island Yankee Stadium. Then walk up to St. Mark's Place and check out the Victorian homes, and, even if no one is performing at the St. George Theatre, just go in and look.