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+FIND IT

JERSEY CITY is bordered to the east by the Hudson River, to the north by Hoboken, to the west by Kearny and Newark, and to the south by Bayonne.

REAL ESTATE



Mercer Street, between Barrow Street and Jersey Avenue

To rent

\$2,395

Two bedroom, one-and-one-half bathroom apartment in the James Monroe. 1012 square feet. 45 River Drive.

(LINDSEY BROWN, 201-478-6708)

\$2,500

One-bedroom furnished condominium in high-rise. Private balcony parking space included in building garage. 707 square feet

(MARGARET E. HILL, HALSTEAD PROPERTY, 201-478-6704)

\$1,800

(sale: \$329,000)

Two-bedroom, one-bath condo in high-rise pre-war building. 1,336 square feet, 2600 Kennedy Blvd., Journal Square

(LINDSEY BROWN)

To buy

\$640,000

Four-bedroom, 2½-bath multi-family house with fireplace and garden. 19 Magnolia Ave.

(PETER COSSIO, HALSTEAD PROPERTY, 201-478-6710)

\$479,000

One-bedroom in nine-story



Renters and buyers can find more space for less money in Jersey City.

waterfront building. Partial NYC and river views, floor to ceiling windows. 25 Hudson St.

(MATT BROWN, HALSTEAD PROPERTY, 201-478-6709)

\$530,000

One-bedroom on 31st floor, NYC views. 717 square feet, 389 Washington St.

(MARGARET E. HILL)

\$305,000

One-bedroom, one-bath condo with eat-in kitchen in converted building near Hamilton Park. 800 square feet, 205 10th St.

(LINDSEY BROWN)



The Colgate Clock is one of the landmarks on the Jersey City waterfront at Exchange Place.

(PHOTOS: CAITLIN RAGIONE)

High culture in New Jersey

No jokes, please; Jersey City takes its arts seriously

BY LANA BORTOLOTT
Special to amNewYork

It's often called the "Sixth Borough" for good reason. Jersey City is within waving distance of Manhattan, where a quarter of its 242,400 employed residents work. But this historic and artistic enclave on the Hudson River has its own identity, which locals fiercely defend.

In other words, you won't hear anyone cracking New Jersey jokes here.

"The culture and the whole feel of Jersey City is unmatched," said Elizabeth Young, executive director of the Historic Special Improvement District (HSID) and an eight-year resident. "The arts scene is well-supported and the level of community development is incredible."

Comprised of about 10 districts, the heart of Jersey City



The Subway Surfers perform at Groove on Grove, a music series from 6-8 p.m. on Wednesdays through Sept. 30.

lies in two neighborhoods: Journal Square, the seat of local government; and a historic downtown. The main corridors, Grove Street, and Newark and Jersey avenues, still support mom-and-pop stores, with quality restaurants and interesting boutiques breaking ground.

But the pride of the neighborhood is the flourishing arts scene. Long the home of independent artists who came for the cheap space, Jersey City now boasts a cohesive arts community thanks to organizations such as HSID, Pro Arts Jersey City

executive director Christine Goodman, herself an artist, said there's no danger of Jersey City becoming the next SoHo or Chelsea.

"I feel like the artists who are in Jersey City are here because they need to make the work happen in a real DIY way," she said.

Even real estate agents say the neighborhood is all about keeping it real.

"Without a doubt, Jersey City is a logical and viable comparison to neighborhoods like Williamsburg," said Eugene Cordano, Halstead Property's Metro Jersey director of sales. "But unlike those neighborhoods, it has diverse and affordable price points for people wanting to buy." Prices here, Cordano noted, are 25-30 percent less than in trendsetting areas.

Sophie Penkrat, a copywriter and 10-year resident, went one step further.

"Jersey City-ites are very particular about where we live — we're not like Brooklyn hipsters. Our pride runs deep and wide — we'll fight on that!"

+Did you know?

Jersey City is home to the Afro-American Historical Society Museum, the state's only museum devoted exclusively to the African-American experience.

and Art House Productions, which engage artists across disciplines with each other and the community at large. Art House founder and

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More than an art gallery, LITM at 140 Newark Ave. also features a bar and restaurant.

TO PLAY

IM Automata Chino
99 Greene St.

No phone, check music at ironmonkey.com
Brought to you by the owners of Iron Monkey, a rock 'n' roll venue with a roof deck and a modest cover charge. It has typical bar food — wings, sliders and skewers — but people come here for



Bar Majestic enjoys landmark status in the space that was once an Art Nouveau theater. (PHOTOS: CAITLIN RAGIONE)

the music, not the menu, and the beers for \$3 and \$5.

Bar Majestic
275 Grove St., 201-451-4400

Housed in a landmark former theater, this wine bar — still carrying

echoes of its Art Nouveau past — is the go-to place. The list is heavy on New World wines, but traditionalists will find their Cotes du Rhone and Chianti here. Drink specials on Fridays from 5 p.m. to closing.

White Star Bar
230 Brunswick St., 201-653-9234

Calling itself Jersey City's "answer to Cheers," this Hamilton Park hangout features daily drink and food specials, an extended Friday

ESSENTIAL VISIT

Liberty Science Center
222 Jersey City Blvd., 201-200-1000

Perhaps JC's most family-friendly, day-trippiest cultural venue, Liberty Science Center is nonetheless impressive and comprehensive. It doesn't have an elephant in the rotunda, but the museum covers it all, from dinosaurs to space exploration. Weary chaperones can slip out and enjoy the stunning harbor views or take advantage of a three-venue pass that gives access to the science center, Liberty State Park and a ferry to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island Immigration Museum (lsc.org).

