

December 5, 2010 - By Nicole Lyn Pesce, Daily News Staff Writer

Frederick Douglass Boulevard: A guide to the booming Harlem nabe



A beautiful statue of Frederick Douglass is located in the Frederick Douglass Circle, 110th St., Harlem.

Aloft Harlem, the nabe's first new hotel in over 40 years, is the latest in a string of chic boutiques, restaurants and cocktail lounges on Frederick Douglass Blvd. above 110th St. The area's first beer garden opened in August, and luxury condos are cropping up on every corner. No wonder realtors call this bustling stretch of Eighth Ave. Harlem's Gold Coast.

*The booming boulevard begins at Frederick Douglass Circle (Central Park North & Frederick Douglass Blvd.), where a monument to the abolitionist was completed in June (pictured above). The B and C trains at 110th St.-Central Park North bring visitors to the vibrant corridor running up to 125th St.



*Niche shops like MODSquad Cycles (2119 Frederick Douglass Blvd.; above left), Bebenoir Boutique (2164 Frederick Douglass Blvd.) and the just-opened Bibi Salon (2220 Frederick Douglass Blvd.) are meeting the rising demand of incoming professionals. "We're bringing a service into a neighborhood that really needed it," says Laralyn Mowers, 31, from MODSquad, which rents out bikes and hawks customized wheels for up to \$4,500. "Sometimes kids come in with a flat tire, and we'll patch it for no charge."



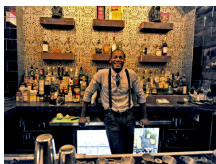
New eateries are expanding the area's palate, like Patisserie des Ambassades (2200 Frederick Douglass Blvd., above right) and Questan's (2113 Frederick Douglass Blvd.) with its seafood specials. The 5 & Diamond (2072 Frederick Douglass Blvd.) opened in March with organic American fare, and upper West Side favorite Levain Bakery will open at 2167 Frederick Douglass Blvd. next year.

*Harlem was poised to be New York's next It nabe three years ago until the real estate crash halted many projects. Now as more students and young families settle uptown, investors are taking over vacant lots and empty storefronts to build new businesses.



The condo boom, however, has some longtime residents worried about getting priced out. The FDB 2280 (2280 Frederick Douglass Blvd.) luxury complex prides itself as Harlem's "new standard" of living, **while the one-bedrooms at the Livmor (301 W. 115th St.) begin selling at \$460,000.**

*Bier International (2099 Frederick Douglass Blvd.; above), Harlem's first beer garden, opened in August with nine international and domestic drafts, plus scores of bottles. "This is what the neighborhood needed," says co-owner Chris Pollok. "My partner and I have been in business for years, mostly in the East Village, but now everything is happening here!" There's more on tap: Harlem Tavern opens next month at 116th St.



*"The lounge culture has gotten really popular," says Malik Sharif, who works at Moca Lounge (2210 Frederick Douglass Blvd.). Karl Williams at 67 Orange St. (2082 Frederick Douglass Blvd., shown above) is also bringing the cocktail culture of Death & Co. uptown. "This area is really starting to open up, and I love it," says the Harlem resident. "I don't have to go downtown to go shopping or have a good cocktail. We're creating that downtown experience up here."



*Iconic pieces honoring Harlem's history still color the nabe, such as the 30-by-11-foot Spirit of Harlem glass mosaic by Brooklyn native Louis Del Sartre (80 W. 125th St.; above left), or the nearby Swing Low: A Memorial to Harriet Tubman bronze sculpture by Allison Saar (123rd St. & Frederick Douglass Blvd.) celebrating the Underground Railroad leader.

* Plenty of local artisans still sell their wares between the bars and chic boutiques. One vendor from Burkina Faso sells handmade West African-style jewelry for a song, including carved wooden bangles and necklaces for \$7 to \$10, and glass rings for \$5 (above right).

All photos Sunshine for News

*The Aloft Harlem hotel (2296 Frederick Douglass Blvd.) opened on Thursday with 124 rooms averaging \$239 a night, plus a gym, a bar/lounge area and outdoor patio. Says local resident Ashtan Pina, 21, "This area is booming, and yet, those places like the Apollo and Sylvia's that make Harlem Harlem are still here."