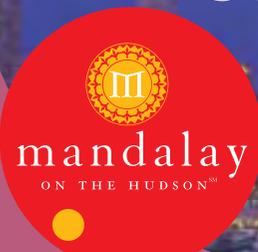
+Did you know?

Loew's Jersey Theater, a 1929 Baroque landmark in Journal Square, cost \$2 million to construct and seats 3,300 people.

happy hour, occasional art shows and themed events such as pajama parties. Norm and Cliff aren't at the bar, but plenty of colorful locals are.

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Gynine Visconti, 35, owns Jersey City's The Stockinette Cafe.

(PHOTOS: CAITLIN RAGIONE)

TO EAT

Ox
176 Newark Ave.,
201-860-4000

Sleek banquettes, local art and a homey menu with unexpected twists make Ox a destination along the Hudson. Come for small plates, full meals or a hearty sandwich of duck confit, blackened catfish or meatloaf. The slow-roasted lamb shank gets raves.

Marco & Pepe
289 Grove St.,
201-860-9688

Eat inside or on the sidewalk at this casual eatery, one of the first in the downtown area, but try not to miss their brunch, complete with a menu of dishes such as chicken and truffle, and rabbit.

Skinner's Loft
146 Newark Ave.,
201-915-0600

Swing by for dependable American pub grub in a more upscale setting than



Patrons at the bar at Skinner's Loft, located at 146 Newark Ave.

+Did you know?

The last film shown in the historic Loew's Jersey Theater, a Baroque landmark in Journal Square, was "Friday the 13th Part VI: Jason Lives."

Basic
231 Eighth St.,
201-656-5900

A cozy corner cafe with artistic types quietly typing away on laptops (there's free Wi-Fi) and blissfully drinking one of many roasted brews. Quesadillas and wraps round out the sandwich menu, which includes tuna with mango chutney. Brooke Shields is said to be a fan of the butternut squash soup.

what's typical. A pleasant roof deck sits atop a former row house.

Jersey City: Cool, artsy and cost-efficient

Sophie Penkrat is a copywriter at Vanity Fair magazine and currently lives in Jersey City.



What's so unique about Jersey City?

I'd say it's the little gems around every corner: The Reservoir where they have fishing derbies, the secret bowling lane in Barrow Mansion and the guarantee of an art event every night.

that catered better to the expanding multicultural community.

Why live here instead of Manhattan?

Though Manhattan has a lot of important institutions and activities, it's just so expensive, not to mention tourist-laden up the wazoo and annoying to get around. The biggest reason: Here you'll land a killer apartment for a slamming price and you'll have a rich community of friends in no time at all.

Is there a downside to living here?

There seems to be a constant struggle with developers and city officials; they're trying to overdevelop a town that has unique character and sass. It would also be nice to have a more comprehensive shopping district

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Young families enjoy a day in Jersey City's Van Vorst Park.

(PHOTOS: CAITLIN RAGIONE)

TO SHOP

Tia's Place
277 Grove St.,
201-451-9358

If you want to look cute and preppy, come here. If you want your house to look cute and preppy, come here. If you're more Martha than Wallpaper, you can't go wrong with the cheerful clothing, jewelry and home goods in this lovingly curated shop.



Duck Duck Goose
14 Erie St.,
201-432-2133

At last, a store for parents who want kiddie fashion without breaking the bank. This hip consignment shop features Ralph Lauren, Lily Pulitzer, Baby Lulu and Jacadi. Tucked on a quiet street, you can shop in peace – until your youngster screams in delight at a must-have.

THE BUZZ

A number of events make Jersey City much more than a bedroom community.

Grove Plaza is the site for Groove on Grove, a live music event every Wednesday from 6-8 p.m. The plaza hosts a farmers market on Monday and Thursday and Creative Grove, a craft market, on Friday. (Visit jcdowntown.com for a schedule.)

Public School

593 Jersey Ave., no phone
Come here for independent brands (and spirit), most of which are exclusive to this hipper-than-thou street-gear boutique. Cool sneaks, sleek duds, graphic tees and a knowledgeable staff that's surprisingly not snarky.

TO DO

Films in Van Vorst
Montgomery Street between Jersey Avenue and Barrow Street

Enjoy free films, popcorn and your own picnic just after sunset in this beau-

tiful Victorian park on Wednesday nights. (Go to filmsinvanvorst.wordpress.com for a schedule.)

Jersey City Museum
350 Montgomery St.,
201-413-0303

At a fraction of the price you'd pay across the river, see contemporary works by



The Barrow Mansion is now a community center and is the home of the Attic Ensemble, a resident theater company.



"Animal Pharm," a multimedia collection, is on display at the Fish with Braids Gallery at 521 Jersey Ave.

visual and material artists. The airy building and its critically acclaimed collection is an undiscovered gem with a rich educational component and child-friendly programming.

Barrow Mansion
83 Wayne St.,
201-432-6979

The single survivor of a

twin set of Greek Revival mansions in historic Van Vorst Park, it's listed on national and state historic registers as an example of pre-Civil War architecture. Now owned by a church, it's used as a community center and home to the Attic Ensemble theater company. (Go to atticensemble.org for more information.)

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